

# **The Great Commission And Christian Education**

**A Pointed Challenge to  
Christian Parents and Church Leaders**

**By**

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## Acknowledgments

It is important to acknowledge the Bible as God's inspired, infallible communication to man. To that end, I trust that the following pages are a reasonable representation of Biblical truth concerning the inherent educational nature of The Great Commission.

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I am indebted to C. B. Eavey and his excellent *History of Christian Education*. The overview included in this booklet is largely based on Eavey's research.

I am most appreciative for the extensive research contained in Rousas John Rushdoony's *The Messianic Character of American Education*. This in-depth study of the philosophy undergirding American public education is an invaluable source concerning the underpinnings of secularism in the public school, much of which is reflected in the following pages.

I am deeply grateful to the staff and students of the school in which I have labored for the last thirty-plus years. It is in this setting and with these wonderful and patient people that I have learned many of the insights and formed the convictions expressed in the following pages.

*And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. "*

*Matt 28:18-20 NASB*

## Introduction

Christians often view Christ's final instructions to His followers – The Great Commission – as something fulfilled primarily by missionaries working on foreign soil and directed toward those who have never heard the Gospel. While such missionary endeavor is certainly an essential element of His imperative to the church, it is not the only aspect of Christ's command. The Great Commission applies equally to the education and training by the local church of its own members. More specifically, as history demonstrates, if the church is not successful in fulfilling the Great Commission *with its own youth*, it has fumbled the ball, so to speak, in one of its primary areas of responsibility. This paper will demonstrate this point as it examines the last one hundred plus years of the Christian education movement in America.

These pages are intended to challenge church leaders, parents, and others who are concerned with serving our Lord Jesus in seeing the importance of bringing to bear the full resources of the local church upon the education and training of its youth as a strategic response to The Great Commission. Indeed, we will see that an emphasis on ministering to youth was one of the church's highest priorities at various times in its history. When it focused on this task, the church prospered, and its influence in culture was at its highest level of penetration.

But beginning in the mid-1800's, something profoundly shifted in how Church leadership viewed the role of the church and its responsibility to educate its youth. The result of this change, as we shall see, has had a devastating impact in terms of the loss of much of the church's youth to the secular culture. The whirlwind of secularism in America continues to gain speed and is sweeping many in the Christian community – especially youth – into its subtle philosophies of syncretism and relativistic notions about the nature of truth. Unless the church and Christian parents fully awaken to this threat, great harm will continue to be done. Not least among the consequences: the church will increasingly be pushed into a place of cultural irrelevance by the larger, secular society.

It is not too late for the church to reclaim much of its influence, not only in the larger culture, but also with its impact upon its own youth. Success or failure will depend largely upon the church's wholehearted obedience to every aspect of the Lord's Great Commission. As pointed out by Paul, the church is “the pillar and support of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). It is God's primary means of communicating truth about Himself to mankind. Furthermore, Jesus begins The Great Commission by stating: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18). The church is God's primary mouthpiece for the dissemination of His truth; therefore, it should not be sitting back in a passive manner when it comes to discharging this solemn responsibility *in all potential areas of its influence*. Rather, the church should be aggressively and fearlessly engaged in this greatest of causes, and nowhere with any more vigor and energy than with its youth.

May the following pages challenge and stimulate Christian leaders, parents and the church-at-large to reclaim the traditions of education and discipleship practiced by

our forefathers, especially as they apply to our youth. May our generation of believers catch this vital vision and work diligently at rebuilding the wall where it has been breached, laying a solid foundation for the next generation to carry the torch of Christianity forward with renewed vigor and effectiveness!

# The Great Commission And Christian Education

## A Pointed Challenge to Christian Parents and Church Leaders

*And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. "*

*Matt 28:18-20 NASB*

At the heart of this profound directive given by our Lord to His followers is the imperative to educate. The Greek word usually translated *make disciples* is *matheteuo* (math-ayt-yoo'-o), meaning literally "to make a disciple; to teach, instruct."<sup>1</sup> The King James Version expresses this sense of meaning by rendering verse 19 as "teach all nations" rather than "make disciples." This imperative is repeated by all the major translations in verse 20: "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...."

The act of teaching means simply "to instruct; to inform; to communicate to another the knowledge of that of which he was before ignorant."<sup>2</sup> This impartation of knowledge is the essence of what it means to educate; thus, we can conclude that education is at the heart of Jesus' Great Commission to His followers. James Orr, recognizing the essential role of education in Christianity, declared, "If there is a religion in the world which exalts the office of teaching, it is safe to say that it is the religion of Jesus Christ...."<sup>3</sup> This educational endeavor is essential both to the missionary aspect of converting non-Christians to faith in Christ (*making disciples*) as well as the ongoing, nurturing emphasis of helping ensure their subsequent growth to maturity as believers (*teaching them*).

In this context, we must not make the all-too common mistake of stereotyping the Great Commission: that it is being fulfilled primarily in some distant place – on some

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<sup>1</sup> John Henry Thayer, *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, (Lafayette, IN: Alpha Omega, © 1981).

<sup>2</sup> Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language* (San Francisco, CA: Foundation for American Christian Education; Reprint of Noah Webster's First Edition [1828] of An American Dictionary of the English Language, Third Ed., 1983).

<sup>3</sup> James Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954; 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1893), p. 20.

foreign mission field. Its application should apply equally to the local church in terms of its community outreach and the on-going education of its own members and others within its scope of potential influence. One might even ask, “If the church is unable to effectively fulfill this Great Commission within its own local sphere of influence, how is it qualified to minister effectively in the more traditional ‘missions’ context on a trans-local level?”

Thus, the fulfillment of the Great Commission in its *local sphere* of influence is a strategic issue for the contemporary church and has everything to do with its relevance in our culture. Concerning the vitality and influence of the church throughout its history, C. B. Eavey observed:

So long as the church continued this practice of teaching the Bible it thrived, but when it neglected its teaching function it declined in spiritual life.<sup>4</sup>

The educational function of the church is vital to its effectiveness in accomplishing its primary commission to make and develop disciples. When the church abdicates or loses its focus on this most important priority, there is a subsequent decline in its spiritual vitality. Let us consider a historical backdrop to help illustrate the importance of this educational component in enabling the church to successfully fulfill its God-given commission.

### **The Educational Emphasis in the Life of Christ and the Early Church**

If one word could be used to characterize the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, it would be the word *teach*. From the beginning of His public ministry – “And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues”<sup>5</sup> – to just before His crucifixion – “And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem”<sup>6</sup> – the words *teach* or *teaching* are used fifty-eight times to describe the heart of His ministry. This is consistent with John’s description of Jesus as “the Word”<sup>7</sup>. The obvious function of a word is to facilitate communication from one to another. Jesus is God’s ultimate expression of Himself to man. This communication was expressed primarily through the example of His life coupled with His teachings to His followers. It is in this context that Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission, commanding them to follow His example in teaching others: “And opening His mouth He began to teach them, saying...”<sup>8</sup>

We see this pattern emulated by the apostles throughout the book of *Acts*. The church age was begun with a profound outpouring of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by the stirring words of Peter instructing his hearers in the truth about Jesus Christ and God’s

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<sup>4</sup> C. B. Eavey, *History of Christian Education*, (Moody Press, Chicago, ILL, 1971), p. 189.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 4: 23b.

<sup>6</sup> Luke 13:22.

<sup>7</sup> John 1:1.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 5:2.

plan for mankind's redemption. Immediately following the conversion of over three thousand people who received Peter's words, Luke records that "they were continually devoting themselves to the apostle's teaching..."<sup>9</sup> We see here both aspects of the Great Commission: the making of disciples through the preaching of the Gospel, as well as the on-going teaching intended to nurture these new believers toward maturity of faith.

This pattern holds true throughout the earliest days of the newborn church. From its beginning, the spread of the gospel was characterized by vigorous teaching—"And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."<sup>10</sup> The Jewish leaders acknowledged the nature of what was happening when they hauled the apostles before the Jewish council and charged them with "[filling] Jerusalem with your teaching..."<sup>11</sup> Nor was this teaching emphasis a short-lived phenomenon. When Paul arrived in Corinth, Luke records that "he settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."<sup>12</sup> The impartation of God's truth in the form of the apostle's teaching was the foundation used by the Holy Spirit to establish an enduring church. Interestingly, the last two verses in *Acts* close with this same theme. Describing the ministry of Paul in Rome, Luke observed:

And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters, and was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Priority of Education in the Pre-Reformation Church**

We see this emphasis on education in other strategic movements in the subsequent history of the church. In his excellent book, *History of Christian Education*, C. B. Eavey includes the following pre-Reformation examples:

- The Waldenses were a group located in the central Alpine regions of Europe who stood against the corrupt practices of the Roman church. According to Eavey, they "Always and everywhere...observed the practice of regular reading of the Bible, regular daily family worship, and regular instruction of individuals, with special emphasis directed toward establishing children in Bible truth."<sup>14</sup> Teaching was conducted primarily by laymen going out two by two and from house to house, instructing entire families and villages.
  
- The Albigenses – neighbors of the Waldenses – were located in the Italian and French alpine valleys. They were severely persecuted by the Roman church, but in spite of opposition, maintained their corporate faith as a

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<sup>9</sup> Acts 2:42.

<sup>10</sup> Acts 5:42.

<sup>11</sup> Acts 5:28.

<sup>12</sup> Acts 18:11.

<sup>13</sup> Acts 28:30-31.

<sup>14</sup> C. B. Eavey, *History of Christian Education*, (Moody Press, Chicago, ILL, 1971), p. 117.

result of a strong emphasis on Bible instruction by parents to their children and a system of itinerant teachers who directed their efforts toward the larger community of believers.<sup>15</sup>

- John Wycliffe and his followers, known as the Lollards, believed in the supremacy of the Bible. Wycliffe is perhaps best known for his work on the first English translation of the Bible, but what is equally significant was his commitment to the education of the common man and woman in order to help them become literate in the Bible's content. In order to accomplish this, Wycliffe and his disciples carried on an aggressive campaign to educate their followers through the distribution of literature and by forming teams of itinerant teachers and preachers.<sup>16</sup>
- John Huss and his followers believed education to be vital to the spread of the Gospel and on-going nurture of its converts. They established a system of schools and a university with the express purpose of preparing young men as gospel workers. In addition, they published one of the first Bible translations in the vernacular of the people. Schools were considered essential in teaching the populace – especially the youth – to read God's word.<sup>17</sup>
- The Brethren of the Common Life represented a strategic pre-Reformation movement. Identified primarily with its Dutch founder Gerhard Groote, this group emphasized the pure teachings of the Bible and their simple application to the common man and woman. They also emphasized teaching the general population to read in order to be able to study the Scriptures in their own language. As a result, they were devoted to education—especially focused on youth—whom they believed represented the future of the church.<sup>18</sup>

There were other notable movements between the time of the original apostles and the Reformation, but the above serve as remarkable examples of what some call “the remnant” church. These believers stayed true to the fundamental doctrines and truths of Christianity, despite the persecution and opposition they experienced at the hands of the secular society and the corrupt Roman church. While these groups may have had some contact with each other, for the most part they were independent movements and serve as testimony to God's faithfulness in maintaining the early church traditions and purity of faith, despite much opposition from institutional religion. It is noteworthy that each movement was characterized by a common reliance on education—with a special emphasis on the education of youth—as a primary means of spreading, maintaining and increasing the vitality of their spiritual life.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 130-131.

## Christian Education and the Reformation

The movements referred to above laid the foundation for the Reformation, a widespread breaking away by believers in northern and central Europe from the Roman church. In this larger movement, we see the same emphasis on education as a primary means for establishing and nourishing the church.

- The Brethren of Common Life, mentioned above, developed into one of the primary influences in the Reformation movement. Recognizing the value of Christian education at all levels—especially with youth—the Brethren encouraged their followers to view the vocation of teaching as one of the greatest means to spread and establish the gospel among the general populace. They were greatly respected by the larger culture as a result of their simple, genuine Christian lifestyle. As a result, Brethren teachers were in great demand in the public schools. They had freedom to teach their Christian doctrines and beliefs, and they did so with the support and encouragement of the local governmental authorities.

In this environment, they influenced whole communities through their religious teachings. They also were responsible for establishing numerous Christian schools and making it possible for those without means to attend through the charity of the larger church community. It is hard to overstate the profound spiritual influence that the Brethren had in northern Europe through their educational endeavors.<sup>19</sup>

- The name most commonly associated with the Reformation is that of Martin Luther. Luther viewed education as the primary means for furthering the gospel and placed special emphasis on the Christian education of youth. The following remarks have been attributed to him: “I am very much afraid that schools will prove to be the great gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount.”<sup>20</sup>

Luther believed that Christ-centered schools should be operated at public expense and education made compulsory for all children, regardless of their social class. The ultimate goal of such universal education was to teach people to read the Bible. Furthermore, he believed good government could be established and sustained only by an enlightened,

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>20</sup> *What Luther Says*, Compiled by Ewald M. Plass (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, © 1959), p. 449.

educated populace. In Luther's view, the vocation of teaching was exceeded in importance only by that of the pastor.<sup>21</sup>

- John Calvin, one of the theological giants of the Reformation, viewed education as being at the heart of the propagation of the Gospel. His efforts included the founding of schools and the promotion of education for all ages. In particular, he believed it was the special duty of the church to educate its children and proposed doing so through a universal system of schools designed to teach fundamental academic disciplines rooted in Biblical truths. He was instrumental in founding the University of Geneva, which quickly became a leading center for all of northern Europe in training Christian workers to serve not only as teachers and pastors, but also in civil government.<sup>22</sup>

Calvin's systematic theology and his philosophy of education had widespread influence on other strategic Reformation leaders and movements. John Knox drove the establishment of Calvin's system of education in Scotland where he made the church responsible for providing a Christian education for all classes and both genders of children. The inclusion of females in the educational process was significant because of the long-standing tradition of educating males only.

In France, the Huguenots founded many elementary and secondary schools in the pattern modeled by Calvin. This model was repeated in England, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and even as far away as colonial America, as Calvin's systematic theology and emphasis on Christian, church-sponsored education became what some consider the primary flow of the Reformation movement.

Eavey points out that Calvin's establishment of the Academy of Geneva became the "nursery of Protestant preachers and teachers for other lands," as well as the model for the University of Leyden, the University of Edinburgh, Cambridge, and Harvard, among others.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, it is hard to overstate the influence of Calvin's philosophy of Christian education. It was applied throughout much of northern Europe, England and America at all levels of education—from the elementary school to the university.

Coupled with his systematic theology and his philosophy of civil government, Calvin's philosophy of Christian education was a primary force used to drive the formation of the modern constitutional governments of these nations.

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<sup>21</sup> C. B. Eavey, p. 148.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

As was the case with the pre-Reformation movements, education was perhaps the most vital element in the spread of the gospel throughout the Reformation movement. According to Eavey,

Every Reformation leader, including Luther in Germany, Calvin in France and Switzerland, Zwingli and Beza in Switzerland, Knox in Scotland, Cranmer and Ridley in England, and Ussher in Ireland, recognized the need for stressing the church school idea as the basis for the growth of the church.<sup>24</sup>

### **Education and the Post-Reformation Years**

Before moving on, let us consider a few post-Reformation examples of the essential role of education in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

- John Comenius (1592 – 1670) is considered the “father of modern education” by many Christian scholars because of his theories on educational methodology and how children best learn. What modern, secular textbooks often leave out is that Comenius was also dedicated to the cause of Christian education. He was invited by the governments of several countries to reconstruct their educational systems. Through this restructuring work, Comenius was able to exert significant influence toward a Christian education for all children.

In particular, Comenius believed that educational systems should be grounded in the Biblical worldview and that Christian truth should be integrated into each academic discipline. He placed special emphasis on the primary role of parents in instructing their children in the fundamentals of faith, believing that schools could then be used effectively to reinforce parental influence in a more formal, academic setting.<sup>25</sup>

- John Wesley, the great English revivalist and the founder of Methodism, placed special emphasis on the education of children as well as small group instruction for converts. Concerning the strategic place of youth, he believed “God begins his work in children,”<sup>26</sup> and that unless children were well educated in the fundamentals of faith, the revival taking place in his day would last for only one generation.<sup>27</sup> Some scholars attribute to Wesley the seeds that later blossomed into the Evangelical Sunday School movement.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 169-172.

<sup>26</sup> H. C. Trumbull, *Yale Lectures on the Sunday School* (Philadelphia, John D. Wattles, 1888), p. 107-108.

Cited by C. B. Eavey, p. 221.

<sup>27</sup> C. B. Eavey, p. 221.

- The history of general education in America is unique because it was overtly Christian from its very beginning. Those original colonists were, for the most part, religious dissenters who left Europe in order to pursue their faith in the freedom available in the unspoiled American wilderness. The Puritans were dissenters with Calvinistic roots who fled the oppression of the Church of England. They settled much of New England and established church schools in the traditions of Calvin. The Huguenots—French protestants with Calvinistic roots—settled in the Carolinas. Many Dutch Calvinists settled in New York; the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians concentrated in New Jersey; the German Lutherans and those of Anabaptist traditions settled much of Pennsylvania. Maryland was originally predominantly Catholic, but even there Protestants were soon in the majority.<sup>28</sup>

Eavey points out that many of these early settlers throughout the young nation came as whole congregational units. What they all had in common was their commitment to educate their children in their Christian faith, and they established schools to that end. Furthermore, the original American colleges, including Harvard, William and Mary, Princeton, and Yale were founded to prepare young men as ministers of the gospel.

- One quite remarkable example in the history of Christian education is the Sunday school movement. Many readers may be surprised to learn that the roots this movement began through the efforts of laymen who had a burden for the great numbers of uneducated, un-churched children who lived in the lower class districts of large cities, such as London. One such individual was Robert Raikes, the editor of a newspaper in Gloucester, England. Moved with compassion for these neglected children, he hired people to gather them into groups one day a week—Sunday—for the express purpose of giving them a religious education. His and similar efforts met with such remarkable success that the Sunday school grew into a powerful evangelical movement throughout England, Europe, and the United States.<sup>29</sup>

In America, the Sunday school movement was largely rooted in a formal union of laymen with a burden to reach American youth who were being adversely affected in terms of their religious faith by the secular, public schools. This union was remarkable in its ability to cross denominational lines, focusing on teaching “the essential truths of our common faith, without reasonable offense to anyone touching matters of unessential importance.”<sup>30</sup> This non-sectarian movement had a profound influence

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 224-229.

<sup>30</sup> Edwin Wilbur Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement, 1780-1917, and the American Sunday-School Union, 1817-1917* (Philadelphia: The American Sunday-School Union, 1917), p. 80. Quotation from the Act of Incorporation, Section 2. Cited by C. B. Eavey, p. 235.

among the youth of America, even though initially opposed by many among the clergy of the various denominations. Because of its widespread success, the Sunday school concept was later assimilated into the various denominations, thus losing much of its non-sectarian flavor.

## **The Educational Precedent In History**

We can conclude from this summary overview that Christian education, in its various forms, was a key element at the heart of any dynamic movement of God's Spirit. *Spiritual vitality and effectiveness in evangelism is always characterized by an aggressive approach to teaching and instruction.* Indeed, education is at the heart of the Great Commission, and where it is aggressively pursued in dependence upon God's Spirit, the gospel is advanced with great effect. As theologian and philosopher Francis Schaeffer observed:

The Holy Spirit can do what He will, but the Bible does not separate His work from knowledge; nor does the work of the Holy Spirit remove our responsibility as parents, pastors, evangelists, missionaries or teachers.<sup>31</sup>

The spread of the gospel is accomplished largely by the power of the Holy Spirit working through men and women who are stepping out in obedience to the "Go, therefore..." of the Great Commission. And the nature of their effort is largely educational – teaching and instructing in the knowledge of Biblical truths fundamental to the Christian faith. As Christians have been obedient to this imperative from Christ, the gospel has prospered; however, as we shall see in the following section, when there is less than wholehearted and aggressive commitment to this educational imperative, there is a corresponding decline of spiritual life.

## **The Church's Abdication of Its Commission to Educate**

One of the common themes in the examples given above, as well as others not included in this paper, is the emphasis on the education of children and youth. Without exception, the forward moving church throughout its history recognized the strategic importance of the education of youth as the foundation for the church's on-going vitality and influence. We can think of the influence of Calvin's system of schools in Geneva and, in particular, his Academy of Geneva. Hundreds upon hundreds of Christian workers were produced from those who attended these schools, and their influence was felt throughout the world.

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<sup>31</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There* (Intervarsity Press; Downers Grove, Ill., 1968), p. 140.

Furthermore, Calvin's influence in the founding of systems of education helped bring about widespread social change. Not only were Christian workers multiplied, but the general citizenry were also educated in the Biblical value system. As already noted, the foundation of most of the western republics is rooted in this Reformation tradition and the education systems it produced. Likewise, the great missionary movements to the larger world have their roots in this Reformation base. The Reformation itself was fueled largely by the educational systems that rooted the general population in Biblical truth and prepared many of them to become dedicated Christian workers. Indeed, it is hard to overstate the strategic importance of education in the Reformation movement and its impact throughout the world.

Nevertheless, a shift began to take place throughout Europe and America that started an erosion of the Reformation foundations. Because of its relevance to our subject, we need to take a moment to outline the history of its development. We will concentrate especially on America, but with the understanding that what happened in America is mirrored in Europe.

A common theme among Reformation—and subsequent Evangelical—leaders was that a universal education should be provided for all children, regardless of class or gender. Such an education would be important not only for establishing future generations in Biblical truth (and thereby continuing to advance the gospel), but also to ensure good and stable governments by educating the general population to be contributing citizens rooted in the Christian worldview. Martin Luther observed:

Though there were no soul, nor heaven, nor hell, but only the civil government, would not this require good schools and learned men? . . . For the establishment of the best schools everywhere, both for boys and girls, this consideration is of itself sufficient, namely, that society, for the maintenance of civil order and the proper regulation of the household needs accomplished and well-trained men and women.<sup>32</sup>

Whether or not one agrees with their doctrine, we must understand that the mentality of many of the Reformers, including Luther, was not only to spread the gospel, but also the building of a society permeated by Christian values. Education was considered the key to building the base for such a society.

Because of the widespread Reformation influence in colonial America, the importance of education as a foundation for good government was reflected in the thinking of American civil leaders. And many agreed that the nature of such a universal education should be Protestant-based in order to produce citizens grounded in the Judeo-Christian worldview.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> F. V. N. Painter, *Luther on Education* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1928), pp. 194-196. Cited by C. B. Eavey, pp. 146-147.

<sup>33</sup> The contemporary interpretation by the Supreme Court of the First Amendment "Separation of Church and State" clause is probably not representative of the founding fathers' intent. Rather than the attempted separation of government from religion, many historians contend that the amendment was intended to

In the years following the Revolution, America began to experience rapid population growth as a result of the western territories being opened and scores of immigrants arriving from Europe to settle these vast spaces. Along with the expansion of its population, the nation grew in its diversity of nationalities, languages, religious backgrounds, and cultural heritages. Many in civic leadership recognized that a national, standardized system of education could be instrumental in helping to meld this increasingly diverse population into a new, unified nation.

Yet, the sectarian nature of American education was a cause for concern. For example, there was a strong Calvinistic bias throughout the New England states. Whereas the Puritan population had at one time largely shared a common Calvinistic heritage, the population became much more diverse with widespread immigration. Many people resented the Calvinistic dogmas that were at odds with their own religious traditions.

Rapid population growth and an increasing religious diversity were two of the primary factors behind a growing movement to establish a national, standardized system of education. The goals of such a system were geared to providing a universal education for all citizens, to bring a sense of national cohesiveness, and to produce the kind of educated citizenry on which a democracy depends for its survival. Furthermore, it was felt that such a system controlled by the government—rather than by various church groups—would minimize the problem of sectarianism in education.

Without taking the time to thoroughly outline the development of public education, we will examine the philosophy of several of the primary leaders of the early public education movement.

Horace Mann (1796-1858), is known as the Father of the Common Schools. More than any single individual, Mann is associated with the establishment of public education in America. A professing Christian, Mann was nevertheless concerned about the sectarian nature of many of the church-sponsored schools and their failure to accommodate the larger, increasingly diverse citizenry. Along with fellow educator James Carter, Mann was instrumental in working with the Massachusetts legislature in establishing the nation's first system of state-sponsored schools.

Many Christians opposed this move toward state-sponsored education, believing schools should remain under the purview of the parents and church. There were other believers, however, who viewed it as an important step in the right direction for the young nation. Mann and others in the movement advocated the continuation of Bible

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disallow any one sectarian religious group from controlling government, such as had been the case in England, where the Church of England was the dominant force in government. Many of the founding fathers were products of Reformation thought – or at least in agreement with basic Reformation values – and the idea of divorcing religion en masse from government would probably have been foreign to their thinking.

teaching and general religious instruction throughout the public system. Thus, many Christians did not see the establishment of such schools as a threat to their faith. Christianity was considered the consensus faith in America, and there was every intention of its continuing to be freely propagated in the new public schools. There was also the promise that public education would be far less sectarian in nature than the parochial schools, and would therefore represent the interests of the larger population. And such was the case with much of public education through its early history.

However, contained in the seeds of this movement were other agendas not so readily apparent. For example, Mann believed that “[s]ociety, in its collective capacity, is a real, not a nominal sponsor and god-father for all its children.”<sup>34</sup> This belief opened the door to the idea that the state had as great a responsibility for the child—if not more—than did the parents and the church. Furthermore, education was designed to provide not only a general education—the three Rs—but also the formation of the whole child in mind, body and spirit. Mann saw this as primarily the state’s responsibility, with “the Sabbath school, the pulpit, and so forth. . . as . . . cooperative or auxiliary institutions.”<sup>35</sup> In other words, what had previously been the sole purview of the parents and the church, Mann viewed as primarily the responsibility of the state. In his eyes, parents and the church were relegated to a secondary sphere of influence.

This point was not missed by Mann’s opponents, who accused him of basing his public school ideas on the European models, especially the Prussian schools, which were viewed as tools of the state designed to mold and condition the citizenry to serve those in power in the government. This accusation carried significant weight because of Mann’s association with James Carter, who shared leadership with Mann in the public education movement in Massachusetts. Carter believed strongly in the establishment of teacher training institutes which would create a cadre of instructors to serve as the conditioning agents of the state. Concerning the establishment of such institutes, Carter wrote,

An institution for the education of teachers. . . would form. . . a very important part of the free school system. It would be, moreover, precisely that portion of the system, which should be under the direction of the state. . . . Because we should thus relieve the clergy of an invidious task, and ensure to the public competent teachers, if such could be found and prepared. An institution for this purpose would become by its influence on society, and particularly on the young, an engine to sway the public sentiment, the public morals, and the public religion, more powerful than any other in the possession of government.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Life and Works of Horace Mann*, Vol. II. (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), p. 96, Lecture II, 1838,

“Special Preparation a Prerequisite to Teaching.”

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159, Report for 1847, 11<sup>th</sup> Report.

<sup>36</sup> James G. Carter, *Essays upon Popular Education*, Containing a Particular Examination of the Schools of Massachusetts, and An Outline of the Institution for the Education of Teachers (Boston: Bowles and Dearborn, 1826), p. 49. This reference cited in Rousas Rushdoony’s *The Messianic Character of American Education*, (The Craig Press: Nutley, NJ., 1979), p. 2.

Carter, with Mann at his side, saw the training and control of teachers as a direct function of the state with the goal of “swaying” the public sentiment in all areas. In other words, both Carter and Mann viewed education largely as a conditioning agent of the state and, in the above quotation, Carter pointedly speaks of removing the church – in the form of the clergy – from any direct responsibility for education. He also refers to the idea of *public religion* and hints at the concept of such religion being manipulated by the state. One might ask how those of the pre-Reformation and Reformation periods listed in the last section would have felt about this transfer of responsibility for the education of youth from the church to the state!

One other aspect of Mann’s philosophy bears mentioning. Even though a professing Christian, Mann viewed Christianity much as did the philosopher Kant. For Kant, Christianity had value, not because it was necessarily true, but because it provided a common belief system and a set of moral, ethical standards by which society could operate in a unified, orderly manner. Kant suggested that without such a common belief system, society would deteriorate into a state of anarchy. (Whether or not Christianity was actually “true” was of secondary importance for Kant.)

In the same vein, Mann believed Christianity should be propagated in the public schools because of its utilitarian value. Mann believed in the perfectibility of man and society. He saw Christianity as a practical means to move society toward this utopian ideal. However, his emphasis on Christianity was not because he believed it to be objectively true, but because he felt it worked for the best interests of society in a utilitarian context.<sup>37</sup> It follows that if the primary criterion for truth is its utilitarian value, then what works best at one point may be in danger of being replaced by something else that works better in different times and in different circumstances. And this is precisely what happened in the evolution of the public school movement.

As public education became established, the Christian belief system began to give way to a new emphasis of secularism—the view that religious considerations should be removed from the public schools. The heart of this shift from Christianity to secularism is succinctly stated by humanist John Dewey, known as the Father of Progressive Education and a signer of the first *Humanist Manifesto*:

I cannot understand how any realization of the democratic ideal as a vital moral and spiritual ideal in human affairs is possible without surrender of the conception of the basic division to which supernatural Christianity is committed.<sup>38</sup>

The “division to which supernatural Christianity is committed” is Dewey’s reference to the Christian understanding of transcendent truth and reality. He felt the imposition of exclusively Christian doctrines in the public school was harmful to the social development of a nation with such a diversity of backgrounds and beliefs as

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<sup>37</sup> Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Messianic Character of American Education*, (The Craig Press: Nutley, NJ, 1979), p. 20.

<sup>38</sup> John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 1934), p. 84.

represented by the American population. According to Dewey, education should be characterized by a religious neutrality which focused, instead, on secular values as determined by the state and those who controlled it. Yet, in what seems a contradiction of terms, he viewed humanism as the new American religion:

Here (in secular humanism) are all the elements for a religious faith that shall not be confined to sect, class, or race. Such a faith has always been implicitly the common faith of mankind. It remains to make it explicit and militant.<sup>39</sup>

While Dewey spoke in the terminology of religious faith (“the common faith”), his words were not to be confused with Christianity. He viewed secularism as the militant new wave to bring in a new world order. And he saw public education as the vehicle by which to aggressively drive this social change, stating, “. . . the teacher always is the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God.”<sup>40</sup> In other words, Dewey viewed public education as the new American church and educators as its priests and prophets.

One does not need a great deal of discernment to see the secularist influences represented by Mann, Carter and Dewey, or to understand their aggressive plan to proselytize the youth of America in their “new” faith and social agenda. Those familiar with contemporary public education philosophy can find abundant evidence of the pervasive influence of these three men and other educational leaders who shared their views.

As these secularist forces gained momentum in the nineteenth century, various Christians began to sound the alarm. One of the more eloquent voices to speak out on this important issue was Princeton theologian A. A. Hodge:

I am as sure as I am of Christ’s reign that a comprehensive and centralized system of national education, separated from religion, as is now commonly proposed, will prove the most appalling enginery for the propagation of anti-Christian and atheistic unbelief, which this sin-rent world has ever seen.<sup>41</sup>

Hodge recognized the potential for state-controlled education to move society from a Christian foundation to one of secularism. He feared that Christian religious influence was to be exorcised and religious “neutrality” established. He further observed:

The tendency is to hold that this system must be altogether secular. The atheistic doctrine is gaining currency, even among professed Christians

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>40</sup> John Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed* (The Progressive Education Association : Washington, D. C.; 1897, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 1929), p. 17.

<sup>41</sup> A. A. Hodge, *Popular Lectures on Theological Themes*, (Presbyterian Board of Publications; Philadelphia, 1887), p. 283.

and even among some bewildered Christian ministers, that an education provided by the common government should be entirely emptied of all religious character. . . It is self evident that on this scheme, if it is consistently and persistently carried out in all parts of the country, the United States system of national, popular education will be the most efficient and wide instrument for the propagation of Atheism which the world has ever seen.<sup>42</sup>

Considering that these words were published in 1887, Hodge demonstrated remarkable insight in predicting the impact of a public system of education removed from any singular religious influence. That prediction perfectly describes the state of contemporary American public education. Perhaps he was thinking of the statement made by Martin Luther as quoted earlier in this paper:

I am very much afraid that schools will prove to be the great gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not increasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt.<sup>43</sup>

These are severe pronouncements by Hodge and Luther. Let us consider some of the evidences that validate the prescient warnings of both men.

### **The Impact of Secular Education in Contemporary Culture**

We have summarized the retreat of the church from an aggressive and predominant role in the education of American youth and the subsequent emergence of secularism as the primary influence in public education. Francis Schaeffer made the following observation concerning the impact of secularism:

I find that everywhere I go – both in the United States and other countries – children of Christians are being lost to historic Christianity. This is happening not only in small groups in small geographic areas but everywhere.... We have left the next generation naked in the face of the twentieth century thought by which they are surrounded.<sup>44</sup>

If these words accurately depict the situation, they would suggest that there is a significant failure within the church to fulfill the Great Commission among its own youth. Is there any reasonable basis by which to confirm the accuracy of Schaeffer's statement?

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 280.

<sup>43</sup> *What Luther Says*, Compiled by Ewald M. Plass (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, © 1959), p. 449.

<sup>44</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There* (Intervarsity Press; Downers Grove, IL, 1968), p. 139-140.

Let us consider a few observations about contemporary society which illumine this increasing trend toward secularism:

- Among people of retirement age, more than half who responded to a *USA Today* opinion poll indicated belief in objective, absolute standards of moral right and wrong. However, four out of five (eighty percent) of eighteen to thirty-five year olds believe there is “no unchanging ethical standard of right and wrong.”<sup>45</sup> In just two to three generations, we see a remarkable shift of values.
- According to the U. S. Census Bureau report released May 15, 2001, households headed by unmarried partners increased by approximately seventy-two percent during the 1990s. Nuclear families (the family unit consisting of father, mother, and children) dropped below twenty-five percent of total households. One third of all babies were born to unmarried women compared to 3.8 percent in 1940.<sup>46</sup>
- According to George Barna, seventy percent of American teenagers believe there is no such thing as absolute truth. Furthermore, these same teenagers do not view contradicting truth claims as problematic. In their view, contradiction is not to be equated with right versus wrong, or with truth and error. If there is no absolute truth, then all truth claims, even those that contradict, can be equally valid.
- Furthermore, seventy-two percent of teens believe the basis for determining what is ethical is whether or not it works for one personally. The idea of an absolute ethical standard is foreign to their thinking.<sup>47</sup>

The evangelical community has not been immune to this erosion of traditional values:

- Pollster George Barna has concluded that only thirty-two percent of adults who claim to be born-again believe in the concept of moral absolutes.<sup>48</sup> This is significant because the Christian church has traditionally been the bastion of absolute truth; yet, less than half of the adult evangelical community now professes such a belief.
- The figure is even lower for born-again teens. Barna concludes that only nine percent of this group believes in moral absolutes.<sup>49</sup> This represents a difference of twenty-one percent between the born-again adults noted above and the born-again teen population. If this figure is accurate, it reflects a profound incursion of

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<sup>45</sup> George Barna, “Americans Are Most Likely to Base Truth on Feelings” (Barna Research Online; [www.barna.org](http://www.barna.org); February 12, 2002).

<sup>46</sup> James Dobson, *Family News from Dr. James Dobson*, July 2001 newsletter (Focus on the Family; Colorado Springs, Co.).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> George Barna, *Americans Are Most Likely to Base Truth on Feelings* (Barna Research Online; [www.barna.org](http://www.barna.org); February 12, 2002)

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

secularist values into the evangelical youth culture over a period of just one generation. This pattern portends a critical challenge for the future viability of the church.

- Eighty-four percent of first year Christian college students cannot intelligently defend or explain their beliefs.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps this is why, according to one survey done with UCLA students, it was found that over fifty percent of incoming freshmen who professed faith in Jesus Christ had lost that faith by the time they became college seniors.<sup>51</sup>

Concerning the profound shift of values in our society, Christian apologist and youth specialist Josh McDowell observed:

. . . the society around you is undergoing what may be the fastest, most ominous cultural change in human history, something author Dennis McCallum calls ‘a cultural metamorphosis, transforming every area of everyday life as it spreads through education, movies, television, and other media.’ It is a change so vast that its implications are mind-boggling. Most frightening of all is that most Christians seem to be missing it.<sup>52</sup>

What is curious and troubling, as McDowell observes, is that the larger Christian community seems either oblivious or indifferent to the devastating impact of secular culture upon Christian youth. There appears to be in the Christian community a naïve affinity with secular institutions, especially the public school, when it is these very institutions that are at the center of propagating anti-Christian values. As pointed out by A. A. Hodge in 1887, the very leaders within the church who should be providing decisive leadership in standing against the trends toward secularism are “bewildered”<sup>53</sup> and seemingly confused in their accommodation of the public school system. Such an attempt at accommodation with the world certainly did not seem part of Jesus’ approach to things! His was a more radical position of “He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.”<sup>54</sup> Those in the evangelical community who ignore this maxim do so at great cost to their youth.

But for those who take literally the teachings of Christ, there should be no reason for misunderstanding the impact of secular institutions on Christian youth. Hodge’s prescient warning rings true as we look back over the last one hundred plus years and see the truth of his admonition that a secular system of public education would result in

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<sup>50</sup> Ted Olson, “Many College Students Do Not Probe Beliefs,” *Christianity Today* 41, no. 2 (February 3, 1997), 88.

<sup>51</sup> Gary Lyle Railsback, “An Exploratory Study of the Religiosity and Related Outcomes Among College Students”; Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles; 1994. Cited by Summit Ministries, *Truth & Consequences*, A Summit Ministries Newsletter; 2002 - #1 (October). [www.summit.org](http://www.summit.org).

<sup>52</sup> Josh McDowell, *The New Tolerance* (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.; Wheaton, IL, ©1998), p. 9.

McDowell quotes McCallum from *The Death of Truth* (Bethany House; Minneapolis, MN, 1996) p. 12.

<sup>53</sup> A. A. Hodge, *Popular Lectures on Theological Themes*, (Presbyterian Board of Publications; Philadelphia, 1887), p. 283.

<sup>54</sup> Matthew 12:30.

profound, anti-Christian social change. The eminent Christian apologist C. S. Lewis recognized what was taking place in western culture and addressed it in what he considered one of his most important works: the *Abolition of Man*. He chose this title because he perceived the threat posed by the “new” educational theories which focused on social conditioning rather than on the traditional emphasis of teaching knowledge, values and critical thinking skills:

. . . the difference between the old and the new education will be an important one. Where the old initiated, the new merely ‘conditions.’ The old dealt with its pupils as grown birds deal with young birds when they teach them to fly: the new deals with them more as the poultry-keeper deals with young birds – making them thus or thus for purposes of which the young birds know nothing. In a word, the old was a kind of propagation – men transmitting manhood to men: the new is merely propaganda.<sup>55</sup>

Lewis understood that this *new*, secular education deliberately disconnected its students from the traditional values of western culture as rooted in Christianity and replaced them with a new relativism as determined by an elite group of conditioners (Dewey’s high priests of education!). Were he alive today, Lewis probably would not be surprised at the dramatic social change reflected in the above statistics. Nor would he be surprised at the aggressive nature of the secularist educators. Richard Rorty, a popular spokesman for post-modern, secular culture, writes:

The fundamentalist parents [i.e., Christians] of our fundamentalist students think that the entire “American liberal establishment” is engaged in a conspiracy. These parents have a point. When we American college teachers encounter religious fundamentalists, we do not consider the possibility of reformulating our own practices of justification so as to give more weight to the authority of the Christian scriptures. Instead, we do our best to convince these students of the benefits of secularization. Rather, I think these students are lucky to find themselves under the benevolent Herrschaft [power and control] of people like me, and to have escaped the grip of their frightening, vicious, dangerous parents.<sup>56</sup>

Considering the growing aggressiveness of secularism, coupled with the inadequate founding of Christian young people in the fundamentals of their faith, the high casualty rate among evangelical youth should not surprise the Christian community. As Francis Schaeffer observed,

It is unreasonable to expect people of the next generation at any age to continue in the historic Christian position unless they are helped to see

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<sup>55</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (Broadman and Holman Publishers; Nashville, TN, © 1944 by MacMillan; First Touchstone Edition 1996), p. 34.

<sup>56</sup> Robert B. Brandon, ed., *Rorty and His Critics* (Blackwell Publishers, Malden, MA., 2000), pp 21-22.

where arguments and connotations brought against Christianity and against them by their generation are fallacious.<sup>57</sup>

What, then, should be the response of the Christian community to the influences of secularism, especially as it affects our children?

### **The Great Commission Revisited**

There must be a call to arms and a renewed emphasis on the educational imperative of the Great Commission and its application to the discipleship of all segments of the church – *especially its youth* – if the church is to maintain its vibrancy and influence in culture. C. B. Eavey's observation, as quoted previously, makes a simple but profound point:

So long as the church continued this practice of teaching the Bible it thrived, but when it neglected its teaching function it declined in spiritual life.<sup>58</sup>

The reader is certainly aware at this point that a seemingly inordinate portion of this paper has been focused on the negative influence of public education on Christian youth. It would appear at first glance that the author has deviated from the central theme of The Great Commission and its wider application. However, as Hodge, Wesley, Schaeffer and others observed in their writings, the strategic target in this battle between secularism and Christianity is the next generation. Understanding why we find ourselves where we do is an important part of developing an effective strategy to counter these trends. The effectiveness of the church in winning its youth will certainly prove to be one of the most important spiritual battles of the twenty-first century.

Unfortunately, much of contemporary Christian leadership seems to have been lulled into a curious position of accommodation with secularism, especially when it comes to the relationship of the church to public education. There is a sense of wanting to remain in the public system as salt and light in order to maintain a Christian witness and influence. However, experience seems to show that a significant percentage of church youth are unable to maintain their Christian faith in the face of increasingly militant secularism. As their Christian presuppositions are called into question, Christian youth lose their basis for belief because of their shallow understanding of the intellectual basis of Christianity.

Remember that we are talking about children and youth who are in their developmental stages of forming their own belief system. Throughout the history of the church, the education of youth has been viewed as a time of nurturing and training. The idea of placing such tender shoots under the care of secularists during their formative years would have been a repugnant practice to such a Reformation giant as Luther. What will it take for the larger body of evangelical leadership and Christian parents to awaken

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<sup>57</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There* (Intervarsity Press; Downers Grove, ILL, 1968), p. 139.

<sup>58</sup> C. B. Eavey, *History of Christian Education*, (Moody Press, Chicago, ILL, 1971), p. 189.

to the inherent contradiction of placing the children and youth of the church under the tutelage of secularists? How did the church drift so far away from its traditional role in educating its youth? What can explain the curious silence of many evangelical pastors and leaders when it comes to the secular influence of public education? What degree of spiritual loss and devastation will it take before the evangelical community awakens to its plight?

Perhaps a primary reason for the strange accommodation by the church to public education is the fact that it started out as a benign movement that maintained a strong Christian influence in its early history. It also promised a less sectarian emphasis that appealed to the larger and more diverse population. However, as the Christian influence waned and that of secularism grew, the Christian population was gradually desensitized and accepted public education as the norm (how quickly we forget our traditions of Christian education!).

Another dynamic in the church's accommodation of public education is its convenience. Those who have chosen to home school or to sponsor Christian schools understand their great cost in both human and material resources. A tax supported public education certainly is appealing in many respects. But, sadly, what is packaged in the guise of "free education" has come at great cost to the Christian community.

As secularism becomes increasingly militant and dominant in the public arena, a growing segment of the Christian community seems to be awakening to the threat. Eminent talk-show host and psychologist James Dobson, issued a call not long ago for Christian parents to seriously consider educational alternatives to public education.<sup>59</sup> In recent years, best-selling author Dr. Laura Schlessinger has begun urging Christian parents to send their children to non-public schools or to home school them.<sup>60</sup> Other leaders and organizations are echoing the call for Christian parents to exit public education in order to place their children in a Christian educational environment.<sup>61</sup> Respected Christian philosopher J. P. Moreland suggests that if the church is to be successful in winning its youth, it will do so only through an aggressive strategy of Christian education in the form of the Christian school supported by the church at large.<sup>62</sup>

This may seem a radical departure from the status quo. After all, Jesus did indicate to his disciples that they must remain in the world.<sup>63</sup> But all such sayings of Christ must be qualified in the context of the whole of Biblical teaching. Paul stated to the Corinthians that the nature of his ministry was to destroy "speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God...taking every thought captive to the

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<sup>59</sup> James Dobson, "Pulling Kids from Public Schools," a Focus on the Family broadcast by James Dobson featuring special guest Dick Carpenter; first broadcast in July, 2002. For more information access [www.family.org](http://www.family.org).

<sup>60</sup> Dr. Laura Schlessinger, *Time for Public Schools to Throw in the Towel*, (The Baptist Banner; Alexandria, VA, April 2003), pp 15, 26.

<sup>61</sup> The Exodus Mandate Project, [www.exodusmandate.org](http://www.exodusmandate.org)

<sup>62</sup>

<sup>63</sup> John 17:11-18.

obedience of Christ.”<sup>64</sup> In this same vein, he exhorted the Colossians to “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.”<sup>65</sup>

Paul and the other early apostles understood that the key to establishing a viable church was through the educational imperative of The Great Commission. In its subsequent history, the church prospered where this Great Commission was earnestly practiced, as shown in the earlier sections. But as the church has retreated from its commitment to maintaining this priority—especially with its youth—its vitality and influence has waned.

What may seem radical to some today would be viewed as the norm by those individuals in history who paid the price and saw the fruit of their obedience to the educational imperative of the Great Commission. *Our own generation’s contribution to the posterity of the church will in large part be a function of how radically committed we are in obeying this fundamental command of Christ.* As the realization sinks in that much of the Christian community has bought into the anti-Biblical, public school model of secularism, one must ask whether or not the Christian community will be willing to act decisively in reestablishing the traditions of Christian education.

The Christian community must understand that much is at stake. As Francis Schaeffer so clearly stated,

The Holy Spirit can do what He will, but the Bible does not separate His work from knowledge nor does the work of the Holy Spirit remove our responsibility as parents, pastors, evangelists, missionaries or teachers.<sup>66</sup>

By God’s grace, may the church understand that no commitment to this priority can be too radical, no cost too great, in fulfilling the educational mandate given by Jesus in His last command to His followers:

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:5-6.

<sup>65</sup> Colossians 2:8.

<sup>66</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who is There* (Intervarsity Press; Downers Grove, Ill., 1968), p. 140.

<sup>67</sup> Matthew 28:19-20.