

# The Reformed Analysis

"For the Commandment is a lamp; and the Law is light; and reproofs and instruction are a way of life."  
Proverbs 6:23

An Analysis Newsletter for the Serious Christian Educator  
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## Historical Education Considerations

*Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God:*

*And thou shalt **teach** them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.* (Exodus 18:19-20 AV)

Since education establishes the direction and personality of the culture, it becomes a major force in society. Control education, and you essentially control the society. This was precisely Adolph Hitler's strategy. In fact, the control of the institution of education by wicked men has always led to the tyrannical destruction of those under its control.

*"This new Reich will give its youth to no one, but will itself take youth and give to youth its own education and its own upbringing."* Adolph Hitler May 1st, 1937

Hitler's plan however was not novel. It had been tried and proven to be true throughout all ages.

From the Word of God through Moses, to the Founding Fathers of this American Republic, education has always been *the* most powerful tool of all generations.

*"Let...children...be carefully instructed in the principles and obligations of the Christian religion. This is the most essential part of education."* Benjamin Rush March 1787

Beneficial education was never intended to be divorced from the Religion of Christianity. In the colonies, as well as in Europe before them, the principles of the Christian faith were firmly established as the foundation of education. It is only in the last 50 -75 years that education has undergone a decaying transformation.

The Founders were convinced that education was the process by which one generation transmits to the next generation the information necessary for success. If the American system of government was to remain free and profitable, then morality and the principles of the Christian faith must be thoroughly taught in the schools. This was to be the foundation of the American Republic and the security of the nation for all time.

It is of no great surprise that the involvement of the Founders, in the process of education, was broad and diverse. As David Barton comments in his *Wall Builder's* book on Founding Father and signer of the Declaration of Independence, *Benjamin Rush*,

*" Some [Founding Fathers] authored textbooks to transmit the facts, values, and principles that they believed would keep America strong (e.g. Noah Webster and Jedidiah Morse). Others helped establish educational centers (e.g. Benjamin Franklin and the University of Pennsylvania, Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia, Abraham Baldwin and the University of Georgia). Still others worked on education policy and legislation (e.g. George Washington and Rufus King). Dr. Rush was one who participated in all of these activities..."*  
[www.wallbuilders.com](http://www.wallbuilders.com)

It was the express goal and purpose of the American Founding Fathers to blend the Christian principles of faith and life with all other academia. Their end desire was to establish and strengthen a steadfast and pro-active Christian world-view in each of the American children who they knew would govern the nation in the future.

### THE WICKED USE OF EDUCATION

Education can be either used for good or it can be used for evil. We find this painfully true in the realm of science and technology. While scientific research gathers information on harmful viruses and bacteria in order to perfect valuable cures, it is also used to develop biochemical weapons of mass destruction. Clearly the same science is used for two distinct technological purposes, medicine and warfare. Although the science is the same, the application is different.

The process of education can also be turned into wickedness by a "*misuse*" or "*perversion*" of education. This was Hitler's method. Either by an **omission** of truth or by an **entire perversion** of truth, Hitler was able to carefully control and determine the culture of Germany and the German people in the early 1930's.

Dr. Benjamin Rush, prophetically observed that the removal and or perversion of the Holy Scriptures

from the education process brings about a quick demise of society by creating savages out of men.

*"Without the restraints of [true] religion and [true] social worship, men become savages much sooner than savages become civilized..."* March 1789

### UNDEFILED EDUCATION

When we refer to "education" in general, we often mean the public school system. Yet, this may be too much of an over-generalization. Education itself is the *process of teaching*. Wicked education, as well as *mis-education* can be taught anywhere. It does not only exist in the statist school institution.

Since the family is both the fundamental and primary institution for education, much wicked teaching and mis-education often begins there. If the direct influence of Biblical precepts are not present, then ignorance, arrogance, hatred, bitterness, envy, bigotry, sloth and irresponsibility are usually introduced and cultivated at home. There is little doubt that the family is principally responsible for the proper education of the children.

Dr. Benjamin Rush also comments on the family:

*"Mothers are the most important members of civil society... Mothers and schoolmasters plant the seeds of good and evil which exist in our world. Its reformation must therefore be begun in nurseries and in schools. Government [discipline and oversight] in a family is like an electric rod to a house. Where it is wanting, a family is exposed to the attacks of every folly and vice that comes within the sphere of its attraction."*

Yet, the debate continues as to what constitutes undefiled education? What makes education good or bad? Perhaps there are those who do not see the question as moral in scope, but rather academic, as if to define learning as a mere set of facts and figures, without attaching moral judgment.

### THE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Initially we must address the question of education by answering the six considerations of *Who, What, Where, When, How, and Why*. Contrary to modern belief, *Who* is teaching is as important as *What* is being taught. Personal worldviews and moral beliefs will always be conveyed by the educator. Furthermore, the atmosphere in which it is taught (*the Where*) is as important as *When* it is introduced and *How* it is administered. That leaves us with the all important question of the *Why*. *Why* should we labor to teach true and undefiled education, and *why* is it necessary for the well-being of our children, our posterity and our nation?

### THE CHARACTER OF THE INSTRUCTOR

The idea of "compartmentalization" of a person's character apart from his office is an oxymoron. Character will always influence performance. A person's belief structure is the root from which all his or her ideas and observations stem. If an educator drinks from the well of immorality and is immoral in character, immorality will remain the underpinning factor in his delivery of instruction. All lessons, therefore, will be infected with immorality.

Upon the death of educator William H. McGuffey, his professional peers honored him with these words:

*"In the death of William H. McGuffey, late Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Virginia, the Association feels that they have lost one of the great lights of the profession...in offices as teacher of common schools, college professor and college president, and as author of text books; his almost unequalled industry; his power in the lecture room; his influence upon his pupils and community; his care for the public interests of education; his lofty devotion to duty; **his conscientious Christian character** - all these have made him one of the noblest ornaments of our profession in this age, and entitled to the grateful remembrance of this Association and of the teachers of America."*

McGuffey, of the eclectic literary series *The McGuffey Reader*, exemplified the need for educators to be of an upright and honorable character, if they were to be a positive effect upon the student. Benjamin Franklin agreed:

*"History will also afford the frequent opportunities of showing the necessity of a public religion, from its usefulness to the public; **the advantage of a religious character among private persons**; the mischief of superstition, and the excellency of the Christian religion above all others, ancient or modern."*

The virtues of a Christian character were essential to a Godly and proper education. They still are. It was this mind-set which dominated all educational facilities, both public and private.

The President of Princeton University, Founding Father and signer of the Declaration of Independence, Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon, further qualified the scope of Christian character by equating it entirely with the Holy Scriptures. For him, there was no other Christian character other than a character that conforms with the sacred Scriptures. He stated:

*"The character of a Christian must be taken from Holy Scriptures...the unerring standard."*

It is obvious that even in those days there were many that professed to be moral and Christ centered, yet their character did not measure up.

### **TODAY IT DOESN'T SEEM TO MATTER**

Today's standards of exactly WHO teaches our children has disintegrated and taken a back seat to convenience. Especially among professing Christian parents, the character of the educator is secondary to the proficiency of their instructional skills. Yet, this was not the rule during the early colonial period and post war independence of America. It certainly was not the norm, nor would it ever be tolerated by the founding settlers and Puritans of the American Republic. Such an idea was unthinkable. Today it is as common as grass.

### **SAMUEL DAVIES**

Samuel Davies (1723 – 1746) was among the great spiritual leaders of our heritage. Born in Pennsylvania, he was converted at the young age of 15 and immediately began an active life in the promotion of the Kingdom of Heaven. A protégé of the great English Preacher William Robinson, Davies was swept into the period of the Great Awakening of the 1700's.

If there was any single influence which led the American colonies to declare their independence from tyrannical Britain, it was the Great Awakening of the mid 1700's. During this period, Davies traveled throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia imprinting the practical truths of the Christian faith on the people of the region. As Iain H. Murray stated in his *Revival and Revivalism*, Samuel Davis' accomplishments "*cast a shadow far beyond his own day.*" He was more practical than historical, yet of great and far reaching importance.

### **THE COLLEGE AT PRINCETON**

In 1753 the College Of New Jersey at Princeton was merely in its infancy with very little financing to support it. It had been established in 1746 where Jonathan Dickinson was appointed President. Historically at this time, most monies went to ecclesiastic support so it wasn't that long before difficulties arose for the College. In September of 1747, Dickinson died and the fate of the college was uncertain.

It was in 1752 that Davies was singled out by the Presbyterian Synod of New York to consider New Jersey College. Davies and Gilbert Tennent made a voyage to Europe to seek the necessary funding for the College. Davies was convinced that ecclesiastic learning needed to be blended with practical learning, which he called "*advanced learning.*"

Advanced learning was simply the *application* of various sciences to life by a Christian World view. This was the essence of practical Christianity. Like Yale and Harvard, Princeton would be established as a College of Christ for the serious study of the Holy Scriptures. Its mission statement was to "*establish young men in God's Holy Word to become a useful ornament to society.*" Their motto was "*Cursed be all learning that is contrary to the cross of Christ.*"

With the assistance of men like George Whitefield, John Gill, John and Charles Wesley (despite their differences in Theology) and a host of others, Princeton was on its way with its new president Aaron Burr.

Burr, however, died, leaving the task to Samuel Davies. Sadly, Davies died only after eighteen months as President at Princeton on February 4th, 1761, at the age of thirty-seven.

The establishment of Princeton and Universities like it raise a significant question. If the promotion and application of Christian truth was vehemently taught and encouraged, then why is there such a shift in today's educational institutions?

Davies' accomplishments are significant. He, along with countless others, prove beyond all doubt that Christian principles were foundational to all learning.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INSTRUCTOR**

The character of the instructor is of utmost importance. In the case of the American Universities of Harvard, Yale and Princeton, the administration and educational staff were all God-fearing, Bible believing Christians. This was the safeguard against all immorality and anti-Christian teaching. It was also the safeguard of the nation and its prosperity. It was commonly understood that if the instructors were immoral and Godless, the instruction would be similar. It would then follow that the nation would tailspin into the utmost depravity.

Benjamin Franklin Morris stated,

*"This is a Christian nation, first in name, and secondly because of the many and mighty elements of a pure Christianity which have given it character and shaped its destiny from the beginning. It is pre-eminently the land of the Bible, of the Christian Church, and of the Christian Sabbath....The chief security and glory of the United States of America has been, is now, and will be forever, the prevalence and domination of the Christian Faith."*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CURRICULUM

Obviously, the curriculum is crucial to proper education. Truth and justice must be uppermost in all educational programs. Noah Webster stated that education was not only a system of instruction for the sciences and language, but it also was intimate with moral behavior and Biblical virtues.

EDUCATION, n. [L. *educatio*.] *The bringing up, as of a child, instruction; formation of manners. Education comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations. To give children a good education in manners, arts and science, is important; to give them a religious education is indispensable; and an immense responsibility rests on parents and guardians who neglect these duties.* (Webster's Dictionary 1828)

Webster not only singles out the Christian religion as crucial for proper instruction, he also lays the responsibility for teaching at the foot of every parent.

Although all curriculum for proper education should be rooted in Scriptural precepts, it is in the *home* where these precepts are to be rigorously taught. The sterile atmosphere of governmental school halls are not conducive arenas for instruction, and cannot compare to the warmth and security of the home, where education was first Divinely institutionalized. It is in the home that true education will flourish.

## THE EARLY YEARS OF INSTRUCTION

Modern educators vehemently insist on the need to bring the child under the yoke of the statist school system at a very young age. Like Hitler of the 1930's, these "educators" go out of their way to convince the parents that their offspring needs early schooling if they are to achieve.

It seems as if five years of age is not soon enough. Perhaps four or even three years old is best. The sooner the child is taken from the security of the home, the sooner he or she can be re-programmed by statist curricula.

It is never too early to begin the true, good and Godly education of a youngster. In fact, the young mind and heart is wonderfully ripe for instruction. It is like giant sponge ready to receive and digest every morsel of information.

It cannot be over emphasized that a Godly, home-based education program must be established early and jealously maintained if the child is to prosper and be well equipped for life. This is the glory of the Christian home.

In contemplating America's youth, Benjamin Franklin stated:

*"I think with you, that nothing is of more importance for the public weal, than to **form and train up youth in wisdom and virtue**....I think also, general virtue is more probably to be expected and obtained from the education of youth, than from the exhortation of adult persons; bad habits and vices of the mind being, like diseases of the body, more easily prevented than cured."*

Samuel Adams concurred with Franklin.

*"Let divines and philosophers, statesmen and patriots, unite their endeavors to renovate the age, by impressing the minds of men with the importance of educating their little boys and girls, **of inculcating in the minds of youth the fear and love of the Deity and universal philanthropy, and, in subordination to these great principles, the love of their country; of instructing them in the art of self-government without which they never can act a wise part in the government of societies, great or small; in short, of leading them in the study and practice of the exalted virtues of the Christian system.**"*

Noah Webster added:

*"Discipline our youth in early life in sound maxims of moral, political, and religious duties."*

On November 5th, 1775 in a letter to her friend Mercy Warren, Abigail Adams stated:

*"[A] true patriot must be a religious man. [H]e who neglects his duty to his Maker, may well be expected to be deficient and insincere in his duty towards the public."*

American history confirms that Christian principles were to be instilled and strengthened early in life. The early Biblical teaching of children for the prosperity of the nation and the culture is essential.

As the Scripture declares,

*"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22.6*

**RA**

**The Reformed Analysis is written by Pastor Paul Michael Raymond of the Reformed Bible Church**

c/o PO Box 2397 Appomattox VA. 24522

www.hisglory.com e-mail: pmraymond@earthlink.net

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