

# Our Children's Education: A Covenant Necessity (3)

## III. The Evils of Public Education

If there is anything more responsible for the spiritual decline in our midst, I rank the public education of our covenant children as chief. The public education system has drowned our children in its seas of evil, and choked them with every sin imaginable. Untold damage has been inflicted upon them since the day they started school. The cause of God's covenant suffers tremendously as a result of the great evils in the system.

Let it not be mistaken that there is anything evil about education per se. Education is the necessary means of developing a covenant child into a spiritually mature and socially responsible adult. Indeed Scripture insists on educating our covenant seed. Train up a child in the way he should go, says the Preacher, and when he is old, he will not depart from it ([Prov. 22:6](#)).

As much as the public education in Singapore has reaped many benefits for our children, desperate evils exist within the system. So subtle yet powerful are these evils that they threaten to extinguish the flame of religion in our covenant seed. These evils are the deadly instruments of the devil, the roaring lion that seeks to devour our covenant young. They deserve not only to be exposed, but also due examination and condemnation in the light of holy Scripture. God's Word must be our guiding light in the sphere of a sinful public education our children live in today.

Public education is essentially wrong on four grounds. Scripture provides abundant evidence against these evils and has many things to say about them.

1. The Educator
2. The Content of Public Education
3. The Public School Environment
4. The Goal of Public Education

### 1. The Educator

The moment we enroll our covenant children into public schools, we are entrusting their education to the government. We entrust their upbringing to the government. We

allow the government to shape their minds. We allow the government to construe their perspectives in life and their worldview. We allow the government, ultimately, to construct their characters.

God's Word is extremely clear that this is wrong. The education of covenant seed belongs solely to the responsibility of covenant parents. A clear teaching of this is found in [Deut. 6:4-9](#):

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Thus we see that the education of covenant children is the full-time responsibility of parents. This responsibility is exclusively theirs. And the one goal of such an education is the love of Jehovah.

Rev. Ronald Hanko is incisive on this point:

This calling does NOT belong to the civil government, but to parents. Search the Scriptures and you will not find even one passage that suggests that the civil government has any calling to instruct the children (Christian Education, <http://www.cprf.co.uk/pamphlets/christianeducation.htm>).

Commenting on the duty of covenant parents in child rearing, Prof. David Engelsma writes:

On the one hand, this instruction of their children is one of the outstanding covenant responsibilities of parents, that is, one aspect of their calling as God's friends-servants to love, serve, and glorify God. On the other hand, it is the means by which God brings the reborn covenant child to spiritual maturity so that he or she becomes a developed man or woman of God, capable of a life of good works (pg. 6, *Reformed Education*).

A godless educator is essentially an ungodly one. He denies that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" ([Prov. 1:7](#)). In all of his instruction he teaches that knowledge begins with and ends with man. God is not in all his thoughts ([Ps. 10:4](#)). To such a person we certainly may not entrust the upbringing of our children.

## 2. The Content of Public Education

I have often wondered in the years of my public schooling: Where is God? Where is God in the history of Singapore? Where is God in the biology of the human anatomy? Where is God in the logical laws of mathematics?

It is precisely this point that makes public education so evil. God is not in it. The fear of Jehovah is not in public education. Not only is he absent, he is disregarded, despised and spat upon. Public education assumes that God does not exist. It assumes the form of the fool who says, There is no God ([Ps. 14:1](#)). Consequently, all public education gears towards a secular form. Man decides the content of our children's education, not God.

Prof. Engelsma's forceful characterization of the public schools is apt:

The exclusion of Scripture makes the public education of today not merely non-Christian but antichristian. This is the reason why God-fearing parents find the public schools unacceptable... To banish the Word is to banish God, and to banish God is to invite the devil (pg. 21, *Reformed Education*).

One clearly sees the devil behind such an education. Evolution is the accepted explanation for the origin of this world because most scientists agree on the theory. Moral standards fluctuate according to the times. Fornication and abortion are merely social evils that can be treated with sex education. Homosexuality must be accepted as an alternative lifestyle in the modern world.

Rev. Carl Haak echoes the same sentiments:

To exclude the Bible from any subject is not only to teach the lie about that subject; it is to teach weakness, to teach knowledge that has no power or meaning to it. This is exactly the weakness of the public schools. They go about leaving God out and the result is that the instruction is weak, empty, and vain. Only when God's word is seen in every subject is true knowledge attained (pg 11, *Perspectives in Covenant Education*, 1983).

A key, but spiritually fatal principle running through secular education is the principle of relativism. This principle has done grave damage to the minds of our covenant young. According to this principle, there is no such thing as absolute truth since the world is constantly changing. As cultures and social perceptions undergo change, so must our children be willing to adapt their thinking according to the times. History leaves God out and can be interpreted in boundless ways so long as there is a rational line of reasoning. Science and technology can be advanced in countless ways as long

as a pragmatic justification is given. Questions on morality have no certainty because everything in this world is relative to the individual's moral judgment. This kind of education reminds us of the time of the Judges, where every man did that which was right in his own eyes ([Judges 17:6](#)).

What is so dreadful about the principle of relativism is that it denies absolute truth, and, consequently, an absolute God. Relativism forces our covenant children to make subjective judgments. Our knowledge of God is relative to the society we live in. The Scriptures are relative to the individual's interpretation. Sin and evil are relative to one's moral judgment.

Even if public education were to admit that God exists, he would be thrust into the realm of subjective religious knowledge that has little or no meaning. The idea of God as taught in the public schools expresses itself in the various religious groups of Singapore. One is taught the main teachings of each religion but there is no need to subscribe to them. To the public educator (the government in this case), religion is merely medicine for the masses. Knowledge of religions only serves to protect the religious harmony of the land. There is little substance and use for religious knowledge in a pragmatic world.

No education, however, can be purely secular without running the risk of developing immoral children. Even the government realizes the need for a moral education in the public schools. There is a need for civility and good order in society. This is especially true in a multi-religious and multi-racial society like Singapore. The slightest upheaval in social harmony can have devastating consequences on the nation. Moral education must therefore serve to protect this social fabric.

A moral education also serves to instill moral values in our children. Family values are emphasized because the family is the building block of society. Values of patriotism are instilled in young minds to teach them loyalty to the country. Racial and religious harmony are strongly promoted by the schools to steer the students to be sensitive and tolerant citizens in a land of great diversity. One is educated to be a responsible and productive citizen.

Should we as covenant parents not then be satisfied with this moral education that our public schools offer? After all, such an education will train our children to be morally upright and law-abiding citizens. They will learn how to live righteously in the midst of this world, obey the government and live peacefully with their neighbors of differing races and religions. Are we too extreme in insisting on a covenant education since the public education takes care of our children's moral upbringing?

The answer is an emphatic NO. Scripture insists that covenant children be raised in the fear of Jehovah alone. They must learn Jehovah's standards of holiness, not man's moral standards. They learn to live righteously in this world because of the righteousness that Christ imputes to them. They learn to live in peace and harmony with their neighbor in this world because Christ has given to them the peace that passes understanding through his cross. Prof. Cornelius Van Til wisely writes that the Christian must "maintain without any apology and without any concession that it is Scripture, and Scripture alone, in the light of which all moral questions must be answered" (pg 71, *The Defense of the Faith*, P&R Publishing Company, 1955).

Public education negates, in fact, despises the truth that God must be the center of all education, for only his truth is sure. Knowledge apart from God is the devil's lie.

Prof. Engelsma writes:

Knowledge apart from knowing God, all activity not motivated by the love of God and directed to Him, and life itself lived apart from God and away from God are vain (pg 86, *Reformed Education*).

Thus the very essence of public education is rebellion against God.