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Thoughts on Public Education and the Christian Worldview

by Melissa Cain Travis

*This article is not going to be a tirade against public schooling. I have many intelligent Christian friends who have their children enrolled in public school, and I do not think less of them for it by any means.*

Melissa, over 90% of American children are enrolled in public schools. 75% of Americans are Christian. So my question is - why would you even think it necessary to state that you do not think "less of them" for enrolling their children in public schools?

The fact that you felt it was necessary to state that, indicates, that you probably *do* think less of them. Someone who did not think less of them would have had no reason to even write that.

*But, I feel God leading me to say a few words about one enormous failing of public education.*

Melissa, define "leading." Are you hearing the voices? Did you see a sign in your Cheerios? Or your pizza? Help us out here.

*My intent is not to try and convince parents of publicly schooled children to switch to homeschooling or private school. (For many families, public school is the only option, period.)*

Melissa, you said that your intent wasn't to convince parents to abandon public schools, but then you followed that by immediately providing an excuse for those who do use public schools "the only option." Question: what if public school wasn't the only option - then would you try to convince them to leave public education?

And not to be picky Melissa, but when you home school your boys next time, you might want to teach them that the final parenthesis goes *before* the final period. That's just a little something I learned in public school.

*My goal here is to help you understand the core problem with secularized education and offer advice on how to successfully counteract it.*

*I need to begin by first explaining why my husband and I have chosen to homeschool our sons. It’s not for the reasons commonly thought by non-homeschooling parents or by secularists. I do not homeschool in order to isolate my children from non-Christians. Now, it is certainly true that the vast majority of people my kids come into contact with are Christians, because we are active in our church and most of our friends and family are Christians. The fact of the matter is that a shared worldview draws people into close relationships with one another. But if a non-Christian family moved in next door, for example, those children would be welcome to come hang out at my home. This is the example set by Jesus Christ himself.*

Melissa, if you are going to follow the example of Jesus, then you would have to make every attempt to convert them into your religion. Jesus made that quite clear. I think that as long as you believed there was a chance to convert them, they would be welcome. But if you realized that they weren't going to submit to your invisible ghost, I don't believe the welcome mat would be out for very long.

*I do not homeschool in order to shield my children from certain scientific theories about the origin of the universe, the origin of life, and the origin of species. Actually, I began teaching my kids about the current scientific thought on these matters at about the age of 7, and I do this by explaining the scientific theories from the secular perspective and the theistic perspective.*

Melissa, do you think there is any rational person reading this essay who believes that you present both sides equally and fairly?

*Furthermore, I make sure they understand the diversity of views on origins WITHIN Christendom, including the strengths and weaknesses of each position.*

Melissa, what about the creation myths of other religions? Do you expose them to Hindu explanations? Islamic explanations?

If you did, there is the very real danger that even at a young age, they might start seeing these stories for what they really are ... ancient myths.

*The most important thing a Christian parent can teach their children about this topic is that there is great synergy, not conflict, between science done correctly and theology done correctly.*

Melissa, you can't be serious?

You don't see conflict between human evolution and magical creation by an invisible ghost?

You don't see conflict between the laws of motion and the biblical claim of the sun going backwards?

Melissa, if I had the time, we could be here for months examining verses that don't mesh with reality.

*Okay, with all that said, what is the giant failing of public education that needs to be understood and effectively counteracted by parents of children enrolled in public school?*

*A secularized education communicates the falsehood that truths about the world are entirely separable from–and have meaning apart from–God and the Christian worldview.*

Melissa, what about the Muslim worldview? What about the Hindu worldview? If public schools had to accommodate every religious worldview, they would never have time to learn how to use parentheses.

*Attempts to “neutralize” education in order to accommodate a pluralistic society result in distortions that slant everything away from the truth about God, the nature of man, and objective morality.*

Melissa, since no two religions agree on all those things you listed, it makes sense to leave those things where they belong: in the church of one's choice.

See Melissa, if you could think outside your tiny little Christian box, you might see that wherever you go on Earth, people like you say the exact same thing about *their* religion. You are no different than they are. And Melissa, they are every bit as confident about their ancient fairy tales ... as you are about yours.

*The “big questions” may not be directly addressed in the classroom, but this avoidance automatically yet subtly communicates the philosophy of relativism–that there are many “right” answers to those questions, so the school room is not the place to teach one particular view.*

Melissa, if the schools stick to teaching what is empirically provable, then that problem is solved. Then you can brainwash your kids every weekend and try to erase all those facts and knowledge and stuff.

*What does this mean for children who attend public school but are from practicing Christian families?*

Melissa, it means that those kids at least have a chance of breaking free from the brainwashing they have been receiving at home and at church. And that is why you homeschool your kids ... contrary to your earlier claims.

*They tend to grow up with a compartmentalized intellect. On the one hand, there’s everything they learn at school, and on the other hand, there’s everything they learn at home and at church. But this is all wrong.*

Melissa, it wouldn't be wrong if you weren't indoctrinating your children with gruesome, bloody ancient myths and trying to pass them off as true.

*All truth is God’s truth, and every discipline (history, mathematics, science, literature, social studies, etc.) is related in some fashion to ultimate reality.*

Melissa, interesting sentence. You started off with an assertion that your invisible ghost is the only true invisible ghost ... but then correctly stated the connection between learning and reality. It's a shame you are incapable of seeing the contradiction in your own position.

*I’ve often heard parents say, “Well, almost all the teachers at our public school are Christians, so I’m not worried.” This shows misunderstanding about the central issue here. It’s not about what a teacher may quietly choose to skip when presenting the state curriculum to his or her class;*

Melissa, thanks for admitting what most of us already knew: that some Christians are undermining their duties as teachers in order to promote their religious beliefs.

*it’s about the teacher’s complete inability, legally speaking, to present anything within the correct framework. So, is there a viable solution for families that use public education? I think there is, but it involves a serious commitment of time, energy, and some financial resources.*

*1. Parents need to be fully aware of everything their children are learning in school and how things are being taught so that they can explain how worldview plays into each and every subject.*

Melissa, spoken like a true control freak. You tried to give the impression at the beginning of how open-minded you were. But now we see that was just lip-service, and that total control is what you seek. Hey, that sounds familiar - oh yeah, that describes your religion ... perfectly.

Your religion dictates what a person cannot eat, can't wear, when they can work, how much to give, whom to love, whom to hate, whom to kill, and even, what to believe. No aspect of life goes untouched by Christian control. That is one reason why rational Americans and progressive Christians alike, refer to you evangelicals as "The American Taliban."

*Philosophical adjustments to the material will need to be made when instructing the child on how to integrate the facts they’re learning into the over-arching Christian worldview.*

Melissa, I know what that means. "Integrate the facts" translates to "rationalize away science and history, and replace them with biblical science and history."

*This will require quite a lot of reading and preparation on the parents’ part. I would strongly suggest studying books on worldview and culture by respected Christian scholars such as Nancy Pearcey and at least one good book on relativism such as Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air by Greg Koukl and Dr. Francis Beckwith. If you have older children, read such books together and discuss them. Summer break is an excellent time for something like this.*

Melissa, I can't even begin to tell you - how much you are making me appreciate my parents right now.

*2. Ongoing intellectual dialogue between parents and children is essential. Talk about their studies with them at every opportunity (car rides, dinner table, etc.) and ask them deep questions.*

Melissa, the third degree. What a great way to raise kids. Don't give them a chance to be kids, just start brainwashing right from the start - and don't let up.

The only thing missing from your regimen, is praying to Bethlehem 5 times a day.

*For example, say they’re studying World War II and Nazi Germany.*

Oh, oh, Melissa, I know this one: tell them Hitler was an Atheist!

I got that one right, didn't I Melissa?

*That’s the perfect time to have serious discussions on the sanctity of life,*

Melissa, what a coincidence - I love that subject too. You wouldn't believe how many Bible verses I have that show how much your God values the sanctity of life. I especially like the one where God sends His goons to rip the fetuses out of pregnant women and then run a sword through the little suckers.

*on the social implications of neo-Darwinism (carefully distinguishing it from common descent), the nature of man, and objective morality.*

Melissa, "neo-Darwinism?"

How did I get involved in this?

*3. Attend conferences and workshops on apologetics, worldview, and classical education.*

Melissa, the term "apologetics" is simply a synonym for lying.

Oh, apologetics is your specialty isn't it?

Oh well, no one pays much attention to that commandment against lying anyway.

*If you have kids in high school, take them along with you. You will glean a wealth of information and practical tools for fostering a fully integrated worldview in your home. You could even enroll in an online course from time to time. Various universities, seminaries, and ministries offer non-degree programs in apologetics and worldview with high-caliber content. Pass along your knowledge to your children in conversation.*

*And last, but most importantly, no matter how you have chosen to school your children, be in continual prayer about how you can best guide them into a coherent and integrated view of reality.*

Melissa, no offense, but I don't see how talking to yourself is going to help anyone; even if you do believe a magic ghost is listening.

*God will honor your efforts to bring Him glory through teaching your children to better love Him with their minds.*

Melissa, I found this essay of yours on the web site of Wintery Knight. He's quite an interesting fellow. He has an absolutely amazing attitude ... towards women. Here's a link to an essay he wrote. As you'll see, I did my best to stand up for you ladies, but let's face it: Knight's got God on his side, while all I've got ...

is me.

<http://theskepticarena.com/archives.aspx/>

(scroll down to podcast #159)

Oh Melissa, one more thing, if you get a chance to get over to Knight's web site, make sure to check out his section called ... wait for it Melissa ... The Manosphere.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

The percentage of Americans with diabetes

has doubled since 1988; and is now nearly 10%

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the rate of diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes was 5.5 percent of the U.S. population. By 2010, that number had risen to 9.3 percent. That means 21 million American adults had confirmed diabetes in 2010.

Several encouraging findings emerged from the study, however. A smaller proportion of people have undiagnosed diabetes, suggesting that newer screening techniques may be more efficient.

Researchers also found that overall blood sugar control has improved, although the disease was less well-controlled in some minority groups.

The increase in diabetes tracks very closely with the epidemic of obesity, and is a direct consequence of it.

There are two main types of diabetes -- type 1 and type 2. Type 2 diabetes is the far more prevalent type, accounting for 90 to 95 percent of all diabetes.

Although both types of the disease result in higher-than-normal levels of blood sugar, the cause of each is different. Type 1 is an autoimmune disease, and its development is unrelated to weight. The exact cause of type 2 is unknown, but excess weight and a sedentary lifestyle are known to play a role in its development.

Poorly controlled diabetes poses serious health risks, including heart disease, kidney damage and blindness.

This study is a reminder that this problem isn't going away; it's only getting worse.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

Michael E. Mann (born 1965) 48 years old

He is an American climatologist and geophysicist, currently director of the Earth System Science Center at Pennsylvania State University, who has contributed to the scientific understanding of climate change that has occurred over the last 2,000 years. He has pioneered techniques to find patterns in past climate change, and to isolate climate signals from "noisy data."

Mann introduced innovative statistical techniques to find regional variations in a hemispherical climate reconstruction covering the past 1,000 years, which was dubbed the "hockey stick graph" because of its shape. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) acknowledged that his work, along with that of the many other lead authors and review editors, contributed to the award of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, which was won jointly by the IPCC and Al Gore.

Mann is also a co-founder and contributor to the climatology blog RealClimate.

“Although scientific revolutions in how we see the world do occur,

the bulk of our scientific understanding comes from

the cumulative impact of numerous incremental studies

that together paint an increasingly coherent picture

of how nature works.”