

Evolution, the Christian Family and the 21st Century

Recently while reviewing my files and reviewing some of the articles that I thought important enough to save, I came upon an editorial by

Linda Bowles and immediately discovered why I saved it. Her lead paragraph caught my attention again!

"If you want to know where our society is heading, take a look at the children. They are the future." Daily Oklahoman, 9/18/1995

It is now without dispute that modern evolutionary conjecture, armed with its supposed scientific sanction, has removed the authority of God as Creator from American consideration. In a candidly open article in the July, 2000 edition of Scientific American, Ernst Mayr, a Harvard Zoology professor and a principal devotee of Darwinism, made this fact quite clear. Consider a few of Mayr's comments:

"The situation differs dramatically with regard to concepts in biology. Many biological ideas proposed during the past 150 years stood in stark conflict with what everybody assumed to be true. The acceptance of these ideas required an ideological revolution. And no biologist has been responsible for more...drastic modifications of the average person's worldview than Charles Darwin." p. 80

"A 21st century person looks at the world quite differently than a citizen of the Victorian era did... But what is not at all appreciated is the great extent to which this shift in thinking indeed resulted from Darwin's ideas."

Remember that in 1850 virtually all leading scientists and philosophers were Christian men. The world they inhabited had been created by God, and as the theologian claimed, He had instituted wise laws that brought about the perfect adaptation of all organisms to one another and to their environment...Such was the thinking of Western man prior to the 1859 publication of The Origin of Species. The basic principles proposed by Darwin would stand in total conflict with these prevailing ideas." p. 81

"Let me now try to summarize my major findings. No educated person any longer questions the validity of the so-called theory of evolution, which we now know to be simple fact. Likewise, most of Darwin's particular theses have been fully confirmed, such as that of common descent, the gradualism of evolution, and his explanatory theory of natural selection."

...Yes, he established a philosophy of biology by introducing the time factor, by demonstrating the importance of chance and contingency, and by showing that theories in evolutionary biology are based on concepts rather than laws. But furthermore—and this is perhaps Darwin's greatest contribution—he developed a set of new principles that influence the thinking of every person: the living world, through evolution, can be explained without recourse to supernaturalism; essentialism or typology is invalid, and we must adopt population thinking, in which all individuals are unique (vital for education and the refutation of racism); natural selection, applied to social groups, is indeed sufficient to account for the origin and maintenance of altruistic ethical systems; cosmic teleology, and intrinsic process leading life automatically to ever greater perfection, is fallacious, with all seemingly teleological phenomena explicable by purely material processes; and determinism is thus repudiated, which places our fate squarely only in our evolved hands." [emphasis added] p. 83

Christian parents had better understand their God-given duty and opportunity to raise godly seed is being severely challenged and undermined by this overwhelming influence in our culture. Thus the present socialization process, from which none of our sons and daughters are exempt, is both anti-Christ and anti-Biblical. Therefore the present American social process is a serious deterrent to parents who desire to raise children with a Biblical worldview.

Does this mean believers must become isolationists? NO! Jesus never advocated that we be isolated from the world and its philosophy. He rather advocated insulationism! He said in His marvelous Gethsemane prayer:

"I have given them [all disciples, see vs. 20] Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth." John 17:14-19, NKJV [emphasis added]

Raising Godly Children

One of the reoccurring themes that I deal with in workshops and conventions across the U.S.A. is the Raising of Godly Children in a Pagan Society. In this same vein I cannot forget what Dr. James Dobson said to a group of prolife marchers that had gathered in Washington D. C., while I was there in the early 1990's doing research at the National Museum of Natural History. yes" Dobson told this group that the United States was in a civil war. He said it was not a war being fought with guns and knives, but rather a war of ideas and values. Then he said a startling thing—"The winner of this war will capture the minds of the next generation! "It is the deliberate capture of the minds of Christian sons and daughters by the godless forces of our society that is my concern (Colossians 2:8).

In October of 2000 the George Barna Research Group revealed the results of an eye-opening survey. They noted that Christian teens were more likely to deny the existence of Satan, to perceive salvation as a consequence of personal goodness and to believe that Jesus Christ was a sinner. 1 Josh McDowell, while being interviewed by the Journal of the Southern Baptist Convention (May 2000) regarding his newest book in the Evidence That Demands a Verdict series, was asked:

SBC LIFE: What has happened in the church since you first wrote Evidence That Demands a Verdict! [1972] What is the state of Christianity in your opinion?

McDowell: We've created two generations, parents and youth, who have beliefs. For the most part many of their beliefs are accurate, but they don't have convictions. The difference is this: a belief becomes a conviction when you can logically think it through to the conclusion of why you believe it. Until you can do that, you only have beliefs. The Bible is quite clear, "Be ready always to give an answer for the hope (or the belief) that is in you." I would say that 98 percent of believers today cannot do that, and the Christian church and message is being attacked with diversity, inclusion, and tolerance more than ever before.

Beliefs that have not been thought through to their logical conclusion are beliefs without conviction. These are

beliefs that are convenient, popular and traditional. These are beliefs devoid of authority that can only come from the Creator. Therefore their beliefs are Biblical, but only preferential and not convictional! They are beliefs that have no long lasting effect on decisions, goals or life style. The Barna report (mentioned above) admonished clearly that:

“If Biblical truth is going to prevail in American society, it will require a strategic, long-term, coordinated effort to convey God’s truth in ways that shake young people from their theological complacency and arrogance. Churches and individual believers cannot continue to minister in the same ways they have been doing for the past decade. Families must become more diligent and reliable in the religious training they provide to their children.” [emphasis added] 2

Father and Mother: The Key

King Solomon, in a somewhat intriguing proverb, offers a lasting solution to this perplexing problem. Solomon said in Proverbs 22:6 that if we “train” children in the way they should go, as they grow older they will not depart. The intriguing thing about this verse is Solomon’s use of the word “train.” According to the Brown, Driver and Briggs lexicon of Hebrew the word “train” uniquely means, “to rub the palate of the child with chewed dates” (p. 335).

How can rubbing or touching a child’s palate with chewed dates have anything at all to do with the training of that child? The fact that the dates are chewed indicates that the child is an infant—most likely being weaned from the breast to solid food. Secondly, the rubbing or touching of the child’s soft palate causes a swallowing response. Thus the parent is causing the child to swallow particular food, and is taking charge of the child’s tastes and appetites. So the use of this word (the “train”) becomes extremely prescriptive of the many aspects of raising godly seed.

Who is touching the palate of your sons and daughters? Or, more accurately, who is training your children—someone is—however, God gave the responsibility to parents and secondly to the church as supplemental trainers. However, as Barna mentioned in this same report, the spiritual views of young people are influenced by parents, friends, music and pop entertainment.³ Of course, in this list parents are the least influential. This must change. This change will be difficult, but we must try!

First and foremost, parents and church educational programs must begin early—as a matter of fact this verse indicates early childhood education to be vital to the program’s success. Second, the strategy must be organized for the long term (i.e. early childhood to teen years) with a systematic program that aids and supplements the parent’s work in training their sons and daughters. It is the parents that are accountable for the training of their sons and daughters—the church can only supplement!

The primary task and goal of this training process is the development of a Biblical Worldview in the minds of believing sons and daughters. But in any case the solution is not going to be easily fixed, or short term, and the process must begin with Genesis—the basis for all TRUTH.

As suggested by Barna it will “require a strategic, long-term, coordinated effort...” between parents and church leaders.”

How will we know when we've been successful? When we see demonstrated in our young people two distinct qualities: Convictional morality and the ability to discern the spirit of truth.

G. Thomas Sharp Ph.D.