

The Curriculum Creators – Part 7

Excerpts from Barbara M. Morris' 1979 book *Change Agents in the Schools: Destroy Your Children; Betray Your Country* continue:

What is supposed to be the benefit of such Humanistic education? According to educator Morrel J. Clutelo, "Humanistic schools work to free people. . ."

The obvious question is free people from what?

Educator William D. Hedges answered the question by giving a "common core of values" that society must adhere to if it is to survive. This "common core of values" projects not Christian values, but Humanist values. He explained: "this view of humankind requires the educative process to free people to be themselves. It values autonomy and . . . interdependence. It decries . . . the imposition of constraints and conventions . . . which can retard the individual's growth."

So, finally, the answer to the question, "from what do Humanist schools free people?" must be, "from Christian values, from Christian behavior and from Christian constraints and conventions. In a single word, then, Humanist schools free children from Christianity."

Indeed, Humanistic education is not value-free, and this was readily admitted by educator Harold C. Lyon: "Humanistic education is not 'value-free.' If it is to be in any way a personal, humanizing experience, one accepts the fact that both students and teachers have a world view or value set through which each interprets facts."

A "world view" is very much a part of Humanist belief, as we shall see. But, additionally, the Humanist interprets facts—he does not accept facts because for Humanists, facts can change. There are no absolutes. Truth is relative. Truth can mean anything one wants it to mean to suit immediate needs and the situation at Hand—"situation ethics."

As we move along it will become clear in many ways that Humanistic education is not "value-free." It can't be "value-free" because it is not intended to develop the "cognitive"—the learning of academic skills and information nor to develop any kind of academic competence, but to develop the "affective"—values, attitudes and behaviors.

Humanism in the schools did not "just happen." It is the result of a movement, led and promoted by John Dewey. Humanistic education did not start with John Dewey, of course, but it was he, more than anyone else who has influenced and determined the status of present-day education. A more contemporary missionary of Humanism in the schools is the well known and influential educator, Arthur W. Coombs, who in 1966 defined the "Humanist movement" with a small "h":

"The humanist movement finds expression in many places. Internationally it appears in the rise and independence of the underdeveloped nations, in the United Nations, the World Court, or the freedom of women. . . ."

Bear in mind the above appeared in 1966. In 1978, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development published a report, credit for which was given to several authors, with Arthur W. Coombs named as chairperson. The introduction to the report, obviously written by Coombs, defined the Humanist (with a capital "H") Movement in a way that was amazingly like his 1966 definition:

"The Humanist Movement came into being very largely in response to this fundamental change in human problems, such as ecology, starvation, conservation, atom bombs. . . . One sees the fruits of this movement in such world-wide developments such as the decline of colonialism,

the rise of the have-not nations . . . the world court, the United Nations, UNESCO . . . public education . . . equal rights legislation . . . women's liberation."

So you can see we had small "h" humanism in 1966 and capital "H" Humanism in 1978.

Is it significant or a printer's error? More than likely, it is significant. The Humanists are bolder now in all that they do. They no longer feel the great need to mislead. The time is right for them to be out in the open about what they are and what they are doing. It is of interest that the concerns of the Humanist Movement expressed by Coombs are also the concerns expressed in the Humanist Manifesto The Humanists are fiercely determined to achieve the aims of their Movement. So determined, in fact, that Arthur Coombs was moved to declare: "the tide of human affairs is running with us. The humanist movement is inexorable. It will not be stopped. Though habit and tradition may kick up waves of opposition from time to time, these are but surface manifestations . . . those great tides in human affairs . . . are disastrous to oppose. I believe the Humanist Movement is one of those tides and it is coming in."

That was Arthur Coombs speaking in 1966. In 1978, his missionary zeal had not cooled a bit: "The Humanist Movement is not fad or frill. It is an absolute necessity for our times. If it did not exist, we would have to invent it."

Clearly, the Humanists are determined not to be stopped. There is a viable Humanist Movement and the schools are the primary areas for it to take hold, and in true missionary fashion, for it to flower and grow. Imagine what would happen if Christians were as determined to propagate Christianity in the schools!

But the Humanist Movement is not carried on only by Humanist educators. Humanists are in positions of power and great influence in entertainment, the mass media, and particularly, in our legislatures. We have already seen one example—California Assemblyman, John Vasconcellos—an ardent champion of Humanism in education.

Higher up yet, we have California Congressman, Don Edwards, who on October 23, 1973, gave a talk in which he said in part:

"I wish I was able to . . . tell you that the Humanist Manifesto II has been read by 535 members of Congress, by the Supreme Court, by the CIA, by the Pentagon and by all those various people at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue—and that further they have declared unanimously that henceforth it would be the cornerstone of American foreign and domestic policy. I wish I could say that, but I can't (sic) does not mean that this very important document is not on Capitol Hill, that it is not going to have a great deal of influence in the dialogue that will go on for many years."

Perhaps the Supreme Court already considers the Humanist Manifesto the "cornerstone of American . . . domestic policy," for hasn't that same Court decreed there shall be no prayer or Bible reading in the government schools? And what of the abortion decision? In fact, hasn't the Supreme Court made many decisions that are supportive of Humanist beliefs?

The Humanists have been very effective with their Movement to "humanize" education. At a convention of atheists in San Francisco, Madalyn Murray O'Hare claimed the climate for atheism has changed since she won her Supreme Court decision. She exulted: "Let's face it, there is no way we could have had an atheist convention 10 years ago. Everything today is much better. Part of the reason is public education."

At the same convention Mrs. O'Hare was quoted as describing Vice President Mondale as "an undercover atheist." Does she know something the public doesn't know? In any case, she's right about the improved climate for atheists, and that part of the reason for the improved

climate is public education and a lot of help from more than a few important people in important places.