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The Pattern of God's Truth: A Review

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### Abstract

Frank Gaebelein posits that “At the heart of all thinking about education, whether Christian or secular, lies the problem of integration” (Gabebelein, 1968, Preface). The practice of Christian education, as opposed to secular education, would seem to assume that Jesus Christ would be the center of the educational worldview. Gaebelein observes therefore that *God's Truth* must be integrated with whatever secular education is incorporated in the classroom. Because there are at times differences between the “sacred and the secular”, the Christian philosophy of education must be to ensure that God's truth prevails. *The Pattern of God's Truth* is written to examine the integration of truth into the Christian education classroom.

### The Patterns of God's Truth: A Review

Christianity does not exist in a vacuum. Gaebelein notes that “Christians are not immune to secularism” (1968, p. 39). The current trend in education is to remove as much Christian influence as possible, and the success rate is high in public education. Because of *Wisconsin vs. Yoder* (406 U.S. 205, 1972), Christian education received at least partial immunity from the attempt to compel all children to receive only secular education. The courts allowed parents to retain the right to choose between secular or Christian education for their children. This has not stopped secular progressives from attempting to curtail Christian education. Mark Walsh writes, “In some legal challenges to such practices, lower courts have ruled that parental rights to control their children's education is outweighed by a school district's interest in including all students” (Walsh, 2000, p. 22). The *Troxel vs. Granville* case in 2000 (Walsh, p. 22) reaffirmed *Wisconsin vs. Yoder*, according to Walsh, but the protection of the Supreme Court can only last as long as conservative justices remain on the bench. Since Christian schooling remains, the course of action by Satan to destroy the effectiveness of truth is aimed at attacking the teachers who are often trained in secular colleges of education.

Gaebelein observes that there can be “no Christian education without Christian teachers” (Gaebelein, 1968, p. 35). Sadly, all too many Christians that aspire to the teaching profession select secular colleges or programs unaware that their faith will be challenged or that they will receive a steady diet of philosophy that is contrary to God's truth. Some of these teachers will find positions in Christian schools and bring with them a secular worldview of education. It must be the responsibility of pastors, church leaders, and Christian school administrators to examine the educational philosophy of their teachers. This is a part of the integration process that is at the heart of *The Pattern of God's Truth*.

*Impact of Patterns of God's Truth*

A liberal education even in a Christian school requires subject content that is not considered to be religious in nature. Most parents, students, or teachers will not equate math with Bible study. Typical subjects of language, such as French or Spanish, composition, physical education, speech, grammar, and reading are certainly not “religious” courses. In public schools, all subject matter has been “secularized”. Reading will be from secular material, but it could just as easily be taught using the Bible or great authors such as John Bunyan. The first concern for Gaebelein is that *Truth* is not always integrated into subject matter. Gaebelein quotes John Henry Newman and writes, “Religious truth is not only a portion but a condition of general knowledge” (Gaebelein, 1968, p. 8). Gaebelein provides a reminder that “all truth is God’s truth” (p. 23). Every subject from Math, to astronomy, biology, music or the arts consist of truths that must be acknowledged to be from God. Gaebelein states that math might be the hardest subject to integrate with truth (Gaebelein, 1968, p. 57), but he argues that divine truth can be discovered in math and uses Pascal as an example of one who discovered truth in math.

Literature, on the other hand, is easily integrated. Gaebelein points out that the “Bible is literature” (Gaebelein, 1968, p. 65). However, Gaebelein notes that since the scripture is more than a human book, it is not an integration of equals. This observation is important in understanding the complexity of integrating truth into Christian education. Truth is revealed in the scripture, but not all Christian teachers will have an equal share of revelation. Secondly, revealed truth is not always incorporated into the subject matter and it requires the Christian teacher to provide the integration. The challenge is that truth must first impact the teacher before it can impact the subject matter.

*Integration of Faith and Learning*

Gaebelein makes a challenging statement when he writes, "The call, then, is for a wholly Christian world view on the part of our education" (1968, p. 23). First we must acknowledge that there is the reality that Christian education and secular education is a true dichotomy. Governments are unlikely to allow the full impact of Christianity to take over the public education system. At one time education was controlled by the church, but even then the integration of faith and learning was often determined by the dictates of the state that used the church for political ends. The utopian view of a complete Christian education system would depend on the equally utopian view of a complete Christian nation; something that does not exist in this world today. However, it must be clearly understood that both are the will of God. God would have "all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4, KJV). There will be a day when "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess" (Romans 14:11, KJV); until then however, the wall of separation of church and state so demanded by secular progressives has become a reality in every nation.

This does not mean that Christians should give up the fight to push Christianity into every nook and cranny of society, but it does mean that there is the strong absolute requirement to keep Christianity pure to prevent the state from overwhelming the church. The Christian school is an extension of the church. Christian education must not be "secular education" in a Christian setting. Liberal churches have already succumbed to the world's mentality and the world view of such organizations as the National Council of Churches is more compatible with the one world plan of the anti-Christ than with the absolute truth that the world should be "the kingdom of God".

Gaebelein gives dire warning that the real need is more than integrating Christianity into a process of education that is known as “Christian education”. This would be similar to medieval education – church schools. The real need is that everywhere Christian education exist, truth must be integrated to the fullest measure possible; in the teacher, in the subject matter, in the administration. The scripture should be used for the sermons in the sanctuary and as part and parcel of the curriculum in the classroom. Gaebelein writes, “Whereupon we must conclude that Christian education has a holy obligation to stand for and honor the truth wherever it is found” (Gaebelein, 1968, p. 23).

*Prediction for the Future*

Gaebelein writes, “The problem is this. Every Christian school or college of any size has, spiritually speaking, a student body of mixed nature” (1968, p. 95). In addition, Christian education is made up of faculty, parents, supporters, pastors and ministers, and with the ever increasing presence of regulation. In many countries Christian education is still hampered by governmental oversight. In America, the Christian home-school movement must deal with state regulations often requiring Christian parents to have oversight by public education.

The Bible speaks of the “mixed multitude” that came out of Egypt with Israel (Exodus 12:38). Christianity today is also a mixed multitude with differences in denominations, doctrinal differences, cultural diversity, and yes – in the Christian schools, differences in educational philosophy. Harvard, Princeton, and Yale are far removed from their original charters. The Bible tells us that it was the “mixed multitude” that started all the complaining against Moses and that lusted for flesh to eat (Numbers 11:4, KJV). In Christian education, the demands of the

mixed multitude eventually turned once powerful Christian universities into the secular *Harvards* of this world.

It is certainly not possible to examine every possible “Egyptian” that request entry into Christian schools and to deny them. It is hard to identify those that are in the mixed multitude, (i.e. those that have a mix of Christianity and the world). The truth is as in the case of Ishmael and Isaac, “for more are the children of the desolate than of her that hath the husband” (Galatians 4:27, KJV). Ishmael and Isaac were both children of Abraham, the father of faith. But Ishmael represents the child of flesh – that is the Christian that is not born again; Isaac represents the Christian that is born again. Although some will contend that all Christians are born again Christians, Ishmael was never-the-less a “child of Abraham”, a type of the believer that walks in “mental assent” rather than “in the spirit”. Christianity has many more children of the flesh than children of the promise. Gaebelein submits that “Perhaps we need in our Christian schools and colleges to make clear the fact that the first proof of the new birth is the possession of eternal life” (Gaebelein, 1968, p. 97). Unfortunately this would not be a possible litmus test since almost everyone that considers themselves a Christian believes that they are saved, even though the Lord warns that “not everyone that says Lord, Lord” will enter heaven (Matthew 7:21, KJV).

### *Safeguarding the truth*

Christian education, however must behave like the church is expected to behave. Sinners are allowed to come and the church opens its arms to receive them. The critical element postulated by Gaebelein, is that truth must prevail within the church and within the school. It is up to the school to be what it claims to be – a Christian institution that provides a Christian education, regardless of who sits in the classroom. This is the heart of the integration matter. If

Christian school demands purity within itself, it will remain as a true Christian educational institution; otherwise it will go the way of the world. Christian schools must learn to ignore the cries and complaints of the mixed multitude and remain true to the absolute truth of the Word of God in all aspects.

The importance of preserving the purity of Christian education has great implications for the future of both school and student. While the litmus test of “being a Christian” is at most subjective for students coming in from the outside, it should be an imperative for teachers and administrators. Some doctrinal differences are not the issue. Paul taught that some eat meat and some eat herbs (Romans 14: 1-3, KJV). Other issues of doctrine must be explicit requirements that are defined by the truth of God's word and should not be subject to compromise. But above all, every teacher, administrator, and staff must rigorously adhere to a Christian worldview for church, home, and school that is under the headship of Jesus Christ and scriptural authority.

The Christian educational institution must demand active participation in Church and have the highest standards in lifestyle required by scripture. In addition, the worldview of the faculty must at times be re-visited as a part of good oversight. Every Christian educational institution should sponsor workshops, courses, self-improvement programs, and associations that focus on strengthening the integration of faith and learning for those involved in Christian education.

*Defining “agnostic approach” to everything*

Gaebelein writes “Let us begin with the climate of opinion in American education today – secular, naturalistic, man-centered, not God-centered, taking for its dynamic an almost

religious idealization of democracy” (Gaebelein, 1968, p. 39). Gaebelein observes that “Education is more than teachers and courses” (p. 85). Among the plethora of activities that have become the life of education are the extra-curricular programs. In addition there are greater numbers of courses that are being offered that are social in nature. Gaebelein reminds us “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him”(Col. 3:17, KJV).

The agnostic approach to everything is to re-define, replace, and then remove all things pertaining to God in the classroom. Creation was first defined as non-scientific, then replaced with Darwinism, and has since been removed from public education. But Thomas Sowell examines the current trend in American education is to flood the system with “psychological-conditioning programs” intended to “undermine the parent-child relationship and the shared values which make a society possible” (Sowell, 1993, p. ix). Many of these add-in courses assume to fill the need of children for education not provided by the weakened institutions of parents and church. Sowell writes,

“So-called ‘sex education’ courses and textbooks, for example, seldom involve a mere conveying of biological or medical information. For more often, the primary thrust is toward a re-shaping of attitudes, not only toward sex but also toward parents, toward society, and toward life” (Sowell, 1993, p. 35).

The brainwashing agendas described by Sowell in American education are becoming pervasive in public education. Their purpose according to Sowell is not that of providing educational knowledge but rather to change attitudes and behaviors. Programs such as multi-

cultural diversity, sex education, drug education, and bi-lingual education are about ideology.

Sowell writes,

The most general – indeed pervasive – principle of these various programs is that decisions are not to be made by relying on traditional values passed on by parents or the surrounding society. Instead, those values are themselves to be questions and compared with the values and behavior of other individuals or other societies (Sowell, 1993, p. 48).

By other societies, Sowell means those that have other values, traditions, social agendas, and even belief systems. These can include the values of socialistic countries or even the atheistic societies of communism.

*In Defense of Gaebelien's Premises*

Gaebelien states that Christian education in our day will never be a “mass movement” (Gaebelien, 1968, p. 106). The Pattern of God's Truth is not a roadmap toward building more Christian schools or universities, although there has been a rise in both since its writing. Gaebelien summarizes, “The call today is for a renaissance of evangelical scholarship” (p. 106). How difficult is the problem within today's Christian education? Are teaching professionals that claim to be Christian being tainted with false ideology? Is the church and Christian school suffering from outside influence that stifles the integration of Biblical truth with the content of our education? Isaiah warned Israel of its apostasy by pointing out its fault:

Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come

unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried

stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste

(Isaiah 28: 14-16, KJV)

The only cure for “lies” that have become the refuge of secular education is to restore the cornerstone and foundation of all that is to be called knowledge – the knowledge of the source of all known truth, whether it is in math, language, philosophy, science, or history – God himself.

### *Conclusion*

There is a need for research that is suggested by Frank Gaebel in *The Pattern of God's Truth*. Certainly there is a disparity between compensation available for Christian teachers compared to secular teachers. How many Christians that have the gift or desire for teaching are being lost to public education? When Christians chose the teaching profession, where do they go for their education? What are the best colleges for the aspiring teacher that wants to maintain or strengthen a Christian worldview? Are there resources for the Christian teacher that reinforces the Christian worldview? These would include professional associations, workshops, or other resources that aid the Christian teacher. There are some including curriculum publishers such as Abeka or ACE. There are some strong colleges with education programs such as Liberty University, Bob Jones University, or Pensacola Christian College. These and other questions should be considered if we truly want to retain a true Christian worldview in education.

## My Christian Worldview Defined

Christianity has since its inception been perceived as being different from the world. This is not only reality, but being a Christian is intended by God to stand in stark contrast to the darkness of the world with its lies, subterfuge, sin, and wickedness. Christians are in the world but not of the world, for Jesus stated, “If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19, ASV). The Christian is represented as being a light in the world (Phil. 2:15), just as Jesus is *The Light of the World* (John 9:5).

My worldview as a Christian is that all truth is absolute. It is represented by the light. Darkness cannot chase away the light. Even the smallest flame of light, however so dim, drives away the darkness – not the other way around. This does not imply that all questions can only be answered one way. For example Jesus is God; that is true. Jesus is man; that is also true. To believe that truth is absolute simply means that I understand half-truths as being lies. Deception is not an absence of truth; it is a mixture of true and false. Unfortunately Christianity is full of truth, but it is also full of deception and that is why Jesus could say that there is a wide gate and a “strait” gate. I agree with Gaebelien – we must be sure that truth prevails.

My worldview that truth is absolute demands that unless truth is at the center of learning, harm results. When we understand that the God of truth is the God of love, harm does not result from knowing truth. Jesus said, “ye shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:32, KJV). The primary and major harm that results from deception is enslavement. False education enslaves the mind and heart. Truthful education frees the mind and heart. It is for this very reason that God's truth must be integrated with learning: in order that freedom can result as the outcome of our learning.

### References

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