

Born to Win

The War for Your Children

by Ronald L. Dart

Not a few Christian folk are beginning to *worry*. They're thinking that they may be losing the culture war. The strongest evidence they see: their young people are abandoning the faith in droves. Laurie Goodstein, writing in the October 6 *New York Times*, cited...

At an unusual series of leadership meetings in 44 cities this fall, more than 6,000 pastors are hearing dire forecasts from some of the biggest names in the conservative evangelical movement.

Laurie Goodstein - Evangelicals Fear the Loss of Their Teenagers

What were they upset about? She said,

Their alarm has been stoked by a highly suspect claim that if current trends continue, only 4 percent of teenagers will be “Bible-believing Christians” as adults.

Laurie Goodstein - Evangelicals Fear the Loss of Their Teenagers

Now, she says that was a “highly suspect” claim, and then goes on to say,

That would be a sharp decline compared with 35 percent of the current generation of baby boomers, and before that, 65 percent of the World War II generation.

Laurie Goodstein - Evangelicals Fear the Loss of Their Teenagers

Now, I'm not sure why that 4% figure is so suspect, or why it would seem so dramatic to her—so steep. That figure dropped from 65% of those who formed the World War II generation who stayed in the faith as adults. It dropped to 35%—folks that's *nearly half* in a generation. Now, just extrapolate that trend and extend it out, and the 4% doesn't sound *entirely* off the wall. Even if it's 15%, it represents a *colossal* failure on the part of churches and youth ministries. One evangelical youth leader, one of the most successful, had this to say about it. His name is Ron Luce. He said,

“I'm looking at the data [...] and we've become post-Christian America, like post-Christian Europe. We've been working as hard as we know how to work — everyone in youth ministry is working hard — but we're losing.”

Now, it seemed odd to me when I first read this that the *New York Times* doesn't want us to worry. Actually, they may think the 4% number is a good sign that their agenda is succeeding, because they seem to be part of the Left in this country that wants to see religion eradicated from American public life. The article goes on to say,

Genuine alarm can be heard from Christian teenagers [*These are the people who are right in the scene.*] and youth pastors, who say they cannot compete against a pervasive culture of cynicism about religion, and the casual "hooking up" approach to sex so pervasive on MTV, on Web sites for teenagers and in hip-hop, rap and rock music. Divorced parents and dysfunctional families also lead some teenagers to avoid church entirely or to drift away.

Over and over in interviews, evangelical teenagers said they felt like a tiny, beleaguered minority in their schools and neighborhoods.

Laurie Goodstein - Evangelicals Fear the Loss of Their Teenagers

They cannot compete. Now, why *can't* they compete? Is the world *that strong*? You know, when the Christian faith was new, the disciples went everywhere turning *the world* upside down, and they had to deal with Rome. Where have we gone wrong? What exactly is it that we're competing against? Well, Ron Luce again, leader of Teen Mania and one of the most successful evangelists among teens, has had some success.

More than two million teenagers have attended in the last 15 years, said Mr. Luce, a 45-year-old, mop-headed father of three with a master's degree from the Graduate School of Business Administration at Harvard and the star power of an aging rock guitarist.

"That's more than Paul McCartney has pulled in", Mr. Luce asserted, before bounding on stage for the opening pyrotechnics and a prayer.

Laurie Goodstein - Evangelicals Fear the Loss of Their Teenagers

Well, they bring in all kinds of teenagers for a big meeting together and...

For the next two days, the teenagers in the arena pogoed to Christian bands, pledged to lead their friends to Christ and sang an anthem with the chorus, "We won't be silent". Hundreds streamed down the aisles for the altar call and knelt in front of the stage, some weeping openly as they prayed to give their lives to God.

Laurie Goodstein - Evangelicals Fear the Loss of Their Teenagers

Now, I don't know for sure, but I have an idea that the teens who attended that meeting came in at least believing that there *was a God* to give their life to, and *that made all the difference*. It is certain that a lot of them knew all too well that their lives *were not working*. But consider another experience—a girl named Chelsea Dunford, a 17 year old from Connecticut, said,

“At school I don’t have a lot of friends who are Christians.” [...]

Ms. Dunford spoke late last month as she and her small church youth group were about to join more than 3,400 teenagers in a sports arena at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst for a Christian youth extravaganza and rock concert called Acquire the Fire.

“A lot of my friends are self-proclaimed agnostics or atheists[.]”

Laurie Goodstein - Evangelicals Fear the Loss of Their Teenagers

Now, you know, you are up against one set of problems when you are dealing with people who believe that there is a God, but whose conduct is wrong. They are intentioned, and they can be brought back to that God. You have a *whole different* set of problems when you are trying to reach people who no longer believe that *God is*. How on earth did we get to this place? You know, I read that article carefully several times and I *marveled* that *no one* (as far as I could read) was willing to talk about the elephant in the living room. It’s right there, it’s staring at you, and no one will say anything about it. Now, it may be that somebody did and the *New York Times* reporter just left it out, but you would think that at least *one* of the religious leaders, *one* of the youth ministers, would have *remarked* on it. Not a soul, according to this article, even acknowledged it was a problem. What is it? What is this elephant in the living room that no one will talk about?

Well, how long has it been since God was banned from the schools? Can *you* trace it back in your mind? Do *you* know when it was? Because when *I* was in high school, you could pray at the beginning of a football game (and they commonly did over the speaker system). When I was in school, you could actually pray in the school. People could talk about God, a teacher could have a Bible on his desk if he wanted to have it there. But that was when *I* was in high school. When did it change? How long as it been since any teacher who attempted to say a word for God was drummed out of his class, stood before the assembled faculty, and had all his insignia of rank ripped from his clothing? You know, there’s nothing new under the sun. What we are experiencing is a new, disastrous phase of a *very old* cycle. The great apostle Paul described it in his own day. Writing to the Romans, he had this to say (it’s right in the first chapter). He said,

Romans 1

NKJV

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

But surely no one would *suppress* the truth, would they? We can believe what our teachers tell us in school, *can’t we*? What “truth” was Paul talking about? Well, he goes on to say. He doesn’t leave us in the dark about this issue. He said,

Romans 1

NKJV

¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.

²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and [divinity], so that they are without excuse,

Well, of course. The people who are suppose to be teaching our kids are the best and the brightest. They have advanced degrees. They understand the process of education. (Or at least we used to think they did.) So, if the truth is being suppressed, it is in spite of the fact that they have *every reason to know*

better. The only excuse some teachers may have is that they have been hamstrung by the courts. And I think they need to inquire of their conscience whether that excuse will wash in front of their God. Paul goes on to say, they've suppressed this truth about the knowledge of God...

Romans 1

NKJV

²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

²² Professing to be wise, they became fools,

²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

And you know, this is probably as close as Paul could get to a description of where Darwinism has taken us. We have banned the true God from our schools and have substituted the god of Darwin: that natural forces have led to the creation of man by way of creeping things, four-footed animals, and apes.

So where did this false god take the Romans? Paul continued,

Romans 1

NKJV

²⁴ Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,

²⁵ who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.

²⁷ Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

You know, you would think Paul was reading our newspapers. Did they practice homosexual marriage in Rome? Well, he went on to say,

Romans 1

NKJV

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, [...]

And, *boy*, is that ever a description of where we are today. Systematically—even those who want to retain God in their knowledge—they're taking it away. He said,

Romans 1

NKJV

²⁸ [...] God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, [...]

And then he begins to tick them off like he was putting them on his fingers, you know:

Romans 1

NKJV

²⁹ [...] sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, [...]

Can you say “Columbine”, children? Have we come to the place to where we have to have a school shooting *at least once a year*? You realize that what Paul is describing is a *complete collapse* of moral character, and he *isn't through yet*. He goes on with his list:

Romans 1

NKJV

²⁹ [...] strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,
³⁰ backbiters, haters of God, [...]

Now, that’s a curious item. They cannot bring themselves to just *not believe*, they must *hate* God. And there’s a remarkable truth buried in that, because the fact is they do *know* that God is out there; and they can’t just walk away from him, they have to push him away. It leads to hate. They are...

Romans 1

NKJV

³⁰ [...] violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

Which shows he’s talking about the younger generation.

Romans 1

NKJV

³¹ undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;
³² who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, [...]

Notice it: *knowing* this...

Romans 1

NKJV

³² [...] not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Paul describes a people whose moral compass is *just gone*. What’s perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this is: it *starts* with sexual immorality and it ends in *violence*. And the mess will only get worse and worse until...well, until what? Well, Ezekiel wrote of another time with a similar outcome. In chapter 7 of Ezekiel, he called out

Ezekiel 7

KJ2000

²³ Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence.
²⁴ Therefore I will bring the worst of the nations, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be defiled.

That is *really* chilling, because when Ezekiel wrote those words he was in Babylon; he was a part of the first consignment of Jews that were carried away. And yet he can write that because of continued and increasing *violence* the worst was yet to come.

Now, if you look at where we are right now, and you wonder what things will be like if the *worst* of the heathen come against us, all you have to do is look in two places on planet Earth: Palestine and Iraq. That's all you have to do. Oh, you might toss in Lebanon if you wish, realizing the kind of a world that those people are forced to live in, with the violence and destruction and the murder, and see our own future in it. If we cannot somehow turn things around in this country, we are headed down *that same road*. And the reason it will come is because we will have lost any reason for existence. When there is no God, there is no higher purpose than the senses. And no reason to live. The children of Islam are the children of our own future—children who are willing to kill themselves (and one another) for a lie, because they will have tasted of life and found it bitter and pointless and worthless—and would rather die than live.

Now, what was it about that elephant in the living room that no one was willing to talk about? It is the system of public education in this country—a system that has been corrupted by a series of lawsuits *designed* to eradicate God from public life. I can say with near certainty that there is *no hope* of turning public education around. It's just too involved, too ingrained, and it can't be done. For one thing, it will take too long. Changing the court system is the work of a generation—no, two generations—and the lawyers and judges of tomorrow are being educated by that same system we want to change right now. If there's to be any hope at all, it has to be in *private* education. And be warned: Private education will be fought *every step of the way* by the education establishment. The only reason the battle has not been joined more vigorously is because private education is not seen as a threat...yet. But there is reason to believe right now that some of those things are changing.

The Southern Baptist Convention walked right up to the edge of this issue not very long ago and they blinked. A resolution was proposed calling on Baptist churches to get their kids out of the public schools before it was too late. In 2005, a Baptist leader named Albert Mohler, recommended...

in light of the “spiritual, moral, and academic decay in the government schools, Southern Baptists develop an exit strategy from the public schools.”

Bob Unruh - Baptist “Exit Strategy” Means Get Kids Out of Public Schools

A resolution was submitted to the convention; it was somewhat watered down at the time. But now the issue is beginning to heat up again. And I had overlooked this. I had seen the original one. I was saddened by the fact that they walked up to the edge and then backed down. But apparently, that wasn't everybody, and some of them are now beginning to fight again. An article was posted on October 20th by Bob Unruh in *WorldNetDaily*. He said,

If you like sexually transmitted diseases, shootings and high teen pregnancy rates, by all means, send your children to public schools. That's the word from a leader in the fast-growing movement within the 16 million-member Southern Baptist Convention for parents to pull their children from those schools in favor of homeschooling.

The program is called Exit Strategy and Pastor Wiley Drake, whose home state of California has done some things especially offensive to Christians this year, is a leading promoter.

Bob Unruh - Baptist “Exit Strategy” Means Get Kids Out of Public Schools

Well, it had to start somewhere, and when you get California (the liberal state that it is) beginning to pass laws in the public schools that are starting to become a problem, becoming *offensive* to those Christians who send their children there, sooner or later something has to break. Well, they are fighting

this again. They're going to walk right up to the brink again, and we'll see this time whether or not they can push it through. If the public school establishment were paying attention, they really should be worried, because this could make a difference.

In an interview with *WND*, he said that those problems and others are prevalent in public schools, and some Christian leaders even have said it could be considered child abuse just to register children in such a facility.

Bob Unruh - Baptist "Exit Strategy" Means Get Kids Out of Public Schools

And I can already see that sending some people right up the wall, but wait until you think it through.

That's why resolutions encouraging members of the nation's largest Protestant church organization to exit public schools have been submitted in *[Listen to this.]* every SBC state and regional convention in the U.S., he said.

Bob Unruh - Baptist "Exit Strategy" Means Get Kids Out of Public Schools

Okay, wherever Southern Baptists are assembling now, resolutions are being submitted to develop this "Exit Strategy" from the public schools.

"Basically, (the education system) has been saying, 'You have to let us teach your kids anything we want'", said Wiley, citing some of the pro-homosexual material being required in public education.

"Well, we don't like it and we're not going to put up with it", he said.

Bob Unruh - Baptist "Exit Strategy" Means Get Kids Out of Public Schools

They're strong words. I applaud them. But everyone who wants to turn this around had better give close attention to the ballot box and to what candidates for office are saying about your rights; because this kind of talk will arouse the devil in the guise of the ACLU, and laws against homeschooling may not be very far behind. Why do I say the ballot box? For a simple reason. Presidents appoint judges and the Senate has to consent to those judges. That means you're going to have to settle in for the long haul. It is the work of a generation, probably two, and you had better get started. Every day you delay is another day toward disaster. And homeschooling cannot be the only basket you put your eggs in. The Baptists are not a poor denomination. They have resources to begin to develop new private schools. Nor are their pews short of professional teachers, but the teachers are going to have to decide whether their loyalty lies with Christ or the teacher's unions. It may not be possible to straddle that fence.

Mohler *[who started this ball rolling]* is president of the SBC's flagship seminary, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and one of the SBC's leading theologians.

"Dr. Mohler is right, Southern Baptists, and Christians generally, need to plan a Christian educational future for our children", Wiley said. "First, Christian parents are obligated to provide their children with a Christ-centered education. Anyone who thinks that a few hours of youth group and church will have more influence on a child's faith and worldview than 40 to 50

hours a week of public school classes, activities, and homework is simply not being honest with himself.”

Bob Unruh - Baptist “Exit Strategy” Means Get Kids Out of Public Schools

And, *boy*, is that ever the truth!

“Second, the open collaboration between homosexual activists and many school districts, together with the overall level of crime and violence in the public schools, make the public schools an unsafe place for our children”, he said.

Bob Unruh - Baptist “Exit Strategy” Means Get Kids Out of Public Schools

Now, I know that homosexuals and homosexual activists will be up in arms about a statement like this, and the connection may not, to most Americans today, be that obvious; but the apostle Paul made that connection. And if it’s not fair, the gay community needs to work a lot harder to make sure the connection is not there—that they are *not* one of those involved in turning the hearts and minds of children away from God simply because the Bible condemns their behavior. They have a major problem with God: the Bible, Old and New Testament, condemns homosexual behavior—not homosexuals, not gay people, but their behavior. Therefore, they have a vested interest in keeping the Bible away from children. But why? Why can’t they just practice their sex life *in private* and leave the kids out of it? Well, there’s probably an answer to this in there someplace, and I’ll leave it for you to see if you can think it through. Another Baptist leader said,

“Although changing the hearts and minds of people is often a slow process, attitudes about how we educate our children are changing within Southern Baptist life”, said Roger Moran, a member of the SBC’s executive committee. “Increasingly we are recognizing that if we are going to profess the name of Christ, then our lives should be a testimony to authentic Biblical Christianity. Yet, how can we expect our children to have that testimony when they are ‘trained up’ in secular public schools to have a secular mindset that excludes the acknowledgment of God and the Word of God at every point?”

Bob Unruh - Baptist “Exit Strategy” Means Get Kids Out of Public Schools

How, indeed. You know, it will not surprise me if this issue ends up splitting the denomination, for the forces that will work against it are strong and entrenched. After all, most of the Baptists were educated, and are being educated, in public schools.

Bruce Shortt, a co-sponsor of the Exit Strategy solution, came up with a statement that I thought was way overdue. He said,

“What Baptists need to do now is create a new public education system, a system that is public in the sense that it is open to everyone and that takes into account the needs of orphans, single parents, and the disadvantaged. With our existing buildings, our talented people, and the educational technology available today, it is now possible to create rapidly an affordable, effective Christian education alternative to the government schools.”

Bob Unruh - Baptist “Exit Strategy” Means Get Kids Out of Public Schools

Well, good for you Bruce Shortt! May God help you and many others stand tall; because that is *precisely* what needs to be done in our communities around the country. The way is long, the opposition will be strong. It makes you wonder if it will be the Christian schools or the Muslim madrasas that will win in the end. There would not even be *a doubt* if all we faced was the enemy *without*. Sad to say, we now have an enemy *within*.

The First Amendment of the Bill of Rights says this:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; [...]

First Amendment to the United States Constitution

It's in that last part now that the battle is going to be joined. Do we have the freedom to exercise our religion, or not? The battle that lies ahead, lies in the courts who, with the legislature conniving, have not *protected* the right to the free exercise of religion. This is the new battleground in this country, and it will become a matter of life or death.

You know, I never imagined in all my life that I would become a single-issue voter, but I have. My single issue is the protection of religious freedom; for it is on *that freedom* that all the others rest.

Until next time, I'm Ronald Dart, and we *have to* win this one.

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