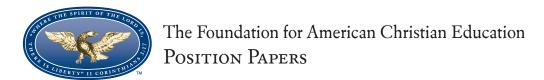
Position Papers 2009

Use of Published School Textbooks



Transforming the Mind and Heart of a Nation



Does the use of modern published textbooks violate the integrity of the Principle Approach®?

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The question of using textbooks is not only one of the quality and nature of available tools and resources, but, more importantly, one of the <u>philosophy of government</u> by which one teaches. Who or what is in control of the curriculum, methodology, pacing, assessment and other facets of the home or school classroom? Secondly, what is the ideology or worldview that is directing and regulating the content, whatever the text source may be—is it good; is it true; and <u>what is its targeted end or purpose</u>?

According to scripture, the first obligation of the Christian parent is to impart the knowledge of God as the "only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning." ¹ Home is the first sphere of education; schoolmasters may be hired to serve the home in upholding its authority. The parent or teacher is the living textbook and governor of learning whose character and scholarship mold the character and scholarship of the student. The most effective learning comes through this relationship, heart to heart and mind to mind. Modern textbooks used exclusively or indiscriminately will impede or distort this natural teaching-learning order.

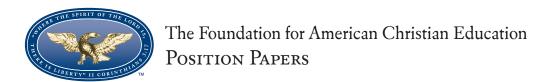
Modern textbooks innately carry the false philosophies and vain conceits of contemporary culture to impose its <u>secular worldview and agenda</u>. They centralize the direction, control, regulation and restraint of information in accordance with the goals and standards of the state and federal governments that fund them. The original American ideals of Christian character and self-government have long been abandoned in contemporary texts and replaced with socialistic and humanistic ideologies. Christian publishers often publish the modern curriculum with the adornment of scripture, or "issues" such as creationism, not recognizing the anti-Christian principles at the core of the text.

America depends for the perpetuation of her liberty on a citizenry tooled in <u>Christian character and self-government</u>. Those principles must serve as the backbone of education generation to generation or be abandoned at the peril of our liberty.

The ongoing generational decline of standards in American education results in teachers who are not masters of the content and who submit their authority in Christ to the supposed superiority of published textbooks. Their lack of dominion makes them ready slaves to the ideologies latent or even blatant in the texts published for schools. The Principle Approach builds the teacher first in a sound philosophy of Christian education and then the student as the teacher becomes the master of the subject and truly the living textbook.

The classroom governed by a Biblical classical philosophy and methodology of education will subordinate the use of appropriate texts to the practice of the Principle Approach methodology and its notebook method towards the end goal and purpose of forming Christian character, self-government and scholarship in the American student.

¹ Slater, Rosalie J. *Teaching and Learning America's Christian History: the Principle Approach.* FACE: San Francisco, 1964, fronticepiece (facsimile of the oldest extant document which, in type, clearly recognizes the existence of Harvard College is a precious pamphlet with this title, 'New England's First Fruits in respect to the Progress of Learning in the College at Cambridge, in Massachusetts Bay,' ... It was published in London in 1643, the year following the graduation of our first class of nine members ..." Rev. George E. Ellis, 1884



DOCUMENTATION

The Biblical Foundations, Key Definitions, and Supporting Documents and References

I. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Ephesians 4:11-16 (KJV) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and **teachers**; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in^{2d} the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

<u>Galatians 4:1,2 (KJV)</u> Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

<u>Philippians 4:8 (KJV)</u> Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

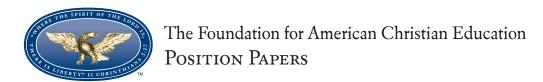
<u>I Timothy 1:3-7 (KJV)</u> As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do*. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned: from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

Romans 12:2 (KJV) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

2 Timothy 2:14-18 (KJV) Of these things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker^{3b}: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

^{2d} in: or, into

^{3b} canker: or, gangrene



<u>I Corinthians 10:5 (KJV)</u> Casting down imaginations^{4c}, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

<u>Colossians 2:8 (KJV)</u> Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments^{5c} of the world, and not after Christ.

II. DEFINITIONS OF KEY WORDS

All definitions are taken from Webster, Noah. Noah Webster's First Edition of An American Dictionary of the English Language. Anaheim, CA: Foundation for American Christian Education, 2006 (unless otherwise noted). Underlines and highlights added.

GOVERN, v.t. [Fr. gouverner L. guberno seems to be a compound.] 1. To direct and control, as the actions or conduct of men, either by established laws or by arbitrary will; to regulate by authority; to keep within the limits prescribed by law or sovereign will . . . Every man should govern well his own family. 2. To regulate; to influence; to direct. 3. To control; to restrain; to keep in due subjection; as, to govern the passions or temper. 4. To direct; to steer; to regulate the course or motion . . .

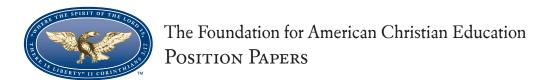
TEXT-BOOK, n. In *universities* and *colleges*, a classic author written with wide spaces between the lines, to give room for the observations or interpretation dictated by the master or regent. Cyc. 2. A book containing the leading principles or most important points of a science or branch of learning, arranged in order for the use of students.

EDUCATION, n. [L. educo, educare; e and duco, to lead.] The bringing up, as of a child; instruction; formation of manners. Education comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations. To give children a good education in manners, arts and science, is important; to give them a religious education is indispensable; and an immense responsibility rests on parents and guardians who neglect these duties.

Good, a. [Sax. god or good, . . . fit, suitable, seems to be the same word. The primary sense is strong, from extending, advancing, whence free, large, abundant, fit, and particularly, strong, firm, valid, [like valid, from valeo; worth, virtue, from vireo . . . to be strong.] 2. <u>Valid</u>; sound; not weak, false or fallacious. 3. Complete or sufficiently perfect in its kind; having the physical qualities best adapted to its design and use; opposed to bad, imperfect, corrupted, impaired. 4. Having moral qualities best adapted to its design and use, or the qualities which God's law requires; virtuous; pious; religious; applied to persons, and opposed to bad, vitious, wicked, evil. 8. Sound; perfect; uncorrupted; undamaged. 13. Full; complete.

^{4c} imaginations: or, reasonings

^{5c} rudiments: or, elements



VALID, *a.* [Fr. *valide*; L. from *valeo*, to be strong. The primary sense of the root is to strain or stretch.] 1. Having sufficient strength or force; founded in truth; sound; just; good; that can be supported; not weak or defective. 2. Having legal strength or force; efficacious; executed with the proper formalities; that cannot be rightfully overthrown or set aside; supportable by law or right.

DOCTRINE, n.. [L. doctrine, from doceo, to teach.] 1. In a general sense, whatever is taught. Hence, a principle or position in any science; whatever is laid down as true by an instructor or master. The doctrines of the gospel are the principles or truths taught by Christ and his apostles. The doctrines of Plato are the principles which he taught. Hence a doctrine may be true or false; it may be a mere tenet or opinion. 2. The act of teaching. He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in his doctrine. Mark 4. 3. Learning; knowledge. Whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Is. 28. 4. The truths of the gospel in general. That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. Tit. 2. 5. Instruction and confirmation in the truths of the gospel. 2 Tim. 3.

Knowledge, n. [Chaucer, knowleching, from knowleche, to acknowledge. Qu. the sense of lech.] 1. A clear and certain perception of that which exists, or of truth and fact; the perception of the connection and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of our ideas. Encyc. Locke. We can have no knowledge of that which does not exist. God has a perfect knowledge of all his works. Human knowledge is very limited, and is mostly gained by observation and experience. 2. Learning; illumination of mind. Ignorance is the curse of God, Knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. Shak. 3. Skill; as a knowledge of seamanship. 4. Acquaintance with any fact or person. I have no knowledge of the man or thing. 5. Cognizance; notice. Ruth 2. 6. Information; power of knowing. Sidney. 7. Sexual intercourse. But it is usual to prefix carnal; as carnal knowledge.

III. CITATIONS FROM SOURCES

From Teaching and Learning America's Christian History: The Principle Approach, p. 52-53, by Rosalie Slater, discussing the role of textbooks in the secularization of American education

It is evident that the de-Christianization of America has received its greatest impetus through the *secularization* of education. From a people proud of a great heritage founded upon the Bible as *the textbook of liberty* we have become a people who today permit the *legislation of atheism* into our schools under the pretext that the "open Bible" and prayer—"the weapons of our warfare"—might offend. Yet Paul the great Christian patriot of the first century establishes the standard by which we can be true to ourselves and thus to others when he states: "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." Acts 24:16

America—the only nation in history ever to establish a government and a Constitution upon principles of Christian liberty derived from the Word of God—America forgot.

But the subversion of Christianity through education did not occur easily in a nation so dedicated to fulfilling God's purpose for America. And while we might be tempted to believe that the accomplishment of this secularization of education occurred when the highest court in our land—the Supreme Court—ruled on the Prayer Case of 1962, it is not so. One cannot legislate Christianity out of a nation through the courts—it must occur first through *individual acceptance* of an educational system without God or Christ as its foundation.

Thus, the records show, that when individuals, churches, communities yielded up to the state the control and direction of education it was then that the Bible became "as the words of a book that is sealed."

In the years 1837–1848 Horace Mann, whom John Dewey designated as "the father of progressive education," made a series of Annual Reports to the Massachusetts Board of Education of which he was Secretary. These Reports paved the way for a state financed, state directed, and ultimately a state controlled education program superseding local control through the demand for "standardization" of school structures, textbooks, curriculum and teacher training and certification. But even this might not have proved so effective in the "secularization" of education had we not deliberately removed the Bible as the basis of our Christian character and substituted for salvation and regeneration of heart a psychological atheism which found man innately "good" and society "bad."

There were many alert clergymen of the time of Horace Mann who were aware of his "condition" for the drive to achieve "universal public education." This "condition" was that Christianity be *neutralized* for the larger goal of building, not Christian character and conscience, but *humanitarians* with *benevolent inclinations* toward mankind. And for those individuals who wished the schools to teach a patriotism which indicated how great was "the faith of our fathers" there was substituted a bland form of *non-controversial democracy* and "citizenship in the state." Thus the public school was able to accomplish that which the hired European mercenaries of England never could—namely to separate our patriotism from our Christian conviction.

The threat of "control" of both the *degree* and *amount* of Christianity in the schools is foreshadowed in this statement by the Reverend Mathew Hale Smith— one of the fundamental clergy whose challenges to Horace Mann in print were rewarded by labels of *extremism*:

"The principles of piety, as you illustrate and enforce them, exclude all that treats of human depravity—salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ—the atonement and the sanctions to a good life, drawn from the world to come. All these common truths, held by nine-tenths of all in this State, who profess any form of Christian faith, are ruled out of schools by the high authority of the Secretary of the Board of Education; they are declared to be sectarian and unconstitutional. You have settled by the authority of the Board, or without that authority, what Piety is, according to the statute. Your influence is derived from the Legislature; through you, the people are told what they must receive and be satisfied with, as a construction of the Constitution. All towns must hear—all districts obey, else incur the penalty of forfeiture of their portion of the school money." ⁶

⁶ Slater, Rosalie J.; Hall, Verna M.: *Teaching and Learning America's Christian History*. American Revolution Bicentennial ed. San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1975, p. 51.

From Teaching and Learning America's Christian History: The Principle Approach®, p. 91, by Rosalie Slater, discussing the political nature of modern education and its texts vs. Christian method and practice

Progressive Education Is Political Not Educational.

As educators in Christian schools, we need to become aware of the fact that progressive education is not educationally oriented. Progressive education is politically oriented to produce both the philosophy and the character of socialism. It is also quite evident that even Christian schools have been permeated with the evolutionary philosophy—particularly in the use of evolutionary and progressive methods of teaching. Our purpose here, however, is neither to document nor to debate about the degree to which Christian schools are using secular methods, texts, or teachers. Our purpose is, instead, to ask ourselves how and to what degree can we establish Christian standards so that the philosophy, the curriculum and the methods "testify of me"—Christ.

The Need to Practice Christian Method

While there are few textbooks written from the standpoint of Christian philosophy it is still possible for Christian schools to establish a school curriculum which is Christian in content. Like the widow of old whom Elisha questioned, "Tell me, what hast thou in the house?" we must look at what God hath already provided. In returning the documentation of America's Christian History—a documentation which has been deleted from our educational systems, our seminaries and our Christian colleges for over one hundred years—we can begin with what we have in our own house.

This guide, Teaching and Learning America's Christian History, is the effort to establish Christian Method in the curriculum of the Christian School. While it might look as if we were dealing with the subject of Christian government—actually, we are teaching principles which are basic to every Christian in every area of life. For what constitutes the Constitution is what constitutes the life and character of our people. If the American character has been shaped, moulded, and formed by the environmental approach to life and living—we shall be externally or materially oriented and educated. If instead, as we understand Christian education to begin with salvation—the internal commitment of heart and mind to the saving grace of JESUS CHRIST—then we are concerned as to whether we are extending the Christian approach—internal—to our methods of teaching.⁷

⁷ Slater, Rosalie J.; Hall, Verna M.: *Teaching and Learning America's Christian History*. American Revolution Bicentennial ed. San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1975, p. 91.

From, A Republic If You Can Keep It, p. 39, by Gai Ferdon, discussing the impact of postmodernism on modern publications—the "deconstruction" of language and history

Linguistic Relativism: Language Deconstruction

By language deconstruction, or *linguistic relativism*, postmodernists assume that words are incapable of conveying definitive truth statements, or as Naugle states, "It casts serious doubt about the ability of language to represent reality accurately and objectively." The denial of transcendence simultaneously discredits the existence of objective, final truth, and therefore, the viability of comprehensive truth claims. "Worldviews†" then, "once deconstructed, are reduced to a self-referential system of linguistic signifiers dispossessed of any authentic metaphysical, epistemological, or moral import." "Language," understood this way, "is arbitrary," with virtually no limits to "the kinds of meanings or interpretations readers may find in or attribute to texts." As Veith notes, language is merely "a cultural creation," and therefore, "meaning is ultimately . . . a social construction . . ."

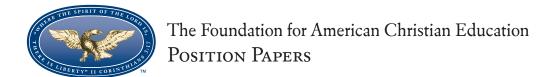
Postmodernism releases readers from the linguistic confines of texts and the intentions of authors; instead, each reader is encouraged to develop his own "personal" interpretation. In this regard, the authority of the reader transcends authors and their works, with the added expectation that they will derive meanings to match their cultural, economic, political, or legal concerns, as well as gender, religious, and ethnic interests. Gertrude Himmelfarb*, a premier American intellectual historian known for her work on Victorian England, asserts in "Tradition and Creativity in the Writing of History" (1992), that postmodernism attempts "to free history . . . from the constraints of a delusive methodology," with an "ultimate," "even more ambitious" aspiration "to liberate us all from the coercive ideas of reality and truth," including deliverance "from the shackles of an authoritarian ideology."

Postmoderns incorporate a more subversive level of textual suspicion and distrust in their deconstructionist methods; language is always wielded as a tool of power to abuse inherent relational antagonisms, leading to dominance and oppression. "Every human discourse is a power play, every social arrangement oppressive, and every cultural setting tyrannical . . ."

In other words, "language is merely one beast using words as tools to get power over another beast."

Historical Relativism: The Past Cannot Be Truly Known—All Narratives Are Equally Valid

The implications of deconstructionism upon the writing of history are profoundly unsettling. If no transcendent entity exists to assist us in forming a metanarrative to transmit meaning, interpret the past, or write the present, then historical narratives and national histories will be dismantled in as many directions as there are readers. Traditional scholarship, which required rigorous interaction with primary sources and the search for authorial intent, is replaced with a type of literary iconoclasm typically deployed in the service of the "oppressed," whose ranks have swelled to include almost all groups except white Anglo-American-European heterosexual males. Though cultural relativism requires that no nation's past be narrated more



prominently than another, postmodernism tends to elevate the histories of so-called oppressed non-western cultures. National narratives are re-written for purposes of social justice as an attempt to equalize the political, economic, and social aspects of societies. Alvin J. Schmidt, in his book *Menace of Multiculturalism* (1997) protests this agenda:

Multiculturalists often damn the facts of history . . . by publishing "noble lies" that will make minorities and ethnic groups feel good, as well as make their cultures appear equal, or perhaps even superior, to the Euro-American . . . So, for instance, if the goal is defined as worthy, presenting false accounts as authentic history in school textbooks is justified. And consistent with postmodernism's argument that truth is only true when it benefits minority groups, false accounts are not false if they will contribute to the well-being of minority or underprivileged groups.

Gertrude Himmelfarb observes this, warning that postmodernism "confronts us with a far more subversive form of relativism" that is "so radical," and "so absolute, as to be antithetical to both history and truth." Not only does it spurn "suprahistorical truths but historical truths, truths relative to particular times and places." Such a "denial involves a repudiation of the historical enterprise as it has been understood and practiced very recently." She is exceptional in capturing postmodernism's radical reading of texts, and her startling observations are worth reiterating to emphasize its toxic consequences for the American historical record.

In literature, postmodernism amounts to a denial of the fixity of any "text," of the authority of the author over the interpreter, of any "canon" that privileges great books over comic books. In law, it is the denial of the fixity of the Constitution, of the authority of the founders of the Constitution, and of the legitimacy of the law itself, which is regarded as nothing more than an instrument of the ruling class. In philosophy, it is the denial of the fixity of language and reality, indeed of any "essential" reality and thus of any proximate truth about reality. In history, it is the denial of the fixity of the past, of the reality of the past, apart from what the historian chooses to make of it, and thus of any objective truth about the past. Postmodernist history, one might say, recognizes no reality principle, only the pleasure principle—history at the pleasure of the historian.

By dismissing the existence of "reality apart from language, it subverts the structure of society together with the structure of language." This "principle of indeterminacy," as Himmelfarb explains, "is an invitation to creation *ex nihilo*," as "It presents the historian with a *tabula rasa* on which he may inscribe whatever he chooses, including the most deterministic of theories."

This is why the indeterminacy of postmodernism lends itself to the determinacy of the race/class/gender trinity. By deconstructing the "text" of the past, new histories can be created in accord with the race/class/gender dispositions of their creators.

A deconstructionist approach to history writing, what the postmodernist considers a "higher form of history," is synonymous with "historiographic metafiction."

Since postmodernism assumes a radical moral and cultural relativism, "there is no truth or reality in history." As a matter of fact, history cannot be characterized as consisting of "events—only 'texts' to be interpreted in accord with the interest and disposition of the historian."

The relationship between postmodernism and multiculturalism is obvious. It is only if history is thoroughly relativized, and purged of any such transcendent ideas as truth, objectivity, or reality, that race, class, ethnicity, and gender can maintain the dominant roles they now have. No history, in this view, can be "privileged" over any other. None is more true, more real, more significant than any other. Each group creates history in its own image, in its own interests, and from its own perspective.

History is now imagined and created in the "image" of the historian, who writes on behalf of a disenfranchised group, or in the interests of the "oppressed." The general implications of postmodernism for American history, with its religious, civil and legal institutions, should be apparent.⁸

The Christian History of the American Revolution: Consider and Ponder, p. 255, by Verna Hall, Noah Webster discussing the link between Christian principles and civil liberty

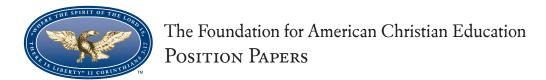
Almost all the civil liberty now enjoyed in the world owes its origin to the principles of the Christian religion. Men began to understand their natural rights, as soon as the reformation from popery began to dawn in the sixteenth century, and civil liberty has been gradually advancing and improving as genuine Christianity has prevailed...the religion which has introduced civil liberty, is the religion of Christ and his apostles, which enjoins humility, piety, and benevolence; which acknowledges in every person a brother, or a sister, and a citizen with equal rights. This is genuine Christianity, and to this we owe our free constitutions of government . . . 9

A Guide to American Christian Education for the Home and School: The Principle Approach®, p. 136, by James Rose, discussing Principle Approach curriculum development, and p. 138 discussing the notebook method

When the Principle Approach—America's biblical method of education, was reintroduced, it was discovered that the "new wine" of individual learning could not be placed in the old wine skins of workbooks. When individual teachers and students do their own researching, reasoning, relating and recording from the Biblical and historical principles of a subject, they need an individualized accounting of their own productivity . . . the notebook came back into its own . . . one of the primary tools of America's historic Christian method

⁸ Ferdon, Gai M.: *A Republic If You Can Keep It.* San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 2007, S. 31 (See also Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 5)

⁹ Hall, Verna M.: *The Christian History of the American Revolution : Consider and Ponder*. San Francisco : Foundation for American Christian Education, 1976, S. 255



of developing a character for Christian scholarship and independence . . . While contemporary workbook methods require instruments for teaching that are essentially mechanical and sterile in character, America's traditional notebook methods strive for inspirational teaching which in its character is spiritual and quickening. Workbook methods demand little of teachers and less of students in the way of scholarship and individual mastery of subject material . . . Most students will progress no further than where they are being led by their teachers. Christian teachers must demand of themselves what they envision for their students. Notebook Methodology sets Christian educators free from prescription scholastics, and encourages them to exercise original, Biblical scholarship of the caliber which resulted in the world's first Christian Republic . . . Teachers are the expositors of divine principles and the examples of right reasoning. It is their individuality, productivity, industry, self-government, progress, and accountability which are reflected upon and imitated by students. Students will record in their minds and hearts, as well as on paper, the teacher's posture, words, thoughts, arguments, and wisdom . . . Displacing workbooks with notebooks opens the classroom to Christian government of that classroom and its individual students. With Notebook Methodology, government of the classroom and students is republican. The chief controls stem from the ministry of teacher to students, within, not from without as coming in the form of packaged curriculum. Notebook Methodology is suited for the restoration of America's Biblical principles of civil government by the professing and the practicing of these principles.

IV. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

- 1. Foundations I: Course 3-Biblical Worldview
- 2. Foundations I: Course 4—History of Education
- 3. Foundations I: Course 5—The Importance of Words