



H. Armstrong Roberts

Middle America Is Moving To Private **EDUCATION**

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■ FOR THOSE of us who are approaching the age at which we can buy Geritol without a note from our parents, the most cherished memories of our youth include those of the first day of each school year. Next to Christmas, and the beginning of summer vacation, the start of school was the most anticipated. For our children it can be something quite different. It

might mean a long bus ride into an innercity slum where the faces at the school are anything but smiling and friendly. Even when they avoid that fate, the opening of school can mean the beginning of another semester of collectivist indoctrination. Instead of being a period of joy and excitement, it is often one filled with fear and foreboding by either the child, the

parents, or all three. The old schoolhouse ain't what it used to be. And it never will be again.

America's public schools are now a \$130 billion a year hustle. And the people know it. A 1978 Gallup Poll shows that only thirty-six percent of Americans give the public schools a satisfactory rating, compared with forty-eight percent in 1974. The litany of parental objections is as long as Wilt Chamberlain's arm.

While the cost of the public school system has rocketed from an average of \$657 per student in 1969 to \$1,800 per pupil in 1979, scores on standardized reading and arithmetic tests and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (College Boards) have been sinking remorselessly since 1964. The newspapers carry horror stories about high schools graduating "scholars" who can neither read the words on their diplomas nor follow instructions well enough to hold a job. Reading and math experts lament that a whole generation is being intellectually crippled.

Meanwhile, the curricula are filled with all kinds of sociological gobbledegook which usually alienate children from the traditional values of their parents. The latest fad in education is called "values education," which is simply "situation ethics" dressed up in a new name to get by parents who think their children are being taught morality. But "values education" attacks values. The message is that everything is totally subjective as children are asked to make decisions concerning all kinds of impossible lifeboat situations. ("Who should live if a teacher, social worker, prostitute, and businessman are on a sinking ship and there is room for only two in the lifeboat?")

Parents who were upset when prayer was banned from the classroom are now beside themselves as the schools have become not simply neutral on

religion but openly anti-Christian. The new religion of the public school system is secular humanism, which is man-centered and anti-God. Originated by Christians to teach their children to read the Bible, the public schools now engage in mandatory sex education without moral training and teach pornography in English classes under the guise of literature. Homosexuality is taught in some schools as no more than an alternative lifestyle. The educationists' *Humanist Manifesto II* openly states: "... Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. ... We strive for the good life, here and now."

The public school has become the laboratory for the social experimenter who scoffs at traditional concepts. His tabernacle is the school bus in which tens of thousands of students are against the wishes of their parents hauled across cities in the name of social balance. Despite the energy crunch, this situation will doubtless worsen as the usual radical groups institute suits to require bussing across county lines to include whites who have fled to the suburbs.

The erosion of discipline in the public schools has meanwhile produced devastating effects on the entire educational process. In its mildest form, learning in the classroom is made more difficult because of noisy and disruptive students. The uglier aspects include widespread muggings and extortions in the hallways and on the playgrounds. With distressing frequency boys are beaten in schools and girls raped. Student drug pushers keep a sizable minority of their classmates supplied with pills and joints, and it is not unusual for students to show up for class unable to function. Many teachers are afraid to discipline their charges, and administrators claim they can't legally do so as the

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courts labor to expand the immunity of student thugs. This situation will doubtless worsen during this federally funded Year of the Child as the advocates of "child rights" continue their political and legal assaults on traditional discipline.

Compulsory attendance laws have combined with the breakdown in discipline to populate the schools with unteachable hoodlums who can't learn anything themselves but can and do prevent others from learning. Ten percent of the students cause eighty to ninety percent of the problems in most public schools, but there is little or nothing that can be done about it. Our "Liberals" have turned the asylum over to the inmates.

The public schools have been politicized, and there is almost nothing that responsible parents can do about it. Virtually all teachers in the public systems belong to the National Education Association (N.E.A.), whose leaders have openly boasted that they intend to make their organization of 1.9 million members the most powerful lobby in the country. Besides its open endorsement of political candidates eager to vote ever greater largess for the public schools, N.E.A. now avowedly supports compulsory education from earliest childhood, behavior modification, sex education, population control, World Gov-

ernment, the Equal Rights Amendment, a federal environmental policy, decriminalization of marijuana, a federal energy takeover, secular humanism, a Cabinet-level Department of Education, federal day-care centers, expanded public welfare, socialized medicine, teacher strikes, racial bussing, and increased federal aid and authority over the schools.

It would indeed be hard to find a single goal or program of the radical Left which the N.E.A. does *not* officially endorse. On the other hand, the National Education Association openly opposes local control of public schools, local financing of public schools, parental supervision of textbooks, standardized tests that measure student and teacher performance, Proposition 13-type tax cuts, and tuition tax credits for parents with students in private schools.

Little wonder that the people now hold the public school system in about the same low esteem as they do the performance of Jimmy Carter. Middle Americans are beginning to blame almost everything they find disconcerting about their country on the public school system. Whether it be the downplaying of patriotism, the erosion of the work ethic, the epidemic of drug use, increased rudeness, lack of respect for parents, sexual immorality, or the general lack of

responsibility, the public school system and its "new curriculum" are seen as having exacerbated the problem.

The question has become: Should parents keep their children in the public schools while working to reform them, or should they take them out of the public schools and enroll them in sound private schools? Opinion is sharply divided on this question. The first inclination of many is to try to save the public schools. Most of us, after all, attended public schools and were reasonably satisfied with them. Also, none of us is anxious to abandon the battleground to "Liberal" educators voting themselves subsidies out of our pockets. Besides, even illiterate products of the public schools will be entering the voting booths in a very short time and helping to select our political leaders. Abandoning the government schools to the "Liberals" could invite political suicide.

Many idealistic Conservatives are trying to save the public schools. Organizations such as the Council for Basic Education are fighting to return basics to the classrooms. Parents have fought to win control of local school boards, sometimes taking their battle to the courts. For example, the people in Kanawha County, West Virginia, have finally won a five-year fight to have outrageously pornographic books removed from the curricula of the local elementary schools.

Unfortunately, more and more, public schools are being removed from the authority of the local school boards. Professor Roger Freeman of the prestigious Hoover Institution at Stanford tells us:

"Federal rules and supervision now govern virtually all actions with regard to faculty and staff — recruitment, selection, compensation, promotion, dismissal, and pensions. They also govern the construction, features, and use of buildings; the ad-

mission, advancement, and graduation of students, and the granting of financial aid . . . and many aspects of both the curriculum and extracurricular activities.

"Federal influence generally aims not at attaining academic excellence but at social engineering and the accomplishment of political goals. Furthermore, most federal controls were imposed not by Congress but by the Executive branch Federal agencies now crack the whip over some hundred thousand lower schools (elementary and secondary) We are moving toward a national system of education"

As usual, Big Brother used your money to initiate this. First comes the carrot and then the stick. Again, we quote Freeman: "It is a supreme irony that this massive drive [for federalizing education] produced pervasive control of schools and colleges with very little financial aid. For about a dozen years now, federal funds have held steady at between 10 and 11 percent of the revenue receipts of schools and colleges (public and private). This means that the institutions must still raise about 90 percent of their funds from state, local, and private sources. Thus, with an investment of, currently, \$14 billion a year, the Federal Government has acquired effective control over the educational establishment, which, with a \$130 billion annual budget, six million employees, and sixty million 'customers' (most of them full-time), is America's biggest industry — and probably its most influential in terms of the nation's future. More shrewdly than any stock manipulator, Uncle Sam has parlayed a small investment into an immense gain in power."

Big Brother is shrewd all right. And as this is written he is laboring to expand his reach again. Congress is engaged in a very close fight over wheth-

er to cave in to the N.E.A. and create a new \$14 billion Department of Education employing twenty-four thousand federal bureaucrats.

Little wonder that many Americans have reluctantly concluded that reform of the public school system is now impossible. Even where Conservative forces win the local battles for the school board, the victory rings ever more hollow each year. The brutal truth is that in most communities the school board is now a ceremonial body whose job is to rubber-stamp directives from the state capital and Washington, D.C. Local taxpayers are thus left at the mercy of elitist bureaucrats beyond their control — collectivists who are in fact contemptuous of the independent and conservative middle class and its values. And these "new class" operators now hold the children of the middle class as hostages in the public schools.

Many parents have been forced to conclude that it is impossible to reform the public schools in time to protect their children from the perversity of the current system. They respond by turning to private schools.

This is a dramatic change for the middle class. Except for the parochial schools, private academies had long been viewed by Middle America as snob schools for the very wealthy. But private schools are now springing up across America to rival the Exeters, Lawrenceilles, and Grotons in which the sons of the Establishment have long been prepared for college. And these new private institutions are being supported by Middle Americans at considerable sacrifice — so that their children can be taught to read, write, figure, love their country, respect their parents, and revere God.

There are many built-in advantages to encouraging a system of private schools. For one thing, they are based on competition. But while "Lib-

erals" recognize monopoly as stifling in the business world, they have done everything possible to create a monopoly public school system. The fact is that the best way to improve education in America is by making the entire system competitive, with parents and students able to "comparison shop." Competition among the private academies forces such schools to be efficient in order to keep tuition down and attract as many qualified students as possible. The schools must do their job — teaching what the parents who pay the bills want their children to learn.

And competition between schools encourages not only diversity among the choice of schools but harmonious relationships in each. Within the public school system conflict is inevitable. Any large school district will include parents who are Conservative, "Liberal," and Socialist. There will be Protestants, Catholics, Jews, agnostics, and atheists. There will be parents who want their children taught creationism and others who want emphasis on the theory of evolution. Some will want sex education for their children while others will insist that it be handled at home or by the church. There will be parents who want a dress code, while others will not. Some parents will urge strict discipline and others will prefer that a more permissive policy be followed. The problems go on and on. Within the public system it is impossible not to trample on the values and freedoms of almost everyone. Only a system of competitive private schools can provide the diversity of instruction and learning environment demanded by what the "Liberals" call "a pluralistic society." Only the availability of options will assure harmony.

It seems ironic that while the average American is opposed to socialized industry, socialized medicine, and

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other socialized services as being inherently inefficient, the most important service of all has been turned over to a socialist system. Government schools, after all, are socialist schools. It gets down to whether one thinks the best education can be provided most efficiently by politicians and bureaucrats or by market-oriented educational entrepreneurs.

It really should not come as any great surprise that a socialist school system tends to promote socialism. It would be illogical to expect anything else. Certainly Christians should not be surprised that a public school system in which religion may not be taught tends to promote the concept that the social ethic is more important than God. Secular humanism is the *logical* religion of those who look to the state to solve man's problems and heal his pain. Socialism is the *logical* political philosophy of those who draw their checks from government. It is not without meaning that socialists regard the public schools as a sacred cow. Without socialized education, collectivists could not achieve a socialized economy. Karl Marx knew what he was doing when he made tax-financed public education one of the ten planks of the *Communist Manifesto*.

But Middle America is catching on, and as the public schools disintegrate

private schools are proliferating. About ten percent of America's elementary and secondary students are now in private schools. The largest number of these are in the approximately ten thousand Catholic schools educating 2.8 million students. It is estimated that there are now eight thousand private Protestant and secular schools, but nobody knows for sure how many there are because, fortunately, there is no central clearinghouse where private schools must register.

Sad to say, the Catholic schools have in recent years been declining in number and in enrollment even as other private schools have been expanding rapidly. Between 1964 and 1974 the Catholic schools lost almost twenty percent of their enrollment. It is not that Catholics are less concerned about their pollution than Protestants, but as "Liberalism" hit the Church there was a sharp reduction in teaching religious and many Catholic schools adopted the secular curriculum of the state schools. An article in the January 1976 issue of *Educational Leadership* reports that there is "... an almost common curriculum among Catholic and public schools. ... The pervasive social underpinnings for both systems seem to be nearly identical now, and the curricula which stem from their shared

basic values will probably continue to look more and more alike." Where that is so, naturally, the schools that require a tuition are those that tend to decline. Fortunately, Catholic schools are highly decentralized, which means that there are still many of high quality which have refused to become carbon copies of the public schools.

Meanwhile, traditional Christian schools supported by Protestants have been multiplying at the astounding rate of three a day. Many were founded when forced integration came to the South in the Sixties. Bussing proved to be the last straw for parents in many areas all over the country. Last year, for example, ten thousand students dropped out of the Los Angeles Public School System when courts ordered children bussed from the San Fernando Valley to beautiful downtown Watts.

All of this is sending "Liberals" into lachrymose rages that rival a typhoon. Typical is "Liberal" political commentator Richard Reeves, who observes in *Esquire* for November 7, 1978: "Government is the enemy now. Marge Timenpel, of Leland, for instance, refused to allow her children to be bused to Barton Hills and then joined the committee that welcomed black Barton Hills students bused to [private] Leland School. And quite naturally the effort that the rebelling parents have put into building their schools from scratch has united them in a spirit and dedication that is strikingly positive except . . . except for the fact that these are people who have consciously set out to destroy the public school system and, incidentally, to condemn poor children to the stunningly bad education currently being provided in most all Los Angeles innercity schools. They don't hate the black and Mexican-Americans who made up two-thirds of the city's public school population before this be-

gan. They are totally indifferent to those poor kids — in that way, I think, they represent the consensus of white America, and that is why their do-it-yourself rebellion has such potential for spreading to other areas They are respectable vigilantes."

Here is the "Liberal" mentality at work. You should be willing to sacrifice your children into the maw of criminality and socialism for the greater good of the poor. We do not know where the "Liberal" Richard Reeves sends his children to school, or even if he has any, but we do note that virtually without exception the progeny of "Liberal" Congressmen and Senators avoid the public schools in Washington, D.C., like the plague. This as their "Liberal" fathers deliver pompous oratory singing the praises of bussing and public schools. Sauce for the Middle American goose is vinegar for the elitist gander.

Reeves continues, asking: "Where will it end? The rebels of Los Angeles talk of victory and a separate school system for their children and children of their children. The Palisades Village School, [private school organizer David] Thomsen's baby, is negotiating for property to build a 700-student school. Neighborhood One [another new private school] has students registered through 1988. And, probably it will end with a poorer America, an increasingly segmented society, more and more self-oriented, with those who can, doing for themselves. For those who can't, like kids in Watts, that's tough. That, as Dave Thomsen says, is the real world."

As you can see, when the middle class chooses to secede from chaos, "Liberals" complain. Collectivists operate on the octane theory. If you mix some high-octane minds with low-octane minds you get a raised average and society benefits. And all it will cost you is the good character,

safety, and education of your children. You are not supposed to complain about the crime, the drugs, the immorality, or the low academic achievement in the public schools. Just see that your youngsters arrive at the bus stop promptly at seven o'clock each morning and pay your taxes. The social planners will take it from there.

The "Liberal" view that we must submit our offspring to public education as a social duty is rejected by Conservatives. Americanists hold that education is for the benefit of the individual, not of society or the government. The individual wishes to become a happier and more productive person so he studies to improve himself. That he or she also becomes a better citizen, neighbor, contributor, and member of society by doing so reflects corollary advantages which our country receives because of *individual* benefit freely pursued.

The irony is that far from building a better society, the public school system is a major contributor to our society's obvious disintegration. The more who can be saved from the disintegration, the better for the individual as well as for society. Abraham Lincoln said the obvious more than a century ago when he pointed out that you don't build up the weak by tearing down the strong. Yet that is precisely what our "Liberals" advocate. Worse, while the strong are being ruined by the public school system, the weak are not benefitting.

Another major argument against abandoning the public school system is that when children become adults they will have to live in the real (pluralist) world. Therefore, we are told, being educated in a safe, lily-white, middle class, and traditional private school does not prepare our children for life. This argument seems persuasive to a lot of civic-minded types who mean well but do not understand the

principles involved. The argument might have had some validity for the sons of grocers during the period when private schools were primarily the training ground for the offspring of the very wealthy. But the private schools which have been opening by the thousands across the country are no more elitist than the neighborhood schools of the Fifties. While they tend to be middle to upper-middle class and predominantly white, that

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Accelerated Christian Education,
2747 Oakland, Bay G, Garland, Texas
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**American Association of Christian
Schools,** 6601 N.W. 167th Street, Miami,
Florida 33015

Association For Christian Schools,
Box 35096, Houston, Texas 77001

**Association of Christian Schools In-
ternational,** Box 4097, Whittier, Califor-
nia 90607

Center for Independent Education,
Box 2256, Wichita, Kansas 67201

Christian Schools International,
Midland, Michigan 48640

The Fairfax Christian School, 11121
Pope's Head Road, Fairfax, Virginia 22030

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too is the way of the real world as they will know it.

As they grow to adulthood, our children will live among people of a similar racial and ethnic background. The world over, adults tend to live among people who share their cultural, religious, and economic values. Nobody deliberately moves into a slum. Why, then, should we bus our children into such an environment? Adults avoid criminals, perverts, dullards, and

other low types whenever possible. Why should we send our children to school with them? It is true that our employment may require that we work with some with whom we would not otherwise choose to associate, but the better our education the less likely this is to happen. "Liberals" want us to put our progeny on the innercity *Titanic* for a nice boat ride. They don't seem to understand why so many are resisting.

A third argument used against private schools is that they are anti-democratic and will hurt national unity. This one was floating around long before the dramatic growth of private academies. Dr. James Conant, one of the founding fathers of progressive education, declared in a speech at Harvard in the Fifties: "I do believe however, that there is some reason to fear lest a dual system of secondary education may in some states, at least, come to threaten the democratic unity provided by our public schools. I refer to the desire of some people to increase the scope and number of private schools To my mind our schools serve all creeds. The greater the proportion of our youth who attend independent schools, the greater the threat to our democratic unity."

What Conant was pushing was a monolithic educational system run by the government — the hallmark of totalitarian states since the age of Sparta. It is the ultimate in hypocrisy to maintain that as parents we should meekly submit while the public schools teach our children to challenge their faith, their country, and our authority and values as parents. That isn't democracy, that's masochism.

"Liberals" also claim that to withdraw one's child from the public school system is to try to deal with problems by avoiding them. Yet it is they who have made sure that parents have virtually no say in the local

school system. The dice have been loaded. The parent can either surrender the child to chaos, ineptitude, and radical indoctrination in the socialist system or resort to a private school.

And bear in mind that just because a school is private does not mean that it pursues a rigorous academic curriculum in a disciplined environment. Some private schools are more progressive and permissive than the local public schools. Most, however, are appealing to the major market for such education — which is one of orderly, traditional, and rigorous academic training.

What about the facilities of these schools? Again, diversity is the rule. Facilities run the gamut from those surpassing the most opulent public school to a single room in a teacher's home. Many, particularly the Christian schools, meet in church buildings.

And obtaining an outstanding faculty is a less difficult task for private schools. First, there is an oversupply of professional teachers. And many of the best from public schools are now eager to escape the drones and unteachables that compulsory education salts into their classrooms. Also, many Christian teachers resent having to teach the anti-Christian secular humanism required in the state institutions and are eager to work in Christian schools even at a reduction in pay. Since thousands of public schoolteachers are each year hospitalized with injuries sustained in attacks by their young charges, many are anxious to get into situations in which strict discipline prevails. Unlike the public schools which have been turned into zoos by court decisions and compulsory attendance laws, private schools simply expel troublemakers.

Most, but certainly not all, private schools are very strong on basics. Reading and language arts usually receive the primary emphasis. Most put

heavy emphasis on the phonics method of teaching reading and regard the fashionable *look-say* system as a disaster equivalent to putting sugar in the gas tank of your car. In his widely used *Manual On How To Establish And Operate A Successful Christian School*, the Reverend Robert Thoburn, founder of the highly successful Fairfax Christian School in Virginia, states: "The way to teach reading is to use the phonetic approach. Ninety-eight percent of all syllables in English and 85 percent of all words are purely phonetic. There are only 44 basic phonetic sounds to master. After mastering these and learning to blend, the child is able to read individual words and has the basis for reading To be sure, there are some words that are only partly phonetic, so they are simply memorized."

Thoburn warns that now almost everybody claims to teach phonics. He observes: "Those who talk about a 'combination' of methods are still clinging to the look-say method. I don't know of any schools in our area that *claim* not to teach phonics. It is popular to say that one teaches phonics. The phonics taught though are usually too little too late. Phonic in most schools is still relegated to a secondary place and often is used only after all other methods fail. Once the sight or look-say method (or word-method, as it is sometimes called) is used with a child and he fails to respond properly it is very difficult to overcome the deficiency. The child has to unlearn what he has been taught and start again."

There are a number of phonics systems in use by private schools, but possibly the most famous is the one developed by the late Mae Carden. Miss Carden, who died in 1977, was a graduate student at Columbia Teachers College when the radical socialist

John Dewey was holding forth there. Dewey was promoting the then revolutionary "look-say" method and Miss Carden denounced him for dismissing ten centuries of achievement and said that if adopted his methods would ruin the American school system.

Mae Carden left Columbia and opened her own private school in New York City. In subsequent years she developed her super-phonics reading system and a series of textbooks to go with it. The Carden method is a great deal more than the teaching of reading through phonetics and letter association. It is a complete language arts program. The reading fulcrum here is the alphabet, a mechanism ostensibly embalmed by the progressive theoreticians, which refused to remain sealed in its casket. "The alphabet," Miss Carden always told her teachers, "is one of learning's greatest labor-saving devices. It takes the forbidding mystery out of reading."

The Carden system, used in all the more than one hundred Carden schools and in several hundred other academies, dwells upon the basics of reading because, as Miss Carden said, "Children never forget what they understand." This is why reading is taught in small sequential steps and integrated into geography, history, and other subjects. This system also stresses moral and ethical values which build character.

Does the Carden method produce superior readers? Over a period of forty years in being used to teach more than fifty thousand students, it has never failed. "We never had a failure. I never have seen a child I couldn't teach," Mae Carden told a reporter. That's not the half of it! The *San Jose Mercury* of June 26, 1975, gave this rundown of the Stanford Achievement Test scores at the private Santa Clara Carden School:

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EDUCATION

"Third graders scored at the sixth grade level in comprehension of mathematics concepts. In the same test, third graders scored at the eighth grade level in language arts achievement. Sixth graders scored at the 10th grade level in language arts. In almost all tests, seventh graders scored at the 11th grade level."

The implication of these results is important. This system is used in private schools but it does not just work for the intellectual elite. As Miss Carden emphasized: "Every child can learn. We have never lost a child. Even the child with learning disabilities can learn just as easily as the normal child with this method."

If the "Liberals" who are weeping and wailing about the middle class deserting the poor in the public school system were truly interested in elevating those about whom they claim to care, the Carden system would be established in every innercity school district in the United States. Children with I.Q.s down to *seventy-five* have been taught to read in a private school environment using this system. But instead of adopting the Carden method, the Progressive Educationists denounce the Carden and other phonics systems used in the private schools as "old fashioned." "Liberals" claim to believe that enhanced academic achievement by the private schools is some kind of a dirty trick. In *The Schools That Fear Built*, a book financed by the "Liberal" Ford Foundation, David Nevin moans of the new private schools:

"Elementary schools teach reading, writing, arithmetic, a little social science and a little physical science. They put great emphasis on reading and use old-fashioned rote techniques. They follow the phonics

method In spelling, arithmetic and reading they put much emphasis on drill which produces high test scores, and it is on this basis that they claim their superiority to public schools. Given the approach, they are almost certain to improve a child's score and thus to satisfy his parents

"They insist that public schools have become so immersed in frills, incidentals and irrelevancies that they have lost touch with plain old fashioned education. Lowering test scores in public schools are seen as proof of this argument. The new schools' attention to basics, to reading and figuring, with time devoted to drill instead of to broadening the student, this is turned into a virtue that is reflected by increased test scores. Smugly, some new school people like to assert that for half the cost they can deliver twice the education by the attention to basics. The broadening or enriching qualities which one might feel a modern world demands of a modern curriculum are dismissed as time wasters that implant 'wrong' ideas in students' minds anyway and are contributing to a decline in the quality of American life."

So the beef with private schools is that they stress academic achievement over *enrichment* — whatever that is. Mr. Nevin's amazing complaints continue:

"For the youngsters, the schools seem to represent homogeneity, solidity, comfort, reinforcement of ego, a sense of being part of an elite. Almost invariably kids in the new schools have come from public schools, and the [Ford Foundation sponsored Lamar] Society's investigators found none who did not think that what they had left behind was vastly inferior. They talked of the tranquil study atmosphere in which it was easier to learn, and gave the impression that

there was much less anxiety here than in public school. They described fewer fights and less reason to fight.

"The students insist that they learn more, must study more and feel demands on them are greater. This may be, though most of their learning turns around drills, which seems harder at the time but makes less intellectual demand. The work results in measurably higher scores which then reinforces their feeling of achievement

"The fact that their parents support the school and warmly approve of it seems to have a reinforcing effect with the students. Popular myth may overemphasize the rebellion; as one moves through the various new schools, one is struck again and again by the pleasure and comfort the students there find in their parents' approval. If they do well in this school they stand higher and more securely in their parents' eyes."

Which you must admit beats having your children think you are a capitalist pig. In a private school, students are taught to respect their parents, not despise them as curmudgeons blocking the creation of a brave new world. This alarms Nevin, who nonetheless admits that parents are as pleased with the private schools as are the students. He writes:

"The parental approval and the willingness of people to make real if not cataclysmic financial sacrifice probably grows from essentially the same points. The schools reinforce and even certify their outlook and their social view. The schools stress discipline, order, old fashioned learning and religious values at a time when people of this outlook see change as a dangerous tide threatening to overwhelm them. Again and again, both parents and the operators of the new schools talk in terms of these *realities*, the kind they remember from the past,

the way public schools used to be"

Of course there is no denying there is substantial cost and often inconvenience in putting your children in a traditional private school. A recent Roper Poll revealed that most Americans surveyed picked cars ahead of children as being more important to the "good life." Obviously such people will not make the sacrifices necessary to send their offspring to sound private schools. Other parents, horrified at the skyrocketing cost of higher education, save their money for college. Whether this is a smart gamble is debatable. Without a strong basic education, there may be no college. With outstanding academic performance, there might be a scholarship to college.

Many parents have hoped that Congress would pass tuition tax credits to ease their school burden, but so far such bills have been defeated under active lobbying by the public school lobby and textbook publishing establishment. The public educators regard it as absolute poison. Albert Shanker, head of the New York City teachers' union, has said the tuition tax-credit bill "will be the beginning of the end for American public education." This is a curious admission, indicating that given half a chance even Shanker believes the public will opt against government schools.

Biblically, says the Reverend Robert Thoburn of the Fairfax Christian School, education is a parental responsibility. Many times sacrifices are required of parents. It is one thing to watch the politicians and bureaucrats pour your tax money down the rathole, it is quite another to watch them pour your children down that rathole. People who now cripple their children in the public schools to save the price of a traditional and disciplined private education will have a lifetime to regret having done so. ■ ■