

TEACHER

By Bill Irby

My memories of grade school days are a little foggy. Of the few things that I have a distinct memory are the faces of some of my teachers. Some of them were fearful creatures, others were quite wonderful. They took me and all the other kids from paste pots and crayons to simple reading, writing and arithmetic. Those elementary teachers readied the wise student for a lifetime of learning. I am thankful for the good teachers I had then.

Our school systems have goals. Over the years educational theorists have modified those goals. Since John Dewey most school systems have taken a pragmatic approach to education. Religion has, therefore, been excluded from public or government supported schools as this pragmatic approach has become the norm. Many in our culture see this pragmatic and non-religious emphasis in schools as a positive thing. It is clear that this is not so.

By removing the influence of the Christian religion from American schools, we have also removed the idea that there are principles that transcend the merely practical. This is a great tragedy. The Christian Bible teaches that there is truth that is absolute in design and character. No rational person thinks that he possesses all truth but any truly rational person will admit to the existence of such truth. When the existence of transcendent principles (that is to say, principles based on absolute truth and not on practical circumstance) is denied the world becomes unhinged and destined for disaster. This is the very thing that has happened in our present culture. We are paying the price in the currency of broken homes, rampant sexual immorality and drug-fueled escapism. People are lost, spiritually to be sure, but also lost in the here and now because they have given up the idea of truth. They have traded it for a set of ideas that allows man to do as he pleases. There is no consequence in our new world, only meaninglessness and despair. Into this world we place our own children, children who are being raised to believe and to know that there is truth (John 8:32). For most of them the places they go to learn are under the direction of committed pragmatists who care little for principles that transcend the moment.

Exceptions exist. A Christian young man or woman need look no farther for a good way to make a living and a difference than the teaching profession. I believe that Christian teachers are blessings to their students and to society. But explicit teaching of the truth is not about to be allowed in our secular schools. It is the responsibility of the church to teach our children and each other the content and the principles of the Bible.

Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20). This is the work of the teachers in our Bible classes here at West Hobbs Street. Each one of them is involved in the "edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). This is a great work. As I have noted above, it is a profound work. When you arrange your lessons for that cradle role, that third grade group or those teen-agers, even your adult class...you know that you are involved in a work that is essential to the continued existence of the church, the salvation of souls, and