

Pastors and Christian Education

The most significant cause retarding the growth of Christian influence in our country is the refusal of pastors to teach God's **MANDATE** for Christian education, and their "taking cover" rather than addressing the urgent need for Christian education. Many pastors "take cover" for fear of offending public school employees and families in their churches. Instead of rising to lead by calling churches to begin Christian schools or by encouraging homeschooling, pastors ignore education altogether and avoid teaching parents the clear biblical principles for educating children. (Mt. 19:14, Mt. 28:18-20, Dt. 6:1-9, Eph. 6:4).

The public school system indoctrinates Christian children, and all children, away from the Christian faith and a Christian worldview. Government schools, in their stated mission to secularize the culture, are not academically, morally, physically, or spiritually safe for Christian children.

Indisputable facts require attention.

In 2017, the Barna Research Group published a report that revealed **only 9%** of conservative pastors strongly and aggressively support Christian schooling. Another 21% support Christian schools and may even have their own children there but fail to teach or encourage their members to do the same. Another 28% of the pastors **never** address Christian education and homeschooling but present instead a position of "opposition" to Christian schooling. This research reveals of a lack of moral courage in the pulpit.

Dan Smithwick, director & founder of the Nehemiah Institute, reports that 80-85% of church youth attend public schools and that 80% of them embrace a strong secular view of life.

(www.nehemiahinstitute.com). In 2002, the Southern Baptist Family Life Council revealed that 88% of the children raised in evangelical homes leave the Church and their faith at the age of 18, never to return. Dean Gotcher, a Christian expert in education and psychology states, "Children are being indoctrinated with secular [humanistic and socialist] values in the public schools."

Facing the future takes moral courage.

On Feb. 14, 2018, during the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida, the deputy in charge of security reportedly took cover outside of the school instead of entering the building and trying to stop the killer. Just like the deputy in Florida, some pastors "take cover" instead of protecting the children to whom they are obligated.

Scripture clearly requires a pastor to lay his life down for his flock. John 10:12-13 says, "A hireling will flee when the wolf comes," instead of protecting his sheep. Some conservative pastors qualify more as hirelings than shepherds. Pastoral leadership is indispensable in order to protect our children, and it's a sad commentary on the church today that many pastors are not alerting their churches in the face of this historic crisis.

Pastors have an obligation and are *exhorted* in scripture (Acts 20:28-32) and before God to care for their flock. They must not "take cover" at this critical crossroad in the history of the church and nation. Pastors should take their stand with wisdom at the crossroads and raise their voices (Prov. 8:2). Children need the biblical *sanctuaries* of Christian schooling or homeschooling.

Pastors have authority to act.

In some cases, pastors don't realize how disastrous public schools are on children today. Some are so busy serving their churches that they don't see the danger: LGBTQ agenda that drives curriculum, anti-Christian bias, revisionist history, Common Core Standards, social emotional learning, data collection, evolution, pornographic sex education, pro-Islamic teaching. Innocent children are being exposed every day to the indoctrination of the federal government's educational system. Even if the schools were academic and physical safe havens, pastors have an obligation to teach the biblical doctrine of education: all education is religious. No neutrality exists in education, and the public schools have been officially godless and humanistic in both design and practice for a long, long time.

Fifteen years ago, the former president of the SC Baptist Convention, a pastor with a congregation of 5,000, spoke to me privately, "Ray, from time to time I have members of my church complain to me about some of the things that are going on in the public schools." He named a few, such as unbiblical sex education. Then he asked, "Is any of that really going on?" His lack of knowledge shocked me so that I had to pause not to show incredulity before I confirmed, "Yes, it really is."

Conversely, 12 years ago, another pastor, attended the Florida Baptist Convention and received materials from Exodus Mandate. Quite surprised, he made copies and then called in several public school teachers from his church for a meeting. He asked them if this was really happening in their local public schools and to be honest with him. A couple of them became upset

but eventually admitted, “Yes, it’s really happening.” The pastor said, “If what you and Exodus Mandate are saying is true, then we have a moral obligation to offer K12 Christian education to the children of our church and the county.” He asked them not to oppose him but to assist in starting a Christian school. Five of the teachers resigned from the public school system and staffed the new Christian school, which is today a large Christian school in the county, because the pastor had the courage to confront the problem and offer a solution. This is a remarkable model of moral courage.

C.S. Lewis said, “Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the focus of every virtue at its testing point.” Pastors don’t say, “I’m a coward,” but they do display a lack of moral courage in our churches. They admit that they are afraid to speak out because they have public school teachers, administrators and families in their churches. “I have to manage; I have to maintain my job.” That’s being more concerned about protecting a job. That’s not the way of the true shepherd in the Scriptures. He lays his life down for the flock. When the wolf comes, the hireling flees, but the true shepherd will protect the sheep.

Pastors, will you take cover or stand?

It is time for pastors to exercise moral courage and be the men of God that He intended them to be by aggressively promoting K-12 Christian education to their flocks. It’s time for Christian families in the congregation to urge pastors to fulfill this role and do their duty.



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Pastors Taking Cover

Moral Courage for the Pulpit



by Chaplain E. Ray Moore, Th.M.