

# Let Go Of The Rope

## (Should Christians Teach In Public Schools)

I recently read a column in which the author suggests that even though public education is “over the edge” of a cliff, Christians are “holding the rope from which the system dangles.” He suggests letting go of the rope by removing our children from the government schools. Why should Christians prop up an anti-Christian institution by their participation? Let it die its well-deserved death.

This prompts the thought of another course of action Christians could take to stop unwittingly aiding the enemy: stop teaching in their schools. Many who argue in favor of pulling our children out of harm’s way nevertheless support the idea of Christians teaching in the state schools to bring a witness in that godless environment. This seems proper on the surface, but a closer look raises some serious questions.

***First, isn’t the good an individual teacher may be able to do outweighed by the evil of the system they are assisting?***

There is very little real witness a teacher can have in place that outlaws the ten commandments, muzzles religious speech, and insists on using godless curriculum. Believers must be submissive to their employers, and this loyalty to the NEA-dominated administrators in public schools would seem to force some compromise on Christian teachers. But even if we grant a limited opportunity to sneak in a word of truth or a clandestine witness to a child, isn’t the presence of the Christian teacher strengthening an institution that is ruining kids by the millions? The better a person the teacher is—the more honest, diligent, moral, etc.—the more effectively he or she helps preserve a wicked system.

A Christian dealer in a casino may have an opportunity for witness, but would that justify his participation in an immoral enterprise? If public education in America today is a corrupt venture, shouldn’t it be spurned by those who want to resist evil?

***Second, while a mature Christian teacher/soldier might be able to thrive in the enemy camp, might he not unwittingly be leading many less hardy warriors to destruction?***

His example of participation in the government schools will tend to place his seal of approval on the system and thereby encourage weaker Christians to believe that those schools are an OK place to send their children. They can excuse their own irresponsibility by pointing to the example of the mature Christian who teaches at the school. The presence of the Christian teacher will comfort them and reinforce their tendency to take the easy road and abandon their little ones to the roaring lion of humanist education.

The third question regarding a Christian teaching in a public school applies to their teaching in Christian schools as well, and it is this:

***Does not the role of school teacher by its very nature tend to separate children from their parents?***

The school teacher becomes a kind of substitute parent as he relates to a child through the larger part of any school day; and a wedge is driven between parent and child. Not that the teacher intends any evil; quite the opposite. Christian teachers are a noble breed and they sacrifice much to serve others. Their aim is to help the children they teach.

But isn't it true that the more effective the teacher is, the more they truly care for the children, the more they sacrifice to be a good teacher—the more they take the place of the parents in the life of the child? This contributes to turning the hearts of children away from their fathers and mothers and to disrupting that channel of grace and blessing that God intends between parents and children. The traditional school model hinders the process of inter-generational biblical discipleship. And the noblest intentions do not erase a negative result, even in Christian schools.

So Christians should consider cutting the rope and letting the government schools crash. But they should also think carefully about their role in a Christian version of an educational model that (not purposely, but effectively) weakens the God-given influence of parents in the lives of their children. —

*Robert Dreyfus*

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