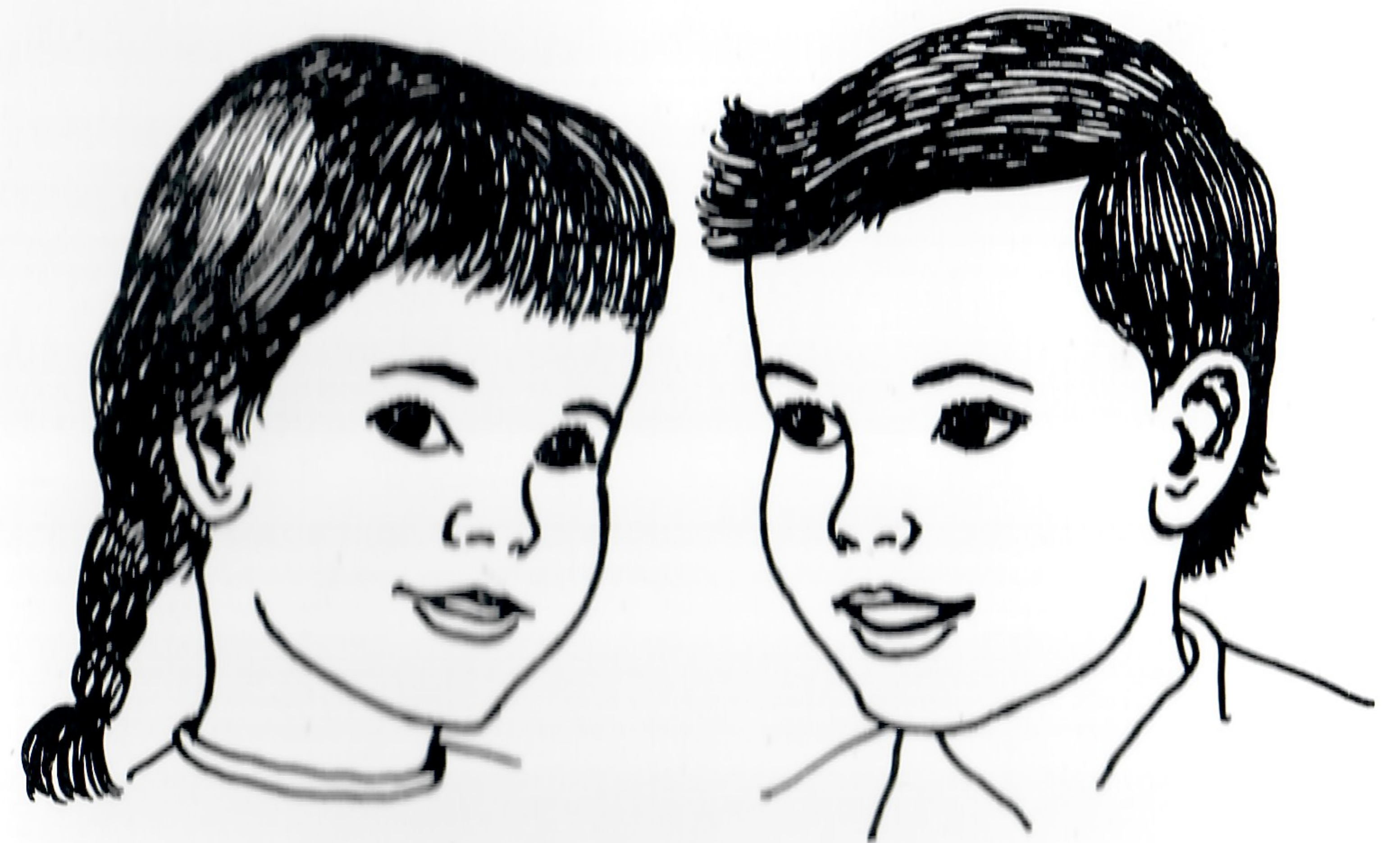




# Schools need Christ



Michael L. Drake



# Schools need Christ

"Withdraw from a child the only divine rule of life, and the result will be most lamentable. An education purely secular is the handmaiden of a Godless scepticism."

- C H Spurgeon



# 1. Going to School God's Way

The Bible tells us how we should teach our children. We cannot look here at all that it covers, but here are some of the passages that will help:

*Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."*

Everything a child learns is about God and what he has made. God made everything, he sustains and directs it by his power and wisdom, and we derive our being from him. We live and move and have our being in him. In particular, man is created in the image of God. The main goal of education is to teach children to glorify, serve and enjoy their Creator.

*Deuteronomy 6:6,7 "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."*

The thrust of this is that God's law is to be spoken about in every situation. Whatever you are doing with your children you are to tell them what God's law says and how it affects what they are learning about. They are to learn to see everything from God's point of view. In social studies, history, maths or any other subject, children are to be taught to know the subject in the same way God knows it.

*Proverbs 1:8 "Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching."*

Parents are responsible for directing a child's instruction. It is the parents that children are to listen to. Parents cannot hand the task of teaching over to someone beyond their control.

Parents need to ask:

Am I able to examine and choose who teaches my children and what they are taught? Are my children learning the things I believe are important? Is what is taught and the way it is taught Christian? Is the curriculum and the life of the school based on God's Word?

*Proverbs 22:6 "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."*

This is more than a truism: it is a promise of Almighty God! School involves a very large part of the child's training. It must train him in the way of Christ, for that is the way he must go.

*Ephesians 6:4 "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."*

A contrast is made here between instructing and training children in God's way, and exasperating or provoking them. Fathers are warned that if the instruction they give or supervise lacks that essential element of being 'of the Lord' they encourage their children to sin. Teaching in classes where by law Christ is banned cannot be teaching 'of the Lord.'

*Psalms 36:9 "In your light we see light."*

God sheds light on the search for knowledge and truth, contrasting what is truly of value with what fallen man values. Knowing God and his glory changes the way we look at man and his wisdom. We may study the same things, but we see them in a different light.

*Proverbs 9:10 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."*

It is only as God is feared and known that any fact is properly understood or able to be wisely used. When every aspect of teaching is in obedience to God, every subject is considered and taught from the viewpoint that God is. When God is revered as the God who created, the God who upholds, the God who has revealed himself to us, we can know the truth as it really is. To try to know anything without this perspective is to distort what is true.

*Daniel 1:17,20 "To these four young men God gave*



knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning... In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom."

Here we see that knowledge and wisdom come from God. What is especially significant about this passage however, is that Daniel and his three friends gained this outstanding knowledge and skill as they rejected the ways of the wise men of the world in favour of obedience to God.

*2 Corinthians 10:5* "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

Every thought is to be Christian. There is to be no thought entertained even for a moment that is not expressly obedient to Christ. We are to think as Christ thinks!

When, for example, we study history, it should be to see what God was doing and how he sees the response of men to his law.

*Colossians 1:16-18* "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy."

Christ is to be supreme in school because he is to be supreme in everything. He is to be the most prominent aspect of every lesson because every lesson is about what he has made and what he sustains.

In mathematics for example, Christ is to be central. He has made mathematics as part of his created order: it is not a mere invention of man. We can rely on the mathematical order of creation because God keeps his creation in order.  $2 + 2$  will equal 4 tomorrow only because it is part of the order God has created and sustains. When God is excluded from the mathematics lesson, all the mathematics taught can only be seen as the result of chance experience without any true reliability for the future. It is this ungodly viewpoint that forms

the basis of present syllabuses in state schools.

*Romans 12:2* "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will."

What you think governs how you live. If we teach children to think without Christ in some subjects, they will live without him in those parts of their lives. They will become conformed to this world. Renewing minds so that we think like Christ instead of like the world, changes lives so that they begin to show what is good, acceptable and perfect. When we teach children that Christ is involved in every part of their learning, and show them how this is true, we begin to train up children who display the attributes of Christ in every part of their lives.

*Philippians 4:8* "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things."

This list of what our minds should dwell on applies to children and adults alike. Everything we think about, everything that is taught, everything our children learn, must measure up to this standard.

Is everything your child studies in English pure? Is every value taught in social studies noble and right? Is the science they learn true?

*Philippians 4:9* "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice."

Paul was an outstanding teacher, for teaching is first and foremost the setting of an example: what he was, his 'students' should be.

*Luke 6:40* "A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher."

When your children are fully trained they will be like their teachers. What an encouragement if your child's teacher is a faithful Christian, but what a frightening promise this verse is if your child's teacher is ungodly. Do your children's teachers live in a way you would like your children to live?



*John 17:15 "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one."*

It is sometimes supposed that a Christian school removes children from the world. Yet the Christian school is in the world, its staff and pupils are sinners, and it is training children to live in the world. This is not isolation from the world!

Children are not adults. They are not yet fully trained. Those who do a good job of training soldiers train them before the heat of battle. The trainee has to learn to handle his weapons, how to understand the enemy and practises long and hard before facing the enemy. So it must be with children. We have the task of training them for their life in the world, not thrusting them unprepared into battle.

The disciples spent many cloistered hours with Christ before he prayed this prayer for them. Indeed for three years their whole lives had been immersed in his. That was the preparation. Even with that preparation he prays for their protection from the evil one.

In providing a Christian schooling for children we exercise the same care Jesus extended to his disciples in leaving them in the world but protecting them from evil.

If the best protection from the evil one is for children to experience sin, we would have to encourage them to engage in the worst sins possible! Clearly the best protection is to shelter them from such experiences while teaching them what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely ....

*Colossians 2:8 "See to it that no-one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ."*

The traditions or philosophies invented by men are basic to worldliness and are able to captivate and deceive. For example, one of the major aims of state social studies syllabuses is to train children to make up their own minds about right and wrong without reference to God's law. This philosophy, invented by men and taught in every state school, can take children captive.

Who would willingly subject his children to the teaching of a false religion? Yet when we send our children off to a state school, we send them to where they will be taught a deceptive philosophy that can take them captive to living

without God. The state school teaches a false religion.

*Romans 1:21 "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened."*

If our children are taught that there are subject areas where the knowledge of God makes no difference, that there are areas of knowledge in which he does not need to be specially honoured, we darken their hearts.

Even the state schools recognise that teaching any subject involves teaching values and beliefs. That is why every syllabus makes it an aim in every subject to teach values and beliefs. In every case these beliefs deliberately exclude belief in God and submission to his law. Such teaching does not enlighten: it darkens the hearts of children.

Whenever children are taught as if God is not involved we darken their hearts: this is what happens in every lesson in a state school, and the result is the exchanging of the truth of God for a lie, and worshipping and serving created things rather than the Creator (see verse 25).

*Psalm 1:1-3 "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."*

What is the result of giving our children to the wicked or ungodly for teaching? Should they be taught to go in the way of sinners? Should they sit where those who mock God and his word teach? Or should they be taught to delight in God's law and to think about it in every subject, at every moment, day or night? It must be one or the other: it cannot be both.

God requires parents to give themselves to training their children to learn and know everything in the light of his word, in submission to the knowledge of God, and in imitation of Christ.

To teach children in any other way, or to allow any of



their training to be independent of specific Christian teaching is a sin that results in our pointing these children away from Christ to be conformed to the world as idolators.

The Christian school aims to help parents honour God in the teaching of their children. Schools without Christ aim to do exactly the opposite.

## 2. State Schools Teach Religion

State schools in New Zealand are teaching religion. None teach Christianity because the law prohibits this. They are in fact teaching the religion of humanism.

The Education Act forbids teachers to teach children that God's law applies to them and declares what is right and what is true. Instead, the syllabuses require that children be guided to decide for themselves what is right and what is true. When man decides these things for himself, he has rejected God and has attempted to make man a law to himself. In this way the state schools teach children that God has no authority over large parts of their lives.

Every state school teaches children to trust in themselves and in their own ability to find out and decide. Every state school is teaching humanism.

Some pretend that humanism is not a religion. But it does involve living by an attitude against God, a life of faith in principles of belief and conduct. This is religious as the American Humanist Association Magazine of January/February 1983 stated:

*"The battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognises and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being... utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach."*<sup>1</sup>

Consider the following examples drawn from the primary school curriculum:

*The social studies syllabus requires the teaching of majority morality.*

As part of their regular classroom work in social



studies, children are placed in role-playing situations where they must make moral choices. These choices may relate to family life, economics, justice, etc. The children discuss the pros and cons of the various answers (acknowledgement that God's law is absolutely binding on everyone is prohibited by law), then decide by majority which is right. This may result in their justifying murder, or suicide, or theft, and the teacher may not point out the requirements of God's law without breaking the law of the land.

The religious commitment of the state school requires submission to the majority in place of submission to God. The syllabus encourages acceptance of the freedom of the individual to believe what he will providing he acts in unison with the majority! God is prohibited, and the majority becomes god, demanding total submission to its tyranny.

The Christian school starts with a different religious commitment: to submit to God as he has made himself known through his word, the Bible. When teaching children how to make moral choices, how to evaluate social structures, how to understand history, the Christian school starts with what God requires. Children are taught that there is a right and a wrong. They are taught to look for the out working of God's law and the effects of obedience or disobedience in the different cultures and periods of history studied, and to learn from them. They are taught that right and wrong are not values they judge, but values judged by an unchanging, holy God.

*The science syllabus requires that children be taught to regard all knowledge as tentative.*

In other words this syllabus requires every teacher to teach children that there are no things they can be really certain of. Truth, they must be taught, is changing. What is true today may not be true tomorrow.

This has resulted in a change from teaching children what is true in 'nature', to giving them experiences, because experience is the only truth each child can depend upon. They learn from this to reject anything they have not yet experienced.

Teachers in a Christian school are able to affirm from the Bible that there is real existence and there are things that are true. The Bible makes it clear that God is, that

he has created, that he keeps the whole of creation together. There are truths given in God's word about creation that are absolute, regardless of our experience.

Christian schools of course recognise that man's knowledge is incomplete and frequently faulty. But that does not mean truth is changing, nor is truth dependent upon man's experience. We may not know accurately, but 'truth' is never tentative. Truth is real and unchanging, even if what we know of it is limited.

*John Dewey, probably the most influential educational philosopher of modern times said, "We affirm that genuine values and tenable ends and ideals are to be derived from what is found within the movement of experience. Hence, we deny that they can be derived from authority, human or supernatural." 2*

This view is embodied in every state syllabus.

The Christian holds a totally opposite view: values can only be truly derived from God who has supreme authority.

Every lesson that teaches values (and every lesson does, as even the humanists acknowledge) teaches one of these two values. Every lesson teaches either that values come from God and children must submit, or that values are arbitrary and children must make up their own minds.

Allowing a child to be taught ungodly values in his daily lessons is to train him to become ungodly. The Christian school bases its whole curriculum on submission to God, and only lessons on this basis can encourage and develop godliness.

*The teaching of values has become the common theme of all syllabuses regardless of the subject.*

'Values' means choosing between right and wrong. The state schools therefore teach children that these decisions can be made, indeed must be made, without reference to God or his word. In this way children are taught God is irrelevant and has no authority over large areas of their lives.

Christian schools agree that every lesson teaches values. This is why we have Christian schools! The Christian school is committed to teaching the values of the Bible, and applying those values to every part of the child's learning and life.



The Johnson report sets out guidelines for the development of state schools: "Every school reflects some type of values system. All individuals and organisations hold sets of values, good or bad, whether expressed or not. Each school shows moral decisions of one sort or another within every action and every area of its philosophy and practices. The whole tone and style of a school's climate will reflect its commitment to its value system."<sup>3</sup>

Children are frequently required to participate in rites of witch-craft, and to enact violence.

Witch-craft is a favoured theme among junior classes in state schools. Especially at halloween children may be required to dress, dance, cast spells and write as witches do.

Murder, violence and crime are favourite themes. The School Journals, published by the Education Department, often feature poems, stories and plays about spirits and witches. The ERIC training programme, in which almost every junior class teacher is trained encourages teachers to use books with violent, spooky or horrific themes because children seem to have a natural affinity to these things. They like them! Of course they do, for they share the same fallen nature as Adam. But what is needed is that they think on whatever is true, noble, right ...

*An inherent part of teaching is inculcating the beliefs and practices of the teacher, even if unintentionally.*

Teaching is discipling, or making disciples. The state teaching force is made up of a reasonable cross section of society. Among teachers can be found spiritualists, cheats, child molesters, adulterers and fornicators, rebels against lawful authority, homosexuals and such like. When these people teach your children, they teach them to believe and live like themselves!

I have witnessed lessons where the attempt has been made to teach these ways of life and immorality. The lessons need not be overt, for in the words of Christ, "Everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher"<sup>4</sup> Your child's teacher is establishing the pattern of your child's life.

Recognising this, Christian schools aim to set before children teachers whose lives can be imitated. That is not to say that Christian school teachers are perfect. But it

is to say that teachers in Christian schools should be the sort of people who by faith in Christ and repentance from sin are seeking to live lives of holiness that can be copied. They should be people who by prayer and Bible study are dealing with sin and becoming more like Christ. They are people who are not openly and wilfully living in sin. These are the sort of people parents should be seeking out to have a life-long influence over their children.

*The state system originally recognised the conflict between its teaching and religious belief.*

When the state system was first established, there was a provision built into the Act to allow parents to remove their children from history lessons if it was felt they would be exposed to antagonistic views. This right was soon removed because you simply cannot have a school where pupils are being removed from certain lessons.

Now parents have no such option. The state has recognised that its teaching is religious and may conflict with the religion of parents. And it requires parents to allow it to teach those conflicting views without challenge.

Modern teaching programmes place considerable emphasis on integrated teaching. This is teaching where a number of subjects are taught at once. A prime example is where health education is required by the latest syllabus to be taught in every subject area. While there will be specific health lessons, there will also be planned health instruction in maths, English, social studies and so on. This not only makes it impossible for parents to withdraw children from particular subjects, it makes it impossible for them to even know when those subjects are being taught or what is taught.

The idea of withdrawing children from proposed sex classes has been promoted. This is deceptive. Not only does the syllabus aim to integrate health lessons, but the withdrawal procedure will be difficult to administer and embarrassing to parents and pupils.

The state system is committed to imposing its beliefs upon children regardless of the religious faith of parents.

The Christian school does not hide its religious belief. It states it openly, provides parents with full details of the curriculum, and invites those who share its faith to



enrol their children. In such schools, parents have a real influence on what is taught - and have the ultimate option of withdrawing children completely if conflict arises.

*"The new generation of teachers coming into the teaching service is to a large extent made up of those who cannot exercise discipline and control because they neither believe in it nor have any experience of it."*

This statement was made in 1980 by a senior psychologist in the Department of Education to a meeting of Principals. Increasingly schools are becoming places where discipline is lacking.

The reason for this is simply that schools do not believe in it. Since there are no absolute standards of right and wrong, schools have no authority or desire to impose their standards on autonomous children.

The idea of punishment is under attack. It is not just corporal punishment that is being opposed, but all forms of punishment. Our state schools are rapidly becoming centres of lawlessness as they put into practice the religious principles they are founded upon.

*Stories from the Bible can be taught as myths and legends.*

It is possible to teach the stories of the Bible. They are listed for inclusion in the part of the social studies syllabus set aside for the teaching of myths and legends. It is not enough to ban God from the classroom. The ultimate step is to direct teachers throughout the nation to teach that God's word is mere myth and legend.

### 3. A Christian Way of Knowing

No 'fact' however simple, is neutral. Depending on how it is taught and the context in which it is put, it will either lead toward God, or away from him. In the Christian framework of knowledge, for example, the fact that ducks have webbed feet leads to an appreciation of the skilled Creator. In the humanistic-evolutionary framework, it leads to the conclusion that ducks developed webbed feet in order to live in their environment better. This mechanistic view of the universe leads away from God.

In social studies, children are taught that cultural and moral practices differ from country to country because of environmental factors. They are taught that one way of life is as good as another and that to be 'balanced' and unprejudiced people they need to accept all cultural and moral practices as being of equal value. The word of God judges all cultures, including our own, which fall short of Christ's standards. It is false to teach children otherwise. One religion is not as good as another. One set of ungodly practices may be as bad as any other set, but the God of heaven weighs them all in his balances and finds them all wanting.

In music, art, and most of all in English, the centre of the primary school curriculum, children are encouraged to set their imagination to work and rove wherever they will. To escape from reason into fantasy and irrationality is increasingly seen as the height of achievement in creativity. The extent to which the child can become, in his mind, the object of his fantasy, is the measure of success in this area.

This view of the imagination sees the mind as a bird, free to fly into any region whatever without consequences. Having no clear view of what man is or how life is to be lived the state curriculum replaces knowledge and skill



with irrational experience.

Christ seeks in his followers a sanctified and purposeful imagination, channelled into fruitful and productive activity, and Paul urges the bringing of the mind into captivity - to Christ! In the Christian school the imagination is set to work in a manner consistent with a godly love for truth and beauty.

No knowledge whatever is neutral. Humanistic and evolutionary thinking is woven through the warp and woof of state education, and it must inevitably be ingrained into children's ways of thinking. By committing our children to that kind of education we are involving both ourselves and them in breaking Christ's commandment to love God with heart, soul and mind.

The diagrams one and two illustrate the differences between Christian and humanistic thinking:

The Christian starts with the certainty that God is, that he has created and rules all of creation, and that he speaks. It is because of this that man knows. He knows what God reveals, even what he cannot experience.

Only God is self-sufficient. Men like the rest of creation depend on God for existence, but God depends on no-one. We depend on God for both life and knowledge.

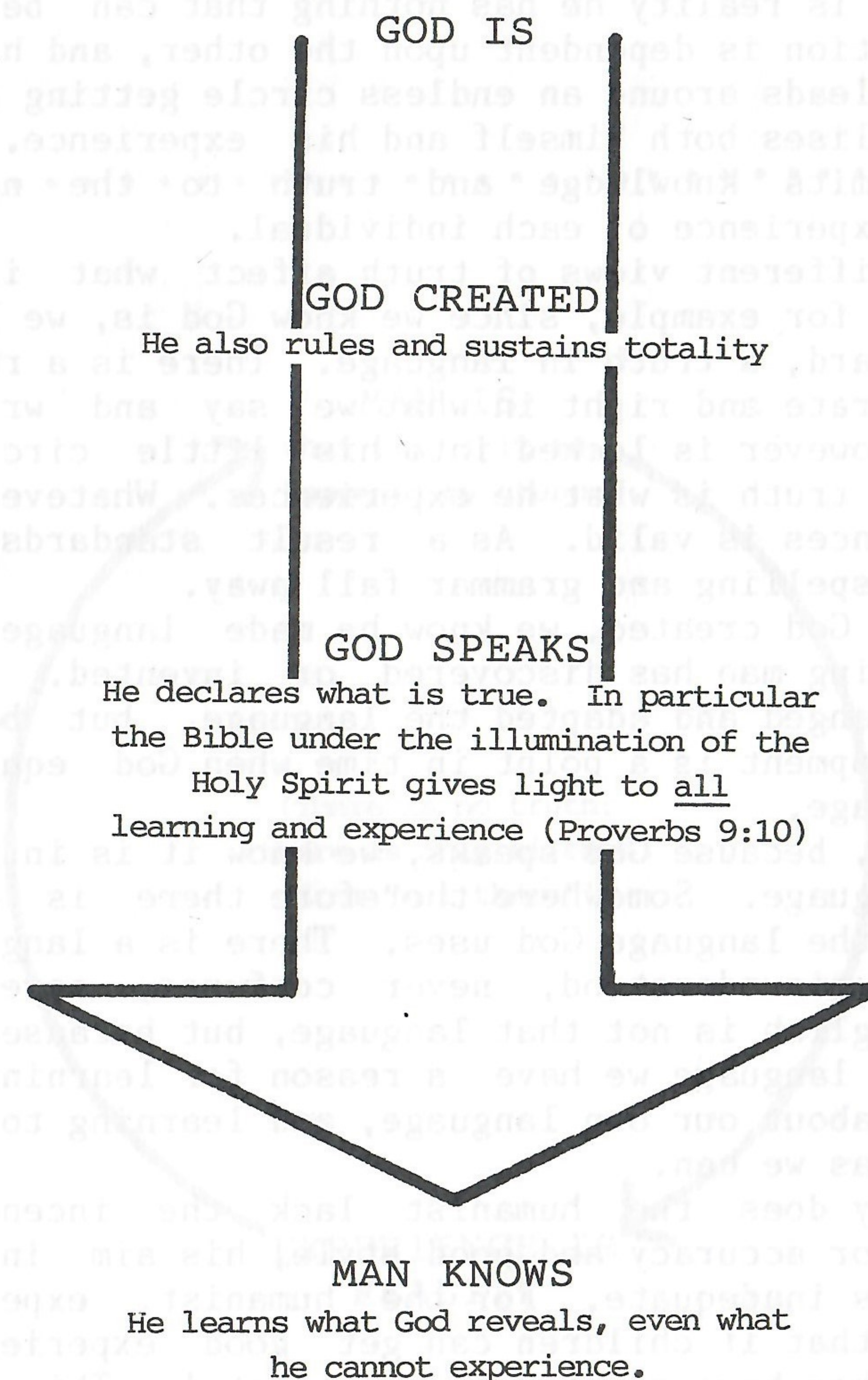
God's knowledge is perfect. He knows himself, because he is the Self-sufficient One. He knows everything else because he made it. For us to know anything truly, we must know like God knows: God's thinking must dominate our thinking.

For this reason, every field of learning must be placed under the authority of the Bible, because the Bible is God's revelation of his thinking. Learning is a search for what God has planned and created. God has chosen the Bible to reveal his mind, to shed light on our search for knowledge.

When God speaks, declaring what is true, he does so through the Bible. It is the Bible, under the illumination of the Holy Spirit that gives light to the individual's learning and experience. This is why Solomon said 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.' (Prov 9.10)

What we learn can only be truly known when the Bible directs and sheds light on it. We may seem to know much by man's standards, but it is only when we fear and know God

## CHRISTIAN VIEW OF TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE (diagram 1)





that we have true knowledge or wisdom about what God has made.

The humanist starts by excluding God. If he is there, which most deny, he is somewhere 'out there' and not in any way involved with man or experience (beyond the dotted line in diagram 2). That leaves him without any certainty. Whether he holds as his main statement of faith that man or experience is reality he has nothing that can be certain. Each assertion is dependent upon the other, and his search for truth leads around an endless circle getting nowhere.

Man idolises both himself and his experience. In this way he limits knowledge and truth to the narrow and fallible experience of each individual.

These different views of truth affect what is taught. In English for example, since we know God is, we know there is a standard, a truth in language. There is a reason for being accurate and right in what we say and write. The humanist however is locked into his little circle, which means that truth is what he experiences. Whatever English he experiences is valid. As a result standards in such things as spelling and grammar fall away.

Because God created, we know he made language. It is not something man has discovered or invented. Certainly man has changed and adapted the language, but behind all this development is a point in time when God equipped men with language.

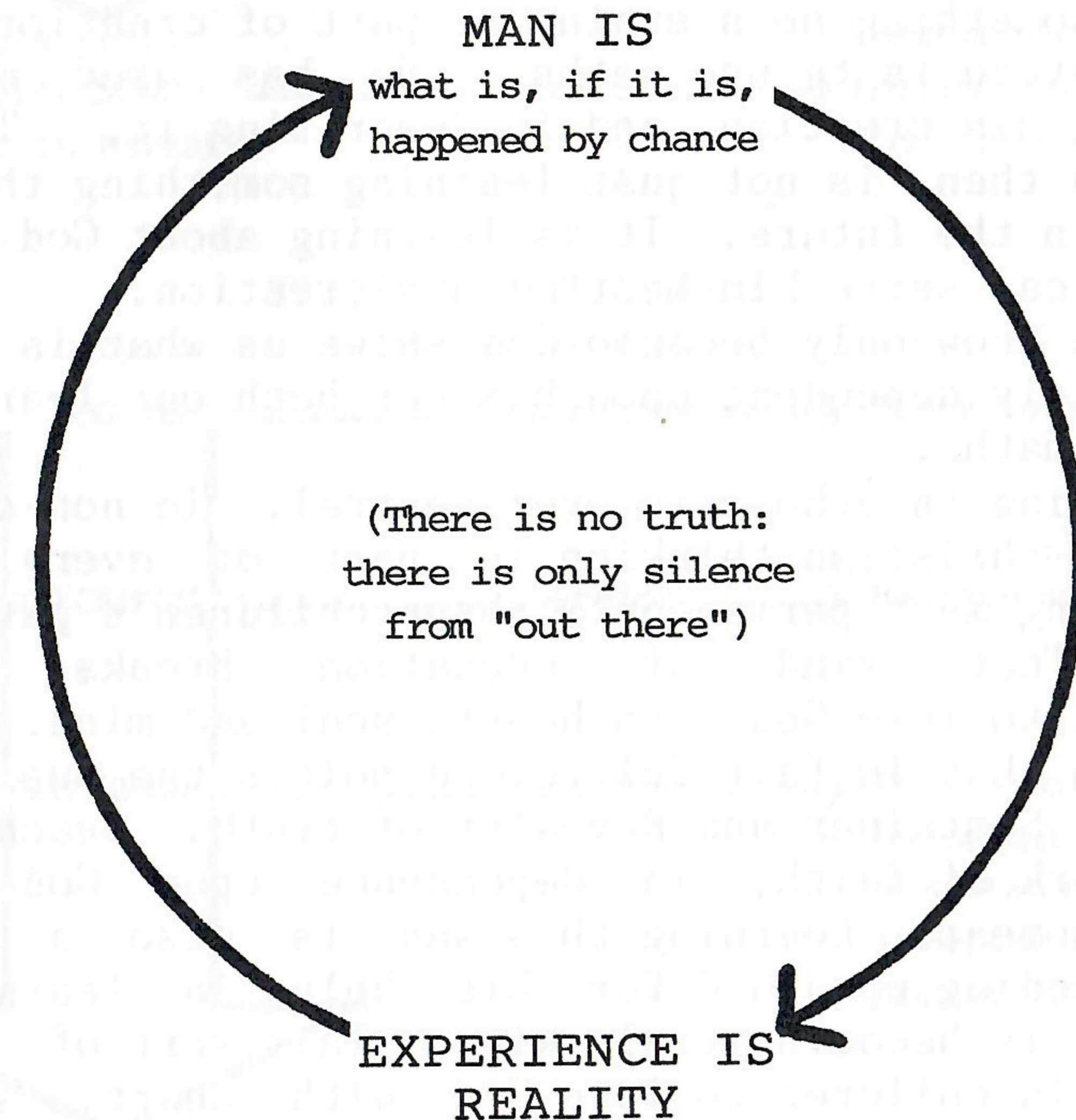
Further, because God speaks, we know it is in his nature to use language. Somewhere therefore there is a perfect language, the language God uses. There is a language that is never misunderstood, never confuses, never lacks! Clearly English is not that language, but because there is a truth in language we have a reason for learning as much as we can about our own language, and learning to use it as perfectly as we can.

Not only does the humanist lack the incentive this provides for accuracy and good style, his aim in teaching language is inadequate. For the humanist, experience is truth, so that if children can get good experiences from language they have reached the ultimate! This is often stated in terms like this: "If others can understand what I am saying, and I can understand what they are saying, no further accuracy is needed." Or, "English is like what its spoke." After all, we do know what the last statement means, so why is it not acceptable?

## HUMANISTIC VIEW OF TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE (diagram 2)

?

.....





The Christian is not primarily concerned with communicating with other men, however. His first concern is to hear God and speak to him. Since God speaks to us through his written word, and we speak to God in prayer, our concern must be to have the best possible skills in the language we use.

Man knows because God reveals what is true. To learn English therefore, a child and his teacher are dependent upon God working directly in the classroom. How arrogant of teachers and pupils to approach lessons without prayerful dependence upon God!

The same sequence can be followed through in maths. Because God is, there is a standard in this subject as in any other.

As Creator, he made maths. Maths is not an invention or discovery of man, but something God has built into creation, something he sustains as part of creation.

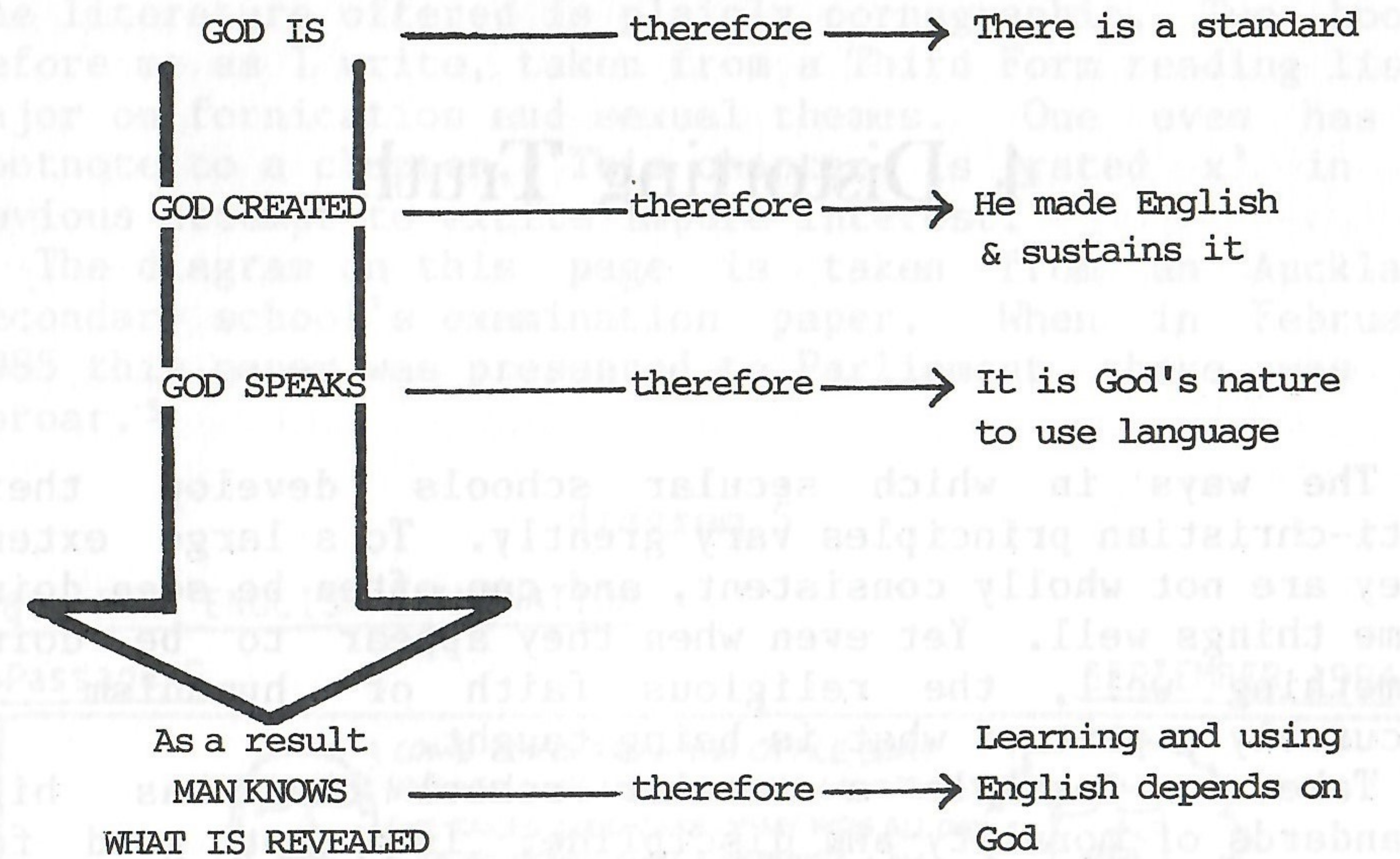
God's nature is to use maths. He has used maths in structuring his creation, and in describing it. To learn about maths then, is not just learning something that might be useful in the future. It is learning about God himself and how we can serve him best in his creation.

Since we know only because God shows us what is true, we are completely dependent upon him for both our learning and our use of maths.

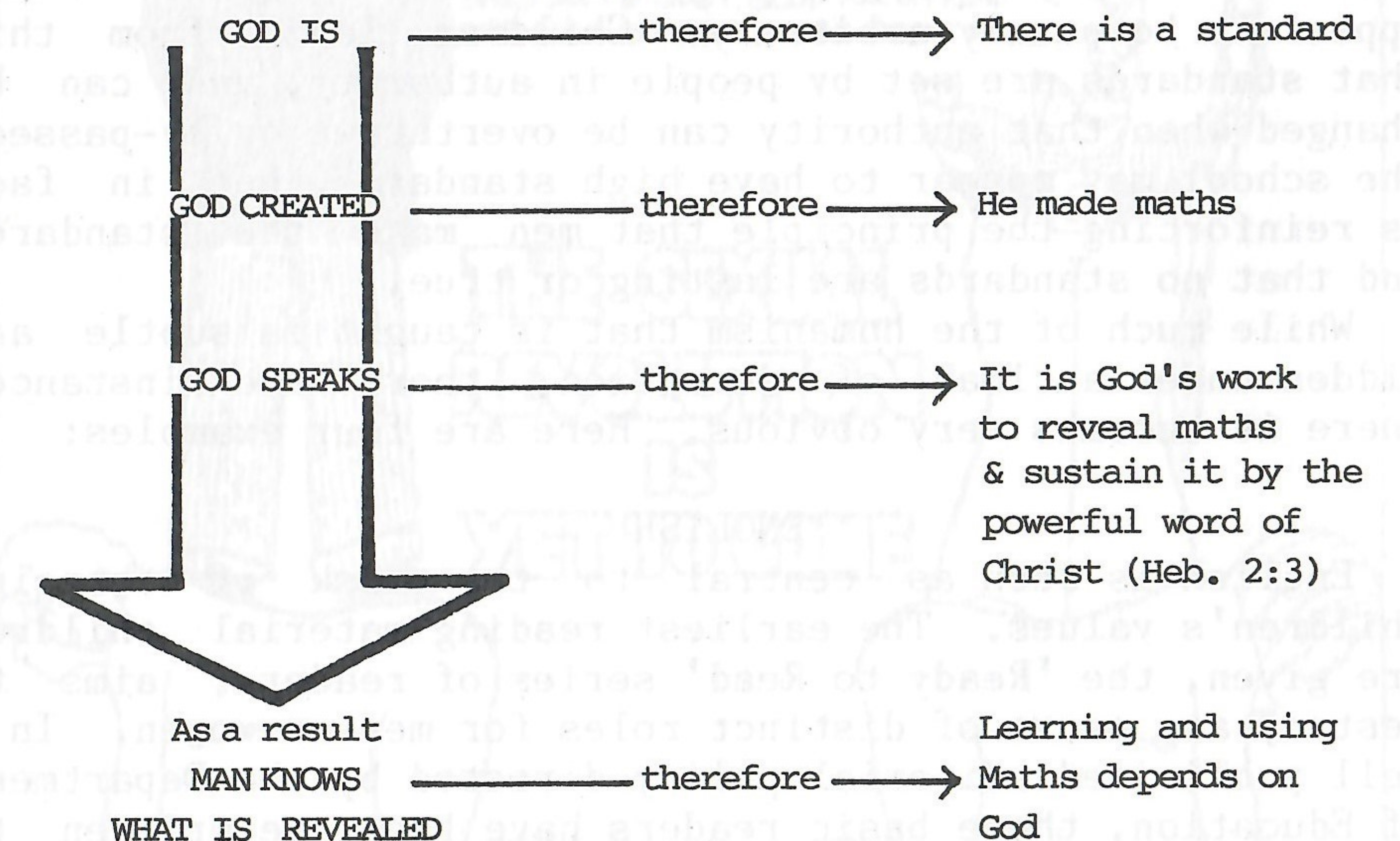
No teaching in school is ever neutral. In non-christian schools non-christian thinking is part of every lesson. That thinking must permanently shape children's patterns of thought. That kind of education breaks Christ's commandment to love God with heart, soul and mind.

Teaching that is faithful to God points the pupil to God as Creator, Sustainer and Revealer of truth. Teaching this way is a work of faith, in dependence upon God's grace moment by moment. Learning this way is also a work of faith, depending upon God for his help in learning the lesson, and in becoming truly wise. This sort of teaching aims to train children to love God with heart, soul and mind ... and to serve him for life!

### TEACHING ENGLISH (diagram 3)



### TEACHING MATHEMATICS (diagram 4)





## 4. Distorting Truth

The ways in which secular schools develop their anti-Christian principles vary greatly. To a large extent they are not wholly consistent, and can often be seen doing some things well. Yet even when they appear to be doing something well, the religious faith of humanism is incurably a part of what is being taught.

Take for example a secular school that has high standards of morality and discipline. Is it not good for children in these schools to learn right and wrong? But on what basis is that right and wrong established? Those in authority cannot teach children that the school's rules are based on the absolute truth of God's word. Their rules appear to be purely arbitrary. Children learn from this that standards are set by people in authority, and can be changed when that authority can be overthrown or by-passed. The school may appear to have high standards, but in fact is reinforcing the principle that men make the standards and that no standards are lasting or true.

While much of the humanism that is taught is subtle and hidden under a cloak of deception, there are instances where it becomes very obvious. Here are four examples:

### ENGLISH

English is seen as central to the task of changing children's values. The earliest reading material children are given, the 'Ready to Read' series of readers, aims to destroy any sense of distinct roles for men or women. In a well publicised editorial policy directed by the Department of Education, these basic readers have been re-written to eliminate any content supporting a Christian view of the distinctions between men and women. In these books for five and six year olds, space is given to stories of mythological and horrific themes, but a Biblical view of

the family is prohibited.

By the time children start secondary schooling, some of the literature offered is plainly pornographic. Two books before me as I write, taken from a Third Form reading list, major on fornication and sexual themes. One even has a footnote to a chapter, 'This chapter is rated x' in an obvious attempt to excite impure interest.

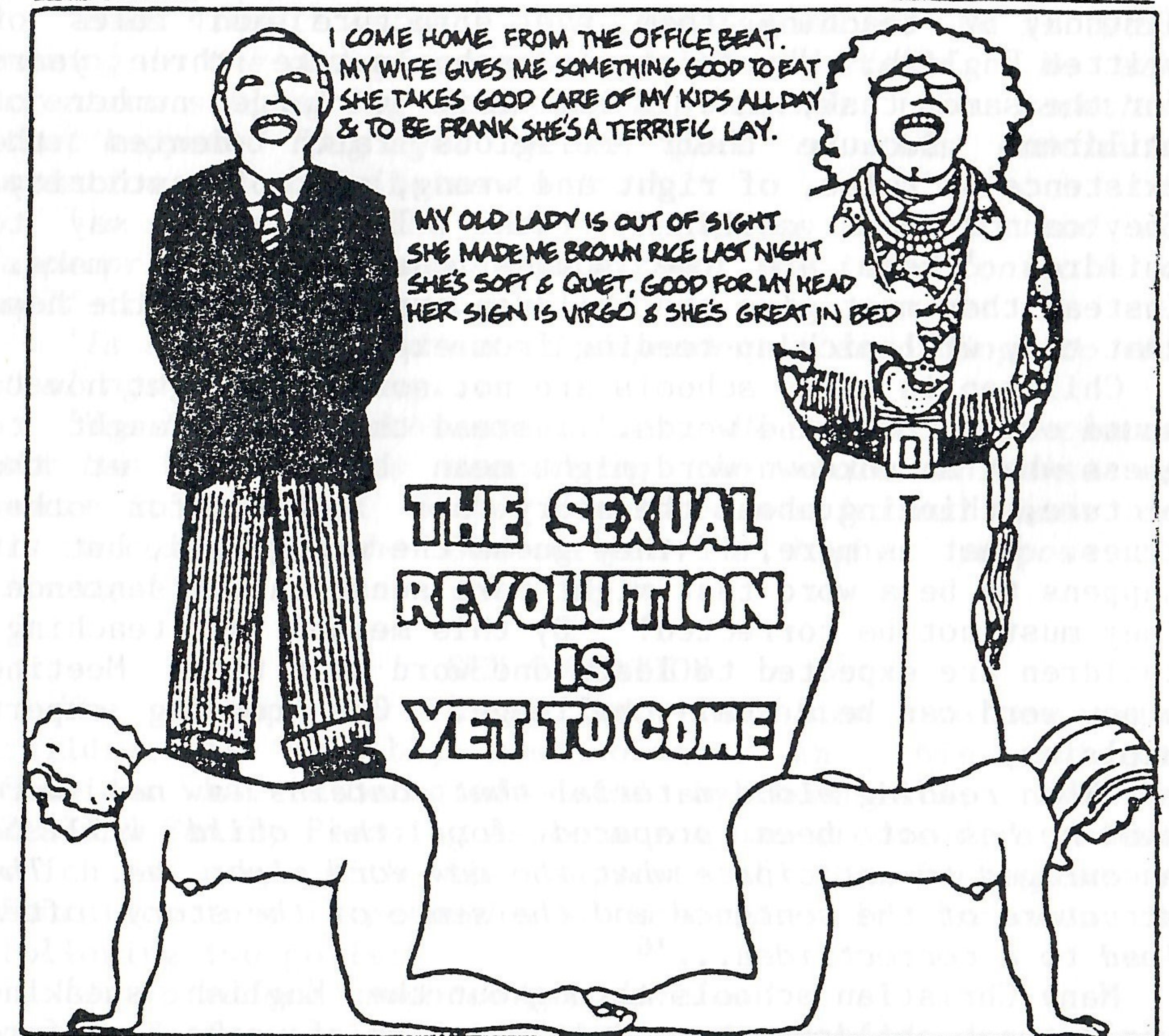
The diagram on this page is taken from an Auckland secondary school's examination paper. When in February 1985 this paper was presented to Parliament there was an uproar.<sup>5</sup>

diagram 5

### 6TH FORM ENGLISH EXAMINATION

#### Passage G

SEPTEMBER 1984



The exam paper is shocking. But what is more shocking



is the sort of teaching that must have been given to prepare children for this sort of exam.

The use of English classes to promote immorality is consistent with the anti-christian principles of the state school. Because the Bible's standards of right and wrong are rejected, this immorality is a natural part of the secular school.

There are of course state schools where a high degree of moral order is maintained under the influence of Principals or others in authority. In such cases the high standards are inconsistent with the basic beliefs embodied in the curriculum, and can last only as long as that particular leader is influential in the school.

Not only does humanism pervert the content of English lessons - it also imposes irrational methods. Five year old children can be taught to read well before their sixth birthday by teaching them the structure and rules of written English. Why do secular schools take three years for the same task, and still fail a large number of children? Because their religious faith denies the existence of rules, of right and wrong, and of authority. They cannot teach children truth. They cannot say to children 'these are the sounds these letters make.' Instead they must give the children experiences in the hope that they will pick up reading from experience.

Children in state schools are not normally taught how to sound out letters and words. Instead they are taught to guess what an unknown word might mean by looking at the picture, thinking about the story and looking for other clues. What is more, if they guess the wrong word, but it happens to be a word that might make sense in the sentence, they must not be corrected! By this method of teaching, children are expected to learn one word at a time. Meeting a new word can be a real challenge. One reading expert explains,

*'When reading aloud material that contains a new word that he has not been prepared for, the child will be encouraged to anticipate what the new word might be. The structure of the sentence and the sense of the story often lead to a correct idea...'*<sup>6</sup>

Many Christian schools throughout the English speaking world teach children to read in a matter of weeks. Before they are six, children can read their Bibles and material of similar difficulty. Yet state schools continue to

insist children cannot be taught the rules of reading.

At best this is nonsense. At worst it is consigning vast numbers of children to reading failure.

#### HEALTH

Health education used to be about healthy activity and the care of the body. It is now defined to 'include physical, mental and social health ... helping people achieve health by their own actions and efforts.'

Under this 'whole-person' concept, curriculum materials are openly aimed at developing the spiritual part of each child. What this means becomes clearer in the following extract from a lecture to Principals of Auckland schools:

*'A fully functioning person ...*

*'Lives fully in the moment of the world. He does not dwell in the past, or dream of the future ...*

*'Sees himself as part of a changing world. He is still moving in the changing world and is not static. He sees creation still going on around him rather than something that happened long ago. He is part of this continuing creation and contributes to it...*

*'Is spontaneous and free to express himself and act appropriately to a situation without the inner controls of self-criticism, fear ...*

*'Is autonomous and acts independently according to his feelings and thinking...*

*'Has his own truths and values. He is not self-centred but has wider values concerning the whole universe and where it is going. He has developed a spiritual sense and is in touch with the God within, a higher purpose for living.'*<sup>7</sup>

#### SEX EDUCATION

The attempt to impose anti-christian values upon children is possibly most obvious in this subject. Consider what is being advocated by humanists. The New Zealand Family Planning Association has produced a kitset which is used with the support of the Department of Education in a large number of schools. It includes the following two goals:<sup>8</sup>

*'1. To reduce unwanted pregnancies*

*'2. To facilitate fulfilling and positive sexuality.'*

It goes on to explain



For some adolescents 'more positive sexuality ... may result from increased sexual activity without guilt.'

The morality of the programme is presented as being 'neutral', but in actual fact it is outspokenly anti-christian:

'It is essential that a teacher understand and accept that THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS and that the task is not so much to teach students facts, (though they play a part in this unit), certainly not to "teach" them values and morals, but to aid students to develop appropriate decision making skills in these fields.' (The capitals are in the original.)<sup>9</sup>

Putting these goals and immorality into practice involves open discussion in mixed classes of personal sexual issues, using whatever crude terminology the pupils may prefer, and passing out samples of contraceptive devices to be handled. Pornographic drawings are used to stimulate discussion and explain the use of the contraceptives.

Homosexuality and other perversions must be presented as alternatives children may wish to consider.

What is the point of all this? After all, by their own admission (on the same page as the first quote above) they claim that sex education programmes do not change sexual behaviour! We agree! It is clearly demonstrable that sex education programmes have never reduced pregnancy rates.

The aim is to harden the consciences of children to sin, to encourage them to enter into whatever experiences may give them pleasure and to destroy what little fabric of Biblical law remains in society.

#### MAORI

The teaching of Maori, Maori tanga and Maori culture is often viewed benevolently. What is seldom realised is that the intention is not merely that children should know how to pronounce Maori place names and enjoy singing a few Maori songs. The aim is that children should embrace aspects of Maori religion and cultural practice.

Early in 1985 the Department of Education distributed a booklet advocating the use of Maori social studies programmes being used in the Taranaki district. It includes the following advice:

'Mauri is the life force or spirit that permeates all things in the natural world and by which all things in

nature cohere... Every person has a mauri which remains throughout his or her physical existence ... all other living things have a mauri, as does the natural environment of air, sea and mountain, and buildings ... The mauri of these too is to be appreciated and respected.

'How carefully do you look at and consider the mauri of each child in your care? Have you done everything to build up (the) child's mauri? ... Do children respect and appreciate the mauri of other living things in and beyond the classroom?

'Tapu: (holy, sacred, protective) ... Very strong spiritual connotations ensured that tapu was sacrosanct, and non-observance of it was tantamount to disaster... In modern Maori society tapu is used as a protective measure, as a means of imposing social disciplines of developing an understanding and awareness of spirituality and of developing respect for people... Tapu can be used to promote conservation, eg, after discussion of tapu, students could decide to make a badly worn section of lawn in the playground tapu to allow it to grow again.

'Wairua: (the spirit, spirituality) Maori people, along with many other people in the world, have a belief in a dimension beyond the material and physical realm... All teachers will have their own ways of developing the spiritual dimension in the children they teach.'<sup>10</sup>

The point must be made that this is teaching that by law is secular!

Maori culture is based upon and run through with a totally anti-christian involvement with the spiritual realm. The lessons being taught in 'secular' state schools are openly practising that religion.



## 5. Making the Right Choice

Christian schools bring great blessings! Children are blessed when school teaches the same truth they learn at home and at Church. Adults are blessed as they see God honouring his promises and their children growing in Christ.

Yet some have genuine concerns about the idea of Christian schools. Here are some of those concerns:

### STANDARDS OF EDUCATION

Apart from the religious and moral principles taught in the school, parents want their children to be well taught in school subjects. Can Christian schools produce good standards?

Christian schools have a very well established record of achieving high academic standards. This is a natural outcome of a commitment to truth. Christian schools believe in teaching truth.

Academic standards depend on two things: the principles upon which the school is founded, and the ability of the teachers to put those principles into practice. When a school fails in either of these, it will fail to achieve good standards, no matter how well intentioned its Christianity. There are some Christian schools that fail here. However, the overwhelming majority of Christian schools have superior academic standards because they are committed to it and are able to select staff who share that commitment.

Academic standards are set by those who determine the curriculum. When the aim and the content of the curriculum changes, standards are different.

A good illustration of the issue of standards is to be seen in the field of mathematics teaching. In 1978 the Department of Education published a report that stated:

*There has been some decline in students' computational skills... (Tests) which measure attainment in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division (established that) these skills had declined.<sup>11</sup>*

This report was prepared in response to public concern that children could not compute as well as they could just 10 years previously - and the Department of Education confirmed this. The Department then went on to excuse this poorer standard on the basis that the curriculum had changed. It argued that mathematics was no longer only about doing computations well, but about understanding. The report claimed that although the writers didn't know how to measure understanding, children were probably doing better:

*It could be argued that this decline is to be expected as the curriculum broadens. Gains in other aspects of mathematics, such as the understanding of mathematical concepts ... probably offset such results.<sup>12</sup>*

Christian schools aim for high standards in computational skills - and achieve them. State schools report to parents that children are doing well in mathematics, but they fail to explain that a high pass in mathematics does not mean good ability to compute!

State schools started to change the mathematics curriculum after the Russians launched Sputnik in 1957. So shocked were educators in the West that the Russians seemed to be winning the space race, they decided the curriculum had to be revolutionised. The mathematics curriculum was changed to stress understanding with the intention of improving mathematical skills. Now the emphasis on understanding is used as an excuse for even lower standards in mathematics!

This illustrates the point that even standards of education are dictated by underlying beliefs. State schools do not believe in absolutes, so their standards change with every intellectual whim. They admit that children cannot perform as well as earlier generations. Their excuse is that those standards no longer apply.

Christian schools believe in high academic standards, and achieve them.



## CHRISTIAN TEACHERS

A frequent concern is that if Christian teachers leave the state schools, a major Christian influence will disappear. Surely Christians need to teach in state schools where children can be influenced for good?

We must be clear that this booklet is not calling for teachers to desert state schools. The main point of this booklet is that Christians have a duty to God to ensure their children receive a Christian schooling. Clearly some Christian teachers are needed for Christian schools, but this does not imply that all Christians should abandon non-christian teaching.

Many Christian teachers have a significant and lasting influence over the children they teach. Many recognise that there is a conflict between their state teaching and their faith. Of course, any who see that conflict as compromising their faith must give up their non-christian teaching. Over 100 years ago, when secular, state education was being promoted, C H Spurgeon saw the issue this way:

*Will not Christian men refuse to teach under such restraint, regarding it as ... an unwarrantable interference with the conscientious discharge of Christian obligation? No true Christian would accept an appointment under which he is commanded to ... prove false to his duty as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have justly complained of the proscription of the Bible by the tyranny of priestly influence or ignorant superstition. But the principle is the same, whether the Bible is excluded from the people of a country, as fatal to Papal domination, or from the children of a village school, as inimical to sectarian supremacy. Let the Government ... banish the Bible from State schools, and they will practically eject every godly teacher to whom a clear conscience is of more importance than the emoluments of office.<sup>13</sup>*

Who can tell the impact on this nation if Christian teachers refused to teach in a non-christian system? Yet the basic issue is that our children must be given a Christian schooling. If after this provision is made, there are Christian teachers who have a clear conscience about teaching in non-christian schools we should not in any manner obstruct them. Rather, we encourage them. May their influence be great, and their lives and teaching be faithful to Christ!

## CHILDREN AS WITNESSES

Some are concerned that placing our children in Christian schools will remove them from a field of witness in state schools.

The first issue is that parents don't send their children to school to witness. While parents hope their Christian children will witness, the prime reason for sending them to school is that they might learn what is true and right, and what leads to maturity. Whatever else it may be, the school is first and foremost a place of training, and the choice of school must be made with that in mind.

Secondly, few parents would send their children into a place to witness at risk of their souls being taken captive. Most recognise that children need spiritual and intellectual maturity to engage in the battles of the adult Christian. State schools are designed to captivate souls and exclude God from children's lives. Parents may need to witness there, but children need the nurture of Christ to train and equip them for battle!

## OUR STATE SCHOOL ISN'T THAT BAD

Many parents recognise the depraved trends detailed in this booklet. Many realise that there are things going on in state schools that are abhorrent. But they believe their school is not caught up in these extremes.

It is a clear blessing when a state school does not put into practice the worst of humanism. There are still a good many state schools where a basically conservative approach results in good standards of behaviour and achievement.

Yet parents must note that good behaviour and good academic knowledge are not the only things that the schools are teaching. Secular schools, by definition, deliberately oppose God. They are there to teach anti-christian values. Note what the Education Department says:

*One of the major intentions in the curriculum as a whole is to foster values and attitudes so that they win permanent acceptance in students' minds. This aim receives special emphasis ... Recent changes in the curriculum - especially in English, social studies, home economics and science - have introduced topics that offer wide scope for consideration of values and the development of healthy attitudes... Some of the responsibilities which were once*



thought to belong to parents now seem to lie with the school.<sup>14</sup>

No matter how good the state school appears in some areas, it leads away from Christ.

The choice Joshua set before the people (Joshua 24:14-15) is so apt. If you will not serve the Lord, then choose which of the state gods you will serve - this state school or the next, it makes no significant difference. Rather, let us finish with these anti-christian institutions, and with Joshua exclaim, 'But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'

## 6. Learning for Christ

The Bible is the truth about truth. To study without its light is like trying to learn about the sun with the aid of a candle. To make a habit of doing school work without the Bible is to make a habit of living by candle light when the sun is shining.<sup>15</sup>

Children will learn without the Bible in their school. They will learn to read, write and do maths. They will also learn that God doesn't count in reading, writing and maths. They will learn to shut God out of much of their lives.

God makes clear the place of the Bible:

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16,17)*

The aim of all Godly education is to thoroughly equip children to be men and women of God ready for every good work. As parents and teachers our goal must be to help children to be more than receptacles for knowledge. We want our children to be ready to serve God wholeheartedly whatever the work they are called to. This is why we teach them English, maths, history and other subjects. We want them to use their knowledge and skills in serving God and neighbour.

It is the Bible, used in teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, that thoroughly equips children for every good work. Its light shapes the knowledge and skills learnt, gives learning direction and purpose and makes a child truly wise.

Sending children to schools where the Bible is banned denies them this light and teaches them the false faith that they can be wise without God. It denies them the very thing they need.



One of the aims of the English syllabus for Secondary Schools is

*To test student's ideas and values against those of family, friends and others, as well as against other values they themselves hold.*<sup>16</sup>

In explaining how this works, the syllabus makes it clear that children should reject any concept of absolute or eternal values. Instead they are to see values as something conditioned by a variety of experiences. Children's experiences are different from those of parents. Children are taught that because of this they can reject the beliefs of parents. The aim is to teach children to do what they see as right in their own eyes.

In schools that ban the Bible, English is deliberately used to change the beliefs of children. This syllabus is compulsory in all state schools, even in those that appear to be conservative. Teaching does not have to be openly antichristian to undermine the teaching of home and Church. It only has to use the compulsory syllabus.

Cornelius Van Til explains why:

*As children of Adam men have always made and continue to make the effort required to cover-up the truth about themselves and God. They see every fact as other than it really is. By means of their literature - drama, poetry, and philosophy - they try to prove to themselves that the world is not the estate of God and that they are not made in his image. Both Jew and Gentile have blinded themselves to the true state of affairs about themselves and their world - about their past, their present and their future. Not being creatures of God, they could not have sinned against such a one. They do not need, therefore, the atoning death of Christ for the remission of their sins. As Stephen said of the Jews, so also it must be said of the Gentiles, that they have always resisted the Holy Spirit - to their own damnation.*<sup>17</sup>

Teaching in non-christian schools is part of the ongoing effort to cover-up the truth about man's dependence upon God and need of salvation in Christ.

Even in schools where the Bible is used in some lessons but not others, children learn that man is sometimes free from God's dominion. This cover-up holds out the hope that they can do without God and without salvation in Christ.

In a Christian school a child learns that he is dependent upon God in every field of study and work. He

also learns of his need of salvation in Christ. Every lesson in a Christian school underlines the truth that the child is God's creature and therefore under God's authority. Every lesson stresses the child's dependence upon God for everything, and in that way highlights the impossibility of salvation by man's own efforts.

There is a link between what a child is taught at school and his response to the gospel's call for faith in Christ. A child who is taught to think, study and work without God in parts of his life 'knows' that man can do without God. He 'knows' he has no need of salvation because he is not under God's total dominion and therefore cannot really be a rebel.

A Christian school aims to show children their need of the Saviour. It aims to show children they need his help in everything they do. But more than this, it aims to show them that anything they do is ultimately worthless if Christ is not their Saviour.

The teachers in a Christian school know that no matter how virtuous a person's work, no matter how wise he appears to be, no matter how full and constructive his life - if he lives and dies without faith in Christ, everything he has done is in vain. By teaching children that every part of their work and life is under God's dominion, the teachers in a Christian school strive to show children that the Gospel message they hear at home and at Church is true. Far above every other need they have, is the need for new birth.

And the Christian school sets a high goal for children when they come to faith in Christ. It says to them that they can do no better than make every moment, and everything they do, a part of serving their Saviour who is King of Kings.



NOTES

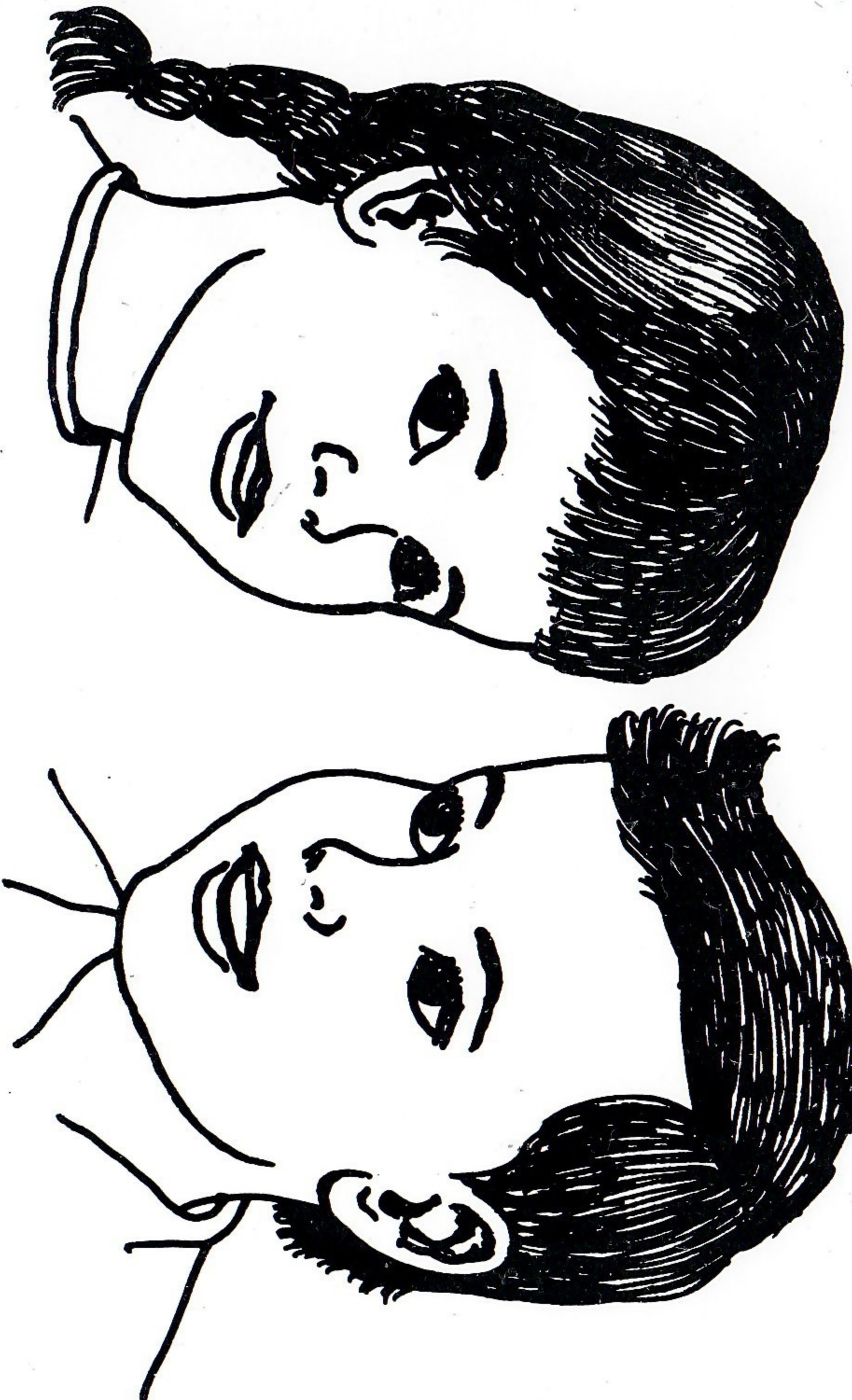
1. The Humanist, January/February 1983, The American Humanist Association, p25
3. Growing, Sharing, Learning, Department of Education, Wellington, 1977, p33
4. Luke 6:40
5. The cartoon was first given wide publicity by the New Zealand Herald, Auckland, 22 December 1984, Section 2, p5.
6. Butler, D & Clay, M Reading Begins at Home, Heinemann, Auckland, 1979, p30
7. Hunton, R Personal Growth, in Stress and Its Effect on Interpersonal Relationships, Auckland Primary Principal's Association, Auckland 1983, p36
8. Family Planning Sex Education Kit Family Planning Association Auckland Branch, Auckland 1982 Introduction p15
9. ibid p11
10. Taha Maori in Social Studies Taranaki District Social Studies Committee (Distributed by the New Zealand Department of Education February 1985)
11. Educational Standards in State Schools Department of Education, Wellington, 1978 p19
12. ibid
13. C.H. Spurgeon The Bible in the School in The Sword and the Trowel London, 1859 p119
14. Educational Standards etc op cit pp81f
15. I am indebted to Cornelius Van Til who frequently uses this illustration.
16. Statement of Aims National English Syllabus Committee, Department of Education, Wellington, 1978, p16
17. Van Til, C Jerusalem and Athens, Presbyterian and Reformed, Nutley, New Jersey, 1974, p7

Bible quotations are all taken from the New International Version: The Holy Bible, New International Version, 1978 New York International Bible Society. Published by Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1979.





# Schools need Christ



Michael L. Drake



# Schools need Christ

"Withdraw from a child the only divine rule of life, and the result will be most lamentable. An education purely secular is the handmaiden of a Godless scepticism."

- C H Spurgeon



## SCHOOLS NEED CHRIST

COPYRIGHT  
MICHAEL L DRAKE  
AUGUST 1985

All rights reserved. Not to be copied or reproduced in whole or in part by any means without permission.

Published by Wycliffe Christian Schools  
43 Pilkington Road, Mt Wellington, Auckland 6, New Zealand.

Cover designed by  
Granville Graphics

### A note about copyright:

Those who feel tempted to copy pages from this booklet despite the fact that to do so is illegal, should prayerfully consider Romans 13:1-7, 1 Timothy 5:18 and Exodus 20:15.

## Introduction

In New Zealand, children spend more than 10,000 hours in school before they are fifteen years old. Each of those hours has been carefully planned to train and change children. For most New Zealand children those ten thousand hours are dedicated to teaching them to live without God.

Over the last 20 years I have been closely involved in teaching. I have taught at all levels of the school system. I have been the Principal of Onewhero District High School and Orakei Primary School in Auckland. I have written curriculum materials and helped train teachers for the Department of Education. Everything I have seen and learnt in that time has confirmed the conviction that where Christ is excluded by law, he is directly opposed.

Many find it difficult to sort out the issues at stake in deciding how children should be taught. It is my prayer that this booklet will help all who want to understand more.

Michael L Drake  
August 1985

Michael Drake is married with four children. He is Principal of Tyndale Park Christian School in Auckland, a school providing for children of Primary and Secondary ages. He has also written In God's World, a curriculum for Primary Schools, The Wycliffe WORD Programme, a kitset for teaching reading, and Christ and School, a short booklet on the need for Christian schools.



# 1. Going to School God's Way

The Bible tells us how we should teach our children. We cannot look here at all that it covers, but here are some of the passages that will help:

*Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."*

Everything a child learns is about God and what he has made. God made everything, he sustains and directs it by his power and wisdom, and we derive our being from him. We live and move and have our being in him. In particular, man is created in the image of God. The main goal of education is to teach children to glorify, serve and enjoy their Creator.

*Deuteronomy 6:6,7 "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."*

The thrust of this is that God's law is to be spoken about in every situation. Whatever you are doing with your children you are to tell them what God's law says and how it affects what they are learning about. They are to learn to see everything from God's point of view. In social studies, history, maths or any other subject, children are to be taught to know the subject in the same way God knows it.

*Proverbs 1:8 "Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching."*

Parents are responsible for directing a child's instruction. It is the parents that children are to listen to. Parents cannot hand the task of teaching over to someone beyond their control.

Parents need to ask:

Am I able to examine and choose who teaches my children and what they are taught? Are my children learning the things I believe are important? Is what is taught and the way it is taught Christian? Is the curriculum and the life of the school based on God's Word?

*Proverbs 22:6 "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."*

This is more than a truism: it is a promise of Almighty God! School involves a very large part of the child's training. It must train him in the way of Christ, for that is the way he must go.

*Ephesians 6:4 "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."*

A contrast is made here between instructing and training children in God's way, and exasperating or provoking them. Fathers are warned that if the instruction they give or supervise lacks that essential element of being 'of the Lord' they encourage their children to sin. Teaching in classes where by law Christ is banned cannot be teaching 'of the Lord.'

*Psalms 36:9 "In your light we see light."*

God sheds light on the search for knowledge and truth, contrasting what is truly of value with what fallen man values. Knowing God and his glory changes the way we look at man and his wisdom. We may study the same things, but we see them in a different light.

*Proverbs 9:10 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."*

It is only as God is feared and known that any fact is properly understood or able to be wisely used. When every aspect of teaching is in obedience to God, every subject is considered and taught from the viewpoint that God is. When God is revered as the God who created, the God who upholds, the God who has revealed himself to us, we can know the truth as it really is. To try to know anything without this perspective is to distort what is true.

*Daniel 1:17,20 "To these four young men God gave*



knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning... In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom."

Here we see that knowledge and wisdom come from God. What is especially significant about this passage however, is that Daniel and his three friends gained this outstanding knowledge and skill as they rejected the ways of the wise men of the world in favour of obedience to God.

*2 Corinthians 10:5* "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

Every thought is to be Christian. There is to be no thought entertained even for a moment that is not expressly obedient to Christ. We are to think as Christ thinks!

When, for example, we study history, it should be to see what God was doing and how he sees the response of men to his law.

*Colossians 1:16-18* "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy."

Christ is to be supreme in school because he is to be supreme in everything. He is to be the most prominent aspect of every lesson because every lesson is about what he has made and what he sustains.

In mathematics for example, Christ is to be central. He has made mathematics as part of his created order: it is not a mere invention of man. We can rely on the mathematical order of creation because God keeps his creation in order.  $2 + 2$  will equal 4 tomorrow only because it is part of the order God has created and sustains. When God is excluded from the mathematics lesson, all the mathematics taught can only be seen as the result of chance experience without any true reliability for the future. It is this ungodly viewpoint that forms

the basis of present syllabuses in state schools.

*Romans 12:2* "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will."

What you think governs how you live. If we teach children to think without Christ in some subjects, they will live without him in those parts of their lives. They will become conformed to this world. Renewing minds so that we think like Christ instead of like the world, changes lives so that they begin to show what is good, acceptable and perfect. When we teach children that Christ is involved in every part of their learning, and show them how this is true, we begin to train up children who display the attributes of Christ in every part of their lives.

*Philippians 4:8* "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things."

This list of what our minds should dwell on applies to children and adults alike. Everything we think about, everything that is taught, everything our children learn, must measure up to this standard.

Is everything your child studies in English pure? Is every value taught in social studies noble and right? Is the science they learn true?

*Philippians 4:9* "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice."

Paul was an outstanding teacher, for teaching is first and foremost the setting of an example: what he was, his 'students' should be.

*Luke 6:40* "A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher."

When your children are fully trained they will be like their teachers. What an encouragement if your child's teacher is a faithful Christian, but what a frightening promise this verse is if your child's teacher is ungodly. Do your children's teachers live in a way you would like your children to live?



*John 17:15 "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one."*

It is sometimes supposed that a Christian school removes children from the world. Yet the Christian school is in the world, its staff and pupils are sinners, and it is training children to live in the world. This is not isolation from the world!

Children are not adults. They are not yet fully trained. Those who do a good job of training soldiers train them before the heat of battle. The trainee has to learn to handle his weapons, how to understand the enemy and practises long and hard before facing the enemy. So it must be with children. We have the task of training them for their life in the world, not thrusting them unprepared into battle.

The disciples spent many cloistered hours with Christ before he prayed this prayer for them. Indeed for three years their whole lives had been immersed in his. That was the preparation. Even with that preparation he prays for their protection from the evil one.

In providing a Christian schooling for children we exercise the same care Jesus extended to his disciples in leaving them in the world but protecting them from evil.

If the best protection from the evil one is for children to experience sin, we would have to encourage them to engage in the worst sins possible! Clearly the best protection is to shelter them from such experiences while teaching them what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely ....

*Colossians 2:8 "See to it that no-one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ."*

The traditions or philosophies invented by men are basic to worldliness and are able to captivate and deceive. For example, one of the major aims of state social studies syllabuses is to train children to make up their own minds about right and wrong without reference to God's law. This philosophy, invented by men and taught in every state school, can take children captive.

Who would willingly subject his children to the teaching of a false religion? Yet when we send our children off to a state school, we send them to where they will be taught a deceptive philosophy that can take them captive to living

without God. The state school teaches a false religion.

*Romans 1:21 "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened."*

If our children are taught that there are subject areas where the knowledge of God makes no difference, that there are areas of knowledge in which he does not need to be specially honoured, we darken their hearts.

Even the state schools recognise that teaching any subject involves teaching values and beliefs. That is why every syllabus makes it an aim in every subject to teach values and beliefs. In every case these beliefs deliberately exclude belief in God and submission to his law. Such teaching does not enlighten: it darkens the hearts of children.

Whenever children are taught as if God is not involved we darken their hearts: this is what happens in every lesson in a state school, and the result is the exchanging of the truth of God for a lie, and worshipping and serving created things rather than the Creator (see verse 25).

*Psalm 1:1-3 "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."*

What is the result of giving our children to the wicked or ungodly for teaching? Should they be taught to go in the way of sinners? Should they sit where those who mock God and his word teach? Or should they be taught to delight in God's law and to think about it in every subject, at every moment, day or night? It must be one or the other: it cannot be both.

God requires parents to give themselves to training their children to learn and know everything in the light of his word, in submission to the knowledge of God, and in imitation of Christ.

To teach children in any other way, or to allow any of



their training to be independent of specific Christian teaching is a sin that results in our pointing these children away from Christ to be conformed to the world as idolators.

The Christian school aims to help parents honour God in the teaching of their children. Schools without Christ aim to do exactly the opposite.

## 2. State Schools Teach Religion

State schools in New Zealand are teaching religion. None teach Christianity because the law prohibits this. They are in fact teaching the religion of humanism.

The Education Act forbids teachers to teach children that God's law applies to them and declares what is right and what is true. Instead, the syllabuses require that children be guided to decide for themselves what is right and what is true. When man decides these things for himself, he has rejected God and has attempted to make man a law to himself. In this way the state schools teach children that God has no authority over large parts of their lives.

Every state school teaches children to trust in themselves and in their own ability to find out and decide. Every state school is teaching humanism.

Some pretend that humanism is not a religion. But it does involve living by an attitude against God, a life of faith in principles of belief and conduct. This is religious as the American Humanist Association Magazine of January/February 1983 stated:

*"The battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognises and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being... utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach."*<sup>1</sup>

Consider the following examples drawn from the primary school curriculum:

*The social studies syllabus requires the teaching of majority morality.*

As part of their regular classroom work in social



studies, children are placed in role-playing situations where they must make moral choices. These choices may relate to family life, economics, justice, etc. The children discuss the pros and cons of the various answers (acknowledgement that God's law is absolutely binding on everyone is prohibited by law), then decide by majority which is right. This may result in their justifying murder, or suicide, or theft, and the teacher may not point out the requirements of God's law without breaking the law of the land.

The religious commitment of the state school requires submission to the majority in place of submission to God. The syllabus encourages acceptance of the freedom of the individual to believe what he will providing he acts in unison with the majority! God is prohibited, and the majority becomes god, demanding total submission to its tyranny.

The Christian school starts with a different religious commitment: to submit to God as he has made himself known through his word, the Bible. When teaching children how to make moral choices, how to evaluate social structures, how to understand history, the Christian school starts with what God requires. Children are taught that there is a right and a wrong. They are taught to look for the out working of God's law and the effects of obedience or disobedience in the different cultures and periods of history studied, and to learn from them. They are taught that right and wrong are not values they judge, but values judged by an unchanging, holy God.

*The science syllabus requires that children be taught to regard all knowledge as tentative.*

In other words this syllabus requires every teacher to teach children that there are no things they can be really certain of. Truth, they must be taught, is changing. What is true today may not be true tomorrow.

This has resulted in a change from teaching children what is true in 'nature', to giving them experiences, because experience is the only truth each child can depend upon. They learn from this to reject anything they have not yet experienced.

Teachers in a Christian school are able to affirm from the Bible that there is real existence and there are things that are true. The Bible makes it clear that God is, that

he has created, that he keeps the whole of creation together. There are truths given in God's word about creation that are absolute, regardless of our experience.

Christian schools of course recognise that man's knowledge is incomplete and frequently faulty. But that does not mean truth is changing, nor is truth dependent upon man's experience. We may not know accurately, but 'truth' is never tentative. Truth is real and unchanging, even if what we know of it is limited.

*John Dewey, probably the most influential educational philosopher of modern times said, "We affirm that genuine values and tenable ends and ideals are to be derived from what is found within the movement of experience. Hence, we deny that they can be derived from authority, human or supernatural." 2*

This view is embodied in every state syllabus.

The Christian holds a totally opposite view: values can only be truly derived from God who has supreme authority.

Every lesson that teaches values (and every lesson does, as even the humanists acknowledge) teaches one of these two values. Every lesson teaches either that values come from God and children must submit, or that values are arbitrary and children must make up their own minds.

Allowing a child to be taught ungodly values in his daily lessons is to train him to become ungodly. The Christian school bases its whole curriculum on submission to God, and only lessons on this basis can encourage and develop godliness.

*The teaching of values has become the common theme of all syllabuses regardless of the subject.*

'Values' means choosing between right and wrong. The state schools therefore teach children that these decisions can be made, indeed must be made, without reference to God or his word. In this way children are taught God is irrelevant and has no authority over large areas of their lives.

Christian schools agree that every lesson teaches values. This is why we have Christian schools! The Christian school is committed to teaching the values of the Bible, and applying those values to every part of the child's learning and life.



The Johnson report sets out guidelines for the development of state schools: "Every school reflects some type of values system. All individuals and organisations hold sets of values, good or bad, whether expressed or not. Each school shows moral decisions of one sort or another within every action and every area of its philosophy and practices. The whole tone and style of a school's climate will reflect its commitment to its value system."<sup>3</sup>

Children are frequently required to participate in rites of witch-craft, and to enact violence.

Witch-craft is a favoured theme among junior classes in state schools. Especially at halloween children may be required to dress, dance, cast spells and write as witches do.

Murder, violence and crime are favourite themes. The School Journals, published by the Education Department, often feature poems, stories and plays about spirits and witches. The ERIC training programme, in which almost every junior class teacher is trained encourages teachers to use books with violent, spooky or horrific themes because children seem to have a natural affinity to these things. They like them! Of course they do, for they share the same fallen nature as Adam. But what is needed is that they think on whatever is true, noble, right ...

*An inherent part of teaching is inculcating the beliefs and practices of the teacher, even if unintentionally.*

Teaching is discipling, or making disciples. The state teaching force is made up of a reasonable cross section of society. Among teachers can be found spiritualists, cheats, child molesters, adulterers and fornicators, rebels against lawful authority, homosexuals and such like. When these people teach your children, they teach them to believe and live like themselves!

I have witnessed lessons where the attempt has been made to teach these ways of life and immorality. The lessons need not be overt, for in the words of Christ, "Everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher"<sup>4</sup> Your child's teacher is establishing the pattern of your child's life.

Recognising this, Christian schools aim to set before children teachers whose lives can be imitated. That is not to say that Christian school teachers are perfect. But it

is to say that teachers in Christian schools should be the sort of people who by faith in Christ and repentance from sin are seeking to live lives of holiness that can be copied. They should be people who by prayer and Bible study are dealing with sin and becoming more like Christ. They are people who are not openly and wilfully living in sin. These are the sort of people parents should be seeking out to have a life-long influence over their children.

*The state system originally recognised the conflict between its teaching and religious belief.*

When the state system was first established, there was a provision built into the Act to allow parents to remove their children from history lessons if it was felt they would be exposed to antagonistic views. This right was soon removed because you simply cannot have a school where pupils are being removed from certain lessons.

Now parents have no such option. The state has recognised that its teaching is religious and may conflict with the religion of parents. And it requires parents to allow it to teach those conflicting views without challenge.

Modern teaching programmes place considerable emphasis on integrated teaching. This is teaching where a number of subjects are taught at once. A prime example is where health education is required by the latest syllabus to be taught in every subject area. While there will be specific health lessons, there will also be planned health instruction in maths, English, social studies and so on. This not only makes it impossible for parents to withdraw children from particular subjects, it makes it impossible for them to even know when those subjects are being taught or what is taught.

The idea of withdrawing children from proposed sex classes has been promoted. This is deceptive. Not only does the syllabus aim to integrate health lessons, but the withdrawal procedure will be difficult to administer and embarrassing to parents and pupils.

The state system is committed to imposing its beliefs upon children regardless of the religious faith of parents.

The Christian school does not hide its religious belief. It states it openly, provides parents with full details of the curriculum, and invites those who share its faith to



enrol their children. In such schools, parents have a real influence on what is taught - and have the ultimate option of withdrawing children completely if conflict arises.

*"The new generation of teachers coming into the teaching service is to a large extent made up of those who cannot exercise discipline and control because they neither believe in it nor have any experience of it."*

This statement was made in 1980 by a senior psychologist in the Department of Education to a meeting of Principals. Increasingly schools are becoming places where discipline is lacking.

The reason for this is simply that schools do not believe in it. Since there are no absolute standards of right and wrong, schools have no authority or desire to impose their standards on autonomous children.

The idea of punishment is under attack. It is not just corporal punishment that is being opposed, but all forms of punishment. Our state schools are rapidly becoming centres of lawlessness as they put into practice the religious principles they are founded upon.

*Stories from the Bible can be taught as myths and legends.*

It is possible to teach the stories of the Bible. They are listed for inclusion in the part of the social studies syllabus set aside for the teaching of myths and legends. It is not enough to ban God from the classroom. The ultimate step is to direct teachers throughout the nation to teach that God's word is mere myth and legend.

### 3. A Christian Way of Knowing

No 'fact' however simple, is neutral. Depending on how it is taught and the context in which it is put, it will either lead toward God, or away from him. In the Christian framework of knowledge, for example, the fact that ducks have webbed feet leads to an appreciation of the skilled Creator. In the humanistic-evolutionary framework, it leads to the conclusion that ducks developed webbed feet in order to live in their environment better. This mechanistic view of the universe leads away from God.

In social studies, children are taught that cultural and moral practices differ from country to country because of environmental factors. They are taught that one way of life is as good as another and that to be 'balanced' and unprejudiced people they need to accept all cultural and moral practices as being of equal value. The word of God judges all cultures, including our own, which fall short of Christ's standards. It is false to teach children otherwise. One religion is not as good as another. One set of ungodly practices may be as bad as any other set, but the God of heaven weighs them all in his balances and finds them all wanting.

In music, art, and most of all in English, the centre of the primary school curriculum, children are encouraged to set their imagination to work and rove wherever they will. To escape from reason into fantasy and irrationality is increasingly seen as the height of achievement in creativity. The extent to which the child can become, in his mind, the object of his fantasy, is the measure of success in this area.

This view of the imagination sees the mind as a bird, free to fly into any region whatever without consequences. Having no clear view of what man is or how life is to be lived the state curriculum replaces knowledge and skill



with irrational experience.

Christ seeks in his followers a sanctified and purposeful imagination, channelled into fruitful and productive activity, and Paul urges the bringing of the mind into captivity - to Christ! In the Christian school the imagination is set to work in a manner consistent with a godly love for truth and beauty.

No knowledge whatever is neutral. Humanistic and evolutionary thinking is woven through the warp and woof of state education, and it must inevitably be ingrained into children's ways of thinking. By committing our children to that kind of education we are involving both ourselves and them in breaking Christ's commandment to love God with heart, soul and mind.

The diagrams one and two illustrate the differences between Christian and humanistic thinking:

The Christian starts with the certainty that God is, that he has created and rules all of creation, and that he speaks. It is because of this that man knows. He knows what God reveals, even what he cannot experience.

Only God is self-sufficient. Men like the rest of creation depend on God for existence, but God depends on no-one. We depend on God for both life and knowledge.

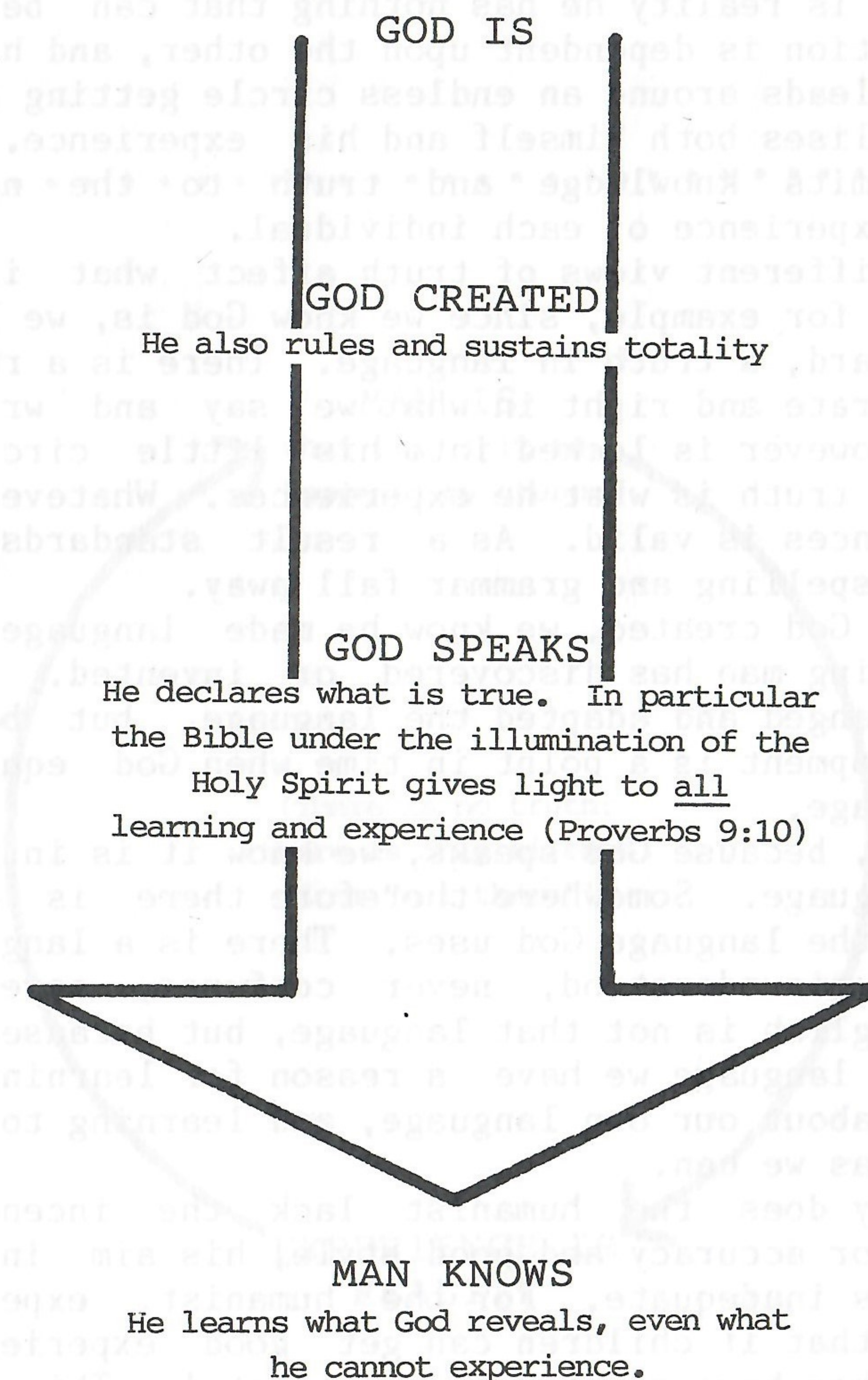
God's knowledge is perfect. He knows himself, because he is the Self-sufficient One. He knows everything else because he made it. For us to know anything truly, we must know like God knows: God's thinking must dominate our thinking.

For this reason, every field of learning must be placed under the authority of the Bible, because the Bible is God's revelation of his thinking. Learning is a search for what God has planned and created. God has chosen the Bible to reveal his mind, to shed light on our search for knowledge.

When God speaks, declaring what is true, he does so through the Bible. It is the Bible, under the illumination of the Holy Spirit that gives light to the individual's learning and experience. This is why Solomon said 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.' (Prov 9.10)

What we learn can only be truly known when the Bible directs and sheds light on it. We may seem to know much by man's standards, but it is only when we fear and know God

## CHRISTIAN VIEW OF TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE (diagram 1)





that we have true knowledge or wisdom about what God has made.

The humanist starts by excluding God. If he is there, which most deny, he is somewhere 'out there' and not in any way involved with man or experience (beyond the dotted line in diagram 2). That leaves him without any certainty. Whether he holds as his main statement of faith that man or experience is reality he has nothing that can be certain. Each assertion is dependent upon the other, and his search for truth leads around an endless circle getting nowhere.

Man idolises both himself and his experience. In this way he limits knowledge and truth to the narrow and fallible experience of each individual.

These different views of truth affect what is taught. In English for example, since we know God is, we know there is a standard, a truth in language. There is a reason for being accurate and right in what we say and write. The humanist however is locked into his little circle, which means that truth is what he experiences. Whatever English he experiences is valid. As a result standards in such things as spelling and grammar fall away.

Because God created, we know he made language. It is not something man has discovered or invented. Certainly man has changed and adapted the language, but behind all this development is a point in time when God equipped men with language.

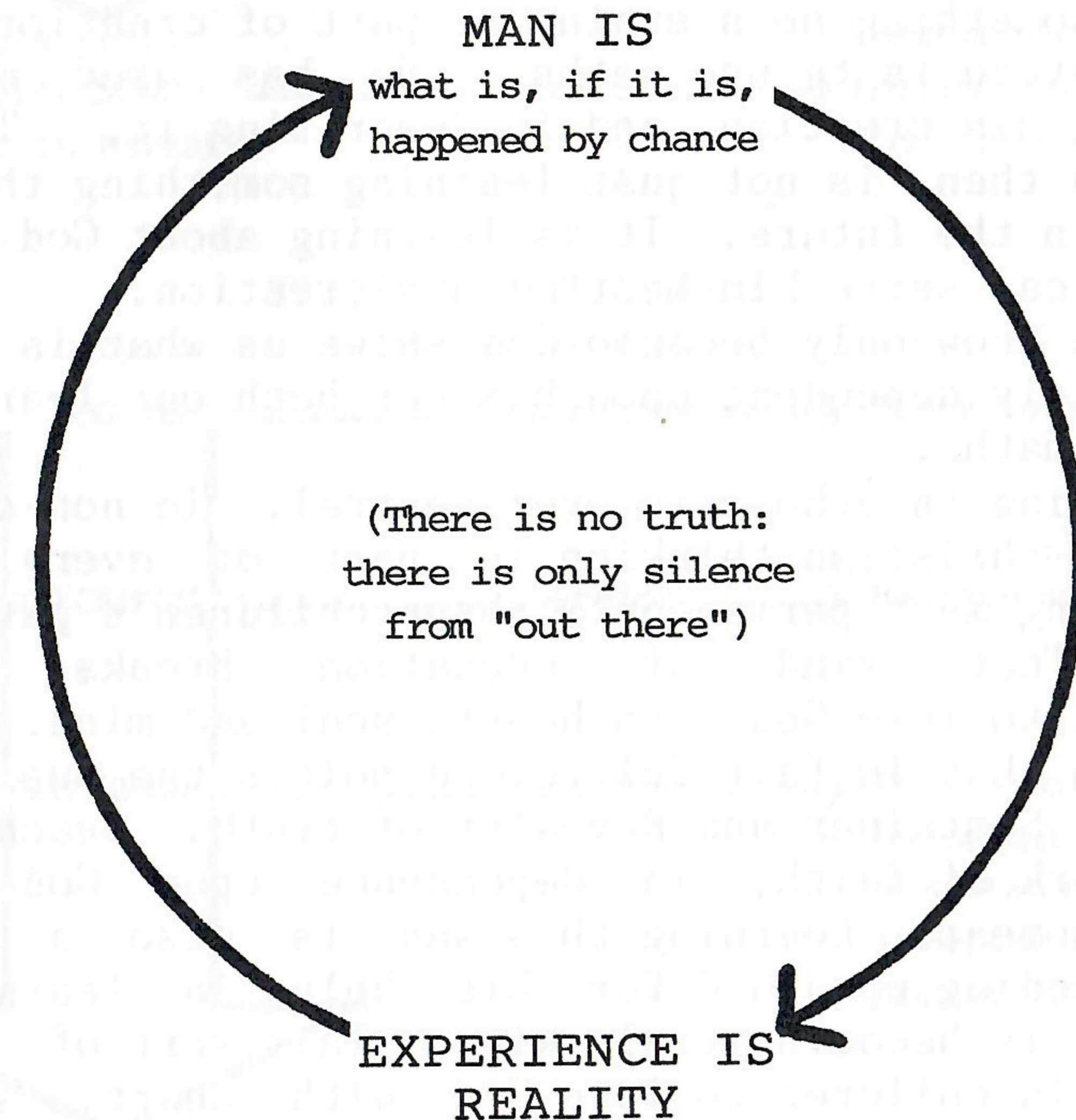
Further, because God speaks, we know it is in his nature to use language. Somewhere therefore there is a perfect language, the language God uses. There is a language that is never misunderstood, never confuses, never lacks! Clearly English is not that language, but because there is a truth in language we have a reason for learning as much as we can about our own language, and learning to use it as perfectly as we can.

Not only does the humanist lack the incentive this provides for accuracy and good style, his aim in teaching language is inadequate. For the humanist, experience is truth, so that if children can get good experiences from language they have reached the ultimate! This is often stated in terms like this: "If others can understand what I am saying, and I can understand what they are saying, no further accuracy is needed." Or, "English is like what its spoke." After all, we do know what the last statement means, so why is it not acceptable?

## HUMANISTIC VIEW OF TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE (diagram 2)

?

.....





The Christian is not primarily concerned with communicating with other men, however. His first concern is to hear God and speak to him. Since God speaks to us through his written word, and we speak to God in prayer, our concern must be to have the best possible skills in the language we use.

Man knows because God reveals what is true. To learn English therefore, a child and his teacher are dependent upon God working directly in the classroom. How arrogant of teachers and pupils to approach lessons without prayerful dependence upon God!

The same sequence can be followed through in maths. Because God is, there is a standard in this subject as in any other.

As Creator, he made maths. Maths is not an invention or discovery of man, but something God has built into creation, something he sustains as part of creation.

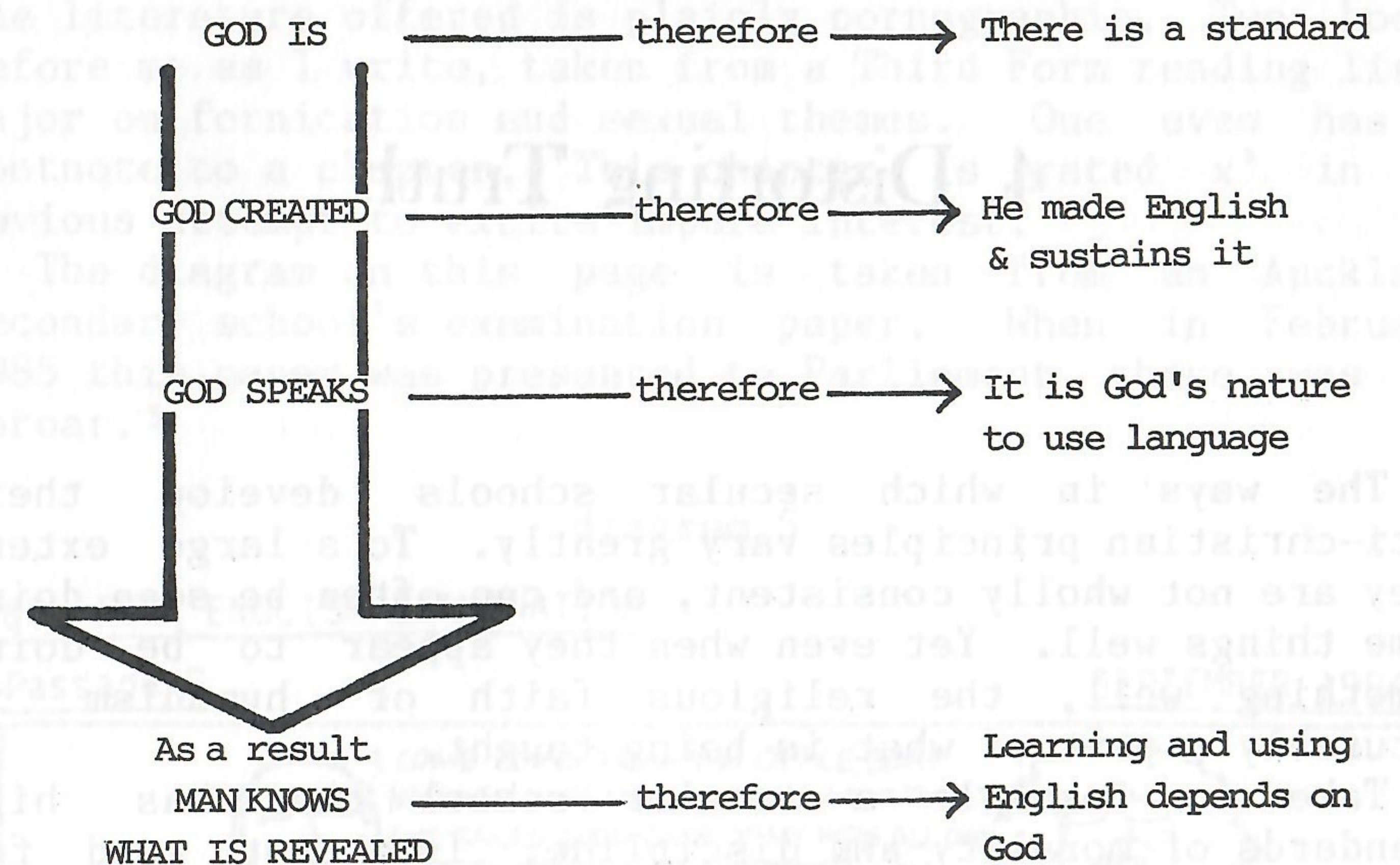
God's nature is to use maths. He has used maths in structuring his creation, and in describing it. To learn about maths then, is not just learning something that might be useful in the future. It is learning about God himself and how we can serve him best in his creation.

Since we know only because God shows us what is true, we are completely dependent upon him for both our learning and our use of maths.

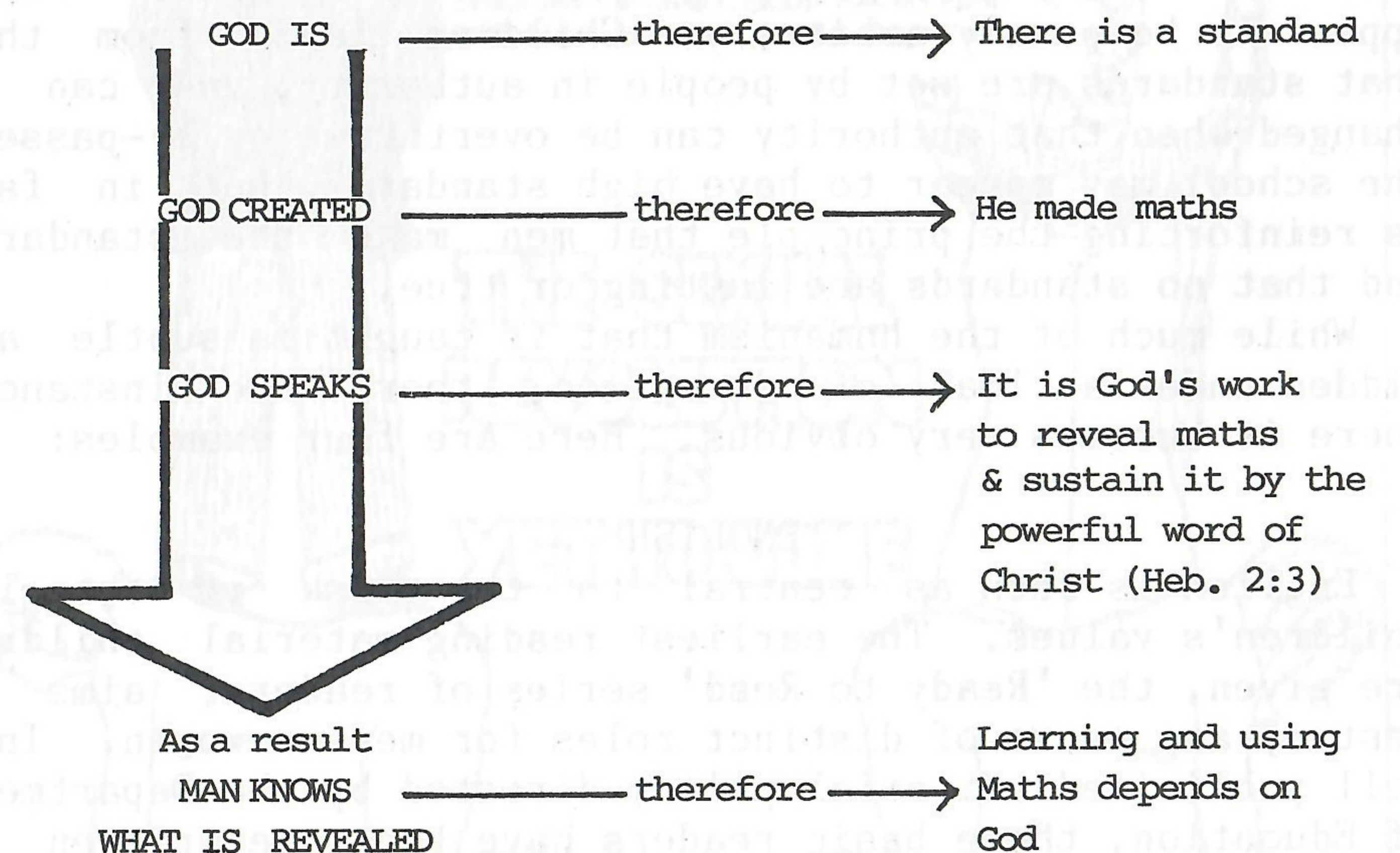
No teaching in school is ever neutral. In non-christian schools non-christian thinking is part of every lesson. That thinking must permanently shape children's patterns of thought. That kind of education breaks Christ's commandment to love God with heart, soul and mind.

Teaching that is faithful to God points the pupil to God as Creator, Sustainer and Revealer of truth. Teaching this way is a work of faith, in dependence upon God's grace moment by moment. Learning this way is also a work of faith, depending upon God for his help in learning the lesson, and in becoming truly wise. This sort of teaching aims to train children to love God with heart, soul and mind ... and to serve him for life!

### TEACHING ENGLISH (diagram 3)



### TEACHING MATHEMATICS (diagram 4)





## 4. Distorting Truth

The ways in which secular schools develop their anti-christian principles vary greatly. To a large extent they are not wholly consistent, and can often be seen doing some things well. Yet even when they appear to be doing something well, the religious faith of humanism is incurably a part of what is being taught.

Take for example a secular school that has high standards of morality and discipline. Is it not good for children in these schools to learn right and wrong? But on what basis is that right and wrong established? Those in authority cannot teach children that the school's rules are based on the absolute truth of God's word. Their rules appear to be purely arbitrary. Children learn from this that standards are set by people in authority, and can be changed when that authority can be overthrown or by-passed. The school may appear to have high standards, but in fact is reinforcing the principle that men make the standards and that no standards are lasting or true.

While much of the humanism that is taught is subtle and hidden under a cloak of deception, there are instances where it becomes very obvious. Here are four examples:

### ENGLISH

English is seen as central to the task of changing children's values. The earliest reading material children are given, the 'Ready to Read' series of readers, aims to destroy any sense of distinct roles for men or women. In a well publicised editorial policy directed by the Department of Education, these basic readers have been re-written to eliminate any content supporting a Christian view of the distinctions between men and women. In these books for five and six year olds, space is given to stories of mythological and horrific themes, but a Biblical view of

the family is prohibited.

By the time children start secondary schooling, some of the literature offered is plainly pornographic. Two books before me as I write, taken from a Third Form reading list, major on fornication and sexual themes. One even has a footnote to a chapter, 'This chapter is rated x' in an obvious attempt to excite impure interest.

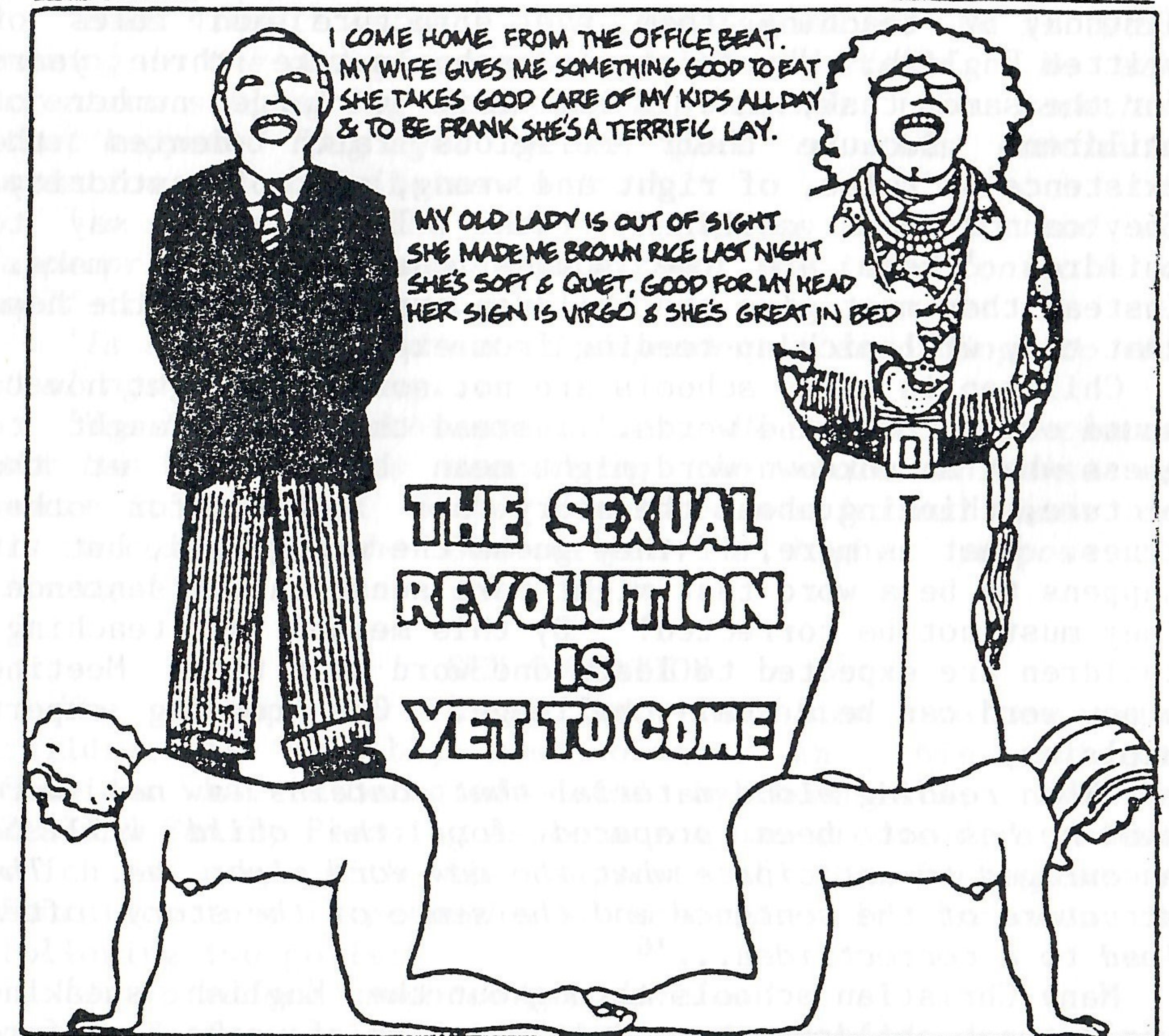
The diagram on this page is taken from an Auckland secondary school's examination paper. When in February 1985 this paper was presented to Parliament there was an uproar.<sup>5</sup>

diagram 5

### 6TH FORM ENGLISH EXAMINATION

#### Passage G

SEPTEMBER 1984



The exam paper is shocking. But what is more shocking



is the sort of teaching that must have been given to prepare children for this sort of exam.

The use of English classes to promote immorality is consistent with the anti-christian principles of the state school. Because the Bible's standards of right and wrong are rejected, this immorality is a natural part of the secular school.

There are of course state schools where a high degree of moral order is maintained under the influence of Principals or others in authority. In such cases the high standards are inconsistent with the basic beliefs embodied in the curriculum, and can last only as long as that particular leader is influential in the school.

Not only does humanism pervert the content of English lessons - it also imposes irrational methods. Five year old children can be taught to read well before their sixth birthday by teaching them the structure and rules of written English. Why do secular schools take three years for the same task, and still fail a large number of children? Because their religious faith denies the existence of rules, of right and wrong, and of authority. They cannot teach children truth. They cannot say to children 'these are the sounds these letters make.' Instead they must give the children experiences in the hope that they will pick up reading from experience.

Children in state schools are not normally taught how to sound out letters and words. Instead they are taught to guess what an unknown word might mean by looking at the picture, thinking about the story and looking for other clues. What is more, if they guess the wrong word, but it happens to be a word that might make sense in the sentence, they must not be corrected! By this method of teaching, children are expected to learn one word at a time. Meeting a new word can be a real challenge. One reading expert explains,

*'When reading aloud material that contains a new word that he has not been prepared for, the child will be encouraged to anticipate what the new word might be. The structure of the sentence and the sense of the story often lead to a correct idea...'*<sup>6</sup>

Many Christian schools throughout the English speaking world teach children to read in a matter of weeks. Before they are six, children can read their Bibles and material of similar difficulty. Yet state schools continue to

insist children cannot be taught the rules of reading.

At best this is nonsense. At worst it is consigning vast numbers of children to reading failure.

#### HEALTH

Health education used to be about healthy activity and the care of the body. It is now defined to 'include physical, mental and social health ... helping people achieve health by their own actions and efforts.'

Under this 'whole-person' concept, curriculum materials are openly aimed at developing the spiritual part of each child. What this means becomes clearer in the following extract from a lecture to Principals of Auckland schools:

*'A fully functioning person ...*

*'Lives fully in the moment of the world. He does not dwell in the past, or dream of the future ...*

*'Sees himself as part of a changing world. He is still moving in the changing world and is not static. He sees creation still going on around him rather than something that happened long ago. He is part of this continuing creation and contributes to it...*

*'Is spontaneous and free to express himself and act appropriately to a situation without the inner controls of self-criticism, fear ...*

*'Is autonomous and acts independently according to his feelings and thinking...*

*'Has his own truths and values. He is not self-centred but has wider values concerning the whole universe and where it is going. He has developed a spiritual sense and is in touch with the God within, a higher purpose for living.'*<sup>7</sup>

#### SEX EDUCATION

The attempt to impose anti-christian values upon children is possibly most obvious in this subject. Consider what is being advocated by humanists. The New Zealand Family Planning Association has produced a kitset which is used with the support of the Department of Education in a large number of schools. It includes the following two goals:<sup>8</sup>

*'1. To reduce unwanted pregnancies*

*'2. To facilitate fulfilling and positive sexuality.'*

It goes on to explain



For some adolescents 'more positive sexuality ... may result from increased sexual activity without guilt.'

The morality of the programme is presented as being 'neutral', but in actual fact it is outspokenly anti-christian:

'It is essential that a teacher understand and accept that THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS and that the task is not so much to teach students facts, (though they play a part in this unit), certainly not to "teach" them values and morals, but to aid students to develop appropriate decision making skills in these fields.' (The capitals are in the original.)<sup>9</sup>

Putting these goals and immorality into practice involves open discussion in mixed classes of personal sexual issues, using whatever crude terminology the pupils may prefer, and passing out samples of contraceptive devices to be handled. Pornographic drawings are used to stimulate discussion and explain the use of the contraceptives.

Homosexuality and other perversions must be presented as alternatives children may wish to consider.

What is the point of all this? After all, by their own admission (on the same page as the first quote above) they claim that sex education programmes do not change sexual behaviour! We agree! It is clearly demonstrable that sex education programmes have never reduced pregnancy rates.

The aim is to harden the consciences of children to sin, to encourage them to enter into whatever experiences may give them pleasure and to destroy what little fabric of Biblical law remains in society.

#### MAORI

The teaching of Maori, Maori tanga and Maori culture is often viewed benevolently. What is seldom realised is that the intention is not merely that children should know how to pronounce Maori place names and enjoy singing a few Maori songs. The aim is that children should embrace aspects of Maori religion and cultural practice.

Early in 1985 the Department of Education distributed a booklet advocating the use of Maori social studies programmes being used in the Taranaki district. It includes the following advice:

'Mauri is the life force or spirit that permeates all things in the natural world and by which all things in

nature cohere... Every person has a mauri which remains throughout his or her physical existence ... all other living things have a mauri, as does the natural environment of air, sea and mountain, and buildings ... The mauri of these too is to be appreciated and respected.

'How carefully do you look at and consider the mauri of each child in your care? Have you done everything to build up (the) child's mauri? ... Do children respect and appreciate the mauri of other living things in and beyond the classroom?

'Tapu: (holy, sacred, protective) ... Very strong spiritual connotations ensured that tapu was sacrosanct, and non-observance of it was tantamount to disaster... In modern Maori society tapu is used as a protective measure, as a means of imposing social disciplines of developing an understanding and awareness of spirituality and of developing respect for people... Tapu can be used to promote conservation, eg, after discussion of tapu, students could decide to make a badly worn section of lawn in the playground tapu to allow it to grow again.

'Wairua: (the spirit, spirituality) Maori people, along with many other people in the world, have a belief in a dimension beyond the material and physical realm... All teachers will have their own ways of developing the spiritual dimension in the children they teach.'<sup>10</sup>

The point must be made that this is teaching that by law is secular!

Maori culture is based upon and run through with a totally anti-christian involvement with the spiritual realm. The lessons being taught in 'secular' state schools are openly practising that religion.



## 5. Making the Right Choice

Christian schools bring great blessings! Children are blessed when school teaches the same truth they learn at home and at Church. Adults are blessed as they see God honouring his promises and their children growing in Christ.

Yet some have genuine concerns about the idea of Christian schools. Here are some of those concerns:

### STANDARDS OF EDUCATION

Apart from the religious and moral principles taught in the school, parents want their children to be well taught in school subjects. Can Christian schools produce good standards?

Christian schools have a very well established record of achieving high academic standards. This is a natural outcome of a commitment to truth. Christian schools believe in teaching truth.

Academic standards depend on two things: the principles upon which the school is founded, and the ability of the teachers to put those principles into practice. When a school fails in either of these, it will fail to achieve good standards, no matter how well intentioned its Christianity. There are some Christian schools that fail here. However, the overwhelming majority of Christian schools have superior academic standards because they are committed to it and are able to select staff who share that commitment.

Academic standards are set by those who determine the curriculum. When the aim and the content of the curriculum changes, standards are different.

A good illustration of the issue of standards is to be seen in the field of mathematics teaching. In 1978 the Department of Education published a report that stated:

*There has been some decline in students' computational skills... (Tests) which measure attainment in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division (established that) these skills had declined.<sup>11</sup>*

This report was prepared in response to public concern that children could not compute as well as they could just 10 years previously - and the Department of Education confirmed this. The Department then went on to excuse this poorer standard on the basis that the curriculum had changed. It argued that mathematics was no longer only about doing computations well, but about understanding. The report claimed that although the writers didn't know how to measure understanding, children were probably doing better:

*It could be argued that this decline is to be expected as the curriculum broadens. Gains in other aspects of mathematics, such as the understanding of mathematical concepts ... probably offset such results.<sup>12</sup>*

Christian schools aim for high standards in computational skills - and achieve them. State schools report to parents that children are doing well in mathematics, but they fail to explain that a high pass in mathematics does not mean good ability to compute!

State schools started to change the mathematics curriculum after the Russians launched Sputnik in 1957. So shocked were educators in the West that the Russians seemed to be winning the space race, they decided the curriculum had to be revolutionised. The mathematics curriculum was changed to stress understanding with the intention of improving mathematical skills. Now the emphasis on understanding is used as an excuse for even lower standards in mathematics!

This illustrates the point that even standards of education are dictated by underlying beliefs. State schools do not believe in absolutes, so their standards change with every intellectual whim. They admit that children cannot perform as well as earlier generations. Their excuse is that those standards no longer apply.

Christian schools believe in high academic standards, and achieve them.



## CHRISTIAN TEACHERS

A frequent concern is that if Christian teachers leave the state schools, a major Christian influence will disappear. Surely Christians need to teach in state schools where children can be influenced for good?

We must be clear that this booklet is not calling for teachers to desert state schools. The main point of this booklet is that Christians have a duty to God to ensure their children receive a Christian schooling. Clearly some Christian teachers are needed for Christian schools, but this does not imply that all Christians should abandon non-christian teaching.

Many Christian teachers have a significant and lasting influence over the children they teach. Many recognise that there is a conflict between their state teaching and their faith. Of course, any who see that conflict as compromising their faith must give up their non-christian teaching. Over 100 years ago, when secular, state education was being promoted, C H Spurgeon saw the issue this way:

*Will not Christian men refuse to teach under such restraint, regarding it as ... an unwarrantable interference with the conscientious discharge of Christian obligation? No true Christian would accept an appointment under which he is commanded to ... prove false to his duty as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have justly complained of the proscription of the Bible by the tyranny of priestly influence or ignorant superstition. But the principle is the same, whether the Bible is excluded from the people of a country, as fatal to Papal domination, or from the children of a village school, as inimical to sectarian supremacy. Let the Government ... banish the Bible from State schools, and they will practically eject every godly teacher to whom a clear conscience is of more importance than the emoluments of office.<sup>13</sup>*

Who can tell the impact on this nation if Christian teachers refused to teach in a non-christian system? Yet the basic issue is that our children must be given a Christian schooling. If after this provision is made, there are Christian teachers who have a clear conscience about teaching in non-christian schools we should not in any manner obstruct them. Rather, we encourage them. May their influence be great, and their lives and teaching be faithful to Christ!

## CHILDREN AS WITNESSES

Some are concerned that placing our children in Christian schools will remove them from a field of witness in state schools.

The first issue is that parents don't send their children to school to witness. While parents hope their Christian children will witness, the prime reason for sending them to school is that they might learn what is true and right, and what leads to maturity. Whatever else it may be, the school is first and foremost a place of training, and the choice of school must be made with that in mind.

Secondly, few parents would send their children into a place to witness at risk of their souls being taken captive. Most recognise that children need spiritual and intellectual maturity to engage in the battles of the adult Christian. State schools are designed to captivate souls and exclude God from children's lives. Parents may need to witness there, but children need the nurture of Christ to train and equip them for battle!

## OUR STATE SCHOOL ISN'T THAT BAD

Many parents recognise the depraved trends detailed in this booklet. Many realise that there are things going on in state schools that are abhorrent. But they believe their school is not caught up in these extremes.

It is a clear blessing when a state school does not put into practice the worst of humanism. There are still a good many state schools where a basically conservative approach results in good standards of behaviour and achievement.

Yet parents must note that good behaviour and good academic knowledge are not the only things that the schools are teaching. Secular schools, by definition, deliberately oppose God. They are there to teach anti-christian values. Note what the Education Department says:

*One of the major intentions in the curriculum as a whole is to foster values and attitudes so that they win permanent acceptance in students' minds. This aim receives special emphasis ... Recent changes in the curriculum - especially in English, social studies, home economics and science - have introduced topics that offer wide scope for consideration of values and the development of healthy attitudes... Some of the responsibilities which were once*



thought to belong to parents now seem to lie with the school.<sup>14</sup>

No matter how good the state school appears in some areas, it leads away from Christ.

The choice Joshua set before the people (Joshua 24:14-15) is so apt. If you will not serve the Lord, then choose which of the state gods you will serve - this state school or the next, it makes no significant difference. Rather, let us finish with these anti-christian institutions, and with Joshua exclaim, 'But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'

## 6. Learning for Christ

The Bible is the truth about truth. To study without its light is like trying to learn about the sun with the aid of a candle. To make a habit of doing school work without the Bible is to make a habit of living by candle light when the sun is shining.<sup>15</sup>

Children will learn without the Bible in their school. They will learn to read, write and do maths. They will also learn that God doesn't count in reading, writing and maths. They will learn to shut God out of much of their lives.

God makes clear the place of the Bible:

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16,17)*

The aim of all Godly education is to thoroughly equip children to be men and women of God ready for every good work. As parents and teachers our goal must be to help children to be more than receptacles for knowledge. We want our children to be ready to serve God wholeheartedly whatever the work they are called to. This is why we teach them English, maths, history and other subjects. We want them to use their knowledge and skills in serving God and neighbour.

It is the Bible, used in teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, that thoroughly equips children for every good work. Its light shapes the knowledge and skills learnt, gives learning direction and purpose and makes a child truly wise.

Sending children to schools where the Bible is banned denies them this light and teaches them the false faith that they can be wise without God. It denies them the very thing they need.



One of the aims of the English syllabus for Secondary Schools is

*To test student's ideas and values against those of family, friends and others, as well as against other values they themselves hold.*<sup>16</sup>

In explaining how this works, the syllabus makes it clear that children should reject any concept of absolute or eternal values. Instead they are to see values as something conditioned by a variety of experiences. Children's experiences are different from those of parents. Children are taught that because of this they can reject the beliefs of parents. The aim is to teach children to do what they see as right in their own eyes.

In schools that ban the Bible, English is deliberately used to change the beliefs of children. This syllabus is compulsory in all state schools, even in those that appear to be conservative. Teaching does not have to be openly antichristian to undermine the teaching of home and Church. It only has to use the compulsory syllabus.

Cornelius Van Til explains why:

*As children of Adam men have always made and continue to make the effort required to cover-up the truth about themselves and God. They see every fact as other than it really is. By means of their literature - drama, poetry, and philosophy - they try to prove to themselves that the world is not the estate of God and that they are not made in his image. Both Jew and Gentile have blinded themselves to the true state of affairs about themselves and their world - about their past, their present and their future. Not being creatures of God, they could not have sinned against such a one. They do not need, therefore, the atoning death of Christ for the remission of their sins. As Stephen said of the Jews, so also it must be said of the Gentiles, that they have always resisted the Holy Spirit - to their own damnation.*<sup>17</sup>

Teaching in non-christian schools is part of the ongoing effort to cover-up the truth about man's dependence upon God and need of salvation in Christ.

Even in schools where the Bible is used in some lessons but not others, children learn that man is sometimes free from God's dominion. This cover-up holds out the hope that they can do without God and without salvation in Christ.

In a Christian school a child learns that he is dependent upon God in every field of study and work. He

also learns of his need of salvation in Christ. Every lesson in a Christian school underlines the truth that the child is God's creature and therefore under God's authority. Every lesson stresses the child's dependence upon God for everything, and in that way highlights the impossibility of salvation by man's own efforts.

There is a link between what a child is taught at school and his response to the gospel's call for faith in Christ. A child who is taught to think, study and work without God in parts of his life 'knows' that man can do without God. He 'knows' he has no need of salvation because he is not under God's total dominion and therefore cannot really be a rebel.

A Christian school aims to show children their need of the Saviour. It aims to show children they need his help in everything they do. But more than this, it aims to show them that anything they do is ultimately worthless if Christ is not their Saviour.

The teachers in a Christian school know that no matter how virtuous a person's work, no matter how wise he appears to be, no matter how full and constructive his life - if he lives and dies without faith in Christ, everything he has done is in vain. By teaching children that every part of their work and life is under God's dominion, the teachers in a Christian school strive to show children that the Gospel message they hear at home and at Church is true. Far above every other need they have, is the need for new birth.

And the Christian school sets a high goal for children when they come to faith in Christ. It says to them that they can do no better than make every moment, and everything they do, a part of serving their Saviour who is King of Kings.



NOTES

1. The Humanist, January/February 1983, The American Humanist Association, p25
3. Growing, Sharing, Learning, Department of Education, Wellington, 1977, p33
4. Luke 6:40
5. The cartoon was first given wide publicity by the New Zealand Herald, Auckland, 22 December 1984, Section 2, p5.
6. Butler, D & Clay, M Reading Begins at Home, Heinemann, Auckland, 1979, p30
7. Hunton, R Personal Growth, in Stress and Its Effect on Interpersonal Relationships, Auckland Primary Principal's Association, Auckland 1983, p36
8. Family Planning Sex Education Kit Family Planning Association Auckland Branch, Auckland 1982 Introduction p15
9. *ibid* p11
10. Taha Maori in Social Studies Taranaki District Social Studies Committee (Distributed by the New Zealand Department of Education February 1985)
11. Educational Standards in State Schools Department of Education, Wellington, 1978 p19
12. *ibid*
13. C.H. Spurgeon The Bible in the School in The Sword and the Trowel London, 1859 p119
14. Educational Standards etc op cit pp81f
15. I am indebted to Cornelius Van Til who frequently uses this illustration.
16. Statement of Aims National English Syllabus Committee, Department of Education, Wellington, 1978, p16
17. Van Til, C Jerusalem and Athens, Presbyterian and Reformed, Nutley, New Jersey, 1974, p7

Bible quotations are all taken from the New International Version: The Holy Bible, New International Version, 1978 New York International Bible Society. Published by Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1979.