

CIVIL RIGHTS COVERAGE EXPANDED

After long delays and ferocious last-minute opposition Congress recently overrode a Presidential veto of the Civil Rights Restoration Act. This law has caused consternation among a number of conservatives. Here are some of the questions customarily asked about the act:

1. *What does the act say?* It prohibits sex discrimination in education (Title IX of the 1972 Education Act Amendments) on an across-the-board or institution-wide basis in any institution that is federally assisted. A school does not have to accept direct aid to fall into this category. Enrolling even one student with a Pell Grant or federally guaranteed loan would classify the institution as federally assisted.

2. *What does the act implicitly say?* Laws against other types of discrimination would apply with equal breadth (if they apply at all), namely, nondiscrimination against ethnic minorities, the aged, and the handicapped. At issue here are, respectively, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1975 Age Discrimination Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

3. *Why did Congress feel the act was needed?* The U.S. Supreme Court held in a 1984 ruling, *Grove City College v. Bell*, that nondiscrimination laws applied to federally assisted institutions in a program-specific way. For instance, if a university's physical-education program accepted federal funding, only that department would be subject to nondiscrimination laws. But Congress held that this interpretation was contrary to its intent at the time the above laws were enacted.

4. *Why the delay in reversing the ruling?* A tacit New Right and Catholic alliance charged that the act would force federally assisted institutions to perform abortions. Not until an abortion-neutral amendment was attached to the act did things begin to move. Church fears of more general nature also surfaced until it was pointed out that Title IX of the 1972 Education Act exempted entities "controlled by a religious organization." (An effort to broaden this religious exemption to include entities "closely identified with the tenets of a religious organization" failed.)

5. *Why the last-minute furor over the act?* James Dobson and Jerry Falwell conveyed some misunderstandings or distortions of the act that aroused the public into a telephoning frenzy. Specifically they identified homosexuals as handicapped, thus suggesting that it would be illegal for institutions to discriminate against them. Others feared that individuals with AIDS would not be protected by the act. A provision in the act stated that it would not be considered discriminatory to deny work to someone with a "currently contagious disease or infection."

6. *Are there some legitimate cautions?* The General Conference legislation committee registered its support of

the Civil Rights Restoration Act but did not authorize a lobby campaign in its behalf. While we welcome override of the White House veto, there is some legitimate concern about system-wide (in contrast to institution-wide) application of the laws.

Understandably, Adventists reading or hearing about the act may have feared that it would expand government control over church institutions. This is not the case. We can legally ignore the requirements of the act, since it specifically exempts church-owned institutions. However, this constitutes no license to discriminate. Such a morally reprehensible policy would violate the scriptural principles of equality so forcefully enunciated by the Apostle Paul in the New Testament. Seventh-day Adventist schools should be in the forefront of promoting equality for minorities, women, the handicapped, and the aged.—Gary M. Ross.

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SCHOOLS IN ACTION FOR HARVEST 90

The colors have become a familiar combination—pink and purple on a white background—the eye-catcher for the Harvest 90 Project. To the K-12 system these colors brought a wealth of information to the classroom. In April of 1987, K-12 teachers across North America received a special packet, prepared by NADOE, containing ideas on getting our young people involved in meeting the objectives of Harvest 90. The packet contains:

- *Department of Education Quinquennial Objectives*—a planning and implementation guide for the Harvest 90 doables.

- *Christian Service Curriculum Guide*—a 32-page booklet with operational procedures for Christian service. More than a hundred activities are listed by grade levels, with suggestions for implementation.

- *Mission Statement of SDA Education*—a goal statement to encourage students to accept Christ as their Saviour, to allow the Holy Spirit to transform their lives, and to fulfill the commission of preaching the gospel to all the world.

- *Report on SDA Schools in NAD*—general information on the second-largest Protestant school system in the U.S.

- *Two posters*—artistic representations portraying the difference in Adventist education (courtesy of the Pacific Union).

- *Weekly Bible Reading Guides*—study guides for grades 1-4, 5-8, 9-12. Each week focuses on a Scripture

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Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987. 392 pages, \$18.95.

This is an important book that anyone connected with American colleges and universities or concerned about the future of the nation must read. *The Closing of the American Mind* does not lend itself to speed-reading; on the contrary, it demands concentration and patience. But it is worth the effort. The author offers a deep, wide-ranging and painful reflection on the current condition of our universities, their students, and on the intellectual influences that—in his view—have shaped contemporary American higher education.

Allan Bloom writes out of his own 30-year experience as a teacher in several renowned universities, including Yale, Toronto, Cornell, and now Chicago, where he is a professor of political philosophy. His book must have touched a sensitive nerve in American consciousness, since it remained on the best-seller list for more than 40 weeks.

The main theme of Bloom's book appears in its bold subtitle, "How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students." Bloom then proceeds to develop the subject in three broad sections: "Students," "Nihilism, American Style," and "The University." Bloom's somewhat convoluted argument can be organized in three parts: the symptoms, the causes, and the cures for the malaise he describes.

What are Bloom's concerns? He is extremely disappointed, first, by the ignorance, shallowness, and self-centeredness of today's college students. He sees them as insensitive to great ideas, indifferent to their democratic heritage, cynical toward any kind of heroes. Instead of reading great books, they receive their "insights" from television and movies. Instead of deep passions they experience rock music with its

basic themes—"sex, hate and a smarmy, hypocritical version of brotherly love" (p. 74). They seem open-minded not because of their search for knowledge and truth, but because they are indifferent to the big issues of life. This shallow openness ends up actually closing their minds to beauty, truth, and goodness—hence the book's title.

Second, Bloom is dismayed by the current state of American universities, which he sees plagued by narrow specialization and crass careerism, without a unified view of life and destiny. As a result, in today's university "there is no vision of . . . what an educated human being is" (p. 337). This situation is tragic because "the university is the place where inquiry and philosophic openness come into their own. It is intended to encourage the noninstrumental use for its own sake" (p. 249). One of the university's main tasks is "always to maintain the permanent questions front and center . . . by preserving—by keeping alive—the works of those who best addressed those questions" (p. 252). These basic questions deal, for example, with reason/revelation, freedom/necessity, democracy/aristocracy, good/evil, body/soul, self/other, city/man, being/nothing.

Last, Bloom is saddened by the moral disintegration of the society from which these university students come. Today's families "have nothing to give their children in the way of a vision of the world, of high models of action or profound sense of connection with others" (p. 57). The obsession with self-development and self-expression has led to the breakup of the family—"America's most urgent social problem" (p. 119). As a result, children from broken families come to the university with "boundless seas of rage, doubt and fear" (p. 120).

How did we get to this point? Bloom devotes the second part of his book to this question by concentrating narrowly on the in-

fluence of German thought on American universities during this century. Our fascination with Nietzsche and Freud—and secondarily with Weber and Heidegger—led to two far-reaching consequences. First, "there is now an entirely new language of good and evil, originating in an attempt to get 'beyond good and evil' and preventing us from talking with any conviction about good and evil anymore. The new language is that of value relativism" (p. 141). Nietzsche believed that "modern man is losing, or has lost, the capacity to value, and therefore his humanity" (pp. 197, 198). Secondly, the self has become the modern substitute for the soul. We are interested in how we feel, not in what we think. The impulses of desire have taken the place of virtue. This double confusion has radically altered language. We now speak of life-style instead of hedonism, of values instead of opinions, of ideology instead of prejudice. These ideas were enacted on American campuses during the rebellious sixties, which Bloom experienced at Cornell University. Subsequently the core academic requirements were abolished and in their place students were given the privilege of smorgasbord education.

What is the remedy? Bloom's proposals are modest. Revive the concept of true liberal education—use the undergraduate years as a time to recognize and discuss the important questions of truth, virtue, and beauty. Return judiciously to the Great Books approach. Place philosophy again as a key unifying ingredient in the undergraduate curriculum. "Liberal education," says Bloom, "flourished when it prepared the way for the discussion of a unified view of nature and man's place in it, which the best minds debated at the highest level. It decayed when what lay beyond it were only specialties, the premises of which do not lead to any

such vision" (p. 347).

As with most books of this kind, the author is at his best in describing the problem and progressively less successful in pointing out the causes or in offering solutions.

It does not seem fair to blame German thinkers and their American admirers for all that has gone wrong with our universities. Other ideological and social factors must also be given their due; for example, the influence of Darwinism, Marxism, and existentialism; the broad attempt to make a college education accessible to all who desire it; and the natural effects of demoralizing wars and prolonged prosperity in this country. It does not seem fair either to blame the university for all that has gone wrong in American society or to expect that by itself it will provide the radical remedy needed. American universities—and the educational enterprise at large—must deal with the virtual collapse of church, family, and community as the major forces that provided stability and an ethical infrastructure to our society. Bloom senses that when he writes, "The crisis of liberal education is a reflection of a crisis at the peaks of learning, an incoherence and incompatibility among the first principles with which we interpret the world, an intellectual crisis of the greatest magnitude, which constitutes the crisis of our civilization" (p. 346).

Bloom is right on target when he points out that the relativization of moral values is the major tragedy not only of the American university, but also of our time. And where would we find a solid point of reference in ethical matters? Certainly not in Plato's *Republic*, for all the philosophical and educational insights it provides. Bloom answers this question early in his book when he speaks longingly and with eloquence of a time in America when such an anchor existed:

In the United States, practically speaking, the Bible was the only common culture, one

that united simple and sophisticated, rich and poor, young and old, and—as the very model for a vision of the order of the whole of things as well as the key to the rest of Western art, the greatest works of which were in one way or another responsible to the Bible—provided access to the seriousness of books. With its gradual and inevitable disappearance, the very idea of such a total book and the possibility and the necessity of world explanation is disappearing. And fathers and mothers have lost the idea that the highest aspiration they might have for their children is for them to be wise—as priests, prophets or philosophers are wise (p. 58).

Although Bloom does not mention them by name, he is lamenting the double impact of secularism and secularization on American culture. He goes on:

The moral education that is today supposed to be the great responsibility of the family cannot exist if it cannot present to the imagination of the young a vision of a moral cosmos and of the rewards and punishments for good and evil, sublime speeches that accompany and interpret deeds, protagonists and antagonists in the drama of moral choice, a sense of the stake involved in such choice, and the despair that results when the world is "disenchanted." Otherwise, education becomes the vain attempt to give children "values" (p. 60).

Sobering words of a thought-provoking book that Seventh-day Adventist educators, board members, and mature students should read as a clear warning and as a stimulus toward true integration of faith and learning.—Humberto M. Rasi.

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E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 251 pages, \$16.95.

Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know is about our failure to learn "the basic information needed to thrive in the modern world." Professor E. D. Hirsch of the English faculty at the University of Virginia attributes our low state of cultural literacy to a decline of "shared knowledge" and "back-

ground information," cultural literacy being the ability "to grasp the meaning of any piece of writing addressed to the general reader." It's "the oxygen of social intercourse" and just as "we ignore the air we breathe until it's thin and foul," it "is only when we run into cultural illiteracy are we shocked into recognizing the importance of the information that we hold unconsciously assumed."

A sizeable chunk of the heart of the book is devoted to an explanation of how children and adults become literate culturally. Making detailed use of psychological, anthropological, and linguistic research Hirsch shows "the knowledge-bound character of all cognitive skills."

And what is this knowledge which we need to be culturally literate? Hirsch doesn't hesitate. He gives us his list of items, 4500 of them—the contents of cultural literacy: "Not to have included a list would have been irresponsible given the goal of the book," he explained to a group of Washington educators a few months ago. And so the final 63 pages of this relatively slim volume are taken up with an alphabetical list: words, snatches of songs, years, abbreviations, books, nursery rhymes, churches, aphorisms, scientific terms, people, battles, court decisions, places, diseases and more. Literacy depends on the degree to which all these are understood.

They're not known now because they aren't taught in school. Education has been mesmerized and weakened by bad theory—such as emphasizing process over knowledge, and skills over content.

And here is where private schools come in. Hirsch notes "In light of what we know about literacy, an important factor must be that curricula in private schools impart more literate information than those of public schools." Citing the research of Coleman, Hirsch

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grams rely on a small group of persons who, in addition to working for the service programs, generally perform other duties in the system. The ambitious program at 300-student Hudson High School in Ohio is supervised by one community volunteer who is also a part-time teacher. Basically, however, the program is run by students, who do their jobs exceptionally well.

The coordinator would be responsible for job placement and the central office; or the guidance director (or a combination of coordinator and counselor) could be responsible for the paperwork, and the community organizations would carefully supervise student volunteers.

The students and coordinators should meet weekly to discuss their work, any problems involved, and their feelings about their experiences. The coordinator must believe wholeheartedly in the program and its goals and should be able to communicate effectively with students and parents, school administrators and faculty members, and representatives of community groups.

Survey Community Needs

If a service program is going to be of real service, the school must have a good idea of the kinds of volunteer help needed by the community. The place to start is the Voluntary Action Center, a branch of a state agency. The VAC will be happy to provide a list of places that use volunteers, as well as job descriptions and contact persons within those organizations. The VAC may even be willing to provide a liaison person for the school. The energy of teenagers is a valuable commodity, and most organizations welcome their enthusiastic help.

A questionnaire can also be sent to schools and community agencies, asking them to describe their needs and the functions that a volunteer student might perform. The coordinator(s), perhaps working with an advisory committee that includes the principal, parents, teachers, and students, could then decide on those prospects that seem most worthwhile.

Schools should consider service opportunities in each of these categories: care (short-term and long-term), education, health, recreation, rehabilitation (physical, mental, and spiritual), and welfare. They should contact both public and private organizations and institutions to inquire about the need for volunteers.

In most cases, students will perform their volunteer activities after school, on weekends, or during the summer. A minimum of 120 hours is required in order to receive a Carnegie credit for service. Students generally receive a Pass/Fail grade based on an evaluation by their job supervisor.

Insurance Considerations

Insurance will be an issue for any school system without a policy covering students who work out of school as part of a school-approved program. Generally speaking, students engaged in an activity program officially sponsored by and/or supervised by the school should be covered by the student accident insurance program that is in effect for the school. However, the type of activity, place performed, and extent of supervision will determine which type of insurance policy will cover the activity. The school should consult with its insurance agent or other person coordinating the insurance program for the school.¹⁹

A really first-rate volunteer program takes considerable time and planning on the part of school administrators. However, as a volunteer director, I know how significant volunteering can be to teenagers. Students, time and again, speak of personal fulfillment and of discovering their own strengths and a sense of self-worth. Service is not just giving, it is also receiving.

In summary, the goal of volunteer service is to help students see the connection between what they learn and how they live. The spirit of the program is, I think, best captured by Vachel Lindsay who wrote:

It is the world's one crime its babes grow
dull, . . .
Not that they starve, but starve so
dreamlessly,

Not that they sow, but that they seldom
reap,
Not that they serve, but have not gods to
serve
Not that they die but that they die like
sheep.²⁰ □

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ Charles H. Harrison, *Student Service: The New Carnegie Unit, A Carnegie Foundation Special Report* (New Jersey: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching).

² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³ Coleman McCarthy, "High School Kids Learn by Serving," *The Washington Post* (February 28, 1987).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Ernest L. Boyer, *High School*, quoted in "Community Service Joins the Curriculum," *The American School Board Journal* (May 1987), p. 12.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Schools may wish to contact the Life Insurance Company of North America, located in Philadelphia, concerning its Volunteer Insurance Service coverage. Additional information may also be gained from the Volunteer Service Association at 4208 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20016.

²⁰ Quoted in Boyer's foreword to *Student Service: A Carnegie Report*, p. xi.

BOOK REVIEWS

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writes "in private schools both middle-class and disadvantaged students spend more time in content classes and are exposed to more of the information that belongs to literate culture." There may be other factors. Teachers in private schools are far more apt to have academic degrees and to spend more time with fewer students, according to a recent study by Pearl Kane of public and private school teachers.

Finally, there may be a connection between the culture of a private school—its mix of traditions, goals, ethos, style, human interaction are all heavily dependent on the strong linkage of common ideas and communal discourse and the developing literacy of its students. Many private schools have a long way to go to reach the nirvana of knowledge outlined on the Hirsch list. But the setting seems to be favorable for making steady gains. —Robert L. Smith. □

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NEWS NOTES

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topic with supporting readings from both the Old and New Testaments.

- *Prayer List Booklet*—16-page booklet with quotations on prayer. It includes space to record prayer requests and answers to prayer.

Teachers and students have found innovative ways to use these packets. Here is what some of them have done:

- Early this school year students from Enterprise Academy (Kansas) presented puppet programs at churches, nursing homes, Adventist elementary schools, and Sunday schools. The director feels the puppet ministry attracts a number of students who would not otherwise join the public-witnessing programs because of shyness.

- Indiana Academy students had been asking for more voluntary religious activities. This prompted the organization of Wednesday night "Breakaway" sessions. Through varied activities students learn more about themselves, what it means to be a member of the body of Christ, and why it is necessary for everyone to work together.

- Rocky Mountain Conference teachers report that some first-graders are writing to individuals who are lonely. Other students volunteered to pull weeds, rake leaves, and pick up litter. When the weather changes they go on snow patrol, shoveling walks and drive-ways of older members.

- On Tuesday nights, about 46 students from Great Lakes Adventist Academy (Michigan) and their drivers meet at the Cedar Lake church for training and sharing. Then they go out knocking on doors in the community to ask people if they would like to study the Bible. One student enthusiastically remarked, "I never thought I'd do this, but I'm really enjoying it."

- Students at Sandia View Adventist Academy (New Mexico) have helped their conference double baptisms by holding Revelation Seminars. Meetings have been held in homes and even in a barber shop. Many have been baptized—including one of the students who did the presentations.

Two Atlantic Union academies participated in separate Maranatha outreach projects: Union Springs (New York) went to the Dominican Republic and Pine Tree (Maine) to Cuentepec, Mexico.

- Thirty-eight Thunderbird Adventist Academy (Arizona) volunteers rolled out of bed at 4:30 a.m. one Sunday morning to provide support services for the National Finals of the Rainbow Iron Kids Triathlon.

- The students at Georgia-Cumberland Academy (Georgia) participate in a Teach-a-Kid program, tutoring lower-grade public school pupils. The public school principal is very impressed with the caliber of students the academy provides.

Across the North American Division, students daily open their prayer books to record answers to prayers. They are using their Bible reading guides to study God's Word. Teachers are helping students catch the

vision of what it means to be a witness for Christ and to be His disciple.

As the program has developed, it has become clear that in addition to witness and discipling, young people need to get better acquainted with the vision of the early Advent church. They need to learn that our pioneers were young people committed to telling others of Christ's soon return. And so a special project has been selected for our elementary and secondary students—the Harvest 90 Education Project. Its theme: CATCH THE VISION!

The project has two phases. The first: educate our students about our Advent pioneers and remind them of the significant and unique doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Through bulletin boards, games, activity sheets, singing, recipes, stories, and "heritage weeks" students will learn about the roots of our church and participate in that heritage for themselves. Look for these materials in a special teacher's packet in the fall of 1988.

A poster search is currently underway. Twelve pieces of original artwork are needed for a Heritage Calendar. Each student whose work is chosen will receive \$100.

The second part of the project focuses on restoration. It will provide an opportunity for students—along with their families and fellow church members—to explore the origins of the church. Students and teachers will participate in fund-raising to restore two Adventist historic sites (Slogan: 90 dimes for Harvest 90). The money raised will be used for visitors' centers at the first Seventh-day Adventist church in Washington, New Hampshire, and the William Miller farm. Through exhibits and restored buildings tourists will experience the story of the early Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The William Miller farm is the birthplace of the Advent Movement in America. It was here that William Miller's study led him to Daniel's 2300-day prophecy. Here he made a covenant with God that if asked, he would share what he had discovered in Scripture. It was behind an old barn that is still standing that he hoped to find release from the covenant when the invitation did come. In this home he awaited the Lord's return on October 22, 1844. Within walking distance of the house are his grave, the chapel he built in 1848, and Ascension Rock, believed to be the place where local Adventists awaited the Lord's return in 1844.

These projects offer students and teachers an exciting opportunity to participate in renewing the history of their church. Through the Harvest 90 Education Project teachers can inspire their students to CATCH THE VISION!—Esther F. R. Rosado. □

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