

## Parents Are and Always Will Be a Child's Primary Educators

*By Rev. Dave Welch, President, Texas Pastor Council*

Did a man who calls himself a pastor actually declare the act of allowing parents access to their own money to choose the best educational environment as "sinful"? This so-called pastor, whose organization has received direct funding by the American Federation of Teachers, has no biblical basis for his ridiculous assertion. He also reflects abject ignorance of some basic truths.

One of the essential questions that must be raised in the escalating debate in Texas over whether parents should have the freedom to place their child in a school environment outside the "public" school system and have some of the funding follow is this – Who, before God, has the primary responsibility for the education of a child? No reasonable person who has even a remote grasp of the historic values this nation was founded upon let alone the Holy Scriptures would say anything other than the obvious – that child's parents.

There are a couple of critical issues that must be clarified to even have a rational discussion. When we refer to "public schools", we should be saying "government schools" because the schools in question are a function of local, state and federal government. The second is whether the tenets of any of the major religions, the U.S. and Texas Constitutions and historical precedent direct that, a) education of children's minds, hearts and souls should be a function of the state/government, or b) should the state/government should have a complete monopoly through forced taxation without parental freedom over that education of their children?

Since primary and secondary education were not a function of government in the United States until the mid to late 1800's it is clear that it was never the intent of our Founding Fathers that government control education content and process. This was primarily because they clearly believed education included mind, heart and soul that could not be separated from religion and would never trust religion to government. They believed in a limited government that should pave the way for education but did not control it.

One hundred and fifty years into government education, there are few people who believe we should dismantle or damage the "public/state" system (any more than it has harmed itself). In truth, monopoly always produces inefficiency, waste and costliness. The massive increase of parents willing to pay twice (taxes plus private tuition or home school expenses) in order to place their children in the environment the parents believe best for them is evidence that the government monopoly must be opened for true competition. It is also true that those families who cannot afford to pay twice should not be trapped and denied the same opportunity.

Children are a "gift from the Lord" according to Psalm 127:3 and parents are given primary duty before God to "train up a child" in His way, so they should not be forced into an atmosphere hostile to that charge as well as not even meeting basic academic needs. On behalf of over one thousand pastors of every color, every corner of Texas we serve through the Texas Pastor Council, empowering parents through universal Education Savings Accounts while protecting their right to direct their child's education is a historic principle that must be restored in Texas now. It would be a sin to do otherwise.

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