

*X17 – EXchanging Worldviews, 17:  
EXploring Prospects for Peace & Prosperity, 9:  
EXtricating Humanity from EXcruciating Problems by, 3:  
EXtirpating Educational Corruption*

Dear: From the previous chapter, you may think that a productive way forward, toward more peace and prosperity, is obvious: teach kids how to become “critical thinkers”. Certainly I praise Paul and associates at the “Foundation and Center for Critical Thinking” for the progress they’ve made (training “70,000 educators”!), but realize that they’re located in one of the most “progressive” states in the world (California). Meanwhile, there’s the rest of us – living in more backward states, nations, and continents!

The rest of us would be wise to keep in mind that one of the first identified “critical thinkers”, Socrates, was sentenced and put to death, after a corrupt jury passed judgment on the phony indictment:

*Socrates is guilty of not believing in the gods in which the state believes, but brings in other new divinities; he also wrongs by corrupting the youth.*

Further, we’d be wise to appreciate that corruption is still rampant throughout the world (including corruption of essentially all educational systems) and that such corruption still includes executing those who think critically – or even differently (e.g., about Islam). In this chapter and the next, I want both to dig into details about such corruption, even in our own educational system, and to comment on ways that humanity has been slowly finding a way to at least partially solve the problem by “extirpating educational corruption” (this chapter) and by “exploiting competition” (the next chapter).

I should immediately explain, however, that I’m using the word ‘corruption’ in broader sense than (just) “[exploitation of a position of power or trust for personal gain](#).” Such corruption is commonly in some form of “economic corruption”, but in addition, some power mongers in educational systems seek sexual or other “favors” from students or parents. As you can find on the internet (and later in this chapter I’ll show you a little), economic corruption in educational systems is rampant, especially in some nations of the former Soviet Union, in Asia, and much of South America and Africa.

In what follows, by ‘corruption’ I’ll also mean its many other definitions:

2. extremely immoral or depraved, 3. unusable because of the presence of errors that have been introduced... 4. continuing undesirable changes in meaning... 5. contaminated or tainted... 6. putrid or decomposing...

That is, by saying that our educational system is corrupt (and that essentially all educational systems throughout the world are corrupt), then as I’ll try to explain, I mean all types of corruption, including economic, intellectual, emotional, moral... for both individuals and their societies.

Now, Dear, I suspect you wouldn’t mind (!) if I justified my claim that corruption of educational systems is extensive – and in turn, I’d of course like to provide you with relevant evidence. But actually, the corruption is so rampant that it’s difficult to decide where to begin! Consider an analogy.

### A SINGLE BAD APPLE

Thus, Dear, consider apples. Sometimes they’re bruised. The reality is that it’s not easy to get apples to market without bruising them. With experience, you’ll learn how to explore the depth of an apple’s defects. With experience, you’ll be able to judge if you can just bite off the bruised part (without tasting it) or if you should use a knife to explore the depth of the rot. To gain that experience, your biting into an apple just once that’s rotten to the core will probably be sufficient training. In the case of educational systems, however, I recommend that you don’t try to bite off just a little bit to determine the corruption’s depth, because most are rotten to the core.

But whereas it won’t be the first time you ignored my advice ☺, consider an example. Soon after you started school, you began to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. With all due ceremony and seriousness, complete with hand over your heart and missing two front teeth, you’d say:

I pwedge a wee Gents to the Fwag of the You Knighted Stakes of am Erica and to the wee pub Wick for which it stands, one Nay Shun, under God, in da visible, with wibor Tea – and just is – for all.

How’s that for corruption? Corrupting a child’s mind by demanding that she participate in some ritual that she obviously didn’t (and, of course, couldn’t) possibly know its meaning or significance.

\* Go to other chapters *via*

Think of that little girl, Dear. For her, ‘allegiance’ meant “wee Gents”, ‘republic’ meant “wee pub Wick”, ‘nation’ meant “Nay Shun”, and so on. It’s as bad as it was to force her to say the Lord’s prayer every night and grace at every meal. Most adults still don’t know the meaning of ‘republic’, ‘God’, and ‘justice’! And think of the poor Muslim children who are forced to memorize the entire Koran – even in a foreign language (e.g., for Pakistanis, Arabic), being beaten when they fail, and being awarded if they succeed, with prizes passed out by a Saudi prince.

So now, little one, tell me: how’d that taste? Rotten? And so tell me: do you want to try a few more bites or would you prefer to use other than your teeth to try to determine the depth of the corruption?

I wouldn’t be surprised if your response is: “**What’s the point?**” If so, first I’d congratulate you on your response. From my viewpoint, that’s just your way of saying “**What’s the objective?**” – and I hope that you never cease demanding that the goals be clear. Consistently, to try to show you my goals, let me try to briefly show you what I want to do in the following.

### SOME OBJECTIVES

My overall goal is to suggest ways that prospects for worldwide peace and prosperity might be enhanced. Evidence suggests that to get there from here, we’ll need to solve some major problems, including too many people consuming too many resources, too many people trapped in too much tribalism, and too many people lost in delusions – with all such problems made worse by religious ignorance. To solve such problems, education is key – especially the education of kids and especially to get them to be better evaluative thinkers than their parents. But to achieve that, corruption in essentially all school systems must be drastically reduced.

As for the goals for this chapter, primarily I want to try to give you some indication of the depth and breadth of the corruption of educational systems throughout the world and then begin to suggest how such corruption can be extirpated, viz., “**weeded out, destroyed, eradicated, stamped out, rooted out, eliminated, suppressed, crushed, put down, put an end to, gotten rid of...**”

Before tackling those tasks, however, I’ll try to justify my claim that so many school systems are corrupt. In turn, before trying to do that, I should

\* Go to other chapters *via*

describe more explicitly what I mean by corruption of school systems. And before doing even that, I should describe major features of school systems that aren't corrupt! Consequently, Dear, please be patient.

### Objectives of School Systems

Thus, beginning where by now you probably expect me to begin the analysis of any system, I'd first ask: For any school system, what's the objective? Subsequently, if agreement can be reached about the prime objective (or prime objectives) of schools, then an investigation can begin into the question how well schools are achieving their objectives, and if not well, then what processes (what "corruptions") seem to be inhibiting or thwarting the achievement of their objectives.

So then, little one, tell me: What's the objective?

Of what?

Of what I've been talking about – of school systems – of your going to school? You've been going to school, now, for 12 years? Why?

'Cause that's what kids do: they go to school.

Yah, but why?

'Cause their parents make them.

Yah, but why?

To learn stuff.

Okay, but why do your parents want you to learn stuff?

'Cause they're mean.

You mean that it's mean of them to want you to learn stuff?!

No, silly – because they said that they're not gonna keep lookin' after me forever; they said I'd better learn stuff, so I can get a job and be able to look after myself.

So you mean that the objective of schools is to prepare kids to be able to get a job?

Yah – at least that's part of it.

Oh – what else?

Well, ya gotta learn how to get along with other people.

Okay – anything else?

Well, ya gotta learn something about how your society works.

Anything else?

Sure, there's lots of other stuff: kids go to school basically to learn how to become adults.

Trust my grandchild to cut through the pulp to get to the kernel! But, little one, if the prime purpose of any school system is to help kids become adults, what's the prime purpose of adults?

Ya gotta be kidding!

Why?

Well, I once had an old grandfather who never stopped preaching that everyone's prime purpose was their trio of survival (or what he called 'thrival') goals: of themselves, their families (whatever they recognized as the extent of their 'families'), and their values (however their values were obtained).

So you mean that the prime purpose of any school system is to help kids become adults who can capably pursue their trio of survival goals?

Well, that's what he'd say.

And what would you say?

Well, something closer to: the prime purpose of any school system is to help kids learn how to solve problems.

Problems? Like what?

Well, like gettin' a job when they're older, gettin' along with other people, and maybe even solving bigger problems.

Like what?

Well, think of all the trouble in the world, think of all the hunger, all the misery, all the pollution, all the wars, all the stupidities, and so on.

Hey, wait a minute. How come you're now talking about goals of societies and even about goals for all humanity?

Huh?

Well, I asked you why you went to school. You responded with comments about your goals, your parents' goals, kids' goals, adults' goals, and now you're talking about social goals and even humanity's goals.

Of course!

And why "of course"?

'Cause schools don't have just a single goal: they have what the same old grandfather used to call "a nested hierarchy of goals", like sets of Russian dolls.

Outrageous!

What's outrageous?

Ah, never mind... maybe that someone so young seems to know so much. So anyway, what's education's social goal?

Well, that depends on the society, but in general, each society wants its schools to teach its kids how to promote its own goals.

Like what?

Well, each society has its own culture, which it usually wants to protect; it's own traditions, which it usually wants to continue; its own set of problems, which it wants solved; and so on.

And beyond each culture, for all humanity, are there some worldwide goals for education?

Well, insofar as all humans want sustainable prosperity with peace and justice, insofar as all humans seek truth and beauty, insofar as all humans want intelligence to continue to evolve, insofar as all humans recognize that we have common problems to solve, then certainly there are worldwide goals for all education systems!

Well, Dear, sometimes I wonder why I waste so much time writing all this stuff when you already understand everything so well, but anyway, as your grandmother says, it keeps me off the streets.

So, having nothing better to do, I'll now comment further on relating education's goals to humanity's goals, because further investigation suggests why there's such great difficulty in obtaining agreement on the prime purpose of education, namely, because there's so much confusion in defining humanity's prime purpose: Is it to serve God? Promote peace and prosperity? Explore outer space? Or what?

Toward addressing such questions, let me show you how other people have described the prime goal (or goals) of education. I've collected the following quotations from a number of locations on the internet and grouped the goals advocated by the identified authors under three heading, related to goals of 1) individuals, 2) societies, and 3) humanity. I admit that, in some cases, "the fit was rather forced", but please realize that my own goal is to try to get a "better handle" on relating education's goal to humanity's goal(s).

### *1. Relating Education's Goals to Goals of Individuals*

- I am not one who was born in the possession of knowledge; I am one who is fond of antiquity, and earnest in seeking [knowledge] there. [Confucius]
- Employ your time in improving yourself by other men's writings, so that you shall gain easily what others have labored hard for. [Socrates]
- To know the road ahead, ask those coming back. [Chinese Proverb]
- The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life. [Plato]
- Education is the best provision for old age. [Aristotle]
- Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all. [Aristotle]
- Only the educated are free. [Epictetus]
- The very spring and root of honesty and virtue lie in good education. [Plutarch]
- We are born weak; we need strength. Helpless, we need aid. Foolish, we need reason. All that we lack at birth, all that we need when we come to man's estate, is the gift of education. [Jean Jacques Rousseau]
- Education makes a greater difference, between man and man, than nature has made between man and brute. [John Adams]

- To acquire a knowledge of the world might be defined as the aim of all education... [Arthur Schopenhauer]
- Education is a companion, which no misfortune can depress, no crime can destroy, no enemy can alienate, no despotism can enslave: at home – a friend, abroad – an introduction, in solitude – a solace, and in society – an ornament. It chastens vice, it guides virtue, it gives at once grace and government to genius. Without it, what is man? A splendid slave, a reasoning savage. [Joseph Addison]
- Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do, when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not; it is the first lesson that ought to be learned; and however early a man's training begins, it is probably the last lesson that he learns thoroughly. [Thomas H. Huxley]
- Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance. [Will Durant]
- Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one. [Malcolm S. Forbes]
- The objective of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives. [Robert Maynard Hutchins]
- Education is helping the child realize his potentialities. [Erich Fromm]
- The first condition of education is being able to put someone to wholesome and meaningful work. [John Ruskin]
- [T]he purpose of education... cannot be to control the child's growth to a specific pre-determined end, because any such end must be established by arbitrary authoritarian means; rather, the purpose of education must be to permit the growing principle of life to take its own individual course, and to facilitate the process by sympathy, encouragement, and challenge, and by developing a rich and differentiated context and environment. [Noam Chomsky]

## 2. *Relating Education's Goal to Goals of Each Society*

- The foundation of every state is the education of its youth. [Laertius Diogenes]
- What greater or better gift can we offer the republic than to teach and instruct our youth? [Cicero]
- Upon the education of the people of this country the fate of this country depends. [Benjamin Disraeli]
- I think by far the most important bill, in our whole code, is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised for the



preservation of freedom and happiness... The tax which will be paid for this purpose is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests, and nobles who will rise up among us if we leave the people in ignorance. [Thomas Jefferson]

- Next in importance to freedom and justice is popular education, without which neither freedom nor justice can be permanently maintained. [James A. Garfield]
- Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation. [John F. Kennedy]

### 3. *Relating Education's Goal to Humanity's Goal(s)*

- Of all the civil rights for which the world has struggled and fought for 5,000 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental... The freedom to learn... has been bought by bitter sacrifice. And whatever we may think of the curtailment of other civil rights, we should fight to the last ditch to keep open the right to learn, the right to have examined in our schools not only what we believe, but what we do not believe; not only what our leaders say, but what the leaders of other groups and nations, and the leaders of other centuries have said. We must insist upon this to give our children the fairness of a start which will equip them with such an array of facts and such an attitude toward truth that they can have a real chance to judge what the world is and what its greater minds have thought it might be. [W.E.B. DuBois]
- Education is the ability to meet life's situations. [John G. Hibben]
- Sometimes one sees in the school simply the instrument for transferring a certain maximum quantity of knowledge to the growing generation. But that is not right. Knowledge is dead. The school, however, serves the living. It should develop in the young individuals those qualities and capabilities which are of value for the welfare of the commonwealth. But that does not mean that individuality should be destroyed and the individual become a mere tool of the community, like a bee or an ant. For a community of standardized individuals without personal originality and personal aims would be a poor community without possibilities for development. On the contrary, the aim must be the training of independently acting and thinking individuals, who however, see in the service of the community their highest life-achievement. [Albert Einstein]
- Education, for most people, means trying to lead the child to resemble the typical adult of his society... But for me, education means making creators... You have to make inventors, innovators, not conformists. [Jean Piaget]
- Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe. [H. G. Wells]

In general, I agree with all those stated goals of education, and I must admit that I think H.G. Wells' assessment is particularly perceptive:

Human history [or maybe better would be “Humanity's future”] becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.

With such a somber assessment in mind, Dear, and assuming that you accept that humanity's prime goal is to help intelligent life to evolve (or some slogan with similar meaning), then please reconsider the question: What's the prime purpose of education?

I think that the answer is obvious (using whatever slogan one finds most satisfying):

- The prime purpose of education is to develop youth's capabilities to solve their and humanity's problems more intelligently,
- The prime purpose of education is to help our descendants not just survive but thrive,
- The prime purpose of education is to help intelligence evolve.

As Geoff Haselhurst wrote:<sup>1</sup> “Education is the most important factor in the evolution of both the individual and our collective society.”

So now, Dear, if you accept at least some of the above ideas about education's goals (for individuals, societies, and humanity, all of which are incorporated in a statement such as “education's prime goal is to prepare the next generation to solve their and humanity's problems more intelligently”), then consider the potentials and possibilities of education's corruption.

## ILLUSTRATIONS OF EDUCATION'S CORRUPTION

To start, consider some quotations that suggest such corruption.

- Shall we, then, thus lightly suffer our children to listen to any chance stories fashioned by any chance teachers and so to take into their minds opinions for the most part contrary to those that we shall think it desirable for them to hold when they are grown up? By no manner of means will we allow it. [Plato]
- The purpose of Compulsory Education is to deprive the common people of their commonsense. [G. K. Chesterton]

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<sup>1</sup> At <http://www.spaceandmotion.com/Philosophy-Education.htm>.

- Men had better be without education than be educated by their rulers.  
[Thomas Hodgskin]
- It is the universal custom and practice of monarchial and arbitrary governments to train up their subjects as much in ignorance as they can... and to teach them to reverence and worship great men in office and to take for truth whatever they say.  
[William Manning]
- Give me four years to teach the children, and the seed I have sown will never be uprooted. [Vladimir Lenin]
- Education is a weapon, whose effect depends on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed. [Joseph Stalin]
- At every hour of every day, I can tell you on which page of which book each schoolchild in Italy is studying. [Benito Mussolini]
- By educating the young generation along the right lines, the People's State will have to see to it that a generation of mankind is formed which will be adequate to this supreme combat that will decide the destinies of the world... I will have no intellectual training. Knowledge is ruin for my young men. [Adolph Hitler]
- The Founding Fathers in their wisdom decided that children were an unnatural strain on parents. So they provided jails called schools, equipped with tortures called an education... School is where you go between when your parents can't take you and industry can't take you. [John Updike]
- Education is the process of driving a set of prejudices down your throat.  
[Martin H. Fischer]
- Education is a state-controlled manufactory of echoes. [Norman Douglas]
- Education: The inculcation of the incomprehensible into the indifferent by the incompetent. [John Maynard Keynes]
- That erroneous assumption is to the effect that the aim of public education is to fill the young of the species with knowledge and awaken their intelligence, and so make them fit to discharge the duties of citizenship in an enlightened and independent manner. Nothing could be further from the truth. The aim of public education is not to spread enlightenment at all, it is simply to reduce as many individuals as possible to the same safe level, to breed and train a standardized citizenry, to put down dissent and originality. That is its aim in the United States, whatever the pretensions of politicians, pedagogues, and other such mountebanks, and that is its aim everywhere else. [H. L. Mencken]

- In all or almost all civilizations we find something like religious and cosmological teaching, and in many societies we find schools. Now schools, especially primitive schools, all have, it appears, a characteristic structure and function. Far from being places of critical discussion they make it their task to impart a definite doctrine, and to preserve it, pure and unchanged. It is the task of a school to hand on the tradition... to the next generation, and to this end the most important thing is to keep the doctrine inviolate... New ideas are heresies and lead to schisms; should a member of the school try to change the doctrine, then he is expelled as a heretic... There may be arguments against dissenters and heretics, or against some competing schools. But in the main it is with assertion and dogma and condemnation rather than argument that the doctrine is defended. [Karl Popper]
- Our schools have become vast factories for the manufacture of robots. We no longer send our young to them primarily to be taught and given the tools of thought, no longer primarily to be informed and acquire knowledge; but to be ‘socialized’ – which in the current semantic means to be regimented and made to conform. [Robert Lindner]
- The role of the schoolmaster is to collect little plastic lumps of human dough from private households and shape them on the social kneading board. [Edward Ross]
- Kids are the best... you can teach them to hate the things you hate... [Homer Simpson of *The Simpsons* TV series]

I trust you agree, Dear, that at least there’s grave potential for corruption of school systems. Maybe you even agree that such a potential has been realized in the past (e.g., under various dictatorships and in essentially all religions). So now, let me ask you to consider the possibility that such corruption is still rampant.

### Illustrations of Corruption in American Education Systems

To try to get you to consider the possibility that something is seriously wrong – even corrupt – with the educational system in this country (and later I’ll suggest that similar is the case throughout the world), I’d ask you to try to briefly answer the following questions (for which I’ve added some “solution hints” as footnotes).

- When certain grandkids were judged to be “intellectually gifted”, why did their school system put them in an enclave of “accelerated classes” at the worst performing school in their city’s slum?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Hint: The *No Child Left Behind* Act threatened poor-performing schools with cuts in funding if they didn’t show significant improvement – and your local School Board devised a way to “game” the system, without regard for the welfare of “gifted” children. And yes, Dear, I hope you notice not only that it’s

- Why are the schools in our cities slums performing so poorly?<sup>3</sup>
- Why do so many (if not essentially all) legislators in Washington, DC send their kids to private schools rather than public schools, and why do essentially all wealthy Easterners do the same?<sup>4</sup>
- Why are teachers in American public schools paid so poorly relative to similarly trained “professionals”?<sup>5</sup>
- Why, in 1995, did the US Senate pass a resolution condemning the proposed “history standards” for US public schools by a vote of 99 to 1 (with the lone dissenter wanting a stronger sanction)?<sup>6</sup>
- Why are kids kept in school long past the time when they show any desire to learn what’s being taught?<sup>7</sup>
- Why is there so much emphasis in American public schools on sports, “art appreciation”, “music appreciation”, etc., and so little on science?<sup>8</sup>

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immoral to use people for your own purpose without their knowledge or approval but also that surely the epitome of such immorality is doing the same with children!

<sup>3</sup> Hint: As far as I know, no data support the contention that children in low-income families are innately less intelligent. Thus, even you would probably have performed poorly in school if you had poorer nutrition and health care, fewer learning experiences before you entered school, a less-developed vocabulary, fewer incentives to succeed at school, less competent teachers, fewer school resources, etc. Instead, consider why so many children in low-income are undisciplined, both at home and at school.

<sup>4</sup> Hint: Beneath the obvious reason you can find a major social problem and major corruption of the concept that ours should be a “meritocracy” – or as a minimum, that kids should start out on a level playing field. Instead, our system has elements of a “plutocracy”, i.e., ruled by the financially powerful. As a result, the Rockefeller, Roosevelt, Kennedy, Bush, and a huge number of other “privileged” families continue to “rule” America – and to corrupt it. I’ll return to this problem later.

<sup>5</sup> Hints: Careful with this question – there are many possible answers! One may be that most teachers are women, and teacher pay scales were set decades before women had many other employment opportunities. Another possibility may be that many schools of education (in universities) have accepted low-ranking students, graduated them, and sent them out to teach at public schools. Still another reason may be that many people do not consider teachers to be “professionals” (quite prepared to tell them how and what to teach – while not presuming to tell an architect how to construct a skyscraper, an engineer how to build an airplane, or a doctor how to perform an operation). And another reason, which I’ll return to later, seems to be that, in reality, public school teachers aren’t “professionals”, because they haven’t adopted methods to “police” themselves.

<sup>6</sup> Hint: Reconsider the quotation from Popper (above) that ends with: “in the main it is with assertion and dogma and condemnation rather than argument that the doctrine is defended.”

<sup>7</sup> Hint: What goals are being pursued?

<sup>8</sup> Hints: Consider the goals being pursued, the incompetence of teachers and members of the school boards, the coddling of kids, and the decadence of our society.

Again, Dear, please be patient with me. As I already stated, it's my opinion that corruption of educational systems is so rampant and pervasive that I have difficulty deciding even how to describe it. As further illustrations, consider the following seven statements of goals (or "missions") of the identified US "schools" and "universities"; I copied these statements from the internet, choosing samples almost at random from literally thousands of available examples.

1. Odenton Christian School (Kindergarten through Grade 12) in Odenton, Maryland, run by the Odenton Baptist Church.<sup>9</sup>

We have no doubt that the best way to educate a child is to provide a traditional classroom setting where Bible based materials are used in conjunction with time honored methods such as drill, recitation, and memorization.

"Educate" using the Bible?! Critical thinking anyone?

2. St. Stephen's evangelical Lutheran School, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin (at least K – 8).<sup>10</sup>

The mission of St. Stephen's Lutheran School is to assist in making the children of our congregation, [*sic*; i.e., the comma is in the original] disciples of Christ, [*sic*] and to offer them a Bible - centered [*sic*], quality education, which will feed their hearts and minds and by God's grace, [*sic*] will provide the church of the future, [*sic*] disciples who are eager to serve their Lord and share the gospel with others.

That they won't learn how to punctuate a sentence is apparently of less concern, just so long as they are good "disciples of Christ".

3. The Bear Creek School, Redmond WA (K – 12).<sup>11</sup>

The Bear Creek School proceeds from a distinctly Christian world view within an orthodox evangelical belief system. Our faculty teach the Bible as truth and model values that inspire and enable students to live a Christ-like life in today's world... [Dear: try reading that again: "Our faculty teach the Bible as truth and model values that..." Did they want "Our faculty teach the Bible as truth and that it provides model values that..."? Who knows?!] The Bear Creek School recognizes that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, - and [How's that for punctuation!] the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding".

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<sup>9</sup> Copied from <http://www.ocs1.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=23&Itemid=36>.

<sup>10</sup> Copied from <http://saintstephen.org/missionstatementschool.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Copied from <http://www.tbcs.org/about/mission.htm>.

Meanwhile, learning meanings for ‘truth’, ‘values’, ‘wisdom’, and ‘understanding’ is apparently not a part of Bear Creek School’s curriculum, nor is understanding what Einstein said: “Whoever undertakes to set himself up as a judge of Truth and Knowledge is shipwrecked by the laughter of the gods.”

4. Bob Jones “University” (founded by Bob Jones, Sr.):<sup>12</sup>

Within the cultural and academic soil of liberal arts education, Bob Jones University exists to grow Christlike character [How about a hyphen for “Christ-like”?] that is Scripturally disciplined; [sic] others-serving; [sic] God-loving; [sic] Christ-proclaiming; [sic] and focused Above.

As with one of the schools quoted above, leaning about punctuation is apparently optional – but then, they’re probably too “focused Above” to get their hands dirty in grimy little stuff such as punctuation. Instead, Bob Jones “University” is “known as the citadel of biblical Christianity for its adherence to the Bible as mankind’s only source of faith and Christian practice.” The Bible is mankind’s only source of faith? Hello? Does that mean that Hindus, Muslims, and Humanists aren’t members of mankind? How about those of us who have faith in the scientific method?

5. Oral Roberts “University” (founded by, who else, Oral Roberts):<sup>13</sup>

Oral Roberts University is a charismatic university founded in the fires of evangelism and upon the unchanging precepts of the Bible. The University was founded as a result of the evangelist Oral Roberts’ obeying God’s mandate to build a university on God’s authority and the Holy Spirit. God’s commission to Oral Roberts was to “Raise up your students to hear My voice, to go where My light is dim, where My voice is heard small, and My healing power is not known, even to the uttermost bounds of the earth. Their work will exceed yours, and in this I am well pleased.”

I, too, expect that many people would be “well pleased” if the “works” of the students of Oral Roberts “University” exceeded those of its founder, even though he apparently claimed to have a direct link (in his schizophrenic head) to the first symmetry-breaking quantum-like fluctuation in a total void that led to the “creation” of our universe.

6. Regent “University”, Virginia Beach, VA (originally the CBN “University”, founded by Pat Robertson, of the Christian Broadcasting Network):<sup>14</sup>

Regent University is an institution of higher learning that exists to bring glory to God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit... Our mission is to provide exemplary education, from a biblical perspective, leading to bachelors, masters and doctorate degrees for aspiring servant-leaders in pivotal professions...

<sup>12</sup> Copied from <http://www.bju.edu/about/mission.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Copied from <http://www.oru.edu/aboutoru/missionstatement.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Copied from [http://www.regent.edu/general/about\\_us/mission\\_statement.cfm](http://www.regent.edu/general/about_us/mission_statement.cfm).



I wonder if their “higher learning” includes studying other “holy books” (such as Superman, Spiderman, or Batman and Robin comic books) and I wonder what other con games (besides being clerics) they consider to be a “pivotal profession”. Prostitution perhaps?

5. Brigham Young “University” (founded by Brigham Young).<sup>15</sup>

The mission of Brigham Young University is to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life.

Talk about an oxymoron: anyone on a quest for eternal life has squelched the possibility of perfection!

And meanwhile, think of a certain grandchild who has been saving money for years to afford tuition at BYU – because a certain set of grandparents won’t financially contribute to her additional indoctrination. If you don’t understand why, Dear, then maybe you’d like to begin to explore some of the reasons by reading the report prepared by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) that concluded:<sup>16</sup> “that infringements on academic freedom [at BYU] are distressingly common and that the climate for academic freedom is distressingly poor.” Dear: BYU (similar to the other organizations listed above) isn’t an educational institution but an indoctrination center. Witness the statement: “In 1998, the AAUP voted to enter BYU on its list of censored organizations, on which it remains to the present.”<sup>17</sup>

### Illustrations of Educational Corruption Throughout the World

But the above are just a few examples of corruptions of educational systems, only from religion and only in the US.<sup>18</sup> Certainly religion is not the only source of educational corruption, but just as certainly, it’s widespread. In fact, such educational corruption is so general that the General Assembly of the United Nations has enshrined it in Article 26, Item 3 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*:

<sup>15</sup> Copied from [http://ce.byu.edu/bgs/eccles\\_endorse.cfm](http://ce.byu.edu/bgs/eccles_endorse.cfm).

<sup>16</sup> Copied from <http://www.aaup.org/Com-a/Censure.htm>; to obtain this report now (2008/01/29), go to <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/censuredadmins/> and then click on “Brigham Young University”.

<sup>17</sup> Copied from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brigham\\_Young\\_University#Academic\\_freedom\\_issues](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brigham_Young_University#Academic_freedom_issues).

<sup>18</sup> Incidentally, Dear, in the news I recently read an encouraging report suggesting that healthy changes are occurring. In the 22 July 2006 issue of the *New York Times*, Alan Finder reports that some Baptist colleges are cutting their ties with the Southern Baptist Convention. To me, especially encouraging in this report was the statement by David W. Key, director of Baptist Studies at the Candler School of Theology at Emory [University]: “The real underlying issue is that fundamentalism in the Southern Baptist form is incompatible with higher education,” Professor Key said. “In fundamentalism, you have all the truths. In education, you’re searching for truths.”



Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Hello? What about responsibilities associated with such a “right”? What about the rights of children to learn “the facts”? Is it more important for the General Assembly of the UN to specify the rights of parents to educate their children or to try to protect the world’s children from indoctrination in ignorance?! If education’s prime goal is to enable students to solve their and humanity’s problems more intelligently, then surely more important (than protecting adults’ rights “to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children”) is to protect children’s rights, e.g., with a UN resolution enshrining Schopenhauer’s assessment:

No idea should ever be established in a child’s mind otherwise than by what the child can see for itself, or at any rate it should be verified by the same means... No child under the age of fifteen should receive instruction in subjects which may possibly be the vehicle of serious error, such as philosophy, religion, or any other branch of knowledge where it is necessary to take large views...

If such a resolution could be implemented, then indoctrination of children in all “grand schemes” (Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Mormonism... capitalism, communism – and even humanism!) would cease. Instead of indoctrinating kids in any “grand scheme”, teach them how to think for themselves: teach kids how to pick fruit from the tree of knowledge and let them decide for themselves what’s ripe and what’s rotten.

Anyway, Dear, maybe you’re beginning to see that there are a huge number of potential and real corruptions of education. Some corruptions are derived from conflicts between education’s goal and some person’s goal (e.g., you might not feel like studying!), some are derived from conflicts between education’s goal and some group’s goal (e.g., capitalists not wanting their students to learn accurate information about communism – or *vice versa*), and still other corruptions are derived from conflicts between education’s goal and other societal goals (e.g., a nation may want their youngsters to defer college education and join the armed forces). Thereby, given the great variety and range of such corruption and potential corruption, perhaps you at least appreciate my difficulty in trying to make this presentation at least appear to be organized!

Failing to see any better scheme, I'll try to organize my comments in the following three broad categories: 1) Corruption of Children's Development, 2) Corruption of Social Progress, and 3) Corruption of Prospects for Peace and Prosperity. I admit that these corruptions are related and that some corruptions (e.g., the huge amount of bribery that corrupts education in many underdeveloped societies) simultaneously span all three categories. Yet, any attempt at organization must start somewhere!

### **1. Corruption of Children's Development**

Such corruption is rampant throughout the world – especially for girls and especially in Islamic nations – but until a later chapter, I'll emphasize what's occurring in the US and attempt to organize my comments into the following three subcategories, dealing with children's a) Intellectual Development, b) Emotional Development, and c) Social Development.

#### *1a) Corruption of Children's Intellectual Development*

Dear: I'm not going to provide details. Feel free to write an essay (or a book!) on each of the following topics:

- Children not being shown particulars before general principles,
- Children not being stimulated to apply the scientific method to solve problem they encounter in their daily lives,
- Children not being shown how to dig into data,
- Children not being taught how to evaluate their beliefs,
- Children being indoctrinated in their society's "truths",
- Children not learning what great thinkers thought.

I wouldn't be surprised if 90% of American schools and 99% of Islamic schools corrupt children's intellectual development (by inhibiting their thinking for themselves, indoctrinating them in "group think", preparing them to become docile members of "the collective", and similar). Kids would profit more from working in fields or in factories than (as in some *Star-Trek* rerun) having their Borg-like teachers drum into them:

*You will be assimilated; resistance is futile.*

Further, more is needed than "just" stimulating kids to think critically. Thus, as Jeffrey H. Anderson wrote:

\* Go to other chapters *via*

When children enter our public schools, they are encouraged not to learn what other people thought about things, but rather to “think for themselves” – which is crucial, but also fruitless without insights from beyond one’s own mind or beyond the minds of one’s similarly underdeveloped peers.

And relative to the need to “dig into data”, Charles Perfetti provided the following critical assessment of “critical thinking”:

...we should not necessarily conclude that higher-level strategic skills are somehow the critical issue. It is exactly these processes that are most vulnerable to specific knowledge failures. We think these processes are important, but we suspect that they develop ordinarily in tandem with the gradual accumulation of knowledge...

Similar was stated by E.D. Hirsch, Jr.:

The evidence regarding critical thinking is not reassuring... Usually, it isn’t the logical structure of people’s inferences that chiefly causes uncritical thinking but rather the uninformed or misinformed faultiness of their premisses.

In addition, and perhaps most importantly, kids must learn that to learn they must work at it! As Ron Rude wrote:

Whether public education can survive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will depend not nearly so much on making the system “personally interesting” or “occupationally relevant”, as it will on helping kids and the adults who nurture them understand that perseverance and self-discipline will get them a lot further in life than ‘interest’ will. I’m not optimistic that we will ever recognize this, much less accomplish it.

Illustrative of the problem in American schools of so many kids just “goofing off” is the following quotation<sup>19</sup> obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics (at <http://nces.ed.gov/>):

Another indicator of the effort that students give to their school work is the amount of time spent on homework. In 1998, most 12<sup>th</sup>-graders (88 percent) reported doing at least some homework in a typical week, although more than half spent less than 0 – 4 hours per week on homework...

Such kids are kidding themselves: more than half spent less than 4 hours per week on homework! Any kid who spends less than 2 – 4 hours per night on homework isn’t in school to learn.

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<sup>19</sup> Copied from [http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001072\\_3.pdf](http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001072_3.pdf).

The failure to inculcate “the work ethic” in American students leads to assessments such as the following:<sup>20</sup>

According to a new Manhattan Institute for Policy Research study funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, only 32 percent of recent high-school graduates were qualified to attend a four-year college. Further, the report showed that the high-school graduation rate remains depressingly low at only 70 percent.

For years, American education experts have been alarmed at the growing inability of public-school students and graduates to compete academically with peers in other industrialized democratic countries. As Charles Sykes wrote in his revolutionary 1990s book *Dumbing Down our Kids: Why America’s Children Feel Good about Themselves but Can’t Read, Write, or Add*:

“When the very best American students – the top 1 percent – are measured against the best students of other countries, America’s best and brightest finished at the bottom.”

And, according to a study by the Program for International Student Assessment, of students in 32 developed countries, 14 countries score higher than the US in reading, 13 have better results in science, and 17 score above America in mathematics...

And William Moloney, chairman of the Washington, D.C.-based Education Leaders Council, writes that American students feel better about their math skills than any other country in the free world – while Korean students, who feel worst about their math skills, outscore everyone else in math. American students are famously confident in their ignorance.

As a summary, let me quote someone who has had significant experience with such corruption, namely Edward A Rauchut:<sup>21</sup>

With very few exceptions, I watched for 14 years as student after student entered and left high school having learned next to nothing during his or her four-year term. And the problem is not in someone else’s school district: it’s systemic. My experience has convinced me that, if the purpose of the public schools were to prevent children from acquiring an education, they could not do a better job than they are doing right now, at this very moment in classrooms all across the nation...

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<sup>20</sup> From <http://www.myshortpencil.com/schooltalk/cgi-bin/show.cgi?tpc=2&post=8350>, written by Hans Zeiger (a freshman at Hillsdale College in Michigan, a 2003 Puyallup High School graduate, and a freelancer for *The Seattle Times*).

<sup>21</sup> Copied from <http://www.illinoisloop.org/quotes.html>, which is a great source of quotes dealing with education. It’s been established by “The Illinois Loop”, stated to be “an informal group of about 200 parents, teachers, school board members and others, mostly in the suburbs around Chicago.”

Ours is an education system that labels children learning-disabled and then calls for more tax dollars to remediate the problem it created. It is an anti-intellectual, morally bankrupt system whose values-clarification classes and bogus drug- and sex-education programs contribute to the very addictions they sanctimoniously claim to solve. It is a system that crushes our children's intellectual curiosity and then demands they learn anyway...

Our public educational system is a monopoly founded on anti-intellectualism and bogus theories of learning. As such, real education has always been its enemy, the single greatest threat to its very existence, a persistent reminder of its failed mission to teach our nation's children... Real education would put the child-detention centers we call schools out of business. Real education would close schools of education by forcing real subjects to be taught in them...

### *1b) Corruption of Children's Emotional Development*

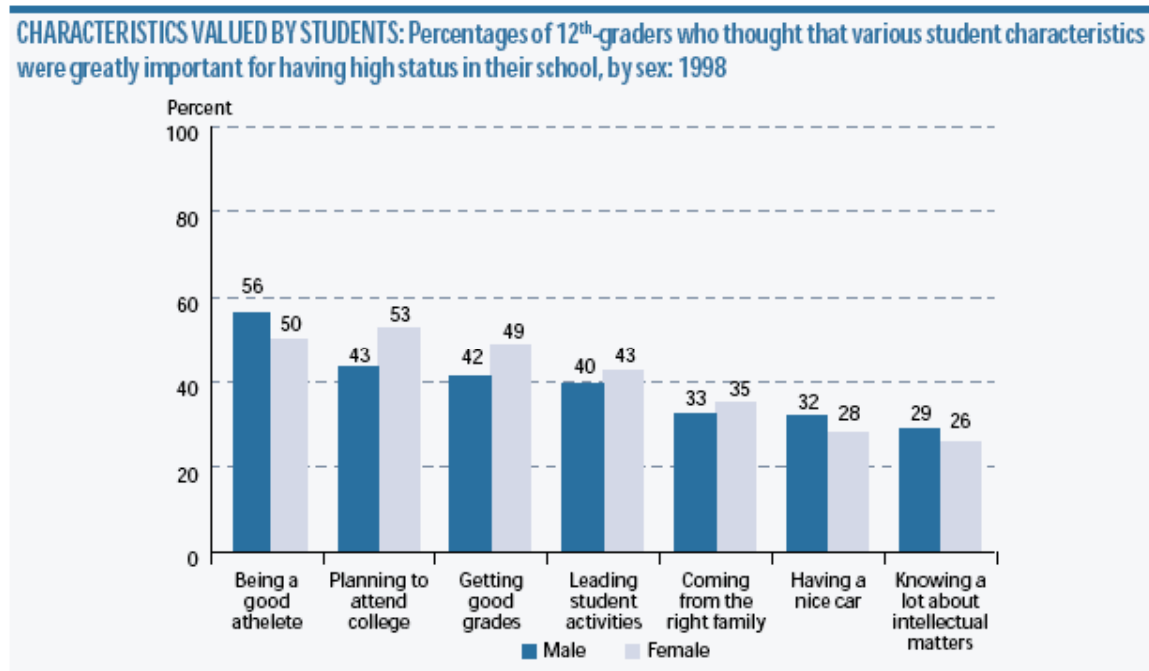
I claim that any kid who isn't successfully overcoming challenging tasks appropriate for the kid's capabilities will be emotionally damaged – and little could be dumber! Realize, Dear, that all societies need contributors with wide-ranging capabilities, from cleaning washrooms to designing fusion reactors. If a kid can't conquer algebra, for example (or absolutely refuses to try to), the kid shouldn't feel a sense of failure; instead, the kid should be stimulated to take on appropriate challenges. What's the point of frustrating so many students by having them study algebra, geometry, and calculus, for example, when those same students could be competently, successfully, and happily studying aircraft maintenance, bricklaying, carpentry, etc.? If everyone knew how to solve the equations of magnetohydrodynamics but nobody knew how to clean the bathrooms, what a foul world this would be – in more ways than one!

Further, beyond the corruption of schools by inadequately directing students toward occupations appropriate to their capabilities and interest, many if not most American schools currently appear to be on a bogus “self-esteem kick”, erroneously and even egregiously promoting the “confidence” of students when they display incompetence: so long as the student conveys his or her “feelings”, then the student's composition is praised; so long as the student tries to master geometry or wood-working or whatever, then the student is praised; and so on. The motto seems to be: “make the child feel important.” As Samuel Hayakawa said: “[Schools reject] the idea of education as the acquisition of knowledge and skills [and instead] regard the fundamental task in education as therapy.” Well sorry, Dear, but not only is that nonsense, it corrupts a child's emotional development.

To become an adult, one of the most important lessons to learn is that you're not so important as your parents said you were and/or as you think you are. You will need to learn that Nature considers you to be totally irrelevant (eliminating you as nonchalantly as she eliminates any other individual life form), and people other than your parents will judge your "importance" in proportion to your contributions. Consequently, if your essay is junk and your woodworking or science project is trash, then either do better the next time or move on to something at which you are more competent. False praise is just that: false. And the associated corruption of the emotional development of children is not only detrimental to each child but also to society (populated by a those who whine that they "don't get no respect"). Respect isn't granted; it's earned – as praise should be.

### *1c) Corruption of Children's Social Development*

In the topic immediately above, there are already hints of corruption of children's social development by our schools (producing graduates who unjustifiably claim "importance" in their societies). This is a huge topic, which I'll leave you to study on your own and then write your own essay (or book!) should you be so inclined. Nonetheless, let me show you at least the following chart.<sup>22</sup>



<sup>22</sup> SOURCE: University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research. Monitoring the Future Survey: 1998; copied from [http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001072\\_3.pdf](http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001072_3.pdf).

In this chart, notice that the percentages don't sum to 100%, because the students (males and females identified separately) were asked to indicate just what characteristics of other students were “[greatly important for having high status in their school](#).” And I wouldn't be surprised if you're unsurprised by the result that, in 1998, kids considered “[being a good athlete](#)” was (and still is!) roughly twice as important as “[knowing a lot about intellectual matters](#)”, which is also less important than “[coming from the right family](#)” or “[having a nice car](#)”. But what does that say about the involvement of schools in the corruption of children's social development?!

In particular, why is there so much emphasis in high schools on competitive sports? Surely the most important reason for sports in schools is associated with health benefits from exercising. Undoubtedly there are benefits from team sports related to stimulating competition and promoting cooperation – but no more so in sports than in teams that put together a school newspaper or participate in some science or other competition. Meanwhile, though, surely the huge high-school emphasis on team sports (football, basketball, baseball,...) taps into (and stimulates) two primitive instincts: tribalism and attraction to physical prowess (a valuable attribute for males, 10,000 and more years ago). And it is these two instincts (two instincts that must be constrained in the modern world) that our schools stimulate and which students judge to be of twice the value of “[knowledge of intellectual matters](#)”?! If that isn't corruption of the social development of kids then I don't know what is!

In this country, in addition, there's serious corruption of the social development of “minority kids” (especially Blacks and Hispanics), a corruption perversely associated with affirmative action programs (where I use the word “perverse” in the sense that such programs were designed and implemented with intentions opposite to their outcomes). Three such perversities are the following, well described by Russell Nieli (professor in the Politics Department of Princeton University) in his article entitled “The Changing Shape of the River: Affirmative Action and Recent Social Science Research.”<sup>23</sup>

- Knowing of the existence of affirmative action programs in colleges and universities throughout the country, Black and Hispanic kids lose incentives to work as hard on their studies as Asian and White kids (of similar economic backgrounds),

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<sup>23</sup> Available at [http://www.nas.org/reports/river\\_change/affirm-act\\_soc-sci.pdf](http://www.nas.org/reports/river_change/affirm-act_soc-sci.pdf).



- Internalizing the idea that they “need” support from affirmative action programs, such kids develop “inferiority complexes”, stifling their self confidence and their academic performance, and
- Resenting that merit isn’t the sole measure of success, Asian and White kids shun social interactions with Blacks and Hispanics, who simultaneously prefer interactions with peers (a form of “siege mentality”), thereby frustrating the social interactions among equals that was one of the prime desirable outcomes of affirmative action.

From such experiences it might be safe to conclude that any “social-engineering” policy that promotes anything but a meritocracy will lead to corruption of the social development of kids.

## 2. Corruption of Social Progress

In the above, dealing with corruption of children, I’ve already hinted at elements of the corruption of society by school systems (e.g., promoting tribalism, honoring physical prowess, producing graduates who haven’t learned that respect must be earned, etc.), but such elements are just the beginning of what could be a huge list. I’ll leave it to you to dig deeper, Dear, but let me at least mention a few items for your consideration.

One horrible way that school systems corrupt social progress can be categorized as unfairness (or injustice). As Stephen Heyneman wrote:<sup>24</sup>

If the school system cannot be trusted, it may detract from a nation’s sense of social cohesion, the principal ingredient of all successful modern societies... A school system... free of [this type] of corruption is characterized by the following:

- Equality of access to educational opportunity,
- Fairness in the distribution of educational curricula and materials,
- Fairness and transparency in the criteria for selection to higher and more specialized training,
- Fairness in accreditation in which all institutions are judged by professional standards equally applied and open to public scrutiny,
- Fairness in the acquisition of educational goods and services, [and]
- Maintenance of professional standards of conduct by those who administer educational institutions and who teach in them, whether public or private.

In his article, Heyneman provides examples of unfairness in educational systems throughout the world; probably worst is the poor educational opportunities for girls *versus* boys in most Islamic countries. In this country,

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<sup>24</sup> *Education and Corruption*, available at, e.g., [www.politika.lv/polit\\_real/files/lv/EducCorrupt.pdf](http://www.politika.lv/polit_real/files/lv/EducCorrupt.pdf).



an example of such unfairness is that, generally speaking, the poorer your parents are, the poorer will be your education – which might be judged fair for parents, but not for kids.

As you can find on the internet, there are many other types of corruption of education systems that damage social development. I'll mention two more.

- In those societies that are plagued by economic corruption of their school systems (especially in Africa, South America, some nations in Asia, and nations that were formerly a part of the Soviet Union), such corruption rots their societies to the core: students learn that bribes are just “the way business is done”, the powerful gain their position through favors rather than competence, and thereby, honesty and trust (the foundations of any society) are sacrificed for expediency. To gain some appreciation for the enormity of the problems, I encourage you to read *Corruption in Education Systems in Developing Countries: What it is Doing to the Young* by Nicholas Bennett.<sup>25</sup> The following is just a sample.

Privatization is one of the current mantras of development gurus, and no civil servants had taken this mantra so much to heart as those in Cameroon. Teachers sold places in the front rows of their overcrowded classrooms, parents had to pay if they wanted their child's exercise books... corrected, and the only way a child could complete the curriculum in an examination year was through private tuition with the same teacher...

Most serious of all has been the change in the heroes of the young. No longer are their teachers, or their political leaders, or those who brought learning to the villagers, their heroes. No longer do they believe that “each one should teach one.” Now the heroes are the “Fay Men”, those who develop tricks to cheat and steal money from ordinary people and the Government, and get away with it. Everyone, whether in Africa, or Asia is talking with pride of the new tricks that have been invented by these fay men. At least footballers and athletes remain as positive heroes.

- In those societies in which social evils such as caste systems, male chauvinism, tribalism, racism, fabricated belief systems, theocracy, plutocracy, etc. are entrenched, then almost invariably, the same evils are propagated within their schools systems, ensuring their continuance. To gain some appreciation for the extent of such corruption, I would encourage you to explore on the internet. Below are two illustrative quotations.

The first is from the webpage of the Ministry of Education of the Government of Pakistan.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Available, for example, at [www.10iacc.org/download/workshops/cs34a.pdf](http://www.10iacc.org/download/workshops/cs34a.pdf), presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Anti-Corruption Conference.

<sup>26</sup> Copied from <http://www.moe.gov.pk/edupolicy.htm>.

Education and training should enable the citizens of Pakistan to lead their lives according to the teachings of Islam as laid down in the Qur'an and Sunnah and to educate and train them as a true practicing Muslim.

Surely, someday, such indoctrination – such blatant violations of the rights of children – will be prohibited, worldwide.

The second example is from the web page of Senator Charles E. Schumer (D, NY), quoting the identified textbooks used in Saudi schools.<sup>27</sup>

- “There is no doubt that the Muslims’ power irritates the infidels and spreads envy in the hearts of the enemies of Islam – Christians, Jews and others... a malicious Crusader-Jewish alliance [is] striving to eliminate Islam from all continents.” (*Geography of the Muslim World*, 1994, p. 32, Grade 8)
- “All Muslims stand together for the realization of their common goals, such as [the following ones]: Purification of Jerusalem from the filth of Zionism and the liberation of Palestine.” (*Geography of the Muslim World*, 1994, p. 37, Grade 8)
- “Now it [Palestine] is occupied by the Jews, a people of treachery and betrayal, who have gathered there from every place: from Poland, Spain, America and elsewhere. Their end, by God’s will, is perdition.” (*Dictation*, pt. 1, 2000, p. 24, Grade 8)
- “Jihad in God’s cause is the path to victory and to strength in this world, as well as to attaining Paradise in the hereafter.” (*[Qur’an] Commentary*, 2000, p. 90, Grade 9)
- “The abundance of the suicide cases in Western societies is surely because of their [great] distance for the true divine source.” (*Islamic Jurisprudence*, 2000, p.19, Grade 10)

Upon reading such filth what again comes to mind is Homer Simpson’s cynical remark: “Kids are the best... you can teach them to hate the things you hate.” Thereby, corruption of societies continues.

### 3. Corruption of Prospects for Peace and Prosperity

In turn, the more educational systems corrupt each society, the more unlikely are prospects for peace and prosperity in humanity’s future. Again, Dear, I won’t go into details. Should you be so inclined, write your own essays (or books) on how the world’s educational systems promote tribalism (e.g., in

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<sup>27</sup> Copied from [http://schumer.senate.gov/SchumerWebsite/pressroom/press\\_releases/PR01526.html](http://schumer.senate.gov/SchumerWebsite/pressroom/press_releases/PR01526.html).

the form of national or religious patriotism), consumerism, many other forms of exploitation (of natural resources and of other humans), etc. I'll leave this topic with the question for you: How can worldwide peace and prosperity ever be achieved so long as kids throughout the world are trained, like little puppies, to “**pwedge a wee Gents**” to their individual “**Fwags**” and to claim that their religion is the only “true” religion.

Thereby, Dear, maybe you're beginning to see what I mean by “the corruption of essentially all education systems throughout the world.” The source of the corruption is a misinterpretation of how to achieve the prime goal of solving our problems more intelligently.

For example, most religious fundamentalists have concluded that the prime problem facing humanity is that everyone doesn't similarly believe that becoming a believer in their particular delusion would solve all our problems. But their method of solution to what they consider to be the prime problem (which includes indoctrinating their children in their dogma) is based not on knowledge but on ignorance.

## EXTIRPATING EDUCATIONAL CORRUPTION

Now, Dear, if you think that efforts should be made to try to improve prospects for worldwide peace and prosperity, if you think that education is the key to improving such prospects, and if you think that there's validity to the idea that most school systems in the world are corrupt, then I assume that you'll agree that major efforts should be expended to extirpate such corruption.

The question, of course, is: How? And my answer is equally obvious, namely: every possible way!

But, Dear, there's “no way” that I can provide you with adequate descriptions of the major and in many cases valiant efforts to extirpate such corruption. If you want to dig into details, I'd encourage you to explore on your own, e.g., beginning with the following.

- For a general overview of suggested ways to extirpate especially financial and professional corruption from especially higher education, see the report by Stephen P. Heyneman entitled *Education and Corruption* (which you can easily find on the internet).

- For more details about “recommended counter-measures” to curb especially financial and fairness corruption in education, especially in developing countries, see the report by Katharina L. Ochse entitled *Preventing Corruption in the Education System: A Practical Guide*, which seems to have been funded (and published) by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.<sup>28</sup>
- In the report<sup>29</sup> by the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) *The State of the World’s Children 2004* special emphasis is on the disadvantages in educational opportunities for girls and the resulting serious consequences for their societies.
- The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) was created in 1963 as a part of United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to “help Member States improve the quality and effectiveness of their education systems.” In 2001 IIEP launched a research project on “Ethics and corruption in education.” You can find literally hundreds of references to relevant reports at their website.<sup>30</sup>

In contrast to the corruption described in the reports referenced above, the corruption in American educational systems may seem minor, but as I suggested earlier in this chapter, as you can find in still other reports (e.g., search on the internet for “Sociology: A Global Perspective” and “Renewing Our Schools, Securing Our Future; A National Task Force on Public Education”) and as you probably know from your own experiences, American schools also have serious problems, including students’ relatively poor academic-performance (compared with students in other countries), inadequate student discipline (not only to study but even to behave), excessive cost, etc.

But, Dear, my goal is not to propose cures for all the ills plaguing educational systems throughout the world. Instead, “all” I desire to do is suggest ways to promote peace and prosperity *via* education, especially (in view of the charge to me by a certain troublesome grandchild) how to counteract the impediments to peace and prosperity caused by religious ignorance. Conveniently for me, however, one of the recommended cures for religious ignorance is also a recommended cure for many other school ailments – and besides that, it’s a cure that already has been widely prescribed (and in many cases even initiated) throughout the world, namely, competition, in general, and specifically: scientific competition.

<sup>28</sup> See [www.gtz.de/governance/](http://www.gtz.de/governance/).

<sup>29</sup> Available at [http://www.unicef.org/publications/index\\_18108.html](http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_18108.html)).

<sup>30</sup> At <http://www.unesco.org/iiep/eng/focus/etico/etico1.html>.

## Correcting Corruption through Competition

The power of competition to remedy corruption has been known “forever”. That competition can be beneficial was perhaps first described by the Greek poet Hesiod (~700 BCE). In his *Works and Days* (which is available on the internet; the version quoted below having been translated by Daryl Hine), Hesiod describes two types of “Discord” – one that he calls “grim Discord”, which “promotes all the evils of warfare and slaughter”, and another, “the firstborn daughter of dark Night”, which can be translated as “competition”:

There is not only one Discord, for on earth she is twofold:  
One of them nobody would find fault with on closer acquaintance;  
One you would deprecate, for they have totally different natures.

Wickedly, one promotes all the evils of warfare and slaughter;  
No one of humankind likes her; out of necessity, at the  
Will of the blessed immortals, they treat grim Discord with honor.

There is, moreover, another, the firstborn daughter of dark Night.  
Her did the high-throned scion of Cronus whose home is in heaven  
Place at the roots of the earth; she is certainly better for mankind.

This is that Discord that stirs up even the helpless to hard work,  
Seeing a man gets eager to work on beholding a neighbor  
Who is exceedingly wealthy and makes haste plowing and sowing,  
Putting his household in order; so, neighbor competing with neighbor  
Runs after riches, and therefore this Discord benefits mankind.

Every potter begrudges another, and artists do likewise;  
Every beggarman envies a beggar, and poets are rivals.

Honoring this “second type” of Discord (competition) is possibly why the Ancient Greeks flourished, e.g., even Hesiod competed with Homer (“and poets are rivals”). Similar wisdom is contained in the Chinese proverb (repeated by Mao in his *Little Red Book*): “Let a thousand blossoms for the light contend.” In fact, such competition is the cornerstone of capitalism and is another basis for my assessment: *If in doubt, let the system go free.*

Now, the above comments about the benefits of competition could provide me with an easy opening into the topic of America’s start toward a “school voucher program”, but I don’t want to go there – yet! I’ll address it (and other attempts to improve school systems) in subsequent X-chapters. But I want to temporarily avoid commenting on the school voucher program,

because not only is it a can of worms (or a “Pandora’s box”), but it’s too “parochial” (in so far as it’s especially topical in the US).

Instead, I’d have you consider, more generally, that already throughout the world there are hopeful signs that international economic competition is stimulating government throughout the world to improve their education programs, diminishing the indoctrination of kids in religion and other philosophies, while simultaneously increasing their involvement in “realism”, i.e., in science.

### Four Recent Illustrations

While I was writing this chapter, news reports provided four examples that illustrate the point that I’m trying to make. In each of these illustrations (given below), notice that leaders of their respective nations recognize that science and technology in their nations (especially, science and technology associated with energy conversion, which form the foundations of all economies) are critical for their nation’s future; therefore, these leaders promote science education.

1. In the US, the Secretary of Energy spoke about the President’s *Advanced Energy Initiative* and the Undersecretary of Commerce spoke about the President’s *American Competitiveness Initiative*; the latter “[lamented the gap between America and the rest of the world: 17 percent of US college graduates receive degrees in science or engineering vs. 52 percent in China and 27 percent in the rest of the world.](#)”<sup>31</sup> These two initiatives were “domestic center pieces” in President G.W. Bush’s 2006 State of the Union Address:

[Keeping America competitive requires affordable energy. And here we have a serious problem: America is addicted to oil, which is often imported from unstable parts of the world. The best way to break this addiction is through technology. Since 2001, we have spent nearly \\$10 billion to develop cleaner, cheaper, and more reliable alternative energy sources – and we are on the threshold of incredible advances.](#)

[So tonight, I announce the \*Advanced Energy Initiative\* – a 22-percent increase in clean-energy research – at the Department of Energy, to push for breakthroughs in two vital areas. To change how we power our homes and offices, we will invest more](#)

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<sup>31</sup> Quoted from an 9 May 2006 article by Joyce Gannon in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, available online at <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/06129/688515-28.stm>.

in zero-emission coal-fired plants, revolutionary solar and wind technologies, and clean, safe nuclear energy.

We must also change how we power our automobiles. We will increase our research in better batteries for hybrid and electric cars, and in pollution-free cars that run on hydrogen. We'll also fund additional research in cutting-edge methods of producing ethanol, not just from corn, but from wood chips and stalks, or switch grass. Our goal is to make this new kind of ethanol practical and competitive within six years.

Breakthroughs on this and other new technologies will help us reach another great goal: to replace more than 75 percent of our oil imports from the Middle East by 2025. By applying the talent and technology of America, this country can dramatically improve our environment, move beyond a petroleum-based economy, and make our dependence on Middle Eastern oil a thing of the past.

And to keep America competitive, one commitment is necessary above all: we must continue to lead the world in human talent and creativity. Our greatest advantage in the world has always been our educated, hardworking, ambitious people – and we're going to keep that edge. Tonight I announce an *American Competitiveness Initiative*, to encourage innovation throughout our economy, and to give our nation's children a firm grounding in math and science.

First, I propose to double the federal commitment to the most critical basic research programs in the physical sciences over the next 10 years. This funding will support the work of America's most creative minds as they explore promising areas such as nanotechnology, supercomputing, and alternative energy sources.

Second, I propose to make permanent the research and development tax credit, to encourage bolder private-sector initiatives in technology. With more research in both the public and private sectors, we will improve our quality of life – and ensure that America will lead the world in opportunity and innovation for decades to come.

Third, we need to encourage children to take more math and science, and to make sure those courses are rigorous enough to compete with other nations. We've made a good start in the early grades with the *No Child Left Behind Act*, which is raising standards and lifting test scores across our country. Tonight I propose to train 70,000 high school teachers to lead advanced-placement courses in math and science, bring 30,000 math and science professionals to teach in classrooms, and give early help to students who struggle with math, so they have a better chance at good, high-wage jobs. If we ensure that America's children succeed in life, they will ensure that America succeeds in the world.

Preparing our nation to compete in the world is a goal that all of us can share. I urge you to support the *American Competitiveness Initiative*, and together we will show the world what the American people can achieve.



2. Another example, this one from the UK, is contained in the following report from BBC News reporter Jonathan Amos:<sup>32</sup>

The Conservative Party is promising to put science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) centre-stage in its formation of new policies.

Tory leader David Cameron has set up a task-force to advise him on how best to develop these important disciplines to the advantage of the British economy.

He has asked Ian Taylor, a science minister in the last Conservative government, to chair the new group.

Ian Taylor said he hoped the task-force would reanimate interest inside the Tory party for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and its importance to policy formation.

“I want also to stimulate a national debate,” he told the BBC News website. “Perhaps there are people out there with ideas they feel the current government hasn’t been listening to.

“The UK is inevitably going to decline unless it not only maintains but enhances its STEM strengths; and that means everything from young people at school opting for the subjects through to the capture and application of technologies by business.

“We will find ourselves marginalised unless we meet the global challenge.”

3. Still another example is available in Russian President Vladimir Putin’s “State of the Union Address”. The following are pertinent reports and excerpts from the indicated news agencies.

**MOSCOW, May 10 (UPI)** – Russian President Vladimir Putin Wednesday called on his government to make specific measures to increase Moscow’s competitiveness in energy efficiency.

“We need to take specific measures in order to change the situation, but without damaging the financial stability that has been attained, and we need to take a serious step to stimulate investment growth in the production infrastructure and in the development of innovation,” said Putin, in his annual state-of-the-union address before the Russian Parliament, RTR Russia TV reported.

Putin said the Russian energy industry lags behind advanced levels and is lower in respect to Moscow’s direct competitors in the world market. Putin has declared energy security as a No. 1 priority for this year’s G8 summit.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Copied from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/4985420.stm>.



**MOSCOW, May 10 (RIA Novosti)** - The quality of education in Russia should answer the demands of today's job market, President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday in his annual state of the nation address.

“We need to ensure the competitiveness of our education, otherwise we will face a serious gap between the quality of education and the current demands [of the market],” Putin said.

He called for adequate controls over the country's education system and for the introduction of independent ratings of higher educational institutions.<sup>34</sup>

“In conditions of harsh international competition, the country's economic development must be determined mainly through its scientific and technological advantages.”<sup>35</sup>

4. And my final example is contained in the rambling letter (loaded with religion) addressed to President G.W. Bush and from the Iranian President Mahmood Ahmadi-Najad (also spelled Ahmadinejad):

Why is it that any technological and scientific achievement reached in the Middle East regions is translated into and portrayed as a threat to the Zionist regime? Is not scientific R&D one of the basic rights of nations?

You are familiar with history. Aside from the Middle Ages, in what other point in history has scientific and technical progress been a crime? Can the possibility of scientific achievements being utilised for military purposes be reason enough to oppose science and technology altogether? If such a supposition is true, then all scientific disciplines, including physics, chemistry, mathematics, medicine, engineering, etc. must be opposed...

What has been said, are some of the grievances of the people around the world, in our region and in your country. But my main contention – which I am hoping you will agree to some of it – is: Those in power have specific time in office, and do not rule indefinitely, but their names will be recorded in history and will be constantly judged in the immediate and distant futures.

The people will scrutinize our presidencies. Did we manage to bring peace, security and prosperity for the people or insecurity and unemployment? Did we intend to establish justice, or just supported special interest groups, and by forcing many people to live in poverty and hardship, made a few people rich and powerful – thus trading

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<sup>33</sup> From <http://www.upi.com/Energy/view.php?StoryID=20060510-124827-2434r>, by United Press International.

<sup>34</sup> From <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20060510/47916730.html>, Russian News & Information Agency, Novosti.

<sup>35</sup> From <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4757969.stm>, British Broadcasting Corporation.

the approval of the people and the Almighty with theirs? Did we defend the rights of the underprivileged or ignore them? Did we defend the rights of all people around the world or impose wars on them, interfered illegally in their affairs, established hellish prisons and incarcerated some of them? Did we bring the world peace and security or raised the specter of intimidation and threats? Did we tell the truth to our nation and others around the world or presented an inverted version of it? Were we on the side of people or the occupiers and oppressors? Did our administration set out to promote rational behaviour, logic, ethics, peace, fulfilling obligations, justice, service to the people, prosperity, progress and respect for human dignity or the force of guns. Intimidation, insecurity, disregard for the people, delaying the progress and excellence of other nations, and trample on people's rights? And finally, they will judge us on whether we remained true to our oath of office – to serve the people, which is our main task, and the traditions of the prophets – or not?

Mr President,

How much longer can the world tolerate this situation? Where will this trend lead the world to? How long must the people of the world pay for the incorrect decisions of some rulers? How much longer will the specter of insecurity – raised from the stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction – hunt the people of the world? How much longer will the blood of the innocent men, women and children be spilled on the streets, and people's houses destroyed over their heads? Are you pleased with the current condition of the world? Do you think present policies can continue? If billions of dollars spent on security, military campaigns and troop movement were instead spent on investment and assistance for poor countries, promotion of health, combating different diseases, education and improvement of mental and physical fitness, assistance to the victims of natural disasters, creation of employment opportunities and production, development projects and poverty alleviation, establishment of peace, mediation between disputing states and distinguishing the flames of racial, ethnic and other conflicts were would the world be today? Would not your government, and people be justifiably proud? Would not your administration's political and economic standing have been stronger? And I am most sorry to say, would there have been an ever increasing global hatred of the American governments?

Let me add that, although the Iranian President sees the advantages of science and technology, yet in his letter to Bush, he demonstrates that he lives in a religious dream world – and he wants everyone to be similarly deluded:

Divine prophets have promised: the day will come when all humans will congregate before the court of the Almighty, so that their deeds are examined. The good will be directed towards Heaven and evil-doers will meet divine retribution. I trust both of us believe in such a day, but it will not be easy to calculate the actions of rulers, because we must be answerable to our nations and all others whose lives have been directly or indirectly effected by our actions. All prophets speak of peace and tranquility for man – based on monotheism, justice, and respect for human dignity.

Do you not think that if all of us come to believe in and abide by these principles, that is, monotheism, worship of God, justice, respect for the dignity of man, belief in the Last Day, we can overcome the present problems of the world – that are the result of disobedience to the Almighty and the teachings of prophets – and improve our performance?

In addition, apparently Ahmadi-Najad is committed to the replacement of democracies with theocracies:

The people are disgusted with increasing corruption. The people of many countries are angry about the attacks on their cultural foundations and the disintegration of families. They are equally dismayed with the fading of care and compassion. The people of the world have no faith in international organisations, because their rights are not advocated by these organisations.



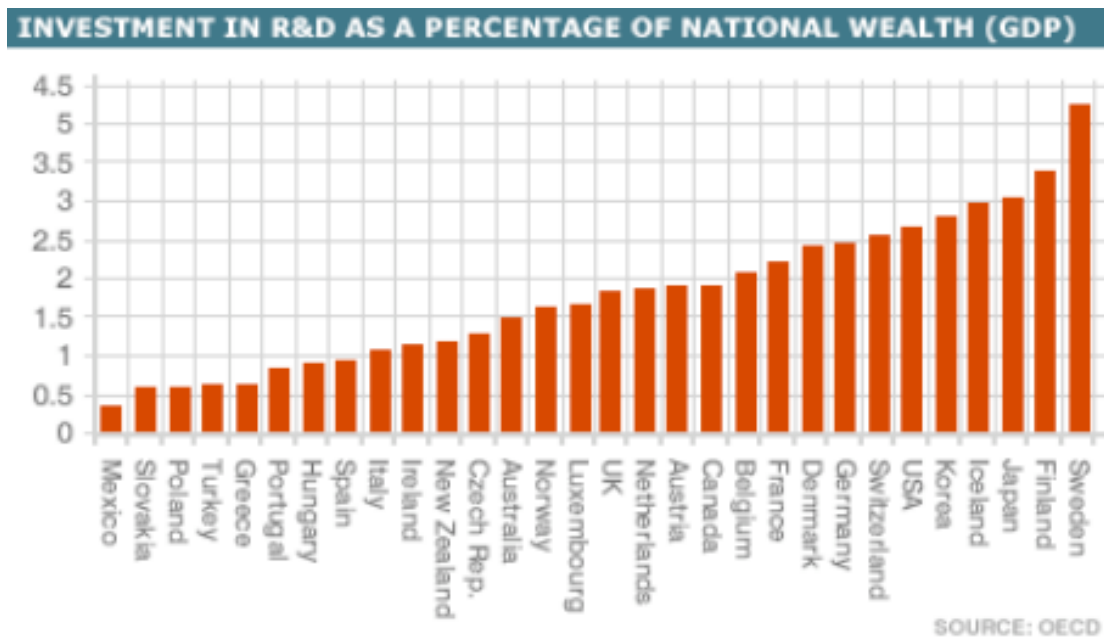
Liberalism and Western style democracy have not been able to help realize the ideals of humanity. Today these two concepts have failed. Those with insight can already hear the sounds of the shattering and fall of the ideology and thoughts of the liberal democratic systems. We increasingly see that people around the world are flocking towards a main focal point – that is the Almighty God. Undoubtedly through faith in God and the teachings of the prophets, the people will conquer their problems. My question for you is: Do you not want to join them? Mr President, Whether we like it or not, the world is gravitating towards faith in the Almighty and justice and the will of God will prevail over all things.

Much of which is well summarized by the accompanying cartoon (which I copied from <http://irregularartimes.com/> – but I couldn't find the name of the cartoonist who created it). And all of which leads me not only to the end of this chapter but also to summarize that, in the above, you can see both a major hope and a major horror for humanity.

### Horror – but Hope

The horror is to see two leaders of the world (the presidents of Iran and the US) living in their dream worlds, divorced from reality, “believing” in prophets and gods, and afterlives, without the slightest shred of data to support their “beliefs”. It’s scary as hell – in fact it is as close as humans will ever come to hell – to have two such fools leading their nations and each claiming that “**God is with us.**”

Meanwhile, though, there’s still some hope. Even Presidents George W. Bush and Mahmood Ahmadi-Najad see the advantages offered by science. In fact, as in shown in the following graph (which apparently was originally produced by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development = OECD), most nations allocate a substantial portion of their wealth for investments in research and development (R&D).



Thereby, science education is recognized worldwide as a “good”, and this recognition provides humanity with some hope. In the next chapter, however, I’ll suggest that greater emphasis on science education provides only a glimmer of hope: it’s a candle flickering in the wind, and significant progress will come only when the wind – derived from the hot air being blown by all the clerics and too many politicians of the world – is stopped.

As Joseph Lewis wrote:

What a day of justice [it] will be... when men and women will no longer pay, by the sweat of their brows, to be taught the grossest superstition; but instead, will receive useful knowledge for the fruits of their labor; knowledge that will give them courage to face life and its problems; will give them a better understanding of the universe, that will make them live better lives – be better citizens – and bring happiness to themselves and to their families...

In later chapters, I'll turn to how that might be accomplished, "excoriating clerics". Meanwhile, Dear, how about your getting some exercise?