

The Blumenfeld Education Letter

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." HOSEA 4:6

Vol. V, No. 5 (Letter # 45)

EDITOR: Samuel L. Blumenfeld

May 1990

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide knowledge for parents and educators who want to save the children of America from the destructive forces that endanger them. Our children in the public schools are at grave risk in 4 ways: academically, spiritually, morally, and physically — and only a well-informed public will be able to reduce those risks.
"Without vision, the people perish."

An Interview With Dr. William R. Coulson On the Origin and Dangers of Affective Education

San Diego, CA, April 28: It was only a matter of time before someone in the Humanistic Psychology movement would come forward and reveal not only how fraudulent the movement is as science, but how destructive it has been in practice. The man who stepped forward and has, in the last two years or so, become known in the conservative movement as a powerful teller of truth, is Dr. William R. Coulson, a former colleague of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, the two major figures in the development of Humanistic Psychology.

This new school of psychology — also known as the Third Force, the other two being Freudianism and Behaviorism — was developed in the 1950s and '60s by psychologist Abraham Maslow who achieved fame by conceiving the notion of "self-actualization" and a hierarchy of needs which must be satisfied before self-actualization could be achieved.

Maslow had rejected Freud's pessimistic view of human nature and the behaviorists' animalistic view of man. He was much more interested in human success than

in human failure. Maslow's biographer, Edward Hoffman, writes:

"[T]he issue was no longer 'What makes for a genius like Beethoven?' but 'Why aren't we all Beethovens?' Slowly and unexpectedly, Maslow's self-actualization research had become the basis for an entirely new vision of psychology with the premise that each of us harbors an innate human nature of vast potential that usually becomes blocked or thwarted through the deprivation of lower needs. This inner potential, Maslow believed, had not been taken into account by any existing school of psychology. . . .(p. 173)

"[H]e emphasized that true fulfillment in life comes from satisfying our higher needs, especially the need for self-actualization. The more we pursue and realize our loftier needs, Maslow contended, the happier and even physically healthier we will be." (p. 181)

Maslow himself wrote:

"People who have enough basic (need) satisfaction to look for love and respect (rather than just food and safety) tend to develop such qualities as loyalty, friendliness, and civic consciousness, and to become better

The Blumenfeld Education Letter is published monthly. Sources of products and services described are not necessarily endorsed by this publication. They are intended to provide our readers with information on a rapidly expanding field of educational activity. Permission to quote is granted provided proper credit is given. Original material is copyrighted by The Blumenfeld Education Letter. Subscription Rate: 1 year \$36.00. Address: Post Office Box 45161, Boise, Idaho 83711, Phone (208) 322-4440.

parents, teachers, (and) public servants . . . People living at the level of self-actualization are, in fact, found simultaneously to love mankind most and to be the most developed idiosyncratically." (p. 181)

Maslow wrote: "I think of the self-actualizing man not as an ordinary man with something added, but rather as an ordinary man with nothing taken away. The average man is a human being with dampened and inhibited powers." (p. 174)

Maslow the Messiah

In short, Maslow had concocted another naive, secular recipe for human perfectibility, in complete contradiction to the Biblical view of man's fallen nature. It is said that Maslow had a Messiah complex with a great personal mission to change the human condition. He said in 1955:

"I am also very definitely interested and concerned with man's fate, with his ends and goals and with his future. I would like to help improve him and to better his prospects. I hope to help teach him how to be brotherly, cooperative, peaceful, courageous, and just. I think science is the best hope for achieving this, and of all the sciences, I consider psychology most important to this end. Indeed, I sometimes think that the world will either be saved by psychologists — in the very broadest sense — or else it will not be saved at all." (Our emphasis.)

In other words, humanistic psychology offered mankind a new road to salvation, and the mechanism or technique which the psychologists (or humanistic clergy) would later use to bring salvation down to the personal level is the encounter group.

The encounter experience was first developed at the National Training Laboratory (NTL) in Bethel, Maine, sponsored by the National Education Association. It was founded in 1948 by Kurt Lewin, a German

social psychologist who invented "sensitivity training" and "group dynamics," or the psychology of the collective. Lewin's work was very much in harmony with John Dewey's educational philosophy which stressed socialization. Lewin died in 1947.

Enter Carl Rogers

The man most responsible for linking up the encounter movement with humanistic psychology was Carl Rogers, the founder of nondirective psychological counseling. In nondirective counseling or teaching the therapist or teacher is merely a facilitator who helps the client or pupil get in touch with his own feelings so that he can direct his own decision-making in accordance with his own values. In teaching, this encourages moral subjectivism and pupil rejection of all outside authority.

Rogers became the guru of the encounter movement because of his extensive experimentation with the technique at the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute (WBSI) at La Jolla, California. In a talk to a large audience of educators on the subject of educational change in the fall of 1968, Rogers explained very clearly what the encounter group was all about:

"One of the most effective means yet discovered for facilitating constructive learning, and growth, and change in individuals and in the organization they represent is the intensive group experience. It goes by many names: encounter group, T-group, sensitivity training. There are a number of labels, but as far as I can see they all represent somewhat the same effort, and I think that all of those efforts have an underlying theme and quality of experience.

"The intensive group or encounter group usually consists of 10 to 15 persons and a facilitator or leader. Personally, I like the term facilitator better because I think he really

helps to facilitate the group in its own direction rather than try to lead it in his direction. It's a relatively unstructured group providing a climate of maximum freedom for personal expression, exploration of feelings and interpersonal communication.

Dropping Defenses

"The emphasis is upon interactions among the group members in an atmosphere which encourages each to drop his defenses and masks and facades, and thus enables him to relate directly and openly to other members of the group, which to me is the basic encounter. Individuals come to know themselves and each other more fully than is possible in the usual social or working relationship.

"The climate of openness and risk-taking and honesty tends to generate a feeling of trust and closeness which enables the person to recognize and to change some of his own self-defeating attitudes, to test out and adopt more innovative and constructive behaviors and subsequently to relate more adequately and more effectively to others in his everyday life situation."

Dr. Coulson's Background

And here is where Dr. William Coulson enters the picture. But first, some background. Coulson, born in 1933, was reared in both California and the Midwest in a strongly Catholic family. In 1951 he graduated from Riverside (CA) Polytechnic High School. In 1955 he got his Bachelor's degree from Arizona State University where he also met his wife Jeannie, an education major, with whom he has had seven children.

From 1957 to 1964 Coulson pursued graduate work at Loyola University, then at Notre Dame where he got a Master's in philosophy and finally a Ph.D. He also attended

Berkeley where he switched from philosophy to counseling and psychology and earned an Ed.D. In 1963 he became a graduate student of Carl Rogers at the University of Wisconsin. Rogers had studied under John Dewey in the 1920s.

At the end of 1963 Rogers moved to the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute (WBSI) at La Jolla, a suburb of San Diego, and Coulson joined him there as an apprentice and research assistant, a working relationship that was to last for the next 15 years. Rogers had taught Coulson how to do his kind of nondirective psychotherapy, and Coulson helped Rogers set up a series of weekend encounter workshops. Word got around about this innovative form of intensive group therapy in which people got in touch with their feelings, lives were changed, and organizations restructured. They began attracting nuns and priests to the workshops.

The Immaculate Heart Experiment

In the fall of 1967 Rogers and Coulson began their first large-scale encounter project with a parochial school system in Los Angeles consisting of a college, 2 high schools and some 60 elementary schools. The formal name of the system was the California Institute of the Sisters of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Informally they were the "Immaculate Hearts."

Coulson writes: "They had a progressive reputation, and it was their progressiveness which made them willing to offer their school system as the setting for the first experiment by the newly convened Educational Innovation project staff."

The results of the experiment were disastrous. As Coulson describes it, "The entire school system began to crumble under the weight of too much feeling expression." Rasa Gustaitis, a free-lance journalist who wrote a

book about the encounter-movement, reported that Dr. Rogers and his staff "put the administrators, teaching nuns and students through truth labs. The sisters began to speak out long-buried emotions and to allow themselves to experience thoughts long submerged in prayer. Soon they were appearing at labs in civvies and Cardinal McIntyre pronounced he never wanted to see a nun in a miniskirt again. They went back to habits, then returned to civvies. By spring 1968, the transformation was in full swing."

Rotten Fruits

Coulson writes: "Today there is no more Immaculate Heart religious order, just as there is no more Immaculate Heart College. The nuns had become 'continually aware of their feelings,' eager to express them and eager to hear the feelings of others. The institution didn't survive."

It was the tragic results of the Immaculate Heart project that made Coulson realize that there was something terribly wrong with what he and Rogers had been doing. I asked:

"Even though you've described the early encounter experiences with the nuns and priests as exhilarating, as if the Holy Spirit was present among you, is it not possible that it was a Satanic spirit in disguise that had entered the group?"

Coulson replied: "When you look at the fruits of what we did, they are so uniformly rotten that you have to think that something like that might have been the case. If it were the Holy Spirit, if we had been visited by an angel, I would think that the fruits would be delicious, and they have not been delicious."

"The fattest case file that I have is headed 'sad cases' and they are all follow ups on people who have been through our encounter groups, and the most recent one, was this little boy in Canton Township, Michigan, who committed suicide at the age of 8. . . . He

wasn't in our encounter groups, of course, and his teacher wasn't either that I know of. But [in accordance with] the Michigan Model, they showed a film [in class] within the context of an exploration of feelings including a list of 25 bad feelings that the kids are apparently supposed to get in touch with. And this is a bright boy, 130 I.Q., a dutiful boy, active in sports and arts, and he was obedient. And he came to understand, because of the Michigan Model, at least this is my opinion, which has a heavy emphasis on the affective domain, that he was to get in touch with his feelings. Having seen this very sad movie in which a handicapped boy tries to kill himself and overempathizing with what he saw, he went home and completed the act. In the movie the boy is rescued; in real life the boy isn't rescued because nobody knows what's happened.

Parents in the Dark

"His parents did not know that the movie was shown. The teachers did not prescreen the movie. But I have since looked at the curriculum and been told by the director of elementary education in that district that the movie was shown as part of the unit on feelings and self-esteem. And I think it's not going to be the last such tragedy that emerges from this model.

"In this same semester, a mother complained that her elementary school child was having to write her own obituary. And the mother was terribly alarmed by this in light of the suicide in the neighboring community. It's morbid what's being done now."

Death education, of course, is part of the Michigan Model, an "affective" curriculum. The affective domain is that part of the school curriculum that deals with the children's values, feelings, self-esteem, and attitudes toward sex, drugs, and death. Its components include values clarification, multicult-

turalism, globalism, sensitivity training, situational ethics, transcendental meditation, New Age relaxation techniques, Eastern mysticism, group counseling, gender orientation counseling, sex education, drug education and death education.

"Why are so many perfectly normal kids committing suicide?" I asked.

Coulson: "I think it's because they have been taught to respect legitimate authority and their parents have taught them that the school possesses legitimate authority. And so the things that they could discount if they heard them in the street, they can't discount them when they hear them in the classroom."

The Obedient Child at Risk

And thus, when death education is taught by a teacher who is given legitimate authority by a child's parents, that child will feel what he or she is expected to feel. For if the teacher teaches the child to hate life and love death, it's as if the parents were teaching it, since the parent will have told the child to obey the teacher and do whatever the teacher tells him or her to do.

"Did the school admit that it was wrong in showing that movie on suicide?" I asked.

"Not at all," said Coulson. "One of the things that's happening now is that the parents who are inclined to say 'We warned you that something like this would happen' — those parents are being called names in the press. There is a campaign being mounted right now against the parents who have been opposing these humanistic interventions in that part of Michigan.

Victim of a Bad Curriculum

"The fact is, at least the news reports that I have seen on videotape from Detroit indicate, that the family itself believes that the boy was done in by a bad curriculum. It's

not the idea of these outsiders alone.

"There are a lot of conservative parents who have begun no longer to take these things lying down and who are rising up against the schools, who are going to the school board meetings. I think the school boards have been trained by the professional educators. You know, they have their retreats and their workshops, so that the school boards are in disarray. . . .

"The administrators too are very much on the defensive right now and inclined to dismiss anybody who objects to what is going on as being fundamentalist."

Coulson on Illiteracy

I also asked Dr. Coulson for his thoughts on America's declining literacy.

"If our children don't learn to read," he said, "they don't develop minds. Michael Polanyi, the philosopher, says, 'The normal outcome of an untutored mind is imbecility.' We are raising a generation of imbeciles, and if they cannot think, then they cannot see. If they cannot see, then they will not understand what's wrong with values clarification. It does not bode well for our future and our competitiveness in the world.

"I like to cite those recent studies in geography which indicate that 32 percent of American students think that Finland is a desert country.

"We had a talk with one of the school officials in Portland, and we talked about bad drug education. They have one that's popular in that area because it comes from Seattle. It's called 'Here's Looking At You' and 'Here's Looking At You 2,000' — a values clarification program that doesn't have a shred of solid evidence to support it. And I said that we really have to return to telling our children what to do, because everybody else is, and if we who love them don't tell them what to do then we effectively turn

them over to those who have no such reservations. And the school official said, 'Well, Dr. Coulson, we would prefer to teach our children to think.'

"And I thought, now there's the last refuge of scoundrels. I will not call this woman a scoundrel. I'm sure she's not. But it's certainly a signal that the school district has given up in defeat, that they cannot teach the children what kind of land Finland is, they cannot teach them to find Southeast Asia on the map. They cannot bring them up to even the world average in mathematics and science, and so we say, well then, we're going to teach them to think, and what that thinking means is we're going to teach them Dewey is what we're going to do.

Dewey's Influence

"You know that 1910 book by John Dewey, *How We Think*, where Dewey misread what scientists do and assumed that all children can do what scientists don't even do. And I said, 'Listen, but we've got to give them something to think with. If you have a head that's stuffed full of advertising slogans and messages from Planned Parenthood and the peer group, then no amount of teaching of critical thinking is going to yield true conclusions. There is something in logic called formal logic, which is how we think, but there's something called material logic, which is what we think with. We've got to get in there and stuff our kids' heads with the truth and then we'll give them something to think with.'"

Contacting Conservatives

Even though an ever-deepening chasm developed between Coulson and his humanist colleagues after the Immaculate Hearts fiasco, he still held out hope that he could persuade his colleagues to see the errors in

their ways. His 1972 book, *Groups, Gimmicks, and Instant Gurus*, also failed to impress them. And it wasn't until the fall of 1985 that Coulson came into contact with the conservative movement when he, along with psychologists Paul Vitz and William Kirk Kilpatrick, were invited to speak to the Association of Christian Therapists, a largely Catholic organization of psychotherapists.

All three psychologists had one message: that there is something corruptive about modern psychology, and that humanistic psychology made it even worse. Coulson had read Vitz's book, *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship*, and Kirkpatrick's two books, *Psychological Seduction* and *The Emperor's New Clothes*, and both authors were delighted to get to know Coulson.

"They have since referred opportunities to me," said Coulson. "There aren't that many psychologists in this country who are converted humanists, I suppose, who know humanism from the inside and who therefore know what it does that's so dangerous."

The Alabama Textbook Case

But Coulson's real education started when he got involved with the Alabama textbook case.

"Vitz could not do the Alabama textbook trial," related Coulson, "because he had too many commitments. The plaintiffs needed an expert to review and analyze the textbooks and write a detailed report to be submitted as evidence. It happened to be a semester that I didn't have a class at the university. And so Jeannie and I went off for 3 months to Mobile, Alabama.

"We became so alarmed and distressed about what we saw in the textbooks, that we determined as a public service to do what we could to inform the public. The fact that we had grandchildren of our own attending public school added a sense of urgency to the

cause. Incidentally, it was in the course of this trial that I read the Humanist Manifesto for the first time and I realized that it described the philosophy of humanistic psychology. In any case, that's what turned us into activists, and life has not been the same since."

The textbooks that Coulson had examined were high school home economics books. All of them, he found, preached the dangerous doctrine of moral subjectivism. In his report he wrote:

"What the textbook publishers and authors apparently fail to realize is how much the consistent and persuasive presentation of the doctrine of the subjectivity of values plays into the hands of those who would deal our children dangerous philosophies and products. If a drug dealer, say, were seeking the cooperation of parents — somehow inviting them to back away from their usual protective stance so that he could move in and pitch his product — he could not do better than to persuade parents (1) that values are 'subjective,' (2) that it might be best, 'for your child's sake,' to consider a more democratic style of home management, and (3) that it is typical of parents to try to impose the old ways when the old ways no longer apply.

"It is sobering to learn that such a prospect — an association of manufacturers pitching the subjectivity of values (and the rightness of a parenting style with 'more questions than answers') — is now being realized."

A One-Man Crusade

For the past several years Coulson has been waging a virtual one-man crusade against an affective drug education program called Quest, which promotes the doctrine of values subjectivity and is heavily financed by the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. There is no

doubt in Coulson's mind that the purpose of the program is to get children to "make their own decisions" about smoking or taking drugs. In other words, parents or teachers are not to tell children never to smoke — for that smacks of authoritarianism — but to be democratic and nonjudgmental and let the children decide for themselves. Invariably some children will try it and get hooked.

Howard Kirschenbaum, a leader in the development of values clarification, described Quest in 1984 at a convention of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). He said:

"We have a program called the Quest program . . . designed to be offered as an elective course for juniors and seniors in high school. . . . It's now being used and taught to 300,000 high school students a year in this country: 300,000! It's a humanistic education curriculum. . . . It has lots of values clarification in it . . . lots of communication skills . . . lots of self-talk. . . . It's . . . a really fine synthesis of alive humanistic education."

The Affective Schema

The tragedy of all of this is that affective drug education does the opposite of what it claims to do: it turns children to drug use, and in sex education to premarital sexual activity. Coulson explains:

"What happens in the affective schema is that the student's identity is recast. He becomes the subjective center of his own decision-making world, no longer an obedient subject of his family's. He learns that among the options of his life are drugs. They become chooseable. He might not have realized it before, but with enough 'interaction' with peers of questionable character (from whom he might have felt obliged to distance himself before) and enough 'clarification' of previously unrealized 'values,' he has come to believe that he can become whatever he

wants or 'needs.' All that's required is to choose.

"Under this induction, typical of the affective classroom, drugs become no longer peripheral to an inexperienced student's awareness, no longer something seen-on-the-evening-news-but-personally-unthinkable. Having been energized and then parked in a circle for heart-to-heart discussion, having exchanged feelings and found that deep down, the users among his classmates were persons with feelings, too, the inexperienced student has 'grown.' In the process, he's lost his fear of offending against the prohibitions of his home and the commandments of his church. The outcome (confirmed in the research) is that he's become more likely to give into what before he would have seen as temptation to be resisted. Now he sees it as a developmental task, a 'risk of further growth.'"

Postscript:

Abraham Maslow died in 1970, having already realized that the third force had become a destructive force. In his last article, published after his death, he wrote:

"I am very disturbed by those who proceed blithely to assume that we already know what we are doing and then simply apply in an unquestioning way the techniques which have been offered as simply experimental techniques, as 'trying something out to see what happens.' . . .

"I share with many other scholars and scientists a great uneasiness over some trends (or rather misuses) in Esalen-type education [intensive encounter group experience]. For instance . . . I see trends toward anti-intellectualism, anti-science, anti-rationality, anti-discipline, anti-hard work, etc. I worry when competence and training are by some considered to be irrelevant or unnecessary. I worry when I see impulsivity confused with

spontaneity

"My impression had been growing through the last four or five years of teaching that I was being used not so much as a teacher but as an object upon which some authority-rebellious students sharpened their teeth and claws, as the bear uses a scratching tree."

The harvest was indeed a bitter one.

For a list of Dr. Coulson's publications and tapes, write to: Research Council on Ethnopsychology, 2054 Oriole Street, San Diego, CA 92114. Phone: (619) 527-0146.

Third Annual PURE Conference July 6-7, Boise, Idaho

Parents for Unalienable Rights in Education (PURE) will hold their third annual conference in Boise, Idaho, on the weekend of Friday, July 6, and Saturday, July 7, 1990.

The conference will be held in conjunction with The Montgomery Institute, an educational enterprise that assists home schoolers in developing home education programs on Biblical principles.

The conference will be held at the Total Life Center, 6250 Cloverdale Road, Boise, Idaho 83709. For additional information call the Montgomery Institute at (208) 888-2315 or The Blumenfeld Education Letter at (208) 322-4440.

Speakers will include Samuel L. Blumenfeld, Sharon Pangelinan, Bob Forrey (former Idaho legislator), and others.

The theme of the conference will be: "A Parents' Rights Strategy for the Nineties."