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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
The 23rd Annual University Forum

with

Albert Shanker

"God, The Constitution, and Schools"

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. FRETWELL: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I am E. K. Fretwell (phonetic), Chancellor UNC - Charlotte, and it is my pleasure to welcome you all this evening to the 23rd Annual Forum.

As many of you know, the forum is a birthday party. It is an occasion which was invented by Edith Linningham and Bonnie Hone and some of our other special friends and supporters to celebrate the idea of the university. The word "university" means many things to many people, but in a single sentence, a university is a place where people face up to major issues, consider various viewpoints, and sometimes actually change their opinions. Sometimes they do; sometimes they don't. How you participate in that part of this forum, silently or otherwise, is up to you.

Now, there has been some speculation tonight as to where our second speaker is at this point. I am happy to tell you that as far as I can tell -- I have certain information but perhaps not all the information in the world -- Pastor Neuhaus is up in the air, courtesy of a major airline.

[Laughter.]

MR. FRETWELL: He will, indeed, be here, I am

informed. But since he will not be here to listen to Albert Shanker's speech, Mr. Ralph McMillan has agreed to become Pastor Neuhaus without becoming frocked on this occasion for the particular event of commenting on the major presentation which we are about to have.

It is a versatile place where many people can participate in a theme as important as the Constitution and God in public schools.

Our major speaker this evening, as I think you all know, is Mr. Albert Shanker, who is one of those rare individuals who is respected by people of many persuasions. He and I have had some fascinating conversations tonight. He has told me something about his early life and youth, which I will not share with you. You can ask him later if you want to. He and I, among other things, did once live in the same neighborhood, but we didn't know each other at that point.

Al Shanker, again as you know, is President of the American Federation of Teachers. He has gained wide respect within both labor and management for insisting that the people he represents -- teachers -- take seriously the reports which are critical of the state of education. U.S. News and World Report, for example, has recently, in its

February 8th issue -- which has, if you haven't seen it, a select list of movers and shakers in education, and he has been defined as a true statesman. He serves as Vice President of the AFL-CIO where he ranks fourth in seniority on the Executive Council.

Major national responsibilities include service on the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. He was recently named to the National Academy of Education, and he is currently serving on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, chaired by former Governor Jim Hunt.

For the past 16 years, Mr. Shanker has written a weekly column titled "Where We Stand on Education, Labor, Political and Human Rights Issues," and that column, as many of us know, appears in the Week in Review Section of the Sunday New York Times and is syndicated by 60 or more newspapers around the nation.

Several magazines, including the New Republic, Phi Delta Kappa and Harper's, Washington Monthly, to mention a few, have praised him for his work in representing teachers. He is a frequent guest on such programs as "Meet The Press," "Face the Nation," "It's Your Business," "Good Morning,

America," and the "Larry King Show."

He was born in New York City and attended city public schools, was graduated with honors from the University of Illinois and completed course requirements for a doctorate at Columbia University.

As a representative of teachers, Mr. Shanker has urged them to look into such plans for improving education as, but not limited to: Merit pay, tougher courses, higher standards, better discipline, a return to a common core of courses, testing of teachers and students, and, of course, better salaries.

We are delighted to have as our initial speaker this evening Mr. Albert Shanker.

[Applause.]

MR. SHANKER: Thank you very much, Chancellor Fretwell. It is a pleasure to be here this evening to discuss to the topic of God, the Constitution and Schools from an educational not a legal point of view. I'm not a lawyer.

I think it's perhaps good to start with a view of the last five years of national discussion and debate in education, and to note the fact that the topic that we're

dealing with tonight has not been on top of the national agenda in terms of improving and reforming schools. We've had a rather amazing five years. When "A Nation at Risk" was published, most people predicted that, like almost every other subject or topic of interest in our society, it would last for a week or two weeks or a month or two months. Anyone who would have predicted at that time that it would be something which would remain a continuing major issue on the national scene for an entire five years would certainly have been considered a rather strange predictor. But, nevertheless, it has been with us.

The major focus, however, of the nation has not been on our topic this evening, but it has largely been on the relationship between the quality of education and the economic prospects for this country. The major players have been groups like the California Roundtable; Ross Perot in Texas; Governor Graham in the state of Florida, who had everyone using bumper stickers which read "Education Means Business"; and the list of reforms common to more than half the states in the country deal with issues like teacher testing, testing students at the end of each year for promotion, minimum competency exams for graduations, longer

school days, longer school years, required courses, and perhaps some types of incentive pay for teachers.

There is only passing reference to the issue of values. "A Nation at Risk" talks about inculcating civility. There is very little said about democracy, and one report -- that issued by the CED -- does talk about the hidden curriculum as being as important as the formal curriculum. And one of the aspects of the hidden curriculum deals with certain habits, such as coming to work on time; character issues, you might say, at least character issues insofar as American industry finds that certain characteristics are important to employees, that they value in their employees.

Now, of course, these are not our issues tonight, but it's important that as we discuss the issue of the evening that we recognize that, volatile though it is and even though it involves large numbers of people, a good deal of press time, and certainly lots of time in the courts, and there are passions in this field that this is not, and has not been for the last five years, the central educational issue in the country.

That doesn't make it unimportant. It doesn't mean that it won't emerge as a central issue. But it's important

to place it in the perspective of the current national debate.

But while the debate on the quality of education and its relationship to economic development and prospects of the country have been before us, there has been an ongoing second debate dealing with the issue of religion, values, morality in the schools. And I will deal with a number of the key issues during this period of time. Prayer in the schools is certainly one of them; the nature of textbooks is another one; the evolution and creationism conflict is a third; the issue of the teaching of values and relativism a fourth; and, finally, the efforts to restructure the financing of education so that parents can provide, at public expense, a religiously sponsored school through tuition tax credits and vouchers.

Let me start with the prayer issue. This is one that has a very long history, and as a matter of fact, it was not unconstitutional for teachers to begin their classes with prayers until very recently. Our nation lived, therefore, about 175 years without the courts finding it constitutional. However, that does not mean that those were years when it was not an issue. Our country has a history of great school

wars, as Diane Ravitch has described them, specifically with Catholics and others, other minorities who were offended by the prayers, textbooks, values imposed on them by a dominating Protestant society and Protestant culture. So this is an issue that goes back some time.

Of course, we still have prayer in many schools in this country because, wherever you have a very homogeneous community -- and no one is going to complain, and children expect it and the principal expects it and the teachers are members of that community -- it's happening. And it's going on throughout the country. There aren't any complaints because if all the members, or just about all members of the community believe in the same way and don't find what's happening there to violate their religious convictions, there's no way for anybody to find out about it.

I find out about it because I travel a lot and talk to a lot of teachers, and many places where I go they say, "Well, you know, we still have prayer in the schools here." It's been quite a few places.

So the issue is largely one that's focused in areas where you have a substantial mix of different religious, cultural and ethnic groups within schools. In those areas,

prayer has, indeed, disappeared. That has brought considerable conflict to reintroduced prayer into schools.

However, anyone who thinks that they will solve the conflict by reintroducing prayer has not read the history. There will be just as much conflict with prayer in the schools as there is without prayer in those schools. One does not resolve the conflict by introducing them.

There are a number of ways of resolving this issue. One, obviously, is to impose the prayers of one particular religion on all of the students in school. I think that there is general agreement that that would certainly not pass constitutional muster and would, indeed, create a good deal of strife. There have been other suggestions that there be a rotation of prayers of different groups. That has its problems as well. That may offend everyone.

Then, of course, there are proposals that there be efforts to develop a consensus prayer. That may or may not be possible in any given community. If it's not possible, of course it won't happen. If it is, it will tend to trivialize prayer and make it so general as to be removed from the actual religious convictions and practices of those in the school.

And there are, of course, considerations of a moment of silence. Most teachers would appreciate a moment of silence.

One of the strongest arguments used for the prayer is that we have it in other institutions. We have it in many courts; we have it in state legislatures; we have it in the Congress of the United States. We use the Bible to swear in people to public office. It's a good argument, but it fails, as all analogies do, in that children are in a different relationship with the teacher than are the members of Congress to the person who is reading the prayer. That is, it's a position of authority. In all these other cases, the position is not one of authority.

This is one that's likely to be with us for a long time. The court has perhaps been strongest on this issue, but the people of the country are also very strong on it. That is, public opinion polls consistently show a very high percentage -- somewhere in the 70s and sometimes even reaching 80 percent -- who believe that prayer ought to be reintroduced. Well, this is one of these situations where the court is very sure and the people are very sure, and they happen to be on opposite sides.

There are very few, I believe, direct educational consequences that flow from settling this issue one way or another. There may be some religious tensions that are created, some that are avoided, but it's not going to make, from an educational point of view, very much of a difference.

The next issue, the textbook one, will make a very considerable difference. The textbook issue is a very interesting one. Textbooks are written and are deemed to be acceptable by State Boards of Education or local educational authorities largely on the basis of a bunch of standards that have very little to do with whether they are good textbooks. That is the last question that's asked. There are readability formulas. One theory is that the words should be very short so that everyone will be able to understand. So these things get dumbed down to the point where they can't really say anything that's of value and don't teach very much.

Then there is a pendulum the other way that says you've got to challenge the kinds, and the words get longer as the textbooks get rewritten. And then there are all kinds of groups that demand that they somehow be mentioned in the book, and most textbooks clearly end up being very boring. They are the works of committees, clearly. A bunch of

pressures. Gone are the days when you had a single great historian writing a textbook which was used for 10 or 15 years and which could be read with some pleasure. They're not there any more.

Now, there have been two rather interesting recent cases which illustrate some of our major issues in terms of textbooks. By the way, the publishers, when you talk to them as to why they don't do more with religion in textbooks and why religion is almost absent, this is one of the big issues and the result of recent research. Religion is absent. You'd never know that George Washington prayed before battle. You'd never know that Martin Luther King was a minister. You'd never know that great wars, movements, nations. You can have pages and pages about the Pilgrims, but no mention of anything related to religion.

Now, when you talk to publishers about this, why, why is the fact that individuals prayed and are religious and that our nation in terms of some of the founders was that the values of democracy to some extent come from Christianity and Judaism; why hide who the Pilgrims were and what their motivation was, et cetera, the answer is: Well, we have too many problems: Do we give all religions equal space? Do we

have proportional representation? And what you get is an answer that their lawyer gave them. You can see that this is preparation for -- that they have had the lawyer's committee in there as to what problems would arise depending on which decision they made.

Now, there have been two recent interesting cases, one in Tennessee where a group of parents found that some of the materials being used in books were, from their point of view, objectionable on religious grounds. Some of these books, there was a section from Anne Frank's diary, the Wizard of Oz, a whole bunch of other things on various grounds.

The Wizard of Oz, I think, was objected to on the basis that it encouraged witchcraft. A phrase of Anne Frank's was objected to because I think most people reading it would find that it was deeply religious, but it was interpreted by these parents as meaning that all religions were equally good. An odd interpretation but it was one which they sincerely held.

At first when these parents objected, one or two school principals said, Okay, if you don't want your kids to read those books, we'll give you something else to read

instead. But the school board soon found out that these schools had made accommodations; and the school board felt that if accommodations were made for these parents that pretty soon there would be more customers, and that there might be some terrible administrative problems. The school board then issued a regulation that no alternative materials were to be provided. The student were eventually told that if they didn't read these materials, they would be expelled from school. Indeed, they were suspended for refusal to read these materials.

Initially, the judge ruled against the parents. However, a higher court asked him to look at it again. He looked at it again and wrote a very careful opinion, a very limited opinion. He said that these were religious views and they were sincerely held; that the kids did not have to learn by reading these books -- they could learn to read by reading any other books; and that for these children and only for the particular books objected to he would allow them to be excused, he would not require that the school provide alternative materials or instruction. The parents were told that they had the obligation to provide that instruction to their children; and the children would be held responsible

for passing whatever midterm and final examinations there were.

You could very easily read into that a warning that if you come back here with more objections or more customers, then I may very well say that it is administratively impossible to run a school system.

Now, actually, eventually, he was overturned, and the parents were told that they had no right to pull their children out. However, from an educational point of view, both sides missed the point from an educational point of view. The school board relied on sheer bureaucratic arguments. They said: Here's how we bought this book. We had all the publishers in, and this group offered us a deal. They gave us free tests to give the kids each year, and we had a committee and we did it. And once you make the decision, you can't let other people go around deciding that we've got to have all sorts of different materials. You'd have chaos and anarchy.

Now, from an educational point of view, it may very well be that different kids ought to be using different materials. As a matter of fact, a good deal of the evidence of school failure would indicate that the effort to get all

children to do exactly the same thing at exactly the same time and exactly the same way is a cause of massive failure because they're all different. Therefore, the basic argument used by the Board of Education to defend its educational position was really very poor. It was good bureaucracy, but it was very poor educational judgment.

On the other hand, the judge's view was very poor educational judgment as well. It is not true that you can really learn to read on anything. Reading is not merely a formal skill. It is not merely the decoding of words. And if you want to see that that's true, I could pull out of my folder, if I had it here, a copy, let's say, of the London Times and open up to the sports page and project it on a screen here. You would be able to read every word. But if you don't know British sports and the rules and the players and where the teams stand and everything else, you'd be able to understand every word in the article but you would not be able to read it. Reading depends on background information, background information that is culturally shared and common.

The reason that we can today read Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln and understand is that they had certain background information which continues to be the same

background information that we have today. Otherwise, we'd have to look things up in almost every sentence.

So that learning to read is not just learning to pronounce words; it is learning about certain things that every writer expects that you will know and will not explicitly state in the writing. Therefore, it does matter. It doesn't mean that all children must read exactly the same books, but all children must end up having a whole bunch of words and concepts somewhere stored in the memory so that they do not have to, in reading every third sentence, look something up to find out who's Adam and who's Eve and where is the Mississippi and what's meant by being tempted by an apple or serpent -- all sorts of things which a writer expects you to know.

So here's a case in which the educational issues were missed by both sides. And we end up with a case which is resolved strictly on the basis of whether parents who hold sincere religious convictions have a right to object to certain materials and shield their children. The court essentially said that the school was compelling you to read this material but it wasn't forcing you to believe it. Therefore, it was not interfering with the religious faith,

and it gets resolved as a church-state issue. But the entire issue of the appropriateness of materials from an educational point of view is left to the educators, if they will grab it.

A case in Alabama was very interesting. It involved two issues, an analysis of all the textbooks used in the state of Alabama. That was a lot of textbooks. Here, Judge Hand actually prohibited the use of all the social studies textbooks in the state on the basis that he said they were all fostering a particular religion. That religion, he said, was secular humanism.

Now, he arrived at that essentially by showing that religion was missing from these books. In that he was right. Religion was missing from the books. He said: Well, if religion is missing from these books, these books must have been written by or influenced by people who are anti-religious. And to be anti-religious is a religion. In other words, he did not in his philosophy acknowledge that there could be people who were areligious or secular without being opposed. He said basically there are two kinds of religions: those that believe in God and those that are opposed to a belief in God. So he got one religion or another, and since the Constitution says that you can't support religion, why

are they supporting this one which is anti-religious? If they're supporting that one, they ought to be supporting the others equally. That was his view.

Second, he reviewed what are now called home economics textbooks. Now, when I went to school, home economics was cooking, but these days home economics deals with some sex education, group guidance and things of that sort. And here he found some rather interesting sections in books, and I will read to you a few of the statements that he found in these books.

On the question of using drugs: "Making a choice about drug use should reflect the values that are important to you" -- meaning the student. "Will your choice bring you satisfaction and growth? Will it help you become the best person you can be?" End of that one.

Next one. This one deals with sex. "Most parents and teachers encourage teenagers to abstain from intercourse. Not having intercourse does not mean that there is no sexual behavior at all. Most teenagers who do not have intercourse still have some form of sex play. They enjoy kissing and stroking each other's bodies."

Third: This is on being too straight. "Too strict

a conscience may make you afraid to try new ventures and meet new people. It may make you feel different and unpopular. None of these feelings belong to a healthy personality."

On the use of alcohol: "You need to form your own attitudes about alcohol. Your attitudes may differ from those of your friends. But the important thing is that you must make your own decision."

On morality: "Morals are rules made by people."

On abortion: "As a result of the 1973 Supreme Court ruling, abortions are legal. This ruling changed the question of abortion from a legal one to a medical one."

So what you have here are textbooks which clearly undermine the values of many of the parents. As a matter of fact, the philosophy embodied in these home economic books is essentially: Don't listen to your church precepts, don't listen to your mother or father; you have to make up your mind, do what it is that will make you feel good.

Now, of course, there are sections of the textbook that talk about feeling good in the short run and in the long run, things of that sort. But, nevertheless, this constitutes a set of pressures to move away from all types of community, family, religious restraints. As a matter of fact, the one

that says, "None of these feelings belong to a healthy personality," essentially tells you to abandon all the elements of conscience and obligations that give you the connections to these other institutions in the world. Do your own thing. It's a kind of whatever is in your own head, that's what counts.

Now, the courts on these issues made what I would view as a very wise decision. They threw Judge Hand's decision out. The courts essentially said: You have proven that these are really rotten books. But the Constitution has nothing to say about whether book shall be good or bad or rotten. That's an issue that you decide politically. There's nothing unconstitutional about a lousy book. And so you can't throw them out.

Now, it seems, however, that this case, I think, is extremely important from this point of view. Religion-school issues tend to be polarized around: one, "liberals," in quotes, who feel that there is a big right-wing religious conspiracy out there ready to take over the schools; and people on the religious right who feel that the schools are out to destroy religion and values. And people tend to move, sympathize with or line up with one side or the other.

Here, clearly, we have a case where the schools, these textbooks, used materials that were blind to the existence of religion -- and there is no question that if you have history books that ignore religion that, in a sense, you're sending a message to kids that it's not important, it doesn't exist -- and that were teaching values which undermined the religious values of the parents, did not indicate that religion was central in the lives of many of the great figures in our history and the history of other nations.

Now, this is one where it seems to me that school people need to show a sensitivity. They are not going to be able to accommodate to those who are all the way over on the religious right and who want direct religious teachings in the schools. However, if they fail to look at these textbooks and get rid of the junk and put textbooks in which have a sensitivity, proper sensitivity to the religious convictions and views of the parents and the students, they will unwittingly drive millions of people into the arms of those who are way out in right field. And that is what has been happening in this country in recent years -- in other fields as well, as I will get to them soon.

But the key issue here is that in the textbook

issue, there is a good deal of room for meeting the objection of most who hold strong religious convictions, not of all.

I'd like to move to the question of evolution and creationism. Here, too, we had a case this year; it came from Louisiana. Here, too, the textbook issue is a very important one. There are very few science textbooks available in the United States of America that take a strong position on evolution as the accepted scientific theory, because they want these books to be used all across the country. Objections are raised wherever a book state this, and, therefore, most of the science books talk about evolution being a theory. And they also have something which says "And some people believe," and then they will have a few lines about creationism.

That would be about the equivalent of a medical textbook telling the medical student what are the various ways of dealing with a certain disease, and then having a little footnote saying, "But some people believe that this disease is best handled by leeches or the following incantation."

Now, in science we have a very powerful tool. Science does not encompass the entire realm of human value.

There are truths that are beyond science. Most of the things that matter most to us are not within the realm of science. So those who believe that somehow if you say that there are other views of the nature of the world, but they're not scientific, that you're somehow saying that they're not valuable or not so. And the schools need to do something about that.

On the question of introducing creationism, I think what we need to do is take a look at what the Soviet Union did to genetics during the time of Stalin. There was a geneticist whose name was Lisenko, and he has a theory which was more in accord with the religion of Communism. That is, his theory was that acquired characteristics could be inherited, so that your environment could affect your genes and you could pass on these environmental factors.

The issue was settled in the Soviet Union when Stalin sent a personal letter to the annual convention of geneticists in which he said that Lisenko's theory was true. Six major world geneticists immediately stood up and recanted their previous views; others were deposed; and the entire agricultural system of the Soviet Union was then based on seeds that were developed in accordance with Lisenko's

theory, which brought about a large scale famine in the next couple of years.

Now, that's the kind of thing you get when outside forces interfere in science, whether those forces be of the Soviet type of religion or any other type. Science has its own ways and its own rules of organizing and developing knowledge, and here there is no room for compromise. It does not mean that creationism should not be dealt with in courses on religion, on history, on literature, or on human values. There are many different ways of seeing the world and seeing it through a physics textbook or a chemistry textbook. They are all valid from the point of view of human experience, but they aren't science. It doesn't make them less valuable.

That leads to the whole question of values. About a year ago, the New York Times ran a very interesting story. A student in the school had found a wallet or a purse -- I don't remember which. There was a lot of money in that wallet or purse, and the student went to the principal's office, turned it in, and someone did appear saying that he or she had lost a wallet with a substantial sum of money, and it was returned.

The Times reporter then said that there was so much

money -- I don't know, hundreds of dollars -- and this student returned it. That was considered to be a very unusual thing to happen. So every single teacher in the school used this as an occasion to have a discussion with the class. And the interesting thing was that the students, some of them, said, "I would never give it back. That's stupid. I would keep it." Other said, "I would give it back. It's right." And there were discussions.

But the terrible thing about the story was that the reporter reported that even though the teachers had sponsored these discussions, that not one single teacher in the school expressed an opinion to the youngsters as to whether this was right or wrong to return the wallet. So here, again, we come back to the philosophy that we saw in these textbooks; namely, the teacher, by not expressing an opinion, by not saying "How would you feel if you had worked hard, if someone in your family depended on this," to do whatever, whether to cite authorities or to reach into the psyche of that person. But by remaining silent on the issue, clearly conveyed the impression that what's right or wrong is a matter of what each and every one of you think within this class, a reinforcement of exactly that.

We have had in the last 20 years a movement which does exactly that. It's called values clarification. Most sophisticated writers know what they're doing and basically want to develop moral thinking and commitment on the part of children, but not in the packages that have been sold to the schools. Here we have little children being asked questions like this: Johnny last week fell down from a tree. When he came home, his parents were very angry. They made him promise that he would never climb a tree again. But today Johnny is walking down the street and sees a poor little kitten up on a branch of this tree. The kitten is probably going to fall. Should he climb up and get the kitten even though he promised his parents he wouldn't? If he does, should he tell his parents if they ask him whether he has climbed a tree?

Or a second example. Mary's grandmother is very sick. She needs pills. She has run out of pills. Mary goes downtown to the pharmacy. It is Sunday afternoon. The pharmacy is closed. Should Mary break the window?

Yes. So we have, in addition to those home economics textbooks, in addition to the story in the New York Times, we actually have a packaged and fairly widely used

curriculum which, while it is designed in the long run to develop moral thinking in children, in the short run implants in children the question of, and says the teacher thinks it might be right for you to break your word to your parents, to lie to them, to break a window of a pharmacy. Because, essentially, what values clarification does is to present little children with moral dilemmas, and that's what these are. Do you allow your grandmother to suffer in pain? Do you allow the kitten perhaps to die?

Most of life's actions are not moral dilemmas. That's why moral dilemmas are so interesting, because they don't occur every day. And to make an entire course not on the values that can guide you on a regular basis and which, if built into your character and personality, will enable you to live a good and honorable and moral and decent life without thinking about these things because you'll do them automatically, it takes eight typical cases, thereby putting all of these moral values into question and at a very early age, when the children are not yet ready to distinguish between what is settled and what is, indeed, a dilemma type of situation tends to undermine their values.

Similarly, on the whole issue of teaching about

democracy, the American Federation of Teachers did a survey of schools and materials used in schools, and we have found that the materials used in recent years tend to be very defensive about democracy as a political system. Ours is only one of many political systems, these books say, or many of the lesson plans. Other people have other points of view. We only think democracy is best because it's our system. If we grew up elsewhere, we would think theirs is best.

The textbooks don't seem to tell you about all the boatloads of people that would be on their way here and, indeed, those who get in, even though we've got rules about it. That's all missing because that would be viewed as ethnocentrism, which is a great sin. It would show that somehow we are biased in our own behalf, and, therefore, we have to lean over to show that everything is equal.

I'll give you an example of a question recently asked on a national standardized examination. It was given in 1981-'82 to students age 9, 13, and 17. Here is the question. It says: Maria and Ming are friends. Ming's parents were born in China and have lived in the United States for 20 years. "People have no freedom in China," Maria insists. "There is only one party in the election, and

the newspapers are run by the government."

"People in China do have freedom," Ming insists. "No one goes hungry. Everyone has an opportunity to work, and medical care is free. Can there be any greater freedom than that?"

So that's the paragraph. Now, here are your choices. What is the best conclusion to draw from this debate? A, Ming does not understand the meaning of freedom. B, Maria and Ming differ in their opinions of the meaning of freedom. C, there is freedom in the U.S. but not in China. And, D, people have greater freedom in China than in the U.S.

The correct answer, according to the test makers, is that Ming and Maria differ in their opinions of freedom.

Now, this is the kind of thing which comes out of textbook which says that in the United States we have the freedom to vote for our rulers, but in other countries they have the freedom to have a free vacation. That is, the freedoms described in terms of security are the same freedoms that one has in a prison. No distinction is made.

Now, the question here, a key question -- and here it seems to me is another area in which those who have taken up the religious banner have very substantial and valid

criticisms: that there has been an undermining of values and the schools have perpetrated an extreme relativism. And there is no reason, however, to say that the only way to get away from such an extreme relativism is to introduce particularistic religious instruction in schools. There is no reason why we cannot teach and, indeed, should and must teach about democracy and teach about the values of honesty and integrity, respect for law and authority, the notions of individual responsibility, respect for parents and family, the notions that one goes beyond what is pleasurable for oneself now and deals with the importance of sometimes subordinating oneself to higher goals, in charity, in service, in patriotism, and in many other ways.

As a matter of fact, one of the country's most distinguished sociologists claims that one of the major reason for academic failure in our schools is not either that the curriculum is poor or that the children are stupid, but that we fail at a very early age to develop something very simple; that is, the notion that you may have to do something unpleasant now in order to live a better life later; that is, that one does not live for the moment and on the basis of instant pleasures, but that one may have to delay gratifica-

tion. And if children don't start with that as an important concept, then they're not willing to make the effort in what in the early stages is sometimes rather boring, tedious, and extremely difficult.

Now, all of these values can be transmitted without religious, specific religious instruction. It can be done through a study of our history, through great figures in our history, through an analysis of what our holidays stand for, and almost any great work in literature. There will be evil characters and evil actions, and there will be good ones. And they appeal very directly to the emotions, and, by the way, this does not preclude the use of Biblical stories and religious stories treated as part of the world's culture and literature and with respect in terms of the moral significance of those issues. The schools miss out when they abandon this.

For those of you who want, we have developed a statement on the teaching of democracy, done with a wide -- by the way, it's rather interesting what we had to do in order to do this. The first thing we did was we said it would be good to put out. I said we can't put it out because it's going to seem like teachers are trying to indoctrinate their children. Somebody is going to say teaching democracy

is flag-waving and jingoism, and this is some sort of a right-wing group.

So the first thing we had to do is develop a statement and circulate it, and you'll see in front here are three pages of people going from the left to the right and everybody in the middle. And what we did was, before we could get out a statement about teaching democracy and how to do it, we had to protect ourselves by getting a list of signers -- it's quite an amazing list. I don't think you've ever seen any statement signed by the people representing this sort of a spectrum -- in order to be able to do it. But that is the sensitivity that exists now on these questions.

But the fact that the statement is out, and a rather large, thick book telling you how to accomplish it within the schools, with the support of this group, is an indication that in this country we can achieve, without the imposition of religion, a very broad, moral consensus all the way from people who are pretty far out right to people who are pretty far left, and a lot of people in between on what could be done.

Now, why haven't these things been done before? Part of it, as I indicated, is fear of controversy. If you

stay away from it, nobody can blame you. Well, we've seen if you stay away from it, they can blame you. Because when you stay away from it, your silence speaks loudly. And that is what many in the religious community are saying, and they are right. And liberal folk who just say keep those religious folks away from the school and don't listen to them are not listening carefully because there are extremely valid points being made by those from a religious point of view. We will not in our society be able to go as far as they want us to go, but they're saying some things that are extremely important. And they're pointing out things that are quite perverse in our current education. And it's our responsibility to straighten them out.

But more than the fear of controversy is something else, and that is the cult of objectivity which is so strong in our schools. What do our kids learn? They learn when something happens and who did it and what happened, but we very rarely deal with issues of why. We very rarely deal with issues -- everything is: Is this true or is this false? There are very few discussions where we involve students in something where the question is still open.

We have answers which are a mystery to kids because

we never expose the way we as adults grope and stumble, and that the process of learning isn't just one of picking some magical answer out of the air.

We have competency tests all over the country for students, and there's only one state that has a test where a student has to write an essay. Why? Because you can't measure the essay as objectively as you can true-false or fill in the squares. In that state, there is a tremendous amount of opposition on just this basis, and there are fears that if a student fails the essay examination, lawyers will be hired to go into court to say: How do you know that this was bad? The state of Maryland is the only state in the country that now requires an essay for high school graduation.

The notion is coverage, factual. We have reading tests that measure little bits of stuff, words. You can graduate from the schools now without reading a decent book, without reading a decent poem. And it doesn't work, because it's boring, it's uninteresting, it doesn't provide you with the cultural background that's necessary. It's a flat education. And what's missing and what would go a long way to satisfying many of the objections from the religious -- not all of them -- is something which is not merely based on

facts and numbers, but something which deals with the life of mind and of value and of creativity.

There are several thinkers in this field who have raised this issue. They say if you look at the top of the graduating class when you went to high school and see who got the best markets, the kid you thought was the genius, if you look at where that kid is now, that kid probably did not meet the expectations that you and the class had for him or for her. Why? Because the school only measures one thing. That's test-taking on a very narrow band of factual types of things.

What's missing? Well, what's missing is discovery, creativity, the ability to see new patterns in old things. A scientist who is raising bacteria so he can find a cure, and one day gets to the petri dish and sees that the bacteria have been ruined by some mold. And he decides to throw it out and says, Isn't that horrible? This mold has destroyed my bacteria. And for years, scientists were throwing them out until one of them says: My God, something that can destroy bacteria. That's what I've been looking for.

I remember a seventh grade class which was the first time I had a shop class. And it was a wood shop. The

teacher gave a wonderful lecture, and it was on trees and how you count the age and what the leaves do and what the roots do and how in a drought the roots will spread out and sometimes reach out to a pipe and wrap themselves around a pipe and break it and get the water. And I was so excited, I raised my hand and I asked: How does the tree know which direction the pipe is in and if there's water in the pipe?

And he was standing there with this piece of wood which he had been illustrating the grains and so forth, and he took the piece of wood and just flung it across the room and hit me in the head -- very hard -- and said, "That's what you get for being a wise guy."

Now, questions of why, questions of value, questions of imagination, are discouraged, and that's why often in the autobiographies of people who were later great you find that they were kicked out of school or they had trouble or they had low grades or poor grades. Because these are the people who had some imagination and creativity which the school tried to destroy, and these great people found ways of preventing that.

Now, the important thing, it seems to me, for both religion and for education is to get away from the cult of

objectivity in the teaching of literature and in history and in art and in dealing with worlds of imagination. There needs to be as part of the school curriculum an ability to attend to mysteries, an ability to confess ignorance, the development of the notion that people throughout life, we go through life with partial understandings. That sort of an attitude would go a long way toward relieving what religion sees as an assault by the measurable and the scientific against things which are not scientific and not measurable, but of great value.

I will spend just a minute touching on tax credits and vouchers. This is an issue which is not going to be solved on the basis of religious arguments, but the Supreme Court in a case in Minnesota seven years ago -- sorry, five years ago -- has found a way of sending money to religious schools. It is a fiction, but, nevertheless, it's there. And given the direction of the court, it's likely to be more supported in the future rather than less supported.

Minnesota said: We will give a certain amount of tax money for tuition or school expenses to any child, whether they go to public school or private school or parochial school. Well, isn't that interesting? Because the

public school kid doesn't pay tuition and doesn't pay for the textbooks and doesn't pay for transportation, but yet he's entitled to the same amount of money. But he can only get that money if the school charges for those services, and by law the public school can't charge for the services. So the public school does not get any of the money. The private school child does get the money, and that's what's been happening. And the court by 5 to 4 ruled that it was constitutional. Since then, the state of Iowa has also passed such a scheme.

So we are now in a world where the Supreme Court has found a way to channel public moneys to students going to non-public schools. The amounts of those moneys in those states are so far small, but as predicted, the initial amount in Minnesota was immediately found to be too small. And there is now the annual debate at the state legislature as to why shouldn't the amount given to kids in non-public schools be equal. First the foot is in the door to get some money, and now the fight is over equality.

So the issue over public support for private schools, that door is now open. Forty percent of the American people believe that it should happen and 40 percent

believe it should not. But the question of whether we move to a system of publicly funded private schools is largely going to depend not on the religious arguments, but it's largely going to depend on whether public schools are able to restore the confidence of the public in their central mission.

One night on the Larry King Show, a mother called, clearly a black woman, who called and said: Look, Mr. Shanker, I agree with you. I believe in public schools. I know what the public schools have done for this country. I want kids of all kinds to be able to mix. I sent my boy to a public school. He's a very bright boy. He did his homework every day. And you know what happened to him? Every day on his way home from school he was beaten up by the other kids in the class because he was doing his homework. He was the only one doing it, and, therefore, they felt that he was making it difficult for them.

And I knew what was about to happen. He was not going to do his homework because he was not about to be beaten up every day. She said: Now, I don't believe in private schools, but -- and then she recited a whole bunch of sacrifices that she had personally made to rescue her child and put him into a parochial school in the neighborhood.

What could I say to that parent? Could I say no, for the sake of public education in America you should sacrifice your child? No, I couldn't say that. And I didn't say it.

So the issue, there is no question what's at stake here is something that is very, very big. Public schools in this country do more than teach you mathematics or English or social studies. Public schools are a basis of Americanizing. We don't like to use that term any more, but essentially, in spite of the fact that they're imperfect and that rich folks live in some parts of town and poor folks in others, and that there tends to be segregation -- the fact that it's imperfect doesn't mean that it doesn't exist at all. We have survived as a nation, miraculously. Every other nation that has many different religions and nationalities, they end up killing each other.

The existence of public education and the creation of that mix is extremely important. If public schools are abandoned, they will be abandoned because people want a better education. But in getting a better education, they will move to Jewish schools and Protestant schools and Catholic schools and the Ku Klux Klan schools and Farrakhan

schools and things all over the lot. And the consequences may very well be that kids will learn just as much English or just as little English, math, social studies and everything else. But the main thing they'll be learning is to be with their own kind. They'll be getting something for which there will be some rather great social consequences to pay in the future.

So, finally, I would say that having touched on these various issues, I would say that the great need of the moment is not to import the religious into the schools, which would be unconstitutional, but that the religious in our society have performed a very important function, to alert us to a lack of sensitivity in the moral and value domain -- which we should do not for them, but because that's what's right for education.

[Applause.]

MR. : Thank you very much, Mr. Shanker.

We are now going to have someone respond to Mr. Shanker. But before that, we'd like to recognize some people who have worked very hard for the University Forum, and particularly we want to recognize Ann Webber, who is the chairman of the University Forum.

Ann, will you please stand?

[Applause.]

MR. : We also wish that the other members of the University Forum also stand. Will you all please stand?

[Applause.]

MR. : We're very lucky today because we have a very good pinch-hitter for Richard Neuhaus. Richard Neuhaus was supposed to respond to this talk, but -- is he here yet? Is Richard Neuhaus here yet?

He hasn't arrived yet. Of course, he hasn't heard the talk. Instead, Ralph McMillan, one of our panelists for tomorrow, has agreed to respond. We are very fortunate that he has done so, and we're very lucky that he's willing to pinch-hit at a moment's notice.

Ralph McMillan came from Charlotte and went to Catholic high school here in Charlotte, went to Wofford College in South Carolina, got his J.D. from University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He's a lawyer in town, a former city councilman. He's a columnist for the Charlotte Observer. He has published in the Wall Street Journal, and we're very happy to have him respond to Mr. Shanker's talk.

[Applause.]

MR. McMILLAN: Thank you very much. I lost my religion about two minutes ago because I came here to enjoy a dinner and just sit back and relax. I prayed to God that Reverend Neuhaus would get here in time, but he didn't.

[Laughter.]

MR. McMILLAN: So I'm here to fill in for him.

I think this is a very sensitive issue that we deal with, and I want to give you a little bit of my background because I think this is very important about this. I was raised Catholic here in the South. I went to the first through the twelfth grade. After that, I went to a Methodist private college. I did not get enamored with John Wesley, the reason to go to the school, but I wanted to play basketball. And so Wofford was the only place that offered me a chance to play down there. I'm very glad I went there; it's an excellent school.

One of the requirements to graduate from Wofford was that I had to take six hours of religion, so I took the Old Testament and a course on what they call New Religion that talked about trends in religion. But that was required to graduate.

After that, I stayed out of school for a couple years and then went to the godless, humanistic grounds of UNC, Chapel Hill, to graduate there, and ended up where I am today. But I think it's important to tell you about this because, even though Dr. Shanker has not done this, I think it's been a very thoughtful presentation about religion and how it fits into the schools, and to show you that I think this is a very sensitive subject and it's a very complicated subject. It's a very complicated subject that has a lot of nuances to it.

Being Catholic, I think that we are sensitive to this notion of how much religion we want to put in the schools. In fact, when I was running for city council, I had a woman call me -- and I was really surprised that this would happen in 1980 -- who said, "I understand, Mr. McMillan, that you're Catholic, and I don't think I can vote for you on city council." And being the good politician I was, frantic not to lose one vote, I raced through my mind and said, "Well, did you think John F. Kennedy was a good president?" This woman happened to be a good Democrat, and she said, "Yes, he was." And I said, "Well, he was Catholic, too." And I got the vote.

I bring this up to show that this is a sensitive issue, and I think that what we have done -- Dr. Shanker has not done this -- is we have somewhat trivialized this issue in that we have talked about prayer in schools, that's a buzz word, and then we talk about evolution, and that's another buzz word. And we talk about religious right, and that's another buzz word. And we get these pictures of people who are out to just overturn the system, disrupt it, and I don't think that's necessarily the case.

I think, as Dr. Shanker said, what we're trying to do is to establish in here what type of values are we going to transmit to our students. What type of values. When you talk about evolution, I think that's a classic example to begin this discussion. The issue is not whether or not evolution is, in effect, a scientific theory which can be proven. What is at issue is what is the nature of a human being. A human being, does it have a fixed human nature that never changes, it's always been that way, and started from a prime mover? That's the battle. That is the real battle, and that has significant effects on how you view the world, how you view how this whole world got started.

So when we talk about in terms of science versus

religion, that's not true. This is a philosophical question which has been going on for many, many years, and that's why people are upset about it. If you have told your children that you are a child of God, that you are special and someone has created you, and that you have certain values which have been in existence from time immemorial, and you then go to school and are told, this ain't the way it is any more, that things evolve, things shift, things change, that is a significant, philosophical change in the way you have been taught. It can be.

Now, I'm not saying that everyone who teaches evolution says that type of thing. But you can imply from that certain assumptions which I think this is what upsets people. So we have to ask ourselves how are we going to deal with that, and that's a philosophical question.

The other point I would like to bring up, and I think this is a big misconception about prayer in schools. And I think Dr. Shanker alluded to it. Even the ogre of the right, Jesse Helms, if you look at his prayer bill, it is a voluntary school prayer bill which says that these school boards will not write the prayers, which is what happened in 1962. So what even Senator Helms wants to go back to is not

what we had in 1962 -- which, by the way, in 1962, you had a Jewish minister, an Episcopalian minister, and, I forget, there was a main line Protestant and a Catholic minister who wrote a prayer which basically went: Our heavenly Father and God, we acknowledge our dependence on you. God bless my mother, my teacher and this country. And that's what we were fighting over.

But the point is, even Jesse Helms does not want to go back to the system we had in 1962. And, frankly, I don't see any problem if we have a system in our public schools where people can voluntarily get together and say: We want to pray. That to me is an extension of your right of free speech, it's a right of association. I don't think it ought to be compulsory. As I said, I don't think hardly anybody who "on the religious right," whoever they are, believes in that. So I think that that's a bogus issue as far as I'm concerned.

Thirdly, I think Dr. Shanker's on to something. I like the fact that he's not comfortable with the idea of relativism. I think that's good, and he says we've got to inculcate these values and we got to use great literature to do it and we got to do a lot of other things. Well, I

recommend a book to you, which is a very short book, very thought-provoking book called "The Abolition of Man" by C. S. Lewis, in which he advocates in that book exactly what Dr. Shanker is talking about, which is what I would call a natural law position.

But the trouble I see with formulating these values using religion -- I mean religion as a teaching tool but not as a valid, absolutely true thing, or if you use literature as a means of showing examples of heroism or other types of things, you're going to run into the problem of shrinking the underpinnings of these moral values that we have.

For example, why should you be honest? We all forget now. There's a few sophomores here in college who debate these kind of issue. Why should you be honest? I don't care if William Shakespeare says you ought to be honest; I don't care if J.D. Salinger says you ought to be honest. At the ending of Franny and Zooey, he says you've got to love the fat lady. That's a very beautiful ending, but you've got to ask yourself: Why is that valid?

And I say to you that religion provides us a theory of absolute value, of absolute value so that this is right in and of itself; and something that ought to be adhered to for

its own sake. For its own sake. And I think for that reason we run the danger of saying you can form this public discourse and these public values of cutting off all values from the roots. When I say the roots here, I am not talking about a sectarian point of view, whether it's Protestant or Catholic, but I am talking about in its most noblest form, the Judeo-Christian ethic.

I think one of the best examples I can use of this is when Martin Luther King said that we want every child of God to be free, every child of God to be free. He is invoking a profound religious sentiment which says that every person has absolute value because God gave it to him. And that's a non-negotiable proposition. From that, we have the notion of individual rights. That is what the Bill of Rights is about. That is what the Magna Carta is about. That's what the Constitution's about.

And that is expansive. That is a powerful idea. Martin Luther King is the best example I can give of in contemporary times who infused the public discourse with religion and in the most noble way I can think of.

Last, let's talk about the notion of choice, the talk about vouchers and tuition tax credits. I think that

everybody in this room would say that we're in favor of public financing of education. I certainly am, and I think the voucher system falls under that. But I think, as Dr. Shanker said, what is wrong in this country is that we have lost confidence in the public schools. And I think that the position of people on the right is correct; the best way to instill confidence is to have competition. And I think that what you ought to do is you ought to have to compete for the student.

We do it in everything else. I think if you tell people you're going to compete, they've got to get better. Right now the trouble with the public schools is they're not competing on the same basis with other schools.

I also don't think that you're going to end up with Ku Klux Klan schools, that you're going to end up with Catholic schools, that you're going to end up with Protestant schools. I don't think Americans are going to do that. I think that they will mix, and I think that people just don't want the type of society where you're segregated regardless of your beliefs.

I think the last thing is you can't have it both ways. If you talk about freedom, if you talk about having

the right to choose, why can't you have the right to choose where you send your kid to school? We're going to let the government pay for it, but why can't you choose where you want to send your kid to school? On the other hand, you say we want to be free, but we don't want you to let you say where your kids go to school. So I think that issue to me makes a lot of sense. If you want maximum diversity in a system where you can choose what you're going to do, let people choose where they want to go.

But I do think the pendulum is going back, and I congratulate Dr. Shanker. I am going to end on this point. I think that it is crucial in this country that we have had an American experience which is based on shared common values. Those values have changed from time to time, and I think that's good. But I think what we have to realize, and I think to me the most important thing and the most noble thing about this country is that we have formulated those views on what I call a Judeo-Christian point of view, which is broad, it makes everybody, I think, liberal in the sense that you understand that everybody is a child of God. And that's what this country was formed about. You have a right to be free but still respect the other person.

So I would like to say that I think this forum tonight is a great chance not to trivialize, not to characterize, but to talk, as we have, I think, in a very thoughtful way about these thorny problems.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

MR. : Would you like to respond, Mr. Shanker?

MR. SHANKER: Just on two points. One is that religion, unfortunately, does not provide one with an absolute basis for values. Martin Luther King did powerfully use the notion of all God's children as a basis for advancing equality. But at the same time that he was using absolute religion to advance equality, there were other religionists who were saying that if God wanted to make us all equal, he would have made us all the same. That is, they took the same absolute values from the same absolute religion to justify racism and segregation.

So in theory, religion gives you an absolute underpinning except that people on both sides in each war can be in the same religion and know that God is on their side. And that's happened throughout many wars. So it's not as

absolute an underpinning as we would think.

Secondly, on the point of the need for competition to improve public schools. First of all, competition does not always improve an institution. Sometimes it puts it out of business. And so you have to be willing to risk that in competition. Secondly, competition will only serve as a positive spur if it is fair competition.

What do I mean by that? Well, a private school can accept any student it wants. It can throw out any student it wants. It does not have to obey any of the laws of the country with respect to pupil mix, handicapped students, due process rights for students, labor relations for teachers -- a hundred different things. So on one side of the street, you've got a school that has to obey all these laws because our lawmakers have said they are good for our country. On the other side, we're going to say to people, well, now, we're passing laws to say that the public school has to do all these things because it's good for our country. But if you don't like it, we're going to give you the money, you take your kid out of school, and put him in a school that doesn't obey any of these laws, because that's the nature of private schools.

The most difficult kids I had when I was teaching in public school were the kids who were kicked out of Catholic school. In those days, they used to hit them. Their parents hit them; the nuns hit them; and the ones who wouldn't obey anyway, then they sent them over to me. I couldn't kick them out.

Now, as to whether these schools would be separate and religiously oriented, that answer is here already. Ninety-five percent of all the private schools in this country are religious. And a handful of them are schools for wealthy people, and there are a few for handicapped kids and so forth. But that essentially is the pattern that we have.

Now, it may very well be that if you want to accept vouchers and tax credits you would say that, if you are going to take the public money, you're going to follow the laws. That is, that by taking the money, you know that you're going to get government control. As a Republican politician, you know that with that money comes the control.

So whatever you have now in these religious schools that are able to run their own business, the minute that you start getting the federal money you're going to have to -- over a period of time, you'll no longer be an independent

school.

A system of vouchers and tuition tax credits would not only destroy public education; it would destroy the values in private education.

[Applause.]

MR. McMILLAN: It's good we have a little disagreement. I see some of you all falling asleep.

Dr. Shanker, down here in the South, it worked the other way. The kids got kicked out of public school and ended up at Catholic school down here. They did. They did, but the point is, I still think that you ought to have the right to choose where you send your kids to school. And I think you're trying to mix apples and oranges.

I think you can devise a system if you've committed yourself to the idea that you're going to have a choice. You can make the rules the same for everybody. I'm not advocating that you make the rules different for one than the other. But I still say that what you can do is have a system that allows people to have the same choice. And I think that you will have a system that's better because it will be diverse.

Actually, what I hear, people who don't advocate a credit say they want to have it both ways. They want to say

we don't want to impose anybody's rules on you, but then on the other hand you want to impose a rule of where you send somebody to school.

But I do agree with you with the big problem. This would go away if we had more confidence in the public schools throughout this nation, which we don't. That's the real problem. I think we can agree on that.

MR. : We'll give Mr. Shanker the last word if he wants it.

[No response.]

MR. : Okay. Now, we have some questions from the audience. Direct them to Mr. Shanker or Mr. McMillan -- mainly to Mr. Shanker because he is the main speaker tonight.

Does anybody have any questions? Yes, Victor? Speak loudly, okay?

MR. : I'd like to know what he said to the lady on the Larry King Show who [inaudible].

MR. SHANKER: I said I agreed with what she did.

MR. : My next question is: Would you not perhaps be better off if [inaudible] had the opportunity to go to work rather than [inaudible]?

MR. SHANKER: Well, if you had a society where there was work for them, that would be a pretty open question. But you get a lot of kids now who do leave school, not at an earlier age but at a fairly early age, and very large numbers of them hang around without any prospect for employment for quite a long time. That's true not only in the United States but Great Britain as well.

I would suggest, though, that instead of giving up on these youngsters, that we ought to think of something. Essentially, our system of education works like this: Let's assume that there were a doctor and a patient came to him and he gave the patient some medicine for his ailment. Two days later, the patient returned and said, "Doctor, not only did your pills not help me, but I have all sorts of other problems from the pills. I've broken out and I'm shaking."

And the doctor looked at the patient and said, "You've got a heck of a lot of nerve not responding to the pill I gave you."

Now, doctors aren't like that. They say, "Well, I'm sorry. That's the pills most doctors would have given you, but it doesn't work on some people. Let's try something else."

That is, the notion is that each individual is different, that you try to use certain approaches; and if they don't work, you keep trying other approaches until you find one that works. Now, we don't do that in schools. We say that essentially schools are very good places for the 15 percent of the people who are able to sit still for five or six hours and listen to someone talk.

Now, there are a lot of people who can't sit still and listen to someone talk, especially at the age of 6, 7, 8. And we call them disruptive and stupid and all sorts of other things. Now, later on, a lot of these people in life turn out to make a lot of money, get very good jobs. They turn out good works of literature, of art, become very important businessmen. When you meet with them, you know they're very intelligent people. They know about the world. They've got good taste. They've got a good sense of humor. They couldn't tolerate school.

Now, we really ought to rethink what school is like as an institution. School can be organized differently. There are other things we do with kids. We knock the stuffing out of most kids. We destroy their desire to learn very early. I'll give you one of the techniques we use. We

call on kids, and we ask them questions. That's a technique. I always used that as a teacher. You'd give a lesson and then you'd say, "Mary, answer this." And some kids always have their hands raised.

It's wonderful. They would come Saturdays and Sundays. School is wonderful for them. But then there are kids who are sitting there engaged in an unconstitutional act. They're praying that they not be called on.

[Laughter.]

MR. SHANKER: But I have to call on them.

What happens when you call on somebody who doesn't have the answer in the morning and he doesn't have it in the afternoon and he doesn't have it the next morning and the next afternoon and so forth?

Well, basically, I'm publicly humiliating this kid in front of all his friends. And when kids are publicly humiliated, at first they may try hard to do it. But if they feel they can't, they say: This is not my game. And they stop trying.

Now, can you do something about that? Sure, you can. I learn to drive much better if I have a driving teacher whom I don't care about, rather than my wife or my

brother or my sister. I mean, we all know that if learning is relatively private, if you have your chance to make your mistakes without being humiliated or embarrassed in front of them, you will try longer and harder.

Can you organize a school that way? Yes, you can. Think of a Boy Scout troop. The scoutmaster does not stand in front of the 20 kids or 40 kids and call on them and try and find out who doesn't know something. A kid who's learning knots sits with a little book in this corner; another kid is learning bandages from another scout.

Little groups, small groups, peer instruction, books, models, games, community resources. And then when the kid learns something, then you let him display what he learned. In other words, instead of exposing failures, you let him demonstrate the strengths. The same as you would handle a kid on a ball team. Don't put him in a spot where he's going to make the team lose. Put him in the best possible spot.

Now, we don't do that. I mean, that's a separate lecture. But I'm not saying that when we're all finished that everyone will be equal, that there wouldn't be some who still wouldn't learn and everything else. But I can tell you

that right now we're essentially educating to some reasonable, modest level, very modest level, only about 15 percent of the kids in this country. Fifteen.

I think if we had a different system we could probably educate 65 or 70 or 80 percent. Then we'd still have to worry about what to do about the ones we don't reach, but we've gotten a lot of improvement before we start turning them out to work at an early age.

MR. : Yes, this gentleman.

MR. : A long time ago, I'd say 30 years or so, I felt [inaudible] would understand [inaudible] very small [inaudible]. There was also the same old recognition. [inaudible] any other teacher that taught.

Now, [inaudible] in his community today and use that [inaudible] improve in order to [inaudible] get the best teachers.

MR. : Mr. Shanker is going to answer this question, but we want future questions to be directed to the topic of the forum. But he's going to answer this specific question.

MR. SHANKER: For the most part, the issue of the standing of teachers within a community is largely based on

things -- to some extent it's based on money, but not completely. For instance, college professors in our society are fairly highly respected, even though classroom teachers may make more than many college professors in the country. So it's not money alone.

At one time teachers were part of -- let's go back to 1940. In 1940, teachers were part of the five percent of the people in the United States of America who had an education that was beyond high school. So teachers were part of an educated elite, and others looked up to them because you had many who were totally illiterate and many who had not even gone to elementary school.

Now that more and more people go to college and teachers in recent years have been drawn from the lower sections of ability of college graduates. Teachers are no longer part of an elite small group. They're part of a larger group. There are more and more people in their communities who have also gone to college and perhaps taken more difficult courses of instruction.

So if you want to improve the standing of teachers, we should go back to a society where only five percent of the people graduate college.

What I'm saying is that there has been a narrowing of the educational gap between teachers and the general public, and the basic way out of this is that the teachers really have to be experts in their area. And also they have to stop being bureaucratic functionaries who are just carrying out the orders of other people. And they have to take responsibility for their own profession. They have to do some of the things that people in other professions do. They have to take some responsibility for peer review for people who are not competent in their field. Teachers have to speak out selectively on the nature of the education and training they're getting, where you see teachers speaking out on the nature of these textbooks.

These are things where teachers could gain great respect in the community if they stood before the school board and said: We have analyzed this set of textbooks that you're about to buy, and they're terrible for the following reasons. Those people would say, Gee, these people know something about education, about the materials that they're using.

Now, teachers generally have not involved themselves in that way. This is part of what we're trying to do with

the National Board of Standards, which is essentially served by those people who will be able to do things like this. And we think that is essentially the creation of an incentive to get people to learn these things, to certify them on a national and objective basis for doing it, and then to get them to function this way in their communities and their school systems.

MR. : Two more questions. Dan?

MR. : You said the textbooks pretty much ignore religion. [inaudible].

MR. SHANKER: Are teachers afraid -- I don't think -- by and large teachers will not initiate a discussion on religion. However, if it were in the textbook, they would know it's okay. I think part of the reason is I think a teacher would be reluctant to stand there and introduce religion. On the other hand, if the teacher were asking questions about why is it right to be honest. Let's say you've just read a story and somebody stole something, and the teacher has raised -- if a student said: Well, one of the reasons is you wouldn't want it to happen to you. Another one is: My mother always told me I should be honest, and I should obey her. The third one says: Because God says

you should.

I mean, that's perfectly acceptable. Nobody rules that out. But textbooks play a very important part. Teacher education plays a very important part. But what you have is you have a system of defensive teaching. You get school boards that are worried about who's going to come down to the next meeting. You get a superintendent employed on a three-year contract. Right? The board meets every other week in public meeting, and any citizen can stand up and criticize the superintendent.

The superintendent has to get orders out to each principal. Now, he may not say it in exactly these words, but the message gets across. Look, I don't care if anything good is happening there, but don't let anything bad happen.

Then the principal kind of tells that to the teachers. And what they do is they put out a lot of rules and regulations; so if something bad does happen, the principal or the superintendent can say: Look, it's not my fault. I had rule No. 9,250. If they had followed that, that never would have happened.

What you get are a whole -- you see, you can never accomplish anything if all you're trying to do is stay out of

trouble.

Now, that has to do with the question of community support. People who don't like something that's happening come down and make noise, and they scare the living daylights out of very good people who spend a lot of time and get very little recognition or compensation or anything for their time on school boards. Then the whole thing gets transmitted down to the teacher, and you end up with defensive teaching and a whole series of mechanisms that are essentially mechanisms of control. They are not mechanisms of spontaneity. They are educationally destructive.

Now, how do we turn this around? It will take a good deal of, essentially in this society -- you know, one answer is it may very well be that you can't have schools run by school boards. That's one answer. That could be. It may be that you want to have a different system of governance. I think that would be pretty bad. It would take away a very important democratic institution in our society.

Another way is to educate the public so that you've got a big enough group of people there that wants to have people who take a certain number of risks in order to try to accomplish certain purposes and protect them. If you can have

that, then you can move forward.

MR. : We'll have one last question from this gentleman.

MR. : The Eastern world has certain standards, certain moralities [inaudible]. These are cultural differences [inaudible] religious differences. The Western world [inaudible].

Now, how do we separate [inaudible]?

MR. SHANKER: We don't. We should include them. And we do. We should do it more explicitly. I think we explicitly, in terms of our political system -- which certainly in great measure in terms of the worth of the individual, and exactly that statement by Martin Luther King. That's an essential point.

However, some of the values are common to Eastern and Western: the whole business of respect for parents, for country, loyalty, of certain issues that are issues of sacrifice, the value of charity, our patriotism. There are a whole bunch of these things that really cross all cultures. In every culture you have sort of a deviant or a crook or something else. If you don't...

Now, it doesn't mean that they don't come from

religion. They do. But the fact is that most people who are not religious also accept these values, and they justify them on other grounds. They may justify them on the basis of the fact that they're the very fabric of any sort of a decent society; that you have to count on other people's words; that you hope that somebody will help you when you're in trouble, and so you help them when they're in trouble; that you wouldn't want to suffer certain losses, therefore you won't inflict them on other people. So you can derive them from religion or you can derive them from your own human experience or from the experience of any group or any society.

There is great universality to these very common ones.

MR. : [inaudible] what we're talking about. [inaudible] would it not be better to [inaudible] cultural values in the world [inaudible].

MR. SHANKER: Well, that's all right when you get old enough, but essentially -- I mean, I would think that people ought to learn about our own history and about our own government and about our own religions and about our own values and everything else before we turn this into a global thing, because then -- first of all, there just isn't enough

time in the curriculum. Secondly, you get more than half the kids in this country which century World War II was fought in. They can't recognize the name of Roosevelt or Stalin.

We have great illiteracy in this field. To decide that when people don't even know their own heritage, their own background, their own history, their own religions, their own values, that we're going to go global is wrong. Because you have to have a perspective. You have to have a point of view. You stand somewhere. What you see is from the perspective that you're in, and you've got to start there.

If everything becomes just too objective and you're trying to give people the whole world before they know where they are, it doesn't work. There's no sense of understanding.

And so I think they ought to -- we need an education in value and in our own history and in our own literature, which is a rich one, which is -- I mean, it is impossible to read most of the great works of literature in our society without understanding Christianity and Judaism. It's impossible for most of them.

Now, that's not a way of teaching religion directly. But it's certainly a way of drawing on those feelings and those values. That can be very powerful.

Our organization, I first met Bill Bennett about 15 years ago, long before he became Secretary, because 15 years ago we felt that in answer to the values clarification that we ought to put out a series of lessons that teachers could give in courage, honesty, et cetera. And what we did was we put out four pages for each of these, using poetry, holidays, historic figures, Bible stories, myths, all sorts of things. And we had an advisory committee, and Bill Bennett was one of the members of the advisory committee. We used to meet four times a year to select those materials. They're still available. There are a lot of good things out there. Besides which, you just can't conduct a class with 20 to 30 kids without teaching them that you can't all talk at the same time because then no one could hear. You can't do this, you can't do that, you can do this.

I mean, just being together for that many hours with a bunch of people gives you not just rules and regulations, but why are these rules right and why are they wrong? What makes for being a good citizen or a good member of a group or a good participant? You can't bring a group of people like that to live for that period of time without those lessons being inherent within the group, as well as

within the materials that are given to them.

MR. : I could listen to Mr. Shanker all night, but some people think we should cut this off at this time. And some people have to go home.

We want to thank Mr. Shanker for his delightful talk.

[Applause.]

MR. : We also want to thank Ralph McMillan for pinch-hitting tonight.

[Applause.]

MR. : Tomorrow at 9:00 o'clock -- we have two sophisticated great speakers in this forum, not only one. Tomorrow we have our second one, Richard Neuhaus. I assume he'll arrive here by then. He is speaking at 9:00 o'clock. Also at 10:15, we're having four panelists. Here's one of the four, Ralph McMillan is one of the four. But we're having three other panelists. All four of them are attorneys, and Ed Williams is our moderator for that panel at 10:15 tomorrow.

We also have punch right now, punch and cookies and other things out there. Also, there's free parking. If you parked your car around here and they try to charge you on the

way out, tell them you went to the Forum. They shouldn't be charging you. I hope that works.

[Laughter.]

MR. : We thank you very much for coming tonight, and I'm sorry some more people didn't come because I think they missed a good time, a great time. I learned an awful lot.

[Applause.]

P R O C E E D I N G S

February 26, 1988

MR. FRETWELL: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the second session of the UNCC 23rd Annual Birthday Forum.

As some of you know, some of you who were here last night were reminded this is a birthday occasion. And what better way to celebrate the birthday of a university than to face up to some of the major issues facing our community and, indeed, the total society.

We have two exciting speakers, one of whom you heard last night. You will hear the second this morning. There will be an opportunity for discussion, and you will have an opportunity to get into the act as we move along.

It's my pleasure to introduce Professor Jeff Meyers, who will introduce our first speaker, and along the way you will learn a little bit more about the format of how we will proceed this morning.

Jeff?

PROFESSOR MEYERS: Thank you, Chancellor Fretwell.

I asked our main speaker today, Pastor Neuhaus, if he was properly to be addressed as Pastor Neuhaus, and he

said yes. I was certain that he would not care to be addressed as a TV evangelist.

I'm going to read to you a paragraph from a textbook used in the public schools.

"See, the sun is up. The sun gives us light. It makes the trees and the grass grow. The sun rises in the East and sets in the West. When the sun rises it is day. When the sun sets it is night. Do you know who made the sun? God made it."

Now, what I neglected to mention was this textbook, a McGuffey reader, was used in the public schools 150 years ago. I read it to dramatize how things have changed in our schools. Such overt religious references, once found throughout the readers, began to disappear in the late 19th century as religious pluralism became more of a factor in the United States. And since the early 20th century, when the McGuffey readers fell from favor, the changes have been even more remarkable. All mention of God was dropped from the textbooks. School prayer, as you well know, was banned. And, finally, for fear of offending anyone's religious or non-religious sensibilities, the textbook publishers have nearly eliminated any reference to religion from the pages of

their books, thus producing the sort of bland and boring textbooks that our speaker, Mr. Shanker, described so well last night.

Now, in the last decade a number of prophetic voices have been raised to question this situation and to protect the exclusion of religion and religious discourse from our schools, from our civic and our public life. Among the most eloquent and respected of these voices is that of our speaker today, Richard John Neuhaus, who has used a striking metaphor of the naked public square to describe this situation.

A Lutheran clergyman, Neuhaus was for 17 years pastor of a low-income, black and Hispanic parish in Brooklyn, New York, and has played a leading role in numerous organizations working for peace, civil rights, international justice and ecumenism. He has accepted presidential appointments in both the Carter and Reagan administrations and is currently the director of the Rockford Institute Center on Religion in Society in New York City.

A prolific writer, Neuhaus is a regular columnist for the National Review and has published numerous books, some five or six in the last two years alone. Among the best

known are "Freedom For Ministry," "The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America," and one just published which deals directly with today's topic, "Democracy and the Renewal of Public Education," which he edited.

Please join me now in welcoming Pastor Neuhaus.

[Applause.]

PASTOR NEUHAUS: Thank you, Professor Meyers. It's a great pleasure to be here at UNCC.

Now, as I understand it, we want to go until about 9:45, and then my dear friend, Al Shanker, will have occasion to say how thoroughly he agrees with everything I've said. Then we break and gather later for a panel discussion.

I want to talk about education and religion, but perhaps more generally about the role of religion in American public life. Because in an odd way, in a way that doesn't have any logical necessity to it but is marked by all kinds of historical contingencies over which people had little control -- and perhaps did not anticipate the consequences of their actions -- in an odd sort of way, the public school or the state school or the government school has become the cockpit, if you will, for the most contentious issues having to do with the role of religion in public life. Because

beginning in the 19th century with the notion of the common school associated with great names such as Horace Mann, there was a concentration, wisely or not, a concentration of American society in the public school classroom, in a manner that was quite unique. And we developed a mythology, I would say, that swirls around the image of the little red school-house, in which it was at least thought to be the case that here all Americans were gathered together to interact in an experience of democracy.

And this concentration of the diversity, of the maddening diversity of American life in the public school classroom made it quite natural that most of the controversial questions having to do with our differences would be focused, also legally, in the area of education.

It is not for nothing that for the 200 years of this republic there was almost no attention paid by the courts whatsoever to the religion clause of the First Amendment. It simply was not a question of high dispute. It has been basically in the last quarter of our experience as a republic, in the last 40 years particularly, that all kinds of questions that the society at large has to face were dumped upon the public school. It was here in the classroom

that especially the issues having to do with religion and religiously based morality were joined.

Now, my argument would be that this has essentially, over the last 40 years -- one thinks particularly of the Eberson decision in 1947 as a watershed point in this development. I would argue that this development has, all in all, been an unhappy one. It has been controlled by some fundamentally wrong-headed assumptions, it seems to me, about the role of religion and religiously based morality in American life. And we're not going to get out of the problems that we have embroiled ourselves in, problems that have been reinforced by rather than resolved by court decision after court decision. We're not going to get out of it for a very long time. And I would argue we're not going to get out of it until we begin to rethink what is the role of religion in American public life, and particularly what did the experiment launched by the constitutional framers envision for the role of religion in American public life.

And so much of what I want to say this morning is going to focus on the First Amendment, and particularly on the religion clause of the First Amendment, and how it should be understood also in the area of education.

You recall in the First Amendment, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." I say with a measure of hope that you recall that. Because, in fact, in a recent survey that an organization I'm affiliated with did, confirming many other surveys, less than ten percent of the American people are aware of the religion clause in the First Amendment. Less than 30 percent of university professors in the social sciences and humanities are aware that the First Amendment even mentions religion.

When people are asked, "What is the First Amendment about?" they'll say free speech, free press, right to assembly, et cetera -- all of which is true, of course. But the first liberty -- the first liberty -- both in terms of sequence and, I would argue, in terms of logic in the First Amendment is the free exercise of religion.

That is not an argument I can make here, but I would like to just for the record say it is an argument to be solemnly entertained. That is, that all liberties and all human rights finally depend upon religious freedom. That is the acknowledgment of each human being as an agent in relationship to the ultimate, the transcendent God, which

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rises above every other legal stipulation and constriction. And without that firmly in place, all other reasons for respecting people's human rights, I would suggest, are built upon very shaky foundation, indeed.

What has happened and has had a powerful role in contributing to what I call the naked public square -- namely, public life denuded of the religious and religiously grounded convictions of the American people? What has happened is what might be described as a great inversion. It goes this way: That in the last 40 years, people have come to think, if they think at all about religion and the First Amendment, they have come to think about two religion clauses. And this is kind of the conventional wisdom and the normal manner of speaking today. People will speak of the religion clauses of the First Amendment. They'll say there's the no-establishment clause, and then there's the free-exercise clause, and that somehow these clauses have to be balanced one against the other.

My argument is that this is fundamentally flawed. These clauses are not against each other. Each is in the service of the other. In fact, if we use the word "clause" in its proper sense as a stipulation or a provision, there is

one religion clause and it has two parts: No establishment and free exercise. The further part of the argument is that no establishment is in the service of free exercise. It is not against free exercise.

But what has been the inversion? The inversion, going back over the last 40 years of maddeningly confused judicial history, the inversion has been to put the no-establishment clause in the superior position, so that it is constantly doing war against the free-exercise clause. So much is this the case that, in legal circles, it is not uncommon today to find people simply referring to the religion clause as the establishment clause.

Leonard Levy, a professor at the University of California, has recently written a book on the religion clause titled "The Establishment Clause." I would suggest it ought to be called "The Free-Exercise Clause" or, even more simply, "The Religion Clause." The entire purpose of no establishment is to accommodate free exercise.

Why were the framers opposed, as strongly as they certainly were, to the idea of an established religion? They were opposed to it because an established religion would violate the free exercise of religion, including free

exercise of conscience, for those who dissent from the established religion.

I would suggest that the argument of the First Amendment is better taught if one understands it to say, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or otherwise inhibiting the free exercise thereof."

The inversion that has taken place might be described as the Pfefferian inversion, and that I name in honor of a truly remarkable human being, Leo Pfeffer. Leo Pfeffer, a man now rich in years and honor, has more than any other single person transformed over the last half century our thinking about the role of religion in American public life. There is hardly a major case having to do with free exercise and no establishment, particularly in connection with education -- prayers in the schools, religious symbols in the classroom and on and on and on -- in which Leo Pfeffer was not the champion before the Supreme Court, and in which he usually prevailed.

In a recent autobiographical sketch, Leo Pfeffer -- who, let me add, is in no way opposed to religion, but is himself a very devout believer, but who believes that religion is an entirely private matter to be sealed off from

public life, not to impinge upon public life, including the government classroom at all. Leo Pfeffer recently in an autobiographical sketch looked back over these 40 years in which he played such an astonishing role, and in a very winning way, he asks himself: Why did decision after decision after decision go our way? And his answer is that he was an absolutist -- and he makes no apology for it -- an absolutist on strict separationism; namely, the rigorous, relentless, with no exceptions allowed, separation of religion and public life.

What he says is that the absolutists on the other side were missing at the critical point. His notion of democracy -- obviously, a notion shared by many people -- is that basically we live in an adversarial position, in an adversarial system; and as absolutists on one side do the best they can to push as far as they can their argument, and it depends upon there being absolutists on the other side who will push back. And somehow, the liberal theory goes, somehow out of this contest will emerge something like justice or truths or an acceptable compromise, at least.

So Pfeffer looks back on these 40 years acknowledging that there is an imbalance in the way these decisions

went. And he ends on the note that many of his strict separationist friends are worried now because they see a reaction setting in. They see a new insurgency, a new militancy, even, on the part of religious forces in American life making their way back into the public square and back into the classroom.

Pfeffer cautions his fellow strict separationists not to be too alarmed by this, that a certain measure of democratic corrective is to be expected.

Well, from what I say about Leo Pfeffer, you can understand why I really have great admiration for him, a noble warrior for an absolutist position which, in my judgment -- and I think one can infer in his own private judgment -- probably went too far. No society can live and no educational system can make sense, even to itself, if it excludes from the process of education the deepest convictions and moral judgments of we the people.

Finally, the argument comes down to a kind of argument pro or con democracy, I would suggest to you. If this is, in the words of Lincoln, a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, there is no way it can be that and exclude from public debate, policy-making and

education the deepest convictions held by the people.

Education is inescapably a moral enterprise. It is not a value-free, value-neutral transmission simply of skills and technical competencies. It is the transmission of a way of life, of a way of understanding the self, the community, rights, obligations, duties -- all of which are morally laden. And in this society, for better and for worse, morality is inseparably tied to religion.

Now, this is not to say that there are not many moral people and that there are not many ways of being "moral" without being religious. Obviously, there are. But I simply observe as a matter of historical, sociological fact what Toqueville observed in the 1830s and what is even more the case today, not less the case. That is, that the American people are incorrigibly religious, and becoming more so. All the survey research data we have suggests this.

The notion that this is a secular society or is rapidly becoming a secular society has everything going for it except the empirical evidence. The empirical evidence is overwhelmingly on the other side. But yet a disjunction, a division, a gap has been created between our educational process and the social reality that is America.

For example, in almost every textbook from the early grades on through graduate school about American life, you will find -- it's almost a generic statement -- that this is, indeed, a secular society or is rapidly becoming a secular society. And so you will find in civics and history texts reference of this nature; that these difficult problems our grandparents used to deal with by reference to religion. But, of course, that is no longer possible for us for we live in a secular society, et cetera, et cetera. That kind of statement.

But it's simply not true. It's simply not true.

Now, I say, for better and for worse, Americans are incorrigibly religious. It creates a lot of problems. It might be easier if they weren't. When we speak of ours as a pluralistic society, which it certainly is, I am afraid that we often use the word "pluralism" in a way that distorts the challenge that is before us. People will say: Well, look, that particular religious belief or conviction or vision has no place in the public square, because you are "trying to impose your religion upon me" -- the standard language, right? And then the standard follow-up to that: "And you have no right to do that because this is a pluralistic

society."

But I would suggest to you that when people use the word "pluralism" in that way that they are not talking about pluralism at all. Rather, they are advancing the monism of indifference, of pretending that our differences make no difference when, in fact, they do. The challenge of a pluralistic society is not to pretend that there are not significant differences, nor is it to say that those significant differences, if they are religiously connected, cannot be articulated in the public square. That is monism, the opposite of pluralism. That's an artificial effort to create a homogeneity which simply is not the case in American life. And we ought not, even in the public school classroom, to suggest that it is.

Rather, the challenge of real pluralism is to engage one another within the bond of civility and mutual respect precisely at those points of deepest difference. I don't think we have begun to do that in our society. If we ever are able to move toward a genuine democratic pluralism, a genuine engagement of the moral and, yes, even religious visions that both divide and unite us, and to do so in a way that does not tear the society apart or create a situation of

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religiously impassioned civil warfare, but rather that brings us together in a deeper and livelier sense of the excitement of the diversities of the American experiment -- if we were able to do that, I think it would be for the first time in American life.

Let me say what that assumes. One reason that it has been in the last 40 years that we have had, especially in the classroom, this move to what I would call the monism of indifference -- the let's-pretend style of education that assumes that what we are doing in education is not a morally laden and religiously grounded transmission of a way of life of a civilization. The reason that we have moved to that in the last 40 years is because in the last half century the previous point of unity in American life collapsed. That was basically a point of unity established by a WASP, white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant definition of the American experiment.

McGuffey's reader assumes an unquestionable hegemony, cultural control, by what might roughly be called the Puritan tradition in American life. The common school movement in the 19th century was in the minds of its champions -- and they made no apology about this -- an effort to incorporate the immigrant hordes, beginning with the Catholics

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who worried them very, very deeply; to incorporate them into the WASP cultural, hegemonic definition of the American experiment.

So that for a long time in American life, the cultural, moral, religious definition was in place, was secure. For a lot of reasons in the last half century, it started to fall apart. The heirs today of that Puritan tradition within the American religious and cultural scene are what used to be called main line Protestantism: Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Methodist, to a large extent Episcopalian. What today is called not so much main line Protestantism as old line Protestantism, and even perhaps more accurately, side line Protestantism. That which is concentrated in, say, the National Council of Churches in New York City. That part of the religious situation which I think -- I do not say this against that community at all. Do not get me wrong. In many ways, I am part of that community. But we have to face the fact that that is the community of former leadership which is now in steep and precipitous and apparently unending decline.

Who now, the question is asked, will provide the religiously based moral symbols by which we as a community --

if one can in any way speak of America as a community -- by which we will deliberate about how we ought to order our life together and about what we want the next generation to carry on? Because that's what education is about, the transmission of a civilization.

The renewal in every generation of the excitement, even the audacity of the American experiment in liberal democracy, that's the goal. How do we transmit that emphatically moral vision? Obviously, it is going to engage religion.

Now, again, let me stipulate, the connection between religion and morality is not a necessary one. People can be moral without being religious. Indeed, there are many people who, by any ethical criteria of righteousness, if you will, who are non-religious or even anti-religious, who shame many of the most devout religious adherents in our society.

That having been said, however, that having been allowed, it is somewhat irrelevant to the task at hand. Because for the great majority of Americans, the connection between religion and morality is self-evident. That is, if you do survey research data consistently, and you ask Americans, "What is the source of morality?" something like

85 to 90 percent -- which is to say, in terms of survey research, about as close as you can get to unanimity -- will give a religious answer. That is, they'll say: The source of morality is the Bible, or the teachings of the church, or the Ten Commandments, or the Sermon on the Mount, or whatever.

Now, we can be very skeptical and, indeed, we probably should be somewhat skeptical about these answers that are given. That is, there are many people who are absolutely convinced that the Ten Commandments is the basis of the morality, and yet they couldn't tell you three of the Ten Commandments. And so you begin to wonder about how much they thought of that. But the social and political reality is that this linkage is there. And it is entrenched, it is deep, and it is growing ever stronger.

This is not to say, believe me, that this is something necessarily to be celebrated. It does not necessarily indicate a great spiritual reawakening or moral renaissance in American life. No. It may simply reflect an ever-deeper desperation on the part of most Americans. Because as they see or think they see a society falling apart, in which there are no or hardly any stable points of moral reference, it is understandable that they resort to

whatever they identify as a possible foundation for a more stable and, yes, a more moral society, a better world for their children -- which for most people is what it's all about more than anything else.

Therefore, because they have no other place to go, the resort to religion becomes ever more emphatic in American life, even if it just something so vague as "the Judeo-Christian tradition" or even more vague, "the American civil religion." But this movement toward reconstituting, first of all, morality and then religiously grounded foundations for morality in American public life is growing, and we have hardly begun to see its full implications.

I believe this is the great cultural sea shift, if you will, that we are witnessing in this historical moment. Perhaps the single most important event in American life. For I take it that politics is essentially a function of culture, and at the heart of culture is religion. Religion functionally understood, at least. That is, those most binding ideas by which people would order their lives and put together the pieces of what they call reality.

We are moving into a period, we are already well into it, of massive rebellion against the naked public

square, against the last 40 years or half century's experiment, in trying to base the American experiment on nothing other than some kind of technical or interest group understanding of the democratic process. And a lot of people are alarmed by this, alarmed by the resurgence of religion and of religiously based morality in the public square and in the public school. And there are reasons to be disturbed. There's no doubt about it. It raises some deeply troubling questions; whether we are capable as a people of being genuinely pluralistic in the sense that I described before. Genuinely pluralistic, which means a real honest engagement of our deepest differences in a way that secures rather than destroys the bond of civility.

I don't know whether that's possible, but I think we are moving into a period in which that is what's going to be tested whether we want it or not. Because, increasingly, Americans are not prepared to check their moral visions, including their moral visions that are religiously grounded, in the cloakroom before they enter the public square. And the most vibrant sectors of American religious life, which I take to be the evangelical fundamentalist worlds and all of their diversities, much, much beyond what is represented by -

the Pat Robertson campaign, and much, much beyond the circus that is located near you here in Charlotte. A much deeper sea change in American life, among evangelicals, fundamentalists most vibrantly, and among Roman Catholics -- the two communities which I think become the heirs of the culture-forming tasks once exercised by what was called the Protestant main line of the Puritan tradition.

There are other communities, of course: the Jewish community, very centrally important to this experiment of whether we are capable of genuine pluralism. At least 30, 40 percent of all our work at the Center on Religion in Society in New York, in terms of research projects, consultations, conferences, are involved in intense work with Jewish leaderships, in rethinking the role of religion in public life, because that community, perhaps more than any other single community in American life, has a keen awareness of the perils of a religiously impassioned majoritarianism that could ride roughshod over the interests and beliefs of minorities. And within that community, a new way of thinking is developing which recognizes the naked public square is finally a very dangerous place, not only for Jews but for blacks and for anybody else in society who dissents.

Because without some religiously, if you will, sacred understanding of the rights of minorities, because it is grounded in a vision of the dignity, a divinely given dignity of each human person -- without that, to be a minority in a society as passionately religious as this can be a very dangerous thing. How do we bring the passions and the juices and the frequently unruly and raucous forms of religious belief in American life into, for the first time, a genuine supportive relationship to the protection of minorities and to the democratic process?

These are the difficult, difficult questions, and there come -- ask questions, for there are no guarantees whatsoever that we as a society will be able to do this; that we will for the first time be able to move into a period of genuine liberal democratic pluralism. One thing that needs to change, if we are to do it, is to rethink what is meant by the First Amendment, to understand again that any interpretation of the no-establishment part of the religion clause that undermines or inhibits the free exercise part of the religion clause is a misinterpretation of the no-establishment part. For the no-establishment part is totally in the service of free exercise.

Those who in the years ahead in American life set themselves against the resurgence of the religiously grounded convictions of the American people in the public square are going to bear a heavy responsibility for intensifying a polarization that is already too intense in American life. This is not a secular society, nor is it likely to become one. And, indeed, the more controverted these issues become, the more people are alarmed by the absence of secure moral reference, the more they will be a desperate, strong determination to overcome the naked public square in a way that will not be respectful of minorities, of diversities, of those who differ. And that is a prospect of unlimited ugliness and nastiness and, indeed, a kind of civil warfare in American life.

I think that prospect can be headed off if we are prepared to rethink against from square one the relationship between the liberal democratic experiment, politics as moral -- (Tape, Part 4, ends).

PROFESSOR MEYERS: -- and is in every respect a very well-known national leader. Mr. Shanker?

[Applause.]

MR. SHANKER: Thank you very much. I may surprise

you by not responding, but embracing most of what Pastor Neuhaus shared with us this morning.

I agree that for the overwhelming majority of the American people, morality is derived from religion. The interesting thing is not only the polls that are frequently taken of the American people but the comparison of these polls with people in France, England, Germany and other countries -- countries where, ironically, there has been not a naked public square, but more religion in the public square, and yet much less belief on the part of the people.

Is it perhaps the fact that there has been this separation which has compelled people in order to preserve and carry on their religious beliefs, to do so more effectively and more intensely in their churches and the family, than is the case in European countries where there has not been this exclusion?

I see no difficulty with the concept that we're not going back to the dominance of one group imposing a particular set of religious views on everyone, which is the basis of our current situation, but a classroom where it's possible for all of the students to discuss moral issues from their own religious-or-non-religious-orientation; and from that

experience in the classroom to bring it later into the community and to public life.

It seems to me that it's easier to do that and more natural than to try to exclude it. In my own remarks yesterday, I indicated that the effort to exclude religion has resulted, to some extent, in an exclusion -- not merely an exclusion, but to the extent that there is any education in values, in many cases it is this cult of objectivity, and it's the extreme relativistic orientation which serves not to only ignore morality and values, but serves to undermine among the youth.

Now, there's a real question as to whether parents with strong religious views, which are the overwhelming majority of parents in our society, would actually want such a dialogue to take place in the classroom. There are some who would feel that it's very productive and it's part of the growth and moral development of their own children. But as we have seen recently in some of the cases that have been taken on textbook issues, some of the motivation of religious parents is to shield their children from any exposure to any religious differences.

It's too early to say whether the kind of mature,

pluralistic engagement which Pastor Neuhaus calls for, and which I would like to see -- I think at least it is worth extensive experimentation. But it will be interesting to see whether this is viewed as a positive way of being able to enhance the religious commitments and convictions and the development of moral values, or whether significant numbers of parents will view such a dialogue and such exposure to other points of view, and perhaps challenges from other points of view, as something which undermines what they want their own children to have.

So I would conclude by saying that we ought to try that experiment. I don't see it as in any way a violation of the First Amendment. I would say that while we're doing that, we can proceed on two other fronts. One is to get away from the silly notion that we ignore the existence of religion in history or literature or culture, and make sure that our textbooks and our curriculum and our discussions are at least accurate in that respect; and, secondly, that we go through the kinds of materials that exist in schools which not only ignore religion but are hostile to the basic values and undermine the values that the children come to school with.

[Applause.]

MR. : Thank you, Mr. Shanker.

Let me just say very quickly the schedule for the rest of the morning. We're now going to have a break, and there are refreshments being served out in the lobby. We encourage you all to stay for that.

Then, afterwards, at 10:15, we'll have a roundtable discussion with four community leaders taking part in the discussion. It will be moderated by Mr. Ed Williams of the Charlotte Observer. Then you will have your opportunity to take part in this discussion as well.

So please stay with us and come back at 10:15.

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MR. WILLIAMS: Let me give some instructions for the panel, and all of you in the audience can hear them. And if you see any of the panelists disobeying the instructions, you may point it out to them. Wave your hands or stomp your feet or something.

The first instruction is that we lean forward when we speak so that the microphones can pick up what we say and transmit it to all these good folks, which is to say within about six inches of the microphone.

VOICE: Louder.

MR. WILLIAMS: Louder? I can't be louder. I meant for them, not for me.

The other thing is that we have a panel of four lawyers, and my task is to limit them to opening statements of four minutes.

MR. : You could have four preachers.

MR. WILLIAMS: I may be in trouble anyway. I'm not even a judge. I have no powers of contempt or eternal damnation here, so I don't know what I'll do.

Let me introduce the panelists. You know the speakers; let me introduce the panelists.

On my far left -- I didn't arrange the seating --

is George Daly, who is a civil liberties attorney in solo private practice, a lucrative undertaking I'm sure.

Edward Connette is a member of the law firm of Gillespie, Lesesne & Connette and was formerly associated with the Friends of Public Education.

To the right of Mr. Shanker is Ralph McMillan, my neighbor in Dilworth, and a partner in the law firm of Parham, Helms & Kellam, former Charlotte city councilmember and sometime columnist for the Charlotte Observer -- though that's always up for renegotiation.

And on the far right is Carl Horn. On your far left is Carl Horn, who is chief assistant U.S. attorney in Charlotte, and with whom I served on a committee that studied public school textbooks and sex education -- a very interesting undertaking.

The format is, as I've said, each panel member will be able to make a four-minute opening statement and then pose a question to either or both our speakers.

Oh, I'm Ed Williams. I'm editorial page editor of the Charlotte Observer, and I'm here representing truth, justice, and the American way.

[Laughter.]

MR. : How about God?

MR. WILLIAMS: That's included in the American way,
as well as truth and justice.

George, would you like to start with an opening
statement. I have a watch here. Go.

MR. DALY: Thank you.

What I would like to comment on is, first of all,
whether you can all hear me if I don't get within this ritual
six inches of the microphone.

Can you hear me?

VOICES: A little louder.

MR. DALY: A little louder? All right.

MR. WILLIAMS: You may move the microphone.

MR. DALY: If I move the microphone, I can't see
what I've written down.

MR. WILLIAMS: This is part of your four minutes,
George.

MR. DALY: Start your watch.

The comments I'd like to make are directed to the
statements that the speaker made at the end of his remarks
when he began to talk about his 40 percent of the time that
his organization spends talking to Jewish people. And as I

heard him say it, he said that the Jewish people were beginning to realize that non-morality in the schools was dangerous and that we needed some sacred understanding of human rights as a foundation for our education system.

I further heard him say or interpreted him to say that only religion can bring us this respect for human rights. To me, that borders on inviting us to undertake some sort of religious imperialism. The very militant religious grounds, the fundamentalist evangelists and the activist Roman Catholics, are very much interested in having a powerful say in the morality of this country. To my mind, they also have an agenda which psychologically could lead to what the speaker called the unlimited ugliness; that is, the dominance of religion and the suppression of any other point of view.

Unless he is using a more watered-down version of sacred than most people use, it seems to me that there is implicit in his remarks -- and sometimes explicit in his remarks -- a capitulation to religion as the only way to have morality in this society, and particularly in a school. And I disagree sharply with that. I think there are other bases of morality. We can all decry that our schools lack morality,

that they are naked, that they lack excitement, that we're not properly transmitting cultural values. We could also all agree with the famous singer, Paul Simon, who says, "When I think back on all the crap I learned in high school, it's a wonder I can even think at all."

But, in any event, I think there is a clear alternative basis for teaching and transmitting morality other than religion. That basis is simply the basis of communal understanding; that is, who we are apart from whatever notions of the sacred and the ultimate that we hold. Because there are certain civilizations that don't really have notions of the sacred and the ultimate and the God on high in the sense that we do, but yet they've had flourishing civilizations.

I went to schools that had what we call the honor system. They taught me that honor system, and I soaked it up and I believed it. And I still practice it. And it's a moral system. But for me, it doesn't have a religious basis, and for the people that taught it to me it did not have a religious basis. It had a basis founded on cultural trust.

I think it is quite possible to transmit to the children the values we want to transmit without having to do

it with a public endorsement of religion.

Thank you. Did I get my four minutes?

MR. WILLIAMS: You got your four minutes. Would you like to ask a question?

MR. DALY: Not presently, no.

MR. WILLIAMS: Woody?

MR. CONNETTE: As we move down the table here, I think you'll get to see the colors of the rainbow unfolding before you.

The Charlotte Observer, I think appropriately, called this an intellectual feast, and so far it has been. I think we on the panel are going to have to do our best to keep it from turning it into an intellectual food fight.

[Laughter.]

MR. CONNETTE: With that in mind, I would like to start out by saying a couple of nice things about Charlotte. Right now, I could not imagine a more vital public square than Charlotte.

Think about it for a moment. We have here in Charlotte a very large fundamentalist population in the highest sense of the word. And despite the mud that has been cast upon them by the PTL and some of the television evan-

gelists, there are many fundamentalists in town who have sincere, legitimate beliefs that need to be heard. People like the Reverend Joseph Chambers are honest, sincere, forthright in their dealings, and deserve respect for what they are saying.

Way off at the other end of the spectrum, you find the same thing. In the public sector, we have a school board that wants to do right by kids. We have an excellent school superintendent. Everything is debated out in the open, and we have a golden opportunity here in Charlotte to decide what role religion is going to play in public education. It's exciting, and I just really like being in the middle of it.

Having said the nice things, let me move on. I disagree with Pastor Neuhaus that the establishment clause has been cast in opposition to the free-exercise clause. I think that what has happened in practice is that on this end of the spectrum down here, we tend to rely on the no-- establishment clause, and on that end of the spectrum down there they tend to rely on the free-exercise clause to push their point of view.

In court there is always tension between different groups trying in one way or another to have their values

become established. We naturally want to use the no-- establishment clause to protect our interests; others naturally want to use the free-exercise clause.

I think that the debate that results is a very healthy one. I also think, though, that while I would hate to see establishment of religion, public prayer, teaching of creationism in our public schools, it is impossible to eradicate religion and religious beliefs from school. I think that we run the danger at that extreme of burglarizing texts and history and sanitizing it and ending up with students who do not have a true sense of their heritage if we try that. That to me is almost as dangerous as if we established religion.

Think about this. Driving down the highway here in Charlotte near sundown, I don't know if you've ever noticed the wonderful way that the light radiates off the buildings downtown. I always think of that Wordsworth line where he said, "On whose dwelling is the light of setting suns." I learned that in the 11th grade. There is a reference to a belief in God in that poem. Can you imagine, though, taking that out of our texts?

That's just one small example of what we run the

danger of missing if we do try to eradicate all reference to religion.

MR. WILLIAMS: Do you have a question?

MR. CONNETTE: I do, and I will wind up very quickly.

Pastor Neuhaus, I started out by saying that I do disagree with you. Do you in the end, though, really think it makes a difference if we cast the debate as one against the other rather than reading them in harmony with each other and trying to go at it from your perspective? Don't we end up in the same place?

PASTOR NEUHAUS: Shall I respond to that now?

MR. WILLIAMS: You may respond now.

PASTOR NEUHAUS: No, I don't think we do. I don't think we do end up in the same place, I'm sorry to say, because my argument is precisely that the entire purpose of the no-establishment provision is to secure free exercise. So it's an argument as to the logic of the clause.

In other words, no establishment in itself is not a logical goal. Why would anybody get excited about saying there can't be an establishment of religion? Obviously, you'd say, well, why are you say excited about that?

Both logically, and I think one can demonstrate historically, in terms of the debates that went around the Bill of Rights in the 18th century, the answer was clear. We want no establishment of religion because we want the free exercise of religion. Okay? And if you establish a religion, you're going to violate other people's free exercise.

So that's my point. We should get away from any notion of these being balanced against each other, or, you know, 50 percent no establishment, 50 percent emphasis on free exercise. No. But rather to begin to rethink what both historically and logically is the case, which then results in a very different bottom line, jurisprudentially, if you will; namely, that, as I indicated, any interpretation of no establishment which inhibits free exercise is a misinterpretation of no establishment.

MR. WILLIAMS: Ralph, would you make your statement?

MR. McMILLAN: Yes, thank you.

I agree with Woody, and I'm very encouraged by the two panelists that I've heard, both last night and tonight. I think the one thing we've got to do when we talk about this issue is to be careful that we don't stereotype people into what the religious right want to do and what liberals want to

do.

Last night, I had the unfortunate experience of substituting for Reverend Neuhaus, and I had to get up and speak for him, which is an awesome task. But I point out that there are certain people -- I was raised Catholic and went to a Methodist private school, and then went to a state law school to give you only a feeling to tell you that there are a lot of people who are concerned with the issue of religion in public life who are not stereotyped people, who are not what we normally call fundamentalist or evangelical but come from totally different backgrounds. And Catholics particularly have been concerned about this.

I do agree with both the speakers that you cannot exclude religion -- I disagree with George on this -- as a basis upon determining moral values. There's an interesting book which I urge all of you to read called "The Abolition of Man," by C. S. Lewis, where he argues -- he doesn't argue from a particularly Western point of view, but also from an Eastern point of view -- that there's a remarkable similarity among all religions, all main line religions, whether they're Eastern or Western, about shared, common moral values. And they basically come -- the basic assumption that is made in

all religions is there is a source of what we call absolute value or real value. There's goodness in and of itself, and it comes from God, however you define God.

And I think the trouble in this debate, where we get hung up -- and, Pastor Neuhaus, I make one correction when you say the establishment clause wants to prohibit religion. It wants to prohibit state religion. This is the historical perspective because our founding fathers, having a history of seeing how state religions work, when you have the state endorsing one sect -- let's say Catholic or Lutheran or Methodist -- that inhibited other religious groups from participating in the public debate.

And what I do think we can do -- and I think we can do it, Woody, with a great degree of civility and thoughtfulness -- is take a basis which -- I say read "The Abolition of Man," where there are commonly held moral values.

Last night, the example I gave was Martin Luther King's injection of religion saying that blacks were children of God and, therefore, they had inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, found in the Declaration of Independence. It's not a narrow sectarian point of view, but a deeply held, broad, religious value which comes from

Judeo-Christian ethic, properly understood, and liberal in the best meaning of the word.

I think that our society would be served if, in public discourse and in education, we talk about those types of values, which are religious, and I think everybody would agree ought to be adopted.

MR. WILLIAMS: Do you have a question?

MR. McMILLAN: No.

MR. WILLIAMS: Carl?

MR. HORN: I'd like to make three points and make a few comments about each.

First of all, number one, that the historical understanding of the role of religion in society is very different from that of the educated elite today, neither of whom, I think, were represented by the speaker last night or the speaker this morning. The educated elite has a very different idea of the role of religion than our historic understanding has been.

Secondly, what the courts -- and in the case of the Equal Access Act of Congress -- have actually decided in regard to the role of religion in society is much less restrictive than what most contemporary Americans realize.

Third, I'd like to propose Al Shanker and Richard Neuhaus be made co-emperors of education with Bill Bennett as chief counsel.

[Laughter.]

MR. HORN: Which is to say that we must move away from the strict separationist, anti-religious, and morally relativistic curriculum so common in public schools today, and toward a true neutrality toward religion with diligent efforts being made to build moral character in the next generation.

First, on the historical point, I think the Declaration of Independence capsulates the historical understanding where Thomas Jefferson -- which Leo Pfeffer and others were able to make out to be a great secularist -- wrote, "We hold these truths...self-evident that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights."

Thomas Jefferson, incidentally, was also President of the School Board of the District of Columbia when he was President of the United States. It must have been an easier job back then.

But the two books, incidentally, which pre-dated

the McGuffey readers which were used in the District of Columbia to teach children to read while Thomas Jefferson presided over their schools were the Holy Bible and the Isaac Watts hymnal.

John Adams said the Constitution was made only for a moral and a religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.

George Washington in his farewell address made it plain that in his view religion and morality were indispensable supports for the kind of political democracy America was to be.

And these religious aspects to our public life continue well into this century. We pledge allegiance to one nation, under God -- the addition of those words "under God" made in the 1950s -- and beginning in the 19th century and continuing to the present, our currency, of all things, had upon it "In God We Trust," which at some point, I believe also in the 1950s, was made officially by Congress our national motto.

Second point, the courts have never required strict separation. In fact, in the very case holding required devotional Bible reading unconstitutional, the Supreme Court

also wrote this, and I'm quoting: "We agree, of course, that the state may not establish a religion of secularism, affirmatively opposing or showing hostility to religion, thus preferring those who believe in no religion over those who do believe."

Other Supreme Court decisions made similar points. In 1952, in a case upholding the release of public school students during the school day for off-campus religious education, the Supreme Court wrote: "We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being. When the state cooperate with religious authority, it follows the best of our traditions, for it then respects the religious nature of our people and accommodates the public service to their spiritual needs. To hold that it may not would be to find in the Constitution a requirement that the government show a callous indifference to religious groups. That would be preferring those who believe in no religion over those who do believe. But we find no constitutional requirement which makes it necessary for government to be hostile to religion."

Perhaps the best short definition of the proper relationship between religion in public schools was given by the Supreme Court in 1970: "benevolent neutrality." In Waltz

v. Tax Commission, the Supreme Court upheld the granting of tax exemptions to religious organizations and reasoned, quoting the Supreme Court: "There is room for play in the joints productive of a benevolent neutrality which will permit religious exercise without sponsorship and without interference."

Finally, what ought to be. The pendulum has swung much too far in an anti-religious, relativistic direction. While groups like the ACLU, NEA, People for the American Way continue to harp on stereotypes of concerns of traditionally minded people, it is encouraging that Al Shanker, in his position as the head of the American Federation of Teachers, declines to do that and very thoughtfully moves to the center and seeks to accommodate and balance these competing interests in society.

Religious faith and moral character remain, as George Washington said, "indispensable supports of our experiment in democracy." Or, as Toqueville observed, and it is still true today, "America's great because America's good. And if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."

Thank you. And I do have a question.

Mr. Shanker, can we expect a moderating of the views of NEA, People for the American Way, and the American Civil Liberties Union in a similar fashion to the moderating of your own views?

MR. SHANKER: I don't think you'll get a moderating of the Civil Liberties Union. I don't anticipate that.

People for the American Way, to some extent, has moved. Their very first position when they first went into business was super-extreme. You will find a recent study that they made about the absence of religion in textbooks, which is quite a good study and which is parallel to the study made by Professor Vitz (ph) and others, and that was a rather surprising development coming from that source, which shows that there are either internal or external forces at work moving them toward the center on this.

The NEA, I would say that the NEA's position is very surprising, as is ours in the American Federation of Teachers. It would make a lot more sense from a political point of view if I had their position and they had ours. That is, we represent mostly large cities in the country and New York State and Illinois. That is, we do not have a large base in the South or in the West. Therefore, if we were to

reflect our membership, we could more easily take the positions they take.

They, on the other hand, have a large membership base in the West and in the South and in rural areas of the country rather than urban areas. They have a huge membership among fundamentalists and evangelicals, and we have a much smaller one.

Essentially, what you have in the NEA is a leadership that is taking positions that are very diametrically opposed to a major portion of its membership. So this has to do with the question of whether the members care about these issues and whether the organization is fundamentally democratic.

I would think that if the organization is democratic and if the members care -- which I think they do -- that over a period of time you will get moderation there.

MR. WILLIAMS: Do I detect a bit of recruiting going on here?

MR. SHANKER: Well, we got most of our members from them. The refugees have all been flowing in one direction for the last 25 years, and we hope that we continue to be worthy of that flow.

[Laughter.]

MR. WILLIAMS: Like Catholic boys kicked out of public school.

MR. CONNETTE: You know why that happened? Because the public schools were so good back then, there wasn't a need for the private schools.

MR. WILLIAMS: Ed is referring to last night that a comment was made that the private schools got to pick the best of the students, and that's why they were better. I said when I went to Catholic school -- this was in '64 to '67, for some of the younger students out there -- nobody really wanted to go to the Catholic schools. Enrollment was quite small, because the public schools were so good. My wife, who is also a Charlotte native, happened to go to one of the public schools, the same one that Bill Bennett's wife went to. And most of the Catholic kids went to the public schools here.

But what has happened over the years is the public schools have gotten worse in the estimation of the consumer. That's why they've moved. In fact, in the old days, the kids who got kicked out of public school ended up at Catholic -- not all, but you'd be surprised.

MR. SHANKER: On a national basis, that has not been so. The percentage of kids going to non-public schools in this country has remained approximately constant for the last 25 or 30 years. It's ranged between 9 and 11 percent, and it's gone up and down depending upon whether Catholics were more committed to their schools. Then they became less committed. Then minorities in urban areas started going into the Catholic schools and so forth.

By the way, my position is not that they get the best kids, but that they are able to get rid of their worst problems. In other words, they often will be very open and accepting, but they are able to reject.

I'd like to make a slightly different point, if I could take just a minute and use the illustration of something we've been very much involved in, to get a picture of where we go on this religion issue, and to use something that isn't religion in the one sense. That's the whole question of teaching kids about their system of government, democracy.

Now, if you go up through World War II, and perhaps shortly after that, you had a probably very jingoistic, nationalistic textbooks in which nobody, no American hero or our government never did anything wrong. And it was all

history culminated in the development of our country and our civilization and our heroes and so forth.

At the end of World War II, several things happened. Lots of people, as a result of the GI Bill, started going to college. And so they started getting more sophisticated views of our history. Secondly, we had the civil rights revolution which educated most Americans that there are very huge blemishes in our history.

Then along came the Vietnam War which opened up all sorts of issues as to America's relationship with Latin America and other countries, and then came Watergate. So essentially, we had a series of jolts, from a super patriotism and a great victory for democracy and freedom in World War II, to a series of exposures that made people feel like, well, all these years we've been lying and we've been telling our kids that. And it kind of paralyzed people. If anything, they actively went out there to talk about the blemishes in our history. They moved the other way.

Now, of course, we do have the best system of government in the world. If we opened up our doors, we'd have a major part of the population of the rest of the world coming here. There's no question about it. And you don't

have anybody that -- we don't keep anybody here. We're not like other countries that lock them in. Anybody that wants to get out can get out. That's a pretty good way of figuring out whether the system is good or not.

But yet we have a terrible struggle trying to get people to say that we ought to be teaching democracy. Now, not teaching it as the old jingoism. Teaching it with the mistakes this country has made, with the sins, with the ability to correct those sins which a democratic society provides.

Yet when we propose this, we get the National Association of Social Studies Teachers that writes that such a curriculum would be very bad because it relies on an adherence to the principles of the Bill of Rights, the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence and is, therefore, inconsistent with educating children to live in a global society.

Now, that's a quote from the national organization representing those teachers. Now, I give you this parallel in terms of religion as well because it is not merely religious sects and religious institutions that are being rejected here. It is the civic religion as well, and how do

you maintain a society if you don't build commitment, belief, loyalty with understanding? Our kids ought to know what the alternative systems are, how we got here, how our forefathers reached the conclusion that this was the system of government, and how we change it if we don't like elements of it.

MR. : Well, that's nuts. We've been kind of sitting here basking in the warm glow of theoretical agreement. But I'd bet that if we get down to what do we really do and how do we do it, we could soon provoke an intellectual fist fight here.

That's the real question. With the exception of George, who is here for the purpose of disagreeing with everything, we seem to generally agree that it would be nice, it would be valuable -- it is, in fact, important -- to help school children learn the moral and religious underpinnings of our society. But how do we do it? How do we do it? How do we get from where we are to where this panel and these speakers think we should be? What do we do now, here?

Any takers?

MR. : I'd like to make one suggestion. Ed, Al, I think that one of the reasons that civics and democracy are not taught with values is the same reason that

religion is not referred to, that values are not taught, and that other sensitive issues are not touched in our schools. That is, that educators are scared. The reason they are scared is because of the intrusion of people in the community on the curriculum and on the content of what is taught in the schools.

Largely, I think that those attacks, that intrusion, has come from conservative and fundamentalist religious groups that do not always have the expertise necessary to know what is best for the children in our schools.

MR. : Well, experts know best. Is that what you're selling?

MR. : I think that educators who are involved in the day-to-day teaching of children, who have the professional background, who have been at it for years, can be trusted. I think that there is room for public debate, but I think that it is very intimidating when a religious group goes, particularly to a teacher, one on one, and says: You're not to tell my child this. I think that when you teach something that might touch on evolution that you're being a secular humanist, that you're challenging my child's beliefs, and that it is wrong. And it has no part in your curriculum.

Teachers, I think, are often afraid of those kinds of attacks on what goes on in their classrooms.

MR. : Could I respond to that?

MR. : Just a minute now.

PASTOR NEUHAUS: Well, on the question of what is to be done, I suppose this occasion should not be permitted to pass without registering a very significant difference between Mr. Shanker and myself. That is, on what I would call educational diversity, which I think needs to be greatly enhanced, if we are to do the kinds of things that all of us or most of us here would like to see done. Al Shanker's description at the end of his response this morning of what ought to be happening in a classroom of genuine pluralistic engagement is one that I would wholeheartedly affirm.

At the same time, I am not sure that it can be done within the present structure of what we call the public school system, with one system having a monopoly on government funding. In fact, I would suggest that this would take a whole other conference, that the distinction between public and private schools is a misbegotten distinction.

Any school that serves the purpose, the public purpose, and most particularly the purpose of the relevant

public -- namely, the parents and the children most immediately involved -- is, in fact, a public school. The appropriate distinction, it seems to me, is between government schools and voluntary schools.

On a matter of fact, I would disagree with Mr. Shanker, my good friend, when he says that one reason that the voluntary schools, or what he calls the private schools, have done better is that they can get rid of the kids that are disruptive and undermining the educational process. I would suggest that in New York City, for example, as a matter of fact, the government schools do get rid of 40 or 50 percent of the kids. In fact, de facto, they are expelled, or at least they are not part of the school system.

In fact, the voluntary schools, the Jewish orthodox, the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran and the other schools, have a much better record of engaging the widest diversity of students at all levels of achievement and potential, and of keeping them engaged in the school system.

In terms of what we do, I think there are three things we can do, one of which I'm sure Mr. Shanker and I would agree on; that within the present government school system, ~~there can be~~ imaginative experimentations and should

be to create greater diversity and to enhance parental choice, which is really the key thing. Because schooling, after all, is an ancillary arm in support of the primary responsibility of parents for the education and socialization of their children.

Where we would disagree is that I expect we have to also move toward experiments with voucher payments, tuition tax credits, and other modalities in order to enhance the diversity of educational approaches by which parents and families can be empowered to take charge of their responsibility for the education and socialization of their children.

MR. SHANKER: I'm going to agree with most of that. First, I think that there ought to be extensive choice in the public schools. The United States is the only industrial, democratic society in the world where parents do not have a right to shop around for a public school where there's an empty seat for their child. It's considered a basic human right in every European democracy. The notion of assigning a kid to a particular school and saying this is the only place you can go would just not be tolerated elsewhere, and it shouldn't be tolerated here either.

Now, that implies, of course, that moving from one place to another you do literally find things that are different. And so we ought to move away from the bureaucratic structures we have to school-based management, and I would go further to say to thinking of the school as more of a professional partnership. You have different types of architectural and law and accounting firms. They're structured differently, have somewhat different purposes. They're for specialization. You could have that in school as well.

And I'm even willing to engage the Pastor in an experiment with vouchers. What I want to do is I don't want to give any kid who is now doing well in the public schools money to leave a school in which he is already doing well. I'm willing to take the five percent of the kids who cannot read, cannot write, who are violent and sometimes don't come to school, and give them full scholarships to private schools.

[Laughter.]

MR. SHANKER: Because those are the kids that we have not reached. Then I want to see how well those kids are doing after three or four years, because if they don't do any better with those kids than we do, I'd like to take them back.

One other point, and that is to go back to the

whole question of outside groups coming in. That's part of the problem, but the other part of the problem is the profession itself. First of all, when a parent comes in to object, it's not enough to pit the teacher's or the principal's point of view against the parent's point of view. If there is some professional judgment or reason which would stand up, then you need a profession that's capable of expressing that reason.

We do not as yet have such a profession in this country. Example: Here is a question from the National Teachers Exam given several years ago to new teachers. This is professional knowledge. The question is: An angry parent comes into your room when you're a teacher and objects to the textbook that you are using. Which of the following responses is correct for a professional teacher?

A, blame the school board. They bought the text.

B, blame the principal.

C, stand on your constitutional rights and refuse to talk to the parent.

D, ask the parent whether he or she has a better textbook to suggest.

Now, please notice that there isn't even a choice

there that assumes that any intelligence went into the selection of the textbook. There is no defense of what is being done here. These are all political responses. How do you get that parent off your back?

Do you blame the boss? No, you don't do that. You'll just get into trouble, whether it's the school board or the principal.

Do you refuse to talk? No, you would offend the parent.

So the correct answer, according to the testing agency, which is the largest in the United States, is to ask the parent what textbook she would use. Now, think of the doctor who gives you a medicine, the medicine doesn't work; you come back and you complain, and the doctor says to you, "And so what medicine do you want me to give you?"

You see, it is a total abdication of any notion of professionalism. So part of this problem of external interference is also a problem of a lack of internal thought and substance to respond. If there were a dialogue there, the outcomes would be very different.

MR. : The reason this forum has been so satisfying to me is that we did something that Woody, God

—

bless him, didn't do in his last comment. That is, we didn't start in the middle of the problem and analyze it; namely, when the "fundamentalists" -- and everyone sees ogres with horns when that word is uttered -- come rushing into the schools.

In other words, we have looked during this forum at the reasons for the discontent with the schools, and we have not blamed it on the objectors, which are largely reacting to a pre-existing situation. They're responding to the paralyzing, relativistic ideology, to the educational mediocrity, and to the insensitivity often of teachers and principals and sometimes school board members when they have raised their concerns in more gracious ways. They are not responded to on the facts. They are typically put off or caricatured or otherwise dealt with, but not on the issue, not on the facts.

I think that what we need to do is to look at the situation in public education, the reasons for the concerns, and try to go back to the beginning of the problem instead of blaming those people who object, however indelicately at times, to those conditions. Where their concerns are legitimate, even if they're overstated, we need to deal with those concerns. Sometimes the concerns are accurate, but

their proposed remedies are unacceptable. We need to look at the concerns themselves, and that's what the speakers have done so well.

I just want to make a brief comment, Ed, if I might, on what I see as some of the solution now. One of the debating techniques which is effectively used against conservatives who express concerns is: Well, what would you do? And you're supposed to in 30 seconds or 60 seconds outline how to correct problems that have amassed over several decades. Obviously, the answers, the solutions, always imperfect, in any event are going to years and even probably decades to begin to turn this big ship in another direction. But I have several points or several items.

It seems to me that, first of all, we need to do something about public opinion. We need to bring intelligent discussion to the public, through the Charlotte Observer and other media, such as we've been privy to. It's too bad so few people come to something like this because it is so much of a breath of fresh air and so much better than most stereotypical discussions. But we need to help public opinion embrace the facts.

~~-----Second of all, we need to do something about the~~

education of the educators. The education of educators, in my opinion, what I know about it -- and I have taken some education courses -- is largely superficial indoctrination. It is not teaching people to think, and to teach people to think, we need to go back to that and embrace a curriculum which gets back to a classical understanding of the roots of Western civilization and truth and right and wrong, the classical virtues.

We need to, thirdly, do something in the courts to reduce the threat that the ACLU has when they say: If you do this, we'll sue you. That puts the kibosh on many experiments, much flexibility we might otherwise have.

Next, two other quick points, we need to show more sensitivity to parents. When parents raise objections, we need to take them seriously. They are the prime educators of their children. We need to listen to them and not alienate them, to the extent we can. Educators need to play catch-up in that area, I think.

Finally, we need to unshackle teachers. Teachers from their education and from the courts and from the information they get when they go away and have retreats, that the fundamentalists are out to get you; and here's how

to defend yourself against them. We need to unshackle teachers so that they can reflect their own personal beliefs and values and the cultural diversity which teachers represent can be a part of the corrective in the classroom, as they teach literature, as they respond to questions, as they choose extracurricular reading. Some teachers will be more religious. That will come through, others less. And this cultural diversity, by taking away the numbing monotony of the current situation would go a long way, I think, to giving kids the kind of broad-based cultural exposure they need.

MR. : For the life of me, I cannot understand why anyone would oppose a voucher system or a tuition tax credit system. It's just amazing to me, and it seems to me the roles are always reversed on this, because the conservatives are always viewed as a people who want to "impose their values on everybody."

But it seems to me the simple solution, if everybody's concerned about imposing values, let's maximize choice. It's to maximize choice. Like Pastor Neuhaus said, put the parents in charge again.

And if you want a system that is diverse, which will be more flexible -- we do this in almost every other

form of endeavor we have. We don't try to establish a monopoly, which is [inaudible] to competition, but we've done this in education.

It seems to me I think it's probably the quicker fix. I'm not sure in terms of America's future it's the best fix, but the quickest fix to this problem would be to say: We'll let everybody pick the schools. We'll set minimum rules in terms of competency, of what subjects have to be taught, in terms of broad, general guidelines, and let the parents choose. It seems to me that's a logical answer to a problem.

Like Dr. Shanker said, if you were in any other country, the people would go nuts if you assigned people to schools. It's crazy.

MR. WILLIAMS: George, do you want to make one last remark? Use the mike.

MR. DALY: What is that other than freedom of choice. And there are other reasons in this country why we don't have freedom of choice in schools. And if you say, well, you can either pay your money to the government and go to public school, or get it back from the government and go to whatever school you want to, what would happen to the

schools in Charlotte. They would overnight be instantly segregated, wouldn't they?

MR. : I'd disagree with you on that point. I think the dilemma that you face, and I think this is true, implicit in any choice there is some underlying value. I will say it one more time.

Implicit in any choice you make, you have to assume underlying value. In my system, my underlying value is not that everybody has the same education in a much more stringent way than we have now. My value says I think freedom is the more important thing. So implicit in every choice you make - - and this is the nub of the problem you have with education. You cannot make a choice about anything without referring to an underlying value.

But I'm still saying that if we have this diverse group of people in America and we have these tremendous problems we're trying to solve these people's beliefs. And if you assume from your position that religion is a very private thing, and when you start mixing religions, you get this volatile situation, let's separate them out. Let's let everybody pick the schools they want to go to, and the parents will be better off.

I go back to your basic point. And I know many parents who feel this way, who are really disturbed about the fact that here in Charlotte you have a choice of sending your child to an exclusive private school, limiting their exposure to the rest of the world. I've heard that comment many, many times. I just don't think that you'll get a society of the type that you want or what you think will happen.

So I would rather trust the people to publicly finance education, make a public commitment that the government's going to finance it. But you get the choice of how you spend that money. I think it's a great system.

MR. SHANKER: You're dead wrong.

[Laughter.]

MR. SHANKER: You know, the choice that you're going to get in that system is not a choice of a parent to send the kid to the school that the parent wants. It's the choice of the school to pick the kids that they want. That's what you've got under that system.

Secondly, wherever you're going to get government money, you're going to get government control, and you're not going to have the private school that you now have.

Third, you are not a conservative; you are a

radical.

MR. : Whoa!

[Applause.]

MR. SHANKER: We have had our kids in this country for over 200 years go to this institution and build a nation, which is a miracle in terms of different groups of people being able to live with each other in relative harmony. We have preserved democracy longer than any other society.

Yes, we have some problems now, and we've had some in the past. But by and large, this country has worked. A conservative is not a person who takes an institution which has been part and parcel of a successful society and roll the dice and take a chance with something which has been totally untried. That's radicalism. It is not conservatism.

[Applause.]

MR. SHANKER: Every social experiment that has been tried, all sorts of schemes to control medical costs and other things, have somehow backfired. The predictions that we've had as to how they would work did not work.

Finally, one other thing on the choice issue, and that's this: Choice has to be balanced with other social consequences if the people of the country are paying for

schools. Today, one of the greatest problems we have in this country is the growing underclass: concentrations of illiteracy, poverty, disease, crime, drug use. And we seem to have no way of reaching in.

The best analysis of this, by William Julius Wilson at the University of Chicago in his book on the truly disadvantaged, says that once upon a time blacks who were doctors, lawyers, teachers and clergymen lived with other blacks because they were forced to by racist laws. Along came the civil rights revolution, a wonderful one in which black teachers and preachers and doctors and lawyers could live elsewhere, and they did. And it's a great thing that they are able to live elsewhere and have moved elsewhere and have other opportunities.

However, there was a consequence of this choice. The consequence is that all those who remained behind no longer had the leadership, the networks, the examples, the community that was there before. And if you take a concentration of people who can't help themselves and put them all together and don't give them the visible signs of the ability to move and to succeed and everything else, you allow one group of people to move while you permanently condemn another

group of people.

That's an issue you've got to deal with when you have school choice. Are the kids who are making it and who've got all the advantages going to move over and get seats in schools with other kids who are already making it? And are they going to leave the other kids who need these kids as their examples and as their helpers? And, after all, kids learns from each other, too. Are we going to pay a price? Are we going to give a few people an opportunity to be a little better in order to create large numbers of kids who are destined forever to fail?

Now, these are issues that you have to deal with if you're interested not only in the advancement of individuals, but in the future of our society.

MR. WILLIAMS: I have conflicting responsibilities and interests here. My interest is in having this go on as long as anyone is interested in listening. My duty is to say that it should have ended 14 minutes ago, and I am negligent in my responsibility as moderator to let it go on this long, which I am completely happy to be. But I am told that the discussion must end so we can go on with the next activities.

Is that right?

Next will be questions from the audience. So we can continue. Great. All right. Out the door at 11:30. We have 16 minutes.

MR. : [inaudible].

MR. McMILLAN: I shall make one response. It's a good technique which Mr. Shanker uses, and I congratulate him, to call me a name by saying I'm radical. Well, I was going to give you some radical countries like Canada and like France, for example, which do have the voucher system. So to say that you're going to be a radical, you have to be very careful. I would hope that a liberal would be more broad-minded and look beyond the narrow experience of this country into other countries where it has worked.

And I go back to the point, I agree with the gentleman. This is a good way to solve the problem, and it's not radical. Other people do it. You shouldn't have a monopoly, I think, on education where the parents do have a say. And they don't.

MR. SHANKER: Neither France nor Canada have voucher systems. They do have some public support for religious schools.

-Let me just, on the comments made on the questioner,

it is a wrong assumption to believe that if you have choice the people will necessarily make decisions on the basis of what's a better school. People constantly make decisions on the basis of which one is more convenient, which one will take my kid an hour earlier and keep the kid an hour later.

Also, don't exclude private for-profit schools which would open up, run by major corporations where they'd have commercials on television telling the kids that if they get their parents to send them to that school that they will get a toy or a game or a prize or a visit to Disneyland.

I mean, once you open this thing up to an open commercial voucher system, people are going to be very creative. And you're going to create types of schools and types of incentives that you can't imagine right now. So the question is: Do you want to gamble with what you have in order to get what you might? You might get something better. I agree with you. You might get a total disaster.

MR. : Also in response to the question and in response to Ralph McMillan, Canada and France do not have the racial distinctions and the racial problems that we have in this country. I think perhaps the debate is departing a little from religion and getting over into more cultural

matters. But it seems to me that, for better or for worse, there has been a decision made in this country that education is going to be a socializing influence, and not necessarily educational in the sense of learning Shakespeare and learning mathematics, but in learning how to get along with everybody else in the country.

The public school systems are now the melting pot between black and white, and I think that the voucher system is a disguised attempt to get away from that. If you want to confront it head on and say we don't like that social value judgment that has been made and that has been implemented, then we can debate that. But the voucher system seems to me just a technique for avoiding that question under the guise of saying, oh, we'll just have this wonderful supermarket of choice.

MR. : [inaudible].

MR. : Would you object to creating a public school system in which there were wide variety of choices?

MR. : I would have a strong objection to having free choice about what public school you went to.

That has been ruled unconstitutional. It was called in those

very words freedom of choice, and that was the designated rubric in the middle '60s. It was overruled by the Supreme Court in the Charlotte-Mecklinburg school system case.

There's a different thing called having a wide diversity within the school system, open schools, traditional schools, regular schools, special schools. That, I think, is quite a different matter. But just to give the parent freedom to choose, or the child with the parent freedom to choose what school to go to is unconstitutional in this country.

MR. SHANKER: The freedom to choose doesn't have to be absolute. Right now it doesn't exist at all. Basically, your kid is assigned to a school, period. Freedom of choice can be within the limits of constitutional constraints and any other desirable policies. And there are places in this country that have established a series of magnets that are quite different, and they make conscious decisions that there is free choice. Just as you could give preference, for instance, to a brother or sister so that there's convenience in transportation, you can also say that a certain number of -- that the school will not be an all-white school or an all-black-school.

There's nothing wrong with saying that, sure, there's choice but it depends on is there a seat, brothers and sisters together if you can do it, no segregation, black or white. You can put these constraints on and still have a system of very substantial choice.

MR. : What methods or models are being used to facilitate a dialogue about our religious pluralism? And what role can a university play in that?

PASTOR NEUHAUS: Well, I think the role of the university is critically important in this respect: that just as there is what I have called the naked public square, and in education the naked public classrooms, there's also a kind of analogue to this in the naked academy where it has been assumed, at least by many, that there is a style of objectivity, which is largely a fictitious objectivity, that should prevent in the university; that the university is the place where discourse transcends particularistic beliefs, histories, traditions and such.

Now, there is something that's very valuable in that tradition, and here is where I think one has to have a nuance to critique. It's a classically sort of secular enlightenment, understanding of the university. There is no

going back before the enlightenment or a reversing of that, nor should we want to. There are enormous benefits that have come out of this tradition that many on the left too dismissively refer to as the liberal, individualistic, bourgeois understanding.

At the same time, we have to recognize that real education is not advanced by a university, in whatever discipline or department, where people pretend that there is an individualistic, autonomous, neutral place to stand where arguments can be offered that are agreed to by all rational actors. That is fictitious. But, rather, where we understand the university is a place where disciplined discourse, mutually respectful, engages the alternative traditions which together comprise what we roughly call Western civilization.

In the university, as Al Shanker said with regard to the grade school or the secondary school, we also have to realize that, contra that objection that was raised by the social science teachers, we are unapologetically part of a tradition. One of the great glories of this that we call the liberal Western tradition is that it is not only prepared to, but eager to engage alternative traditions, and to do so in a way that is disciplined and respectful. And in the engage-

ment, all will be changed. We ourselves will be changed in our own understanding, our self-understanding of the tradition of which we're a part.

But for the university, especially in the humanities and in the social sciences, especially there, for the university to recapture a sense of itself as the at least elite custodian of the traditions that constitute the tradition of which we're a part would, I think, be a formula for educational renewal of very exciting dimensions.

MR. : [inaudible].

MR. SHANKER: Well, if you do values clarification, you're essentially getting the kids to participate in a view that will end up with the notion that whatever they like or think is best, is right and is best. And it's essentially, ultimately, a pop psychology, "me" kind of thing.

Now, if you try to approach it from a religious point of view, you'll get objections. But the thing is, we don't agree on religion but we do agree on what the moral values are. People do not -- the teacher can certainly talk about honesty, about why one should keep a promise or keep one's word, about why one should respect parents and love countries, about courage, about willingness to sacrifice for

higher goals, through literature, through poetry, through stories, through heroes in our history, through a whole bunch of things, through Bible stories. That's not illegal. All of those things. And there's nothing wrong with having children in terms of their participation talk about how they come at it from their religion or what their parents tell them. There's nothing wrong with that.

The crazy thing is I don't see any parents coming to school saying: I don't want you to teach my kid that honesty is good. Or: I want you to teach them that murder is okay. You don't have that. There is broad agreement on common values. Yes, when they get older, you can get into these moral dilemmas and show that occasionally there's a problem. But certainly not at the elementary school level or most of the junior high school level within the public schools. I don't see what the problem is.

Nobody is going to come and attack you for teaching that honesty is a good thing.

MR. : Okay. Agreement. Last question.

MR. : [inaudible].

MR. : I think, first off, that I've been mislabeled here. I do not oppose parental concern for what

their children are learning in the schools. I think that it is important for parents to participate and to know what's going in the schools and to know what their children are learning.

I think that in the particular instance that you are citing, the second statement in particular, I would take as a statement of fact. Today, more and more women are entering the work force. I think, though, that there are a lot of people who would read some values into that. I think that a good place for that to be talked out is in the home and in the school. And there is room for that to happen.

Certainly, being a homemaker, staying at home, is a legitimate choice, and there is nothing in the statement that has been taken out of the curriculum that would suggest otherwise. It can be discussed.

The same is true with the first statement that you mentioned about man as a sexual animal. There are people who would like that to a theory of evolution and would set it apart from anything else that might be going on in the world. Again, I think that that is something that you can deal with as a value or as a belief, without excising it from the curriculum and keeping it from being read, heard or thought

about by other students.

MR. : I would like to continue this, but
the airlines will not wait.

Thank you all for coming. This debate continues
every time Ralph McMillan comes to my office. So feel free
to step in sometime.

Thank you to the UNCC for doing this.

[Applause.]

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