

**Eight Challenges
for
Christian Parents**

by

Leon Stansfield

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**Cover photo on Oregon beach
by Leon Stansfield**

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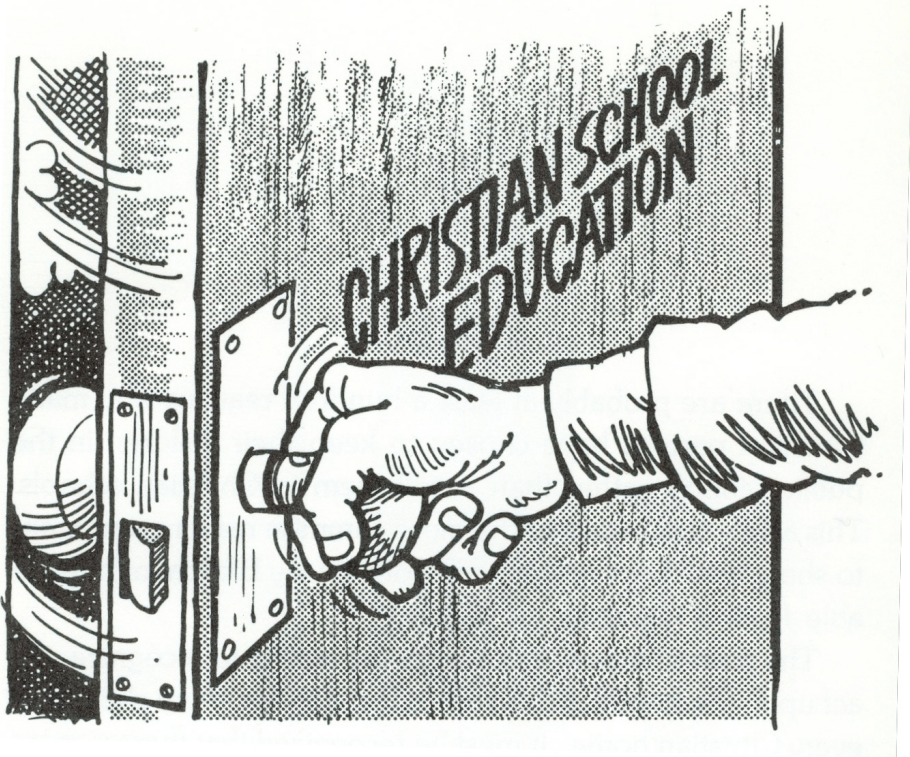
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Preface

There are probably at least a hundred reasons why many Christian parents have chosen to keep their children in the public schools rather than enroll them in Christian schools. This article takes eight of the more common reasons and seeks to show how these reasons are not actually Biblical or reasonable from a Christian perspective.

The author hopes to persuade the reader to recognize and act upon the need for Christian education for every child from every Christian home. It must be recognized that there is more involved than mere mental persuasion. This is a matter of the Spirit. I am discussing the means to our children's true success both for the moment of time we call "this life" and for endless eternity.

The goal is that the will of God may be done in the life of every reader and in the lives of the reader's children and grandchildren. May the Holy Spirit bring enlightenment and blessing.



Introduction

The purpose of this article is to open new doors of understanding concerning Christian school education. Three audiences are specifically in view.

First is the group of Christian parents who now have their children enrolled in Christian schools. Within this group there are those who have decided to give the Christian school a "test run" because friends or acquaintances got them interested. But depth of commitment is still in the future. There is a "wait and see" attitude. Others within this group are in the second or third year with Christian schools and are growing in their commitment. Still others in this group have developed a deep conviction that their children will have a Christian education at any cost.

Second is a far larger group of Christian parents who have their children enrolled in the public school. When confronted with the

questions: *"What kind of education does God expect me to provide for my children?"* and *"What does **God's Word** say?"* they consistently arrive at an answer different than this article will endorse. The purpose of this article is to cause those Christians who advocate public schools to rethink some of the basic assumptions which they have made in support of their position.

The third group is the group of young married couples whose young children will be of school age within the next few years. Hopefully, the thoughts and challenges of this article will aid you who are young parents to make an early and wise decision to make whatever sacrifice is necessary to provide your children with a Christian education through your home, your church and your local Christian school.

No matter which audience you may represent, won't you please join me for the few minutes it will take to read this article?

Perhaps you hold some strong feelings favoring the public schools, and perhaps you hold some unexamined prejudices against the Christian schools. This article will demonstrate that there exists a very strong moral, philosophical, and Biblical basis for either home schooling your children or enrolling them in a Christian school — and avoiding any secular school, public or private. This article will challenge you to seriously consider Christian schools and home schools as not just options in a free society, but as a vital necessity, even a Biblical mandate, for our times.

Appreciation is certainly due to those Christians and others of moral character who, as teachers and administrators in the public schools, have diligently labored for us and for the children of our nation, whose dedication, sacrifice and example continue to be worthy of emulation. Let no one say that this article is a reflection upon them personally.

As a product of the public elementary, secondary, and post-secondary schools of Oregon, and as a former teacher and school principal in the public schools of Maryland, Montana and Oregon, I understand the public side of education reasonably well. I spent thirty

years in the public schools, twenty as a student and ten as an educator. I was a teacher, then a principal. I regard my move to Christian schools in 1978 as a miracle of God's guidance and, based upon Romans 12:1-2, an experience which might be called a "second conversion." There was no immediate human instrument involved in either my conversion to Christ in 1954 or in my conversion to Christian schools in 1978. It was the work of the Holy Spirit who leads believers into all truth. Beginning in 1978 I spent 21 years as a Christian school administrator and teacher, working in Christian schools in Washington, Oregon, California, and Colorado.

Thank you for taking your time to weigh the claims of the following eight challenges. Your comments, critique, suggestions or questions are welcomed and appreciated at any time.

Leon Stansfield, Stockton, California, April, 2009



WHO IS MOLDING YOUR CHILD?

Challenge 1: The Strong Christian Home

"We are a strong Christian home. The Scriptures teach us to bring our children up 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord' (Eph. 6:4). We will be able to raise up our children in the way of the Lord through regular family devotions, spending quality time with our children, counseling them and praying with them, keeping them faithful to the house of God, keeping them active in the church youth group, and maintaining a careful watch over their music and television. They will have the strength of character and power from the Lord to make it through the public schools victoriously."

Let's suppose that you hold to this precept. You probably believe that your child will be a stronger Christian for having weathered the storm.

Are you now on a daily basis practicing all these parental responsibilities just listed? If you are, you are almost certainly in the minority. But let's suppose that you are faithfully carrying out all of these on a consistent basis. You are having regular family devotions, you are spending quality time with your children, you are counseling and praying with them, you are taking them regularly to church and youth group activities, and you are carefully screening their movies, television and music. You are a rare parent. Your children are indeed blessed. Still, let me ask you to consider not only the apparent outward victory, but what is happening on the **inside** of your child on a daily basis while in school.

Everyone agrees that education has a large share in the shaping of an individual's life — his goals, his aspirations, the way he thinks. Let's dwell briefly on the shaping effect which a secular education has on **anyone's** mind, and the way one thinks, be it a Christian or non-Christian mind.

The greatest danger of the secular school is the danger that few Christians even see. That danger is that the federal and state governments, many local school boards, the teachers' unions, the ACLU, many of the teachers, and the curriculum have taken a deliberate position that **God, or any reference to God, is to be completely omitted**. The deliberate omission of any reference to God in all of education is an extremely important fact. It is an abomination to God, the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and of every living thing. Jesus made it very clear that "He that is not with me is against me . . ." (*Matthew 12:30 and Luke 11:23*). The logical and expected result of this position on the part of secular education ought to be of highest concern to all sincere Christian parents. Ultimately, the danger is that if the secular school is highly successful in achieving its unwritten, but clearly evident goal, then your child will gain a well-trained, secular, materialistic, natural mind, well-practiced in keeping God out of the picture.