

The Hijacking of Homeschooling

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The apostle Paul wrote that he marveled that the Christians in Galatia had so soon turned from grace to another gospel, the bondage of legalism. I marvel at how quickly Christian home educators are turning from the freedoms they have won over the past couple of decades back to the bondage of government control. As the patriarch of a family that began homeschooling in the 1980s, perhaps I've earned the right to look with a critical eye on younger parents who take for granted their freedom to teach their children 1) at home and 2) without government interference. Keep in mind that there are two freedoms—two birthrights—involved here. Parents who believe they have made a shrewd deal that allows them to retain the first while bargaining away the second for a pottage of textbooks and other "benefits" have indeed been deluded. And make no mistake about it, being deluded necessitates a deluder. In this case, it is the education establishment wielding the bait of government funding.

The approach is not new. When the serpent tempted Eve with the forbidden fruit, he knew that as soon as she and Adam ate it, they would be fatally walloped by the law. This was his premeditated purpose. In the last few years, federal, state, and local government in the United States has taken a similar approach to gaining control in areas where it previously had little or none. Let parents take warning. Charter schools, by whatever name they may go under, have been instituted for one purpose. That purpose is to hijack homeschooling. To put it more mildly, they want to gain the ascendancy in the homeschool movement and turn it into carefully supervised and regulated public education at home. This could very well turn out in many ways to be worse than public school itself. Charter school families are, in essence, asking school authorities to extend their jurisdiction of regulation into the privacy of the home. As officials begin to regulate textbooks from Christian publishers out of their programs, we must wonder where the line will be drawn, if anywhere. If Christian textbooks are forbidden, what about the Bible? What about prayer? Will school authorities expect charter school families to become secular from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., or will they expect it 24 hours a day?

Charter schools threaten not only the homeschool movement, they threaten the sanctity and privacy of the home. Even more fundamental is the fact that the charter school movement, as well as other trends,

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threatens freedom of religion and our obligation to worship God as our consciences dictate. Let us not be as Esau, but instead, despite financial hardship and persecution, "let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).