

“It is an affront to treat falsehood with complacency.” Thomas Paine

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BEHIND THE IVORY CURTAIN

By: Malcolm A. Kline

Or why you can't pick a college out of the U.S. News and World Report

When the increasingly rare academic contrarian speaks out about what is going on behind ivory-covered walls, you invariably find that the situation is worse than you thought it was.

“We don't collect data on teacher loads,” economist Richard Vedder said at an Accuracy in Academia author's night on April 7, 2011. “Why?”

“We don't want you to know that we don't work very hard.” Vedder teaches at Ohio University.

“My university has a secretary of state,” Vedder said at the AIA event at the Heritage Foundation.

“Why we have a secretary of state is beyond me.”

“I'm surprised we aren't opening embassies.” Vedder also heads the Center for College Affordability and Productivity (CCAP). His findings at CCAP and his willingness to share them have a ready audience among students, although they strain the professed tolerance of academic authorities.

“When I'm invited to campus these days, it's by students not faculty,” Vedder avers. “In fact, the faculty usually protests.” Small wonder: Vedder's findings, to put it mildly, go deeply against the current wisdom in faculty lounges.

“We have fewer lower-income kids going to college now than we did in 1970 despite Pell grants and dropping money out of airplanes on campus and everything else,” Vedder averred at the AIA event.

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Vedder takes an especially jaundiced view of the U. S. News & World Report rankings of colleges, particularly their weighting of university spending as a benchmark of academic quality. “This is a great racket for us,” Vedder noted wryly. “We can demand raises and say it will improve our rankings.”



At CCAP, Vedder and his associates have come up with their own rankings in which they put more weight on some questions than U. S. News might, namely:

1. What do students think of the courses they take and their instructors? “We look at retention rates,” Vedder explained. “We ask, ‘do they come back after freshman year?’”
2. What happens to students after they graduate? “Do they get jobs?” Vedder asked pointedly.
3. “Are you going to get clobbered financially if you go to this school?” is another question Vedder asks. “We look at debt and default.”
4. Do students graduate on time? “To U. S. News

and the Department of Education, 6 years is acceptable,” Vedder explained. “We use four years because that’s what schools advertise.”

5. Are students successful in school?

Vedder admits he would like more data to rank schools by. “I’d love to have data on ‘do students learn something in school,’” he told the crowd of Capitol Hill interns.



Vedder’s appearance at the AIA author’s night was sponsored by the Frank A. Fusco Foundation which supports the AIA Conservative University lecture series.

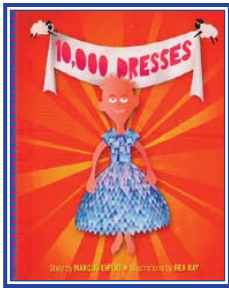


SQUEAKY CHALK



by Deborah Lambert

HEATHER HAS THREE MOMMIES?



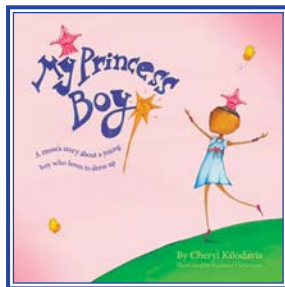
Students at the Redwood Heights Elementary School in Oakland, California got a megadose of pro-transgender propaganda a couple of months ago. During a two-day session at the end of May, teachers used “all-girl geckos and transgendered clownfish to teach gender diversity lessons,” according to edwatchblogspot.

For example, in the lesson called “Gender Spectrum Diversity Training,” students were taught that “gender is not inherently nor solely connected to one’s physical anatomy.”

Redwood Heights principal Sara Stone describes the sessions as part of a larger effort to address the problem of bullying at the school.

Meanwhile, Brad Dacus, head of the Pacific Legal Foundation, questions “the legitimacy of the topic” and offers “legal counsel to parents who oppose gender diversity lessons.” Although there is no state law that allows parents to “opt out” of the “pro-transgender indoctrination,” Dacus says that his group can at least provide concerned parents advice on how to protect their children.

Titles on the school reading list include “*Boy, Girl or Both?*” and *My Princess Boy* for grades K-1, *10,000 Dresses* for Grades 2-3, and *Three Dimensions of Gender* for Grades 4-5, the age group that was also introduced to the song, “All I want to Be is Me.”



SCHOOLS OR PRISONS?

In case you haven’t noticed, the influence of Big Brother on our nation’s school children is increasing at an alarming rate. In fact, “our public school students are being watched, tracked, recorded, searched and controlled like never before,” according to businessinsider.com.

While police officers rarely visited public schools 20 years ago, today’s “students are being handcuffed and arrested in staggering numbers.” Some of the most outrageous incidents include the following:

A Pennsylvania school district “secretly recorded more than 66,000 images of students using webcams that were embedded in school- issued laptops that the students were using at home.”

- ◆ “A TSA official was recently brought in to oversee students searches at the Santa Fe High School gym.”
- ◆ The U.S. Department of Agriculture is spending huge amounts of money to install surveillance cameras in the cafeterias of public schools so that government control freaks can closely monitor what our children are eating.”
- ◆ “A six-year-old girl in Florida was handcuffed and sent to a mental facility after throwing temper tantrums at her elementary school.”
- ◆ “In 2009, an eight-year old boy in Massachusetts was sent home from school and forced to undergo a psychological evaluation because he drew a picture of Jesus on the cross.”
- ◆ This June, “13 parents in Duncan, S.C. were actually arrested for cheering during a high school graduation.”



FORMER PREZ MAKES “FIVE WORST” LIST



The student yearbook at Arkansas’ Russellville Middle School caused quite a stir this year for featuring a list of the “Top Five Worst People of All Time.”

The yearbook list included the following names:

- Adolph Hitler
- Osama bin Laden
- Charles Manson

SQUEAKY CHALK

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- George W. Bush
- Dick Cheney

Shortly after the books were printed, District superintendent Randall Williams hastily called it an “oversight,” but it was too late, according to Fox News. Parents had already seen the yearbook and were outraged by the inclusion of a former president and vice president on the list. Even the district’s solution to cover the list with tape didn’t work, since apparently the tape could be pulled off

So far, disciplinary measures for those who allowed this to occur have not been announced.

IS TEACHERS’ STRESS CONTAGIOUS?

The Wall Street Journal recently reported that negative classroom environments – often the result of school budget cuts – can cause students, like teachers, to feel stressed out.”

The article on healthcenter.ucdavis.edu noted that “First graders whose teachers are exhausted or lack need materials show more signs of stress, according to a study of 10,700 first-grade parents and teachers published recently in the Journal of Health and Social Behavior. Students in more negative environments, such as classrooms where teachers feel disrespected by their co-workers, also have more behavioral and emotional problems, after controlling for other factors, according to the student led by Melissa Milkie, a sociology professor at the University of Maryland, College Park.”

There is a suggestion that this might occur because teachers “that lack resources ‘become more harsh or frustrated,’ the study says. Or because ‘dilapidated surroundings and insufficient materials symbolically devalue children.’”

The results inspired one commentator to observe that “This seems like an Onion headline. News alert:

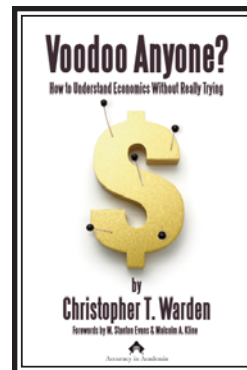
Children in homes with no food often feel hungry.”

CALIFORNIA PARENT POWER CHALLENGE

The California parent empowerment law, passed only last year, is now under assault from an array of bureaucrats, state legislators and teachers’ unions. Their goal? To tie parents’ hands with “burdensome requirements and obtuse rules,” according to the City Journal’s Ben Boychuk, who predicts that “parents may find they’re once again left to fend for themselves against an education establishment heavily invested in preserving its prerogatives.”

The law states that if half the parents “at a chronically failing school sign a petition, the local school district must adopt” one of several suggested reforms that include converting the school to a charter or firing half the teaching staff and the administration. In one case, parents in Compton, California used their newly won clout to petition the County Board of Education to open a new charter school a few blocks from the under-performing McKinley Elementary School. On May 25th, the board approved an application to open the charter school next fall. However, this victory occurred not because of the parents’ protest, but because of a series of technicalities in the state’s charter law that mandated its approval.

Yvonne Chan, “one of California’s charter-school pioneers and the founding principal of Vaughn New Century Schools in Pacoima, California,” said “the struggle to find clarity with the parent-empowerment law reminds her of the fight to start Vaughn nearly 20 years ago in the face of recalcitrant school-district bureaucrats. Her advice: ‘Parents should just duke it out.’”



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A LESSON IN DA'WAH

by Val Jensen

Da'wah (from Arabic *da'ā*, to “call,” “invoke,” “summon,” to “invite.”)



Perhaps, it is safe to say that by now the average American has a certain level of familiarity with the term *jihad* and knows more or less its significance when relating it to fundamental and radical Islam. Continuing in this vein of thought, perhaps it is also safe to say that on average, Americans have practically no familiarity with the term *da'wah* and how it relates to the overall Islamic narrative, but also correlates with the radical agenda.

Da'wah, according to the deputy executive director of the Institute for Counter Terrorism in Herzliya, Israel, Dr. Col. (Res.) Eitan Azani, translates as “propagation based on non-violent means aimed to repair the Muslim society through education, preaching, and social welfare.” He explains that *da'wah* is found all over the world in Islamic centers, mosques, college campuses and madrasahs (public schools). It is also translated to mean “missionary work to bring new believers to Islam, or to reinforce belief,” according to the New Encyclopedia of Islam (page 114).

Perhaps a good question is, why would the average American even care about the term *da'wah*? The simple answer, according to Dr. Azani, who is also a professor at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, is that *da'wah* and *jihad* are inextricably linked and can serve the same purpose. That purpose is the full realization

of the *ummah*, or a world that is governed solely by Islamic law (*Shari'ah*).

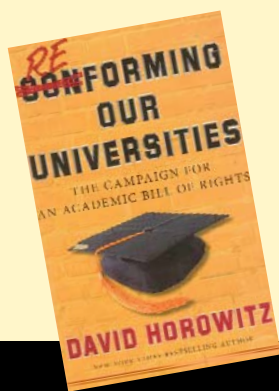
The world falls into two main conditions for Islam: *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb*. The two terms are defined by the New Encyclopedia of Islam (page 111-112) as:

dar al-Islam (lit. the “abode of peace”). Territories in which Islam and the Islamic religious Law (the *shari'ah*) prevail.

dar al-harb (lit. the “abode of war”). Territories in which Islam does not prevail.

This infers that in order to reach the full realization of the *ummah*, these two territories are in a constant state of hostility toward one another and the goal is to reconcile *dar al-harb* with *dar al-Islam* through *jihad* and *da'wah* so that eventually *dar al-harb* will be in subjugation to *dar al-Islam*, according to Dr. Azani. The repercussions are clear when speaking about *jihad* in these terms as Muhammad himself embodied the very nature of reconciling these two conditions through *jihad* or conquest of Arabia and the subsequent Arab conquests of the Middle East, northern Africa and Spain in the 7th and early 8th centuries. The repercussions of *da'wah* are much more subtle and run the risk of falling into the category of Islamophobia and political incorrectness (which could explain the lack of attention in mainstream media) but are, in effect, just as dangerous as overt *jihad*, as Dr. Azani warns.

The real crux of the argument is this: the *Qur'an* states in Surah 5:48 that there should be no separation between Islamic religion and governance and when Mus-



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lms that wish to sincerely follow the *Qur'an* are given many verses such as *Surah* 8:38-39 which state to fight those who have disbelief until all of religion is for Allah, then it becomes logically alarming because if taken literally and true, it means the eventual state of the world should be in submission to Allah and Islamic governance. Radical Muslims recognize this and do this forcefully through *jihad* but are often aided by non-violent measures of *da'wah* (charitable funding, proselytizing). Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, explains this when he speaks about obedience.

There are many Muslims for whom *da'wah* simply means a form of missionary work in the hopes that people find Allah, and to whom violence or world domination plays no part. However, Dr. Azani's warning concerns the societal threat of those who seek *da'wah*, supported logically from the *Qur'an*, as linked with *jihad* in a hope of a world under *dar al-Islam*. As the term *jihad* will probably forever take on the connotation of a violent struggle and holy war instead of a personal struggle for betterment in the West, *da'wah* also runs the risk of developing a negative connotation without those Muslim leaders who can boldly stand up to set the theological record straight.

Val Jensen is an intern at the American Journalism Center, a training program run by Accuracy in Media and Accuracy in Academia.

Freedom in the States

Michael Watson, June 10, 2011

States that respect individual autonomy are more successful than those which do not, according to Drs. William Ruger and Jason Sorens, affiliated with the libertarian Mercatus Center think tank at George Mason University. In their report, *Freedom in the 50 States: An Index of Personal and Economic Freedom*, Drs. Ruger and Sorens rank New Hampshire and South Dakota as the freest states and New York as the least free of the states.



On June 8, political scientist and journalist Michael Barone joined them at a policy forum hosted by the Cato Institute in Washington, DC to discuss their findings and the implications. Barone noted that even though the New Deal weakened the differences in policy between states under federalism, Americans still leave states that have poor public policies. Barone said that in fiscal policy but especially in cultural policy the states have considerable leeway to allow different levels of freedom. Ruger and Sorens found evidence in their study that higher levels of freedom in the index brought higher economic growth and higher inward migration rates.

Both Barone, who noted that San Diego County, Cal-

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER



By *Malcolm A. Kline*

July, 2011

Dear Reader,

On page 6 we feature articles by two of the students in the American Journalism Center internship program that Accuracy in Academia runs with its sister organization Accuracy in Media. In operation for the past half decade, the AJC has trained more than 60 inters, one-third of whom have gone on to work in the media or in media internships.

Accordingly, we can show you some of the places that AJC grads have gone on to work in:

Doug Giles, The Washington Examiner

Alana Goodman, Commentary magazine

Natalia Angulo-Rico is now El Diario Editorial Intern at ImpreMedia

Mytheos Holt, speech writer, Sen. Barasso

Emily Ham, Online Advertising Executive at Hattiesburg American

Scott Whitlock, Media Research Center

Anthilla Bradley became Technical Writer 1 at WOOD Consulting Services, Inc. in September 2010

Dierdre Almstead, Sen. John Cornyn

Christine Hall, American Solutions

Anthony Kang, editorial assistant, Bleacher Report

Melinda Zosh, Intern at WDBJ7

Emily Russo Miller. Reporter at Roswell Daily Record

Matt Hadro, Newsbusters

Sandy Linczer, Quality Control at LibreDigital publishing

Bethany Stotts, marketing assistant, IGI Global

Jeff Waldman, QA Specialist at Lumen Legal

Michelle Treasure is now Assistant Editor & Administrative Assistant at BYU Marriott School

As with everything that we do, our goal is to make academia and the media better places than we found them. As with everything we do, we could not do it without you.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mal Kline". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "K".

Mal Kline
Executive Director

ifornia had grown at less than the national average over the last ten years, and the co-authors gave evidence that the relation between freedom and higher population growth would hold even if the pleasantness of the climate were constant.

All the panelists remarked on the regional variation of the results. Ruger noted that although he expected traditionally Democratic states to rate high in personal freedom, and traditionally Republican states to rate high in economic freedom, regional variation eliminated this relationship. Northeastern states rated poorly on both personal and economic freedom, while Mountain West states rated generally high in both categories. In both categories the percentage of non-Democrats in a jurisdiction was generally correlated with higher freedom, although the relationship is much weaker in personal freedom.

Drs. Ruger and Sorens equally weight “personal freedom” and “economic freedom” to create the aggregate score. Drs. Ruger and Sorens analyzed over 200 public policies and divided them into “paternalism,” “fiscal policy,” and “regulatory policy” categories. The

policies and categories were then weighted and an aggregate score of total freedom was developed. The most important single policy areas in the index were taxation, spending, education, gun control, labor regulation, and healthcare regulation.

Michael Watson is an intern at the American Journalism Center, a training program run by Accuracy in Media and Accuracy in Academia.



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