

The Blumenfeld Education Letter

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

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

The Scandalous State of Reading Instruction in Australia

Your editor has just returned from a five-week tour of Australia in which he was able to find out what is happening in education "Down Under." As most of my readers know, we have been told by the promoters and purveyors of Whole Language, that this "new" reading instruction program was developed in Australia and New Zealand where it has proven to be enormously successful.

The truth is quite the opposite. Whole Language is doing to literacy in Australia what it is doing to literacy in America. Of course, Whole Language is not really new. It is the latest adaptation of the whole-word, look-say, sight reading method which teaches children to read English as if it were Chinese, an ideographic writing system. We now know that imposing an ideographic teaching technique on an alphabetic writing system can cause reading disability.

The good people who brought me to Australia are as aware of this as we are in the United States. Thus, the three seminars I gave on teaching intensive phonics in Adelaide, Sydney, and Queensland were well attended and very well received by the par-

ents, home schoolers, and Christian school teachers who attended them.

What follows are reports in the Australian press about the reading problem in that country and the falling academic standards caused by the decline in literacy skills. During my visit I asked my hosts if they could provide me with documentary evidence of the educational problems plaguing Australia. Out of their files came a plethora of clippings from newspapers that graphically told the same tragic stories of declining literacy that routinely appear in U.S. newspapers. The stories will sound very familiar to American readers. (The stories are reproduced with original Australian punctuation):

The Courier-Mail (Brisbane, Queensland) 8/2/91

Falling standards 'a scandal'

The dramatic decline in the standard of Australian schools since World War II was scandalous, a senior academic said yesterday.

The University of Wollongong pro vice-chancellor, Professor Lauchlan Chipman, told an Australian Family Association lunch in Brisbane there was an enormous amount of evidence showing the de-

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