

Excellence and the University

A Colorado Springs *Gazette.com* article recently caught my attention. It was about Jane Hilberry, an English professor at Colorado College, who had been invited to speak to middle school children in the Springs. When leaders at the school discovered Hilberry's *Body Painting* book, they rescinded her invitation. According to the article, the book "features nudity on its cover and verse about . . . same-sex attraction" (Rabey 2009). A University of Northern Colorado website states, "Crazy Jane . . . makes appearances throughout Hilberry's work, seducing a bear, sleeping in a priest's bed, and generally transgressing social norms. Ultimately, the poet celebrates unconventional choices—to love both men and women, not to have children, and to abandon the attempt to find God in church" (Colorado Poets Center). Hilberry responded to the rescindment of her invitation by saying that she feels "deeply, deeply, deeply that art has in some ways saved [her] life, and the sad thing is the Colorado Springs School is not giving its kids a chance to have that experience" (Rabey 2009). Now here is my question: Would you rather have Professor Hilberry teach your *young* child or your *college-age* child? I believe that the best answer is *neither!*

You will recall from previous articles I have written that Bonnie and I are committed to "cradle to grave" Christian education for each of our four children. So you can imagine how intrigued I am by conversations I hear from time to time about the importance of Christian education. Some believe that Christian education is important during the primary years but think that secondary Christian education is less important, or vice versa. Others argue that Christian college education is what *really* matters but believe that K–12 Christian education isn't really necessary. For the record, I believe that "cradle to grave" Christian education is one of the best means available to me as a father in the achievement of one of my primary goals in life—that each of my four children will grow up to be thoroughly prepared, full-throttle, sold-out followers of Jesus Christ! For the remainder of this article, however, I will focus my thoughts on Christian college education, because soon many newly graduated Christian high school students, along with their parents, will be making college decisions for the fall.

Recently I witnessed a verbal assault on a mother who had the courage to publicly question the quality of the education her child and others would receive at a secular university. I believe that the degree to which an education aligns with truth is the degree to which it is excellent . . . or not. The sad fact is that one has to search diligently to find anything that even vaguely resembles an excellent, quality education at many of our "finest" secular colleges and universities today. Education that *contradicts* the foundational truth of the Word of God and *scorns* His Son, Jesus Christ—who is Truth personified—is miseducation.

Dinesh D'Souza writes the following in his book *What's So Great About Christianity*:

Psychologist Nicholas Humphrey argued in a recent lecture¹ that just as Amnesty International works to liberate political prisoners around the world, secular teachers and professors should work to free children from the damaging influence of their parents' religious instruction. . . .

Philosopher Richard Rorty argued that secular professors in the universities ought "to arrange things so that students who enter as bigoted, homophobic religious fundamentalists will leave college with views more like our own" [(Boffetti 2004)] . . .

This is how many secular teachers treat the traditional beliefs of students. The strategy is not to argue with religious views or to prove them wrong. Rather it is to subject them to such scorn that they are pushed outside the bounds of acceptable debate. This strategy is effective because young people who go to good colleges are extremely eager to learn what it means to be an educated Harvard man or Stanford woman. . . .

Children spend the majority of their waking hours in school. Parents invest a good portion of their life savings in college education to entrust their offspring to people who are supposed to educate them. Isn't it wonderful that educators have figured out a way to make parents the instruments of their own undoing? Isn't it brilliant that they have persuaded Christian moms and dads to finance the destruction of their own beliefs and values? Who said atheists weren't clever? (2007, 35–37)

For a real life example of this, you need look no further than this *Gazette.com* article I've cited. ACSI has as members 135 of the finest Christian colleges and universities in the world. As you consider colleges for the fall, I encourage you to visit www.acsi.org (select the *Higher Education* link under the Schools tab) and to consider a truly excellent Christian college education.

Note

1. Nicholas Humphrey, "What Shall We Tell the Children?" (Amnesty lecture, Oxford, February 21, 1997), http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/humphrey/amnesty.html.

References

- Boffetti, Jason. 2004. How Richard Rorty found religion. *First Things* (May). <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2008/09/how-richard-rorty-found-religion--45>. Quoted in D'Souza 2007, 35–36.
- Colorado Poets Center. Bibliography: Jane Hilberry. University of Northern Colorado. http://www.coloradopoetscenter.org/poets/hilberry_jane/index.html.
- D'Souza, Dinesh. 2007. *What's so great about Christianity*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing.
- Rabey, Steve. 2009. School snubs local poet over her 'body' of work. *Gazette.com*, December 4. <http://www.gazette.com/entertainment/poet-90315-uninvited-hilberry.html>.



Brian S. Simmons, President
Association of Christian Schools International