

March 2024

Four Steps That Ended the West and One to Revive It

David Goodwin

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DAVID GOODWIN

Four Steps That Ended the West and One to Revive It

PREFACE

Our goal for the 2024 Liberty University Law Review Symposium was to explore the case for educational freedom from multiple angles. While several of our other authors have focused on the proper role of parents and the civil government in education, those approaches represent only part of the American education system. Many of our articles are more poignantly focused on the legal aspects that this topic implicates, but Mr. David Goodwin provides a slightly different perspective. Mr. Goodwin is a seasoned educator, intellectual, author, and an advocate for Classical Christian schools.

He has written a book—a New York Times Best Seller—in which he considers the history of education and identifies, within the modern education system, problems that he argues Classical Christian education is equipped to address. Here, borrowing from his book, Mr. Goodwin offers a perspective on the history of education and the importance of private schools that the rest of our authors are not able to provide. We are grateful to Mr. Goodwin for his continuing work in the field of education and for his willingness to participate in our Symposium. It is our hope that his contributions will add to the robustness of our consideration of educational freedom in the United States.

AUTHOR

David Goodwin is the coauthor of *Battle For the American Mind: Uprooting a Century of Miseducation* with Pete Hegseth of FOX News. In 2022, the book released at number one on the New York Times Best Seller list. It remained on the list for twelve weeks and is believed to be the best selling book on education in over twenty years. He also authored *Discover*

Classical Christian Education” with over 100,000 copies in print. David was a founding board member and spent thirteen years as the headmaster of The Ambrose School, a Classical Christian school in Boise, Idaho. He currently serves as the President of the Association of Classical Christian Schools and is the editor of The Classical Difference Magazine. David holds an M.B.A. and B.I.S. from Boise State University and worked for a fortune 100 tech company before he quit to invest in classical Christian education. He grew up on an Idaho farm and now lives in Boise with his wife Stormy. They have three grown children, one of whom will begin teaching at a classical Christian school in the fall. You can read more from David Goodwin on <https://davidgoodwin.substack.com>.

ESSAY

FOUR STEPS THAT ENDED THE WEST
AND ONE TO REVIVE IT*David Goodwin*[†]

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I. INTRODUCTION

Humans have the astounding capacity to normalize nearly anything, no matter how unusual, unnatural, or evil. When we look at the Canaanite sacrifice of children,¹ the cannibalism of the Maori people,² the ancient Aztecs skinning their human victims like animals,³ the worship of stone and wood gods around the world,⁴ the sexual practices of Sodom and Gomorrah⁵ (or Rome and Greece⁶ for that matter), or the cultural practices of ancient people like the Celts,⁷ we see people who seem utterly unlike us. But in fact, they are just like us. An infant adopted at birth into an American family from anywhere in the world will, after growing up, be culturally indistinguishable from an American-born child raised in a similar family. If we could travel back through time to one of these “primitive” ancient cultures, adopt a newborn, and return him here, we would see the same thing.

We call these ancient cultures “primitive” because anthropologists and sociologists tell us that modern cultures have advanced beyond all that foolishness.⁸ As learned as these social scientists may seem, they do not explain much. They don’t seem to notice that we’ve returned to many of

¹ See, e.g., *Jeremiah* 19:4–5.

² See, e.g., Ian Barber, *Archaeology, Ethnography, and the Record of Maori Cannibalism Before 1815: A Critical Review*, 101 J. POLYNESIAN SOC’Y 241 (1992).

³ See, e.g., John Hester, *How to Feel Comfortable in Someone Else’s Skin*, LIBR. OF CONG. BLOGS: WORLDS REVEALED (Aug. 11, 2022), <https://blogs.loc.gov/maps/2022/08/how-to-feel-comfortable-in-someone-elses-skin/> (describing the ancient Aztec ritual of *Tlacaxipehualiztli*, which involved flaying human sacrifices).

⁴ See, e.g., *Idolatry*, ENCYC. BRITANNICA (Nov. 3, 2023), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/idolatry>.

⁵ See, e.g., *Genesis* 19.

⁶ See, e.g., *HOMOSEXUALITY IN GREECE AND ROME: A SOURCEBOOK OF BASIC DOCUMENTS* (Thomas K. Hubbard ed., 2003).

⁷ See, e.g., Proinsias Mac Cana & Myles Dillon, *Celtic Religion: Beliefs, Practices, and Institutions*, ENCYC. BRITANNICA (Feb. 9, 2016), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Celtic-religion/Beliefs-practices-and-institutions>.

⁸ See, e.g., Elman R. Service, *Primitive Culture*, ENCYC. BRITANNICA (Oct. 28, 2023), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/primitive-culture>.

these “primitive” practices under sanitized names like “choice” and “freedom” and “democracy.”⁹ The ancient Greeks discovered the true source of culture and, from their discovery, they began Western civilization—the most influential, unique, and powerful culture in history. And yet, somehow, despite the success of the West, it has become the most despised of all cultures among our present ruling class.¹⁰

In our book, *Battle for the American Mind*, Pete Hegseth and I explore the little-known Greek concept of “*paideia*.”¹¹ *Paideia* creates culture.¹² And it perpetuates it.¹³ The Greeks identified *paideia* and sought to create a superior culture that could self-govern by training up children intentionally as free men.¹⁴ “Without Greek cultural ideals, Greco-Roman civilization would not have been a historical unity, and the culture of the western world would never have existed.”¹⁵ With the right *paideia*, the Greeks believed man could be at least partially liberated from the tyranny of falsehood.¹⁶

Paideia appears in its noun form about six times in the New Testament and about fifty-one times in the Septuagint.¹⁷ *Paideia* can be translated

⁹ See, e.g., PETE HEGSETH & DAVID GOODWIN, *BATTLE FOR THE AMERICAN MIND: UPROOTING A CENTURY OF MISEDUCATION* 123 (2022).

¹⁰ See, e.g., Kwame Anthony Appiah, *There Is No Such Thing as Western Civilisation*, *THE GUARDIAN* (Nov. 9, 2016), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/09/western-civilisation-appiah-reith-lecture>; Peter Berkowitz, *The West’s War on the West*, *RealClearPolitics* (April 24, 2022), https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2022/04/24/the_wests_war_on_the_west_147515.html.

¹¹ See generally HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9.

¹² See *id.* at 30.

¹³ See *id.*

¹⁴ See, *Paideia*, ENCYC. BRITANNICA (Feb. 8, 1999), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/paideia>.

¹⁵ 1 WERNER JAEGER, *PAIDEIA: THE IDEALS OF GREEK CULTURE* xvii (Gilbert Highet trans., 1939).

¹⁶ See HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 51–52.

¹⁷ G3809 - *paideia* - *Strong’s Greek Lexicon (ESV)*, BLUE LETTER BIBLE, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3809/esv/mgmt/0-1/> (last visited Mar. 4, 2024); e.g., *Ephesians* 6:4; 2 *Timothy* 3:16; *Hebrews* 12:5, 7–8, 11. The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Old Testament (which was originally written in ancient Hebrew). See generally Ryan

numerous ways, such as *education, instruction, fear, admonishment, training, chastisement, nurture, or discipline*.¹⁸ In Scripture, *paideia* is most often translated as “discipline,” specifically within the context of virtue.¹⁹ The wide array of translations gives us some clue that *paideia* is not a simple noun—like *lamp* or even *wisdom*. In fact, *paideia* is filled with so much meaning that Harvard scholar Werner Jaeger’s definitive work on the word was three volumes—and yet was still incomplete.²⁰

Every culture has a *paideia*.²¹ Until classical Greece, informal education established a servile *paideia* in children.²² Emperors, kings, and despotic rulers were sure to want their citizens trained to follow, not to think.²³ The Greeks began their democracy in Athens with the practice of educating the youth to think for themselves—to make virtuous decisions rooted in transcendent reality rather than their own personal whims or pragmatic choices with short-lived benefits.²⁴ They trained children in the art of language and thought, called the *trivium*, or the three ways.²⁵ They taught them grammar, logic, and rhetoric.²⁶

While the Greek’s experiment with democracy was short, the Romans borrowed the concept of an intentional *paideia* from the Greeks and

Reeves, *What Is the Septuagint?*, GOSPEL COAL. (Aug. 12, 2018), <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/what-is-the-septuagint/>.

¹⁸ See G3809 - *paideia*, *supra* note 17.

¹⁹ See, e.g., *id.*; *Ephesians* 6:4; *2 Timothy* 3:16; *Hebrews* 12:5, 7–8, 11.

²⁰ See 1 JAEGER, *supra* note 15; 2 WERNER JAEGER, *PAIDEIA: THE IDEALS OF GREEK CULTURE: IN SEARCH OF THE DIVINE CENTRE* (Gilbert Highet trans., 1943); 3 WERNER JAEGER, *PAIDEIA: THE IDEALS OF GREEK CULTURE: THE CONFLICT OF CULTURAL IDEALS IN THE AGE OF PLATO* (Gilbert Highet trans., 1944).

²¹ HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 51.

²² *Id.* at 51–53.

²³ See generally *id.* at 51–52.

²⁴ See *id.* at 51–53.

²⁵ See Sabrina Little, *The Trivium: Revisiting Ancient Strategies for Character Formation*, 17 J. CHARACTER EDUC. 109 (2021) (discussing the *trivium*, how it was implemented into education, and its benefits).

²⁶ See *id.*

managed to keep their empire alive for almost 500 years.²⁷ Our American founding fathers recaptured that Roman spirit in forming the American federal republic.²⁸ But, after 250 years, the future of our republic is in grave jeopardy. If we have any hope of it lasting as long as Rome, we need to take radical action to restore a liberating *paideia*. However, the *paideia* we need is not the Greek form.

Christians picked up the mantle of *paideia* in the first century and this time, it lasted. By the end of the fourth century, Christians had Christianized the Western *paideia* to create the Western Christian Paideia (WCP).²⁹ The power of the Gospel to transform everything, especially culture, was unleashed.³⁰

The classical Greek *paideia* lacked a defined center—a transcendent basis of truth.³¹ Christianity filled this void with the Word made flesh and the truth of Scripture.³² The seven liberal arts of the Medieval church would eventually transform the whole world.³³ Grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy may not seem transformational, but education in these arts was and is powerful.

Christendom had many political leaders and governments, but as St. Augustine taught us, the City of God was where the action happened, not the City of Man.³⁴ Through monasteries, the church, and parishes across

²⁷ See HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 140; *Roman Empire*, ENCYC. BRITANNICA, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Roman-Empire> (last updated March 9, 2024).

²⁸ See HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 124–30.

²⁹ See *id.* at 46–50, 66.

³⁰ See *id.*

³¹ See *id.*

³² See *John* 1:1–5, 14.

³³ See HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 46–50, 66.

³⁴ “The City of God,” a concept derived from St. Augustine’s work of the same name, refers to a spiritual society consisting of God’s elect—people whom God has called to salvation. Thus, the City of God is filled with Christians who are united in their love for God and, by extension, each other. Augustine contrasted the City of God with the City of Man, which is the parallel “spiritual society” that consists of those who do not worship God but instead seek their own goals and pleasures. See *generally* AURELIUS AUGUSTINE, *THE CITY OF GOD* (Marcus Dodds ed. & trans., 2014) (Aurelius Augustine is also known as Saint Augustine of Hippo).

Europe, Asia, and North Africa, the WCP spread.³⁵ It soon dominated the known world and sat atop the western world for over 1,000 years.³⁶ Then, about 200 years ago, it was challenged. The WCP was eventually overtaken by the American Progressive Paideia (APP) in the first half of the 20th century, and then early in the 21st century, the Cultural Marxist Paideia (CMP).³⁷ Insanity and evil are now the bitter fruit of a *paideia* rooted in self-autonomy and atheism.³⁸ How did this happen? Like an orchard outside a city, the WCP fed the culture of the people until it was forgotten and taken for granted.³⁹ The trees slowly died and production dropped off. The city starved. We are now on the verge of subservience to new authoritarians and tyrants, promoting a new *paideia*. How do you lose something so powerful and important as the WCP? It took four steps and a lot of patience on the part of the progressive revolutionaries.

II. STEP ONE: THE ENLIGHTENMENT REDEFINES REALITY

In 1637, René Descartes published the *Discourse on Method*, in which he postulated: “I think therefore I am.”⁴⁰ This perspective on reality, which came to pervade Enlightenment thought, was rooted not in the transcendent, but in humanity. Even Christian scientists like Francis Bacon and John Locke furthered the Enlightenment, contributing to the rationalist movement that advanced science—not Christ—as the primary means of obtaining knowledge and governing, respectively.⁴¹ Before long, the word “Christ” was less often said than “God,” and “God” was reduced (through

³⁵ See HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 145–47.

³⁶ *See id.*

³⁷ *See id.* at 122–23.

³⁸ *See id.*

³⁹ *See id.*

⁴⁰ *See* RENÉ DESCARTES, DISCOURSE ON METHOD 28 (1912).

⁴¹ *See generally, e.g.*, FRANCIS BACON, NOVUM ORGANUM (John Devey ed., 1902) (1620); JOHN LOCKE, TWO TREATISES ON CIVIL GOVERNMENT (1884). While Bacon and Locke may not have sought to replace Christ with science, their less faithful Enlightenment counterparts eagerly co-opted their work to do just that.

deism) until He was essentially, according to Nietzsche, dead.⁴² Yet, the Enlightenment, for all of its flourish, barely moved the cultural needle with regard to *paideia*. Throughout the Enlightenment—which lasted through the end of the eighteenth century—the WCP remained the dominant *paideia*, nurtured in homes, families, and the church.⁴³ But, among some devotees of the Enlightenment, Christianity was a problem and thus, in 1829, a plan was hatched to undo the WCP.⁴⁴

III. STEP TWO: CONSOLIDATE EDUCATION IN THE STATE

By 1800, the effects of the Enlightenment roared through industry, higher academia, government, and high society.⁴⁵ But its fires stopped outside the cities. Western people were largely agrarian, and no enlightened revolution could occur until these folks were subdued.⁴⁶ If only there were a way to sever the connection between the church, the family, and the perpetuation of the WCP!

Quietly, a group led by Horace Mann would set a course to overcome the WCP.⁴⁷ Of course, Mann's couched his crusade to create America's common school system in a desire for better education and education in

⁴² See FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, *THE GAY SCIENCE: WITH A PRELUDE IN GERMAN RHYMES AND AN APPENDIX OF SONGS 108* (Bernard Williams, ed., Josephine Nauckhoff, trans., Cambridge University Press 1882).

⁴³ See, e.g., Brian Duignan, *Enlightenment*, ENCYC. BRITANNICA (Feb. 12 2024), <https://www.britannica.com/event/Enlightenment-European-history>.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., John Woodbridge, *The Rise of Biblical Criticism in the Enlightenment*, GOSPEL COAL., <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-rise-of-biblical-criticism-in-the-enlightenment/> (last visited Mar. 5, 2024) (detailing the different views of Christianity and the Bible held by various enlightenment thinkers); See ROBERT I. GANNON, *THE POOR OLD LIBERAL ARTS 18–20* (1961) (quoting Orestes Brownson, Address to Philomathian Society at Mt. St. Mary's College (June 29, 1853)).

⁴⁵ See, e.g., *The Enlightenment Causes and Effects*, ENCYC. BRITANNICA (June 21, 2022), <https://www.britannica.com/summary/The-Enlightenment-Causes-and-Effects>.

⁴⁶ See Kathleen A. Brosnan & Jacob Blackwell, *Agriculture, Food, and the Environment*, OXFORD RSCH. ENCYC. OF AM. HIST. (Apr. 5, 2016), <https://oxfordre.com/americanhistory/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-179#acrefore-9780199329175-e-179-note-15>.

⁴⁷ HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 69–71.

morals for everyone.⁴⁸ His work spanned from the 1840s to the 1860s and furthered the plans of all those seeking to control America's *paideia*.⁴⁹

Orestes Brownson took part in this early activist group that sought to transform culture in America.⁵⁰ He later recanted his involvement in this cultural coup and wrote of it in 1853—speaking of actions underfoot in the 1820s and 30s.⁵¹

“The great object [of our effort] was to get rid of Christianity, and to convert our churches into halls of science. The plan was not to make open attacks on religion . . . but to establish a system of state—we said national—schools, from which all religion was to be excluded, in which nothing was to be taught but such knowledge as is verifiable by the senses, and to which all parents were to be compelled by law to send their children. Our complete plan was to take the children from their parents at the age of twelve, or eighteen months, and to have them nursed, fed, clothed and trained in these schools at the public expense; but at any rate, we were to have godless schools for all the children of the country, to which the parents would be compelled by law to send them. The first thing to be done was to get this system of schools established. . . . This organization was commenced in 1829, in the city of New York”⁵²

⁴⁸ See Lawrence A. Cremin, *Horace Mann*, BRITANNICA (July 29, 2023), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Horace-Mann>; Audrey Cohan & Charles F. Howlett, *The Historic Link Between Horace Mann and John Dewey in Support of Public Schooling: A Lesson in Democracy*, NJCSS (July 6, 2019), <https://teachingsocialstudies.org/2019/07/06/the-historic-link-between-horace-mann-and-john-dewey-in-support-of-public-schooling-a-lesson-in-democracy/>.

⁴⁹ HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 69.

⁵⁰ GANNON, *supra* note 44, at 18–20.

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Id.*

IV. STEP THREE: REMOVE THE CORNERSTONE OF THE
WEST THROUGH SCHOOL:

In the dawning days of the 20th century, step two had been largely accomplished. Most states had departments of education, and “public schools” were now almost universally in place.⁵³ By 1918, Mississippi became the final state to enact “compulsory education laws” forcing parents to put their children into school, presumably public school.⁵⁴ Teachers colleges were forming, and control of the educational establishment was now a matter of the state, not the family or the church.⁵⁵ But, there was a problem. Americans, nurtured in the WCP, viewed Christian norms as essential in education.⁵⁶ We were a Christian nation. And to the common person’s ear in 1900, removing Christ from education was akin to blasphemy.

Between 1890 and 1910, there was a clandestine effort to remove Christ from school in America.⁵⁷ Christianity, after all, was at the heart of the WCP.⁵⁸ Without it, the power of *paideia* would be up for grabs. We know of this effort to remove Christ, not because of some underground activity, as was the case in the 1820s, but because those who were pushing the effort published it in their popular national magazine, *The New Republic*.⁵⁹ We know this was not a fringe element within the progressives because the editorial board debated not *whether* to remove Christianity, but *how* best to

⁵³ LERUE W. WINGET ET AL., COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS, EDUCATION IN THE STATES: NATIONWIDE DEVELOPMENT SINCE 1900, at 75 (Edgar Fuller & Jim B. Pearson eds., 1969).

⁵⁴ HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 70; *Mississippi Is Last State To Require School Attendance*, ANNENBERG CLASSROOM, https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/timeline_event/mississippi-last-state-require-school-attendance/ (last visited Mar. 5, 2024).

⁵⁵ HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 70, 97.

⁵⁶ *Id.* at 70, 86.

⁵⁷ *See id.* at 83.

⁵⁸ *See supra* Part I.

⁵⁹ HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 86.

remove it.⁶⁰ Nearly everyone in the progressive movement seemed to agree that Christ must not be part of education in America.⁶¹

New York is where the story of the consolidation of education in the State comes together.⁶² In 1915, it was New York progressives that revealed their plan in *The New Republic*.⁶³ On the editorial page of the magazine, a debate was raging.⁶⁴ Progressives were attempting to take control of the American common school system. To do so, they had created a series of “model schools” where various experiments in education could be tested.⁶⁵ One of the most successful was in Gary, Indiana.⁶⁶ This school would give rise to “The Gary Plan” which promoted the modern high school—with 50-minute periods, Carnegie units, bells between classes, and subjects like social studies.⁶⁷ The Gary Plan also removed Christ from the school.

As Hegseth and I chronicled in *Battle for the American Mind*, “[t]he Gary Plan, rather than including Christianity in its program, allowed for students to leave school for religious education during the school day. This was a compromise that kept religion near the school but not in it. But even this arrangement created conflict within the progressive camp.”⁶⁸

After the Gary Plan’s success in Indiana, it was to be transferred into New York public schools.⁶⁹ In a debate over the Gary plan’s pull-out program for religion, “progressive hard-liners feared that “creed consciousness” will be revived, and religious feeling, [which had been] banished . . . from our American school [in New York], will be brought back in perilous form.”⁷⁰

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ *Id.* at 87.

⁶² *Id.* at 86.

⁶³ *Id.* at 86–88.

⁶⁴ *Id.* at 86–88.

⁶⁵ HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 85–86.

⁶⁶ *Id.*

⁶⁷ *See id.*

⁶⁸ *Id.* at 86.

⁶⁹ *See id.*

⁷⁰ *Id.* (quoting Editorial, *Religion in Public Schools*, NEW REPUBLIC, Nov. 13, 1915, at 33).

The Gary Plan's progressive supporters, once again writing in *The New Republic* in November 1915 in an article titled "Religion in Public Schools," countered that "as long as the public school is in any sort of competition with the church school, religion will not be entirely divorced from the schools. . . ."

In other words, [both groups] wanted to separate religion from school so they could create a new paideia without religion. If they removed Christianity outright, parents would flee to private schools. To prevent this, they first needed to separate the two [by having a pull-out period]. Then they could eliminate Christianity from the classroom when the time was right.

The defenders of this so-called pull-out period for religious education knew they could end Christian education if they played their cards right. Defending the pull-out period in the same *New Republic* article, they wrote that "the [church] school [will be] less necessary for those who wish religious instruction for their children. What the Gary Plan seems to do is not to bring religion into the schools, but for the first time to take it out of the schools."⁷¹

Why would progressives be so intent on removing Christianity's influence from the schools? The next year, in another *New Republic* piece, the intention of the progressives was put forth for all to see:

Twentieth-century democracy believes that the community has certain positive ends to achieve, and if they are to be achieved the community must control the education of the young. It believes that training in scientific habits of mind is fundamental to the progress of democracy. It believes

⁷¹ HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 87 (quoting *Religion in Public Schools*, *supra* note 70, at 33).

that freedom and tolerance mean the development of independent powers of judgment in the young, not the freedom of older people to impose their dogmas on the young. Democracy claims no right to interfere with worship or opinion, but it does claim the right to develop in every child the capacity for testing its own convictions. It insists that the plasticity of the child shall not be artificially and prematurely hardened into a philosophy of life, but that experimental naturalistic aptitudes shall constitute the true education.⁷²

With the stage set to remove Christ from the schools, all that was left was a mop-up activity. John Dewey, the father of the Modern Public School, was a frequent contributor to *The New Republic* and advanced the progressive agenda through the 1920s and 30s.⁷³ By 1940, progressives controlled the schools.⁷⁴ In the early 1960s, progressive U.S. Supreme Court Justices sequentially eliminated prayer, the Bible, and any other vestige of Christianity still lingering in suburban and rural schools across America.⁷⁵ The goals of the 1829 activists had been completed just as they had planned. Parents were no longer in control of the education of their children and Christianity was out. But to what end? The progressives, as they told us, have “positive ends to achieve.”⁷⁶

Speaking of this progressive takeover, Pulitzer Prize winning educational historian Lawrence Cremin said:

If education was to be the principal engine of an intentionally progressive society, then the politics of education would have significance far beyond the control

⁷² *Id.* at 88 (quoting Editorial, *Father Blakely States the Issue*, NEW REPUBLIC, July 29, 1916, at 319) (emphasis omitted).

⁷³ *Id.* at 80, 85, 96–97.

⁷⁴ *See id.* at 80, 83.

⁷⁵ *See Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962); *Sch. Dist. of Abington Twp. v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963); *see also* HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 103.

⁷⁶ HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9 at 88 (quoting *Father Blakely States the Issue*, *supra* note 72, at 319).

of schools, or child saving institutions, or communications organizations; in the end, it would hold the key to the achievement of the most fundamental political aspirations—in effect, the key to the American *paideia*.⁷⁷

Paideia, it turns out, is the powerful but little-known “X factor” that shapes culture and our very civilization. And, thus far, the progressives had only laid the groundwork for what was to come.

V. STEP FOUR: REBUILD WITH A CULTURAL MARXIST PAIDEIA

When progressives originally overtook education around 1920, they could not get away with taking the cornerstone of Christianity out of school unless they propped up the corner of the fortress with something else. So, they created a new basis for America’s *paideia*—a new transcendent figure that was not Christ—it was America herself.⁷⁸ In *Battle for the American Mind*, we called this the American Progressive Paideia (APP)—complete with a creed in the form of “The Pledge of Allegiance” from Francis Bellamy, a socialist reformer.⁷⁹ They installed flags and pictures of our founding fathers, and often John Dewey or Horace Mann as icons in every classroom.⁸⁰ They taught “civics” as a new form of catechism.⁸¹ With Christ out, the cornerstone of education and the WCP had been unceremoniously yanked from underneath the battlements. What many now think of as “the good old schools” were really a progressive fake. As good as patriotism is, it is a poor substitute for Christ as the cornerstone of culture.⁸²

The frail APP stick shoved into the gap left by the cornerstone’s removal did not last for long. As anticipated by the progressives, the whole of the WCP came crashing down in the 1960s and 70s.⁸³ Now, they could get to

⁷⁷ LAWRENCE A. CREMIN, *AMERICAN EDUCATION: THE METROPOLITAN EXPERIENCE 1876–1980*, at 155 (1988).

⁷⁸ HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 75–78.

⁷⁹ *Id.*

⁸⁰ *Id.* at 77.

⁸¹ *Id.* at 122.

⁸² *See e.g.*, 1 *Samuel* 8:4–22.

⁸³ *See* HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 101–02.

work. With a pile of cultural rubble and the public school system, the next generation could be given a new *paideia*— one based on progressive values— Marxist values. Enter the Cultural Marxist Paideia (CMP).

By 1980, the American public school leaned Marxist.⁸⁴ By 2000, the American public school was saturated in the CMP.⁸⁵ This *paideia*, modeled by Mao in the 1960s, treated the oppressor/oppressed narrative as the seminal myth of our culture.⁸⁶ From here, a whole new battlement could be assembled from the rubble. If you do the math, 2020 marks about one generation (40 years) of schools training up students in the *paideia* of cultural marxism. After one generation, we are now witnessing only the beginning of the power of *paideia*. For those who appreciate its power, the future is not bright.

VI. THE CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN RENEWAL

As difficult as it may seem, there is only one solution to the cultural crisis of our day. We must return to the classical Christian form of education that dominated prior to 1770. Going back to the 1950s, or even the 1850s to relearn education will not work. Between about 500 A.D. and 1770, education was a relatively pure form of the seven liberal arts as transformed by the Christian church in the Middle Ages.⁸⁷ This Classical Christian education produced our generation of Founding Fathers. It was a proven source of the WCP. And only the WCP has a track record of creating and sustaining Western civilization.⁸⁸ The alternative is not some other civilization—Eastern, African, or otherwise—it is barbarity couched in a techno-bureaucratic power structure. Without the WCP, we are bound for servitude, not liberty.

⁸⁴ See MIKE GONZALEZ & KATHARINE C. GORKA, HOW CULTURAL MARXISM THREATENS THE UNITED STATES—AND HOW AMERICANS CAN FIGHT IT 6, 10–12 (2022), <https://www.heritage.org/progressivism/report/how-cultural-marxism-threatens-the-united-states-and-how-americans-can-fight>.

⁸⁵ HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 102, 123.

⁸⁶ See *id.* at 173, 218; GONZALEZ & GORKA, *supra* note 84, at 8.

⁸⁷ See *Liberal Arts*, ENCYC. BRITANNICA (Dec. 1, 2023), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/liberal-arts>.

⁸⁸ See HEGSETH & GOODWIN, *supra* note 9, at 53–54.

As we work toward the recovery of classical Christian education, we have to understand how the progressives managed to seize control of the West. At each step along the way, their design was fulfilled—first in the unification of education under the state (mid-1800s), then through compulsory education laws (1852-1918), then through the imposition of science as the sole source of truth in school (1920s and 30s), then through the eventual removal of God (1962-1965), and then with the rise of the APP (1940s, 50s, and 60s) followed by the CMP (1980s, 90s, 2000s, and today).

Our task is to reverse all of this by returning the control of education to families and churches, and by returning to Christ as the cornerstone of our children's *paideia*. This effort is the basis of the Classical Christian renewal movement.