

State Teacher Licensing Requirements vs. the Bible, the Hymnal, and the Catechism

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Ryan MacPherson, Ph.D. • Bethany Lutheran College • www.ryanmacpherson.com

What are we to do when the state imposes upon teacher training programs and teacher candidates a set of licensing standards that contradict Scripture? Can state-licensed teachers “teach about” evolution without “advocating” evolution? Does critical race theory have any redeemable qualities? What are teachers, parents, and students to do when the state misconstrues something as basic as gender?

I. Introduction

- A. Several states, including Minnesota, are revising their teacher licensing standards in a manner that pits the state against both Scripture and natural law: evolution, critical theory, LGBTQ+.
- B. Teaching standards impact everyone: students, parents, teachers, administrators, college professors at teacher-training schools, and “the public good” that schools ought to serve.
- C. Christians have a duty to adhere to Scripture and natural law for the good of the family, the church, and the state—and unbelievers have a moral duty, too, inscribed in their hearts.
- D. Christians have a rich heritage of God-fearing educational practices in service to the family, church, and society—and America has been a Christian-influenced nation.

II. The Christian Roots of American Education—Both Public and Parochial

- A. The **Lutheran** Reformation involved significant education reform.
 1. Luther and Melancthon pioneered the Lutheran liberal arts at Wittenberg.
 2. Luther urged civil magistrates to sponsor schools that were faithful to Scripture.
 3. Johannes Bugenhagen and Johannes Sturm established model grammar schools.
 4. The Saxon Lutherans who formed the LCMS brought this heritage to America.
- B. America’s largely **Protestant** founders recognized that education must harmonize with the natural law, and that Scripture clarifies and preserves the natural law.
 1. Harvard was founded (1636) to educate Puritans for “piety, morality, and learning.”
 2. Colonial New England had the highest literacy rate in world history. *Do you know why?*
 3. Princeton was founded (1746) to train Christian clergy and civic leaders.
 4. The Northwest Land Ordinance of 1787 (same year the U.S. Constitution was written): “Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”
 5. The inter-generational legacy of John and Abigail Adams: the Bible and the classics, from the international homeschool to the White House.
 6. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835): Christianity, practiced with the freedom of religious association, provides the moral stability that makes democracy beneficial rather than self-destructive.
- C. America’s **Roman Catholic** immigrants have fostered a philosophically robust tradition that promotes a solid grasp of civil righteousness and civic engagement.
 1. The University of Notre Dame required Thomistic philosophy in the general core.
 2. Antonin Scalia and Samuel Alito have been the salt and the light of the Supreme Court.

III. The Demise of American Education—Again, Both Public and Parochial

- A. **Progressivism**: “Modern science” (i.e., Creator-denying pseudo-science) guides the social engineering necessary for civilization to evolve to a higher level, with socialism enforcing compliance. (Note, too, the religiously secular zeal.)
- B. **Postmodernism**: Neither goodness, nor truth, nor beauty exist—except in each person’s subjective preferences; both Christianity and modern science are tools of the powerful elites.
- C. **Quietism**: Pseudo(!)-Luther’s Separate Kingdoms and Jefferson’s “wall of separation” mean Christians should avoid politics; we can’t prevent schools from going progressive/postmodern.
 1. So, as soon as Satan masquerades as a “politician,” then pastors have to be silent?
 2. (Please read the Magdeburg Confession to re-discover the Lutheran heritage of God-fearing political resistance, consistent with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.)
- D. **Credential Envy**: Parochial schools and teachers “keeping up with the [secular] Joneses.”

IV. **Battles in the War over State Standards (focal example: Minnesota)**

- A. 1990s: Shift from facts and inalienable rights to skills and global citizenship.
- B. 2010s: Removing major historical figures/events and replacing them with...nonsense?
- C. Today: Inserting Marxist theology/LGBTQ+ morality—teachers as agents for a new regime.
 1. Standard 2: “Planning for Instruction” (= Plotting for Indoctrination)
 2. Standard 8: “Racial Consciousness and Reflection” (= Advocating Wokism)
 3. Anti-Catechesis, rejecting: objective truth; body-soul personhood; human unity across ethnicities; 4th Commandment’s blessed hierarchies; chastity; human sin/divine grace.

V. **Evaluation**

- A. “Teaching about” vs. “advocating”? Perhaps, but consider the saturation tipping-point.
- B. Does critical race theory teach us anything *good* that we didn’t already know? (See “What Does the Bible Say about Race and Racism?” and “How Should Christians Address Social Injustices?” at www.els.org/apologetics/qalc.)
- C. How can we “speak the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15) when the LGBTQ+ language fosters a grammar and vocabulary that already has “exchanged the truth for a lie” (Romans 1:25)? (Is it possible to say anything meaningful at all in a pseudo-language, an anti-language?)

VI. **Concluding Recommendations**

- A **command** for every household: Be a Bible/Hymnal/Catechism home educator—to which God attaches His **promises** of great blessings! (cf. Deuteronomy 6:4–9; Ephesians 6:2–4)
- Maintain strategic footholds as teachers, administrators, school board members, and policymakers in the realms of both public schools and parochial schools.
- Exercise tactical retreats from public schools and wayward parochial schools when the ground no longer can be held conscientiously; indeed, prudence may dictate a retreat even sooner than that. (*Never compromise*: compromise concerning an absolute is really a surrender.)
- Utilize the “lawful civil ordinances” (AC XVI): campaign, vote, lobby, editorialize, sue, etc.—and fill laundry baskets with letters of protest, as Norwegian moms did when Nazis took over.
- Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves regarding voucher programs, charter schools, etc.
- Pray for, encourage, and participate in the CEU, following the example of the CY and the CON.
- Support faithful Christian schools by volunteering, paying tuition, donating to tuition-assistance funds, and speaking in defense of orthodoxy at voters’ meetings.
- Pray in concert with the church—as a congregation, a family, and an individual.
- Read good books and the Great Books and the Greatest Book, and talk about them with others.
- Be encouraged by the saints who have gone before you, trusting that God will care for you.

VII. **Recommended Resources**

- Online videos by Ryan MacPherson: www.ryanmacpherson.com/presentation-list (education, apologetics, postmodernism, Two Kingdoms, sanctity of life, etc.)
- “Q & A Leading to Christ” apologetics flyers (various topics): www.els.org/apologetics/qalc
- Center for Apologetics and Worldviews (video archives): www.blc.edu/apologetics/events
- Home devotion materials, plus essays on church/state, etc.: www.hausvater.org
- Lutheran theology of political resistance: www.intoyourhandsllc.com/interposition
- Digital Catacombs: www.digitalcatacombs.com / www.anchor.fm/digital-catacombs
- “Brief History of Power” podcast (Jonathan Fisk/Adam Koontz): abriefhistoryofpower.com
- Stephen Kieser, “Why LCMS Schools Are Struggling and What To Do About It,” www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2oWRkSjMWc (accreditation, teacher certification, etc.)
- Paul Dare, *Christians in a Woke World: A Call to Courage, Confession, and Love*
- Allen Quist, *America’s Schools: The Battleground for Freedom*; and, *Fed Ed*
- Gene Veith, *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*; and, *Post-Christian: A Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*
- Thomas Korcok, *Serpents in the Classroom: The Poisoning of Modern Education and How the Church Can Cure It*; and, *Lutheran Education: From Wittenberg to the Future*
- Great Books: Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*; Plato, *Republic*; Richard Gamble, ed., *The Great Tradition: Classic Readings on What It Means to Be an Educated Human Being*; etc.
- Book of Concord: LC I, Fourth Commandment (the primacy of the office of fatherhood in educating children); AC XVI (“lawful civil ordinances,” consistent with God’s moral order); etc.
- The Greatest Book—the Bible—reading it as an exile in Babylon, yearning for the New Jerusalem