

THE STATESMAN

Volume 10 Issue 10 October 2006

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God: The Center of a Great Education

By Oliver DeMille

The greatest statesmen in history—from Washington and Jefferson to Gandhi and Churchill, to Joan of Arc and Mother Theresa, and many others—saw service to God, family and community as the focus of their lives. With God as part of our education, we learn not only intellectual knowledge but also service, morality, and true leadership. Though great statesmen in history came from various religious and denominational backgrounds, they all understood that serving God and others is the key to life and leadership.

Great education has God at the center. The leaders of the 21st Century are being educated now, and the Five Pillars of great education are Classics, Mentors, Simulations, Field Experience, and God. These pillars are vital to educating statesmen, and the central pillar of the five is the God Pillar.

Unfortunately, in the Progressive Era, between 1890 and 1960, many of the leaders of the modern world turned away from God as the

center of our lives. Marx attacked God in politics and government, and Freud had the same impact on the health care industry. Nietzsche attacked God in philosophy and the intellectual world, and Kinsey made God unpopular among many recognized experts on the family.

John Dewey did the same thing to education, convincing many that children are just animals to be conditioned rather than God's children and future leaders who need the best education to raise families and lead our communities, businesses, and nations. God was kicked out of the schools, and leadership learning drastically decreased.

At George Wythe College, God should be part of every class, mentor meeting, and study session. We start each class and meeting with prayer, and students bring personal scriptures to class along with their other books. Our theme for the 2006-07 school year is putting God central in our education.

In order to highly promote this year's theme, we are encouraging each faculty member and student to emphasize the following three items all year, and as a part of their education throughout their lives:

1. *Scripture*. Every class is having each student read their central book of scripture each semester. Students select one full book from the canon or major scriptures from their religion—for example, Jewish students are encouraged to read the Torah or Talmud, Catholic and Evangelical Christian students might read the New Testament or the whole Bible, LDS students to read the Book of Mormon or the Bible, Hindu students the Rig Veda, and so on. Of course, students may choose other canonized-level readings from their own faith. The study of scripture is vital to leadership education, as the American Founders and other great statesmen taught at length.

2. *Get the Spirit*. Each student should work to have the Holy Spirit, or what C.S. Lewis called the Tao or Universal Light, in his or her life, to have clear and powerful communication with God and

do God's will. Lewis also taught that even non-believers tap into the power of the universe when they focus on true love. Love leads to service, virtue and leadership.

3. *Prayer*. All faculty and students are emphasizing prayer as a principle of power. It is something too few people use today, and many who do use prayer do it far too routinely. In contrast, statesmen use prayer in a way that powerfully opens the heavens and impacts the world. Washington, Lincoln, Churchill, Gandhi, Joan of Arc—they really, really, really prayed. They prayed with power. They did it long before they were thrust into the public scene, and they continued to do it when the stakes were the highest.

Again, think of the greatest statesmen and stateswomen in history—scripture, prayer, the spirit and real love were absolutely central to their education, and to their mission and service in life. God is the author of greatness, and a great education makes God a central part of all learning.

There are many schools and institutions around the world that bravely make God a part of the educational process. There need to be even more. Parents, especially, have the ability to impact the education of their children through prayer, scriptures, the light of the spirit, and more peace and love in the home. Wherever you and your children and grandchildren learn, at whatever level from child through adult, God should be the central pillar of a truly great education. Perhaps all of us can do more, right now and for years to come, to invite God more into every facet of our education and lives.

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