

Trojan Horse of Tyranny

By G. Brent Bradley

Who Owns the Children?: Public Compulsion, Private Responsibility, and the Dilemma of Ultimate Authority, by Blair Adams, (Waco, Texas: Truth Forum, 1991), 5th ed, 525 pages, appendices, bibliography, index.

Contra Mundum, No. 4, Summer 1992

Copyright © 1992 G. Brent Bradley

When the citizens of Troy brought the marvelous gift into their fortress city, they were convinced that the gods were smiling on them once again. Little did they realize that hidden within the prize was the source of the destruction of their city and their way of life. In *Who Owns the Children*, aptly subtitled *Public Compulsion, Private Responsibility, and the Dilemma of Ultimate Authority*, Blair Adams demonstrates that totalitarian tyranny is the logical consequence of the “gift” of compulsory education in the United States.

A serious battle is being waged before our very eyes, with little or no understanding by the public of its implications for individuals, families and the nation, with chilling effectiveness Adams reviews the atrocities being perpetrated against parents who are truly concerned for the education of their children. Compulsory education laws are being used, not to promote education, but to harass families who are successfully educating their children using alternatives to State education.

Adams's central theme is that compulsory education opens the door for the totalitarian State (corporate man exalted to the place of god), which claims to own and control its citizens and all of their actions. Compulsory education was the first brick laid in building the brave new world order which has led to greater infringements upon those rights which our founding fathers believed were endowed by our Creator. It is the State which now claims to be the creator and sovereign of every facet of life, public and private. After all, if they can demand control of what your children must be taught to believe, what freedom is left to any individual or group of people?

The conflict between civil government and families and churches has come about precisely because the State has intruded into an arena it should never have entered. Because education is necessarily religious in nature, compulsory State education cannot

escape establishing one religion at the expense of another. This conflict comes into its sharpest focus in view of the Bible's requirement that parents educate their children in the teachings of the Christian religion which is an all encompassing world and life view. Jesus tells his followers to “render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and render unto God the things that are God's.” There is, therefore, an arena of authority that God has delegated to the State, and an arena that belongs to the Lord, over which the State has no authority. Who owns the children then? The State claims that it owns the children, and is enforcing that claim with the power of the sword. On the other hand Christians claim that God owns their children and has given parents the responsibility and authority to raise and educate them.

Adams argues that the State education system in the United States is modeled after the German system which led to the atrocities of the Nazi regime. Adams asks how the intelligent and well educated people of Germany could tolerate such cruel oppression. His answer is that the education system consistently taught that ultimate authority belongs to the State. When the interests of the State demanded radical action, the population was conditioned to give unquestioned obedience to their civil god regardless of their traditional religious beliefs.

Parents in the United States face a similar dilemma. On the one hand, the State requires children through compulsory education laws to attend State approved and regulated 'educational' facilities. The reason for this coercion is that the State has a compelling interest to train children to be “good citizens” and protect them from the 'abuses' that might occur should parents train their children according to the dictates of their consciences. What the State fears and calls “abuse” is the teaching that God is the ultimate authority rather than the State. However God requires parents to teach their children the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty. The Supreme Court has determined that the Ten Commandments cannot be posted in a State classroom lest they have an unconstitutional religious influence on a student. If such subtle influence as simply posting the Ten Commandments is viewed as a threat to the authority of the State and an abuse of children. Statists must oppose the greater abuse of parents who teach and enforce the Ten Commandments as the Law of God, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

To prove that the State claims to own children. Adams quotes numerous troubling court decisions and arguments. For instance, He says:

the authority of all guardians, which includes parents, is derived from the [S]tate that “there is no parental authority independent of the power of the [S]tate”, and even that “a child is primarily a ward of the [S]tate. The sovereign, that is the State, whose power is determined by the interpretations of the very judges who are here speaking, “has the inherent power to legislate for its own welfare, and to place [the child] with either parent at will, or take it from both parents and place it elsewhere. . . the rights of the parent in his child are just such rights as the law gives him; no more, no less.”

Note that the parent has no “inalienable rights” provided by any immutable constitutional law, but “just such rights” given him by grossly mutable law, whimsically interpreted by the many contradictory opinions of many judges. (pp.49-50)

Other court decisions claim that “the moment a child is born he owes allegiance to the government. . . . [And] the government places him under guardianship. . . *that he may acquire that education which will enable him afterwards to discharge the duty which he owes to his country* [that is the State].” Furthermore, a California court affirms that a “primary” function of the government's education system is to train school children in. . . loyalty to the [S]tate (p. 50)

Adams refutes three main arguments offered in favor of compulsory education. The first is that in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, compulsory education is in the best interests of the children. In State operated or approved schools, children are subjected to inferior education. The State denies that it has any responsibility educate the children it requires to come under its influence. For example, Agnes Rich, charged with contempt for starting a school without State approval, was harassed for over three years. In the course of the trial,

the State's chief witnesses, the local school superintendent and the state commissioner of education, admitted in cross examination the arbitrary nature of the certification and approval law. Superintendent Betty Saunders first claimed the law was “for the protection of the children. To see that they are in fact having a well rounded, functional education by people who are equipped to handle children.” Yet she and the State commissioner both admitted that the State regulations did not require a school to even teach basic subjects such as English, history, science or math, nor did they provide for any means to evaluate educational performance. (p. 23)

In spite of testimony thee the students in Mrs. Rich's school scored well above grade level using the highest norms available for testing, although the socioeconomic backgrounds of the students should have led to below average scores, the court's verdict upheld the State's requirement for certification and State approval. This verdict was totally unrelated to the quality of education and rooted entirely in the demand for control.

Another suit was brought against a school system by parents whose child had been graduated from high school with a fifth grade reading ability. Attorneys for the State school system argued successfully that “There is no duty under common law (for schools) to teach a child to read.” To add injury to insult, in 1986 the First District Court of Appeals rejected a lawsuit brought by a California mother against the school system in which her son had been beaten and robbed on numerous occasions suit because the California Constitution “imposes no express duty on anyone to make schools safe.” (p.21)

It should be readily apparent that compulsory education “for the good of the children” is nothing more than a smoke screen for State control over education, for the good of the State. Furthermore, State educrats use compulsory education laws not to prosecute those parents who have no interest in providing an education for their children, but primarily as a weapon against those who are the most dedicated to educating their children, and who are making the greatest sacrifices to do so.

A second argument for compulsory education is that of “compelling State interest”, for a democratic State to have an educated citizenry. The State, however, has proven itself incapable of producing such a citizenry. Second, it is circular reasoning to say that the State, which is molded by its citizens, must first mold its citizens through compulsory education. As Adams puts it “. . . to proclaim a people free to choose their own government but then to insist that the government determine, through a government controlled compulsory education system, the very attitudes and values by which the people will choose becomes the most insidious and pernicious form of tyranny: it gives the people the *illusion* of freedom, while all along controlling them through a form of mass governmental programming.” (p. 46) Thus, State education is coercive, ultimately enforced at the point of a gun. To Statist educators, parents who desire to train their children apart from State control are as much a threat as the State is to concerned parents. Therefore the entire power of the totalitarian State will be brought to bear to protect itself. “The only inalienable” right that remains, Adams argues, “is the might that makes right, the right to infringe on everyone's rights in the name of everyone's rights.” (p. 49)

A third argument for compulsory State education is its social benefit to the rest of the community, such as “reduced crime”, more “social cohesion” and a more productive work force. Unfortunately the evidence shows thee the socialization produced by compulsory State education has had the exact opposite effect, producing more crime, more class envy and hatred, and less productivity. David Moberly, in the May 1980 *Education Digest* states: “From a professional viewpoint there is growing evidence that, for at least some youth, school is an exercise in frustration. A recent investigation in Philadelphia found that 52% of the boys dropping out of school had police contacts before leaving school, whereas only 3.8% of those dropouts initiated their delinquent careers after leaving school. *Of those 52% who were delinquent prior to leaving school, only 14% continued to violate the law [after leaving school].*” (emphasis added) (p.52)

Adams points out thee once you admit the authority of the State to superintend the education of your children, you have admitted their authority to regulate the whole process. The current model of cooperation between State education and private or home education is nothing more than the ploy of slowly heating the water in which the frog is swimming so that he won't leap to escape from the deadly heat. When parents concede that the State has authority to regulate education, the State has the grounds to say that parental authority was only a “tolerated privilege”, granted by State sufferance”, and not an inalienable right.

Once the State assumes the prerogatives of God, rather than placing itself under His

authority as a minister of God with the limitations of God's Law placed upon it, the State becomes antichrist. The State, despite its lofty claims, cannot save individuals, families or cultures. What it can, and should, do is exercise its authority to protect the innocent and punish the wicked. However, when the State steps outside its legitimate bounds as defined by the Bible, it will inevitably go about the business of punishing the innocent and protecting the guilty. The claims of the State in our day demonstrate that there has been a radical change of faith in the United States from the worship of God, to the worship of Baal—the State deified. Adams stresses the limited nature of civil authority and the essence of sphere sovereignty. He quotes from Harvard law professor Michael W. McConnell's article, "The Origins and Historical Understanding of Free Exercise of Religion", in the May 1990 issue of *The Harvard Law Review*:

If government admits that God is sovereign, then it also admits that its claims on the loyalty and obedience of the citizens is parental and instrumental. Even the mighty democratic will of the people is, in principle, subordinate to the commands of God, as heard and understood in the individual conscience. In such a nation, with such a commitment, totalitarian tyranny is a philosophical impossibility. (p. 177)

Herbert Schlossberg, in *Idols For Destruction*, argues that we must not only think of totalitarian government in terms of barbed wire and military presence, but rather in how much of life is under the control of civil government. Adams also illustrates the totalitarian claims of the Messianic State. The State has intruded its power into the private realm of individual and family and presumes to assume responsibility for individuals and families. When the State assumes personal responsibility it creates ethical slaves who then require the paternal State to make every decision for them. "Such laws prejudice individuals, such as parents, as irresponsible and presume only the State as competent to make ultimate, godlike determination for the safety of its citizens." (pp. 139-140) In another context Adams makes this important observation. "An undisciplined child will never be free; he will always have to live in an austere, controlled environment, and when he gets older, it is the State that will do the controlling." (p. 572) Thus the very problems that the State is rushing to solve through its laws and regulations have arisen because the State has usurped authority. In a downward cycle to tyranny' the actions of the State create crises to which the State points as the basis for further intervention. Such "government by crisis" is all too common today.

In addition to education, the intrusion of the State into the lives of families and individuals can be seen in the areas of health care, child care, and reproduction. In each, the "well being of the children" is set forth as demanding State involvement. The most alarming of these is the matter of child abuse. True child abuse is certainly great tragedy that should be abhorred by all. Yet under the guise of protecting the children, child abuse laws are being used to demolish the family. Using their own warped definitions of child abuse to create a sense of urgency, State social scientists have proceeded to remove constitutional protections from any who are even anonymously accused of child abuse. The bottom line is that parents accused of abusing their children are presumed guilty until

they can prove their innocence. This becomes a difficult thing to do when a child's denial that any abuse took place is considered evidence of trauma due to abuse, and at the same time a child's admission under leading and coercive questioning is also evidence of child abuse. The problem is exacerbated by the broad definitions of child abuse which include birthing your children at home, administering Biblical discipline, or insisting on teaching them in a manner not approved by the State.

The present assault upon the family is understandable given the 'antichrist' nature of most social planners who believe that the State is messianic, the savior of the world. Instead of seeing the problem of child abuse arising from the breakdown of the family (“preschoolers living with one natural [parent] and one stepparent were 40 times more likely to become child abuse cases than were like aged children living with two natural parents.”), the new deliverers see child abuse arising out of the Biblical concept of the family itself, and are therefore striving to eradicate the scourge of the Biblical family from the face of the earth. The Federal Child Protection and Treatment Act defines child abuse as “the physical or mental injury, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child...under circumstances which would indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or *threatened* thereby”. (emphasis added) (p. 376) Notice that these broad terms are left to the definition of social workers or judges, and that even conduct that leads to the possibility of mental injury constitutes child abuse. (conceivably, telling a child "no" can lead to mental distress. In a school system that promotes disobedience to parents as one of its objectives, a parent's crossing his children's desires is sufficient ground to prosecute for child abuse.

While child abuse law is purportedly aimed at correcting the deficiencies of the Biblical family, positing the State as the more efficient and caring parent, the statistical evidence demonstrates that real child abuse occurs most often where the family has been broken down by destructive State policies. Just as compulsory education laws are used to restrict those who are doing the best job of educating their children while ignoring the “child neglect and abuse” of the State in its education system, so child abuse laws are being used to destroy the family that best provides for the care of children in order to promote the power of the State.

Social scientists define child abuse in terms that exclude any kind of Biblical discipline which the Lord says is the expression of true love for legitimate children. Evidently these social planners want all children to be treated like bastards, that is to treat them as those having no inheritance and no responsibility. Adams notes:

In their famous book, *Behind Closed Doors: Violence in the American Family* Straus and Gelles see in the Biblically consistent dictum, “spare the rod and spoil the child,” and in the belief that children are “born corrupted by original sin.” the foundation of “a tradition of physical (and emotional) cruelty to children.” In another study they depict traditional patterns of child discipline as “cruelty”: “Even prisoners in jail cannot legally be hit or verbally abused, but physical punishment of children is legal in every state. Any one

who spends an afternoon at a supermarket or shopping mall is likely to observe instances of children being hit or verbally abused. And that is the tip of the iceberg. Most of the physical and mental cruelty these children experience every day goes on behind the closed doors of millions of American homes.” (p. 541)

So there you have it folks. The parents of traditional American families are in reality monsters who in the dank confines of the American home oversee elaborate instruments for the torture and abuse of children. Where is the white Knight who will come and deliver the helpless? It must be the State with its compassionate use of force that has brought us the abortion holocaust and the education debacle. The State will protect these children from evil parents by forcing them into schools where they will be exposed to drugs, illicit sex, intellectual (and possibly physical) rape, and even murder. (Carrying deadly weapons to school is a common experience these days in government institutions of learning.) Yet where the family follows the dictates of the Lord, children are raised to assume responsibility and quietly go on their way to becoming productive citizens. On the other hand, those who have their lives disrupted by State intrusion often end up on the liberal plantation either on the welfare rolls or in the prisons of “Big Brother”. But rest assured, they have all the protection of the almighty State.

Statist social manipulators hope to solve the child abuse problem by dismantling the Biblical family. They promote the feminist movement because they believe that in order to reduce violence our culture must destroy the “the common view of the man as head of the household”. By seeking “the elimination of our culture of sexism, they argue, “feminism is directly beneficial to physical and mental health of all members of our society”. According to this philosophy, men “. . . should be freed from the pressure associated with having to be provider, worker. . . . husband, father, and nurturer all at the same time.” This program, by the way, has been implemented in the black inner city community through State welfare programs with great success’. The next time you travel to a major city, take the time to visit the black ghettos where you can see the brave new world of Straus and Gelles.

Wherever men abdicate their responsibilities as covenant heads of families, society collapses. Research has found that “most gang members come from female-headed households.” Evidently Straus and Gelles think that violence among peers is better than having a father in the household. The *American Journal of Sociology* in 1987 found from data from hundreds of British communities . . . a direct statistical link between single parenthood and virtually every major type of crime including mugging. Violence against strangers, car theft, and burglary” (p. 545) Wray Herbert reported in *Psychology Today* that “90 percent of repeat adolescent fire starters come from fatherless households.” Oh, I get it! Straus and Gelles are into compulsory urban renewal through the offspring of their brave new world. Ingenious!

The second step to eliminating child abuse, according to these new Statists, is to eliminate the authority of parents over children. To quote Straus and Gelles. “To the

extent that. . . children are given the same rights as adult men, they become the sole owners of their own bodies. Hence any infringement on their body without consent cannot be tolerated." Therefore, society must reject the belief that spanking is an effective discipline tool and we must abolish corporal punishment for all time."

In a perceptive analysis of these experts, Adams points to their own rebellion against the authority of God, hatred of His word, and a lust to be god. Because many social scientists are ethical rebels themselves and see all discipline as something that requires submission to a higher authority, they justify their rebellion by calling all discipline wrong and unlawful. In this way, they can soothe their smarting consciences and place the blame for their twisted hearts and souls on the Lord, rather than on their own perverted wills. Straus and Gelles, Adams shows, are "infantile personalities themselves, who rebel against any authority above man and want to teach other children to do likewise." (p. 564)

If you want a detailed analysis of the issues involved in the education issue in our land, *Who Owns the Children* is a useful tool. The research, quotations and bibliography alone are worth the price of the book. In addition, Adams brings together several strands of dangerous totalitarian intervention that are taken for granted as perfectly legitimate by most professing Christians. Furthermore, it provides follow up on cases which you will not find in the secular press. For instance, were you aware that the most famous and expensive child abuse case in history ended in acquittal for those accused, even though the media (and most American citizens) had tried and convicted them even before the trial? As it turns out, the accuser in the case had a history of making unfounded accusations, and subsequently complained of her dog being "abused", and accused others of "abusing" her son. The woman was finally diagnosed as "an acute paranoid schizophrenic". (p. 360) Yet, I must admit, when I heard the verdict through the news media, I was convinced that there had been a terrible miscarriage of justice.

Yet the book is not without its weaknesses. There is an incredible amount of material in the book; it is not easy reading; and it is difficult to remember what Adams attempts to prove.

A second, and more important, weakness is found in Adams's inconsistent view of the Scriptures. On the one hand he insists that the only legitimate basis on which to take one's stand is the authority of the word of God. "For the Christian, one must find God's standard of justice and apply it to the question of ultimate authority in order to understand the limits of the State's authority and so answer the question of "who owns the children?" (p. 65) Yet he dismisses the legal sanctions of the Old Testament as an outmoded standard. Leaving us with the opinions of men to determine the proper administration of just sanctions. Referring to the Lord's mandated death penalty for a man who does not control a vicious animal that has killed, Adams says "...certainly we do not advocate as consistent with Christianity' the death penalty in such cases." (p. 133) "Certainly the Old Testament offers many examples of violent action on the part of God's people, but we cannot follow the shadow of the Old Testament precedent when the greater light of the New Testament has *superseded and transformed it.*" (p 148)

This latent antinomianism then infects Adams's views in other areas. It is quite obvious that Adams has pacifistic tendencies. He is evidently opposed to the death penalty, even though commanded by God for capital crimes as a result believers are left with judicial agnosticism in determining the good and evil of the actions of men and nations. Alluding to such matters as punishment for acts of terrorism and acts of war, Adams says, "These questions and many others like them lie beyond the believer's sphere either to condemn or applaud. God's measure of grace and calling to us does not extend to that area of judgment." (1 Cor. 5:12-13) (pp. 199-200) Yet in 1 Corinthians 6, God tells us that we shall judge nations. Though the Church is to judge righteous judgments in her own sphere of influence, this is not to say that Christians should not exercise Biblical justice in their spheres of responsibility outside the Church. In fact, it is the responsibility of all judges to judge righteous judgments, i.e. those that are according to God's infallible word.

Furthermore, Adams sees the State in such a negative light that Christian involvement in the civil sphere is viewed as at best dangerous and at worst sinful.

God appointed us ambassadors to the kingdoms of the world (Matthew 28:19, 2 Cor. 5:20; Eph. 6:20), and an ambassador does not act within the foreign government to shape it, though he can attempt to influence it by his diplomacy. God has not assigned us the task to expand or restrict through *positive* political participation the jurisdiction of the agency of wrath. He has given us no authority to *promote* the *expansion* of criminal laws, to expand the authority of wrath. Our active promotion of this negative authority would make us active participants in that authority. (p. 129)

In this way Adams reduces the influence of Christ through His Church to civil irrelevance and guarantees that the civil government will remain perpetually in the hands of the ungodly. Yet the Bible has a much higher view of the power of the Gospel and the universal reign of Christ. Jesus said that the disciples were to "disciple the nations" and see to it that they "observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." (Matthew 28:19) In the second Psalm God promises to give His Son the "nations for your inheritance".

Another weakness is Adams's pious pessimism. He cannot see any resolution to the conflict between Church and State until the final conflict of Armageddon. Implicit in this view is that the State is inherently evil, when in fact it is men who are evil. While it is true that authority may be abused. institutions, especially institutions ordained by God, are not intrinsically evil. But abuse of authority cannot be charged to the State alone. There is a measure of compulsion in every authority system. Adams denies that the power of the Gospel and the Law written on hearts can effectively solve the tension between the authority of the Church and the State. According to Adams, it will only be when the Church is "reaped and threshed" in the tribulation that the conflict will be resolved. "Until then, no lasting resolution to the dilemma of authority in civil government will come." (p. 198) Pack it in folks, you are doomed to live under the threshing wheel of the evil empire until you realize that it is sinful to desire and work for the reign of Christ in every institution.

These considerations lead Adams to advise Christians to accept cheerful martyrdom for their stand for the truth. (p. 127) In this view believers must disobey the State in order to obey God. but must give no resistance to the punishment meted out by the State. Such is not the view of the Bible. It is true that anarchy on the part of individuals is forbidden by the Scriptures. But the Bible also recognizes the legitimate use of force in the spheres of individual and family responsibility. For instance, to use deadly force in self defense or in the defense of your family against criminals is not only permitted by God, but required under the sixth commandment. Furthermore the Bible is filled with examples of legitimate resistance to ungodly oppression of existing civil entities. It is the responsibility of Christians to resist tyrants through the lawfully ordained means of lesser magistrates. What Adams fears is “Strong impulses can rise up in us, wanting to force people to stop the mindless degradation of life. Yet violence and hatred only beget more violence and hatred. These will never cease in man's world until the end.” (p. 198) Yet it seems again that Adams has underestimated the power of the Gospel to bring every enemy under Christ's footstool. The Bible speaks of the civil government as becoming the nursing father of the Church. (Isaiah 49 23) This is not the natural course of events, but the result of Christ reconciling all things to Himself, things in heaven and things on the earth. In fact it is the denial of the church militant and an affirmation of the Church milquetoast which will continue to contribute to the disruption of the peace of the Church, and assign her to a place of perpetual irrelevance.