then, yes, that is what it would mean. It is simply not true, however, that "the Anglo-Protestant culture and the Creed of the founding settlers" were as Huntington and other creedalists describe it, and, at various places in his book, he seems well aware of this, though at others he does not. In some places, his account borders on the absurd, as in the statement, "For over two hundred years the creedal principle of equal rights for all without regard to race had been ignored and flouted in practice in American society, politics, and law." If Americans persistently flouted their own "Creed," in what sense can we say it was their creed at all?

In fact, it was not. The "Creed" that Huntington insists is such an important part of the national identity barely existed until the early 20th century and acquired dominance in American culture and politics only during its course. The Protestant Republic the British settlers and pioneers created in North America knew nothing of it, or of its happy talk about "eliminating racial and ethnic barriers." As Huntington also acknowledges, the first naturalization law in American history confined citizenship to whites. The republic was a racial state and remained one, in principle, until the 14th Amendment was imposed at the point of bayonets and, in practice, until the "civil rights" era.

Having eliminated these barriers, we now discover that the mass immigration that ensued does not much care for the Anglo-Protestant culture and, in fact, offers its own creeds. Mr. Huntington's book is an excellent documentation of the process by which the incoming races and their civilizations are in a protracted clash with those of the old America and of how the ruling elites of the present are facilitating the destruction of the latter, but he gives little sign of understanding how the old America might yet resist the conquest and recover its own country again. ◁

LIBERAL ARTS

SIGNS OF THE APOCALYPSE

"'Same-sex Marriage: A Lesbian Christian Perspective' with Rev. Eva O'Diam, pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church of Harrisburg, 7:30 p.m., at the Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups."

—from an event listing for Elizabethtown (PA) College

Why Johnny Shouldn't Vouch

by Laurence M. Vance

School Choices: True and False
by John Merrifield
Oakland: The Independent Institute; 97 pp., $15.95

Voucher Wars: Waging the Legal Battle over School Choice
by Clint Bolick
Washington, D.C.: The Cato Institute; 277 pp., $20.00

◆

For some time now, the panacea offered by conservatives and libertarians for improving the education of American youth has been vouchers. There is no question that government schools are failing miserably. There is plenty of teaching about the wonders of diversity and multiculturalism, but not enough instruction in the basic skills required for work or college. The need for reform of the public educational system is trumpeted by both parties at election time, while the fact of private education's superiority in every respect (except, perhaps, in sports programs and sex education) is tacitly acknowledged.

The idea behind the voucher plan is that the federal government should provide a voucher sufficient to fund an education for each school-age child. Parents could choose the school on which to expend the voucher. The school would then redeem the voucher for payment from the federal government. In other words, vouchers are an income-transfer program, as well as a subsidy to private industry, courtesy of the U.S. taxpayer.

It is not that vouchers are a bad idea *per se*. There are, in fact, many private voucher programs. Even in the case of a complete separation of school and state, vouchers would still be a viable alternative to the existing scheme for educational funding. Truth be told, however, all parents have "school choice" right now—just as they have a choice in cars, clothes, and food. What voucher proponents really mean when they complain of an absence of "school choice" is that parents do not have the opportunity of choosing where to spend other people's money for the education of their children.

Two recent books attempt to make the case for vouchers. John Merrifield's *School Choices: True and False* is a critique of current school-choice programs and proposals that emphasizes competition in education as the means to effect real reform. Clint Bolick's *Voucher Wars: Waging the Legal Battle Over School Choice* is an account of the 12-year legal battle that culminated in the Supreme Court's 2002 decision, *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*, which upheld Cleveland's school-choice program. Although the two books are totally different in their approach to the subject of vouchers, they contain some of the same fallacies.

Merrifield, an economics professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio, is no neophyte on the subject of school choice. He has already written widely on the subject and is a frequent guest on television and radio programs where the issue is discussed and debated. Bolick, the author of several previous books on civil rights, is the vice president and national director of state chapters at the Institute for Justice. He also has the dubious distinction of having worked for the government at the Equal Employment Opportunity Center and in the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division.

School Choices progresses from the current state of the public-school system to problems with current reform proposals to the author's policy proposals for a competitive education industry. Although the main focus of the book is on vouchers, Merrifield also addresses charter schools; tax credits; the politicization of public education; government inefficiency, bureaucracy, and regulation; educational systems in foreign countries; magnet schools; school districts; and teachers' unions. Merrifield treats both the identification and discussion of "the critical elements of a competitive education industry" and the failure of current voucher programs and proposals, which he attributes to the fact that "choice advocates have forsaken and endangered the only truly effective reform catalyst—competition—mostly unwittingly, but often intentionally."

Numerous myths have been perpetuated on both sides of the school-choice debate, and Merrifield exposes many of them. The independence of charter schools is, he claims, "largely an illusion," and the charter ideal of an autonomous public school is a "fantasy." Merrifield further points out that the system of nonrefundable tax credits, by which every dollar of private-school tu-

ition paid reduces taxes by one dollar, would not help anyone. The rich can afford to send their children to whatever private school they wish regardless of any tax break they may receive, while the middle class and the poor, who pay little or no income tax, would not be helped by a tax credit at all. Voucher programs currently under way in Florida, Milwaukee, and Cleveland are the object of Merrifield's greatest attention and disdain—not because they are voucher programs, but because they limit participation to low-income parents and low-performing schools (with the state grading its own schools); do not allow for add-ons (supplements to the tax-funded voucher to make the higher-priced private schools affordable); and because they are simply too small to provide any meaningful results. Merrifield's solution to the school-reform problem is not an end to the public-school system, voucher programs, or federal control of education. Instead, he advocates publicly funded, universal, child-based vouchers. Merrifield again leaves it to the government to "determine the boundaries of its role as information provider and data generator, including standardized testing requirements and content."

Merrifield's proposals contain some major problems. First, if the state is to determine (as Merrifield thinks it should) what a school is, then a universal voucher is not a universal voucher at all. Parents who wish to send their children to "non-traditional" private schools that do not take orders from the state in respect of textbooks, teacher qualifications, hiring quotas, admissions, or curriculum requirements would not enjoy school choice. Second, as an economist, Merrifield should understand that his universal voucher program would distort the marketplace by establishing a floor below which tuition could not sink. No private school would have the incentive to compete on cost: Consequently, prices would be higher for everyone. Third, vouchers would foster increased dependency on the government. Parents would look to the state as the sole provider of educational funds for their children, as many parents now look to the state for food stamps, medical care, housing subsidies, and assorted welfare programs. Also, the state might very well embrace universal vouchers if it sees how they can be used to its advantage.

Voucher Wars is a firsthand account of Clint Bolick's experiences as a litigant on behalf of school-choice voucher programs. Bolick condemns public schools not only as defective, inadequate, and inferior but as hellholes. Although his solution to the problem is the voucher plan, he does not write in defense of vouchers *per se*, even though Bolick considers them a good thing that all libertarians should support. The concerns of libertarian critics of vouchers therefore receive short shrift in this book. Bolick argues that, "for those of us who consider ourselves libertarians, the school choice movement is a textbook example of effectively reducing the scope and power of government"—a statement with which many prominent libertarians would disagree. Bolick holds up the Milwaukee voucher program as "a model for the nation," but this program has been severely criticized by other voucher supporters, including John Merrifield.

The bad guys in the fight against vouchers are always the teachers' unions, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the NAACP and its Legal Defense Fund, People for the American Way, the ACLU, and "special interest groups." Therefore, to be opposed to vouchers is to be identified with these groups in the eyes of Clint Bolick, who holds both "absolutist" libertarians and

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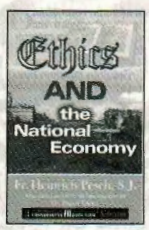

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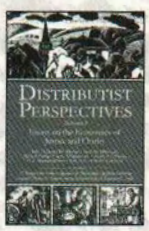

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teachers' unions responsible for keeping children in government schools. Like Merrifield, Bolick uses the language of the free market to commend the voucher plan: *consumers, competition, deregulate, parental liberty, the market, choice, educational marketplace, freedom.* Vouchers, however, are not about educational freedom: They are a program to transfer income from "the rich" to "the poor" reminiscent of Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society. "The rich" who send their children to private schools must pay tuition *and* taxes to fund public schools; "the poor," on the other hand, who do not pay taxes to fund public schools to begin with, may now receive a voucher for private education courtesy of "the rich." Bolick claims that "it is nothing less than criminal to fail to consider private options in a rescue mission" for children in failing public schools. Is it any less criminal, however, to compel a citizen to pay for the education of someone else's children? As a lawyer, Bolick can be forgiven his claim that "litigation could in fact change the world"; as a professed libertarian, he should know better.

Clearly, Bolick and Merrifield are intellectually indebted to economist Milton Friedman. John Merrifield admits that "the modern voucher debate began with Milton Friedman's 1955 proposal that was first read widely in the context of Chapter Six of his 1962 book *Capitalism and Freedom*," in which Friedman suggested that "governments could require a minimum level of schooling financed by giving parents vouchers redeemable for a specified maximum sum per child per year if spent on 'approved' educational services." Friedman expanded on this proposal in his later book *Free to Choose*. And Bolick, who "idolizes" Friedman, considers him and his wife "the godparents" of the school-choice movement. Although Friedman is widely respected as a free-market economist, his statist ideas gave us the withholding-tax system and the Earned Income Tax Credit. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Friedman should be behind the redistributionist voucher scheme.

Voucher proponents, although they may lament the decline of education in America, completely miss the point. There are two fundamental problems with vouchers.

First, far from improving American education, vouchers would make it worse. Not only would the voucher system create an additional layer of government bureaucracy financed by taxes, inflation, or borrowing, it would allow the state to take complete control of those private schools that accepted voucher payments through regulation, hiring quotas, teacher certification, curriculum requirements, *etc.* I find it incredible that Merrifield can state:

> I am not convinced that a refundable tax credit or fully funded voucher risks any more regulation of the private sector than exists now or will exist in the near future. But even if the risk were greater than with other approaches, the potential benefits of system transformation are worth it.

It is inconceivable that the government (federal or state) would ever provide money to parents or schools without attaching strings to its largesse. Federal control of private schools would have the same disastrous results that federal control of airport security has had.

Second, vouchers would be financed by tax dollars, as public education presently is. To make matters worse, voucher funding would come from "fresh money." No current voucher proposal even hints at a reduction in funding for public schools to pay for vouchers. Under Merrifield's proposals, education would be publicly funded even in the absence of a public-school system. If all the money currently spent on education were instead given to parents in the form of vouchers to expend at any school they wished, then the public schools could and should be abolished. And even if they were not abolished immediately, the mass exodus of students would certainly cause them to decline still further. The federal government, however, would never allow the wholesale dismantling of the public-school system—the greatest tool it has to foster its agenda of egalitarianism, collectivism, and political correctness. And, if the system were abolished, or even rendered irrelevant, what would be the point in collecting tax money from all citizens and redistributing it to those who have school-age children?

School Choices: True and False should cause libertarians and conservatives who favor current voucher programs and proposals to rethink their position. Critics of vouchers, whatever their political or economic persuasion, will find in this slender volume much useful information and also insightful analysis of the problems associated with current voucher programs in Florida, Milwaukee, and Cleveland, as well as of the myriad calls for reform and the proposed solutions to the crisis in public education. And *Voucher Wars* is your book if you are looking for a comprehensive legal history of the school-voucher movement. If, however, you were expecting a philosophical defense of school vouchers, this account of a libertarian lawyer's 12-year crusade in behalf of yet another government program will leave you sorely disappointed.

Laurence M. Vance is an instructor at the Pensacola Bible Institute and a freelance writer.

Cakewalk Through the Sand Dunes

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror
by David Frum and Richard Perle
New York: Random House;
284 pp., $25.95

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This malignant little book, admirably successful in achieving the difficult feat of combining vapidity with nastiness, further exhibits dishonesty, hypocrisy, flattery, cant, and special pleading, in about equal parts. To this list of sins, we can finally add error—of the grossest magnitude. *An End to Evil*, though published just a few months ago, is not just hopelessly outdated, it is wholly vitiated by subsequent events "on the ground," in Officialspeak. Really, there is something unsporting about reviewing this crippled book from the present historical vantage point. Fortunately, this hunt does not entail a long chase.

David Frum, the former White House speechwriter of "Axis of Evil" fame, and Richard "Cakewalk" Perle, he of the Department of Defense (more or less), describe their book as a "manual for victory" in the "War on Terror," which, for them, is almost infinitely more dreadful than the French, Russian, and Maoist Revolutions combined.

> For us, terrorism remains the great evil of our time, and the war