SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IS MASQUERADING AS EDUCATION

By Bonnie Gasper
Paul’s exhortation to Timothy remains true for all redeemed believers in Jesus Christ. We live in that time when many Christians are not enduring sound doctrine but are turning aside to fables and away from truth.

Many factors could be identified as co-conspirators in the growing demise of spiritual discernment among American Christians, but nothing has been more destructive than “transformational education,” which began reshaping public education in the early 1960s.

Antonio Gramsci, an Italian communist from the 1930s and father of cultural Marxism, is credited with the long march through the institutions. His “transformational education” invaded schools with ideologies and objectives committed to destroying Christianity and Judeo-Christian values by transforming how children think and speak. Primary strategies involved deconstructing language, division by identity, and the sexualization of children—the ultimate goal being the destruction of the family. The family is the foundation of any civilized society and the primary means God created for propagating the gospel and raising up a spiritual heritage for the Lord. Gramsci understood that changing how children think and speak would transform the culture.

According to Webster’s Dictionary, transformational is an adjective concerned with transformation, especially linguistic transformation. That’s because words mean things. They determine how and what we think. Academia is saturated with instructors who have marinated in transformational education throughout their entire academic careers. Their thinking has been fundamentally changed, as evidenced by ongoing and carefully crafted pedagogies and programs that fully embed cultural Marxism and are being taught to students through Social-Emotional Learning.

WHAT IS SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING?

Today, American schools are immersed in an innocuous-sounding pedagogy called Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). CASEL (the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning), which is directly linked with the United Nations global initiatives for education, is the founding and leading SEL organization. They define SEL as “the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.”

That sounds like wonderful language, right? However, it goes on to say that SEL will advance “educational equity and excellence,” and “help address various forms of inequity,” and create “safe, healthy, and just communities.” That is deceptively loaded language.

SEL is the umbrella or mothership carrying all the controversial ideologies like Critical Race Theory (CRT), Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Gender Inclusion, Cultural Competencies, Comprehensive Sex Ed (CSE), and Mindfulness training. These ideologies influence every content area because to be considered effective, SEL must be “systemic” and embedded in every subject at every grade level.

The innocuous language disguises the danger of SEL. SEL is simply transformational education repackaged. The focus is not on acquiring academic knowledge but rather indoctrinating students with the attitudes, values, and beliefs required to ensure full acceptance of unbiblical ideas such as equity, social justice, and identities to bring about a cultural revolution.

UNDERSTANDING THE DANGERS OF SEL REQUIRES BIBLICAL DISCERNMENT

Unfortunately, many Christians don’t understand how they are being deceived. Many have adopted SEL language, ideologies, and assumptions without examining them through the lens of Scripture. Sometimes it is because the narratives have already reshaped their own thinking. Sometimes, they don’t recognize how they are being manipulated by spiritual and psychological warfare which accompanies every attack on truth. And many Christians believe the only way to love others and not be judgmental is to affirm everything, including false beliefs and doctrine. And when Christian students are labeled extremists or inherently privileged, social justice demands they give up their voice, and they meekly comply. Christian parents must recognize how SEL erases the true identities of their children by assigning false narratives about race, human sexuality, and justice through the curriculum. SEL has many facets but is commonly taught in schools through equity, Critical Race Theory, Comprehensive Sex Education, and Mindfulness.
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Equity has been masterfully conflated with equality. Equality is biblical; we are all equal before God, and each human being has the same right to love, respect, and dignity that comes with being His creation. However, equity assigns privilege and power based upon perceived social standings, skin color, and heritage—even sexual identities. Equity demands equal outcomes according to identity groups, which requires taking from the privileged and giving to the underprivileged. Personal responsibility, achievement, and free will are not part of equity.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) assigns guilt or virtue according to skin color, privilege, or victim status, and there is no way to shake it because it is inherent or baked in. We are either systemically racist or a victim and an oppressor or oppressed. Therefore, CRT rejects the biblical truth about people, that we are all born sinners, responsible for our personal sins and actions.

Comprehensive Sex Ed (CSE) further destroys a child’s identity by denying the biblical and biologically verifiable truth of two genders, God’s design for human sexuality and marriage. Instead, children are taught gender is merely a social construct created not by God but by our own feelings and desires. They are taught sexual pleasure is their right and are encouraged to explore every kind of sexual practice early and often. CSE is steeped in the Marxist goal of sexualizing children. Therefore, CSE views children as simply higher-order animals with no unique purpose or meaning. To CSE advocates, sex is like breathing. It’s not sacred and reserved for marriage. Rather than being a gift from God, sex is the right to be and do whatever is right in our own eyes.

Additionally, SEL is deeply focused on self-awareness and self-management, and trainers are teaching teachers eastern meditative practices through activities like Mindfulness training. This is dangerous terrain for young impressionable minds. Mindfulness teaches children to empty their minds (an Eastern religious practice), while the Bible tells us to fill our minds with the things of Christ. As a result, the absolute truth of the Bible is not used to guide emotions or decisions. The natural outcome is that children are left to follow their hearts or feelings. Mindfulness seeks truth by turning inward, not by looking to the Bible. It teaches children relativism and is eastern religion repackaged.

THE DANGERS OF SEL

SEL is not safe. When Satan said to Eve, “did God really say?” he was planting seeds of doubt about her identity. SEL is no different and goes even further by demanding that children adopt and demonstrate affirmation of what the state has decided are acceptable values, attitudes, and beliefs. In fact, SEL compiles a massive database tracking every child through constant surveys and assessments to assess their progress toward these objectives.

Christians must reject this intersectionality of identities which are lies masquerading as truth, and instead stand firm on the truth that all children are created in the image of God. All reflect His character and attributes, and all are deeply loved by the Father regardless of circumstances. Every child should be taught they were “fearfully and wonderfully made” by our Creator God. He established their place, epoch, and days. We are here not to get what is ours but to love and serve Him by loving and serving others and introducing them to Christ.

Public education will not self-correct. The cultural Marxist worldview has metastasized and thoroughly engulfed curriculum, the teacher’s union, the national school board association, both federal and state departments of education, and now, even proposed teacher licensing requirements.

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CHRISTIAN PARENTS MUST TEACH THEIR CHILDREN THE TRUTH

If we wish to stop the cultural transformation of our families and nation into a godless Marxist dystopia, we must ensure our children know the truth, are prepared to defend it, and are equipped to stand firm in it. All parents must consider the cost of immersing their children in a false worldview that teaches children there is no God, truth is relative, and circumstances determine their worth.

Christians must understand they can still love everyone without affirming all that is opposed to God and His Word. Speaking the truth in love is the most loving thing one can do for another. It can be difficult and costly. Failing to speak the truth is not only eternally dangerous for the lost, but it is also dangerous for the saved. Salt is a preservative. If it has lost its saltiness, it is good for nothing.

It has been said a child’s mind is like wet cement; whatever lands on it sticks. Christian parents must consider the cognitive dissonance a child experiences when what’s taught in school directly contradicts the home. At some point, the child must work out in his mind who is telling him the truth. Unfortunately, all too often, the world wins.

God exhorted us to “train up our children in the way they should go” and ensure their hearts and minds are filled with the truth. They should not be “sitting in the seats of scoffers.” There is no safe harbor in public education for children anymore. Parents must secure alternative educational opportunities as soon as possible.

Bonnie Gasper is a working professional in the print and promotional industry. She has written extensively about moral issues as understood through a biblical worldview. An executive-level board member of the Child Protection League (childprotectionleague.com), she frequently speaks and writes about cultural issues, legislation, and curricula. CPS works to protect children from violence, exploitation, and indoctrination by educating and equipping parents and the public about issues impacting children. She and her husband, Tom, have three children and reside in Minnesota.

ENDNOTES

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