

# FB FAITH BUILDERS

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, INC.

*“Discipling the head, heart, and hands”*

Issue 91

Spring 2009

### EQUIPPING KINGDOM CITIZENS:

WHY

# HISTORY MATTERS

IN MENNONITE SCHOOLS

by Patrick Heatwole

I learned something from several of my history classmates in college—history *doesn't* matter. It's true, no one actually said it, but the news was often suggested by my colleagues' choice of back seats. Although they attended class, historical understanding wasn't the focus. Their true passions, however, surfaced during class introductions or in casual conversations. My classmates cared about coaching; becoming a history teacher was simply the most convenient way to the game.

Please do not misunderstand me. I respect those who aim to build students' character in the gym. Yet getting a history or social studies degree just to coach conveys a rather nonchalant attitude toward studying history—an attitude Christians, and especially Anabaptists, ought to reject robustly.

Unfortunately, it's not merely a few prospective football coaches who share historical apathy. Our culture's indifference regarding history is implied by the headlines we often read—“American Students Lag in Math and Science Achievement.” Rarely do we see similar stories about the lack of student achievement in history or geography. This focus on math and science at the exclusion of history shouldn't surprise. It simply reflects the goals of a society and educational system primarily focused on preparing students for the workforce. Of course, schools are concerned with developing good citizens, but this too is largely defined as faithfully contributing to economic uplift. Since jobs and money are the target, and technology and science offer the best path to the goal, studying the past becomes a

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second-class priority.

But Mennonite schools must exist for reasons more substantial than raising responsible, wealth-building citizens. This goal is far too trivial for followers of the Lord of the universe. In fact, the sacrifices we make to fund our own schools are squandered if our graduates' impact is only felt within the narrow confines of time and geo-political boundaries. Instead, we desire students who live lives of eternal purpose, capturing a vision for what God is doing, and participating in His global strategy. As Anabaptists, who

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pledge primary allegiance to a heavenly rather than an earthly kingdom, our educational objective should be the development of young men and women prepared for effective service in the kingdom of God in either local or cross-cultural settings. We must equip kingdom citizens.

If this is our purpose, Mennonite schools will offer a distinctive education, but it will not happen automatically. Only as school boards, administrators, and teachers purposefully plan curriculum and activities to prepare students for kingdom responsibilities will our objective be met.



## We must equip kingdom citizens.



Vital to a distinctive, equipping education is a renewed focus on teaching history. While our students should excel in all academic disciplines, studying history from a Christian point of view has the powerful potential to shape attitudes, create understandings, and develop skills that prepare our students for successful, twenty-first-century, kingdom citizenship. Properly taught, history is not just a tedious recitation of past events but an essential part of the curriculum to develop God's servants for service today and tomorrow. But what does this look like? How can history class help students not only develop historical knowledge, but also proper heart-attitudes and skills? And how does one teach history from a Christian/Anabaptist perspective?

I suggest four ways the history classroom (beginning in first grade) can be a significant force in equipping kingdom citizens. Describing these four purposes of historical understanding will also

## MARRIAGE SEMINAR | MARCH 28-29



### Becoming One

a weekend of enrichment for married couples

March 28-29, 2009

to be held at Faith Builders Educational Programs  
Guys Mills, Pennsylvania

Speaker: John Coblentz, Sr.

#### Saturday, March 28

- 9:00-9:30 Worship
- 9:30-10:20 "Roles in Marriage"
- 10:30-11:20 "Setting Goals"
- 11:20-11:50 Breakout Sessions
- 12:00 Lunch

- 1:30 Worship
- 1:40-2:30 "Head Level/Heart Level Communication"
- 2:40-3:30 "Listening"

The evening is kept open in order to provide an opportunity for couples to spend time together. We encourage couples to plan a "date" away from Faith Builders for the evening. We will provide a list of restaurants and possible activities to help in your planning. An evening meal will be served for those who choose to eat at Faith Builders. Couples who wish to eat at Faith Builders should indicate that when registering.

#### Sunday, March 29

- 9:30 Worship
- 9:45-10:30 "Talking about Differences"
- 10:40-11:00 Breakout Sessions
- 11:05-11:50 "Building Friendship in Marriage"
- 12:00 Lunch

If you would like to attend this seminar, please register by March 15, 2009. Call (814) 789-4518 or email [fbep@fbep.org](mailto:fbep@fbep.org) to register for this weekend. Attendance at this seminar is limited. Lodging at Faith Builders is also limited. A list of local motels is available from the office. A freewill offering will be taken to cover the expenses of the weekend including speaker fees, food, and lodging.



## SUMMER TERM | JUNE 29-JULY 31

### Are you looking for ways to strengthen and invigorate your teaching?

Faith Builders' Summer Term offers concentrated study, refreshing interaction with other teachers, and practical training for new and experienced teachers. If you are teaching or plan to begin teaching, consider joining us for Summer Term, June 29-July 31, 2009.

#### About our courses >

See our website [www.fbep.org](http://www.fbep.org) for full course descriptions, explanation of credit hours, and other information.

- » Art: Private Lessons ..... Hannah Scott
- » EDU 201 Foundations of Education (3) ..... Steven Brubaker
- » EDU 202 Principles of Teaching (3) ..... Patrick Heatwole
- » EDU 204 Course Development Practicum (3) ..... Gerald Miller
- » EDU 210 Child Development (3) ..... Jonas Sauder
- » EDU 230 Teaching Reading (2) ..... Anna Zehr
- » EDU 326 The Life of the Teacher (1) ..... Jonas Sauder
- » EDU 333 Teaching Language Arts (3) ..... Sharon Yoder
- » EDU 397 Art for Teachers (3) ..... Hannah Scott
- » EDU 420 Learning Disabilities (3) ..... TBA
- » ENG 330 TESOL (3) ..... TBA
- » HIS 360 Art Appreciation (1) ..... Jonas Sauder
- » LIT 240 Children's Literature (3) ..... Sharon Yoder
- » MAT 020 Math Independent Study (NC) ..... Earl Koch
- » MAT 030 Algebra II (NC) ..... Earl Koch
- » MAT 250 Mathematics for Secondary Teachers (3) ... Earl Koch
- » MUS 110 Music Fundamentals (3) ..... Brandon Mullet

A brochure and application will be available by end of February. Students of 2007 and 2008 summer terms will receive a copy of the brochure, and copies are available on request. Check our blog for updated information at [www.fbep.org/blog](http://www.fbep.org/blog).

#### About our guest instructors >

**Patrick Heatwole** serves as high school teacher and assistant principal for curriculum and instruction at Barnwell Christian School in Blackville, South Carolina. With an educational background in Bible and history, Patrick is excited about the effect of Christ-centered education in God's kingdom and loves to explore purposes and methods of instruction.



**Jonas Sauder** is completing his 36th year of teaching, having started his involvement in education in 1971. Currently he teaches at Sonlight in Lancaster, PA, and works part-time with Christian Light Education in teacher workshops and curriculum projects.



**Hannah Scott** lives in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She is a graduate of Elizabethtown College with a degree in visual arts. She also completed the art education program at Millersville University and is a certified art educator. Currently she teaches art classes at several local schools. Hannah is passionate about the importance of the visual arts in a child's spiritual, physical, and cognitive development.



**Earl Koch** brings his 35 years of teaching experience to his summer classes at FBEP. He has taught mathematics in secondary schools in Waterloo County, Ontario. He also tutored privately and taught adult education classes. Earl pastors at Grace Mennonite Church near New Hamburg.





provide us with some direction in thinking Christianly about history and help teachers explore practical ways to make the study of history transformational in their students' lives.

### EQUIPPING CITIZENS WITH A KINGDOM PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Mansfield, a teacher and popular author, thinks he knows why many students hate studying history—their teachers only focus on “dates and dead people.”<sup>1</sup> Whatever the reasons some dislike history class, it’s true that students are too often stuffed with historical trivia with little chance to engage larger historical questions of cause and effect, change across time, and the effects of the past on their lives. In short, they are cheated out of asking the big question—what is our world about and where do I fit in? Helping our students get out of the trees to see the forest is our first job as history teachers.

Our task is to introduce students to history as the study of God’s unfolding plan for time. We understand that God created time, and history is guided by His hand to a designated end. God even raises up and puts down powerful rulers (Dan. 2:21). When students gain an appreciation for the ways God has acted throughout his-  
<sup>1</sup>Mansfield, Stephen. *More Than Dates & Dead People*. Nashville: Cumberland House Pub., 2000.

## APPLY NOW FOR FALL 2009

We are still accepting applications for Fall 2009 in the Ministry Apprenticing and Teacher Apprenticing Programs, with several openings for both men and women. Increased interest in these programs means that early applications have a greater likelihood of acceptance. If you would like more information about either of these programs, please contact the office for a information packet. To request an application packet, contact the office. You may also download the application packet from our website.

Some first-year students said,

*“My nervousness in joining a new community lasted about one day. I am enjoying people here as friendly and real people; there’s a genuine feeling of community here.”*

*“I have discovered again this week how much I don’t know. I want to learn.”*



tory to achieve His goals, they begin to develop a God-centered perspective (His priorities and desires) on their world. This perspective has practical significance in equipping kingdom citizens.

First, knowing God has a plan for history develops confidence in troubled times. As students learn that our sovereign God has the ultimate control and is moving history toward a victorious completion, they gain confidence knowing they are on the winning side. We can have peace even when our earthly country faces Muslim extremists and a crumbling economy.

Secondly, learning to view earthly events from God’s point of view helps

our students resist entanglement in earthly contests. Whether it is Obama vs. McCain, Democrats vs. Republicans, or China vs. the United States, teachers should train students to watch and wonder how God might be directing history for the advancement of His kingdom. As Joshua learned while preparing to battle Jericho, we dare not try to put God on the side of an earthly, partisan contest (Josh. 5:13-14). Our job is to make sure we are on God’s side. Instead of becoming the cheerleaders in national or international controversies, an understanding of God’s perspective on the world will cause our

## JOIN THE SHARE TEAM

FB SHARE Team was started to build a support network of partners that will enable Faith Builders to foster closer connections with the Anabaptist community.

- » **Supplication** | Increase prayer support.
- » **Help** | Recruit long and short-term volunteers and community representatives.
- » **Attendance** | Increase student enrollment.
- » **Resources** | Broaden the base of financial and material support for FBEP.
- » **Education** | Inform Anabaptist communities about the work of FBEP.

Anyone or any organization can join the FB SHARE Team by committing themselves to praying, volunteering, or giving financially. For more information send an email to [share@fbep.org](mailto:share@fbep.org).



## COLLEGE STUDENT SEMINAR & RETREAT

Faith Builders invites you to attend the College Student Seminar & Retreat, scheduled for July 2-5, 2009. This event offers encouragement to college students through workshops on current challenges to the Christian worldview, opportunities for small group discussion and prayer, and informal interaction with others who have walked or are walking a similar path.

The Seminar (Friday) is a one-day conference on “Developing a Christian Mind,” filled with lecture, breakout sessions for discussion, and study of the philosophies young people may encounter on college campuses. Speakers at the seminar include Patrick Heatwole, Lois Hershberger, and Jonas Sauder.

The Retreat (Friday evening-Sunday afternoon) is a weekend for young people in college to engage peers and mentors with their questions and struggles. It’s a safe place to discuss and think about college experiences and our Mennonite heritage. Activities include small-group discussions, thought-provoking sessions, panel discussion of issues, organized recreation, and times for relaxing and visiting. Dave Nisly from Manassas, VA, will be the guest speaker for the retreat.

Faith Builders hosts both events at the Castle, a turn-of-the-century mansion built by an oil baron, now turned into a retreat center. The Seminar will cost \$55 per person, including overnight lodging, meals, and seminar expenses. The Retreat will cost \$130 per person, including two additional nights’ stay, meals, and retreat expenses. Students registering for both events will receive priority.

Those attending previous years have said, “So refreshing to hear these subjects from a biblical perspective!” “Topics were very appropriate to what I have faced in college.” “The small groups were challenging, life-giving and a safe environment.” “Very helpful to have the input of older people to our questions and feelings.”



This retreat is limited to 42 participants. Detailed schedule information will be available on our website. You may apply online or download the application from our website. You may also request an application by calling (814) 789-4518 or emailing [fbep@fbep.org](mailto:fbep@fbep.org).

student to begin to ask how they may best accomplish God’s will in their time.

Thirdly, with an understanding of God’s eternal plan for history, students begin to develop vision for what God wants to do in the future. As God’s plan for the world becomes clearer, our students should grow more passionate about God’s desire that the entire world should know Him. Kingdom citizens who understand that God is at work in history will be more excited to get involved in the Great Commission.

### EQUIPPING CITIZENS WITH A KINGDOM IDENTITY

Preparing students to be good citizens is almost universally considered a central

purpose of a history education. The stories students learn in history are a society’s collective memory. This memory develops a sense of citizenship—the responsibilities and privileges of living in that particular society. The largest association in the United States devoted to social studies education explicitly states that “social studies educators teach students [what is] necessary for fulfilling the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy.”<sup>2</sup> As Christian teachers, however, we understand our primary citizenship to be heavenly. Therefore, contrary to the goals of the National Council for the Social Studies, we want our students to identify themselves first as citizens of God’s

<sup>2</sup>From: “About NCSS”: accessed at [www.socialstudies.org/about](http://www.socialstudies.org/about).

kingdom before assuming citizenship in a “participatory democracy.” Historical understanding in our Mennonite schools should develop within students a global, Christian identity with God’s people across time and geography.

One important way to develop this identity is to include in our collective memory some of the stories left out of many history texts. Too often students read history books that glorify warriors and political leaders while excluding those who lived for God’s kingdom. Mennonite schools’ history programs will be distinctive and effective as they choose to highlight not just the exploits of national heroes but also the heroes of the kingdom of heaven. Our students should hear of those who overcame evil with good, who



chose to follow God against the odds, and who advanced the kingdom of heaven. A history not only of Hannibal, George Washington, and Dwight Eisenhower, but of Felix Manz, Elizabeth Elliot, and John Troyer.

Another way to help students develop their primary identity as citizens of the kingdom is to integrate the historical record in the Bible and church history into the history curriculum. As students see God's people working on His plan throughout history, they begin to see themselves as one link in God's overarching plan of history. Our classrooms will want to join in solidarity with the distinguished kingdom citizens past and present who are advancing God's work. Like Queen Esther, they can view themselves as first a child of God and understand that they have been placed in history "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14).

### EQUIPPING CITIZENS WITH KINGDOM UNDERSTANDINGS AND ATTITUDES

A challenge I face teaching in a school with little ethnic diversity is helping students develop understanding attitudes toward those who are different or less privileged. And I'm not the only one teaching in an overwhelmingly white, rural Mennonite school in a community becoming more diverse in our globalizing world. In such relatively sheltered environments, how do we help students understand the struggles many around us face? How do our students respond to new Latino or Asian immigrants in their neighborhoods or the struggles of many urban, African-American communities? Do our students look compassionately on those hurting in the world and desire to share Christ's love?

History class offers an ideal environment to help our students learn about themselves and those around them. Whether or not we admit it, the past

## CLEP®: NOW AVAILABLE AT FB

Faith Builders offers the College-Level Examination Program® (CLEP®), a credit-by-examination program which gives students the opportunity to earn college credit by earning qualifying scores on exams. CLEP exams are computer-based and administered on computer at Faith Builders. Nearly 3,000 colleges and universities grant credit or advanced standing based on CLEP exam performance.

CLEP exams offer a low-cost method for earning college credit. At \$85 (\$70 for the exam plus \$15 administration fee), each exam is a fraction of the tuition required for a similar college course. The 90-minute, computer-based exams are offered in more than 34 subjects, ranging from U.S. History, Spanish, and College Algebra to American Literature, Western Civilization, and Financial Accounting. Students receive their scores immediately upon completion of the exam (except for English Composition with Essay exam).

Faith Builders offers course exemptions for selected CLEP exams. Up to 12 credits from CLEP examinations may be applied to requirements in the Teacher Apprenticing or Ministry Apprenticing Programs. In addition to students attending Faith Builders, we encourage those interested in earning college credit to consider this program. Students attending Faith Builders' short terms may wish to take a CLEP exam while they are here. Teachers who have taught courses in core subjects such as history, mathematics, science, and literature may be able to take CLEP exams with only minimal preparation. Contact the office to request a brochure showing the examinations available and FBTI course exemptions.

For more information about CLEP, visit [www.collegeboard.com/clep](http://www.collegeboard.com/clep). To schedule an exam at Faith Builders, contact the Academic Department at (814) 789-4518, ext. 363, or [academics@fbep.org](mailto:academics@fbep.org).

strongly influences the realities of our lives; therefore, studying history enlightens present conditions. As we explore how people's pasts affect their current situations, decisions, and weaknesses and strengths, we can guide our students in developing caring attitudes. In our history classes we ought to teach the injustices inflicted on Native American populations, the terrible history of slavery in the United States, and the historical and economic reasons giving rise to immigration. An awareness of history equips kingdom citizens to minister more effectively by developing understanding and compassion for those they will touch.

Historical understanding not only leads to empathy, history also develops humility. As students study history they learn we are not the only ones through whom God has worked. In different cultures and

religious traditions, men and women have done mighty works for the Lord. Studying history teaches us to appreciate those different from us; we will be less ready to criticize and more ready to listen to counsel from brothers and sisters, both living and dead.

### EQUIPPING CITIZENS WITH SKILLS FOR KINGDOM ADVANCEMENT

We live in the information age. As a teacher, I notice the change in the classroom; my students enter class each morning with more information than ever before about events and ideas around the world. Through blogs, radio talk-show hosts, YouTube, and Facebook, our students receive a stream of data each day needing to be filtered and sorted. Especially troubling with the spread of



non-traditional news media is students' ability to get all their news from increasingly subjective and opinionated sources. In a world filled with information, it is vital that kingdom citizens learn to analyze and weigh all they hear and read. We need followers of Jesus who are discerning when they study for topical presentations, prepare for Sunday school, or listen to news that shapes their worldview. As educators we face a challenge—how to teach students to be wise consumers in an age of cheap information. History class is a place we can engage our students in careful research about the past to develop thinking skills essential to navigate the vast trove of information at their fingertips.

A central task of historians is to uncover the past based on source material. Historians carefully look at evidence from the past and analyze each source for bias, both intentional and unintentional. In history class, we should teach our students these same skills. History teachers should require their students to research, analyze historical documents, and discuss the validity of the sources. Students should learn to ask questions of what they read.

What was the motive behind writing this? Who wrote this document? What biases might this writer have? As students learn to wrestle with these questions, we can then teach them to transfer these skills to their current information usage. Effective kingdom citizens dare not be naïve about the power of false information to take their eyes off truth. Studying history equips students to use the blessings and advantages of the information age to build God's kingdom.

Implementing these historical principles and practices in our schools is not easy. Few history curriculums on the market share our distinctive vision for educating kingdom citizens. In addition, many textbooks—even from Christian companies—too strongly emphasize earthly citizenship and fail to engage students in historical analysis. To communicate these four purposes of history effectively, we teachers must put effort into learning to think and teach Christianly about history. Quality classroom materials designed to teach history from a Christian/Anabaptist point of view will help. Yet to be equipped, students ultimately need teachers who

personally embrace a vision for why history matters and act to implement this vision in the classroom.

It will take work, but the opportunity to see students prepared for effective service is an exciting calling. In addition, students will be happy for a purposeful history class. Considering its potential for our communities, let us renew our commitment to the history classroom as a vital tool in equipping a generation of world Christians, students interested in God's global work. May we equip kingdom citizens who like the sons of Issachar "understood the times" and wisely directed their lives (I Chron. 12:32).

**Patrick Heatwole**

*serves as high school teacher and assistant principal for curriculum and instruction at Barnwell Christian School in Blackville, South Carolina. With an educational background in Bible and history, Patrick is excited about the effect of Christ-centered education in God's kingdom and loves to explore purposes and methods of instruction.*



**News from Faith Builders**

**Thanks to...**

- » Libby Turner, Woodburn, OR, FBCS, Oct-Dec.
- » Beth Martin, Aroda, VA, short-term kitchen help, January.
- » Katie Shank, Aroda, VA, short-term kitchen help, January.
- » Lois Hershberger, Jesup, GA, short-term help.

**Farewell to...**

- » Lynford Slabaugh, Nappanee, IN, maintenance, Dec.

**Welcome to...**

- » Johann Butikofer, Richland Center, WI, maintenance, Nov.

**Congratulations to...**

- » Myron & Rosina (Mast) Miller, Jana Kalyne, 1<sup>st</sup> child & daughter, July 17.

- » Peter & Rachel (Kuhns) Goertzen, Benjamin Willard, 1<sup>st</sup> child & son, Sept 18.

**Other news**

- » Our annual Teachers Week is scheduled for August 4-7, 2009. In 2008, nearly 200 teachers joined us for four days of practical workshops, hands-on work sessions, and inspiring general sessions. This year, the committee is planning forty workshops by a variety of teachers plus general sessions by John Coblentz and Peter Whitt. A detailed brochure will be available in March and will be sent to previous attendees of Teachers Week.
- » Our old Ford pickup broke down and is not worth repairing. We are eager to talk with anyone who is willing to help us find a pickup or light truck to replace it.

It must be full-size, four-wheel drive, and heavy-duty enough to attach to our snow plow. Do you have such a truck? Would you be willing to donate it to FB or offer it at a reasonable cost? Perhaps your church or business would like to raise funds for this need. If so, please contact Sheldon Kauffman at (814) 789-4518, ext. 303.

- » We are upgrading our phone system. Callers may use (814) 789-4518 for both business and personal calls. You may also ask a student or volunteer for the extension of his dorm and dial that extension directly when prompted. Please report problems by emailing tech@fbep.org or calling (814) 795-9165. We appreciate your patience as we make changes.



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# HISTORY MATTERS

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*by Patrick Heatwole*



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