



# KEYSTONE SENTINEL

Protecting and Promoting Christian Education



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Michael Clater, Editor

## boardroom

By  
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### "I CAN DO ANYTHING I WANT!!!" – CHAPTER 5

September—Chapter 1: Christian school leaders, some civil laws apply to your schools.

October—Chapter 2: Students, don't form one's aspirations on contemporary models of self-esteem, self-determination, and entitlement.

November—Chapter 3: Schools and teachers, academic programs are better when properly supervised by a principal.

December—Chapter 4: Parents, it is important for your kids to be in school every day except for an urgent reason – no matter what you want.

Now for Chapter 5: Christian school leaders, documents help avoid headaches and turmoil.

Christian leaders have had an apt response when someone is exposed to some clear teaching in Scripture and they respond, "I'll pray about it." We reject that mindset, asserting that one does not "pray about" any decision where God's Word has already given a clear answer. The Bible has been provided, and it has the highest level of knowledge for decision making. God does not give out special deals, waivers, exceptions. In contrast, "I'll pray about it" is one way that a person, any person, can express that "I can do anything I want."

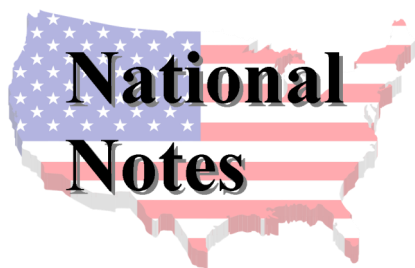
In simple, non-theological language, Scripture is a written document akin to a policy book to be followed. Scripture is provided through the advanced thinking of Jehovah, not accidental, not haphazard, not impulsive. The human readers of the Scriptures have a choice when making a decision. Do I or do I not believe I should follow and obey what is written? To believe it and follow it relieves one of unplanned decision-making options that are opposed to the content in Scripture. To

believe it and follow it relieves one of making many mistakes that lead to a life characterized by perpetual headaches and turmoil.

Beyond the Bible, there is a parallel (but not perfect) "book" that is an esteemed part of ministry by some Christian school leaders. Having a set of well-designed, foundational documents enables a school to emit professionalism and quality. Leaders engaged in study, thinking, debate, and prayer to write documents that provide guidance in everyday decision making—for ourselves and others. Core foundational documents include a Constitution/Bi-Laws and Incorporation papers. Foundational documents also include a set of three detailed manuals: (a) a Student/Home Handbook, (b) a Faculty Handbook, and (c) an Administrative Handbook. These are not just legal documents, they are documents that shun impulsiveness as contemporary "praying about it" is absent. Like the Bible, when faithfully followed, policy books bring consistency, predictability, and stability. Unlike the Bible, we create these documents - with advanced prayer and diligence. We periodically edit/upgrade.

One can observe four reasons why some leaders approach biblical "policies" differently than school "policies": (a) some do not see the far-reaching benefits of school policymaking and cannot justify the necessary work; (b) some see their giftedness as qualifying for an exception; (c) some believe they are advantaged if/as they make special deals, give waivers, make exceptions; and (d) some prefer to act spontaneously rather than heed and follow forethought and planning—some prefer to "Do what I want" at the moment.

Consider the parallels between the biblical illustration above and the policy illustration just covered. Many will not follow a leader who exhibits "I can do anything I want." Christian school leaders have a choice. The development of policies and procedures and faithfully following them is both a sign of professionalism and of choosing a road to heightened success through stability. The shunning of written policies and not faithfully following precedent, policy, and procedure follows the road to perpetual headache and turmoil.



## City Schools Restructure Due to School Choice

The school choice movement has long proven to be a quality and effective tool for families to educate their children in the learning environment that best meets their academic, social, and spiritual needs. Government school advocates view school choice as an existential threat and use any manner of arguments against it. The latest case in point: Chicago's Board of Education voted in mid-December to end school choice practices, moving toward a plan claimed to improve neighborhood schools by bolstering educational quality, thereby reducing student loss.

The driving motivation? Not the best interest of the kids. Not addressing the lack of quality education, at least as a core reason. Instead, it seems to be money and wrong philosophy.

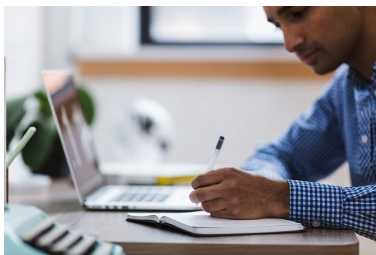


Image by [StockSnap](#) from [Pixabay](#)

- ◆ By **reducing “privatization” of education**, the system gets more money and more student control.
- ◆ **Educational equity** is the talking-point, underpinned by language of victimhood, “economic inequality,” “structural divestment,” and “longstanding structural racism and socio-economic inequality.” (Blatantly put, capitalism is a system of white oppression that intentionally stratifies people into economic ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ while maintaining racial dominance for the ‘rich white rulers.’)
- ◆ **Capitalism is to blame** for their education system’s failures, not current or past Board or union leaders, so the government must retake control to ensure everyone has the same level of opportunities and learning outcomes.

In reality, the success of school choice opportunities has forced the board to face higher numbers of disgruntled parents and the system’s own long-term failures. It has chosen to ‘double down’ on their own system and progressively Marxist philosophies. The lasting racial, economic, and social impact that single-parent families have in the community — even for multiple generations — cannot be ignored in an honest discussion of local and national education. (It’s a significant argument that author Melissa Kearney has made in a newly published work, [Two Parent Privilege](#).)

Pennsylvanians cannot ‘rest on our laurels’ with the significant enrollment increases the last few years. Student success stories are the most effective examples that participants, families, ministry leaders, and school choice supporters can share this week — National School Choice Week — and throughout the year.

- ◆ **How do you promote quality and excellence** in the classroom and across your ministry? In these tougher economic times, people are looking for a better deal — at the grocery store and in educating their kids.
- ◆ **How does your school promote its value?** Comparative results of achievement and academic testing is a great tool for school promotion, focusing teacher development opportunities, and
- ◆ **How does your school and ministry verbalize its distinctives** from other area Christian schools, or from the charter and cyber education options?

[Chicago Board of Education to move away from school choice, bolster neighborhood schools citing ‘equity’ | Fox News](#)

[‘Two Parent Privilege’ author sounds alarm on concerning marriage trend’s impact on children \(msn.com\)](#)

## The 2024-2025 FAFSA: Changes and Frustrations

Millions of American students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually in order to apply for loan or grant funding to attend college. It has been a fairly reliable and predictable process for years.

The U.S. Department of Education launched the 2024-2025 form and website almost three months later than usual. It quickly turned into confusion and frustration for many, as key components in the process were changed, names and acronyms were modified, and the website had noteworthy flaws that caused even more user anxiety.

- ◆ A failure to include a calculation to adjust for historic inflation in the new Student Aid Index flummoxed users, forcing website updates and form clarifications.
- ◆ Transferring tax data from returns filed with the IRS are now unavoidable.
- ◆ Family size is no longer a factor, with a new emphasis on providing funds for lower-income individuals.

[7 Key Changes Coming to the 2024–25 FAFSA® Experience – Federal Student Aid](#)

[Editorial: A broken FAFSA website is toying with students’ lives \(msn.com\)](#)

[New FAFSA reveal comes with complications, delays | Fox Business](#)

# Christian School Staff Scholarship Program



**Promoting Academic  
Development through  
Grants for Advanced  
Coursework at Partnering  
Christian Colleges**

**Do you meet common  
sense criteria like:**

**Meet the income requirements?**

**Coursework enhance your ministry?**

**Hold KCEA staff certification?**

**Employed in an affiliating school?**

**Communicate with your ministry  
leadership and KCEA staff about this  
opportunity. The 2024-25 scholarship  
cycle starts in Summer 2024.**

**Don't miss out!**

## *The Bible and Society*

Recent Items of Interest for Believers

### Anti-Religion and Anti-Christianity: A Challenge

We have all experienced or witnessed verbal attacks on both Biblical Christianity and on 'religious people.' These attacks seem to be escalating in both creativity and frequency as the world is seduced by Satan's temptations, moving away from God- and Bible-consciousness.

- ◆ The Philadelphia-area Wallingford Swarthmore School District openly promoted "Gay Pride Month" in June 2023 but highly discouraged District staff and school bus drivers from showing any form of support for Christmas, including music, decorations or clothing. [Wallingford-Swarthmore School District Bans Christmas – DV Journal \(delawarevalleyjournal.com\)](#)
- ◆ Numerous pro-Palestinian 'protests' in opposition to the current Israel-Hamas war have been violent, damaging, and disruptive throughout the world. Earlier this month, Palestinian protesters destroyed and vandalized an archaeological site known as Joshua's Altar, located in the West Bank. This incident comes in the wake of other attacks in recent years on revered sites connected with Christian or Hebrew backgrounds. [Joshua's Altar on Mount Ebal vandalized by Arab rioters - Israel News - The Jerusalem Post \(jpost.com\)](#)
- ◆ A school board member in Fairfax County, Virginia, replaced the Bible for his swearing-in ceremony, while others did not use any book for their oaths. Karl Frisch placed his hand on five LGBTQ-themed books, four of which are on the American Library Association's list of top "banned books." (Note: the ALA is currently headed by a self-avowed Marxist lesbian.) [Supervisors and school board members sworn in | Annandale Today](#)
- ◆ Quarterback C.J. Stroud, quarterback for the Houston Texans of the National Football League, gave repeated glory and thanks to God and the Lord Jesus Christ in post-game interviews. NBC, which broadcast the game, selectively edited Stroud's comments to remove the Name of Jesus from social media posts and has faced immense backlash. Here is Stroud's original interview: [CJ Stroud ORIGINAL Postgame interview - YouTube](#)

**The challenge:** How can you, your church, and your school be a beacon and testimony of Christ-like salt, light, and hope in your community? A nice road sign doesn't change people's hearts and minds. The Gospel and the Bible do.



# In the Classroom

## 'Cancel Culture' Defies Academic Rigor, Honest Teaching of History



Image by [Markus Winkler](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Every month we encounter and read reports of “cancel culture” actions taken by both private and governmental entities. Examples range widely, from libraries to media outlets, involving historic figures and texts along with free-speech denials on college campuses and beyond.

Several actions taken since late 2023 are worth sharing.

- ◆ Minnesota became the latest of six states to officially redesign its flag. At issue are claims of portrayed racism (either in the state seal on the flag or symbolic association with the Confederacy and slavery). [Minnesota adopts new, non-racist state flag, joins Utah, Mississippi, Michigan in re-designing flags | Fox News](#)
- ◆ Consecutive majors of Jacksonville removed Confederate monuments from a city park, most recently one dedicated to the women of the Confederacy. In December, a federal judge also approved the removal of a Confederate statue and monument in Arlington National Cemetery. Instead of using the long-standing statues as educational tools, both were simply removed. [Mayor Removes Tribute to Women of Confederacy \(newser.com\)](#)  
[Removal of Arlington Cemetery Confederate statue may proceed, federal judge rules | CNN](#)
- ◆ A subtle National Park Service plan to remove a statue of William Penn from Welcome Park in Philadelphia was quickly stopped once it was discovered. Gov. Shapiro, state legislators, and members of the public all threw their weight behind retaining the monument, forcing the Service to backpedal. [Park Service retracts decision to take down William Penn statue at Philadelphia historical site \(msn.com\)](#)

These practices defy open and honest historical discussion in the public form. Simply removing statues (without any explanation or other display to replace what once stood, or to supplement a still-standing monument) crosses into the realm of null curriculum, meaning that an educational curriculum teaches by leaving out undesirable facts or topics. Essentially, interpretation is argued as more important than historical fact or evidence. As historians are well aware, the adage that ‘whoever wins the war gets to write the history’ is applicable here, but the fight for our public and private spaces — along with the ability to fairly and accurately present history — continues.

School leaders have the opportunity to enhance academic rigor

through honest, candid discussions with students on these and similar historical topics, with a Biblical worldview as the starting point.

- How does the recent action affirm, redefine, or deny history?
- ◆ How do the actions affirm or contrast with Biblical Christianity, doctrine, and practice?
- ◆ What do the actions mean for individuals and families visiting museums and other sites of historic value?
- ◆ How do these actions impact decisions about school or church trips? And while on trips, how are communication and education handled on topics currently viewed (by some) as controversial?

## National Contest Awards Announced

The American Lung Association and the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors recently announced the winner of their national contest to promote radon awareness. Students aged 9-14 submitted posters, while high school students submitted videos. Winners were chosen from the entries that won their state-level contests and were then submitted for national consideration.

[Wheaton Student Wins National Radon Video Contest | American Lung Association](#)

We encourage families and schools to promote opportunities for students, especially those that are both academically meaningful and creatively challenging. Extracurricular projects and contests can supplement and even dovetail into a class curriculum plan. Projects that advance the application of knowledge boost academic rigor and challenge students to think creatively, either scientifically or artistically, as in the case above. And they can be good P.R. for prospective families by showing how your students encounter and engage with ‘real world’ problems.

## Free Class Supplements

The King Arthur Baking Company offers a free outreach program called Bake for Good for students in grades 4-12. The program focuses on “the math and science of making bread from scratch.” In-person and virtual demonstrations are available, along with guided lessons for school groups of 10 or more — with supplies provided!

To apply, or to find out more information, visit [Bake for Good | King Arthur Baking](#).



### Commonwealth Court: Private Property 'Fair Game' for Government Agents

In an alarming ruling against private property owners, the Commonwealth Court ruled on Sept. 29 that government agents have an absolute power to “roam private land without consent, warrants or probable cause.” The case involves two hunting clubs in Clearfield County and the state Game Commission after game wardens defied clearly posted signage to enter their properties without cause or a warrant to monitor and “interrogate” club members on their activities. The Court effectively said it had no choice in the ruling, using precedent from a 2007 PA Supreme Court ruling. That decision said the century-old Open Fields doctrine (the Commission’s justification) was permissible because property was not deemed a “possession,” which is specifically stated as protected in the state Constitution. The case is being appealed.

While there is no direct attack on religious liberties in the case, there could be some implications for ministries that own larger plots of open land or wooded areas. In this and similar rulings, the “slippery slope effect” is always a concern, as

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erosion of property rights could be used to undermine religious liberties.

[Pennsylvania court rules against gun clubs in private property case | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)

### *“National Notes” Continued from Page 2*

#### Covid-Era Tax Return Program: Lawsuits and Dangers

Government action sent a torrent of financial handouts to businesses and even religious organizations during Covid. Through this, torrent, the KCEA office kept affiliating ministries informed of important details. KCEA continues its long-standing position of skepticism when government wants to “help” God’s work.

It should not go unnoticed that unsavory actions have and are occurring. The Employee Retention Tax Credit, or ERTC, is one of the more recent examples. KCEA recommended individuals work with a reputable professional if interested in completing an application for this refund. This recommendation still holds true, especially as the IRS slowed the rebate payments in the second half of 2023 due to fraud. There also are significant lawsuits over the fees being charged by various processors, even if the potential applicant never completed the process or received the rebate. KCEA has recommended interested leaders to work with Brotherhood Mutual, which has both a solid reputation and a fair fee schedule for this work. In summary:

- ◆ This program is different than the host of government ‘handout’ programs. This is a refund of taxes paid.
- ◆ Beware numerous processors trying to persuade you and your business by email and/or postal mail to apply by promising a simple process, low fees, or similar.
- ◆ A number of online articles exist describing fraudulent applications and processing procedures. Be discerning.
- ◆ Consider placing any received rebate funds in an interest-bearing account for a longer period of time, perhaps 3-5 years. Leave the account untouched. Congress always has the potential to revise or repeal the program, in which case some form of repayment may be necessary. Don’t be caught unprepared.

KCEA is a loose association of Bible-believing churches and Christian schools in PA uniting under a common banner for the furtherance of a common goal: the protection and promotion of Christian education as a philosophy and methodology of training our youth.

The Association is a faith ministry that serves Bible-believing ministries in Pennsylvania. Churches and other ministries are encouraged to support the Association with regular prayer and financial gifts. Dr. Allen Harris, President. Rev. Ross Ritchey, Vice-President. Mr. Michael Boole, Secretary-Treasurer. Dr. Theodore Clater, Executive Director.