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Theosophy and Its Effects on Washington State Education Reform

A study in Theosophy will provide legislators, government agency leaders, public educators, and interested parties with a clear understanding of the principles driving the Washington State education reform efforts. There are two key Theosophist's teachings that have influenced the educational system—Annie Besant and Charles W. Leadbeater.

Theosophist Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater's clairvoyant investigations guide the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) leadership. Besant and Leadbeater teach that "Science [in 1913] is exploring the marvels of what it calls the 'subjective mind'...Someday Science will realise what it calls the subjective mind, Religion calls the soul."¹ It is this belief and other theosophical teachings that support the State Superintendent's assertion, "the mission of education is to develop the resources of learners and prepare them for their future roles of living, learning and working...the development of thinking skills...will develop our learner products as powerful contributions in the 21st century global marketplace."² To fulfill this mission the OSPI has created an educational system based on the presumption that subjective thinking is the core curriculum, and that a superior nervous system is the basis for intelligence.³ These are the fundamental principles leading the educational reform efforts in Washington State.

Education Reform Movement and its Principles

Students are extensively instructed on how to subjectively think, and then continually assessed on how well they are able to express this thinking in writing. The OSPI enforces non-objective thought with the OSPI designed Washington Assessment for Student Learning (WASL) to assess the level of thinking a student has mastered. The passing of this test will be a graduation requirement for the class of 2008.

The test design is based on Robert Carkhuff's pseudo-science as presented in his books *The New Science of Possibilities*, *Human Possibilities* and *Possibilities Schools*. State Superintendent Dr. Terry Bergeson and Assistant Superintendents' Dr. Shirley McCune and Dr. Andrew Griffin developed in

¹ Annie Besant and Charles W. Leadbeater, Man: Whence, How and Wither, (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1913), xvii.

² Robert Carkhuff and Shirley McCune, Possibilities Schools, (Amherst, MA: Possibilities Publishing, 2000), ix.

³ Robert Carkhuff and Associates, The Freedom Doctrine, (Amherst, MA: Possibilities Publishing, 2003), 215.

consultation with Carkhuff Thinking Systems an educational design based on the idea that students must be provided with curriculum that allows them to master skills in *stimulus human processing reasoning*. This is presented to the public as the New 3Rs: Relating, Representing and Reasoning. The WASL is extensively higher-order questions requiring students to subjectively respond; this allows the State to determine the level of a students' stimulus response system, which demonstrates, according to this system, the development of their nervous system.

Carkhuff describes the response system at three levels: stimulus response as S-R (conditioned responses-**relating**); S-O-R (discriminative learning-**representing**); and S-P-R (generative processing-**reasoning**).⁴ Carkhuff describes S-R as “the conditioned responder simply react[ing] in an unthinking or mechanical manner,” the S-O-R as “the intervening human organism (O) which discriminates the stimulus [and] intervenes to mediate by selecting an appropriate response, and emits the response,” and the S-P-R is “an active and generative human processor (P) intervene[ing] between the stimulus and the response.”⁵ The response system diagnostic tool developed by Carkhuff is used to determine the nervous apparatus of a student, which unveils the evolutionary stage of their soul. Carkhuff's stimulus human processing reasoning theory is a “scientific approach” to the concept of “waking consciousness” as discussed in Annie Besant's book, *A Study of Consciousness*, and in many clairvoyant investigations conducted by both Besant and Leadbeater.

Besant claims that the Fifth Root Race (Aryan Race) has a superior nervous system enabling the Aryan Race to achieve higher consciousness, or an advanced intellectual ability to higher-order think.⁶ Carkhuff's S-P-R represents the consciousness of the Aryan's advanced nervous system as compared to the lower two Root Races: the third root race (S-R), Lemurians, the Negroes are its descendents from mixed marriages, and the fourth root race, Mongol (S-O-R).⁷ The Lemurian descendents are limited to conditioned responses, and the Atlanteans (Mongol) are able to discriminatively respond. The Aryan is the higher evolved race and is able to higher-order think. In other words, the Aryan is the superior race (the embodiment of older souls), and the third (Negro) and fourth (Mongol) races are classes of an undeveloped man with inferior intellect because of a younger evolved soul not having the faculties, which can only be acquired through experiential learning in past lives.

In mandating educational policy to transform teaching and learning, lawmakers have empowered the current OSPI leadership to create an educational design that advances the white race. The reform efforts are driven by the notion that the Fifth Root Race, the Aryan, will move humanity further

⁴ Robert Carkhuff, *Human Possibilities*, (Amherst, MA: Possibilities Publishing, 2000), 7-15.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶ Annie Besant, *A Study of Consciousness*, (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1938), 145.

⁷ Robert Carkhuff, *Human Possibilities*, (Amherst, MA: Possibilities Publishing, 2000), 15.

along its evolutionary process. As a result of this belief the current educational standards are primarily focused on students mastering higher-order thinking skills. This is done to provide a curriculum that evolves the consciousness of the white race. In order to further the human evolutionary process the Aryan must reach higher-consciousness. These, and other teachings of Theosophy are directing the education reform efforts in Washington State, and are outlined by Robert Carkhuff, Dr. Teresa Bergeson, Dr. Shirley McCune, Dr. Andrew Griffin, Dr. Norma Milanovich, Annie Besant and Charles W. Leadbeater.

Dr. Terry Bergeson is the elected State Superintendent; Dr. Shirley McCune is the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning; and Dr. Andrew Griffin is the Assistant Superintendent of Community Outreach and Higher Education. Dr. Robert Carkhuff contracted with the OSPI to develop materials teaching the growth of the human processing system (the nervous system), and the development of a diagnostic tool to evaluate the seven components of Prime Human Capital as arranged under three parts: Physical, Emotional and Intellectual (the WASL tests the intellectual component). Dr. Norma Milanovich co-authored with Dr. Shirley McCune the book *The Light Shall Set You Free*; they discuss the Human Energy System. The writings of Annie Besant and Charles W. Leadbeater, the deceased teachers of Theosophy, are the doctrines guiding Bergeson, McCune, Griffin and Carkhuff.

The theosophical doctrine of Besant and Leadbeater guides the development of the Washington Assessment for Student Learning (WASL), a test of students' higher-order (subjective) thinking skills, and the development of the Essential Academic Learning Requirements. The test has three forms of questions: S-R (multiple choice with one right answer), S-O-R (multiple choice with discriminative answers), and S-P-R (extended responses, essays, and problem solving tasks). There are a very limited number of S-R questions. The responses to the questions are scored to determine the level of higher-order thinking a student has mastered. The responses are designed to represent the third, fourth and fifth root race. S-R represents the third race (Negro), S-O-R represents the fourth race (Mongol), and the S-P-R represents the fifth race (Aryan). Carkhuff claims "interdependent processing [S-PP-R] is the necessary vehicle for higher-order response outputs."⁸ When he uses the terms *necessary vehicle*, he means the nervous apparatus of an Aryan. The responses as scored on the WASL determine the nervous apparatus of a student, or the evolution of their soul.

The WASL not only tests students' higher-order thinking, it is also the tool being used to transform the curriculum and instructional practices. The skills being taught concentrate on experiential and observational thinking skills because Theosophists believe all learning must be experienced in order to be retrieved in future lives. Foundational skills in math, spelling, writing and grammar are limited. The use of calculators in math as early as 2nd grade is encouraged or required; memorization of mathematical facts is discouraged; and

⁸ Robert Carkhuff, Human Possibilities, (Amherst, MA: Possibilities Publishing, 2000), 240.

the teaching of algorithms has been nearly abandoned. Science is based on scenario investigations. History is changing to become more limited to teaching of races, cultures and religions, rather than historical people and events. Middle and High School literature is spiritually inclined. Ancient myths teaching Karma and Reincarnation are introduced in the 7th grade. Students are asked to write hymns, sermons, letters to God, etc. Death is the predominate theme throughout one literature series adopted by Washington public schools.

The curriculum and instructional practices being adopted follow the teachings of Besant and Leadbeater. The ideas relating to experiential and observational learning are discussed throughout the writings of Besant. In fact, Besant and Leadbeater, in 1913, offer a clairvoyant investigation of the future curriculum in their book *Man: Whence, How and Whither*. The curriculum and instructional methods described in their clairvoyant investigation mirror the current practices being adopted in Washington State public schools. Systems theory is a key teaching of theosophy, and is the main theme of the science standards in Washington State. Besant and Leadbeater support their theory of human evolution as a systemic process leading to Universal Oneness.

Summary of Theosophy

Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater write of the human evolution process, and that the advancement of the fifth root race, the Aryan, is required to further the human evolutionary process of man becoming One with the Universal Mind. Their ideas are based on Helena Blavatsky's theosophical writings of the late 1800s. Blavatsky co-founded the Theosophical Society in 1875, resided as president until she died in 1891, and shortly after, 1895, Annie Besant was elected president. Besant remained president until she died in 1933. She has more than three hundred books and pamphlets on Theosophy to her credit.

Theosophy, as taught by Besant and C.W. Leadbeater, is a combination of philosophy, religion and science; this combination brings together the many teachings of ancient beliefs, myths, symbols and sacred texts. Besant teaches that ancient myths are scriptures and symbols are the facts.⁹ She claims theosophy is the "direct knowledge of God...it teaches...methods of reaching firsthand knowledge by unfolding the spiritual consciousness...evolving the organs through which consciousness can function on our earth..."¹⁰ C.W. Leadbeater defines Theosophy "as not in itself a religion, but the truth which lies behind all religions alike."¹¹ The many books written by Besant and Leadbeater are designed to assist a theosophical student to understand the systemic evolutionary process of humanity, and to provide knowledge of how the individual student can evolve his physical matter to unfold his soul to become *One* with the

⁹ Annie Besant, *The Ancient Wisdom*, (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 2001), 2.

¹⁰ Annie Besant, *Theosophy*, Canadian Theosophical Association [book online] accessed 14 January 2005; available from <http://www.theosophical.ca/>.

¹¹ C.W. Leadbeater, *A Textbook of Theosophy*, (Wheaton, Illinois: The Theosophical Press, 1937), 1.

Universal Mind. Karma and reincarnation are the main doctrines of Theosophy; an understanding of these two eastern religious ideas is essential to grasping the concepts of theosophy.

Karma represents the purification process of the soul, or Ego, and reincarnation represents the evolving process required to achieve liberation (freedom), or to become individualized—a God. Besant teaches that “karma is the guarantee of man’s evolution into mental and moral perfection.”¹² She believes all thoughts and actions are stored in the Universal Mind and each soul will be accountable for good and bad thoughts and actions. Karma is the Law of Cause and Effect, and a soul’s new incarnation is determined by karmic inheritance. Besant believes the understanding of karma will allow the present embodiment to seek out ways to cancel bad karma and create pure thought-forms, which will allow the growth of the Ego. Achieving this advanced stage of thinking requires a superior nervous system. Besant believes the Aryan race has the superior “nervous apparatus through which the ever-increasing stream of consciousness can flow...in the fifth Root Race, a fuller stream of life pouring down, causing greater internal development of the permanent atom, and increasing as that development proceeds...and thus build up a better nervous apparatus through which the ever-increasing stream of consciousness can flow.”¹³ This development can be achieved through the evolution of man’s soul through the seven bodies of man. Carkhuff, McCune and Bergeson all teach of the seven bodies, and the idea of becoming a whole person, or fully human.

Theosophy teaches that man has seven bodies, divided into three planes: physical, emotional and mental (Intellect). The seven bodies are compared to the following scientific terms: solid, liquid, gas, ether 4, ether 5, ether 6, ether 7. Below is a diagram defining the seven bodies as taught by Theosophist Annie Besant:

The Seven Bodies of Man

SPHERES			BEINGS	STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS	BODIES	
Unmanifested	1	Divine	Adi	Logos	Divine Triplexity (1)
	2	Monadic	Anupādaka	Human Monad	Monadic Triplexity (2) Will, Wisdom, Activity
Manifested	3	Spiritual	Atma	Man who is	[A] Spirit, individualized as Will	Atom
	4	Intuitional	Buddhi		[A] Spirit, individualized as Intuition	Intuitional
	5	Mental (higher)	Manas		spirit, individualized as Intellect	Causal
	5	Mental (lower)	Manas	Man who has	Mind	Mental
	6	Astral (or Emotional)	Kāma		[B] Desires and Emotions	Astral
7	Physical	Sthula		Vitality (3)	Physical	
[A]- An immortal Individuality [B] -A mortal Personality						
[The Student may find the Sanskrit terms useful, as they have been much employed in Theosophical literature, and the above are my own English equivalents: 1. Adi: 2-Anupādaka: 3-Atmā or Nirvāna: 4.Buddhi: 5. Manas (adjective. mānasic): 6. Kāma: 7. Sthula. The						

¹² Annie Besant, A Study in Karma, (Twilight) [book online] accessed 8 January 2005; available from <http://www.tphtha.ws>.

¹³ Annie Besant, A Study of Consciousness, (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1938), 145.

Buddhists use for Adi, Mahāparinirvāna, and for Anupādaka, Parinirvāna.]
(1) The Trinities of religions, the Three Persons of Christianity. As manifested in a Solar System. They appear three by difference of function, seen from below. The whole Solar System may be called the Body of the Logos, and the Sun His physical Body, but they only embody a fragment of Him.
(2) Man "made in the Image of God". His aspects, Will, Wisdom, and Activity, or Power, Knowledge-Love, and Creativeness are shown in the embodied reproduction of himself, as Will, Intuition, and Intellect.
(3) The seven are named from below upwards: solid, liquid, gaseous, etheric, super-etheric, sub-atomic, atomic

Theosophy by Annie Besant¹⁴

Relation to Washington State

Dr. Shirley McCune's book, *The Light Shall Set You Free*, adopts these same concepts; in fact, McCune refers to both Besant and Leadbeater in her book when discussing the Human Energy System, Karma and Reincarnation. Specifically she states, "Theosophists, such as Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater, began to write about some of these systems in an open manner. They began by describing them as chakras and explained their connection to spirituality."¹⁵ McCune gives a description of the seven principles, and seven bodies of man similar to Besant, in her book, *The Light Shall Set You Free*. McCune's teachings reflect the teachings of Besant, Leadbeater and Carkhuff. Robert Carkhuff expands on these ideas by developing a scientific equation to determine the evolution of a student's soul.

Carkhuff's contract with the State of Washington produced materials intending to scientifically validate the theosophical teachings discussed by McCune, Besant and Leadbeater. The State of Washington implements the principles of theosophy under the guise of Possibilities Schools (The New 3Rs: Relating, Representing, Reasoning), and further propagates it as education reform, the transformation of learning and teaching, the Learning Process of Explore Understand and Act (EUA), and as preparing students for the 21st century requirements. The development of higher consciousness, defined as **Prime Human Capital = P x E(2) x I(5)** is the basis of Carkhuff teachings and the Possibilities Schools design; this is the same principle defining the seven bodies as discussed in the writings of Besant, Leadbeater and McCune.

Dr. Bergeson discusses the Physical, Emotional, Intellectual concept in her 1982 Doctoral dissertation from the University of Washington. She continues to present this concept in her position as the elected State Superintendent. She also promotes the Explore, Understand, Act (EUA) learning process. The EUA process is a representation of the Karmic Rope—the purification process of the soul. Bergeson writes about the EUA in her 1982 dissertation, which is based on Robert Carkhuff's Human Resource Development theory. Bergeson offers in the

¹⁴ Annie Besant, *Theosophy*, (Canadian Theosophical Association) [book online] accessed 14 January 2005; available from <http://www.theosophical.ca/>.

¹⁵ Shirley McCune and Norma Milanovich, *The Light Shall Set You Free*, (Albuquerque, NM: Athena Publishing, 1996), 70.

appendix of her dissertation a symbol depicting “The Whole Person Concept,”¹⁶ which is the same symbol Theosophy calls the Third Logos (Trinity) symbolizing “the Creative Mind, the Divine Activity now ready to manifest as Creator.”¹⁷ The whole person concept is the creative mind. Theosophists believe that man’s evolutionary destiny is to become God by unfolding consciousness to reach the Self, which is the Universal Mind.

Final Connecting Pieces

The OSPI purchased nearly \$100,000 worth of Carkhuff books discussing the stimulus response and PEI concept. Dr. McCune co-authored the *Possibilities Schools* with Carkhuff. The book details the stimulus response concept, and how the educational system is designed around the S-R, S-O-R and S-P-R. A booklet distributed by the OSPI in March of 1999 describes the S-R, S-O-R and S-P-R as the output responses assessed by the WASL.¹⁸ The implementation and assessment process is also discussed in the books, *The New Science of Possibilities* and *Human Possibilities*. Carkhuff notes in his book *The New Science of Possibilities* that the State of Washington, represented by Dr. Terry Bergeson, Dr. Shirley McCune and Dr. Andrew Griffin, designed, along with Carkhuff Thinking Systems, Possibilities Schools.¹⁹

Carkhuff, under contract with the OSPI and in collaboration with Bergeson, McCune and Griffin, created an educational design based on the Physical, Emotional and Intellectual whole person concept. This design follows the teachings of a 1919 lecture on Educational Reconstruction given by Besant; she directed that education is to be classified in “four departments, Physical, Emotional, Mental, and Spiritual.”²⁰ Carkhuff supports Besant’s teachings in his book *Human Possibilities* when stating, “the following components may be dedicated to accomplishing [Human Capital Development] functions: physical, emotional and intellectual resource components. At higher levels, we may add social, spiritual and other resource components.”²¹ The three functions of physical, emotional and intellectual are the three key components driving the education reform in Washington State. The three components represent the seven bodies as described by Besant in the above diagram. A comparison of the seven bodies of the three components as presented by Besant, McCune and the OSPI (Carkhuff and Bergeson) proves there is a common belief. **This comparison demonstrates across the board that Besant, McCune and the**

¹⁶ Teresa Bergeson, *A Comparison of Two Methods of Improving Math Attitudes In Intermediate Teachers and Counselors*, (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 1982), 159.

¹⁷ Annie Besant, *A Study of Consciousness*, (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1938), 10.

¹⁸ Carkhuff Thinking Systems, *The New 3Rs: Skills for the 21st Century*, (Olympia WA: Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction, State of Washington, 1999), 18.

¹⁹ Robert Carkhuff and Bernard Berenson, *The New Science of Possibilities*, (Amherst, MA: Possibilities Publishing, 2000), 232.

²⁰ Annie Besant, *Problems of Reconstruction*, (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1919), 94.

²¹ Robert Carkhuff, *Human Possibilities*, (Amherst, MA: Possibilities Publishing, 2000), 146.

OSPI have the same theory of Human Evolution and its unfolding process leading to Divinity (see Appendix A).

Conclusion

It can not be emphasized enough that sectarian Theosophical principles are driving the education reform efforts in Washington State public schools. The above discussion demonstrates some of the evidence gathered to support this assertion. Serious problems exist with the educational reform efforts in Washington State because the underlying principles leading the reform efforts do not support the inclusion of students with disabilities; in fact these principles teach that people with disabilities are the “semihuman horrors that are occasionally born.”²² Carkhuff supports this principle when he labels the physically sick and under resourced as being the *laggards*, having unhealthy personalities, unable to think and having no soul.²³ The underlying principles also refer to certain minority populations as *savages*,²⁴ specifically those of the African American race.²⁵

The State of Washington’s continued effort to advance these principles will continue to disenfranchise minority populations, violate constitutional rights of all students by denying them their right to receive a free appropriate public education teaching the basic educational skills free of sectarian control or influence.

The current education reform efforts have financially drained Washington State resources; this jeopardizes the stability of public education. Almost 60% of the general budget is appropriated to education. A significant amount of State and Federal dollars have been used to fund the education reforms efforts, resulting in the following outcomes:

- Students with disabilities and other minority students are underserved;
- A majority of students are being disenfranchised;
- Children are not provided an education that is academically based;
- Teachers are underpaid;
- Millions of dollars have been spent to adopt textbooks teaching to a test that is based on principles intending to advance the white race;
- Textbooks or instructional materials being adopted for literary purposes emphasize death, spirituality, and morbid subject matter, and under the

²² Annie Besant, The Ancient Wisdom, (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, Sixteenth Reprint 2001), 279.

²³ Robert Carkhuff and Bernard Berenson, The New Science of Possibilities, (Amherst, MA: Possibilities Publishing, 2000), 165.

²⁴ Annie Besant, A Study of Consciousness, (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1938), 154-155.

²⁵ Annie Besant, Theosophy, (Canadian Theosophical Association) [book online] accessed 14 January 2005; available from <http://www.theosophical.ca/>.

- guise of comparative religion are promoting the beliefs and practices of one religion;
- Textbooks being adopted for Math are highly controversial, and science in the lower grades is predominately observational;
 - Funds have been used for trainings and workshops that teach to a test designed to fail minority students and advance a minority of students within the white race;
 - Funds are being used to develop thought reform materials and educators are unknowingly being subjected to thought reform techniques;
 - Funds have been used to push a thought reform movement throughout the State of Washington; the victims are children, educators, the entire legislative body, government leaders, community members, business leaders, etc...

The constitutional rights to a free appropriate education are being denied. This places the State of Washington at risk of class action lawsuits claiming discrimination, violation of freedom of religion, and a denial to receive a free appropriate education. Immediate action must be taken by the Legislature, Governor and State Attorney General. The priority role of the State Attorney General is to protect the constitutional rights of the citizens and in this particular situation, the rights of innocent children. The evidence gathered and documented overwhelming supports the assertions presented. A continued in-depth review of educational documents will further demonstrate the influence Theosophy has on the education reform efforts.