

## Rescuing Our Children From the Edge of Evil

The September issue of the Preserving Public Education Report to the Board of Directors contained an article entitled, "Pizza Evangelism — Premeditated, Purposeful, and Profitable." The intent of the article was to alert readers to the aggressive exploitation of the public schools by three evangelists — professional missionaries who purposefully misrepresent themselves and their organizations in order to gain access to students, to proselytize, and to conduct after school crusades for Christ in conjunction with "free" pizza parties.

Interestingly, one of the three Pizza Evangelists featured in the September Board Report article — Kansas' Jerry Johnston — is also featured in the October issue of Jerry Falwell's *Fundamentalist Journal*, which is devoted entirely to a discussion of Satanism. In an article entitled, "Rescuing Our Children From the Edge of Evil," Johnston reveals for fundamentalist parents from coast-to-coast how children are recruited by "a fast growing, developing subculture movement in the teenage community, namely Satanism."

In spite of the fact that Johnston has absolutely no credentials whatsoever in the fields of education, counseling, psychology, or adolescent development, and in spite of the fact that he has no formal training in the occult, Johnston implies that his encounters with "hundreds of thousands of the young generation from the platforms of auditoriums and gymnasiums" qualify him as an expert on youth culture and trends. "Some time ago," Johnston relates, "I noticed a distinctive new category of teens attending my talks. They did not fit the norm. These young people glared with a dark and deadly fascination. And with these curious-looking teens were signposts that they were involved. In all those audiences I kept noticing more and more teens with homemade pentagrams, tattoos, and symbols carved into the web between their thumbs and index fingers, too many notebooks scrawled with '666' and 'NATAS' (Satan spelled backward) or 'LIVE' (evil spelled backward)."

### Advice to Parents Falls Short

While the Pizza Evangelist's article does go on to include factual information about the occult which is commonly shared by legitimate researchers and authorities in the field, his advice to parents who suspect their child of dabbling in Satanism falls a little short. Johnston's advice is twofold: "(1) Get satanic influences physically away from your teenager and your teenager physically away from satanic influences, and (2) pray."

Johnston, who is billed in the *Journal* as president of

the allegedly secular Jerry Johnston Association, rather than as president of the overtly religious Jerry Johnston Ministries, offers "a final word on preventing teenagers from self-destruction: sometimes there is nothing you can do. They [children] have a choice about what they do and who they become, no matter how much they want to foist the blame for wrong choices on their parents or their first grade teacher or the cartoons they watched on Saturday mornings. God can deliver one from Satanism."

With the growing conviction among fundamentalists that "Satan is becoming more and more active as the world draws nearer to its God-appointed finish line," not only have Far Right extremists such as Johnston, Simonds, Schlafly and LaHaye identified Satanism as another source of fund-raising for their organizations, but the public schools of this nation are sure to become the site of an increasing number of witch hunts (no pun intended).

## Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Home Schooling, But Weren't Quite Sure Whom to Ask

If the 1980s do not go down in history as the decade of educational reform, the ten year period will surely be recognized as the decade of educational reform reports. Primarily as a result of "A Nation at Risk" and the numerous studies which followed, critics have had a field day measuring every aspect of public education for which a yardstick could conceivably be devised.

In addition to claiming that the progress of children schooled in the home exceeds that of public school children when measured by standardized achievement tests, proponents of home schooling — Sam Blumenfeld, Phyllis Schlafly, Beverly LaHaye — boast that the quality of the educational experience in the home is far superior to that in the public schools. This, in spite of the fact that home-schoolers, by and large, have neither the background, the training, nor the experience generally considered essential to maximize the potential of the teaching-learning process.

Concerned Women for America, long an advocate of home schooling as a means of preserving traditional moral values, devoted a portion of their September journal issue to "Questions and Answers About Home Schooling." Sue Welch, editor of *The Teaching Home*, authored the material. The following are several excerpts from the article which readers may find both interesting and enlightening.