

No Child Left Behind

Students' academic success is a sign of God's blessing

When I was growing up in the 1960s, I watched my grandfather build a successful contracting business. Granddad had attended school only through second grade because he had to start working at the ripe old age of 8. Yet he had learned to read very well and became a model Christian businessman by the time he reached adulthood. My grandfather attained success in the classic rags-to-riches motif.

Granddad, like many blacks of his generation, harped on the importance of education. Therefore, my father became the first person in the family to go to college and receive a degree.

My family considered it a privilege to attend great schools and universities. Unfortunately, today's families are often settling for mediocre training for their children. We are also forgetting the fact that the world is becoming smaller. The globe is much more interconnected than ever before. Because of these factors, America is losing the battle for international education.

Generally speaking, black, white and Hispanic kids are lagging behind world-class achievement levels. The "digital divide" is creating an educational gulf between those who are technically literate and those who are not. In addition, there are many in our urban classrooms who have not mastered the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic. Social promotion has allowed many students to graduate from high school without the ability to read or perform basic math tasks.

I believe that as our country begins to make a moral recovery

and we continue on this path, one of the signs of the Lord's blessings upon our nation will be the accelerated academic, emotional and spiritual growth of our children.

The scriptural basis for my proclamation comes from an Old Testament promise given to Israel by the prophet Isaiah. Despite the Hebrews' previous rebellion, the Lord promised to restore wayward Israel. Not only would these people be lifted up in their generation, but also God would accelerate the learning and emotional health of their kids. Specifically, Isaiah 54:13 says, "All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children" (NKJV).

In a very practical way, the No Child Left Behind Program of the Department of Education seems to be reversing some of the downward trends everyone has been observing in our children's academics.

First, the achievement gap among black, white and Hispanic students is narrowing in both reading and mathematics. Second, America's 9-year-olds—from all ethnicities—are posting the best scores in reading and math in the history of the nation's Report Card, which has been administered by Congress for more than 30 years.

Finally, the report shows that kids are starting to read with better comprehension and in many cases, more volume. Some are reading more than 20 pages a day for school.

To help promote excellence in education I recommend every parent or relative of a student do the following:

1. Pray for your student and quote the Isaiah 54:13 blessing.

2. Meet with your student's teachers for all subjects at least once per semester.
3. Find out one good thing your student is doing that should be celebrated and one problem area to improve.
4. Become active in the local PTA or support the efforts of a member of your church family.
5. Run for the school board of your district or encourage a member of your church to run.

We can change America on our watch! We can release generational blessings to a nation because of the faithfulness of a righteous remnant.