

[Spiritual Junkfood: The Dumbing Down of Christian Youth](#) by Cathy Mickels & Audrey McKeever. (Enumclaw, WA: Winepress Publishing, 2003), 281pp, paperback, \$16.99.
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This volume was birthed out of a concern for the influences of secular humanism on public education and the subsequent decline of American education. The authors grew further alarmed when they perceived the same tenets at work in the Christian church. Their purpose in writing this book is "to show how humanistic philosophies and the teaching methods responsible for this crisis in education have found their way into the church." It is a wake-up call to Christian parents and youth leaders.

Throughout its pages, the authors define, document, and discuss "the unbiblical views underlying the educational materials adopted by many evangelical churches to educate their youth" in Sunday School and youth groups--curricula predicated on humanistic and "experiential" learning.

For example, the same "psychological climate" Carl Rogers says is produced in encounter groups (opening up, mutual trust, affirmation, feedback, and experience) is being fostered in numerous church curricula and programs for children and teens. Instead of meeting to worship God and study His Word, many church leaders are endorsing "meeting together to learn to relate to others." The result is that participants are finding and practicing a counterfeit spiritual faith based on something other than Jesus Christ.

The authors cite several key authors and publishers who are involved in this "dumbing down of Christian youth" and provide a list of criteria for evaluating curricula used in the church in Appendix C. This includes examining curriculum, a teacher's manual, a film, a workbook, or suggested activities for both biblical content and methods. Extensive endnotes and an index are found at the end of the book.

I would recommend this book to parents, Sunday School teachers, youth pastors, and anyone involved in overseeing ministry to youth.

Reviewed by [Deb Garland](#), www.spiritandtruth.org