

**The Worldview Evidenced in *Looking For Goodness* by Rebecca Jones:**

The fact that today's public schools have undergone significant moral and educational degradation is hardly debated among objective observers. Few politicians of either side of the aisle can deny that something has gone horribly wrong in the American educational system. The proposed remedies, however, spring from all kinds of worldviews and vary greatly. From throwing more money at the system, to imposing a voucher program, to giving local communities complete control (and thus dissolving the NEA), ideas for how to fix the problem abound. One remedy is proposed in *Looking for Goodness* by Rebecca Jones. Unlike so many of the secular "solutions," hers is not amoral and actually comes close to recognizing the crux of the issue.

The worldview of Rebecca Jones seems in many ways Christian. The method by which she approaches the problems in today's youth are not far removed from the method by which most Christians would approach them. However, her focus is not on increased influence of the Church or of the Christian rearing of parents, but rather on more general "moral teaching." Her remedy's focus is not far from the root of the problem, but unfortunately doesn't quite penetrate it. She recognizes that religion is a factor in the character of children, but she sees it as such because it teaches morals, not because it involves a relationship with God (i.e. the Holy Spirit of Christianity) – "Prayers have no place in school, but [Haynes] says schools can, and should, explain what different religions teach about moral issues" (74). She appears to agree with Haynes and for this reason her metaphysical view does not seem to be that of an immediate and interactive God, but rather

of one that, if He exists, is not active in our lives. She does not really deny the existence of God, but at the same time she doesn't seem to factor Him into the equation. Though many agnostics have very anti-God (atheistic) attitudes unlike Jones, she does appear to hold these beliefs.

Her agnostic tendencies can be seen in her view of knowledge as well. She recognizes religion as a source of moral teaching, but she also bases much of her argument off of what can be learned from History and psychological studies. Proof of this can be easily found on page 71, including "Many psychologists see this attachment as a precursor to developing empathy..."

Similarly, her system of ethics seems very "results-oriented" rather than based on absolute standards set by a higher being. The purpose of fixing the moral decline is based on what's best for humanity, not on the instructions or will of God – "We, as adults, haven't been doing enough to help kids develop consciences we can all live with" (71). The "we can all live with" demonstrates that the reason for teaching and encouraging morality is for our own benefit and for purely practical purposes. No mention of "because it's God's will" can be found in the article.

While Jones certainly displays mostly-accurate insight into the problems facing today's culture, her remedy doesn't necessarily come from a Christian worldview. Her article does indeed include many arguments that Christians could support and agree with, but she leaves one important factor out of her proposal – a faith in the Christian God that has an outworking in one's life. And the mere fact that she is "looking" for goodness (as her article title states) implies that she thinks humanity must determine solutions to society's problems. For all these reasons she appears to be agnostic. She doesn't fight religion as atheists do, but

neither does she base anything on the existence of God as Christians (and to a lesser extent, deists) do. She does come about as close to the truth as one can without bringing God into the picture, though whether that is anything to be proud of is doubtful.