

# Yount: Uniforms Embrace Belief In Equality Under God

**By DAVID YOUNT**  
**Scripps Howard News Service**  
 If British education officials have their way, it will soon be difficult to be sure which students are girls and which are boys.  
 Britain's Equality and Human Rights Commission recently warned schools that they cannot require girls to wear skirts.  
 In American public schools this rul-

ing would have little effect (although increasingly districts are instituting uniforms), but in Britain's tax-supported schools there is a long tradition of requiring students to wear uniforms — modest jumpers and knee socks for girls, white shirt and trousers for boys — sometimes complemented by inexpensive blazers in the school's colors.  
 Far from regimenting the students, uniforms ensure that students from

more affluent families do not embarrass their poorer peers by showing up in class in the latest fashions.  
 The commission now contends that uniforms discriminate against transsexuals, of which there are no more than 5,000 of all ages in the United Kingdom. Officials argue that compelling all girls to wear skirts breaches the rights of those who are unsure of their sexuality. "Pupils born female

with gender dysphoria experience great discomfort being forced to wear stereotypical clothes — for example a skirt," the commission argues.  
 The guidelines are meant to protect students who believe they were born into the wrong gender, "regardless of whether or not they intend to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender reassignment."  
 Elsbeth Insch, head teacher at

Birmingham's King Edward VI Handsworth School, refused to comply, saying, "The message is: not in my school — we're sticking with our skirts."  
 Although the ruling is well intentioned, it is an extreme illustration of the tyranny of a tiny minority over the vast majority of students who welcome uniforms as a way of breaking down Britain's stifling class consciousness.

## HUNTERS

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Over the years, the Hunters gained the good will of local government who saw the couple's efforts to educate, feed and encourage — "love on" as Mrs. Hunter puts it — children living in conditions they could not address themselves.

They did whatever needed to be done, from recruiting volunteer teachers from Europe to work with their "Teachers For Africa" nonprofit, to escorting children without parents to school each day. They fed, clothed and bathed children who had none of those options available to them, and the Hunters provided hope through a quality academic education.

Hunter, who is also a potter, caught the imagination of local artisans by holding craft shows in the wealthier districts of Katatura, a city of 250,000, to sell his pottery and fund the school. Accomplished with a gun, he shot game to put food on the tables of Christian Hope School, courtesy of local citizens who let him hunt for free on their "game farms."

"There is just about any kind of game you can imagine there," he said. "Zebra and Springbok, which is like a pronghorned antelope, and more. I've gotten a lot of food for the school that way."

Their efforts were paying off. Things were looking up. When the school reached 50 students, Hunter ventured to ask the local government to purchase the last two acres of open land in the city, designated ERF (pronounced "Earth") 344.

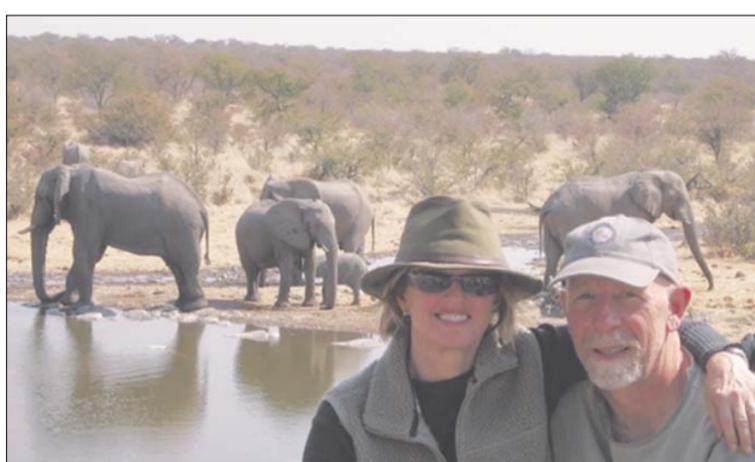
"I didn't have the money for Earth 344," Hunter said. "I just felt like God was telling me to ask them if they would sell it. It was a pretty bold move, really, because the department of education had the land slated for a soccer field for the community, but it had never been developed. But they didn't say 'No' and even said they'd seriously consider it."

### THE UNEXPECTED

Then the cancer came. The Hunters had to leave Africa and leave their school of 80 students from grades one to six in the hands of their international volunteers and nominally paid indigenous staff.

It was a "team-building" experience to see their founders step aside.

"It was difficult not to have them here," a recent email from the school reads. "The building was starting to feel a bit cramped. Our students have outgrown both our playground and lunch area. We have seen so much sickness and death here and the students are faced daily with poverty, violence and the effects of HIV/AIDS. The students are excelling



**HELPING HANDS:** Suzanne and the Rev. John Hunter are working to add more land for Christian Hope School, partly thanks to a \$250,000 donation.

academically, but we don't want these children to simply get good grades. We want them to grow up with strong character. The Hunters were gone most of last year, but it ended up being a time of team building and maturing."

Once in Boston, the Hunters didn't quit living because of cancer.

"We didn't know anybody, so we went to a Presbyterian Church near the Institute and got involved in a couples group."

Soon learning about Christian Hope School, the group became intrigued.

"We ended up having a chili cook-off, Texas style, as a fundraiser and we got more than \$10,000 for the school," Hunter said. "The people were wonderful. One man came to me and said, 'I don't want to just send money,' so he went to a Sports Authority store and bought all the soccer shoes they had to give to the kids in the school."

More importantly, Mrs. Hunter said, the group prayed for them as the chemotherapy sessions had their "ups and downs."

"We found group of young, active prayer warriors who went to prayer for John on regular basis," she said. "In the midst of it, we found comfort and peace."

### TREMENDOUS BLESSING

And they also new found supporters for Christian Hope School. A member of the church had prayed about helping the Hunters and announced to the couple he

was giving them \$250,000 to buy land for the school's new building.

"And they said another \$250,000 would follow at the end of 2010," Hunter said. "He had asked God how much he should give Christian Hope School and then, without telling his wife the amount he had in mind, asked her to pray too," Hunter said. "She came back with the same figure he had. Not only that, the amount was exactly what I had asked God for to buy Earth 344 and build a two-story school."

With money in hand, Hunter contacted the government in Windhoek.

"The money is sitting in a bank in Tyler," Hunter said on Wednesday. "The government will decide in 15 to 21 days if they will sell us the land. Please, please pray for Christian Hope School that the government will sell this strategically located land. We said we'd build the soccer field for the community as well as the school, and a sports field was what they'd originally wanted anyway."

Oh, and the cancer?

"Well, it's almost all gone," Hunter said. "I stopped coughing in July. I feel great."

He paused, as if reviewing the incredible events of a year.

"God took what looked like a horrible situation and turned into a tremendous blessing," he said. "I know it's God, because things like this don't 'just happen.' It has to be God."

## DISPATCH

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It's too late for someone to come get me and too humiliating not to finish. What would my boys think of their wimpy mother? The feeling I get from reaching the top and looking up at the sun is so good, a feeling of triumph, success, strength and maintaining my reputation as a Hunter — one who doesn't give up.

One time I asked God about poverty.

He spoke to me that the way out was by learning to be generous. This was my key to open the door.

The only problem is how do we convince people at the bottom that they have to exert themselves and learn to trust the ROCK?

My parents were poor during the Depression, but along with hard work and

determination became affluent and prosperous. Their example to me was a strong influence on my destiny. They never forgot where they came from and were always generous people. It has taken me years to discover how to use that key, but in the years to come, we will be assisting many children who really want to climb up out of the pit.

## BUTLER

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The rush that comes from "A-Bay" is not in the item desired, but how one gets it. A-bay makes other get-it-dirt-cheap Web sites pure boredom by comparison.

Where is the thrill of victory on some milquetoast Web site where one may safely and securely "buy it now" for just 10 cents without a struggle, when you can bid for 50 times the price and wrest it away from some hapless soul in Seoul, South Korea for \$5?

Welcome to "A-Bay," where peace on earth and good will toward men is relegated to the dust bin while demi-gods of the keystroke find ways to outfox each other. For five flu-filled days, I observed a few types who inhabit "A-Bay."

One is the "I-don't-give-a-rip-about-this item" bidder, who nonetheless must be keeping track of the hours, minutes and seconds of their favorite CD for sale. Contemplating a Roy Orbison four-CD box set "Like New" with mint-condition booklets, I wondered why no bids had been made with just a minute to go.

"Must be something wrong with it," I muttered to myself. I was a poor, deluded fool. At 50 seconds, a bid went up for \$3.75. You must bid in 26 cent increments minimum on "A-Bay," so another bid came in for \$4.01. Then \$4.27.

Then it got wild. With 30 seconds to go, someone dropped the bomb and bid \$10. But he was outbid by someone who'd already bid \$14.50 and then increased his maximum bid to \$21.

I stared at the computer screen, disbelieving. At 18 seconds, it all broke loose. Bids of \$23.50, \$27.12 and then \$29.00 came up as nationwide — perhaps worldwide — bidders broke free of the pack to play their purchase strategies to the public. Time was running out!

At three seconds, a bid came up for \$38.78 and then the clock shuddered to a stop and froze. I held my breath.

The final and winning bid, "A-Bay" said, was \$43.26.

There is a bid-history page and I examined it. Most of the bids were from the same people who battled it out keystroke by keystroke. But, the victor made only one bid. The victorious one. This bidder had waited, I noted, until there were only about five seconds left and made an offer no one was ready to respond to.

"Who in the world would participate in this?" I asked myself. "I don't get it."

But then it happened. Up for bid was a "Moby Grape" original CD first release "Like New" for the ridiculous price of \$3.50. I'd been looking for that recording from my California high school days for a couple of decades.

A quick check at "NileRiver" revealed used copies for "\$98 and up." Returning to "A-Bay," I said, "I must have this!" Taking a cue from the expert bidder, I waited, counting down the minutes, then final seconds aloud until I bid. At 10 seconds I let loose with a bid three times what anyone else had offered. A flurry of bids hit the fan, but I came out ahead — at \$20.

I was ecstatic. My demi-dream had come true. Flushed with victory, I searched for other emotion-laden "bargains." I had a bad flu for five days, but after "Moby," I was plenty busy. About 50 CDs later, I thankfully got well and went back to work so I could pay for my purchases. The CDs are still trickling into the house through the mail. Take another look and learn, the Proverbs say.

Once again, I realize that "A-Bay" was no way for e-may. Thankfully I had some-

thing like work to distract me from online bidding.

"Maybe" I thought, "that's why God gives us work to do." Maybe the idle mind really is

the Devil's playground.

Funny, I'd always just thought that was a trite, tired saying from old people who really didn't know any better.

### St. James Missionary Baptist Church

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Guest Speaker: **Rev. Ernest Dews,**  
 Pastor New Hope Conglee  
 Arp, Texas



## On Religion: Now THAT Is A Tough Lent Sacrifice

**By TERRY MATTINGLY**  
**Scripps Howard News Service**

It was a decade ago during Lent that author Lauren Winner was visited by an angel, unawares.

"Actually, it was my priest," said Winner, who teaches Christian spirituality at Duke Divinity School. "I have learned that people in my life often tell me what I need to do during Lent. ... It's kind of like hearing from angels."

Although the voice wasn't miraculous, Winner thought it would take a miracle to follow her spiritual guide's advice. The challenge was deceptively simple: Could she give up reading during Lent?

At the time, Winner was working as book-review editor for Beliefnet.com and studying for her doctorate at Columbia University. She was a writer, editor and student and, naturally, was surrounded by books day after day.

How in the name of God was she supposed to stop reading?

Nevertheless, she decided to try.

"This was not your normal 40 days of work," said Winner, author of "Girl Meets God: A Memoir" and other works of contemporary spirituality. "What I was doing was attacking my own work obsessions."

"This forced me to examine the place of work in my life. It made me examine other parts of my life, as well."

Fasting traditions during Lent — the 40-day penitential season before Easter — have evolved through the ages, especially in Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and liturgical Protestant churches that emphasize the church calendar. Winner is active in the Episcopal Church.

For centuries, Catholics ate only one real meal a day, with no meat or fish. Today, Catholics are supposed to observe a strict fast and abstain

from meat on Ash Wednesday at the start of Lent and Good Friday at the end. In many parishes, the faithful are still urged to avoid meat on Fridays during Lent. Orthodox Christians strive to fast from meat and dairy products during all of Lent and Holy Week.

Meanwhile, millions of Americans in a variety of churches follow an informal tradition in which they choose to fast from "one thing" — such as chocolate or soft drinks — during Lent. This practice may be linked to a passage in the sixth-century monastic Rule of St. Benedict, which states:

"During these days, therefore, let us add something to the usual amount of our service, special prayers, abstinence from food and drink, that each one offer to God ... something above his prescribed measure. Namely, let him withdraw from his body somewhat of food, drink, sleep, speech, merriment, and with the gladness of spiritual desire await holy Easter."

Winner noted that this practice of "giving up one thing" was supposed to build on the traditional Lenten disciplines linked to food, prayer and almsgiving — not replace them. The goal was to shine a spotlight into some unexamined corner of one's life.

It didn't take her long, for example, for Winner to realize that she couldn't stop reading — period.

She needed, for example, to reread one book to prepare for an exam. She had to do some reading in order to do her day job, but she asked if she could be relieved from some assignments that she would have accepted, if not for this unique Lenten discipline.

The surprise, Winner said, was how this fast touched her life after the working day. That's when she could almost hear her favorite volumes of history and fiction calling her name (especially the detective novels).

## In The First Place

By Paul W. Powell

**Much Given — Much Required**

We delight to say "all men are created equal" but that simply is not true. We may be equal before the law and equal before God but we're not equal in any other way. We don't all have the same IQ, the same physique, the same looks. Some can run faster, jump higher, and lift more than others. But we all have certain abilities and what we have we ought to use to the maximum.

Paul "Bear" Bryant the legendary coach of the University of Alabama and Texas A&M said there are four types of players: Those with ability and they know it; those with ability and they don't know it; those who don't have ability and they know it; those who don't have ability and they don't know it.

"The one who makes you proudest is the one who isn't good enough to play, but it means so much to him and he puts so much into it that he does it anyway. The ones who have ability and don't use it are the ones who eat your gut out."

I suspect coaches are not the only ones who have gut wrenching experiences. God must also, if he's given you ability he expects you to use it to serve him and to serve mankind. The scriptures remind us, "unto whomsoever much is given of him shall much be required" (Luke 12:48).

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