

Education of Child — Letter to Judge

Your Honor,

I am glad for this opportunity to expound more completely the basis for my beliefs concerning the education of my daughter. The education of my daughter—a matter, of vital importance to me—has everything to do with the God that I serve. I contend that section 96 of the *Education Act* of the statutes of Nova Scotia does violate my rights. To be precise, the enforcement of this statute against me violates the fundamental freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution Act of 1982 (Charter of Rights and Freedoms), which are: the freedom of conscience and religion; and also, the guarantees of freedom of thought and belief stated in the same section, entitled “Fundamental Freedoms”. May it be found that these “freedoms” are more than noble platitudes which shrink away when a persons’ faith in God causes him to live a lifestyle different from the “norm” of society. May these freedoms cover more than just what a man “thinks” in his brain, but also allow a man to practice his faith, as he pursues peace and righteousness. First, I would establish that I am a follower of the Jesus Christ of the scriptures, and I believe that the scriptures known as the Holy Bible are the inspired writings of God, the God of Israel. Jesus Christ came to earth to establish a people (Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9), not a militant and rebellious people (1 Pet 2:13 14,17; Rom 13:1 7), but a people who will ultimately govern the whole earth (Mt 5:5; Rom 4:13; 2 Tim 2:12; Daniel 7:13 14; 2:44; Rev 20:4; 22:3 5; 1 Cor 6:2). By the grace of God, I am part of that people. I am a descendent of Abraham by faith in his God (Gal 3:29).

According to my God, I am to train my children in His way according to Gen 18:19:

For I have chosen him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.

Also Dt 6:4 9: “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you rise up.” In this way I prove to be a true descendent of Abraham and a true follower of Jesus Christ, who said, “If you are Abraham’s offspring, do the deeds of Abraham” (Jn 8:39).

*God is no fool. He knows that in whatever way a child is raised, in that way he will live as an adult. “Raise up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it.” The governments of the earth know this is true. All the religions of the earth know this. Thus is the focus of all the battle over children and their rights: To whom do these children belong? To the province or the parents? My daughter belongs to God, and I stand before God as her steward and father. The government does not own my child. I would no more agree to the province regulating the education of my child than I would agree to Mao, or Sun Myung Moon or President Reagan (or anybody else that I do not know and have no reason to trust) regulating and testing her training. Where did they get their standards? Are they the standards of God or the “speculations” of experts in a system that has proven itself to have bad fruit? And how, after subjecting her to twelve years of this abuse, would I pretend to erase its effects? And may I point out, too, that there actually seems to be **no standard** to evaluate my daughter by, even from the school officials. When asked exactly what the “standards” were, they gave a vague and arbitrary answer. I still do not know.*

The province in section 96 leaves no alternative but to surrender your child to be molded to its ways, its norm, that of the “majority”. It is as if to say no one has a right to be a true Christian. Does anyone have the right to NOT receive a secular, humanistic education? Even if they have decided against it because they have seen the rotten fruit of a system that is headed for destruction? By bad fruit, I don’t mean the drunks and the rowdies alone, but the successful who are just as godless, having been calloused to the true signs of the times—through the agency of things like public school.

Parents have a fundamental right to privacy. By privacy, I mean that no one tells me how to make love to my wife. Neither does anyone but my God tell me how I must train my own flesh and blood, my own seed which proceeded out of my body and my wife’s body. Certainly my child has a right to knowledge — math, reading,

geographical skills, and so forth. These skills I am training her in with the able help of other brothers and sisters in the church. In fact the scope and thoroughness of her preparation far exceeds what she would get in a classroom of thirty students with teachers only able to pass on knowledge but not being able to pass on the all — important spiritual life that she needs.

No modern educational institution can qualify to educate my daughter; for no educational institution is equipped to accomplish the purpose of God on earth. The Kingdom of God cannot collaborate with the kingdom of this world. Any *joint undertaking* or common course of action is against what God has revealed to me. By giving the school system charge of a portion of rearing my child, I would prove unfaithful to the one who saves me from this world. What does the rational have in common with the irrational? What does the good have to do with evil? “Do not be bound together with unbelievers, for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, just as God said:

I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE, says the Lord.

AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN;

AND I WILL WELCOME YOU.

AND I WILL BE A FATHER TO YOU,

AND YOU SHALL BE SONS AND DAUGHTERS TO ME,

SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY” (2 Cor 6:14 18).

It’s not that my daughter and I have a disdainful attitude toward others that aren’t in the church where we are.

We sincerely love others and want to be a faithful witness to all men of the only One who can deliver men from their sin. But the fact is that the kingdom we now stand in, the Kingdom of God, is a different kingdom from the society of this world. It is Christ’s body, God’s society — a society of people who are being redeemed from the ravages of this crooked society. The difference is at the very root and origin. These are two kingdoms of two entirely different substances. This is why there can be no common spiritual undertaking together with this society. What is more spiritual than the training of my daughter?

As a follower of Jesus Christ, I am held responsible to obey the whole Word of God. It is in this obedience that I must take on the education of my daughter. I cannot merely teach my children from 7 to 16 years of age, but I must diligently instruct and discipline them from the cradle to the grave. God has provided the ideal environment for my child to be trained — the community of His people where the peace and order of God prevail. In this environment, my child is being trained according to God’s purpose on earth with clear vision of how to accomplish this purpose.

Collaboration with this system of education would be to us a compromise of our conscience — moral failure!

And it is upon the basis of our conscience (my daughter’s and mine), that we must give account to Jesus Christ.

I maintain that the civil government of Nova Scotia, of any nation, has no jurisdiction over my faith and conscience and the free exercise of it. My desire is to obey the laws of the land and live in peace. I uphold the principle of government and the need for such. I pay taxes; I obey traffic laws and other statutes. But the civil government transgresses its rightful authority when it attempts to intervene upon the free practice of conscience and obedience to God, with the possible exception of cases where religious freedom actually causes clear-cut harm or deprivation to rights of others. I do not believe that this charge can be leveled against me whatsoever.

Concerning this point, I quote the first article of *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*:

“The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits (emphasis mine) prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.”

I do not believe that my fundamental freedom of religion, which vitally includes the education of my child, can be limited or denied apart from a clear demonstration of it being injurious to anyone.

I felt that the initial approach of the school authorities to my case was “cut and dried”. There was no liberty to express anything about what I believe or how I actually *do* provide education for my daughter. My religion was immediately discounted as irrelevant to the issue of my daughter not going to the local school. The moment I was identified as someone moving apart from “the norm”, I was met with the strict application of the letter of the Law. These men told me that they were investigating my case in response to “complaints” received from members of the community about my daughter’s non-attendance of school. Upon meeting me and hearing my situation, why didn’t these men go and do some homework and figure out a way for me to be obedient to the convictions of my faith without being processed as a “Law breaker”? Why have the school officials confronted me with “The Law is the Law”— either conform or go to court. From this point, the burden of proof has been on me to prove that I’m not neglecting my child. Why is it *presupposed* that my education of my child is negligent? I have repeatedly felt that no one is willing to take me at my word — as a man of integrity. I’m indiscriminately lumped together with the evasive law breaker who truly does neglect his child’s need.

Somehow, the lack of compassion I have found bothers me profoundly. Is the system of education no more than an “insensitive beast” who makes everyone conform to their standard without consideration for the merits of each case? “I’m only doing my job” and “The Law is the Law” — these are the stock answers I get time and again.

Are the public servants able to be men of conscience? Is not this rigid insensitivity and lack of courage a further indictment against the public school complex?

I wonder what the momentum is that causes the school officials to make this such an issue. Is it a true, heartfelt concern that my daughter would be able to develop her capacities to the utmost? Is their motive for all of this to assure her the best opportunity for her growth as a human being? Actually, the school people involved know very little about myself, my daughter or what I teach her. This is certain, because we have spent very little together. I feel as though there is a demand for a legalistic application of the statute — disregarding who I am, what my intentions are and what my fruit is. Is the goal of the province to help each individual human being realize their full potential or is the real business of government education to train useful citizens so that the *system* can be perpetuated? And what about my daughter? Who cares about her needs, her rights? I do! And I affirm once again that she does not want to go to government schools. She wants to be educated in the church where she lives.

At this point, I must also ask, is there *fear* that many others will follow suit (on account of a possible precedent in this case) if I am allowed the freedom of my conscience to educate my child? I’m not crusading or trying to establish a precedent for everyone in society. Let every man do what is right in his own conscience before God.

Although we, as citizens of a democracy, are supposed to be free from anybody imposing a religious belief on us

It does not appear to be so. We are supposed to be free from the state imposing or endorsing a religion that all must conform to. Yet, as I look through Canadian textbooks of past and present, I see something quite the opposite. (I am exposing the pretense that the philosophy taught in the public school is philosophically neutral.) A Science text, still being issued as late as 1971 in Nova Scotia, tells its readers that man is probably a descendant of some kind of ape. Even now as I look at the book, I’m confronted with a chart “demonstrating” the evolutionary process from Gibbon to chimpanzee, Gorilla and finally, man. Yet the faith of *my fathers*, the faith that I see in the scriptures says that man is God’s highest creation. These scriptures tell me that my daughter and I are made “in the image of God”. Why do the textbooks discount the Bible as impotent by ignoring its principles, prophecies and the way of life it teaches? The scriptural point of view doesn’t even get *equal billing* with the humanistic theories that fill our texts and the minds of our children today!

I know that humanism is a religious philosophy. It doesn’t teach anything about God’s person or his dealings with man; but it teaches, by implication, a religion of man and his supreme power. This philosophy exalts man and his reason as the lord of all things, discounting the only true and rightful sovereign — the God that my daughter and I worship.

There is no way that government controlled education can help but be a philosophical persuasion — it promotes humanistic philosophy which is really a religious philosophy. To portray some modern thought on this subject, I quote from the Jan./Feb. 1983 edition of the HUMANIST magazine (a magazine circulated in both the U. S. and Canada). The writer is a Mr. John Dunphy:

"I am convinced that the battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognizes and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being. These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preachers; for they will be ministers of another sort; utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of the education level — preschool, day care, or large state university. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new — the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of humanism, resplendent in its promise of a world in which the never realized Christian ideal of 'love thy neighbor' will finally be achieved."

To be more precise in describing the religious philosophy of humanism, let me mention briefly the ones that I see increasingly taught in government education—implied by textbooks and by teachers who are steeped, themselves, in this philosophy. One is evolution, in the sense that man gradually emerged by chance from lower forms of life over millions of years. Also, the matter of ultimate authority is undermined by the teaching that man is his own authority and not accountable to any higher power. The moral question. I do not want my child being taught that there are no absolutes by which to live. I want her to be saved from the increasing sense of meaninglessness that government-educated youth shows forth. I protest and appeal for the right of myself as a parent to raise my child in the religion of her family — in the faith of her fathers. How can I ever submit, with a good conscience, to an educational system that presents history from a slant, the slant of creation apart from God? Why are Key men in history such as Adam, Noah, Isaiah, John the Baptist and the apostle Paul missing from the history books in the secular school system? The scriptures say that life without acknowledging the God who is the Father of Messiah, is arrogance (Rom 1). I cannot allow my daughter to be trained in a spirit of arrogance, anti-biblical bias, and futile speculations masquerading as absolute truth.

I have spoken of what is being taught, up till now. But of even greater importance is this: I am responsible in the sight of my Creator, to provide a proper environment for the education of my child! I refuse to send her to undisciplined schoolrooms where rebellion against parents, teachers, human dignity, and freedom of religion (which the Charter of Rights protects) prevails; sexual permissiveness, drug abuse, and harassment are often unchecked. I am commanded by my Lord and God not to conform to the pattern of thinking, nor lifestyle, of this world, but to be separate from it (Rom 12:1-2). It is obvious to me that the fabric of authority is unraveling in the schools. How is it that students can emerge from twelve years of public schooling and find more identity with transvestite rock music stars than with the traditional values that have held Canadian society together for generations? Do I have to immerse my daughter in an "educational" environment where she will learn more about "Boy George" than she ever will about men like Nehemiah, who had a passionate love for God and justice? What kind of environment is public school really? What kind of people have charge over our children for six hours a day, ten months a year? Are there homicides, rapes, robberies, drug traffic, vandalism, threats, disorder, coercion, assaults, illegal break ins, arson, weapons confiscated (and some not), etc.? Some will say, this doesn't characterize the schools, although you might find some of this happening sometimes. So I must decide, "Do I want to send my daughter into an environment where sometimes there is rebellion, disorder, and decadence?" The educational system, a system dedicated to training the minds of our youth in all "goodness" and moral character, and integrity, has turned out to be a wolf in sheep's clothing, due to its internal corruption. Jesus said that if the blind lead the blind, they will both fall into the ditch. And as to those whom we are expected to trust our children to every week: I do not believe that a mere "sheepskin" qualifies a person to be a true teacher and trainer of children. Teachers are not qualified by colleges and universities but by God, and only in His church where He prepares them by adding grace to their natural

ability. True teaching is a function that must take place in the church—not in the society at large. The scripture commands the church to “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20). So, it’s all really a matter of two separate kingdoms clashing here. The church, the body of Christ, that I am part of, should be teaching the nations rather than the nations teaching the disciples. How can I farm out my precious daughter to a system that will put values and a spirit that are opposite to the pure spirit of God — in His church? Let those who love the world be educated by the world — in its spirits and values — but only the church can teach its own. The teachers and educators who would be over my daughter have received their spirit from educational institutions that consider success to be power, money, position, and authority. Their philosophy of education is one which says that the purpose of education is to make me a success in order that I may live my life for myself in the comfort that the world offers, thus having no greater preoccupation than self interest (Lu 6:40). Student like teacher! Those who teach my daughter must pass on to her a spirit—the one spirit of truth. I require that her teachers be motivated by love and compassion (not greed), and therefore can earn no salary. They must know her and love her, and be willing to spend time with her. They must not be hired hands, but people who are able to help her with her special needs. A child’s soul is done irreparable harm by processing then through impersonal, mass-production, large scale education. This is an absolute perversion of the function of education. My youngest son suffered from a great liability in academics when he was being processed through the “Education Factory”. He is only now, in the church, recovering from this low self esteem brought about, in part, by competition, pressure, and lack of care. In spite of the many well meaning individuals involved in the educational system. It’s the system itself that is warped and ungodly — and its bad fruit is so obvious to those who are willing to see.

I must ensure my daughter with an education suitable to prepare her to love God with all her heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love her neighbor as herself (Mt 22:37-40). Reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, etc., are vital, but all will still be in vain if she fails to know her God. “For since in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believed” (1 Cor 1:21). “Ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth.” “Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.”

Yes, it’s one thing to become equipped with the basic knowledge of academics, but it requires the ministry of a wonderful and pure Holy Spirit to equip a child to love with all their heart. It requires authority to equip God’s people and this authority is only found in the church — God’s good government among men. The state simply doesn’t have the *authority* to train my child. She belongs to God, and I am her steward before Him. The scriptures says to train up a child in the way he should go even when he is old he will not depart from it (Pr 22:6). The education of my child is at the very heart and core of my faith. It is unthinkable to even consider any partnership with the system I am commanded to be separate from. How could the world and the church work together to disciple God’s people? He has vested myself and the people I live with to be able to equip her. She does not belong to the state. The state’s function (if it is not apostate and oppressive) is to praise those who do good and to punish those who do ill. The state should uphold my right to exist as a disciple of Christ the Messiah, and it should uphold my right to do good in the training of my daughter in all godliness and right conduct.

In the practice of these fundamental freedoms (conscience, religion), I believe that common sense indicates that the free practice of my faith does not endanger other members of the society. Neither does my conduct infringe upon the rights of others. If my faith condoned raping, stealing, and killing — whether “in the name of God” or not, then by common agreement and reason I should be condemned. But this is not the case. I believe that the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a democratic society, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. I believe that this is the pure spirit of democracy. Is the law to be indiscriminately enforced against the true offender as well as the man of sincere conviction? This has been my appeal to the educational authorities all along: Is there no provision for a man like me to educate my daughter in peace? Is there enough discernment and justice in the wielders of the law to see my heart to see my intentions for good? Is the true spirit of democracy to really force servitude on those with sincere conviction to

not send their child to the state school? Is there not something terribly wrong with a society which has to force its members to attend school? Whose rights are being upheld ultimately? Is it for the “common good”, to promote the “general welfare” of society, that my daughter is being forced to attend the provincial school? Does anyone care about what she desires?

My daughter loves me with all her heart. She has confessed her love and allegiance to my God, the one whom I serve with a clear conscience. She has been baptized into my faith and my God for over a year. This is her heart’s desire. Love led her to this, not coercion. She earnestly wants to grow up and be educated according to my wishes. To her, this is normal. This is all she has ever known. She would not be able to articulate her feelings as clearly as I can, but nonetheless you would find her a young woman of conviction. Without having to immerse herself in another way or be exposed to “alternatives”, she knows what she wants. It was never God’s desire that our children be thrown into an atmosphere of perversity so that they could “make a rational choice”. The proponents of this kind of “liberty” exhibit very bizarre reasoning. They are people who are cut adrift from any conviction of absolutes. They live in “the gray” and they want their children to live in this same haze. Is it proposed to me that I put a little poison in my child’s food so she’ll learn not to like the Poison? Or maybe she will prefer the poison over the food. But, if I am wise, I will keep poison out of her food. There is an old parable about this subject. One springtime, a wise master gardener was visited by an idealistic young friend.

The young friend asked, “What are you planning to plant in your garden this year?” The old gardener, knowing of his friend’s theories, said, “Well, I thought I’d just wait until October and see what the garden decides to grow on its own.”

Alexander Pope once said, “As the twig is bent so grows the tree”.

My daughter has found my God because she has grown up loving me. The Lord has used me in the normal manner of parents in the kingdom of God — trying to be diligent in training her and showing her the ways of my God. The good fruit has come from the faithfulness of the Lord. He, alone, is to be praised.

My daughter has a right to flourish and become all that her Creator intended for her to be. She has a right to remain under His nurture — to be educated mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically by those who truly love her; to have all of her needs met, not just a lop sided development of the mind, at the expense of the soul. She has a right to be able to fulfill her desire to be obedient to me, her father.

Let it not be that men endeavoring to follow the command of scripture, with a good conscience, be subjected to civil prosecution for the sake of their faith.

I am not a rebel, nor am I a man who rises up in impudence to disobey the laws of the land. I seek to live a quiet life, working with my hands, being at peace with all men. My hope is for justice.

Yours respectfully

André Massé