



"Learning In The Light"

13320 79th Avenue,
Edmonton, AB.,
T5R 3G5,
October 21, 2009-10-22

The Honourable Dave Hancock,
Minister of Education,
Government of Alberta.

Re: Upcoming Revision of The Alberta School Act

Dear Mr. Hancock:

In the revisions of The Alberta School Act which will be undertaken in the coming months, we in The Edmonton Logos Society want to encourage you to ensure that the revised Act continues to provide clear support for Christian school education within the public school system. Specifically, we would like to see the following:

1. **That Section 21 providing for alternative programs in public schools which emphasize "a particular language, culture, religion or subject matter... or teaching philosophy" be continued.**

At least 15 school districts have taken advantage of this provision, and there may be more this autumn that we are not aware of. This means that there are literally thousands of parents who are pleased and grateful that your government has provided this opportunity for their children to be educated in a Christian environment espousing traditional biblical principles as found in the Sermon on the Mount, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed.

Not only that, society is strengthened through these schools. For example, the Mission Statement of the Logos Christian Program says: "That students, taught in a spiritually nurturing, intellectually challenging and disciplined environment, acquire the knowledge, attitudes, skills and training necessary to seek after 'whatsoever things are.' That, sustained by Christ's teaching and God's love, students may develop binding commitments to their families, neighbours, country and the global community while leading moral, healthy and productive lives." Isn't this what we all want?

2. **That the new School Act recognizes and supports the precedent set by the Courts in the case where Christian schools within the Calgary Board of Education geographic boundaries were able to join the Palliser School District when the Calgary Board refused to offer any Christian programs.**

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It would not have been justice for a few individuals, four school trustees in Calgary's case, to have had the power to prevent Christian parents from having public Christian education for their children. The Palliser School District has been a great service and blessing to the parents with children in those Christian Schools from Calgary which have joined them. We pray that this will be allowed to continue in the new School Act.

3. That Section 50 providing for school boards to prescribe religious and patriotic instruction be preserved.

If undertaken properly and with sincerity, prayer and flag salutation can be offered in a mixed setting. For example, we know of one LOGOS Christian program where Muslim children, with the consent of their parents, have expressed the wish to pray along with the Christian children. Surely, the historical tenets upon which the public system were founded do not have to suffer elimination for the sake of immigrants who come here, or any others, who say that things have to change because of them.

4. That Section 34 allowing for the Operation of Charter Schools be continued. That section could be improved and clarified, however, to allow specifically for government to publicly fund Christian charter schools.

The way Section 34 (4) reads at the moment, namely, "A charter school shall not be affiliated with a religious faith or denomination" is internally inconsistent. This is because when God is not allowed to be mentioned or discussed in the classroom, the religion of Secular Humanism essentially becomes the religion of the classroom – and a very intolerant religion at that.

Many people do not realize that Secular Humanism is itself a religion. Yet, a reading of the Humanist Manifesto I, and subsequent restatements thereof, make this abundantly clear. The authors referred to their manifesto as "religious humanism" and speak specifically of establishing their new religion. In their 1980 version their statement of faith is "Secular Humanism places trust in human intelligence rather than in divine guidance." Moreover, in 1961 the US Supreme Court [Torcase and Watkins] specifically defined secular humanism as a religion equivalent to theistic and other non-theistic religions. (For example, Buddha himself did not believe in God).

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Charter Schools increase choice for parents. Increased choice, whether through charter schools or a voucher system, provides three major benefits:

- a) It stimulates greater efficiency and academic effectiveness of schools,
- b) It provides greater equality for all parents (eg: for those who cannot afford to move to the best neighbourhoods or pay for high-academic private schools),
- c) It is consistent with the principles of freedom, democracy and subsidiarity (that is, where decisions affecting people's well-being are made as close as possible in the organizational chain to those who are affected by the decisions),.

These points are elaborated on in detail, and their critics answered, in my book entitled *Educational Choice: Necessary But Not Sufficient*, published by the Institute for Research in Public Policy, (1994), and distributed by Renouf Publishing Co. Ottawa, Ontario.

5. **That the basic content of the School Act be preserved so that substantial parts of it are not simply placed in regulations – which can be changed arbitrarily, at a moment's notice, without bringing the changes to the Legislature for debate, public input, and approval.**

Policies affecting voters, and specifically affecting how the education of children is carried out, need to be open to public debate and accountability, and not simply determined by civil servants acting from their own perspective of how things ought to be done. You and your colleagues, as politicians, have an extremely important role to play in ensuring that the views of voters have an adequate chance to be expressed before important changes affecting their lives are made.

Thank you for providing the opportunity of making a submission with respect to the revisions of the Alberta School Act. May God guide you all as this work is undertaken.

Sincerely,

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