

NO NEUTRAL GROUND

A Christian Critique of the Secular Onslaught in Provincial Education Systems

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NO NEUTRAL GROUND INTRODUCTION

In provinces across the country education policy continues to evolve and usually for the worse. In particular, new policies and programs are being developed and implemented that directly undermine parental authority, advance a particularly hedonist sexual ethic, and openly attack the Judeo-Christian worldview.

- Quebec implemented a mandatory religious studies program in 2008 that requires an “objective” approach to the teaching of religion, meaning that the State can insist that Christian schools teach about other religions uncritically.
- In 2013, Ontario passed Bill 13 imposing gay-straight alliance clubs on Catholic schools and promoting a sexual ethic directly contrary to Christian teaching.
- That bill has been replicated in Manitoba through Bill 18 (passed in 2014) and in Alberta through Bill 10 (in 2015). Unlike Ontario, Bill 18 and Bill 10 apply to independent Christian schools too.
- In British Columbia, a human rights complaint from a homosexual activist was resolved when the B.C. government agreed to allow that activist to review the entire curriculum in the province to ensure adequate coverage (i.e. promotion) of the homosexual lifestyle and worldview. This arrangement was called the Corren Agreement, negotiated in 2006 and implemented across the province in 2008.
- Ontario developed a health education curriculum that includes a very controversial sex education component. Despite the concerns of parents over the age appropriateness of the material, the curriculum will begin in September, 2015.

These bills, curricula and policies impose a one-size-fits-all approach to issues of bullying, religion, and sexual ethics on all schools in their provinces, including independent, parent-run schools. You can read more about the particulars of the Corren Agreement, Bill 10, Bill 18, Bill 13, the Ontario sex-ed curriculum, and the Quebec Ethics and Religious Culture course at ARPACanada.ca.



ARPA Canada is producing this short booklet to supplement other excellent secular resources on these troublesome education policies.¹ This booklet is for Christian parents who are looking for a particularly Christian analysis and critique of these developments. Various legal analyses from ARPA Canada on the constitutionality of Bill 10, Bill 18, Bill 13 and on the Quebec religion course can also be found online.²

A word should also be said about the political philosophy behind these bills. Put aside matters of religion and sexuality for a moment. When we evaluate Bill 10, Bill 18 and other education matters from a purely political-philosophical perspective, we see a State that refuses to inform parents about what is being taught to their children, a State that says there is only one way to deal with sexual ethics, a State that maligns other points of view by demonizing critics, and a State that centralizes power in an education bureaucracy. Such a State is not free. Bills 10, 13 and 18, the B.C. Corren Agreement and the Quebec religious studies curriculum are programs that are totalitarian in nature. (For more on the political philosophy angle, see commentary by ARPA's legal counsel at LifeSiteNews.³)

There are better solutions to the problems the provincial legislatures are attempting to address with these programs. Good public policy does not use a heavy-handed, one-size-fits-all approach to issues of fundamental importance to families, religious communities and civic institutions. Good public policy trusts parents, teachers and communities at the local level to make good decisions for the benefit of the children whom they have an ongoing relationship with. Bad public policy does the opposite.

In this paper, we wish to address five themes in relation to the secular onslaught in public and independent education. Each theme opens with a prescient quote and then explains the theme using the Bible as foundation. We hope this booklet is helpful for motivating and encouraging Christians to engage.

¹ See, for example, a Parental Choice in Education paper on Bill 10. The brief legal analysis in the paper, as well as the discussion about what Bill 10 is and how it undermines parental choice in education is thorough and well worth a read. It's available online at <http://parentchoice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/GSAs-What-Alberta-parents-should-know-about-Bill-101.pdf>
See also work and research by the Fraser Institute, the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms and the Canadian Constitution Foundation.

² For Bill 10: <http://arpacanada.ca/attachments/article/2290/Loyola%20case%20and%20Bill%2010%20a%20brief%20legal%20analysis.pdf>
For Bill 18: <http://arpacanada.ca/attachments/article/1734/BILL%2018%20-%20SOME%20SIMPLE%20TALKING%20POINTS.pdf>
For Bill 13: <http://arpacanada.ca/attachments/article/1585/Bill%2013%20Submissions.pdf>
For Quebec religion course: <http://arpacanada.ca/attachments/article/2035/ACES%20Factum%20final%20.pdf>

³ <https://www.lifesitenews.com/opinion/threats-to-liberty-begin-with-education-policy>



ONLY DEAD CHRISTIANS “GO WITH THE FLOW”. LIVING CHRISTIANS MUST SPEAK UP.

“A dead thing goes with the stream, but only a living thing can go against it.”

-- G.K. Chesterton

“What is today a matter of academic speculation begins tomorrow to move armies and pull down empires. In that second stage, it has gone too far to be combatted; the time to stop it was when it was still a matter of impassionate debate.”

-- J. Gresham Machen

A theme running throughout scripture is the antithesis. There are the sons of Cain and the of Seth (Gen. 4-6), Israel and the nations (Ex. 19:5-6), the righteous and the wicked (Psa. 1), the wise and the foolish (Prov. 1:7), the saved and the lost (Matt. 18:11), the children of Abraham and those of the devil (John 8:39-44), the elect and the non-elect (Rom. 9), believers and unbelievers (1 Cor. 6:6), practitioners of the wisdom of the world and of the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1-2), those who walk in light and those who walk in darkness (1 John 1:5-10), the church and the world (1 John 2:15-17).

Some Christians think that western society is “all on the same side” as far as worldview goes. This is not a biblical view. Christians are called to “destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). We understand that “all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).

Because we have access to the Truth, and those who subscribe to a different worldview are blind to the Truth, calling darkness light, and evil good (Isa. 5:20), as Christians we can’t just “go with the flow”. We must “always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame” (1 Pet. 3: 15-16). Note well that those who are opposed to our position *revile* us! For us to just go with the flow ignores this reality.



Jesus calls his church to be a salt in our culture, a light in our cities (Matt. 5:13-15). When Christians go with the flow, they aren't a salt that flavours, they are a salt that has lost its saltiness. When Christians refuse to speak out on issues of fundamental importance to the family and church and society, or only speak about it within the walls of our homes or churches, then we are putting a bushel over our lamps. A balm that does not sting is probably not doing its job.

Bill 10 in Alberta, the sex-ed curriculum in Ontario, the bullying law in Manitoba and the religion course in Quebec are all ideas, concepts, and philosophies that catapult us toward a tyranny of the State over the internal affairs of the home. The time to speak up, as the theologian Machen says in the quote above, *is now*. The longer we wait, the more painful will be the reformation.



CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT EXPECT THAT EDUCATION IS NEUTRAL. IT CAN'T BE.

"Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil!"

-- C. S. Lewis

Those committed to Jesus Christ seek to "bring every thought captive" to him (2 Cor. 10:5). Others are committed to something else: another religion, a philosophy, a political movement, or something they contrived themselves. There is no neutrality. When the secular state teaches about sexuality and ethics, it will teach it from a secular-humanist (and sometimes hedonist) perspective. It will teach certain behaviours as good that we know are harmful; it will teach certain ideas as true that we know are false; it will teach certain things as beautiful that we know are disordered. Even when the State remains silent on certain attributes of God, its silence preaches that God is dead – that his providence does not guide history, that his creative power did not bring the world into existence, that his laws do not bind mathematical absolutes, that his design for marriage is merely old-fashioned drivel.

Teaching about sexuality without teaching the virtue of chastity, teaching about economics without teaching about the evils of greed and envy, teaching about bullying without teaching about the golden rule, is dangerous. It does not teach these concepts (sexuality, finances, bullying) in a value-free environment, or neutrally. It teaches them still, but in a way that suggests that no virtue is required.

Douglas Wilson writes that there are two reasons many parents have bought into the idea that the State will be neutral and beneficial when educating their children:

"The first is that the government has become the guarantor of 'quality' in teaching. If something is 'licensed' or 'accredited,' it is easy to assume the quality is good. We forget that licensing also means control... But God has placed the responsibility in one place, and to move it to another for the sake of 'quality-control' is abdication. The second reason is related to the first. Neutrality is impossible; worldviews in education are unavoidable. Jesus eliminated neutrality in all areas when He said, 'He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad' (Matt. 12:30)."⁴

⁴ http://www.reformed.org/webfiles/antithesis/index.html?mainframe=/webfiles/antithesis/v1n6/ant_v1n6_education.html



**GOD GAVE AUTHORITY OVER EDUCATION OF CHILDREN TO PARENTS.
CHRISTIANS MUST RECLAIM THIS AUTHORITY FROM THE STATE.**

“Schooling is a form of adoption. You give your kid away at his or her most formative years to a group of strangers. You accept a promise that the state, through its agents, knows better how to raise your children and educate them than you do.”

-- John Taylor Gatto

“They are stealing our children, but because they are leaving the body of the child with us, we don’t even know it’s happening.”

-- Erwin Lutzer

Bill 10 and many of the other education programs described above do not require parental notification about what is being taught. In practice, this means that teachers or ideological student clubs can counsel children about complex moral and ethical issues without the consent – or even the knowledge – of their parents. As the Alberta government itself explains it:

There is no requirement in Bill 10 requiring parental notification or consent for a student to participate in a [gay-straight alliance club]. School boards, staff and teachers have a responsibility to act in the best interest of their students, by ensuring their health and safety. School boards and teachers have a duty of care; the government expects them to act in the best interest of their students within the context of all of their legal obligations.⁵

The Ontario government operates from the same playbook. They are pushing their new sexual education curriculum and doing so without meaningful parental consultation. While we believe that God makes all education the responsibility of parents (the State's role is merely an “assistant” to parents) the teaching of sexuality and sexual ethics are particularly the domain of parents. Read through the book of Proverbs and this becomes abundantly clear. What we are seeing with the present Ontario government on this particular issue is a blatant disregard for this Biblical truth, a terrible intrusion into the safe domain of the family home and a sneering “moral superiority” complex by a provincial government that really seems to believe they know better than parents.

⁵ <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/supportingstudent/safeschools/amendments-to-bill-10.aspx>



Bill 10 and Ontario's sex-ed curriculum are gross violations of the principle that parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education their children should receive, a right recognized in multiple international human rights instruments including the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, (Article 18(4)), and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (see especially Articles 5, 14, 18). However, international law is not the final authority.

The Bible teaches that parents are the primary authorities of their children. This is seen in God's directions to Abraham in Gen. 18, God's instructions to the people of Israel to teach their children his commands in Deut. 6, the generational instruction outlined in Psalm 78, or the entire book of Proverbs, filled with instructions on how to "train up a child in the way he should go" (Prov. 22), including as it relates to sexuality. (See also Deut. 4:10; Prov. 1:8-9; Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20.) The State may not drive a wedge between parents and their children or use children as pawns to advance a particular worldview in society. We have an obligation to remind the State that its role is particular and limited (Rom. 13), and that Bill 10, sex education, and religious worldview training all fall far outside of its authority.

J. Hampton Keathley explains that parents are not free to do with their children as they please because parental authority is delegated. "Ultimately, the authority we exercise as parents is God's authority. Children are *stewardships* from God, blessings He has given to parents to manage for Him. But to be good stewards, parents must raise their children according to God's guidelines and authority so children come to know God and obey and behave as the children of God."

Keathley continues with a deeper explanation of authority.

Authority means the delegated right to rule or lead... it is the right to set policy... the responsibility to bring about controls in our children's lives within the limits of the authority given by God. God has absolute and complete authority and the right of complete control because of who He is as the sovereign Creator (Psa. 47:2; 103:19; 115:3; Dan. 4:34b; Rom. 9:20b-21)... Even God's authority and control is never arbitrary because it is based on His perfect righteousness and goodness; it is always for the good and blessing of people. For instance, the commandments of God's Word... are designed to bring safeguards that enhance our capacity for blessing. This is so because of the very character of God who is perfect holiness... Inherent in all of this is God's goodness as our loving Benefactor. As an illustration, when our children were young we gave them tricycles as soon as they were old enough to ride them, but we established a rule: they could ride their tricycle in the driveway or on the sidewalk but not in the street. That rule restricted them out of love and parental responsibility, but its design was to keep them from being run over by an automobile.⁶

⁶ J. Hampton Keathley III, Th.M., The Principle of Authority, in *Biblical Foundations for Child Rearing*, online: <<https://bible.org/seriespage/3-principle-authority>>



This is not to say that the State doesn't have any authority. It does have authority to make good laws, to collect taxes, and to defend its citizens from aggressors. We are subject to the governing authorities (Rom. 13:1). As Jesus commanded, we are to render to Caesar (the State) what is Caesar's (Matt. 22:21). And Christians don't do this grudgingly. We are urged to pray for our political leaders and the good of our nation (Jer. 29:7). While it may be tempting to show disrespect and dishonour to them, we recognize they are still put in authority over us by God. The emperors in the time of the apostles Peter and Paul did not know God and yet the Christians were still called at that time to obey, respect and pray for them (see 1 Tim. 2:1-4; Tit. 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:17).

Pray that our rulers hear the truth from their Christian citizens and then govern faithfully. Pray for a conversion of hearts and minds so that they see the harm their policies might do to families and society.



SEX AND GENDER IDENTITY ARE NOT MERELY POLITICAL OR TRIVIAL. BIOLOGICAL SEX IS BINARY AND SEXUAL ACTIVITY REQUIRES VIRTUE.

"We are now in the odd position of supposing that sex is too trivial to require virtue for its exercise, but that it is simultaneously so significant, so determinative of a person's identity, that to suggest any restraint upon its consensual exercise is an affront to the most important fount of human dignity. It is at once nugatory and holy. We are at once to think nothing of it, and everything... It requires no sacrifice from its exerciser, and the sacrifice of everything else to it: the welfare of children and the family, public morals, the common good, and liberty itself."

-- Anthony Esolen

Transsexualism

Transsexualism, also known as transgenderism, Gender Identity Disorder (GID), or gender dysphoria, is a desire to change one's sex or to fulfill the role of the opposite gender. Transsexuals / transgenders usually describe themselves as "trapped" in a body that does not match their gender. They may seek hormone therapy or surgery to bring their bodies into conformity with their perceived gender.

Most provinces have now enshrined in law an idea that gender is not fixed but fluid, that there are more than two genders, and that what ultimately matters is how one person feels about their own gender, rather than what their biological sex actually is.

The Bible has plenty to say about human sexuality. Most basic to our understanding of sex is that God created two (and only two) genders that correspond to the two biological sexes: "male and female He created them" (Gen. 1:27). All the modern-day speculation about numerous genders—or even a gender "continuum" with unlimited genders—is unbiblical.

In Psalm 139, we learn that God fashions each one of us. "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. . . . My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. . . . your eyes saw my unformed body" (verses 13-16). God's creation of each individual must surely include His designation of sex.

After the fall of man, gender issues soon became confused. In the law of Moses, transgenderism was forbidden: "A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this" (Deut. 22:5).



No matter if the gender distortion has a genetic, hormonal, physiological, or psychological cause, the Bible clearly and consistently labels any sexual activity outside of marriage between one man and one woman as sin and rebellion against God's plan. But following this realization is good news: sin can be forgiven and lives can be changed through faith in Christ. The Corinthian believers are an example of such a change: "And [homosexuals] is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). There is hope for any sinner, transsexuals and transgenders included, because of God's forgiving and transforming grace available in Jesus Christ.

Sexual Activity

Bills 10, 13, and 18 entrust the State, rather than parents, to inculcate a shared ethic on matters of sexuality. However, the State of late has no respect for chastity or virtue or for age appropriateness. In particular, a report from the IMFC⁷ notes that the main reason for backlash in Ontario to a new sexual education curriculum introduced in 2010 was due to concerns over the age appropriateness of the sex education materials.

"Age appropriateness" is elusive but important. The American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry advises that "[P]arents should respond to the needs and curiosity level of their individual child, offering no more or less information than their child is asking for and is able to understand."⁸ Unfortunately, provincial curriculum has limited flexibility to suit the sensitivity of each child. Readiness differs from child to child, even within the same family.

In other words, the provincial curriculum is one-size-fits-all, and works with the philosophy of teaching issues before they become issues (i.e. before a child would typically be engaged in these types of behaviours). With this type of an educational philosophy for sexual education in particular, combined with the one-size-fits-all approach, we can logically conclude that in order to achieve the goal of reaching all kids in a school before any might be faced with questions about these sexual behaviours, activities or issues, the age at which it will be presented will drop to the lowest common denominator. Many other students will needlessly be exposed to these behaviours, activities and issues well before these children would otherwise be, and well before their own parents would think is the right time.

⁷ http://www.imfcanda.org/sites/default/files/making_sex_education_work.pdf

⁸ https://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/docs/facts_for_families/62_talking_to_your_kids_about_sex.pdf



The Scriptures teach a deep respect for the joy and gift of sexual intimacy, but that it must be limited within the monogamous, heterosexual, life-long marriage relationship. “But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:2). There are numerous other Scripture passages that speak to the proper design for sexual activity. (Acts 15:20; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:13, 18; 10:8; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; 1 Thes. 4:3; Jude 7). The Bible promotes complete abstinence before marriage. Sex between a husband and his wife is the only form of sexual relations of which God approves (Heb. 13:4).

Furthermore, God’s intent for sex includes producing children. Thus, for a couple to engage in sex before marriage is doubly wrong – they are enjoying pleasures not intended for them, and they are taking a chance of creating a human life outside of the family structure God intended for every child. All of this is not taught in State-run schools nor is it contemplated by Bills 10, 13, etc.; indeed, these bills seek to undermine these teachings even in Christian independent schools.

For more information on the policy implications of recognizing the fluidity of gender identity in law, see ARPA Canada’s video on the issue.⁹ See also the article on ARPA Canada’s website with multiple links to Christian resources on the topic of gender identity.¹⁰

Here follows 10 resolutions with regards to a Biblical understanding of the issue of gender and sex:¹¹

- all persons are created in God’s image and all are made to glorify Him (Gen. 1:27; Isa. 43:7);
- we recognize that the fall of man into sin and God’s subsequent curse have introduced brokenness and futility into God’s good creation (Gen. 3:1-24; Rom. 8:20);
- we extend love and compassion to those whose experience of this brokenness includes a perceived conflict between their biological sex and their gender identity (Rom. 8:22-23);
- we affirm God’s good design that gender identity should be determined by biological sex and not by one’s self-perception – a perception which is often influenced by fallen human nature in ways contrary to God’s good design (Eph. 4:17-18);

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGNz7V388bM>

¹⁰ <http://arpacanada.ca/issuesresearch/sexuality/1992-a-biblical-response-to-transgenderism>

¹¹ Taken from, Denny Burk and co-sponsor Andrew Walker, a resolution “On Transgender Identity” to the Resolutions Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, <http://www.dennyburk.com/a-resolution-on-transgender-for-the-sbc/>



- we affirm God’s original design to create two distinct and complementary sexes, male and female (Gen. 1:27; Matt. 19:4; Mk. 10:6);
- we affirm that male and female designate the fundamental distinction that God has embedded in the very biology of the human race;
- we affirm distinctions in masculine and feminine roles as ordained by God as part of the created order, and that those distinctions should find an echo in every human heart (Gen. 2:18, 21-24; 1 Cor. 11:7-9; Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Tim. 2:12-14);
- we invite all people, including transgender persons, to trust in Christ and to experience renewal in the gospel (1 Tim. 1:15-16);
- we love our transgender neighbors, seek their good always, welcome them into our congregations as they repent and believe in Christ, and spur them on to love and good deeds in the name of Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-20; Gal. 5:14; Heb. 10:24);
- our love for the gospel and urgency for the Great Commission must include declaring the whole counsel of God, including what God’s word teaches about God’s design for us as male and female persons created in His image and for His glory (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 20:27; Rom. 11:36).



THE DOCTRINE OF THE *IMAGO DEI* AND THE SECOND GREATEST COMMANDMENT CONDEMN BULLYING. CHRISTIANS WILL NOT TOLERATE IT.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

-- Jesus Christ

Every student has a right to be free from harassment, violence, name-calling and intimidation, and all students deserve dignity and respect. *These are assertions that virtually no person would disagree with.* In particular, parents who disagree with having GSAs (gay-straight alliance clubs) in their children's schools agree entirely that harassment, violence, name-calling, intimidation and bullying are completely unacceptable behaviours. In an Albertan survey by Ipsos Reid in 2010, 98% of parents said they "encourage [their] children to be accepting of people who are different" and 92% talk to their children about bullying.¹² Bill 10 in Alberta (and similar bills in other provinces) attempts to fix a problem that is already being addressed by those more capable of addressing it: parents.

When compared with the existing data, Bill 10 and similar bills are exposed as a poor method for protecting children. Anti-bullying laws privilege some students over others. Imagine the outcry if Bill 10, an act to protect *all* children, mandated Christian student clubs at any and all schools (including Muslim and Jewish independent schools!) should just one student request such a club. Such an outcry would be justified; laws should not privilege some students over others. Yet Bill 10 privileges a very small minority over many others who need protection from bullying: the most prevalent reason for being bullied (at 38%) is body image (students are perceived to be too fat, too thin, red hair, ugly, etc.). The second highest reason for bullying is grades or marks (at 17%). These students fail to get special mention in anti-bullying laws whereas sexual orientation, even though it doesn't make the top seven reasons for bullying, receives explicit protection.¹³

¹² Ipsos Reid Public Affairs, "Alberta Children and Youth Services: Albertans' Perceptions of Family Violence and Bullying Survey 2010," March 2010, http://child.alberta.ca/home/documents/familyviolence/PO_Survey_Final_Summary_Report_2010.pdf, 17.

¹³ Maria Yau and Janet O'Reilly, "2006 Student Census, Grades 7-12: System Overview," Toronto District School Board Research Report, http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/about_us/external_research_application/docs/2006StudentCensusSystemOverview1.pdf, 21. The top seven reasons for bullying: body image (38%), grades (17%), culture (14%), language (7%), gender, religion, and income (5% each).



But all of these numbers are irrelevant, except to show that bullying is a condition of human brokenness that torments children (and adults!) regardless of who they are. Christians do not tolerate bullying because it violates the commands of God.

Where the bullying of children is involved, it is the parents' responsibility before God to protect their children and take steps to make the bullying stop and, if necessary, remove their children from situations where they may be in distress. All husbands are required to defend their wives, children, families, homes, businesses, and their nations (Eph. 5:21 – 6:9). Again, where the State takes over this responsibility from parents, it results in a loss of responsibility on the part of parents. More and more, parents abdicate their responsibility when the State steps in. (**Note well:** criminal conduct is properly prosecuted by the State – the forgoing should not be seen as a justification for the State to look the other way when criminal acts are committed against children.)

The Bible says believers are to love God with everything in them, so they can produce good fruit (Gal. 5:22-23) and apply the Golden Rule to others. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), Jesus reveals that the heart of a true neighbor is one that shows mercy, even to one's enemies. So, Christians are to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), first being sure their own hearts are pure before God.

Human dignity is not first found in autonomous choices or the celebration of various group identities. Christians know that human dignity is found in human life. It is existential, meaning the dignity comes from simply being, simply existing, as a human. This understanding of human dignity is necessary for universal human rights and freedoms to flourish and to be equally available to all. This is also why the secular definition of human dignity, human rights, and the State's approach to bullying is so superficial and shallow.

Our universal human rights are based on a particular worldview, one that most Canadians take for granted. It was the Judeo-Christian worldview that ended the practice of throwing infants off cliffs of Sparta, or abandoning the sick and disabled by the Tiber River in Rome.

The reason why universal human rights should be recognized and can be an absolute standard to which all humans can appeal is because they have their foundation outside of us. In order for the *Charter* to work, in order for the fundamental freedoms to function and for equality rights to exist and to continue to exist, in order for anti-bullying policies to really work, they require us to recognize that Canada, that our constitution, that law, is founded upon (or must be founded upon) principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law.



Without that foundation, there is only us: lawyers and philosophers, politicians and citizens, teachers and parents to determine what is good and right and just and fair.

And if it's just us, there's nothing stopping another group of politicians to decide that maybe our laws should be interpreted in Orwellian fashion, that everyone is equal, but that some are just a little bit more equal than others.

When Christians encounter another person, we first see, (or we *ought* to first see), not skin colour, not gender, not disability, not sexual orientation. Rather, we see someone made in the image of our Maker, we see the *Imago Dei*. That's why we must treat every human being with respect regardless of how sick they are, how confused they are about their biological make up, or how much or how little they can function. We can have vigorous debates and disagreements with our neighbours about issues and ideas and actions. But the love of neighbour remains because when we see our neighbour, we see an image of God.

It is the Christian schools and the Christian families that deal with bullying best. They need to be given to freedom to do so.