

POINTS OF VIEW

Remarks on faith-based schools offensive

Last week more than 13,000 students entered the 78 schools of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS) to learn how to be responsible citizens. Besides receiving high quality academics, these students will learn that Christian citizenship includes participating in the economic life of society, obeying the law, respecting the rights and beliefs of others, getting involved in the life of the land by way of volunteering, voting, and generally contributing to the common good.

OACS takes serious issue with reported comments made by Premier McGuinty and Minister of Education Wynne on the place of faith-based schools in Ontario. The premier has stated or implied that bringing faith-based schools into the realm of publicly funded schools would cause "social unrest." The Minister of Education says public funding would be "divisive."

What's divisive is the fear-mongering of the Premier and Minister of Education. Social unrest is caused by a government suggesting that parents who choose faith-based schools are somehow undesirable elements in society, and the schools they choose are unworthy of the support of their elected leaders. Such statements are even more distasteful when one considers that the premier and his children are products of faith-based schools.

The comments made by the premier and his minister of education are offensive to thousands of parents, students, teachers and supporters of OACS schools. For more than half a century, OACS schools have taught civic and social responsibility and participation as the primary purpose of Christian education. OACS students are taught that it's not enough to fit into society, but that it is everyone's responsibility to make this world a better place.

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*-John Vanasselt
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