



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

“The Northern Ireland population needs to know about what is happening in our schools”



A report in The Belfast Telegraph of 15th November, under the headline: “Scandal of tiny tot terror in our schools”, highlighted the growing crisis within state education that violence amongst pupils is causing. It is a trend which the Bible states will mark the end times and about which many preachers of God’s Word have been warning. The situation underscores the case for Christian education which has been faithfully presented by a few within the Free Presbyterian church. The article, which we substantially reproduce, makes alarming reading.

“Children as young as two are involved in attacks on teachers in Ulster schools,” the article states. Fern Turner, from the National Association of Head Teachers, said that there were violent children in all sectors of education in Northern Ireland - including toddlers in nursery schools. Mrs Turner was speaking after the North Eastern Education Board released shocking details of the reasons for 17 pupils being expelled during the 2002/03 academic year. The cases include a 16-year-old bringing in drugs and ‘related equipment’ to school, a 14-year-old causing £20,000 of damage through an arson attack, a 15-year-old bringing ammunition into school, having previously brought a gun in, and a 14-year-old attempting to sell drugs in school. Mrs Turner praised the NEELB for publishing its statistics and case studies.

NEED TO KNOW

“The Northern Ireland population needs to know about what is happening in our schools,” she said. “It is the only way that people are going to realise the very severe and traumatic difficulties that our teachers and school leaders are having to deal with. “The cases from the North Eastern Board are not at all unusual and that is what makes the whole situation so sad. “We like to think of schools as havens and teachers and school leaders work hard and try and create a pleasant atmosphere, but the reality is that the problems out there in society are also in our schools. “There are some very difficult pupils that schools have to deal with.”

TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Mrs Turner said that the cases listed by the NEELB are “just the tip of the iceberg”. “Things like this are happening everywhere and at every level in education,” she said. “There are even some very difficult children in nursery schools where some two and three-year-olds can be very violent. “There are situations where teachers are being attacked, kicked and punched by children of this age. “When they are so young teachers can deal with them but some young children also behave the same way towards other children in their class. “I think it is all just a reflection on what is happening in society. “We need to teach children from an early age what is acceptable and what is not.” A Department of Education spokesman said: “The Department of Education, in partnership with the education and library boards, has developed a range of support services for schools, teachers and pupils to ad-



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dress the problems poor behaviour can create." He said that this included detailed guidance for schools, the creation of behaviour support teams in each board, and places in pupil referral units and on alternative education programmes have been increased. £5m has been allocated to support this work in 2002/03 and a similar figure has been allocated for 2003/04.

These facts highlight a trend that very often Christians wish to deny, or at least, ignore! All too often, in response to the Bible's case for Christian education, Christians have defended their local school with the assurance that such things would never happen there. This is a parallel argument to that presented by those who refused to obey the Bible's call to separate from the ecumenical denominations, saying that "their man" was an evangelical and would have nothing to do with the Rome-ward trend. Time has indicated that such a position is untenable.

So it is with the defence mounted by some for the state education system. The whole thesis of the state system is based upon a rejection of the Bible. The disease breaking out so virulently in some areas is present throughout the system, though perhaps less obviously so.

The Editor.