



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

A statement by Rev. Brian McClung, Minister of Newtownabbey Free Presbyterian Church and Administrator of Newtownabbey Independent Christian School. He addresses the remarks by First Minister Peter Robinson that labelled the current segregated system in Northern Ireland a "benign form of apartheid".

1. Peter Robinson is right to highlight the unjustifiable advantages, privileges and special arrangements that Romanism is given in the field of education in Northern Ireland. 100% funding is available to no other religious group that I know of.

2. His language about church schools being a 'benign form of apartheid' are however totally unacceptable, if he includes the FPC schools in that description.

i. If the state sector of education doesn't offer an education in accordance with what the Word of God commands, then every Bible believing Christian has every right, and a duty, to stand apart and run their own system of education. This is not a 'benign form of apartheid' but obedience to the Word of God.

ii. The state sector is presently secular, evolutionary, & man-centred in its ethos and therefore ultimately falls short of true education, For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding, Prov 2:6. True education begins with a knowledge of God as He has revealed Himself in His holy Word.

iii. The Bible clearly teaches the principles of separation. This is a fundamental starting point for evangelical Christianity. The born again believer is in the world but not of the world. We are to stand apart, ecclesiastically, morally, and educationally. This has been the historic position of our Christian forefathers.

We have been here before. This is not a new idea. Dr Henry Cooke [A Presbyterian minister back in the mid 1800s] had a great controversy over the issue of joint education.

iv. It is disingenuous for Peter Robinson to equate race and faith based views. To segregate on the basis of race is unbiblical, God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth..., Acts 17:26.

To stand apart on the issue of faith is the essence of Bible religion. In fact God pronounces a blessing upon it, Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, Ps 1:1.

3. Peter Robinson draws a parallel between the higher level education and primary or secondary schools.

i. He fails to appreciate the importance of education in these early formative years.



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The older someone grows the more they should be able to discern between what is truth and what is error. In early years there is the additional aspect of a pupils' character forming.

ii. If there was a Christian University/College holding to evangelical principles then I would certainly encourage Christians to attend there. This is due to the fact that sinful example has a detrimental effect upon the youth. So much behaviour is learned by watching others. God commands us to be wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil, Rom 16:19; Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things, Phil 4:8. Sadly many state educational institutions fall far short of this exhortation.

Historically, many of the state schools and universities originally started out being run and funded by Churches. It is the state who are the recent converts to education and not Churches.

iii. It must be remembered that education is not neutral. All education must have an ethos which underpins it. Secular education seeks to send out into the world those who are of a secular outlook. This is unacceptable for a Bible believer. God commands the Christian to raise their children with a Biblical worldview, to fear God and to serve Jesus Christ. The born again believer who wants to obey God has presently no option but to stand apart and place their children in an environment that honours God and has the Bible as its foundational textbook.

iv. State education has in the past been used to further the aims of politicians in solving the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland. Education for Mutual Understanding was set up by the Department of Education with the purpose of eliminating differences and points of distinction on the foolish premise that this would solve Ulster's troubles. It was an attack upon evangelical Christianity.

The state is not neutral, that is impossible for any form of education. The ethos of the state system of education is contrary to the evangelical Christianity.

4. Christian legislators are required to rule by the Word of God and particularly the Moral Law of God. Rom 13:1-10 *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore*



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to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

If they fail to do so then it can be legitimately asked: what is the point of electing them in the first place if they acquiesce in or even push a secularist agenda?