

Toronto Conference
The United Church of Canada

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April 30, 2010

Hon. Dalton McGuinty
Premier of Ontario
Room 281, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

Dear Mr. McGuinty,

I write to you on behalf of the Executive of Toronto Conference of The United Church of Canada regarding the issue of sex education in the schools.

We are not experts in sex education or teaching; therefore, we offer no comments on the proposed curriculum. However, as a Christian community, we hold some values which we believe should be reflected in the discussion about any proposed curriculum. Those values include:

- **Different perspectives:** We acknowledge the diverse perspectives within the Christian community and other faith groups, particularly the Muslim and Jewish communities with whom we have long relationships. It is part of our faith tradition in the United Church to respect these perspectives. The curriculum should recognize a variety of perspectives.
- **Respect:** We uphold the importance of children having respect for themselves and others. We believe that is part of the positive learning potential in the sex education curriculum setting. We see this as learning of human relations in addition to correct terminology of sexual organs. Good education is a way of protecting the vulnerable among us, our children. It is a way for children to be empowered to understand situations in which they may be vulnerable.
- **Diversity of families:** We recognize that the so-called traditional family of mother, father and several children is no longer the norm. We recognize families of same sex parents, or grandparents who are parents or extended families or more often, single parent families. These diverse families need different kinds of support from the wider community, church and state. Many may need sex education presented in a non-judgmental manner. Families need to be assured that education can happen in a safe environment and not only by way of the Internet.

We recognize that a number of voices have been raised in this matter and a number of them have been in opposition to the proposed curriculum. We also recognize that United Church people have a spectrum of opinions on the proposed curriculum. The values we have named are important for

The mission of Toronto Conference is to strengthen Congregations, Pastoral Charges, Outreach Ministries, and Missions to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ.



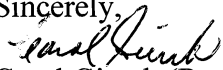
you to hear as the curriculum revisions are considered. The Christian faith, indeed no faith, is monolithic in its opinion.

In 2006 our church adopted a theological document which reflects our beliefs. The document, *A Song of Faith*, offers us a place from which we can speak of the things that are important not only to us as a faith community, but to our care for the wider community. It says, in part:

We sing of a church seeking to continue the story of Jesus by embodying Christ's presence in the world. We are called together by Christ as a community of broken but hopeful believers, loving what he loved, living what he taught, striving to be faithful servants of God in our time and place.

We offer these thoughts for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Carol Gierak (Rev. Dr.)

President, Toronto Conference

c.c. Education Minister Leona Dombrowsky
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