

## 199316 ceprogram staynercamp1993

Long time friend of well over 20 years, Bob Stover. Bob, I want to introduce you this morning. And I first knew you as a fellow camper, maybe a counselor, since you were a little older than me up here at Panoagami.

And one thing I always remember about Bob Stover is he's the best driver that I've ever driven with. He used to drive us out to Wasaga Beach. And I don't think his speed varied one iota.

He would just pass a car so smoothly. And I think Bob's been operating smoothly ever since that. Bob is the assistant superintendent of human resources in the York County Board of Education, regional board.

And prior to that time, Bob served for 22 or 23 years as a principal in the Stouffville-Markham area. And I've known some teachers who worked for Bob. And that's the proof of the pudding as far as I'm concerned.

They speak highly of Bob. And I know that many of you know Bob and his reputation as well. During the time when he principled several schools, Bob also took some time out to found the Stouffville Christian School as the founding principal there.

Our children attended that school for a year. As we were on furlough one time, it was a good school. And Bob started teaching in 1961.

That was the year I graduated from high school. You must have a year or two on me. Second time, Jim.

And three, and I'm going to be knocked dead, Bob. Bob has served in numerous denominational posts. He's been on the Missionary Church Denominational General Board, and in various district boards, and on the district executive.

And we're privileged to have you here, Bob, this morning, to be part of this forum on education in Ontario. Over to you. Thanks, Jim.

About that smooth driving, you better talk to my wife, because I think a few things have changed over the years, Jim. It's my pleasure to introduce Jim. You all know Jim, but maybe there's some details that are missing, and you need to have them filled in.

I've known and appreciated Jim for a long time myself, and really appreciated his testimony, his consistent Christian walk, and his really kind and accepting spirit. Jim, as we know, is presently the academic dean at EBC, and was principal at the Hillcrest School, and his mission assignment, as well as field director for the UMC Church, and had assignments in Christian education and missions. But all prior to this, Jim has a broad background in education, and he was a secondary school science teacher, and then prior to him giving himself to missions, was a head of a science department in a secondary school in Scarborough.

So Jim knows of what he speaks when it comes to secondary education in particular, and certainly in the field of science. Jim, I think that's all in terms of introductions. Now you want me to talk about the goals of our session? Yeah, we want to know why we're here today, Bob.

Good, good. That's what I continually tell teachers, Jim, that let them know at the beginning what you're going to tell them, or what you're going to teach them, and then teach them, and then tell them what you've taught them. OK, there will be a test at the end of this.

No, that's a lie. So take note. We have several objectives for our session this morning.

It's certainly try to increase your awareness of the trends in education and some of the issues in education that you as parents, students, and administrators, and teachers are facing in the world of education. We want to affirm the Christians who work in the education field, and in particular our teachers, but yes, our students as well. I've said, I'm on our admissions committee back at our home church, and I said that my whole mindset toward admissions has been changing.

And I said what I would like to put up in the bulletin board in our church of who the active missionaries are in our church are the teachers, number one, who teach in our public school system, because what a mission field that they have. Another objective will be to equip Christian parents for involvement in your particular school. That's really a pet peeve with me.

That's a pet concern that I have, that we have a door open there as Christians, and hopefully we'll be able to equip you and encourage you to be more involved in your own school setting. And that leads us into the final one, which is somewhat connected to the third objective, and that is to promote or encourage Christian activism in the educational process. There are many doors open for us.

I believe that we have to get our Christian voice onto the table, and I'm sure some of the panel members will share some of the experiences they've had in doing that. It's risky, but it's worthwhile. So those are our objectives for this morning, and that's going to lead into possibly some follow-up session this afternoon, Jim.

Well, how are we going to accomplish these objectives? Well, this morning, we want to start out with, first of all, a recognition of our audience this morning. We want to see who you are, what role you have played in education. I guess everyone has gone through school, so we can all stand up if that question is asked.

But then there are some other things we want to do as a way of surveying who's here and learning of your involvement in education. Then we will look at some questions together with our panel members, who will be introduced a bit later. We have a clip from the EFC video, In Defense of Freedom, a very important video which identifies a number of issues from perhaps a more philosophical perspective.

And we want to be a little more practical perhaps in some ways today, but we need to have a

little bit of that background. And I know you're going to enjoy that video clip from EFC. And then following that, there will be a chance for audience to be involved.

And these are cordless microphones, and we have some ushers here who will carry these right to you in the audience. You just have to stand up if you want to make a comment, ask a question, or elucidate some issue that has been raised. And the microphone will come right to you, and you'll be part of the proceedings this morning.

And then we'll summarize some methods by which we can be positively involved in our educational settings. And that will be the end of this morning's session. Oh, yes, all right.

That's the whole proceedings will be taped. So if you find it really good, you can take a copy home with you. Now, having said that, we're just going to take a moment, Bob, and find out who's here this morning.

And perhaps your name is not important to us right now so much as your involvement. So I would like to ask you to stand when you fit into certain descriptions today. If you are a parent or a student who is presently in public school or high school, a public elementary school or a public high school, or if your children are, would you please stand up? We would like to know all those who have children or are students in public elementary and high schools.

We think this will be a fairly large group today. And it is. I would estimate there are about 20 people like that.

Thank you. Now, the next one will perhaps be a little surprise to some of us. But if you have a child or you are a student in a separate elementary or high school, would you please stand? And we have around six or seven like that.

Thank you. If you are a parent of a child or are a student in a Christian or some other private school, would you please stand? How many does that look like? Eight, I think, calling it just in round numbers. By separate, I meant Catholic.

Yes. You should have been sitting for that and standing for this. All right.

Thank you. And we received a telephone call from a parent. And I'm not sure if she or her husband is here today.

With regards to homeschooling, is there anyone here who is involved in homeschooling? Would you please stand? Great. We've got four people there. And if you are a university or college student or the parent of a university or college student, you could stand.

And I know some of you have stood already. But you need to stand again for that one. Great.

Thank you. Now, we would like to know next concerning those who work in the educational field. If you are a teacher or an administrator in some publicly supported school, public meaning not separate, not private, would you stand if you work in the public system, teachers

and administrators? Two of those this morning.

These are the frontline missionaries that Bob was speaking about a moment ago. Anyone working for a separate school board, Roman Catholic? All right, two. And anyone who would be working within the Christian or private school setting, would you stand? One.

And then in a university or college setting, would you stand if you are involved in working there? I have to stand for that. Emanuel Bible College? Professor Priddle, are you here this morning? Two of us. Thank you.

And lastly, anyone who is involved at the school board or Ministry of Education or political level, would you stand if you are involved more at the political and control end of education? I think we can say whatever we want, Bob. There's no one like that here this morning. Thank you very much.

You're an important part of our group today. Bob, would you come and take over for the introduction of our panel members, please? Thanks, Jim. Jim has indicated we're now moving into the partner agenda where we will be dealing as a panel on some of the issues and trends that are sort of near and dear to our hearts.

First of all, I'd like to introduce the panel members. First of all, one that isn't here that we had hoped would be here, Doreen Archer. And we just got word this morning that Kathy has a blood clot in her arm.

And so we can be praying for the Archers over the situation. But she was unable to attend. So would there be any teacher that would volunteer to come up here and take Doreen's part? No, I'm just kidding.

That would be tough. But let's be much in prayer over that situation. I'm going to introduce the other panel members.

You've met Jim. You've met myself. And first of all, I would like to introduce Heather Thurton.

And Heather, while I'm introducing you, if you would take your place on the platform. Heather Thurton is a student, just recently graduated from Unionville High School. So that puts her in the south end of the province, in a sense, close to Toronto.

She's come out of an interesting program. It's one of what we call our magnet schools in York region where we have an arts program. And Heather has been a very accomplished student in the arts program, majoring in music.

So students can come out of that program, 30 of their credits, and eight of them can be in a chosen arts field. And in Heather's situation, it was music. She might have had a minor in some others as well.

No? OK. And also, Heather knows the Markham Missionary Church quite well, as we could

understand. When Jim asked Heather to be a part of our panel, she was quite quick to volunteer, didn't take too much arm twisting.

And one of her pet peeves is bureaucrats, superintendents that know nothing about education and not are even in the schools. She just hit me right between the eyes with that. So obviously, Heather and I got some few things to resolve before this session's over with.

Welcome, Heather. And we're just delighted to have you here. I'd like next to introduce Janice Fisher.

Janice is a parent and comes from the Kitchener area. Her home church is Bethany. Three children come up through the public school system, but their oldest is heading to a private school setting.

In talking with Janice, I was impressed with the way that she has researched the educational scene and looked, and I think she has assessed the alternatives well and has a well-thought-out position. She also, I found out in distant passing, that she has a real interest in music as well. So welcome, Janice, to our panel this morning.

Finally, George Getz. And George, too, is from Kitchener. And he got his own fan club down here, George.

Talked about that later. George is a hydro worker, and his home church is the Country Hills Church. George has two children, one in senior public in the public school system and one presently in university.

In talking with George, I sense that his concern this morning is that the school system is wandering away from the basics. And he has a real concern that what is taught in the school will, in fact, support the Christian home and will also equip the student for certainly the world of work and being able to take their place in a responsible way in our society. So again, we thank you for being part of our panel this morning.

Now, I'm going to hand it back to Jim, and he's going to start us in our discussion this morning. Panel, these microphones are supposed to be on swivels that you can move back and forth between yourselves so that you can be clearly heard and memorialized on the tape for posterity. The first thing we want to do this morning is to ask each of our panel members briefly to share an issue or a concern or something that they notice as a trend in education from their own experience.

And if you can illustrate that with a story, we would be very happy for that as well. So I think it'll be ladies first. And Heather, why don't you begin and tell us something of your experience.

OK. I'll just start with what I said about the bureaucrats. I'll expand a little bit.

What my big problem is with the ministry and that they set out all these guidelines and all these

books and all these requirements that we're supposed to get done for each class, well, in a day, you take about four or five classes. And when you talk that on top of each other, it gets to be quite a bit of work. And they set out, I'll just share my experience.

Last year, I was in my OAC year, and I took three OACs where my English class, I'd be reading about four or five books right after each other on top of having an essay due that week and to write a little comment on each book and write a test. And then I'd go to math class and have two hours of math class, two hours of homework to do that night. And so I'd had to get all that done on top of if you have a part-time job, which some of my friends did, and they would be doing that too.

And on top of any extracurricular, if you want to do that, well, you have to balance your time and get to bed before 11 o'clock so you can make it through the day the next day. So just what my problem is that they set out these guidelines. And I think it'd be nice if we could somehow get in touch with the students and make some of the guidelines a little more reasonable and a little more understandable.

Because even the teachers find it hard to get all the material into one semester. And you can get really pressured. And to fit all of that in, so that's why.

Could I just ask you, Heather, how, as a Christian, you feel that this influences you? Or how you, as a Christian, could respond a little bit to that problem of changing guidelines and workload that you've outlined? Well, it makes it really difficult to do a lot of things in the church. I was in our school play. And on top of my homework, a lot of times we'd have Bible study during the week.

And it would make it hard for me to get out because I would have stuff due that I needed to get done. And that made it difficult. Also, some of the books that they have on the reading list, I didn't agree with at all.

I had to read A Clockwork Orange. And I don't know if any of you've heard of that book. But it's very violent and very sacrilegious.

And I didn't want to be filling my mind with that. But in order to pass the course, I had to read it. But I was against that book completely.

So that's another problem I had, is what they're giving us to read and giving us to do. We'll move to George. Not that Janice is not a lady.

You certainly are a lady. But just to get a little variety here in the genders, George, would you like to speak next on the same question of issues, trends, from your own experience? What we've noticed is, like Bob had mentioned, some of the teachers that our daughter, who is now entering grade seven in September, they don't seem to be teaching the same way in the school as what they did 10 years ago when our son was coming through those grades. They're getting away from the basic communication skills, the reading and writing or literacy skills, and the

mathematical skills.

They'll teach in some classes what the answer is. And you have to get through to your own method of doing it. And one of the teachers in the last couple of years that we have talked to didn't really seem to care what the students were doing.

An example was that, or weren't even telling the truth at all times. One of the examples is, around Kitchener anyway, I'm not sure how far spread it was, but there was a curriculum out grammar connection, I believe it was called, which had a lot of stories in it. They were teaching of old, I guess there's some old Indian tales in it, of how Mosquitos Came to Be was the one.

And they put this across in their classes each week. And our daughter would come home and tell us about it. We approached the teacher on it, and she said she never used that book at all.

And when we pressed it a bit further, she said that she had a copy on her desk, but she had never opened it. And when they were starting to put this across, and a lot of it was new age coming through it, because we got a copy of the book at home, which we were told that could not leave the school, but some friends of ours had gotten a copy, and we read through it. There's a lot of new age in there, which this teacher refused to admit that she had been using.

And our comments were that, or our questions were, that stuff does not belong in the school, that we send our children there to be able to learn ways to get along in the working world later on and get along in life, such as I mentioned, the math, and the reading, and the writing, and communicating. And when they get away from what we see as the basic things in school, we have a deep concern. George, obviously, you must feel that it's important for parents to know about things like new age so that you can respond when you suspect something like that may be going on.

Where did you learn about new age and how to watch for the signs of that kind of teaching? I guess one of the things is, whatever we hear, if it doesn't compare to God's word, we check further in it. Mitchell's Bookstore has some, here's a plug, Mitchell's Bookstore has some information, some books on many of the different beliefs that are coming across. And again, if it doesn't line up with what the Bible teaches, then it's not something that we want our kids to be hearing and be taught.

Thank you very much. Obviously, we're cutting you a little bit short. You must have some other issues and trends to mention.

But Bob, why don't we go to you next, and then to Janice after that. One of the issues or concerns that I have as an administrator, a supervisory officer, is the, and it would go a little bit counter to what Heather and George have already said, and that is the concern that I have is the confidence in education, which has been eroded away over the last 10 years. And it has been eroded away through the publication of how we're not doing well on standardized tests from a worldwide point of view.

Like our kids in Canada or our kids in Ontario do not stack up with the Korean kids. So you have that comparison. You have a comparison from a national level, and also you have a comparison from a provincial level.

We were continually being bombarded with the fact that we're just not preparing kids well enough for either the world of work or for further academic training and experiences. And we're continually bombarded with the dropout rate. That was seen with a report that came out about five years ago now, and we're continually being bombarded with that sort of thing.

So I guess, Jim, the underlying concern that I have is the eroding of confidence in the educational field today. Janice? I have a number of concerns with the education system, but I guess the biggest one I sat down this morning and thought is the difference between right and wrong. We as parents teach our, as Christian parents teach our children from God's word what is right and what is wrong, and the kids go to school and their teachers teach them their right and wrong.

And it is sometimes really contrary to what we teach them. And it becomes difficult for the child to know what is right and wrong, and how do you go to your teacher and say, well, I don't think what you're saying is right, and not be disciplined for that. So I think we have to, as parents, be involved in that process and let the teachers know where we're coming from so that our children can at least come out of the system with some sort of consistency.

It can be very confusing for them. Do you have a story to illustrate any of that? My daughter, a couple of years ago, my oldest, Tracy, she is very musically inclined, and she had auditioned for a part in a play for Oliver and got the part of Fagin. And anyway, as time went on, the children started calling her names and really picking on her because they figured if it was Fagin, it should have been played by a boy.

And instead of the teachers sitting down and explaining that the reason that Tracy got the part was because she was able to play the part of the man, who was a little whacked out, a little crazy, they told her she needed to stand on her own two feet about it. And one day, one of the boys who had just been harassing the daylights out of her went after her with a hockey stick. And Tracy stood in the middle of the parking lot and she just screamed.

She was scared to death this kid was going to beat her up. Anyway, the teacher, the music teacher, came out and scolded her for yelling. And told her that she needed to grow up, that she needed to stand on her own two feet, that she had to understand that in life, you had to just roll with the punches.

And consequently, she took the part away from Tracy and told her that she was not growing up about it, that she had to understand that when you stand in the limelight, that you have to be able to take this kind of punishment. What ended up happening out of this is Tracy was then asked to be the understudy for the part. She taught another person how to play the part, the songs, the words.

Ended up having to stand on the side of the stage and cue this girl all the way through her lines in the play. Now I don't know about you, but I don't know that I could have done that myself. But the positive thing that came out of this was that Tracy's little light shone.

She knew that she had to be an encouragement to this person who got her part. So in some ways, I think our children in the public school system, although sometimes they're treated poorly and rotten, they have a purpose there. Christ has put each one of us on this earth.

We may have a tough time in our job, and our children have a tough time in the school system. But through all in all, and Tracy apologizing for screaming and scaring the daylights out of this teacher, the teacher knew there was something different about her. Now I want to just be a panel member for a moment and give my own two cents worth regarding issues and trends.

And I'll choose one that's positive. I think that we need to understand that there are so many changes taking place in education. And here's one that I have noticed from compared to 20 years ago when I was a teacher.

I think that there is a fair amount of flexibility in situations with regards to students who may have alternatives in mind for a particular project or a particular period of time. Two in particular, like Heather, our son had to study some literature. He was in quite an interesting course where there was a lot of feminist literature covered.

And one particular story was a rewrite of the Adam and Eve story. And in that particular story, Eve disobeyed Adam and became a hero. And gained her freedom as a result of that.

And so Mark went to his teacher and said, you know, I really dislike this story. And here are the reasons why I dislike this story. So she allowed him to do some substitute work.

And that worked out to be very fine from our point of view, from his point of view. And I think she showed a fair amount of respect to Mark as an individual student from that point forward. Then another incident, and I mentioned this a little bit cautiously.

We did have the privilege of attending, or going to the Holy Land in the springtime with Ray Priddle's tour. And we took Laura along with us. We had a number of reasons for doing that.

She was owed something by our family because Mark had had his privileges at one point. And so we took her along with us. And she was out of school for 12 days.

And given quite a creative series of alternative assignments. And they were graded and included in her mark. And she ended up with as good a mark, I think, as she would have had had she remained in school.

Now she's a good worker. And she spent about 12 hours on the return flight working solidly. And I wouldn't have done that.

I think she's a remarkable girl to have done that herself. But I just want to point out flexibility,

adaptability, and responsiveness to individual needs is something that I see as a positive trend, something that I appreciate. Now, perhaps we've got time to go through and get a second trend issue or something that you'd like to say.

So we'll move back to Janice again and change the order in which we do this. One of the things I think is, but I will, is discipline in the schools. If a student is hitting another student, the student who is being picked on is told to deal with it.

I think they're asked to grow up way before their time. And of course, if you've got two 10-year-olds and one's hitting on the other, they start off with, stop it. And someone ends up retaliating.

I think what needs to be done, I have a, my daughter Tracy, she had the problem with one of the boys in her class. I think he liked her. But he used to hit her all the time and throw things at her.

And just torture her all the time. And I said to the teachers, can we get the two students together and get them to come to some sort of compromise so they can at least live with each other in the classroom? And they all thought that was totally bizarre. What they needed to do was separate the kids.

So what they ended up doing was taking this boy out of the class. And grade four went along just fine. This year, however, the boy was back in her class and still had not been resolved.

I even went as far as calling the parent to see if we could somehow get the two of them together. And I think the parent disagreed, too, because she talked to the teacher. And the teacher, of course, said, no, they're just going to have to work it out between them.

And I think between the two of them, probably serve 40 detentions. And as a parent, I think the best way to resolve conflict is to sit down and confront one another with it and come to some sort of a solution on it. And I couldn't get over how much the principal and vice principal and teachers were so much against resolving conflict from a parent's standpoint.

They really, I even had one teacher say to me, why are you so involved? Why do you care what goes on here? It's between your daughter and this kid. It's not about you at all. And that kind of upset me a bit.

And I thought, you know what? We have to be involved in our children's lives. If our children, as young kids, don't understand the consequences of wrong, then how are they going to make it in the workforce? If this little guy grows up and believes that he can pick on whoever he wants, and it's their responsibility to move away, not for him to give anything, he's never going to be able to hold down a job. You can't go and work in the office and hate the person you're sitting beside and expect them to change.

And I think sometimes as Christians, when we focus out and we take a look at serving others, I find the system sometimes really thinks that's whacked out. I can remember a time that a

question was asked on an essay assignment for English with regards to other people. And Tracy had answered that question saying, it's important that we look out for the needs of our friends and the people around us.

And sometimes we have to give a little in order for other people to be happy. And she got marked wrong on the question. What kind of message is that giving our children? When she comes home and says, mommy, is this wrong? And I said, no, your answer is completely correct.

I give you bonus marks for coming up with that answer. Again, that miscommunication that's happening where you have one set of rules and regulations answers at school and another set at home. And my question is, what happens to these kids as adults? Are they going to be able to decipher in their mind what's right and what's wrong? If they do something that's right in their discipline for it or punished for it in the school system, and a detention is a detention, but it's humiliating to your friends.

One of the questions that will arise out of Janice's point here is, what is the basis for right and wrong if there is going to be right and wrong behavior? That's right. And it will be identified. On what basis will we identify that? Will it be on a humanistic basis? Will it be on a Christian basis or the basis of the common morality that many religions espouse? I think most religions are against stealing, for example.

But that's an issue that we have to look at at some point. George, I want to go to you and then to Heather and then to Bob for a last word at this part of our program. It's just occurred to us in the last while the importance and the influence that principals actually have in the schools, and the awareness that we need to be of what is being taught in the schools, in extracurricular activities, in clubs, and then to make our viewpoints known and to be able to go up and speak to the principal, if necessary, or the teachers about our thoughts.

And put them across in a way where we don't sound like a, quote, religious fanatic as we bring up any points to the teachers. There's a case in the senior public in our area where a number of years ago, the school was just continually going downhill. And the vice principal at that point had started a Dungeons and Dragons club.

And he was the main participant in it. And he kept getting as many students as he could to go into it. And there's other problems in this school.

I think that was one of the places where the drugs had started getting into. The last few years now, I think it was two years ago, a new principal has gone into that school. He has made the statement and worked on it that he is going to clean that school right out.

And he has done that the last couple of years. He's also getting a new vice principal in this year. I'm not sure if he is a Christian gentleman or not.

But I know he is morally upright. He has great concerns about family life. And between the two

of them, their goal is to make that about the best school in Kitchener-Waterloo, if not the best one.

And I think, again, that it is up to us as parents to let them know that we appreciate what they're doing in the schools and to let them know, as well, if there is anything going on that we disagree with. And a number of them will pay attention. And if the school itself, if the principal doesn't, I guess then we have to go one step beyond to the boards, to the superintendents.

But do remember at all times to act as a Christian, but maybe not to come across with the words that we are a Christian, because we won't pay attention to those. Another, I'll just expand a little bit on the trend of not teaching the fundamentals. And what really bothers me is that I didn't learn how to write a proper essay until last year.

And I've been in school since I was six. And I guess in high school, you get to high school and they start teaching you opinions and how to express yourself and how to write your opinion about this. But what right does a teacher have to tell me that my opinion of a story is wrong? And I wrote a test in one of my world issues classes, which is more of a political kind of class.

And my opinion was different from the teacher, so I failed that part of the test. And I went to him and I asked him, why did I get so low? And he said, you gave the wrong opinion. You took the wrong side.

So I don't know. And I have a lot of friends who don't know what an adverb is and don't know what an adjective is. And I mean, we're going to get to college and we're going to get out into the business world and they're going to ask us to write things and we're going to be lost.

And it totally fazes me that people can get through high school without knowing how to read. And if they can express themselves properly, they'll get a good grade. And I guess I just think that's wrong.

I don't think that a teacher has any right to be teaching me values. I think that belongs to my parents. And I think that, I don't know, they have, I took a family class.

It was a family OAC class. And they were teaching different kind of lifestyles and different kind of, like about the family, families all over the world. And never did they teach about Christian families.

I learned about polygamy and Indian culture and Chinese culture and Japanese culture and the Jewish religion and their culture and everything. But they didn't look at a Christian family or Christian morals or ideas. And so I guess if a teacher's not allowed to give their opinion in class, then maybe the curriculum should match that also.

And if you're going to teach a lifestyle, teach them all. You can't just pick one. So I guess that's another trend I see.

All right, Heather, let's do this sort of thing. To Heather's credit, she came out of that RTO program. She was talking about that workload.

I, along with several others, evaluated that program. One of the things that really came out loud and clear in this program was the discipline that the kids had toward their learning. And they were learning good work habits.

They were learning the rigors of hard work and developing a good work ethic. And we were really impressed with that. I guess my second peeve is that we've taken a lot of belts here this morning, or I felt them.

But what really is being said is that the agenda has changed in the educational system. And it's changed gradually. It's changed, in some cases, quite dramatically.

But listen, folks, the agenda isn't the same in education as it was when I went to school and when kids went to school 10 or 15 years ago. The agenda, here's a teacher coming out, Jim. I'm pointing at them.

The agenda back there was far more academically oriented. You know, you work from a scholar. You work from a textbook.

You work from a prescribed course of study. But the social agenda today has greatly been enlarged. You know, we as teachers, when I came into the profession, I knew I had a custodial function.

I cared for the needs of kids. That has ballooned like you wouldn't believe today. Kids are coming into the classroom today with empty stomachs in southern Ontario.

We have schools that are setting up breakfast programs. That wasn't even heard of when I went to teacher's college. We have kids coming in that are coming from dysfunctional homes, from a whole myriad of broken homes that they come in.

And if I were to sit down and start teaching them the difference between an adverb and an adjective, they would say, Stover, you're out to lunch. What my problem is right now is dealing with the home situation that I have to work through. Alcoholic parents and on it goes.

So our social agenda in education today has expanded greatly. The ministry of education is becoming political. Junior kindergarten.

Folks, I might be stepping in a few toes this morning, but you should be going back and stamping on that, stomping on that. That's costing us money, folks, that we do not have the time and the effort. And I'm sure that I'm talking to some areas that have junior kindergarten right now.

But it's taking money away from areas that we need to bolster up the academic program, for example. But another one is family life and sex ed. The family life and sex ed program is like

this.

When I went to teachers college, it was like that. And so we're asked to do things like the teachers. I'm amazed at how well our teachers are doing today.

Continue to pray for your teachers. Our teachers have a great load to carry, far more than I had to carry when I came into the profession. They have to be not only a teacher of academic subjects, but they have to be a doctor.

They have to be a nurse. They have to be a social worker. They have to be a psychologist.

They have to be a psychiatrist. They have to sit down and give guidance to parents. And I know teachers are becoming burned out with the weight of what they have in their class of 25 or 30 kids, the number of needs that are there.

I'm just amazed at how well they do with that. So coming back, the agenda in education has changed dramatically, folks. It's just not teaching the three R's.

It's far more encompassing than it ever has before. And how we deal with that is another thing. I have some ideas I'll talk more of.

Jim. Response, which is what our last speaker talked about. Involvement, and how we as Christians can, through constructive involvement, make a difference which is positive in our educational options.

Bob, I'd like you to begin, too, because I know you have something to say about the Sunshine Club and the experience that was recounted in the video. Just to give you an update on that situation, first of all, that, going back before the Sunshine Square clip, where the pastor and his wife tried to become involved in the school, that was a York Region school, one of the schools that I'm aware of. Just to update you on that, that was an overreaction from a principal, an overreaction from a teacher.

It also was an overreaction by the Ministry of Education in reference to the Elgin County situation. And that has a bearing on the Sunshine Square situation. The ministry has now come out and has said, in a put in print, it's OK to talk about Christmas.

And thank goodness for that, because that's just plain searching for truth. That's in the pursuit of learning. So in our schools now, we can, in fact, sing Christmas carols, not at the expense of removing any reference to, say, Hanukkah or that sort of thing.

We don't do that. But certainly, we have freedom to do that. We have freedom to portray the Christmas story.

And I think you'll find that more and more in schools. I'm not saying that that situation wouldn't crop up again, but that's certainly the case. That was an overreaction to the removing of Sunshine Square.

And that's still, before the legislature, that part of removing all forms of religious instruction from the curriculum. But what's ironical and what's really a concern to me as an educator and would be a concern to me as a parent is that that program in Sunshine Square was outside of the instructional program. It was over noon hour.

A, it had parental approval. The parents could approve. The only thing that was being offered was the building itself.

I believe we'll likely see that back in the schools because we still have ISCF groups, Interschool Christian Fellowship groups, that are still operative in our schools. I think Bob's answer or response to this indicates that with continued involvement and not just letting go of an issue, but continuing to process it in a credible way with respect to the authorities that are deciding in these cases that we can make a change, we can make a difference. And I'd like to ask, first of all, panel members and then members of the audience to speak a little bit about this issue now of positive change, constructive involvement.

So panel members, would you have any comments to make in this area first? And also, if you have as an audience member something to say at this point, we'd invite you to stand up and Anusha will bring a microphone to you. I'll go first. When my children first started in school, I thought the only way that as a Christian I could make a difference was to volunteer my time.

And I had chose to stay home with my kids until just this past year. So I would go into the schools and I would volunteer my time and I would ask in the kindergarten class and grade one classes if I could spend some time with the kids who were really having struggles, tying their shoes, getting themselves dressed, being able to know what one, two, three was, knowing their colors, and sit and read to them. And I brought my books to read.

And it was really fortunate. I never had anybody stop me from doing that. By the end, halfway through the year, a lot of these kids could print their own names and stuff like that, but they needed that one-on-one encouragement.

The other thing that we can do is we can pray for our Christian teachers and encourage them. We need to support what they're doing. At the one school that my two younger children are still attending, the principal there is a Christian, and every Christmas and every Easter, he tells the Christmas story and he tells the Easter story.

And they take the choir into churches to sing. They have to get permission from parents, but I don't know of any parents who disagree with that. The other thing that we need to do is get our kids to pray for their teachers, too.

To give you a quick story, this year, Trish again takes me to a synagogue, And her grade six teacher had decided to, for a book study, they were doing a study on the occult. And Tracy was really upset with that. And she went and said that her and some other kids were really frightened by the book.

And they didn't like things possessing other people and making them do things. And they wanted him to stop reading the book. And he said that he wouldn't.

So we took it in prayer. And three days later, he stopped reading it. And we started praying that there would be some books that they could read in English class that would be OK to read.

The next book study term that came up, they had to choose from three different books. And one of the books was *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. And Tracy was really excited about that.

And I said, well, don't you go tell him what it is. We'll just pray about it and ask the Lord if that would be a possibility for them to study that book. And he left it in God's hands.

And sure enough, they got to read *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. And some of the questions the teacher asked were, boy, what I'd like to have answered the question. Why did Aslan die? Why would he have done that for that boy? Tracy did get marked wrong.

That was the question I was telling him. She got marked wrong, got a zero on it because he didn't like her answer. But at the very end, she got an opportunity when he said, did you enjoy the book, to explain what that book was and where it came from.

So we need to encourage our children to share their faith with the teacher when the questions are asked, and not to be ashamed that we're Christians. If our teacher is a Christian and they're having real struggles with some parents, to be able to sit with them and encourage them to pray with them. I don't think the answer is to run.

I've studied all the different aspects of schooling. And I don't think the answer is to run to another alternative, although we have to take a look at our child. Our oldest child is going to be going to Rockway this fall.

And I'm looking forward to that. I'm excited about that. Our children need to be able to go to their teachers and share the problems and the things that they're going through.

I think a Christian school can do that. But I'm hoping that Tracy will eventually go to university and a secular university again. The hardest years, I think, at school are probably 7 and 8. We haven't gotten through 7 and 8 yet.

But just trying to set in their own minds what is right and what is wrong, I think sometimes they can have that influence. But find out who your Christian teachers are. Go in and talk to them.

You might find out your principal is a Christian. Or you might find out that the teacher down the hall is a Christian. Let your children know they can go and share their concerns with those teachers and support them.

Thanks, Janice. I'm really looking for somebody from the audience to stand up now with a question, a comment. All right, we have two gentlemen back here and a lady up near the front.

Would you stand, those who raised your hand, please? And just while they're taking the microphones to you, just let me add that we have handed out sheets that identify a number of issues that we as Christians could be praying about and involving ourselves in. Have a look at those sheets sometime. I hope they'll be helpful for you.

All right, the lady near the front, please. Yeah, I guess you had asked for some positive comments on supporting the public school system. And while we've never had our children in the public school system and we are homeschooling our four youngest, we have two in a Christian high school.

And I'd like to be positive, but I guess my question is, why would we feel obligated to bow down to the God of secular education? Why? What would compel us to do that? I feel the scripture is quite clear, which tells us to train our child up in the way he should go. And there are many warnings that warn us against those who walk in the council of fools will become as fools. And I guess just to me, I just cannot comprehend why we would feel obligated to bow down when we know it is a religion, it's secular humanism, and there are options.

Why would we do that? I just don't know. If anybody can give me an answer, I would appreciate that. But I appreciate everybody feeling that we should be witnesses and doing our best, but I don't know.

I just, I don't know why we would want to support that system personally. We want to affirm you in your decision to homeschool and to use a Christian high school option for your children. And I wonder if those of us who are in the audience today can even begin to comprehend the degree of financial and time commitment that you as parents have offered to that schooling option.

Give glory to God for it. We affirm that. And what we are increasingly looking at in our educational context are a number of options that parents will prayerfully select that are right for them and for their children.

And if someone gets up and defends the public education system and feels that as Christians, their children are standing firm and learning things that they need to learn, we will also affirm such of you who would stand up to say that today too. Our aim is not to in any way cast an aspersion on a prayerfully made decision regarding your child's education. Gentleman near the middle, please.

Yes, my concern, first of all, I should probably say I'm not an educator or I haven't been on a board of education, but I was a parent and a grandparent of children that went to school and I've had a considerable background in the public sector and interfacing with the educator. I must say, Mr. Chairman, that I'm concerned that there's some degree of naivety on the part of some of the panel to hope that there's gonna be much change in any influence we can make at the public education system. I was involved at ministerial level in the 1960s and 70s with the Minister of Education and the Premier of Ontario back at that time.

And there was a move then to remove the Judeo-Christian concept from education. It was referred to in the EFC film there. And that has been, in their view, successfully done.

I sat on a panel in 1970. It was supposed to be a community panel. My former experience in the city was not as an educator, but it was a community panel.

And I couldn't help but be drawn into the facet of education when a speaker for the Ministry of Education, I will say he wasn't a political person. He might not have dared to say what he did, if he had been, but he did say that the process, and I'm gonna say this carefully, of the Ministry of Education was to remove the current concept there is about the family and to move, his department, to move the Ministry of Education into the mainstream of European socialism. And other leaders have picked that up since.

And when I objected to this, he shook his nose in my face and he said, you'll live long enough to see this happen. Now, this is some of the background with which I make the next comment that I would like to make. Moral values education has been the answer that the educator has had to the Judeo-Christian concept.

Incidentally, about the Judeo-Christian concept, when we made representation to the province of Ontario back in 68 or 69, the man that stood with me at that time was the mayor of Port Arthur, whose brother was Boer Alaskan. This is a Jewish orthodox who said the Judeo-Christian concept should be the guiding principle in our education. He lost that fight and so did Boer Alaskan.

I think it's an important thing to realize that the child is not the client of the Board of Education or the educational system, is the parent. We've lost sight of that. I had a case of my own where my own daughter was objecting to her child, my granddaughter, sitting in a moral values education with the RAF concept and some of these other things that some are aware of.

They've been withdrawn now from Simcoe County, but they were prevalent then. And she felt that she couldn't handle it because she was overpowered by the heavies in the principal's office, so she asked me to go with her, and I did. And he argued right in my face that we were wrong, that the educational system was moving in the right direction.

He even went a little further to say that if I hadn't been involved in some political area prior to that, he'd have thrown me out of his office. So that's the kind of response you get. And you have much to say about the moral values education.

I was another panel in which I was asked to take part, and frankly, I had far more support from the Roman Catholics than I ever did from any of our own school system. My response to this is that I believe we should actively pursue the vulture system of education. All we have to do is take a look and see in Barrie alone, and I don't know about other municipalities, 72% of our tax dollars goes to the public education system, and our families are struggling to send their children to some other kind of alternative system.

The vulture system is not popular in Canada, but it is popular in other countries. For explanation, it's a system whereby your education tax dollar goes where you determine it should be, just the same as the Catholics have now. Now, I believe that the reason why this is having such a hard time is not in the interest of the parents, it's not in the interest of the school, but it's in the interest of the strongest lobby there probably is, and that's the educational system, because they're probably very much concerned that the competitive system they would get in the face of that would be something they couldn't meet.

I've watched this in the United States, and I think it's abundantly clear. Well, I think I'll stop somewhere about here, Mr. Chairman. Those are my views.

I think that really, the only thing we can do, I think there's very little hope we're going to influence the present system to fall in step even lightly with the Christian concept. I'm aware, too, before I sat down, that many of us have had very fine Christian teachers, and our children have seen them, and I have seen them and talked to them. But I'll tell you, they're getting thin and far between them now, and I think it's not gonna be long till those are gonna be retiring.

I'd just like to point out that the gentleman has referred to the educational voucher system as a possible way of recognizing alternative forms of education with tax dollars, which is where it really counts. And the EFC will be pursuing that issue in the courts this September, along with the Coalition for Religious Freedom. So we want to support that as a very possible way of engendering this kind of free and open competition in different educational styles, which could only serve Christian interests and concerns.

Now, he has made a very impassioned appeal to our senses with regards to possibly that there is a very strong drive in this direction of a secular humanist monolithic approach to education, and we need to respond to that. One thing I would like to ask is, supposing we would have a national revival in Canada, and 50% of the people of this nation would truly meet the Lord and repent of sin, would that not make a difference with regards to this strong drive towards such a monolithic educational philosophy? Perhaps that is one of the things that we need to be praying about, because our system does reflect the people that live in the province and the people that have achieved power, as he has pointed out correctly. Now, I want to move to Heather for a response and then to Bob Stover, and then Gail Smith, I saw you standing, I believe it's Gail, and we have a gentleman here.

So we'll take the gentleman and then Gail, and that will be the end of the responses from the audience, I'm afraid, because of time. Heather? Okay. I just wanted to remind everyone that we're talking about praying for the teachers and remembering the teachers, but let's not forget the students, because I think that the students are the biggest missionaries of all, because teachers have their restrictions and what they can talk on and who they can reach out to, but I don't have any restrictions placed on me and neither do any of the other Christian students, and I think we have to remember that there's some statistic, but that the majority of people become Christians under the age of 20, and that's us, we're the ones reaching those people,

and we're the ones who are the teachers of the future, we're the ones who are gonna be on the board in 20 years, and I think we have to remember that, and I think it's important to pray for the students, and not all teenagers rebel and not everyone turns against the Christian values.

I've always been in the public school system, but I'm very thankful that my parents always encouraged me and supported me in what I was doing, and I think the best thing to do is to support your kids and encourage them in what they're doing, and if they come home with a bad grade, find out why they got the bad grade. Don't immediately react and get angry because they got a low grade, but what's going on? Is the workload too much? Well, how can we ease up the workload? Are they having problems with the teacher? Well, what's the problem? And find out what's going on, and I think it's important to remember that it's not just the teachers who are having influence, but it's the students, too, and if enough students can take a stand against something, then they can make a change in the board and with their teachers. If they don't want a book to be read, if enough students don't want this book to be read, they can change it, and I think that it's important to remember that and that just to really pray for the students and to help them.

If they wanna bring a bunch of friends into your home, let them. It's a Christian house. They can make that Christian influence, and even if it's just you're reaching out to one person, one person is more than no one, so I think that's an important thing to remember.

Well said, Heather. I do share a lot of the comments that the gentleman said partway toward the back. It's my contention, though, that one of the reasons that we are in the state that we're in today is that Bob Stover and many of us in this audience have not been nearly as proactive as we could have been, and I think the door is still open there for us.

Here's something for a student to hear and also for a parent to hear. These three principles are still in the Education Act. A, it's my duty as a teacher to pursue learning or to promote the student to pursue learning.

Correction on the Judeo-Christian value that has been taken out of the Education Act, it's still there, folks, that it's still there loud and clear. It's still there. Now, there are movement to remove it, but we are instructed to teach a value, and our values, it's clearly there, and also it's clearly there that we're to promote a safe environment.

Now, that gives you folks a tremendous talking point. It gives a teacher a talking point in the staff room. It gets at this blocking out another opinion.

It says in the Education Act that we're to pursue learning. For that teacher to say I'm not prepared to accept that particular opinion, I as a parent or I as administrator will be climbing all over that teacher for that because she or he has just violated that point in the Education Act about pursuing learning. What is learning? Learning is looking at things from another point of view.

How did you get that? Problem-solving. You know, that really bothers me that that sort of thing is not pursued and is not taken up. I've got several stories where I've been really encouraged lately about the effects of getting our agenda on the table.

We'll sit after church and we'll natter about this and we'll natter about that, but my question is what have you proactively done to deal with that? And I don't believe the battle's all over yet, folks. I believe that there's still much ground to be gained within the public school system that we can get our agenda on the table. And I'll maybe, if we have time, share a story with you on that that might be of an encouragement to you.

Gentlemen over here on my left, please. Well, maybe this is not important. I'm from Elgin County and I'm one of the Gideons down in that part of the world.

And we give out testaments to the schools. In 1950, you could go to the schools any time of the day. You are welcome.

You can talk to the children, have prayer and give out your testament. But right now we have to go there before nine o'clock. We have a script to read.

You can't talk to the children, do anything. But thank God we're still able to give out the word of God. Thank you, that's relevant.

Gail Smith. I think that our schools, our local schools do not reflect the wishes of the majority. I come from Elmira and it's really a Christian community as such.

And when the Lord's Prayer was to be removed, it wasn't removed in Elmira. It went on for a whole year. And finally, laws were passed from above and they said, get it out.

So I think that we have more support than we know as Christian parents. And not necessarily born again people. But I think there's a feeling in the world that things are going to pieces.

And they see that Christianity makes a difference. And so I would support what Heather said. Encourage your teenagers to go to ISCF, your college kids to go to Navigators or whatever there is in the universities.

Encourage them to have the support of other Christians at any age level. And I think that they can make a difference where they are. And then as church people, I think the door is wide open for us to have club programs where you can love a child and counsel a child and hug a child and teach them the truth.

If we're not going to make big differences in the school system, what are we going to do? We have to do something. And I think it's our duty as a church to do it through club programs. We can do what teachers can no longer do in the school.

Thank you, Gail. I'm sorry, June. You may, if it's brief, yes.

Also Elgin County, a supply teacher in both the public school and the Catholic school, which I much, much, much prefer. It's an area where God is there, where we have a getting together time at the beginning of each day when we ask the Lord to bless our day. I just want to say a little word of encouragement to parents of kids in the public system.

I see kids who are starving to know about Jesus. I'm not allowed to say to this kid who's been raped by her father the night before, Jesus loves you. I love you.

I received a directive in the mail, an open directive. Telling teachers to never, ever, ever be in the classroom alone with a child, to never, ever have a child behind the desk with you, to never, ever touch a child even to say good for you, that's paranoid to me. That's a very heavy burden to walk into a classroom, especially a classroom where I've never been before.

When you're occasional teach, you've never seen these kids before in a great many instances. You don't know the other teachers, you don't know the principal, you don't know what's what. I'd like to relate a little incident that happened at Christmas.

I knew I was going to be in an art class for two days, so I was on my own on the thing, and I'd asked the kids to bring what they needed to bring. We were going to do a stained glass window picture for Christmas, and I had a picture of a bell and one of a star, et cetera, and I also had a nativity picture because my survival kit for the day includes stuff for the Catholic school because I never know where I'm gonna go. I just double-checked with the principal, can I use this picture if one of the kids would like to choose that one? I was told, no, you may not, definitely, emphatically, you may not use that nativity picture.

Okay, that's the rule, that's fine. However, I had showed the kids all their choices, asked them to think over which they'd like to use. One little guy the next day had a note from his mom saying, we want him to use that nativity picture.

He got it. Principal doesn't know he got it, he got it. The other kid said, how come he gets that one? That's the one we wanted.

He brought a note from his mom. Well, why didn't you tell us we could bring a note from our mom? Never entered my head. But kids want this.

I make it a point on my clipboard to have little Christian stickers. I don't say anything about them unless the kids come and say to me, what's that? Who is that? And I'll hold it up and I'll say, anybody know who this is? That's Jesus. And the kids who know about Jesus, they're not restricted like Heather said.

I'm restricted, but I can put the visual there. I think I'm doing it anyhow. And I want to tell you that every single call I get when I'm pulling out my driveway, I'm always scared because I never know what I'm going to find.

Is there going to be a day book or what? And I asked the Lord Jesus every single working day

that I have that even though I can't mention his name, that somehow I can let these kids know that I love them. And usually the little hellers, and I use that word for what it is because that's what it is. They're the hungriest.

Pray for those kids. Pray for the teachers. Please, parents, encourage your kids if they're going into a public school system to take every little chance they can get.

And I know I've taken too long, Jim. Sorry, but I got to tell you one more thing. I was down in the storeroom of one school and down there in the bottom of the storeroom, there's a whole cartons full of Bibles, Bible story books sitting in the cellar.

That broke my heart. They're sitting there, but I'm not allowed to haul them upstairs to the classroom. And supplementary reading in one class I was in this year, the kids could bring their own book from home and sit and read for silent reading.

One little guy had his Bible there. He brought his Bible from home. The other kids are teasing him about it.

Well, I figured if the kids are having silent reading, I'm having silent reading too. So I hauled out my Gideon New Testament and I said, Matthew, that's my favorite book you're reading. I'm going to sit and read mine too.

And that gave Matthew a big boost. And I hope he'll remember that somewhere there was a teacher that loved him and thought he was reading a neat book. Jim, thanks for those comments.

A principle that I would not really encourage, but one that I operated from from time to time was it's far better, far easier to get forgiveness than it is permission, so that I would suggest to you that when you go in to do supply teaching, don't open your satchel to the principal. Go ahead and do it. Jesus was a historical figure, don't forget.

Just to wind up with a couple of things and to pull together some things that we can encourage you folks to be actively involved, whether you're in the public school system, your children in the public school system, whether they're in a private school, a separate school, whether you're doing homeschooling, we want to affirm you folks in the route that you're taking because it'll be you alone that'll be standing before the Lord and will have to give an account as to how you have fulfilled that responsibility in Deuteronomy 6. But we would encourage you to get to know the teacher and support the teacher. A secondary school that I know very, very well, there's this group called MITS. It's mothers in touch with schools.

It's a group of Christian mothers. They make no bones about it. They bring in a tray of muffins every week, or no, once a month to the staff room and make very, very clear to the staff at King City Secondary School in King City that they're praying for the staff and they are in support of what they're doing and they want to support them in any way they can.

They get involved. A very, very practical way to do that. I think it's important for you to be informed and well-informed of what's going on out there.

We run off and we say multiculturalism is a demon. Multiculturalism is not a demon, folks. If it means that I want to understand a different culture or else we wouldn't have sent missionaries, folks.

But I sat down with a group of people from Hong Kong in a school that I was evaluating and out of the blue this parent said, Mr. Stover, we want to hear about your Canadian traditions. I said, what do you mean by that? We want to hear about Thanksgiving. We want to hear about Christmas.

We want to hear about Easter. Almost knocked me off my chair. Here was a group of parents that were saying we want to know about your culture.

What we're fighting against, folks, today is a very small, strident group that want to promote that form of secular humanism and remove all of those things from our curriculum. It's a small group, but they're very, very effective. That's why I'm saying to you, folks, get your agenda on the table.

Now, I want to conclude with this, another story that hopefully would encourage you. I take it upon myself each year to become better acquainted with, I wish Heather was here to hear this. I'll have to tell her in the follow-up, to find out a little bit more about a certain aspect of curriculum.

This year I took the family studies curriculum in the Family Life and Sex Ed program. I went to a two-session workshop where grade seven and eight teachers were being equipped to teach sex education. It was a resource booklet that outlined forms of birth control and also information on STDs.

There was all of 10 seconds in this five-hour workshop session, two two-and-a-half-hour sessions, where abstinence was mentioned at the very, very beginning and then it gets into the use of a condom and various exercises that turn my stomach inside out. I spoke out clearly in opposition to those activities and said to the teachers, folks, you don't have to teach that. It's a resource booklet.

I had teachers that came up to me afterward and said, thank you for giving me permission to do that. But it was interesting. I went head-to-head with the consultants on that and the superintendent of curriculum.

I'm in human resources and so I don't have responsibility in a curriculum. And I said to them, there has to be a change. There has to be a greater balance of the abstinence part as opposed to the protection part.

I said, that's the best protection. And so this, and this is interesting, the consultant said, I was

servicing the needs of the people and they wanted information on that. Now, there were 40 people at that workshop.

So that means, that tells me, there were about another 160 grade seven and eight teachers or even more than that, would be over 200, that weren't there. And I said to myself, why weren't they there asking for material on the abstinence position? Now, to make a long story short, I was able to, and the Lord really superintending this, having those consultants go down to the Markham Crisis Pregnancy Center where Kathy McComaski and Janice Russell is heading up that and got all of their material on the abstinence position. And they've already, that group has had schools calling them in, teachers calling them in to teach that.

It is now part of the York Region Curriculum. And I said to myself, wow, what if we were doing more of that sort of thing? Could we turn that around? And I was encouraged with that. And so there's much for us to do, folks, and we can, we want to encourage you in being better informed, being informed, and also being that salt and that light out there as it reflects on the education system.

Jim. We're finished, folks, and I would like to ask you to stand. We're going to pray for schools, teachers, students in some of the areas we've been discussing this morning.

Let me just, first of all, say that at 1.30 in the Fellowship Hall directly across the driveway here, we will complete the showing of the EFC video. And at the end, it will tell you ways in which you can be financially involved in helping to fight the battle at the court level. And then as well, in the room, adjoining the dining hall, the ante room to the dining hall, Bob and Nancy Stouffer, and I hope June will be there, and some others that would like to discuss further on issues that we have touched upon this morning.

It'll be a roundtable discussion continuing in some of these areas that we have been touching on today. That's at 1.30. It will last for 45 minutes in both locations. And we have a cloudy day, so maybe we'll get a crowd after all, Bob.

And if you're a teacher this morning, or a parent who has a heart burden for a child that's in a school situation with which you're not totally satisfied, we just wanna pray for you at this point. Or if there's a financial problem with regards to your private school education, or perhaps a time problem if you're homeschooling, we wanna pray for you too. And we wanna pray for those who say, God helping me, I'd like to be more active in whatever school my children are in.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you today for this time together. We thank you for each one who has shared heart concerns, some from a practical point of view, a personal point of view, others from historical and philosophical points of view.

And we wanna pray, Father, that you will touch our hearts with the gravity of the needs of our country. In a sense, Father, we believe that the needs of our country are somehow focused within our school system. And there we see it more clearly than we can see it at any other place.

And we thank you for those who are involved already, for teachers and administrators who have dared to speak out on behalf of the word of God. And we pray, Lord, that you will protect them from any untoward embarrassment for the stand that they have been taking. And we pray that you'll give them a hearing.

May they find favor in the ears and the eyes of those who are watching them. We pray, Father, for students who are in school at every different level. And we pray that where they have to be salt and light because of where they're placed, that they will have special grace.

Lord, for those who struggle financially within Christian and private school settings because of the choice they've made, we pray, O God, that you will give them extra resources. And we pray for the initiatives that might open up doors for them in the future. Father, look down upon this province.

Have mercy upon it, Father. We know that perhaps more than most spots in the world, the issues are clearly crystallized. And we would ask that your spirit will have a free reign to make changes.

And Father, we pray for a national revival. We know that that is the beginning of the real solution to the problems we face. Thank you, Father, for this time together.

Dismiss us with your blessing and may our thoughts continue to be directed in these areas. Through Christ we pray, amen.