

## **An Open Letter To The Citizens And Inhabitants Of Ontario And Canada Concerning Children's Rights and Education**

October 31, 2005  
Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

Fellow Citizens

I am a person with great respect and love for children. My own four children are Our Most Precious Treasures. Like you we have been willing to work diligently to provide them the best care and opportunities possible. Life is challenging at the best of times for most people and the further worries, demands and complications that so many of us experience in dealing with public school systems and employees of these systems and institutions seems (and is) unnecessary.

We share concerns around providing at least the minimum Canadian living standards for our families, and strive in hopes of giving them more. By Global standards even the poorest of us live privileged lives. But we do not wish to measure Canada by World standards. Rather we work together to assist the entire Global Community to live, and to be able to live by the International Values that have developed and evolved in Canada. First there was one Nation. Then we were Three Nations. Now we are All Nations.

As a National Community we share and strive for lofty ideals and effective solutions to challenges we face. [See my essays "Ice As A Factor In The Development Of The Canadian Character" and "Canada: True North Strong And Free" and others @ [www.blindmansees.com/essays](http://www.blindmansees.com/essays)] As a Nation we have been blessed beyond the wildest dreams of all people of all times in all places from the dawn of history [AHA] to the present. Yet we still face challenges. One serious challenge of conscience that we all face is the subject of this essay: The Rights of Children.

Our people (who are from Here, There and Everywhere) strive together successfully to maintain a fairly peaceful society (which could easily be improved by the recommendations of this essay) while most of The World is embroiled in war and conflict (enmity). What makes us so special? I believe it's the way we care about one another (and find practical ways to express it).

I urge you to read this essay Our Most Precious Treasures: The Rights of Children and to think about what I'm saying. Discuss it, share it, consider it, pray about it, meditate. Then help me to act for the true benefit and welfare of all of our Children who are so precious to us. Stand with me for the Equal Treatment and Equal Rights of our children; first in legislation that ensures their Rights rather than making them the easy targets of rude and powerful bullies in our schools, then everywhere. Our love for our Children can change this ugly reality into a new and meaningful experience for all children and families forevermore.

There will soon be a link available at my website where this essay will be available for reading, download, printing, distribution and discussion. You have told me what you think. I'm simply telling you what you have told me. I was listening.

We can change the world dramatically (and quickly) for the better while protecting our community of children and Nation, saving money and exerting the wisdom and Will of The Canadian People. I made this essay as simple as possible under the circumstances..

I am sincerely yours,

[The Reverend] John Williams [a.k.a. Jake Willis ☺]

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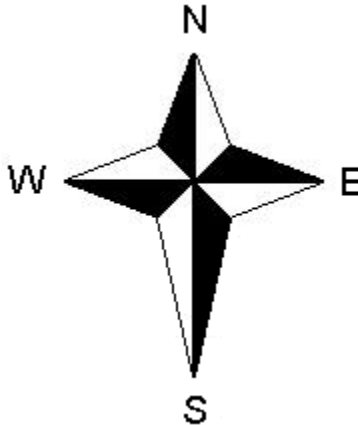
"Don't keep the peace...pass it on."



## Our Most Precious Treasures: The Rights of Children

[An Essay]

Dedicated compassionately to the Children, the Teachers, and The Child in us all.



The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle. If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men [sic] who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its mighty waters.

I expose slavery in this country, because to expose it is to kill it. Slavery is one of those monsters of darkness to whom the light of truth is death.

*-Frederick Douglass (1818-95 – African-American anti-slavery activist friend of Abraham Lincoln)*



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*We can pay our debt to the past by putting the future in debt to ourselves.* – John Buchan

## **Preface**

*“Eternal vigilance is the price of democracy.”* - Thomas Paine

This essay addresses the widespread and troublesome problem of bullying in the publicly-funded school systems in Ontario. Much energy and attention has been devoted to this ongoing public concern by legislators, bureaucrats, educators, philosophers and social architects, and by citizens at large.

This effort brings a unique perspective to bear. It includes some observations, analysis, recommendations and conclusions. The key and central focus is upon the failure of democratic Canadian society to extend Equal Rights to the children who live in our midst, and consequences of this omission.

The problem of bullying is also set in societal and Global contexts in order to sharpen the focus upon the compelling Global and social problems (which are parts of a linked set) that need to inform our educational theory, practice and curricula.

This essay is an urgent call for the extending of Equal Rights to Canadian children, for kind treatment of children and their families by school teachers and staff, and for the introduction of elite education for all children in all public schools in Ontario. Canada is coming of age at this historic juncture and we have much to share with a distressed world. The recommendations in this essay are directed towards the reality, potentiality and responsibility of Canada in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

My heartfelt thanks is extended to all who have contributed to this Project in any way. We all did this together...in Our True North Strong And Free. Any errors or shortcomings are mine.

Peace.

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October 12, 2005.

“Don’t keep the peace...pass it on.”

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## **PART ONE**

### **The Rights of Children**

*You can never have international peace as long as you have national poverty.*

- Stephen Leacock

*It is only natural that they insist on measuring us with the yardstick that they use for themselves, forgetting that the ravages of time are not the same for all, and that the quest of our own identity is just as arduous and bloody for us as it was for them. The interpretation of our reality through patterns not our own serves only to make us ever more unknown, ever less free, ever more solitary.*

*The Solitude of Latin America, by Gabriel Garcia Marquez*

## **Who Is The Bully?**

*The right to swing my fist ends where the other man's [sic] nose begins.*  
-Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. (1841-1935) [U.S. Supreme Court Jurist]

It is a commonly held belief that children are our most valued citizens. Our society has done much to ensure the safety, well-being, security, happiness and education of these vulnerable and treasured members of our families and society. Legislation is in place to ensure, enshrine and guarantee the Civil and Human Rights of our children. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms declares that there shall be no discrimination on the basis of age.

Yet the evidence suggests that the Rights, dignity and respect our various legislations extend to our children are habitually disregarded and transgressed as a matter of common course in our publicly-funded school systems in Ontario. The Ministry of Education and the Ontario Legislature have produced The Code of Conduct, which theoretically applies to all people involved in education in The Province of Ontario. This Code prohibits bullying by all, including children, parents, teachers, staff, et cetera. Yet at the same time The Code requires that teachers and administrators be bullies. The Education Act of Ontario requires the same attitudes and behaviours and as such proves to be not democratic, but autocratic. Meanwhile, children are condemned for bullying behaviour.

Personal experience and anecdotal evidence strongly suggest that there exists a "culture of bullying" amongst a large segment of the teaching and administrative staff in our schools. It has become difficult to conclude anything but that there is a systemic bullying problem in the culture of our educators. Yelling, shouting, pushing, verbal and emotional and sexual abuse seem commonplace in spite of the will of the citizenry and government that these have no place in the treatment of our children in what is intended to be an educational environment for the holistic nurturing of our most precious citizens. Our societal desire is that children be treated with kindness, in gentle respectful tones, whether in schools or elsewhere.

By virtue of size, experience, education and authority teachers, principals and others abuse children on a daily basis without challenge and without notice. People seem to believe that it is acceptable for teachers to yell or scream, intimidate or punish children, some very young, small and vulnerable. Yet this kind of behavior and treatment is deemed abusive in the family setting, or in any other setting. If children were treated in the same manner in the corridors of the Ontario Legislature as they are in our schools someone would go to jail. Our teachers must not and do not have the right and latitude to treat our children in ways that would be subject to criminal prosecution if it were politicians, public officials, clergy, parents or anyone else acting in these ways.

Those who object to this abusive behaviour are treated as intruders and with hostility and are considered to be troublemakers by our presumptuous 'masters', the school teachers, who are convinced that their level and brand of education represents the highest flowering of Global Culture. But these matters of relations touching upon school teachers and administrators abusing and bullying students and their families have already been examined and decided in favour of child safety and respect by the Japanese High Court. This occurred in the wake of many lawsuits launched by parents over these very issues. Japan is reported to have produced a model for this new kind of respectful and inclusive education where parents are a real and vital and integral part of classroom life and need not 'bow' to the will of rude and well-organized public employees.

Bullying behavior in schools (learned in schools) has far-reaching consequences in our society and our organizations. The bullying behaviour modeled by teachers and staff in schools bears bitter fruit on the factory floor, in the Legislature, the bureaucracies, financial institutions, and in all segments of the society and the economy. If we, Canada, wish to encourage the eradication of bullying in international affairs, and a nation without an army is prudent to do so, then it must begin in our schools, spread to the courts, law enforcement, families, religious institutions, organizations of all types from sports to academics to the trades and the military to non-profit volunteer groups to the Arts. Education is the paintbrush with which we create new worlds and societies.

Over and over again we give ourselves black eyes as the result of bullying in our society. A police officer can bully a citizen or a CEO can bully professional organizations, or vice-versa, all with negative consequences. The impact and consequences of the conditions in our schools need to be a part of the theoretical base and data-analysis of our social architects and engineers and theorists. It cannot be without consequence when we regard bullying of children by public servants as an acceptable method of relating in the schoolroom or schoolyard or Principal's office.

Ultimately The Rights of Children are the Rights of Every Person. For children are our hope and our future. Instead of valuing and respecting those who will care for us in our latter years and for The Earth, we treat them as unimportant as persons and citizens. Why would we treat those with contempt into whose hands responsibility for our very well-being shall pass? Moreover our children are, generally speaking, Our Most Precious Treasures. We value them over our own lives and all that we accomplish or possess. Furthermore, in some ways, we are all children.

### **Sounding The Alarm: Threat To Our Freedom**

*Poverty is to be without sufficient money, but it is also to have little hope for better things. It is a feeling that one is unable to control one's destiny, that one is powerless in a society that respects power. The poor have very limited access to means of making known their situation and their needs. To be poor is to feel apathy, alienation from society, entrapment, hopelessness and to believe that whatever you do will not turn out successfully. ~ Canadian Royal Commission on the Status of Woman, Report, 1970*

Curricula in the area of Social Studies have long taught the children of our culture about the democratic values, practices, institutions, struggles, heroes and heroines, and the Rights and Freedoms that have resulted from this tradition of Democracy. We hold these things dear. Yet while we teach our children about these things we simultaneously infringe upon their Rights and Freedoms as guaranteed by numerous respectable Declarations, from The United Nations Declaration On The Rights of Children to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to The Code of Conduct For Schools In The Province of Ontario. Children are taught that people have struggled and prevailed against tyrants who would strip them of their Rights, while at the same time the children are subjected to commonplace treatment that would be deemed abhorrent by any self-respecting citizen of a free and democratic nation and see themselves shorn of their Rights.

For some reason the adult population, from parents and family, to school employees, to the police and officers of the court, to leaders and legislators, to religious and business leaders are managing to ignore the all-encompassing and unnoticed withholding and withdrawing of Civil and Human Rights that is experienced by children in all segments and sectors of our society. Even if these small citizens, and some not so small, have been persuaded that they are not and should not be entitled to the same Rights as blacks, women, men, gays, et cetera, and convinced by the withholding of these Rights that this is an acceptable condition *by* this very withholding of these Rights, it is incumbent upon us to ensure the full and equal Rights of all who dwell within our borders in the first place, and All people everywhere and anywhere that the beacon of Liberty burns in the second place.

Children constitute a large percentage of our "poor population". This is to say that we are agreed among ourselves as a political entity (the citizenry) that children, due to their vulnerability, should be poor, badly educated and treated in manners that would result in legal action where both parties are within that magical and arbitrary "age of majority". Let us not ignore nor forget that many children are more intelligent, better informed and educated, more trustworthy and reliable, are more productive, more conscientious and just plain more than many amongst the adult population and the society of educators.

## The Spirit Of Liberty

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*I believe that liberty is the only genuinely valuable thing that men [sic] have invented, at least in the field of government, in a thousand years. I believe that it is better to be free than to be not free, even when the former is dangerous and the latter safe. I believe that the finest qualities of man [sic] can flourish only in free air – that progress made under the shadow of the policeman's [sic] club is false progress, and of no permanent value. I believe that any man [sic] who takes the liberty of another into his [sic] keeping is bound to become a tyrant, and that any man [sic] who yields up his [sic] liberty, in however slight the measure, is bound to become a slave.*

- H. L. Mencken

*I must study politics and war that my sons [sic] may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons [sic] ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history, naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain. - John Adams*

When I was a young child my father spent much energy and time communicating to me the importance of Liberty and the cost at which our Liberties have been purchased. Even then it was obvious to me that those teaching staff who were unkind and unfair and ill-informed would have been infringing my Rights and those of many children I knew, perhaps all to some degree, had we been citizens with equal Rights. But, just like the children of today, we had neither Rights nor recourse.

I discovered The Spirit of Liberty outside of school. At the age of eleven I memorized the American Declaration of Independence, which was cast upon fine parchment on my bedroom wall along with The Bill of Rights of The United States of America. A year later I memorized Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. As a teenager I read On Liberty [Mill], The Rights of Man [sic] [Paine], The Wealth of Nations [Smith], The Vertical Mosaic [Porter] and related books as well as The British North America Act for the first time. As a teen I first made both literary and personal contact with the late Right Honorable Pierre Elliot Trudeau who was a political mentor for me.

Through it all it has been obvious to me that there is glaring inequity in the treatment of children in this society. And a reduction of abuse does not constitute Equal Rights. Were the victims Jews, Muslims, Blacks, Homosexuals, The Handicapped, Women, or Men I would not be able to rest until the matter had been satisfactorily examined and acted upon to secure the equal Rights of all, and I have supported the Rights initiatives of all of these groups and others besides. ALL people are guaranteed the same Rights. Abraham Lincoln once

proclaimed that "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy." For all positions and occurrences of inequity strip us all of Rights and Equalities and they threaten the maintenance and dissemination of Freedom.

It amazes me how widespread a consensus exists among countless people with whom I have discussed these matters over the years. There is a widespread acknowledgement that children are often treated badly in their public school environments and there is a widespread perception that teachers in these institutions consider this rude and intemperate, even unkind and unfair treatment of children in their care as acceptable, even unobjectionable. But this is abuse.

If "the problem" is as widespread as I am claiming, why has there not been an uproar? Some incidents of extreme abuse do come to the attention of the public through the news media. Some end in court and sentencing. Some children's issues are raised in our legislative assemblies and attempts are made to bring justice and clarity to the public mind by leaders. For the most part I suspect that little is said due to the sheer magnitude and complexity of this systemic set of baseless assumptions and abusive behaviours which have been "normalized". These assumptions involve a mistaken understanding of the Delegation of Authority within given parameters and within its proper scope and in keeping with the will and desire of those who have authorized public officials, be they teachers or otherwise, to act in their behalf in order to address collective needs and concerns. Another assumption is that there is no need for Respect in relating to the children for whom they are authorized to care by parents and other members of the free society.

Teaching staff do not treat children with respect because they are not required to do so. The force of Law brings effective change. In fact the present levels of fair treatment of children in our Nation and society are recent. It was the academic and activist work of Doctor David Bakan, Professor of Psychology at York University in Toronto since the 1960's, which helped to transform our society from one where "mentally handicapped children were still in the sideshow at the CNE and children were receiving corporal punishment in our schools, to one where these practices had ceased to be regarded as acceptable." [From the eulogy for David Bakan who died in October 2004.] Dr. Bakan helped put an end to many of these offenses through the presentation of six talks on CBC Radio entitled Slaughter Of The Innocents which were later published in book form under the same title.

To address such matters requires a set of skills, gifts, experience, training, and ability that few possess. These are complex matters that are taxing to the intellect and the emotions, body and soul. Such a task requires a level of motivation and concentration and composition skills that are generally engaged in complex professional careers. It is a rare parent of six and twelve year old

children who can bring together the requisite skill set in order to address these related issues in our complex public administrative environment. Recognizing this, and feeling deep empathy for and solidarity with our children (of all ages), I determined that it had fallen to me to raise the Alarm and draw attention to the sad betrayal that continues to strip our children of Rights and teaches them distrust and bullying rather than the peaceful reconciliation that is the policy of every recent Canadian Government and of the vast majority of the citizenry and inhabitants of Canada. It is a rare day when I do not hear at least one report of abuse by teachers and staff in schools. Most parents with children in school are simple people who could not embrace, examine and express opinions on these complex issues.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men [sic] are created equal...” [U.S. Declaration Of Independence] All people, not some. Not only those of a certain age or condition or in control and possession of a certain measure of money, power, social or economic or educational status. Under the Canadian Constitution and The Charter of Rights and Freedoms all are equal and guaranteed equal treatment. All!

Now if the teachers about whom I am writing were treated in the same manner on their job assignments as they treat the children in their care we would see an abundance of labour and legal actions in response. Yet we see no flood of advocacy for the children who in fact are being treated in manners that are rude and harmful and humiliating. These become the didactic dynamic in the classroom, the school yard, then home and on to highschool where the problem is even more embarrassing and widespread and exacerbated with entrenching experience. If we want our children to be kind, intelligent, informed, lovers and makers of peace, then we must provide models at the front of the classroom. If we are in some way nurturing growing ambassadors for Canadian Democracy and Democracy in general then we must do more than teach them about their Equal Rights. We must give them their Equal Rights. We live in a Global Community and must think Globally in order to survive.

Sadly at this juncture our society is blind to the unequal position endured by children who are at once our most valuable and most vulnerable citizens. Some of these young people endure unhappy, chaotic, traumatic and grief-stricken circumstances outside the boundaries of their school experience. My twenty years of experience in formal pastoral ministry has made this clear to me. So then if we hope that our society will be Just, Compassionate and Free, we will have to model and share these principles and practices with our young citizens in the most obvious place - Public Schools. Teachers can and must learn to be fair and kind and sensitive and compassionate.

In any case this kind of teaching will result in a more committed and enthusiastic student who will learn more and better in a respectful environment, void of

hostility, humiliation and bullying on the part of our teachers whom we authorize to care for and instruct our children. Levels of trust will rise in an atmosphere of peace and the opportunity to model and practice and implement truly democratic methods will increase. That can further ensure the continuity of democracy and the evolution of our collective understanding of Equality under Law. And it will nurture democratic thinking in school employees at every level.

*In this possibly terminal phase of human existence, democracy and freedom are more than just ideals to be valued - they may be essential to survival.*

- Noam Chomsky

*The woman [sic] who really loves her [sic] own children...is the woman [sic] that wants to see other peoples' children get their chance too.* Nellie McClung

There exists another compelling reality that possesses power to convince us of the need for fair and equal treatment of children in our publicly-funded and sanctioned school systems. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, Canada is a nation that is coming of age in an historic Moment in which we are badly needed in the Global Community. There is an emerging sense amongst citizens of The Earth that Canada is doing many things right. We do not seek to harm our neighbours, but rather offer all people kindness and support, especially in times of crisis. As the world descends into what seems a deeper and steeper spiral of crisis upon deeper and more complex crisis, The Canadian Way is emerging as a beacon of Hope for the community of nations and for the citizens of every part of the Globe.

We have a reputation for making and keeping peace politically and militarily. A frightened and hurting world in conflict is looking to us to discover how people of all types and backgrounds and from every religion and nationality and language group can live together in relative peace and harmony. We are a microcosm of and the model for a future world that can be responsible and co-operative and just and compassionate, and peaceful.

In order to export this, perhaps our most valuable cultural feature, we will need citizens who know the feel and the zeal of Liberty and are able to co-exist with and value their neighbours as equals, no matter what their condition or age or economic, social or educational status. There will be no army of Ambassadors for our way of life if we do not provide clear and concrete opportunities for our young people to enjoy the richness that exists in being equal before a Just Law within a functional and purposeful set of Values and guided by a Vision of hope.

If we treat children with kindness and respect they will be much more inclined to remain in school, to get an education and training, and to support the system that supports them in and with appropriate manners. Children are and can be such able, gentle, kind, co-operative, respectful, interesting, fun, helpful and educational people. Our teachers can learn much from them as students, as do the best of our post-secondary teachers learn from their students.

If we do not actively and energetically, efficiently and intelligently export Peace and our methods of achieving it, then it is highly likely that War will come to visit us in Canada. At that point most concerns around education, teacher employment contracts, availability of resources and so forth will be moot. Perhaps we can pre-empt this possibility by acting in accordance with the real urgency of our circumstances and situation. To act now can prevent much suffering later for Canadians and people of all nations. Our situation could change suddenly and dramatically for the worse. But we [Canada] can make a significant positive difference. One way is through appropriate and effective education.

## **PART TWO**

### **Getting Perspective**

*No army can withstand the strength of an idea whose time has come. -Victor Hugo*

## **The Social, Political, Economic & Legal Consequences of Withholding Equal Rights**

### **Introduction**

*On the most exalted throne in the world, we are still seated on nothing but our arse.*

- Montaigne

People who are treated as “less than equal” grow very quickly resentful. Prolonged and persistent withholding of Rights will quickly evolve into spontaneous sub-cultures of resistance. The resistance will inevitably express itself in rebellion against the dominant culture that oppresses and marginalizes those of “lesser value”. I witnessed this first-hand in El Salvador some years ago and in China.

We systematically gather children into institutions where they are compelled to sublimate their true selves to the conventions imposed upon them by powerful giants and “agents of government” who have the power to punish any deviance from (the) narrowly-bounded behavioural parameters. These giants infuse an agreed-upon set of data or information, skills and behaviours into the small people with the force of the government and society behind them. This is the very picture of being powerless. Add to this the clearly and often stated idea that the Giant has Rights but the small people do not and we discover the feeling of being powerless. [If the children ‘misbehave’ they are likely to be expelled, coerced or drugged into an acceptable behavioural pattern. This is awkward for them.]

But children are people and arrive in our midst with the full set and range of human abilities and potentialities, with the acknowledged range of variances. They can observe, reason, discuss, feel, desire, grieve, create, revolt, co-operate, harm, laugh and much more. As resistance to oppression increases and becomes refined and organized the dominant culture will be forced to respond to the sniping on the part of their classless captives.

It seems odd that our society is willing to accommodate the consequences of withholding equality from our children through a range of legal considerations and adjustments; but the same society is not willing to acknowledge the inequities and remedy the problem that is at the root of much righteous rebellion on the part of our young offenders who commit crimes that are often committed as a direct result of them having been denied Equal Rights under Law and by agreed upon social values and processes. People are not permitted the nobility nor the benefits of these blessings of democratic citizenship until they are considered adults. Children are lesser beings and of lesser value socially with fewer Rights and Freedoms in our Society and Institutions. Any child can see the problem with this arrangement of things. Apparently adults cannot; so I appeal to The Child in my reader.

*All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he [sic] grows up.*

– Pablo Picasso

In Canada we have come a long way towards the securing of Human Rights, and the advances clearly extend to children and others. However we have hesitated to extend Civil Rights to children in our society, and most especially in that institutional setting [schools] in which children most commonly encounter their Nation, Culture and Government. Yet it must be seen that extending equal Civil Rights to a person is perhaps the single most important Human Rights concession. Therefore we can extend a wide range of protective measures and nurturing processes to our youngest and most vulnerable citizens and not extend Equality, and we have fallen short of True Human Value in our assessment (our valuation) of children.

The fact of the matter is encapsulated in the title of this essay; for children are truly Our Most Precious Treasures. This is why we protect them, nurture them, institute means and methods for their integration into society, and also why we are moved and motivated to ensure their Rights by increments. This points to a uniquely Canadian economics theory in which Humanity/Humans/People are attributed a high Value.

Historically children, like men and women and all others in their turn, were not regarded as human and consequently they were not entitled to any kind of Human or Civil Rights. As it stands, even after a lengthy process of small steps in the direction of equality, our children suffer from their omission from equal treatment under The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This was openly acknowledged in a recent session of the Federal Standing Committee On Rights and Freedoms (CPAC) by a Government Minister [Hon. Andy Scott, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, September 28, 2005]. Children's governments, institutions, processes and society militate against them and treat them as something less than Human. We need to stop making War upon our children in our schools, courts, and homes and all institutions.

As a direct consequence of a universally accepted presupposition that children are not equal, young citizens are marginalized, mistreated and minimalized in the eyes of all who act in behalf of society. This includes Parliament and Legislative Assemblies, educational institutions of all kinds, Law Enforcement, the Courts and Judiciary, and even extends to those compassionate organizations that offer relief to young people in circumstances of trial or crisis. Everyone is blind to the fact that much of the "bad behavior" on the part of young people is a natural resistance to accurately perceived inequity/inequality. Forgive my impertinence, but is a blind man the only one who can see this ubiquitous blight upon our culture and society? [For I was blind and had my eyesight surgically restored. What a country!]

*You do not lead by hitting people over the head - that's assault, not leadership.*  
– Dwight D. Eisenhower

There are economic consequences that arise from these conditions that result from the aforementioned presupposition. As children realize that they are powerless to participate as partners in society, they turn their innate creative powers to resisting the oppressive regime that claims to value them, but clearly does not value them equally with those of voting age. The major legislation that deals with children [Education Act of Ontario and Code of Conduct For Schools] turns The Law and The Charter of Rights and Freedoms on its head by presuming guilt rather than innocence and by imputing culpability to those who have done nothing to deserve it other than having been born. This Resistance has enormous economic consequences in that we must find means, often expensive means, of dealing with the consequent interruptions to social and institutional functionality, whether in courts, schools or elsewhere, that result from this “resistance”.

**I am convinced that almost all Rights and Freedoms extended to an immigrant upon declaration of Citizenship in Canada can be extended to our naturally born or naturalized children.** I would seriously hesitate to extend the Right to vote to most children, but many people who are too young to vote [apparently the age of majority and voting age in Iran is sixteen years] have a more evolved sense of civic responsibility and political awareness than many who are entitled to cast a ballot in elections of most kinds by virtue of their age.

We encourage our children to “play” democracy and to play at it. We teach them about it in schools and in the media as well as in clubs and organizations designed for their nurture. But we will not permit them to participate truly and fully in one of the greatest democratic experiments in human history. So children turn against those who represent their oppression: teachers, police officers, judges, politicians, clergy and even parents, and all others who conspire against their innate sense of Humanity.

We can win the support and participation of our children by extending equal Rights and Equality to them, and we clearly need their help. The world is in the grip of a group of extreme crises. Removing many of the impediments to Equality that they face will free up enormous resources that are presently used in efforts to control them. And this will harness their power as our allies. It has been noted that this is the first generation in human history wherein parents must turn to their children in order to learn skills necessary for survival, rather than the reverse. But if they are democratic at birth, as I have postulated, then they will be impossible to control as some might wish. Democracy resists oppression. I believe that Democracy is an innate element in people and an important component of “the human spirit.”

Some years ago [1999] I submitted an essay to a millennial essay-writing competition sponsored by The Goethe Institute and the EEC Cultural Division. My essay submission was entitled “Natural Democracy” ([www.blindmansees.com/essays](http://www.blindmansees.com/essays)). In it I have argued that the values and conditions towards which Humanity strives in our timeless and universal search for Liberty are innate and integral to the Human Condition. This is a desire to be Free and Equal. I argue further that the survival of our Global ecology and the political and biological future of Humanity rests upon recognition of these innate human features. I believe that Democracy is in us at birth and seeks opportunity for expression across the breadth of The World in all Nations, and all Peoples of all Faiths.

Canada is a microcosm of The World in many respects, while also being a unique and wildly successful experiment in Democracy. Here we have implemented the politico-social model of The Vertical Mosaic [1] which provides a theoretical base for diversity, multiculturalism, multilingualism, as well as multi-faith. This historic precedent of people of all backgrounds and lifestyles living together in relative harmony and productivity with co-operation is important to the future of the world and our existent civilization. Canada has exhibited a capacity to be inclusive and respectful of people as people. We are in some ways forerunners of what the world must become in order to survive relatively intact for the next one to two hundred years. Therefore we have a responsibility and an obligation to maximize our cultural and social resources in order to effectively and efficiently share with people everywhere the results of this magnificent socio-politico-cultural experiment.

This sharing must begin with our children who are the inheritors of our work and will be the only ones who can carry our values and technologies (Human Technologies) into the future and share them with a needy world. We have the historic opportunity to nurture a generation of true young Canadian democrats and to unleash them upon a world that has learned to trust those who come bearing the emblem of The Red Maple Leaf. They could become an army of Ambassadors of Peace as many of our citizens already are.

I believe in this country and all of those who strive diligently to maintain and improve it; to make it work. Our people have exhibited a trustworthy sense of **Justice With Compassion** and a capacity for excellent creativity and diligence. We have so much to share. We need only devise and implement effective development and delivery systems (and technologists) in order to export our amazing cultural technologies to a desperate and hurting world. These “cultural technologists” will be our children or they will be no one.

Notes: [1] The Vertical Mosaic, John Porter, 1965. University of Toronto Press. Toronto, Canada.

## **An Academic And Scholarly Perspective – Towards Elite Education**

*Where there is no Vision the people will perish. - Proverbs [The Bible]*

### Great Teachers I Have Known

Among the many wonderful and capable teachers I have had the honour to know as mentors several stand out as particularly memorable.

The first was my venerable and esteemed professor of Advanced Classical Chinese Literature and Translation in the East Asian Studies Department in Robarts Library at The University of Toronto. Doctor Wayne Schlepp also gave me private tutoring in Classical Mongolian. Tall, distinguished, with a white beard and hair, Dr. Schlepp always practiced T'ai Chi Ch'uan and fed roasted peanuts to the students in the class. He always addressed us in a formal and respectful manner as Sir or Miss. I asked him why he addressed us with such respect. His surprised response, with whitened eyebrows raised, was, "Why, I do not know what you will become!"

If Wayne Schlepp had had only one successful doctoral student, and if that one student had been Doctor Karl-Heinz Pohl, his career would have been a stunning success. My good friend Dr. Pohl, who married a Canadian and canoes in Algonquin Park, was Professor of Classical Chinese language and literature in the famed and highly reputed Tübingen University in Germany. As a hobby Dr. Pohl is a practitioner of Aikido, the most highly ethical of the oriental martial arts which we practiced together for years, and which he introduced into Germany. He has also been a mentor to many fine German scholars, and is friends with famed Roman Catholic theologian Hans Kung. Most important of all, Dr. Pohl has served as Cultural Liaison Officer for the EEC (EU) in Europe's relationship with The People's Republic of China.

Kindness and good instruction have far-reaching implications. Dr. Schlepp was among the most demanding teachers that I ever encountered outside of Princeton and he challenged all of his students academically, intellectually and spiritually. Yet he won the love, respect and loyalty of his students through sharing respect in humility.

At Princeton Theological Seminary I discovered why every child in America hopes to attend Princeton. Besides the high academic standards, people (students) there are treated with dignity and respect. The teaching staff are without peers in most areas. The academic requirements are stringent and lofty. During my time at Princeton one professor stood out among a list of world-class scholars. This was Doctor Bruce Metzger.

Doctor Metzger was a small, quiet, unassuming man. I met him short days after my arrival on campus. I was eating lunch at a large round table in the expansive student cafeteria when this older gentleman approached and politely inquired if he might join me. We chatted and exchanged niceties over lunch on numerous occasions, always in the student cafeteria, though there was an elegant dining room for staff.

Short weeks later I saw Dr. Metzger sitting at one of those large round dining tables as Chairperson of The New Testament Translation Committee for The Revised Standard Version of The Bible. Dr. Metzger turned out to be the world's leading authority on New Testament Greek who had personally written most of the useful study resources for students of this subject. He is also regarded as the world's leading authority on the subject of The Book of Revelation and has published the definitive book on this topic: Breaking the Code. And he produced The Reader's Digest Condensed Bible.

Yet Dr. Metzger was always kind, always modest and respectful, always clear-minded and challenging intellectually, academically and spiritually. This was a very bright and very sweet man functioning at the very pinnacle of formal education structures. I had the pleasure of sitting through his revealing lectures on the subject of The Book of Revelation and again saw his well-mannered kindness and respect for students wrapped around a formidable intellect and a massive photographic memory. Elite education is built upon kindness and respect and the recognition of gifts. It begins with respect.

Let me add another scholarly example to help round out the picture of good instructors. While I was an undergraduate student at Victoria University (U of T) I had the pleasure and good fortune to audit a course in Shakespeare's King Lear with Doctor Northrop Frye. Here was another man of great genius whose grasp of Western culture, history and literature has shaped and reshaped the study of English Literature and The Bible As Literature. Beyond the thousands of young minds he helped to shape and nurture through such lecture series, Dr. Frye published numerous books that have been of great impact in his field and in our broader culture. Two stand out as being particularly valuable to the scholarly and popular reader. These are The Educated Imagination and The Great Code. Dr. Frye is yet another example of a person of great gifts and diligence who devoted himself to Education which he recognized as the root and source of cultural influence and stability. Again in Dr. Frye were found the keynotes of Excellence in Education: respect, humility, diligence, creativity and innovation, coupled with passion for the subject matter. Elite education allows, nurtures, and supports passionate interests.

## Other Great Teachers

*An understanding heart is everything in a teacher, and cannot be esteemed highly enough. One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feeling. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.*  
- Carl Jung

I have been blessed beyond the common round in terms of my educational experience. Though I absented myself from grade school as much as possible, yet still excelled; though I only attended high school for one full academic year; still I have had a long and noteworthy educational history and experience.

When I was fifteen and had dropped out of school I began auditing courses at Sir George Williams University [now Concordia University] in Montreal in 1969 when two of my brothers and a sister-in-law were students there. I sat regularly in classes that included introductory and advanced Economics, Russian History, English Literature, Sociology, and others. I read widely and independently and learned from the great minds and writers of all cultures while being encouraged and nurtured by Mentors.

At seventeen, after having worked as a Reporter for The Guelph Mercury, I met one of my political mentors, the late Right Honorable Pierre Elliot Trudeau who advised me about civic responsibility and political action and participation. This has influenced me in the writing of this essay. I was the youngest Mature Student admitted to Canadian universities at the time at age twenty-one and studied English and Chinese Studies at The Universities of Waterloo, Toronto and British Columbia. At twenty-seven, with a degree in Chinese Studies from The University of Toronto and while doing pre-doctoral language study at Taiwan Normal University's Mandarin Training Center in Taipei, I was befriended by the late Doctor Irvine, famed German inventor of Ethno-psychiatry and junior colleague of Dr. Sigmund Freud and Dr. Carl Jung. Dr. Irvine was another man of respectful kindness.

At Princeton I also studied Administration with Dr. Geddes Hanson who was the consultant hired to restructure and reorganize The University of Toronto in the 1970's, and also with Dr. Richard Armstrong, a Canadian. More intelligent kindness.

These are some of the friends, mentors and teachers whose talent and skill and kindness have remained with me as shining examples of good teachers. The list would be very long if completed and would include staff members in the many universities I've attended formally, not to mention those who have contributed to my education in colloquia, seminars, conferences and meetings across the spectrum of The Academic Disciplines in The Humanities and into The Arts and Sciences and as a professional.

Our world, my world has been peopled by great and capable teachers. By contrast my public and high school experience was brief, but a lengthy series of nightmares.

### Abusive Teachers I Have Known

*Of all tyrannies, a tyranny exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own conscience.*

- C.S. Lewis

*He [sic] is not only dull himself [sic], he [sic] is the cause of dullness in others."*

- Samuel Johnson

In one and a half (1.5) years of high school I had a plethora of abusive experiences. My Grade Ten French language teacher constantly arrayed her exposed breasts to my naïve and distracted adolescent eyes up close and personal and with the most confusing smile on her face. My Grade Ten Latin teacher regularly sat on my desk in a mini-skirt with legs askew so I could readily observe the clean white strip of panty material that concealed a teenage boy's greatest fear and interest. [My first term grade in Latin was 7% for some strange reason.] I did not choose to study Latin, but my choice of studying Music, in which I was clearly and passionately gifted, was denied me in favour of "mini-skirt Latin". These were both cases of sexual abuse. And very distracting and disturbing to me.

Other boys and I were regularly bullied by various "teachers" in Physical Education classes and in the gymnasium and on the sports field. This was physical, verbal and emotional abuse. In Grade Nine we had a Science teacher who, without provocation, physically assaulted several of the boys in our class and other classes, as well as being intellectually and verbally condescending and abusive. He, along with others, was protected from assault charges by the notorious (among children) and dreaded Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada which justifies violence against children by public servants.

A Math teacher was also physically and emotionally and verbally abusive to me and other students (mostly boys) as a matter of habit and course with no provocation, which demolished my love of Mathematics. This is deemed to be acceptable behaviour for disciplinary purposes!! The final straw for me in my high school career was a remark from a rather slow-minded Grade Ten Geography teacher who shouted at me in class, "Why don't you just quit school

and get a job in a coal mine. You'll never amount to anything." Those words still resound after thirty-five years like it was yesterday, though they have lost their sting. This simply demonstrates the lasting importance of the behaviour of formal educators. [In fact I did quit school shortly thereafter, but not before having read every textbook in use in that high school arts and science curriculum. ☺ ]

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As a parent raising four children I have had more experience with abusive people disguised as teachers and school staff (i.e. – educators) than I wish to recall. Due to the moving from place to place that is inherent in professional pastoral ministry I have had a broader view of teacher and staff performance in our publicly-funded school systems than some, and I have the professional and intellectual tools with which to evaluate their performance. Beginning with my eldest son's admission into Grade One in Napanee, Ontario, through a particularly ugly episode of abuse resulting from gender discrimination at a school in St. Thomas, Ontario where my second son had a Grade Three teacher [female] who clearly did not like boys, we have dealt with the glaring inadequacies of public education in the Province of Ontario again and again and again.

Early on we discovered that principals and vice-principals consistently closed ranks with abusive teachers who belonged to the same union as them. I remedied this particular problem with a lengthy letter to The Honourable John Snobolen, then Ontario Minister of Education, whose government addressed this tendency by prohibiting principals and vice-principals from being members of the Teachers Federation of Ontario. I also drew attention to the frequent and widespread incompetence of many teachers which was obvious to me as a scholar, which resulted in a teacher testing program. Thirdly I expressed concern about the tendency of Board of Education Trustees automatically siding with staff and teachers in cases of concern or complaint and the ineffectual application of public policy. This resulted in the shaking and reshuffling of Boards and Trustees under the Harris Government. But all of these have proven ineffectual in rooting out the problems of abusive treatment and bullying by teachers and staff of students and their family members, as is attested by our recent experience here at St. John Roman Catholic School in Guelph. In fact we have encountered bullying, and irrational stupid bullying as bullying must be, in virtually every school our children have attended.

With very few exceptions it was teachers, principals and staff who were doing the bullying. The fact that it played out the same way everywhere was a clue to the ubiquitous nature of the problem and was amplified by the ongoing set and series of complaints and concerns from many sources that were summarily dismissed by those who should have been collecting data rather than rationalizing

inappropriate behaviour. The widespread occurrences of this phenomenon ultimately drew my attention to the problems with the legislation. In a few instances it was children who were bullying other children, but what should we expect when the classroom examples are largely faulty and misleading?

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*Dare to dream.* - Jake Willis

At the same time, almost without exception, though not entirely, we have seen how teachers and staff have failed to take note of our children's gifts, talents, abilities and skills. This failure to notice the person (student) and to honour that, coupled with stupidly abusive practices, has been evident in at least seven of the publicly-funded schools our children have attended through the years in Guelph alone. The methods of instruction, management and administration have all left us disappointed and frustrated. From teachers to vice-principals, principals, superintendents, and others, there has been a consistent closing of the ranks in order to protect 'the system'. [I am intent upon protecting the children, their families, the Province and The Nation.] When people serve a system rather than the system serving the intended clients, something is amiss. This is an imperative truth in the study and practice of Administration. Apparently teachers, staff, administrators and the system itself are deemed more important than the children and their families whom they are supposed to serve, or The Nation itself.

To give a simple illustration of the blind bullying that occurs let me relate an incident from last Spring (2005). My third child Stephen, who was in Grade Six, came home at lunchtime very upset and vowing not to return to school that day. He told me that on the previous day his classroom teacher had physically shoved him through the classroom door (Imagine this happening in a place of employment to an adult, or in a government agency or office of any kind!!) and then that day she had squeezed his hand in a painful manner with no reasonable cause (if such a reasonable cause can exist). Stephen stayed home that day and the next.

It so happened that I had a musical rehearsal scheduled for that afternoon. So Stephen, then twelve years old, who apparently was regarded by his teacher as slow and incompetent, sat at the piano and played improvisational jazz instead of sitting idly in his classroom and being bullied. Let me add that he played with ease and precision on at least two pieces that proved beyond the scope of one of Canada's most competent piano accompanists not two weeks before at one of my performances in New York. On another occasion when he missed school for two days due to his acute asthmatic condition, he taught himself HTML [a computer language for graphic design that is critical for Internet functionality] from a manual (like Albert Einstein he had been slow to learn to read), built a

website using this technology, and began to effectively attract traffic to the site. He has since built an amazing Links page for my website which promotes Canadian culture, and he made it by typing the code, again while he was ill for two days. ( [www.blindmansees.com](http://www.blindmansees.com/links) /links)

Yet his teachers at school consider him to be slow to learn and not intellectually gifted. There is an obvious incongruity of perception here which I attribute to the bullying, presumptuous attitudes that so prevail across our school systems. These attitudes and the people who hold them seem to believe that they, rather than the students, are why we have schools. It begins to take on the appearance of a Public Works Program rather than an appropriate and effective educational system designed and operated to realize our social and cultural Values, Goals and Objectives.

It has been our experience that teachers and other staff in schools treat children differently in the company of other grown-ups [parents, et cetera] than behind the secure doors of our schools. Experience tells us further that high school staff are often the worst offenders in this regard. A comical incident occurred in this regard involving my wife who, though a mature woman, possesses a youthful demeanour. Before the frustrated withdrawal of our two eldest sons from high school Tammy accompanied our second eldest teenage son to the high school they attended at the time for a meeting with the Principal. As she accompanied Tim along the school hallway towards the administrative office a male teacher came out of a classroom and yelled, not shouted, but yelled at them, "Stop! The announcements are on. Get up against the wall!" Startled, she stopped with our son and asked Tim if this was the way he was always treated there. He replied, "Yes. That is why I don't want to be here." When the teacher came closer and noticed that she was not a student he sheepishly said that they did not actually have to stop. Tammy replied to him, "It's interesting that when you thought that I was a student you yelled at me but once you saw that I was an 'adult' you treated me with respect. There is something wrong with that." From a distance he had mistaken her for one of those under his "care" and had treated her in his usual manner reserved for students. This was not the only instance of this happening to her!

Our teachers seem in need of widespread and thorough sensitivity education and training so that they recognize that children are not only *people* entitled to equal and respectful treatment, but that they are Our Most Precious Treasures, no matter what their age may be. Teachers are probably not the smartest individuals in their classes and arrogance born of basic post-secondary education (B.A./M.Ed. + Education Diploma, et cetera) has no place in our society and schools. It is a counter-democratic attitude and an expression of the bullying facilitated by The Education Act, Code of Conduct and Section 43 of The Criminal Code of Canada

## **Sports, Athletics and Health – Towards A Healthy Populace**

*Democracy does not guarantee equality of conditions - it only guarantees equality of opportunity.*  
- Irving Kristol

Bullying also infiltrates the sports and athletic activities in schools. It's all about elbows, competition, domination, and victory at all costs over the "opponent" who is the enemy. These practices and attitudes are transplanted into independent sports leagues and into life in the world. There is much injury and humiliation for those who can participate in such intense competition. For those who cannot or will not there is the pain of exclusion. From this source in our schools these attitudes and ways of relating are sown as seeds throughout our society.

Canada is a culture that does and can legitimately draw upon the cultural features of all other Nations and Cultures. Our people are from Everywhere. I have named this phenomenon [coupled with some other important factors] The Universal Culture. With this in mind we might introduce proven physical disciplines from elsewhere that are non-competitive, non-threatening, have broad practical applications in life; and that improve discipline, focus, co-operation, universal health, concentration, respect; while doing no harm and not resulting in humiliation or injury. Rather the results are confidence, calm, competence and personal security. Football, basketball, baseball, hockey, gymnastics and the like do not and cannot accomplish this.

Aikido [from Japan] and T'ai Chi Ch'uan [which is practiced by millions of all ages in China] can; and do all of this for many people in many countries. These are wonderful, simple, easily learned disciplines that would be interesting and helpful to children and are lifelong health-giving activities accessible to all. They would be more widely inclusive and engaging for more children than the current sports and athletic activities. In this way our citizenry could be peacefully and compassionately armed against danger, but with no attitude or technique for aggression. These are more in keeping with Canadian attitudes and values.

There is another shameful blight upon our society and citizens in the area of personal health. Our society and health systems are geared towards fixing people once they are broken. The entire history of modern Medicine makes clear the fact that prevention is better (and more economical) than correction, and some things cannot be corrected. The consequence to which I refer is the obesity and ill-health of those who have been subjected to "health" training and education in our schools. Schools have failed society in this regard, and the "report cards" are walking the streets of Canada in a state of compromised health. An unhealthy population is a weak and vulnerable population.

We need to teach people how to be healthy, rather than teaching them how to access expensive and out of control medical delivery systems that support backward and corrupt 'fix-it' thinking. Again I stress this option of the ancient and still widely practiced Chinese exercise system that they call T'ai Chi Ch'uan. These exercises are easy, fun, interesting to children and adults alike, poetic in name and form and movement, intelligent, and have proven effective for nurturing good health by the Chinese population through time in the hundreds of millions. [see The Green Chinese Slippers: China And Me @ [www.blindmansees.com/essays](http://www.blindmansees.com/essays)]

It promises (and delivers) "the strength of a lumberjack and the flexibility of a baby" while correcting and preventing a wide range of maladies from arthritis to anxiety to heart disease. It brings strength, flexibility, agility, mobility, good circulation and respiration and posture. It incidentally provides a self-defense system learned in a 'very low-impact' manner as well as nurturing mental, intellectual and imaginative clarity, while linking the practitioner with a profound history. T'ai Chi does much more. It keeps people alert, calm, confident and respectful. And it requires no special equipment. This exercise system can be privately practiced in any small space or outdoors through the course of a lifetime alone or with others [unlike our impact sports] and lends vitality and alertness to all. We *can* teach our children to be healthy, fit and armed against danger. We could take Switzerland as a general example of a Nation that is prosperous, with a healthy and well-educated citizenry, but is known as a 'neutral' country [largely for historic financial reasons]. Yet Switzerland is strong, stable and peaceful. As I understand it this disciplined and prepared Nation has not been engaged in a war for five hundred years, yet their soldiers have provided security in The Vatican for about the same period.

Athletics and Health have played an important part in my life. Growing up in the home of an acclaimed and respected professional athlete and Canadian Olympian (which was like living in a sports gym) introduced me early to the technologies of health, conditioning and high performance competition, while initiating me into my Father's sport, boxing. In his youth Howard enjoyed the advantages and opportunities of wealth, which enabled him to train in New York City in the gym where World Heavyweight Boxing Champion Joe Louis shared a trainer and friendship with my Father [Canadian Welterweight Boxing Champion] and with Charles Atlas and the like. He had a network of health-conscious friends who also shared a sense of Justice and a concern for Public Health.

As a child I excelled in every popular sport: hockey, baseball, football, volleyball, boxing, soccer, skiing, and all of the Track and Field events, plus swimming, biking, hiking and more. I was a busy boy and played on championship baseball teams. But ultimately the nasty competitiveness of these activities were overwhelmed and displaced by my growing sense of Justice and Fraternity and Kindness and Humanity. So I abandoned them in favour of non-competitive, and health giving physical disciplines. I had to abandon school in order to do so.

Since then I have had the opportunity (and the wherewithal) to explore and investigate sports and health technologies (including many martial arts and boxing forms) from and in many cultures and sub-cultures in The Global Village in which my life has been lived. I have weighed the benefits, costs, ethics, and accessibility of them all. Out of all of these I arrived at two superlative physical technologies (both of which I still practice) that I believe would be embraced by a grateful and needy Canadian populace. These are T'ai Chi Ch'uan from China; and Aikido from Japan, which provides and requires a high level of fitness and conditioning while being non-competitive and conciliatory in a purely defensive manner. They are both brilliant. These are the most in keeping with the Values, Goals and Interests of Canada and Canadians.

The unhealthy condition of our citizenry is yet another example and expression of the sad betrayal of our young citizens (who trust us to make the best decisions and judgments in their behalf) at the hands of their "masters", the grown educators. This kind of "master" / "underling" thinking is a remnant and expression of an "Imperial" [autocratic] model of Human Relations. There have been many examples and precedents of this kind of thinking and behaviour historically, which have had tragic consequences on a Global scale.

The "master" / "underling" mentality informed and gave justification for slavery; for the exclusion of women from equality; for unjust dealings with our Aboriginal Peoples and other minority groups. It does the same to Children, who represent a majority of our population in a ratio akin to the citizen/slave ratio in Classical Greece or Imperial Rome. This attitude has been behind many personal, social regional, international and Global struggles and conflicts. And it still informs our educational philosophies, practices and methodologies. This lacks Respect and Equality. This is *not* Democratic.

## **Public Authority**

*I acted on the information I have been accumulating since I was three years old.*

- Pierre Trudeau, former Canadian Prime Minister

It is by virtue of publicly sanctioned authority that a teacher acts in the classroom. This bestowal of powers is common in all political and social styles and environments. From the highest elected officials in government, through every governmental appointee, to the underlings and hirelings in our public and foreign service, to those who constitute the Ontario Teachers' Federation, individuals are allotted certain specific and circumscribed powers to act in behalf of "The People" and within the values and processes permitted by Law and regulation and society. We "empower" people to act as specialized substitutes where their expertise is considered to be a useful contribution to the safety, well-being, and continuity of The Nation and Citizens.

Democratic societies, in order to be so, embody certain values, principles, systems, processes and institutions that identify them as such. As it is has been long-held that education is the foundation of Liberty, we believe that access to good publicly-funded education is essential to our continuing freedom and the survival of the society. As already stated, schools are intended to provide basic education while inculcating the values and methodologies of our culture into young members of society in their formative years. Thereby thinking can be disciplined to regard society-at-large as valuable and students may learn to think, read, write, cipher and work collectively while learning the principles and values of our democratic society.

Presently the methodologies, practices and information learned in public and high schools are, for the most part, considered insignificant, ineffectual, and irrelevant by university instructors. This is only partly due to curriculum content and format. Meanwhile mediocrity is rewarded and applauded. And ironically only children are considered to be bullies, with no hint that the source of this widespread bullying is in the legislation and finds expression in the behaviour of teachers, administrators and staff in the schools and those with supervisory authority over them. These "educators" blame the children [Victims] in their care.

Ontario and our education systems must be seen within the context of the whole of Canada in order to be able to appropriately reflect who we are and what we value. If our educational practices contradict our national and collective values, then it is incumbent upon us to act so as to bring our practice in the classroom

into sync and line with the highest National Values. These Values are enshrined in our Constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These are The Chart, The Compass, and The Sextant for navigating towards our Future.

### **Value: Democratic Economics**

*This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness. - HH the Dalai Lama [since age five]*

The first order of Value in a democracy is the value of The Individual. Students are taught this in our schools. But they are not valued personally in accordance with this central value. It is the grown-ups, those of voting age who have Rights and Value; not the children. Children are the nameless, voiceless, powerless horde who live in our midst without the benefit of the Rights about which they study.

One of the deep tragic consequences of this circumstance is that some of these citizens, due to early or untimely death, will never taste the sweet fruit of true personal Liberty and its attendant Equality. They will have been excluded entirely from the benefits and blessings of Liberty.

So then what is it that the citizens of The Nation desire when we authorize teachers and staff to have jurisdiction over and care of our children in our schools? The first thing is kindness and respect based upon a sense of equal value in each citizen. If we examine the true value of children to parents who are rational, sane and stable we discover that parents (and families and society at large) value children above others, not below them. Consider this equation: [My Child] > [My Child's Teacher or My Self]. Here is The Will Of The People: that our children be regarded as at least as valuable as our school teacher employees. Do the Math.

### **Individuality**

*Vision is the art of seeing the invisible.* - Jonathan Swift

One of the unique features of our society and culture is the level and degree of Individuality that has evolved in us socially. This trait is not immediately obvious to those who have only lived within the confines of Western culture in Canada. I

was enabled to recognize this outstanding characteristic in Canadians after spending almost a year in China where by doctrine and tradition people are much more regimented, alike, predictable. Whereas in Canada each person is unique, quirky, individualistic. Each of us is a Towering Individual by Chinese social and cultural standards.

Individualism can have its challenges and negative expressions, but it is a big part of who we are. I expect that ways can be discovered, invented and implemented to respect this important aspect of our culture, which is more evolved in almost every important aspect of human life than in many societies and cultures. Again this is due to The Universal Culture which has its axis in Canada. So the problem and the challenge is to systematize, organize and even institutionalize our deeply rooted Individuality. Democracy in general seeks to accomplish this, so democratic methods are the most likely to bring the desired and desirable results.

Whether by Chance or Design we are each and everyone unique, from birth to death. Our culture, politics, society and values respect this truth and reality. Our schools can and should respect and accommodate and reflect our differences. Ultimately the differences fit together to create a whole society. Canada still faces challenges in the area of reconciling differences, but the prospects are good and hopeful. An education culture that respects and accepts this will be better suited to the needs and necessities of The Twenty-first Century.

Canada was created by people of Vision, courage, diligence, creativity: Individuals. Our people have been nurtured in the bosom of a challenging wilderness amidst hostile climatic conditions and the violent swirls of history. Yet we have sought and found impossible solutions to each demand we have faced. The Future is upon us and we are busily pulling up our bootstraps for the present challenges.

We are no longer impeded by forests and great lakes and rivers and glaciers and prairies and mountain ranges and the sea. Our present impediments and mortal enemies are ecological, environmental, ethical, health related, political, scientific, issues of sustainability, technological, social, economic, doctrinal, Global. We require healthy, strong, educated, creative individuals capable of caring and sharing. Education can give us this if we reach for it carefully, intentionally and with resolve.

## **Art and Reason**

*Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.*

- Paulo Freire

*All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man's [sic] life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom.* - Albert Einstein

In a peaceful social environment when all is calm as has been the case in Canada, a land of peace and stability, the cream can rise to the top. Creativity and Rational Thinking are *la crème de la crème* of culture. These inform and support more than Art and artist. They are the substance, the purpose, the methods and the material in most businesses and enterprises, both public and private.

Recognizing this we can nurture these elevated human activities to an appropriate place in our schools and educational theory, mediations and discussions. By respecting, nurturing and refining inventiveness and sound ideas we can serve our People, our Province, our Nation, and The World in more exacting, efficient and effective ways. We need a New Hermeneutic that allows for technique in the classroom which recognizes, values and propagates these important aspects of our society and people.

This might require a relaxing and/or elimination of some of the regimentation that is universally expected in our schools. Artists, inventors, scientists, creative thinkers and adventurers require more flexibility, freedom and latitude [i.e. - Democratic methods and values and practices] in their lives and in the education that carries them towards fulfillment and productivity. [Ours remains an "Imperial" (i.e. – autocratic) system.]

We have a very high percentage of such people in our population and they are critical for our survival, our comfort, our enrichment, earning and productivity. There should be special and unique places in our school systems for this large number of such people, for they ultimately provide disproportionately large and far-reaching benefits to Nation, Society and Citizens. Data on this kind of personality type and ways to recognize and accommodate it are readily available at and through The Musicians' Clinic at Chedoake Hospital in Hamilton, Ontario. There has been much research devoted to this phenomenon worldwide that could be easily applied to our situation.

The challenge is partly to design a way to nurture people who “march to the beat of a different drummer.” Any single child could hold solutions for Life’s mysteries and challenges, like unique species of plants in the Amazonian Rainforest that provide specific medical treatments. *We do not know what they will become.* That is beyond the scope of our powers but there are hints and signs that can help us identify them and care about them appropriately. They are better informed than all of the kings and sages of history. We can do more than warehouse, police, indoctrinate and control Our Most Precious Treasures. We can recognize that they are unique in History by virtue of the wide range of resources, media and opportunities to which they have exposure and access; and they know how to use them if given the chance. We can (and should) expect great things from these amazing young Humans.

Presently the onus is on children to conform to the prescribed regimentation required in schools. It should be the responsibility of the system to flag and identify those budding artists, intellectuals, and technical inventors of all types. Children do not wish to be treated as anything less than Human and their various forms of genius, though ignored by some, may *disallow* them from certain kinds of conformity. Yet we need them *and* we have a civic responsibility to care for them, educate them, respect them, and live with them. Perhaps we require some New Forms Of Continuity between home and institution such as have been implemented by employers, universities, colleges and the like. We need a New Interface for children between personal life and life in society that accommodates these bright children; and they all seem bright. Presently I can write an email to the Prime Minister of Canada, but cannot communicate with my children’s school teachers via this extraordinary and convenient new medium among many cutting edge media. And sometimes it’s difficult to predict which child is and will prove to be the brightest, most able, and most able to contribute to the well-being of others. But we can know that they are ALL important.

A way should be available to recognize and nurture such imaginative and intellectual genius in all its expressions and levels. We should expect more and give more. Problem-solving tools that are up to date and cutting edge are required. [Children quietly laugh at “school” methods which cannot compare with their lives in The Universal Culture.] This would likely necessitate New Resources of many kinds (some of which are probably being invented right now by creative geniuses who could find no place nor recognition nor acceptance nor support in our school systems), as well as new teaching methods and techniques. The Global Technological, Cultural and Social Revolution presses on relentlessly and our children are keenly aware of this fact. They are the ones who can, do, and will implement these new technologies.

They are informed. They can see the inadequacies of educational resources and methods. They may not be able to express their perception with clarity, and even if they can they are not permitted the opportunity. But their Human Intuition

informs them and guides them through the minefields of misguided and obsolete instruction and instructors. Who would conform to something that is so obviously inadequate and incomplete where better choices are readily available? We would do well to stop thinking of them as that lesser thing [children] and think of them as People, and quite possibly very smart people. Just witness the games they play. A way should be available to recognize and nurture such imaginative and intellectual genius in all its expressions and levels. We should expect more and give more.

One of the problems faced by those with an artistic temperament (and other creative people) is that their brain processes occur in bursts of clarity and emerge from curiosity born of their gifts and talents, and sometimes their afflictions. They cannot control these tendencies; these outbursts of insight. These are important events that can result in the production of Van Gogh's *Starry Night* or a new design for a refrigerator or a new energy source. People who have these abilities and experiences cannot control them, but these gifts can be trained, disciplined, educated, applied, evaluated and applauded. These are visionaries.

If people of creative genius (which some believe to be all people) can be integrated respectfully into our public education system at all points of entry, and if we can successfully nurture their genius, then they will make previously unimaginable contributions to Humanity.

### **What Teachers Could Be – The Einstein Factor**

*An intelligence passing through an environment tends to organize it.*

- Albert Einstein

Highly evolved classical civilizations had a special place for education, revered Teachers, and implemented systems of advancement for those with ability and capability.

In China The Examination System, though flawed and circumscribed by our standards, served the needs of The Middle Kingdom for over two thousand years and resulted in stability of People and State. This system was based upon the didactic (teaching) style, philosophy, methods, writings, and intellectual, social and spiritual values of one man who lived during a period of prolonged and intense political and social turmoil and upheaval. [The Warring States Period - Circa 500 – 216 B.C.E.] The system was named after this one “Teacher among teachers.”

The Confucian Examination System employed a core curriculum that was national in scope and was administered by the central Imperial government. The curriculum consisted of The Six Classics [later five when The Classic of Music was lost in a purge in 216 B.C.E. under Ch'in Shih-Huang-Ti] and The Four Books. Taken together The Confucian Canon constituted a Cosmology covering everything from an understanding of the divine; to the mechanics of Nature and Human affairs; to the functions of the human mind and soul; to the dynamics of human interaction (The Five Relationships); down to the details of daily life. It was a door into profound understanding, moral discipline, and public service. Students were required to write complex (Eight Legged) essays in the highest Imperial Examinations, which were the final academic doorway into Public Service. Success meant position, influence, opportunity, wealth, power and more. They could become Mandarins based upon talent, ability and diligence (Merit).

In a landscape of bureaucratic striving, scholarly exertions and personal elevation, Teachers were regarded highly as the ones who enabled all of these possibilities and more. Only Scholars trained in this demanding curriculum framework could read the complex Literary Chinese language and could participate in the rich and complex political and cultural life of China; for due to the wide range of distinct spoken dialects people of different regions could not

understand each other, which remains largely the case in China today. In this landscape Teachers were regarded as lesser versions of The Great Teacher, Confucius (K'ung Fu-Tzu). The life, prosperity and preservation of The Nation turned upon the axis of the work of Teachers (lao-shih). Confucius was and remains a Teacher to all Chinese people.

Reverence for teachers has been a feature of many high cultures: India, Tibet, all Aboriginal Peoples, England, France, Spain, Italy, Greece (which provided us our Western "Confucius" in the person of Socrates), Rome, Israel, and on and on. However, the status and respect for teachers in Canada has declined over the last fifty years. This could be reversed through the implementation of new methodologies and expectations for our teaching staff. An increase in respect for teachers would be motivating and inspirational for them.

The Great Teachers of our society and of Western Culture have provided us models for elevated and excellent instruction. We have many good models from whom to choose. Albert Einstein is our icon for Intelligence as well as for Genius and Creativity and Productivity and as a Teacher. In this universally recognized Global figure we can see the qualities that are required in order to gain deep insight capable of transforming Human understanding. In order to unleash his set of original and transformative theories Albert had to stand outside of what was presumed to be True and gain a unique perspective. [He didn't fit in schools.] This kind of "outside the box" thinking is a necessity in our world which Dr. Einstein has been so instrumental in creating.

Among the still to be determined set of "lessons" that Albert Einstein has left with us and for us is this: *Original thinking that reaches ahead for Humanity results from the removal of preconceptions about what is true and possible.* Albert Einstein was forced to do his thinking outside of school (the box). But there should be places for all of the subsequent "albert einsteins" inside our school systems. This will help facilitate the addressing and solving of large and pressing Global crises. Canada can be a world leader in education by simply accommodating the widespread goodwill and genius of our children.

Teachers in our public schools, if permitted, could also be "albert einsteins" through a few simple adjustments in our expectations of them. For all of his profound insight and influence, Albert Einstein was man of "relative" simplicity. He had seven identical suits, one for every day of the week. He kept his life simple, his mind uncluttered, and his energy resources focused upon inquiry, research, meditation, invention, teaching. He was a living, breathing, walking, talking person with a passion for Justice and he exerted his influence for Peace.

If research and “academic” and personal development were stressed in the training and job description of our teachers, their functionality for the greater good would be considerably increased. If teachers were Scholars [rather than ‘educators’] and in hot pursuit of their passionate interest (whether knitting, automotive technology or The Philosophy of Law), as students they would become better teachers. They would have so much to share and exemplify: passion for a subject; methods of inquiry; creative didactic (teaching) methods; specialized knowledge and experience.

Our current public school curricula/um seems inflexible, constraining, restrictive. It disallows and disregards creative input and personal expertise. With these new expectations teachers would be more innovative, insightful, exciting, more instructive and just plain “more” and consequently more worthy of respect from students and public alike. We need good Human models for our children; models of and for Humanity for Today and Tomorrow. This would be more interesting, more fun, more challenging, more enriching and engaging, more productive and instructive for teachers and students alike.

As Canadians we can draw upon the resources of The Universal Culture in our educational thinking and practice as we do and have done in so many other areas. All of the cultures of the world are being melded and made accessible to us as a result of the profound technological (and scientific) revolution in which we are awash. Canadians, due to an historic anomaly, have greater access to this phenomenon than most, perhaps all people.

Drawing from this rich pool of resources, options and possibilities will continue to enrich, elevate and functionalize our Nation, our People and The Global Community. Teachers in our schools will be essential to the continued success of Canada and Canadians in The 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We can draw upon the best of everything from everyone everywhere to enrich our lives. Let us do this with regard to our public education systems which are readily available and existent resources to assist in the sustaining and evolving of People, Nation, Globe and Global Village.

In this way we could all learn to be our best and do our best while fulfilling The Canadian Dream of World Peace.

## **Einstein's Pencil**

*But words are things, and a small drop of ink,  
Falling, like dew, upon a thought, produces  
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think.*

- Lord Byron

In the Summer of 2004, while doing market research for my music enterprises and the promotion of Canadian Culture I was a guest at The Philadelphia Folk Festival where I learned something interesting about Albert Einstein. While I was busily occupied with the administrative staff of the festival, my partner and traveling companion devoted his time and energy to the functions of the large corps of volunteers [about 10,000]. Among this group Danny met and spent the bulk of his weekend with Albert Einstein's grandson who is a long time volunteer at that event. This man related to my Canadian friend an oft-quoted statement that his grandfather used to make. "I'm not smart. It's my pencil that's smart." The grandson explained that it was in his writing activity that his grandfather's genius emerged through the channels provided his Imagination by highly-evolved writing skills. Many writers and thinkers of stature have made the same claim.

If we wish to unlock, set at liberty and harness the genius of our children then we must provide them with the best possible thinking, writing and literary technologies rather than catering to "the lowest common denominator" which is the present goal of public education. "Don't offend anyone!" seems to be the motto, while the offenses pile up outside of the narrow focus of education fairness and accessibility as they presently exist. Again we must expect more, much more, and give much more in order to enable their gifts and value the genius in our midst. Children graduating from our schools are left with less than adequate skills for the challenges they face.

I have frequently observed that the reason my own children have not performed to their optimum potential in schools was because little was expected of them. And the little that was expected was given far too much time in which to be done. When I have advised teachers to expect more and to expect it within narrowly defined timeframes appropriate to the task, then the children have performed easily to the level of these more strident expectations. I believe we have to expect more and better productivity in an atmosphere of respect.

With elevated thinking and writing skills and higher productivity and quality expectations, children will be in a position to experience what Albert Einstein expressed frequently to family members and others: that part of genius is in the pencil, the pen, the word-processor, The BlackBerry; the ability and capacity to create and communicate with skill, speed, competence, clarity, accuracy and agility. We can elevate everyone and reach for the stars.

In this historic epoch rapid invention, adaptation, production and distribution are critical for successful competition in The Global Marketplace. These children can and will create technologies and art and will make discoveries and initiate revolutions in all areas: ideas, manufacturing, service, diplomacy, Aid, government, agriculture, administration and management, computer and Internet technologies and so on. Many children are already doing so while being shunned by and functioning outside of the obsolete school systems in which they generally feel imprisoned and ignored and abused, rather than at liberty and passionately engaged in learning, discovery, creation; and participation and Life in The Universal Culture.

## **To Mars and Beyond – Governmental Policies on Canada's Future**

*The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only object of good government. - Thomas Jefferson*

*When this circuit learns your job, what are you going to do? - Marshall McLuhan*

If Canadian Astronaut Marc Garneau, Director of The Canadian Space Agency has his way, these children will take Humanity to Mars and beyond in their lifetime. And they will do it in co-operation with and in the company of people of many cultures, languages, nationalities, et cetera. In order to participate fully in this exploration and exploitation of Space, Canada will require Space Age Einsteinian Thinkers. Our current educational practices do not and cannot support and allow that kind of methodology. In fact it precludes it by virtue of regimentation; low expectations; an antiquated philosophy and political undergirding of ideas; and the failure to recognize and confer Equal Status upon our young citizens.

These young people are, without the benefit of our education systems, better informed and more able than over 80% of the current adult population of the world. They learn at high speed with the aid of the technologies and tools and toys they use on a daily basis. They are brilliant and should be recognized as such and given their Just Entitlement: Equality, Freedom and Full Citizenship. Their champion and model is Bill Gates whose lesson and leadership has produced "Business @ The Speed Of Thought" (his book title).

The demands of the present Hour in History demand effective and appropriate preparations and actions of us as a Species. Some current conditions and circumstance have put Homo Sapiens on The Endangered Species List. To ignore this fact will result in disaster and a probable destruction of The State by one means or another. Prompt and effective action now can thwart and reverse the gathering army of threats that encircle us as a Nation and as a Species; whether political, military, economic, ecological/environmental or social.

We face great challenges and great opportunity in our privileged position in the bosom of The Universal Culture. Canada can complacently and chaotically pursue disparate and selfish goals, or we can unify our extraordinary Human, Technological and Natural Resources in order to build a viable, prosperous and peaceful Future.

Presently Canada and Canadians languish in the condition faced by every person or organization or nation that lacks an appropriate and compelling Vision.

They turn against themselves and each other, just as frustrated and unguided social creatures of all kinds do. This is the tragic scenario and story over and over again in this most blessed and prosperous and Free Nation in the world. Dispute and self-destruction and suicide are rampant, while the real enemies of Person and State are ignored.

To illustrate my point, imagine that day in the turmoil and distress of the 1930's with Dustbowl, Depression and Displacement rampant, when someone stood up in a loud voice and declared, "Oh my God! Look at that! There's Adolph Hitler and his army of butchers coming to kill and enslave us all. We have to act quickly, decisively, appropriately and with accuracy. We will only have one chance to defeat this determined enemy." And everyone turned, looked, saw, believed, reacted, acted, persisted, and prevailed.

We are now under siege by many enemies including pollutants of all kinds that infect our water, air and soil. Terrorism is one Islamic response to the bullyism taught in Western schools and governments. There is internal strife in Canada that is Constitutionally and culturally based (e.g. – Quebec). There are economic and political uncertainties. There are divisions. There is widespread ill-health and an economically unviable health care system. And everyone is pulling for themselves while the hope of The Nation is torn apart bit by bit.

Still we have been bequeathed many useful tools and skills by our Visionary Canadian forbearers. We have peace and promote Peace in the footsteps and shadow of one of our great leaders, PM "Mike" Pearson. We have Constitutional Independence and a Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We have processes of dialogue and negotiation that do not require guns. We have strong allies and trading partners. We have great diversity and tolerance.

We have a highly developed and evolved culture and society, political structures and institutions and processes, infrastructures, transportation and communication systems, economic and financial responsibility and excellent Federal management that has brought us unprecedented prosperity and stability as a Nation among nations. Though small in numbers we are large and efficient in productivity and influence. We possess a significant amount of Soft-power.

We stand at a critical juncture when we can passively watch our achievements and Democracy slide back into darkness. Or we can forge ahead through the barriers and impediments to illuminate the whole world. It begins with our children, schools and education methods. A New Paradigm is required.

These ideas and methods outlined in this essay are not as far-fetched or out-of-reach as one might surmise. In fact these methods are already being

implemented, taught and modeled in at least one Canadian university Teacher Training Program [Ryerson University]. We can be assured that the children, parents and community that encounter this new breed of respectful educator will be pleased with the result of this New Education Technology. Attention to this fledgling Initiative could serve The Province, The Nation, The People and The Child Citizens well in the immediate future. This is a crisis and requires critical and decisive correction.

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*Faced with the choice between changing one's mind and proving that there is no need to do so, almost everyone gets busy on the proof.*

- J. K. Galbraith, Canadian/American economist

My children and their many friends testify that the abuse I've described has only worsened, intensified and spread with the entrenched delusion of "educator as king/queen" over years, perhaps generations. Teachers [not all] are rude, insulting, abusive in every way, badly trained, poorly educated and informed, disrespectful, lacking in self-control and discipline, deceitful, dishonest, self-serving, manipulative, given to drug and alcohol use, violent, arrogant, condescending and they support those children who can effectively model this behaviour and curry their favour. ["Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely."] Children report that all teachers do not bully all children. But almost all of them bully some so that all children are bullied by someone amongst the teaching staff, not to mention by other students who copy and are encouraged in this abusive behaviour by none other than...you guessed it, teachers. This is the Report Card from those for whom they have had responsibility.

Growing Police presence and aggression in schools towards students [Our Most Precious Treasures!!] is another part of the "War On Children". Police support staff and the autocratic methods staff employ, as per 'the legislation'; and of course the real teacher bullies who provoke and abuse children the most will inevitably require the greatest support and assistance [protection and armed, authorized muscle] from Law Enforcement. I've heard reports of "school" police officers manhandling and intimidating children; of S.W.A.T. teams entering schools without just cause and intimidating the students and student body. Our schools are in danger of becoming battlegrounds between "educators" and police on one side and our children on the other, as has become the case in some other jurisdictions. Besides this there are perks and kickbacks for our so-called educators from commercial businesses who provide dinners, prizes, cash awards, and other perks while flogging everything in our schools from chocolate products to books to photographs, and the like [all of those things integral to a sound education!!].

These behaviours and attitudes would cause a public uproar and Legal consequences if it were occurring in daycare centers or other places children live or gather. Administrators and other caregivers would be castigated and held accountable. I blame the Legislation. All I seek is Just and conciliatory Change.

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We need a new and effective Paradigm wherein parents can participate in the lives and education of their children in a peaceful and caring and meaningful atmosphere. And we need it quickly in order to put an abrupt end to this longstanding and widespread abuse of Canadian Children, and to jump start The Future in Canada.

## **PART THREE**

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

*Did you, too, O friend, suppose democracy was only for elections, for politics, and for a party name? I say democracy is only of use there that it may pass on and come to its flower and fruit in manners, in the highest forms of interaction between [people], and their beliefs -- in religion, literature, colleges and schools -- democracy in all public and private life.... – Walt Whitman*

## **Recommendations**

1) In behalf of the citizens and children of Ontario I hereby request that there be a legal and constitutional review of The Education Act of Ontario and The Code Of Conduct For Schools In Ontario; that a new and appropriate Education Act and Code of Conduct be legislated employing true Canadian Values as expressed in our Constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and in accordance and harmony with The UN Declaration of Children's Rights.

The present legislation has two thoroughgoing and operative (and false) presuppositions that must be eliminated in order to guarantee the Rights of Children. The first is that children are evil, culpable and to be held in suspicion. The second is that teachers, staff and administrators in schools are inerrant, cannot make mistakes, have perfect judgment and can be safely entrusted with autocratic powers. These presuppositions undermine and dissolve the Rights of the children whom the legislation intends to protect and nurture.

2) Furthermore I recommend that all teachers, staff, and administrators in our public school systems be required by law, regulation, education, review, inspection and enforcement, to treat students, family members and guardians with kindness and respect. [We're tired of dealing with rude, contemptuous, arrogant, undisciplined, insensitive, badly-informed public servants who serve as teachers, administrators, staff, including school and Board secretaries and receptionists who are a frequent point-of-contact with the public.] In short I recommend that our practice be brought into line with our theory and that children be treated in ways that are appropriate for what they are: Our Most Precious Treasures.

3) I also recommend that Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada be reviewed in order to prevent people/public servants from bullying children rather than enabling such behaviour as is presently the case. Children require Guaranteed Equal Rights and treatment.

4) Finally, I recommend the development of a Federal Education Strategy created to guarantee the quality and focus of primary and secondary education in all Provinces and Territories and Regions of Canada. This Strategy should include and reflect a National Vision based upon the Canadian Character, Constitution, and Charter Of Rights And Freedoms. This strategy and all of its consequences should be 'Child Friendly' and 'Family Friendly'. As Human and Civil Rights issues are involved, this would be a project with shared and intersecting Provincial/Territorial and Federal jurisdiction. A Merit driven system that is fairly integrated with the soon to be developed Aboriginal Education System would be welcomed.

## **Conclusion**

### **Our Most Precious Treasures – Choices**

*All men [sic – people] lead lives of quiet desperation.* - Henry David Thoreau

*Freedom is not merely the opportunity to do as one pleases; neither is it merely the opportunity to choose between set alternatives. Freedom is, first of all, the chance to formulate the available choices, to argue over them -- and then, the opportunity to choose.* - C. Wright Mills

The bullies who work and thrive in the Education System along with those who are forced by The Education Act and The Code Of Conduct For Schools into autocratic relationships with children in schools comfortably hide behind Section 43 of The Criminal Code. This statute provides "parental authority" to public employees, particularly in situations where discipline, even physical or corporal discipline might come into play. [In fact a simple political analysis of the consequences of these related pieces of legislation will reveal that they enable, perhaps even require teachers and principals to set up fiefdoms (which sometimes become personal playgrounds where they can take advantage of the young, the naïve, the weak, the innocent and) where they exercise dictatorial powers with Police support and do not hesitate to use them, often recklessly.]

Sadly this law ignores our current "acceptable" practices and philosophies of society and parenting. It focuses upon punishment rather than the larger part of parenting, which is caring, protecting and nurturing. These latter three, which constitute almost the entirety of our current social values in Canada with respect to parenting and childcare need to be stressed, legislated, regulated and enforced.

Canadian children are special and important people and should be treated with the kindness and respect that our mores dictate: with gentleness, and with the compassionate acknowledgement of gifts, talents, tendencies, wounds, weaknesses and shortcomings. These children are the hope for suffering children everywhere. We, as parents and as a society, have reared and nurtured them to be the hope of the hopeless. These will be the people who must solve insuperable Global problems, created in large part by those bent upon power with little regard for fairness, Equality and all of those fineries allowed by Constitution, Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and overriding Canadian Values.

As a Society we can make this choice to be kind and friendly towards our community of children. We can intentionally and carefully and kindly and firmly inform our school staff that we authorize them to act in our behalf and absence but that we expect our children to be treated as "Our Most Precious Treasures".

Do not bully them. Do not humiliate them. Do not discourage them. Do not judge them through any lens but the lens of love and compassion. Do not hold them back with insufficient curriculum materials. Do not make them feel small, frightened or insignificant. Do not direct anger or frustration towards them. Believe in them. Care for them. Treat them gently and kindly. We all, as parents and as a society, will support this kind of behaviour on the part of those authorized (as teachers or otherwise) to act in our behalf and participate in a challenging and exciting Future filled with hope that belongs to Canada and resides in our children. Schools should not be places where children (or their families) are threatened or feel threatened. They can be warm, friendly and inviting environments.

A simple poll of public opinion in this matter would be revealing. Ask all children how they would like to be treated, whether in accordance with The Education Act of Ontario and the current practices amongst teachers, staff, et cetera; or in the manner I am proposing: with kindness, compassion, respect, and relevant curriculum materials that will help them solve the challenges they will inevitably face - Globe and Global Community in crisis.

Ask any parent which model they would choose. Ask the Minister of Education and his staff which model they would prefer applied to their children by other public servants. Ask The Premier of Ontario and Members of Legislature and Parliament. Ask the Prime Minister which model he would prefer for his own grandchildren. Ask anyone. I have and the great overriding majority agree with me. This agreement is not chance occurrence or coincidence. In fact I have inquired with countless of my fellow Ontarians and Canadians. It is their opinion I am expressing.

If we want the children and future citizens of Ontario to be kind, peaceful, intelligent, respectful and co-operative, then our best avenues of influence are the schools systems. We need to model these behaviours in the classroom, the boardroom and the playground. If we want them to be kind, then we must treat them with kindness. If we want them to be patient then we must be patient with them. If we want them to be respectful then we must treat them with respect. If we want them to be intelligent then we must recognize and respect their gifts, talents and intellects. If we want them to be peaceful then we must stop waging war upon them which makes casualties of so many, and afflicting them with humiliating grief. If we want them to co-operate then teachers must embody a spirit of co-operation and teach our children to do the same; parents, students and teachers in 'equal' partnership.

In short we must treat them with the respect they deserve, as citizens [full Citizens] of the most wonderful democratic Nation that exists or ever has existed, and as Our Most Precious Treasures. They are dear to us.

It has been my experience in public school that no person nor “the system” itself had the capacity to evaluate and nurture the kind of intellect I have been proven to possess. Of course every system has its limitations, but high intellect should not be penalized, vilified and rejected. Intelligence and Ideas are valuable National and Global resources.

And it has been discovered that intellect can express itself in numerous forms and can be directed towards any human activity or discipline and that all children are gifted. But it is noteworthy that Albert Einstein, a recognized genius of historic proportion and consequence, a self-taught mathematician and physicist and educator of us all [schools thought he was slow and stupid], Director of The Institute For Special Studies In Physics at Princeton University [a research facility that was created for him upon immigration to the United States of America], Father of the Atomic Age, this man stated emphatically that, “The highest expression of intelligence is kindness.” Let our education systems embody intelligence through kindness.

We all value our children as "Our Most Precious Treasures". Treating them with kindness (If bullying can be legislated then so can kindness.) will be a great relief to the large proportion of school employees who are kind, caring, devoted and gifted for the challenges of educating a sometimes reluctant population. Let us give children the caring attention they require, deserve and demand while they are alive and well, for the loss of a single one of them is a great blow to all of us and we cannot avoid the consequences and concussion of such losses. We must choose war or peace and it has been The Canadian Way to choose peace. Let us make Peace ‘with’ our children.

Everyone will benefit if we dispense with this antiquated and offensive legislation and replace it with an Education Act that permits, requires and demands that all children in all schools be treated and valued to the same lofty level as we value them as parents and as a society - as " Our Most Precious Treasures". We all, as a Nation, can unify our efforts in order to lift the burdens of suffering, ignorance, and intolerance in Canada and around the world. It used to “take a village to raise a child.” Perhaps now it requires a Global Village.

Presently we are reckless and random in our spending and lifestyle habits. We indulge in fancy details and flourishes while millions starve. These careless habits will bring negative consequences. Injustice and greed will return to us seeking payment. We spend more on clipboards for our hospitals than would be required to feed entire cities in other parts of the world where starvation is rampant, and then berate our children for not being conscious and conscientious about the economical use of resources. Ignoring these truths in a state of ongoing apathetic complacency will certainly bring undesirable consequences.

Our Prime Minister [Mr. Paul Martin] has given us all a lesson in Economic realism and responsibility, which should be broadly and 'liberally' applied to our life in Canadian Society. His Financial/Fiscal leadership has lifted Canada out of an economic quagmire and into the elite status of a solvent and prosperous nation. The same kind of fiscal responsibility is needed in our schools, hospitals, and elsewhere; everywhere.

It is both conceivable and possible for us to raise up a generation of strong, healthy, smart, capable, confident, compassionate, economical, disciplined, Just, Equal and safe citizens. These Globally-minded people can carry the Canadian Lifestyle Technologies of Peace to all of the world. With the removal of the legislative impediments and the implementation of contemporary learning methods and technologies, plus the application of the best features of The Universal Culture that is ours, Canadians can continue to prosper in an international atmosphere of security and take a distinctly Canadian leadership role in the Global Community.

Our social, political and cultural technologies are clearly more effective than those of nations that dominate and undermine the lives and affairs of others with blind, misguided bullying. In Canada we know that ALL people are brothers and sisters, no matter their age, colour, language, lifestyle, economic status, national origin, sexual orientation, educational status, et cetera. This human affection is at the heart of Democracy according to Walt Whitman, the American Civil War poet.

Canadians are among the most creative, inventive, free, diplomatic, informed, imaginative, resourceful, equipped, productive and diligent people of all nations of all historic periods. We possess the natural resources, the goodwill, the social, cultural and industrial technologies and financial resources. We only require the unified, decisive, and Vision-driven Will to act in defense of our families, our Provinces and Territories, our Nation and The Global Community, and the ecosystem of The Globe itself. Time is short. The Crisis is upon us. We must act quickly with Canadian methods and values, or perish. Without Justice for our Child Citizens, Our Most Precious Treasures, this National potential cannot be realized and The Canadian Dream of World Peace, Security and Justice With Compassion will die.

Lady Liberty calls us again to stand, to choose, to decide, to act and to advance in solidarity with our disenfranchised children. She goads us forwards with her timeless benediction to the Children of Humanity. "Liberté. Egalité. Fraternité." ["Liberty! Equality! Brother/Sister/Childhood//Fraternity!"]

Peace.