

What Mackay report on religion really says

The teaching of religion in Halton schools has produced 13 briefs and 22 letters for the Halton County Board of Education's ad hoc committee on religious education. The submissions deal with the recommendations made in the recent Mackay Report on Religious Education in Public Schools in Ontario.

A special meeting to discuss seven of these briefs with their supporters was held last evening (Tuesday) by the 19-man committee. Acton's representative on the committee is Vic Bristow, and the secretary is Eric Balkind, administrative assistant to the superintendent of program for the Halton Board.

Last night's presentations were made by the Pentecostal Assemblies, Baha'is, Knox church, Milton; Milton Ministerial Association, Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Rea of Acton, Mr. and Mrs. Hackett, R. R. 6, Milton, and St. John's United Church, Oakville. Committee members have copies in advance, and ask questions of the supporters.

One brief has already been discussed at a meeting, and one or two more will come up at another meeting two weeks hence. The committee will likely be prepared to report to the county board in April.

Any group which presented a brief was invited to send spokesmen to a meeting. The committee felt the response to their request for briefs was "fair."

All across the province briefs are being submitted to local boards of education, concerning the controversial Mackay report.

The 120-page report, written by J. Koeller Mackay and his committee of six people make 12 basic recommendations. The following is an outline of what is contained in the recommendations.

The report urges the present course of study be abandoned in the elementary schools and its aims as set out in related legislation, programs of studies, regulations and guidebooks be abandoned.

It urges elementary schools to conduct opening exercises consisting of the National Anthem and a prayer, either of universal concern or the Lord's prayer, to be held in the home rooms each morning. The report suggested the same set of exercises be conducted in the Secondary schools but only before student assemblies and not in the home room on the daily basis.

The report suggests a program with its focus on character building, ethics, social attitudes, moral values and principles be encompassed in the public schools from grade 13 down to kindergarten.

It recommends that the acquisition of information about and respect for all religions be recognized as an essential objective of the educational system from kindergarten to grade 13. "This should be achieved by a program of incidental teaching and study, not through a formal syllabus."

It also urges a formal course of study dealing with the principal religions of the world be offered as options in grade 11 and 12 and instructed through the history department.

The report urges the hiring of a program consultant for each regional Board of Education office and a program co-ordinator for the Department of Education to be responsible for the implementation and direction of the new program in religious education. The special interest of the general public in the area of this curriculum should be given continuous representation through an advisory council of education.

The report notes opportunities for communication between the teaching body generally and those engaged in educational research should be established and improved where they already exist.

Also advised in the report are workshops, summer courses and other in-service activities that would provide professional development for the present teaching body.

Retain religion - Christian school

Georgetown and District Christian School's board of directors urge the retention of religious education in the public school system.

The school, on the seventh line of Esquesing has 200 students with over 30 students from the Acton area. It operates without the benefit of a per pupil grant from the province, such as is given to the public school system and Roman Catholic school system. The parents of most of the students attend the Christian Reformed church and want their children to attend schools which give a more basic Christian non-humanist approach to life.

Principal George Petrusma says "We do not protect our children from evolution, but just prepare them for a pluralistic society and point out to the children what we believe, as opposed to the views of evolution."

"In teaching science, we believe in creation."

"The Christian perspective makes us look at history as the development of life over centuries, which was a mixture of obedient and disobedient response to God's law word language was the gift of God. Christian education teaches us to see life as a precious gift."

The Georgetown brief "implodes the board of education to keep religion in the schools" Mr. Petrusma said. The Lord's Prayer and scripture reading should be retained in public schools, he said.

"If religion is taken out, there will be nothing left."

He said teaching religion can't be left just to the home and church. The child spends much of his time in school, so there must be harmony in teaching from the home, church and school or the child will become confused.

The public schools are trying not to offend anyone by

eliminating Christian teachings, he said. "It is hard not to offend anyone. I feel education can't be neutral."

Open Night



TEACHER MRS. ANDRICA Schouten of Georgetown shows Renate and Nancy Voskamp of School open night Monday. About 45 children from Acton and district attend the school on the R. R. 2, Acton, the exercise book used by children in her grade at the Georgetown District Christian Seventh Line, outside Georgetown. (Staff Photo)

MR. AND MRS. HARRY ENSING and children Eddie and Patricia look over the work done at the Christian School near Georgetown. Almost 200 children attend the school, most of them of Dutch origin. Parents believe in giving their children a Christian education and receive no government assistance. There are seven classrooms in the modern school building. (Staff Photo)



WELCOME MAT was out for all to inspect the Georgetown District Christian School Monday night and many parents and friends of students attended. John Snippe of R. R. 1, Limehouse, assures everyone they are welcome. (Staff Photo)

Don't accept Mackay report say Pentecostal Assemblies

A committee of Pentecostal Assemblies in Halton County says the Mackay report should not be adopted and insists the present system should not be abolished.

This committee of Pentecostal Assemblies held a well-attended public meeting in Acton, Feb. 12 when the brief was discussed. The representatives then went to a meeting of the board of education's ad hoc committee on February 17, but there was not a quorum of members present. They returned last night (Tuesday) to explain their presentation.

Included on the Pentecostal committee is Mrs. S. Thoman, who is its secretary.

"If anyone were asked if there had ever been a plot to make the people of Ontario the most spiritually impoverished and consequently the dumbest, most culturally deprived, colorless, joyless and unprovocative people

on earth, one could surely answer, "Yes, the Mackay Report."

"The old course, the out-dated Protestant ethic, was at least based on the Bible, a book which is probably still the most widely translated and distributed of any in the world. If there was discrimination under the old course then the adoption of the new will bring it to an acute stage. How it will ever find its way into the Hall of Fame or endure as a lasting monument to the progress of religious instruction for the young is hard to imagine."

"The report is ambiguous. It states that indoctrination received at home is to be respected through the public school career of the child. Yet what it proposed in the interest of the public good amounts to a heartless and immoral attack upon the Christian conscience. Whether this is a misconception on the part of the committee or a deliberate camouflage, one cannot know."

Baha'is endorse Mackay report envision "citizens of world"

These remarks form part of a brief recently submitted on behalf of the Baha'is of Halton County to the Ad Hoc Committee on Religious Education of the Halton County Board of Education. The Committee has requested submissions from the residents of the County on the Mackay Report and its application to this area in particular.

The Baha'i Community endorses the view expressed in the Mackay Report that since religious faith is a vital part of life, and since all the world's religions have contributed greatly to history, art, literature and music, a form of religious education, rather than indoctrination, should be provided in the schools. The Baha'is further suggest that opening exercises should include daily readings from the

recognized scriptures of the world and that a course in comparative religion should be incorporated in the history course in Grade 11 in the five year program.

"Upon us rests a particular responsibility to educate our children to be good citizens, not only of Canada, but of the world...to prepare them to enter a global society."

They fully support the moral development program suggested in the report as well as the recommendation that religious education in the public schools be carried out without the setting up of a formal syllabus.

The Mackay Report, Baha'is feel, mirrors an awareness of the need to educate our children to take their place in modern society as informed, unprejudiced and understanding individuals.

Acton couple prefer separate church, state

Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Rea of Acton say:

"We would like to express a belief in the principle of the separation of church and state with regard to religious education as currently proscribed in Ontario. We would add that we believe in the primacy of individual conscience, as opposed to religious indoctrination by the state.

No one doubts the wisdom, if not the necessity, of teaching children in school about the religions of men as the subject arises naturally in history, social studies, or literature. In this way children may understand more fully the inter-relationships between religion and behavior, church and state, religion and culture."



Catholics in Mauritius have now been officially authorized to "read and study the Revised Standard Version edition of the Scriptures and also the revised French Second New Testament." Both these versions are distributed in Mauritius through the Bible Society there.

One of the first to visit the Bible House Book Store was the priest in charge of one of the largest parishes in the island, who immediately purchased 100 copies of the Scriptures and within a fortnight was back for more, since they had "sold like hot cakes." As well as being in charge of a parish he had responsibility in the diocese for a group of young people who voluntarily give their time to the service of the church.

For the next quarter he had arranged that their service will involve Scripture distribution, including the Bible Society Testaments, and to this end he recently visited Bible House again full of enthusiasm to build up his stocks.

Continue present system Acton submissions urge

Several briefs received by the committee simply call for the continuation of the present system of religious education.

They include briefs from Mr. and Mrs. Peter Binne, Acton; Mr. and Mrs. George Forrest, Acton; Vivian Baskin of Limehouse; Nellie Norton of Limehouse; Mrs. Alma Hackett of Milton; Mr. and Mrs. Bailey of

Georgetown, and one from a group of eight Halton residents.

Milton and District Ministerial Association declares that the Mackay report, in protecting minorities, has forgotten the right of the majority. They suggest a qualified religious education consultant develop a program to be taught by the teacher, and to use the clergy

Health, food will cost less

Health and food services will cost Halton Board of Education an estimated \$162,894 in secondary schools and \$129,330 in elementary schools, the Board learned at their regular meeting Thursday in Oakville.

Both items are less than was spent last year. There is a difference of almost \$30,000 in the secondary schools and the elementary budget is down about \$800 from last year.

Budget for plant operation is up by almost \$20,000 in the elementary schools and by approximately \$160,000 in the secondary schools. Plant maintenance for secondary schools is down by about \$25,000 and in the elementary schools plant maintenance is down by \$65,000.

The Board discussed Food and Health Service along with plant maintenance and operation at the meeting. Budget discussions have been in progress since January. The finalization of the budget is set for March 26.

With the exception of three cafeterias in Halton schools, all are served by caterers rather than Board of Education staff. Currently there are 16 full and part time people employed by the board in cafeteria service. This department will be phased out by next school year and the Board will rely strictly on catering services.

Traditional simnel cake

The traditional simnel cake will be served this Sunday at St. Alban's. This is Mothering Sunday with baptism service. Then, during the coffee hour in the lower parish hall, the simnel cake will be served.

J.W.A. Lasby retired druggist

A retired druggist, Joseph Wallace Anderson Lasby of Toronto passed away on February 8 after a lengthy illness. Funeral service was held at the Rumley-Shoemaker funeral home on February 10 conducted by the Rev. R. D. Sinclair of Eden Mills. Interment was in Fairview cemetery.

Pallbearers were Orrie Lamb, Cameron Kitching, James McNabb, Wallace Swackhamer, Bill Lasby and Bob Lasby.

Mr. Lasby was born in 1897 in Esquesing township, son of Wallace Lasby and Jessie Anderson. He attended S.S. No. 9 Nassagaweya school and Georgetown high school graduating from the Toronto College of Pharmacy in 1920. He had lived in the United States, Scotland and Europe before going to Toronto 25 years ago.

He is survived by brother Charles W. Lasby, R. R. 1, Campbellville, nephews G. Wallace, and Joseph A. Lasby, R. R. 2, Rockwood.

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