Family Concerns
"Bridging the Information Gap"
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SELECTIVE "TOLERANCE"

By Linda Holloway

When is it ok to be intolerant and bigoted in public schools and mass media? When are diversity of thought and viewpoints absolutely not tolerated? What people group is made fun of, called names, and dismissed as kooks?

Ready for some answers? Public schools and mass media seem to feel compelled to single out Christians – particularly conservative Christians – as the group to harass and to try to intimidate and embarrass into silence. No diversity of views is allowed when man's origin is taught in our public schools.

Inherit the Wind seems to be the playbook from which the media and public educators take their cue. Isn't it interesting in this day of tolerance and sensitivity to every possible people group that teachers in the Shawnee Mission School District choose this movie to show in high school biology classes? This movie not only fictionalizes the Scopes trial but also lies and misrepresents real people, and makes up other people in order to portray anyone who disagrees with evolution as bigoted, ignorant, rude, anti-intelligent, and anti-science – just to name a few character traits. The disagreeable people in this movie were conservative Christians.

One set of parents in the Shawnee Mission District objected to the movie being shown in their 10th grade daughter's biology class because of the way it presents Christians. The school principal told the concerned parents that he didn't see anything wrong with it, and the movie was shown. These parents followed the procedure to file a complaint with the District and to appear in front of a panel. It's interesting that a student was included on the panel, but no students were allowed to speak to the panel. If this District follows its usual pattern, the powers that be will decide that the material is absolutely appropriate and nothing will change.

If this scenario sounds familiar, it could be because something quite similar happened at KU recently when a professor's choice of questionable materials and behavior toward students was "investigated" by the university. The university found nothing wrong with the materials or the behavior of the professor. Self-investigation appears to be a charade meant to placate the public… the press… somebody.

In these days of a weak economy and tight budgets, schools are losing money. In the K-12 schools, the funding is based on enrollment, so fewer students means smaller amounts of money. It seems that the public schools need to drop the arrogance and elitist attitudes and make a purposeful effort not to offend any religious group – even conservative Christians. In the past when Christians have objected to anything from whole language to sex education to OBE to dogmatic evolution instruction, educators and conservative Christian-bashers have had one solution for such annoying people – take their children elsewhere. Many have, but can the public schools really afford to keep chasing off students?

It would seem that one logical strategy to increase funding for schools would be to find out why so many parents are taking their children out of public schools and determine what policies could be put into place to entice parents to come back to the neighborhood school or to stem the flow of new students leaving. One change that would be a step in the right direction would be to improve the atmosphere in schools for Christian students. Instructing teachers that hostility toward these students and their worldview should not be tolerated from either students or teachers. Assuring parents that their children will be safe is imperative. Many educrats pride themselves on being progressive and yet they imitate the Hollywood view of Christianity.

Several school districts dropped their hostility toward homeschooled students when they realized they could make money off of them by allowing, even encouraging, the homeschooling parents to enroll their children in a few courses at the public schools. Perhaps, the same will happen for conservative Christians as a group. Even if change comes, not because it is the right thing to do, but because of the money factor – change would be refreshing!!

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