



Good evening. On behalf of Parents as First Educators, I am eager to bring to your attention the concerns that many Ottawa Catholic School Board ratepayers have with regards to this board's partnership with the secular charity Free the Children.

Eight months ago this room was filled with over 100 anxious parents and grandparents. They came because they were alarmed by some of the partnerships this board had entered into. They supported the delegations and speakers who asked the board to revise their partnership policy to include and underline the importance of the Moral Teachings of the Catholic Church when assessing who should partner, and who should not partner with you to educate our children.

Five months later, after a great many emails and phone calls from ratepayers, after input from many stakeholders, including Archbishop Prendergast, a partnership policy revision was presented and passed. To the encouragement and delight of ratepayers, you included the following sentence in the new partnership policy:

“The Board's philosophy, vision statement, as well as Catholic Social and Moral Teaching, will also direct partnerships and sponsorships”

This sentence was inserted to ensure that our children's education remains faithful to the Catholic Church, and so to Jesus Christ. In light of this newly revised partnership policy being guided by Catholic Moral teaching, I am here to express the judgment of many parents and ratepayers that Free the Children is an unsuitable partner for educating our children.

We base this on four considerations:

- First, Free the Children has refused to answer our direct and clear questions regarding artificial birth control and the use of condoms to prevent STDs and HIV,
- Second, Free the Children online media ties reproductive health to a dollar target linked to the promotion of abortion and contraception,
- Third, Marc and Craig Kielburger have written in support of International Planned Parenthood: the largest provider of artificial birth control and abortion in the world. Furthermore, Free the Children has supported this advocacy.
- Fourth, Marc and Craig Kielburger, have aligned themselves with AGALI, a group that advocates and lobbies for contraception and abortion

I will explain these four points in more detail. They are the reasons we cannot accept Free the Children as a legitimate partner for the education of our children.

ARTIFICIAL BIRTH CONTROL

On their website and in their own community reports, Free the Children makes it public that they teach women about family planning and reproductive health. In the appendix of this presentation, I have



included six instances of their public statements.

However, Free the Children has refused to answer the question of ratepayers, on whether or not they teach artificial birth control to the people they serve in their health clinics.

We would assume that if Free the Children embraced the Catholic moral position on artificial birth control, they would answer the questions of Catholic ratepayers without hesitation. They would quickly and energetically declare that they oppose contraception because it is part of the culture of death.

However, Free the Children has done everything to avoid answering our question. This, as you can readily understand, leads many ratepayers to suspect that they do indeed teach artificial birth control in the countries where they provide their services. If this is true, then based on the new partnership policy, it is clear that they cannot be legitimate partners in the education of our children.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

Free the Children also educates people in developing countries on how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases. References to this can also be found in the appendix. Our question is whether Free the Children is teaching methods that are immoral.

We know that the Catholic teaching of abstinence before marriage and monogamy within marriage is 100% effective in preventing STI and HIV transmission. The Church has always taught that intercourse outside of marriage and contraception within marriage are intrinsically evil. That is, no circumstances exist in which they are morally permissible.

If Free The Children advocates for the use of condoms to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and HIV transmission, that would also be in clear violation of board policy.

Again, Free the Children has done everything to avoid answering this clear question from ratepayers. This naturally leads many ratepayers to suspect that they do indeed advocate for the use of condoms.

FREE THE CHILDREN ON YOUTUBE

Free the Children also advocates for reproductive rights in online media. They have their own YouTube station called “Ask the Professor”¹. On this station, Professor Jonathan White speaks on behalf of Free the Children. In the video entitled Globalization Part 2, he says:

“Last year we spent 12 billion dollars purchasing perfume. That same 12

¹ <http://www.weday.com/we-act/ask-the-professor/>



billion dollars could provide reproductive rights for all women around the world.” <http://www.weday.com/we-act/ask-the-professor/>

This 12 billion dollar figure comes from a conference in 2010 called “Women Deliver”. This conference clearly articulates that part of the 12 billion dollars allocated for reproductive rights is to be used for contraception and abortion.²

THE KIELBURGERS AND INTERNATIONAL PLANNED PARENTHOOD

We know that International Planned Parenthood is the largest provider of so called “reproductive health services” in the world. For International Planned Parenthood, “reproductive health services” include all forms of artificial contraception, and also the direct killing of children through abortion. In a letter titled, “A Mother's Day Manifesto”, Marc and Craig Kielburger, declare their direct and energetic support of International Planned Parenthood. Here is what they say:

“And as women in developing countries fight for reproductive rights, our now Conservative majority government is poised to cut funding to International Planned Parenthood, an organization that provides reproductive health services abroad. It's a paternalistic refusal to offer women in Africa the same rights offered to women in Canada.” <http://www.weday.com/global-voices/a-mothers-day-manifesto/>

The Kielburgers insist that the so-called rights Canadian women exercise through the services of Planned Parenthood, must also belong to African women. But what services does Planned Parenthood provide? They provide all forms of contraception and the direct killing of unborn children. These services, the Kielburger brothers clearly imply, must not be refused to African women.

The Manifesto containing this statement is currently on display at the “Me to We” website. The “Me to We” page that displays the “Mother's Day Manifesto” letter, also contains a direct link to Free the Children pdf teacher resource documents. These pdf documents are intended to assist teachers in drawing out lessons from the Manifesto for students. Here is a quotation from one of those Free the Children documents:

Explain to students that throughout the column a variety of women’s rights violations occurring around the world have been identified. Ask students to identify some of these issues from the column and write their answers on the board (e.g.: bride burnings, veiling, genital mutilation, the killing of infants

²<http://www.unfpa.org/public/cache/bypass/home/parliamentarians/pid/3615.jsessionid=BF8588AC39C99B9291C1421590180862?newsLId=12052> and <http://www.womendeliver.org/about/the-issue/the-cost/>



and little girls, reproductive rights, rape, date rape, etc.)” <http://cdn5.freethechildren.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/4/files/2012/09/Mothers-Day-Secondary-Activities1.pdf>

As the evidence clearly shows, Marc and Craig Kielburger, and Free the Children – who use their Manifesto as a resource for teachers – do publicly support and advocate for International Planned Parenthood.

THE KIELBURGER'S AND AGALI

More recently, in a September 15th article authored by the Kielburger brothers in the Ottawa Citizen³, Marc and Craig express their opposition to child marriage: something that every conscientious Catholic opposes. In that same article though, they also give praise to the Adolescent Girls' Advocacy and Leadership Initiative, or AGALI, a group based in California that teaches young girls in developing countries to speak up and resist oppression. However, when we take a closer look at AGALI, we discover that they also teach young girls to advocate for access to contraception and abortion. The following is a statement from AGALI's website,

“young women are subject to legal and political frameworks that negate their human rights, and often suffer the consequences of ...unsafe abortion...”
<http://agaliprogram.org/eng/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/AGALI-Fact-Sheet-20091.pdf>

Of course, as everyone in this room knows, abortion is never safe. Every abortion results in a wounded mother and dead child. Aligning themselves with AGALI is further evidence that the Kielburger brothers and Free the Children⁴ do not qualify as legitimate partners in Catholic education.

In the minds of a great many concerned Catholic ratepayers, there is every reason to disqualify Free the Children as a partner for the Ottawa Catholic School Board. While there is no doubt that Free the Children does do some good things in developing countries, there is also no doubt that they advocate for practices that are the opposite of what we hold, profess, and live as Catholics. Based on the evidence we have provided here tonight, we ask the Ottawa Catholic School Board to stop engaging in its partnership with this charity.

We would ask furthermore that the Ottawa Catholic School Board not entertain any future engagement with Free the Children until they provide clear and unambiguous negative answers to the following three straightforward questions:

3 <http://www.ottawacitizen.com/opinion/op-ed/Girls+most+powerful+advocates+their+rights/8914661/story.html>

4 At the end of the Ottawa Citizen article is a link to the We Day website and highlights the Kielburgers' connection to Free the Children.



1. Does Free the Children teach methods of artificial birth control to any of the people they serve?
2. Does Free the Children teach that condoms prevent STI and HIV transmission to any of the people they serve?
3. Does Free the Children's definition of reproductive rights and or health, as mentioned in numerous Free the Children documents and online media, include access to artificial birth control or abortion?

We may be tempted to abandon hope of finding suitable partners for Catholic education. However, it turns out there are many potential partners who refuse to participate in any immoral activities. These are groups who see women and children in all their dignity as children of God. We would like to take this opportunity to name three of them for your consideration as potential future partners and as replacements for Free the Children. They are: Mater Care Internationals⁵, Canadian Food for Children⁶, and Save a Family Plan⁷. These are groups that can attract and inspire adolescent and pre-adolescent students not only by the work they do, but also by the principles they embrace. They oppose the culture of death and live and breathe the culture of life. Thank you for listening.

APPENDIX

The following are direct quotations from Free the Children web pages or community reports:

1.

“The women's groups also learned the importance of family planning and how to best prevent sexually transmitted infections.”

(Free the Children's Enelera Community Report,
<http://ottawapafe.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/eneleraicommunityreport.pdf>)

2.

“Mamas in the community also bring their families to the clinic to receive immunizations and for weekly family planning sessions.”

(Free the Children's Pimbini Community Report,
<http://ottawapafe.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/pimbini-community-report-smm-spring-2011.pdf>)

5 <http://www.matercare.org/>

6 <http://www.canadianfoodforchildren.org/>

7 <http://www.safp.org/>



3.

“They also learned about family planning and how to prevent HIV/AIDS.”

(Free the Children's Motony Community Report,

<http://ottawapafe.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/motonycommunityreport.pdf>)

4.

“the provision of health workshops and family planning”

(Free the Children's India Fact Sheet,

http://www.virgin-atlantic.com/tridion/images/freethechildrenfactsheet_tcm4-859631.pdf)

5.

“provide them with information about important topics, including reproductive health”

(Free the Children New Health Initiatives in Udawad

<http://www.freethechildren.com/2013/01/new-health-initiatives-in-udawad/>)

6.

“we provide mothers and daughters with education on reproductive health”

“The most common illnesses in Adopt a Village communities are respiratory illnesses, water-related illnesses, HIV/AIDS and malaria. Free the Children takes a number of measures to ensure that these illnesses are not only treated, but prevented.”

(<http://www.freethechildren.com/international-programming/adopt-a-village-faqs/>)