

Get involved in education to prevent sacrificing future of our children

Nicolette Leonard

Is the education of our children a sacrifice to Molech, a Canaanite god associated with child sacrifice?

One detestable ritual was to build two fires on opposite sides of a path. Children were forced by their parents to walk through between the fires. Children were physically scarred for life and even died in these sacrificial rituals.

If they did survive it, the emotional scars remained with them forever.

We should not allow our schools and our education system to become altars for Molech. Uneducated, underdeveloped, broken and scarred children will only lead our families and nation into deeper despair, poverty and destruction.

Schools have become unsafe places for children, with gaping holes in the floors, broken windows and broken doors.

Schoolyards have become a playground for drug deals to go down and for gangsters to recruit new members.

Toilets have become death traps and spaces for violent predators who prey on young children to perform their dastardly deeds.

Once pristine sports fields have become overgrown and dangerous areas that are no longer functional to the school.

Education provides an escape from poverty. It is the way to economic and social development of a community and a nation.

It gives purpose and meaning to life.

Education was always emphasized in our family. I qualified as a teacher and practised as one for 22 years. I have experienced and seen how children from poor families, remote and rural areas became the "source" to lead their families out of poverty to a better life.

Having taught many children, who have beaten the odds and who broke the cycle of poverty in their families, I know first hand that these successes for these learners did not come cheap.

Sacrifices were made and support came not only from learners, but from parents, teachers, education officials, government and school governing structures.

I firmly believe education is a powerful tool at our disposal today and therefore it needs a greater scale of attention from all stakeholders.

Most children are excited to attend school because it is the place where they exercise and practise their social skills.

Making friends and building friendships remain an important part of a child's development and there is not really anything that can replace that in a child's life.

Our schools need to become and remain safe places where children have the opportunity to develop, are given opportunities to learn skills, increase knowledge, play sport in an encouraging environment, learn to respect others outside of their home environment, and learn to accept the authority of their school principal and the staff of the school.

They need to learn to play within the rules and respect the outcome of the game and to work hard to realise their dreams.

The responsibility to make the above possible rests with the government, parents and teachers.

Government needs to ensure that schools have their required teacher quota so that this tendency to have classes of 50 and more is simply stopped.

No child can function optimally in a cramped class where they share desks or floor space with others. We should not allow our schools to become tools in political spats.

Redeployment and changes in the curriculum that are not thought through properly breed instability and uncertainty in our teacher corps.

Teachers are to take their role as educators seriously and fully understand the impact of their role in the life of every single child.

Teaching is a calling, not just a job that gives you governmental benefits. Your hard work and passion for each single child could change the trajectory of their life.

Ensure your example of punctuality, commitment, dedication and presence inspire your learners.

School governing structures must ensure the school provides opportunities for academic, cultural, entrepreneurial and sport development. How many of our schools still live up to these ideals?

Parents certainly play the biggest role in the education of their children.

What do you do to encourage your child? What do you do to support the school and the teacher?

Do you inculcate a culture of learning in your child by ensuring they do their homework, respect teachers and accept discipline?

The responsibility to keep our schools safe is part of our responsibility as parents, as members of communities who care about what happens on our streets.

Our responsibility is to invest in our children and in their future.

As parents we cannot abandon or absolve ourselves from our primary responsibility given by God to cherish and raise our children.

They are dependent on us, and it is our responsibility to take this task seriously and not to abuse this trust and dependence. Parents need to support the work of the teachers as much as they hold teachers accountable to do their work in the classroom.

Churches, community buildings need to awaken from their slumber and open their doors to offer spaces for extra classes, entrepreneurial development and homework clubs where community members can offer themselves to safeguard and develop children.

The education of our children is our collective responsibility.

May Almighty God protect us from serving and sacrificing our children on the altars of Molech.

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