

I am Rev. Ted Pierce a pastor of Rolling Hills Presbyterian Church in Overland Park, Kansas. It is a privilege and honor to address this distinguished body of Representatives from the State of Kansas.

Not long ago I preached a sermon titled "You Can Go To Hell." A dear friend and Methodist pastor called me and asked, "Ted, is this sermon, 'you can go to hell' or ' YOU CAN GO TO HELL...'" Jokingly, He then stated he *had been wanting to tell some of his congregation they could "go to Hell" for a long time!*) I responded, "I am just quoting Jesus! - from the Book of Matthew chapter 25."

"It reads....

When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep and the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, Come you that are blessed from my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. .. Then Jesus will say to those at his left hand. You that are accursed depart, go to hell with the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink I was a stranger and you did not welcome me...

I have made it a personal goal (and I preach and teach this) to the people at Rolling Hills Presbyterian; when I am preaching, teaching, or voting on an issue – I will cast my vote for welcoming the "stranger" *especially for young people*. I am not one that wants to hear "you can go to hell with the devil and his angles!" If it is a school down the street, a college around the corner, or a school that Rolling Hills will build and support next year in Guatemala, we desire all God's children and youth to have access. I recommend the State of Kansas remain with the status quo leaving the doors open to affordable education to all - those to whom Jesus says, " I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who *are members of my family*, you did it to me."

The young people you grant an affordable educational opportunity are members of our family! I believe you want to open up doors and hear "well done good and faithful servant" verses "you can go to hell." Let us continue an open door policy with an affordable education opportunity for ALL young people who live in our communities here in the State of Kansas.