

Murdoch's Toronto: Toronto the Good?

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[0 : 00] Thanks, Alexandra. I don't know whether it's good to be on this side of the room or not, but you'll find out, I guess. I'll start with a psalm, which is a prayer.

And I'll start there. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him and the son of man that you care for him?

Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands. You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. So our God's creation is good and human beings are endowed by God and we've been created to be creative.

And at their best, so are human communities. Another reading this morning from C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*.

[1 : 25] It may be possible for each to think too much about his own potential glory hereafter. It is hardly possible for him to think too often and too deeply about that of his neighbor.

The load or weight or burden of my neighbor's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken.

It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare.

All day long we are in some degree helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and circumspection proper to them that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Lewis in *Weight of Glory*. These are good words to remember when we talk about human communities.

[2 : 55] We will be thinking and looking at some data and statistics this morning, but do not forget the individuals with all their variety that are behind these statistics.

I'll just pass it, show and tell a little bit, and I'll pass a few things out while we're talking, and I'll do that in an hour. There are some photos of Toronto that I took in a book on Toronto in the time period.

Murdoch, maybe we'll touch on Murdoch some. Murdoch starts, I think, in around 1895, and I'll be lucky at the period from about 1880 to 1890, which Murdoch is set in.

Okay. And here is a portrait of Toronto in 1893, sort of a bird's eye portrait.

That's, you know, fairly accurate, but it's obviously an artist's conception. So Toronto, the city of churches, as it was known as.

[4 : 08] This morning, I will suggest that the Victorian Toronto was the result of a centuries-old development within Western Christianity that resulted in enormous amounts of social capital accumulating in the city that lies along the northern shore of Lake Ontario.

By social capital, I mean the dense networks that tie individuals and groups together in reciprocal relationships that are mutually beneficial and produce norms of trustworthiness.

Well, what does that mean? It's Robert Bowling alone Putnam's idea.

But, for example, one can go to the bank and be confident around here that one's funds will be there. I haven't been turned away, except if the balance is a little low or negative in the past in Canada.

One can borrow a tool for the garden from a neighbor. Community centers exist for the common good, and we've enjoyed them along the way.

[5 : 22] One can go on. Craigslist, Alexandra was talking about putting her fireplace screen up yesterday, and lo and behold, she looks at the person who responded, and it was George Edgerton.

So she's got that in her trunk this morning here at church, but that's kind of social capital. Or one can take a more extreme example.

Suicide rates. Suicide rates vary across time and culture and depend upon the density of relationships that individuals are embedded in, as do murder rates that we will look at in a few minutes.

And obviously there are individual situations in each occasion for these tragedies, but these rates are culturally produced overall, even though they're all individual occurrences.

And they are fairly predictable. They're cultural products. We know that perhaps there will be 350 homicides in Canada this year, which is actually a very low rate, possibly 3,500 deaths through vehicle accidents.

[6 : 47] Victorian Toronto, Murdoch's Toronto, was of course not absolutely unique, but why look at Toronto?

The historian David Bebbington, the historian of evangelicalism from Britain, he's English, he's lived in Scotland for a long time, designates Victorian Toronto as the premier 19th century evangelical city.

Evangelical at its, quote, most potent, quote, unquote. How did this evangelical city come about?

And I will go all the way back to the earliest developments in the church. I don't want to only go back to the great revival, say, in Britain.

There's a lot going on prior to that. And so we'll take a very quick tour here. And we'll go into the...

[7 : 51] That's some Roman ruins, of course, there. Larry... No! Yeah, it's my... What the heck did that use to be before it got wrapped up?

Okay, it was some kind of statue. That's a head. Yeah, it's my... PowerPoint skills aren't the greatest when I'm grabbing these pictures.

But we'll take a big picture view of the development of a broad Western liberalism. And an Oxford professor of government, Larry Sedentop, has given us such a big picture.

And he locates these developments in the evolution, the development of Western liberalism in general, within the developments in the evolution of the Western church.

In the Roman world here, the place of the lords and the paterfamilias as keeper of the gods was upset. And there was a move towards the greater equality of the soul in the eyes of God.

[9 : 07] The care of souls was emphasized in the developing church. There was an increasing regard for the worth of the individual. Christians of all classes, even slaves, came together in the basilica.

The place of women was slowly changing. And I've got something slightly out of order here, but I won't worry about it. The development of the church influenced the development of government in the West and put limits on power.

A new, quote, social order based on individual morality and self-discipline rather than on brute force and mere deference, unquote. Standards introduced by canon law were more humane.

Even voluntary associations go back to monastic orders. Christianity changed the ground of human identity, as our friend James Houston has emphasized many times.

Kyle Harper, the author of this book here, an historian of the Roman Empire, a classicist at the University of Oklahoma, has written a major work on, quote, the jarring gospel of Christian sexuality, unquote.

[10 : 29] In the Roman world, the sex trade was blatant. It was everywhere. It wasn't on the margins. Slaves were routinely sexually exploited. But the new Christian ethic was, according to Harper, a, quote, coordinated assault on the extramarital sexual economy that marks one of the most consequential revolutions in the history of sex.

This is what the early church brought about. Monogamy became extremely important. And this is... And this is... Paul Vane, an archaeologist of the ancient world, not a...

I think he's an atheist, tells the story from a different angle. I will quote the scholar Gary Anderson, who says, Paul Vane asks his readers to imagine themselves in an airplane flying over the ruins of a large Roman city.

And here's a Roman city, perhaps not in ruins, but one that I found. The public buildings erected by means of charitable bequests include the public theater, the baths, and various basilicas devoted to governmental functions.

So enormous are they visible that the observer might conclude that they cover more ground than allotted to domestic housing. If, on the other hand, we flew over a great medieval city, and here we have London circa 1300, the picture changes quite a bit.

[12:11] Instead of theaters and baths, one sees the roofs of convents, hospices, orphanages, and soup kitchens for the poor. Charitable activity left an enormous and visible footprint on the design of the evolving Christian city.

Quote, unquote. And we see that in Toronto. This is social capital. Going ahead to the 18th century, the early evangelicals did not seem to take much notice of a social evil such as slavery.

But among the earliest abolitionists, there was little coordination or even awareness of other abolitionists. But deep under the surface, the recurrence of reform, evangelical networks were forming as a result of the communal nature of evangelicalism as it developed.

And the emphasis on the individual being created in the image of God. Anti-slavery marked British evangelicalism. And this evangelical engine of reform continued to evolve into Bible societies, missionary organizations, prison work, orphanages, the importance of women's rights, factory reform, and temperance campaigns.

Methodism, as the fastest growing religious tradition in the transatlantic world, played an important role. Methodist discipline was employed in avoiding luxury items such as sugar and rum in order to subvert the economics of the slave trade.

[13:49] By urging a sugar boycott, it mobilized Methodist women, who were, of course, the custodians of kitchen supplies. Evangelicalism was able to ride the tales of vast changes in organizing and communication.

The voluntary society, the newspaper, print in general, there were enlarged spheres of action for women. Global missions brought back awareness of slavery.

A fusion of evangelical humanitarian zeal and enlightenment notions of natural rights produced a powerful, popular mobilization of men and women against slavery.

Newspapers, coffeehouses, debating societies, libraries, and cultural activity. Methodism did not set out to be politically involved, but it is a good thing that it did.

And Bruce, Bruce Heinmarsh and Mark Noel will be having a course on Methodism this, the Wesleys anyway, this summer.

[14:54] While some Unitarians and free thinkers espoused the abolitionist cause, evangelicals provided the horsepower. And here the Christian doctrine of monogenesis that saw all of humankind as one was all important.

Human beings were all created in the image of God. In abolitionism, this doctrine moved into the public arena. And you can see where I'm going with this, to Toronto.

Evangelicals increasingly held sway within British culture, both within the metropole, that is London, and on the periphery in places such as Toronto.

So we can go to the beginning of Toronto in 1791 when John Graves Simcoe was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada.

He had undergone, he was a British general in the Revolutionary War, the American Revolutionary War, and somewhere around 1790 had gone through a religious conversion and served briefly with Wilberforce in Parliament in Westminster.

[16:06] But in 1791 he was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada and in 1793 selected York as its capital, later Toronto, of course.

And in 1793 he forced through the Act Against Slavery against the Council there. Six of the 16 were slaveholders at that time.

And by 1810 slavery had disappeared in Upper Canada. And this was an enormous good that saved Canada from tremendous heartache.

we will move on here to and this was Seedentop's book and that's the Dutch translation of it.

I believe it's I don't read Dutch but Italian is that right? Okay, there's the Italian translation to work.

[17:14] So moving on to Toronto the good. In the 1880s Mayor William Howland Evangelical Anglican set up a morality squad and is remembered by historians today for being a vice squad but it had a much broader agenda that included the protection of women and children.

And so the tag of Toronto the good was originally connected with his vice squad or morality squad anyway and so it was originally an epithet a term of contempt but it has brought in since although most wouldn't know its origin today it's sort of become Toronto the good it's only thought of as positive I like to refer this to a scandal of goodness a scandal in that much of the historical guild would view the place as oppressive and hyper moralistic at least in the 19th century so the city Murdoch's city if you want in 1881 had a population of 86,000 and by 1901 it was 156,000 so it was rapidly urbanizing and industrializing over 90% of the city had roots in the British Isles there were of course economic ups and downs life could be very precarious for women with large fat families they were very dependent on male breadwinners on average although women certainly worked as well there was heavy migration to the city of young folk as you see at times on

Murdoch Toronto Toronto was also known early on as the city of churches and it is blessed with rich statistics with respect to religion that's why that's part of the reason I was attracted to studying Toronto religion was included in the Canada census whereas in Britain religion was included in the Canadian census until 1951 whereas in Britain it was discontinued in 1851 and in the US it was never included because of the separation of church and state and so I was able to calculate things like literacy rates according to denomination and I was also able to work with the central prison register I have a picture of it circulating there and the register included denominational data so it's a historian's gold mine and at the moment

I'm working on prisoner heights by denominational affiliation exciting yeah yeah how tall prisoners were I estimate that over 50% of Toronto's population at this time was evangelical in a broad sense and would follow David Bevington's quadrilateral definition of evangelicalism four points one evangelicalism was conversionist emphasizing a change of the heart two there was a mystical emphasis I would say on the person of Christ Christ and on the cross and on the cross and all of this together resulted in an activism that can be seen in missionary movements or voluntary societies etc.

that we'll be looking at shortly here and the roots all go back to the evangelical revival in Britain but I would go back much further to Puritanism Reformation and the earlier church that we were talking about before there I would not want to cut off Protestantism from a movement within Western Christianity in general and you can't excise the Roman Catholic Church for example so there's three points I'd like to make quickly in the time remaining number one British evangelical Protestant discourse messages however you describe language even ways of thinking how did a person at the time think number two the British evangelical Protestant organization and the take up number three the take up of British evangelical

[22 : 17] Protestant ideas into the heads of the citizens of Toronto at the time so number one discourse Protestant messages emanated from multiple sources whether coming from the pulpit the Sunday school hundreds of thousands of pages of newsprint messages given to children around the table or going out the door on the way to school these messages discourse if you will were disproportionately aimed at male behavior men women women were a visible majority in churches and even if the older males in the household did not attend women carried Protestant prescriptions back into their homes and on into the culture at large teaching on temperance became closely entwined with ideas on Christian manliness quote unquote male sexuality was increasingly constrained over a long period of time of course but in

Toronto births and in Canada in general births outside of marriage were extremely low and I would see that as a measure of the containment of the male sexuality to the marital union on an urban frontier women often with large families could simply not have sons and husbands off spending the money in the tavern and so the Christianity isn't simply moralism but it carried with it this moral dimension the ordering of male behavior paradoxically led to greater freedom for both men and women women and working class men got the vote in the latter part at least municipally in the latter part of the century when neither could vote earlier working class men without property couldn't vote as of course women couldn't vote unless they were widows or single with property so new places were opened up for human activity once male violence was contained and we can talk about this further in general these messages this protestant discourse served to humanize the city such that the treatment of children prisoners and even animals became perceptibly more humane the humane society was an evangelical organization in its beginnings in Toronto and elsewhere and this is

I'll just briefly show this graph and you can see homicides decreasing with time and this some historians have called this in England being at the bottom of the trough there and some historians have referred this to the English miracle but maybe not all so number two the British evangelical protestant organization in Toronto I've called it the machine in the past but I'll call it an organization for our terms today here the British social historian Hugh McLeod has argued that the strength of a discourse of a religious discourse can be measured by church attendance and we all know that church attendance doesn't sum up what it means to be a Christian but surely it's a measure of something at least on the community level there were three newspaper censuses that I'll refer to later that were done in the 80s and 90s that showed over 40% of Toronto's population in church on a given

Sunday which was basically the highest anywhere there were maybe two or three communities in Britain that were smaller that had similar rates of attendance the first table here I'm not going to spend a lot of time on it the important part is to look at perhaps is the rates of change over the 20 years that I've listed there and you see all expressions increasing significantly although if you look at the Methodists and Presbyterians and Baptists in particular they and other smaller group they increased significantly buildings church buildings were cropping up in the central core of Toronto there were 90 churches by 1890 or so and the

Methodists for example had 19 buildings with a seating capacity of 1,000 or more with several 2,000 or greater the growth of all expressions of the Christian faith was remarkable and I can I've got some I'll just go through some some of these buildings here that really got blurred and about a third of them will of these 90 churches in the core still stand today this one was turned into a box factory long ago but obviously Methodist church I think this is I used to know the names of these and that terrible transfer this is Grace church which was an Anglican church started by two Anglican evangelical laymen Sam

[28 : 22] Blake and William Howland it was built for the poor in the ward area which was the poorest part of Toronto approximately where Eaton Centre is today but it's long ago torn down I forget exactly this is the Cathedral of Methodism in Toronto Metropolitan Methodist Church still there today and it held at this time anyway 2500 and just to the east was Cook's Presbyterian which also was held a similar number which is gone today this oh sorry this may be Cook's church here I'm not sure I don't know whether that would hold 2500 though another one anyway you get the idea even if they're somewhat blurred my so you can see changes in seating capacity there with the

Baptists in particular growing from 1882 and I got these figures from the church censuses that the newspapers had Methodist seats grew from or Baptist seats grew from 3300 in 1882 to 9900 in 1896 so it's a time of tremendous growth across the denominations and the third table there labeled C2 are the raw attendance figures in the newspaper censuses these were conducted by the globe and the telegram one by the globe and two by the telegram I believe and we could talk about it later you'll see a couple interesting an anomaly there in the 1888 attendance and you can think about why that might be that particularly

Anglicans Presbyterians and Catholics didn't show up on that date maybe you'll have some ideas these are raw numbers so you basically have to make an adjustment for Baptists and Methodists who might show up twice at church on a Sunday so if you subtract a third that may give you more like 45% of the total population being in church on a given Sunday and these Sundays were in the winter so it's not prime time and you know at a time when there wasn't medicine at any given moment a lot of people would be very ill and you had disease in 1885 5,000 died of smallpox in Montreal Toronto was spared but primarily primarily through inoculations but you can see I don't know how big Montreal was at the time maybe 200,000 but to have 5,000 people die in one winter goes beyond our experience Sunday school I haven't listed but in 1880 approximately approximately 19,000 children were enrolled in Sunday school and in the elementary school there were 12,000 children with an average attendance of 8,500 in elementary school the difference being of course that one of the big differences was that the Sunday school spanned a much greater age range so and Methodists had a disproportionate number in the Sunday schools 7,800 Anglicans had 6,900 but they had a larger population to draw from so there you see the strength of Methodism and the Baptist faith in particular relative to Anglicans anyway for which there were of course more nominal members if you were going to be a Methodist you had to join whereas with Anglicans and Catholics it was more of a state religion although there was no establishment at this point the Sunday school 56% were girls and 44% boys evangelicalism in general was a highly

gendered religious expression we don't have hard data but in New Brunswick for example this may have been numbers of evangelicals 66 members church members were women maybe men were regular attenders often who didn't belong but that was the case in Toronto too where you had disproportionate numbers of women in churches very few single men past the age of 16 18 would attend church they would tend to come back after they married whereas there would be many single women in church we can talk about that later if you wish and that's fairly standard even today political power is another component of this religious organization here we have

[34 : 38] Edward Blake who was the leader of the federal liberal party he was from a prominent evangelical family in Toronto he had served for premier of Ontario for two years and then when Alexander McKenzie who was prime minister from 1873 to 1878 a teetotaling Baptist from Sarnia Blake went over to be one of his ministers and when Blake jumped to federal politics he handed off the premiership to Oliver Mowat a very strong Christian politician and I've circulated an article along with the handouts he was I think he's the great great uncle of Farley Mowat an atheist he was premier consecutively from of

Ontario from 1872 to 1896 and was simultaneously the president of the Canadian Evangelical Alliance these prominent evangelicals were also part of the vast evangelical reforming movement that comprise scores of voluntary societies as we mentioned these societies went back to the early days of evangelical abolitionist movement and provided a safety net for the culture at large at a time when there wasn't a huge federal budget in Ontario the federal budget in about 1893 was 4.2 million church whereas church budgets were a quarter of that and that's not counting the vast number of charities so I think the budget's approach of the churches and their associated charities approached that of the

Ontario government the city had a higher budget than the province so as we mentioned these societies went back these voluntary societies went back to the early days of the evangelical abolitionist movement and provided a social safety net in London I don't have real good data on Toronto but in London England the annual budgets of the various charities which were usually associated with the churches were larger than the budgets of a number of European countries so the charitable organizations in London had revenues that were half that of the Dutch government at the time and the Dutch government maybe perhaps wasn't the powerhouse that it had been but it was still a major country the growth of the evangelical denominations in the 80s and 90s resulted in increased political power in an organic way it wasn't a culture war kind of conspiracy to elect your evangelical as opposed to all others it was just a function of the numbers of evangelicals who outside of

Toronto were even in places were even greater they were generally liberal evangelicals in terms of political persuasion but not always William Howland we'll see his picture in here I scrambled them somehow a two-term mayor evangelical Anglican came to power as a result in the mid this is in 1885 he's elected to mayor came to power as a result of the votes of the labor movement temperance movement and the members of the middle class so he had very broad power base he was very popular Howland was born in 1844 possessed a bubbling enthusiasm was unassuming kind-hearted and approachable he ministered to the poor and he was said to be found constantly day and night in the ward which was the poor quarter there in

Toronto around where the Eaton's center is there today but he died young relatively young at age 49 and for his funeral procession people lined the streets by the thousands including hundreds of poor people he served as president or on the boards of all of these associations which will give you an idea of the scope of this evangelical network evangelical for the most part not all but the evangelical alliance newsboys home prisoners aid boys home house of industry the mission union Wycliffe college home for sick kids coffee house association upper canada bible society magdalene asylum west and temperance association the infants home prison gate ministry home for the aged toronto general hospital hillcrest convalescent hospital mimical school for boys home for incurables dominion alliance willard track depository children's aid society humane society in shaftesbury hall and he died almost penniless because he gave away so much he came from a business family but he probably devoted didn't devote enough time to his business and I will come back here is a plaque for another evangelical anglican layman daniel wilson who was the first president of the university of toronto but is remembered for that today on this marker university college at [41 : 25] U of T but I'm sure he would want to be remembered as being a Christian but you don't read about that anymore today of course so the take up and Casimir Zosky another important

anglican evangelical layman great great grandfather of Peter Zosky this is Sam Blake brother of Edward Blake a prominent evangelical anglican involved in the founding of Wycliffe College and just back here this is Robert Rakes a statue in Queens Park it's a cast from the original which was cast for the or sculpted

I guess you would say for the centennial of the Sunday School movement Robert Rakes was involved in globalizing the Sunday School movement and in 1930 two of these were cast two replicas and one came to Toronto anybody know where the other went Rakes was from Gloucester so I'm assuming that Jim might remember this statue in Gloucester where Rakes did his work with Sunday Schools I'll skip over anyway I'll briefly touch on the take up of British Evangelical Protestant ideas and I saw this as reflected in changes in homicide from the period 1880 to 1889 when males are

I would argue we're increasingly being shaped by British Evangelical Protestant moral ideas they are already very low 1880 to 1889 30 homicides 1890 to 1899 23 homicides a very low rate even for today and you can say well this is an anomaly but you can look ahead to the murder convictions in Toronto for the coming decades there are obviously more homicides than murder convictions but it is a I believe a measure of violence in a culture brief breakdown 53 homicides for two decades males as always across culture and across time males were perpetrators in 85% of cases and it usually runs about 90% across culture and across time while a woman was the victim in 28% of cases wives there were only four wives killed by husband four too many of course but a very low number from 1921 to 1990 women were victims in 36% of homicide cases so this period that we've been looking at has a lower percentage of women as victims which could point to tighter constraints on male violence in general and against women in particular furthermore there was only one case of murder-suicide in these 20 years which is an extremely low rate of these 53 homicides eight involved handguns and four knives

I've passed out the Eaton's catalog and you'll see the easy availability of handguns and I'm quite in favor of gun controls but in late Victorian Toronto you had to be 16 years old to go in and buy a revolver from a gun shop or Eaton's and it wasn't against the law to possess a handgun if you were less than 16 but you couldn't buy one so I'm only pointing out that there was a very low incidence of homicide despite the ready availability of handguns how important is alcohol regulation in all of this alcohol was increasingly being regulated and this was a byproduct of evangelical activism can be argued that this was the mechanism whereby male behavior was changed in the 1894

Ontario plebiscite 85% of eligible women voted for prohibition which is a phenomenal statistic maybe a mistake for the long run but for the short run one statistic from the earlier period in the 19th century was that there was one tavern per 127 Toronto residents and this changed to one tavern per 4091 in 1911 which is a social massive social shift how important was monogamy somewhere in the neighborhood of two to four percent of births were outside of marriage so sexual rivalries among males was diminished and I would argue a product of the Christian influence which tends to put the damper on male violence so I would like to point out that

[47 : 39] Toronto was a peaceful place across the religious spectrum Catholics and Anglicans weren't violent people in Toronto and certainly evangelicals were not this peaceful trend continued in 1907 there were seven murder convictions in all of Canada a country approaching six million at the time today homicides in Canada remain low but are higher than in the late 19th century in the first half of the 20th trauma medicine today is a factor perhaps 50% of victims in Murdoch's period would survive today we are a more heavily police culture with far greater surveillance than back then so in summary Christianity brought about a significant accumulation of social capital and this made a difference for ordinary people who the Christian faith declares are not ordinary

Murdoch mysteries I did a count in Wikipedia on homicide victims and I couldn't get them all because they're not all mentioned but I counted 138 in a short period of time and it's pure fiction of course so it's not a but 30% of them were women so Elizabeth Jennings whoever is the writer you know did have at least if not in numbers in percentages she was in the ballpark so I'll close there we can talk about Murdoch briefly or whatever you want to whatever questions you want to ask and I'll try to say something testimony second this work the wife éc an induce gaan never can believe beyond underestimate mother

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