

Christians, Secularism and Pluralism: Choices for Public Religion in Contemporary Canada

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[0 : 00] Okay, well the full title there, Choices for Public Religion in Canada, subtitled Christians in an Age of Pluralism and Human Rights.

I was given a bicycle at roughly the age that Jim received his typewriter. I don't think the bike affected me one way or the other, and I do use computers now.

And we will try and keep the technology under control. I've written out what I want to say, although I think I'll probably be summarizing myself and skipping things.

We only have so much time. But anyway, as I start off in the introduction here, I'm speaking as a Christian and as a historian.

I have been working on the topic of public religion in Canada for a couple of decades now, which represented a quite new field for me.

[1 : 08] I had previously worked and published and taught in international relations in the history department. But in the 1990s, as I was on several of the both diocesan Anglican committees and synods and the long-range planning committee of General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, I became more and more interested in the intersection of public religion and politics.

Indeed, let's see what I mean by public religion here. I should say that in last year's presentation, in last March, to Alerner's Exchange, I reviewed many of the key findings and drew on several of the publications I already have out.

But the hope is that I will live long enough to finish a major study of all of this, right from, well, certainly the Second World War and the age of Mackenzie King, into the major turning point, as I'm going to be arguing today, that what comes under Trudeau, and when I say Trudeau, I mean the Trudeau, the only Trudeau.

And then as the post-Trudeau period of chartered jurisprudence, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

So if I live long enough, as I say, and I have enough energy, I'm hopeful that I will get this study out. If I don't buy any more boats or work on any more restoration projects, which have really interfered with publication, but I do want to get back to that.

[3 : 06] And certainly it's been a real pleasure to bring back in my active memory the major themes of this project, which I'm going to be presenting to you today.

So I'm going to review briefly some of the themes that set the background for today's focus, things that I brought forward last year, and then identify some of the major choices Christians and other faith communities face in light of challenges in the public domain to our values, our religious freedoms.

We can look briefly at some of the more urgent challenges, indeed, as I underline it here, crises that religious communities in Canada increasingly are facing.

And we could choose an array of these things which make it into the national headlines, but I think out here many of us are very much alarmed and concerned about what's been happening to Trinity Western Union's attempt to establish a law school, which they've got full permissions for, and then the major attack mounted by bar associations and ventures across Canada to prevent them from doing this, indeed, by preemptive censure, such that in Ontario right now and in Nova Scotia and who knows what will happen in BC, their graduates, should they establish this school, would not be acceptable for practice in those provinces.

So that's one thing. There's a couple of other topics we may get to, and I see Cheryl has arrived here now, and she is very active, and rightly so, and very effectively so, in looking at the problems of gender identities and sexual behavior that violate traditional religious values, which are being imposed, it seems, within our public school systems.

[5 : 25] Okay. And at any point, if you want to stop me and ask questions, certainly do it. We're going to have discussion and questions at the end as well.

So let me see if I can get things going here. I'm not going to spend much time on, let's not go too far, reviewing the patterns of pluralism in Canada.

Indeed, human rights is at the center of the types of normative behavior shaping our constitutional realities, both manifest in terms of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, provincial human rights codes, federal human rights bills, codes, and the various commissions and tribunals across the country that exercise authority and power in these fields.

Human rights and pluralism. Indeed, what I'm talking about is, what type of pluralism will we see become the dominant pattern in Canadian jurisprudence, Canadian politics?

So I reviewed these shifting patterns last year. I'm not going to spend much time going over them again. I want to look primarily at the fourth, and as we'll see, the fifth pattern.

[7 : 00] But the classic pattern in Canada was a type of Christian pluralism between the major denominations, Protestant and Catholics.

It was cooperative, and I think it engaged quite successfully with the liberalism and the democracy, which is at the foundation of Canadian values and politics.

The term that was used was Christian democracy, and this lasts from Confederation up until the Second World War and into the 1950s.

One of the really interesting things is, whenever we're in crisis, whether it's a depression or it's a war, First World War, Second World War particularly, and then the Cold War, the relationship between church and state becomes much more cooperative as the government looks to the churches for legitimation, support, and direction.

Now, we change slightly, and I'll just very briefly mention, a real turning point is 1948, when human rights begins in the wake of the terrible things that happened under the Nazis and the fascists in the Second World War, and then as the Cold War comes along, two from the Soviet Union.

[8 : 26] Human rights are discovered anew and given legislative articulation, first, and very importantly, in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Canada subscribes to this, but with great reluctance. The governments of Mackenzie King and then his successor, Louis Saint Laurent, favored British type of jurisprudence where Parliament would be supreme, the common law would be the center of all of this, rather than the American pattern or the French pattern of putting it all into a chart.

Well, we subscribed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but it was a very narrow sell in all of that, and it was Lester Pearson who represented us as the Universal Declaration was being signed up that was effective in getting our adherence to that UN Declaration.

But, and this is really important for understanding everything in terms of the nature of human rights and pluralism in Canada, the government wanted to insist, they weren't successful in this, but they wanted to insist that human rights were not created politically, but rather they were endowed by the creator, God.

And so the theology of all of this is entitled in Latin, the Imago Dei, that we are created, humans are created in the image of God, and therefore, they possess inherent rights and dignity as being creatures of God.

[10 : 15] So that was the compromise. That was how we interpreted human rights back at that time. Then we come to Mr. Diefenbaker, where the Christian pluralism that had prevailed classically in Canadian history is quite intentionally, when it comes to drafting the Diefenbaker Bill of Rights, as it was called, it was formally the Canadian Bill of Rights in 1960.

The Jewish community in Canada, Jewish leaders in Canada, were brought into the religious condominium or consortium and welcomed in by leaders like Paul Martin Sr., Diefenbaker himself, worked very closely with the Jewish communities and leaders in Canada.

And so, as the Diefenbaker Bill of Rights included reference to rights under the supremacy of God, nothing in that Diefenbaker Bill of Rights would be offensive then to Jewish leadership and Jewish communities across Canada.

So the maddeningly Christian elements of Christian democracy are being replaced then by a, what I call, religious pluralism. Then we come to the 1960s, and this is where everything indeed changes.

Those of you, just about everybody here has lived through the 1960s, I think. I was young then, fewer young then, perhaps very young. But this is where things radically change in Western cultures across the world and in certainly North American, Canadian cultures.

[11 : 58] Now, we come to then Mr. Pearson who, one of my favorite politicians anyway, manifests the Christian in all his instincts as I argue here.

Just let me get down a little bit further here. And what you have is a type of pluralism. Let's go a little bit further down here. I review the kind of dynamics that transformed Canadian culture through the 1960s, and it's particularly poignant in Canada because it coincides with a major crisis from Quebec nationalism, incipient Quebec separatism, but certainly a challenge to the Anglo-Canadian hegemony which had dominated Canadian politics up to that time.

Now, religion is changing. There are powerful forces of secularization, media changes, entertainment changes, sexual morality begins to change radically.

This is the age of the pill. And it's also of course in 1967 Canada's centennial celebration, a hundred years.

and we got quite excited about that. We wanted something positive. There were so many uncertainties and confusions and minority governments that were not too effective in many areas under Mr.

[13 : 39] Pearson. So when it came, first we changed the flag, and we got a flag which everybody seems to like now, but there were tremendous critics on that flag.

It dropped, of course, the crosses of the Union Jack and the Canadian M sign, and we ended up with something that looks not too far from, well, it's a maple leaf, but of course it's off of the treatise marijuana.

Okay. But anyway, we came to love the maple leaf flag, but it was Expo that became the happiest of the celebrations in the 1960s in Canada.

Now, briefly, in shaping the religious element in Expo 67, recorded, of course, in Montreal, what to do?

Because the religious communities were very eager to participate in all of this. And as it turns out, now, let me just go down a little bit further here, the Pearson government, and certainly Pearson himself, was more than anxious to invite warmly religious communities of all types, virtually all types of any, with a national presence, and come participate to show themselves at Expo, and so we had a series of pavilions.

[15 : 15] Now, the original intention of the bureaucrats that were in charge of setting up the pavilions and the religious side of all of this at Expo, I went through all their records, quite interesting stuff.

Their original intention, there would be one pavilion for all the Catholics and Protestants and other religious communities, and they would all happily cooperate together under bureaucratic regulation and control.

This was shot right from the beginning, and indeed we ended up with, yes, there was an ecumenical Christian pavilion, Man and His World, I think it was.

Then there was an evangelical Christian pavilion that brought all the Moody Institute science films in, very, very popular, together. And they did quite well.

There was a Baha'i pavilion, there was an Islamic pavilion, there was a Jewish pavilion, and what you see is the government finally happily cooperating and helping all these communities and granting them the rights to have their own religious pavilions.

[16 : 30] And so you have what I call here a liberal pluralism that is inclusive, that is welcoming, that is respectful of the religious communities in Canada.

So that I think is, if we're talking about patterns of pluralism, that is the type of pattern that there is some hope that we can support and recapture in Canadian politics and culture.

Now, the fifth pattern that I identify here is really the pattern that we've seen increasingly adopted by the elites of Canada, by the courts of Canada, by the major institutions in Canada, and it was the pattern favored by the Mr.

Trudeau himself, and that is a pattern of strict separation of church and state, as in the American constitutional position, as it has been increasingly interpreted in modern times, and as very much in Trudeau's thinking, in the French Republican tradition as well.

So, here we have Mr. Trudeau, then. Trudeau mania, the election of 1968, and Trudeau and let me say that one can't help but admire the energies and charisma and focus and determination of Mr.

[18 : 11] Trudeau. I mean, I think perhaps the most brilliant and, you know, determined politician in modern Canadian politics.

Now, here we have, as he addresses the tremendous cultural changes that are occurring in Canadian society by the late 1960s, and equally so, the tremendous challenge of what he called tribalism, but nationalism and separatism in Quebec, his agenda is to modernize Canadian constitutional norms and jurisprudence and removes the classic role and functions that religion made in the public sphere.

Now, privatization would be, I think, the best term to describe what Mr. Trudeau wanted. He, of course, was the Catholic, a thoroughly liberalized and modernized Catholic, Catholic, and nevertheless very disciplined in his attendance at Mass, and very anxious to court and have the cooperation and recognition of the Catholic hierarchy in Canada.

Cardinal Carter, Emmett Carter, and Trudeau were very, very close and saw each other an awful lot of the time. and when it came to Trudeau's grand passion then, having gone through the stages of reforming the criminal code in Canada and removing certain key elements that were, of course, full of religious import, abortion, homosexuality, birth control, that all ended up, I think, for the most part, first in marriage legislation, bringing in much more liberalized and permissive divorce, then in the omnibus bill of 1968-69, removing criminal proscriptions around these key issues that I've mentioned.

Now, in doing all of this, let's go down here. Trudeau was very articulate and intentional in what he was doing here, and he was bringing in a type of pluralism in which the state would be neutral, or we might call it secularist then.

[20 : 59] As he addressed in 1967 when he was justice minister, he put forward what I call the cardinal themes of the new jurisprudence and pluralism.

quote, we are now living in a social climate in which people are beginning to realize, perhaps for the first time in the history of this country, that we are not entitled to impose the concepts which belong to a sacred society upon a civil or profane society.

The concepts of the civil society in which we live are pluralistic, and I think this parliament realizes that it would be a mistake for us to try to legislate into this society concepts which belong to a theological or sacred order.

So you see the major points here and what I term this then is a secularist pluralism where religion is privatized and is not to practice publicly and in major public institutions.

Its previous elements, its priestly, pastoral, and prophetic elements, and particularly the priestly elements are to be privatized in all of this.

[22 : 25] So, again, Trudeau was insightful and his reimagining of liberalism to meet the challenge of a secular modernized, increasingly secularized and modernized Canada.

They were quite brilliant and one has to hand it to Trudeau for the skill with which he articulated these things. even if he himself, I think, would be appalled at some of the directions that have been taking.

Now, of course, Trudeau model two has tried to claim the legitimacy of his father's legacy.

I mean, Trudeau was quite opposed to abortion personally. The arguments that the embryo, the part of the woman's body, he utterly rejected, whereas, of course, Justin Trudeau claims that he's just following in his father's footsteps.

Trudeau, also, in the negotiations with the Catholic hierarchy, and especially Cardinal Carter, trying to get the Catholic churches, who were very, very concerned about where all this was going by the 1980s, both in terms of protecting their confessional schools, but also protecting the major scenes of protection of life, in particular.

[24 : 07] They were very worried where these things were going, so Trudeau finally got the support of the hierarchy and Cardinal Carter in a very interesting personal negotiations, by promising the bishops, by promising Cardinal Carter that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms would not remove the constraints and open up free abortion.

That was the principal thing that the Cardinal was concerned about, and that you remember, what was brought in 1969 was therapeutic abortion when the mother's life or health became an open door, and that's what the bishops were worried about.

When that was endangered, then a hospital committee of, I think it was three doctors, would study the situation and grant permissive abortion then, but abortion aside from that would remain under the criminal code.

Now, Carter made it clear to Trudeau that if Canada went down a path, which of course it's done, all of the things that Catholics and evangelicals were worried about back in the 1960s and then at the time of the constitutional watershed of 1982, all of them had gone to pass.

trials, so their fears were quite legitimate, but Trudeau promised Carter that this wouldn't happen, and Carter in turn told Trudeau that if it did happen, he would hold Pierre Trudeau personally responsible for all of this, and he didn't say he would rock in hell, but that's what happened.

[26 : 02] Okay, Trudeau, I've got to not talk about Trudeau because that could monopolize its soul. It's also interesting. Okay, so we see then that the criminal code of Canada is altered, and Trudeau's, as two of his biographers, Christine McCall, in their biography of Trudeau, they called this his magnificent obsession, as he, of course, came back from a very brief retirement in 1980, and devoted his principal, the last phase of his time as prime minister, to drafting and having passed and getting the obstreperous premiers on board, and hopefully also Levesque, he already failed in getting René Levesque into this, but he did to break through the gang of eight, between 1980 and 82, 82 April of 82 was when the Queen came and the wonderful ceremony on Parliament

Hill that was almost rained out, and you see Trudeau and the Queen there, and she signs the Royal Proclamation bringing in the new Constitutional Act with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as the first part of the Canada Constitutional Act of 1982.

Now, as the Charter and the constitutional changes were being discussed through these years, and it took quite a bit of time, there was tremendous debate, discussion, and of course I list some of the actors here, the Guardians, this was what had the public attention, the Premiers, the Guardians of Provincial Rights, Civil Libertarian Groups, Aboriginal and Women's Groups, these are major actors in the constitutional discussion, but to the government's surprise, they were quite dead surprised by this, religion, religious issues emerged powerfully by 1980, 81 as well.

Christian lobbyists, and here we, I think, have some lessons to learn, Christian lobbyists joined with Conservative Party leaders to criticize what was lacking in this Charter of Rights and what was there in the Diefenbaker Bill of Rights.

They criticized the godlessness of the Liberals' proposed Charter, and what is perhaps noteworthy for our purposes regarding the religious dimension of this debate, whereas mainline Protestant submissions and witnesses in the various parliamentary committees that were set up gave their full support to the Charter project, concentrating on justice issues with little concern for protection of religious freedom, religion, or the religious grounding of human rights, which was the classic position in modern Canadian history.

[29 : 23] It was the Catholics and the evangelical Protestants slowly roving their way towards each other, being traditionally pretty far apart and often enemies.

But anyway, now they find that they have much more in common really, and this is one of the most important themes of contemporary Canadian constitutional history.

But the evangelical Protestants, represented very effectively by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, they were the ones that pressed the government, working primarily through the Conservative Party, and they were the ones that pressed most resolutely.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada stated, the acknowledgement of one supreme God, whom we as a nation are answerable, gives ground for legislation bearing on all matters human.

To omit any such reference only leaves the door open for a substitution of other less worthy grounds. And they list some of these, utilitarianism, naturalism, secularism, etc.

[30 : 32] Since legislation cannot escape growing out of presuppositions. Moreover, human rights, though recognized by the state in a democratic society, are a sacred endowment from God, not bestowed, but administered by the state.

Now, those two sentences are very, very insightful, and I think... Well, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, their committee of who Ian Rennie, who many of us know, Ian was on that committee.

And this is the transforming moment for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. They were a nice but rather sleepy and ineffective organization up until this time.

But given the challenges of the charter and then what could be following it, it was Brian Stiller, who became the head of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

He transformed it. His leadership was very, very important in all of this. Again, many lessons that we could learn from Brian Stiller in all of that. Later on, he became the president of Tindo University College in Toronto.

[31 : 50] And now he is still going very strong, very active, and he is a roving ambassador for the World Evangelical Fellowship. Now, I'm not going to spend a lot of time on Trudeau, God, and the Constitution.

I've published on all of this, and I think I mentioned a fair amount of this last time. But the Catholics and the Evangelicals working effectively through JCP, I think primarily in the Conservative Party, and through Deputy House Leader David Smith, who is Senator Smith now, although he can't claim to be a big-out liberal senator with the Liberal Party pulling out the rugs under all these liberal senators.

He must be really angry about that. But anyway, he was the point man in the Liberal Party for the religious dimension of all of this debate. And he was very close to Trudeau. And David Smith himself grew up as a Pentecostal.

His parents were missionaries. And he was, indeed, the closest of the Liberal leaders, then, to the Ontario, certainly the Ontario Evangelicals.

And they, indeed, worked closely with him. Now, he convinced Trudeau, given the mobilization that occurred by the early 1980s in 1981 particularly, as the final version of the Constitutional Act and the charter was being written, that it would be politically disastrous for the Liberal Party if they ignored the Catholic heritage and the rising evangelical political influence in Canada.

[33 : 41] And most importantly of all of them for David, as he saw all of this, was that they were cooperating with each other. And if the Liberals didn't put a reference, a religious reference, in the charter, they would lose these communities forever to the Conservative, the Conservative Party.

So, now, here we have some of the things that I say. Trudeau criticized the Conservatives as hypocritical and detestable for playing politics with God.

And claiming they were, he claimed that they were inspired more by fear of the electorate than fear of God. Trudeau thought it was, here I quote, was strange so long after the Middle Ages that some politicians felt obliged to mention God in a Constitution which is, after all, a secular and not a spiritual document.

He also finally genuflected to the electorate, claiming now it was his personal preference to include this reference. Privately, as David Smith told me, Trudeau told the Liberal Caucus that he didn't think, quote, God gives a damn whether he was in the Constitution or not.

My favorite quote in all of the history is that. Okay. Now, more seriously, the Liberals were confronted with a mass campaign, unprecedented in, I think, in religious lobbying in Canada.

[35 : 12] And in all of this, yes, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, yes, Evangelical Church elites' leadership, but the most important element there that I see looking back at it was 700 Huntley Street.

David Maines went off on television repeatedly, brought in leaders, and called for a massive letter-writing campaign, petitions, the whole thing.

Cheryl, I hope you're listening here. And, sure, Quetian, who was the Justice Minister, who was in charge of the Constitutional File, then, speaking in Parliament, admitted that, you know, sure, they had all these other lobbies, but in terms of the numbers of letters, the passions raised coming in, that, indeed, this issue was the number one issue.

And so the Liberals backed off their separate, secularist agenda here. It wasn't going to be there. Trudeau didn't want it there. And Chrétien didn't want it there.

And they bowed them to the political pressure that was mobilized by Catholics and conservative Christians. Well, as I say here, the, you know, we have a reference, then, to the supremacy of God.

[36 : 37] Canada's founded on principles. This is in the preamble. A preamble to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There it is, right there.

Whereas Canada's founded on principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law. Now, what you have here, if you encrypt this, is this is a recognition of the fusion of religious values, principles that recognize the supremacy of God and, on the other hand, the liberal ideology or democratic values, the rule of law.

That is the classic Canadian pattern. And that is the pattern that is in the Constitution that we have today. All attempts to remove, as secularists want to do today, remove any influential claim to this religious dimension in, as it's articulated, the supremacy of God, when any attempts to remove this have fallen absolutely flat.

Stan Robinson was the key mover and shaker on this file. But even the NDP didn't want to give him free reign on this and he got demoted to the backbench for for his bringing forward petitions on this issue because the NDP and the Post and the Conservatives knew that this would open a hornet's nest and that Canadians generally still favored this in the Constitution, certainly back still in the 1980s.

Okay, we get into, and I'll just cover this very quickly, post-charter Canadian jurisprudence. I've already covered this and what I've been projecting ahead that for the most part the guarantees that Trudeau had given to the Catholics, the success in putting in reference to the supremacy of God in the preamble to the Constitution, these have been, in a sense, brushed aside as the jurisprudence of Canada in the age of human rights and in the age of Section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which is the equality rights section, they have trumped the Section 2 which articulate the fundamental rights to conscience and religious freedom as well as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, all of those rights that are in Section 2.

[39 : 28] And this is an age where we see the religious participation of Canadians, memberships in religious organization, attendance on a regular basis, all of these factors have gone down, down, down, down, not least of course in the Indian.

The Church of Canada but especially in the United Church, the Catholics have held their ground a little bit better but in terms of identity, membership, participation, we've been living in an increasingly secularized or indifferent age in our culture, in our society.

And the jurisprudence, again, now this is an area that I'm going to be studying much more intensively, but the jurisprudence and particularly the role of human rights commissions and tribunals, provincial and federal levels, the role of the courts then, and including and most importantly then the Supreme Court of Canada, which of course St.

John's Shaughnessy had quite a lot of experience, certainly with the superior courts in BC, and then we failed to get our case before the Supreme Court of Canada.

But nevertheless, all of this has operated to bring us to the condition that we're in now on a whole series of issues, which is the secularist, the secularist capitalism, whereby secular lobbies, identity lobbies, are much more successful before the major institutions, including the legal institutions of Canada, much more successfully in having their agendas recognized and privileged than religious organizations are, or those that espouse a traditional Christian or traditional religious morality on all these hot topic issues.

[41 : 38] Most, perhaps most importantly, the redefinition of marriage that came in the Christian government and the Civil Marriage Act of 2005, which represented a secularist type of pluralism, privileging, religion, than the lobbies that were extending and changing the definition of marriage over traditional religious opposition to all of this.

Okay. I talked briefly about how the various religious organizations in Canada have responded to all of this.

and I compare, I'll just say this briefly, the secularization ceases that was predominant among sociologists up until a decade or so ago.

With modernization, urbanization, industrialization, you had the loss of religion in public spheres and roles and influence, and religion would be privatized.

now that's the true pattern. This seemed to be contradicted by the resurgence of religion around the world globally. Islam, the most dramatic of these, but also religious communities in the two-thirds world, not least Anglicanism in almost everywhere except Canada and Britain, but resurgent in numbers and vibrant and playing major public roles in their particular cultures.

[43 : 21] and in America, you have this strange conservative revival under the Republicans with Mr. Reagan being very, very sympathetic to public religion and norms and values and public prayers and all of that and trying to get a Supreme Court appointed that would go along with all of this.

Nevertheless, it seems that certainly in Canada and the Western Europe and Britain, the secularization seems to be credible and convincing, whatever it is in America.

And it seems, I think it's going that way very much in America after the blip of the Reagan administration, even the very, you know, all the attempts to appoint conservative Supreme Court justices, this seems to have been ineffective as the liberalist agenda in the area of identity rights, sexual identity rights.

This seems to be sweeping at the jurisprudence there where the conservatives are losing all their cases, which has driven us all back then in many ways to protecting in an increasingly indifferent or increasingly hostile environment, protecting elements of religious freedom, which are constitutionally guaranteed.

Now, in all of this, the media, the elites of media, entertainment, schools, courts, lawyers, professionals, are very, very important.

[45 : 04] And the attitudes and values that are central to the agenda in these very, very influential cultural and political quarters are increasingly hostile to anything but the extremely privatized religion.

I quote Chief Justice Beverly McLaughlin in all of this as she sees where the, in a sense, the unwritten constitutional principles expressing themselves previously in doctrines of natural law.

But now, unlike in ancient times, these norms do not fasten on theology as the source of the unwritten principles that transcend the exercise of state power.

It is derived from the history, values, and culture of the nation viewed in its constitutional context. Now, where the religious traditions of Canada fit into all of that, she seems to be fairly ignorant, but it's a matter then of the jurisprudence, which is secular and pluralist, and with the unwritten norms and principles derived from secular sources in history.

Okay. What do we do now? We're going to be running out of time, I'm sure, soon. What is the time? 9.52. 9.52. Okay, we've got, I better stop here.

[46 : 40] I've got choices here then for public religion in Canada. And I'm, you can see them here now. I've got five or six things that I think are quite important.

We are living in, be realistic, we're living in an age when Canadian elites are hostile to traditional Christian values in the realm of sexual and family norms where permissiveness rules.

There is no wisdom in assuming any privileging of traditional Christian norms in politics or law, not least in the conservative party who will not touch social conservative issues.

Religious freedoms, the guarantees of the constitution for freedom of conscience and religion of section two, I've mentioned this, are in no way subordinate to the equality rights of section 15.

This was made very clear. These are not a hierarchy, they're not ranked, they are foundational, they are equal. And this needs to be re-emphasized as fundamental in seeking legal protections.

[47 : 41] The supremacy of God, I've talked about all of this, this needs to be reaffirmed and publicized in terms of its manifest original purpose as a guarantee of religious freedoms and status in the public as well as the private sphere.

Very different from a strictly secularist pluralism. effective voices. Now I've talked about a few of the effective voices that we've had in the past.

We have to be alert and active. One of the most important things that's happened in recent years is the growth of think tanks and lobbies that understand the realities of constitutional change, legal change, and social change in Canada, and develop articulate, effective strategies and tactics for the protection of religious freedoms.

Faithful witness on conflict, social and moral issues, and who now regularly intervene with the courts and legislatures on such issues. A brief list here, and there's many of them, but I've talked about the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

Cardus, which brings Protestants and Jews and Catholics together, they publish a very important journal, Convivium. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and some of their subcommittees together with related Catholic pro-life organization, Living Waters of Canada, we know some of our friends that are involved very actively in that, but it's hard going, and they have to shape themselves in ways that can operate in a very hostile, endangered, legally endangered environment, and they're doing an excellent job of training church leaders as well as providing pastoral care for those that come with relational problems.

[49 : 40] And we have to align ourselves with some people that may disturb us sometimes, rabble rousers, like Ezra Levant, who is writing and helping a major campaign in support of the religious freedoms of Trinity Western University to establish a law school without being censored by lawyers and bar associations.

Okay, signing petitions, calling our political leaders, all of this counts, writing letters to the newspapers, political participation, whether in our professional organizations or in lobbying public institutions and media or in direct political participation, we need the courage to speak and stand for what is true and good, even when we are censored and hold down on these issues.

I put this as a question, maybe Cheryl can answer it. Is the Conservative Party of Canada presently unwilling to advance, it seems unwilling to advance any social conservative themes.

Is this still the best hope for damage control in national politics? And finally, something that we should not forget when we jump into this turmoil and all the excitements and disappointments of political participation and being in but not of the world, like our savior.

We should love the world and all its peoples, we should, in all things, be prayerful and live in hope, not to despair.

[51 : 20] Fear not and speak the truth in love. In the long run, all things will be put to right, however dismal it looks like. Oh, I can't be short.

Okay, I'm going to stop there. Okay. Okay. Hold on. Hang on. All right. Okay. Hold on. Malik Facto. I'll wait. Be cared for Joe. He started playing the super Doch, but it's just...

one gang member of that ass system. Check it out. And then I'll just have your developer table and Christie. Wilson. Sorry, and Stephen on In starring in her franchise and Jul. Gary. Jasonremo.

Police state. Wilson. Can't be a friend of devil. So much more.