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## Connecting the Dots

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### Introduction

I call the first part of this talk *Connecting the Dots* because I am going to make some connections and comparisons that will shed some light on the current situation in Canada related to freedom of conscience and religion. My focus will be on one of the things Pope Benedict has described as non-negotiable: the primacy of parental authority in the education of our children.<sup>1</sup>

The second part of the presentation is about becoming active in public affairs. I call that *Mission Impossible*.

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You are familiar with the old saw that those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it, so let's begin with a history lesson.

#### Germany

Compulsory education began in Germany in Reformation times, more in theory than in practice, and became state policy in Prussia in 1871. School attendance became mandatory in the Weimar Republic after the First World War, but private education arrangements were still a legally available alternative.

Only after 1938, when Adolph Hitler promulgated the Law on Compulsory Education, was compulsory attendance at state schools enforced with fines and imprisonment.<sup>2</sup> Denominational schools were not formally abolished, but Nazi policies and intimidation were effective in suppressing them. Some 13,000 Catholic schools had been closed by the beginning of World War II.<sup>3</sup>

Hitler had earlier demonstrated his interest in securing his hold on German youth. He said:

When an opponent declares, "I will not come over to your side," . . . I calmly say, "Your child belongs to us already . . . What are you? You will pass on. Your descendants, however, now stand in the new camp. In a short time they will know nothing else but this new community."<sup>4</sup>

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This motivation was apparent in the wording of the law, which mandated “education and training of German youth in the spirit of National Socialism”<sup>5</sup> - Nazi ideology. A year after he enacted the law on compulsory state schooling, Hitler ordered the conscription of all remaining German children into Hitler Youth. Parents who resisted “were warned that their children would be taken away from them . . . unless they enrolled.”<sup>6</sup>

Continuing the history lesson, we find that police dragged crying children from their homes to state schools,<sup>7</sup> and that home schooling families fled Germany because they faced fines and imprisonment and even the apprehension of their children.<sup>8</sup>

And not only under Hitler’s compulsory schooling law. One German official even threatened to charge home-schooling parents with “high treason and incitement of the people against the authorities.”<sup>9</sup>

Responding to international criticism, a German consul general explained that the suppression of homeschooling was necessary to prevent “the rise of parallel societies that are based on religion or motivated by different world views.”<sup>10</sup>

None of this will surprise anyone with even a passing acquaintance with Nazi Germany. Adolph Hitler was not one to tolerate the existence of “parallel societies” that might challenge his world view.

But what may surprise you is that all of this happened in Germany within the last five years. Parents fined and imprisoned, children seized and placed in psychiatric facilities and foster homes, German refugees fleeing to Austria, Iran, France and England - these reports did not come from Hitler’s Germany. The reports are from democratic Germany, Germany of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where Hitler’s law is used to harass and punish parents in the name of tolerance, multiculturalism and human rights.

All of this is done, moreover, with the blessing of the European Court of Human Rights. According to the Court, such oppressive measures serve the interests of democratic pluralism.<sup>11</sup>

By now, some of you may be wondering if I have played a bait-and-switch game with your executive: that I accepted an invitation to talk about freedom of conscience and religion in order to deliver a sermon on home-schooling. Others may question what German educational policy has to do with fundamental freedoms in Canada.

### Quebec

Well, let’s now turn to Canada: Mennonites leaving Quebec after the government ordered their denominational school shut down and raised fears that their children would be apprehended by child welfare authorities.<sup>12</sup>

This was not during the “bad old days” in Quebec under the Duplessis regime, when state educational policy reflected the cultural hegemony of the Catholic Church. This was not sixty years ago, but the summer of 2007. It followed twenty years of changes, including the repeal of constitutional protection for religious education, the elimination of state denominational schools and the abolition of parental authority in the education of their own children (Appendix “A”).

You see, the government of Quebec has decided that all children in the province must be made to develop “a religious culture consistent with ministerial orientations.”<sup>13</sup>

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Underline that: “a religious culture consistent with ministerial orientations.”

To be quite clear, “ministerial orientations” has nothing to do with ministers of religion, nor the sexual preferences of clergy. It refers to policy guidelines from the Ministry of Education. Students in Quebec are to be taught to develop a religious culture that complies with policies of the Ministry of Education, which will “determine the type of instruction the school should provide . . . on ethical and religious issues.”<sup>14</sup>

One of those policies, now made law, requires all schools to teach the state’s newly minted Ethics and Religious Culture curriculum to all students in all grades. No students will be excused from the course,<sup>15</sup> because the government of Quebec believes that “openness toward others, tolerance and a sense of cooperation are essential for social peace.” It insists that all students must “develop their ability to work with others while showing respect for cultural, social and religious differences.”<sup>16</sup>

So, in a spirit of openness, tolerance, cooperation, and respect for cultural, social and religious differences, the Quebec Ministry of Education ordered the Mennonites to close their private school and send their children to state-approved schools, run by state-approved teachers, to learn a state-approved curriculum that would effectively subvert the religious and cultural integrity of the Mennonite community. In effect, the Ministry said, “Turn your children over to us - or else.”

Rather than face financially ruinous legal proceedings and the possibility that their children would be apprehended - taken hostage by the state, one might say, to be ransomed by parental submission - Mennonites in Roxton Falls left Quebec.<sup>17</sup>

The Ethics and Religious Culture course was implemented in September, 2008. Since that time, about 1,700 objecting Quebec families have been refused exemption. Some have, nonetheless, withdrawn their children from the classes. Six Evangelical Christian students who refuse to attend the classes are being threatened with expulsion. At least two legal challenges have begun.<sup>18</sup>

Lending an Orwellian twist to all of this, the Ministry of Education’s foundational document for the Ethics and Religious Culture programme declares that “respecting the fundamental right to the freedom of conscience and religion is the basis of all ethics and religious education.”<sup>19</sup>

### **British Columbia**

In British Columbia we have independent schools that receive partial funding from the government based on their compliance with Ministry of Education standards. There are also private schools that operate without government oversight. Diocesan Catholic schools operate within this framework.

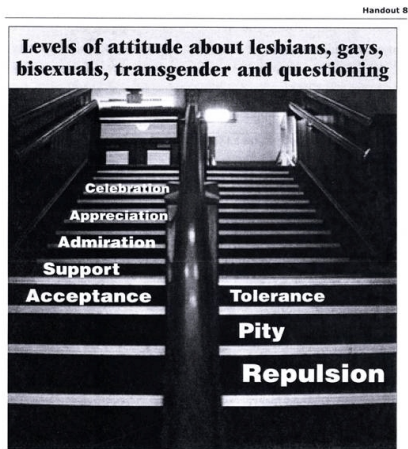
The League’s concern in this province has been to defend parental authority in the state school system. Activists here are determined to force all children in state schools from Kindergarten to Grade 12 to accept and celebrate unspecified forms of sexual diversity. To this end, two homosexual activists, Peter and Murray Corren, signed a private agreement with the Ministry of Education to introduce what they call “non-heterosexual realities” into the entire K to 12 curriculum.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the Ministry agreed that it would prevent parents from withdrawing even their youngest children from classes where homosexual conduct is promoted.<sup>21</sup> “There’s no point in us making the curriculum more queer-positive,” said Peter Corren, “if people can take their kids out.”<sup>22</sup>

What justification was offered for this attack on the religious, moral and cultural integrity of families

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in British Columbia?

You may well guess: “respecting diversity” - “promoting human rights” - “social justice” - “pluralism” - “multiculturalism.”



You may notice that tolerance is not in the list. In fact, the concept of tolerance is entirely absent from teacher guidelines. The reason for this is that tolerance involves the judgement that something is wrong or otherwise undesirable, together with a willingness to put up with it for some greater good, or to avoid a greater evil. Tolerance is not good enough, since it implies an adverse judgement of the kaleidoscope of behaviour captured by the term “non-heterosexual realities.”

The point was driven home in February of this year at a “Social Justice Workshop” hosted by the BC Teachers’ Federation. Teachers attending were shown a photo diagram of what they are expected to accomplish: to move students from tolerance, to acceptance, to support, to admiration, to appreciation, and finally to celebration of sexual conduct that the Catechism describes as “intrinsically disordered” acts of “grave depravity.”<sup>23</sup>

One exchange at this conference is especially enlightening. A teacher explained that if students say their parents disapprove of homosexual conduct, he deflects the comment by saying, “Well, different people have different ideas about sex.”

His suggestion was not well received.

“That won’t accomplish the kind of change we need,” said . . . a professor in the Department of Social, Cultural and Media Studies at UFV. “Students feel silenced by that kind of comment. ‘What does everybody think?’ is a bigoted comment. We need to decide who we want silenced.”<sup>24</sup>

The professor’s assertion that teachers must decide who they want silenced is reflected in Ministry of Education guidelines to teachers.<sup>25</sup>

Germany - Quebec - British Columbia. A common threads run from Hitler’s law on compulsory schooling and Germany’s current assault on home-schooling families, through Quebec’s compulsory Ethics and Religious Culture programme to British Columbia’s attempt to impose compulsory instruction in “non-heterosexual realities:” Suppression of parental authority in the education of their own children.

Why?

### “Normative pluralism”

Douglas Farrow, Associate Professor of Christian Thought at McGill University, has proposed an explanation. Professor Farrow reviewed Quebec’s Ethics and Religious Culture curriculum and concluded that it is designed “to wean children away from traditional religious and moral commitments and to train them in an ideology [hostile to them].”

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It is intended to teach them . . . that faith is all right as long as people are not that serious about it. It is intended . . . to pry them away from their most basic communities of socialization - their families and their houses of worship - and to unite them in the State, and with the State, and under the State, a State that regards itself as more fundamentally important than their families and churches.<sup>26</sup>

That is exactly what the Corren Agreement, Ministry of Education policies and yhe BCTF's "social justice" workshop are meant to accomplish in British Columbia. It is exactly what Hitler had in mind when he said, "Your descendants, however, now stand in the new camp. In a short time they will know nothing else but this new community."

Activists in BC, Quebec and elsewhere are busy orchestrating the education of our children and grandchildren, the future citizens of this new community. Our children, says Professor Farrow, are to be taught the ideology of "normative pluralism," which considers all questions about truth meaningless,<sup>27</sup> and religion, at best, a colourful cultural phenomenon. And this will be the only socially and politically acceptable viewpoint. The eradication of contrary views will be the goal of education: to kill the Christian in the child, to kill the Muslim in the child, just as residential schools are said to have been built to kill the Indian in the child.<sup>28</sup>

Contemplating this prospect, Professor Farrow says, "invites us to consider - if imagination can stretch so far - whether Mary and Joseph would have allowed a State like ours to take the young Jesus from their home and to insist that he learn religion on the State's own terms."<sup>29</sup>

The Mennonites of Roxton Falls knew the answer to that question. What will ours be?

### **Mission: Impossible?**

Let's turn now to the question of bringing our faith to bear on public affairs. So far, everything has been pretty gloomy. So let's begin with some good news.

#### **The call to holiness**

The real Good News - the Gospel - is that all of us are called to become holy - to live in the presence of God, to put God at the centre of our lives. Some people think this means that we should behave and live like priests, monks and nuns. They're wrong.

Other people think that being an active Christian means being on parish council, or being a lector or extraordinary eucharistic minister, or singing in the choir - doing 'churchy' things. They're wrong.

It's not that there is anything wrong with these things; they are good things. From them we derive grace and strength. And we need that grace and strength for our mission. But we are laymen, and our primary mission is not in the sanctuary or the choir loft, but in the world outside.

The laity - that's us - live in the world, not in the monastery or convent. Priests and religious have their own special responsibilities, their own mission. But our primary mission is in secular duties and activities.<sup>30</sup> Our mission is in the hockey rink, on the soccer road trip, in the hospital, in school and on the job. We are supposed to have Christ at our side in all of these places, and make Him present in these places by acting as He would have us act<sup>31</sup>

The idea is that we are supposed to blend in like yeast in the dough.<sup>32</sup> Yeast blends into the dough, but it remains yeast, and it changes the dough from inside. We are supposed to become part of the

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team, the class, the business or the town, but we are to remain Christian, and encourage our class mates, co-workers and friends to live according to will of God.<sup>33</sup>

Why live according to the will of God?

Well, we can't kick God out of creation. We can't tell God that He has no business in the logging camp or the classroom. We can't hide from God in a courtroom, a bedroom - not even a closet.

We can't say, "God, you keep out of this. This is between me and the boss."

We can't say, "Get lost, God. This is between me and my wife, between me and my girlfriend."

We can't say, "God, it's Friday night. I want to get a little drunk. Butt out. Come back on Sunday."

We have one conscience, and one conscience only, not one for religious duties and a different one for the party - whether it's a political party, or the weekend party. We have one conscience, a Christian conscience, and that is to guide us in everything that we do.<sup>34</sup> *Everything*. There is no such thing as "I'm personally opposed, but . . .". Pontius Pilate was personally opposed to crucifying Our Lord, but he didn't want to impose his morality on the mob.

So, here we are, ready to live and act as Christians should. What response can we expect? Let's consider what happened to some people who tried to do just that.

### Cases

Imagine yourself in the following real-life situations.

- You are a university student. You get into some heated debates in class when you defend your religious beliefs against what you perceive to be inaccurate or even hostile claims by your professor and classmates. Your professor reduces the mark on a paper, criticizing it as part of an "agenda of resistance."<sup>35</sup>
- You are a student nurse. You refuse to dispense a drug that could cause abortion. Your supervisor has strongly indicated that this may result in a failing grade.<sup>36</sup>

Dr. James Robert Brown, a professor of science and religion of the University of Toronto, has a simple answer for health care workers, like the student nurse, who don't want to be involved with things like abortion or contraception. These "scum" - that's his word - these "scum" should "resign from medicine and find another job." His reasoning is very simple.

Religious beliefs are highly emotional - as is any belief that is affecting your behaviour in society. You have no right letting your private beliefs affect your public behaviour.<sup>37</sup>

### Mission: Impossible?

Now you know why I titled this talk "Mission: Impossible?" Christians must take part in worldly affairs, live a vigorous Christian life, and change the world so that all things are ordered to the glory of God.<sup>38</sup> But Christians who actually try to do this may be disciplined, fired, or threatened with other penalties. People like Dr. Brown call us 'scum' and say that we have no right letting our personal or private beliefs affect our behaviour in society.

How do we answer them?

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### The Response

There are a number of possible responses. Today I will give you four.

1. Personal and private doesn't mean insignificant.
2. All beliefs influence public behaviour.
3. Everyone is a believer - even atheists.
4. Proposing is not imposing.

#### **First: personal and private doesn't mean insignificant.**

Professor Brown and others like to stress that religious beliefs are 'personal' and 'private'. This is intended to belittle us. It's meant to make us feel like we're alone, isolated, even eccentric.

Well, our beliefs *are* personal, in the sense that we personally accept them. They *are* private, in that what we believe is primarily our business, not someone else's.

But our beliefs are also shared with hundreds of millions of people, living and dead - not just a few hundred thousand who happen to be alive and who, like Dr. Brown, occupy positions of power and influence.

We share our beliefs with some of the greatest minds and imaginations in history. Some I need to introduce: Albertus Magnus - St. Albert the Great, Great because of his extraordinary learning. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says he deserves "a pre-eminent place in the history of science."<sup>39</sup>

Dante was the "greatest poet of Italy, if not of mediaeval and modern times."<sup>40</sup>

The inventor of the barometer was Blaise Pascal, a genius among modern thinkers,<sup>41</sup> and deeply interested in religion. We measure pressure in *pascals*, the unit of measure named for him.

And we share our beliefs with J.R.R. Tolkien, author of *Lord of the Rings*.

Not only great intellects, some of the most courageous souls through the ages have been religious believers: St. Joan of Arc, who led the armies of France; St. Thomas More, beheaded because he was "the King's good servant - but God's first;"<sup>42</sup> and St. Maximilian Kolbe, who volunteered to die in the place of another prisoner in a Nazi death camp.

Most important, we share our beliefs with some of the holiest people who have walked the face of the earth: St. Francis of Assisi, first to bear the wounds of Christ; Blessed Damien of Molokai, who died among the lepers he served near Hawaii;<sup>43</sup> and Mother Teresa, who needs no introduction.

These were Catholics, but non-Catholics and non-Christians can make similar claims, including in their lists names like Sir Isaac Newton, the great scientist, the Muslim physician, Avicenna, Mahatma Gandhi, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran pastor hanged by the Nazis.<sup>44</sup>

The first point, then: personal and private doesn't mean insignificant. We are not alone in our personal convictions. We are not few in number. There are literally billions of religious believers.<sup>45</sup> Don't let people bully you by making you feel like strangers in your own world.

#### **Second: all beliefs influence public behaviour.**

Professor Brown says that we must not let our so-called 'private' beliefs affect our public behaviour.

Really?

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What about the ancient Indian emperor Asoka? After ten years of bloody wars, he became a Buddhist, and decided that he should rule his people like a father, with “morality and social compassion.” Among other things, he provided them with free hospitals and veterinary clinics, and built new roads and rest houses for travellers.<sup>46</sup> In other words, Asoka let his private beliefs affect his public behaviour. If we believe Professor Brown, this must have been bad news for his people.

Well, some might say, that was in ancient times. Let’s bring it closer to us in time.

How many of you have seen *Saving Private Ryan*? If you were shaken up by the D-Day landing scene in *Saving Private Ryan*, Dieppe was far worse. Fewer than half the Canadians who landed at Dieppe in 1942 made it back. The Royal Hamilton Light Infantry landed with 582 men; 365 were killed or taken prisoner. John Foote, a Presbyterian minister, was chaplain to the regiment. For an hour, during the retreat, Foote carried wounded men on his back to the boats. He deliberately returned to the beach to be taken prisoner with the men left behind. He was awarded the Victoria Cross.<sup>47</sup> But Professor Brown says that people shouldn’t let private beliefs affect their public behaviour. Maybe he thinks that Foote didn’t deserve it.

Let’s bring it even closer in time, and closer to home. Toronto, a few years ago.

During World Youth Day celebrations, a quarter million young people filled the streets of Toronto. What they did in public - on the streets, in buses and subways, in the parks - was influenced by their religious convictions. And you know what? People loved it. They thought it was great. They wished that people behaved like that all the time.

I don’t know where Professor Brown was during World Youth Day. Maybe he fled in terror at the thought of all those young people acting as if their faith really meant something.

But let’s take an even closer look at what Professor Brown had to say. What was he doing when he gave that interview to the reporter? What was he doing when he proclaimed that no one should be allowed to act in public according to private beliefs?

Professor Brown was - - acting on his beliefs. It was his personal belief, his private conviction, that we should not be allowed to act upon our beliefs and convictions. Well, we have every reason to demand the same freedom that Professor Brown claims for himself. All public behaviour - how we treat other people, how we treat animals, how we treat the environment - is determined by what we believe. All beliefs influence public behaviour.

And this brings me to the third point.

### **Everyone is a believer, even atheists.**

An atheist believes that God does *not* exist. He *believes* it, just as a Christian *believes* that God *does* exist. The Christian has a belief about God; the atheist has a belief about God. One is a religious belief; the other a non-religious belief, but both are beliefs. The atheist is as much a believer as a Christian when it comes to the existence of God.

Moreover, belief is absolutely essential to society. Human society can exist without science, without technology. It exists wherever people live together, whether or not they are scientifically or technologically advanced.

But society cannot exist without belief. Everyone here will believe that tomorrow is 31 May -



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because that is what you have been told. It won't be because you've done the astronomical observations to prove it. If people believe in human dignity, equality and justice, it will not be because these things are facts proved by scientific experiment. Some of the most important decisions we make in life are based on belief, not certainty. Will I move to Alberta? Will I be a carpenter or a teacher? What woman will I marry? Will this man be a good husband? How many children shall we have? Belief, not certainty, decides these things.

But here's the central point for us today. People who don't believe in God may defend and promote what they *believe* is good for man and society, and they may do so in public. People who aren't members of a religion may ask their neighbours and the government to respect what they *believe* is good for people. Atheists may ask for policies and laws to protect what that they *believe* is good for man and society - like health care, for example. These are all believers. They don't believe in God, they don't believe in a particular religion, but they are all believers, and they are free to act on their beliefs in public and to promote them.

Well, so are we. We are believers too, and we have the same freedom to act on our beliefs in public and to promote them as non-religious believers. Professor Brown is free to propose his ideas about how people ought to behave in public, even if his ideas come from his personal beliefs. So are we.<sup>48</sup>

### **Here we come to our final point; proposing is not imposing.**

“It isn't right to impose your beliefs on other people.”

You've heard that, and you know it's not entirely true. Society often impose beliefs by law. We believe that it is wrong to murder, to break into houses, to assault people, to defraud them. If somebody doesn't believe that, and starts breaking into houses or killing people, we will impose our beliefs by throwing him into jail.

So to say, “It isn't right to impose your beliefs on other people” isn't entirely true. But that means it isn't entirely false. We may throw people into jail for murder, but not for refusing to accept Christianity. We may fine people for speeding, but we don't fine them for not going to church on Sunday.

I am not going to talk about how to decide when beliefs should be imposed, for two reasons.

First: you don't want to stay here for the rest of the week.

Second: we are not talking now about *imposing* beliefs, but about proposing them. All citizens are free to make proposals about laws or social policies. All citizens are free to propose ideas about how people should live and work together. All citizens are free to plead, to argue, to lobby, to convince other people to accept their ideas about what is good for people and good for our country.

That is not imposing beliefs. That is good citizenship in a democratic society, and we need more of that, not less.

## Summary

So when we are told that we can't let our personal religious beliefs determine how we behave in public, that we can't impose our religious convictions or ideas on others, what do we say?

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- First: personal and private doesn't mean insignificant. We share our beliefs with hundreds of millions, if not billions of others.
- Second: all beliefs influence public behaviour. The person who tells us we can't let our beliefs influence how we behave is a hypocrite, trying to get us to act according to *his* belief.
- Third: everyone is a believer - even atheists. Belief is essential. Most of the time we have to act on belief because there isn't time for anything else.
- Fourth: proposing is not imposing. It's good citizenship.

## Conclusion

I hope these four points will give you more confidence to use your freedom as the Lord would have it used. But don't get the idea that things will be easy.

Henry Morgentaler has demanded that no religious organization - especially the Catholic Church- be allowed to operate hospitals, because they won't provide abortions.<sup>49</sup> Others are suggesting that the Church should be deprived of its schools precisely because it is faithful to the Gospel rather than "the public policy of Canada" that is said to support homosexual lifestyles.<sup>50</sup> And the Chief Justice of Canada said that the law claims ultimate and total authority over us.<sup>51</sup> All of these statements are demands that we accept the state as our supreme authority. We shall have no king but Caesar.

"We have no king but Caesar!"

Where have we heard that before? When you hear that, you know what path lies before us. But, after all, St. Thomas More said that the Lord we follow didn't go to heaven in a feather bed, and we should not expect better for ourselves.

Mission: Impossible?

Humanly speaking, yes. But, humanly speaking, so was the Resurrection. With God, all things are possible.

Thank you.

### Appendix “A”

#### Denominational Education in Quebec

When Canada was established in 1867, the BNA Act (now the Constitution Act of 1867) guaranteed that Quebeckers living outside Quebec City or Montreal were entitled to denominational schools if they were a Catholic or Protestant religious minority, or if they lived in Montreal or Quebec City and were Catholic or Protestant.<sup>52</sup> Most schools outside Montreal and Quebec were operated as Catholic schools, not as a matter of law, but because that reflected the majority.<sup>53</sup> The Constitution Act of 1982 continued the arrangement.

Beginning in 1988, the Quebec government moved to abolish denominational school boards and replaced them with linguistic boards (Bill 107). Schools themselves could, under the new system, continue to identify themselves as Protestant or Catholic, and access to denomination education continued to be guaranteed. Implementation was delayed until after 1993, when the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the arrangements - including the continued provision of denominational schooling - were not unconstitutional.<sup>54</sup>

Bill 109 (June 19, 1997) established procedures for electing linguistic boards, but opposition from parents who wanted to ensure the continued protection of denominational schooling was significant. Thus, the government of Quebec asked the federal government to abolish constitutional safeguards that protected denominational education in the province. The Liberal government’s point man for the project, Stéphane Dion, delivered the amendment before the end of the year. Dion and Liberal Senator Lucie Pepin offered assurances that denominational education would continue to be protected by existing provincial law.<sup>55</sup>

Three years later, Quebec abolished Catholic and Protestant schools (Bill 118, 14 June, 2000). However, private denominational schools were unaffected, and parents could ask state schools to provide classes on general morality for their children, or Catholic or Protestant religious instruction.<sup>56</sup> The overwhelming majority of parents continued to ask for religious instruction.<sup>57</sup>

The next moves came in 2005 with the passage of Bill 95. Having earlier obtained the abolition of constitutional protection for denominational education, the Quebec government claimed that it was unconstitutional to offer Catholic and Protestant religious instruction in state schools.<sup>58</sup> The new law prohibited all religious teaching in the state school system. It also required all schools - including private denominational schools - to teach the state’s newly minted Ethics and Religious Culture course to all students in all grades. The Minister of Education stated that no students would be exempted from the course.<sup>59</sup>

To ensure that objecting parents did not interfere, Bill 95 also amended the province’s Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms to nullify parental authority in education, making the state - not parents - the final arbiter of “the rights and interests of children.”<sup>60</sup>

The new course was introduced in September, 2008. About 1,400 families have requested an exemption, but have been refused. Some have, nonetheless, withdrawn their children from the classes. Six Evangelical Christian students have refused to attend classes and are threatened with expulsion. Others are boycotting classes, and at least two legal challenges have begun.<sup>61</sup>

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The prospect of successful political action at the provincial level seems remote, as the only party to support parental authority in education lost badly, while the parties responsible for driving forward the new law made substantial gains.<sup>62</sup> In the lowest election turnout in the province since 1927, only 56.5% of voters went to the polls.<sup>63</sup>

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### Notes

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4. Speech by Adolph Hitler, 6 November, 1933. Quoted in Shirer, William L., *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1960, p. 249. Such policies were vigorously denounced by Pope Pius XII: "Conscientious parents, aware of their duty in the matter of education, have a primary and original right to determine the education of the children given to them by God in the spirit of the true faith and in agreement with its principles and ordinances. Laws or other regulations concerning schools that disregard the rights of parents guaranteed to them by the natural law, or by threat and violence nullify those rights, contradict the natural law and are utterly and essentially immoral." Encyclical: *On Church in Germany (Mit brennender Sorge)* (14 March, 1937), 37.  
([http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_14031937\\_mit-brennender-sorge\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_14031937_mit-brennender-sorge_en.html))
5. Gesetz über die Schulpflicht im Deutschen Reich (Reichsschulpflichtgesetz) vom 6. Juli 1938. § 1. § 1 ". . . Sie sichert die Erziehung und Unterweisung der deutschen Jugend im Geiste des Nationalsozialismus." ("It provides education and training of German youth in the spirit of National Socialism.")  
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20. Murphy, Sean, *The Corren Agreement* (Updated May, 2008) (<http://www.ccrl.ca/index.php?id=4835>)
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23. Gray, Ron, *BCTF Social Justice conference at UVF told teachers how to manipulate student attitudes*. (<http://www.bcptl.org/gay.htm#manipulate>) Accessed 2009-05-27
24. Gray, Ron, *BCTF Social Justice conference at UVF told teachers how to manipulate student attitudes*. (<http://www.bcptl.org/gay.htm#manipulate>) Accessed 2009-05-27
25. “Self-expression that is ignorant or hurtful or that can be readily construed as a perpetuation of oppression or injustice should not be a part of classroom discourse and will need to be addressed if it arises.” *Making Space, Giving Voice*, p. 10
26. Douglas Farrow, “The crisis in Quebec schools: Alarm bells should be ringing throughout Canada.” *Catholic Insight*, 16:6, June, 2008. Professor Georges Leroux, one of the Quebec government’s advisors, said: “Our children will be better than us because they will be more open to religious and moral diversity and committed to normative pluralism . . . They will believe that it is preferable to be plural than homogenous.” Quoted in Douglas Farrow, “Rebuilding Babel in Quebec City: La Belle Province substitutes ideology for religion in the classroom.” *Catholic Insight*, 16:3, March, 2008
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28. *Prime Minister Stephen Harper's statement of apology*. CBC News, 11 June, 2008. (<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/06/11/pm-statement.html>) Accessed 2009-05-29
29. Douglas Farrow, “The crisis in Quebec schools: Alarm bells should be ringing throughout Canada.” *Catholic Insight*, 16:6, June, 2008

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30. Vatican Council II, The Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) 43; Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*) 2

31. "Whatever you are doing, whether speaking or acting, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 3:17). See also Vatican Council II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 4.

32. Vatican Council II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 2

33. "In achieving all this, the laity, that is Christians who have been incorporated into Christ and live in the world, are of primary importance and worthy of special care. It is for them, imbued with the Spirit of Christ, to be a leaven animating and directing the temporal order from within, so that everything is always carried out in accordance with the will of Christ." Vatican Council II, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes Divinitus*)<sup>15</sup>. See also Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 40.

"... by reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit to the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus, especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope and charity they must manifest Christ to others. It pertains to them in a special way so to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are so closely associated that these may be effected and grow according to Christ and may be to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer." Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) 31.

34. "The layman, at one and the same time a believer and a citizen of the world, has only a single conscience, a Christian conscience; it is by this that he must be guided continually in both domains." Vatican Council II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 5.

"They will strive to unite the two harmoniously, remembering that in every temporal affair they are to be guided by a Christian conscience, since not even in temporal business may any human activity be withdrawn from God's dominion." Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, 36.

"But it is no less mistaken to think that we may immerse ourselves in earthly activities as if these latter were utterly foreign to religion, and religion were nothing more than the fulfilment of acts of worship and the observance of a few moral obligations. One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith which many profess and the practice of their daily lives. The prophets vehemently denounced this scandal, and in the New Testament Christ himself with greater force threatened it with severe punishment. Let there, then, be no such pernicious opposition between professional and social activity on one hand and religious life on the other." Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 43.



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35. *Statement of Claim in the Supreme Court of British Columbia between Cynthia Maughan, Plaintiff, and the University of British Columbia, Lorraine Weir, Susanna Egan, Anne Scott and Judy Segal, Defendants*, dated 23 October, 2002. Filed and delivered by the law firm of Chipeur Advocates, solicitors for the Plaintiff.

36. Private communications between the Administrator of the Protection of Conscience Project and student nurse (2001).

37. *Dr. James Robert Brown, a professor of science and religion at the University of Toronto, said he agrees with prosecuting a doctor with that sort of conflict. "Suppose someone (doctor) said, 'I'm uncomfortable with (treating) a minority,' I'd say, 'So long scum'," said Brown.*

*Brown believes performing abortions and offering other forms of contraception are necessary and if Dawson won't perform them, then, Brown added, 'Fine - just resign from medicine and find another job.'*

*"Religious beliefs are highly emotional - as is any belief that is effecting your behaviour in society. You have no right letting your private beliefs effect your public behaviour."* Canning, Cheryl, "Doctor's faith under scrutiny:Barrie physician won't offer the pill, could lose his licence." *The Barrie Examiner*, February 21, 2002

[ <http://www.consciencelaws.org/Repression-Conscience/Conscience-Repression-17.html>]

38. "Let Christians follow the example of Christ who worked as a craftsman; let them be proud of the opportunity to carry out their earthly activity in such a way as to integrate human, domestic, professional, scientific and technical enterprises with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are ordered to the glory of God." Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, 43

39. St. Albert the Great (1200-1280) "Albert's works embrace the entire knowledge of his time, not only in theology . . . but also in philosophy and in the natural sciences. He alone among mediaeval philosophers made commentaries on all the works of Aristotle, both genuine and spurious . . . Above all it was by his writings on the natural sciences that he exercised the greatest influence until modern times. . . A pre-eminent place in the history of science must be accorded to him forever." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1973, Vol. 1.

40. Dante Leighieri (1265-1321) "The greatest poet of Italy, if not of mediaeval and modern times, and author of the greatest Christian poem, the *Divina Comedia* or *Divine Comedy*. The loftiness of his art is revealed by the immense variety of his literary output and by the exceptional breadth and depth of his interests." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1973, Vol. 7.

41. Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) "French scientist and writer on religious subjects, a man whose genius gives him a unique eminence among modern thinkers. . ." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1973, Vol. 17.

42. Marius, Richard, *Thomas More*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985, p. 514

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43. Blessed Damien of Molokai (1840-1889) spent 18 years in exile with the lepers on the Island of Molokai, eventually contracting leprosy himself.

44. Avicenna (Abu-Ali Al-Husain Ibn Abdullah Ibn Sina) (980-1037) “Avicenna’s most famous medical work is *Al-Qanun fi’l-Tibb* (The Canon of Medicine) . . . [it] not only became extremely popular in the Islamic world, but also was studied in European universities for centuries . . .” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1973, Vol. 2.

Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727). “English physical scientist and mathematician, one of the greatest figures in the entire history of science.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1973, Vol. 16.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945). “. . . in July, 1939, he gave up a lectureship [in New York] to rejoin his fellow Christians in Nazi Germany. His return home. . . meant joining the political conspiracy of the resistance movement; and in 1942 he met his friend Bishop G.K.A. Bell in Sweden to reveal plans for Hitler’s overthrow and ask for cooperation from the allies. He was arrested . . . after two year’s imprisonment was hanged at Flossenburg concentration camp . . .” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1973, Vol. 3

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) “The mortal influence which Gandhi has exercised upon thinking people may be far more durable than would appear likely in our present age, with its exaggeration of brute force,” said Albert Einstein. “We are fortunate and grateful that fate has bestowed upon us so luminous a contemporary, a beacon to generations to come.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1973, Vol. 9

45. At the end of 1997, according to approximate statistics, religious believers accounted for over 4.5 billion of the world’s 5.8 billion inhabitants.  
(<http://catholiceducation.org/articles/facts/fm0002.html>) Accessed 9 December, 2002

46. Asoka ascended his father’s throne in 269 BC. Time-Life Books, *TimeFrame 400 BC - AD 200: Empires Ascendant*, p. 107-109

47. More than 900 out of 5,000 Canadian soldiers were killed; nearly 2000 were captured. An example of the carnage: of the Royal Regiment of Canada, half were killed, just 65 of 554 made it back to England, and only 22 of them were unwounded. Readers Digest, *The Canadians at War 1939/45*. Vol. 1, p. 181, 192.

48. The author has borrowed this theme from Iain Benson of the Centre for Cultural Renewal. See Benson, Iain, “There are No Secular Unbelievers.” *Centrepoin*ts, Vol. 4, No. 1, Spring, 2000

49. “Dr. Morgentaler, Vice President of the Humanist Association of Canada (HAC) will call for a complete secularization of all public hospitals in Canada and an end to whatever affiliation they have had with religious bodies, in particular with the Catholic Church. When hospitals are or become Catholic through mergers, e.g. Wellesley and St. Michael's, they deprive patients of access to abortion, contraception and A.I.D.S. prevention, thereby imposing a religious doctrine on public tax-supported hospitals.” News release dated 3 December, 2002, announcing a Morgentaler Clinic - Press Conference, Wednesday December 4th at 2:30pm.

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50. A lawyer speaking for supporters of a student who forced a Catholic school to let him take a homosexual 'date' to a dance suggested that the case raises the question of "whether our law should permit public funding of religious schools that enforce discrimination that is contrary to the public policy of Canada." Quoted in Schratz, Paul, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place," *BC Catholic*, 22 April, 2002, P. 6.
51. Careless, Sue, *Making Room for All in the Public Square*.  
(<http://www.consciencelaws.org/Examining-Conscience-Issues/Ethical/Articles/Ethical33.html>)
52. The Constitution Act of 1867 ([http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/const/c1867\\_e.html](http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/const/c1867_e.html)) Accessed 2009-05-28
53. "Clearly, many Quebec parents still want the option of choosing a Roman Catholic or Protestant denominational education for their children. Equally clearly, however, the Quebec Education Act, as amended by Bill 109, still provides parents with that choice - and that choice will remain while Quebecers continue to debate the place of religion in their education system. I have faith that, before any legislation to change that rule is approved by the Quebec National Assembly, the issue will be fully, openly, and democratically debated. In fact, outside of Montreal and Quebec City, and with the exception of a very small number of Roman Catholic dissentient schools, Roman Catholic parents have had schools for their children run according to a Roman Catholic orientation, not because of section 93, but because the provincial education legislation allows this choice. In other words, democracy and parental choice have prevailed." Pépin, Lucie, *Linguistic School Boards-Amendment to Section 93 of Constitution-Consideration of Report of Special Joint Committee*. 25 November, 1997.  
(<http://sen.parl.gc.ca/lpepin/index.asp?PgId=815>) Accessed 2009-05-28
54. Reference re Education Act (Que.) [1993] 2 S.C.R. 511  
([http://www.hrcr.org/safrica/cultural\\_religious/education\\_act.html](http://www.hrcr.org/safrica/cultural_religious/education_act.html)) Accessed 2009-05-27
55. Farrell, Regina, "Quebec scuttles Section 93." *Catholic Insight*, 5:10, December, 1997.
56. Morissette, Pierre Morissette, "The change in religious education for the young: a new challenge." L'Assemblée des évêques catholiques du Québec, 18 October, 2000  
(<http://www.eveques.qc.ca/documents/2000/20001018e.html>) Accessed 2009-05-27
57. "Parents fight to keep Catholic instruction in Quebec public schools." Catholic News Agency, 28 March, 2005.  
(<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/showarchive.php?date=2005-03-28>) Accessed 2009-05-27
58. Quebec Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports, *Establishment of an Ethics and Religious Culture Program: Providing Future Direction for All Québec* (2005), p. 4  
([http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/lancement/Prog\\_ethique\\_cult\\_reli/prog\\_ethique\\_cult\\_reli\\_a.pdf](http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/lancement/Prog_ethique_cult_reli/prog_ethique_cult_reli_a.pdf)) Accessed 2009-05-27
59. Jean Morse Chevrier, "Quebec parental rights in religious and moral education," *Catholic Insight*, 17:2, 17 February, 2009

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60. Douglas Farrow, "Rebuilding Babel in Quebec City: La Belle Province substitutes ideology for religion in the classroom." *Catholic Insight*, 16:3, March, 2008

61. Jean Morse Chevrier, "Quebec parental rights in religious and moral education," *Catholic Insight*, 17:2, 17 February, 2009

62. CBC News, "Dumont to step down after ADQ defeat." 9 December, 2008.  
(<http://www.cbc.ca/news/quebecvotes2008/story/2008/12/08/qv-adq.html>) Accessed 2009-05-27

63. CBC News, "Almost half of Quebec voters shunned polls." 9 December, 2008.  
(<http://www.cbc.ca/news/quebecvotes2008/story/2008/12/09/qv-voterturnout1209.html>)  
Accessed 2009-05-29