

Religions Must Conform to Canadian 'Charter Values' or Lose Charitable Status Says Influential Prof.

Condemns Catholic Church Discrimination Of Refusing To Ordain Women As Priestesses

By Hilary White <http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2007/feb/07020104.html>

Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: Today it is Canada, tomorrow it will be America and true Christians will be tested. Will churches change their statements of faith in order to maintain tax free status, or will they stand for the truth no matter what the cost? Will you stand for the truth no matter what the cost?

I Jn 2:17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. 18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.(NKJ)

TORONTO, February 1, 2007 (LifeSiteNews.com) - A political scientist at the University of Toronto has argued that as Canadian "Charter values" and Christian values drift further apart, churches should either adhere to and promote the state ideology, or lose the financial support they enjoy through their tax-free status.

In her article, "Living Better Multiculturally: Whose values should prevail?" published in the Fall 2006 edition of the Literary Review of Canada, Janice Gross Stein equates "Canadian values" with "Charter values," in other words, those formulated and championed by the Liberal party of Canada after Pierre Trudeau's leftist revolution.

Stein is a prominent political scientist and director of the University of Toronto's Munk Centre for International Affairs, a member of the Order of Canada and a recognized expert in Middle Eastern conflicts.

Deborah Gyapong reported in Canadian Catholic News that Stein proposed traditional religious groups essentially must either abandon any religious beliefs that conflict with the ideologies of the state, notably that of radical feminism, or cease to make any claims to special financial considerations for their charitable, non-profit works for the community.

"If religious institutions are able to raise funds more easily because governments give a tax benefit to those who contribute, are religious practices against women a matter only for religious law, as is currently the case under Canadian law, which protects freedom of religion, or should the values of the Charter and of human rights commissions across Canada have some application when religious institutions are officially recognized and advantaged in fundraising?"

Stein writes of what she calls a "resurgence of orthodoxy in Christianity, Islam and Judaism," as a threat to the peaceful coexistence of various cultures in Canada's urban centres. This orthodoxy, she claims, "is sharpening lines of division between 'them' and 'us'."

"Where we are reluctant to go," she writes, "is the conflict between the universal human rights that we treasure and different religious and cultural traditions. One obvious fault line - one that we tiptoe around - is the rights of women in different religious and cultural traditions in our midst."

"These religious institutions that systemically discriminate against women are recognized, at least implicitly, by governments. They enjoy special tax privileges given to them by governments."

Stein, a Jew who practices her faith at an "egalitarian" congregation in Toronto, gives the example of the Catholic Church's teaching that only men have vocations to the priesthood. "Does it matter that the Catholic Church, which has special entitlements given to it by the state and benefits from its charitable tax status, refuses to ordain women as priests?"

"How can we in Canada, in the name of religious freedom, continue furtively and silently to sanction discriminatory practices?"

Gwen Landoldt, a lawyer and vice president of REAL Women of Canada responded that Stein's case falls apart at her assumption that all Canadians adhere to the "Charter values" of the extreme left.

"Religious practices discriminate against women? What women?" Landoldt said. "It's only radical feminists who feel that Christian practices are against women. That doesn't represent all Canadian women's views because we don't share her common point of ideology."

"And as for charitable tax status, who does more charitable work in this country than the Catholic Church and the Salvation Army?"

Landoldt continued that the Stein article represented a serious escalation in the anti-religious rhetoric prevalent in Canada and promoted as an ideology through Human Rights Tribunal cases. "We are right at the periphery of perhaps the most serious issue we have faced. All the things that we have had in the past, abortion and same sex marriage, are closing in around the

freedom of the Churches. This is a gauntlet that has been thrown down," Landoldt said.

Landoldt said it speaks directly to the role of religion in public life. "The role of religion is the advancement of religious faith, so that the goodness and graces of belief can be brought to everyone... Religion's role in the public sphere is to teach people good public behavior."

Stein's point is not shared by all in academia either. Gyapong quotes Daniel Cere, head of McGill University's Institute for the Study of Marriage, Law and Culture, who says Stein's line of thought is "troubling" for its implications for religious freedom. He says this is the first time a public intellectual has openly advocated forcing religious bodies to conform their inner principles to the ideology of the state.

Constitutional lawyer Peter Lauwers said that Stein's assumption is that all citizens will eventually conform internally to a uniform state ideology, "a brave new world in the future where we all think the same."

Although the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees freedom of religion in its second section, Lauwers says adherence to Stein's portrait of a future Canada, would essentially abrogate the Charter-guaranteed right of religious bodies freely to believe and act according to their beliefs.

Read a shortened version of Stein's essay: <http://www.magazine.utoronto.ca/07winter/stein.asp>

Cotler Revealingly Praises "Constitutional Revolution" Caused by the Canadian Charter of Rights:
<http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2005/feb/05020113.html>

Lawyer Says Canada's Charter to Blame for Today's Social Liberalism
<http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2006/mar/06033101.html>

Winnipeg's Museum For Human Rights: Canada's \$300 Million Temple of Ideology
<http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2005/jul/050701a.html>