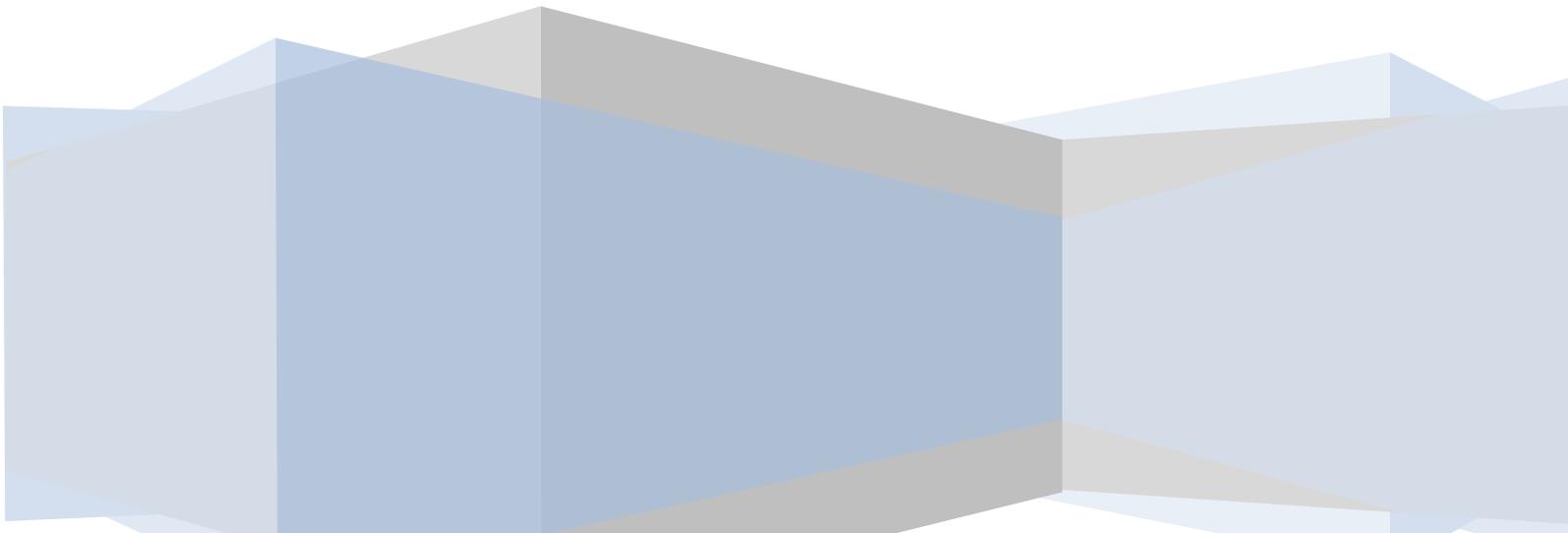




Lesson Plans

For Christian schools and home schools in Canada
(Grades 10 – 12)



Notice to Teachers Regarding ARPA Canada's Lesson Plans

Dear Teachers,

These lesson plans have been prepared by ARPA Canada for use in Christian schools or by homeschooling families. ARPA Canada is a non-profit organization devoted to promoting political awareness and action among Canada's Reformed churches. We recognize that our children are growing up in a world that is increasingly opposed to applying our Christian worldview to public life. We want to make it easier for teachers and parents to introduce students to some key public and political issues from a Biblical perspective. These issues surround us and it is important that students are aware of them and comfortable with responding to them in a way that is consistent with their faith.

It is our intent to increase the number of topics available. But we want to do this in cooperation with you. If you have lesson plans already prepared that you think may be applicable, please pass them on. Or if you have suggestions about new topics or changes to the ones already available, please let us know. It may be helpful for you to know a few things about these lesson plans:

- They are non-partisan. This means that they don't support or oppose any particular party and don't risk the charitable status of schools.
- They are topical rather than based on specific provincial curricula. We thought that it would be most prudent to allow teachers to decide where they best fit within the curricula.
- They can be incorporated into a variety of subjects. Although Socials Studies or Bible courses may seem to be the natural fit, teachers can be creative and find ways to apply them to other subjects such as computer courses (e.g. the computer assignment about Christian political organizations), Science (e.g. the abortion issue), or History (e.g. comparing political ideologies).

Please let us know if you are using these lesson plans. We want to hear your feedback so that they can be improved and expanded. If you received this package in the mail, we may be following it up with a phone call or email to see if you received it and have any initial comments. If you took this off of the internet, we would appreciate a quick phone call (toll free) or email to let us know that you are using it.

Sincerely,

Mark Penninga, Executive Director
Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA) Canada
mark@arpacanada.ca
1-866-691-2772

Lesson Plans Contents

Human Trafficking: The Modern Day Slave Trade (part 1).....	4
Responses to the Problem of Human Trafficking and Prostitution (part 2)	7
Religious Persecution.....	10
Demographics: The Birth Rate in the World, the West, and the Church.....	14
Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide.....	17
Abortion – How Do We Respond?	19
Redefining Family – What’s the Big Deal?	25
Human Rights and Human Rights Commissions.....	27
Religion and Climate Change	31
The Separation of Church and State:	35
Political Ideologies: Discerning the Right from the Left.....	39
Comparing Canada’s Political Parties	42
Christian Political Organizations in Canada.....	46

Additional Contents (only with binder that was sent to Reformed schools - ARPA no longer has these resources available)

- *Demographic Winter: the Decline of the Human Family* (DVD and also available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZeyYIsGdAA>)
- *Turning the Tide: Dignity, Compassion, and Euthanasia* (DVD)
- Discussion sheet and handout “Caring Not Killing” to accompany *Turning the Tide* DVD
- E-version (PDF) of Lesson Plans on DVD

Notice to Teachers

Permission has been obtained by ARPA Canada from the producers of the two DVD’s for their use in schools and homes in conjunction with this lesson plan package.

Human Trafficking: The Modern Day Slave Trade (part 1)

(Two 50 minute lessons)

Level – Grades 9-12

Applicable courses: Human Geography, Law, Social Studies

Lesson 1: A Biblical Perspective on Human Trafficking in Canada

Human Trafficking is one of the major social justice issues of our time. There are millions of men and women, boys and girls who are victims of this crime today. Despite this, many people aren't aware that it is going on. Many activists say that one of the most important ways to deal with this problem is to educate ourselves about it. So, what exactly is human trafficking?

What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, harbouring and/or exercising control over the movements of a person in order to exploit that person, typically through sexual exploitation or forced labour. It is often described as a modern form of slavery. This happens most commonly to women and children, but men also fall victim to these crimes. Men most commonly are forced to work without pay. It is generally women and young girls who are forced into prostitution. However, these are generalizations.

Victims are commonly 'recruited' by traffickers with the promise and hope of reward. Sometimes traffickers spoil young girls with all kinds of gifts, only to trap them by forcing them to pay back their 'debt'. Some victims move to Western countries hoping for a better future, only to come under the control of traffickers. It is hard for victims to leave because they are afraid they or their families will be injured or even killed if they attempt to escape. When victims are trafficked to a country with a different language they feel, and are, even more isolated.

Human trafficking is a big and growing problem. The UN estimates that this industry generates \$32 billion for its perpetrators. What is even more troubling is that the industry is growing. Over the past two decades, the trafficking of women and girls was the fastest growing criminal activity in Western Europe. This trend has direct links to the legalization of prostitution. In the 5 years after prostitution was legalized in the Netherlands, the number of child prostitutes increased by 300%!¹ Women who are victimized in the sex trade are under the complete control

¹ See *Respectfully Submitted* Policy Report by ARPA (<http://arpacanada.ca/index.php/government-submissions/1388-respectfully-submitted-prostitution-in-canada>)

of their pimps. They are constantly abused, mistreated, and are forced to live in horrible conditions.

Questions: ask these questions to gather a sense of your students' awareness of this issue

1. How many of you have heard of human trafficking before today?
2. How would you describe it?
3. Is human trafficking a problem in Canada?

Human trafficking in Canada?!

When people think of human trafficking and the sex trade, they often think of Eastern Europe and South-East Asia. Although issues with human trafficking are deep and serious in these regions, Canada is also a part of this industry. Canada is both a destination and transit country. This means that people are trafficked to and from Canada! Human trafficking occurs most commonly in larger urban areas for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Since the government and RCMP have started gathering information and looking more closely for cases of human trafficking, incidents have been uncovered all over the country. It is easy to find news stories about human trafficking across Canada.

Activity

- Assign students to look at the newspaper articles for examples of human trafficking in Canada
 - o Links to these articles are provided the bottom of this document
 - o The *Canadian Council for Refugees* website gives access to many other news reports from all across Canada if you would like more articles
 - (<http://ccrweb.ca/en/mediatrafficking>)
- If applicable, try to find a case close to where you live. Many cases occur where people do not expect. Hearing about a story close to home could really drive the point home of how “real” this issue is.

Video

- Show the students the video of Timea Nagy telling her story. (10 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wc4XkPFHBPo&list=PL4C0608552CFC7ADB>

In many of these cases, victims were kept in subdivisions and regular homes. It can be hard to tell which people are victims of trafficking because they are forced to act ‘normal’ and can face serious consequences if they even hint that something is wrong. This knowledge is chilling and emphasizes the need for urgent action.

Deeper Issues

Perhaps the biggest issue is the high demand for human slaves. Our culture is driven by self-seeking and self-gratifying behaviour. Greed drives the trade of forced labour. Lust drives the sex trade. It is no surprise that the places with a high demand for prostitutes will be the most

lucrative for the traffickers. The desire for money leads some to coerce others into slave labour. The desire for sex drives men to treat women and children as objects of their pleasure. These desires are so strong that the value of human life is totally disregarded. Some countries have legalized prostitution in hopes that it could serve as a solution to many of these problems, but as we pointed out earlier, this backfired in the case of the “Red Light District” in Amsterdam.

Biblical Perspective

What does the Bible say about all this? We confess in the Heidelberg Catechism that we are inclined to hate God and our neighbour (Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 5). Humanity is depraved. God gave us His holy law as a guide to our actions. We can confess with David in Psalm 19, that the law of the LORD is perfect. Indulging in pornography and other lustful acts crosses the good and perfect boundaries God has set for us as His creatures. Yet it seems as if these sins are now acceptable, considered normal, and even celebrated in our society. We must not forget the reality that *people’s enslavement to sin and lust causes the enslavement of young women to pimps and traffickers*. To deal with the problem of human trafficking, it will be necessary to control our own desires, greed, and lust. God is the only good master. He knows what is good for us because He created us. Through Christ we are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to righteousness (Romans 6).

Activity

Assign the students to look at the following Bible texts:

[Psalm 68:5-6](#)

[Psalm 82:3-4](#)

[Proverbs 31:8-9](#)

[Isaiah 1:16-17](#)

[Isaiah 58:5-8](#)

[Micah 6:6-8](#)

Discussion Questions:

1. What does God reveal about Himself in these texts?
2. How do these texts relate to human trafficking, if at all?
3. Does God command us to do anything in these texts? If so, how can we carry out these commands?

Responses to the Problem of Human Trafficking and Prostitution (part 2)

Last time we looked at the reality of human trafficking and how it is tied with prostitution. We also discussed how sin is at the root of the problem. We also saw from Scripture that God hates oppression and fights against injustice. We now have a basis to discuss some possible solutions to the problem.

What is our government doing?

In 2012, the Canadian government launched the “National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking”. This action plan created a law enforcement team with a mandate to specifically target human trafficking. It aims at training law enforcement officials, raising awareness in communities, and providing more support for victims. This action plan also aimed at improving coordination between Canadian and international agencies to better deal with human trafficking. Two amendments to Canada’s Criminal Code have been enacted: Bill C-268 (2010) created a new offence for child trafficking with a five-year mandatory penalty, and Bill C-310 (2012) allows the Canadian government to prosecute Canadian citizens and permanent residents who engage in trafficking outside of Canada and also enhances the definition of exploitation in the trafficking of persons offence. Activists welcome these positive changes but more can be done to free and protect all men, women, and children from human trafficking.

Should prostitution be legalized?

There are many who are pushing the government to go further. Some have suggested that prostitution be legalized. They argue that if it is regulated by the government instead of pimps, sex workers would have more protection. It would give them more power in choosing their clients and working conditions. If prostitution is illegal, prostitutes are afraid to go to the police and report abuse since their livelihood will be taken away from them. However, there are also many who oppose this view.

Activity

- Have the students read through the following article and summarize the arguments on a chart. (<http://newint.org/features/2013/04/01/should-prostitution-be-legalized-argument/>)
- Show the following documentary made by *Hope for the Sold* to the students (Start at 31 minute mark; 15 minutes long). <http://hopeforthesold.com/resources/>

Discussion Questions: So, should we legalize prostitution?

1. Write up a response to the article, imagining you had the final word in the debate.
2. Which argument do you agree with? Would you add anything to her argument that you think she missed?

3. In the documentary, the activists suggest the adoption of the Swedish model. Do you think this is a wise suggestion? Doesn't the Bible say prostitution is illegal? How can we then decriminalize the selling of sex?
 - a. See ARPA's policy suggestion on this issue:
(<http://arpacanada.ca/index.php/government-submissions/1388-respectfully-submitted-prostitution-in-canada>)

What can we do?

So what can we as everyday Canadians do? One of the most helpful tools to this cause is awareness. It is important to educate yourself and others about the reality of human trafficking in Canada and the world today. Increased awareness will also help in applying pressure on the government to review and introduce laws and policies which will protect men, women, and children from being bought and sold as slaves. Although this is a global issue, we, as citizens, have power to persuade our law makers.

As Christians we can bring this matter to God in prayer. Pray for the governments and law enforcement officials to do their work effectively. Pray for those who are stuck inside slavery today. Pray for past victims of trafficking who still suffer emotion and psychological pain from the abuse they endured. Pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. If the root cause of this horrible industry is sin, then we should pray that God will change hearts and minds. We should strive to show the love and grace of Christ in our communities in the way we view women, treat other people, and glorify God. Since we live in a society with people who are not Christian, how can we fight against the lust and greed of our society?

Also as Christians, especially male Christians, when we talk about the women around us, are we respecting them as image bearers of God? Do we show honour and respect for them in this regard? Do we recognize them as the weaker sex, deserving of our protection instead of our lustful desires? Are we willing to protect our female classmates in the same way you would your little sister? And when speaking with friends who might not be Christians, if the subject of pornography arises, recognize that as an opportunity to speak truth and gospel. Ask your friend if he or she knows that many females in pornography are there against their will. Ask them if they understand the link between pornography consumption and the kidnapping and forced sexual bondage of girls as young as six years old in places like Cambodia. We have a duty as Christians to speak up for those staggering towards the slaughter.

As the anti-slavery hero William Wilberforce said, "*Having heard all of this you may choose to look the other way...but you may never again say that you did not know.*" Compare this statement to what's outlined in [Proverbs 24:10-12](#). How are the statements similar in their sentiment? How does this text and the thoughts of Mr. Wilberforce apply to human trafficking and prostitution?

Resources

Cases of human trafficking (newspaper articles)

- Canadian Council for Refugees
 - o <http://ccrweb.ca/en/mediatrafficking>

- Hamilton:
 - o http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2012/04/04/human_trafficking_kingpin_gets_record_9year_sentence.html
 - o <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/2235869-human-trafficking-kingpin-pleads-guilty/>
 - o <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/2137390-the-gypsy-kings-part-1-of-2/>
 - o <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/2084305-part-2-hamilton-s-human-trafficking-connection/>
- Vancouver:
 - o <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/vancouver-man-charged-with-human-trafficking-of-girls-as-young-as-14/article2217576/>
- Edmonton:
 - o <http://www.edmontonsun.com/news/edmonton/2009/09/10/10822296.html>
- Winnipeg:
 - o <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/story/2010/09/23/manitoba-human-trafficking-charge-winnipeg.html>

Additional Resources:

Respectfully Submitted Policy Report: Prostitution in Canada

- <http://arpacanada.ca/index.php/government-submissions/1388-respectfully-submitted-prostitution-in-canada>

Government's *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking*

- <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/le/cmbt-trffkng-eng.aspx>

Article by Joy Smith (March 13, 2013)

- <http://www.calgaryherald.com/opinion/columnists/Smith+flesh+trade+Canada+dirty+little+secret/8100150/story.html>

Book:

- *Invisible Chains: Canada's Underground World of Human Trafficking* (Benjamin Perrin)

Religious Persecution

Unless otherwise noted, the facts from this report come from Paul Marshal, et. al., Persecuted: the Global Assault on Christians (Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 2013).

Ayman Nabil Labib was a seventeen-year-old high school student in the Upper Egyptian town of Mallawi. Ayman was a Coptic Christian. On October 16, 2011, his Arabic-Language teacher began insulting and harassing the teenager during class. He told Ayman to wipe off the Coptic cross from his wrist. He told his teacher that it was a tattoo, and added that he was also wearing a necklace with a cross. When the teacher heard this, he became very angry and asked the rest of the class, “What are we going to do with him?” Seventeen of his fellow classmates chased Ayman as he struggled to escape. Ayman was forced into a teacher’s room where the group beat him to death.²

Persecution in Our World Today

There are countless stories like Ayman’s. Religious persecution happens every day in our world, but these stories rarely make it into the daily news. Although we all know that persecution happens, many of us don’t know very much about it. Christians are the most persecuted group of believers in the world, suffering about 75% of all religious intolerance.³ Pope Francis has reiterated the call to stop persecution against Christians.⁴ However, many other religious minorities, like Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan, also suffer religious persecution. These acts are unjust, and countries must be held accountable. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 18 of this declaration states that,

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

Countries like Iran and Pakistan have voted in support of this declaration, yet religious persecution is rampant in both these nations.

Religious Opposition

Persecution can come from religious opposition. For example, in South Asia, Christianity is often seen as an invading and foreign philosophy.⁵ For this reason there is ongoing violence. Christian churches in Nepal receive many bomb threats from extreme Hindu groups. Radical Buddhists in Sri-Lanka are pushing for anti-conversion laws. This restricts religious freedom, putting the lives of people who convert at risk. This is often directed against converts to Christianity.

² Kurt Werthmuller, “Copt’s Murder a Test of Egypt’s New Anti-Discrimination Law,” *National Review Online* (October 31, 2011), http://www.hudson.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=publication_details&id=8452; Interviews by Hudson Institute Center for Religious Freedom, Mallawi, October 2011.

³ Paul Marshal, et. al., *Persecuted: the Global Assault on Christians* (Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 2013), p. 4.

⁴ <http://www.christianpost.com/news/pope-francis-prays-for-persecuted-christians-93981/>

⁵ Paul Marshal, et. al., *Persecuted: the Global Assault on Christians* (Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 2013), p. 92.

The most widespread persecution today takes place in the Muslim world. Persecution can be done by the government, through laws about property rights, conversion, and blasphemy, through angry mobs, or through extremist groups, like Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. It is illegal for Muslims to convert to another religion in Malaysia. In Yemen, conversion from Islam is punishable by death. Some countries like Algeria go further, making evangelism illegal. Morocco has similar laws, aimed at stopping “religious terrorism.” In Turkey, Christians are being deprived of their churches and are not given permission to build new ones.

One of the worst offenders is Saudi Arabia. This Islamic state allows no non-Muslim place of worship, state schools teach children to “hate Christians”, and the state is governed by the principles of Sharia law. Influenced by the hard-line Wahhabi version of Islam, the religion police ensures that these laws are being strictly followed. Iran is another terrible place for religious minorities, with a growing number of stonings, dismemberments, executions of minors, and other forms of religious persecution. Conversion in Iran is punished by death. In Pakistan, Ahmadi Muslims and other religious minorities are persecuted. Pakistan also has vague anti-blaspheming laws. Those who insult Islam, the prophet Mohammed, or Allah either directly or indirectly can be punished by hefty fines, lifelong imprisonment, and death. The vagueness of these laws can lead to punishment of non-Muslims who even touch a Qur’an. On top of all these atrocities there are many kidnappings and forced conversions in many of these Muslim-majority countries.

Besides the actions of governments, extremists groups also wield a lot of influence. Whether it is the Taliban in Afghanistan, or Al-Shabab systematically killing Christians in Somalia, these groups are fighting a self-confessed religious war against Jews, Christians, and all other infidels. Although many world leaders praised the so-called “Arab spring”, it has only created more opportunity for influence by these extremist groups. One example of this is the growing power of Salafists and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The influence of these kinds of groups can clearly be seen in Nigeria, where there has been a growing number of mob-lynching and church bombings incidents.

State Opposition

Religious persecution also originates from the desire for total state control. This can mostly clearly be seen in Communist and Post-Communist countries like Russia, China, and North Korea. Russia, although not Communist anymore, still has a lot of power centralized in government. The “Council of Experts for Conducting Religious Studies Expert Analysis” includes Christian groups among “extremist groups” and monitors them. Many other post-Soviet countries also require official church registration, while forbidding churches that are “too small” or “too large.”

Communist countries, like China, require complete-commitment to the state, and therefore see Christianity as a threat. In Vietnam, all churches must be officially approved and registered by the state. House churches are illegal. China, although opening economically still has a lot of restrictions politically and spiritually. Only State-approved and State-run churches are allowed, and must submit to the authority of the state. Despite restrictions on house churches, there are many all over China, and Christianity is growing rapidly. One method of control is through labour camps. Forced labour is the means, thought reform is the aim.

North Korea is perhaps the worst of the religious persecutors. Since the 1960s, churches have been closed, religious literature has been destroyed, and religious leaders have been executed or sent to prison camps. Worship of any other person or object besides the Emperor is strictly prohibited.

Although these kinds of persecutions are not expressly one religion against another, it is clear that God has been replaced by an idol, the state. Christ teaches us to respect the authority God has placed over us but also warns about coming persecution. In [John 15:18-20](#), Christ speaks about the hatred of the world for Him, and therefore also for His followers.

For Discussion

What do the following texts teach us about persecution?

- [Matthew 5:10-12](#)
- [Matthew 10:16-23](#)
- [Mark 13:9-13](#)
- [Luke 21:10-19](#)
- [Romans 8:31-39](#)
- [1 Peter 4:12-16](#)

1. Will all Christians face persecution?
2. Do Christians in Canada face persecution?
 - a. If no, are we being bold enough as Christians?
 - b. If yes, how?
3. What comfort does God give us in the Bible about facing persecution?
 - a. Besides the texts you already looked at, what texts in Revelation speak about persecution?
4. Must we respect the government when it persecutes Christians?
5. Should we allow other religions the freedom to practice? Should we tolerate idolatry and false religions?

Group Activity

In 1998, the US government set up the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. This commission publishes an annual report on religious freedom throughout the world. It outlines the degree to which religious freedom can be exercised in that country and makes policy recommendations to the US government. It is a great place to get an overview of the current state of affairs. For this group activity:

1. Split into groups and pick a country
2. Look into the religious freedom and persecution of that country
3. Find stories of individuals, groups, and churches who have been persecuted
4. Present this case study to class

Helpful Resources

- [USCIRF Annual Report](#)⁶
- [Voice of the Martyrs](#)⁷
- [Open Doors: World Watch List](#)⁸
- [Amnesty International](#)⁹
- **Book:** *Persecuted: the Global Assault on Christians*, (2013) Paul Marshall, Lela Gilbert, Nina Shea

What can we do?

We have a responsibility to help our fellow Christians who are suffering throughout the world. We must encourage our government officials to act in defense of religious freedoms globally. Our government can pressure other nations to respect religious minorities. This can especially be done through our Prime Minister, the Department of Foreign Affairs, and the Office for Religious Freedom. Contact members of the government and ask them how they are defending religious freedom. Look for examples of particular religious prisoners or ongoing persecution and ask them to do something about it.

Although the Office of Religious Freedom is relatively new, it has great potential to protect religious freedom around the world. The United States equivalent (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom), for example, was instrumental in the establishment of Southern Sudan as an independent country and thereby protecting many Southern Sudanese Christians from Muslim militants in the north.¹⁰

God has blessed us as Christians in Canada. We have so many freedoms that we tend to take for granted. The freedom to worship God. The freedom to meet with fellow believers. The freedom to express our beliefs and to evangelize to others. We have a great responsibility because of these great freedoms. What is our responsibility? First and foremost, we must be thankful to God and worship him in these freedoms. We must share the Gospel with our neighbours. We must continually hold our brothers and sisters up in prayer. We must stand up for justice and mercy. We must defend the cause of the oppressed and speak on behalf of the voiceless.

⁶ <http://www.uscirf.gov/reports-and-briefs/annual-report.html>

⁷ <http://www.persecution.net/>

⁸ <http://www.worldwatchlist.us/>

⁹ <http://www.amnesty.ca/>

¹⁰ Paul Marshal, et. al., *Persecuted: the Global Assault on Christians* (Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 2013), p. 296.

Demographics: The Birth Rate in the World, the West, and the Church

[Note: This lesson plan is meant to accompany the movie *Demographic Winter*, available as a DVD or at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZeyYIsGdAA>.]

Two 50 minute lessons (Plus an optional third class to discuss the questionnaires that students completed with some senior citizens)

Level – Grades 10 - 12

Applicable Courses: Social Studies, Worldview Studies, Sociology

Overview – Adapted from the Article “**Family Planning: on a big scale**” *Reformed Perspective Magazine*, July/August 2008. Go to www.arpacanada.ca to read the full article.

Individualism has almost always been a problem in democratic countries. But its effects on marriage and the family really took hold around the time of the Sexual Revolution of the 60’s. Canada’s Supreme Court and our Parliament have gone along with this mantra of choice and autonomy. Now, one generation later, we can see the effects of this ethic beginning to take hold throughout the world. The birth rate in the West is falling rapidly, meaning that we no longer have enough children to replace us. The consequences of this are staggering.

For a population to stay stable in our part of the world, every woman must have an average of 2.1 children to replace herself, her husband, and those children who die before being old enough to reproduce. Canada’s birth rate is about 1.5 children per woman. In other words, if it weren’t for immigration, our population would be rapidly shrinking. And a much higher percentage of the population would be elderly and unable to contribute to the economy (or pay taxes). This isn’t causing immediate problems for Canada because there is no shortage of people from other nations who want to move here and enjoy our freedoms and privileges.

But what happens when birth rates around the world begin to drop? According to the documentary *Demographic Winter* “Worldwide, birthrates have been halved in the past 50 years. There are now 59 nations, with 44% of the world’s population, with below-replacement fertility. Sometime in this century, the world’s population will begin to decline. At a certain point, the decline will become rapid. We may even reach population free-fall in our lifetimes.”

According to UN statistics, Italy’s rate is 1.2 and Spain is at 1.1. With numbers that low, their entire population can almost be halved within a lifetime, immigration aside. What about Holland? Although the Dutch have a reputation for big families, they aren’t much better off than Canada, with a birth rate of 1.72. Australia is only a hair higher at 1.75.

What is causing the population meltdown in the West? A number of factors are contributing. First, people are waiting longer to get married. Careers and education are becoming more of a priority. Second, even couples who are married are waiting longer to have children. The average age of women giving birth for the first time in Canada is 28 years old. Once again, the priority seems to be getting established, having a higher standard of living, and a career. Third, contraceptives are not just about family planning, they are also changing society. The birth control pill was introduced to

Canada in 1961 – the same year that the birth rate began to fall. Sadly abortion is also being used as a form of birth control and the nearly 100,000 abortions per year in Canada alone are a big reason why our birth rate is so low. Add to all of this the increasing disregard for the traditional family unit and the objectification of sex and the result is a rapid decrease in the number of babies being born.

Not every country has such a low birth rate. A country like Afghanistan's birth rate is 7.48! Saudi Arabia's is 4.09 and Iraq's is 4.83. As Mark Steyn made clear in his book *America Alone: The End of the World as We Know It*, there are obvious demographical consequences to this imbalance. Muslim nations have high birth rates and are growing much faster than Western secular nations. So when secular countries such as Holland and France need immigrants to grow, they inevitably bring in more Muslims which results in serious clashes. The "tolerant" West suddenly is exposed as not being so tolerant after all.

Countries like Canada provide government pensions for seniors. How is it possible to maintain this when the number of seniors skyrockets and the number of tax payers decreases significantly? And it is not only pensions that will be affected. Our health care system is already strained – just imagine the effects of an increase in seniors and a decrease in health care providers. Many other aspects of the welfare state rely on younger people to keep the economy going. How can an economy be maintained with fewer workers? And with all of the new pressure on the economy, who will look after the growing number of seniors? Will euthanasia become a convenient way to address this problem?

The Role of Reformed Families

It is striking that the very first command that humanity received from God was to "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen 1:28). Malachi 2:15 also spells this out: "Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring." God wants us, as the human race, to have children and populate the world.

It is encouraging to see that the Reformed church in Canada has grown by leaps and bounds, largely internally. One has only to look at the huge family reunions that happen every summer. But it doesn't take an expert for us to observe that the birth rate is also falling within the church. As a former pastor of mine would say, "When it rains in the world, it drips in the church." Although it used to be common for families to have many children, the numbers seem to be dropping (even though they are still larger than typical Canadian families). Part of this is due to changing circumstances. We are no longer first or second generation immigrants. Many more young people in the church pursue postsecondary education, which often delays marriage and children. Real estate prices are high in the cities which makes owning a large home more difficult. And many more women are working, making it more difficult to have more children.

But perhaps it is our attitudes that have changed along with the circumstances. A house for a family with six children today is a whole lot bigger than 50 years ago. Expenses are higher today, but these expenses include luxuries that would have never been considered by previous generations. Although it used to be the norm that children helped work for the family, the standard today seems to be that our teens have an incredible disposable income which is used for clothes, cell phones, movies, and cars. And there is much more pressure for mothers to have a part-time or full-time job to contribute to the family income.

God will bless each family with or without children as He determines. But He also gives us a responsibility to make wise choices when we are able. We like to think of ourselves as exceptions to

the norm. But our individual choices ultimately shape our society. It is not a Biblical command to have big families. But it is important that we evaluate our motives for choosing to start and stop having children. After all, our children are God's children. Few contributions are more valuable to society than raising God-fearing children in our communities, our churches, and our world.

For Further Study:

Demographic Winter – A new documentary which examines the trend of falling birth rates throughout the Western world. The accompanying website (www.demographicwinter.com) has many frequently asked questions and further resources on this topic.

[The Future Belongs to Islam:](http://www.macleans.ca/culture/books/article.jsp?content=20061023_134898_134898)

(http://www.macleans.ca/culture/books/article.jsp?content=20061023_134898_134898)

This article by Mark Steyn is an excerpt from his book *America Alone* which considers the consequences of global demographics and the rise of Islam. Both Steyn and *Macleans* magazine were tried before a Human Rights Tribunal for publishing this article.

Procedure

- 1) Watch the documentary “Demographic Winter.” It is 56 minutes long.
- 2) Have all students read the full article “Family Planning on a big scale” as homework before next class.
- 3) In the next class, sum up some of the arguments from the documentary
- 4) Read the Bible texts that discuss parental responsibility (such as Genesis 1:28, 33:5, Psalm 127:3-5, 128:1-4.).
- 5) Ask students to list consequences of a falling birth rate. Divide these consequences into three groups: international consequences, consequences in Canada, and consequences in the church.
- 6) Using the list of consequences in the church, ask students to think of things that can be done to change this (if negative) or promote it (if positive).
- 7) **Optional Assignment:** With student participation (in class), make a questionnaire that students can take with them and interview a senior citizen(s) in their church who had a large family or was raised in a large family. The questionnaire should be made in such a way as to spark some discussion between the students and the seniors about what changes have happened over the decades, what it meant to the seniors to be part of a large family, and what the seniors think are the challenges or reasons why families are shrinking today.

Give the students two weeks to conduct the interview, write down some of the responses they received. Time permitting, have the students discuss their findings in a future class.

Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

[Note: This lesson plan is meant to accompany the DVD *Turning the Tide: Dignity, Compassion, and Euthanasia*. The DVD itself includes a discussion guide in the front cover.]

Length: One or two classes

Level: Grades 10 - 12

Applicable Courses: Social Studies, Worldview Studies, Sociology, Science

Current Political Context: Euthanasia is constantly before Canada's courts, Parliament, and Legislature. The Supreme Court of Canada has agreed to hear a case that is challenging our laws on euthanasia, and the Quebec Legislature is pushing to legalize it. Go to www.ARPACanada.ca for the latest developments.

Overview: Throughout our lives we struggle with the brokenness that comes from sin. Many people have been given very difficult burdens resulting from poor health, old age, or abandonment. Some who struggle with these burdens feel that life is not worth living, or that their lives are too much of a burden on their families or society in general.

Political support for assisted suicide and euthanasia is growing (see the DVD discussion guide for definitions). Countries like Switzerland, Holland and Belgium have already legalized some forms of euthanasia and many others, including Canada, are considering it. A June 2007 poll conducted by Ipsos Reid found that 71% of Canadians were in favour of physician-assisted suicide. In 2008 a Private Members Bill was introduced that would have legalized physician assisted suicide in this country. Although this effort fell through without going to a vote, there will likely be another attempt soon.

The Bible is clear that we have intrinsic worth because of God's special relationship with us. Genesis 1 explains that He made us in His image which means that we reflect many of the attributes of God through our dominion over creation, our creativity, intellect, righteousness, and holiness (having been set apart from the rest of creation), to name but a few distinctions. In short, our dignity cannot be lost because of a disease which takes away our ability to make decisions for ourselves. Regardless of whether we are young or old, disabled or healthy, we must all be treated with dignity because we were all made by God. Even after the fall into sin and before the sixth commandment was given on Mount Sinai, God warned Noah, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man." A Biblical view of human dignity realizes that we do not possess dignity because of our own worthiness. Our depravity is evident in everything we do and would surely have removed any dignity that we possessed. But even after the fall into sin we still possess the image of God, as made clear in the text just quoted. We have dignity only because God continues to have a special relationship with humanity. Christians should stand out from all others by reflecting who God really is to a world that is lost in darkness.

For more information, read [Euthanasia on the Horizon](#) and [Dying with Dignity](#) (French version also available) which can be found at www.ARPACanada.ca.

For Further Study:

Euthanasia Prevention Coalition: www.euthanasiaprevention.on.ca

Human Life Matters: <http://humanlifematters.blogspot.com/>

Procedure

- 1) Watch the documentary “Turning the Tide.” It is 28 minutes long.
- 2) On a chalk/white board, make two columns. Ask students to recollect reasons for and against assisted suicide and euthanasia, as presented in the documentary.
- 3) Have students read the following passages. For each of the texts, ask them to explain how they apply to the discussion:
 - a. Genesis 1:28
 - b. Genesis 9:6 (explain context)
 - c. Luke 10:25-37
 - d. Matthew 25:31-46
- 4) Try to get the students to understand that being against euthanasia and assisted suicide is not simply a political perspective. It is a way of life that values other people for who they are, regardless of their abilities. This applies to how they treat their peers as well.
- 5) Time permitting, use the discussion guide that accompanies the DVD. It may be a good idea to go back to some of the scenes of the documentary that the questions relate to.
- 6) **Optional Assignment:** Have the students make a poster that communicates that loving one’s neighbour means valuing them regardless of their abilities, health, or age.

Abortion – How Do We Respond?

[The “5 - Minute Pro-Lifer” article by Scott Klusendorf accompanies this lesson plan.]

One 50 minute lesson

Level – Grades 8 - 12

Applicable Courses: Social Studies, Worldview Studies, Sociology, Bible, Science, Biology

Overview for Teachers – It is difficult to talk about abortion in Canada because it is a moral issue with two strongly opposing views. But it must be talked about because in the centre of the debate are the life of a child and the well-being of a pregnant woman. After years of legalized abortion, countless people have been hurt because of it – either directly or indirectly. This applies within our churches as well. As a result, this lesson must be delivered with sensitivity, realizing that students in the room may be a whole lot closer to this issue than we may expect.

There is no doubt that abortion is evil. It usually involves the purposeful destruction of human life for the sake of personal convenience. All human life is special in God’s eyes. He made humans separate from the rest of creation and also warned us to respect human life “for in the image of God has God made man.” (Gen 9: 6) Abortion is a choice to destroy a human that God miraculously created in the womb. The legality or ease of a choice does not make it right or justifiable. God’s command against murder applies to everyone, including the unborn who are the most vulnerable.

In Canada, close to 100,000 unborn children are aborted every year. Looking globally, an estimated *126,000 unborn children die every day* because of abortion. It is hard to think about how huge those numbers are. Compare them to the size of some cities in your area (for the Canadian figure) or countries in the world (for the international number).

There are no laws that limit abortion in Canada. Abortions are allowed until the child is outside of his or her mother. This is a result of the Supreme Court of Canada striking down the already weak abortion law in 1988 with the case involving Canada’s notorious abortionist Dr. Henry Morgentaler. The absence of abortion laws means that they could be performed for any reason, including choosing the sex or physical traits of a child. It also means that school-aged girls can have abortions without their parents ever knowing about it.

But What Can Be Done?

There are three general approaches that the pro-life community has used to respond to abortion:

- **Pastoral Approach:** This involves combating abortion by reaching out to the women who are considering an abortion and offering them the support they need to carry their baby to term. Pregnancy care centres are located in communities across the country and work to bring a positive pro-life message to women. There are also toll-free phone lines and websites directed towards pregnant women. The pastoral approach emphasizes

compassion and assistance. Some can provide information on adoption, counselling, or even ultrasounds.

- **Prophetic Approach:** This involves speaking to our nation to make abortion unthinkable. Prophets in the Old Testament spoke out against evil and injustice to awaken the people and urge them to repentance. In our age, some pro-life groups are taking a similar approach by showing our world what abortion really is. This can include showing graphic pictures of abortion at university campuses (known as GAP displays), erecting billboards which draw awareness to the health effects of abortion on women, and having public debates about abortion.
- **Political Approach:** Abortion is prevalent partly because the law allows it to happen. Some pro-lifers try to limit abortion by promoting laws which make it more difficult to have an abortion. For example, a law could require a woman to be told about the potential health effects of having an abortion including a higher risk of suicide, breast cancer, and complications with future pregnancies. In the United States these laws have resulted in a decrease in the number of abortions.

What can Christians do? In our daily lives we can demonstrate a pastoral, prophetic, and political approach. We can reach out to help women who may be considering an abortion, we can speak to our friends who may be OK with abortion, and we can use our democratic freedom to bring a pro-life message to our government. Doing this requires that we are comfortable with giving a pro-life message. That is why this lesson is so important. It provides simple tools that students can use in their daily lives to speak up for the unborn.

For Further Study:

www.abort73.com: This website is packed with resources, online videos, and information that is suitable for a teen audience. Be warned, some of the pictures and videos are graphic and disturbing because they detail abortion realistically.

www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/abortion/ab-canada.html: Abortion Statistics for Canada, from year to year. There is also a link to provincial data and regional data within each province.

www.caseforlife.com: Arguments against abortion.

Procedure

- 1) Begin by asking students some questions. Try to encourage a number of responses before giving the answer (from above):
 - a. How many abortions happen every year in Canada? In the World?
 - b. Up to what point in pregnancy is an abortion legal in Canada?
 - c. Why do people have abortions?
- 2) Try to use the discussion from these questions to introduce some of the other facts included in the overview (above). It should be impressed upon them that this is not just an interesting moral issue but a matter of life and death. If we are willing to risk our lives to save somebody who we see dying, what are we willing to do about abortion?

- 3) Ask students about ways that pro-lifers can respond to abortion. Introduce the three basic approaches (pastoral, prophetic and political).
- 4) Ask a couple of more questions that typically come from a pro-abortion perspective to make students realize the difficulty of defending the pro-life view. For example, “Why can’t I make my own choice because it is my body and my pregnancy?” or “This is just an embryo, a little clump of cells. What is wrong with getting rid of it if it’s just a potential human?”
- 5) Distribute the article from Scott Klusendorf titled “The 5-Minute Pro-Lifer.” Go over as much of it as you think is appropriate for your class. Be sure to include the section explaining the SLED acronym. Also, be sure that they realize that the point about people being free to choose their own religion is referring to religious freedom in a political sense rather than a view that religions are arbitrary or that there is no true one.
- 6) Have the students summarize the article and convert the information to a different format:
 - a. Poster
 - b. Pamphlet
 - c. PowerPoint

This can be done individually or in small groups.

[Permission has been obtained from Life Training Institute to use this article with this lesson plan.]

THE 5-MINUTE PRO-LIFER

Making the Case for Life...Like It's Never Been Heard Before

Issue #1 - How to Defend Your Pro-Life Views in 5 Minutes or Less

By Scott Klusendorf [Life Training Institute: www.prolifetraining.com]

Suppose that you have just five minutes to graciously defend your pro-life beliefs with friends or classmates. Can you do it with rational arguments? What should you say? And how can you simplify the abortion issue for those who think it's hopelessly complex?

Here's how to succeed in three easy steps:

1) Clarify the issue. Pro-life advocates contend that elective abortion unjustly takes the life of a defenseless human being. This simplifies the abortion controversy by focusing public attention on just one question: Is the unborn a member of the human family? If so, killing him or her to benefit others is a serious moral wrong. It treats the distinct human being, with his or her own inherent moral worth, as nothing more than a disposable instrument. Conversely, if the unborn are not human, killing them for any reason requires no more justification than having a tooth pulled.

In other words, arguments based on “choice” or “privacy” miss the point entirely. Would anyone that you know support a mother killing her toddler in the name of “choice and who decides?” Clearly, if the unborn are human, like toddlers, we shouldn't kill them in the name of choice any more than we would a toddler. Again, this debate is about just one question: What is the unborn?

At this point, some may object that your comparisons are not fair—that killing a fetus is morally different than killing a toddler. Ah, but that's the issue, isn't it? Are the unborn, like toddlers, members of the human family? That is the one issue that matters.

Remind your critics that you are vigorously “pro-choice” when it comes to women choosing a number of moral goods. You support a woman's right to choose her own doctor, to choose her own husband, to choose her own job, and to choose her own religion, to name a few. These are among the many choices that you fully support for women. But some choices are wrong, like killing innocent human beings simply because they are in the way and cannot defend themselves.¹ No, we shouldn't be allowed to choose that.

2) Defend your pro-life position with science and philosophy. Scientifically, we know that from the earliest stages of development, the unborn are distinct, living, and whole human beings. Leading embryology books confirm this.² Prior to his abortion advocacy, former Planned Parenthood President Dr. Alan Guttmacher was perplexed that anyone, much less a medical doctor, would question this. "This all seems so simple and evident that it is difficult to picture a time when it wasn't part of the common knowledge," he wrote in his book *Life in the Making*.³

Philosophically, we can say that embryos are less developed than newborns (or, for that matter, toddlers) but this difference is *not* morally significant in the way abortion advocates need it to be.

Consider the claim that the immediate capacity for self-awareness bestows value on human beings. Notice that this is not an argument, but an arbitrary assertion. Why is some development needed? And why is this particular degree of development (i.e., higher brain function) decisive rather than another? These are questions that abortion advocates do not adequately address.

Put simply, there is no morally significant difference between the embryo you once were and the adult you are today. Differences of size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency are not relevant such that we can say that you had no rights as an embryo but you do have rights today. Think of the acronym **SLED** as a helpful reminder of these non-essential differences:⁴

Size: True, embryos are smaller than newborns and adults, but why is that relevant? Do we really want to say that large people are more human than small ones? Men are generally larger than women, but that doesn't mean that they deserve more rights. Size doesn't equal value.

Level of development: True, embryos and fetuses are less developed than you and I. But again, why is this relevant? Four year-old girls are less developed than 14 year-old ones. Should older children have more rights than their younger siblings? Some people say that self-awareness makes one human. But if that is true, newborns do not qualify as valuable human beings. Six-week old infants lack the immediate capacity for performing human mental functions, as do the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, and those with Alzheimer's disease.

Environment: Where you are has no bearing on *who* you are. Does your value change when you cross the street or roll over in bed? If not, how can a journey of eight inches down the birth-canal suddenly change the essential nature of the unborn from non-human to human? If the unborn are not already human, merely changing their location can't make them valuable.

Degree of Dependency: If viability makes us human, then all those who depend on insulin or kidney medication are not valuable and we may kill them. Conjoined twins who share blood type and bodily systems also have no right to life.

In short, it's far more reasonable to argue that although humans differ immensely with respect to talents, accomplishments, and degrees of development, they are nonetheless equal because they share a common human nature.

3) Challenge your listeners to be intellectually honest. Ask the tough questions. When critics say that birth makes the unborn human, ask, "How does a mere change of location from inside the womb to outside the womb change the essential nature of the unborn?" If they say that brain development or higher consciousness makes us human, ask if they would agree with Joseph Fletcher that those with an IQ below 20 or perhaps 40 should be declared non-persons? If not, why not? True, some people will ignore the scientific and philosophic case you present for the pro-life view and argue for abortion based on self-interest. That is the lazy way out. Remind your critics that if we care about truth, we will courageously follow the facts wherever they lead, no matter what the cost to our own self-interests.

[1] Gregory Koukl, *Precious Unborn Human Persons* (Lomita: STR Press, 1999) p. 11.

2 See T.W. Sadler, *Langman's Embryology*, 5th ed. (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1993) p. 3; Keith L. Moore, *The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology* (Toronto: B.C. Decker, 1988) p. 2; O'Rahilly, Ronand and Muller, Pabiola, *Human Embryology and Teratology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Wiley-Liss, 1996) pp. 8, 29.

3 A. Guttmacher, *Life in the Making: The Story of Human Procreation* (New York: Viking Press, 1933) p. 3.

4 Stephen Schwarz, *The Moral Question of Abortion* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1990) p. 18.

Redefining Family – What’s the Big Deal?

Length: One 50 minute lesson

Level: Grades 8 - 12

Applicable Courses: Social Studies, Worldview Studies, Sociology, Bible/Religion

Overview for Teachers: In the summer of 2005, Canada’s Parliament passed the *Civil Marriage Act* which redefined marriage to include homosexual couples. Canada became the fourth country in the world to officially redefine marriage in this way. Parliament’s decision followed numerous court decisions which found that the traditional definition of marriage was “unconstitutional.”

But this wasn’t the only effort to redefine the traditional family. In 2007, an Ontario court ruled that a child can legally have three parents. The biological mother and father of the child wanted the mom’s lesbian partner to legally be the boy’s parent as well. The court agreed, resulting in the boy having three “parents.” In addition to these changes to the traditional family, there is a growing push to allow for polygamy in Canada.

The redefinition of family has resulted in part from the breakdown of the family that accelerated with the introduction of “no-fault” divorce back in 1968. When maintaining marriage became a matter of preference, it did not take long for other groups to take advantage of this and redefine other parts of family according to preference.

What is going on behind each of these scenarios? The traditional family unit is being redefined according to individual preferences. Instead of biology and adoption defining family, family becomes whatever people want it to be. With these changes, there is no longer any objective standard of what should constitute a family. Instead, courts determine the new parameters based on what they think is “loving” and “tolerant”.

This redefinition of family is a rebellion against the long-standing definition of family (a married father and mother and biological or adopted children). This traditional definition was not simply some arbitrary definition that worked in the past but should be replaced to suit our postmodern times. It was designed by God to reflect the spiritual relationship between Him and us. Ephesians 5 explains how the relationship between husband and wife is to reflect the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. Likewise, the relationship between fathers and children is also to reflect the way that we are obedient to our heavenly Father. Throughout the Bible it is very clear that God puts a divine imprint on His creation. The family is to reflect who God is to this world. It is not to be defined according to our changing preferences but according to God’s eternal standard.

God also knows what is best for us. The traditional family unit is not only a spiritual reality; it is made for our good. When it is destroyed through divorce, redefining marriage, or any other way, there are inevitable consequences. A wealth of social research testifies to the importance of stable traditional families for the well-being of children and society in general.

For Further Study:

http://www.focusonthefamily.ca/tfn/family/PDF/Marriage_in_Jeopardy.pdf - This electronic pamphlet provides some typical questions and solid answers about redefining marriage to include homosexual couples.

[Institute of Marriage and Family Canada \(www.imfcanada.org\)](http://www.imfcanada.org): This think tank from Focus on the Family has a lot of resources and studies that affirm the value of the traditional family unit.

Procedure

- 1) Begin with a short lecture explaining some of the changes to the definition of the family and the reasons that underlie these changes (from notes above). Describe some common features of Biblical Jewish families.
- 2) Divide the class into four groups and get each group to look at a different aspect of families.
 - a. Group 1: Research a typical Jewish family in Biblical times. For example, what was Jesus' family like?
 - b. Group 2: Research families in Canada in the past two hundred years (e.g. Quebec in the 1800's).
 - c. Group 3: Have the group search through magazines (such as *National Geographic*, *Time*, and *Macleans*) to find pictures of families throughout the past century. Try to get the year from which the picture was taken.
 - d. Group 4: Compare average families from different continents today (African, American, Asian, European).
- 3) Have each group report their findings to the class. Have them consider the following questions:
 - a. How many children are in the family? When does this change? Why?
 - b. What do the pictures show about the relationship between the husband and wife?
 - c. What major changes occur? How are these changes represented? Positively, negatively etc.? Which are cultural but acceptable? Which are unbiblical?
 - d. What are some of the positive and negative consequences of the changed families that we see today?
- 4) After all four groups have presented their information, relate what they have learned to the current trend to redefine the family as it is happening in Canada today. Possibly have them prepare a written response to this question.

Human Rights and Human Rights Commissions

Length: One or two 50 minute lessons

Level: Grades 8 - 12

Applicable Courses: Law, Social Studies, Worldview Studies

Overview for Teachers: What are rights? What happens when they conflict? Who determines the winner? This lesson introduces students to these questions by looking at one example of a Christian pastor who has been silenced by a human rights commission for speaking up about his beliefs. Pastor Buisson's story follows this introduction.

Upholding human rights is essential for a just society. In Canada, we are blessed with the protection of many rights, allowing us to live our lives in peace and security. But this is changing. The language of rights is being manipulated to privilege particular worldviews, choices, and lifestyles. Our courts and so-called human rights commissions are increasingly being used to promote an agenda in which basic rights (life, freedom of religion etc.) are being squashed by new "rights" (unregulated abortion, celebration of homosexuality etc.).

As valuable as rights are, there is a lot of confusion about them. What exactly is a right? A right is an entitlement. It is something that we can take hold of, something that we naturally possess simply by being human. This means that rights come from outside of ourselves and our abilities. They have to be given to us by someone else who has the authority to give us these rights. That authority is God. Without belief in God, rights get reduced to a mere fiction or social agreement. They lose all authority and moral reason to compel us to recognize the rights of others.

Rights are accompanied by corresponding responsibilities. For example, we have a right to life but that can only be upheld if we are responsible to protecting the lives of other people. Rights are different than privileges. We are not owed privileges nor do we possess them simply by being human. Many people confuse rights with privileges. For example, we talk about a right to vote when in fact being allowed to vote is a privilege. Being human does not mean that we should be given the ability to be part of determining the government of our nation. Universal human rights are possessed by all humans equally.

Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* has ushered in a rights revolution in this country. The problem is not as much with the actual document as with the power given to the courts of this land to interpret it in a way that furthers a particular humanist agenda. The vague language of the *Charter*, combined with the denial of any religious grounding for human rights, has ushered in an era in which our judges use rights language to further particular social and political causes.

In recent years it has been this country's commissions and tribunals that have done the most harm with this rights revolution. The article below explains this in more detail. These commissions and tribunals have taken on the role of censorship, punishing those who publicly voice a worldview contrary to theirs. Unfortunately, many Christians are now afraid of speaking

up in public because of the threat of a human rights complaint by someone who claims to be offended.

For Further Study:

ARPA Canada's website (www.HumanRightsCommissions.ca) has a wealth of information on this topic.

Procedure

- 1) Show students a copy of the [Canadian Charter of Human Rights](http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/) (<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/>) and read sections 1-3, 7, and 15.
- 2) Distribute the article about Pastor Stephen Boissoin and read his story together as a class.
- 3) Split the class into three or four groups and give each of the groups two of the following questions:
 - a. Should Pastor Boissoin have publicly stated his views like this?
 - b. Does it matter if somebody is offended by what they read in the newspaper?
 - c. Should there be legal penalties for people who offend others with what they write? How extreme does something have to be for it to be a criminal offense?
 - d. Pastor Boissoin had been ordered to never write or say something like this again. Should he obey or disobey this? (Update: Boissoin appealed this in court and won a solid victory which overturned the human rights commission decision).
 - e. Find examples in the Old Testament that could be considered hateful. Should the religious books like the Bible be subject to courts?
 - f. What should we do if a church member is brought to court for refusing to provide a business service that he or she believes is against their faith?
 - g. Is it a right to have Christian schools? Or a privilege?
 - h. Should Christians be using human right commissions to advance our own objectives or concerns?
- 4) Have the students jot down their answers and appoint one person in the group to introduce the question and answer to the entire class.

Pastor Boissoin vs. Goliath

While Alberta's Human Rights Commission is acting the party of the big bully, Pastor Stephen Boissoin is honouring God as a modern-day David

by Mark Penninga (first published in Reformed Perspective Magazine, July/Aug 2008)

2014 Update: Stephen Boissoin appealed the HRC decision to the Alberta Court of Queens Bench (a real court!) and won a decisive victory in 2009. The case was appealed and Boissoin won once more in the Alberta Court of Appeal in 2012. Although this was a big victory for free speech, it came with a huge cost to Boissoin. Sadly, Alberta, BC, and SK all still have these "hate-speech" provisions in their human rights codes.

Most of us know the Biblical story of David and Goliath very well. It is a story of courage, strength, and justice. Most of all, it is a story of how God used David, a shepherd boy, to defeat the giant Goliath.

We are in our own David and Goliath situation today with Christians throughout the country being charged by Canada's human rights commissions (HRC's). Alberta Pastor Stephen Boissoin is one example – and his story needs to be told. His ordeal with the Alberta HRC forces us to question how we will respond. Are we going to be like the men of Israel who shook in their boots whenever Goliath came out to challenge them? Even worse, will we just shrug our shoulders and not care? Or will we be like David, who courageously fought back with the Lord's strength because he realized it was God's Name that was being dishonoured?

The context:

If you follow the news, you've probably heard at least a bit about two high profile cases involving *Western Standard* magazine publisher Ezra Levant and *Macleans*' columnist Mark Steyn. These two were brought before human rights commissions because of things they had published and written.

But while these two journalists have gotten most of the media attention there are many lesser-known cases involving people who do not have a lot of money or a media empire behind them to help fight their case. Canada's HRC's have been carrying out their persecution for years and few people seemed to care. I know of at least two cases involving businessmen from Reformed churches in Canada who have been brought before these commissions for refusing to do work which was not in keeping with their faith.

Before explaining Pastor Boissoin's case, it is helpful to know a few things about the Human Rights Commissions. Long-time Calgary newspaperman Nigel Hanniford has written a policy paper entitled "the Commission of Human Wrongs." In it he explains that the commissions were established across the country in the 1960's and 1970's "to provide quick, inexpensive remedies outside of the regular court system for victims of discrimination in the areas of employment and accommodation." But by the 1980's the commissions began to be used by activists as an easy tool for censorship. The reason why these commissions are so effective in the hands of these activists is because they do not follow the standard proceedings of justice. Here are some examples of how HRC's are open to exploitation:

- If a case is accepted, the complainant does not have to pay any of the costs, even if they lose the case. On the other hand, *the defendant must cover all of their own legal expenses, even if they win.* Therefore, simply being brought before a HRC is a penalty, even if you are not guilty.
- It doesn't matter if any harm *actually* occurs. It's enough that something is *likely* to occur, regardless of whether it ever does.
- Regular legal defences of truth, fair comment, and lack of intent to harm don't apply in the HRC's. In other words, you can be convicted for simply saying the truth, and nothing but the truth, if someone finds that truth offensive.
- The regular rules of evidence that apply in courts are lax and even neglected completely. For example, in the BC Human Rights Commission trial involving Mark Steyn and *Macleans*' magazine, the "prosecutor" was allowed to use quotes from Internet bloggers as evidence against Steyn. How can anybody defend themselves against every random thing some person might blog about them?
- Pastor Boissoin has also reported that at least one HRC (Alberta) is also in a conflict of interest because it hands out grants to groups that it thinks promote equality and diversity

(including Alberta Parents Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays). Is it possible for them to be impartial and objective?

Pastor Boissoin's case

Stephen Boissoin lives in Red Deer, Alberta. He is the director of a Christian drop-in centre for youth in the city. Back in 2002, in the midst of the public debate about the definition of marriage, Boissoin wrote a letter to the *Red Deer Advocate* in which he argued that there is a "militant homosexual agenda" to teach children that same-sex acts are "normal, natural and even productive."

One of the readers of this letter was offended. Darren Lund, who was then a local school teacher and is now a University of Calgary professor, filed a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission (HRC), arguing that Boissoin's letter was "hate-mongering." He also claimed that the letter to the editor led to an assault on a homosexual youth that happened two weeks later.

Given the points made about the HRC proceedings it was not too much of a surprise that Pastor Boissoin was found guilty by the Alberta HRC. The weak standard of justice meant that Boissoin could not do much to defend himself. A regular court could have considered how Boissoin actually lived a life that was very respectful of everyone. As a *Today's Family News* story reported, the young people who attend Boissoin's drop-in centre strongly defended his character. "Over half the kids here are gay or bisexual - for a fact - and Steve has never said, 'You can't come in.' He treats everyone equally, blind, deaf, black, gay," Maggie, a 17-year-old volunteer who calls herself 'very gay,' told the *Herald*." A regular court would have also thrown out the argument that this letter led to an assault on a homosexual youth. The only evidence that Lund gave for that was that the victim of the assault claimed to have read the letter and felt unsafe. It did not matter whether the actual assailant was motivated, or even read, the letter by Boissoin.

Feelings were enough to subject Boissoin to a lengthy trial and huge expenses. But that was not the end of it. On May 30, 2008, he was given his fine. He has to pay \$7,000 (including \$5,000 to Lund, for the "ridicule and harassment" he endured), write a letter of apology, and he was ordered to never again publish "disparaging remarks" about homosexuals in "newspapers, by email, on the radio, in public speeches, or on the Internet." *In other words, this pastor is not allowed to preach what the Bible says about homosexuality.*

Thankfully, Boissoin is not backing down. He is appealing the decision and rallying support for his cause. He is an example to us all that being persecuted for standing up for our faith is not something to become angry or cynical about. In an article on his website he writes "As hard as this persecution has been I publicly praise God for giving me the convictions that put me in this troubling position. I would rather be here and suffering tenfold worse than to be one that does not know or trust in Him!!!"

Religion and Climate Change

[The [National Geographic movies](#) that accompany this lesson plan are available at our website. Click on the education menu, find this lesson plan and click on the link provided.]

Length: One 50 minute lesson

Level – Grades 8 - 12

Applicable Courses: Social Studies, Worldview Studies, Science

Overview for Teachers – Turn on the radio or TV, look through a newspaper or magazine, and you will undoubtedly come across something about “climate change.” How did this one issue consume the West so quickly? Why has the media and our governments bought into it with religious zeal? Why do we hear it referred to as “climate change” rather than “global warming” now?

Christians have a God-given mandate to care for this world. Being “green” is usually a good thing. But there is something about this whole climate change hype that seems wrong. What is the problem? Is it just bad science? Or is there more to it than that?

The purpose of this lesson is to get students to understand that there is more to the climate change hype than bad science. It is being promoted with religious zeal because there is religious motivation behind it. Secular humanism believes that we are all there is. Without an all-powerful and loving God, we have to be responsible for Mother Earth ourselves. Humans are to blame for changes in climate and humans are responsible to fix it. Mixed in through all of the climate change rhetoric is the call to a form of international socialism. International bodies (such as the United Nations) are supposed to govern the redistribution of resources from richer nations to developing nations. National governments are not to be trusted because they will likely consider only their own well-being. These unaccountable transnational bodies are given more and more power as they work towards promoting their humanistic worldview.

In this lesson, students will watch two short videos (located on the ARPA Canada website) produced by National Geographic and the United Nations about climate change. The purpose of the lesson is to get students to think critically about what they see and to recognize the humanistic worldview behind the movies. This worldview will then be compared with our Christian belief about the world.

For Further Study:

For more information on the science of global warming, go to www.cornwallalliance.org. There are also a couple of articles on the ARPA Canada website.

<http://www.cornwallalliance.org/docs/an-open-letter-to-the-signers-of-climate-change-an-evangelical-call-to-action-and-others-concerned-about-global-warming.pdf>

<http://www.cornwallalliance.org/docs/a-call-to-truth-prudence-and-protection-of-the-poor.pdf>

<http://www.npr.org/documents/2006/feb/evangelical/calltoaction.pdf>

Procedure

- 1) Introduce the issue of global warming/climate change to the class by bringing up some of the points made in the introduction.
- 2) Show the class the two movies available at www.ArpaCanada.ca (click on the education tab and then the link to the movies that accompanies this particular lesson plan). If time is limited, just show the first movie.
- 3) In conjunction with the movies, ask the students to fill in the accompanying form (the climate change videos column) by writing down quotes and points that come up in the movie. It may be a good idea to show the movies twice. See the second form a few pages further for some suggestions of what can be filled in the form. Also, here are some quotes and points that came up in the first movie (*A Way Forward: Facing Climate Change*) that could be given as examples:
 - Global warming “threatens every species on earth”
 - “The world’s top scientists...have issued urgent warnings.”
 - “The IPCC reports leave no room for doubt. Global warming is a fact.”
 - “Humans are the main cause of climate change and its dangerous side effects.”
 - Global warming will intensify drought...aggravate flooding...lead to disappearing glaciers and rising oceans, disturb biodiversity, kill off some species, lead to starvation, make third world countries suffer the most
 - “We can shape a different future.” We must stabilize greenhouse gas emissions so that the temperature can drop two degrees. All of us must change our consumption patterns. But it is largely up to governments. IPCC suggests we change the way we think about energy. Help developing countries choose a more environmentally friendly course.
- 4) As a class, go through the Christianity column of the form and provide Bible texts or points of doctrine and belief from our faith to compare with the ideas expressed in the *National Geographic* film. For example, [read Lord’s Day 10](#) of the Heidelberg Catechism and compare answer 27 and 28 with the message in the *National Geographic* movies?

Some Features of Religions

Religions Explain/Answer	Climate Change Videos	Christianity
Where do we come from?		
Are we on our own?		
What/Who is the ultimate authority?		
Where are we going?		
Who should be responsible for guiding us to the truth?		
Does it rely on faith? If so how?		
Examples of Evangelists, Prophets, etc.		

Some Features of Religions

Religions Explain/Answer	Climate Change Videos	Christianity
Where do we come from?	Belief in evolution is assumed. Humans are products of change just like the rest of nature.	Genesis 1 and 2 – We were made by God. Belief in Him is assumed.
What/Who is the ultimate authority?	Science (as if it were one singular voice). Science is all-powerful and all-knowing.	God is the authority. He is all-powerful and all-knowing. The sciences testify to His power and work (Romans 1).
Can humans turn anywhere for help?	No, it is up to us to change the climate and ensure the survival of both nature and humanity.	Lord's Day 10 of the Heidelberg catechism and Matthew 6:26 – God cares for nature. But even more, he cares for us. He is our heavenly Father.
Where are we going?	Eternal destruction, unless we repent and change our ways quickly.	Eternal destruction, unless we repent and change our ways quickly.
Who should be responsible for guiding us to the truth?	We have an individual responsibility to change our ways and make things better. International bodies (unaccountable and undemocratic) should supervise this.	We have an individual responsibility to change our ways. God ultimately guides us by His Word and Spirit.
Faith	No scientific certainty to prove the hysterical claims, despite the claim that it is a fact.	No scientific proof of the existence of God and the truth of His Word although the Bible says that creation itself testifies to its truth (Romans 1)
Evangelists, Prophets, etc.	Al Gore, David Suzuki etc.	Apostle Paul, Augustine, etc.

The Separation of Church and State

How Should the Church and Government Interact in Canada?

(Two 50 minute lessons)

Level – Grades 11 or 12

Applicable Courses: Social Studies, Bible/Religion, Worldview Studies

2014 Update: ARPA has written a policy report which examines the issue of competing worldviews and religions in the public square. Find it at <http://arpacanada.ca/government-submissions/1934-new-policy-report-the-supremacy-of-god>

Overview for Teachers

The concept of the separation of church and state is often misunderstood, even by Christians, to mean the separation of religion from politics. Christians are often told to keep their religious views private and away from political issues. But God calls us to be a light in our world and to be prophets, priests and kings. How do we respond when our society tells us to keep our faith private?

Separating the institutions of the church and state is necessary for a free society. God has given different responsibilities to the church and the state. He has also set up different authorities in each institution. Though they are separate institutions, God remains sovereign over everything, including the state. As a result, our faith cannot be separated from politics. In fact, despite popular claims to the contrary, there is always a faith-based worldview behind all political decisions, even in our secular society. Behind the scenes there is a battle of worldviews competing to rule our nation. These worldviews are often hidden in an attempt to make the decisions seem to be “value neutral.”

Christians must courageously hold up the Christian worldview in the public square and demonstrate how it is best for all Canadians. At the same time, we must respect the different responsibilities given to the church and the state.

Preparation and Materials

Students should be shown examples (provided below) of:

- 1) Biblical texts which show God’s sovereignty over the public/political realm.
- 2) Biblical texts which show that the intuitions of church and state operate differently.
- 3) How the separation of church and state is misunderstood by many to mean keeping religion away from politics.
- 4) How faith, be it humanism, Darwinism, or Christianity, is behind all political decisions.
- 5) Practical ways (such as a letter to the editor) in which Christians can bring their faith to bear on public life.

For Further Study:

A good book on this topic is *State vs. Church* by Timothy Bloedow (a link to it can be found at www.ARPCanada.ca at the Library menu). It is Canadian, quite recent, and provides many more examples relevant to this discussion.

Procedure

- 1) Have a class discussion to gauge the student's general thoughts about the separation of church and state. What does it mean? Do they think it is a good idea?
- 2) Read Romans 13: 1-7. Who institutes civil authorities (government)? What is the task given to civil government? How does this compare with the role that government now plays in society (providing child care, welfare, flood relief etc.)?
- 3) Read Matthew 22:15-22. Who is "Caesar" today? What does this tell us about our relationship with civil government?
- 4) Read Titus 1:6-9. What does this tell us about different roles for the institution of the church and the institution of the state? What are some examples of situations where one institution may be tempted to interfere in the authority of another institution?
- 5) Distribute and read the National Post article below. What does Minister Pettigrew think the separation of church and state is about? How would he be correct in his comments? How would he be wrong? He explains that promoting same-sex "marriage" is his principled decision. What might his principles be? How are they formed?
- 6) Read the response to Minister Pettigrew by Ted Byfield. What are some other laws in our society that come from the Bible? Ted Byfield's argument can be taken one step further. Keeping religion out of politics would not only exclude all the laws that are based on the Bible, it will also exclude the laws that are based on other religions/worldviews. If Minister Pettigrew is basing his decision on principle, and that principle isn't the Bible, then what is it?
- 7) Encourage students to try think of examples of new laws and policies that are being promoted that are not based on the Bible. What are they based on? What is the new authority? Who are we expected to look to for help, for guidance, for determining right from wrong?
- 8) So what is really going on? Is the question really about the separation of church and state? Or is it the battle of one worldview against the other? A new worldview (secular humanism, which looks to the state for authority) is fighting to push the old worldview (Christianity) away.
- 9) How do we respond? May we promote the Christian Worldview in a country that is no longer Christian? How do we do this? Encourage the students to think of ways to present Christian principles to someone who doesn't believe in God or the authority of Scriptures.
- 10) **Assignment:** Have students write a short letter to the editor on a topic of their choice in which they argue for Biblically-based position. (See two sample letters below) Encourage

them to think through the eyes of a secular reader. This requires presenting arguments which someone else would consider, even if they are not a Christian. The Bible can be used (though it is not necessary), but students should attempt to show why it should matter to someone who does not believe in the Bible as well.

“Church told to butt out”

Author: Elizabeth Thompson and Anne Dawson

Publication: CanWest News Service, with files from National Post January 28, 2005

FREDERICTON - The Roman Catholic Church should keep its nose out of the government's same-sex marriage legislation, Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew suggested yesterday.

Asked about plans by church groups in Quebec to launch a campaign against same-sex marriage, Mr. Pettigrew said the government and churches should not get involved in each other's affairs.

"I find that the separation of the Church and the state is one of the most beautiful inventions of modern times."

While some Liberal MPs have said they will oppose the legislation or have yet to make up their minds, Mr. Pettigrew said there is no doubt in his mind that he will support the bill to be tabled when Parliament resumes.

"It is a question of principle for me. I will support the government's legislation on the marriage of same-sex couples."

“Pettigrew Puts Boots to Religious Canadians,”

Excerpt from an article by Ted Byfield, The Calgary Sun, January 30, 2005

“That’s not only the minister’ position, but also that of the liberal media. However, none of them seem to have taken this dictum to its inevitable conclusion. All laws – not just laws concerning sexual behaviour – are based upon some moral principle. The entire Criminal Code, for starters, is an anthology of morality. Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not lie, thou shalt not murder, all these rules are moral principles....

The first point to note then is this: morality does not lie behind some of the things legislators do. It lies behind everything they do, because every law is an attempt to enforce –coercively–some moral principle. The second point is equally important. The basis of the morality of just about everybody in the country is religious. We don’t steal and we don’t murder because the bible says we shouldn’t. When we send money to relieve the victims of the tsunami, it’s because we’re trying to love our neighbour, a biblical injunction. If we seek to make education available to everyone, it’s because we think it’s “fair,” and what we think “fair,” whether we realize it or not, comes directly out of the Bible.

Therefore, when Pettigrew says that religion must not be allowed to influence public policy, he disqualifies from participation in government all those whose moral basis lies in religion. Since our religion is ultimately the only reason we can give for favouring, or opposing, any law, he has

in reality called for the disenfranchisement of just about every Canadian. And nobody in cabinet bats an eyelash. Welcome to the New Canada.”

Sample Letters to the Editor

Both letters below were written by Christians. The first comes from an ordinary citizen, the second from a Member of Parliament. In different ways, both letters serve as good examples of how to communicate a Biblical point of view, even if the Bible is not necessary mentioned.

RE: An explicit sex event at a local university

Lethbridge Herald

Editor,

It's not about being "up-to-date" or "democratic" or "free to do what's right for me". When one does good, and obeys the truth, there is blessing. When one does whatever one pleases, with no regard for truth or right, there is no blessing.

We need to maintain a respectful attitude toward sex as a God-given gift to mankind. The blessings in keeping sex within marriage (of a man and woman, of course) include strong husband/wife relationships, and well-adjusted, secure children.

Rather than fighting for "our rights", we need to focus on doing what is right before God.

SH Alberta

Calgary Herald – March 10, 2006 -Time for limits

Re: “Choice, yes, within reason,” Editorial, Feb. 26.

I want to commend the Herald for the thought-provoking and well-reasoned editorial. Canadians not only want limits on abortion, they want laws that protect women from being misled.

A 2005 Environics poll found 70 per cent of Canadians support requiring physicians to give women contemplating abortion information on fetal development, health risks of abortion, alternatives and an ultrasound scan. A woman also has the right to know abortion can harm her future children. A French study reported last year in the British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology concluded abortion almost doubles the risk of future pre-term birth.

Women are also not told the fetus feels pain. Dr. K. S. Anand, an expert on pain perception in fetal and neonatal children, says the fetus feels pain by 20 weeks, and perhaps even earlier, and that the pain caused by abortion would be “prolonged and excruciating.” In 2002, at least 308 children were aborted between 21 and 40 weeks gestation. We must all share in the blame for the more than 100,000 abortions annually in this country. We should help with crisis pregnancy centres and other programs to support women so abortion becomes a rare thing in a compassionate society.

Maurice Vellacott

Ottawa

Maurice Vellacott is the MP for Saskatoon-Wanuskewin

Political Ideologies: Discerning the Right from the Left

One 50 minute lesson

Level – Grades 8 - 10

Applicable Courses: Social Studies, Worldview Studies, History

Overview for Teachers – Are you right wing or left wing, conservative or liberal? What do these terms even mean? We hear them all of the time, be it in the news or even in church. The purpose of this lesson is to help students understand some basic differences between political ideologies and then analyze how their Christian beliefs fit into these categories. Should Christians be conservative? Is there something wrong with the fact that many who identify themselves as Christians in Canada tend to vote exactly the same way as the rest of the population?

As evidenced in the chart below, each political ideology is guided by different worldviews. For example, a socialist perspective is much more optimistic about human nature than conservatism. Understanding the underlying worldview goes a long way in helping us determine their consistency or inconsistency with our Christian faith.

It is also important for students to understand that an ideology may sound good in theory but that does not necessarily translate to it being good in practice. For example, if the underlying worldview is optimistic about human nature and our potential (such as communism or socialism) it is actually out of step with reality (from our Biblical perspective) and can end up causing a great deal of harm.

Although one ideology may be more consistent with our faith, a Christian worldview does not fit neatly in any single category. The Bible emphasizes that we are citizens of God's kingdom first. Earth is our temporary home. Our ultimate king is God. We are commanded to obey our civil government (Romans 13) but not to the point of disobeying God. There is no clear calling in the Bible for civil government to do anything beyond restraining evil (through justice etc.) and promoting good so that we may live in peace (see *Belgic Confession* Article 36). These points seem consistent with the "conservative" category in the chart below. But the Bible also calls Christians to be generous and to share with those in need (2 Corinthians 8:1-14). This was especially evident in the early church where believers shared freely with each other out of love (Acts 2: 42-47). Private property and ownership is never disapproved of, but there are many warnings about greed and materialism. For example, Proverbs 30:8-9 asks God to give us what we need, not too much or too little. Capitalism and conservatism have also been associated with greed and a lack of compassion for the needy.

Suggested Reading:

[Belgic Confession Article 36](#): The Civil Government

[George Bush's Fact Sheet on Compassionate Conservatism](#): How is “Compassionate” Conservatism different than the traditional form? Why do you think there has been an increasing push in this direction among conservatives?

Procedure

- 1) Photocopy and distribute the chart below.
- 2) With the class, go through each category of political ideologies, explaining the worldview behind them and some examples. *This chart is only a starting point. Feel free to add to it or modify as needed.* It is quite general and should be appropriate for all high school students. Senior grades may be able to go a little more in depth on each of the categories. Try to keep this to 15 minutes if you want to have the assignment completed in a 50 minute class.
- 3) Explain how fascism is different from the other ideologies. It came out of a specific mentality in the early 1900's and fell out of favour after WWII.
- 4) After the students are familiar with the basic differences, divide them into four groups and have them each represent one of the ideologies (leaving fascism aside). Ask each group to come up with a case for what is Biblical about their ideology. They should be specific – provide Bible texts, Reformed doctrines, or other points to back up their points. They should have about 15 minutes.
- 5) Have the four groups face each other on two sides of the room. The right side (facing the teacher) should consist of the conservatives and liberals and the communists and socialists should be on the left (corresponding to traditional parliaments).
- 6) Give each group two minutes to give a standing defence of their ideology from a Christian perspective.
- 7) In the remaining time, allow for a moderated debate (teacher should be the “Speaker” of parliament) where each group can respond to the others by questions and comments.
- 8) Conclude by jotting down the three main strengths and three main weaknesses of each political ideology as judged by Biblical standards. Based on this, does there seem to be a ranking between the competing ideologies?

Comparing Political Ideologies

	Communism/Marxism	Socialism	Liberalism	Conservatism	Fascism
Description (Origins and Key Ideas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1800's (Karl Marx) - Workers control the economy - Own things together - No private ownership or property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1800's - State looks after you "from the cradle to the grave" - minimum wages are high - Very high taxes - Government pays for many things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1700's - personal freedom emphasized - some state controls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1700's - traditional, resist change - minimum government necessary - usually pro-business and anti-union - capitalism and free economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1920's - state controls industry - yearn for past glory - associated with racism/belief in racial superiority - private property
Worldview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - denies sinful nature and greed - based on evolution -no room for God (often anti-Christian) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - optimistic view of human nature - agnostic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - humanistic (people are number one, not God) - separation of church and state - freedom of religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - religion is important - church and family should help poor and sick, not government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - anti-Christian - very evolutionist - Social Darwinism
Examples	Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North Korea - Cuba - China (less now) - Russia (till 1990) 	Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sweden - Holland 	Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canada USA Scotland England 	Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> USA (under Bush) Canada in the 1950's 	Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Germany under Hitler - Italy under Mussolini - Argentina

Comparing Canada's Political Parties

(Two 50 minute lessons)

Level – Grades 10 - 12

Applicable Courses: Social Studies

Overview

Canadian politics requires the organization of political parties – voluntary associations of individuals who agree to work together based on common ideas about public affairs. Political parties are membership based. Canadian citizens are able to buy a membership in a party and receive the privileges that are associated with their membership (such as choosing a candidate to run for office, choosing a leader, and voting on party policy). When a party has the majority of MP's in the House of Commons, it forms the government. The leader of the governing party becomes the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister selects some of the MP's in his or her party to serve as cabinet ministers – special positions responsible for various aspects of governing such as health or defence. The party with the second most number of MP's forms the official opposition.

There are many parties in Canada. The Liberals, Conservative, New Democrats, and Bloc Quebecois are the most well-known because they have a presence in Canada's House of Commons. But many other parties exist, such as the Animal Alliance Environment Voters Party of Canada, the Marijuana Party, and the Western Bloc Party. The sixth largest party in Canada is the Christian Heritage Party. They describe themselves by saying “The CHP is Canada's only pro-Life federal political party, and the only federal party that endorses the Judeo-Christian principles enshrined in the Canadian Constitution...” Individuals from Reformed churches were very involved in the creation of the CHP in the 1980's.

The two largest parties in Canada – the Liberals and Conservatives – are classified as “brokerage parties.” This means that they try to reach out to as wide a variety of people as possible. In contrast to ideological parties, which run on specific principles such as environmental responsibility, brokerage parties are willing to make their policies adapt to the general consensus of Canadians.

Christians work within many different parties. Some choose to work for secular brokerage parties with the hope of using their power to influence Canada for the better. Others believe that the only option is a Christian party because the other parties require a compromise of faith. Choosing which party to support is an important decision that all Canadian citizens have a responsibility to consider.

Preparation and Materials

Students should be shown:

- 1) Policies from some of Canada's political parties (provided)

- 2) A chart comparing ideological and brokerage parties

For Further Study:

A very helpful guide (*How Canadians Govern Themselves*) which explains Canada's Parliament and how it functions is available on Parliament's website at

http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/AboutParl_Education.asp?Language=E.

Party Websites: A list of all of Canada's registered parties, along with links to their websites is available at

<http://www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=pol&document=index&dir=par&lang=e&textonly=false>

Procedure

- 1) Write the names of some of Canada's most well-known parties (Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Green, and CHP) on a board and ask students to list things that they think describe each party.
- 2) Show the chart provided which compares ideological parties with brokerage parties
- 3) Show the chart provided which compares the party policies on child care and ask how they reflect whether they are brokerage parties or ideological parties.
- 4) **Discussion:** Explain the importance of Christians using their vote as part of their service to this country. Invite students to bring forward reasons why it would be better for Christians to vote for a brokerage party or an ideological party. What are advantages and disadvantages to both? How do these advantages and disadvantages measure up to what the Bible says about our place in this world?
- 5) **Assignment:** Divide the class up into four to six groups, depending on the class size. Have each group represent one of the parties listed above. Select a current topic to debate (crime, definition of marriage, the environment etc.). Have each group research what the party policy would be for that issue. Have a 30 minute debate in which each group presents their policy, defends it, and gets two opportunities to respond to the other parties. Make sure that they stay true to the party policy rather than bring in their own perspectives.



Brokerage Parties vs. Ideological Parties

	Brokerage Party	Ideological Party
Examples	Liberal, Conservative	Green, CHP, Marxist-Leninist
Purpose	To win an election and govern	To advance an ideology
Size	Large – diverse composition	Smaller – more united on policy
Popularity	Almost always form governments. Gain the vast majority of votes.	Generally the smaller parties. They tend to attract support but it often does not materialize into votes.
Benefits	More likely to achieve power and have influence.	More committed to the values of the membership base, uncompromising in beliefs.
Drawbacks	Provides little leadership because it tends to follow public opinion. Policies change quickly.	Canada's "first-past-the-post" electoral system leaves most small ideological parties in the dust. They don't elect MP's and therefore don't have an opportunity to advance their agenda within government.



Comparing Parties on their Childcare Policies

Conservatives	Liberals	NDP	CHP
Implemented the Universal Child Care Benefit which gives \$1,200 per year to parents for every child under six.	Against the Child Care benefit – would prefer the money to go to new child care spaces	Lock in a program that provides early education and child care and that cannot be watered down with new governments	Responsibility of parents, not gov't to raise and educate children.
Provide \$250 million per year to provinces and territories for creating new child care spaces	When in gov't, promoted a 5 billion dollar plan to create a universal child care program	Provide a stable amount of money to provinces so they can develop more child care spaces.	In-home child care facilities are preferred rather than institutional child care.
Belief: Parents should have the support to raise children as they see fit, but gov't also has a role in providing child care spaces.	Belief: Families should be able to bring their children to government funded child care centres so that parents can work if they want.	Belief: State has the responsibility to provide government-funded child care for families.	Belief: Families should be caring for their children. It is not the state's responsibility.

Christian Political Organizations in Canada

(Two 50 minute lessons)

Level – Grades 9 - 12

Applicable Courses: Social Studies, Worldview Studies

Overview:

Christians care about what is going on in politics because our civil governments make decisions which impact almost every aspect of our lives. The Bible also calls us to be a voice for justice and righteousness. In a country where abortion is pervasive, child exploitation (through pornography etc.) is rampant, and many women are trafficked for sexual slavery, Christians need to speak up and promote justice and love.

Organizing political action usually increases its effectiveness. A number of Christian political organizations exist in Canada. Each has their own unique approach and niche in the political landscape. It is helpful to know which organizations exist so that we can benefit from the work that is already being done. The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to some of the types of political action possible and to familiarize them with some of the specific organizations that may help them in the future.

The article “A Welcomed Ally” (included below) introduces and explains the differences between grass roots mobilization, issue-based advocacy, and general Christian political advocacy. Two more groups have been added for the purpose of the assignment: Christian political parties and Christian think tanks.

- The Christian Heritage Party is the only Christian party in Canada. It attempts to promote the Christian worldview directly through democracy. Like all parties, Christian parties aim to be elected into public office. If they are successful (which is the case in the Netherlands and other countries), they can have a great deal of influence because they are part of the law-making process. However, if they don't get elected, they have difficulty making a significant contribution apart from presenting a Christian perspective around election time. The electoral system in Canada has resulted in the CHP never having a candidate elected into office.
- Think tanks are academic organizations that develop research and studies with the goal of getting this into the hands of policy makers. They focus their research on topics that are in keeping with their organizational goals and priorities. Their hope is that government leaders will use their research in creating laws and policies. This is a form of indirect influence. Politicians look to think tanks which they know share their ideology on a particular issue. They benefit with research to support their position. The think tank benefits by having its ideas influence new laws. However, think tanks also have weaknesses. Their attempt to be academic and professional creates a distance between them and the general public. As a result, they do little to help everyday Christians make a

difference in the public square. They are also quite limited in what they can say, given their desire to appear objective and academic.

Each type of political action has its own unique strengths and weaknesses. It is not about one type vs. another but rather how they work together to make a positive difference in this country.

Procedure

- 1) In the first class, give a lecture explaining the five general types of Christian political groups and the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- 2) Use the handout (below) and explain what their assignment will be in the second class.
- 3) In the second class, have the students go to a computer with internet access to fill in the assignment.
- 4) Go over the answers with the students, explaining the ones which students have different answers for. The answer sheet is below.
- 5) Timer permitting, ask the students which type of organization they would go to for:
 - a. Suggestions on what they can do about a specific issue (either A, B, or C)
 - b. Research for an academic report they are writing on a political topic (E)
 - c. Help with writing a letter to the government (A)
 - d. Thoughts on who to vote for (D)

Further Reading:

A WELCOMED ALLY: Christian political organizations already exist, so where does ARPA Canada fit in?

2014 Update: This article has been modified to reflect the changes since it was written.

by Mark Penninga

Politics impacts everything we do, from what kinds of light bulbs we can buy to what we read on our cereal boxes. Given the impact politics has on our daily lives, it's worth asking how much Christians are doing to positively influence society through politics. Which Christian organizations are already involved in Canadian politics? How successful are they? And is there room for one more?

Canadian Christians have indeed been doing some work in the political sphere, and there are at least three different types of Christian political advocacy organizations already at work in our country. We're going to look at each of them, and then explain just where ARPA Canada fits in.

1. Grass-roots mobilization

Have you ever received an email from a group calling you to respond to something that is going on in Parliament, such as the definition of marriage, or a bill to increase the age of consent? Chances are the email came from an organization that is promoting grass-roots mobilization.

The two main organizations in Canada that are doing this are the Canada Family Action Coalition (CFAC) and My Canada. Like almost all Christian political organizations, these are actually very small organizations with only one or two employees. They rely on regular Canadians to get their message out to our civil governments. The primary method of action that these groups use is

the Internet – through email “action notices” or “1 click technology” that allows individuals to send an email to many government officials at the click of their mouse.

Pros:

Grass-roots mobilization is very important because it is in keeping with the Biblical mandate for *all* Christians to be a light in our world. The work is not left up to a few professional lobbyists in Ottawa. Furthermore, since we live in a democracy, the people still have an important influence in the public policy process. Giving citizens a voice is an important part of promoting democracy.

Cons:

Grass-roots mobilization organizations are often reactive rather than proactive. Emails flood Parliament when something bad is happening, but little is being done to promote positive action before changes are already happening. Furthermore, internet-based lobbying only has limited value. Few things are more effective than meeting with a government official face to face, or at least giving them a phone call.

2. Issue-based advocates

Recognizing that Canada is promoting many harmful things, such as abortion and the breakdown of the family, some groups exist to make a difference on those specific issues. Campaign-Life Coalition is a primarily Catholic organization that has been promoting the pro-life cause in Parliament. Groups like this have also sprung up in response to the changing definition of marriage (such as Defend Marriage Canada) but they have died out about as quickly as they came up. Many Reformed Christians are also familiar with the ECP Centre (Equipping Christians for the Public Square) which is now defunct. Although their name suggests that they may belong in the first category of Christian political groups, they have instead focussed primarily on defending civil liberties.

Pros:

These organizations focus on one (or a few) issues which means that they are often good at what they do. They can also strategize and be proactive so that they influence the government officials before they make decisions. Furthermore, they are often able to interact more directly with Members of Parliament and hopefully also build a relationship with them.

Cons:

This approach does not usually encourage much action from every-day people because it is just a few paid employees who do all the work. Some of these groups struggle with having to give the same message for many years and end up becoming distracted from their goal or wearing out their welcome.

3. General Christian advocacy groups

Religious groups and denominations realize that government decisions have a big impact on the things that they care deeply about. That explains why organizations such as the Catholic Civil Rights League and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada have offices devoted to political action. These organizations work with a broad variety of issues and try to provide a religious perspective to government.

Pros:

These organizations don't try to hide the fact that they are bringing a religious perspective. This results in a more Biblically-based approach. Furthermore, they have a stronger connection to their support-base and are therefore able to encourage grass-roots mobilization as well. The EFC in Ottawa is a good example of how effective this type of organization can be. They have nurtured good relationships with MPs and earned a lot of respect for the work they do.

Cons:

Having a broad mandate can often result in a lack of focus. These groups struggle with having to cover such a wide variety of issues and still be effective.

Read the rest of the article (which introduces ARPA Canada) online at www.arpacanada.ca

Assignment – Identifying Christian Political Organizations

Look up the following websites from Christian political organizations in Canada. From a brief analysis of the website, choose which category best describes the organization:

- A. Grass roots mobilization
- B. Issue-based advocacy
- C. General Christian political advocacy
- D. Political Party
- E. Think Tank

Canada Family Action Coalition (www.familyaction.org) _____

Explain why (point form):

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (www.evangelicalfellowship.ca) _____

Explain why:

Cardus (www.cardus.ca) _____

Explain why:

Christian Heritage Party (www.chp.ca) _____

Explain why:

ARPA Canada (www.arpacanada.ca) _____

Explain why:

Institute of Marriage and Family Canada (www.imfcanada.org) _____

Explain why:

REAL Women of Canada (www.realwomenca.com) _____

Explain why:

Campaign Life Coalition (www.campaignlifecoalition.com) _____

Explain why:

Answers – Identifying Christian Political Organizations

Look up the following websites from Christian political organizations in Canada. From a brief analysis of the website, choose which category best describes the organization:

- A. Grass roots mobilization
- B. Issue-based advocacy
- C. General Christian political advocacy
- D. Political Party
- E. Think Tank

Canada Family Action Coalition (www.familyaction.org) A

- help people get active on social conservative issues

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (www.evangelicalfellowship.ca) C

- Keep the evangelical churches informed, represent them, on a variety of issues.

Cardus (www.cardus.ca) E

- Produce research and resources to change Canada's social architecture.

Christian Heritage Party (www.chp.ca) D

- Goal is to be elected.

ARPA Canada (www.arpacanada.ca) C

- Combination of informing, representing, research, and encouraging action.

Institute of Marriage and Family Canada (www.imfcanada.org) E

Produce research on family issue for government

REAL Women of Canada (www.realwomenca.com) B

- Promote a conservative view of women's issues in opposition to feminism

Campaign Life Coalition (www.campaignlifecoalition.com) B

- Promote pro-life position in government