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STILL GLORIOUS AND

FREE?

OUR CHRISTIAN DUTY TO STAND ON GUARD FOR FREEDOM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The chorus in our national anthem is a prayer: *God keep our land glorious and free. O Canada we stand on guard for thee. So, what does that mean practically?*

James teaches us that it's no good to pray for the hungry and poor if we ourselves don't also help the hungry and the poor (James 2:14-26). How does God answer our prayer to feed the hungry? Sometimes through miracles, but most often through his people feeding the hungry!

If we pray, "God, please keep our land free", then we also have an obligation to "stand on guard for" Canada, to keep her free.

In a modern, liberal democracy, freedom is often equated with the right to do as I want, when I want. This is not the type of freedom I mean, and most likely not the freedom that the original author of the national anthem had in mind either. Lord Acton, writing around the same time, said it well: "Liberty is not the power of doing

what we like, but the right of being able to do what we ought."

It is perhaps partly because we, as a culture, have grown accustomed to a sense of liberty as doing whatever we want that we Christians easily shrug our shoulders when freedom is curtailed in the face of a pandemic. But it is especially during trying times that we need the freedom to do what we ought.

During this pandemic, all kinds of Christian duties have been curtailed: the duty to give tender care to aged parents, the duty to tend to the sick, the duty to visit and encourage the lonely, the duty to corporately worship and pray for our nation and city, the duty to comfort the mourning, and the duty to love the orphan or foster child and their family. In much

worse and deadlier pandemics in the recent past (Spanish flu in 1918-1919, Asian Influenza in 1957 and Hong Kong Influenza in 1968), these restraints were not imposed (except for limits on large-scale gatherings lasting at most three weeks). If a Christian wanted to risk their health or life to comfort a sick person, visit a lonely person, or assist a struggling person, they were permitted to do so. Since March, if a Christian were to do so, they risk not only large fines but also vilification by Christians and non-Christians alike.

It's difficult to determine the reason for this dramatic shift, but I suspect it has a lot to do with the massive expansion of the administrative (nanny) state over the past three or four generations.

STAND ON GUARD FOR FREEDOM *(CONTINUED...)*

What should make Christians distinct from their neighbours is not whether we speak up about our freedoms but how.

Generally, Canadians lift up their eyes unto the state from which their help comes. How many Christians too, look for the state to both protect them and to do the ministry of mercy which Christians ought to be doing?

So, is there anything an individual Christian can do about these intrusions into the ministry and witness of the church? In Canada, everyone has the fundamental freedoms of religion, of peaceful assembly and of association, protected by section 2(a), 2(c), and 2(d) of the Charter. These freedoms should protect the ministry of the church described above. When the civil government infringes on Charter rights like freedom of peaceful assembly, the burden is on the civil government (not citizens) to demonstrate that the restrictions are justifiable in a free and democratic society.

But what about Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17? Don't these passages demand submission to the governing authorities? Yes, the general rule of Scripture is that Christians are subject to the governing authorities. But in order to make a proper application of this rule, we have to understand how our civil authorities govern.

In a democracy, it is not only the premier who gets to decide what the law requires. In fact, lawyers and judges, and police officers and citizens should all know what their rights and responsibilities are in law. We are all equally under law and ruled by law. This legal reality is a blessing of Christendom. The Magna Carta, which enshrined this concept over 800 years ago in English law, is rooted in Christian culture. Furthermore, the judiciary is also part of the civil government. When a citizen appeals to a judge to clarify whether or not the actions of the Premier are constitutional (i.e. legal), then this shows respect for the government

and her institutions and uses the law to our advantage. Paul – who wrote Romans 13 – does this multiple times, when he uses his Roman citizenship status to avoid being flogged (Acts 22:22-29), when he demands that the local magistrate personally escort him and Silas out of jail after their rights had been violated (Acts 16:37-40) and when he appeals to Caesar (Acts 25:10-11).

Asserting Charter rights is not insubordination. As a Canadian citizen, you bear Charter freedoms. Making your case in court, as the law entitles you to do, is a lawful exercise of your office of citizenship.

What should make Christians distinct from their neighbours is not whether we speak up about our freedoms but how. Our tone of respect, our posture of prayer, and our spirit of submission sets us apart.

The church can be a blessing to her country and city in times of prosperity. She will be a greater blessing to her country and city in times of adversity. She must be free to be that blessing in times of need. Paul writes to the Corinthians, “You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.” (1 Corinthians 7:23).

So, stand. Stand on guard for Canada and make your voice one that helps keep Canada glorious and free.

The full version of this article is available at ARPACanada.ca. Join us at our fall tour (details on back) to explore this matter more fully and ask questions. Also, go to ARPACanada.ca for suggestions and tools to speak up for the expansion of worship services in British Columbia and Ontario.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Aga court case: We have been working to appeal a decision from the Ontario Court of Appeal in which the court determined that it can make a judgment about an internal church discipline matter. We are grateful that the Supreme Court of Canada has accepted the appeal. Please pray for a blessing on the application to intervene at the highest court, and for the continuing freedom for churches to have oversight over ecclesiastical matters.

Alberta education: Please join us in thanking God for the Alberta government's affirmation of parental authority and choice in education.

Euthanasia and Conversion Therapy: With Parliament prorogued, two very bad pieces of legislation have died, at least for now. Bill C-7 sought to expand euthanasia and C-8 sought to criminalize “conversion therapy.” This is an answer to prayer. At the same time, it is likely that the government will bring them back as soon as it can. Please pray that future efforts are thwarted.

Sex-selective abortion act: While C-7 and C-8 died when Parliament was prorogued, Bill C-233 (explained elsewhere in this newsletter) remains, because private members bills are not affected the same way that government bills are. For this we are very grateful! Please pray that the legislation is used to open eyes and hearts to the injustice of abortion.

Churches: Please join us in praying that Christians will shine the light of the Gospel into this dark land at a time where our nation is in the grip of fear. God's Word is what this country needs most! Pray that churches have the freedom to gather and that Christians have the freedom to serve in their communities.



HELPING CHURCHES RESPOND FAITHFULLY DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC

Since March, ARPA Canada has strived to assist individuals, families, schools, and churches with understanding and responding to the restrictions that resulted from COVID-19. This included 44 webinars with over 1,500 registrants, numerous articles and videos (available on our website, YouTube, and Facebook pages), as well as new website devoted to expanding worship services, which many Christian churches have signed on to. But one of the biggest tasks has been working directly with pastors and elders as they sought to proclaim God's Word, meet publicly, and take part in the sacraments.

We asked our Director of Law and Policy André Schutten to give some insight into what this has involved:

Over the past half-year, the numbers of emails, phone calls, face-to-face meetings, conference calls, and webinars with pastors and consistory members has skyrocketed! And it's no wonder – many are in uncharted territory, addressing specific questions about how this or that government law, bylaw, regulation, order, guidance document, or advisory paper should be applied or interpreted.

An unfortunate legal development in response to the pandemic has been a massive proliferation of laws and regulations at four different levels of government: federal, provincial, regional, and municipal. These regulations were interacting with each other in odd and inconsistent ways and the sheer volume and complexity of the various

laws was enough to make a lawyer swoon. How then does the average citizen figure out what to do?

And so, over the past few months, we have scrutinized dozens of mandatory mask bylaws, cross-referenced handbills of provincial orders, and compared regional health orders and guidance documents. We have then gone back to elders or pastors and explained what they can and can't do according to the applicable laws and discussed what they ought to be able to do despite the law.

To give one example: I received a call from one elder at the end of the summer who told me his church was not singing or celebrating Lord's Supper because the local health unit had told the church that these practices were "off the table" as part of their reopening strategy. It appears that the local church leadership had taken that opinion as a statement of the law and the conversation seemed to have ended there. The church leaders decided they had to "submit" to the civil government and, in late August, had not celebrated Lord's Supper since before the pandemic in early March. I was able to encourage the elder that the local health officer was wrong on the law, plain and simple. When restaurants are serving meals in the same city to countless patrons all day every day, a church can certainly celebrate the Lord's Supper. After all, the latter is protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the former is not. As for singing, a local health authority can only prohibit singing through legal means. The opinion of a local health inspector that a church shouldn't sing does not have legal force. Such a prohibition must have a grounding in law. The provincial law allowed singing, and the municipality did not prohibit it either. For the regional health authority to ban singing, it would have to issue a legal order under a particular statute. It had not.

If this elder hadn't called a lawyer, how long would that church have gone without singing and the sacrament? Another 3 months? A full year?

I'm thankful that ARPA Canada has been able to help many Christians (both leadership and congregants) to find their voice through this pandemic. May God be glorified by our witness and praise.



THANK YOU!

ARPA Canada's board and staff are so grateful to you, our grassroots, for standing behind this work even through these challenging times.

This picture is from our summer staff meeting in Deroche, BC, where we could enjoy a wonderful week of fellowship, training, and thanksgiving for God's goodness and grace.

[Missing: Ed Hoogerdyk, Karen Bandstra, Joanne DeRuiter and Alicia Ibbitson]

TAKE ACTION: ENCOURAGE OUR LEADERS TO CARE, NOT KILL

For decades, suicide prevention advocates have been working to make Canada a more compassionate nation. Today, suicide hotline phone numbers are visible in train stations and bus depots. We all want a Canada where those considering suicide are met with love and care.

In stark contrast, the expansion of doctor assisted suicide in Canada removes the responsibility of care that Canadian society has for those with unmet needs. Earlier this year the federal government introduced Bill C-7, a bill to expand access to medical assistance in dying. In anticipation of Bill C-7, ARPA Canada took a big step into the public discussion on this issue. In late January we launched a campaign website at CAREnotKILL.ca.

CAREnotKILL.ca is a website that aims to engage with the Canadian public by forcing them to answer questions that the media and politicians are not asking. When our society proudly proclaims euthanasia as a societal good, we're stepping in and saying 'hold on one second.' It engages with questions like 'are some people more valuable than others?', and 'should we ever discourage suicide?' This is about getting you, our supporters, and all Canadians to challenge the status quo, and to call on our government officials to stand against the slippery slope of assisted suicide in Canada.

We had paused this campaign for a few months as the COVID-19 crisis played out, and Bill C-7 was also mercifully stalled due to the prorogation of Parliament. But we expect it will return without delay this fall, and so we have taken steps to relaunch the Care Not Kill campaign. Many of you have already taken part and we thank you! As we look to use this time we've been given, we call you to continued action against the expansion of assisted suicide in Canada.

There are 4 things you can do:

1. Send an EasyMail to your MP focusing on this issue - <https://easymail.arpacanada.ca/>
2. Send a letter to your local newspaper using our new EasyLetter tool - <https://easyletter.arpacanada.ca/>
3. Set up a meeting with your MP to discuss!
4. Order printable materials that coincide with the campaign:
 - a. Mailbox flyers: you can order as many as you like. Get a group together and pick a neighbourhood to distribute them in. We want to get Canadians talking about the real issues.
 - b. Postcards for MPs that you and your friends can fill out and send back to the House of Commons free of charge
 - c. Telephone/bulletin board poster: Pin them up in your hockey rink, post office, or hang them on stop signs and telephone poles in town.

We have these materials in stock and ready for delivery, and you can put your order in for free at CAREnotKILL.ca.

TAKE ACTION: PINK FLAG DISPLAYS TO SUPPORT THE SEX SELECTIVE ABORTION ACT

While much was cancelled in the spring of 2020, abortion was not. This meant that the pro-life movement needed to keep working even while adapting to new circumstances.



In February, MP Cathay Wagantall introduced Bill C-233, the Sex Selective Abortion Act and, in God's providence, the cancelled Parliament sessions gave

us more time to spread awareness of this proposed law. This included doing all pink flag displays as a memorial to the victims. One display in Langley, BC, resulted in two articles by a local newspaper, bringing even more awareness to the tragedy of sex selective abortion. Several more flag displays are planned for the fall.

Every abortion is a tragedy and an affront to the image of God, and sex selective terminations are one important piece of puzzle. As you piece together a puzzle, you have two options: look at the picture you are trying to construct and see how the individual pieces fit into it, look at the individual pieces and try to fit them together, ignoring the bigger picture until the end. The humanity and dignity of every pre-born child is the bigger picture that we want everyone to see. But helping someone see the harms of sex selective abortion gives them pieces to fit together that will ultimately help build the bigger picture against abortion.

You can join this effort by hosting a pink flag display (at your home, your church, or any other private property), sharing this information with your friends, family, and neighbours, and writing to your MP. Visit DefendGirls.com for assistance with any of these activities.

GRASSROOTS PROFILE -ALBERTA: PRESSING ON WHEN TIME IS PRESSING

There's more than one way to carry out a mission. When placed under trying and unique circumstances, you make the necessary adjustments and press on. And that's exactly what ARPA's grassroots have been doing in Alberta.

STAMPED IN COWTOWN

The Calgary Stampede was cancelled but that didn't stop our grassroots from riding into action and respectfully challenge Calgary's conversion therapy bylaw (the bylaw prohibits parents and others in position of authority from trying to help children love the bodies they have been given by God). Calgary and Lethbridge were the final stops on this bylaw trail that has wound through communities across Alberta.

There were a record number of letters and emails sent to city councillors, including a record number of ARPA Canada EasyMails sent on any municipal issue - over 900 sent!

Unfortunately, Lethbridge prohibited public hearings on the topic because "it would cause trauma" to those in favour of banning conversion therapy. But that didn't stop our supporters from writing letters and holding prayer meetings. Those words matter too! We are thankful for the two councillors who publicly opposed the ban on conversion therapy. This took courage and they felt well supported by many Christians across the province. We commend our grassroots for their engagement and diligence on this file.

FREEDOM TO DO WHAT WE OUGHT

The past two years on the Alberta education front have been anything but dull. We are grateful to God for all grassroots' vocal defence of parental authority, as well as for the massive change that resulted.

Building on its new Education Act that passed in 2019, the United Conservative Party (UCP) government is continuing to affirm that parents have the right to choose the kind of education they feel is best for their children. This year they introduced and passed Bill 15, affirming parental choice in education and the primary responsibility parents have for their children's education. The legislation now recognizes faith-based schools and home education programs as valuable and integral educational choices.

Praise God for providing us the freedom to continue to operate schools according to a Biblical mission and vision!



COUNTRY ROADS

Thanks to the easing of COVID restrictions in his province, our Alberta Manager Ed Hoogerdyk hit the road this summer to connect with our grassroots. The stops in Lethbridge, Barrhead, and Neerlandia were a success as our supporters attended presentations to hear highlights and updates from the first half of 2020.

Many folks took home CareNotKill postcards, wrote a short message, and sent them to their MP. Enthusiastic groups also spent their Saturday morning delivering CareNotKill flyers - 300 postcards and 4,500 flyers were distributed!

FALL TOUR OCTOBER 2020

DEFENDING OUR CHRISTIAN LEGACY OF LIBERTY



Freedoms are often tested in the crucible of national turmoil: war and terrorism, plague and natural disaster. During the COVID crisis of 2020, we have seen unprecedented limits on our fundamental freedoms: freedom of religion and conscience, freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association. Join ARPA Canada on our Fall Tour 2020, as we dig deeper into the challenge of defending freedom while submitting to and respecting the authorities that God has put in place over us.

*Due to restrictions pre-registration is required this year.
For more details visit: [ARPACANADA.ca](https://arpacanada.ca)*

CANADIAN TOUR DATES:

FERGUS	Tuesday, October 13, 2020
HAMILTON	Wednesday, October 14, 2020
STRATHROY	Thursday, October 15, 2020
NIAGARA	Friday, October 16, 2020 
WOODSTOCK	Saturday, October 17, 2020
BARRHEAD	Monday, October 19, 2020
EDMONTON	Tuesday, October 20, 2020
PONOKA	Wednesday, October 21, 2020
COALDALE	Thursday, October 22, 2020 
FRASER VALLEY	Friday, October 23, 2020 
FRASER VALLEY	Saturday, October 24, 2020

