

MUNICIPAL INTERNET POSTINGS DO NOT WORK

In an age of misinformation and shrinking newsrooms, your support for credible journalism has never mattered more.

According to the 2024 Digital News Reports by the Reuters Institute, 52% of Canadians say they're willing to pay for trusted news - yet only 15% actually do.

This gap threatens... the sustainability of local news organizations like ours who work every day to report with integrity, accountability, and a deep connection to our community.

Other countries are stepping up:
Norway: 40% pay for news
Sweden: 31% pay for news
Australia: 21% pay for news
Finland: 20% pay for news
Even United States out performs Canada's support of journalism, with 22% of readers who pay for news.
Canada shouldn't fall behind
Local journalism keeps communities informed, connected, united and empowered. It shines a light on the issues that matter most - your schools, your streets, your stories.

By subscribing, you're not just getting access to trusted local news - you're helping preserve a vital public service.

**CHOOSE TRUTH
CHOOSE FACTS
CHOOSE LOCAL JOURNALISM**

Municipalities have opted for online posting with catastrophic failure. Every week you are missing out on important local information that affect your daily life.

Municipalities are forcing taxpayers to go on line. Taxpayers are not responding due to a series of realities:
Cost of Internet
Cost of purchasing computer/cell phone.
Lack of knowledge on use of technology.
Complex web pages full of pop-ups.
Lack of time to sit in front of a computer.
Internet is infested with all kinds of algorithms that track you.
Internet is very specific and not broad enough for public.

By supporting your local newspaper you are uniting the community around a trusted local news source.
Your support, supports local businesses and creates an atmosphere of community. Your support sends a real message to your municipality that you demand arms length accountability.

Your local newspaper is written and published by journalist that live and work in the community. Community members that you can trust.
Today, even major network news sources have fallen to bias reporting due to political interests.
Your local community newspaper is different. Your local journalist bring you articles that matter to you and your family.
Demand that your municipality publish in your local paper.

WITHOUT SUPPORT TRUTH HAS NO PLATFORM
Subscribe Today!!!
**ARE YOU EXPERIENCING
'BROWN OUTS?'**

A brownout is a temporary reduction in voltage in an electrical power system, often causing lights to dim and equipment to operate poorly. Brownouts can be caused by high electricity demand, such as during heatwaves, severe weather, or equipment malfunctions in the power grid. They are a partial voltage reduction, unlike a blackout, which is a complete loss of power.
Citizens along the Rossland, Thornton, Simcoe North area have been reporting high volume of 'Brown Outs'. Many, have lights flicker and have no idea of what may be going on.
Electrical experts have attributed these 'Brown Outs', as the over load on the grid. People coming home from work and plugging in their electric vehicles is putting a huge strain on the over access to the system.
People experiencing this... People calling this newspaper. Are directed to call directly the Oshawa Public Utility and demand that they put in place some sort of safeguard against these 'Brown Outs'. People have worried that equipment may be damaged. Best thing. Call the local OPUC and report the incidents.

Holy Horror: The Campaign to Kill Off Canada’s Religious Charities

The modern welfare state owes much of its origins to religion. Blessed with ample resources and driven by a moral duty to improve the lives of those in their care, churches and religious orders in the Middle Ages created the first universities, hospitals, homeless shelters and food banks. More recently, however, the pendulum of power has swung mightily in favour of secular government. And now, with church attendance on the wane, those secular forces seem determined to destroy their spiritual competition once and for all. Examining a potentially devastating federal proposal to strip religious organizations of their charitable status, Anna Farrow considers the impact churches play in today's civil society – and wonders how Canada's less fortunate would fare in a world bereft of faith.
Five years ago, Canadian lawyer Barry Bussey took stock of his country's political and legal trends and issued a dire warning to all religious organizations. In his essay Making Registered Charitable Status of Religious Organizations Subject to 'Charter Values', Bussey explained that the standing of churches as respected charitable institutions was about to come under attack – a result of the inherent conflict between "politically incorrect" religious doctrine and the concept of equality found in human rights legislation. It was not a question of whether such a challenge might occur, he warned, "it is a matter of when, and preparing for the inevitable." It didn't take long for Bussey's prediction to come true.

Late last year, the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Finance produced its annual list of pre-budget recommendations to Parliament. As usual, it summarized the pleadings of various businesses, organizations and lobby groups to the Liberal-dominated committee seeking favourable new government programs, tax breaks and other fiscal goodies. This time around, however, an item calling for the end of a long-standing tax benefit made its surprising first appearance.

Tucked amongst the 460 recommendations was one calling for the next federal budget to "Amend the Income Tax Act to provide a definition of a charity which would remove the privileged status of 'advancement of religion' as a charitable purpose." Following through on Recommendation #430 would mean that all churches would henceforth be taxed as if they were businesses, while losing their authority to issue tax receipts to donors. Despite its unheralded position in the committee's report, Recommendation #430 should be regarded as an historic, epoch-ending proposal. Canada's churches are already reeling from decades of declining membership. Making religious organizations subject to the full measure of Canada's tax system would undoubtedly impose a devastating additional burden. But the broader implications of such a change should trouble all civic-minded Canadians: religious, atheist or indifferent.

Beyond adding to churches' present-day woes, the current tax proposal would end the centuries-spanning legal recognition of churches as community-building, welfare-enhancing institutions. Ample research establishes that churches and the volunteer spirit that animates them provide an array of benefits to the entire country. This includes the direct financial gain accruing to the local economy as well as the private provision of numerous local social welfare programs, and the general uplift created by the presence of a group of citizens committed to the physical and moral improvement of their community. Set against these society-wide advantages would be a tiny gain to government coffers resulting from the elimination of some modest tax breaks.

Whether the current Liberal government has accepted this radical advice won't be known until the 2025 federal budget is finally released on November 4. According to The Catholic Register newspaper, Liberal MP Karina Gould last week stated that, "Charitable status for religious organizations is not under review." But the fact this concept has already been blessed by the Liberal and NDP MPs who control the powerful Finance Committee, whose parties also comprise a majority in the House of Commons, suggests the

idea holds considerable weight in Ottawa.

It should also be noted that the committee's Conservative MPs responded to Recommendation #430 by organizing a petition objecting to it. "Religious organizations do good work advancing the common good, in Canada and beyond, and rely on charitable status to support their good work through private donations," the petition reads. "We...call on the Canadian government to reject the absurd mean-spirited attack on religious organizations."

That "good work" deserves a closer look. Since the dawn of civilization, religious institutions have formed a crucial part of the polity – sometimes in competition with whatever form of government exists at the time. Consider the Medieval cathedral, that era's most enduring form of architecture and one that embodied the latest developments in science and engineering. These were obviously grand religious structures meant to provide parishioners with a sense of awe as they worshipped. But their grounds were also places where anyone could socialize, seek shelter, organize and do business beyond the control of government authorities. As historian Phillip Ball explains in his 2008 book Universe of Stone: Chartres Cathedral and the Invention of the Gothic, local wine merchants sold their wares inside the church free from the taxes imposed elsewhere by the local nobility. Canada, it should be noted, was founded on explicitly religious, Christian grounds. Our national motto, 'A Mari Usque Ad Mare' – From Sea to Sea – is a direct reference to Psalm 72:8. 'O Canada' asks that 'God keep our land glorious and free.'

For centuries, churches provided sanctuary for those unjustly persecuted by absolutist governments. The first universities were religious efforts. So were the first hospitals. Prior to the creation of the modern welfare state, the poor, disabled, diseased or homeless searching for succour had nowhere to go but to their local church. When government was incapable or unwilling – which was almost always – the church was there to meet the need.

These obvious public benefits were first legally recognized in English law during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The Statute of Charitable Uses, passed by Parliament in 1601, enumerates (in archaic English) the many ways in which churches and other charities helped out, including, "Releife of aged, impotent and poore people...sicke and maymed Souldiers and Marriners...Orphans [and]...poore Maides." Another law enacted the same year obliged local parishes to help the unemployed. Good work, done free: For centuries, the 'advancement of religion' meant serving the less fortunate while pioneering developments in science, architecture and education. Shown (clockwise from top left): Interior of a Gothic Cathedral by Dutch painter Paul Vredeman de Vries; Queen Elizabeth I, during whose reign the charitable status of churches was first legally recognized; the Hospices of Beaune, an early French hospital; and students enrolling at the University of Bologna, founded by the Catholic Church in 1088.

Good work, done free: For centuries churches have served the less fortunate while pioneering developments in science, architecture and education. Shown (clockwise from top left): Interior of a Gothic Cathedral by Dutch painter Paul Vredeman de Vries; Queen Elizabeth I, during whose reign the charitable work of churches was first legally recognized; the Hospices of Beaune, an early French hospital run by Les sœurs hospitalières de Beaune; students enrolling at the University of Bologna, the world's oldest continuously-operating university, founded by the Catholic Church in 1088. (Source of bottom right photo: Cristophe Finot, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.5)
The acceptance by government of the public significance of religious activity is now incorporated into Canada's tax laws. Alongside the relief of poverty, advancement of education and other community-minded activities such as protecting the environment and supporting the arts, "advancement of religion" is explicitly recognized by the federal government as a pursuit deserving of charitable status. This means

churches are exempt from paying income taxes and collecting GST/HST, while also being authorized to issue tax receipts to donors. Provincial tax codes similarly shield churches from property taxes. The general downturn in church attendance today means that these financial advantages are likely crucial to the continued existence of many religious institutions. What is the "advancement of religion" and why is it significant for Canadian charities?

The Modern Church and its Good Works

Canada, it should be noted, was founded on explicitly religious, Christian grounds. Our national motto, A Mari Usque Ad Mare – From Sea to Sea – is a direct reference to Psalm 72:8. O Canada asks that "God keep our land glorious and free." And the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms begins, "Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God..."

This religious foundation appears to be rapidly slipping away, however. According to Statistics Canada's 2021 Census, more than one-third of Canadians report having no religious affiliation whatsoever, a figure that had doubled since 2001. Between 2018 and 2023, there was a 37 percent drop in the number of Canadians who said they regularly participated in organized religion. With this decline in church membership has also come an overall decline in religious fundraising. In its most recent review of the volunteer and charitable sector, Statcan found that between 2018 and 2023 the total value of donations to churches and religious charities fell by 22 percent.

Despite these tough times, churches and religious institutions are still the biggest component of Canada's charitable sector, accounting for \$4.9 billion in annual donations. Behind them come health charities at \$1.8 billion and social services at \$1.7 billion. The church may be fading as a motive force in Canadian life, but it maintains a substantial presence in the provision of social services.

Consider Toronto's downtown "Street Patrol". On Wednesday evenings in July and August, parishioners from St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church and other parishes take to the streets with bags of sandwiches and drinks to share with hundreds of local homeless men and women. This volunteer organization began in 1995 when Lucio Abbruzzese came across a man dying on a Toronto sidewalk and wondered whether he could have done something more than just call 9/11. "I was doing everything I thought I should do as a Catholic – going to Mass, going to confession," he explained to The Catholic Register in a recent interview. "But there was still something missing." What was missing, Abbruzzese realized, was serving the less fortunate in his own community. And so he founded Street Patrol, which has been coming to the aid of the city's needy for the past 30 years. "The spirit of Street Patrol," Abbruzzese explained to the paper, "is not just about the food, it's more about actually talking with the homeless. The food lets us in."

His program is just one of innumerable efforts organized by congregations of all faiths across the country and born of a desire to help their local community in ways government can't or won't. These include putting on Thanksgiving dinners, sponsoring refugees from Syria or Ukraine, organizing clothing and furniture drives, giving away Christmas baskets, providing temporary homeless shelters, hosting language schools and addiction programs and simply providing a safe and welcoming place for people in the surrounding neighbourhood to meet. And while it is the doctrine of most religions not to ask for anything in return, it's worth noting the sort of response most churches get for their efforts at making the world a better place. Not thanks, but scorn. Is Mass Just Brunch with Less Food? In 2016, American comedian Bill Maher reflected on the spiritual Zeitgeist on his HBO show Real Time with Bill Maher. Citing statistics that nearly 25 percent of Americans were "atheists, agnostics, and anti-religionists," Maher opined: "That

means almost a quarter of us in America are being forced to subsidize a myth that we're not buying into. Why am I subsidizing their Sunday morning hobby?" Maher's demand that churches be stripped of their charitable status has since grown in popularity. Thomas Dowd, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, has been tracking the growth of anti-church sentiment closely. As Dowd relays in an interview with C2C Journal, a Quebec mayor once explained to him why churches ought to pay property tax. According to Dowd, the mayor asserted there is no difference between going out to a restaurant for breakfast and going to church on a Sunday morning. "If religion is your chosen form of entertainment, go to church," Dowd recalls the mayor stating. "Some people go to brunch instead of church, some people go to the movies instead of Saturday night mass. But those other institutions all pay taxes. Why should the restaurant pay taxes and the church not?" In the public mind, Dowd worries, there has been a "privatization of religion." Religious practice is now understood to be "a purely private activity versus an activity that produces public benefit."

The concept is now becoming reality. The 2025 Pelchat-Rousseau Report to the Quebec government was commissioned to come up with ideas on how to push secularism even further in an already very secular province. Among its recommendations is that "removing the criterion of 'promotion of religion' would ensure greater consistency with the principle of separation of church and state." The report also suggested assessing the administrative costs and impact on taxpayers of changing charity law. In 2022, the Nunavut city of Iqaluit passed a bylaw requiring that all churches pay property tax. Nunavut MP Lori Idlout defended the decision by suggesting that churches were both a drag on the economy and tainted by history. "It's not fair to the rest of the municipality to have to carry the burden of a faith-based group – that itself is part of the history of colonialism," she told Global News.

Always Keep a Halo Around Ever-louder claims that churches are a burden on society and that their activities are of no interest to the majority of citizens are belied by decades of reliable, replicable research of the sort beloved by secularists. The evidence is clear that faith-based organizations provide substantial economic and social benefits that extend far beyond any spiritual advantage enjoyed by the congregations themselves. "For every dollar that a typical Canadian congregation spends, the local community receives on average \$3.39 in socio-economic benefits," Wood concludes.

Adapting a methodology first applied to churches in the United States, Canadian social policy think-tank Cardus undertook a project to measure and showcase the array of public benefits produced by Canada's religious community. The Halo Project, launched in 2015 as a look at a few Toronto churches, has since been expanded to include data Canada-wide. As Halo Project author Mike Daly Wood explained in a summary report released last year, his work adds together all the measurable benefits arising from the presence of churches in their communities. These include direct spending on goods and services plus the value of social services and other programs they host or offer for area residents, the provision of meeting space at below-market rates for community groups and the broader "magnet" effects of weddings, funerals and bar/bat mitzvahs. "For every dollar that a typical Canadian congregation spends, the local community receives on average \$3.39 in socio-economic benefits," Wood concludes. Using a sample of 64 representative Canadian churches, Wood estimates the average overall value of an individual church to its community at \$2.8 million annually, or \$118.3 million across the entire sample. Extrapolating to all Canadian churches yields a stunning \$18 billion national figure. Wood then compares these concrete public benefits with the estimated gain that would accrue to Ottawa and other levels of government if churches were stripped of their charitable status. **CONT - PG.9**