

C-14, A National Suicide Pact

Rod Taylor

Leader, CHP Canada

Last week, the Liberal governments (both Canada and Ontario) committed to sending emergency teams and yet more money to Attawapiskat to try to derail the plague of suicides among First Nations youth there and in other indigenous communities. On Thursday, the other shoe dropped. The federal government tabled its long-anticipated Bill C-14, designed to free up hospital beds by killing old people. Ironically—and almost simultaneously—people trying to escape the pain of existence by ending it all are competing for tax dollars with those who want someone to help them escape the pain of existence by ending it all.

Of course, that's not the narrative they want you to believe. They want you to think C-14 is all about "choice" and "death with dignity." Underneath all the hubris and heart-wrenching tales of tragedy, "intolerable suffering" may be more about the frantic antics of federal and provincial budget teams trying to deal with the demographic imbalance of payers and users of health care than it is about patient comfort. Statistically, there simply aren't enough hospital facilities for our aging population nor enough working young people—thanks, in part to abortion—to pay for the extended care of the elderly, the infirm, and the disabled. Of course, we believe that doing the right thing is more important than budgets and statistics. God directs us to care for those in need and He will provide everything we need to do so. However, in the pragmatic world of Canadian politics, some lives are seen as expendable and others are useful for their emotional value.

Why have Canadians become so complacent about inflicting death on the elderly yet so justly concerned about preventing death among troubled youth who also apparently have concluded that they are experiencing "intolerable suffering?" We've been lied to. We've been fed a narrative that ailing Canadians are being hooked up to machines—against their wills—to keep their hearts pumping and their lungs expanding while they endure excruciating pain. That's the oft-repeated public narrative. We've also been told that the Supreme Court, composed of nine mortal human beings, each with his or her own moral flaws, is capable of making decisions for 35 million Canadians. We've been told that court decisions are final, irrevocable, and infinitely wise. History declares otherwise.

We've conveniently forgotten that Supreme Courts have been wrong before (like in 1929 when they decreed that women were not persons). We've carelessly forgotten the constitutional provision of the Notwithstanding Clause that allows Parliament to set aside SCOC decisions for up to five years. Instead, we've let these nine individuals throw out laws, throw out babies and keep the bathwater (as in the 1988 decision that denied personhood to babies), and throw out the moral values upon which our nation's laws and civilization depend.

When it comes to the tragedy of suicide among young people (both on and off reserve), we also need to look below the surface. And we need to do it quickly. In Attawapiskat and on other reserves, suicide is not an isolated event, although those who join themselves in suicide pacts are, arguably, isolated and lonely individuals. Pulling young people back from the brink is about more than providing education, jobs, and

clean drinking water—as important as those things are to a healthy emotional state. As we speak, armies of well-meaning psychologists and grief counsellors are preparing to descend on these troubled communities. What new hope will they offer to these precious young people whose hope for meaning and purpose has been replaced with false hopes and distorted dreams?

It seems so obvious that people who are contemplating ending their lives need real hope so they can summon courage to go on—to face the challenges of life, whatever those are. Even Bob Rae, a person whose views are often very different from ours, had this to say in *The Globe and Mail* April 15, ***Suicide is a National Problem***¹, **“It is a time for all of us to take a good, hard look in the mirror. People who have given up hope, young and old, are choosing to die rather than to live.”** Young people living in a democratic country with their lives ahead of them and opportunities for employment, marriage, and personal achievement beckoning, should not be gasping away their youthful energy in dark and shrinking nightmares of despair. “Mental health,” the rallying cry of sincerely concerned politicians and bureaucrats should itself be analyzed. In a healthy society, healthy emotions should be the norm and troubled and despondent young people should be the exception. Across the country, however, and especially on reserves, we have robbed youth of their natural hope, blinded them with a postmodern cultural bias, and condemned them to a worldview devoid of an eternal perspective.

We’ve taught children, both indigenous and non-indigenous, that the God who created them in His image and for His purpose no longer exists and cannot meet their needs or answer their questions. We’ve taught them that life has no particular value; we use tax dollars to kill over 100,000 pre-born babies each year. Those who miraculously survive the abortionist’s knife are supposed to nurture self-esteem and find personal purpose in a meaningless existence. We expose them to night after dreary night of brutal TV “wrestling” matches between hotheaded and arrogant fighters, endless variations of police shootouts and violent and gruesome killings, prurient and selfish sex acts, displays of homosexual “comedy” and a pathetic array of accusations and denials of assaults, drug use and fraud. Then we wonder why they find life depressing.

We want students to make responsible decisions for themselves about all manner of things from sexual activity to career choices to not inflicting self-harm. At the same time, we tell them they are only advanced animals with no eternal purpose. On the reserves, especially, we talk about our respect for the Elders and then as a broader society we discuss how we can help our elders kill themselves. We encourage youth to stay away from drugs and excessive alcohol consumption. Then we discuss how to legalize marijuana.

Our society, both native and non-native, is in a serious identity crisis and we find ourselves lost. We want autonomy, self-government, and freedom from rules and restrictions. We want the freedom to do whatever we want but we don’t want consequences for our poor choices. We want to spend but never pay. We want all the joys of life without the pain of childbirth, the challenges of growing up, the discipline of work, the sacrifices and commitments required in marriage and family life or the diminishing of strength and ability that sometimes come with old age. “Reality” TV has created a fantasy world where only the strong, the beautiful and the wealthy can achieve purpose and happiness.

And now our government has allowed the Supreme Court to thrust us down the rabbit-hole of diminishing returns in regard to the value and sanctity of human life. Debate will be taking place on C-14 but with an urgency and haste born out of an undeserved awe of the Supreme Court. Some “progressives” say the proposed law does not go far enough; they want minors included and those suffering from poor mental health (yes, like the troubled youths in Attawapiskat). Others worry that failure to pass a law—any law—by June 6 will plunge Canada into an unregulated Wild West show of

doctors killing patients (as if that weren't already happening in secret). Being pushed into a bad decision by nine Supreme Court bullies would be a tragedy. We expect courage of politicians.

Now is the time to stand up for human life, its purpose and meaning. Not only the young people of Attawapiskat but all Canada's aging seniors need to know that their lives have value. It's time to return to the "principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law," as it says in the Charter Preamble. We sing: "God keep our land glorious and free!" If we mean that, if we truly want to experience that freedom, we'll have to find the courage to tell it to the young people in Attawapiskat and across this country. Our aging seniors need to be reminded that our God has a plan and purpose for their lives, even when their strength is failing.

We Canadians do need to make a pact, not a suicide pact like C-14, but a solemn covenant to restore to our nation an awareness that all our freedoms, our children, our mental health, our clean water, our democracy itself are gifts from the hand of our loving Creator. If we will renew our covenant as a nation established on His principles and acknowledge again that "He shall have dominion from sea to sea," we can begin to see hope spring up anew in places like Attawapiskat . . . maybe even in Toronto and Ottawa! To learn how you can do more to help the CHP restore real hope for young people, visit our website, CHP.ca.

Footnotes

¹ www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/attawapiskat-is-not-alone-suicide-crisis-is-national-problem/article29635917/