

## Don't Mix Religion and Politics? Why Not?

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You've probably heard a hundred times: "Religion and politics don't mix." Or maybe the phrase "Separation of church and state."

But have you ever thought deeply about these statements? Have you considered the history behind them, and why some people parrot these shibboleths unthinkingly?

Let's take a deeper look.

**"Religion and politics shouldn't be mixed."** Why not? Indeed, if your faith matters at all to you, shouldn't it be an integral part of *every aspect* of your life? Shouldn't it guide your education, your choice of career, your investments, your purchases—and your political decisions? If your faith doesn't influence how you vote, whom you campaign for, whom you support with your legally-restricted donations, shouldn't you wonder if your faith really matters to you?

**"Separation of church and state."** Where did that idea come from? What does it really mean?

First of all, it's an American phrase but it is neither found in their Constitution nor in ours. It first appears in a letter Thomas Jefferson wrote to a Baptist church. He assured them that, as president, he would not breach the "wall of separation" that exists in America between church and state.

But what did he mean by that? What's the role of that mythical "wall"? Jefferson meant that the church must always be protected from any misuse of state power: the state must not be allowed to tell the church what to teach and preach, or who God is, or how believers should live, apart from strictures of the civil law— which must not intrude into church affairs.

But he most emphatically did *not* mean that believers should be excluded from the political life of their nation. That would be anti-faith bigotry.

And that's exactly what has been taking over our nation for the last half-century!

Anti-faith bigotry is taking our children away from us. It regulates our schools by excluding any and all ideas about God and religion. It's in most daycares, elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and almost all universities and colleges. It's in almost all the media—both news and entertainment. It has even taken over the courts and our judicial system: one Canadian judge, Madame Justice Southam, publicly declared<sup>1</sup> that the clause in the Preamble to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (which states, accurately, that "Canada was founded on principles that recognize the supremacy of God") is, in her words, "a dead letter." Really? The next clause in the same sentence declares the importance of "the rule of law." How many judges also believe *that's* a dead letter, too?

Anti-faith bigotry has also produced a few generations of people with no regard for or real knowledge of history. Too many people believe, as Henry Ford—a raging anti-Semite—once declared: "History is bunk!"

But history retains the details and the record of our culture and our moral standards. What is more, people who disregard history—who say, "I live for the moment"—forget that this moment, the present, will tomorrow be history. Thus history gives significance and meaning to the present.

Without being rooted in history, we fall into the warning of the philosopher George Santayana:

“Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it.”

Religion is a deep and important part of our history as a nation. The Fathers of Confederation—all 33 of them—concurred unanimously, when they were considering what to call this new nation, to name it “The Dominion of Canada”—from the eighth verse of Psalm 72, which declares that “He [Jesus Christ, God’s Messiah] shall have dominion from sea to sea”.

It’s chronological chauvinism to think that we know more or are smarter than they; in their time, people commonly entered university in their early teens—already speaking several languages, most commonly Hebrew and Greek to enable them to study the Bible in its original languages—in addition to their native French or English. They had studied the governments and systems of history, as well as philosophies of politics, and they incorporated that knowledge into the structure of the government they designed for Canada.

They understood the government of our southern neighbour, and the wisdom by which its Founders incorporated Montesquieu’s doctrine of balancing the three separated powers: legislature, executive and judiciary—the legislature writes the laws, the executive administers the law, and the judiciary settles disputes according to the law *as they find it written*. Both America and Canada are currently suffering from courts that have usurped the law-making power of the people.

They also understood the importance of separating the head of state, who embodies the nation’s history and aspirations, from the head of government, who must be responsive to the will of the electorate.

In Canada, the head of state is the monarch, who since the 16th century has borne the title “Defender of the Christian Faith”.

Thus, the revealed faith of the one true God—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Israel—is inextricably intertwined with the political life of Canada.

That doesn’t mean that political power is or should be limited to Christians; but it recognizes that the many freedoms and the prosperity we enjoy belong equally to all Canadians—for the Christian faith, and the biblical Jewish religion in which Christianity was born, are the only world faiths that recognize the equality of men and women, and of people of all faiths or of no faith; in other single-religion nations, undue preference is given to people of that faith. But in the Scriptures of Judaism and Christianity, we are instructed that “it shall not be so among you”, and that “there shall be one law for the native born and the alien who dwells among you.”

And that understanding of history should have a significant bearing on how your faith influences your politics.

For the benefit of both faith and politics, and for the benefit of you and your neighbours, it’s important that you integrate your faith and your politics.

Take them both seriously—and together.

For serious government based in our historic principles of freedom and equality, join CHP Canada today.<sup>2</sup>

## **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> [www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-appeal-court-doctors-referrals-objections-1.5136455](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-appeal-court-doctors-referrals-objections-1.5136455)

<sup>2</sup> [www.chp.ca/get-involved/](http://www.chp.ca/get-involved/)

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