

Canada, A Christian Country

A Christian Heritage Party Publication

Many Canadians think Canada is not a Christian country and that all religions carry equal weight. They might be surprised to learn most of our laws and customs are based on a Judeo-Christian foundation. Here is but a small sampling of the vital role Christianity has played in Canada from its founding.

1. When Jacques Cartier landed in Canada on his first trip in 1534 he erected a 10 metre **Christian cross** on the Gaspé Peninsula and took possession of the territory in the name of the King of France.¹
2. His ship flew the national flag of France which was composed of a white **Christian** cross on a red background. The cross was a reminder of the one that foot soldiers attached to their tunics so that they would recognize each other when they set out on the third Crusade in 1188.²
3. The earliest priests brought to the colony were members of the Récollets, a French branch of the **Catholic** order, the **Franciscans**. They came with Champlain in 1615, and made their headquarters in Quebec.³
4. Throughout the 1640s, **Jesuit** missionaries penetrated the Great Lakes region and converted many of the Huron natives to **Christianity**.⁴
5. The **Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec** ruled New France until Jean Talon was appointed Intendant in 1665.⁵
6. When General James Wolf captured New France for Britain in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham Sept. 13, 1759⁶ he did so under the Union Flag of Great Britain⁷ which was then composed of the crosses of St. George⁸ and St. Andrew⁹, both Saints of the **Catholic** Church. The famous picture of the death of General Wolf by Benjamin West¹⁰ shows the flag directly above his head.
7. The Quebec Act of 1774 allowed French Canadians to retain their **Catholic** religion and the French system of civil law¹¹ and the oath of allegiance¹² to the King no longer made reference to the Protestant faith (*though it did to God, see No. 8*).
8. English Common law introduced by the victors is itself, based on concepts found in the **Bible**¹³, particularly those sections dealing with murder, theft, adultery, Sunday observance and perjury.¹⁴ There is, for example, no statute in Great Britain making murder illegal,¹⁵ it was illegal from the start of common law under Henry II because it was one of the **Ten Commandments**.
9. The self defence clause in the Criminal Code, Defence of Person, is derived from English Common Law and is based on **Exodus 22:2**; "If the thief is caught while breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account."

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacques_Cartier

² <http://www.gouv.qc.ca/portail/quebec/pgs/commun/portrait/drapeau/?lang=en>

³ http://www.chroniclesofamerica.com/french/jesuit_priests_in_new_france.htm

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_France#Jesuit_missions

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_france

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Wolfe

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union_Flag

⁸ http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=280

⁹ <http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/home/scotland/standrew.html>

¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Death_of_General_Wolfe

¹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quebec_Act

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oath_of_Supremacy

¹³ http://www.iejs.com/Law/origins_of_common_law.htm

¹⁴ <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04153a.htm>

¹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_law

10. The current constitution of Canada, the Constitution Act, 1982 begins by saying "Canada is founded upon the principles that recognize the **supremacy of God** and the rule of law."¹⁶
11. The Oath of Allegiance sworn by all Members of the Canadian Parliament is normally sworn on a **Christian Bible** and contains the phrase 'so help me God.' The word 'swear', the phrase 'so help me God' and even the Bible can now be dispensed with, but this was and remains the normal practice.¹⁷
12. Publicly funded **Catholic education** is mandated under various sections of the Constitution Act, 1867 and remains the case in Ontario.¹⁸
13. Reading of the **Lord's Prayer** was compulsory in most Canadian public schools until the 1980's when this practice was successfully challenged citing the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.¹⁹
14. Canada's Christian influence can be seen in the historical development of health care across the country. Many of Canada's major hospitals were started by Christian churches or orders, such as **St. Michael's Hospital** in Toronto founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1892²⁰, **Hopital du Sacré-Coeur de Montreal** founded by the Sisters of Providence in 1902²¹, and **St. Paul's Hospital** in Vancouver, also started by the Sisters of Providence, in 1894.²² In 1904 the Salvation Army opened the first **Grace Hospital** in Winnipeg.²³ In Calgary, the predecessor of the Grace Hospital was a small home caring for unwed mothers which opened in 1910.²⁴
15. The same holds true of many Canadian colleges and universities such as Victoria University at the University of Toronto founded by the **Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada** in 1830²⁵ and the University of Manitoba founded by three Christian colleges, St. Boniface College, St. John's College, and Manitoba College in 1877.²⁶ St Boniface College originated in 1818 when **Catholic** Father Provencher founded a school for boys on the banks of the Red River,²⁷ St. John's College was founded by the **Anglican** Church in 1866 (28) and Manitoba College was founded in 1871 by the **Presbyterian** Church.²⁹ McMaster University is the outgrowth of educational work initiated by **Baptists** in central Canada as early as the 1830's. Named after Senator William McMaster (1811-1887), who bequeathed substantial funds to endow "a Christian school of learning", the University was incorporated under the terms of an act of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in 1887.³⁰
16. The Canadian Army has a **Chaplain Service** which provides **Christian** services in the Canadian Forces chapel, as well as other religious services elsewhere and in the field.³¹
17. Members of the House of Commons **pray to God** at the start of each sitting of the House. The prayer used until 1994 made three references to **Jesus Christ** and included the entire **Lord's Prayer**.³²

¹⁶ http://www.solon.org/Constitutions/Canada/English/ca_1982.html

¹⁷ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oath_of_Allegiance_\(Canada\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oath_of_Allegiance_(Canada))

¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denominational_school

¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_prayer

²⁰ <http://www.stmichaelshospital.com/about/index.php>

²¹ http://www.imtl.org/montreal/building/hopital_sacre_coeur.php

²² http://www.providencehealthcare.ca/about_history_stpauls.html

²³ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0007136>

²⁴ <http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/infoprivacy/Archives/FondSalvationArmy.html>

²⁵ http://www.vicu.utoronto.ca/about/history/The_Cobourg_Years.htm

²⁶ <http://umanitoba.ca/about/ourstory.html#firstyears>

²⁷ http://www.ustboniface.mb.ca/pdf/nouvelles/190e_College_Article.pdf

²⁸ http://www.umanitoba.ca/colleges/st_johns/anglican/index.html

²⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manitoba_College

³⁰ <http://www.mcmaster.ca/univsec/history.cfm>

³¹ <http://www.army.forces.gc.ca/1asg/chaplain.asp>

³² <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/MarleauMontpetit/DocumentViewer.aspx?Sec=Ch10&Seq=2&Lang=E>

18. The National Assembly of Quebec chamber has a large **Christian crucifix** directly above the Speaker's chair despite attempts to have it removed by the Bouchard-Taylor Commission.³³
19. The Quebec provincial flag still contains a white cross, the symbol of a **Christian** nation.³⁴
20. The Ontario provincial flag contains **the Cross of St. George**, as do the provincial flags of Alberta, Manitoba, and Newfoundland and Labrador. The Nova Scotia provincial flag contains the **Cross of St. Andrew**.³⁵
21. Canada has a week in which one day, **Sunday**, a Christian day of worship, is normally a holiday and for many years observed the Lord's Day Act, until it was revoked by the Supreme Court citing the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.³⁶
22. Canada officially celebrates two **Christian holidays**, Christmas and Good Friday.³⁷
23. Federal employees also observe a holiday on **Easter** Monday and Boxing Day which commemorates the **Feast of St. Stephen**, the first Christian martyr.³⁸
24. Canadian troops regularly attend Church as a group, or **Church Parade**, as they did on the 125th Anniversary of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles Nov. 21, 2008.³⁹
25. Commemorative services of Veterans Affairs Canada, such as those on Remembrance Day, Nov. 11, are **Christian religious services** and include a prayer and a blessing by a priest.⁴⁰
26. Canadians frequently sing '**God Save the Queen**' at formal ceremonies as the Royal Anthem of Canada.⁴¹
27. The official Canadian motto, *A Mari usque ad Mare* (From Sea to Sea) is derived from **Psalm 72:8** and is part of a sentence which says: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."
28. This **Bible** quotation is also where the word 'Dominion' comes from in the former long title of Canada, The Dominion of Canada.⁴² So significant were these words, that they are inscribed above the windows in the Peace Tower. At the time of Confederation, when the founding fathers could not agree on a name for the new nation, the decision was held over for the next day. That day upon arising, as was his custom, Sir Leonard Tilley, Premier of New Brunswick, read a chapter of the Bible. That day he read Psalm 72:8, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea." He then presented the name "Dominion of Canada" to the gathered assembly.⁴³
29. The Queen of Canada is also the Head of the **Church of England**, a Protestant denomination.⁴⁴
30. In the Canadian Navy the ship's bell is used for the shipboard **Christening** of a sailor's child.⁴⁵
31. Canadian warships themselves are given a **Christening** when launched, as in the case of HMCS Oakville Nov. 5, 1941.⁴⁶
32. Since HMCS Tecumseh in Calgary, a unit of the Canadian Forces Naval Reserve, is considered a 'ship', it too was **Christened** Nov. 1, 1941.

³³ <http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2008/may/08052309.html>

³⁴ <http://www.vigile.net/lf-Quebec-is-secular-why-is-there>

³⁵ <http://www3.sympatico.ca/goweezer/canada/cansymbols.htm>

³⁶ <http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/en/timePortals/milestones/116mile.asp>

³⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_holidays_in_Canada

³⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Stephen

³⁹ http://www.army.forces.gc.ca/LF/ENGLISH/6_1_1.asp?id=3035

⁴⁰ http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=feature/vetweek/comm_guide

⁴¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_Save_the_Queen

⁴² <http://www.canadaka.net/content/page/125-dominion-of-canada-faq>

⁴³ Michael D. Clarke, ed. *Canada Portraits of Faith* (Chilliwack: Reel to Real, 1998) 61.

⁴⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supreme_Governor_of_the_Church_of_England

⁴⁵ http://www.navy.forces.gc.ca/centennial/0/0-c_eng.asp?category=67

⁴⁶ <http://images.oakville.halinet.on.ca/details.asp?r=vs&ID=14356&number=17>

33. Oh, Canada, our national anthem, is based on a poem by Sir Adolphe-Basile Routhier, a Quebec judge. The first verse of the official version contains a **supplication to God** to protect Canada,

“God keep our land glorious and free!”

The fourth verse of the poem is an explicit Christian prayer in which there is a reference to **Judgment Day** and the life eternal.⁴⁷ Here’s the verse:

“Ruler supreme, who hearest humble prayer,
Hold our dominion within thy loving care;
Help us to find, O God, in thee
A lasting, rich reward,
As waiting for the Better Day,
We ever stand on guard.”

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⁴⁷ <http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/ceem-cced/symb/anthem-eng.cfm>