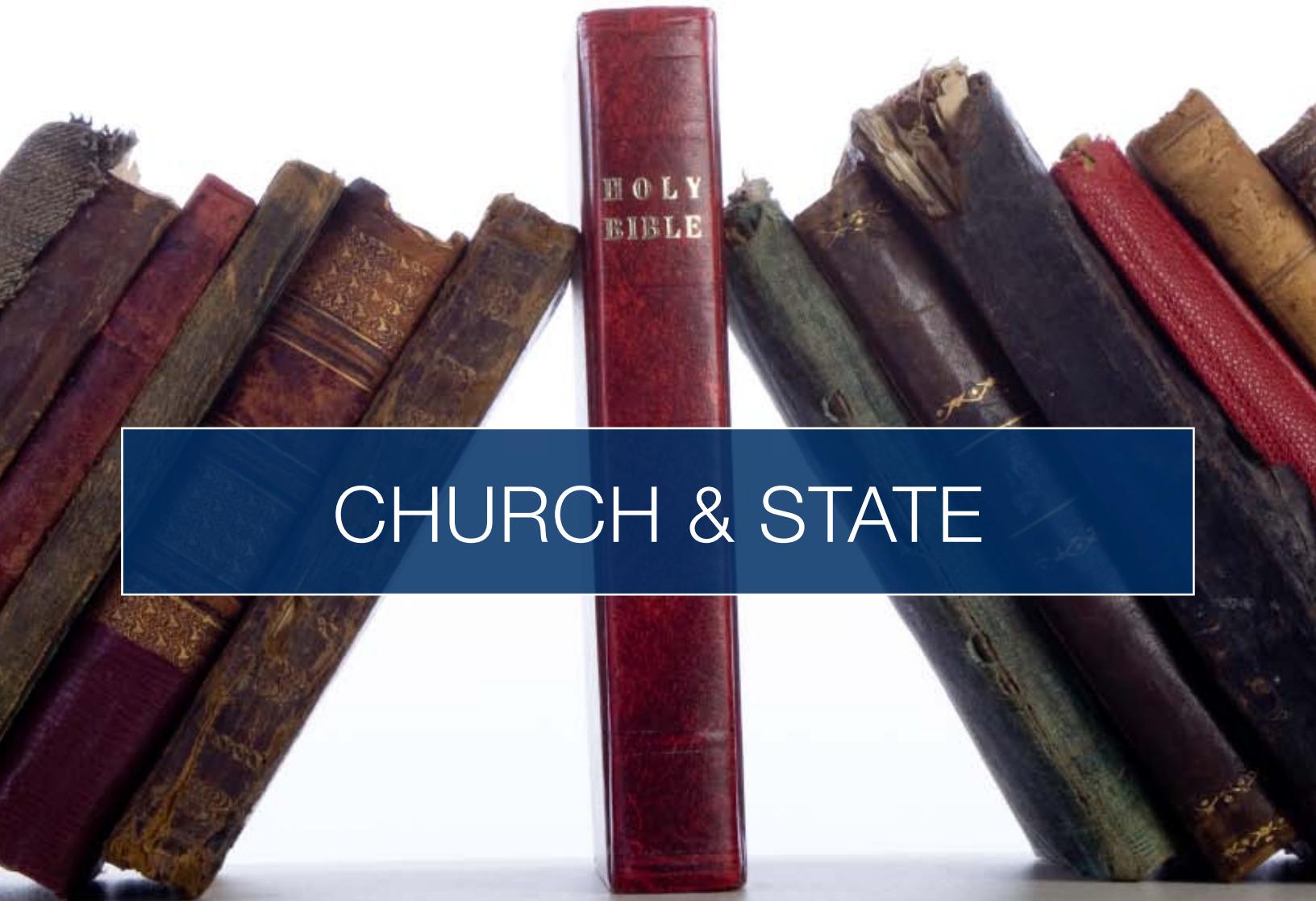


PARENT / TEACHER LESSON PLANS



# CHURCH & STATE



### Summary

In this lesson, students look at a comparison of Canadian Law and God's Law after having an opportunity to give their thoughts on the meaning of the separation between church and state. These different roles between church and state are God-given roles. Students conclude by examining different news articles and writing their own letters to the editor of a newspaper.

## Essential Question

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*How can we best respect the different roles between church and state while still being a salt and light?*

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This question is intended to get students thinking about the different roles between church and state. This concept is often misunderstood.

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## Engage the Students with a discussion of Church and State

- Write the phrase "Separation of Church and State" on the board. Provide students with a short time to write down what they know about it, and what they wonder about it.

## Explore what the Bible teaches

- Lead a class discussion on the following Bible chapters.
- Read Romans 13: 1-7. Who institutes civil authorities (government)? What is the task given to civil government? How does this compare with the role that government now plays in society (providing child care, welfare, flood relief etc.)?
- Read Matthew 22:15-22. Who is "Caesar" today? What does this tell us about our relationship with civil government?
- Read Titus 1:6-9. What does this tell us about different roles for the institution of the church and the institution of the state? What are some examples of situations where one institution may be tempted to interfere in the authority of another institution?
- Students should write a paragraph summarizing what they have learned about the biblical relationship between church and state

## Extend the learning to analyzing news articles

- Distribute *Handout 3 – news articles* and read news article #1. Lead a class discussion on the following points:
  - What does Minister Pettigrew think the separation of church and state is about?
  - How would he be correct in his comments?
  - How would he be wrong?
  - He explains that promoting same-sex "marriage" is his principled decision. What might his principles be? How are they formed?

- Read news article #2: the response to Minister Pettigrew by Ted Byfield. Lead a class discussion on the following points:
  - What are some other laws in our society that come from the Bible?
  - Ted Byfield's argument can be taken one step further. Keeping religion out of politics would not only exclude all the laws that are based on the Bible, it will also exclude the laws that are based on other religions/worldviews. If Minister Pettigrew is basing his decision on principle, and that principle isn't the Bible, then what is it?

## Class Discussion

- Encourage students to try think of examples of new laws and policies that are being promoted that are not based on the Bible.
  - What are they based on?
  - What is the new authority?
  - Who are we expected to look to for help, for guidance, for determining right from wrong?
- Focus the discussion to the underlying issue:
  - So what is really going on? Is the question really about the separation of church and state?
  - Or is it the battle of one worldview against the other? A new worldview (secular humanism, which looks to the state for authority) is fighting to push the old worldview (Christianity) away.
- Encourage the students to think of ways to present Christian principles to someone who doesn't believe in God or the authority of Scriptures.
  - How do we respond?
  - May we promote the Christian Worldview in a country that is no longer Christian?
  - How do we do this?

## Task: Letter to the Editor

- Distribute *Handout 4 – sample letters to editor*.
- Have students write a short letter to the editor on a topic of their choice in which they argue for Biblically-based position. (See two sample letters below) Encourage them to think through the eyes of a secular reader. This requires presenting arguments which someone else would consider, even if they are not a Christian. The Bible can be used (though it is not necessary), but students should attempt to show why it should matter to someone who does not believe in the Bible as well.
- ARPA's EasyMail website has numerous letter ideas and topics to use.



# Teacher Overview – Separation of Church and State

The concept of the separation of church and state is often misunderstood, even by Christians, to mean the separation of religion from politics. Christians are often told to keep their religious views private and away from political issues. But God calls us to be a light in our world and to be prophets, priests and kings. How do we respond when our society tells us to keep our faith private?

Separating the institutions of the church and state is necessary for a free society. God has given different responsibilities to the church and the state. He has also set up different authorities in each institution. Though they are separate institutions, God remains sovereign over everything, including the state. As a result, our faith cannot be separated from politics. In fact, despite popular claims to the contrary, there is always a faith-based worldview behind all political decisions, even in our secular society. Behind the scenes there is a battle of worldviews competing to rule our nation. These worldviews are often hidden in an attempt to make the decisions seem to be “value neutral.”

Christians must courageously hold up the Christian worldview in the public square and demonstrate how it is best for all Canadians. At the same time, we must respect the different responsibilities given to the church and the state.

# What does the Bible Say?

Record your notes and thoughts on the class discussion of the three Bible chapters.

Romans 13: 1-7

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Matthew 22:15-22

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Titus 1:6-9

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# Comparison Chart Between God's Law and Canadian Law

	<b>Canadian Law</b>	<b>God's Law</b>
<b>Summary of Law</b>	Negative - Do no harm.	Positive - Love God and neighbour.
<b>Source of authority</b>	Some aspects of law are assumed (e.g. human rights, dignity, equality) but without an articulated basis. Others are advanced on account of the changing will of the majority.	As Creator, God decides how His creation is meant to live, providing a blueprint for a healthy, happy life: individual, familial and societal.
<b>Formulation of Law</b>	Subjective and changing: written and interpreted by privileged individuals and developed from tradition or current values.	Objective and unchanging: 1) natural law – God's creation, preservation, and government of the universe; 2) Bible - complements natural law but with deeper clarity.
<b>Administration of Law</b>	Large bureaucracy required. Most responsibility put on the State. Little individual responsibility.	Very limited role of the civil government with increased freedom <u>and responsibility</u> put on other spheres of authority and government.
<b>Accountability in administering Law</b>	Broken and back-logged justice system which does little to address wrongs.	Judgment by the Sovereign God of the universe – waiting for every human being.
<b>Freedom as a result of Law</b>	Increasingly undermined by secular notions of equality and neutrality. As the state expands its reach, freedom diminishes.	Promoted extensively and protected vigorously (See our Freedom & Liberty policy report).
<b>Effects of Law</b>	Continual expansion of law leads to discouraged citizenry, contraction of productivity, and individualism.	Liberates - when humanity lives as God intended us to live, we flourish. Health, industry, equality and charity are promoted.

*This chart is taken from ARPA Canada's Respectfully Submitted: Supremacy of God published in Spring 2014.*

## News article #1

# “Church told to butt out”

Author: Elizabeth Thompson and Anne Dawson

Publication: CanWest News Service, with files from National Post January 28, 2005

FREDERICTON - The Roman Catholic Church should keep its nose out of the government's same-sex marriage legislation, Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew suggested yesterday.

Asked about plans by church groups in Quebec to launch a campaign against same-sex marriage, Mr. Pettigrew said the government and churches should not get involved in each other's affairs.

"I find that the separation of the Church and the state is one of the most beautiful inventions of modern times."

While some Liberal MPs have said they will oppose the legislation or have yet to make up their minds, Mr. Pettigrew said there is no doubt in his mind that he will support the bill to be tabled when Parliament resumes.

"It is a question of principle for me. I will support the government's legislation on the marriage of same-sex couples."



## News article #2

# “Pettigrew Puts Boots to Religious Canadians,”

Excerpt from an article by Ted Byfield, The Calgary Sun, January 30, 2005

“That’s not only the minister’ position, but also that of the liberal media. However, none of them seem to have taken this dictum to its inevitable conclusion. All laws – not just laws concerning sexual behaviour – are based upon some moral principle. The entire Criminal Code, for starters, is an anthology of morality. Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not lie, thou shalt not murder, all these rules are moral principles....

The first point to note then is this: morality does not lie behind some of the things legislators do. It lies behind everything they do, because every law is an attempt to enforce –coercively-some moral principle. The second point is equally important. The basis of the morality of just about everybody in the country is religious. We don’t steal and we don’t murder because the bible says we shouldn’t. When we send money to relive the victims of the tsunami, it’s because we’re trying to love our neighbour, a biblical injunction. If we seek to make education available to everyone, it’s because we think it’s “fair,” and what we think “fair,” whether we realize it or not, comes directly out of the Bible.

Therefore, when Pettigrew says that religion must not be allowed to influence public policy, he disqualifies from participation in government all those whose moral basis lies in religion. Since our religion is ultimately the only reason we can give for favouring, or opposing, any law, he has in reality called for the disenfranchisement of just about every Canadian. And nobody in cabinet bats an eyelash. Welcome to the New Canada.”

# Sample Letters to the Editor

Both letters below were written by Christians. The first comes from an ordinary citizen, the second from a Member of Parliament. In different ways, both letters serve as good examples of how to communicate a Biblical point of view, even if the Bible is not necessary mentioned.

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RE: An explicit sex event at a local university

Lethbridge Herald

Editor,

It's not about being "up-to-date" or "democratic" or "free to do what's right for me". When one does good, and obeys the truth, there is blessing. When one does whatever one pleases, with no regard for truth or right, there is no blessing.

We need to maintain a respectful attitude toward sex as a God-given gift to mankind. The blessings in keeping sex within marriage (of a man and woman, of course) include strong husband/wife relationships, and well-adjusted, secure children.

Rather than fighting for "our rights", we need to focus on doing what is right before God.

SH Alberta

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Calgary Herald – March 10, 2006 -Time for limits

Re: "Choice, yes, within reason," Editorial, Feb. 26.

I want to commend the Herald for the thought-provoking and well-reasoned editorial. Canadians not only want limits on abortion, they want laws that protect women from being misled.

A 2005 Environics poll found 70 per cent of Canadians support requiring physicians to give women contemplating abortion information on fetal development, health risks of abortion, alternatives and an ultrasound scan. A woman also has the right to know abortion can harm her future children. A French study reported last year in the British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology concluded abortion almost doubles the risk of future pre-term birth.

Women are also not told the fetus feels pain. Dr. K. S. Anand, an expert on pain perception in fetal and neonatal children, says the fetus feels pain by 20 weeks, and perhaps even earlier, and that the pain caused by abortion would be "prolonged and excruciating." In 2002, at least 308 children were aborted between 21 and 40 weeks gestation. We must all share in the blame for the more than 100,000 abortions annually in this country. We should help with crisis pregnancy centres and other programs to support women so abortion becomes a rare thing in a compassionate society.

Maurice Vellacott (MP for Saskatoon-Wanuskewin)

Ottawa