



Christianity and Social and Political Progress

Michael Coren

Author, Columnist and Speaker

November 9, 2018

9:00am – 4:30pm

Summary (Abstract)

Is it desirable to allow religion, and in particular Christianity, to influence the public square?

In his workshop, Michael Coren, a well-respected and recognized writer and broadcaster will explore this very important question and how it relates to the concept of church and state separation. Highly outspoken on the topic, Mr. Coren believes that Christian values are indeed progressive values: those, for instance, of Tommy Douglas, Martin Luther King, and Christian Socialism.

Mr. Coren explains that, in his view, while church and state must remain separate, the individual Christian and the state are actually linked. The two can work together in search of reforms that are in line with both Christian values and social and political progress.

Outline

- Church and State Separation
 - o The concept
 - What does this mean?
 - o The history
 - How did this happen in Canada and elsewhere?
- Defining Christian Values
 - o Liberalism vs. Christianity
 - Why are they seen as being at odds?
 - Are they really?
 - o Can Christian values be progressive values?
 - o Important examples
- Reconciling Christian Ideas and Progress
 - o Christian values and the Individual
 - Distinguishing between Church and State
 - o Potential for social progress
 - Social welfare, pluralism, social cohesion
 - o Potential for political progress
 - Partisan/ideological polarization
 - Ethical governance
 - Political/economic equality





Required Readings*

Students are asked to do some general reading around the concept of the separation of Church and State – please make sure to consult various writers on the issue (both Right and Left). Here are some examples:

Coren, Michael (2018) “Conservatives Don’t Own Jesus: By teaming up with Christians, progressives can reclaim the political agenda”. *The Walrus*. <https://thewalrus.ca/conservatives-dont-own-jesus/>

Lankford, James and Russell Moore (2018) “The Real Meaning of the Separation of Church and State”. *Times*, January. <http://time.com/5103677/church-state-separation-religious-freedom/>

Huffington Post list of articles: <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/topic/separation-of-church-and-state>

Witte, John Jr. (2006) “Facts and Fictions About the History of Separation of Church and State”. *Journal of Church and State*, 48(1): 15-45. <http://0-dx.doi.org/mercury.concordia.ca/10.1093/jcs/48.1.15>

Additional Resources

Coren, Michael (2016) *Epiphany: A Christian's Change of Heart & Mind over Same-Sex Marriage*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.

Campolo, Tony (2009) *Is Jesus A Democrat Or A Republican*. Nashville: W Publishing Group.

McDonald, Marci (2011) *The Armageddon Factor: The Rise of Christian Nationalism in Canada*. Toronto: Vintage Canada.

Gunn, Joe (2018) *Journeys to Justice: Reflections on Canadian Christian Activism*. Toronto: Novalis Publishing.

*If you are registered for non-credit and are unable to locate the readings, please contact us at wssr@concordia.ca

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