

Sub vs



the BIBLE holiness movement

INTERNATIONAL - INTER-RACIAL

"IS NOT MY WORD LIKE A FIRE?
SAITH THE LORD" Jer. 23:29

November 20, 1980

Dear Honourable Committee Members:

The Enclosed submission was originally prepared by the Religious Freedom Conference of Christian Minorities and has been sent to all members of the parliaments since then including the Premiers of the Provinces. It is also by special resolution the official position of the Bible Holiness Movement, a small evangelical Methodist denomination, on this issue.

We would strongly recommend in the charter of liberties that the common practice of the new commonwealth nations be followed in not only outlining them, but in adequate definition so that these ideals do not remain in the area of abstracts, but are also made effective constitutional laws applicable to all Canadian citizens in every part of the nation.

The necessity, in our opinion, for definition, is seen when one examines the actions of countries where these freedoms are not definitively set forth. For instance, in many of the Marxist countries, freedom of religion is understood to only guarantee the private personal exercise of conscience but does not guarantee the right of associated worship or evangelism or religious teaching. Likewise in some church-state countries, it has been interpreted to narrowly mean the right of very limited private dissent from the majority religion.

Yet, one must recognise that freedom of religion is essential to every other democratic freedom we have because it is based upon the inherent human right of choice which we believe is God-given.

We would therefore urge that in keeping with the current British commonwealth traditions, this freedom be defined, also that the clause on racial and ethnic equality be strengthened. Even if the present proposed charter of liberties is used, we would recommend a minimal amendment to the clause "freedom of conscience and religion" with the addition of "public or private, either alone or in community with others."

We thank you for the opportunity presented of making known our concerns in this areas.

Respectfully,

Wesley H. Wakefield
Wesley H. Wakefield
WW/am/enc.

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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIAN MINORITIES

(Sponsored November 1978 by The Bible Holiness Movement in Vancouver, B.C.)

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN CANADA

WE WOULD RECOMMEND that the new Constitution contain a specific recognition of all the rights and responsibilities of common law conferred upon Canadian citizens to the present, and that freedom of thought, conscience, and religion be defined to include the following provisions:

Freedom of Conscience and Religion

1. Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest and propagate his religion, or belief, in worship, teaching, practice, and observance.
2. Parliament shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the right of free speech and assembly; but recognises the legal equality of all religious denominations and associations without discrimination or preference, provided
 - a) that the rights and freedoms of other persons are not contravened, including the right to observe and practice any belief of conscience without the unsolicited interventions of other religions, beliefs, or denominations,
 - b) this does not excuse criminal acts or the promotion of crime or genocide, or contravenes the interests of public safety, public morality, and public health.
3. Freedom of conscience and religion specifically includes the right to freely propagate with the purpose of voluntary conversion and this confers
 - a) the right to communicate beliefs by any lawful means, and
 - b) the right to voluntarily convert to another belief, denomination, or religion without
 - (i) - prejudicing any right as a citizen
 - (ii) - being required by detention or coercion to change to any belief, practice, or persuasion.
4. Every religious association or community of conscience has the right to organize and to govern itself with rules, requirements, and observances that cannot be altered except by or with the consent of the governing authority of that association or community.
5. No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or take part in or attend any religious ceremony or holiday observances, if such instruction, ceremony or observance relates to a religion or belief other than his own.
6. No religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any place of education maintained wholly by that community or denomination.
7. No religious test shall be required as a qualification for citizenship or

to any office or public trust in Canada or for any employment, except for religious occupations or religious organizations.

8. No person shall be compelled to take any oath which is contrary to his religion or belief, or to take any oath in a manner which is contrary to his religion or belief, and a solemn affirmation shall be regarded as the same legal effect as an oath.

9. No person, in order to be employed shall be compelled to join any professional, trade, or labour association or union where such affiliation is against his religious conscience.

10. No person who objects by reason of conscience or religion may be required to enter combatant military service, bear arms, or be employed in the manufacture of the same.

11. Except for works of necessity or emergency, no person shall be required to work on his weekly day of worship.

12. Every citizen has the right to choose therapeutic treatment for himself in harmony with his religious beliefs, except for contagious diseases or endangering the health, safety and life of others.

13. Government shall not legislate or provide exclusive jurisdiction to any religion or denomination over the religious affairs of any public community, native people's reserves, or public institution, but shall recognize the right of choice of religious belief and counsel for all.

14. Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion as defined in the constitution shall be applicable throughout Canada; federally, provincially, and territorially.

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Excerpt from the Richmond Review, Richmond, British Columbia, December 1, 1978

Participants at the conference and in the committee work of preparing the statement of religious freedom included ministers and members from the Salvation Army, the Free Methodist Church, the Standard Church, the Evangelical Church, the Mennonite Brethren Church, the General Conference Mennonite Church, the Regular Baptist Church, the Pentecostal Assembly, the Faith Mission, the Japan Evangelistic Band, and the Bible Holiness Movement.

These also included in their personal or denominational affiliations, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the National Black Evangelical Association, the Mennonite Central Committee, the Canadian Holiness Federation, the Canadians United for Separation of Church and State, the United Citizens for Integrity, the Canadian Protestant League, and Christian Holiness Association, the Christians Concerned for Racial Equality, the Canadians for the Protection of Religious Liberty, and the anti-Slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights.