



Catholic Civil Rights League

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CBC uses Tim Bits and coffee in Communion satire

TORONTO, ON February 25, 2013 – The CBC program “This Hour has 22 Minutes” featured a short skit February 19 satirizing the possibilities of a Canadian becoming pope. During a spoof of parishioners receiving Holy Communion, Tim Bits and Tim Hortons Coffee were substituted for the bread and wine.

We have protested the offensiveness of satirizing the Blessed Sacrament to the CBC, and also to Tim Hortons, and encouraged our membership to do likewise. While Tim Hortons would have played no part in creating the skit, viewers associated it with their product and the association should not be a welcome one for the company. We asked executives to discourage “This Hour” producers from using their products in portrayals that are deeply offensive to Catholics and many others.

League gave interviews to several radio stations to protest this outrageous skit. Visit our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/catholiccivilrightsleague) for links to this and other problem content in the media, and ways to respond.

Media coverage of papacy found wanting

TORONTO, ON February 21, 2013 – Media coverage of Pope Benedict’s resignation (or as it is formally known, renunciation of the papacy, has included a real mixture of good articles along with some needlessly negative, sometimes downright anti-Catholic vitriol, particularly from columnists and message board posts. To help improve balance, we have written to The Star, twice, regarding separate Rosie Di Manno columns, the Globe and Mail once regarding a news story, and later regarding a column by Gerald Caplan, CBC twice, once regarding a longish news story and again regarding This Hour has 22 Minutes (see separate article in this edition). Several regional newspapers were also contacted by our local directors.

We also provided an article for The Ottawa Citizen, by our Ottawa director Richard Bastien. Media interviews were given by League President Phil Horgan, and directors Richard Bastien and Christian Elia, with CHCH and Sun Media respectively.

League welcomes religious freedom office

TORONTO ON February 20, 2013 – The Catholic Civil Rights League welcomes the establishment of Canada’s Office of Religious Freedom and hopes it will play a role in extending respect for religious and conscientious freedom throughout the world. “We hope that the new Office for Religious Freedom may prove to be a beacon of Canada’s high regard for religious and conscientious freedom, and that it will prove to be a source of dialogue, mutual understanding, and peace,” said League President Phil Horgan, who attended the launch of the new office February 19 in Maple, Ontario on the League’s behalf.

League comments on free speech ruling

OTTAWA, ON February 27, 2013 – The Catholic Civil Rights League today commented upon the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) decision in the [free speech case between William Whatcott and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission](#). The court allowed the Commission’s appeal in part, and restored two of four fines against Mr. Whatcott, plus awarded costs to the Commission.

Mr. Whatcott, formerly of Regina and now of Weyburn, SK was fined \$17,500 in 2002 by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission (HRC) under Section 14 for distributing a series of pamphlets objecting to what he

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judged to be homosexual values being taught to children in Saskatoon Public schools. As a result of today's ruling, the penalty is upheld for two of the pamphlets but dismissed for two others. The fines have been upheld for pamphlets which used strong language to complain about the adoption of same-sex friendly curricula by the Saskatoon school system, while complaints based on advertisements for intergenerational sex partners were allowed.

The Court held that a minor revision to the law, by a deletion of eight words, would allow the underlying statute to be maintained. The Court further ruled that such hate speech provisions were an acceptable legislative approach to dealing with the issue of hate speech. While the actual provisions in the Saskatchewan legislation infringed on protections of freedom of speech and freedom of conscience and religion, the Court found that the provisions, as amended, were reasonably and demonstrably justified, using Section 1 of the Charter.

"Once again the court has struggled with the difficult problem of balancing the right to freedom of expression with the goal of preventing discrimination against identifiable groups," said League President Philip Horgan. "The SCC upheld its previous jurisprudence on such hate speech provisions, and has provided clarification which should limit such applications to the most severe cases."

The Catholic Civil Rights League was an intervenor in the case, represented by Ryan Dalziel of Bull, Housser and Tupper LLP in Vancouver. Mr. Whatcott's lawyer, Thomas A. Schuck of Saskatchewan, is a member of the League. The appeal was heard October 12, 2011.

The court stated subsection (b) of Section 14 of the Saskatchewan code must be amended to remove "ridicules, belittles or otherwise affronts the dignity of" while the prohibition on exposing or tending to expose to hatred will remain.

The Supreme Court's ruling may not solve the League's concerns. In its effort to maintain the underlying provision, by excising eight words, the Court allows a provision which is acknowledged to restrain speech or religious freedoms, in circumstances where the words of the following section expressly intend to disallow. The Court has effectively invited a new interpretation of section 14 (2), where it reads "Nothing in subsection (1) restricts the right to freedom of expression..." The new interpretation can only be understood to mean

"Sometimes subsection (1) restricts the right to freedom of expression..."

The problem of individuals having to face such applications when engaging in public debate is shown by the process faced by Mr. Whatcott. The original human rights tribunal ordered Whatcott to pay \$17,500 in compensation to four people who had complained his flyers exposed them to hatred. A Queen's Bench judge upheld the ruling. In 2010, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal found that while the pamphlets attacking teaching schoolchildren about homosexuality used crude and offensive language, they were protected by the right to freedom of expression.

Such hate speech provisions have been used in the prosecution of others, including Bishop Fred Henry of Calgary, Rev. Stephen Boissin, an Evangelical minister in Red Deer, and Father Alphone DeValk, former editor of Catholic Insight, for criticizing same sex behaviour. Mr. Whatcott has faced at least nine human rights tribunal or court charges for his pamphleteering.

Visit our web page (www.ccrl.ca) for a complete analysis of this court decision.

League annual dinner to take place May 30

If you live in the Toronto area, or are planning to visit in May, please set aside Thursday May 30 for our annual dinner and presentation of the Archbishop Exner Award for Catholic Excellence in Public Life. Guest speaker will be Stephen Woodworth, MP, who put forward Motion 312, which called for scientific study to support a modern legal definition of when life begins.

Chapter contacts

For upcoming meetings of our *Windsor-Essex chapter* contact Bob Baksi at robert@baksi.com.

Antigonish chapter: Contact Don Maclellan, chapter president, at maclellan_donald@yahoo.ca for details. From September to June the chapter meets the first Tuesday of each month.

St. Catharines Chapter: Contact Justin O'Donnell at justinodonnell@cogeco.ca.

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