RELIGION AND THE NATION: AN AMBIGUOUS ALLIANCE

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In the current discussion about Canada's nationhood, the role of religion has not been prominent (at least not directly) to one of the two founding peoples now threatening our national unity, the Quebecois. The other, the Native peoples, have a close link between their religious beliefs and their affirmation of nationhood. In some cases of confrontation, religious rituals and ceremonies have been freely used as weapons in the confrontation. That native religious functionaries are now able to work in prisons is a sign of progression in our cultural mosaic.

A reading of Canadian history leads to the conclusion that the ruling party has always used religion in a manner bordering on idolatry.[1] This is illustrated by two examples, the handling of the Riel rebellion slightly over a hundred years ago and the discussion (about ten years ago) of bringing God into the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.[2] It would not be surprising if there were a continuous line between the way in which Canada treated Louis Riel and what happened this past summer in our confrontation with our native peoples.[3]

I. Louis Riel

Louis Riel was born in St. Boniface and for him the Red River Settlement was always home.[4] Of Metis parentage, he is being today increasingly recognized as the founder of Manitoba and is slowly gaining national recognition. His mixed ancestry may not have been the decisive factor denying him this honour before now, rather Manitobans were reluctant to enshrine someone as founder of their

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[1]Ever since I worked through H. J. Berman, *The Interaction of Law and Religion* (New York: Abingdon, 1974), I have been aware of the need for dialogue between those in the academic study of religion and law. This is essential in such practical areas where we have common interests, human rights, victim offender reconciliation, diversion but even more in the area of theory and philosophy of law. In the early 1970s it was my privilege to interpret religious points of view on capital punishment; the discussions held with persons from the Law Reform Commission at that time were very enriching: see W. Klassen *Release to Those in Prison* (Kitchener: Herald Press, 1977).

[2]*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Part I of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, being Schedule B of the *Canada Act 1982* (U.K.), 1982, c.11 [hereinafter Charter].

[3]See W. Klassen, "Two Wise Men from the West: Canadian Identity and Religion" in P. Slater, ed., *Religion and Culture in Canada* (Canadian Corporation for the Study of Religion, 1979) at 271-288. Some of this material appears in that essay.

[4]The standard works on Riel are G. Stanley, *Louis Riel* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1963) and H. Bowsfield, *Louis Riel, The Rebel and the Hero* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1971). Most helpful are the works of T. Flanagan, ed., *The Diaries of Louis Riel* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1976) and above all, *Louis 'David' Riel: Prophet of the New World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979).

province who had resisted the Government of Canada and who in effect established his own state in Manitoba. Solid, conservative citizens that Manitobans are, surely they could not be expected to acknowledge as their founder a man whose sanity was in doubt when he was tried and executed for treason. (There are, to be sure, people among them who accept as their leader a Jew of the first century whose relatives also considered insane, who was also tried for insurrection and executed for that crime; but there are accounts to the effect that God raised him from the dead, and in any case he has in the meantime become respectable. Besides, he stayed out of politics, or so some believe.)

Louis Riel's statue stands just south of the Parliament Buildings in Winnipeg, his back turned to the United States and more immediately the Assiniboine River and his contorted face peers in the direction of the halls where the laws are now enacted and enforced. It took a city-wide fight to get him turned around for he was at first placed with his back to Parliament and his face towards the South. It became clear in this controversy that Manitobans had their trouble with Louis Riel. Should he be installed near their Parliament Buildings along with Queen Victoria and other great figures from the past; this man whose strange career stood as a reminder to all that strong people whose visions are thwarted will sometimes resort to violent behaviour?

With the publication of his diary,[5] it becomes increasingly clear that there was a strange union of religion and politics, Canadian nationalism and devout Roman Catholicism, political aspiration and messianism all intertwined in the mind of this brilliant but thwarted man. Yet who can deny the impact of this man, not only upon Manitoban history, but upon Canadian history? Born of a settled Metis family in 1844, he received a good education and spent several years in a Montreal seminary which he left in 1866 in order to marry. When the marriage was not permitted by his intended's parents Riel left Montreal without wife, career or money and spent two idle years in the United States. By age 24 he returned to the West and became increasingly involved in the dream of self-government for what later became the Province of Manitoba.

It was important to Riel that the people of Manitoba have a say in the fate of their land. It was he who stood firmly against the sale by the Hudson's Bay Company of its enormous territories to the new Dominion of Canada. When a surveying team came from Canada to the farm of André Nault, Nault protested

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[5]T. Flanagan, *ibid.* Without claiming to provide a complete picture of Riel, the diaries provide an insight into his inner workings. That they may confirm the suspicion that Riel was mentally unbalanced, I do not for a moment evade. It is the lot of creative geniuses or people who see issues before their time to be considered mad. Did Jesus of Nazareth himself not have to contend with this accusation from his mother and his brothers and sisters (Mark 3:21)? Others claimed he was demon-possessed (Mark 3:22; John 8:48, 52). Riel's insights are not destroyed merely because a psychiatrist puts a label on him.

and as the surveyors did not speak French, he sought the help of Riel who, unarmed, came with a number of men and simply stood on the surveyor's chain. The Metis believed they had no authority to survey their land and would not be allowed to do so.

It is perhaps not surprising that in Manitoba schools, children were never told that 15 years after their grandfathers came from the Ukraine to settle in southern Manitoba, Riel was executed by the Canadian Government in part for the consequences of his beliefs; that the land on which he and his people lived in southern Manitoba belonged to them. This was not part of the religious history. It is not that the facts were deliberately hidden, rather they simply did not fit into Manitoban existence until recently.

The main concern of Riel and his committee was that they be consulted with regard to the Red River Colony. Sir John A. Macdonald had made his own position quite clear when he wrote: "These impulsive half-breeds have got spoilt by this émeute (riot), and must be kept down by a strong hand until they are swamped by the influx of settlers... ."[6] In the negotiations and confrontations which took place between the Prime Minister and the Government of Manitoba during the winter of 1869-70, major concessions were made. Sir John had to negotiate with "this upstart youth." Fearful of American intervention, Sir John granted them nearly everything they had demanded: guarantees for the French language and the Catholic religion, recognition of aboriginal rights of the half-breeds, and the entry of the Red River Colony into Confederation, not as a colony but as a province. It was a great success for the Metis but even though they elected Riel three times as their representative in Parliament, he was never allowed to take his seat.[7] This fact alone is a reminder that the appearance of parliamentary democracy is not itself a guarantee of liberty. Riel, as head and spokesman of the Provisional Government of the Northwest, expressed his concerns about the relationship with Canada in the following way.

> ... it has always seemed strange to the people of Assiniboia to hear themselves spoken of in official and other documents in Canada as a rebellious and misguided population, because we did not want to submit to the arbitrary procedures of the Canadian government.[8]

As a result of growing confrontation, culminating in the famous case of the young Orangeman, Thomas Scott, Riel allowed his supporters to execute Scott. There is evidence which suggests that prior to this event, Riel was committed to a strategy of moderation. At least in the case of C.H. Boulton, who had also been

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[6]H. Bowsfield, ed., "Issues in Canadian History" in *Louis Riel* (Toronto: 1969) at 34.

[7]T. Flanagan, *supra*, note 4 at 10.

[8]H. Bowsfield, *supra*, note 6 at 36.

condemned, he tried to grant clemency. By March 1870, however, Riel no longer enjoyed a position of strength. The Metis had followed him by choice and it is assumed that Riel felt that an act of capital punishment would strengthen his leadership role, both among his own people and the outside world. The execution of Scott was a fatal mistake marking the beginning of the end of Riel's career.

There are a number of issues central to the life of Riel which have significance today. First, is the great importance which Riel attaches to the autonomy, freedom and vitality of the land. We may indeed sing to the "true north, strong and free," but it was Riel who wrote in his diary the following words:

> The Spirit of God made me see a crate full of merchandise. On the bottom were written the words, 'The heart of the North'. Oh my God! For the love of Jesus, Mary, Saint John the Baptist, grant me the grace to conquer the North and to master all within it. Give me the heart of the North.[9]

He saw his mission as one of rescuing this heart from enslavement by the East. This motif appears elsewhere.

The West and North were constantly threatened by absorption from the South as well as the East but for Riel, self-determination and national identity were critically important. National identity derived its strength from the North and sustained its freedom by refusing dependence upon the South. Riel received a letter from G.W. Gibbons, former Colonel of the American Annexation League deeded April 4, 1870 which reads as follows:

> My Dear Sir, Recognizing your right in governing the Red River Community – I tender you my services in upholding the same – in any attempt made by Great Britain to the contrary. My assistance of Men, arms, etc., will also be given you. By all means make a firm and decisive stand. I should be pleased to hear from you.[10]

Even though the Americans were better friends of the Metis than were the Canadians, Riel stood firm for independence from the United States and would act without their assistance. The native peoples of the United States, however, would be free to join them at any time.[11] In his diary, on April 29, 1885, Riel records a dream in which he was in a carriage with Michael Dumas, one of his associates who was leaving for the United States. They travelled together for a certain distance and spoke about the United States and after Dumas had left, Riel wrote in his diary as follows:

> An area around me was clear and open; all the rest of the ground swarmed with snakes. There were more snakes than I could count. Oh, it is a dangerous step

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[9]T. Flanagan, *supra*, note 4 at 58.

[10](1970) 100 *The Nor 'Wester* 1 at 22.

[11]*Ibid.* at 56.

> to ask the Americans for help. Beware of adventurers from the United States. For I assure you they are to be feared. They have neither morals, nor faith, nor heart. They are dirty dogs, foul jackals, ravishing wolves, raging tigers.
> O my God! Save me from the misfortune of getting involved with the United States. Let the United States protect us indirectly, spontaneously through an act of Your Holy Providence, but not through any commitment or agreement on our part.[12]

It is fascinating that a hundred years ago the founder of Manitoba realized that to obtain self-determination the people must be represented in the group that makes decisions for them, and must not lean too heavily on their neighbour to the South. This led Riel inevitably to regionalism as opposed to confederation. He recognized the importance of regional units, particularly those of clear ethnic identity, in order to remain separate from the larger federalism. Riel identified an issue which has yet to be resolved. As a consequence of resorting to violence, he died by violence and did not live to establish the regional autonomy for which he fought.

Riel, J.S. Woodsworth, and other great leaders of the West have indissolubly joined religion and politics. Eastern politicians may seem more sophisticated, but it is the striking aspect of Canadian western history that religious values and political action are very closely linked. However, with respect to Woodsworth and Riel, there is one major unresolved problem; the place of violence in the political sphere. It is a part of the quest for Canadian identity.

The Canadian ego, if one may be allowed to use that term, has had its developmental problems. We have not had a war in which to establish our machismo. We have not engaged in any great battles with the Indians in order to possess this land. In other words, Canadian history cannot point to a war of independence or a major civil war to mirror its identity. This country's leaders seem to have that strange quality of wanting Canada to be recognized as a nation in its own right, but were reluctant to fight for it. This trait appears to run from Louis Riel to Pierre Trudeau. (The contrast between Trudeau's appeals for love in 1976 and his use of force during the Quebec crisis of October 1970 is striking.) The crisis of identity is seen in the Armed Forces; what does one do with men killed in the Sinai or Cyprus as part of a Peace-keeping Force? Are they heroes or victims of national vanity? Do they belong at Oka or in the Persian Gulf? Can one recruit persons into an Army which builds its reputation on cleaning up oil-spills and aiding in disaster relief rather than bringing them about? Here religion and Canadian identity crossed over most distinctly in both Riel and Woodsworth.

It is hard to find a source which so strikingly juxtaposes these two traits as does the diary of Riel. Riel had no love for war. He is not engaged in a battle

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[12]T. Flanagan, *supra*, note 4 at 77.

in order to prove that he is a man; in fact Riel was engaged in a holy war. His diary indicates that the real battle is fought by God and not by him or his soldiers. On the one side is the conviction:

> My ideas are right; they are well-balanced. They are level and clear; there is no mourning in my thoughts. My ideas are like the sights on my rifle. My rifle is upright. It is the invisible presence of God which holds my rifle straight and ready.[13]

In concert with this theme are repeated prayers that God may be gracious to his enemies. He prays not only for himself, that he may find it in his heart to be charitable to those who are enemies, but also that God will "let the bullet graze him (the enemy), but spare his life."[14] Towards the end of his diary when his capture is close at hand he prays: "Oh my God, find a way, to be good to our enemies, while still giving us Your successes, Your victories and Your triumphs forever and ever."[15] Riel clearly sees himself as a Holy Warrior; the victory must come from God.

One is now able to perceive in a way which Riel could not the dangers of the Holy War motif; the War of Jahweh, which He fights with his angels, so easily becomes our war which is fought with muskets. Riel tried to shore up his sagging political situation and to demonstrate his muscle by allowing the execution of Thomas Scott. He learned this from the white man whose "justice" he was trying to emulate by introducing capital punishment. The tragic flaw in Riel's character was this inconsistency; relying on Jahweh the Warrior but eventually being drawn into battle which flatly contradicted the teaching of the Jesus upon whose name he so frequently and fervently called. Criticism of Riel must be tempered by the fact that it was our forebears who taught him that inconsistency. The tragedy is that he learned it. Driven from his land and uprooted from his people, this fugitive came to a sad end when he took up arms against Canada. Nevertheless, that end is a blot on the record of Canadian justice. If today Riel's people seek to make him their hero, far be it from the descendants of the white settlers to sit in judgment on them.

With respect to violence, Woodsworth was more consistent. Perhaps the

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[13]*Ibid.* at 60.

[14]*Ibid.* at 63.

[15]*Ibid.* at 85. Riel stands in the tradition of Socrates and Jesus. All vengeance he leaves to God (*Ibid.* at 70) and the victories are God's (*Ibid.* at 54) and he prays that God's goodness may be done towards the enemies. Even on those rare occasions in which he speaks of his enemies in other terms, such as praying that his foes one fine morning may scatter in fear before his hands, or expresses the wish that they may grovel in the dust and that he may stamp out their life as reptiles in the dust, his thoughts seems to move along the lines of the Psalms of Imprecation of the Old Testament (Ibid. at 48 and 49). The Christian approach of loving one's enemies seems to triumph.

reason for this is that he was never tested by power; he never ruled. More importantly, however, Woodsworth, although he also had emotional stresses and breakdowns, never lost his place. The way opened up for him repeatedly so that he could creatively express the throbbing energy within him. Yet, he too had a tragic flaw which was his position on immigration restrictions and the basis on which they rested. There were strands of racism in Woodsworth's immigration philosophy. Not only did the Ukrainian joy of life as expressed at weddings and other occasions cause him to wonder whether Ukrainians really belonged here, but the question of Orientals coming to Canada in large numbers distressed him. While it is essential that thought be given to immigration policies, racism and sound immigration policies are not compatible.

II. God in the Canadian Constitution

One of the more amusing sidelights of the battle for a Canadian constitution is the debate on the place to be assigned to God. While the question cannot be answered definitely this side of eternity, there are certain hints. There is some evidence that the House of Commons had difficulty distinguishing its own role from that of God. At one point in the Commons debate on the subject, the Acting Speaker of the House, Mr. Blaker, said: "The House can do anything it wishes. It is somewhat similar to God; there are no limitations on the will of the House."[16] He thereby put into words what had been suspected for some time. Prime Minister Trudeau confirmed this belief when he revealed that the secret behind his pressure to patriate the Canadian Constitution was his conviction that the best time is always the present, "because on God's scale it is apocalyptic, a time when the lines between good and evil are clearly drawn, and each one of us must choose his side."[17] Now there is no longer any room for the coward or the uncommitted!

Apart from this conviction that God is deeply concerned about our Constitutional timetable, it was also clear that certain members of Parliament felt deeply that God might be slighted if left out of the Constitution. (God very likely is as bored by the whole topic as most are, but then who can read God's mind?) When the question of whether God would be given due recognition in the Constitution was debated in the Commons in the winter of 1981, a number of speakers called on God's help. Others argued zealously that God should be enshrined in the preamble to the Charter. Those who at first had seen fit to leave God out were branded "socialists and atheists."

In reply, it was noted that on February 19, 1981 the Government had urged

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[16]Canada, Parliament, *House of Commons Debates* at 7483 (19 February 1981).

[17]*Ibid.* at 8520.

upon the provinces a proposed preamble containing the following sentence: "We, the people of Canada, proudly proclaim that we are and shall always be, with the help of God, a free and self-governing people."[18] When this was found unacceptable, the dreadful prospect loomed that God would not be recognized by some provinces.

It is clear from the Commons debate that the concern stretched from sea to shining sea. British Columbia, in particular the Fraser Valley, came out swinging for God. Mr. Wenman (Fraser Valley West), after some hesitancy to get involved in the debate for fear that no one was interested in hearing him, lashed out at the " 'atheists and socialists' ...who have been successful in blotting out all references to the Supremacy of God, all references to private owner's property, the sanctity of the individual as a human being, and the valued position of the family... ."[19] Some hecklers suggested that indeed Prime Minister Trudeau himself might be in the place of ultimate authority at the present time. However, the profoundest wisdom in this debate came not from British Columbia or from Manitoba, but from David Crombie (Rosedale). While Crombie may not have taken the lion by the tail, he did make some very valuable observations about rights. Crombie believed that rights have always "rested on the basis of some spiritual entity, a supreme being":

> This was not merely because it was a nice thing, which it was, but primarily because it had a very practical advantage. When law rests on religion, when legal orders relate to spiritual principles, it allows for diversity and dissent. The roots of democratic dissent have always begun with religious dissent; laws imposed by governments were always fought on the basis of an appeal to God. This is why we insisted ...that not only should there be a preamble respecting the supreme authority because it was in our hearts, but that it should be related to spiritual principles, but it had a practical democratic value as well. The way in which generations of western people have been able to overcome tyranny was by being able to appeal over the head of the government which oppressed them.[20]

The insight in this observation is profound enough to qualify Crombie to become a professor of religion. He has noted here that the affirmation of religion has in fact been intimately related to the provisions made for dissent.

At the same time Crombie has introduced a sizeable problem for Canadians, for as soon as God is named in any public document like a preamble to the Charter, we have violated a principle central to Canada, namely the respect for varying traditions and religions. Can native peoples recognize that word as it appears in the latest draft? Might they not be tempted to say that Canada, as they

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[18] *Ibid.* at 7490.

[19] *Ibid.* at 7435 (18 February 1981).

[20] *Ibid.* at 7441 (18 February 1981 Commons Debate).

know it, was in fact founded not upon God, but on demonic forces that destroyed their way of life? Can orthodox Jewish citizens be happy with the presence of the name they are reluctant to use or avoid altogether? What about the thousands of citizens who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, adherents of Islam, or any other minority that can be named? Have not some of them been subjected to bitter harassment in areas of Canada which now insist that God must be enshrined in the Constitution?

The author, a theologian, upon entering the debate, urged that all references to the supremacy of God be dropped and that it simply say, "Whereas Canada is founded upon transcendent principles and the rule of law." That is both more honest and holds a better prospect for the future; as well it reflects more accurately the multicultural and multi-religious society Canada is at present.

We cannot leave these debates, however, without observing the most profound irony of all. Mr. Jake Epp, whose Mennonite foreparents 400 hundred years ago laid down their lives in order to separate church and state, led the attack to get God into the Constitution. What did he achieve by this? Is Canada now more religious that God is named in the Constitution? Hardly. Will it be more likely to follow a particular form of religion now that God is named? Again, that is doubtful. To mention God with a capital letter in the preamble to the Charter and then to go on to say that the Charter provides a fundamental freedom of conscience and religion, is a contradiction which even a theologian, to say nothing of all the lawyers, must surely recognize. For that reason alone, our members of Parliament owe Canadians the removal of the name of God from this document.

It could further be argued that those who muster the courage to speak for the removal of God from the *Charter* are in fact speaking for God. God must feel very uncomfortable being enshrined in the Constitution when most pay far more homage to the Canadian dollar and certainly pay more Canadian dollars to maintain Parliament and the Senate than they would ever consider giving to God.

The cause of true religion is never advanced by putting God's name on a document, in a national anthem, on coins, or generally in the public sphere. God, in whatever form we may understand him or her, is surely best served when the freedom to worship is acknowledged, not only in the heart of a document, but also in its preamble. It is a lesson well worth learning from both the American experiment in democracy and Islamic fundamentalism. Surely religion can be invoked to mould a nation from disparate units to one whole if it is done with respect to all religions. This means in the present case that no religion lays claim to a favoured status and that all religions are protected by the Charter. A yarmulke may be as appropriate for a policeman as a Sikh turban or the present Smokey the Bear hat.

Fortunately we are making progress in the area of interfaith understanding. One example is the excellent book by Ron Graham which seeks to chart Canada's rich religious heritage by looking at all major religious faiths woven into the tapestry that is Canada.[21] This book deserves wide circulation, for although Canada is a multi-cultural society, few come to know people outside their own ethnic group. Over the years, the author has asked many students how many of them have close friends who do not belong to their ethnic or religious group, and it is disheartening that so few have such friends until they reach university.

Our universities therefore, stand in a critical place of leadership. Departments of religion have, since 1965 flourished in Canadian universities and have not only contributed to the scholarly understanding of our various religions but have also prepared many to appreciate the relatively new discipline of comparative ethics. A course in religion and the environment may examine not only what the religions of the Book, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, say about human stewardship over nature but also explore the cultures of the many peoples of this land, the Sikhs, the Hindus and the Buddhists, all of whom have a rich tradition and history. For that to be successful, universities have to see themselves as "communities of conviction," to use a phrase coined by Craig Dykstra.[22] Dykstra addresses a twofold disarray:

(1) A disarray of contemporary liberal arts education.
   (i) Disciplines which seem more interested in their own logic and methods than with the realities they are ostensibly designed to explore.
   (ii) A series of calls to relevance, personal, social, and occupational to which liberal arts has felt incapable of responding or responded to through self-compromise.
   (iii) An overall fragmentation of thought and work, of a narrowing of interests, and of removal from intimate 'contact with the dilemmas of human experience and silence about critical questions of personal and social choice.'[23]

(2) A disarray of our society and in the world as a whole.
   (i) In our complex world of tough choices and critical issues some of which are rather ultimate in nature, our inherited values and present character provide neither the vision nor the courage to deal with them.
   (ii) The result is moral uncertainty and confusion – both standing in the shadow of a temptation to hopelessness.

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[21]R. Graham, *God's Dominion: A Sceptic's Quest* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990).

[22]C. Dykstra, "Communities of Conviction and the Liberal Arts" *Council of Societies for the Study of Religion, Bulletin*, 19, 3 (September, 1990) at 61.

[23]Quoting from R. Morrill, *Teaching Values in College* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980) at 2.

Our survival depends upon an ethical revitalization. Universities and colleges are still seen as potential places in which this revitalization may occur. Dykstra sees a renewed interest in moral education and thinks that perhaps moral formation may provide a path out of our present difficulties.

Citing the fascinating essay of Glen Tinder, Dykstra tackles the connections and conflicts between religious communities and the world of higher education and follows Tinder not only in seeing politics as a "spiritual" discipline but also in seeing the University as a community of conviction.[24] At the same time he considers Stanley Hauerwas' description of the moral weakness of the current Christian university valid and agrees that "the most significant [way of corrupting youth] is that the university underwrites the assumption that morality is created through individual choice rather than by the shaping of our own thoroughly disciplined discovery of the good."[25] The system of higher education too often sees itself as needing to convince those who come to it that any of their needs can be met. In the words of Hauerwas:

> The university or college must appear to be a gigantic cafeteria. The student comes as a diner filled up by pushing a tray along the line, taking a salad of math or computer science, potatoes of philosophy... a little corn of literature, and finally some meat of the major in business, physics or history... to supply nourishment for their career.[26]

The very word "value" is an economic term and to teach "values" is to teach something's relative worth on the market. In its place, Dykstra tries to make the case for understanding moral education as having to do with the formation of character, which means fundamentally to become persons who see deeply into the reality of things and who love that reality – over time and across circumstances.

> Such "seeing" and "loving" involves the long, hard, patient formation of our desires, struggle with our fears, the learning of revelatory or disclosive rhetorics, participation in traditioned practices – many of which place the self at risk and even in danger – and the shaping and testing of fundamental convictions, all of which take place through profound involvement in some particular community.[27]

Dykstra works with Iris Murdoch's definition of morality as guided by the fundamental belief that we live in a world whose mystery transcends us and that morality is the exploration of that mystery in so far as it concerns each individual.

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[24]G. Tinder, "Can we be good without God? On the political meaning of Christianity" (December 1989) 264:6 *Atlantic* 68.

[25]S. Hauerwas, "How Christian Universities Contribute to the Corruption of Youth" (*Katallagete* 9, 1986).

[26]*supra*, note 22 quoting Hauerwas, *Ibid.*

[27]C. Dykstra, *Vision and Character* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981) at 62.

Therefore, Dykstra concludes that moral formation requires something much more profound than options and patterns of thought more capable of fructifying the landscape of the moral imagination than in critical inquiry alone. The significance of religion in moral life he defines thus:

> Religious communities, precisely because they bear within them a long deep rich, historical tradition attentive to ultimacy, have the capacity to provide the denser resources required for the formation of character and vision. They are what I describe...as communities of conviction.[28]

No doubt both nation and religious group can be that kind of community of conviction. Fundamentally, we belong to religious groups by choice. Some belong to nations by choice as well. The sense of peoplehood and belonging, however, is not nearly as strong in the nation as it is in a closely knit religious group. Nor can the nation ever take the place of the religious community. While they overlap and in many ways complement each other, they represent two distinct loyalties and most religions having endured for many centuries, will not brook intrusion of the government into its realm.

The presence of religions in Canada requires the state to be especially sensitive in governing so that no one is offended. For the most part, we are capable of doing that today, but there still is much to be done. The author knows of no country in which there is greater promise for a truly multicultural and interfaith reality than in Canada. For what has been for many years an ambiguous relationship between religion and the state, can become one of mutual strengthening. This is especially true when one views the major role of religion in any society as monitoring the claims governments make for themselves and protesting the absoluteness of its power inherent in any state. It is above all, the role of religion to work for justice and to protect the fragile freedoms which must be an essential part of any living and thriving democracy.[29]

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[28] *Ibid.*

[29] See T. R. Berger, *Fragile Freedoms: Human Rights and Dissent in Canada* (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1981) which shows how miserably Canada has fared in this regard.