

# The Impact of the “Advancing Religion” Charitable Sub-Sector in Canada

Submission to the Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector

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CANADIAN COUNCIL *of* CHRISTIAN CHARITIES  
ADVANCING MINISTRY TOGETHER

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## Overview

The Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC) appreciates the open inquiry being made by the Special Committee. The breadth of briefs and witnesses reflect the sincere efforts the Committee is making to learn about and understand the charitable sector, and we commend the Senators for their thoughtful work.

CCCC welcomes the opportunity to participate in the process and we feel we can help the Committee with the second part of its mandate, which is “to examine the impact of the voluntary sector in Canada.” This submission examines the impact of Canadian registered charities that advance religion and establishes the public benefit of advancing religion in four categories:

1. Religion develops and activates *prosocial attitudes and behaviours*, resulting in high levels of generosity and volunteerism that benefit both religious and secular charities, and improves public civility.
2. Religion results in *better personal outcomes* that reduce demand on the state’s resources for rehabilitation and health care and improves quality of life and individual contribution to society.
3. Religion has *tangible community benefits* in terms of social capital, infrastructure, and neighbourhood viability and a 12-times return on investment related to tax concessions.
4. Religion creates *tangible benefits for the public at large* based on a core of people who are other-centred, civically engaged, and willing to work together sacrificially for the common good.

CCCC was established as a registered charity in 1972, and today we are the largest association of registered charities in Canada, with 3,400+ members ranging from the largest to the smallest of charities, working in Canada and overseas, from churches to relief and development organizations to inner city missions to colleges and schools. Our staff of lawyers, accountants, human resource professionals and others help our members be exemplary, healthy, and effective Christian ministries.

CCCC would like to make an oral presentation to the Committee focussing on the benefits that non-religious Canadians receive from the presence of charities that advance religion.

## Recommendation

That the Special Senate Committee affirm *Advancing Religion* as a charitable purpose with significant public benefit to Canadian society.

## Introduction

Religion provides not only private benefits to those who are religious, but a significant body of research shows how private benefits also create very consequential public benefits for every Canadian.

This submission draws from academically rigorous research, much of it by Canadian organizations and academics such as Statistics Canada, Imagine Canada, and Angus Reid Polling and sociologists such as Reginald Bibby and Kurt Bowen. American sources include organizations such as the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and sociologists Robert Wuthnow (Princeton University) and Nancy Ammerman (Boston University). The submission also draws upon European and Asian research.

This brief is a condensed version of a research paper prepared by CCCC<sup>1</sup> which cites well over 100 different studies, which in turn cite hundreds more studies. The impact of religion reported in this brief has therefore been replicated many times and in many places.

As well, much of the Canadian research has been repeated every few years for the last thirty years, and each time, the new results validate the previous results. Therefore, the findings reported in this brief are not blips or out of date but show relationships that are consistent over the last three decades.

Due to history and demographics, the research mostly relates to Christianity. However, research related to other religions has been drawn upon when available. This may not be an issue because in an article based on their book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Robert Putnam, professor of public policy at Harvard University and David Campbell, associate professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame, conclude it does not matter *which* religion a person has in terms of its public benefit. The issue is the level of religious commitment a person has.

## The Impact of Religion

### Important notice

Parts of the analysis involve the positive effect that religion has on people. To demonstrate that religion has public benefit, it is necessary to compare religious people with non-religious people. Making these comparisons causes the author great discomfort because it could give the impression of arrogance or condescension. It could also create a feeling of antagonism between two groups of people or an “Us vs. Them” mentality. Those are not at all the intentions of this brief or its author. The author believes that all humanity must work together for the good of all, with each contributing what they have from their various perspectives and each appreciating the contributions of others. All opinions or beliefs of the author are identified as such. Everything else is a quote, paraphrase, or summary of what an academic study has reported.

The author acknowledges that religion is not *necessary* to instill prosocial attitudes and behaviours in people. Many non-religious people have prosocial attitudes and behaviours, and there are some among them who are more prosocial than some religious people. However, research on the linkage between religion and prosocial attitudes and behaviours demonstrates that, **as a group, very committed religious people are markedly more likely to have prosocial attitudes and behaviours than non-religious people, as a group.** Canadian sociologist Reginald Bibby has explained the relationship between religion and prosociality this way: “People who don't believe in God can be good. But people who believe in God are more likely to value being good, enhancing the chances that they will be good.”

### Spectrum of religious commitment

Comparing the religiously Very Committed (people who attend a place of worship at least once per week) with the Less Committed (people who attend a place of worship, but less than weekly) and the Non-Religious (people who never attend a place of worship) shows the remarkable positive effect religion has on people who take their faith seriously. The Less Committed are much more like the Non-Religious in behaviour than they are like the Very Committed.

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<sup>1</sup> The larger report will be available soon for free from [CCCC.org/store](http://CCCC.org/store).

## 1. Prosocial Attitudes and Behaviours

### Good citizens

Human societies throughout history have depended on prosocial behavior to ensure their survival. We understand good citizens to be those who are caring, kind, generous, selfless, and community-oriented. Good citizens have prosocial attitudes and behaviours, and **institutions that develop prosocial citizens provide an important public benefit. Places of worship are such institutions.**

The citizens who form Canada's civic core are those prosocial people who act for the common good by giving, volunteering, and pursuing goals that benefit local communities and the greater good beyond themselves. They are other-centred and have a world view that stresses responsibility, connectedness, and cultural renewal. Canada's religious adherents are a vital part of Canada's civic core.

### Religiosity and good citizenship

Remembering that there will always be individuals from both non-religious and religious groups who will be strongly prosocial, Canadian Kurt Bowen summarizes his research of twenty years of surveys by Statistics Canada and others, saying:

The Very Committed put a distinctively high value on the importance and quality of their relationships with others. Compared to the Non-Religious, notably more of the Very Committed say they value a sense of belonging (69% vs. 53%), friendliness (80% vs. 63%) and kindness (85% vs. 71%). The Very Committed are even more likely to stress the importance of forgiveness (73% vs. 43%), generosity (71% vs. 42%), and concern for others (80% vs. 58%). Moreover, they are more inclined to disapprove of vengeance, to think we should forgive those who hurt us, and to believe that we ought to put our trust in others, even when we cannot be certain of reciprocation. This impressive, consistent, and cumulative set of differences suggests that the Very Committed are much more likely than other Canadians to be concerned with the welfare of others. **Though various secular moralities can and do preach the same virtues, it is the overwhelming...ranks of the Very Committed who most frequently and consistently endorse that ethic of forgiveness and concern for others.**

### Good behaviour

Kurt Bowen noted, "There is a gentleness among the Very Committed that sets them apart from other Canadians." For example, the Very Committed care about justice, but are careful to advocate in lawful ways. When it comes to protest, the Very Committed are twice as likely to support a boycott or attend a legal demonstration as the Non-Religious. But as to illegal forms of protest, only 20% of the Very Committed would join an unofficial strike or occupy a building, compared to 50% of the Non-Religious.

The Very Committed are law-abiding people who avoid anti-social behaviour. They are more likely than the Non-Religious to strongly agree that cheating, buying stolen goods, lying, and accepting a bribe are never justified. Across six forms of anti-social behaviour that were studied, the Very Committed are the most likely to strongly disapprove of them while the Non-Religious are the least likely to disapprove of them. Bowen concludes: "The common thread underlying these findings on both protest and permissiveness is that religiosity is intimately linked to civility."

The civility of the Very Committed extends to their close relationships. For example, the rate of marital breakdown among the Very Committed is half that of the Non-Religious (14% vs. 33%) and the Very

Committed are embedded in a much more stable and extensive network of intimate relationships than the Non-Religious. These factors add to social stability and the availability of people who can provide support to those in need without their having to resort to a social agency.

Canadians value having an international reputation for being a nation of caring, kind, generous, selfless, and community-oriented people. Very committed religious people contribute significantly to earning that reputation. As we've noted, they tend to be other-centred, committed to working through family and other relationship problems, and willing to sacrifice their own preferences for the greater good. The result is a strong, stable social network in families and communities that strengthens Canada's social fabric.

### Giving and volunteering

Very committed religious people have a distinctive commitment to giving and volunteering. Kurt Bowen notes, "Though we overwhelmingly agree that voluntary and charitable organizations are crucial to our collective well-being, only about a third of us actually volunteer in community organizations. . . . Religiosity is one of the major social forces affecting the volunteering levels of Canadians and it is the most influential factor bar none in determining how much we give to charity."

The reason religiosity is so crucial to giving and volunteering is that good intentions, beliefs, and attitudes alone are not enough to drive behaviour. Prosocial behaviours are taught, modeled, and practised in a mutually reinforcing community environment located within local places of worship. The religious doctrines of responsibility for one's neighbour, of valuing each person as God's creation regardless of social status, and of self-sacrifice for the greater good work together to drive the prosocial concern for the welfare of others to tangible action. **Practising one's religion is the mechanism that converts attitudes and beliefs into habits and practices.**

The Very Committed tend to plan their giving in advance as part of their religious responsibility to care for others, often deciding to give a percentage of their income each week. Those who plan their giving as a fixed percentage of their income give an average of 3% more of their income to religious and non-religious charities than those who do not plan their giving in advance.

Statistics Canada has shown that the 20% of Canadians who are Very Committed fund 75% of all donations to religious charities and more than 20% of all donations to secular charities.

Eighteen Canadian social surveys reveal that **the Very Committed give more to secular charities than do the Non-Religious or anyone else.** The median donation by the Very Committed to secular charities was found to be double that of the Non-Religious. The one-third of Canadians who were religious (the Very Committed *and* the Less Committed) together provided more than 40% of all the funds raised by secular charities. The 40% of the population who were Non-Religious gave only 30% of the donations received by secular charities. (Other Canadians fit into the middle part of the religiosity scale.) Religious Canadians give sacrificially to ensure that secular goals for the common good are achieved.

Bowen reported that if everyone gave like the Very Committed give, the total value of all charitable donations would rise from \$5 billion (at the time) to \$12 billion. He said, "Without the Very Committed, all Canadians and our network of charities and non-profit organizations would be much diminished." Religious ideals inspire generosity that is much higher than it otherwise would be.

As with charitable giving, survey results show that a core group of individuals provide most of the hours volunteered. Specifically, roughly 10% of Canadians accounted for more than 75% of all volunteer hours. The Very Committed give almost double the volunteer hours per year than the hours given by the Non-Religious, and a greater percentage of the Very Committed volunteer for secular organizations than the Non-Religious do (35% to 25%).

Advancing religion leads directly to a strong charitable sector that cares for all those in need.

## 2. Better Personal Outcomes & Social Benefit

Religion enhances a person's personal outcomes with the result that many social costs are minimized, and the benefits of their contribution to society are maximized. There are several reasons why this is so, outlined as follows.

### More responsible choices

Religious participation by youth correlates with lower rates of juvenile delinquency, better school attendance, and increased chances of graduating from high school. These factors have positive economic benefits for communities by reducing incarceration and rehabilitation costs, as well as encouraging greater employment and productivity. In essence, youth who are religious make choices that have long-term positive consequences for their lives. Research at the Harvard School of Public Health shows that **children and youth who attended weekly religious services reported greater life satisfaction and positivity in their twenties and were less likely than others to smoke, use drugs, or make poor sexual activity choices.**

Religiously involved adults are also less likely to commit crimes or misuse prescription drugs, and more likely to make wise choices for positive long-term outcomes.

### Improved health

Significant research following children for 10 to 20 years shows that weekly church attendance as a child has long-lasting benefits for mental health and other health issues. This finding is very relevant in Canada today, as 63% of Canadian millennials are reported to be at high risk for mental health issues. The terrible cost of mental health issues is seen in the fact that suicide is now the second-leading cause of death among Canadians 15-24 years old, second only behind accidental deaths.

Empirical research suggests that religion is associated with better health and well-being in adults as well. Religious teachings often include practices related to living a healthy lifestyle and sometimes explicitly consider character or respect for the body as an integral part of the religion's beliefs. **Religious attendance shows the strongest relationship to good health, and religious coping is a prominent predictor for successful recovery and survival in clinically ill populations.**

Compared with non-religious people, very committed religious people have fewer depressive symptoms and lower probabilities of posttraumatic stress disorder, sexually transmitted diseases, and other health issues.

### Increased longevity

A study of 21,000 case files from the U.S. National Health Interview Survey showed that people who never attend religious services exhibited almost twice the risk of death in the study's eight-year follow-up period when compared to the Very Committed. This translates into a seven-year difference in life

expectancy at age twenty. The relationship between frequent religious service attendance and lower mortality risk is found even in the most rigorous studies.

A study by Tyler VanderWeele, professor of epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health showed that Very Committed women were 30% less likely to die in the 16-year period of his study than Non-Religious women. The study also found that Very Committed women were five times less likely to commit suicide. VanderWeele found that **religion increases social support, discourages smoking, decreases depression, and helps people have a more optimistic or hopeful outlook on life.**

### 3. Tangible Community Benefits

Not only do religious people contribute to Canadian society as individuals, but most, if not all, religions have a very strong communal aspect to religious life. The author concludes from the evidence that many benefits accrue to all Canadians because places of worship *create synergy* as individual members live out their faith together and accomplish something much greater together than they could achieve on their own. Places of worship benefit their local communities in four ways:

1. A positive contribution of social capital
2. A multiplier effect (the “Halo Effect”) that produces benefits far greater than their budgets
3. An exceptionally high return on society’s investment through the tax system
4. An improvement in the area’s Neighbourhood Viability Index

#### Positive social capital

An Imagine Canada report contains this summary statement about religious organizations and their communities: “Religious organizations are more likely than other nonprofit and voluntary organizations to have a local community focus. Often at the heart of their communities, religious organizations can act as a point of initial contact for people new to a neighbourhood. Perhaps contrary to expectation, religious organizations tend to serve the public, regardless of faith. **Religious organizations are less likely than nonprofit and voluntary organizations in general to have membership restrictions or to serve a specific segment of the population.** In fact, more than two-thirds of religious organizations say that both members and non-members benefit from their services.” A study of 46 Ontario churches concluded that **non-members were four times more likely to use the church’s community programs than the church members were.**

Places of worship leverage their own programs and assets by engaging in mutually beneficial relationships with outside groups and supporting their programs. Nancy Ammerman, a sociologist at Boston University, studied congregational life in the United States, and wrote:

Everywhere you look among the congregations we interviewed, there are scout troops and nursery schools, senior centers and sports leagues – all existing independently of any single congregation, but often housed and supported by religious groups in cooperation with others in the community. In addition, there are arts organizations that use religious buildings for rehearsals, performances and lessons. Congregations support formal and informal programs of tutoring, after-school care, and literacy classes. They contribute to programs of education and service provision that surround issues as diverse as AIDS, unwanted pregnancies, handicapped persons, adoption, and more. They support and refer parishioners to counseling centers of all sorts. And they cooperate with others in delivering spiritual care to people in hospitals, nursing homes, on college campuses, and even in police and fire departments.



## The “Halo Effect”

A Canadian research study called *The Halo Project* analyzed places of worship in the Greater Toronto Area representing different religious traditions. An earlier witness, Milton Friesen of Cardus, spoke to the Special Committee about this project. The project was jointly supported by the City of Toronto’s Research and Analysis Unit, Toronto Parks and Recreation, and Toronto Water, along with other organizations including the Canadian Council of Christian Charities, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and Cardus. The study determined the difference between what a church spends and the higher value that it provides to its local community. This is referred to as the “Halo Effect.” The results showed that **the dollar value of having a place of worship in a community is at or above 4.5 times its annual budget.**

The Toronto Halo Project was followed by a study of four rural churches in Ontario to determine if they made similar contributions. Although they made a lesser economic contribution than the big city congregations, the rural churches still made a significant contribution to their communities and, in fact, outperformed the big cities almost 3:1 in the value of the social capital and care they contributed to their communities. So, large and small, urban and rural, local congregations have a significant effect on the quality of life in their communities.

Several other studies in recent years, both in Canada and in the United States, have reviewed the contributions that faith communities or local religious congregations make to the cultural, spiritual and social lives of their surrounding neighbourhoods and found positive results.

## Religion’s return on investment (ROI)

Advancing Religion provides an outstanding tangible ROI to Canada. Some people feel that public support for religious charities through tax concessions given to places of worship is unfair. These objections can be properly assessed by doing a cost/benefit analysis that considers both the cost of the tax concessions and the significant benefits identified by The Halo Project.

A 2017 analysis of 16 congregations calculated an ROI for places of worship. It determined the total amount of “lost” taxes in terms of municipal property tax, provincial and federal sales tax, and the provincial and federal personal income tax credit for receipted donations. The cost was then compared to the socioeconomic benefit contributed by those congregations, and the result was **a return on investment that is 12-times higher than the “lost” taxes.** The fact is, those taxes are not lost but are invested, and Canada’s investment in religious charities through the tax system provides an outstanding return on investment to all taxpayers, reducing the burden taxpayers would otherwise have to pay to obtain equivalent benefits for the public.

## Neighbourhood viability index

When a place of worship closes, the neighbourhood suffers. Two political scientists looked at the effect of a church closing on its surrounding community using a Neighbourhood Viability Index, which measures the neighbourhood’s well-being in terms of residential tenure, home ownership, educational attainment, and other similar factors. They were concerned that neighbourhoods in major metropolitan areas that experience decline and disinvestment would be adversely affected by the closure of places of worship. They report that places of worship are often regarded as important social actors because they are typically the last community group to leave a neighbourhood.



They found that for each closure of a geographically oriented congregation (e.g., Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Orthodox Jewish), there is a corresponding decrease in neighbourhood viability over the following decade of 10% for departing Roman Catholic churches and 7.5% for the others. They also found that for each closure of a congregation characterized by bridging capital (i.e., the church is involved in social concerns beyond the congregation and active in its neighbourhood), there is a corresponding decrease in neighbourhood viability over the following decade of 2.5%. The author concludes that the presence of a place of worship contributes positively to a neighbourhood's viability.

#### 4. Tangible Benefits for the Public At Large

##### Other-centredness

The positive impact of religion on the public was observed in the early 19th century by Alexis de Tocqueville, who argued that **religious values were the impetus that moved people away from self-interest and toward civic engagement**. His observation is highly relevant because social scientists are concerned that today's individualism is undermining civic engagement. Religion (especially worship) reminds people that they are not the "centre of the universe" and they are responsible for supporting the greater good. Religion is a powerful corrective to individualism's negative consequences.

##### Civic engagement

Two Canadian academics have noted a trend in declining civic engagement since 1945 and link it to declining church attendance. They report that social capital, in terms of bonding (formation of group identity) and bridging (social service that brings different groups together in a shared task) is diminishing. They explain that civic engagement and church attendance are linked because, in addition to instilling prosocial attitudes and behaviours, the local church used to be where people learned to become civically engaged; it was there that they learned to speak in public, run meetings, engage those with different viewpoints, and understand the needs of their local community. A local church helped people to not only bond within their community, but also to bridge into the other communities around them.

##### A social buffer

Religious communities bring their religion to a very practical level by providing a supportive social buffer against dysfunctional habits and harmful relationships. They transfer an overall benefit to society through the congregation's healthy social capital and capacity for self-care as each religious community cares for its own and for those who come to it for assistance.

##### Contribution to public discourse

Legal scholar Kathleen Brady notes that religious groups help the broader society when they develop and communicate new ideas that contribute to the common good of the whole society and push the larger community forward; for example, the now mainstream Canadian values of equality and human dignity were developed from the Christian theology that all humans are created in the image of God. **Because religion contributes new ideas to society, the European Court of Human Rights stressed that the autonomous existence of religious communities is indispensable for pluralism in a democratic society, a position that has been adopted by the Supreme Court of Canada.**

##### Effect on businesses and the economy

The presence of religion in a society constructively impacts business practices and economic growth. Several recent studies show a generally positive relationship between religiousness and ethical decision-

making in business. In a series of studies in China, Xingquiang Du and colleagues determined that the proximity of a firm to places of worship (e.g., Buddhist monasteries, Taoist temples) predicted benefits in terms of environmental responsibility, philanthropic giving, reduction of illegal business practices, owner-manager agency costs, and earnings management, mirroring the direction of other studies. Chinese research looked at provincial-level data from 2001 to 2011 and found that Christianity, in particular, has significant positive effects on economic growth in China.

#### Improved availability of community services

A credible body of academic work has documented that **not only does religion increase the supply of community services, it also reduces the demand for them** because attendance at church worship services results in less burden on public resources such as health care, explained in part by the support network that religious communities provide.

#### Support for government policy

Religious support networks augment government programs, such as refugee support. Statistics Canada reported that in 2011 there were 7,400 government-assisted refugees, but in addition, another 5,500 were supported by private groups which, according to Statistics Canada, were mostly Christian churches. In fact, a newspaper reported that **churches dominate the roster of 100 organizations pre-approved by the federal government to work with refugees**. The article stated that with determined volunteers and a built-in donation base, faith-based organizations are well-suited for refugee work.

Faith-based sponsors tend to sponsor marginalized people. Ninety percent of the Syrian refugees who came to Canada through private sponsorship (mostly by Christian churches and individuals) were from ethnic and religious minorities, while only 5% of those sponsored by the federal government came from those minorities. One Christian group, Hay Doun of Montreal, alone sponsored 25% of all Syrian refugees arriving since 2013, continuing a service it had already been providing for 10 years as they sponsored Christians and Muslims alike.

Finally, government studies show that privately sponsored refugees tend to fare better than their government counterparts. More broadly, a study showed that **half of new Canadians receive material support, help finding a job, and new language instruction from faith-based communities, and more than 60% rely on those same groups to form a community and relational network after they arrive in Canada**. That community support is possible because a religious congregation exists and opens itself up to welcome and support newcomers to Canada, regardless of their faith.

### Why Religion “Works”

People may espouse beliefs they do not always practice. We want to believe what is socially admirable, yet following through on those beliefs can be very difficult in our “me-centred” world because, as previously stated, beliefs are not the key drivers of behaviour. Believing it is important to care for others is only weakly correlated with caring behaviour. What matters more are habits and practices that are accumulated over time and then activated by circumstances that cue caring behaviour. Congregations are places where caring behaviours are observed in others, needs are highlighted, opportunities to act are presented, and relational networks reinforce prosocial behaviour. People who attend a place of worship at least once per week develop their prosocial attitudes and behaviours by participating in its religious programs and services and from the social support and modeling of fellow attendees.

A place of worship combines in one cohesive environment a comprehensive package in which all elements work together to achieve their intended result. Sermons are reinforced with opportunities to act on them. Small groups allow people to discuss their faith and its application in life. Values are discussed and modeled in community for both children and adults. People who occupy low-status and marginal positions in society are reassured of their self-worth and their intrinsic ability to contribute to the public good.

The “secret sauce” of religion is that adherents believe there is a Higher Power, gods, or God that is external to themselves. Religious people understand that the world does not revolve around them, but that they are part of something bigger than themselves. Their fundamental worldview is that life is lived in community and there are communal responsibilities. That perspective turns the focus of religious people outward and inspires them to find fulfilment in serving others.

Michael McConnell, professor of law at Stanford University, addresses the issue of whether the public benefits of religion are just the sum of individual religious practices (which might be replicated without religion) or are the product of the practices working synergistically together. His description of how the practice of religion works as a single, holistic, comprehensive system is a great explanation of what makes religion so effective at producing prosocial people who do so much good for Canadian society:

Religion bears resemblances to, and has differences from, a wide variety of other human concerns. Religion is a special phenomenon, in part, because it plays such a wide variety of roles in human life: it is an institution, but it is more than that; it is an ideology or worldview, but it is more than that; it is a set of personal loyalties and locus of community, akin to family ties, but it is more than that; it is an aspect of identity, but it is more than that; it provides answers to questions of ultimate reality, and offers a connection to the transcendent; but it is more than that. Religion cannot be reduced to a subset of any larger category. In any particular context, religion may appear to be analogous to some other aspect of human activity - to another institution, worldview, personal loyalty, basis of personal identity, or answer to ultimate and transcendent questions. However, there is no other human phenomenon that combines all of these aspects; if there were such a concept, it would probably be viewed as a religion.

## Conclusion

Faith communities do not claim their religions have beneficial effects manifesting in each and every person, measure, circumstance, and event, especially when practised by people who are inevitably fallible. Nevertheless, the positive effect over time that religious organizations have on individuals has been proven by impartial academic research, and is a tremendous public benefit for Canada.

Without this network of religious charities that advance religion, and without the faithful people those charities nurture and guide, the social fabric and even the essence of Canada would be significantly diminished.

**The charitable purpose of advancing religion benefits the Canadian public, both individuals and communities, and it benefits our nation by increasing civic engagement, economic output, and social infrastructure. Advancing religion does all this by producing citizens who bolster our international reputation for civility, generosity, and kindness.**