

THE BATTLE OVER CHILD CARE

Two dramatically different approaches to child care were proposed by the two major parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives during the recent federal election.

The Liberals had budgeted \$5 billion to be given to the provinces over five years to create non-profit government operated child care spaces. An agreement was signed by the Federal Liberal government, the provinces and territories to this effect. One provision in this agreement, however, was that either party to the agreement could cancel it in one year's time i.e. July 1, 2007.

The Conservative child care policy on the other hand, provides that \$1,200.00 to be given annually to parents for each child under six years of age. That is, the Conservative policy is to fund the child not the institution. The Conservative child care policy also included funding to businesses and others to create 125,000 new child care spaces whether private, non-profit or for-profit child care.

Mr. Harper has placed his child care policy in the budget so that it is now a matter of confidence, and if the budget is defeated, then a new election must be called.

The three opposition parties are not in a strong political position to have another election, especially the Liberal party which is badly in debt and is in the middle of a leadership race, which will not be decided until December 2, 2006. Also, the opposition does not want to go on record as opposing grants to families - it creates bad political optics for them. However, the opposition is adamant that the federal-provincial agreements should continue to provide government operated non-profit child care throughout the country. Mr. Harper intends to end the agreements by July 1, 2007 as permitted by the agreement. The three opposition parties claim they will fight this. Whether they will actually do so is uncertain.

Child Care Lobbyists Counter Attacks

The day care lobbyists have now launched a counter-attack against the Conservative child care plan. In this they have been ably assisted by the media who are obligingly repeating the deliberate misrepresentation about child care put forth by the child care lobbyists. For example, they argue that 72% of women are in the paid work force and "need" child care. However, this statistic includes women working from home, those working in family businesses with or without salary, women on maternity leave, women working part-time even for as little as one hour per week, women receiving unemployment insurance, women looking for work, etc. Most of these women however do not require child care services at all. Moreover, according to a Vanier Family Institute Study in 2005, those who do require such services rate institutional child care as their fifth choice in child care. A parent or family member looking after the child is their first choice in child care. (SEE REALity, Propaganda on Child Care, March / April, 2005)

Most of the organized opposition to the Conservative child care plan is coming from child care workers and lobbyists who have been funded by the Women's Programme Status of Women since 1983. That is, millions of tax payer's dollars have supported their persistent lobbying for a national child care plan. For example, we learned from material obtained under the Access to Information Act that child care lobbyists have received over \$1,362,209 from the Women's Programme, between 1992 and 2002. And in the fiscal year 2004 - 2005, they received a further \$483,713. This latter grant was made at the time the former Liberal government was negotiating with the provinces and territorial governments for a national child care programme. Child care lobbyists, who have the most to gain from a national child care plan, as its implementation would place them on the government's payroll, with all its security and benefits, are now working full tilt, with taxpayers' money, to defeat the Conservative child care plan.

A very significant point that is seldom mentioned is that the \$5 billion promised by the Liberal government over five years is only the cost of starting up the programme, not the total cost of such a program. In 1986, the Report of the Task Force on Child Care, estimated that the cost of a national child care program would be \$11.32 billion annually. In 1999, a leaked Federal discussion paper from the Department of Health concluded that such a program would cost, at that time, \$12 to \$15 billion annually. A national child care programme would therefore be an ever increasing drain on future federal budgets, much like our medicare system. Is this what the Canadian taxpayers want? We don't think so.

Please write your M.P. and request that heshe vote for the Conservative plan of \$1,200.00 annually to parents with a child six years of age and under. Very importantly, also request that the Liberal government's agreement with the provinces and Territories on child care be cancelled by July 1, 2007.

Please write:

Your M.P.

House of Commons

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

THE INSANITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNALS

We have endured enough. The Human Rights Tribunals are out of control. They have reduced freedom of speech, religion and conscience to a memory of better, freer times. At present, we live in a post-liberal era, genuflecting to political correctness determined by the appointees sitting on Human Rights Tribunals, who represent special interest groups, not justice.

In just over a year, Provincial Human Rights Tribunals have carried out the following actions:

In January 2005, Bishop Frederick Henry of Calgary distributed a pastoral letter setting out the Catholic Church's position on homosexuality and its opposition to same-sex marriage. Homosexual activists brought a complaint against Bishop Henry before the Alberta Human Rights Tribunal. The latter accepted the complaint, despite the fact that freedom of religion is a protected right in Canada under the Charter. It only stopped the complaint when it was forced to do so because the homosexual activists withdrew it due to the adverse publicity it had caused.

British Columbia's Human Rights Tribunal, in 2005, ordered the payment of a fine for "hurt feelings" caused by members of a Catholic Knights of Columbus Council in Port Coquitlam, BC, when they refused to rent their hall to a lesbian couple who wished to use it for their wedding reception. That is, there was a collision of rights between religious freedom and homosexual rights, and the homosexual / lesbian rights triumphed. Although the decision acknowledged the right of the Knights to refuse to rent the hall to the lesbian couple because of their religious beliefs, they, nonetheless, were fined and had to pay costly legal expenses to defend themselves under this ruling.

Calgary based Western Standard magazine, reprinted some cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed - originally published in a Danish newspaper. These cartoons served as a pretext for Muslim militants to stir up riots around the world. Mr. Syed Soharwardy, President of the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada, at first attempted to have Mr. Levant, the publisher, arrested by the police. When this failed, he lodged a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission against the magazine and its publisher. This august body, instead of tossing the complaint out on the grounds it suppressed freedom of speech, decided instead to proceed with the complaint, thus requiring the Western Standard to retain a lawyer at great expense to defend itself.

The disorder and chaos created by these Human Rights decisions over the past few years are too numerous to list here, but a few examples will suffice:

A Christian printer in Ontario was ordered to print letterhead for a homosexual organization and pay a \$5,000 fine for refusing to do so (Brockie 2002);

A Christian in Saskatoon was ordered to pay a fine for inciting hatred against homosexuals when he placed an ad in a local newspaper during gay pride week, specifying references in the Bible rejecting homosexuality. The ad also

included stick figures of two men holding hands with a diagonal line through the depiction (Hugh Owens, 2002). The Saskatchewan Queen's Bench upheld the decision of the Human Rights Tribunal. Fortunately, however, on April 13, 2006 the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal overturned the Tribunal's decision. Mr. Owens who was forced to pay his own legal expenses had to argue the case himself. If the homosexual activists, who laid the complaint before the Tribunal, decide to appeal the case to the Supreme Court of Canada, Mr. Owens will be obligated to defend himself again as best he can.

A British Columbia teacher who wrote letters opposed to homosexual activity, published in the local newspaper, was suspended for one month without pay for behaviour unbecoming a teacher by allegedly "poisoning the school environment" by his letters. There is no evidence to that effect or any complaint made against the defendant teacher. The B.C. Human Rights Tribunal refused to hear the teacher's complaint (Kempling, 2006).

A pastor in Alberta had letters published in the Red Deer Advocate newspaper (between June and September 2002) objecting to homosexuality. This resulted in a University of Calgary Assistant Professor Darren Lund laying a complaint against Pastor Boissain before the Alberta Human Rights Tribunal. Although the Commission initially dismissed the complaint, Mr. Lund successfully appealed that decision and the Tribunal has now re-heard the case, and its decision is expected to be handed down shortly.

Human Rights Tribunals have Become Official Censors

Human Rights Tribunals have become official censors and guardians of politically correct thought. They have assumed this role with no one in authority having the sense and decency to rein them in.

Background to Human Rights Commissions

The Human Rights Commissions were set up initially to protect vulnerable Canadians from being refused employment, accommodation, or services, for example, being refused service in a restaurant on account of colour, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation etc. In order to assist and encourage the complainant, all his expenses are paid by the Human Rights Commissions. The commission's staff investigates the complaint, carries out mediation between the parties and then finally shepherds the complaint to the Tribunal for disposition. That is, the complainant is assisted both financially and morally by the Commission, while the unfortunate defendant is left to his own devices to try to protect himself.

Under these circumstances, it is difficult to describe these Commissions as "impartial" The theory behind the human rights system may be reasonable, but, in practice, they have become twisted and ugly instruments of censorship and social engineering, imposing politically correct thought on their hapless victims.

Alan Borovoy, long time general legal counsel for the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, who helped design the Human Rights Commissions in Canada, stated in a letter published in the Calgary Sun (March 16, 2006) that he believed the actions of the Tribunals are unacceptable. He stated:

... during the years when my colleagues and I were labouring to create such commissions, we never imagined that they might ultimately be used against freedom of speech.

Mr. Borovoy further stated that human rights laws should be changed to prevent censorship occurring in the future. "It would be best...to change the provisions of the Human Rights Act to remove any such ambiguities of interpretation." Although the British Columbia Attorney General in 2002, and, more recently, the Ontario Attorney General, in April 2006, attempted to streamline their Human Rights Commissions to rid them of their heavy back log of cases, they have failed, nonetheless, to eliminate the very worst characteristic of these Commissions, namely, their biased procedures and decisions.

In fact, the recent amendments to the British Columbia and Ontario Commissions have made the Tribunals even more dangerous for the general public. That is, the "gate keeper" role of the commissions has been eliminated and instead, they now permit complaints to go directly to the Tribunal for resolution. All this means is that if a complaint is laid

against an individual, then his goose is cooked that much more quickly! Moreover, the defendants still have to defend themselves and pay their own legal costs. The Tribunal officials continue to represent special interest groups in their decisions and continue to pay all the complainants' costs. Moreover, the Tribunal panels do not necessarily have any training in law, nor are they required to follow any of the safeguards developed by the Courts to protect an accused, such as following the rules of evidence. In short, Human Rights Tribunals still have unrestricted freedom to conduct hearings any way they choose. Absolutely nothing has been done to correct the prejudicial and biased hearings of the Human Rights panels. Consequently, Human Rights Tribunals remain kangaroo courts to be approached with extreme caution, with the full knowledge that the accused will almost always be found guilty as charged.

A SUMMER VISIT WITH YOUR M.P. ABOUT SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Parliament will recess for the summer at the end of June. When it meets again in the fall, it will face, as promised by Prime Minister Harper during the last election, a debate on the thorny issue of same-sex marriage.

The debate will be in two parts:

Is it the will of the House of Commons that the debate on same-sex marriage be re-opened? If the House of Commons agrees with this, then the second question will be:

Should the Civil Marriage Act (Bill C-38), which redefined marriage to include same-sex partners, remain in effect or should the Act be amended to permit marriage to refer to opposite sex people only, as it was before the enactment.

Homosexual activists have started to gear up for this final debate by re-establishing their so-called Equal Marriage Committee, to be headed up by the homosexual former mayor of Winnipeg, Glen Murray.

On the other hand, twelve pro-family organizations in Canada have established a Defend Marriage Coalition to present the pro-family perspective nationally. The coalition consists of the following organizations: REAL Women of Canada, Catholic Civil Rights League, Campaign Life Coalition, Canada Family Action Coalition, Enshrine Marriage Canada, Preserve Marriage-Protect Children's Rights, United Families Canada, United Mothers and Fathers, Marriage Canada, Équité-Famille, Equipping Christians for the Public-square Centre, Association des Parents Catholiques du Québec.

The first initiative of the Defend Marriage Coalition was to send a letter to all the leaders of the religious organizations in Canada, letting them know that religious rights are not protected under last year's Civil Marriage Act, which permitted same-sex couples to marry. This is because, contrary to the former Liberal government's assertions, religious groups are still subject to legal challenges under the legislation.

This is based on the fact that the Supreme Court of Canada in the same-sex marriage reference, handed down on December 9, 2004, concluded that although the provisions on the Civil Marriage Act purport to preserve religious rights, this provision has no effect, and is superfluous, because it deals with provincial rights and, therefore, is outside the federal government's jurisdiction. The Supreme Court did acknowledge that religious groups would be protected from actually performing same-sex marriages, but the court also stated that in situations where there is a "collision of rights", the courts would be obligated to balance and delineate these colliding rights. This is not reassuring because in most cases in which the courts have adjudicated religious freedoms versus homosexual rights, the latter's rights have trumped religious rights.

Already, in less than a year since the same-sex marriage law was passed in Canada, cases have arisen which negatively affect religious rights in Canada:

The BC Human Rights Tribunal, in 2005, ordered the payment of a fine for "hurt feelings" caused by members of a Catholic Knights of Columbus Council in Port Coquitlam, BC, when they refused to rent their hall to a lesbian couple who wished to use it for their wedding reception. That is, there was a collision of rights between religious freedom

and homosexual rights and the homosexual / lesbian rights triumphed. Although the decision acknowledged the right of the Knights to refuse to rent the hall to the lesbian couple because of the Knights' religious beliefs, they nonetheless were fined and had to pay costly legal expenses to defend themselves.

A Mennonite-owned summer camp was charged with discrimination by a homosexual male choir because the camp refused to rent the camp premises to it. This case is to be argued before the Manitoba Human Rights Tribunal this spring.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission refused a complaint of a federal employee who wished to have her mandatory union dues diverted to charity because her union was actively supporting same-sex marriages. The federal employee claimed that the use of her union dues contravened her freedom of religion and conscience. The government employee is now seeking a judicial review of the Tribunal's decision.

The Defend Marriage Coalition has been heartened by the positive response it received from the religious leaders. The letter is available on our web site www.realwomenca.com. For those without access to our web site, please fax/write/phone our national office for a copy of the letter (available in French and English).

Please give a copy of the letter to your local pastor/priest/abbi, as all religious leaders should be made aware that they are not protected under the present marriage definition.

Also Very Importantly:

Visit your MP over the summer months about this crucial same-sex marriage issue. We do not want the MP's to return to Ottawa in the fall stating that it is not an issue with his/her constituents. It must be an issue.

The Defend Marriage Coalition will be undertaking other initiatives shortly in its effort to restore to Canada the traditional definition of marriage, the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

This may be the last opportunity we have to return Canada to the traditional definition of marriage. We must not fail in this. It is not for our own sakes, but for the generations to come.

HATE CRIMES AND RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING

The CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission), which currently consists of 11 appointed members (all appointed under the former Liberal government), has always detested single faith broadcasting. In fact, over the years, it has repeatedly rejected the applications for licenses by single faith broadcasters, claiming that public air space should not be allocated to special interest groups. Only very reluctantly and only under intense political pressure, has it given its grudging approval to a few single faith broadcasters, such as the Miracle Channel in Lethbridge in 1994, and Crossroads Christian Communications in 1997.

Meanwhile, the CRTC has happily licensed the special interest Playboy Channel in 1996 and the homosexual channel, Pride Vision in 2000. To explain its hypocrisy, the CRTC Commissioners stated that granting licenses to these latter special interest groups was based on Canada's recognition of "diversity". The truth is that Canadian broadcasting is open to diversity only if the broadcasters have a left of centre or liberal perspective: "diversity", due to a conservative, perspective is not worthy of recognition.

One of the single faith broadcasters to which the CRTC has repeatedly denied a license is the US based conservative Catholic Network, Mother Angelica's Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN). This network has been safely beaming its programmes around the world into 118 million homes in 127 countries without anyone being overcome by shock due to the contents of its programmes. Still, the CRTC has deemed EWTN too risky for Canadian eyes and ears.

However, finally, under pressure, in September of 2001, the CRTC allowed EWTN to be shown on Rogers Cable and satellite in Canada.

This was a breakthrough for EWTN. However, the difficulty it experienced in acquiring its license to broadcast in Canada has made the network extremely wary of Canada and the CRTC, with its obvious preference for politically correct content.

Consequently, EWTN was especially concerned and alarmed when the amendments to the Criminal Code prohibiting "hate" crimes on the basis of sexual orientation were passed in 2004.

This amendment was introduced by former NDP M.P., Svend Robinson, and was supported by the Liberal government. Unfortunately "hate" is not defined in this section of the Code and, therefore, no one knows exactly what constitutes a "hate" crime. "Sexual orientation" is not defined in this provision either, so we don't know what that expression entails. Does it include pedophilia and bestiality, so that they are protected under the "hate" propaganda provisions as well? In view of the uncertainty, EWTN has steered a wide berth around homosexual issues in its programming aired in Canada and Europe.

This caution arose when EWTN received a complaint, filed in the United Kingdom (UK) in September 2005, in connection with an episode of EWTN's "Life on the Rocks" programme when it dealt with homosexuality. Although EWTN successfully defended itself in this UK case, the experience left it nervous about all episodes dealing with homosexuality.

On March 2, 2006, EWTN's programme "Life on the Rocks" featured former homosexual Stephen Bennett and his wife, Irene, with whom he is happily married and with whom he is the father of two children. The programme was to cover the subject of same-sex attraction. Although the programme was advertised in Canada, it was not aired as promised. According to EWTN's Vice President, Scott Hults, the programme was pulled from EWTN's Canadian and European feeds because of the network's "sensitivity" to Canada's "needs" which, regretfully, appears to mean that it needs to be politically correct on the homosexual issue.

This is a prime example of how the amendment to the hate crime provision in the Criminal Code on sexual orientation is stifling free speech. The mere existence of this provision means that even without charges ever being laid, debate is stifled. That is, the mere existence of the provision is sufficient to close down discussion on the homosexual issue. This is disturbing and highly unacceptable in a democracy.

Please write to the following, to request that the hate crime provision in the Criminal Code be amended to delete the controversial protection which protects only certain designated groups, not others, in Canada. That is, either the hate propaganda provision should protect all Canadians, or the entire hate propaganda provision in the Criminal Code should be totally deleted. As it is currently written, the hate propaganda provision is a discriminatory provision, which provides special protection to only a few select groups of Canadians, but not to everyone.

Please write to:

The Right Hon. Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Hon Victor Toews, P.C. M.P.
Minister of Justice
East Memorial Building, 4th floor 284 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H8

Your MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

THE MARIJUANA SCENE IN CANADA

According to marijuana activist Marc Emery who is being extradited to the United States for selling marijuana seeds over the Internet, Canada's Conservative Minister of Justice Vic Toews is "...the most hostile Minister of Justice the Canadian cannabis community has ever had to deal with."

Thank goodness! Mr. Toews has made it clear that the Conservative government has no intention of decriminalizing marijuana as had been proposed by the previous Liberal government. This position was confirmed by Prime Minister Harper on April 3, 2006 in a speech to the Canadian Professional Police Association meeting in Toronto.

There is good reason for the position taken by the Conservative Party, as it appears from recent studies that marijuana is not a harmless drug but rather, its use has very serious side effects. For example, the results of studies released in 2006 alone are alarming.

A study published in January 2006 in the British Medical Journal (volume 332) reported a strong link between marijuana use and psychosis. Psychosis, according to this study, is a severe mental illness characterized by the presence of delusions, hallucinations, and other associated cognitive and behavioral impairments that interfere with the ability to meet the ordinary demands of life.

A study published in February 2006 in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, indicates that marijuana affects fertility and reduces the chances of a good outcome in fertility treatments by reducing the number of eggs available and lowers the sperm count.

A report published in the March 14, 2006 issue of Neurology, the scientific journal of the American Academy of Neurology, by Dr. Lambros Messinis, a neurologist at the University hospital of Patras, in Greece, indicates that long term users of marijuana, of at least one marijuana joint a day for 10 years, perform poorly in a range of standardized tests, including verbal fluency, verbal memory and learning.

In 1985, Australia adopted marijuana decriminalization laws and "medical" marijuana use. This has resulted in marijuana becoming the most commonly used drug in Australia. The New South Wales Health Department released a report, in March 2006, discussing the devastating impact of marijuana use on the mental and physical health of chronic users. According to its Health Minister, John Hatzistergos, "anyone who thinks cannabis is a soft drug should come to visit a psychiatric unit to see its devastating effects". Australian Prime Minister John Howard has now called on the Australian states and territories to abandon decriminalization and to introduce tougher laws to deter marijuana use.

Marijuana Used as Medicine

In the 1980's in the United States, over a period of several years, a number of seriously ill patients were permitted to use marijuana legally. This program, however, was terminated in 1992, when the United States Public Health Service stated that there was no scientific evidence that the drug was assisting patients, and issued a warning that smoking marijuana as a form of medical therapy may actually be harmful to some patients .

By January 2006, however, 13 U.S. states had passed legislation or ballot initiatives allowing marijuana for medical reasons. Eight of these states ranked in the top ten states for marijuana use by persons aged 12 or older. All these top ten ranked states, without exception, had passed laws permitting marijuana use or had active campaigns which promoted the message that marijuana is a medicine.

This indicates that, as perceived risks of marijuana decrease, the use of marijuana increases . That is, marijuana use increases when there is an active promotion of marijuana or its use as medicine.

Those dedicated to normalizing and eventually legalizing the use of marijuana and other drugs are very aware of this link between marijuana, perceived as a medicine that treats illnesses, and the acceptance of it for social purposes. For example, in the United States, Richard Cowen, former director of NORML (National Organization for the Reform of

Marijuana Laws) stated in 1993 during the 50th anniversary conference celebrating the discovery of LSD, "The key to it [legalization of marijuana] is medical access. Because, once you have hundreds of thousands of people using marijuana medically under medical supervision, the whole scam is going to be bought.... So that once there's medical access, if we continue to do what we have to do, and we will, then we'll get medical, then we'll get full legalization."

In short, NORML uses the medicalization of marijuana to achieve legalization of marijuana and that is why marijuana is now being promoted for medical use in Canada.

Background to Medical Use of Marijuana in Canada

In 2000, the Ontario Court of Appeal (yes, that court is always creating difficulties with its so-called "progressive" agenda) ordered Health Canada to develop regulations to allow the medical use of marijuana. Mr. Rock, the former Minister of Health, was delighted to do so, rather than appealing the decision to the Supreme Court of Canada. He immediately created a program to have doctors dispense marijuana. However, the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Medical Protective Association questioned his proposal and were reluctant to implement it. The next Health Minister, Anne McLellan, was not as enthusiastic about the medical use of marijuana as Mr. Rock, and stated that, while the government was not convinced of the medical benefits of marijuana, it was, nonetheless, compelled to establish a dispensing plan as a result of the Ontario court ruling. It is significant however, that both Mr. Rock and Ms McLellan are lawyers and they were aware that a decision by a provincial appeal court applies only to that particular province and it does not apply nationally. Apparently however enforcing the Ontario Court decision nationally was exactly what the Liberal government wanted to do - and it used the Ontario decision as its excuse to do so.

In July 2003, the Canadian Medical Association insisted again that "the government has not made the case for the safety of the medical use of marijuana", and the CMA strongly recommended that the physicians of Canada not participate in dispensing marijuana under existing regulations, and warned that those who do, do so at their professional and legal peril. Consequently, the government resorted to a new plan - namely, that marijuana be dispensed by pharmacists.

In June 2005, the Federal Department of Health established a pilot project to assess the feasibility of distributing marijuana for medical purposes through a conventional pharmacy-based drug distribution system.

If accredited, Canada would then become the second country in the world, after the Netherlands, to allow the direct sale of medical marijuana in pharmacies. It would also mark the first time that community drugstores in Canada would sell a controlled substance that is not an approved drug.

Renewed Push for Medical Use of Marijuana

With the clear intentions of the Conservative government to not decriminalize marijuana use, the supporters of marijuana are now renewing their argument that marijuana has medical uses. They assert this, despite the fact that there is no clinical research to support marijuana as a medicine.

To remedy this lack of evidence, several marijuana activists, including Alan Young, a law professor at Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto who argued the successful case before the Ontario Court of Appeal on marijuana as medicine, and Moses Znaimer, former owner of MTV, man-about-town, and "progressive" thinker, have recently formed a company called Cannasat Therapeutics. This company is to be used to conduct research on the medical use of marijuana with the view of developing cannabinoid products for sale. As stated by Mr. Young, in a recent article published in the National Post, (May 3, 2006):

Canada is the ideal jurisdiction for advancing cannabinoid research, as we are the only country in the world where patients have a constitutional right to use marijuana as medicine, and where the government has a constitutional obligation to produce this medicine to facilitate reasonable access through other channels.

Thanks to the extremist appointed judges on the Ontario Court of Appeal, Canada is faced with these problems with marijuana. In this regard according to an article in the Wall Street Journal, (May 2, 2006) Cambridge University has recently published a book "Cannabis Dependence" which provides substantial scientific evidence that the euphoria induced by the THC, (Tetrahydrocannabinol), the active ingredient in marijuana, can be addictive to approximately 10% of those who use it. Marijuana, according to addiction treatment statistics, is showing a dramatic growth in marijuana related problems, and this rise in problems reflects a big spike in marijuana use both in Canada and abroad.

The Result of Failure to Enforce Marijuana Laws

In view of the former Liberal government's determination to medicalize and legalize marijuana, it is not surprising that, according to a study of young people in Canada released in 2004, our youth now hold the distinction of topping all nations (Switzerland was second) in frequent marijuana use. The lead researcher for this study, Dr. William Boyce of Queen's University, stated that the increased use of marijuana in Canada was tied to the three As - affordability, availability and acceptability. He stated, "in Canada, I think all three of those things come together so that it's actually used quite a bit by kids here. It's not so expensive, it's definitely available and with the legislation introduced in the last Parliament - and perhaps again in this one - that decriminalizes marijuana use, it certainly provides a signal to kids that this is not a highly illegal activity."

Thank heaven, the Conservative government is now providing a different message to our youth on marijuana use.

Please write to Prime Minister Harper and Minister of Justice Toews to thank them for the planned enforcement of the present marijuana laws rather than legalizing its use. Their actions will make a significant difference to our nation's youth. Please also request that marijuana use for so-called medical reasons be stopped if and until such time that it can be scientifically determined that its use has in fact, medical benefits.

Please write to:

The Right Hon. Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

The Hon. Vic Toews, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
East Memorial Building, 4th Floor, 284 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H8

Your MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Just as there has been a major change in our federal government, so too there will be a minor change in REAL Women of Canada. It was four years ago that I became President of REAL Women of Canada, and while for me it has been a wonderful and humbling experience, it is time for a change. A new President will be chosen at our annual Board of Directors meeting in June of this year.

I think one of the most rewarding aspects of my role as President was the opportunity to have contact with so many members across Canada. So often we hear that this country is fragmented, and that Canadians in Atlantic Canada likely have little in common with those from the West Coast, or that English-speaking Canada is at odds with Quebec. My experience as President of REAL Women of Canada has clearly shown that this is not the case. Across the country

all Canadian women and men desire the same rights to life, liberty and health. Our organization believes that these rights include respect for all human life from conception to natural death, and the liberty to publicly promote the traditional Judaeo-Christian values on which this country was founded.

We have a new leader and governing party in Canada and we are hopeful that this government will make a real difference and that the tide of anti-family policies will be turned, but this will require vigilance on the part of all concerned Canadians.

The noted religious philosopher, Thomas Merton, was right on the mark when he made the following statement:

The experience of twentieth-century dictatorships has shown that it is possible for some Christians to live and work in a shockingly unjust society, closing their eyes to all kinds of evil and, indeed, perhaps participating in that evil, at least by default, concerned only with their own compartmentalized life of piety, closed off from everything else on the face of the earth.

In many of my "messages" I have urged you to be pro-active by becoming involved in the political process. It is not easy for some of you, who understandably find politics distasteful, to become politically involved. Please at least continue to offer your prayers for a good government. I know your prayers have made a real difference!

Thank you also for your wonderful support for REAL Women of Canada. I cannot tell you how proud I have been to act as your President, and certainly I plan to stay involved. God bless you, every one!

Lorraine McNamara

ONGOING DISCRIMINATION BY THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Since REAL Women of Canada began in 1983, we have had to contend with the fact that anti-family, anti-life feminist groups have been generously funded by the federal government 's Women's Programme at the Status of Women. Hundreds of millions of tax dollars have flowed to these feminist groups since this programme began in 1973. The funding of feminist groups has enabled them to become agents of change to promote feminism throughout Canada. As a result, feminists are more influential in Canada than anywhere else in the world.

In contrast, except for a few small grants from the Women's Programme, REAL Women has had to support itself from our membership dues and donations received from our members and supporters. As generous as our members are, it still means we have a limited income and in no way can operate on in a level playing field with the feminists.

As outlined in recent issues of REALity, REAL women applied, under the Access to Information Act, for material relating to the funding of feminist groups by the Women's Programme at the Status of Women.

The material we received revealed an abuse of power by the former Liberal government in funding feminist-only groups. This funding policy MUST be stopped.

On April 4, 2006, REAL Women sent a letter outlining the discriminatory policies of the Women's Programme and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women to all "friendly" MPs, which included Conservative, as well as some individual, Liberal and Bloc Quebecois MPs who are supportive of the pro-life/pro-family cause

Below is a copy of our letter to the MPs, which describes this outrageous funding in support of a special interest group of feminists and also raises objections to the re-establishment of the House of Commons Committee on the Status of Women.

Dear M.P.:

RE: THE DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Since 1973, the federal taxpayers have paid hundreds of millions of dollars to feminist-only organizations by way of the Women's Program at the Status of Women Canada. The mission statement of the Status of Women is "to promote gender equality and the full participation of women in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the country". Its practical effect, however, is that only feminist objectives and feminist women in Canada are promoted by the agency. Other women's organizations, which have differing perspectives from that of feminism are denied funding and recognition.

The Status of Women refuses to fund organizations that are not feminist on the premise that it funds only "equality - seeking" women's organizations, and in its view, only feminist organizations are validly seeking equality for women. This is highly discriminatory since most women support the equality of women - but there are different ways to interpret and achieve this objective. For example, the promotion of the equality of women is one of the objectives included in the Objects of Incorporation for REAL Women, yet the Status of Women does not accept our organization as an "equality - seeking" organization.

Feminist organizations, however, do not represent Canadian women in general but rather a special interest group of women whose ideology is that of feminism. The feminist ideology does not now, and never has had the support of the vast majority of Canadian women. Thus, this funding of the special interest group of feminists by the Status of Women is highly biased and discriminatory, and provides an uneven playing field for all other women's organizations in Canada.

Because of its discriminatory policies, the Women's Program of the Status of Women has made only a few token grants to REAL Women of Canada over the years and these small grants were stopped entirely in 1996. Nor has REAL Women been invited to participate in activities supported by the Status of Women. An exception arose in December of 1999 when the Status of Women sponsored a Consultation on Gender Equality, to which REAL Women was given an invitation. However, the feminist participants at that conference, whose organizations depend solely for their existence on the Status of Women funding, insisted that REAL Women's invitation be withdrawn. When our representative refused to leave the conference, the feminist participants isolated, ignored and then booed her and refused to permit her to participate in the conference in any way. Since that conference, REAL Women has not been invited to participate in any further conferences sponsored by the Status of Women, even though our organization represents the views of over 55,000 Canadian women.

Extent of Funding to Feminist Organizations

An application was made under the Access to Information Act for information about the funding by the Status of Women in the ten-year period from 1992 - 2002. A further application was made under the Act for information about funding for the fiscal year 2004 - 2005.

According to this material, hundreds of feminist organizations receive government funding each year from the Program. For example, between 1997 - 2003 alone, the number of recipients and the total of the grants awarded to them by Status of Women were as follows:

Year	Number of Recipients	Amount
1997-1998	343	\$ 8,286,059
1998-1999	262	\$10,321,916
1999-2000	207	\$ 8,502,412
2000-2001	227	\$ 9,810,390
2001-2002	215	\$10,385,851
2002-2003	222	\$12,297,090

Organizations funded by the Status of Women include national, provincial and regional feminist organizations, such as the following:

The legal arm of the feminist organization, The Legal Education Action Fund (LEAF) received \$900,334 over a 10-year period, 1992 - 2002, which enabled this group to intervene in court cases and to mount their own court challenges. In contrast, REAL Women of Canada was obliged to fund its own pro-family interventions before the courts.

The National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL) received \$1,648,318 in the same 10-year period. In the fiscal year 2004-2005, this organization received an additional grant of \$474,879.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women, (NAC), the umbrella group for the feminist organizations of Canada, received \$984,551 in the 10-year period, and In the fiscal year 2004 - 2005 received an additional \$150,000.

Child Care lobby groups, such as the Canadian Child Care Federation, and the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, received \$1,362,209 between 1992 and 2002. These organizations form the pressure group for a national child care plan as recently proposed and implemented by the former Liberal government.

In the fiscal year 2004 - 2005 these child care lobby groups received a further \$483,753 from the Women's Program. This large grant was given during the time that the former Liberal government was negotiating with the provinces for a national child care program.

On February 16, 2006, the tax funded Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada launched a Canada wide campaign called "Code Blue" to lobby for and work with the provincial / territorial governments and parliamentarians to prevent the present Conservative government from cancelling the federal / provincial agreements on child care made last year by the former Liberal government.

It is significant that these child care lobby groups have the most to gain from a national child care plan since such a program would provide them with financial security by placing them on the government payroll with secure income and benefits.

In the 20-month period preceding December 4, 1998, lesbian organizations received \$250,918. In the fiscal year 2004 - 2005, an additional \$90,280 was awarded to a homosexual / lesbian association.

524 women's shelters across Canada have been funded by the Status of Women, even though such shelters fall within provincial jurisdiction. These women's centres serve as agents of change for feminists in communities across Canada. Feminists claim they provide protection from male assault, in spite of the fact that a Statistics Canada study, released in July 2003, found that more men were killed, hurt, or threatened by their partners in 2001 than in previous years. The study "Family Violence in Canada," funded by the Federal Family Violence Initiative, found that spousal violence has increased for both men and women. In 2001, there were 344 incidents per 100,000 women, and for men, there were 62 incidents for every 100,000 - the latter is up 40% from six years ago. Although there were many more incidents of assault against women, this does not mean that men should be neglected.

The pro-abortion organization, BC Pro-Choice Action Network, initially received \$60,220 in the 10-year period from 1992 - 2002. However, in 2004 - 2005 it received \$27,400. According to information on their web site, the spokesperson for this organization, Joyce Arthur, stated that opposition to abortion "comes primarily from religious justifications for oppressing women" and is due to a need to "maximize [the Catholic Church's] membership levels to maintain their worldly influence and wealth". This pro-abortion organization also accused pro-life Christians of being "religious fanatics" who do "little or nothing for children once they are born". She stated that pro-life Christians are "anti-woman and anti-child," and had views which were "uninformed, sexist, cruel". She also accused pro-life Christians of lacking the ability to empathize, which "breeds intolerance, hate crimes, and war". Ms. Arthur further stated, according to the web site, that pro-lifers' attitude towards women is like "the slaveholder's attitude to blacks, and the Nazi's attitude to Jews". That an organization that expresses such bigoted views, receives public funding is shameful and an unpardonable offense to the Canadian taxpayer.

Organizations to promote the decriminalization of prostitution in Canada, namely the Canadian National Coalition of Experiential Women (CNCEW), received \$325,000 to actively campaign to decriminalize solicitation for prostitution. In

the fiscal year 2004 - 2005, it received an additional \$322,646 from the Women's Program. This large grant was made at the time that the Liberal government had established a sub-committee of the Justice Committee to study the issue of prostitution. This Committee recommended that prostitution be decriminalized.

House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women in Canada (FEWO)

It is also a concern to us, that the House of Commons Standing Committee of the Status of Women, which was established in October, 2004, serves to promote only feminist organizations and their feminist agenda in Canada. The Committee stated that it promotes "equality - seeking" women's organizations. Of course, its narrow definition of "equality" excludes all other women's organizations. The Committee's first report, tabled in the House of Commons on February 10, 2005, recommended that funding for women's [feminist] groups be increased by 25%. In its second report, tabled in the House of Commons on April 19, 2005, the Committee recommended that a "gender analysis" be carried out on all federal government departments, their policies, and proposed legislation. In practical terms, the purpose of this proposal is to ensure that all government actions be subject to feminist overview and approval in order to ensure that the feminist ideology is spread throughout Canada.

Such extreme recommendations by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women expose it as being out of touch with the views of most Canadian women. This group's recommendations fail to comply with the democratic process in regard to a full consultation and fair treatment of all organizations.

Therefore, we request, that the discriminatory Status of Women, as well as the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO), be disbanded, since they represent only the singular views of a special interest group of feminists. In short, these two agencies serve no purpose but to promote the views of a handful of extremist feminist organizations at the expense of the Canadian taxpayer. These feminist ideologues serve only to increase intolerance and disrespect towards those who do not share their views.

In this regard, it should be pointed out that women's organizations, being special interest organizations, should be self supporting as REAL Women of Canada has been since it was federally incorporated in 1983. REAL Women has managed to exist without debt, financed solely by the donations and dues of our grassroots members with only a few minor grants from the government. Similarly, all special interest groups should be required to do the same.

Summary

Feminist groups have few, if any, members, and are, in effect, mostly phantom organizations sustained only by the funding they receive from the Status of Women. Since these organizations represent no one but the radical feminists who run them, they should not receive financial support from the Canadian taxpayer.

Yours truly,
Lorraine McNamara
National President, REAL Women of Canada

Please write to:
The Right Hon. Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

The Hon. Beverley Oda, P.C. M.P.
Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women
Les Terrasses de la Chaudière
12th Floor, 15 Eddy Street
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0M5

Please raise your objections to the funding policies of the Status of Women and the discriminatory policies of the House of Commons Committee on the Status of Women.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS CANADA - NEW DIRECTION NEEDED

As an NGO (non-government Organization) with special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, REAL Women is invited every year by Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) to a consultation, which is held in Ottawa previous to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights annual session in Geneva, Switzerland. This year's 18th annual consultation on February 7 and 8 was filled with uncertainty as the UN is now undergoing needed reform. We were told by Foreign Affairs representatives that Canada regards the Commission on Human Rights as "dysfunctional and politicized," and that the human rights situation around the world has not improved, "nothing much is working all that well at the UN." "Management reform is difficult in an organization perceived by most participants as a huge patronage system" one speaker told the assembled NGO's.

"Resources have been squandered." Yet it was announced that Canada has increased its contribution to the UN High Commission on Human Rights, headed by former Supreme Court Justice Louise Arbour, to \$5 million from \$2 million annually, through the Canadian International Development Agency CIDA. It was pointed out that having "greater resources doesn't lead to better human rights." A peace building fund will be created but "that doesn't mean anything practical will happen" one presenter noted.

U.S. Ambassador to the UN, John Bolton has stated, "The current situation is untenable and ... membership of the UN Human Rights Commission by some of the world's most notorious human rights abusers mocks the legitimacy of the ... United Nations itself." (National Post, January 12, 2006).

As the Ottawa Citizen wrote, "The chaos is so bad that the Human Rights Commission, beginning its annual six weeks of meetings in Geneva this week, voted to suspend itself for fear it couldn't get anything done." (Ottawa Citizen, March 15, 2006).

A New Council on Human Rights

As a result of its numerous failures, the UN General Assembly decided to establish a new Council on Human Rights to replace the former "discredited" Commission. The United States voted against the plan because it believed that the new council would only continue on its former course unless more profound changes were made. For example, reducing the council from 53 members to 47 member nations was hardly a significant change.

The basic problem with the Human Rights Commission was that it had no standards for membership when they were selected by the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) So, bloodthirsty tyrannies sat on it together with liberal democracies. Given the let's-all-get-along camaraderie of the United Nations, they all operated on a vaporous consensus that stripped the Commission of any purpose. China, Cuba, Eritrea, Liberia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Zimbabwe were all members, ensuring ample representation from governments interested only in preserving their ability to jail their dissidents or despoil their countryside.

Human rights abusers were particularly drawn to the Commission so they could eliminate any diplomatic or moral threat it might pose to their misrule. They voted as a bloc to oppose any strenuous language directed at themselves or fellow abusers. On the inside, they subtly influenced the process in their favour.

Under the new rules to establish the U.N. Human Rights Council, however, the General Assembly, by a majority vote, now selects the members. Unfortunately, this allows the worst human rights abusers to still sit on the Council, since again, no criteria for membership was established. Also, there are fewer western seats allowed on the new Council, which allows the Asian and African regional delegates to dominate the Council. Under these circumstances, the US decided not to seek election to this Human Rights Council, but did promise to work cooperatively with the member

states on the new Council.

Unfortunately, Canada seems to regard the "new" Human Rights Council as an open opportunity to continue to promote its current agenda for radical feminism, abortion and homosexual policies, apparently unchanged from what it was under the previous Liberal government

Jeanette Sautner, gender equality section, FAC, repeated Canada's objectives to eliminate violence against women, trafficking of women and girls, and help for migrant women. Injecting gender into every area possible is persistent, - into the "right to health", into education, HIV/AIDS, housing, and "peace building." The criminalization of marital rape is an ongoing effort. The usual UN Conventions were listed as supportive of the feminist agenda: Beijing Conference on Women (1995), the Cairo Conference on Population and Development (1994), and Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, (CEDAW) (1979). Due diligence is promoted, meaning, failure to exercise due diligence to "prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence against women" constitutes a human rights violation. Once inserted, this could apply to other "human rights." The objectives are so ambitious that the work of these Canadian bureaucrats at Foreign Affairs is guaranteed to go on forever. Very little is reported about concrete results, yet there are always new demands for expansion.

Gender Activism is Relentless

Resolutions to advance "women's equality" are presented every year. We were told that new elements are added or removed, focus changed, language changed, but the thrust is to further entrench gender (feminism) globally and nationally.

The ACPD (Action Canada for Population and Development), an organization established in 1997 by Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada, which has received grants from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Citizenship and CIDA, and other left wing NGO's and U.S. anti-population organizations, such as the Rockefeller Foundation, wants Foreign Affairs Canada to "affirm" and "push" positions on sexual orientation and sexual health (abortion, etc.). ACPD's lesbian Executive Director Katherine MacDonald (see REALity, "Canada's Betrayal of Third World Women", July/Aug 2005) encouraged FAC to be imaginative in trying to insert the term "sexual orientation" in UN documents to set a precedent. She suggested looking for opportunities to include it in various resolutions - violence against women, Committee on the Rights of the Child, the rights of adolescents, gender identity. "Keep doing it over and over and over again and eventually it will pass."

Andree Cote, Director of Legislation and Law, Association Nationale de la Femme et du Droit, stated at this FAC consultation that abortion is vital to assure the security and autonomy of women.

In the Religious Rights workshop, Catherine Laidlaw-Sly, policy advisor and past president of the National Council of Women of Canada, affirmed that "everybody has the right to their own faith, not the injection of that faith in law. The track record of most major faiths is one of discrimination against women." She recommended the "separation of faith and the state" because in the "history of the world for the last several thousand years", she warned, the "major faiths have not practiced gender equality."

Foreign Affairs Continues to Push Former Liberal Agenda

The homosexual organization Arc (Allied Rainbow Communities) International emphasized that how the new Council deals with controversial issues, such as sexual orientation and gender identity, will be the litmus test for its effectiveness as a new body. UN rapporteurs (human rights monitors) are "getting a lot of heat for defending particular cases" and they should be defended by the UN says ARC International.

The Ottawa based homosexual lobby group, EGALÉ (Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere) representative Ron Chaplin was concerned about legislation in Nigeria which criminalizes same-sex marriage with 5 years incarceration for someone who performs the ceremony, 19 years in prison for same-sex activity itself, while advocates of same-sex

marriage may be subject to a criminal term of 5 years. He feared that efforts to criminalize gay and lesbian activism in Nigeria could lead other African Commonwealth countries to adopt this type of "human rights abuse."

In response to ACPD's push for sexual orientation language in UN resolutions, Chantal Walker, FAC's Women's Equality Division, agreed, "perhaps we need to stir things up a little bit and have new strategies." She noted that non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation "has been a tradition in Canadian culture" and referred to the civil marriage Act C-38 and that "Canada's international position is based on our position domestically." She added that Foreign Affairs has had meetings with ARC International on the Gender Identity issues (transsexual and transgender - (See REALity, "Homosexuals' new Agenda: Transexualism", July/Aug 2004) and that "our strategy on this is still developing." Efforts will be made to continue raising it, "a lot of education still needs to happen on this issue as well as on sexual orientation ... Any ideas you have are more than welcome and we can discuss them." Chantal affirmed that "Canada is working constantly to include sexual orientation in human rights documents." Director Henri-Paul Normandin assured NGO's that they "can count on us to look for opportunities to keep the issue alive, it's definitely our intention to keep the issue alive."

Henri-Paul Normandin added that it's a steep learning curve as they break new ground, "we have to be creative as to how we try to advocate and promote these issues ... The position we are presenting today, Canada developed over the years." He also added that "It is the responsibility and duty of the government to provide direction to Foreign Affairs, that's their role, we will have to see."

However, many Canadians believe that years of training to defend "sexual orientation" (homosexual behaviour) and "sexual health" (abortion) by FAC should be re-directed by the new Conservative government. Foreign Affairs must change direction and defend neglected life and family issues, instead of promoting a left wing anti life/family agenda internationally.

Please write to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Foreign Affairs Minister, Peter McKay, and your M.P. Insist that Foreign Affairs change its policies immediately to support traditional conservative values of family and life. The bureaucrats at Foreign Affairs must be advised that a new government has taken over and that the former policies of the Liberal government to push radical feminism, abortion and homosexuality internationally are no longer acceptable.

The Right Hon. Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

The Hon. Peter MacKay, P.C. M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
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Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

Your MP
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Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

PROFESSIONAL FEMINISTS FACE CHANGING TIMES

There is no shortage of feminist advisors on "gender issues" who flitter from one government funded organization to another, promoting the feminist agenda. Gender "experts", buoyed by affirmative action pressures, globe trot to UN conferences, international forums and political hot spots, busily trying to entrench the feminist world view in dozens

of developing countries, under the guise of democratization.

A panel discussion was held in Ottawa on April 3, 2006 on "Governance, Women's Rights and International Development" sponsored by the Society for International Development (SID). It revealed yet more layers of feminist activity. Panelists represented at the SID conference included the federal government's international funding agency, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the crown corporation, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and Carleton University. SID has been in operation since 1957 and focuses on "institutional transformation" for livelihoods, gender and social justice. Its international advisory board includes representatives from UNICEF, the UN Family Planning Agency (UNFPA), and Nadis Sadik, the UN General Secretary envoy on HIV/AIDS, Harvard University, Yale School of Medicine and others. Its publication, "Development", is available on the Internet at www.sidint.org.

SID International Senior Advisor Profile

With a steady supply of tax dollars from unsuspecting working families, feminists have expanded their reach from equality with men, to governance, democratization, globalization and market forces, political and social policy, legal and economic reform, and with the advent of military conflict, "peace and security." A special guest on the panel, Wendy Harcourt, senior gender advisor to SID International in Rome, Italy, stated that sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) "covers vast ground", no doubt to match feminists' vast ambitions for control and acceptance as the exclusive spokeswomen for all women worldwide. SRHR includes "pre and post-natal care, family planning, obstetrical services, sex education, men's responsibilities to prevent unwanted pregnancy, the feminization of HIV/AIDS, violence against women, and gender equality practices in the home community." This touches a vast array of government departments and social institutions.

In SID's publication, edited by Harcourt, she describes a feminist AWID (Association for Women's Rights in Development) forum in Bangkok, October 2005: "Beside a starlit Bangkok river I sat with over a thousand feminists from around the world watching an open air stage filled with a beautiful transsexual and transgender troupe in Marilyn Monroe pink and pearls performing Helen Reddy's 'I Am woman', the song of my early Australian feminist days." As the feminists were swept away with "the networkings, the meetings, the shows, the dances, the early morning swims and yoga..." they recognized the contradictions, "Burmese workers would spend 5 months salary to have one night in the Forum's hotel", the luxurious Shangri-La. As one AWID participant noted "...the concept of binary gender is long past, as are heterosexual norms.... Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, Confused are political categories of self but also of survival and well-being." Another was quoted, "sexuality is a cross-cutting issue that lies at the heart of disempowerment of women. So if women are to be empowered, work on sexuality is essential." Another commented, "The challenge was out there of how to go beyond sexual identities...to a movement based on demands and desire rather than identities - destroying the gender system rather than just shoring up the interests of one group within it."

Would our Prime Ministers and their Cabinets be surprised that their support for the feminist agenda has reached the point of "destroying the gender system?" Who knows?

Harcourt added a personal note on an issue which perennially concerns global feminists - migrant women and their exploitation. She confessed that it is hard to discuss this issue from a feminist context considering a woman from the Philippines works to look after her children and family.

The SID panel and publication indicates, however, that there are concerns by ordinary taxpayers about funding activists and academics as they push feminism's perpetual "evolution."

Panel Reveals Feminist Woes

Senior policy advisor Julie Delahanty stated that CIDA is spending \$50 million of its \$300 million budget for Iraq (over seven years), specifically on women's rights in Iraq, which, under Saddam Hussein, developed "the highest levels of

women's empowerment in the Arab world." According to Delahanty, former CIDA director, Diane Rivington, once stated that she believed the entire CIDA annual \$3.312 billion budget should be at the disposal of gender equality.

But the international women's empowerment network is being challenged. The high-flying days of abortion and contraception promotion appear to be waning, as countries are more concerned about stability and security. When SID wanted to organize a panel on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Washington D.C., they were told that this approach came from the 1960's, and that organizations receiving government funding had signed an agreement not to promote legalization of prostitution or abortion. A panel on sexual and reproductive health could endanger their funding so it was not possible. In The Hague, the rebuff to SID was almost identical: "this used to be the issue, but we've moved on, we're talking about security now." One former Prime Minister of a European nation and former head of a UN agency would not allow any discussion of this issue on an international panel he was chairing.

Feminists are trying to hold the line and "prevent steps backward." IDRC's objective (\$133 million annual funding), according to Claudie Gosselin, is to "fund what Americans are no longer funding" as a result of U.S. pro-family non-intervention into private sexual and reproductive areas. She listed Canada's IDRC's gender unit concerns as "gender roles and power in sexual relationships, ... access to choice - contraception and safe abortion, ... regulation of new reproductive technologies, ... women's rights in marriage, including polygamous unions, ... safe sex, keeping in mind AIDS, ... negotiation of spacing of children - a key area for gender equity, ... research in trafficking." Is this what the Canadian taxpayer wants?

Many governments are questioning the use of tax dollars to interfere with what Wendy Harcourt defines as sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) which "brings tabooed 'private' subjects into the public sphere.... It translates intimate, highly culturally specific behaviours into medical, technical and legal terms within the discourse of rights and development." Julie Delahanty laments moving away from a "giddy sense of optimism" in the 1990's to the prospect of feeling "dispirited by the roll back in progress towards sexual and reproductive health" (Development, December 2005). Feminists are apparently hitting a wall of reality. Delahanty even suggests that feminism can be a fundamentalism which has failed to appreciate the "lived experiences of women who have had abortions and miscarriages" as a result of feminist strategies of focusing on choice and definitions of the unborn child as an impersonal fetus.

The "rights approach" to reproduction is now "under fierce attack" according to an essay in Development, December 2005. "Since George W. Bush came into power and since the events of September 11th, mainstream political debates no longer have a strong rights approach." The publication also analyses "regressive forces" such as politico-religious fundamentalisms and conservative forces under which it classifies "Bush", neo-liberalism, the Vatican, capitalism, privatization and business outreach.

Health care reform also affects women's reproductive rights, according to a Development article. "Preventive and public health services", rather than "individual curative care services", that is, state health care, rather than medicinal care, are better suited to women's rights advances. Perhaps this shift in focus explains the recent uncontrollably high cost of "health" in Canada and a decline in services to alleviate disease and treat illness.

"Constraints already appear" in Canada the Ottawa panel noted. People working with CIDA were disappointed with the cutting of funding to Palestine by the Conservative government. They expect even more changes. CIDA, by the way, in the fiscal year 2004 - 2005 had a budget of \$3.312 billion dollars.

The fact is, unless deep funding cuts are implemented, the well oiled feminist machine will motor on, nationally and globally, harming families, genuine education, health and demographics, as professional feminists use tax dollars to create their own ever changing and evolving bizarre version of Shangri-la.

BOOK REVIEW: SURPRISE CHILD FINDING HOPE IN UNEXPECTED PREGNANCY

By Leslie Leyland Fields, 162 pages, WaterBrook Press, Colorado Springs, Colorado, www.surprisechild.com

Leslie Leyland Fields is a writer, teacher, wife, and mother of six children living in Alaska where her family runs a salmon fishing operation. She has experienced two unplanned pregnancies and has talked to countless women about this not unusual life changing event. She has written a unique book providing in detail, the initial reactions of several women in very different circumstances, to a surprise child. The unexpected advent implied failure, mistake and accident. The realities reveal unexpected joys, strength and victories. It is a sad commentary on our times that a new life so often elicits feelings of loneliness, desperation and ambiguity in mothers and fathers.

According to the U.S. National Institute of Health, 60% of all pregnancies in the U.S. are unplanned, and this translates into three million women, half of whom choose abortion.

According to the book, mothers in various stages of life, from teen to grandmother, express their doubts about their ability to cope. Some are rejected by the father of the child and yet persevere, while others get full support from father and family. Careers are interrupted, plans changed and entire lives are re-routed. Not all mothers were able to keep their child due to difficult life circumstances. Yet the unfolding of these pregnancies chronicles a surprise of strength, hope and joy. "Someone utterly new, never before known" exists.

Many women immediately respond with joy on learning of a pregnancy, but for the many who face the news with anguish and doubt, this book is helpful. In fact, it is helpful to all mothers because we forget the immensity of motherhood. And older mothers can learn to appreciate the added pressures on young mothers today, who have an array of technologies which can complicate decisions and intrude on the natural impulse to accept life's surprises.

In these times, when motherhood is not central and cherished in society, this small book could be a lifeline if put in the right hands at the right time. With abortion so available, "free of charge", pressures are added to which some succumb but which many resist heroically.

Many stories recounted in this book are of loss, separation and reunion. Stories of apparent hopelessness, with time, turn into happy endings - "how much light he's brought into our house!" Some mothers, involved in drug abuse and partying, changed their lives entirely to accommodate the baby and now say "this baby saved my life."

Many mothers are familiar with foolish and hurtful comments made about their large families and in response to the news that they are "expecting again!" The book contains resources for support and discussion groups, contacts to help new mothers and teens, and information about health and adoption. These are American sources but some can be used by everyone. One discussion group asks, "Our culture defines success mostly in terms of money, power and independence. What other measures of success do you think are more important?"

Every chapter of the book begins with a statement on the developing child and the physiology of pregnancy, as well as a scriptural quotation to elevate the mind and remind us of "something of greater value", eternal value.

So many mothers found that they were wrong about their fears:

We didn't expect to love this unexpected baby as we do. We didn't expect her or him to love us as each does... we forgot about love.

He was a surprise only to me. Nothing about him was a surprise to God.

Who are we to decide who lives or dies?

All our mothers made room for us. We will do the same.

All of us could have ended these lives in a few moments, secretly, with only a doctor knowing. We could have gone on with our lives just as planned, trying to maintain control over our bodies and our future. But who can count or measure what we would have lost?

In carrying this child you are giving her or him a chance to be. Without being what else matters?

This is a book truly worth writing, and reading. For more information about the book and the author, see www.surprisechild.com and links.

FAMILY PERKS DO INCREASE POPULATION

The western world has been in despair about its rapidly declining population. However, when countries have tried to cut back on social benefits to soften the effects of the population decline, they have experienced a backlash from the public, which then forces the governments to withdraw their plans for cutbacks.

It seems, though, that France has stumbled on a solution to the problem. Instead of withdrawing benefits to the general public, France has decided to add benefits for larger families. It seems to be working. France had a birth rate typical of European nations, of only 1.5 children per woman of childbearing age. In a matter of a few years, France now has a birth rate of 1.9 children per woman of childbearing age and holds second place in the rates of European countries, with only Catholic Ireland having a higher birth rate.

Quite an amazing difference. The perks offered to French families to encourage births are imaginative and include some of the following genuine advantages for large families.

- A large family "card" which gives a 30% reduction on train fare and half price for the Paris subway;
- Free entrance to swimming pools and museums for families with three or more children;
- \$300.00 for extra-curricular arts and sports activities for families;
- A calibrated income tax rate: the more children a family has, the less tax they pay;
- A monthly allowance of \$360.00 for families with three children. This grant increases when the children reach 11 years of age;
- A tax deduction for housekeeping help;
- Parents working in the public sector or large companies receive subsidized holiday camps, financial bonuses at the start of the school year, and Christmas presents for the children;
- Families have an option of receiving \$1,160.00 per month for 1 year after the birth of a third child or \$690.00 per month for three years after the birth;
- Tax credits for babysitting fees;
- 15,000 new crèche places, double tax credits for some child care costs, and financial benefits for parents looking after a sick child.

Experts are now pondering this relatively high French birth rate, because in relation to Ireland, it does present a degree of mystery. This is due to the fact that Ireland has a higher fertility rate than France, but it doesn't have all the family perks available to French parents. Nobody understands the reasons for this difference.

Meanwhile, parents of large families in France are enjoying all the perks and the birth rate there keeps increasing. These perks are obviously irresistible to many parents and who can blame them?