

In the fall of 2016, the first of a series of citizen surveys started going out across the country, to leaders and centres of influence within the faith communities of Canada.

The surveys asked questions about what the faith community leaders believed were the issues and challenges that they were facing in their communities.

What were their 'priorities'? What was important to them?

One important part of the ask in the surveys though, was that faith leaders would share their feedback only on the issues that they felt completely comfortable, discussing with their church families – or – to others within their spheres of influence.

The survey process also asked, that their view of the issues brought forward, could also be communicated using secular language, to those people who perhaps were not familiar with church life – or – to people that were 'outside' of their sphere of influence.

Well the responses were overwhelming.

Human Trafficking, Prostitution, Pornography, Euthanasia, Marijuana, Abortion, Polyamorous Relationships, Education, Freedom of Religion, Child Protection, Gender Theory, Debt and Taxation, just to name a few.

Anything and everything you can imagine, appeared to be represented in the mix of data collected.

But here is where something very interesting was noted.

When you stood back and looked at all of these issues and points of view, every one of these individual issues, and the way they were expressed, could be categorized in just a few 'silos' or 'groups'.

The issue of Prostitution Law for example, was often expressed as a concern for vulnerable young women and girls. And when you looked at another issue, such as abortion policy, the very same concern was paramount, the wellbeing of women and young girls.

Another example...

Common concerns related to the future of our children were clear when you held an issue like Education and Parental Authority, up against the issue of excessive government Debt and Taxation. A common concern was expressed in both, for our children and future generations, and the negative impact that these challenges would have on families.

So ultimately, it was discovered, that virtually, all of the issues and concerns expressed in the survey results, could actually be reduced down and filed into one of 4 silos, or what have come to be known as PILLARS.

The First Pillar, and the single largest issue expressed as a concern by far was...

**That Parents, have the right to raise their children the way they want to.**

Parents just wanted to be free to raise their children with the same values and in the same faith tradition. That was all. So simply expressed but clearly a priority to those who responded. A desire to raise your children the way you want.

The second silo, or “pillar” represented over a large number of the responses was...

**That those WE elect to serve US in civil government MUST respect and defend our right of belief and freedom of religion.**

Again, so simply put, but of such great importance to those who participated in the surveys.

And it was interesting that leaders really felt, that those elected to serve us, MUST respect and defend our right of belief and freedom of religion.

Not “should” but rather **MUST**.

A Non-negotiable point. In other words, it is NOT okay for an elected person to act in a way, that would deny the citizens, their right of belief and religious freedom...and to be clear here, we are talking about religious freedom for ALL people, and not just members of the faith communities of Canada.

Now the third pillar, which is what I believe to be the true heart of the faith community of Canada is...

**That, the laws and policies of civil government must provide for the safety and security of the citizens, especially the vulnerable that live among us in our communities.**

So, the laws and policies of government, at the very least, must check the box of being safe, and provide for the security of ALL citizens, but **ESPECIALLY** the vulnerable among us.

People like the homeless, drug addicted, the shut-in elderly and the lonely. The young girl who is told by her doctor she is pregnant. People who feel as though there's no hope. The

people that are frustrated by mobility challenges or chronic conditions.

All of these citizens must FIRST be protected by ANY policy or laws that is passed by civil government.

And finally, the fourth pillar, a very sensible posture related to finances...that **it is, inappropriate to heap debt upon the backs of our children and future generations.**

So, spending money today, calling it an investment in our children's future, when what it really is, is structural debt that will carry an interest rate long into the life of our kids, is unacceptable fiscal policy.

Buying things today FOR US, that civil government will excessively tax OUR CHILDREn to pay for in the future, is unacceptable – flat out.

And that was it. The four pillars.

Let me quickly review them again, the 4 Pillars are...

First,

**1) That Parents having the right to raise their children the way they want.**

**2) That those we elect to serve us in civil government must respect and defend our right of belief and freedom of religion.**

**3) That the laws and policies of civil government must provide for the safety and security of the citizens, especially the vulnerable...and**

**4) That it is inappropriate for civil government to heap debt upon the backs of our children and future generations.**

THESE FOUR THINGS are now the things we focus on here at the National Leadership Briefing.

And THESE are the Pillars we all rally around.

These are the things we encourage churches to teach on.

These are the things we encourage mom's and dads to share with their children.

These are the things we share with Candidates and politicians when they ask us for our support.

And, its all because, it is THESE THINGS that are THE most important issues to the faith communities of Canada.

So when civil government proposes a piece of legislation, these are the points we hold the legislation up against to see if it represents our views and values.

And when a politician speaks, this is now the litmus test for whether or not we are listening to someone in government who understands our worldview and will defend our right to have it.

And now, if a government leader enacts a policy that LIMITS our right as parents to raise our kids the way we want?

We look for new government leaders.

If civil government leaders recklessly, pass a law that puts the vulnerable people in our community at risk?

We withdraw support from them and look for another place to put it.

If they Enact policies that don't respect our right of belief and freedom of religion – or just as important these days - if they

refuse to defend it against the barrage of attacks that come at us as people of faith?

Those government leaders are replaced at the very next electoral opportunity with someone who will.

And finally, with our children in mind, if politicians spend SO MUCH money today, that a yoke of excessive taxation is placed around the necks of our children in the future forcing THEM to pay for it?

We're going to make a change.

Asking people of faith what THEY believe, is what I believe the wisest thing to do. They know what works. They know what prospers people and produces positive health outcomes for our children, our neighbour and our nation.

Now I would like to make a suggestion?

If these 4 Pillars sound to you like a good representation of your views and values, why don't you join us each month on the National Leadership Briefing. It's a time when, for only one hour, once a month, we focus on these 4 Pillars and discuss how we can advance these things we share in common into our culture, politics and government.

It's a place where we are going to encourage Pastors to teach about these things from the Bible, Preach about them from their pulpits, and RALLY AROUND them in their communities. And YES, we are also going to learn about how to best inform those we elect to serve us in Civil Government of our shared support for the 4 Pillars.

Now let me close this segment here and identify one very important challenge for us to overcome if we are going to succeed in our mission to advance these 4 pillars in culture and society.

The truth is, that as the church, we have had challenges coming together. At times we have even been divided, even at the expense of our common interests.

But now, every month on the National Leadership Briefing, for the sake of our children and our children's children, we ARE GOING TO come together, We are going to set aside our differences and all of the things we may not agree on.

We are going to come together and unify our focus on influencing our culture and our governments always advancing these four pillars.

And here is the best part. We get to do it, TOGETHER.

Every month. Developing the habit of coming together, to receive the strategic information we need, to influence our nation.

Using our COMBINED VOICE whenever needed, to influence the national issues during elections for example, but also daily in our own individual spheres of influence. Always edifying and sharing the pillars there.

Strengthening our nation by strengthening our own families, our own communities, churches and businesses with the 4 pillars.