



**crossroads**<sup>TM</sup>  
GLOBAL MEDIA GROUP

# PRESERVING THE CANADIAN RELIGIOUS VOICE IN MEDIA

## Abstract

Religion is at the core of the founding of our country and is a pillar of our human rights. As such, the government of Canada must ensure that Canadians can easily access the variety of religious voices on all regulated media distribution platforms, including Canadian broadcasting, broadcast distribution undertakings, and future federally regulated new technology and distribution platforms.

# **Foreword**

## **A Healthy Democracy Requires Engagement with All the Values of its Citizens.**

The forming of Canadian values comes from a diverse collection of ideas on what it means to be human. For many Canadians, those ideas of what it means to be human travel through the spiritual, the religious, the transcendent.

This brief represents media and production experiences which, for fifty years, have been present in Canadian national television with a religious voice. Giving expression to the spiritual dimensions of Canadian life is a deeply held value, and it is rooted in community support and volunteerism.

We are delighted that the Canadian Heritage Committee is making room to investigate how Canada's media future can best represent the plurality of our country's citizens. Without a doubt, Canadians wish that their religious experiences can be expressed in media platforms.

# **Introduction**

## **Who We Are**

Crossroads Global Media Group is Canada's leading international distributor of faith and values media content, crossing multiple genres and demographics by encouraging the development of media that shares values sourced in religion. We specialize in acquiring, producing, and distributing media internationally across all platforms. Under our media umbrella we house YES TV, which is a not-for-profit, religious and multi faith TV station that is committed to positive programming and entertainment for the whole family. We also produce and broadcast *100 Huntley Street*, which is Canada's longest running daily television program. *100 Huntley* currently impacts over 1 million viewers each week and aired its 10,000<sup>th</sup> episode in October 2015, making it truly part of our Canadian heritage.

Crossroads also produces and broadcasts *Context with Lorna Dueck* which is Canada's premiere Christian voice in news and current affairs. Currently in its sixth season, *Context* speaks out on the complex issues around Syrian refugees, Islamic extremism, First Nations, Marijuana legislation, Climate Change, Assisted Dying, and much more. The show provides a platform for Canadian and global issues, while *Context*'s distinctive voice and style gives our audience a perspective they don't hear in other media.

## **Threat to the Religious Voice in Canadian Broadcasting**

Media in Canada is in trouble. The falling revenues, loss of Canadian programming, and instability of jobs in this industry make it clear that the Canadian media distinctive is in danger of disappearing. As the media giants continue to struggle, the danger for the religious voice in media is even more dire. The religious voice in Canadian media offerings has always relied on subscriber revenue, that is, charitable donations. Clearly Canadians value religious

presence in media because they are voluntarily supporting it financially. Crossroads' Canadian productions are all charitable, and require an annual \$12 million of funding, all of which is donor supported. YES TV, a broadcast channel in Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta, exists for the purpose of providing balanced multi faith TV programming. In 1997, when the CRTC granted Crossroads a licence for YES TV, it was seen as a 'right to play' move. Without its own channel, there were no prime time opportunities and only severely limited opportunities for the religious voice to be broadcast, thus the CRTC ruling to create YES TV's license.

YES TV is financed by a base of debenture holders who believe investing in religious broadcasting is good for Canadian culture. YES TV's annual operating survives because of a unique blend of religious broadcasting, and an advertising funded prime time window of two hours of daily American-produced entertainment programming. (Wheel of Fortune, Jeopardy, etc). This hybrid for YES TV allows it to generate commercial sales, and without this US-produced entertainment programming, YES TV would not be viable.

We commend the Government of Canada and the Heritage Committee for holding these hearings and thought leadership into the state of Canadian media. Through these consultations, the government aims to develop a new media policy which ensures Canadian media reflects Canadian identity and promotes democracy, focuses on citizens and creators, and supports social and economic innovation.

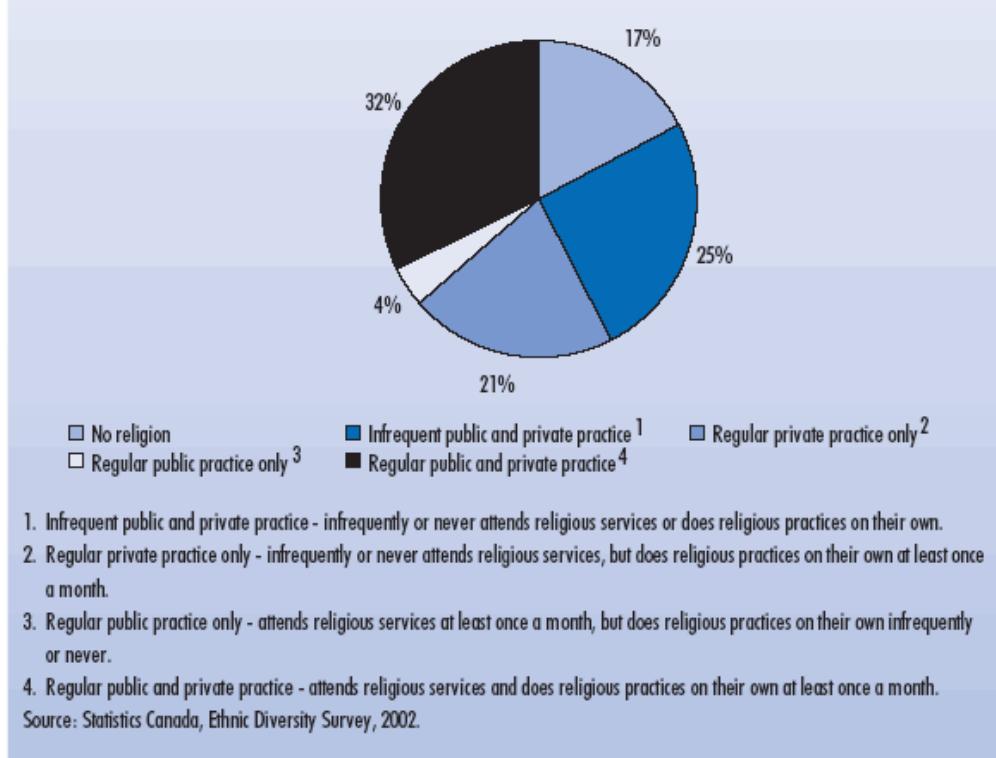
As representative of the religious voice in Canadian media, we will demonstrate how the Crossroads Global Media Group already promotes the proposed media policy and why its survival is vital. The government of Canada must ensure that Canadians can easily access the variety of religious voices on all regulated media distribution platforms, including Canadian broadcasting, broadcast distribution undertakings, and future federally regulated new technology and distribution platforms.

## Reflect Canadian Identity and Promote Democracy

### Religion in Canada

According to the StatsCan 2011 census, of the 32 million Canadians who responded, 22 million identified as Christian, and roughly 1 million as Muslims. 7.85 million people identified as non-religious. This means that 24.15 million Canadians identified as belonging, or adhering, to a religion or a religious ideology.

StatsCan has also reported that roughly half of Canadian adults engage in some sort of religious practice on their own, whether that be prayer, reading of a religious text, or worship. According to their research, only 32% of Canadian adults engage in public and private religious activities at least once a month. However, there is another 21% that, while they very rarely, if ever, attend religious services, do engage in private religious activities at least once a month.



Given that 24 million Canadians identify as belonging to a religion, and roughly half of all adult Canadians engage in some sort of religious activity frequently on their own, it is evident that religion holds a significant role in Canada.

### **Religion as Part of Canadian Culture and Heritage**

Religion has been part of Canada since humans were known to have settled on the land. The First Nations groups who inhabited the land adhered to various religious beliefs which guided the way they lived, thought, interacted with one another, and engaged with the world around them.

When European settlers started arriving in Canada in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, many of the new inhabitants identified as Christian. Jesuit missionaries were sent to Canada as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>1</sup> where they played an important role in establishing settlements. Churches were important institutions in much of early Canada as they built and operated schools, hospitals, and welfare services before the government took on those roles. Much of our legal code and social make-up is based on principles founded in Judeo-Christian scriptures.

For much of our history, Canada has identified itself as a country with religion at its core. Even the name, 'The Dominion of Canada' was originally suggested by Sir Leonard Tilley in

<sup>1</sup> J. Herbert Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1982), 68.

reference to the Bible verse Psalm 72:8,<sup>2</sup> which states, “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” Furthermore, the preamble to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms reads, “Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law...”

Canada’s heritage and culture are greatly steeped in the role that religion has played in our history and the role it continues to play today in shaping our modern society.

### **Freedom of Religion as a Fundamental Staple of a Thriving Democracy**

Not only is religion a part of our culture and heritage, but freedom of religion is one of the most important freedoms to protect and maintain in a thriving democracy. In Canada, freedom of religion, freedom of the media, and freedom of expression are three of the fundamental freedoms which are represented as a part of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Our government understood how important it is for people to be able to hold religious beliefs and have the ability to express those beliefs personally, and through media, as a function of our democracy.

When looking at broadcasting, the voices of the 24.15 million Canadians who identify as religious are not proportionally represented as a part of Canadian media. Currently, of the 684 television stations that are licensed to broadcast in Canada, only 7 are religious.<sup>3</sup> While this may seem disproportionate, the content of these religious stations does fairly represent the religious voice in Canada, however, we must ensure that this voice is heard by all Canadians. One way in which the government can ensure the religious voice is more widely heard would be to enshrine unrestricted access to the entire population through current and future distribution platforms, while also ensuring the same funding, which is received by secular program content producers, is extended to religious content producers without restriction.

## **Focus on Citizens and Creators as a Part of Content**

Crossroads-produced shows, such as *100 Huntley Street* and *Context with Lorna Dueck*, produce all of their content in Canada and largely feature guests and issues which are important and unique to Canadians.

YES TV also uses independent producers to produce religious content from different faith backgrounds. They offer a religious, as well as Canadian voice on material which they would not get to see in the mainly US content-driven major TV networks in Canada. As seen below in the graphic,<sup>4</sup> many networks, other than CBC and Yes TV, mainly broadcast American programming during prime time hours. YES TV and Crossroads understand the importance of producing and broadcasting Canadian content for our culture, which is why they continue to

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<sup>2</sup> “Dominion,” *Historica Canada*, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/dominion/>.

<sup>3</sup> *Communications Monitoring Report 2016*, The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Committee (Ottawa, 2016), 146.

<sup>4</sup> From “A Creative Canada: Strengthening Canadian Culture in a Digital World,” CBC/Radio Canada 2016 Report, 17, <http://www.cbc.radio-canada.ca/en/media-centre/2016/11/28a/>. YES TV graphic was added.

prioritize the creation and dissemination of quality Canadian content.

Network	PM	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
	07:00	Marketplace	Just for Laughs Gags	Hello Goodbye	22 Minutes	Rick Mercer Report	HNIC	Heartland	
	07:30			Coronation St.				This is High School / Canada's Smartest Person	
	08:00	Murdoch Mysteries	Rick Mercer Report	Dragon's Den	Nature of Things	Mark etplace		This Life	
	08:30		22 Minutes			Hello Goodbye		The National	
	09:00	Shoot the Messenger	Kim's Convenience	The Romeo Section	First Hand (Doc Stand)	The Fifth Estate			
	09:30		Mr. D.						
	10:00			The National					
	10:30								
	07:00			etalk				W5	
	07:30			Big Bang Theory					
	08:00	Gotham	The Flash	Blindspot	Big Bang The Goldbergs	Grimm	Big Band Theory American Housewife	Once Upon A Time	
	08:30								
	09:00	Lucifer	This is Us	Criminal Minds	Notorious	The Exorcist		Mike & Molly Anger Management	
	09:30							Secrets and Lies	
	10:00	Conviction	Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.	Designated Survivor	How to Get Away with Murder	Blue Bloods		Saving Hope Quantico	
	10:30								
	07:00			Entertainment Tonight				Border Security Border Security	
	07:30			Entertainment Tonight (Canada)				The Simpsons	
	08:00	Kevin Can Wait	NCIS	Survivor	Superstore The Good Place/The Great Indoors	MacGyver	Rookie Blue NCIS: LA		
	08:30	Man with a Plan							
	09:00	Chicago Fire	Bull	Chicago Med	Pitch	Hawaii Five-O	Combat Hospital Madam Secretary		
	09:30								
	10:00	Timeless	NCIS: New Orleans	Chicago P.D.	The Blacklist / Pure Genius	Canadian Crime Stories		Elementary	
	10:30								
	07:00			Modern Family				Sunnyside Second Jen	
	07:30			Modern Family					
	08:00	The Middle	Brooklyn Nine-Nine	Lethal Weapon	The Mindy Project	Hell's Kitchen	HNIC	Modern Family	
	08:30	The Real O'Neals	New Girl					Son of Zorn	
	09:00	2 Broke Girls	Scream Queens	Modern Family	Mom	Cyberwar		Family Guy	
	09:30	The Odd Couple		Black-ish	Life in Pieces	Vice Essentials Canada			
	10:00	Scorpion	2 Broke Girls	2 Broke Girls	2 Broke Girls	2 Broke Girls	Vice Guide to Film Last Man on Earth		
	10:30		Two and a Half Men	Two and a Half Men	Two and a Half Men	Two and a Half Men		Cyber War	
	07:00		Wheel of Fortune					Wheel of Fortune	
	07:30		Jeopardy					Jeopardy	
	08:00		100 Huntley Street				Canadian Basketball League Game of the Week / Canadian Documentaries	Gaither Gospel Hour	
	08:30		100 Huntley Street					In Touch with Charles Stanley	
	09:00		King of Queens					Daughters of Eve	
	09:30		Everybody Loves Raymond					Daughters of Eve	
	10:00		James Robison					Canadian Ministry	
	10:30		100 Huntley Street / Canadian Ministries					Young Once	
								Young Once	

## Support Social and Economic Innovation

### Social Innovation

According to the Stanford Center for Social Innovation, “A social innovation is a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than current solutions. The value created accrues primarily to society rather than to private individuals.”<sup>5</sup>

Canada is rife with individuals who are dealing with mental illness, addiction, abuse, or who are dealing with some sort of trauma. “In any given year, one in five people in Canada experiences a mental health problem or illness, with a cost to the economy of well in excess of \$50 billion. Only one in three people who experience a mental health problem or illness — and as few as one in four children or youth — report that they have sought and received

<sup>5</sup> “Defining Social Innovation,” Stanford Graduate School of Business Center for Social Innovation, <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/faculty-research/centers-initiatives/csi/defining-social-innovation>

services and treatment. Of the 4,000 Canadians who die every year as a result of suicide, most were confronting a mental health problem or illness.”<sup>6</sup>

Crossroads Global Media Group has sought to ease suffering and breathe life into society by offering messages of hope in our broadcasting and by operating a prayer centre which is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. By operating a prayer line, we are offering a creative solution to some of the most difficult problems facing our society. We offer a true listening ear and care for people who are isolated, feel hopeless, and have no one else to turn to. Our prayer lines are also free and are staffed constantly, which is unique, because many people are forced to pay for counselling services, which they may not be able to afford, and counsellors are not always available.

Since the prayer lines began operating in 1977, our lines have been called 11,108,000 times! People have called for prayer with these primary concerns:

Emotional needs	2,781,223
Suicide Crisis Prevention	13,696
Family Concerns	2,748,630
Substance Abuse	304,491
Physical Health	2,424,073
Financial Needs	710,133

People's lives have been saved, families have healed, and communities have been transformed by the prayer and support we have provided over the past 40 years. While it may be easy to believe that this sort of support is no longer relevant in our society, our prayer lines still receive an average of 1,000 calls per day!

### Economic Innovation

While many Canadian broadcasters have decided to invest in buying American-produced content, Crossroads and YES TV are actively engaged in contributing to the Canadian independent producer community. They are continually seeking out Canadian independent producers to work on new projects that unveil our uniquely Canadian voice; producing content that may not have been made otherwise. Furthermore, they are also providing a platform for the sharing of that content, by providing airtime on YES TV stations.

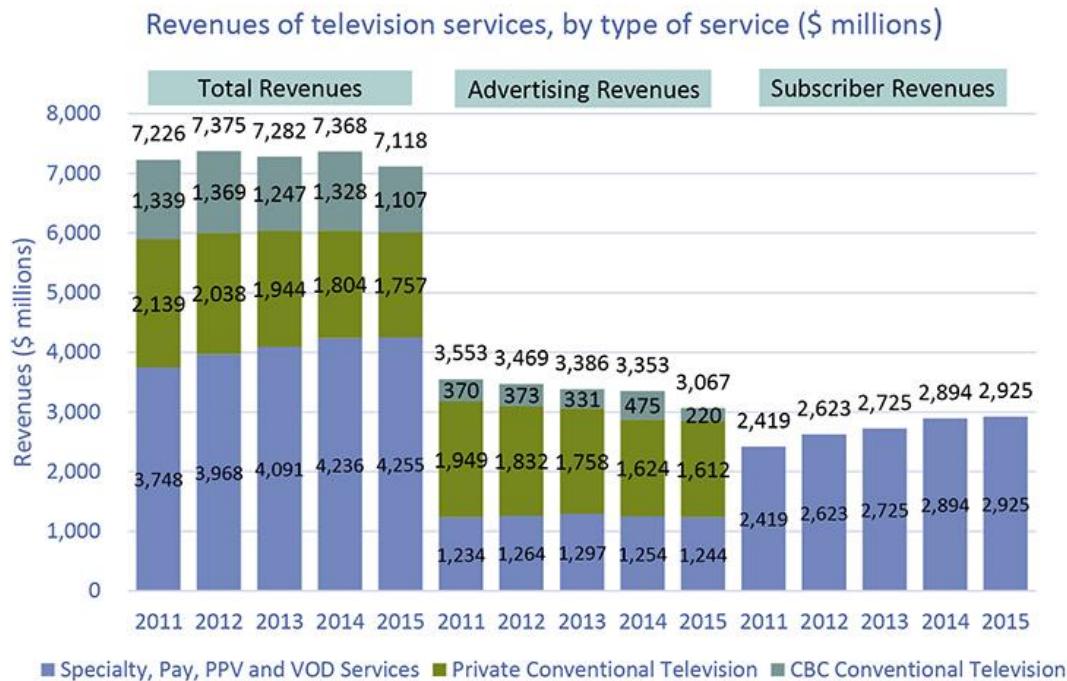
## Threat to the Religious Voice in the Canadian Media Landscape

Today, the religious voice is in danger and under threat in our current media landscape. Media in Canada is in danger because the traditional revenue models are no longer generating the revenues required to maintain the repertoire of programming that was previously possible.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> “The Facts,” Mental Health Commission of Canada, <http://strategy.mentalhealthcommission.ca/the-facts/>.

<sup>7</sup> Graphic from *Communications Monitoring Report 2016*, The Canadian Radio-television and



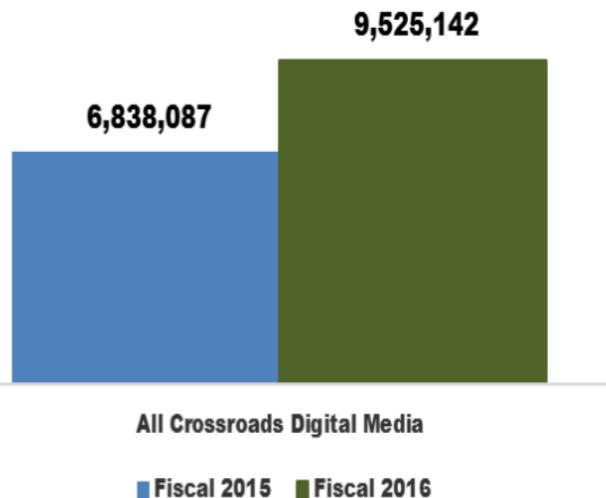
As this graph demonstrates, the traditional television services are watching their revenues decline as subscription services are continuing to grow. This research also provides evidence to support the idea that traditional models of television need to adapt. People want to be able to watch TV on demand. They do not want to be held to a schedule. They prefer to watch without advertisements and they are willing to pay a small subscription fee for that privilege.

Crossroads Global Media Group has done our part to stay ahead of the curve and adapt to a changing media landscape. Crossroads produces content that is high quality and is largely funded by independent donors. It is also produced with new media platforms in mind.

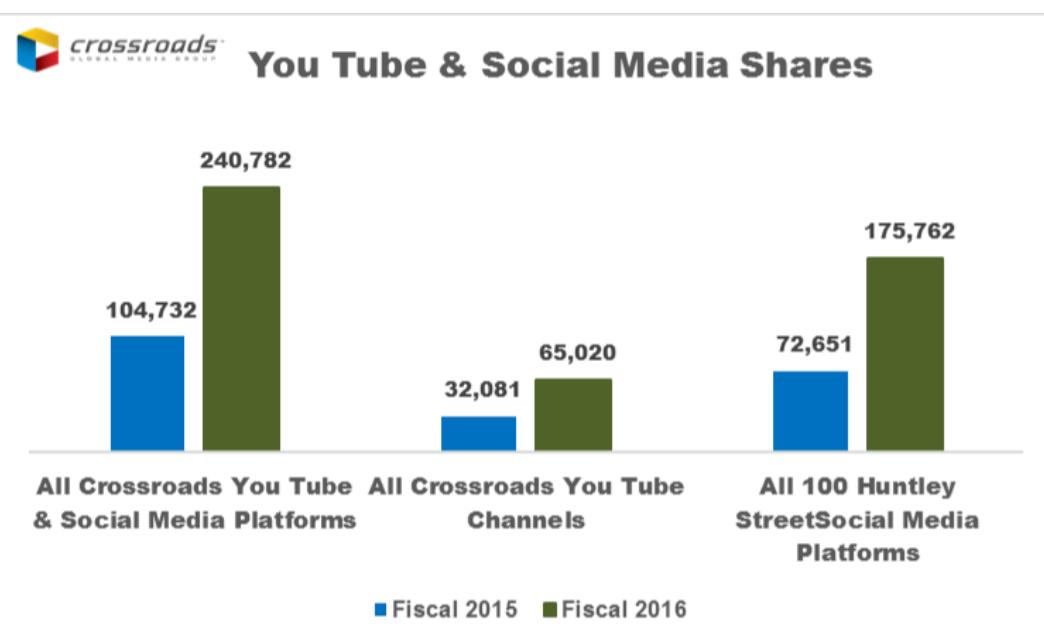
Currently, we live in a world where we produce content for the older generation who consume media through traditional platforms. However, we are also working to adapt our content to remain relevant with the next generation and their methods of consuming media. We have a growing online presence and have made our shows available to stream on our websites and our Facebook pages. We incorporate social media interaction into our programming and produce content that is only available online. Our shows are also being added to the PureFlix streaming service, so we can reach a wider audience of viewers.



## You Tube Unique Viewers



Over 9.5 million views of Crossroads Content on YouTube™ (Fiscal 2015-2016)



Over 240,000 shares on YouTube™ and all Social Media platforms (Fiscal 2015-2016)

# Recommendations

One way in which the government can ensure the religious voice is more widely heard would be to enshrine unrestricted access to the entire population through current and future distribution platforms, while also ensuring the same funding, which is received by secular program content producers, is extended to religious content producers without restriction.

Religion is at the core of the founding of our country and is a pillar of our human rights. As such, the government of Canada must ensure that Canadians can easily access the variety of religious voices on all regulated media distribution platforms, including Canadian broadcasting, broadcast distribution undertakings, and future federally regulated new technology and distribution platforms.

Sincerely,

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**Lorna Dueck**

CEO | [Crossroads™](#) | [YES TV™](#) | [Tricord Media™](#)

