



Inquiry into hate in the pandemic: Hearing transcript

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Roman Catholic Terry O'Neill

Archdiocese of Vancouver

attendees:

BCOHRC¹ attendees: Human Rights Commissioner Kasari Govender, Emily Chan, Carly Hyman

Please note that third-party personal information has been removed from this transcript.

[Introductory comments by Human Rights Commissioner Kasari Govender not included in transcript.]

Terry O'Neill: Thank you very much. So, I'm here today as a representative of the Archdiocese of— Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver, and it was actually a bit of an honour and a surprise to me when I— when the Archbishop and his designate asked me to take part in this. And they did ask me because I've been the prime reporter for the BC Catholic Newspaper of the incidents that I'll refer to during this presentation here. And I've done several stories for the BC Catholic Newspaper, and I'm also an editorial advisor for the BC Catholic Newspaper, it's a weekly newspaper.

So, let me tell you a little about the Archdiocese of Vancouver. So, it was actually, in its early form, it was formed in 1863. It was called, not the Archdiocese then, but it was called Vicariate Apostolic of British Columbia. So, but it didn't become an official Archdiocese until 1908. So, it's been in British Columbia since the very beginning of the western settlement of British Columbia.

It's headed today by Archbishop J. Michael Miller, he's the Chief Pastor and the leader of the Archdiocese. He looks after both spiritual and administrative needs of the pastors and the people.

¹ BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner

Let me tell you how big we are. The Archdiocese is 120,000 square kilometers, covers BC's lower mainland, stretches right up to Powell River, but strangely not to Whistler, so that's part of the Kamloops Archdiocese. There are, by our latest census count, 446,000 Roman Catholics, baptized Catholics within the boundary.

We have 77 parishes within the Archdiocese of Greater Vancouver— of Vancouver. There are 52 schools and four institutions of higher education. There are 207 priests, 95 religious sisters, 34 permanent deacons, and 30 religious brothers.

So, it's a significant size operation. I can't give you square footage or square meters of the buildings that operate, the schools, the gyms, the church halls, the churches, but you can appreciate that it's pretty substantial.

I'd just like to share it a little bit about myself as well. That it did come as a surprise to me that I'm even in this position as an editorial advisor and writer for the BC Catholic, but it was my career for three and a half, or close to three and a half decades when I retired to get into city politics. I was a City Councillor in Coquitlam until three years ago, when I retired from that. And after retiring from that is when the editor of the BC Catholic and delegate— designate of the Archbishop asked me to get more involved in the newspaper, lend my experience both in public affairs and as a journalist to the newspaper, and it's been quite a rewarding job.

I've been very active in the community as well. I currently serve on several boards and associations, but I think the most significant one right now that I work with— do a lot of work with is the Talitha Koum Society. We operate two recovery homes for women recovering from addictions. We operate them in Coquitlam, and we're kind of unique because we allow the women to bring their young children with them, and we found that really helped quite a bit. I've been on the board of the Coquitlam Foundation and Signal Hill Life Education Society

I'm also a core member of the Vancouver Collective Against Sexual Exploitation, and I help with communications there. I'm a founder and continue to organize, for the last quarter of a century, an operation called "Blooms and Rooms" where we visit seniors and seniors' homes, or long-term care facilities and give them flowers and visits. Since COVID, we haven't been able to do that very— very often.

I've won several journalistic awards over the years. One of my proudest was the BC Christian Coalition gave me an award for journalistic integrity, and I wasn't writing for a Christian organization at the time, so that was kind of interesting. I've been awarded Distinguished Citizenship in Humanitarianism by the Red Cross Society, and Canada Blood Services. It's connected to my long-time support of both organizations' blood donations, and other things like that. So, I worked in Victoria for the French Provincial Legislature as a reporter for Canadian Press. I've edited magazines and newspapers, I was a silent editor of a TV news station in Vancouver, so lots of experience.

So, what brings us here? What brings us here, is what happened late last spring in Kamloops with the discovery of disturbed ground, which is a pretty good indication that that was the site of a graveyard next to the Kamloops residential school. And in the months that followed, there was a conflagration, I would say, of anti-Catholic hatred across Canada.

And there were arsons, churches burned to the ground, and I'm talking now generally about Christian churches, but also specifically about Catholic churches, also specifically about Catholic churches in our Archdiocese.

Luckily, no Roman Catholic churches in the Archdiocese of Vancouver were burned to the ground. It's not really lucky, but from my point of view, from whom I'm representing, it's doesn't— it didn't affect us. But there were acts of vandalism, and certainly communication of hatred towards Catholics.



It was a very sad affair and was made even sadder by the, what I would say, very lax response from public officials. And even actually, responses that we felt were pouring figurative gasoline on the literal fires that were burning across Canada and in British Columbia. And I think the most— the most hurtful one came from the **[third party personal information removed]**, when in a tweet, in response to a new report about church burnings, she tweeted “Burn it all down”.

Now, that— that originally was, was supported by the board of BC Civil Liberties Association, and explained that she was speaking metaphorically that progressives, when they talk about radical change to society, will just say, burn it all down. But coming in the context, as it did of actual literal fires and actual churches being burnt down, an apparent response to the discovery of the disturbed ground and likely graveyard at the residential school, this was— this was shocking and very hurtful. And so, eventually after a week of controversy, she did resign. And so, but it was sort of indicative of a general lack of public and public figure pushback against these arsons and vandalisms. And I have— I’ll go over to some lists and where you can get— I’ll provide lists of— lists of arson attacks, vandalism attacks, and things like that. I’ve got all sorts of links that I can send to you if you’d like. I think one of the typical things that upset Catholics, certainly upset the people in the Archdiocese was, was a response from— from public figures like the Premier of British Columbia, John Horgan, who instead of a strong denunciation of vandalism and the arson attacks, said this is not the way forward. Well, would a public figure like that have said the same thing if religious gathering places of other— of other institutions, of other religions had been attacked in the same way that the Catholics and the Christian churches were being attacked? I don’t know.

A close friend and former chief of staff to Prime Minister Trudeau in reaction to the outburst of burnings and arsons called it understandable. Okay, now, would you have seen or heard the same responses if the targeted the attacks were any other religious organization? Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist. One doesn’t think so.

Perhaps, the person who put all of this together and expressed the strongest outrage, and it wasn’t me, I was doing factual reporting. It was **[third party personal information removed]** of the Vancouver Sun. And I would really recommend that you take a look at this article from July 22nd of 2021. You’re probably familiar with **[third party personal information removed]**, a very well-respected, renowned writer of religious issues, multicultural issues, and immigration issues. He’s been with The Sun for at least three decades, as far as I know.

And this column was not much different between Islamophobia and Christophobia. You don’t actually hear the word Christophobia very often, do you? But it is definitely out there. And he made many of the same points that I’ve just, sort of, made in general before you at this— during this hearing here at this meeting. He called what was going on, had been going on for almost two months, “Violent bigotry.” And he said, according to his calculation the past month, and he broke this July 22nd, there have been 25 Canadian churches being burned to the ground, defaced or vandalized. And of course, he also noted that in Surrey that week a Coptic Orthodox Church was burned to the ground. That arsonist was eventually charged, arrested, and convicted of crime, and that just happened in the last couple of weeks.

So, interestingly, none of these arsons or vandalism attacks was there letters published by the people who are responsible, by personal manifesto, saying why they’re doing this, that — that I was able to see. That it was, I think, in terms of explaining why they wanted to do them like, as you traditionally see, especially in a Hollywood film or something, somebody has a terrorist attack and they issue a manifesto taking credit for it and saying more of this will happen unless you do something. We didn’t get any of that. So, it’s kind of— but everybody knew why it was happening at that time. It was because— and personally speaking, and I’m not speaking for the Archdiocese here, but I personally think that the coverage of the— the initial coverage especially, of the discovery of the disturbed ground like the cemetery graveyard was very sensationalistic, and was misleading.

I had so many conversations I personally had to be involved with after people would say, “Well, why aren’t people being charged with murder now?” And I said, well, to begin with, likely anybody— if any murders



did take place, that— that was half a century or three quarters of a century ago. These things all took place a long time ago and nobody alive now would be responsible.

But secondly, according even to the reports associated with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, these were not— there was no evidence of murders, and I actually interviewed and spoke with **[third party personal information removed]**, who wrote the report for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

He talked about the horrible conditions in the residential schools, and the lack of support from the Federal Government in terms of budgeting and everything like that, leading to terrible health conditions, and terrible living conditions. And that as— as diseases swept through communities and the reservations themselves, nearby they also hit the residential schools very, very hard. And this was no— you know, as the Church has said many, many times over the last at least three decades, the Catholic Church should never have been involved in the residential schools, should not have taken this responsibility on from the Federal Government, and that there's much to apologize for, and very sorrowful. And it was wonderful to see Pope Francis just the other day, issue such a heartfelt and deep apology as well for the Church's role in residential schools.

The Archbishop has apologized at least a half a dozen times over the last many years and reiterated the apology again, shortly after the discovery in Kamloops. So, there was a lack of context and the media also talked about them. In the first couple of days, you might recall, they talked about a mass grave being found there.

[Technical Difficulties]

There were reports of mass graves, and a distinct connotation there is associated with war crimes where people are— where the bodies of people who are killed are dumped into a mass grave. And there was nothing like that ever thought that took place in and around Kamloops, or in speaking to **[third party personal information removed]**, who did the report for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he never found any evidence of that. He found evidence of graveyards, cemeteries that were poorly maintained, and then not maintained at all, and no plan was ever done to maintain these things. Primarily, cemeteries of students that died because of disease and bad conditions, and things like that.

So, I mean, you can find his report yourself. And I reported on that in a very level... we— the Catholic Church is very, very apologetic for its role in the residential schools, and I personally feel it from the bottom of my heart. But at the same time, the facts need to be the facts, correct? And we need to help Canadians understand the full range of what happened there. And I think, to help them understand what those cemeteries were all about and how they came to be, and they weren't mass graves, and they weren't mass murders and things like that, but that was the impression that was left, and that was the one I had to try to correct, personally, several times. That our coverage tried to just put that on the record. But, you know, where coverage is, in the BC Catholic it's primarily Catholics reading the BC Catholic and that doesn't get out to the— to the general public.

So, there's still that effect there. Now, interestingly enough, you will note something that, by the way, **[third party personal information removed]** talked about, is just try at the time talking anything about the Catholic Church on Twitter and you will be subjected to hatred and contempt and belittlement, and everything like that. And he quoted, actually, a blogger who was saying some terrible things. And it's actually one of the reasons, probably the prime reason why in my consent form, I did not give consent to using my testimony on your social media. I'm quite happy to see it in the formal report and in news releases and things like that, but in social media I know what's going to happen. People are just going to— "Oh there's the Catholic Church, they murdered people, they did this, that and that." So, yeah.

So, that's the broad text of what I wanted to talk about, okay, the broad input of what I wanted to talk about. I am just going to quickly go through the stories that I wrote, which made me the expert for the Archdiocese, were the stories that I wrote. And I'll just talk to you— I'll get them on the record and I can



send you the links. The first one was June 3rd, 2021. That was just shortly after the news about the discovery of the disturbed ground, which indicated a cemetery. That was titled: "'Mass grave' narrative misses need for answers and action: researcher".

So, this was the story I did with **[third party personal information removed]**, and he was like, he was appalled at the coverage and hysteria and the misinformation and sensationalism. And what he was saying, and what I reported was, really, the story is what happened a century ago, why it happened, and why my recommendations and the recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission weren't followed like he recommended, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommended at the time it came up five years previous, like, start spending money now to identify all these cemeteries, graveyards, and look after them. And repatriate bodies if they need to be— if they've been found, and by the way, there has still not been a single human remain found in any of these, that might surprise you. There have been echoes using ground penetrating radar indicating disturbed grounds, so that— that's another thing that people don't understand, and that's something **[third party personal information removed]** talked to me about as well.

But anyway, very important story, I think, just to get things on the record from, and was all his point of view, it wasn't the Church there. There are other stories of course done in that— those additions about the controversy and the horrors, and about the need for apologies, forgiveness, and to reconcile and for people to become healthy, without a doubt.

So, the next major story I did was July 8th, and that was a response to church attacks or indicative of hatred and intolerance for religion. And that was— the lead for that story came from the Catholic Civil Rights League. It's based in Toronto, and we talked at the time about 20 arson and vandalism attacks on churches across the country. And what was very interesting is the aptly named **[third party personal information removed]**, who's the spokesman for the Catholic Civil Rights League, noted that calming voices that were coming were primarily coming from Indigenous leaders who were saying "Stop burning down our churches, they still have great value for us."

Many of our— many of our First Nations brothers and sisters still go to these churches, and so nobody knows who is bringing these churches down. There have been no charges connected to— that I've heard of, for a lot of these small churches in the countryside, and things like that. So, he noted that, so I— that story also quoted **[third party personal information removed]** for The Centre of Israel and Jewish Affairs, talking about how hurtful and hateful the anti-Catholic attacks were. He was calling on harsher, like, more rigorous investigation of those crimes as well.

I also talked to **[third party personal information removed]**, who you might recall, ran for the BC liberal leadership, and is First Nations heritage himself. And he was one of the— one of the people who spoke up, very critical of **[third party personal information removed]**, the executive director of the BC Civil Liberties Association for saying "Burn it all down." Anyway, there was another story the BC Catholic published was July 22nd and that was police— Vancouver police are calling for public vigilance in the Church— in the wake of the church attacks. And so, at that time they were one of the only. It was very interesting— as these individual attacks took place, there were very few stories in the mainstream media that linked them all together, and this to me indicated some sort of blind spot in the way that the public and the public media was viewing these things. Each seemed to be reported individually, but where were the big pieces?

Where was the big outcry into "Let's have— let's have a public inquiry into why all this is happening," you know. When we see there's— there's, and in a lot of other instances, terrible events happening. There's always a cry from opposition MLAs, opposition MPs, public bodies saying the government's got to get to the root of this, and get to the bottom of this. That wasn't happening here at all, and that's something that **[third party personal information removed]** wrote about, suggested in his column as well. So, Vancouver police did call it— I think the perfect example of this lack of putting things together, was the Vancouver Sun did a story on that burning of the Coptic church in Surrey. A full detailed story, without a single word about any other church burnings that had taken place that summer. It was reported on as a single standalone event, and that was just another indication of our society is not taking this seriously enough.



And I have a feeling that— and this is personal, this is not speaking on behalf of the Archdiocese, but that sort of feeling was that many people thought the Church had it coming. That, you know, for the terrible things that were done half a century ago, or a century ago, the Church had it coming. **[third party personal information removed]** — and of course, that's completely unfair, that's not part of our law, that's not part of our moral system. Two wrongs don't make a right. And it's something **[third party personal information noted]**.

He says, "Well, people do seem to be indicating that, but they're forgetting that the whole residential school system, of course, was founded by the Federal Government, and nobody's trying to burn down the parliament buildings, very interesting that they're taking it all out on the Catholics or the Christians". And he's not— he wasn't suggesting that, of course, and I'm not suggesting at all, but this double standard that seemed to be there. And I think the double standard is something— that sort of feeling that there's a double standard in terms of the outrage and the concern about hate crimes carried over, Ms. Govender, right to the announcement of your inquiry. Because on all the publicity regarding it, and I looked at your— the recording of your press conference and the terms of reference and the press release that came out. Yeah, there were specific mentions made of various groups that had been subject of increased hatred over last couple of years, and there is no— and this announcement of the Commission, it came within weeks, or maybe a month at the most, of the last of this conflagration of hate crimes against churches across Canada and in British Columbia— no specific mention of that, and I wrote a story about that quoting people saying, "It seems to be kind of like, 'what's going on here?'".

Now it was your— the publicity department of the Human Rights Commission did say, "Well, you know, point to me to the fact that the terms of reference of the inquiry do include hatred of any kind, and any of the protective groups, including religion, so yes, your concerns would be covered under that aspect". Well, thank you that's great, good to know, but it still seemed like, how could the BC Human Rights Commission not mention what had been pretty substantial series of hate crimes directed at Christians, and from my point of view, Catholics, I'm here speaking on behalf of Roman Catholics, that had taken place in June and July, just weeks before you announced your inquiry.

So, just to quickly go through some other stories. I also— and it's interesting enough, I did— I reached out and I found a think tank activist group based in Vienna, Austria and contacted that woman who heads that, and she keeps track of anti-Christian hate crimes throughout Europe, and she had seen a huge increase in, for some reason, France, where a lot of churches being burned down in France.

And I also found that there was the— bishops in the United States were seeing a big rise in anti-Catholic hate crime in in the United States as well, so I did stories on that, I found that quite interesting. The story that I did on the inquiry's announcement was headlined by the editor, "Inquiry into hate somehow left out burning of churches". The Inquiry actually hasn't left that out, but it was the announcement of the inquiry that left it out.

And the final specific story I did, and thank you, Ms. Hyman, for the "hurry up" here, because I do have something else that I need to get on the record here, a couple of other things, was a story just on March 31st. I did it on the eve of the Aboriginal leaders meeting with Pope Francis in Rome, and at the time there was some tension here, and all Catholics were wondering how this would turn out, knowing how badly the last time this was really in the news turned out, two years previous, with the burning of the churches and everything like that. But if somehow this meeting didn't go well and if somehow the publicity over the meeting was sensationalistic or misleading, we were wondering, are we going to see another conflagration of hate crimes against churches. And luckily it didn't happen, the meeting turned out beautifully well, it was reported very well in many ways, so very happy to see that.

So one of the questions you asked is, "What role do you think the pandemic played in the rise of hatred towards organizations?" Well, that's very hard to say. We know that it certainly is this one event that happened in the middle of the pandemic. And I think just about everybody you ask will say that during the pandemic people have been maybe a little tenser, maybe a little quick to leap to conclusions, or a little less thoughtful, and sometimes— hard to generalize. Did the fact that this took place during the, you know, this



discovery, and the report from Kamloops took place during the pandemic, did that make the reaction worse? Don't know. Don't know. So it happened during the pandemic, though, so it may well have, we don't know.

How has our organization responded? Well, the— we do know that the Archdiocese did send out specific instructions to every one of the 77 parishes to please report any act of vandalism, any act of arson, any threatening letters, things like that, so they keep track of them. I do not have a report on what that ended up doing, but that was the one report, the one thing that I can say definitely happened.

I also do know that the Canadian Catholic Civil Rights League Canada has a database that they are using to keep track of all the hate crimes attacks against Catholics across Canada. And as well I know that a group called, I think it's True North, that has compiled on August 23rd 2021 a list of the 68 churches throughout Canada that were vandalized or burned since the residential school announcement. And of those 68, 23 of the arson attacks were in B.C., and 14 of the vandalism attacks were in the province. Six of the arson attacks were against Catholic churches, while 10 of the vandalism attacks were against Catholic facilities.

There were no church burnings in the Archdiocese of Vancouver, but we know there were several acts of vandalism, we know of threats. There was a news report done on a small church in the Musqueam reserve land at UBC that put up extra security because of ongoing threats and concerns. In the news most recently was the vandalism attack on St. Jude's Church in East Vancouver. Two young women, twin sisters actually, have pleaded guilty to throwing orange paint on the front doors, and there are other acts of vandalism as well. And I know just the Church I attend, it's been subject to acts of vandalism and threats as well, just threatening typed letters, we have a little display, a pro-life display at the front of our church, just a little grave marker marking deaths of unborn children, and that was vandalized within the last year.

So I wanted to let you know about that, and I think that's probably got to the end of my time. I do want to say that we at the Catholic Church has made great efforts in Vancouver to be ecumenical in its relations with all the other faiths, made great strides I think in terms of the truth and reconciliation. The leadership of Archbishop J. Michael Miller has been exemplary, and the sort of openness that he has, the compassion he has. I think it's the people, you know, if people were aware of how deeply we care, and how deeply we are trying to find answers and move forward on these issues I think the world would— it would be a more peaceful and less hateful place, but I think that's all I need to say right now. So, thank you.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Thank you for that, Terry. You actually, right at the end there, answered some of my earlier questions, so that's good. I just wanted to see— one of my questions for you is going to be around the statistics and any numbers you have around the numbers of churches that have faced arson or vandalism of some kind. So, you mentioned a few sources there, the True North report, the Archdiocese report, and the database. Are you able to send us any of that information?

Terry O'Neill: I've got all of those links, and I can send them, and I've got links to the stories that I was involved with, so I've got those ready. I can send them to you. There we go.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Okay, perfect. Thank you, that would be excellent.

Terry O'Neill: I can send them to you, and I should send them to up to what, to you Emily?

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Yes, that would be great.

Terry O'Neill: Is there anything that you think that I need to clarify, or maybe you think, "Oh, really? Does the Archdiocese see it that way, or does Terry see it that way?" Like maybe I can explain something, I mean it's— I don't have a written report. I have a whole bunch of notes in front of me, and just wanted to go through those as well as I could and make it clear out of my mind at the same time.



Commissioner Kasari Govender: Well, thank you. I do have— I have a couple of more follow-up questions. So, I just want to get the numbers piece out of the way, and then— and you talked about how many churches were burned, so that's very useful information. I wondered if you had any more information about the police response to arson and vandalism. You talked a couple of times about charges that were laid and guilty pleas. I wondered if you had any of the numbers there.

Terry O'Neill: Yeah, I think that's it. I don't know if anybody asked— we've been trying to follow it closely and just the only ones that we know of in the Vancouver area anyway, and so there might be more for the rest of the province. But where the St. Jude's one with the two sisters went through, and then the one about the Coptic church in Surrey. Those are the only ones we know about for sure. That I know about, and there may be more from up north, or something that escaped my attention or somewhere in the interior.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Okay. You spoke about the connection of hate, or you talk about what's been happening internationally, and what you've learned internationally, and I wondered if you had any thoughts about the connections here, given the kinds of sort of causal connections you've drawn here in BC. How do you see those replicating elsewhere?

Terry O'Neill: Okay, right, because obviously hate crimes in Europe, and the burning of churches in Europe who wouldn't— they wouldn't know about— they wouldn't have known about what was going on here, and this precedes, actually, the concern in France especially precedes. Well, that's a really great question, certainly some of it must be connected to the handling of, and the— sorry, not the handling of, to all the horrible revelations about the horrible acts of sexual and physical abuse that have been associated with, members of the church, priests and brothers and things like that. That is certainly, you know, that's going on for quite a while now, and there were, I think, created a lot of antipathy towards the Church.

But beyond that there is a growing secularization of society as well, as you're quite aware. We're in a post-Christian era, for a long time Western society was in a— there was a Christian era. We are definitely in a post-Christian era, and that's probably connected with that, too. These are— I don't think these are sensational or outrageous things for me to assert, I think that it's factual. But the direct connection between all the hate crimes, I don't know. I don't know about direct connections.

You know it's interesting, if you look in, you know, the mind of somebody who's an arsonist and somebody who feels that he or she has the right to burn somebody else's property down or to vandalize somebody else's property. And there may be a proximate cause and there may be a deeper cause as well, and, you know, there's not a worldwide conspiracy, but there's something happening out there, right? And it's affecting a certain number of people in the same way. And so these things are happening, it's difficult to sort of say, well, this or that, right?

But one of the questions that was asked I didn't quite address in terms of, you know, what can be addressed about hate crime against the Catholic Church. I really do think that there needs to be less picking and choosing by our civic leaders about which hate crimes they get upset about. Which hate crimes they stand up in saying, "This has to stop, we're a civil society, we are the rule of law. It's terrible that you're doing this, stop doing this". We didn't get that from enough people. Actually, we got the opposite from at least one significant person, and that needs to be done, you know. We've got to respect the rule of law, we've got to respect morality, what's right and what's wrong. We have to be just. I think we're after justice. Justice is one of the four cardinal virtues, so that's a good thing.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: And the last question I have for you builds on that actually it sounds like, I was going to ask you about recommendations. So, one of your recommendations seems like a focus on responsive leadership in the province. Do you have any other recommendations you want to add to that, or how you would see...?

Terry O'Neill: Oh no, we have not talked about we need more laws or anything like that. You know, it's— I think it's unusual, it's a little uncomfortable for me to be saying— for me to be here representing the



Archdiocese, saying we're a victim here, you know? It's— we're— we try to be leaders in society, we lead by example and by works, and the proof of our pudding should be in the eating, as the expression goes, and that should be— there should be a lot of very good people doing very good things associated with the Church. And for us to sort of look to another agency to say well, you know, like you should be doing these things. It's not exactly the sort of thing we— that the Church does a lot of, you know. But you're having this Inquiry, and so well, let's participate, let's put the oar into the water there, and you know what's fair is fair, and so let's be fair.

Let's have a level playing field. Let's not look the other way. Let's not— so if there's education involved and I do believe that your commission is primarily, you know, it's an activist organization but it's also— I'm by the way, I'm friends with **[third party personal information removed]**, who was one, I think the first Commissioner of the BC Human Rights Commission many, many years ago. She and I became, and where I might say this, because she was mostly involved in education. I'm friends with her because she and I have a relationship for about five years where we were weekly columnists in the newspaper here in the Coquitlam area where I live called Tri City News.

And we did a column called Face to Face, where we worked on— we agreed to an issue to debate, and we debated it. She from her position, and I from my position. I'm a socially conservative Catholic, she's not, and very different than me. We got along famously. And she's interested in education and I'm interested in education. I want to touch people's hearts to change their minds, I don't want to hit them over the head with a 2x4. So, I hope— that's by the way, sort of a G. K. Chesterton quote. He says the only thing you can— it's easier to, you know, change somebody's opinion by touching their hearts with something. The only thing you can do with their head is hit them with a piece of wood or something, you know, because you know, rigorous, tough, logical arguments, they never persuade anybody, right? You feel better sometimes when you write those. But so if, you know, if I'm looking for something that comes from you, it's from your heart, from the Commission's heart, about the importance of respect, the importance of understanding, or importance of not jumping to conclusions.

I had a— I want to share this with you since I've got a minute or two left here. When I was in public office every issue that came up, I had an immediate response to it because of all my years as a journalist. And I had to identify whether the response was actually a prejudice, a policy— based on a prejudice, based on a policy, or based on a principle, and if I identified my response to be based on a prejudice, I better be really prepared to change my response, to change my opinion on that public policy issue. Some prejudices, by accident, are right, but most, quite often they're not. If I identified that my reaction was based on a policy that I held, I'd probably held that policy because I'd done research written a story on it, given a speech on it, or something like that, but those facts and figures upon which that policy was based might have changed. So, I could be more likely to change that policy, but if I identified— I could change that policy, but not as easy as changing prejudice.

If I identify that policy is based on principle, I said I'm not going to change that. These are my principles, and what I'm looking to you in the Commission for, is an enunciation of principles. What are the principles that we believe in? The basic principles of justice and fairness, and of equity, and of inclusion that includes people who are being discriminated against today and are being targeted today. People are being subjected to hatred today. Now that's Roman Catholics.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Thank you very much, Terry. We really appreciate you being here with us and sharing your thoughts and look forward to seeing that list of sources. It would be really helpful to us. Emily, did you want to say any final comments?

Emily Chan: Just wanted to thank you as well, Terry, for taking the time to be with us. Feel free to send me those materials, and we'll also touch base with you when the recording is ready to be posted on the website. You'll have a chance to review it before it goes live in case you want to change your consent, so I'll be touching base with you at that point as well.

Terry O'Neill: Okay.



Emily Chan: Just a lot of thanks from all of us.

Terry O'Neill: Thank you. So, are all the recordings of all the submissions going to be posted to the website?

Commissioner Kasari Govender: No, they— it depends on people's consent, so some people have consented, some haven't. Some have consented to only portions being released, so it's on a case-by-case basis.

Terry O'Neill: Okay. Are you able to tell me, like, is a majority going on? Or like— I don't want to be like one of three recordings that are on.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Yeah, no that's fair.

Carly Hyman: That's fair, yeah. I don't have the numbers, but I would say it's a significant number going on, but there's also you know— a good number of people that have chosen to keep their presentations confidential for some of the same reasons as you've, you know, articulated today.

Terry O'Neill: Oh, yeah, yeah, okay.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: And we're quite aware of that issue, I appreciate what you're saying about that. And at the beginning, actually, we only had a couple people who had consented, and we were going to go back to them and say we're not comfortable posting such a small number for exactly that reason, even if you've consented, just because it draws attention in a particular way, so we now have more consents, so we're putting more up.

Terry O'Neill: Okay, Good. Thank you.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Thank you very much, Terry.

Terry O'Neill: Thank you very much, and good luck with your work, and thank you for the work you're doing.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Thank you. Take care.

Terry O'Neill: Thank you. Bye-bye.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Bye.

