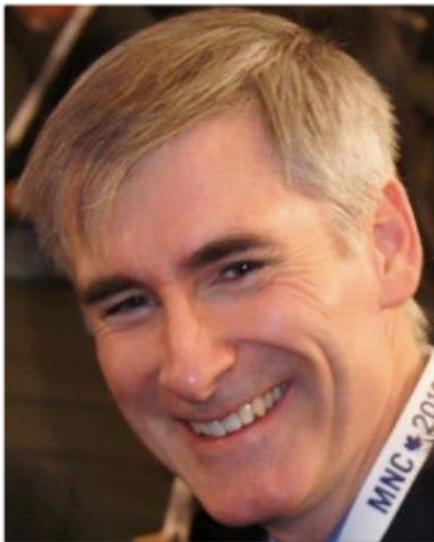


# THE EVANGELICAL OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SQUARE

## *When Truth Becomes Irrelevant All that Remains is Power* David MacKenzie, April 19th, 2017

A society that cares less about policy, cares more about police. Nothing could illustrate this better than the recent experience of *Rebel Media* personality, David Menzies, while reporting on the Conservative Riding



Association of **King-Vaughan**, northwest of Toronto. When the rule of law is no longer respected by an organization's supposed elite, the force of law is all that's left. Due process bows out; the little guy bows down. That's how it works.

Put another way, a society that cares less about truth, cares more about power. We see this inverse relationship everywhere. We live inside a culture prone to fraud but eager for accolades. We'll gladly lie and cheat for fame— which is just one way of saying that we'll gladly trade the truth for power. Think of the myriad ways

in which fantasy is peddled in the hope of celebrity. We **barely blink anymore** at those bottom-dwelling web-ads which tell us that some blonde local-yokel is now earning \$8K/week. Pictures apparently don't

lie— she’s partying right now on her private jet. And, amazingly, she’s from everyone’s hometown!

Where truth becomes irrelevant, what remains is power. This trend has various facets. A society that no longer cares about impartial principle becomes increasingly interested in advocacy. And what, precisely, is advocacy if it is not the desire for greater influence and power? Hence, in times when truth matters less, partisanship matters more. Tribes and tribalism matter more.

Sounds like us.

A society that cares less about truth, cares more about political image. That’s us, for certain.

Recently, an Irish investigative team stated publicly that in the now infamous 2011 trial of American doctor, Kermit Gosnell (the Philadelphia abortionist convicted of multiple counts of infanticide), prosecutors only brought eight counts of murder against him out of concerns that the annual **murder rate in Pennsylvania** might be significantly skewed if the full count was considered.

Sometimes truth hurts. Yet, if you haven’t noticed, culture is now more dominated by subjective feelings than by objective thoughts. Hence, it hates when it hurts.

In a Myers-Briggs sense, it increasingly looks as though all the thinkers have retired, leaving nothing but the feelers to dominate the culture. Dr. Jordan Peterson, a notable exception, is an eminent Canadian example of what happens when **thinkers think irrespective of how cultures feel**. Peterson is routinely swarmed by visceral outrage— but never logically beaten in debate. His graduate students are deprived of research grants— not because of shoddy research but rather because of the **coercive use of financial power**. Someone is offended.

And when truth becomes fundamentally offensive, all that remains is power.

Ironically, a society that feels truth should never hurt, usually lacks emotional maturity. It is an adolescent society. Moreover, a culture that doesn't care about truth, also cares less about principle. Its news broadcasts are more sentimental than substantive. At some point, such a society no longer even cares about definitions. It will claim that it matters less **what *Islamophobia* is**, and more that we're outraged about it. Such a culture will, likewise, believe it better that we can *read into* the law, rather than exegete the true, original meaning. Consequently, such a "liberal" culture will despise an Antonin Scalia, and seek to reject a Neil Gorsuch.

Additionally, a society that cares less about truth, doesn't bother to argue on truth's behalf. It increasingly finds the justice system too adversarial, and the parliamentary system embarrassing and distasteful. Perhaps this is why Liberal Senate leader Peter Harder, when musing upon ideals, thinks a caucus of organized **opposition is detrimental** to Senate politics.

Actually, he's only partly correct. In truth, organized opposition is in no way detrimental to the quest for truth. Predictably, however, **organized opposition is detrimental to power**.

And there is yet another oddity about these times in which we find ourselves. As Universities have **debated less about philosophy and theology**, they have obsessed more about the issue of power. Moral authority has been disqualified, shouted-down and even beaten-down, by hostile theories and accusations of "privilege". The Marxist-inspired rage is palpable, and even predictable, because the issue is one of power, not of truth.

Historically, envy and political rage once put a man on a cross. His purpose, he said to Pontius Pilate, was "to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37 ESV). Pilate didn't care about truth, and even said as much. Not long after, however, he did ask Jesus this question: "do you

realize that I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” (John 19:10 NIV).

Of course, Pontius. In a raw Roman world, what matters is Caesar and not Socrates.

Power will generally attempt to kill the truth— all the way up to the One who says, “I am the truth”.

It is a sobering political principle, well worth remembering. And, to this day, well worth rejecting.

