

Cardus Counters Public Assumptions

A Public Letter¹

How many assumptions have you made today? Maybe you took for granted that someone started the coffee pot this morning. Maybe you assumed other cars on the road would stop at red lights as you drove through an intersection. We make plenty of assumptions every day that help us predict how the world works without having concrete empirical evidence.

While assumptions can be helpful in getting us to work and school safely each day. Some common assumptions in Canadian society are actually detrimental to a flourishing public sphere. Here at Cardus we are keenly aware that (in the eyes of the public) faithful perspectives are disqualifying one's participation in some of our national debates, local communities, and even our schools. Why is this happening? Simply put, people across Canada are assuming that faith no longer has a role in our common life.

We believe differently. Cardus believes that marginalizing voices of authentic believers is harmful to our democracy. We have outlined two examples of how recent Cardus research has exposed false assumptions and put forward a better path.

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A Brochure

Cardus is observing a troubling trend:

(In the public's eye,) faithful perspectives are disqualifying one's participation in our national debates, in our local and school communities, and even in our families. Christians may also be disqualifying themselves as communities withdraw from public institutions and let "cultural credentials" lapse.

Prompted by the understanding that Canadian society has developed an amnesia surrounding the current and historical role

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of faith in the life of our nation, went across Canada asking Cardus constituents for their insight and discovered that a number of common assumptions have disqualified faithful perspectives from the table at local, provincial and national levels.

Here are two examples of how Cardus research challenges the logic of these assumption and provides meaningful alternatives...

Common Assumption #1:

Our civil society institutions are essentially secular.

Cardus research finds that:

Civil society institutions such as families, independent and religious schools and churches cultivate virtue for the common good. That is why Cardus measures the contributions that churches and Christian schools make to the social, cultural, and spiritual well-being of the communities in which they find themselves.

Common Assumption #2:

Faith does not belong in the public square.

Cardus research finds that:

Over half of Canadians think their religious beliefs and personal faith are very or quite important in terms of how they think about public issues and the problems facing society. This understanding is also central to our work as a public, Christian, credible think-tank.

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The truth is that faithful perspectives are very much an important part of our society. We will push against harmful assumptions and we will promote faithful perspectives in public conversations. That is why Cardus exists. And we couldn't do it without you....