




HOUSE OF PRAYERS



An analysis of prayers in the
Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, 2003-2019

BC Humanist Association
September 2019



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House of Prayers:

An Analysis of Prayers in the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, 2003-2019

Authors: Dr. Teale N. Phelps Bondaroff, Ian Bushfield, Dr. Katie E. Marshall, Ranil Prasad, and Noah Laurence.

Abstract

This study investigates the practice of opening sittings of the BC Legislature with prayer. It examines prayers delivered in the Legislature from October 6, 2003, to February 12, 2019 (N=873). In exploring the legal and philosophical arguments around this practice, the study concludes that legislative prayer tends to favour Christianity over other faith traditions, favours religious belief over irreligious belief, and it violates the state's duty of religious neutrality. The quantitative analysis of prayers, among other things, revealed that 71.2% were religious in nature, and of the 20.2% of prayers where religion was identified, 93.1% were identified as Christian. The analysis found that fewer MLAs are delivering prayers, and that prayers are getting longer and more religious. The study concludes by recommending various paths to removing prayer from the BC Legislature.

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We acknowledge that this work was completed on unceded indigenous territories, including the shared lands of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh (Squamish) & səliłwətaʔl (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples; and the lands of the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lkwungen-speaking peoples.

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Executive Summary

Overview

It may come as a surprise to many, but before every sitting of the BC Legislature, the Speaker invites an MLA to lead the chamber in prayer. MLAs are given the option of delivering a prayer from a list of five ‘Sample Prayers’ or one of their own devising. As a result, the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature can vary considerably, ranging from sectarian prayers invoking the name of Jesus, to attempts at poetry, to partisan attacks.

To date, no study has sought to investigate these daily prayers – to better understand their content, and the practices that surround them. The goal of the study is to create a comprehensive understanding of prayer in the BC Legislature. It examines prayers delivered in the Legislature from October 6, 2003, when video recordings were made available, to February 12, 2019, the end of the 3rd Session of the 41st Legislature (N=873). In pursuing a better understanding the nature of prayer in the BC Legislature, the report seeks to establish the extent to which this practice fairly reflects the diversity of BC, and inform inquiry into whether or not this practice is acceptable in a modern, multicultural province.

The Arguments

Before examining and analyzing the prayers themselves, the report surveys various controversies surrounding legislative prayer in Canada, and examines the arguments emerging from these controversies. In addition to the highly influential Canadian Supreme Court decisions in *Saguenay* declaring the practice of opening municipal councils with a prayer to be a practice that discriminates against non-believers and which violates the state’s duty of religious neutrality, legislative prayer also:

- 1) Trivializes a sacred act – Many faith traditions consider prayer to be a highly personal and sacred act. This act is trivialized when politicians weave partisan jabs into their prayers.
- 2) Promotes a specific denomination over others – Even the most ecumenical of language will imply something about the nature of a god, or the type of relationship that adherents should have with that god, thereby elevating one denomination over others. Politicians are ill-equipped to navigate the delicate distinctions between denominations which have fueled sectarian conflict for millennia, and in fact their attempting to do so would be unconstitutional.
- 3) Promotes a particular religion over others – Crafting a universal ‘non-denominational’ prayer that will encompass all the diversity of religions and faith traditions is impossible. Instead, we see ‘non-sectarian’ prayers adopting Christian and Abrahamic structure and language – ending in ‘amen’ and referring to a deity as ‘Lord’ or ‘Heavenly Father.’

- 4) Is inherently exclusive – Reserving time for ‘prayer’ at the start of a meeting excludes both non-believers and those whose faith traditions do not include prayer, or even prayer in this form.
- 5) Excludes non-believers – The act of opening sittings with a prayer favours religious over irreligious beliefs, thereby excluding non-believers.

Method

While they are available on video, the contents of prayers delivered in the BC Legislature are not transcribed into the record by Hansard. As a result, we first employed a team of over 50 volunteers to transcribe all available prayers. In order to ensure reliable results, these were then coded by two coders, with a third checking for intercoder reliability. Prayers were coded for a variety of factors including structure, content, and religiosity. Quantitative analysis was then used to identify trends within the data.

Key Findings

Religiosity

- We categorize 71.2% of all the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature as religious. Of these, we were able to identify the religion for 21.7%.
- Of the prayers where we could identify the religion, 93.1% of these were identified as ‘Christian,’ and Christian prayers represented 20.2% of all of the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature.
- 91.9% of prayers adopted a prayer structure by ending in ‘Amen,’ and 53.8% of prayers included the name of a deity. Even 88.7% of the prayers coded as ‘secular’ were found to end in ‘Amen.’
- NDP MLAs were marginally more likely to deliver secular prayers, compared with Liberal MLAs (31.4% vs. 26.0% of prayers).
- Liberal MLAs were significantly more likely to deliver Christian prayers, with 25.4% of prayers given by Liberal MLAs being Christian, compared with 9.2% of prayers delivered by NDP MLAs.
- For both parties, the number of sectarian and Christian prayers have been steadily increasing.

Content

- There has been a steady increase in the amount of First Nations content in prayers, though only 6.0% of prayers contained First Nations content, and the vast majority of this content (85.7%) was the use of a single word.
- NDP MLAs were significantly more likely to include First Nations content than Liberal MLAs (11.7% versus 0.2%).

- Ten (10) prayers were found to have overt partisan content.
- MLAs are given the option of delivering one of five sample prayers, or a prayer of their own devising. The number of MLAs choosing either option was split evenly (50.0%).
- Liberal MLAs were significantly more likely to use sample prayers than NDP MLAs (64.0% vs. 35.0% of prayers).
- NDP MLAs were more likely to make alterations to the sample prayers when they used them, altering the sample prayers 55.1% of the time, compared with Liberal MLAs who only altered the sample prayers they used 22.5% of the time.
- The use of the sample prayers is on a steady decline, with more MLAs opting to deliver prayers of their own devising.

Prayer Length and Participation

- Religious prayers were generally found to be longer than secular ones.
- Liberal MLAs used 1.8 times more words when they were delivering a sectarian prayer, while NDP MLAs used 1.2 times as many words.
- Despite Christian prayers only making up 20.2% of the total prayers given in the BC Legislature, because they were significantly longer, they were composed of 25.6% of the 70,079 words used in prayers.
- The overall trend for MLAs of both parties is that prayers are getting longer.
- The number of MLAs delivering prayers is steadily declining over time, and a small number of MLAs are delivering most of the prayers.

We found that fewer MLAs are delivering prayers, and that prayers are getting longer and more religious. Looking at demographic data, we concluded that the types of prayers delivered in the BC Legislature do not reflect the diversity of beliefs in the province. Every non-Christian religion, with the exception to Judaism, was under-represented in the category of sectarian prayers and by all prayers in general. Additionally, there was no apparent mention of Sikhism, despite Sikh's making up nearly 5% of the population of BC. Prayer in the BC Legislature also entirely excluded non-believers, despite their constituting as much as 64% of the population.

Recommendations

Prayer in the BC Legislature favours Christianity over other faith traditions, favors religious belief over irreligious belief, and it violates the state's duty of religious neutrality. This report concludes by recommending that the BC Legislature abolish the practice of opening sittings with a prayer, and that it be replaced with nothing, a First Nations territorial acknowledgement, or a time for silent reflection. Should the BC Legislature wish to reform this practice, rather than abolishing it, the report concludes with several options designed to render the practice less discriminatory.

Introduction

It may come as a surprise to many, but before every sitting of the BC Legislature, the Speaker invites an MLA to lead the chamber in prayer. MLAs are given the option of delivering a prayer from a list of five ‘Sample Prayers’ or one of their own devising. As a result, the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature can vary considerably, ranging from sectarian prayers invoking the name of Jesus, to attempts at poetry, to partisan attacks.

To date, no study has sought to investigate these daily prayers – to better understand their content, and the practices that surround them. The goal of this study is to create a comprehensive understanding of prayer in the BC Legislature. We examine prayers delivered in the Legislature from October 6, 2003, when video recordings were made available, to February 12, 2019, the end of the 3rd Session of the 41st Legislature (N=873).

While they are available on video, the contents of prayers delivered in the BC Legislature are not transcribed into the record by Hansard. As a result, we first employed a team of over 50 volunteers to transcribe all available prayers. In order to ensure reliable results, these were then coded by two coders, with a third checking for intercoder reliability. Prayers were coded for a variety of factors including structure, content, and religiosity. Quantitative analysis was then used to identify trends within the data.

In pursuing a better understanding the nature of prayer in the BC Legislature, this report seeks to establish the extent to which this practice fairly reflects the diversity of BC, and inform inquiry into whether or not this practice is acceptable in a modern, multicultural province.

The report begins by outlining the rules and procedures concerning prayer in the BC Legislature. It then surveys the diversity of practices surrounding legislative prayer across Canada, before exploring some of the controversies that have arisen relating to this practice. We then provide a detailed examination of the Canadian Supreme Court ruling in *Saguenay*, a critical case addressing key issues associated with prayer at the municipal level. The report then delves into the various arguments for and against legislative prayer, reaching for responses from *Saguenay* and beyond. It then considers the issues surrounding applying *Saguenay* to legislatures, in light of parliamentary privilege.

We then turn to examine the content of prayers delivered in the BC Legislature. After a review of the extant literature, we detail our methods and the data that was generated. The report

then describes the results of our quantitative analysis of this data, for which we used R and number of other analytical tools. This is followed by a discussion where we outline some of the key findings of the report. We conclude by offering a number of recommendations for the BC Legislature it adopt should it wish to end the exclusionary and discretionary practice of opening sittings with a prayer.

Prayer in the BC Legislature – Rules and Procedures

Standing Order 25 establishes the daily routine of business in the BC Legislature, and delineates that morning and afternoon sittings will begin with a prayer.¹ Parliamentary practice further outlines that “prayers are held in the House with both officers and strangers present. Prayers are generally interdenominational and are delivered by Members, visiting clergy or the Speaker.”² This translates into a practice whereby caucuses “coordinate putting forward one of their member[s] to deliver the daily prayer or reflection,” which occurs before bills are introduced.³ Prayers are generally short, an average of 89 words, and speakers are given the choice of delivering a reflection of their own devising, or of reading one of five sample prayers (see Appendix 1).

Apart from the five sample prayers, content of the prayers delivered varies considerably, including alterations and combinations of the five standards prayers. A random sampling of prayers reveals sectarian declarations invoking the name of a specific deity, the reading of quotations from religious or historic figures, acknowledgements of current events, well-wishes for the recovery of members who have fallen ill or who are facing a personal or family tragedy, and on occasion poetry. Some MLAs even use the opportunity to praise a government policy or take a (subtle) partisan swipe across the aisle.

For sittings featuring a Speech from the Throne, a practice whereby the government outlines its legislative priorities at the beginning of a new session of the legislature, a member of the public representing a faith group is invited to deliver the prayer. This invitation is facilitated through the Office of the Speaker, and the general practice is for representatives of faith groups

¹ MacMinn, E. G. (2008). *Parliamentary practice in British Columbia*. 4th Ed. Government of British Columbia, 56.

² *Ibid.*

³ Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Acting Clerk of the House, correspondence with the author.

to be invited on a rotating basis. The Office of the Speaker notes that input from the Office of the Premier, as well as suggestions from MLAs, may also be submitted, and that the Office of the Speaker makes the necessary arrangements.⁴ The exact nature of this rotation, and which faith groups are included, is unclear.

Prayer in Other Legislatures

There is considerable diversity of practices across the country. BC is one of three jurisdictions in Canada where MLAs are given the opportunity to deliver prayers of their own devising; the other two jurisdictions are Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.⁵ New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Ontario open their daily sittings with the Lord's Prayer.⁶ Ontario has followed the Lord's Prayer with a prayer from a rotating schedule of prayers "reflecting Indigenous, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Baha'i and Sikh faiths – a change which was introduced in 2008 after a contentious public debate."⁷ Nova Scotia opens its daily sittings with a shortened version of the Lord's Prayer written by Speaker Mitchell in 1972.⁸

Alberta opens its sittings with a prayer devised and delivered by the Speaker, which varies considerably, and is one of the few prayers to be Hansardized. Saskatchewan and Manitoba open with a standard 'non-denominational' prayer read by the Speaker.⁹ In the Yukon, the speaker reads one of four sample prayers prior to the beginning of a sitting following the Speaker's procession, and the video broadcast of the proceedings are paused during the prayer.¹⁰

⁴ Bueckert, C., Hill, R., Parisotto, M., & Roberts, M. (2017). "Religion, faith and spirituality in the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia." *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, (Spring), 25-29, 25.

⁵ Fizet, C. (2010, June 2). "Reopening the discussion on the use of 'the Lord's Prayer' in the Ontario Legislature." Paper presented at the *2010 Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association*, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, 2; Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. (2015, May 27). "Rules of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories." Retrieved from https://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/rules_of_the_legislative_assembly_0.pdf, p.12; and Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. (n.d.). "Broadcasting: sessional broadcasting schedule." Retrieved from <https://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/documents-proceedings/broadcasting>.

⁶ Lanouette, M. (2009). "Prayer in the Legislature: tradition meets secularization." *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, (Winter), 1-7.

⁷ Bueckert *et al.* 2017:25; and see Lanouette 2009.

⁸ Fizet 2010:2.

⁹ Bueckert *et al.* 2017:25.

¹⁰ Nils Clarke, Speaker Yukon Legislative Assembly and MLA for Riverdale North, correspondence with author; Linda Kolody, Deputy Clerk, Yukon Legislative Assembly, correspondence with author; and see Yukon Legislative Assembly. (2018, April 23). "Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly." Retrieved from http://www.legassembly.gov.yk.ca/pdf/standing_orders_print.pdf; Yukon Legislative Assembly. (n.d.).

Quebec abolished the practice of opening sittings with a prayer in 1976, and now sittings begin with a time for reflection, and sittings of the Newfoundland and Labrador Legislature have never opened with a prayer.¹¹

The practice of opening a legislative sitting with prayer originates in the British Parliament, where it is generally believed to have been first adopted around 1558 during the reign of Elizabeth I.¹² The prayer was typically read by the Speaker, but “beginning in 1659 a Chaplain took over the role.”¹³ In Canada, the practice was adopted ten years after confederation, in 1877.¹⁴ Today, sittings of the House of Commons and the Senate begin with the speaker reading a standard ‘non-denominational’ prayer, followed by time for silent reflection.¹⁵ The English wording of the prayer used in the House of Commons reads as follows:

Almighty God, we give thanks for the great blessings which have been bestowed on Canada and its citizens, including the gifts of freedom, opportunity and peace that we enjoy. We pray for our Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth, and the Governor General. Guide us in our deliberations as Members of Parliament, and strengthen us in our awareness of our duties and responsibilities as Members. Grant us wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to preserve the blessings of this country for the benefit of all and to make good laws and wise decisions. Amen.¹⁶

The Senate recites the following prayer in both French and English:

Almighty God, we beseech thee to protect our Queen and to bless the people of Canada. Guide us in our endeavours; let your spirit preside over our deliberations so that, at this time assembled, we may serve ever better the cause of peace and justice in our land and throughout the world. Amen.¹⁷

Mirroring the British Parliament, this practice begins before the chamber is open to the public.¹⁸

“Coverage of proceedings.” Retrieved from <http://www.legassembly.gov.yk.ca/house/cop.html>; and see Ronson, J. (2015, April 17). “Yukon Legislative assembly prayers to continue.” *Yukon News*. Retrieved from <https://www.yukon-news.com/news/yukon-legislative-assembly-prayers-to-continue/>.

¹¹ Bueckert *et al.* 2017:25; and see Lanouette 2009:6.

¹² Sandford, M. (2013). “Traditions and customs of the house: House of Commons background paper.” Retrieved from <https://www.parliament.uk/about/how/business/prayers/>.

¹³ Fizet 2010:2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ The Senate adopted a non-sectarian prayer in 1994, and the House of Commons moved to a standard ‘non-sectarian’ prayer in 1994 and formally adopted this prayer in 2004. See Fizet 2010:2; and see Rau, K. (2008, March 17). “Take God out of the legislature.” *DailyXtra.com*, Retrieved from <https://www.dailyxtra.com/take-god-out-of-the-legislature-38464>.

¹⁶ A French version is also available. Parliament of Canada. (n.d.). “Compendium of procedure: prayer.” Retrieved from https://www.ourcommons.ca/About/Compendium/TypicalSittingDay/c_d_prayer-e.htm.

¹⁷ Canadian Senate. (2013, November). “Companion to the rules of the Senate of Canada.” 2nd Ed. *Government of Canada*. Retrieved from <https://sencanada.ca/media/106242/companion-rules-senate-2nd-nov13-e.pdf>; and Canadian Senate. (2015, June). “Senate procedure in practice.” *Government of Canada*. Retrieved from <https://sencanada.ca/media/93509/spip-psep-full-complet-e.pdf>, Chapter 4.

¹⁸ Fizet 2010:2; and see MacMinn 2008:56.

By comparison, in the United States, chaplains pray at the beginning of each day of sessions of the Senate and House of Representatives. For both chambers, these positions have always been held by someone who is both Christian and male.¹⁹ Guest chaplains are also invited to deliver prayers before US legislatures. The first woman to pray before was the Senate in 1965, the first Muslim in 1992, and the first Hindu in 2007, and “the House has also welcomed guest chaplains who represent a wider variety of religious traditions than the official chaplains.”²⁰ For a survey of the issue in other legislatures, see the Lanouette’s coverage of the subject.²¹

Legislative Prayer Controversies in Canada

Populations of western liberal democracies have become increasingly diverse and secular in recent years. This has resulted in an increased questioning of sectarian legislative traditions. In Canada, controversies around the inclusion of prayer in Canadian legislatures have arisen across the country, and are not necessarily a recent phenomenon. A prominent early example of open opposition was that of Ontario MPP Elmer Sopha, who, in 1969, refused to be present in the provincial legislature during the reading of the Lord’s Prayer, which he described as “words from the Tudor age to which we are obliged to listen to in reverential silence.”²² The question of replacing the Lord’s Prayer in the Ontario Legislature was again raised by Premier Dalton McGuinty in February 2008. After public input, which inundated the government’s website, the government opted to retain the Lord’s Prayer, but follow it with alternating prayers from other faith traditions.²³

In Nova Scotia in 2001, NDP MLA Howard Epstein argued that “when prayers are said in the official law-making body of the state...[that suggests] that there is an official religion of the state.”²⁴ These arguments were ultimately rejected by the all-party committee, which

¹⁹ Sixty-two men have been chaplains to the Senate and fifty-two men to the House, all of them have represented a Christian denomination. See Cadge, W., Olson, L. R., & Clendenen, M. (2015). “Idiosyncratic prophets: personal style in the prayers of congressional chaplains, 1990-2010.” *Journal and of Church and State*, doi:10.1093/jcs/csv093, 5-7.

²⁰ Cadge *et al.* 2015: 7.

²¹ Lanouette 2009.

²² Prayers in the Ontario Legislature, 2008:4 quoted by Fizet 2010:3.

²³ Fizet 2010:1; and see Boissinot, J. (2015, April 17). “The end of prayer in the councils of the nation.” *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/the-end-of-prayer-in-the-councils-of-the-nation/article24010902/>; and Lanouette 2009:5.

²⁴ CBC News. (2001, April 19). “Nova Scotia reconsidering Lord’s Prayer in Legislature.” Retrieved from

preferred to maintain the traditional Christian Lord's Prayer.²⁵ Members of the Centre for Inquiry Regina, a Humanist group, presented a petition in 2016 calling for the Saskatchewan Legislature to end the practice, which was dismissed by Premier Brad Wall.²⁶ This same group raised the issue again in 2018.²⁷ More recently, Green Party MLA Kevin Arseneau in the New Brunswick Legislature called to replace the practice of having a priest or MLA recite the Lord's Prayer, and suggested that replacing it with "a moment of silence would generate...inclusivity and give everyone a chance to reflect in their own manner."²⁸ This proposal was met with opposition from the governing coalition.²⁹

Prayer in Municipal Councils and the Saguenay Ruling

The issue of prayer at the meetings of political assemblies has also been raised at the municipal level, and was ultimately addressed by the Supreme Court of Canada in *Mouvement laïque québécois v Saguenay (Saguenay)*. In the Quebec municipality of Saguenay, "at the start of each meeting, the mayor would recite a prayer after making the sign of the cross while saying 'in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.'"³⁰ Alain Simoneau, a Saguenay resident and atheist, "felt uncomfortable with this display" and, together with Mouvement laïque québécois, eventually took his challenge to the Supreme Court of Canada. In a unanimous decision, the court sided with Simoneau and found that the prayer breached the "state's duty of religious neutrality."³¹

In his decision, Justice Gascon, writing for the majority, said that this duty "results from

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia-reconsidering-lord-s-prayer-in-legislature-1.270636>.

²⁵ CBC News. (2001, March 30). "The Lord's Prayer stays." Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/the-lord-s-prayer-stays-1.254380>; and see Lanouette 2009:4.

²⁶ CBC News. (2016, May 1). "Prayer debate taken to steps of Saskatchewan Legislature." Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/opening-prayer-legislature-saskatchewan-secularism-petition-1.3561634>.

²⁷ CBC News. (2018, November 2). "To pray or not to pray? The place of God in the Sask. Legislature." Retrieved from <https://leaderpost.com/news/saskatchewan/to-pray-or-not-to-pray-the-place-of-god-in-the-legislature>.

²⁸ The Canadian Press. (2019, April 8). "Green legislator calls for replacement of New Brunswick legislature prayers with silence." *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-green-legislator-calls-for-replacement-of-new-brunswick-legislature/>.

²⁹ Poitras, J. (2019, April 2). "Green MLA's motion aims to do away with daily Lord's Prayer." *CBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/arseneau-higgs-austin-christian-prayer-legislature-1.5081671>.

³⁰ Para. 6, *Mouvement laïque québécois v. Saguenay (City)*, 2015, SCC 16 [2015] 2 S.C.R. 3.

³¹ Para. 75, *Saguenay*.

an evolving interpretation of freedom of conscience and religion,” as enshrined in section 2a of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.³² Justice Gascon noted that

the evolution of Canadian society has given rise to a concept of neutrality according to which the state must not interfere in religion and beliefs. The state must instead remain neutral in this regard. This neutrality requires that the state neither favour nor hinder any particular belief, and the same holds true for non-belief. It requires that the state abstain from taking any position and thus avoid adhering to a particular belief.³³

Justice Gascon also drew on section 27 of the Charter, which enshrines ‘the multicultural heritage of Canadians,’ writing that

[t]he neutrality of the public space therefore helps preserve and promote the multicultural nature of Canadian society enshrined in s. 27 of the Canadian Charter. Section 27 requires that the state’s duty of neutrality be interpreted not only in a manner consistent with the protective objectives of the Canadian Charter, but also with a view to promoting and enhancing diversity.³⁴

The state’s duty of religious neutrality is as a ‘democratic imperative,’ according to Justice Gascon. He set out that

[t]he state may not act in such a way as to create a preferential public space that favours certain religious groups and is hostile to others. It follows that the state may not, by expressing its own religious preference, promote the participation of believers to the exclusion of non-believers or vice versa.³⁵

Criticisms of Legislative Prayer

While the *Saguenay* decision explored a number of the key points relating to the inclusion of prayer at legislative meetings, it is informative to canvass these arguments, as well as their counter-arguments in greater detail. Here we will explore these arguments more fully, drawing upon *Saguenay* and additional sources.

Criticism of legislative prayer strikes at the heart of the matter of separation of religion and government, and tends to include a number of objections that impact everyone from the devoutly religious to the atheist. Legislative prayer:

- 1) Trivializes a potentially sacred act;

³² *Ibid.*, Para. 71.

³³ *Ibid.*, Para. 72.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Para. 74.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Para. 75.

- 2) Promotes one denomination of a religion over others;
- 3) Promotes one religion over another or no religion;
- 4) Is inherently exclusory;
- 5) Presumes the universality of belief that is not reflective of society.

Other more practical objections raised are the costs associated with the practice, particularly in jurisdictions where paid chaplains are employed. For example, in the USA, chaplains for the House of Representatives and Senate are full-time, non-partisan, paid, federal employees. They have their own staff, and in 2018 the Senate chaplain earned a salary of \$172,500 per annum.³⁶ Another concern is that the practice consumes time that could otherwise be spent with important chamber business, and by extension, suggesting those wishing to pray can do so on their own time.

1 – Legislative Prayer Trivializing a Potentially Sacred Act

The procedures and protocols around a legislative prayer can be perceived as trivializing a sacred practice and by so doing further frustrating the participation of people from some faith traditions. Practitioners often consider prayer to be a highly personal and serious practice. The act of praying in public can be interpreted as undermining the solemnity of prayer; transforming it from profound introspection or personal communication with the divine, into public performance. This is highlighted by the fact that prayers delivered in the legislature are susceptible to the inclusion of partisan attacks or references to matters soon to be considered by the chamber.

When asked about their views on the practice of prayer in the BC Legislature, several MLAs who are in favour of the practice expressed concern over it being used for political purposes. For example, one MLA noted that “there are some days when the prayer is used by some MLAs for political purposes but even with that I believe the tradition is important.”³⁷ While another expressed that they were “concerned when, from time to time, members use the

³⁶ Chaplains are paid the same as a Level IV of the Executive Schedule. See Brudnick, I. A. (2018, April 11). “Congressional salaries and allowances: in brief.” *Congressional Research Service*. Retrieved from <https://www.senate.gov/CRSPubs/9c14ec69-c4e4-4bd8-8953-f73daa1640e4.pdf>, p. 9; and see Cadge *et al.* 2015:5-7.

³⁷ John Rustad, Liberal MLA for Nechako-Lakes, correspondence with author.

prayer as a means by which to make an overt political statement. This is a recent development. Thankfully, it does not occur very often.”³⁸

Such observations are accurate. Sometimes MLAs use prayers to express praise for government policies, consider the following:

We pray to God to keep us mindful of the special and unique opportunity we have to work for our constituents in our province. And we thank the people of Canada for the ship building contract.³⁹

And other times, prayers may be used to take subtle wibes at other political actors. For example this prayer, which was delivered in April 2004, the morning after the Campbell Government passed Bill 37 which forced striking Hospital Employees Union (HEU) members back to work:

Thank you Father God for good health and strength, and the honour and joy of serving the people of British Columbia in this house and we thank you for the work that we got done last evening. And we pray for the HEU members who went back to work, that you'll help them to carefully appraise their opportunities and make choices that will be the right ones for themselves and their families. We pray that you'll bless the outcome of this and we'll soon be able to restore services to patients who are needy throughout British Columbia. We thank you for our province and our resources, especially the people that we represent, the four million people of British Columbia and this wonderful time and place that we live. We pray that you'll help us to honour you in all of our deliberations today and that you'll bless our great province as we move forward. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.⁴⁰

The delivery of this prayer was critically reported on in the HEU strike bulletin.⁴¹ The propensity for the inclusion of partisan content, as well as the idea that performative prayer might undermine the spiritual significance for practitioners, can easily be perceived by many practitioners and believers as inappropriate use of prayer.

The idea that prayer is a highly personal and private affair is explored in theology. There are numerous debates surrounding the appropriate use of public prayer, with practitioners contemplating the admonitions of such practices in religious texts.⁴² Likewise, some religious

³⁸ Mary Polak, Liberal MLA for Langley, correspondence with author.

³⁹ Norm Letnick, Liberal MLA for Kelowna-Lake Country, October 19, 2011.

⁴⁰ Kevin Krueger, Liberal MLA for Kamloops North-Thompson River, April 29, 2004.

⁴¹ Hospital Employees Union. (2004, Summer). “Krueger prayers for the HEU.” *Guardian: 8 Days on the Line*. Retrieved from https://www.heu.org/sites/default/files/uploads/resource/2004/07/15/04_Guardian_2Summer.pdf, p. 8 and 12.

⁴² For example some Christian’s may interpret the Bible verse in Matthew (6:5, New King James Version) as condemning ostentatious displays of public prayer: “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.”

traditions, like Jehovah's Witnesses or Baha'is, will go so far as to proscribe participating in politics altogether.⁴³ The private nature of prayer is substantiated by the practice of many legislatures, including the House Commons and Senate, which exclude members of the public from the chambers during the delivery of prayer and reflections.⁴⁴ The private nature of prayers is further reinforced by a common practice across most Commonwealth legislatures of not recording the content of prayers in Hansard.⁴⁵

Efforts to craft 'non-denominational' or 'secular' prayers are often seen as a means of accommodating a wider range of faith traditions. However, even the act of so doing can conflict with some religious traditions. As Delahunty elaborates, "the dread of reducing prayer to the merely ceremonial and instrumental – to idolatry – unquestionably deters some faithful and conscientious believers from seeking to lead legislative prayers."⁴⁶ For those who treat prayer as a sacred and solemn act specific to their faith tradition, having a 'non-denominational' prayer delivered in a public forum by partisan politicians may very well seem profane.

2 – Legislative Prayer Promotes a Specific Denomination

Religion is often divisive. As one senior US judge noted, "historically, the bitterest division and keenest theological hatred has been between those who are close in their religious heritage and divided as to its interpretation."⁴⁷ As such, "even *within* a single monotheistic tradition, much traditional prayer language could readily be viewed as excluding *other members of the very same tradition*."⁴⁸ The use of language specific to a particular Christian sect, for example, may conflict with the beliefs and practices of other Christian denominations, and the use of that language in a legislative prayer may create "the possibility of real or perceived sect

⁴³ See for example Poirier, B. (2018, November 10). "Why Baha'is don't participate in politics." *Bahai Teachings.org*. Retrieved from <https://bahaiteachings.org/why-bahais-dont-participate-politics>; and see Jehovah's Witnesses. (n.d.). "Why do Jehovah's Witnesses maintain political neutrality?" JW.org. Retrieved from <https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/political-neutrality/>.

⁴⁴ Fizet 2010:2; and see MacMinn 2008:56.

⁴⁵ Bueckert *et al.* 2017:25; and see Boissinot 2015.

⁴⁶ Delahunty, R. J. (2007). "'Varied carols': legislative prayer in a pluralist polity." *Creighton Law Review*, 40, 517-568, 551.

⁴⁷ John T. Noonan Jr. (1998). *The lustre of our country: the American experience of religious freedom*, 213-216, cited by Delahunty 2007:549.

⁴⁸ Emphasis Original. Delahunty 2007:549; see also Marshall, W. P. (2002). "The limits of secularism: public religious expression in moments of national crisis and tragedy." *Notre Dame Law Review*, 78(1), 11-33, 18.

preference.”⁴⁹ Such differences may hinge upon major theological questions or minor questions, and can sometimes be as simple as word choice.

Take for example the following selection from a lengthy prayer delivered by a BC MLA, after learning that an aircraft containing five people had gone missing in their constituency:

As our search continues I would like all members of this Assembly in prayer... Lord, today in this house, we pray that have our friends found safe.... Lord, today in this House, we pray that you keep the search crews safe, sound and ever vigilant. We pray that you lift your veil of heavy weather and swiftly guide them to our friends wherever they may be. Lord, we have lived in, by your grace upon this coast for many generations now and your hands have claimed many lives. We know no other life. We are loggers, fishers and people of this rugged place. We have learnt to submit to your will but as we climb aboard that plane each and every time, we say a small prayer: we ask that you guide us safely through the world we cherish; that the vistas be grand and green and blue and are ours to savour; that you keep us long in life at home with our family and friends. Amen.⁵⁰

The speaker asks all members to pray, thereby excluding those who might react to such a disaster in another fashion.⁵¹ Furthermore, this is a petitionary prayer, whereby someone requests a particular outcome from a god. Within theology, this is a contested concept, and touches upon the nature of a god, its powers, its plans, and the ability of individual supplication to affect these plans.⁵² The very act of delivering a petitionary prayer to a deity is rife with presuppositions. As Delahunty elaborates,

[i]t presupposes a deity who alone is divine, who is personal, who is willing to hear and respond to human petitions, who intervenes in human history and indeed controls its course, who grants or withholds blessings, and who sits in judgment on the nations. These presuppositions are ‘sectarian.’ They adopt the claims of some religious traditions and preclude those of others.⁵³

A multiplicity of denominations would offer various positions on each of these elements, and as such “prayers addressed to a personal God who hears human petitions and who intervenes in

⁴⁹ Marshall 2002:19.

⁵⁰ Rod Visser, Liberal MLA for North Island, March 2, 2005.

⁵¹ See for example Riggio, H. R., Uhalt, J., Matthies, B. K., Harvey, T., Lowden, N., & Umana, V. (2018). “Explaining death by tornado: religiosity and the god-serving bias.” *Archive for the Psychology of Religion*, 40, 32-59.

⁵² For example, St. Thomas Aquinas is quoted as declaring that “[w]e pray not in order to change the divine disposition but for the sake of acquiring by petitionary prayer what God has disposed to be achieved by prayer.” Quoted in Stump, E. (1979). “Petitionary prayer.” *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 16, 81-91; and see *inter alia* Smith, N. D. (2013). “Philosophical reflection on petitionary prayer.” *Philosophy Compass*, 8(3), 309-317; Davison, S. (2017). *Petitionary prayer: a philosophical investigation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Basinger, D. (1983). “Why petition an omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good god?” *Religious Studies*, 19, 25-42.

⁵³ Paul Johnson (1996). *The quest for God: a personal pilgrimage*, 183 cited by Delahunty 2007:540

human affairs will ‘exclude’ the followers of faith traditions that take ultimate reality to be impersonal, or that believe petitionary prayer to be useless.”⁵⁴

The simple choice of one word over another can serve to signal to the public that the state favours one denomination or interpretation over another, thereby excluding those who adhere to other interpretations. For example, references to a god as ‘Father,’ ‘Lord,’ or ‘King,’ use the language from specific sects and traditions, and may imply something about the nature of that god, and the type of relationship that adherents should have with that god.⁵⁵ As a result, “however inclusionary or ecumenical a prayer is intended to be, it necessarily incorporates a particular theological viewpoint or belief.”⁵⁶ Even procedural aspects such as the timing and location of the prayers, or characteristics, gender, hygiene, or even clothing of the person delivering the prayer, or the types of other people present during a prayer, might exacerbate sectarian divisions. Wars have been fought over matters of doctrine, which to outsiders would appear to be minor differences of protocol or belief.

Politicians, in their roles as representatives of the state, are ill-equipped to navigate these delicate distinctions that have been at the heart of sectarian theological disputes for centuries.⁵⁷ Further, to do so, as Justice Iacobucci wrote in *Syndicat Northcrest v Amselem*, is arguably unconstitutional.⁵⁸ He wrote that

the State is in no position to be, nor should it become, the arbiter of religious dogma. Accordingly, courts should avoid judicially interpreting and thus determining, either explicitly or implicitly, the content of a subjective understanding of religious requirement, ‘obligation,’ precept, ‘commandment,’ custom or ritual. Secular judicial determinations of theological or religious disputes, or of contentious matters of religious doctrine, unjustifiably entangle the court in the affairs of religion.⁵⁹

To permit otherwise is to inevitably intertwine the state with the internal affairs of religious organizations. Rather, the state must observe its ‘duty of religious neutrality’ and limit itself to inquiring about ‘the sincerity of a claimant’s belief’ and not the beliefs themselves. To do otherwise would not only harm the state, but also religious institutions and communities. As Justice Iacobucci elaborates,

⁵⁴ Delahunty 2007:523

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 527.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 522

⁵⁷ See for example Marshall 2002:18.

⁵⁸ *Syndicat Northcrest v. Amselem* (2004), SCC 47 [2004] 2 S.C.R. 551 (*Amselem*).

⁵⁹ Para. 50, *Amselem*.

[t]his approach to freedom of religion effectively avoids the invidious interference of the State and its courts with religious belief. The alternative would undoubtedly result in unwarranted intrusions into the religious affairs of the synagogues, churches, mosques, temples and religious facilities of the nation with value-judgment indictments of those beliefs that may be unconventional or not mainstream. As articulated by Professor Tribe, ‘an intrusive government inquiry into the nature of a claimant’s beliefs would in itself threaten the values of religious liberty.’⁶⁰

Here, as clearly articulated by the Supreme Court of Canada, it is not the role of the state to adjudicate various religious claims. Nevertheless, the practice of prayer in the legislature, and attempts to craft an ecumenical compromise, appears to do exactly that.

3 – Legislative Prayer Promotes a Particular Religion over Another

The act of delivering a public prayer not only has the potential to promote one sect over another, but also to promote one religion over other religions and non-religion. When a legislature begins with the Lord’s Prayer, it is engaging in an explicitly sectarian Christian practice, which promotes Christianity over non-Christian religions and nonreligious viewpoints.⁶¹ This is the case for any sectarian prayer. For example, consider this excerpt from a prayer delivered by an invited clergy member delivering a prayer prior to a Speech from the Throne:

May our loving and merciful God, the God of Jesus Christ, the God of all the world's great religions, bless you as you serve the common good, as you endeavour to build vibrant communities for all in this great province....⁶²

In an effort at ecumenicism, the speaker has diminished other non-Abrahamic religions, and those whose faith or belief traditions do not believe in a personal god who dispenses blessings.

This effect is the same when an ostensibly ‘non-denominational’ or ‘non-sectarian’ prayer is delivered. This can be illustrated with an attempt by a MLA to deliver the following ‘non-denominational’ prayer:

As there are many different faiths among us in this house, I ask that through our own choice of spirituality, we are granted the strengths of our convictions to honourably and respectfully complete the daily work of the people that we serve. I

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Para. 55, citing L. H. Tribe, *American Constitutional Law* (2nd ed. 1988), at pp. 1244.

⁶¹ See for example Corbin, C. M. (2019). “Christian legislative prayers and Christian nationalism.” *Washington and Lee Law Review*, 76, 453-483.

⁶² Father Hann, February 12, 2008.

pray that through this process, our passions and convictions are tempered with the other traits of our humanness: those of kindness, forgiveness, and civility. As we look beyond the printed documents and bills presented for us today, and as we comment and debate on these important pieces of the people's business, I pray that we conduct ourselves with the honour and respect that the position of privilege bestowed upon us deserves. Heavenly father, we thank you for your guidance. Amen.⁶³

Despite the speaker's best intentions to recognize a diversity of faiths at the beginning, the remainder the prayer draws upon the language of one specific religious tradition, and ends with a declaration to the Christian God.

A prayer referring to a god as 'Heavenly Father,' which draw on Christian language around the "God as a Father who brings redemption only through his Son Jesus," will exclude practitioners from other major monotheistic religions, such as Jews and Muslims.⁶⁴ Replacing 'Father' with 'God' or 'Lord,' a similar invocation promotes the concept of monotheism over non-theistic or polytheistic religions and belief systems. Thus, even the most carefully crafted 'non-denominational' or 'non-sectarian' prayer will promote one faith tradition over others, and even exclude some faith and belief traditions entirely. This issue is yet more acute when, as is the case in the BC Legislature, prayers are not carefully crafted to be as inclusive as possible, but rather left to whims of individual MLAs or invited guests.

Content notwithstanding, many religions have complex rituals that surround the act of prayer, often requiring preparatory rituals, a correct mindset, cleanliness, and/or specific clothing. Very few of these practices are possible within a legislative chamber. In some traditions, prayers must be conducted at a specific location, or facing a certain direction, or at a specific time. The timing and procedure and protocols around prayer in the legislature may make accommodating these requirements impossible, and as a result, prohibit the participation of certain faith traditions from the practice. Giving precedence to some faith traditions over others in a public forum is not consistent with BC's desire to foster a diverse society encompassing a multiplicity of beliefs and traditions and aspirations towards multiculturalism. Writing in the *Saguenay* decision, Justice Gascon supports such arguments by establishing that "the neutrality of the public space therefore helps preserve and promote the multicultural nature of Canadian society enshrined in [Section] 27 of the *Canadian Charter*."⁶⁵

⁶³ Ken Stewart, Liberal MLA for Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows, March 11, 2004.

⁶⁴ Delahunty 2007:524.

⁶⁵ Para. 74, *Saguenay*.

4 – Legislative Prayer is Inherently Exclusionary

The development of a ‘common denominator’ prayer is seemingly impossible, given the multiplicity of faith traditions. As one commentator notes, “the very concept of a ‘nondenominational prayer’ is self-contradictory.”⁶⁶ As Delahunty elaborates,

The quest to find some ‘common denominator’ prayer language will characteristically depend on overlooking two elementary but essential points: first, the fundamental difference between monotheistic religions (*e.g.*, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and non-theistic religions (Buddhism in some interpretations, and arguably, Hinduism); and second, the existence of ways of understanding and characterizing ‘God’ that strikingly distinguish the main monotheistic religions from each other – and, indeed, that distinguish believers even *within* each of the major monotheistic traditions.⁶⁷

Thus, “some religious traditions presuppose that ultimate reality is a personal God (as in monotheism), while other traditions presuppose that ultimate reality is impersonal.”⁶⁸ The personal god that is “somehow distinct from the individual,” contrasts with concepts of “an all-pervasive energy or force that may or may not include the individual.”⁶⁹

These differences in belief translate into practice, such that those who believe in a personal god may engage in various forms of prayer, while those who believe in an impersonal ultimate reality may engage in other practices or different types of prayer. Given that the act of prayer plays no part in some religious traditions, including prayer in the Standing Orders of the House will therefore necessarily exclude people from some religious traditions for whom prayer is a foreign concept. The act of including time in the legislature reserved for prayers signals a belief by the state in the supremacy of theistic belief systems over other beliefs. In this way, even the act of reserving time for supposedly ‘secular’ prayers, such as Sample Prayer 3 will exclude many, and represents the state’s endorsement of one belief system over another (see Appendix

⁶⁶ G. R. Stone (1983), “In opposition to the school prayer amendment,” *University of Chicago Law Review*, 50, 823, cited by Delahunty 2007:522-523.

⁶⁷ Emphasis original. *Ibid.*, 540-541.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 541.

⁶⁹ Berry, D. (2005). “Methodological pitfalls in the study of religiosity and spirituality.” *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 27(5), 628-647, 636; and see Koenig, H. G., Al Zaben, F., Khalifa, D. A., & Al Shahaib, S. (2014). “Measures of religiosity.” In G. J. Boyle (Ed.), *Measures of personality and social psychological constructs* (530-561), Elsevier Science & Technology, 530.

1). Even the nomenclature, ‘prayers,’ reflects a specific conceptual framework and does not reflect the diversity of nomenclature used to describe religious and secular ritualistic activities.⁷⁰

In the *Saguenay* decision, Justice Gascon strongly rejected the argument by the municipality and the Quebec Court of Appeal, that the prayer should be permitted because it was non-denominational and therefore ‘an inclusive practice.’ Here it is valuable to quote Justice Gascon, when he explained that

even if it were accepted that the prayer at issue is *prima facie* a non-denominational practice, it is nonetheless a religious practice, as the respondents themselves conceded at the hearing in this Court. The respondents argue in this regard that a state that is ‘somewhat religious’ can be tolerated in the context of state neutrality provided that it is inclusive, and that this tolerance can be justified on the basis of historical and traditional values. They add that the separation of church and state does not necessarily mean that the two are totally separate. I find that the respondents are on the wrong track in this respect. True neutrality is concerned not with a strict separation of church and state on questions related to religious thought. The purpose of neutrality is instead to ensure that the state is, and appears to be, open to all points of view regardless of their spiritual basis. Far from requiring separation, true neutrality requires that the state neither favour nor hinder any religion, and that it abstain from taking any position on this subject. *Even if a religious practice engaged in by the state is ‘inclusive,’ it may nevertheless exclude non-believers.*⁷¹

5 – Legislative Prayer Excludes Non-Believers

Just as allocating time for prayer excludes those whose faith traditions omit this activity, no matter how inclusive the prayers used in the legislature they will always exclude non-believers. As one commentator notes, “it is no more possible to pray without invoking a particular conception of the Supreme Being or Supreme Reality than it would be to speak without using the conventions of a particular language or sign system.”⁷² As such, any instance of prayer, no matter how secular, will necessarily exclude non-believers.

Even consider attempts at developing ‘non-denominational’ and ‘secular’ prayer can be seen to favour religion over non-religion. In crafting ‘non-denominational’ prayers, efforts are made to accommodate diverse religious values, but exclude those of non-believers. This suggests

⁷⁰ Berry 2005:631.

⁷¹ Emphasis added. Para. 137, *Saguenay*.

⁷² Delahunty 2007:539.

that religious beliefs are worthy of being accommodated, but irreligious ones are not. Again, a hierarchy of beliefs is being reinforced by the state through its well-intended actions. This position was clearly stated in the *Saguenay* decision, as Justice Gascon agreed with the argument that “a prayer, even a non-denominational one, is a religious practice that excludes atheists and agnostics.”⁷³

Prayers delivered in the BC Legislature are not necessarily carefully crafted attempts at secularity, as MLAs frequently deliver their own prayers of their own creation, or select one of a number of sample prayers. As a result, the potential for non-believers to be explicitly excluded by specific prayers becomes possible. Consider the following example of a prayer delivered in the BC Legislature:

Focus on who you are rather than who you are not. Focus on what you have rather than what you lack. Focus on what you know rather than what you doubt. Focus on the evidence of God’s presence rather than the apparent evidence of his absence. Focus on health rather than pain. Focus on your abilities rather than your limitations. Focus on the future rather than the past. Focus on God as the source of life rather than random circumstance. Amen.⁷⁴

This proselytizing prayer calls upon the irreligious to contradict their own beliefs or understandings. For those who do not believe in a god, asking them to “focus on the evidence of God’s presence rather than the apparent evidence of his absence,” would be entreating them to focus on things in direct contradiction to their own beliefs and values. By some interpretations, such an invocation could be seen as a direct attack on the beliefs of members with no religious beliefs.

The choice of words used in prayers often implies that the speaker is offering the prayer on behalf of all of the members of the chamber, thereby expressing group sentiment. This is reflected in both the manner in which the prayers themselves are introduced by the Speaker, and the language used in the prayers. The Speaker will typically invite a specific MLA to deliver their prayer in a variation of the following: “The member for [X constituency] will lead us in prayer.” This type of phrasing denotes a group activity, and that the MLA in question is engaging in official business. This is also reflected in the language used in the prayers themselves. Consider the following excerpt:

Let us all thank you, Creator and Sustainer, for answering our colleague from

⁷³ Para. 92, *Saguenay*.

⁷⁴ Val Roddick, Liberal MLA for Delta South, February 25, 2008.

Kelowna-Mission's prayers, and all of our prayers on her behalf.... We ask that you continue your good work, as we all strive to do the same, in your name. Amen.⁷⁵

In addition to evoking explicitly Christian sectarian language ('Creator and Sustainer' and 'in your name'), this practice ascribes beliefs to members of the chamber who may not share those beliefs. For example, rather than using the pronoun 'I' the speaker has chosen the word 'we,' and asks for everyone – 'us all' – to offer thanks to a creator deity who answers prayers. The act of praying on behalf of the collective implies the collective's support of that statement; problematic when members of the group do not share these beliefs. Compare this to debates on a bill before the chamber whereby members are free to express, through their statements and votes, their agreement or disagreement with a speech's content.

Ultimately, the inclusion of prayer of any type presumes a universality of belief, which is a sentiment that is not reflective of society. Consider the following example of a 'non-sectarian' prayer:

May the spirit that dwells in us all grant us an understanding heart, equal vision, balanced mind, faith, devotion and wisdom. Grant us inner spiritual strength to resist temptation and to control the mind. Free us from egoism, lust, anger, greed and hatred and fill our hearts with only divine virtue.⁷⁶

It is impossible for one who does not believe that a "spirit dwells in us all" to feel that this statement applies to them. Even the vague terminology around 'spirit' betrays a bias towards a belief in some spiritual or supernatural thing, a belief which is not shared by every member of the chamber, or by society at large.

This kind of language, which advertently or inadvertently excludes non-believers, was addressed at the Ontario Court of Appeal in the 1999 case of *Freitag v. Penetanguishene*. In this case, Henry Freitag, a non-Christian resident of Penetanguishene, Ontario, objected to the mayor of the town's invitation to council members to recite the Lord's Prayer. Freitag argued that this practice contravened his right to freedom of religion guaranteed by section 2 of the Charter. In this case, Justice Feldman, writing for the unanimous bench, reached the conclusion that

[t]he 'subtle and constant reminder' of his difference from the majority is what causes the appellant to feel intimidated and uncomfortable at council meetings. It has also deterred him from running for a council which proclaims and identifies

⁷⁵ Val Anderson, Liberal MLA for Vancouver-Langara, March 24, 2004.

⁷⁶ Diane Thorne, NDP MLA for Coquitlam-Mailliarville, November 26, 2007.

itself as it does.⁷⁷

This sentiment was cited by Justice Gascon in the *Saguenay* decision, who concluded that “the state’s duty to protect every person’s freedom of conscience and religion means that it may not use its powers in such a way as to promote the participation of certain believers or non-believers in public life to the detriment of others.”⁷⁸

Beyond the language of the prayer, the act of a publicly mandated prayer itself can exclude non-believers and members of minority religions who choose not to participate. In 1988, the Ontario Court of Appeal considered the constitutionality of prayers in public schools where students could exempt themselves from the classroom during the prayer. Justice Brooke wrote for the majority that “the exemption provision imposes a penalty on pupils from religious minorities who utilize it by stigmatizing them as non-conformists and setting them apart from their fellow students who are members of the dominant religion.”⁷⁹ Removing state mandated prayer from public schools does not prevent individual religious pupils from praying, but simply prevents the state from violating its requirement of neutrality by having it endorse one religion over others, or none.

Arguments Defending Legislative Prayer

It is useful to survey the arguments raised by those defending the continued inclusion of prayer in legislatures. Examining the literature on the subject reveals a number of key arguments:

- 1) God of the Preamble: The Preamble of the Charter professes a theistic faith and establishes Canada as a theistic nation.
- 2) Tradition: Prayer is traditional and an important part of our heritage.
- 3) ‘Good to do so’: It is good for elected officials to pray before undertaking legislative duties.
- 4) Promotes diversity: Sharing prayers from various traditions promotes diversity.
- 5) Solemnizes Occasions: Prayer can serve to add solemnity to a gathering.

⁷⁷ Para. 39, *Freitag v. Penetanguishene (Town)* (1999), 125 O.A.C. 139 (CA), and see citation at Para. 125, *Saguenay*.

⁷⁸ Para. 76, *Saguenay*.

⁷⁹ *Zylberberg v. Sudbury Board of Education (Director)* (1988), 65 O.R. (2d) 641 (C.A.).

- 6) State Neutrality: Prohibiting prayer violates state neutrality and the religious freedoms of believers.
- 7) Individual Freedoms: Restricting prayer infringes on individual rights of religious expression

1 – God of the Preamble

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* begins with the statement: “Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law.”⁸⁰ One argument that was raised in the *Saguenay* case, and which will occasionally be raised in defense of legislative prayer elsewhere, is the argument that the preamble of the Charter professes a theistic faith and in so doing establishes Canada as a theistic nation. This matter was dispensed with in the *Saguenay* decision, where Justice Gascon explained how

The reference to the supremacy of God in the preamble to the Canadian Charter cannot lead to an interpretation of freedom of conscience and religion that authorizes the state to consciously profess a theistic faith. The preamble, including its reference to God, articulates the ‘political theory’ on which the Charter’s protections are based.⁸¹

A preamble establishes the context for something, and cannot be used to alter substantive clauses. In this case, the preamble cannot be used to limit the rights enumerated later in the Charter. Its reference to God is not an invitation to diminish the rights of non-believers. As Justice Gascon continued, citing the work of Sossin,

The reference to the supremacy of God in the *Charter* should not be construed so as to suggest one religion is favoured over another in Canada, nor that monotheism is more desirable than polytheism, nor that the God-fearing are entitled to greater rights and privileges than atheists or agnostics. Any of these interpretations would be at odds with the purpose and orientation of the *Charter*, as well as with the specific provisions regarding freedom of religion and conscience under [Section] 2.⁸²

⁸⁰ *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Part 1 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, being Schedule B to the *Canada Act* 1982 (UK), 1982, c 11.

⁸¹ Para. 147, *Saguenay*.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Para. 148, citing Professor L. Sossin, “The ‘supremacy of God’, human dignity and the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*,” at p. 229.

2 – Tradition

In canvassing the types of arguments raised in the debate that surrounded reviewing the use of the Lord’s Prayer in the Ontario Legislature, Fizet identified heritage and tradition as major arguments in favour of maintaining prayer. Members of the public felt “that historically Ontario/Canada was a Christian province/country and [prayer] is an important component of our popular memory.”⁸³ When the authors reached out to BC MLAs about the practice, the most common defence of prayer was that of heritage and tradition.

One MLA noted that “our society will continue to change and evolve. Some traditions should probably also change but I believe the legislature should be a reflection of our roots as well as our future and therefore I continue to support the concept of a morning prayer.”⁸⁴ This same MLA elaborated, explaining that “the BC Legislature is full of traditions that have been in place for more than 100 years and are based on traditions that have been in place for hundreds of years. For example, as a male you must wear a tie.”⁸⁵ Another MLA noted that “the entire place is steeped in tradition and protocol and it is part of the long-standing tradition of the legislature.”⁸⁶ A third MLA declared that “I support the practice of opening the legislature with a prayer... In my view, it is true to the foundation on which our parliamentary system is built and is an excellent opportunity for the legislature to display the spiritual diversity that exists among its members.”⁸⁷

While the legislature is indeed steeped in tradition, and this tradition is an important part of our political system, an appeal to tradition (*ad antiquitatem*) is not a valid defense of a practice that is exclusionary or discriminatory. Our legislature has a number of traditions which we have abolished, and of which we are not proud, particularly concerning practices that excluded or discriminated. As Fizet elaborates,

Traditions are not self-legitimizing and when we look at certain past traditions—
theft of native lands through unfair treaties, women’s exclusion from politics and

⁸³ Fizet 2010:6.

⁸⁴ John Rustad, MLA for Nechako-Lakes, correspondence with the author.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* Following correspondence with this MLA, a recommendation from the Acting Clerk of the legislature that “neckties are not required” was approved by the Speaker, see Ryan-Lloyd, K. (2019). “Report of the Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to the Honourable Darryl Plecas, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, on dress guidelines and expectations in the parliament buildings.” Retrieved from <https://www.leg.bc.ca/Documents/Report-DressGuidelines.pdf>.

⁸⁶ Adam Olsen, MLA for Saanich North and the Islands, correspondence with the author.

⁸⁷ Mary Polak, MLA for Langley, correspondence with author.

the legal persecution of homosexuals— we are reminded that we need a sounder reason than simply tradition, which cannot serve as a moral compass.⁸⁸

If we relied on tradition alone, a majority of BC citizens – women, people of Chinese and Japanese decent, Hindus, Doukhobors, Mennonites, Hutterites, First Nations people, and even members of the clergy – would be prohibited from voting, let alone serving as MLAs.⁸⁹

Furthermore, when it comes to arguments about heritage, “it is important to recognize that the heritage denoted is that of European settlers and takes no consideration for our Native heritage.”⁹⁰ While sittings of the BC Legislature begin with a prayer, it is worthwhile noting that they do not routinely begin with a territorial acknowledgement, despite the current governing parties stated commitment to reconciliation.⁹¹

Returning to the *Saguenay* decision, a part of the ‘distinct society’ of Quebec relates to its historic ties with the Catholic Church, which distinguish it from Protestant English Canada. As such, the City of Saguenay argued that opening meetings with prayers was part of its history. Justice Gascon acknowledged this, stating “it must be recognized that the Canadian cultural landscape includes many traditional and heritage practices that are religious in nature.”⁹²

However, Justice Gascon rejected the arguments that a state could adopt a ‘civic religion’ that would allow it to express an ‘inoffensive’ form of religious heritage, arguing that doing so still constituted a violation of the state’s duty of neutrality. He elaborated, noting that

I do not think that the state’s duty to remain neutral on questions relating to religion can be reconciled with a benevolence that would allow it to adhere to a religious belief. State neutrality means that the state must neither encourage nor discourage any form of religious conviction whatsoever. If the state adheres to a form of religious expression under the guise of cultural or historical reality or heritage, it breaches its duty of neutrality.⁹³

Looking specifically at the actions of the Mayor and Council of Saguenay, including their statements at the Tribunal, Justice Gascon concluded that the prayers were not merely for “celebrating and preserving its religious heritage” but “above all else a use by the council of

⁸⁸ Fiset 2010:7.

⁸⁹ For a history of the franchise in BC, see for example Elections BC. (2019). “Electoral history of B.C.” Retrieved from <https://elections.bc.ca/resources/learning-about-elections/electoral-history-of-bc/>; and see Elections BC. (2002). *Electoral history of British Columbia, 1871-1986*. Retrieved from https://elections.bc.ca/docs/rpt/1871-1986_ElectoralHistoryofBC.pdf.

⁹⁰ Fiset 2010:7.

⁹¹ British Columbia NDP. (2017). “Working for you. Our commitments to build a better BC - 2017 BC NDP platform.” Retrieved from <https://action.bcndp.ca/page/-/bcndp/docs/BC-NDP-Platform-2017.pdf>, p.82-85.

⁹² Para. 87, *Saguenay*.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, Para. 78.

public powers to manifest and profess one religion to the exclusion of all others.”⁹⁴

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Para. 116 and Para. 118.

3 – *Good To Do*

There are those who feel as though including prayer prior to a sitting of the legislature is merely a ‘good thing to do,’ that it provides some kind of ephemeral benefit to MLAs. In documenting people’s arguments in support of the Lord’s Prayer in the Ontario Legislature, Fizet noted a significant number of people arguing that including a prayer was simply ‘good to do.’ In the case of Ontario, Fizet noted that such arguments “should equally work for any other prayer, not only as justification for the Lord’s Prayer.”⁹⁵ Such arguments are not typically well-developed, but generally revolve around the idea that the act of conducting a prayer prior to a sitting affords some benefit to those who participate in this process.

Sentiments expressed in a number of the Sample Prayers reflect this intent. For example, when the end of Sample Prayer 4 expresses that members “rededicate ourselves to the values and traditions of parliamentary democracy as a means of serving our Province and our country,” it is giving legislators the opportunity to reaffirm their commitments as parliamentarians.⁹⁶ When Sample Prayer 2 calls for “the deliberations in this chamber be characterized by temperance, understanding and reason,” it is reminding legislators of expected behavior.⁹⁷ And when Sample Prayer 5 calls on members to be “mindful of the special and unique opportunity we have to work for our constituents and our Province,” it is attempting to remind legislators of the privilege and concomitant responsibilities that come from their position.⁹⁸

While the expression of such sentiment may be laudable, the assumption that the act of prayer is necessarily a good thing to do, and a source of positive outcomes, betrays a strong bias in favour of religious sentiments. Furthermore, there are effective ways of achieving these same ends, vague though they may be, without resorting to the use of prayer (see ‘Recommendations’). For example, it is the role of the Speaker to remind MLAs of proper decorum should the need arise, and a wide range of secular symbols and rituals that surround daily activity in the chambers, and even the architecture, serve to remind MLAs of the responsibilities vested in them by the people of the Province. If the daily need existed for MLAs to rededicate themselves to the principles of parliamentary democracy, there is a much greater issue than can be addressed with

⁹⁵ Fizet 2010:7.

⁹⁶ Sample Prayer 4, see Appendix 1.

⁹⁷ Sample Prayer 2, see Appendix 1.

⁹⁸ Sample Prayer 5, see Appendix 1.

the perfunctory repetition of an invocation. As Justice Gascon elaborated in the *Saguenay* decision in response to this argument, “[d]ecorum could have been ensured in many other ways that would not have led the City to adopt a religious belief.”⁹⁹

Finally, the authors are unaware of any research into the efficacy of legislative prayer or its impact on the quality of legislative outcomes. A systematic review of intercessory prayer in medicine found no discernible effects.¹⁰⁰

4 – Promoting Diversity

Another argument raised in defense of prayer in the BC Legislature is that it serves to provide an opportunity to reflect the diversity of religious viewpoints among MLAs and the province more broadly. As one MLA elaborated, prayer in the legislature “is an excellent opportunity for the legislature to display the spiritual diversity that exists among its members.”¹⁰¹ One commentator echoed these sentiment, noting that “exposure to other traditions is at least one way to increase understanding and foster acceptance between groups and also serves to promote or celebrate multiculturalism.”¹⁰²

The rebuttal to this argument was delineated succinctly in the *Saguenay* decision, where Justice Gascon wrote that

a neutral public space free from coercion, pressure and judgment on the part of public authorities in matters of spirituality is intended to protect every person’s freedom and dignity. The neutrality of the public space therefore helps preserve and promote the multicultural nature of Canadian society enshrined in [section] 27 of the *Canadian Charter*.¹⁰³

One does not promote diversity and multiculturalism by the state endorsing a single, or set, of religious views. Justice Gascon was also careful to note that this “[n]eutrality is required of institutions and the state, not individuals.”¹⁰⁴ In this way the private players in a public space are not homogenized, it is the public space itself which remains neutral. Put another way, MLAs are

⁹⁹ Para. 127, *Saguenay*.

¹⁰⁰ Masters, K. S., & Spielmanns, G. I. (2007, August). “Prayer and health: review, meta-analysis, and research agenda.” *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 30(4), 329-338.

¹⁰¹ Mary Polak, MLA for Langley, correspondence with author.

¹⁰² Forbes, L. (2012). “To pray or not to pray, is that the question?: how the increasing desire for state neutrality affects prayer before council meetings in Canada.” *Regulating Religion E-Journal*, (August), 1-18, 10.

¹⁰³ Para. 74, *Saguenay*.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Para. 74, citing *R. v. N.S.*, 2012 SCC 72, [2012] 3 S.C.R. 726, at paras. 31 and 50-51.

free to express their religious identity in any number of ways inside and outside of the chamber, but the formalizing legislative prayers in the Standing Orders gives the State's imprimatur to the practice.

Justice Gascon was vehement that the state's duty of religious neutrality was "based on a democratic imperative," and that

[t]he rights and freedoms set out in the *Quebec Charter* and the *Canadian Charter* reflect the pursuit of an ideal: a free and democratic society. This pursuit requires the state to encourage everyone to participate freely in public life regardless of their beliefs.¹⁰⁵

Ultimately, Justice Gascon is firm in *Saguenay* declaring that the state "may not use its powers in such a way as to promote the participation of certain believers or non-believers in public life to the detriment of others. It is prohibited from adhering to one religion to the exclusion of all others."¹⁰⁶

In this way, the inclusion of prayer in the BC Legislature promotes participation of certain believers at the exclusion of others. However, without an examination of these prayers we have had no way of knowing which beliefs are being promoted. The narrower the band of beliefs promoted through prayer in the BC Legislature, the greater the number of individuals who are being harmed through this practice. In studying the extent to which prayers in the BC Legislature reflects the diversity of the province, this report brings to light this harm.

5 – Solemnizes Occasions

The inclusion of prayer in a meeting or gathering is often considered as a means of solemnize that occasion. Occasions intended to be significant public events will typically include a number of ceremonial elements in order to underscore their solemnity. The argument here is that prayer serves a 'secular' solemnizing purpose.¹⁰⁷ This argument is much more prevalent in the US, where the practice has been described as 'ceremonial deism' – the expression of a purportedly 'non-theological civil religion.' The fact that this 'civil religion' is allegedly stripped

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Para. 75.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Para. 76.

¹⁰⁷ Marshall 2002:23.

of its religious content and significance through rote repetition,¹⁰⁸ is merely to justify the inclusion of religious language in civic ceremonies and state functions, such as the addition of God in the Pledge of Allegiance, songs like ‘God Bless America,’ and religious references in inaugural addresses.¹⁰⁹ As one commentator attempted to explain, “the God acknowledged in civil religion’s rituals is not the God of any traditional religion. Civil religion’s prayers are not the prayers of any particular church. No doctrine of ‘traditional’ religion is promoted or offended by these invocations. The God of the civil religion is *sui generis*.”¹¹⁰

Efforts to fabricate a non-sectarian god fall short, and despite the vague deist nature of this god, “he is by no means simply a watchmaker God...[but rather] He is actively involved and interested in history, with a special concern for America.”¹¹¹ In stripping the god of sectarian characteristics, the American ‘civil religion’ ostensibly attempts to use ceremonial deism as a unifying force, drawing people together around shared symbols and language. Unfortunately, this effect is lost in a diverse society that contains non-believers or members of religious traditions who might find this generic ‘off-brand’ god offensive.¹¹² As a result, the use of ceremonial deism as a unifier has the opposite effect, and the idea that a god, or prayer in general, serves a solemnizing effect privileges religious belief over irreligious beliefs. In trying to serve everyone, ceremonial deism ultimately serves no one, and infringes on the rights of many.

Canada seems to lack the deeply engrained religious sentiment that causes American judiciaries to contort logic to justify practices that clearly infringe on the freedom of conscience and religion of citizens. It is entirely possible to imbue a meeting with a sense of purpose and solemnity without reaching for divisive and discriminatory tools. To return to BC, the Legislature and the activities therein are replete with ceremonial rituals and items. Even before prayer opens a sitting, the Speaker enters the chambers in a formal procession replete with symbolism. The procession is led by the Sergeant-at-Arms, who carries the Mace (a symbol of the Speaker’s authority in the chamber), the Speaker follows, wearing ceremonial dress, which includes a tricorn hat and black silk robe.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸Justice Brennan’s dissent in *Lynch v. Donnelly*, cited by *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁹ Delahunty 2007:529

¹¹⁰Marshall 2002:25.

¹¹¹ Delahunty 2007:530

¹¹²See additional discussion in Marshall 2002:19-20.

¹¹³ Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. (n.d.). “Glossary: discover your legislature series.” Retrieved from <https://www.leg.bc.ca/content-peo/Learning-Resources/Glossary-English.pdf>.

6 – State Neutrality

Another argument that is often raised against the removal of prayer from the legislature is that doing so shows a preference for irreligious over religious beliefs. For example, in *Saguenay*, the municipality argued that “barring the municipal council from reciting the prayer would amount to giving atheism and agnosticism prevalence over religious beliefs.”¹¹⁴ Such an argument revolves around different conceptions of state neutrality, and takes the position that the act of removing prayer from the legislature represents the state overstepping a responsibility to support ‘passive or open secularism’ and adopting a ‘rigid or strict secularism.’¹¹⁵ Jukier and Woehrling summarize this distinction as follows:

A ‘strict’ or ‘rigid’ conception of secularism would accord more importance to the principle of neutrality than to freedom of conscience and religion, attempting to relegate the practice of religion to the private and communal sphere, leaving the public sphere free of any expression of religion... A more ‘flexible’ or ‘open’ secularism, on the other hand, is based on the protection of freedom of religion, even if this requires a relaxation of the principle of neutrality. In this model, state neutrality towards religion and the separation of Church and State are not seen as ends in themselves, but rather as the means to achieving the fundamental objectives of respect for religious and moral equality and freedom of conscience and religion. In open secularism, any tension or contradiction between the various constituent facets of secularism should be resolved in favour of religious freedom and equality.¹¹⁶

Those advocating for a more open form of secularism would adopt a model where “‘state play[s] a ‘passive’ role in avoiding the establishment of any religions, [and] allows for the public visibility of religion’ and can be seen as ‘a pragmatic political principle that tries to maintain state neutrality toward various religions.’”¹¹⁷

These arguments were ultimately put to rest by the *Saguenay* decision, wherein Justice Gascon drew a distinction between unbelief and true neutrality. He wrote that “[t]rue neutrality presupposes abstention, but it does not amount to a stand favouring one view over another. No

¹¹⁴ Para. 130, *Saguenay*.

¹¹⁵ Jukier, R., & Woehrling, J. (2010). “Religion and the secular state in Canada.” In J. Martinez-Torron & W. Cole Durham (Eds.), *Religion and the secular state: national reports* (155-191), International Center for Law and Religious Studies, 157.

¹¹⁶ Jukier & Woehrling 2010:158.

¹¹⁷ Kuru 2007, p. 571 cited by Forbes 2012:4.

such inference can be drawn from the state's silence."¹¹⁸ Building on this, he explained this distinction, noting that

[a] practice according to which a municipality's officials, rather than reciting a prayer, solemnly declared that the council's deliberations were based on a denial of God would be just as unacceptable. The state's duty of neutrality would preclude such a position, the effect of which would be to exclude all those who believe in the existence of a deity.¹¹⁹

Ultimately, as one commentator summarized, the

governmental religious neutrality is attained when government does not influence its citizens' choices for or against certain religious or secular systems of belief, either by imposing burdens on them or by granting advantages to them. Instead, government is neutral when it is evenhanded toward people of all faiths and of none.¹²⁰

And rather than excluding religions and churches from the realm of public debate, the

concept of neutrality allows churches and their members to play an important role in the public space where societal debates take place, while the state acts as an essentially neutral intermediary in relations between the various denominations and between those denominations and civil society.¹²¹

Therefore, following the realistic and non-absolutist approach set out in *Saguenay*, true neutrality is assured when the state neither favours nor hinders any particular religious belief, that is, when it shows respect for all postures towards religion, including that of having no religious beliefs whatsoever, while taking into account the competing constitutional rights of the individuals affected.

7 – *Infringes on Individual Rights of Religious Expression*

A species of argument against ending the practice of government sanctioned prayer revolves around the idea that in restricting state officials from delivering a prayer prior to a sitting of the legislature is in some way a restriction on the rights and freedoms of that individual. However, removing prayer from the Standing Orders of the Legislature in no way prohibits

¹¹⁸ Para. 134, *Saguenay*.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Para. 133.

¹²⁰ Madeley, J. (2003). "European liberal democracy and the principle of state religious neutrality." *West Europe Politics*, 26(1), 1-22, 7, citing – S. Monsma & C. Soper, *The challenge of pluralism: church and state in five democracies*, p.6.

¹²¹ LeBel J. in *Lafontaine* (Emphasis added; paras. 66-67), cited in Para. 71, *Saguenay*.

individual MLAs from engaging in a private prayer, silent reflection, or any other ritual, religious or otherwise, prior to a legislative sitting. Rather, this would reasonably reduce these acts to personal acts, as opposed to those of a state official acting in their official capacity, and obviate the need for participation by those who do not ascribe to these rituals.

In the *Saguenay* decision, Justice Gascon made a critical distinction between the state as an entity and those individuals who may serve as its representative officials. He began by clarifying that

the state itself cannot engage in a religious practice, so the practice would be one engaged in by one or more state officials, who would have to be acting in the performance of their functions. Where state officials, in the performance of their functions, profess, adopt or favour one belief to the exclusion of all others, the first two criteria for discrimination mentioned above, namely that there be an exclusion, distinction or preference and that it be based on religion, are met.¹²²

In this way, a state is seen to adhere to a religious belief when its officials acting in the performance of their duties adhere to a religious belief. The issue at hand is not the freedom of conscience and religion of state officials when they are not acting in an official capacity. Justice Gascon elaborated, explaining how although state officials “are not entitled to use public powers to profess their beliefs, this does not affect their right to exercise this freedom on a personal basis.”¹²³ Individual freedom does not extend to the state officials when “acting in the performance of their functions.”¹²⁴

Does Parliamentary Privilege Protect Prayers?

Saguenay specifically dealt with the prayers said before a municipal council, a body that is purely a creature of legislative statute; whereas Parliament and the legislatures enjoy greater constitutional protections. On what impact the *Saguenay* ruling would have on the House of Commons’ prayer, Justice Gascon opted to avoid an in depth analysis. He wrote,

[f]irst, there is no evidence before us on the purpose of the prayer of the House of Commons. Second, the circumstances of the recitation of the two prayers are different. Third, it is possible that the House’s prayer is subject to parliamentary privilege, as

¹²² Para. 84, *Saguenay*.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, Para. 119.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, Para. 84.

certain courts have suggested.¹²⁵

On this point in his ruling, Justice Gascon cited a 2001 Ontario Court of Appeal case that considered whether the Ontario Human Rights Commission could even consider a complaint over that legislature's practice of beginning sittings with the Lord's Prayer.¹²⁶ Writing for the unanimous court in that decision, Justice Finlayson dismissed the complaint, concluding that the Ontario

Assembly's Standing Orders are immune from examination by the Commission, even when those actions are alleged to breach the [Human Rights] Code. I consider it well established that the Assembly must be afforded privilege over its own internal affairs and day-to-day proceedings and that this privilege includes the setting of rules such as the Standing Orders to provide for the proper functioning of the Assembly. That is, matters relating to the internal workings of the House must be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the House, since control over such matters is necessary to the independent existence of the House. The House must be absolutely free to set its own guidelines for how its legislative sessions will be carried out and the Standing Orders that detail the operation of parliamentary procedure must be considered privileged and insulated from outside review. Having made this determination, it is not open to this court, nor to any other body associated with the executive or judicial branches of government, to question an individual exercise of conduct that falls within the protected sphere. As the recitation of the prayers is called for by the Standing Orders, it is encompassed as part of the Assembly's privilege relating to control of its internal proceedings, and is not susceptible to outside challenge.¹²⁷

Nevertheless, in her dissent at the lower Divisional Court, Justice Pardue argued that the parliamentary privilege that extends to the Standing Orders should not necessarily immunize every element within them from scrutiny. Rather, she would have permitted the Commission to consider the complaint in order to better explore these tensions. She observed that

[a] conflict between *Charter* rights and parliamentary privilege is fundamentally different from a contest between parliamentary privilege and issues which do not have constitutional status, such as the regulation of sales of liquor, or the supervision of the formation of a union or collective bargaining.¹²⁸

She elaborated, noting that “[i]f the policy had been adopted by legislation rather than Standing Order, there is no doubt that the measure would have been subjected to scrutiny under the

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, Para. 142.

¹²⁶ *Ontario (Speaker of the Legislative Assembly) v. Ontario (Human Rights Commission)* (2001), 54 O.R. (3d) 595 (C.A.), (*Human Rights Commission* 2001).

¹²⁷ Para. 48, *Ontario (Speaker of the Legislative Assembly) v. Ontario (Human Rights Commission)* (2000), CanLII 30135 (ON SCDC) (*Human Rights Commission* 2000).

¹²⁸ Para. 37, *Human Rights Commission* 2001.

Charter. In principle, there seems little reason to treat a Standing Order differently.”¹²⁹ Justice Pardue conceded that the legislature has the right to arrange various components of its opening ceremonies, and that the choice to include

the Lord's Prayer may not be reviewable on the ground that a court cannot inquire into the rightness or wrongness of a particular exercise of the privilege, but a court might inquire, on a more general level, whether adoption of religious practices, or whether adoption of only Christian religious practices was necessary to the ‘dignity, integrity and efficiency’ of the legislative body.¹³⁰

Justice Pardue here cites then Justice McLachlin’s comments that for courts to inquire when parliamentary privilege is asserted by the legislature, the court “asks whether the dignity, integrity and efficiency of the legislative body could be maintained if it were not permitted to carry out the type of action sought to be done.”¹³¹ In other words, if a court were to consider whether legislative prayer is protected by parliamentary privilege, the correct inquiry is whether the adoption of religious practices undermines the ‘dignity, integrity and efficiency’ of the legislature.

As we have seen, *Saguenay* is clear that when the state preferentially favours certain religious viewpoints and is hostile to others, including nonreligious viewpoints, the state violates its duty of religious neutrality and further contradicts the democratic values and equality rights that undergird the *Charter*.¹³² If excluding and discriminating against individuals on the basis of their religion or non-religion at the municipal level of government is proscribed, then the Court has effectively already conceded that this threatens the ‘dignity and integrity’ of that level of government; for what claim to ‘dignity and integrity’ can a democratic body have when it precludes the full and equal participation of individuals on an otherwise protected ground? It follows then that including prayer in federal or provincial legislatures would have the same deleterious effect.

In drawing the obvious parallel that “[i]t is unlikely that discrimination based on race, gender or religious beliefs, for example, would be found necessary to the ‘dignity, integrity and efficiency’ of a Legislative Assembly,” Justice Pardue exposed the special pass that the religious privilege inherent in traditional practices is granted.¹³³ Historic barriers to democratic

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, Para. 46.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, Para. 47.

¹³¹ Para. 72, *Harvey v. New Brunswick (Attorney General)* (1996), 2 S.C.R. 876.

¹³² Para. 75, *Saguenay*.

¹³³ Para. 47, *Human Rights Commission* 2000.

participation on the basis of race and gender have been slowly repealed or struck down by the courts, being declared antithetical to our fundamental democratic values, and yet here we have a practice that marginalizes the nonreligious.

Justice Pardue ultimately concluded that “[t]he issue of whether the Standing Order incorporating the Lord’s Prayer is immune from review on the ground of necessity and pursuant to the *Charter* is far from clear.”¹³⁴ Given the monumental shift in the legal landscape around nonreligious rights in Canada codified in *Saguenay* since Justice Pardue rendered her dissent, the issue is arguably more alive than ever. However, adjudicating the extent to which legislative prayer can be shielded by parliamentary privilege will require complex litigation involving competing constitutional norms and values. As a result, change in the near term will more likely come from within the legislature by MLAs either amending the Standing Orders, or adopting new practices around them (see ‘Recommendations below).

When we approached MLAs about the question of legislative prayer, several expressed support for changing the practice, while others explained that they considered the prayers to indeed reflect the diversity of the province. One noted that

Society has changed dramatically over the decades and centuries. Because of diversity of religion and culture some are uncomfortable with the concept of a morning prayer. But as you research the prayer in the legislature you will notice that this prayer is not just Christian but has expressed different religious values from time to time.¹³⁵

This suggests that a key step in shifting the status quo on prayer in the BC Legislature is to determine whether or not prayer in the BC Legislature reflects the growing diversity of the province. However, without an accurate understanding and analysis of the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature, this is impossible to determine.

Studying Prayer in the BC Legislature

The exploration of the arguments for and against legislative prayer, detailed above, point to a number of questions pertaining to the practice in the BC Legislature. For example, do the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature tend to favour one religious sect over another? Do they

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* Para. 49.

¹³⁵ John Rustad, MLA for Nechako-Lakes, correspondence with author.

tend to favour one religion over others? Do they tend to promote theistic beliefs over non-theistic beliefs? Do they tend to promote religious beliefs over irreligious beliefs? To what extent is the potentially sacred act of prayer trivialized through the incorporation of partisan content? And ultimately, do the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature accurately reflect the diversity of beliefs in the province?

In order to answer these questions, an accurate understanding of the kinds of prayers being delivered in the BC Legislature is required. As has been noted, unlike some Canadian legislatures, BC does not rely on a set prayer, such as the Lord's Prayer or a pre-written 'non-denominational' prayer. While BC MLAs are provided with a list of sample prayers from which to choose, they are under no obligation to select one of these prayers, and there are not records of the frequency at which these prayers are selected, if at all. Further frustrating efforts, a common practice across Canada and in other Commonwealth countries has been to consider prayers in legislatures "as a private practice for the benefit of the elected members of each respective legislature," and as a result, they are not typically recorded by Hansard."¹³⁶

BC's Hansard "was first instituted in 1970 when a limited report of House debates was prepared. It became a full report in 1972 when the debates of budget estimates (Committee of Supply) and clause-by-clause debate of bills (Committee of the Whole) were included in the transcript."¹³⁷ In 1991, Hansard's Broadcasting Services were initiated, resulting in the broadcast signal of live proceedings being made available to all cable providers in the province. Webcasting services were introduced in 2003, whereby the broadcast signal was made available over the internet.¹³⁸ Unfortunately, while the remainder of activities that occur in the Chamber are transcribed verbatim prayers are not, thereby frustrating analysis.

The only other previous study that considered prayers in the BC Legislature sought to overcome this lack of transcription of daily prayer by analyzing the content of the prayers delivered before Speeches from the Throne. Bueckert *et al.*, studied 31 prayers from the 35th Parliament in 1992 to the fifth session of the 40th Parliament in 2016.¹³⁹ This study was relatively straightforward. The set of prayers analyzed were delivered by members of the public, and the

¹³⁶ Bueckert *et al.* 2017:25; and see Boissinot 2015.

¹³⁷ Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. (n.d.). "Learn about us: Hansard Services." Retrieved from <https://www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/hansard-services>.

¹³⁸ Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, "Learn About Us."

¹³⁹ Bueckert *et al.* 2017.

religious affiliation and title of those individuals was identified along with their names. As a result, the authors were able to gauge the religion of the prayer by looking at the religious affiliation of the person delivering it, and to a much lesser extent the language used, to identify the religion of that prayer.

This study found 67.7% of all prayers to be ‘Christian’ prayers, 12.9% of the prayers as ‘non-denominational,’ followed by Indigenous (9.7%), Jewish (6.5%), and Muslim (3.2%).¹⁴⁰ Comparing these numbers to the *2011 National Household Survey*, the authors were able to roughly gauge the extent to which the associated religions of this subset of prayers in the BC Legislature reflected the general religious makeup of the province.¹⁴¹ The Survey found the following breakdown of the religious affiliation for British Columbian respondents:

- Christian: 44.6%
- No religious affiliation: 44.1%
- Sikh: 4.7%
- Buddhist: 2.1%
- Muslim: 1.8%
- Hindu: 1.1%
- Jewish: 0.5%
- Other religions: 0.8%¹⁴²

Given this religious makeup, the authors concluded that “in the past 24 years, the faiths that are represented within prayers delivered prior to the Speech from the Throne do not directly correlate to the percentage of British Columbians that identify with each respective faith group.”¹⁴³ This conclusion is exacerbated by the fact that the exact question on religion included in the Survey is “What is this person’s religion?” with the instruction to “Indicate a specific denomination or religion even if this person is not currently a practising member of that group.”¹⁴⁴ This instruction arguably depresses respondents who identify ‘culturally’ with a religious denomination, despite being otherwise non-practising or even non-believing. There is also extensive literature concerning of self-reporting religion and religiosity, whereby people habitually “exaggerate their attendance at religious services to a surprising degree.”¹⁴⁵ Data from

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁴¹ The authors are careful to note that the Survey was, unlike the previous mandatory long-form census, a voluntary survey and was completed by less than three-quarters of British Columbian households, but it served as a reasonable measure. *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁴² 2011 National Household Survey cited by *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁴⁴ Statistics Canada 2011.

¹⁴⁵ See McAndrew, S., & Voas, D. (2011, February). “Measuring religiosity using surveys.” *Survey Question Bank: Topic Overview* 4, 5; and see Hadaway, C. K., Marler, P. L., & Chaves, M. (1993). “What polls don’t show: a

public opinion surveys commissioned by the BC Humanist Association in 2013 and 2016 found the proportion of British Columbians who do not practice a religion or faith grew from 64% to 69% in that period.¹⁴⁶

The findings of this study should be worrisome, in so far as those most significantly under-represented are people without religious affiliation. Given the difficulty in crafting an adequate ‘non-denominational’ prayer, and the likelihood that many of the prayers coded as ‘non-denominational’ were ultimately still theistic in nature, but likely too ecumenical to code as belonging to any particular faith, those without religious affiliation are severely under-represented by the prayers preceding the Speech from the Throne.

Data and Methods

This study builds on Bueckert *et al.* by expanding the data set to include every daily prayer in the BC Legislature from October 6, 2003, when video recordings were made available, to February 12, 2019, the end of the 3rd Session of the 41st Parliament. In December 2018, we recruited a team of 52 volunteers from across BC and beyond to assist in transcribing 877 prayers. Of these, 70 prayers were randomly selected to be transcribed twice in order to check for transcription accuracy. Apart from inconsequential differences in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, there were 4 discrepancies that were classified as significant errors (missing words or segments of sentences, or word conflicts). This gave our transcribers an error rate of 5.7%. In order to catch as many possible transcriptions errors as possible, we instructed our coders to flag any prayers that appeared to contain errors, and to verify the content of these prayers by revisiting the original video recording (see Appendix 2).

While this study covers a the vast majority of prayers for the duration of the study period, our team was unable to transcribe 4 prayers, as the videos were not available, were inoperative,

closer look at US church attendance.” *American Sociological Review*, 58, 741-752; and Brenner, P. S. (2011, March). “Identity importance and the overreporting of religious service attendance: multiple imputation of religious attendance using the American Time Use Study and the General Social Survey.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 50(1), 103-115.

¹⁴⁶ British Columbia Humanist Association. (2013). *2013 BC religious and secular attitudes* [Data set]. Justason Market Intelligence. Retrieved from https://www.bchumanist.ca/2013_bc_religious_and_secular_attitudes_poll; and British Columbia Humanist Association. (2016). *Religious and secular attitudes 2016* [Data set]. Insights West. Retrieved from https://www.bchumanist.ca/religious_and_secular_attitudes_2016.

or started after the prayer had occurred. These were not included in any totals, and we flagged them for Hansard. We also recognize the potential that our initial survey of the Hansard archive could have missed videos containing prayers. While this is regrettable, given the thoroughness of this survey, we likely missed fewer than 10, likewise, the overall large sample size should compensate for any such omissions.

While transcription was ongoing, we reached out to MLAs in writing in order to gain a more qualitative understanding of the practice. They were informed that their answers might be quoted in this study and asked the following questions:

- What is your view of the practice of opening morning sittings of the BC Legislature with a prayer? Is this a practice you support, oppose, or are ambivalent towards? Why?
- Have you had the opportunity to deliver one or more prayers in the legislature? And if so, how do you select the content of your prayer?
- Do you have any other thoughts or anecdotes regarding prayer in the legislature that you would like to share?

In order to maximize responses, letters were sent twice, one in December 2018, and the other in July 2019. We received responses from only 7 MLAs, and content from their responses has been used throughout this report.

Once transcribed, we tasked two Canadian Summer Student Program research assistants with the job of coding each prayer based on a number of categories (see Appendix 2: Coding Instructions). In order to refine and test the Coding Instructions and to ensure strong intercoder reliability, coders were given a preliminary draft and instructed to code the first 100 prayers, after which, they met with the project supervisor to discuss the process and flag any issues arising.¹⁴⁷ As a result of this discussion, several edits were made to the instructions, and the initial 100 prayers were then re-coded. These changes have been documented in footnotes in Appendix 2. Once all of the prayers were coded by the two coders, the results were compared and any differences were re-coded by a third coder. Partisan affiliation and MLA names were excluded from the prayer sets given to coders in order to avoid any potential bias.

Of the videos we were able to examine, two had significant sections that were either inaudible or intelligible, and five were delivered entirely in First Nations languages. While we included these prayers in our counts, we were unable to produce a reliable transcription and thus did not further examine the religious content of these prayers. As a result, our team fully coded

¹⁴⁷ Consistent with procedures in similar studies. See for example Cadge *et al.* 2015:8.

866 prayers, which included 23 prayers that preceded Speeches from the Throne (hereafter ‘Throne Prayers’). As these prayers are delivered by invited members of the public, they have been excluded from some of the analyses focusing on prayers delivered by MLAs exclusively, leaving a total of 843 prayers. Please note that while not all of the statements studied in this report were ultimately classified as prayers since some were poems, quotes, or moments of silence, for brevity we will refer to any statement given during the period designated for prayers as a ‘prayer.’

We examined the literature of comparable works looking to gauge the religiosity of political speech and other forms of communications to help in building the list of categories for which we were coding. There were a few areas which other studies have examined which we were unable to code for which bear mentioning: behaviour and gestures, and language. While we instructed transcribers to also note the behaviour and gestures of the person delivering the prayer along with the transcription, this proved too cumbersome for transcribers who were not equipped to transcribe audio and code for behaviour and gestures. As a result we discontinued the practice of recording behaviour and gestures after the first 200 transcriptions. Thus, despite the potential for gestures such as clasped hands or speakers crossing themselves serving as additional indicators of the religiosity and religion of the prayer delivered this code was not include in the final data set.¹⁴⁸ Additionally, other studies have also looked at the type of language used in a prayer (vernacular, non-vernacular, formal, informal) and also style (speaking, proclaiming, chanting, singing), however given the nature the type of language used in the Legislature and the high level of subjectivity within this category, we opted to not code for it.¹⁴⁹

We conducted our quantitative analysis in R,¹⁵⁰ using the plyr package for data reorganization when needed.¹⁵¹ Prayer length in words was calculated from transcripts using the `str_count` command in the stringr package to search for spaces between words.¹⁵² When we tested differences among groups with a continuous response (e.g. prayer length or total prayers

¹⁴⁸ Hesser, G., & Weigert, A. J. (1980). “Comparative dimensions of liturgy: a conceptual framework and feasibility application.” *Sociological Analysis*, 41(3), 215-229, 217.

¹⁴⁹ See for example Hesser & Weigert 1980:217.

¹⁵⁰ R Core Team (2018). “R: a language and environment for statistical computing.” *R Foundation for Statistical Computing*, Vienna, Austria. Retrieved from <https://www.R-project.org/>

¹⁵¹ Wickham, H. (2011). “The split-apply-combine strategy for data analysis.” *Journal of Statistical Software*, 40(1), 1-29.

¹⁵² Wickham, H. (2019). “stringr: simple, consistent wrappers for common string operations.” R package version 1.4.0. Retrieved from <https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=stringr>

given per MLA), we used general linear models (ANOVA, ANCOVA, and regression) to test for statistical differences among predictors. We examined the distribution of both continuous predictors and responses by generating histograms, and natural logarithm transformed these variables to improve normality if necessary. When we tested differences among groups with a binary response (e.g. whether the prayer was secular or not), we used logistic regression implemented as a generalized linear model with binomial distribution. Alpha was set to 0.05 in all tests, however for $0.05 < p < 0.10$ we report the effect size and p-value for interpretation of trends. The generated R script showing analysis steps has been made available in Appendix 5.

Sample Prayers

MLAs in the BC Legislature are given the option of reading one of five Sample Prayers (see Appendix 1),¹⁵³ or delivering a prayer of their own devising. Each Sample Prayer was coded as such, and given a number appropriate to the specific Sample Prayer. Overall, MLAs delivered one, or a combination of, the Sample Prayers 50.0% of the time (434 prayers; Table 1).

The coding team met to discuss the coding of the unaltered Sample Prayers, and these were coded as follows:

- Prayer 1 = Non-sectarian: This prayer was coded as non-sectarian as it adopts a prayer structure (ends in ‘amen’), includes the name of a god (‘most gracious God’), includes a reference to god (‘Thee’), employs archaic language associated with prayer (‘humbly beseech Thee’), and because it uses other religious language (‘religion and piety’).
- Prayer 2 = Non-sectarian: This prayer was coded as non-sectarian as it adopts a prayer structure (ends in ‘amen’), includes an indirect appeal to a god (‘ask for divine guidance’), and because it uses other religious language (‘divine guidance’).
- Prayer 3 = Secular: While this prayer adopts a prayer structure by terminating in ‘amen,’ it is otherwise devoid of any obvious religious language, as such, we coded it as ‘secular.’
- Prayer 4 = Secular: While this prayer adopts a prayer structure by terminating in ‘amen,’ it is otherwise devoid of any obvious religious language, as such, we coded it as ‘secular.’
- Prayer 5 = Non-sectarian:: This prayer was coded as non-sectarian as it adopts a prayer structure (ends in ‘amen’), includes an indirect appeal to a god (‘God’), and because it

¹⁵³ Acquired through correspondence with the Office of the Speaker, Darryl Plecas, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, correspondence with author.

uses other religious language ('pray').

For a full discussion of the coding instructions used, see 'Religiosity of Prayer' below, and 'Appendix 2: Coding Instructions.'

Table 1. Sample Prayer use in BC Legislature by MLAs.

Sample Prayer	Coded¹⁵⁴	Total Number	Percentage of Total Prayers (N=866)	Percentage of Sample Prayers (N=434)
1	Non-sectarian	26	3.0%	6.0%
2	Non-sectarian	120	13.8%	27.7%
3	Secular	75	8.7%	17.3%
4	Secular	121	14.0%	27.9%
5	Non-sectarian	51	5.8%	11.8%
2+3	N/A	1	0.1%	0.2%
3+4+5	N/A	2	0.2%	0.4%
3+5	N/A	3	0.4%	0.7%
4+3	N/A	1	0.1%	0.2%
4+5	N/A	34	3.9%	7.8%
Total		434	50%	100%

We also recorded if the prayer had received some alterations. We had originally intended to code each prayer for degree of variation from the original Sample Prayer, that is any variation ranging from the alteration of a word or two ('minor'), the removal of the prefix 'as we commence proceedings,' to the inclusion of the prayer as part of a longer statement ('major'). However, this proved to be too subjective, with low intercoder reliability. Coders did however observe that MLAs were altering the Sample Prayers, and even combining them. As a result, we recorded whether or not a prayer was altered, and if one prayer was combined with any others. For the purpose of recording whether or not a prayer was altered, our coders made allowances for insignificant variations (such as errors in speech, and minor word variation from the standard), and coded these prayers as 'unaltered,' so long as the alteration did not change the pre-set coding for the sample prayer. An example of a small variation which changed the coding of the prayer would be removing the word 'divine' from Sample Prayer 2, thereby transforming the prayer from a 'non-sectarian' to a 'secular' prayer.¹⁵⁵ Of the Sample Prayers used, 139 (32.0%) were tagged as having been altered in some fashion.

¹⁵⁴ Refers to the original, unaltered prayer.

¹⁵⁵ See prayer delivered by David Cubberly, MLA for Saanich South, February 22, 2006.

Prayer Structure and Content

Next, we were interested in the content of the prayers and their structure. This information served to tell us something about the prayers themselves, and was also significant in helping to code the religiosity of prayers. We started by looking at the structure of the prayers, and asked our coders to identify whether or not the prayer ended in ‘Amen,’ a declaration of affirmation, or ritualized conclusion commonly associated with many forms of prayer. Including Throne Prayers, 797 of 867 prayers (91.9%) ended in ‘Amen’.

We also asked coders to look for other structures, including poems, quotations, references,¹⁵⁶ and moments of silence. Where possible, coders were asked to identify the source of the poem, reference, or quote. This was done to evaluate the extent to which the statements adopted or deviated from traditional theistic prayer structure, to determine whether or not any specific sources, religious or otherwise, were commonly cited in the chambers. We were also interested in learning the extent to which ‘alternative structures’ were used by MLAs, which could tell us the extent to which MLAs might chafe at the conventional format of prayers, or experiment with such things as moments of silence. Note that because we were aiming to identify formats other than prayers, we were interested in quotes from sources other than religious texts, and as a result, we excluded direct quotes from religious texts, but included quotes from religious figures, so long as they were not quoted in the former. The goal here was to focus on format, and not content, and the assumption was that the structure of a ‘quote’ and a ‘prayer’ would be different.

Coders noted a difficulty in identifying poems due in part to the fact that prayers were transcribed as blocks of text, rather than stanzas, and also due to the difficulty in differentiating between prayers which may contain poetical elements, carefully drafted and takes on some poetical elements, and statements which are exclusively poems. Ultimately we acknowledged that this distinction was difficult to parse and fell outside of the purview of the study. As such, coders were instructed to only code statements as ‘poems’ if they were explicitly identified as

¹⁵⁶ Coders found that not all quotations were direct, so we added this category to capture when the speaker referenced a source, but did not quote it directly. For example, “We remember the words of the psalmist that God sets the lonely in families and we thank you again for those welcomed into loving homes and remember those still awaiting placement...” Excerpt from prayer by Linda Reimer, MLA for Port Moody-Coquitlam, April 26, 2016.

such by the MLA/person presenting the statement. We recognized that this would result in some poems being missed. A total of 62 alternate prayer structures were used by MLAs in our dataset (Table 2).

Table 2: Alternative structures of prayers used in the BC Legislature

Structure	Count
Poem	6
Quotation	46
Reference	8
Moment of Silence	2

Interestingly, we found that many (83.9%) of these alternate prayer formats still ended using the word ‘Amen’ (Table 3).

Table 3. Use of ‘amen’ to end both regular and alternate format prayers¹⁵⁷

	Regular format	Alternate format
No ‘Amen’	7.5% (60)	16.1% (10)
Has ‘Amen’	92.6% (745)	83.9% (52)

Next, we were curious as to whether or not the prayer contained a reference to the name of a deity.¹⁵⁸ This served as an indicator of religiosity, and also helped narrow down the specific religion. Prayers were coded as referencing a deity if they included a name of a deity included in the ‘Names of Deities Glossary’ (see Appendix 2), and prayers were coded as such regardless of how many references to a deity there were above 1. Coders added to the glossary if they uncovered the name of a deity not included in the glossary. Overall, 466 (53.8%) of the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature, including Throne Prayers, included the name of a deity.

Building on the previous category, we then asked coders to record whether the prayer contained other additional religious language. This would allow us to cross reference prayers which contained names of deities and religious language, and identify those which had one, but not the other. Presumably prayers which contain both the name, or names, of a deity and additional religious language would likely appear more religious than others. Coders were

¹⁵⁷ Numbers in brackets indicate total prayers in each category.

¹⁵⁸ Black, A. E. (2004, September). “With God on our side: religion in George W. Bush’s foreign policy speeches.” Paper presented at *Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association*, Chicago, Illinois, USA, 9.

instructed to be careful when encountering polysemous words – words with similar origins and roots and even usage, but which could have significantly different connotations when used in a religious or non-religious context, such as ‘grace’ or ‘praise.’¹⁵⁹ For example, the difference between ‘praise God’ and ‘the firefighters have earned our praise,’ or similarly, ‘have faith in God,’ and ‘make an agreement in good faith.’ In total, including Throne Prayers, 566 (65.3%) of all of the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature contained religious language.

We also asked coders to code for direct quotes from religious texts, as well as the repetition of any common religious prayers, such as the Lord’s Prayer, *Shema Yisrael*, *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*, etc. Intercoder reliability was low in this category, owing largely to variation in text name and specificity; quotes could be coded as ‘Bible’ or ‘1 Timothy.’ As a result, we only included prayers coded as ‘Lord’s Prayer’ in the final analysis. A total of 9 instances of the Lord’s Prayer were recorded, making up 1.0% of the total prayers.

Religiosity of Prayer

This category of codes was the primary motivator behind our selecting manual coding rather than a simply keyword-based analysis. In reviewing the transcribed prayers, we noted that keyword analysis would likely fall prey to the problem of polysemy, and likewise would not necessarily capture the intent of word choice and context in which individual words were used (polysemy). This choice was confirmed when we found the following prayer:

Creator, we thank you for the blessings we have. Let us be at peace with ourselves. Let us work hard for the people of British Columbia. Let us remember the importance of the separation of Church and State. May we be guided by good sense, good strong moral judgment. Amen.¹⁶⁰

A keyword search would have likely coded this prayer as religious, and in fact, given the word choice, it would have likely been coded as ‘Christian,’ however, reading the prayer in its entirety reveals that this prayer is anything but sectarian.

We therefore set about developing categories that measured religiosity and which were well-defined. There is a considerable literature exploring evaluating the religiosity of individuals and statements/speech. Because there are so many scales of religiosity that are used in the social

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Nicholas Simons, BC NDP MLA for Powell River-Sunshine Coast, May 20, 2010.

sciences, it is recommended and a best practice to first reach for an existing scale, rather than creating a new one.¹⁶¹ Unfortunately, much of the literature is focused on measuring religious belonging, behavior and belief, and these metrics are not effective at evaluating the religiosity of speech.¹⁶² Generally speaking there is “limited empirical research investigating religion and communication.”¹⁶³ As a result, we set out our own criteria differentiating between levels of religiosity of prayer, and which included, the ability to identify the religion of the prayer, where possible. We will begin by describing the categories and then explain the process by which prayers were sorted into them.

Not a Prayer:

This category includes anything which could not be classified as a prayer or invocation, such as reading from a book, reciting a poem, the repeating a secular quote from an individual, or a moment of silence/silent reflection. In order to be included in this category, any of the aforementioned content could not be part of a broader invocation that adopted a prayer structure. This content needed to be delivered in a format that did not adopt a prayer structure or elements of a prayer, such as appealing to the divine or transcendent (directly or indirectly), using religious language, or ending in ‘amen.’

Secular Invocation/Prayer:

This category includes any invocation, or call of thanks not specifically invoking, or directed towards a deity or the transcendent. These may still end in ‘amen,’ but otherwise do not include reference to the divine or transcendent, the supernatural, a deity/power, or use any other religious language. We identified Sample Prayer 3 and 4 as being good examples of this category; both offer general thanks and include a pledge/rededication to parliamentary values

¹⁶¹ Hill, P. C., & Maltby, L. E. (2009). “Measuring religiousness and spirituality: issues, existing measures, and the implications for education and wellbeing.” In M. de Souza, *et al.* (Eds.), *International Handbook of Education for Spirituality* (33-50), Springer Science and Business, p. 34.

¹⁶² See for example Jennings, J. T. (2016). “Mixed reactions: how religious motivation explains responses to religious rhetoric in politics.” *Political Research Quarterly*, 69(2), 295-308, 296; McAndrew & Voas 2011.

¹⁶³ Baesler, 1994; Stewart, 1994; Stewart & Roach, 1994 cited by Punyanunt-Carter, N. M., Corrigan, M. W., Wrench, J. S., & McCroskey, J. C. (2010, July). “A quantitative analysis of political affiliation, religiosity, and religious-based communication.” *Journal of Communication and Religion*, 1-32, 2.

and responsibilities (see Appendix 1).

Non-Sectarian Prayer:

This category includes any prayer that invokes the divine or transcendent, a deity, power, or supernatural entity, or relies on religious language. Building on the ‘non-denominational’ category used in Bueckert *et al.*, prayers would be coded in this category if they “did not contain words associated with a specific religion to the exclusion of others.”¹⁶⁴ Prayers that were religious in nature, but could not be easily identified with a specific religious tradition could be coded as ‘non-sectarian.’ This distinction is consistent with the literature, which generally consider these types of prayers “to transcend the differences between particular sects or denominations,” a prayer “that is more inclusive in its reach, and less closely associated with any particular faith, than sectarian prayer.”¹⁶⁵

Sectarian Prayer:

This category includes any prayer with religious content to a specific, identifiable faith tradition. Coders were instructed to look for a number of indices of religions, including prayers:

- Containing names of a deity exclusively used by a specific faith tradition (Jesus, Heavenly Father, Allah, Adonai, etc.).
- Including references to, or quotes from the texts or figures associated with a specific religion (the Bhagavad Gita, Quran, Bible, Torah, etc.).
- Including references to specific religious holidays (Ramadan, Rosh Hashanah, Christmas, etc.)
- Employing language closely associated with a specific religion (for example language associated with Christianity, such as ‘minister to their spirits,’ or ‘we pray this in your name.’ Or language associated with Islam, such as ‘peace be upon him’).
- Recite prayers from a specific religion (the Lord’s Prayer, Shema Yisrael, Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem, etc.).

Coders were instructed to only code a prayer as ‘sectarian’ if they could identify the religion of that prayer. They were instructed to be very conservative in their coding, and not to apply any specific knowledge of a particular faith tradition, such that the average person would confidently

¹⁶⁴ Bueckert *et al.* 2017:26.

¹⁶⁵ Delahunty 2007:521.

identify the prayer as belonging to a specific faith tradition.

We recognized that this would likely result in under-selecting prayers that seemed to be very ‘Christian,’ but which used terminology could belong to different faith traditions. For example, a prayer delivered in the form of a personal dialogue, spoken directly to god, with multiple references to ‘Lord.’ The structure and content of this prayer likely points to it being a Christian prayer, however, this language is also common with other religions as well.

This represented a deviation from the coding used by Bueckert *et al.* who categorized prayers as ‘Christian’ if they “referenced “Jesus”, “God”, “Father”, and other words commonly associated with the Christian faith.”¹⁶⁶ We did not consider the use of the term ‘God’ or ‘Lord’ to be sufficient to categorize a prayer as ‘Sectarian-Christian,’ unless these terms were used in conjunction with other language commonly associated with Christianity. We did consider the term ‘Father’ to be sufficiently associated with Christianity to allow us to code prayers containing this term, when it referred to a deity, as ‘Sectarian-Christian.’ To illustrate further, prayers containing terms like ‘pray’ and ‘blessings’ may not necessarily be coded as ‘Christian’ unless these terms were used in more targeted language, such as “pray down your blessing on them.” Likewise prayers making reference to the ‘divine,’ or ‘spirit,’ without any other indices of religious affiliation, were coded as ‘non-sectarian.’ Discussions between the coders indicated a number of boarder line cases, and where there was sufficient doubt, prayers were coded as ‘non-sectarian.’

Prayers coded as ‘sectarian’ were also coded with the appropriate religion. For the purposes of the study, we categorized prayers into major faith traditions, which included:

- Christian (including Catholics and all the various sects of Protestantism)
- Muslim (including Sunni, Shia, and Salafi)
- Jewish (including reform, Orthodox, and Hassidic)
- Buddhist (including all various sects)
- Sikh
- First Nations
- Other

With respect to prayers coded as ‘First Nations,’ this did not refer to First Nations prayers necessarily being of a religious nature, but rather was used to code prayers delivered in First Nations languages or including First Nations content. For example, this might include a MLA

¹⁶⁶ Bueckert *et al.* 2017:26.

conveying a traditional greeting from the First Nations in their constituency. While a number of the prayers used language commonly associated with First Nations invocations, such as ‘creator’ or ‘guiding spirit,’ coders reported their being used in conjunction with the language associated with other religious traditions as well. As a result, we considered these terms as being similar to terms like ‘God’ and ‘Lord’ –sufficiently broad such that they could be employed by a number of faith traditions. As such, prayers were only coded as ‘First Nations’ if they employed language more exclusively used in First Nations invocations, such as ‘great spirit’ or ‘all my relations.’

Some discussion on these last two categories is in order. In critiquing the idea of distinguishing ‘non-sectarian’ from ‘sectarian’ prayers, Delahunty argued that the idea of a ‘non-sectarian’ prayer “presupposes that some generic, ‘non-sectarian’ prayer language can be disengaged from the specific faith traditions and forms of worship that give prayer its vitality, power, and inner meaning. That presupposition is false.”¹⁶⁷ These criticisms are linked with the debate surrounding the nature and possibility of drafting ‘non-denominational’ prayer, canvassed extensively above. However they do also touch upon the challenge of differentiating ‘non-sectarian’ and ‘sectarian’ prayers. Ultimately, many of the ‘non-sectarian’ prayers employ language and structure particular to a specific religion, and deeper analysis might reveal a greater number of prayers to be ‘sectarian.’ Regardless of this ongoing debate, we can confidently say that prayers in the ‘non-sectarian’ and ‘sectarian’ categories can both be considered as ‘religious prayers, and can be treated as such for various analytical purposes.

Including Throne Prayers, we determined that 49.5% of the prayers fell into the category of ‘non-sectarian,’ and 21.7% were identified as ‘sectarian.’ Given the religious nature of both of these categories, we can conclude that 71.2% of prayers delivered in the BC Legislature could be classified as ‘religious.’

Table 4: Prayers in the BC Legislature by religiosity

Prayer Type	Count	Percentage
Sectarian	188	21.7%
Non-Sectarian	429	49.5%
Secular	238	27.5%
Not a prayer	12	1.4%

Surprisingly, even the prayers coded as ‘secular’ often ended with an ‘Amen.’ We found that

¹⁶⁷ Delahunty 2007:539.

88.7% of secular prayers ended with the word Amen.’

Table 5: The percentage of secular and non-secular prayers ending in ‘Amen.’¹⁶⁸

	Not secular	Secular
No ‘Amen’	6.8% (43)	11.3% (27)
Has ‘Amen’	93.2% (586)	88.7% (238)

Of those prayers classified as ‘sectarian,’ we found that 175 (93.1%) could be identified as Christian, and this category of prayer constituted 20.2% of the overall number of prayers delivered in the BC Legislature.

Table 6: Sectarian prayers in the BC Legislature by religion

Religion	Number of Prayers	% Sectarian Prayer	% All Prayers
Christian	175	93.1%	20.2%
First Nations	3	1.6%	0.4%
Jewish	4	2.1%	0.5%
Muslim	3	1.6%	0.3%
Gaian	1	0.5%	0.1%
Buddhist	1	0.5%	0.1%
Hindu	1	0.5%	0.1%

First Nations Content

Given the importance of truth and reconciliation, we were interested in knowing the extent to which First Nations language and content was incorporated into prayers. As a result, coders examined prayers to identify the use of the following:

- Word – The use of a single word from a First Nations language.
- Sentence – The use of a single sentence/expression from a First Nations language.
- Sentences – The use of more than one sentence from a First Nations language.
- Whole – The entire prayer was delivered in a First Nations language.

As previously noted, we removed four prayers from the content analysis due to their being entirely in First Nations languages, however, these four prayers have been included for the

¹⁶⁸ Numbers in brackets indicate total prayers in each category.

purposes of the analysis in this section.

Table 7: Use of First Nations language in prayers

Content	Number of Prayer	Percentage (N=871)
Word	42	4.8%
Sentence	1	0.1%
Sentences	1	0.1%
Whole	5	0.6%

We found that 42 prayers (4.8%) used a single word from a First Nations language. These were typically used as declarations of affirmation, or ritualized conclusion commonly, in a fashion similar to ‘amen,’ or ‘thank you.’ Given significant variations in spelling by transcribers, we were unable to generate precise numbers for each term used, however the most common term was ‘SABAK,’ a Gitksan term used often by the MLAs from Stikine and Skeena,¹⁶⁹ followed by ‘HÍSWKE’ (SENĆOFEN) or ‘Huy ch q’u’ (Hul’q’umi’num’), which is a Salishan (Coast Salish) term for ‘thank you.’¹⁷⁰

One prayer (0.1%) contained a sentence in a First Nations language, and one prayer (0.1%) included more than one sentence. The five prayers delivered almost entirely in a First Nation’s language were all Throne Prayers. Furthermore, three of these prayers were delivered by Chief Elmer George Sr., an elder of the Songhees Nation.¹⁷¹ In total therefore 5.6% of all of the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature contained at least one word from a First Nations language. It should be noted that there were two sentences said in languages we could not identify, these have been included in the section below.

We can combine the use of First Nations language (49) with those prayers containing First Nations content delivered exclusively in English (3) (those coded as ‘Sectarian - First Nations,’ explored above), in order to get a better overall understanding of the degree to which

¹⁶⁹ See for example prayers delivered by Robin Austin, NDP MLA for Skeena, October 21, 2009; and Doug Donaldson, NDP MLA for Stikine, November 3, 2009. We are grateful to the Doug Donaldson’s office for assisting with identifying the language of this word.

¹⁷⁰ See for example First Voices. (n.d.). “SENĆOFEN words – HÍSWKE (thank you).” Retrieved from <http://tiny.cc/w8w6bz>; School District 79 Aboriginal Education. (n.d.). “Hul’q’umi’num’ greetings.” *Cowichan Valley School District 79*. Retrieved from <http://abed.sd79.bc.ca/hulqumimum-resourses/hulqumimum-greetings/>.

¹⁷¹ See prayers from February 14, 2006; November 21, 2007; and May 11, 2016. The last of which was delivered jointly with Mary-Ann Thomas.

First Nations content in general can be found in prayers in the BC Legislature. This gives us a total of 52 prayers (6.0%).

Other Languages Spoken

Again, with an eye at examining diversity we coded prayers containing content in non-English, non-First Nations languages. Similar to the inclusion of First Nations languages, we asked coders to differentiate between a word, sentence, or sentences. However we found that all but one of the instances of other languages spoken came in the form of individual sentences/expressions. The one outlier was the inclusion of the Hebrew word ‘shalom’ in a prayer.¹⁷² For the purposes of coding, we did not include words like ‘amen’ or names of deities. It should also be noted that we did not translate the content from these sentences for the purposes of coding their content. These prayers were still coded as using ‘other religious language’ if the speaker indicated that the sentence was a prayer from another language or contained religious content (see Appendix 2). In total, 10 total (1.2 %) of prayers contained sentences in other languages, and three of these were included in Throne Prayers.

Table 8: Use of sentences from other languages in prayers

Language	Number of Prayers
Hebrew	4
Arabic	2
Unknown	2
Chinese Dialect	1
Aramaic ¹⁷³	1

Partisan Content

During the transcription process, several volunteers noted the presence of what they described as ‘subtle barbs,’ ‘partisan attacks,’ and ‘tone.’ They noted that a number of the

¹⁷² See Doug Donaldson, NDP MLA for Stikine, March 1, 2016.

¹⁷³ Note that this prayer included the ‘mourners kaddish’ a traditional Jewish prayer of bereavement which is delivered in Aramaic.

prayers included (subtle) references to issues before the house, hinted at criticism of another party, or praise of the MLAs own party. The variation in this content varied considerably from overt partisan statements, to subtle word choice which could only be identified as relevant to the issues before the house or current events by transcribers familiar with the time in which the prayers were delivered. One obvious example included the statement: “And we thank the people of Canada for the ship building contract.”¹⁷⁴ A more subtle example was one MLA quoting Cesar Chavez’s ‘Farm Workers Prayer’ around the time that minimum wage increases that did not apply to farm workers were being implemented.¹⁷⁵

Because partisan content was often subtle, and identifying it would have required our being able to place them within the specific context in which they occurred, which would have in turn required intimate knowledge of matters before the house and current affairs at the time the prayer was delivered, we instructed our coders to only code those prayers which contained overt partisan content. They were also instructed to flag prayers that contained borderline content, and these were discussed by the coding team. As the name of the MLA and their party affiliation was excluded from the original lists of prayer so as not to influence the coding process, coders were only able to know the speakers constituency, this made identifying potential partisan content more challenging.

Ultimately, this exercise yielded 10 prayers identified as containing overt partisan content. In addition to the examples cited above, these included references to oil spills days before the National Energy Board received the project application for the Northern Gateway Pipeline,¹⁷⁶ praying for teachers to have ‘peace about the situation’ shortly before a teachers’ strike,¹⁷⁷ and discussion of racism and discrimination a day before the Human Rights Amendment Act was given royal assent.¹⁷⁸ The most overtly partisan prayer, cited above, was that of Liberal MLA Kevin Krueger, whose ‘prayer’ for HEU members “to carefully appraise their opportunities and make choices that will be the right ones for themselves and their families,”¹⁷⁹ was reported on in the HEU strike bulletin.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁴ Norm Letnick, Liberal MLA for Kelowna-Lake Country, October 19, 2011.

¹⁷⁵ Raj Chouhan, NDP MLA for Burnaby-Edmonds, November 16, 2011.

¹⁷⁶ Lana Popham, NDP MLA for Saanich South, May 31, 2010.

¹⁷⁷ Kevin Krueger, Liberal MLA for Kamloops-South Thomson, March 8, 2012.

¹⁷⁸ Jagrup Brar, NDP MLA for Surrey-Fleetwood, October 26, 2017.

¹⁷⁹ Kevin Krueger, Liberal MLA for Kamloops North-Thompson River, April 29, 2004.

¹⁸⁰ Hospital Employees Union 2004: 8,12.

Analysis

We started by examining the number of prayers per MLA. Frequency of prayer by each MLA varied considerably, with many of the MLAs in our dataset (30 individuals out of 117) only delivering a single prayer and three delivering 30+ (Figure 1)Figure 1.

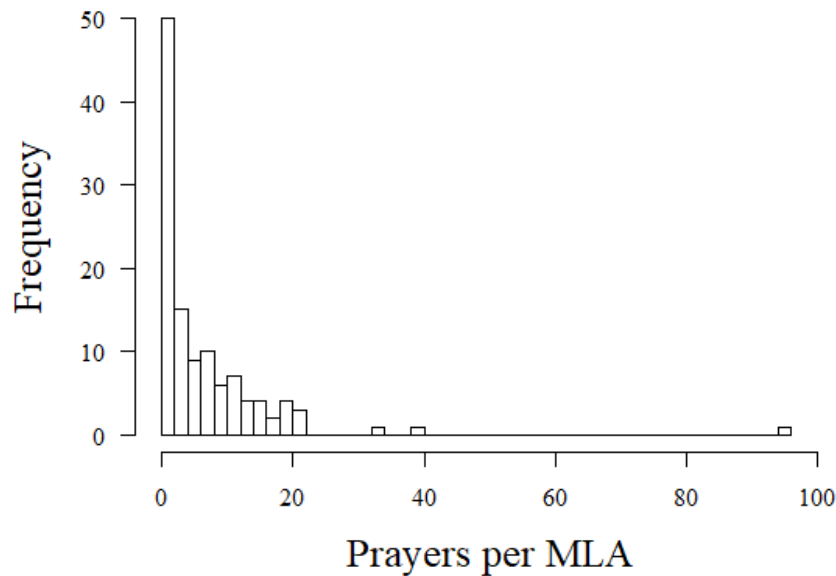


Figure 1. The distribution of prayers per MLA.

When we created ‘league tables’ comprising all of the MLAs who delivered prayers and the number of prayers they delivered, per Parliament (see Appendix 4), we found that the number of MLAs delivering prayers was diminishing over time (see Table 9). We also observed that Leonard Krog, NDP MLA for Nanaimo, has delivered the most prayers of any MLA in the period covered by this study, and can be found at the top of every ‘league table’ from the 38th Parliament onward (see Appendix 4).

Table 9: Percentage of MLAs delivering prayers, per Parliament

Parliament	# MLAs Total	# MLAs Delivering Prayers	% MLAs Delivering Prayers
41	88	24	27%
40	88	28	32%
39	88	36	41%
38	77	42	55%
37	78	34	44%

Since the Green Party only had one MLA who delivered a total of 2 prayers, we omitted them from further analysis based on party affiliation and focused on differences between the Liberal and NDP MLAs. We found no evidence that Liberal vs. NDP party affiliation affected the total number of prayers given per MLA ($F_{2,109} = 0.47$, $p = 0.628$; ANOVA with total prayers natural log transformed to improve normality).

We similarly found that MLAs varied widely in the religious content of their prayers, with 44 MLAs giving no secular prayers at all, and 5 giving 10+ secular prayers (Figure 2). We found no evidence that MLAs who tended to give more secular prayers gave more or fewer prayers ($F_{1,109} = 0.59$, $p = 0.45$; ANOVA with both proportion secular and total prayers natural logarithm transformed).

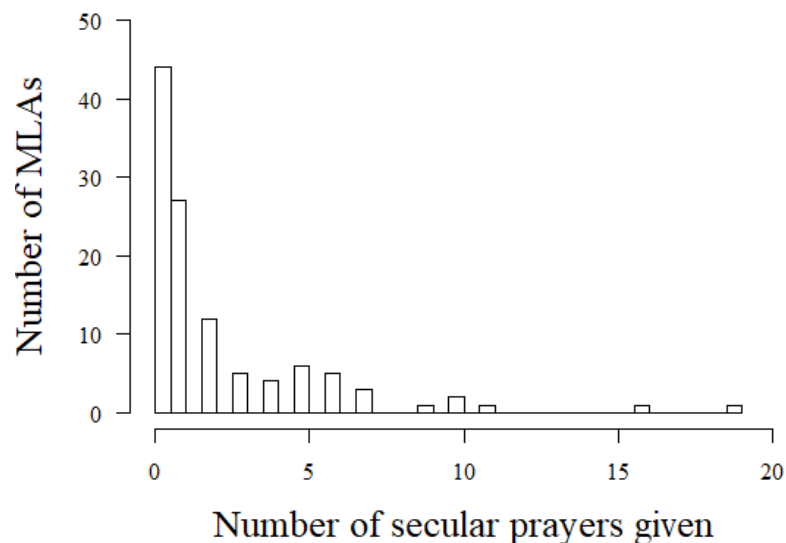


Figure 2. The distribution of secular prayers given per MLA.

We then decided to examine whether party affiliation influenced the content of prayers. Again, we excluded the Green Party since they only delivered two prayers in our dataset. We used logistic regression to examine the relationship between party affiliation of the MLA delivering the prayer and the religious content of the prayer. We found a trend that NDP MLAs were marginally more likely to deliver secular prayers (31.4% vs. 26.0% of prayers, $Z_{1,838} = 1.7$, $p = 0.089$; logistic regression). Liberal MLAs, by contrast, are significantly more likely to deliver sectarian prayers (the vast majority of which are Christian). On average, prayers delivered by Liberal MLAs are sectarian 26.0% of the time, while prayers delivered by NDP MLAs are sectarian only 10.3% of time ($Z_{1,838} = -5.55$, $p < 0.001$; logistic regression). We found very similar results in the proportion of Christian prayers by party: 25.4% of prayers given by Liberal MLAs were Christian, compared with 9.2% of prayers delivered by NDP MLAs ($Z_{1,838} = -5.8$, $p < 0.001$; logistic regression). We were also interested in whether the use of the name of a deity differed between the parties, and found that overall there were no differences between parties in the use of name of a deity ($Z_{1,838} = 0.8$, $p = 0.45$).

Next, we examined the effect of party affiliation on whether a First Nations language was used in the prayer. Because we were interested in the effect of party affiliation, we removed Throne Prayers for this analysis. We found that NDP MLAs were significantly more likely to use First Nations language (11.7% of their prayers vs. 0.2%; $X_{1,838} = 4.79$, $p < 0.001$; logistic regression).

Sample Prayers are used to different extents by party. Liberal MLAs are significantly more likely to use sample prayers than NDP MLAs (64.0% vs. 35.0% of prayers; $Z_{1,838} = -8.2$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, the type of sample prayers varies significantly between parties, with Liberal MLA's significantly more likely to use the unaltered sample prayers, while NDP MLAs more likely to use a combination of Prayer 4 and 5 (*Table*). There was also a trend towards NDP MLAs being more likely to alter sample prayers. NDP MLAs altered the sample prayer 55.1% of the time that they used a sample prayer, while Liberal MLAs only did so 22.5% of the time ($Z_{1,836} = 2.0$, $p = 0.051$).

Table 10: Sample prayer use between Liberal and NDP MLAs¹⁸¹

Prayer	Coded	Liberal	NDP	Z statistic (p-value)
1	Non-sectarian	24	2	-3.0 (0.002)
2	Non-sectarian	101	18	-6.1 (<0.001)
3	Secular	55	20	-2.9 (0.004)
4	Secular	77	44	-1.6 (0.12)
5	Non-sectarian	44	7	-3.9 (<0.001)
2+3	N/A	1	0	Not tested
3+4	N/A	0	1	Not tested
3+5	N/A	3	0	Not tested
3+4+5	N/A	2	0	Not tested
4+3	N/A	0	1	Not tested
4+5	N/A	0	34	5.2 (<0.001)
Total sample prayers		307 ^a	127 ^b	4.8 (<0.001)
Non-sample prayer		173	234	

We next examined the determinants of prayer length, particularly the religiosity of the prayer and party affiliation. We found a significant interaction between party affiliation and whether the prayer was secular, identifying that for Liberal MLAs, prayers were 2.09 times longer if they were non-secular, while for NDP MLAs, non-secular prayers were only 1.52 longer ($F_{1,834} = 5.2$, $p = 0.023$ for the interaction in a two-way ANOVA; Figure 3). We found similar effects for whether or not the prayer was sectarian, with Liberal MLAs using 1.8 times as many words if they were delivering a sectarian prayer, while NDP MLAs used only 1.2 times as many words ($F_{1,834} = 14.8$, $p < 0.001$; Figure 4). Since the vast majority of sectarian prayers were Christian prayers, we found almost identical results when we examined Christian prayers with Liberal MLAs using 1.8 times as many words for Christian prayers than non-Christian prayers, and NDP MLAs only using 1.2 times as many words ($F_{1,834} = 12.5$, $p < 0.001$; data not shown). Overall, despite Christian prayers only making up 20.2% of the total prayers given in the BC Legislature, because they were significantly longer, they were composed of 25.6% of the 70,079 words used in prayers.

¹⁸¹ Letters indicate significant differences in probability of use of a particular prayer between the two political parties in a logistic regression. When total prayers for a particular sample prayer were < 5 , we did not test the effect of political party on use due to low sample size. ‘Coded’ refers to the coding of the original, unaltered prayer.

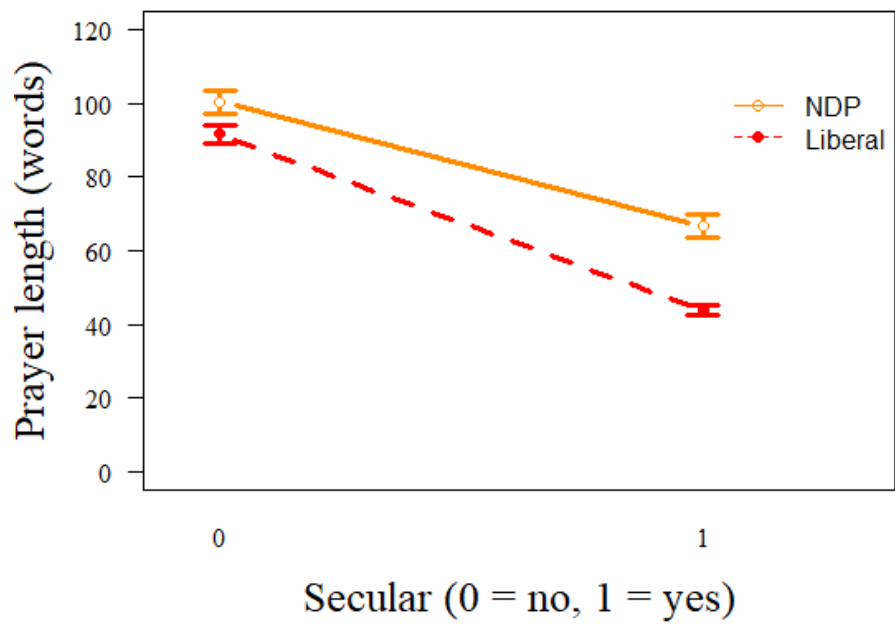


Figure 3. The effect of party affiliation and secular status of the prayer on prayer length.

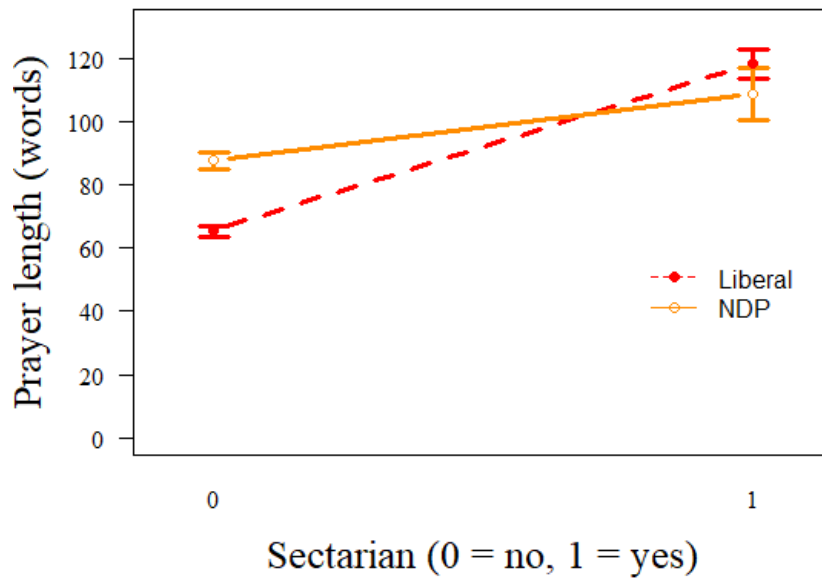


Figure 4. The effect of party affiliation and sectarian status on prayer length.

We were interested in whether any of these metrics in prayer use or party effects changed over time. We decided, for simplicity sake, to conduct all analyses on a year-by-year basis, and fit locally-weighted regressions using the loess function in R to visualize trends over time. We also tested nonlinear effects of time by fitting a polynomial term in our regression models. We first examined how First Nations language use varied over time, finding that there has been a steady increase in the proportion of prayers that included First Nations Language ($F_{1,13} = 12.0$, $p = 0.004$ for the linear effect of time; Figure 5), although overall use, particularly by Liberal MLAs remains relatively low.

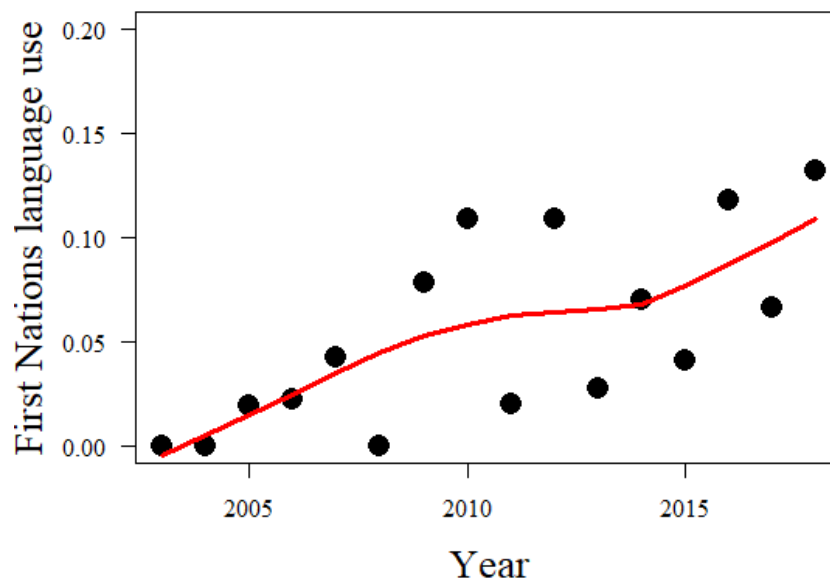


Figure 5. The proportion of prayers that includes at least one word of a First Nations language over time. Line represents a locally-weighted regression.

We examined the use of sample prayers over time. We found that in both parties, sample prayer use has steadily declined over time ($F_{1,26} = 18.4$, $p < 0.001$ for the linear effect of time; Figure 6), but there was no significant interaction between party affiliation and change over time. We also examined how prayer length changed with time between the two parties, finding that both parties increased prayer length linearly over time, but NDP MLAs increased even more steeply ($F_{1,24} = 9.5$, $p = 0.005$ for the interaction between year and party affiliation; Figure 7).

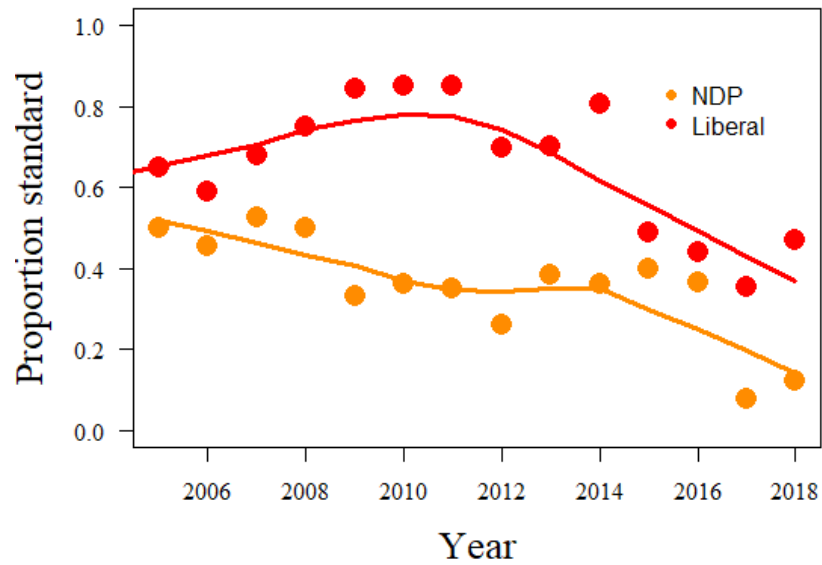


Figure 6. The proportion of prayers that are part of the standard repertoire delivered by each party's MLAs over time. Lines represent a locally-weighted regression.

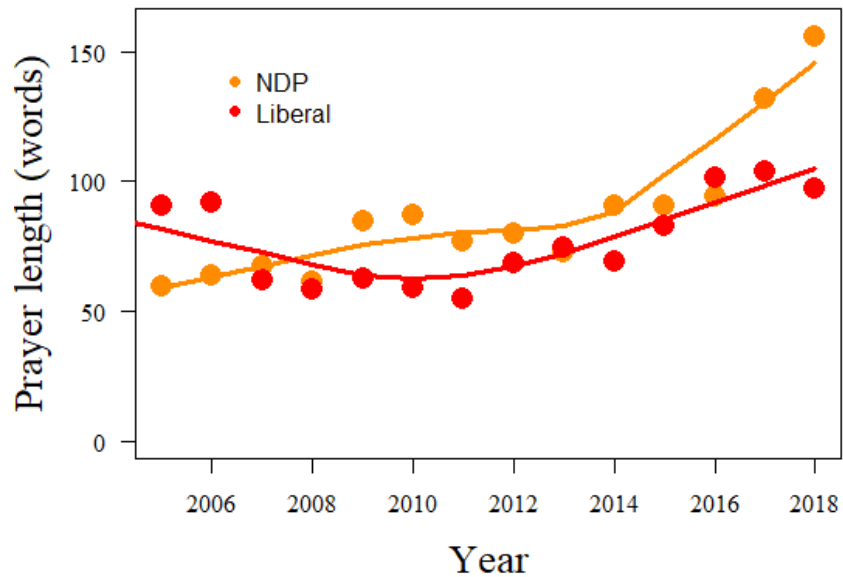


Figure 7. Prayer length (in words) over time between the NDP and Liberal party. Lines represent a locally-weighted regression.

Next, we examined how religiosity of prayer content varied over time between Liberal and NDP MLAs. While earlier we noted that the parties diverged greatly in the proportion of prayers that are secular, overall secular prayer use by both party MLAs has generally declined over time ($F_{1,24} = 18.8$, $p < 0.001$ for the interaction between party affiliation and time; Figure 8). We similarly investigated the proportion of prayers that are Christian, and found that it is steadily increasing over time in both parties, more than doubling over the past decade in each case ($F_{1,24} = 6.4$, $p = 0.02$ for the interaction between party affiliation and time; Figure 9). Similarly the proportion of prayers that were sectarian significantly increased over time in both parties ($F_{1,24} = 4.7$, $p = 0.04$ for the interaction between party affiliation and time).

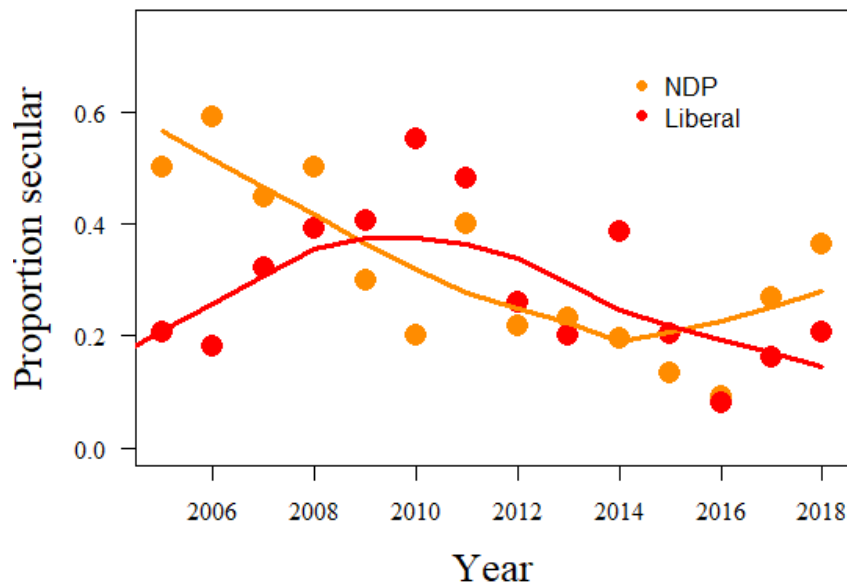


Figure 8. Changes in the proportion of prayers that are secular delivered by MLA party affiliation. Lines represent a locally-weighted regression.

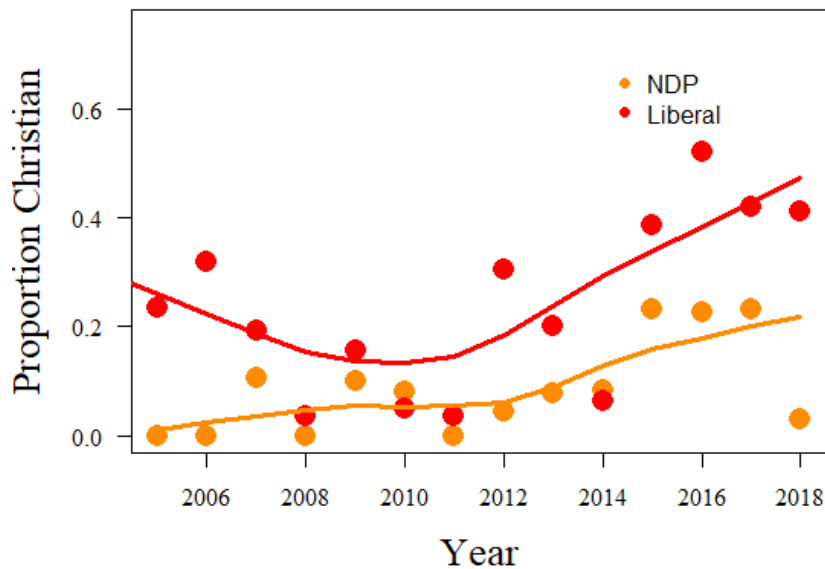


Figure 9. The proportion of all prayers that are Christian over time, separated by political affiliation. Lines represent a locally-weighted regression.

Discussion

Representativeness

Examining the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature from October 6, 2003 to February 12, 2019, the first thing that stands out is the overall religiosity of the prayers. In total, 71.2% of these prayers were classified as ‘religious.’ We can compare these numbers with the religious demographic information of BC to gauge the extent to which prayers delivered in the BC Legislature reflect the beliefs of British Columbians. Here we offer a number of enumerations of religious affiliation in BC for comparison (Table 11). The surveys and Census data indicates a significant and growing percentage of British Columbians with no religious affiliation.¹⁸²

¹⁸² See also analysis in PEW Research Centre. (2013, June 27). “Canada’s changing religious landscape.” Retrieved from <https://www.pewforum.org/2013/06/27/canadas-changing-religious-landscape/>

Table 11: Religious demographics in British Columbia

Religion	2013 BCHA Survey ¹⁸³	2011 Household Survey ¹⁸⁴	2001 Census ¹⁸⁵	1991 Census ¹⁸⁶
Christian	25.5%	44.6%	54.7%	63.6%
No Religious Affiliation	64.2%	44.1%	35.1%	30.0%
Sikh	0.8%	4.7%	3.5%	2.3%
Buddhist	1.0%	2.1%	2.2%	1.1%
Muslim	0.5%	1.8%	1.5%	0.8%
Hindu	---	1.1%	0.8%	0.6%
Jewish	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Other Religions	4.1%	0.8%	---	---
Don't Know	0.7%	---	---	---

Given the high proportion of religious prayers delivered in the BC Legislature, it is clear that the views of this group are being underrepresented by prayer in the BC Legislature. We would be unjustified to conclude that the 27.5% of the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature that were identified as ‘secular’ reflected the views of non-believing British Columbians. To the contrary, we found that even the secular prayers adopted the structure of a ‘prayer,’ with 88.7% of secular prayers ending in ‘amen,’ compared with other prayers which ended in ‘amen’ 93.2% of the time. Simply because religious content is removed, minimized, or obscured, does not mean that a prayer reflects the beliefs of the irreligious, diverse as those beliefs are. And even if this were the case, non-believers would still be severely underrepresented. We can conclude therefore, that the argument that legislative prayer excludes non-believers is supported by our findings.

When we look at the sectarian prayers for which we were able to identify religion (188), 175 (93.1%) of these prayers were identified as ‘Christian.’ In this way, Christianity is considerably overrepresented in the content of the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature, and it

¹⁸³ BCHA 2013. N=600, BC adults (18+), telephone-online hybrid (April 15-23, 2013), margin of error: +/- 4.0%.

¹⁸⁴ Statistics Canada 2011. Global non-response rate 26.1%.

¹⁸⁵ Statistic Canada. (2003, May 13). “2001 Census: analysis series, religions in Canada.” *Government of Canada*. Catalogue no. 96F0030XIE2001015. Retrieved from <http://publications.gc.ca/Collection/Statcan/96F0030X/96F0030XIE2001015.pdf>

¹⁸⁶ Statistics Canada. (n.d.). “British Columbia: one-third report no religion. Table: major religious denominations, British Columbia, 2001 and 1991.” *Government of Canada*. Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/Analytic/companion/rel/bc.cfm>

overshadows other religious traditions. Every non-Christian religion, with the exception to Judaism, was under-represented by both sectarian prayers and all prayers in general. Furthermore, some significant faith traditions are not represented at all. Despite Sikhs representing around 4.7% of the population of BC, this religious tradition was never mentioned in the BC Legislature over the period covered by this study (Table 12). A lack of diversity is further indicated by a paucity of the inclusion of First Nations language and content, which comprises a mere 6% of prayers (including Throne Prayers), and is largely the use of single words, and also the lack of content from other languages (1.2% of prayers).

Table 12: Prayers in the BC Legislature compared with BC population

Religion	2011 Household Survey¹⁸⁷	% Sectarian Prayers	% of All Prayers
Christian	44.6%	93.1%	20.2%
No Religious Affiliation	44.1%	---	---
Sikh	4.7%	0%	0%
Buddhist	2.1%	0.5%	0.1%
Muslim	1.8%	1.6%	0.3%
Hindu	1.1%	0.5%	0.1%
Jewish	0.5%	2.1%	0.5%
Other Religions	0.8%	0.5%	0.1%

When defenders of legislative prayer claim that it displays “the spiritual diversity that exists among its members,”¹⁸⁸ these claims are not supported by the data. On the other hand, the argument that legislative prayer supports one religion over others, in this case Christianity over others, is supported by our findings. As a result, it is fair to conclude that prayer in the BC Legislature is excluding significant populations of believers and non-believers.

First Nations Content

In a time when truth and reconciliation should be front and centre, it was positive to see an increase in the use of First Nations languages in the BC Legislature. When we tested the year-

¹⁸⁷ Statistics Canada 2011. Global non-response rate 26.1%.

¹⁸⁸ Mary Polak, MLA for Langley, correspondence with author; and see John Rustad, MLA for Nechako-Lakes, correspondence with author; and Forbes 2012:10.

by-year usage of First Nations language, we found a steady increase in the proportion of prayers that included First Nations Language. However, there are several caveats that go with this information. First, the usage of First Nations languages was not evenly distributed between the parties, instead, NDP MLAs are far more likely to use First Nations language in their prayers (11.7% versus 0.2% for Liberals). Before NDP MLAs pat themselves on the STASCEĒ,¹⁸⁹ of the 49 prayers that contained First Nations languages, 42 (85.7%) were a single word and the MLAs from Stikine and Skeena delivered most of these words.¹⁹⁰ The four prayers delivered almost entirely in a First Nation's language were all Throne Prayers, delivered by invited guests. Additional progress is clearly needed.

Structure

A common argument raised against legislative prayer is that structure and nomenclature associated with allocating time for 'prayer' strongly influences how this time is used. The idea of having time set aside at the beginning of a meeting for 'prayer' reflects a specific conceptual framework, at the exclusion of others. Structuring the time in this way prescribes the form that the discourse delivered in this time will take. Far from being an ecumenical time allocated for a diversity of faith traditions to share their beliefs, this time is generally perceived as a time for Christian prayer. As a result, other beliefs and traditions are seen guests in this space, and as guests, they tend to adopt the structure of the space they are visiting. In other words, if you are asked to deliver a prayer, you are much less likely to 'colour outside of the lines' and deliver some other kind of declaration. Instead you are likely to structure your discourse in the form of a prayer, one that likely adopts the structure of the dominant faith tradition.

We can see this in the structure of the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature. A number of prayers incorporated 'alternate structures'— including a poem, quotation, reference or moment of silence — yet despite containing these other elements, 83.9% of these still ended in 'amen.' Of the prayers coded as 'secular,' 88.7% ended in 'amen.' There were only two 'moments of silence' in the Legislature, and one of these was part of a sectarian prayer delivered by a Catholic priest, who asked MLAs to "pause for a moment and be aware that we are in the midst of a

¹⁸⁹ First Voices. (n.d.). "SENĆOTEN words – STASCEĒ (back)." Retrieved from <http://tiny.cc/uqcfcz>.

¹⁹⁰ Robin Austin, NDP MLA for Skeena; and Doug Donaldson, NDP MLA for Stikine.

mystery of mercy and love.”¹⁹¹

Only six MLAs delivered poetry, and all but one of those poems were religious in nature and coded as ‘non-sectarian.’ The one outlier was Lana Popham, who recited Robyn O’Brien’s *True Food: A Love Poem*.¹⁹² With respect to overall content and structure, of the prayers delivered in the Legislature, only 12 (1.4%) were classified as ‘not prayers.’ And even these often felt the need to make mention of faith:

Whatever faith one is driven by or if one is simply driven to this place by ethic or logic, we must remember the consequences of public policy. Public policy is blunt, and the teeth and gears of policy gone wrong can harm those left out. With that consequence in mind, we must remind ourselves there is a simple equation in democracy that one equals one. No matter who, one equals one. No matter how thick their wallet or how cold the bridge under which they live, one equals one. Equal citizenship and equal right to our Commonwealth. Thank you.¹⁹³

The fact that the BC Legislature has time allocated for ‘prayer’ and that MLAs are called upon by the Speaker to ‘lead us in prayer,’ inherently biases this time in favour of religious prayers and statements which adopt the structure of a Christian prayer. As a result, this practice excludes both non-believers and those whose religious traditions do not include ‘prayer’ or prayer which adopts a ‘Christian’ format.

Sample Prayers

There is considerable diversity of practices relating to legislative prayer across Canada. Only Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and BC provide MLAs with the opportunity to deliver prayers of their own devising. BC MLAs only chose to take advantage of this opportunity half (50.0%) of the time. For the remaining time, MLAs would read from one of five Sample Prayers (see Appendix 1), and their selection of these sample prayers is not evenly spread across all five. When MLAs selected a Sample Prayer, they favoured the secular Sample Prayer 4, 27.9% of the time, and the non-sectarian Sample Prayer 2, 27.7% of the time. MLAs found the non-sectarian Sample Prayer 1 the least appealing, selecting it a mere 6% of the time. MLAs also mixed and matched the sample prayers, doing so 9.3% of the time, and when they did, they showed a preference for combining Sample Prayers 4 and 5, more often than they selected Sample Prayer

¹⁹¹ Throne Prayer by Father Hann, February 12, 2008.

¹⁹² Lana Popham, NDP MLA for Saanich South, September 21, 2009.

¹⁹³ Doug Routley, NDP MLA for Nanaimo-North Cowichan, February 19, 2014.

1. On top of this, the use of Sample Prayers by MLAs of both parties is on a steady decline.

What this information tells us, is that for whatever reason some of the Sample Prayers are more appealing, that MLAs are reaching for Sample Prayers less often, and that if given the option of selecting from a list of prayers, MLAs will likely do so in a way that favours some prayers over others. This knowledge can be used to inform efforts at reforming the practice of legislative prayer in BC. It suggests that altering or adding to the Sample Prayers in an attempt at making them more representative of the diversity of beliefs in BC would in no way ensure that those prayers were read. If the BC Legislature wishes to ensure that a specific prayer or other statement is read, it must remove this task from MLAs and instead assign it to the Speaker, something which has been done in many legislatures across the country.

Parties and Prayer

It is informative to examine the differences in delivery of prayers between the two major parties in the BC Legislature. There are considerable differences beyond the fact that NDP MLAs are much more likely to include First Nations language in their prayers. While party affiliation had no influence on the number of prayers given per MLA, it did have a marginal impact on the religiosity of those prayers. Liberal MLAs were much more likely to deliver a sectarian prayer than their NDP counterparts (26.0% of the time, compared with 10.3%), and these prayers were much more likely to be Christian. 25.4% of prayers by a Liberal MLA were Christian, compared with 9.2% of prayers delivered by NDP MLAs. NDP MLAs are marginally more likely to deliver a secular prayer than Liberal MLAs.

Sample Prayer use varied considerably between the NDP and Liberal, with Liberal MLAs being significantly more likely to use sample prayers than their NDP counterparts (64.0% vs. 35.0% of prayers). This difference also extends into MLAs choice and use of Sample Prayers; NDP MLAs show a greater preference for delivering altered or combined versions of the Sample Prayers, while Liberal MLAs prefer to use Sample Prayers unaltered.

MLAs of both parties are reaching for the Sample Prayer list less often, and instead choosing to deliver prayers of their own devising, and these prayers are more sectarian and longer. Prayer length has increased over time, with the length of the prayers delivered by NDP MLAs expanding faster than those of Liberal MLAs. Furthermore, the more religious the prayer,

the longer it tends to be for MLAs of both parties, with religious prayers by Liberals being the longest on average. Simply put, Liberal MLAs give more standard and more religious prayers, NDP MLAs give longer prayers. Both parties give longer prayers if they're more religious, but religious prayers by Liberals are the longest.

Fewer MLAs are Delivering Longer and Increasingly Religious Prayers

Across parties, prayers delivered in the BC Legislature are becoming longer and more Christian, and these prayers are being delivered by a shrinking number of MLAs. Fewer 'secular' prayers are delivered in the BC Legislature, and instead prayers are becoming sectarian, and more specifically, Christian. The proportion of prayers delivered in the BC Legislature that are Christian has more than doubled in the past decade, across both parties, and these prayers tend to be longer than others.

Only a few MLAs are giving the majority of prayers; while most MLAs deliver 0 to 2 prayers, three MLAs delivered more than 30 prayers each. When we reviewed the 'league tables' ranking MLAs by the number of prayers they delivered, we found that the percentage of MLAs delivering prayers was diminishing over time.

This trend suggests a growing number of BC MLAs who are choosing to not participate in the delivery of prayers. We suspect that this indicates an increasing number of MLAs who oppose the practice, or at the very least are ambivalent towards it. When we asked MLAs about their position on the practice of legislative prayer in BC, we consistently found that those who opposed the practice also expressed a desire not to deliver prayers themselves. One MLA noted that "I do not support the practice as I believe there should be real and perceived separation of religion and state."¹⁹⁴ When asked if they had been given the opportunity to deliver a prayer in the legislature, this same MLA responded with "[y]es I have had the opportunity to deliver a prayer but declined."¹⁹⁵ Likewise, another MLA made the following statement:

I am somewhat ambivalent. I do see the value of tradition in our Legislature, but I wonder at the practice of a religious ceremony in what is meant to be a secular institution. I appreciate that there are many different customs represented by the prayers – religious and non-religious – but there can be for some a feeling of

¹⁹⁴ Jordan Sturdy, MLA for West Vancouver-Sea to Sky, correspondence with author.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

alienation that comes from the practice.¹⁹⁶

When asked if they had been given the opportunity to deliver a prayer in the legislature, they responded that “I have not delivered a prayer, and I am not inclined to request this.”¹⁹⁷ It is worth noting that this same MLA also recommended that the practice be replaced with a First Nations territorial land acknowledgement and perhaps a ‘reflection’ delivered by an MLA, both options we explore in ‘Recommendations’ below.¹⁹⁸

All of this seems to suggest that a significant and growing number of MLAs are choosing to not deliver prayers in the BC Legislature, and this suggests to us a growing number of MLAs who oppose, or who are at least ambivalent towards, the practice. Unfortunately, for this exclusionary and discriminatory practice of opening sittings of the BC Legislature with prayer to end, we will require this silent majority to step up and take action.

Conclusion and Recommendations for the BC Legislature

What is clear from the above report is that the status quo, whereby sittings of the BC Legislature open with a prayer, must change. The practice discriminates against non-believers and members of minority faith traditions, and in so doing violates the state’s duty of religious neutrality. It does not promote diversity, but rather favours one faith tradition over others, and religious beliefs over irreligious beliefs.

Fewer and fewer MLAs are delivering prayers in the Legislature, and those prayers are becoming increasingly religious. In order to make the BC Legislature a more inclusive chamber, one where all British Columbians feel welcome, the practice of beginning sittings with a prayer should ended. Towards this end, and informed by the above research, we have developed of three key recommendations, these are, that the BC Legislature:

- 1) Abolish the practice of legislative prayer altogether.
- 2) Replace the practice with a First Nations territorial acknowledgement.
- 3) Replace the practice with a time for silent reflection.

These three recommendations are the only three which we consider sufficient in order for the

¹⁹⁶ Sonia Furstenau, MLA for Cowichan Valley, correspondence with author.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

state to maintain its duty of religious neutrality and to make the Legislature maximally inclusive.

We have also included four additional options which would exclude fewer people, and are therefore superior to the status quo. Unfortunately, these half-measures include a number of shortcomings, which we have also outlined. While these options are not presented in any order of preference, the first three are far superior to the fourth. These options are that the BC Legislature:

- 1) Adopt the Scottish Model: Invited presenters deliver a prayer/reflection, with beliefs of invitees directly proportionate to BC population.
- 2) Redraft the Sample Prayers to make them all secular, and have these delivered by the Speaker on a rotating basis.
- 3) Include humanist declarations in the Sample Prayers, and have these delivered by the Speaker on a rotating basis.
- 4) Include humanist declarations in the Sample Prayer list and continue to permit MLAs to deliver their own prayers.

Recommendations

1 – Abolish the practice of legislative prayer altogether.

The *Saguenay* decision was clear that the state's duty of religious neutrality is as a 'democratic imperative,' and that "this neutrality requires that the state neither favour nor hinder any particular belief."¹⁹⁹ However, by including prayer in the legislature, the state is acting "in such a way as to create a preferential public space that favours certain religious groups and is hostile to others," an action which is proscribed by *Saguenay*.²⁰⁰ Any action short of the complete abolition of the practice of opening sittings of the BC Legislature with prayer will necessarily exclude non-believers and members of religious minorities. *Saguenay* is clear, "the state may not, by expressing its own religious preference, promote the participation of believers to the exclusion of non-believers or vice versa."²⁰¹

The courts have yet to explore the question of whether parliamentary privilege can be used to allow this discriminatory practice from continuing in a legislature. However, if prayer has been found to discriminate and exclude people at the municipal level of government, it follows that its inclusion in legislative assembly would have the same effect. The shield of parliamentary privilege exists to protect individual MLAs, not generally discriminatory practices

¹⁹⁹ Para. 72, *Saguenay*.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.* Para. 75.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

or procedures. Nor can it shield this practice from public scrutiny, nor obviate the clear exclusionary effect that this practice has on non-believers and members of religious minorities.

Furthermore, any attempt to counteract the exclusionary effect by crafting an ‘inclusive’ or ‘non-denominational’ prayer will necessarily fall short. As was clearly stated in *Saguenay*, “[e]ven if a religious practice engaged in by the state is ‘inclusive,’ it may nevertheless exclude non-believers.”²⁰² It is not possible for the BC Legislature in general, let alone individual MLAs individually, to craft a prayer or prayers that would not in some way exclude and discriminate. Furthermore, even if this were possible, the practice of calling for a member of the Legislature to ‘lead us in prayer,’ and the practice of beginning a meeting with a ‘prayer,’ reinforces the hegemony of one specific faith tradition, at the exclusion of others, or none. We can see this in the significant percentage (88.7%) of ‘secular’ prayers that still fall into the practice of ending in ‘amen.’

The most straightforward approach would be to simply abolish the practice. Standing Order 25 should be amended to exclude ‘prayers.’ Such a change would help move the BC closer to fulfilling its duty of religious neutrality.

2 – Replace the practice with a First Nations territorial acknowledgement.

In an age when truth and reconciliation should be front and centre, it is puzzling and problematic that the BC Legislature would continue to begin with a prayer but not include some kind of First Nations territorial acknowledgement. We recommend that the practice of beginning sittings of the BC Legislature with a prayer be replaced with a First Nations territorial acknowledgement. Furthermore, we recommend that the procedures, protocols, and details surrounding this practice be developed in consultation with First Nations stakeholders. This latter requirement is critical in order to ensure that the practice represents the diversity of First Nations across the province, and that the practice forms a meaningful part of reconciliation, rather than lapsing into perfunctory practice.

Our analysis has shown that there has been a gradual increase in the amount of First Nations content in prayers in the BC Legislature. However, relying on the prayer portion of the

²⁰² *Ibid.*, Para. 137, and see Para. 92.

legislature to cover this important acknowledgement is unreliable, will likely exclude certain First Nations, and does not give sufficient respect to the importance of reconciliation. Of the First Nations content included in prayers, the vast majority constituted a single word, and of these words, the most common was the Gitksan word ‘SABAK,’ delivered by two the MLAs for Stikine and Skeena.²⁰³ The BC Government notes that “[t]here are 198 distinct First Nations in B.C., each with their own unique traditions and history,” and elaborates that there are “[m]ore than 30 different First Nation languages and close to 60 dialects are spoken in the province.”²⁰⁴ The fact that in prayers, the use of First Nations content is intermittent at best, and that two MLAs represented most of the First Nations content, indicates that we cannot rely on MLAs in general to include this content in their prayers. If we continue hope that MLAs will remember to incorporate First Nations content into their prayers, many of First Nations communities will continue to go unacknowledged.

The current practice of sporadic incorporation of the rare First Nations word or reference into a prayer does not give reconciliation the prominence it deserves, and instead sends the message that such content is at best an afterthought. This paltry amount of content is in no way a substantive, let alone meaningful territorial acknowledgement. Such an acknowledgement should, at the very least, be given its own place in the Standing Orders.

When we corresponded with MLAs over the issue of legislative prayer, several of them mentioned a desire to see this practice replaced with a First Nations territorial acknowledgment.²⁰⁵ Additionally, adopting such a practice is consistent with the government’s commitment to reconciliation.²⁰⁶ As a result, the government and all BC MLAs could follow through on this commitment by removing ‘prayers’ from Standing Order 25, and working in consultation with First Nations stakeholders, develop protocols and procedures around

²⁰³ Delivered at the conclusion of various prayers by Doug Donaldson, NDP MLA for Stikine and by Robin Austin, NDP MLA for Skeena.

²⁰⁴ Government of British Columbia. (2019). “B.C. First Nations & Indigenous People.” Retrieved from <https://www.welcomebc.ca/Choose-B-C/Explore-British-Columbia/B-C-First-Nations-Indigenous-People>; and see Dunlop, B., Gessner, S., Herbert, T., & Parker, A. (2018). “Report on the status of B.B. First Nations languages.” 3rd Ed. *First People’s Cultural Council*. Retrieved from <http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/FPCC-LanguageReport-180716-WEB.pdf>.

²⁰⁵ See for example Sonia Furstenau, Green Party MLA for Cowichan Valley, correspondence with author.

²⁰⁶ BC NDP 2017:82-85; and see for example First Nations Summit *et al.* (n.d). “Joint agenda: implementing the commitment document – shared vision, guiding principles, goals and objective.” Retrieved from https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/BC_FNLC_Vision.pdf; and see First Nations Summit *et al.* (n.d). “Joint agenda: implementing the commitment document – concrete actions: transforming laws, policies, processes and structures.” Retrieved from https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/BC_FNLC_Actions.pdf.

incorporating a territorial acknowledgment into the practices of the Legislature.

3 – Replace the practice with a time for silent reflection.

There are so many different religious traditions in the world, with so much diversity of beliefs and practices, that crafting a ‘non-denominational’ or ‘secular’ prayer is impossible. The divide between theistic and non-theistic religious traditions points to one major impediment to crafting non-denominational prayers.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, even if such a thing were possible, *Saguenay* is clear that “a prayer, even a non-denominational one, is a religious practice that excludes atheists and agnostics.”²⁰⁸ The concept of prayer necessarily invokes a particular concept of a Supreme Being or Supreme Reality, which necessarily excludes those who do not believe in such things.²⁰⁹ As such, any attempt at accommodation through a method that continues to include prayer will ultimately fail. One way of avoiding this pitfall is to replace the time in the BC Legislature allocated for ‘prayers’ with a time for silent reflection.

This is the practice that has been followed in Quebec since prayer was abandoned in this assembly in December 1976. At the time, “Speaker Richard decided to abandon the practice to reaffirm support for the freedom of members belonging to different faiths.”²¹⁰ A time for silent reflections provides an opportunity for MLAs to prepare for the upcoming sitting in whatever way they deem fit. Individual MLAs can do anything with this time short of violating the request for silence; they could offer up a silent prayer to a god or gods, contemplate the contents of an upcoming speech, psych themselves up to heckle a cabinet minister, or review their dinner plans. By not being prescriptive, this approach avoids the risk of imposing on the rights and freedoms of individual MLAs. By not including any overt statements, this approach avoids the risk of the state violating its neutrality by endorsing a particular belief and creating a space favouring one belief over others.

The procedure here is straightforward; MLAs would need to amend Standing Order 25, to replace ‘prayers’ with ‘time for reflection.’

²⁰⁷ Delahunty 2007:540-541; and see Berry 2005:636; and see Koenig *et al.* 2014:530.

²⁰⁸ Para. 92, *Saguenay*.

²⁰⁹ Delahunty 2007:539.

²¹⁰ Lanouette 2009:6; and see Bueckert *et al.* 2017:25.

Other Options

The above three recommendations would address the concerns around legislative prayer detailed in this report. Should the BC Legislature wish to adopt a half-measure, we thought it beneficial to include some options that would at least minimize the discrimination resulting from the continued inclusion of time allocated for prayer. All but one of these options include removing the opportunity for MLAs to deliver the prayers themselves. This has been done because any attempt at making the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature more representative of the population or a diversity of beliefs will be undermined by continuing to give MLAs the option of either delivering a Sample Prayers or one of their own devising.

Simply amending the list of Sample Prayers to include humanist or more secular options does not mean that these options will be used. As we have seen, MLAs choice of Sample Prayers is not evenly spread across all five. For example, more MLAs choose to combine Sample Prayers 4 and 5, than selected Sample Prayer 1, and more than half (55.6%) of the Sample Prayers used were prayers 2 and 4. Thus, if there is indeed a desire for prayers to be more representative of the diversity of beliefs in the province, they must be delivered by people other than MLAs; either the Speaker or invited guests.

One further requirement that should accompany the adoption of any of these options is that the period reserved for ‘Prayers’ be renamed with another term such as ‘Time for Reflection,’ ‘Affirmations,’ or ‘Reflections.’ The act of calling any statement that begins a sitting of the legislature, or any meeting for that matter, a ‘prayer’ is problematic, as relying on this term does not reflect the diversity of nomenclature used to describe religious and secular ritualistic activities.²¹¹ Instead, having a time reserved for ‘prayers’ reflects a specific conceptual framework and tends to prescribe the structure of the statements given in this time, such that even secular statements tend to adopt a ‘prayer structure.’ Replacing this term with a term such as ‘invocations,’ does no better, as such a term evokes the religious and spiritual, thereby privileging these beliefs over others. At least if a secular term like ‘reflections’ were used, it would not dictate a religious structure, thereby reducing the number of iterations of violations of the state’s duty of religious neutrality.

²¹¹ Berry 2005:631.

4 – Adopt the Scottish model.

Prayers delivered in the BC Legislature not only are disproportionately religious in nature (71.2%), but of those prayers where the religion could be positively identified, the vast majority were identified as Christian (93.1%). This clearly does not reflect the diversity of beliefs in the province, religious or otherwise. Clearly relying on MLAs to deliver representative content is proving ineffective. A more effective way of ensuring that a greater diversity of views are reflected in the prayers delivered in the BC Legislature would be to invite guests to deliver these prayers.

Just such an approach was adopted in Scotland. After its powers were repatriated, the Scottish Parliament adopted a practice of conducting a ‘Time for Reflection,’ which is typically the first item of business at a meeting of the Parliament each Tuesday afternoon. A speaker is invited to address the legislature for 4 minutes, and the “pattern of speakers reflects the balance of beliefs in Scotland (based on the Census).”²¹² The variation of speakers is considerable; it includes representatives from a wide range of religions and faith traditions, as well as non-faith and humanist groups. For example, on May 9, 2017, the legislature was addressed by a pupil from the Falkirk High School, who delivered a secular message in British Sign Language.²¹³ The Scottish Parliament Information Centre maintains details records of all speakers, broken down by belief and gender.²¹⁴

There are practical challenges to adopting such an approach. For example, having invited presenters open every sitting of the BC Legislature would place a high administrative burden on the Office of the Speaker, and it would be expensive. Scotland has reduced such administrative and financial costs by holding a ‘Time for Reflection’ on a weekly, rather than daily, basis. The challenge of achieving an adequate representation of the population at large is also a significant one. While the reflections delivered in Scottish Parliament come close to reflecting the diversity of beliefs in that jurisdiction, they have so far failed to capture the full spectrum of gender diversity (see Table 11).

²¹² Scottish Parliament. (2019, June 27). “Scottish Parliament fact sheet: contributors to Ttime for reflections: sessions 5.” Retrieved from https://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/Factsheets/Contributors_to_Time_for_Reflection_Session_5.pdf ; and see Lanouette 2009:6.

²¹³ Scottish Parliament 2019.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Table 13: Summary of Contributors to Time for Reflections in Scottish Parliament, Session 5²¹⁵

Gender	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Male	26 (76%)	27 (71%)	24 (63%)
Female	8 (24%)	11(29%)	14 (37%)
Totals	34	38	38

Achieving a proper balance of beliefs would always present a challenge, given that the legislature does not necessarily sit for set duration. As such, targets for adequate representativeness would need to be set over longer periods of time.

Unfortunately, this option has other drawbacks; it still risks creating a space favourable to some beliefs at the exclusion of others. While a greater diversity of views would be represented under this approach, it would still exclude any minority beliefs which did not reach a sufficient threshold in the Census. In this way, this option would simply focus discrimination and exclusion on a smaller segment of the population. Balancing the will of the majority whilst protecting minority rights is a fundamental part of democratic systems, and given that there are options that would obviate all of this discrimination (see ‘Recommendations’ above), this option is less than ideal.

This option also risks aggravating problems in the census. Surveying the public about their religious affiliation and beliefs is fraught with challenges: individuals are prone to exaggerating their religious attendance,²¹⁶ and individuals who no longer believe in the tenants of a religion might still identify themselves as ‘culturally’ belonging to a faith. Likewise religious and nonreligious individuals may object to the nature of these types of census questions, and either not complete them, or write in ‘another religion.’ For example, in some jurisdictions, the percentages of individuals writing in ‘Jedi’ or a variant of this faith tradition portrayed in the fictitious Star Wars universe has been significant, so much so that this practice has become known as the ‘Jedi Census Phenomenon.’ For example, in the 2001 Australian Census, 70,509 Australians (0.37%) wrote in ‘Jedi’ or a variant.²¹⁷ These numbers exceeded those of individuals who affiliated themselves with the Church of Christ, and came close to the number of individuals

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

²¹⁶ See McAndrew & Voas 2011:5; and see Hadaway *et al.* 1993; and Brenner 2011.

²¹⁷ See Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2013, November 20). “Losing my religion?” *Australian Social Trends*, 4102.0. Retrieved from <http://tiny.cc/4ipfez>; and see Kuruvilla, C. (2016, August 1). “An absurdly large number of Australians say their religion is the Force.” *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/australian-jedi-census-atheist_n_579f7a8ae4b0693164c1ef12.

who identified themselves as Jewish.²¹⁸

This phenomenon is not restricted to Australia. The 2001 New Zealand Census recorded 53,715 people as Jedis, “more than those who identified themselves as Buddhists, Baptists, Mormons, Hindus or Rātana Christians.”²¹⁹ While Jedi numbers across the world have declined in recent years, in 2011, 176,632 people in England and Wales described themselves as belonging to the Jedi faith, 22,262 in New Zealand, and around 9,000 in Canada.²²⁰ McAndrew and Voas noted that this kind of phenomenon has the tendency to mask the numbers of members of various smaller religions who may input ‘Jedi’ on their census as a form of protest.²²¹ Furthermore, the state is not likely in a position to adjudicate on whether or not Jediism or other similar ‘new religious movements’ constitute ‘valid’ religions.²²² As outlined by Justice Iacobucci in *Syndicat Northcrest v Amselem*, doing so would likely be unconstitutional, and it would “unjustifiably entangle the court in the affairs of religion.”²²³

5 – Redraft the Sample Prayers to make them all secular, and have these delivered by the Speaker on a rotating basis.

The current list of Sample Prayers used by the BC Legislature includes five prayers, three of which were classified as ‘non-sectarian’ and two of which were classified as ‘secular.’ Both types of prayers originate from a religious background, and the non-sectarian prayers are determinedly religious in nature. Despite their attempts at ecumenicism, by evoking the divine, these prayers “necessarily incorporate... a particular theological viewpoint or belief.”²²⁴ At least the ‘secular’ prayers have the benefit of attempting to accommodate non-religious viewpoints,

²¹⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2006, January 20). “Religious affiliation.” *Year Book Australia, 2006*, 1301.0. Retrieved from <http://tiny.cc/ufpfcz>; and see Kuruvilla 2016.

²¹⁹ New Zealand Herald, cited by Walrond, C. (2011). “Atheism and secularism - who is secular?” *Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. Retrieved from <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/atheism-and-secularism/page-3>.

²²⁰ See Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013; and see Singler, B. (2014). “‘See mom it is real’: the UK Census, Jediism and social media.” *Journal of Religion in Europe*, 7(2), 150-168; and The Canadian Press. (2013, May 8). “Canada’s Jedi Knights not as much of a religious force.” *CBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/canada-s-jedi-knights-not-as-much-of-a-religious-force-1.1321650>.

²²¹ McAndrew & Voas 2011.

²²² Davidsen, M. (2011). “Jediism: a convergence of Star Wars fan culture and salad bar spirituality.” *De Filosoof*, 51, 24; McCormick, D. (2006) “From Jesus Christ to Jedi Knight – validity and viability of new religious movements in late modernity.” In *Proceedings social change in the 21st Century conference 2006*, Queensland University of Technology. Retrieved from <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/6636/1/6636.pdf>.

²²³ Para. 50, *Amselem*.

²²⁴ Delahunty 2007:522.

despite the fact that their structure and intent frames them as prayers, and prayers originating from a specific religious tradition.

If the BC Legislature insists on beginning sittings with some kind of ‘secular affirmation,’ it should a) make all of these ‘affirmations’ exclusively secular, and b) make their focus a reaffirmation of MLAs duties and responsibilities. We can examine each of these elements in turn.

The goal with this option is to reduce the ‘secular reflection or affirmation’ to an exclusively secular purpose. In the two Sample Prayers coded as secular (3 and 4, see Appendix 1), one will note that their intent is twofold: 1) to offer thanks, and 2) to pledge or rededicate to parliamentary traditions or the people of BC. The first element has clear religious connotations but could be interpreted charitably to have some vague secular intent. The second element can be seen as exclusively secular, similar to a rededication to an oath of office. The idea of making a daily reaffirmation to uphold one’s oath of office seems to undercut the strength of the initial oath. However, apart from the potential to weaken the sincerity of the oath by turning it into something banal or perfunctory, the act of requiring MLAs to deliver such an oath does not appear to violate the state’s duty of religious neutrality.

Every religious prayer is read in the Legislature represents a further weakening of the state’s duty of religious neutrality. By replacing all non-sectarian prayers on the Sample Prayer list with secular prayers, we move the BC Legislature closer to fulfilling this duty.

6 – Include humanist declarations in the Sample Prayers and have these delivered by the Speaker on a rotating basis.

To attempt to accommodate as many religious beliefs as possible through the practice of a rotating list of prayers from various religious traditions suggests both a hierarchy of beliefs, with some religious being worthy of state recognition over others. Any attempt would represent a velar violation of *Saguénay* and the state’s duty of religious neutrality. However, if the BC Legislature insists on continuing this exclusionary practice, it should at the very least include one or more ‘humanist’ declaration into the rotation, as none currently are included.

The current list of Sample Prayers includes three non-sectarian prayers, and two secular prayers. Expanding the number of secular prayers does not effectively address the issues of

underrepresentation of non-believers. Sectarian prayers affirm the existence of a god; secular prayers at best remain silent on the matter. Neither of these two approaches encompasses the position of a non-believer, one who believes there is insufficient evidence for the existence of a god or gods. Distinct humanist or atheistic declarations should be included to remedy this shortcoming.

Including any prayer at the start of a sitting is a clear violation of the state's duty of religious neutrality, however, if the state is going to violate this neutrality, it should aim to do so in as 'balanced' a way as possible. *Saguenay* in fact, outlines how this can be accomplished. In elaborating on the issue of state neutrality, Justice Gascon notes that

[a] practice according to which a municipality's officials, rather than reciting a prayer, solemnly declared that the council's deliberations were based on a denial of God would be just as unacceptable. The state's duty of neutrality would preclude such a position, the effect of which would be to exclude all those who believe in the existence of a deity.²²⁵

Thus, if the BC Legislature wishes to continue to include religious prayers in its list of Sample Prayers, it must include prayers of an opposing viewpoint. The 'opposite' of these religious prayers would not be secular prayers, but rather declarations denying the existence of a god or gods. Most humanists and atheists would not adopt the strict anti-theist position, in which one actively denies the existence of gods, outlined by Justice Gascon.²²⁶ Instead, they would typically adopt the position that there is insufficient evidence for the existence of a god or gods. As a result, a humanist declaration could read as follows: "There are almost certainly no gods; therefore let us commit ourselves to tackling the challenges that face our province with reason, wisdom, and empathy."

Humanism "is undogmatic, imposing no creed upon its adherents," and as such, there is no one specific 'prayer' upon which humanists will universally agree.²²⁷ Rather, when asked, individuals often craft a humanist 'declaration' based on their personal values and connections to the philosophy. In Appendix 3 we have, under all of the aforementioned objections, offered a sample of six humanist declarations for consideration, should this option be selected.

²²⁵ Para. 133, *Saguenay*.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, Para. 133.

²²⁷ Humanists International. (2002). "Amsterdam declaration 2002." Retrieved from <https://humanists.international/what-is-humanism/the-amsterdam-declaration/>.

7 – Include humanist declarations in the Sample Prayer list and continue to permit MLAs to deliver their own prayers.

Any expanded list of Sample Prayers that attempts to better represent the diversity of the beliefs of British Columbians is only effective if the prayers it contains are read before the chamber. As detailed in the analysis, the usage of the current Sample Prayers is not consistently spread across all five prayers. Thus, the simple amendment or expansion of the list of Sample Prayers will not necessarily serve to render the actual prayers delivered in the BC Legislature more representative. Likewise, in doing so, prayers would still exclude large segments of the population of BC, would still be prone to the inclusion of partisan attacks, and still represent a violation of the state's duty of religious neutrality.

However, if the BC Legislature wishes to take the most nominal and token effort at increasing the diversity of the content of prayers delivered in this house, it could look to expand the list of Sample Prayers. Given the significant number of British Columbians who identify as non-believers, such an expanded list should include at least one or more humanist or atheistic declarations. In Appendix 3, we have included six possibilities.

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Appendix 1: BC Legislature Sample Prayers²²⁸

A member may deliver reflections of his or her own choice or read one of the following:

- 1) Most gracious God, we humbly beseech Thee to behold with Thy blessing our country and the peoples of the Commonwealth. We pray especially for this Province, for the Lieutenant Governor, and for the Legislative Assembly at this time assembled, that all things may be so ordered and settled by their endeavours, upon the best and surest foundations, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety may be establishes among us for all generations. Amen.
- 2) As we commence proceedings today in this Assembly, we ask for divine guidance so that our words and deeds may bring to all people of this great Province hope, prosperity and a vision for the future. May the deliberations in this chamber be characterized by temperance, understanding and reason to the end that we may better serve those who have made the Members of this House guardians of, and trustees for, all the citizens of British Columbia. Amen.
- 3) We give thanks for the bounty of our Province – our people, our land and our resources. We pledge ourselves to tend with care our heritage on behalf of all British Columbians. Amen.
- 4) As Canadians and British Columbians, we give thanks for the precious gifts of freedom and peace which we enjoy. As Members of this Legislative Assembly, we rededicate ourselves to the values and traditions of parliamentary democracy as a means of serving our Province and our country. Amen.
- 5) We pray to God to keep us mindful of the special and unique opportunity we have to work for our constituents and our Province, and in that work give us strength and wisdom. Amen.

²²⁸ Darryl Plecas, Office of the Speaker, Legislative Assembly of BC, Correspondence with Authors, January 16, 2019. Numbers added for ease of reference.

Appendix 2: Coding Instructions

The following instructions were used to guide the coding process. Note, the dictionary of terms for 'god' and other religious terms were updated if new words were uncovered, and shared between coders. Coders were given a version of these instructions and tasked with coding the first 100 prayers. After which, they met with the project supervisor to discuss the process and flag any issues arising. As a result of this discussion, several edits were made to the instructions, and the initial 100 prayers were re-coded. These changes have been flagged in the document below in footnotes. The coders and supervisor also agreed upon the coding for the five Standard Prayers at this time. These codes were automatically applied to any Standard Prayer, so long as it was unaltered.

Please note that prayers were coded for a number of factors not included and analyzed in this final report. These include:

- *To whom is the prayer directed (God Direct, God Indirect, chamber general, chamber specific)?*
- *Directly quotes from religious text (all quotes other than the Lord's Prayer).*
- *Is the prayer praying for something or someone?*
- *If they prayer is praying for someone or something, who/what (individual, group of people, region, specific action, other).*

Intercoder reliability for these categories was too low, and so these categories were not included in the final report. However, we have opted to leave these in the coding instructions to maintain the integrity of these instructions.

Please also note that Partisan affiliation and MLA name were added after coding to avoid biasing the coding process.

Introduction

Please note that for ease of communication, we will refer to each transcribed speech as a 'prayer,' this is not to suggest that all of these speeches can in fact be classified as 'prayers.'

For each prayer, please read through the prayer to make sure it is complete. If you feel as though there has been a transcription error, please flag it for the supervisor, and then verify the content by watching the original Hansard recording and comparing it with the transcript. If you make any changes as a result, please flag them for the supervisor.

Note on spelling – the accuracy of the work of our volunteer transcribers has been verified, and their work is generally of a high quality. There are some significant discrepancies when it comes to the spelling of non-English words, particularly those in First Nations languages. Please sound out the word phonetically if necessary, using the spelling included.

Please go through the following for each prayer.

Is the prayer one of the five standard prayers?

- No
- Yes

If ‘Yes,’ indicate which of the standard prayers.²²⁹

Please note that the Standard Prayers have already been coded, and unless there is significant variation in the prayer delivered, please use and input the pre-established coding for the remainder of the prayer.²³⁰

Has the Standard Prayer been altered?

Members of the legislature are invited to deliver their own reflection, or may read one of five Standard Prayers. While many MLAs reading the standard prayers repeat them verbatim, some will begin their prayer with a standard prayer and then add additional content, or alter the Standard Prayer in some other way. If this is the case, indicate ‘Yes’ in the ‘Standard Prayer Altered’ column.

Please note that some variation to allow for human error is permitted. For example, small variations between one word or two, repetition to cover for errors, etc. Likewise dropping the ‘as we commence proceedings’ introduction would fall under the category of ‘minor variation.’²³¹

²²⁹ Coders were provided a list of the five Sample Prayers, see Appendix 1. Note that we originally erroneously labeled these as ‘Standard Prayers’ in our instructions and this report. This has been updated in January 2023.

²³⁰ We observed that several of the prayers were combinations of two or more of the Sample Prayers. In these cases, coders were instructed to input all of the relevant Sample Prayers, in the order in which they were used, and to indicate that the prayer had been altered.

²³¹ Please note that the original coding instructions had a category which differentiated between ‘major’ and ‘minor’ alterations, but these proved to be too subjective and were dropped.

Structure of ‘prayer’: Does the prayer end in ‘Amen.’

Many of the ‘prayers’ end in ‘Amen,’ although not all of them do. The fact that a ‘prayer’ ends in ‘Amen’ does not necessarily make it sectarian. And likewise, invocations and prayers can still be structured as such without terminating in Amen.

- Ends with Amen? Y/N
- Other format:
 - Poem.
 - Quotation.²³²
 - Reference.²³³
 - Moment of silence.
 - Other.

*If a quotation or poem, please specify the source of the poem or quotation, if specified.²³⁴
If the prayer is a version of the Lord’s Prayer (see below), please code these as “Quotation – Lord’s Prayer.”*

²³² The goal here was to focus on format, and not content, and the assumption was that the structure of a ‘quote’ and a ‘prayer’ would be different. As we were aiming to identify formats other than prayers, we were interested in quotes from sources other than religious texts, and as a result, we excluded direct quotes from religious texts (see ‘Directly quotes religious text’ below), but included quotes from religious figures, so long as they were not quoted in the former.

²³³ Coders found that not all quotations were direct, so we added this category to capture when the speaker referenced a source, but did not quote it directly. For example, “We remember the words of the psalmist that God sets the lonely in families and we thank you again for those welcomed into loving homes and remember those still awaiting placement.”

²³⁴ Note: There was considerable discussion within the research team regarding differentiating between prayers which may contain poetical elements and statements which are exclusively poems. We recognized that this distinction may be difficult to parse, and fell outside of the purview of the study. As such, coders were instructed to only code statements as poems if they were explicitly identified as such by the MLA/person presenting the statement. On several occasions coders flagged poems or quotations from sources that were not specified, but with which they were familiar.

Contains religious language – Reference to deity?

Please select ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ and please add to list (email supervisor) any new names for a deity that may be used but are not listed below. Please note that this list is not comprehensive, we have not included many non-western deities,²³⁵ if you come across these, please add them to the list.

Does the ‘prayer’ make reference to one or more of the following? Yes/No

Names of Deities Glossary

Adonai	God	Jesus	Saviour
Allah	Goddess	King of Kings	Son of Man
Almighty	Great Mother	Krishna	Spirit*
Buddha	Great Spirit	Lamb of God	The Enlightened One
Chief in the Sky	Guiding Spirit	Lord	The Good Shepherd
Christ	HaShem	Lord of Lords	The Lamb
Creator	Heavenly Father	Maker	Vishnu
Divine*	Holy Spirit	Master	Yahweh
Elohim	Jah (Ja)	Messiah	
Father	Jehovah	Redeemer	

*If used as a proper noun.

Contains additional religious language?

Please select yes or no, and please add to list (email supervisor) any new religious terms that may be used but are not listed below.

Does the ‘prayer contain other language associated with religious observance? Yes/No

Glossary of religious language

Angel(ic)	Liturgical	Religion	Sinner
Bible	Liturgy	Religious	Soul
Biblical	Minister (verb or noun)	Repent	Spirit
Blessing(s)	Pastor*	Repent(ance)	Spirit (if used as a noun)
Canon	Piety	Sacred	Spiritual
Consecrate(ed)	Pious	Sacrament(al)	Supernatural
devotion(al)	Pray	Saint(ly)	Trespasses
Divine	Prayer	Saintly	Tribulation
Grace	Priest*	Salvation	Worship(ful)
Guru	Providence	Sanctified	
Holy	Psalms	Scripture	
Imam*	Rabbi*	Sin(ful)	

*And other names for members of religious orders/clergy.

²³⁵ Please note that this category only captured references to deities, and we excluded the names of ‘gurus.’ While we recognize that gurus of various non-theistic faith traditions may make claims to divinity, exploring these claims fell outside of the scope of the study. While this was not discussed by the coding team at the time, verification during intercoder reliability checking confirmed that any references to these types of religious figures were coded ‘other religious language.’

Directly quotes religious text?²³⁶

Does the 'prayer' contain or comprise entirely of a quote from a religious text?²³⁷

- Yes/No

If yes, which text?

Note: Some speakers will deliver a version of the Lord's Prayer, please flag these in this category, and under 'which text' add 'Lord's Prayer.' In case you are unfamiliar, this is the Lord's Prayer (which is a Christian Prayer):

Traditional:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemporary:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

²³⁶ Given low intercoder reliability in this category, as text names had considerable variation, and citation specificity varied (Bible vs. 1 Timothy). As a result, we only included prayers coded as 'Lord's Prayer' in the final analysis.

²³⁷ Original note to coders: Include any common religious prayers in this category, such as the Lord's Prayer, *Shema Yisrael*, *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*, etc.

To whom is the ‘prayer’ directed:²³⁸

Deity or god(s) directly –

- “God, we beseech you to...”
- “Creator, please help us...”

Deity or god(s) indirectly –

- “We ask for divine guidance so that our words...”
- “Let us pray to the almighty that he bless them...”

To the chamber in general – (could it include members of the press, visitors who are not MLAs)

- “We ask for guidance so that our words and deeds may bring...”
- “We give thanks for the precious gifts of freedom and peace which we enjoy...”

To the members of the chamber specifically – (specifically addressing MLAs)

- “Let us remember our true purpose in this place...”

Note: some prayers may alter their direction mid-way, for example “We ask that the chamber reflect on their upcoming difficult decision and thank the lord for his bounty.” In these cases, include all relevant ‘directions’ in the coding sheet.

²³⁸ The literature examining prayers often differentiates prayers based on such factors as direction (inward, outward, upward), or to whom the prayer is addressed (the deity, the audience, historical persons, etc.), or the goal of the language (exhortation to action/petitionary, matter for reflection/bearing witness, thanks, or praise). Building on this literature, we initially set out to code prayers based on the audience of the prayer, that is, answering the question ‘to whom is the prayer directed.’ Note that intercoder reliability was low for this category, due to the fact that many prayers would contain multiple directions, and also subjectivity between the categories. As a result, it was dropped from the final analysis. It should be noted that this code did serve a role in helping coders in coding for the religiosity of the prayer. See *inter alia* Ladd, K. L., & Spilka, B. (2006). “Inward, outward, upward prayer: scale reliability and validation.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 45(2), 233-251; Hesser & Weigert 1980:217; and Cadge *et al.* 2015:8-9.

Praying for something or someone specific?

While many prayers are directed towards general populations (members of the legislature, the province and citizens of the province, for example), some are specifically targeting groups – firefighters, one particular MLA or a member of their family, people of a specific region facing forest fires or floods, etc. This question has been included in order for use to gauge how topical the prayers are. Likewise, sometimes prayers are very specific – “we pray that it will stop raining in X community,” or “we pray for an end to the flooding in the interior.” Please note that a single prayer may include multiple specific requests.²³⁹

Something or someone specific is being prayed for? Yes/No

If yes, indicate which/who:

- Individual
 - For example – “The family of Stan Hagan...”
- Group of people
 - For example – “We pray for all of the first responders...”
- People from a region
 - For example – “We want to thank you that the flood situation in the Fraser Valley has abated...”
- Specific action/outcome
 - For example – “We pray for better weather this summer Lord...”
- Other
 - Please specify.

²³⁹ We initially set out to identify prayers that prayed for something or someone specific. That is, some prayers contained elements that prayed for something specific, such as ‘firefighters,’ one particular MLA or a member of their family, people of a specific region facing forest fires or floods, etc. The goal in including this category was to gauge how topical the prayers were. The hypothesis here was that the time allocated for ‘prayers’ could be used to offer up well wishes to individuals experiencing loss, or recognize the efforts of individuals doing good deeds in the community. The initial goal was to code prayers that prayed for something, and then identify what that something was (individual, group of people, people from a region, a specific outcome/action), however this level of specificity proved too subjective. For example if a prayer read:

“Father, I bring before you the families of those who were killed in Fernie yesterday, what an awful tragedy. Please bring comfort and help to the grieving families and give the member for Kootenay East a big heart...” Excerpt from prayer by Laurie Throness, BC Liberal MLA for Chilliwack-Kent, October 18, 2017.

It might be coded as: ‘Group of people killed in Fernie,’ ‘Families of group killed in Kootenay East,’ ‘Fatalities in Fernie,’ ‘Local tragedy,’ etc., thereby making quantitative analysis on this category difficult. As a result, this category was dropped from the final report and analysis.

Religiosity of the Prayer

This is the most subjective component of the coding process. Please take into consideration all of the various components of the prayer in rendering your evaluation. For example:

- *The structure of the prayer: Does it end in Amen? Is it a quotation or a poem? Is the person/text being quoted religious in nature?*
- *Does it contain religious language, a 'generic' name of a deity (God, Lord, Creator) or unspecific religious language (blessed, pray)?*
- *Does this religious language point to a specific religion: Jesus, Allah, Adonai, Heavenly Father (Christian)?*
- *Does the prayer contain a quote or reference to a specific religious book or in a language associated with a specific religion:*
 - *A passage from a religious text like the Bible, Bhagavad Gita, Torah, Quran.*
 - *A quote from a religious figure of a specific religion.*
 - *An invocation in a specific language like Hebrew or Arabic?*
- *How targeted is the prayer? Is it directed at the room in general, indirectly to a deity, or directly to a deity? Directly to a specific deity?*
- *What is being asked? Is supernatural intervention being requested to change the current state of affairs?*

The answers to all of these questions taken holistically should allow you to sort all of the 'prayers' into the following categories. We are using two coders, so if there is variation between both responses, the 'prayer' will be re-coded by a third person.

Not a Prayer:

- This category includes readings from books or poems, or quotes from individuals that are secular in nature, and delivered exclusively as such, and not as part of a broader invocation.
- Statements which do not adopt a prayer structure (appealing to a divine, ending in Amen).
- Statement which include no religious language.
- A moment of silent reflection.

Secular Invocation/Prayer:

- A general invocation or call of thanks, not specifically invoking or directed towards a deity. These may still end in 'Amen' but otherwise do not invoke a divine, or the supernatural, or a deity, or power, or use religious language:
 - For example, Standard Prayers 3 and 4:
 - We give thanks for the bounty of our Province – our people, our land and our resources. We pledge ourselves to tend with care our heritage on behalf of all British Columbians. Amen.
 - As Canadians and British Columbians, we give thanks for the precious gifts of freedom and peace which we enjoy. As Members of this Legislative Assembly, we rededicate ourselves to the values and traditions of parliamentary democracy as a means of serving our Province and our country. Amen.

Non-Sectarian Prayer:

- Prayer invokes a deity/supernatural entity in some way without being overly specific such that you can identify which religion/deity. Prayer uses religious language (like blessings, pray, etc.).
 - This can be:
 - Direct: “Creator, we ask that you...”
 - Indirect: “Let us pray to the almighty that he bless them...”

Sectarian Prayer:²⁴⁰

- A prayer with explicit religious content belonging to a specific faith tradition. Referring to a specific deity, identifiable with a specific faith tradition.
 - For example:
 - “The Father, again we thank you for the privilege that you have given us to serve you here in this house, to serve the good citizens of British Columbia ... We pray that we will have your wisdom and counsel in the midst of serving our citizens today, we pray, in Jesus’ name. Amen.” (Christian).
 - “Father in Heaven, Psalm 139 says: where can I go from thy spirit; where shall I flee from thy presence. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea...” (Christian)
 - “In the name of Allah, the most beneficial and the most merciful, the maintainer of all beings, thee alone we worship; thee alone we seek for help. Guide us to the right path; the path of those upon whom thou has bestowed favours; not of those cursed ones who have gone astray. Amen.” (Muslim)
 - The Lord’s Prayer (Christian), or Shema Yisrael (Jewish).
- And also using language closely associated with a specific religion - for example:
 - “God in heaven...” is language which is not commonly used in major faith traditions other than Christianity.
 - Prayers referring specifically to a holiday: like Christmas, Hanukkah, Ramadan, etc.
 - “The tribulations around the world” – Christian.
 - “Minister to their spirits” – Christian.
 - “We pray this in your name” – Christian.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ The goal here was only to flag prayers as ‘sectarian’ if the average person would perceive this prayer as belonging to a specific faith tradition.

²⁴¹ A small number of prayers made reference to “God and Goddess,” we were unable to positively associate this language with a specific religion, and as such, these prayers were coded as non-sectarian.

If a 'Sectarian Prayer,' indicate to which religious tradition the prayer originates:

- Christian (including Catholics and all the various sects of Protestantism).²⁴²
- Muslim (including Sunni, Shia, and Salafi).
- Jewish (including reform, orthodox, and Hassidic).
- Buddhist (including all various sects).
- Sikh.
- First Nations.²⁴³
- Other – please specify.

The examples in the above section have been labeled in this way.

First Nations language used?

A number of prayers are delivered entirely, or in part, in languages of various First Nations peoples. Similarly, several MLAs regularly end their prayers with a word from a First Nations language. Please note that our transcribers did not use the same spelling when transcribing these words, and that there is considerable variation in the spelling used. If you come across a new word, please add it to the list. Where more than one word was used, transcribers would typically leave a blank section '[xxxx]' and indicate that something was said in a First Nation's language, this can be coded as a sentence or multiple sentences if multiple blank sections are indicated.

- No.
- Yes – isolated word.
 - Common examples include:
 - Sabbagh, Sabbac, Sabba, etc.
 - Heitchkah, Hashkah, Heightsh-kah, High eech ka etc.
 - Ohsayem, Osiem, Ohsayhem, etc.
- Yes – full sentences.
- Yes – Entirely in First Nations language.

²⁴² Footnote provided on original coding sheet: Given the use of similar language, and shared religious texts, it is very difficult to differentiate Mormon and Jehovah's Witness prayers from mainstream 'Christian' prayers. For example, Mormon's rely heavily on 'Heavenly Father' as a term for their deity. Unless you can confirm that the prayer has an origin from these sects, please categorize it as 'Christian.'

²⁴³ Note included in original coding sheet: Recognizing a wide range of First Nations traditions, and in an era of Truth and Reconciliation, we wanted to capture the extent to which First Nations culture is represented in the Legislature. We coded prayers as 'First Nation's' if the prayer was delivered entirely, or included more than one sentence, in a First Nations language. As translating these prayers exceeded the scope of our project, where the prayers are entirely in another language, we have not coded them for content. We recognize that not all of these prayers would otherwise qualify as 'Sectarian.' While in some instances a specific Nation was mentioned, this information was excluded to better capture the overall representation, rather than the specific.

Other languages spoken?

Similar to above, however, where the word or words are discernible as words in a language other than English, but also not a First Nation's language. For example a prayer or segment of a prayer delivered in Hebrew, or a quotation in Mandarin.

- No.
- Yes – Word.
 - For example, 'shalom,' 'Allahu Akbar.'
- Yes – full sentence.
 - For example, "Bismillahir rahmanir rahim."

If you can identify the language,²⁴⁴ please specify.²⁴⁵

Overt Partisan Attack?

Several volunteers transcribing the 'prayers' noted the presence of what they described as 'subtle barbs' and 'tone' which were incorporated into the 'prayers' as a subtle reference to an issue before the house, or hinting at criticism of another party. The extent to which these barbs are apparent vary considerably.

In some cases, the choice of a particular poem, quote, or even words may subtly allude to an issue currently before the house. For example, the use of a mining metaphor may allude to an upcoming bill on mining. In these cases, our ability to identify these as partisan attacks would require that we place them within the specific context of the time. This exceeded the scope of the study, and as such, we asked you to tag overtly partisan comments, with this category being defined as overt criticism of the other party, or the incorporation of content which clearly refers to issues before the house.

- Prayer includes criticism of other party or is used to push for an issue that is before the house.
 - Yes/No/Maybe

Look at the time of year and who is delivering the 'prayer' in order to support your coding choice.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Coders were not always able to identify the language used, in these cases, the language was coded as 'unknown.'

²⁴⁵ Note included in original coding sheet: We did not translate prayers, but if a prayer from a different religious tradition is used, such as when a speaker introduced it as such, it was coded as including 'use of other religious language.' Where this was unknown, prayers were coded as 'don't know' for references to a 'name of a deity,' or 'use of other religious language.'

²⁴⁶ Our coders did flag a number of prayers as 'maybe' and discussion of these occurred. Given these narrow parameters, our coders were conservative with this category, and we likely missed the more subtle partisan attacks. As the name of the MLA and their party affiliation was excluded from the original lists of prayer so as not to influence the coding process, coders were only able to know the speakers constituency.

Appendix 3: Recommended Humanist Declarations

1. There are almost certainly no gods; therefore let us commit ourselves to tackling the challenges that face our province with reason, wisdom, and empathy.
2. Take a moment to look around the room at all of the people here, in this moment, sharing together this extraordinary experience of being alive. Let us rededicate ourselves to working toward improving the lives of the people of our province.
3. We come from a variety of backgrounds and interests, but the passion that ignites us all is a passion for improving the lives of British Columbians. Let us fulfill the great responsibility we have been given with reason informed by compassion, empathy, and science.
4. Rather than bowing our heads and closing our eyes in deference, we should open our eyes to face the challenges that confront us. Let us commit ourselves to improving the lives of all British Columbians with reason, wisdom, and empathy.
5. We have within us all a shared humanity. Let us therefore treat one another with respect and dignity. Let us focus on what we have in common, and not what divides us. And let us commit ourselves to applying reason and science, strengthened by empathy and compassion in order to improve the lives of all British Columbians.
6. Let us celebrate our shared humanity, our shared capacity for reason and compassion, our shared love for the people of our Province. Let us commit ourselves to fulfilling the great responsibility we have been given by the people of British Columbia, with reason informed by science, compassion, and empathy.

Appendix 4: MLA Prayer ‘League Tables’²⁴⁷

Table 14: MLA prayer ‘league table’ – 41st Parliament (June 22, 2017 to Present)

MLA	Party	Constituency	Prayers	%
Leonard Krog	NDP	Nanaimo	14	13%
Anne Kang	NDP	Burnaby-Deer Lake	12	11%
Mitzi Dean	NDP	Esquimalt-Metchosin	9	8%
Laurie Throness	Liberal	Chilliwack-Kent	7	7%
Jagrup Brar	NDP	Surrey-Fleetwood	7	7%
Marvin Hunt	Liberal	Surrey-Cloverdale	6	6%
Jinny Sims	NDP	Surrey-Panorama	6	6%
Jackie Tegart	Liberal	Fraser-Nicola	5	5%
Simon Gibson	Liberal	Abbotsford-Mission	4	4%
Donna Barnett	Liberal	Cariboo-Chilcotin	4	4%
Peter Milobar	Liberal	Kamloops-North Thompson	4	4%
Jane Thornthwaite	Liberal	North Vancouver-Seymour	4	4%
Dan Davies	Liberal	Peace River North	4	4%
Claire Trevena	NDP	North Island	3	3%
Michelle Stilwell	Liberal	Parksville-Qualicum	3	3%
Shirley Bond	Liberal	Prince George-Valemount	3	3%
Todd Stone	Liberal	Kamloops-South Thompson	2	2%
Norm Letnick	Liberal	Kelowna-Lake Country	2	2%
Tom Shypitka	Liberal	Kootenay East	2	2%
Doug Clovechok	Liberal	Columbia River-Revelstoke	1	1%
Joan Isaacs	Liberal	Coquitlam-Burke Mountain	1	1%
Selina Robinson	NDP	Coquitlam-Maillardville	1	1%
Steve Thomson	Liberal	Kelowna-Mission	1	1%
Tracy Redies	Liberal	Surrey-White Rock	1	1%
Darryl Plecas	Ind.	Abbotsford South	0	0%
Mike de Jong	Liberal	Abbotsford West	0	0%
Linda Larson	Liberal	Boundary-Similkameen	0	0%
Raj Chouhan	NDP	Burnaby-Edmonds	0	0%
Katrina Chen	NDP	Burnaby-Lougheed	0	0%
Janet Routledge	NDP	Burnaby North	0	0%

²⁴⁷ Please note that these tables only include the top 30 MLAs, by number of prayers delivered, per parliament. MLAs delivering zero prayers have been included in alphabetical order, by riding.

Table 15: MLA prayer 'league table' – 40th Parliament (June 26, 2013 to March 16, 2017)

MLA	Party	Constituency	Prayers	%
Leonard Krog	NDP	Nanaimo	33	15%
Bill Routley	NDP	Cowichan Valley	25	11%
Doug Donaldson	NDP	Stikine	15	7%
Marvin Hunt	Liberal	Surrey-Panorama	14	6%
Jane Thornthwaite	Liberal	North Vancouver-Seymour	13	6%
Scott Hamilton	Liberal	Delta North	13	6%
Laurie Throness	Liberal	Chilliwack-Hope	11	5%
Donna Barnett	Liberal	Cariboo-Chilcotin	10	5%
Jackie Tegart	Liberal	Fraser-Nicola	10	5%
Jane Shin	NDP	Burnaby-Lougheed	10	5%
Sue Hammell	NDP	Surrey-Green Timbers	8	4%
Linda Reimer	Liberal	Port Moody-Coquitlam	7	3%
Simon Gibson	Liberal	Abbotsford-Mission	7	3%
Doug Routley	NDP	Nanaimo-North Cowichan	6	3%
John Yap	Liberal	Richmond-Steveston	5	2%
Linda Larson	Liberal	Boundary-Similkameen	5	2%
Marc Dalton	Liberal	Maple Ridge-Mission	5	2%
Greg Kylo	Liberal	Shuswap	4	2%
Ralph Sultan	Liberal	West Vancouver-Capilano	4	2%
Andrew Weaver	Green	Oak Bay-Gordon Head	2	1%
Darryl Plecas	Liberal	Abbotsford South	2	1%
Michelle Stilwell	Liberal	Parksville-Qualicum	2	1%
Mike Farnworth	NDP	Port Coquitlam	2	1%
Nicholas Simons	NDP	Powell River-Sunshine Coast	2	1%
Claire Trevena	NDP	North Island	1	0%
Don McRae	Liberal	Comox Valley	1	0%
Norm Letnick	Liberal	Kelowna-Lake Country	1	0%
Pat Pimm	Liberal	Peace River North	1	0%
Adrian Dix	NDP	Vancouver-Kingsway	0	0%
Amrik Virk	Liberal	Surrey-Tynehead	0	0%

Table 16: MLA prayer 'league table' – 39th Parliament (August 25, 2009 to March 14, 2013)

MLA	Party	Constituency	Prayers	%
Leonard Krog	NDP	Nanaimo	22	11%
Doug Donaldson	NDP	Stikine	18	9%
Bill Routley	NDP	Cowichan Valley	15	8%
Eric Foster	Liberal	Vernon-Monashee	14	7%
Claire Trevena	NDP	North Island	10	5%
Doug Routley	NDP	Nanaimo-North Cowichan	9	5%
Pat Pimm	Liberal	Peace River North	9	5%
John Slater	Liberal	Boundary-Similkameen	8	4%
Donna Barnett	Liberal	Cariboo-Chilcotin	7	4%
John Rustad	Liberal	Nechako Lakes	7	4%
Joan McIntyre	Liberal	West Vancouver-Sea to Sky	7	4%
Diane Thorne	NDP	Coquitlam-Maillardville	6	3%
Nicholas Simons	NDP	Powell River-Sunshine Coast	6	3%
John Les	Liberal	Chilliwack	5	3%
Marc Dalton	Liberal	Maple Ridge-Mission	5	3%
Ralph Sultan	Liberal	West Vancouver-Capilano	5	3%
Douglas Horne	Liberal	Coquitlam-Burke Mountain	4	2%
Norm Letnick	Liberal	Kelowna-Lake Country	4	2%
John van Dongen	Liberal	Abbotsford South	3	2%
Jane Thornthwaite	Liberal	North Vancouver-Seymour	3	2%
Rob Howard	Liberal	Richmond Centre	3	2%
Colin Hansen	Liberal	Vancouver-Quilchena	3	2%
Randy Hawes	Liberal	Abbotsford-Mission	2	1%
Linda Reid	Liberal	Richmond East	2	1%
Murray Coell	Liberal	Saanich North and the Islands	2	1%
Lana Popham	NDP	Saanich South	2	1%
Margaret MacDiarmid	Liberal	Vancouver-Fairview	2	1%
Mable Elmore	NDP	Vancouver-Kensington	2	1%
Raj Chouhan	NDP	Burnaby-Edmonds	1	1%
Harry Bloy	Liberal	Burnaby-Lougheed	1	1%

Table 17: MLA prayer 'league table' – 38th Parliament (Sept. 12, 2005 to March 31, 2009)

MLA	Party	Constituency	Prayers	%
Leonard Krog	NDP	Nanaimo	27	12%
Lorne Mayencourt	Liberal	Vancouver-Burrard	17	8%
John Nuraney	Liberal	Burnaby-Willingdon	14	6%
Mary Polak	Liberal	Langley	13	6%
Dennis MacKay	Liberal	Bulkley Valley-Stikine	11	5%
John Yap	Liberal	Richmond-Steveston	11	5%
Randy Hawes	Liberal	Maple Ridge-Mission	10	4%
Val Roddick	Liberal	Delta South	10	4%
Chuck Puchmayr	NDP	New Westminster	7	3%
Claire Trevena	NDP	North Island	8	4%
Diane Thorne	NDP	Coquitlam-Maillardville	7	3%
Doug Routley	NDP	Cowichan-Ladysmith	7	3%
Harry Bloy	Liberal	Burquitlam	7	3%
Charlie Wyse	NDP	Cariboo South	6	3%
Corky Evans	NDP	Nelson-Creston	6	3%
Ron Cantelon	Liberal	Nanaimo-Parksville	6	3%
Joan McIntyre	Liberal	West Vancouver-Garibaldi	5	2%
Maurine Karagianis	NDP	Esquimalt-Metchosin	5	2%
Nicholas Simons	NDP	Powell River-Sunshine Coast	4	2%
Robin Austin	NDP	Skeena	4	2%
Sue Hammell	NDP	Surrey-Green Timbers	4	2%
Jenn McGinn	NDP	Vancouver-Fairview	3	1%
Michael Sather	NDP	Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	3	1%
Ralph Sultan	Liberal	West Vancouver-Capilano	3	1%
Claude Richmond	Liberal	Kamloops	2	1%
David Cubberley	NDP	Saanich South	2	1%
Katherine Whittred	Liberal	North Vancouver-Lonsdale	2	1%
Kevin Krueger	Liberal	Kamloops-North Thompson	2	1%
Mike Farnworth	NDP	Port Coquitlam-Burke Mountain	2	1%
Richard Lee	Liberal	Burnaby North	2	1%

Table 18: MLA prayer 'league table' – 37th Parliament (October 6, 2003 to March 10, 2005)²⁴⁸

MLA	Party	Constituency	Prayers	%
Harry Bloy	Liberal	Burquitlam	11	11%
Jeff Bray	Liberal	Victoria-Beacon Hill	10	10%
Ken Stewart	Liberal	Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	10	10%
Val Anderson	Liberal	Vancouver-Langara	7	7%
Walt Cobb	Liberal	Cariboo South	7	7%
Gillian Trumper	Liberal	Alberni-Qualicum	5	5%
Ralph Sultan	Liberal	West Vancouver-Capilano	4	4%
Randy Hawes	Liberal	Maple Ridge-Mission	4	4%
Brian Kerr	Liberal	Malahat-Juan de Fuca	3	3%
John Nuraney	Liberal	Burnaby-Willingdon	3	3%
Lorne Mayencourt	Liberal	Vancouver-Burrard	3	3%
Rob Nijjar	Liberal	Vancouver-Kingsway	3	3%
Bill Belsey	Liberal	North Coast	2	2%
Brenda Locke	Liberal	Surrey-Green Timbers	2	2%
Elayne Brenzinger	Liberal	Surrey-Whalley	2	2%
John Les	Liberal	Chilliwack-Sumas	2	2%
Judith Reid	Liberal	Nanaimo-Parksville	2	2%
Kevin Krueger	Liberal	Kamloops-North Thompson	3	3%
Richard Stewart	Liberal	Coquitlam-Maillardville	2	2%
Blair Suffredine	Liberal	Nelson-Creston	1	1%
Dennis MacKay	Liberal	Bulkley Valley-Stikine	1	1%
Gordon Hogg	Liberal	Surrey-White Rock	1	1%
Karn Manhas	Liberal	Port Coquitlam-Burke Mountain	1	1%
Katherine Whittred	Liberal	North Vancouver-Lonsdale	1	1%
Lynn Stephens	Liberal	Langley	1	1%
Pat Bell	Liberal	Prince George North	1	1%
Richard Neufeld	Liberal	Peace River North	1	1%
Rick Thorpe	Liberal	Okanagan-Westside	1	1%
Rod Visser	Liberal	North Island	1	1%
Sheila Orr	Liberal	Victoria-Hillside	1	1%

²⁴⁸ Note this does not include the entire 37th Parliament, but comprises all prayers from October 6, 2003.

Appendix 5: Code Used

```
##Prayer data analysis##
##Katie Marshall##
##Aug 30 2019##
##Updated Sept. 4 2019##
##Updated Sept. 7 2019##

setwd("C:/Users/Katie/Desktop/BCHA/prayers/Sept. 7/data and code")

library(sciplot)
library(stringr)
library(ggplot2)
library(plyr)

prayers <- read.csv("prayerssept.7.csv")
setwd("../")
setwd("spreadsheets")

##rename columns##

names(prayers)[7:23] <-
c("transcript", "standard.prayer", "which.prayer", "altered.standard", "amen", "other.format", "deity",
"additional.rel.lang", "lords.prayer", "religiousity", "religion", "fn.cont", "fn.lang", "other.lang", "lang",
"partisan.attack", "attack.explain")

##check party status##

table(prayers$MLA.Party)

##liberal is spelled wrong in a few, fix

prayers$MLA.Party <- mapvalues(prayers$MLA.Party, from = c("Liberal"), to = c("Liberal"))
table(prayers$MLA.Party)

##check a few other things##

table(prayers$MLA.Name)
table(prayers$standard.prayer)
table(prayers$which.prayer)
table(prayers$altered.standard)
table(prayers$amen)
table(prayers$other.format)
table(prayers$deity)
table(prayers$additional.rel.lang)
table(prayers$lords.prayer)
```

```

##if blank, recode lords prayer to "N"##
prayers$lords.prayer <- as.character(prayers$lords.prayer)
prayers$lords.prayer <- ifelse(prayers$lords.prayer == "", "N", prayers$lords.prayer)
table(prayers$lords.prayer)

table(prayers$religiousity)
table(prayers$religion)
table(prayers$fn.cont)

prayers$fn.cont <- as.character(prayers$fn.cont)
prayers$fn.cont <- ifelse(prayers$fn.cont == "", "N", prayers$fn.cont)

table(prayers$fn.cont)
table(prayers$fn.lang)
table(prayers$other.lang)
table(prayers$lang)
table(prayers$partisan.attack)

prayers$partisan.attack <- as.character(prayers$partisan.attack)
prayers$partisan.attack <- ifelse(prayers$partisan.attack == "Yes", "Y", prayers$partisan.attack)
prayers$partisan.attack <- ifelse(prayers$partisan.attack == "Yes ", "Y", prayers$partisan.attack)
table(prayers$partisan.attack)

table(prayers$attack.explain)
table(prayers$Throne.Speech)
table(prayers$Inaudible)

prayers$Inaudible <- ifelse(prayers$Inaudible == "", "N", "Y")
table(prayers$Inaudible)

table(prayers$Not.Available)

##rewrite new dataset##
##calculate length of prayers##

prayers$length <- str_count(prayers$transcript, "\\w+")
write.csv(prayers, "reorganized.prayers.csv")

##look at dates##

prayers$posix.date <- as.POSIXct(strptime(prayers$Date, format="%Y-%m-%d"))

##remove video missing prayers##

prayers <- subset(prayers, prayers$Not.Available == "")

```

```

##get prayers/MLA##
prayers.no.throne <- subset(prayers,prayers$Throne.Speech == "N")

prayers.no.throne.only.mla <- subset(prayers.no.throne,prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party != "")

mla.num <- as.data.frame(table(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$MLA.Name))
mla.num <- subset(mla.num,mla.num$Freq > 0)
mla.num <- mla.num[order(-mla.num$Freq),]

hist(mla.num$Freq,main="",breaks=50,family="serif",las=1,xlab="Prayers per
MLA",cex.lab=1.6,ylim=c(0,50),xlim=c(0,100))

only.one <- subset(mla.num,mla.num$Freq == 1)

write.csv(mla.num,"number.by.mla.csv")

##quick prayer stats##

hist(prayers$length,xlab="Prayer length (words)",las=1,main="",family="serif",cex.lab=1.6)
mean(prayers$length)
min(prayers$length)
max(prayers$length)
sd(prayers$length)

##get type of prayer/MLA##

prayer.type.mla <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$length >
0,by=list(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne.only.mla$MLA.Name,prayer
s.no.throne.only.mla$religiosity),FUN=sum)
names(prayer.type.mla)[1:4] <- c("party","MLA.name","prayer.type","total.prayers")
prayer.type.mla <-
prayer.type.mla[order(prayer.type.mla$party,prayer.type.mla$MLA.name,decreasing=T),]

write.csv(prayer.type.mla,"prayer.type.by.mla.csv")

sectarian.prayers <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$religiosity ==
"Sectarian",by=list(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne.only.mla$MLA.Na
me),FUN=sum)
not.prayers <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$religiosity == "Not a

```

```

Prayer",by=list(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne.only.mla$MLA.Name)
,FUN=sum)
not.sectarian <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$religiosity == "Non-
Sectarian",by=list(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne.only.mla$MLA.Na
me),FUN=sum)
secular <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$religiosity ==
"Secular",by=list(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne.only.mla$MLA.Nam
e),FUN=sum)

names(sectarian.prayers)[3] <- "num.sectarian"
names(not.prayers)[3] <- "num.not.prayer"
names(not.sectarian)[3] <- "num.non.sectarian"
names(secular)[3] <- "num.secular"

all.types.by.mla <-
cbind(sectarian.prayers,num.not.prayer,num.non.sectarian,num.secular)
names(all.types.by.mla)[1:6] <-
c("Party","MLA.Name","Num.Sectarian","Num.not.prayer","Num.non.sectarian","Num.secular"
)
all.types.by.mla$total.prayers <- all.types.by.mla$Num.non.sectarian +
all.types.by.mla$Num.not.prayer + all.types.by.mla$Num.Sectarian +
all.types.by.mla$Num.secular
all.types.by.mla$prop.sectarian <- all.types.by.mla$Num.Sectarian/all.types.by.mla$total.prayers
all.types.by.mla$prop.not.prayer <-
all.types.by.mla$Num.not.prayer/all.types.by.mla$total.prayers
all.types.by.mla$prop.non.sectarian <-
all.types.by.mla$Num.non.sectarian/all.types.by.mla$total.prayers
all.types.by.mla$prop.secular <- all.types.by.mla$Num.secular/all.types.by.mla$total.prayers

plot(prop.secular~log(total.prayers),all.types.by.mla,pch=16,xlab="Log(Total Prayers
Given)",ylab="Proportion of prayers that are secular",las=1,family="serif",cex.lab=1.6)
lines(lowess(log(all.types.by.mla$total.prayers),all.types.by.mla$prop.secular),col="red",lwd=3)

all.types.by.mla.no.green <- subset(all.types.by.mla,all.types.by.mla$Party != "Green")

my.aov <- aov(log(total.prayers)~Party,all.types.by.mla)
summary(my.aov)

my.aov <- aov(log(total.prayers)~log(prop.secular+0.1),all.types.by.mla.no.green)
summary(my.aov)

hist(all.types.by.mla$prop.secular,xlab="Proportion of prayers given that are
secular",ylab="Number of MLAs",main="",las=1,family="serif",cex.lab=1.6)

```

```

hist(all.types.by.mla$Num.secular,breaks=30,xlab="Number of secular prayers
given",ylab="Number of
MLAs",main="",las=1,family="serif",cex.lab=1.6,xlim=c(0,20),ylim=c(0,50))

write.csv(all.types.by.mla,"prayer.types.by.mla.reorganized.csv")

##are MLA's that give the most prayers also more religious?##

hist(all.types.by.mla$total.prayers,main="",breaks=100,family="serif",las=1,xlab="Prayers per
MLA",cex.lab=1.6,ylim=c(0,50),xlim=c(0,100))

boxplot(prop.sectarian~Party,data=all.types.by.mla.no.green)

trial <- subset(all.types.by.mla,all.types.by.mla$total.prayers == 1)

##look at prayer types##

table(prayers$amen)
table(prayers$lords.prayer)
other.format <- as.data.frame(table(prayers$other.format))
write.csv(other.format,"other.format.use.csv")

total.types <- as.data.frame(table(prayers$religiosity))
total.types <- total.types[-1,]
names(total.types)[1:2] <- c("prayer.type","total")
sum(total.types$total)
total.types$proportion <- total.types$total/867
total.types$proportion[1] <- "omitted"

write.csv(total.types,"breakdown.of.prayer.type.csv")

##count standard prayers##

table(prayers$standard.prayer)
which.prayer <- as.data.frame(table(prayers$which.prayer))
which.prayer$prop.from.total <- which.prayer$Freq/867
which.prayer$prop.of.standard <- which.prayer$Freq/434

standard.prayers <- aggregate(prayers$length >
0,by=list(prayers$standard.prayer,prayers$religiosity),FUN=sum)
standard.prayers <- standard.prayers[-1,]
names(standard.prayers)[1:3] <- c("standard.prayer","religiosity","total.prayers")

```



```

write.csv(standard.prayers,"standard.prayers.by.religiosity.csv")

##party affiliation & sectarian##

##first remove throne speech prayers
##also remove Green party prayers since there are only 2##

prayers.no.throne <- subset(prayers,prayers$attack.explain != "Throne")
prayers.no.throne <- subset(prayers.no.throne,prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party != "")
prayers.no.throne <- subset(prayers.no.throne,prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party != "Green")

prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne$religiosity == "Sectarian",1,0)

party.sectarian <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)
party.no.sectarian <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian
==0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)

sectarian.party.glm <- glm(bin.sectarian~MLA.Party,family="binomial",data=prayers.no.throne)

summary(sectarian.party.glm)
anova(sectarian.party.glm,test="Chisq")

party.sectarian$not.sectarian <- party.no.sectarian$x
names(party.sectarian)[1:3] <- c("Party","num.Sectarian","num.not.Sectarian")
party.sectarian$total.prayers <- party.sectarian$num.not.Sectarian +
party.sectarian$num.Sectarian
party.sectarian$prop.sectarian <- party.sectarian$num.Sectarian/party.sectarian$total.prayers

write.csv(party.sectarian,file="sectarian.by.party.csv")

##christian by party##

prayers.no.throne$bin.christian <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne$religion == "Christian",1,0)

party.christian <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.christian,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)
party.no.christian<- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.christian
==0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)

party.christian$not.christian <- party.no.christian$x
names(party.christian)[1:3] <- c("Party","num.christian","num.not.christian")
party.christian$total.prayers <- party.christian$num.not.christian + party.christian$num.christian
party.christian$prop.christian <- party.christian$num.christian/party.christian$total.prayers

```

```

christian.party.glm <- glm(bin.christian~MLA.Party,family="binomial",data=prayers.no.throne)
summary(christian.party.glm)
anova(christian.party.glm,test="Chisq")

write.csv(party.christian,file="christian.by.party.csv")

##look at FN language use##

fn.lang.use <- as.data.frame(table(prayers.no.throne$fn.lang))
write.csv(fn.lang.use,"fn.lang.use.csv")

prayers.no.throne.only.mla$fn.lang <- as.character(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$fn.lang)
prayers.no.throne.only.mla$bin.fn.use <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$fn.lang ==
"?",0,prayers.no.throne.only.mla$fn.lang)

prayers.no.throne.only.mla$bin.fn.use <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$fn.lang ==
"N",0,prayers.no.throne.only.mla$bin.fn.use)
prayers.no.throne.only.mla$bin.fn.use <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$bin.fn.use ==
"0",0,1)
prayers.no.throne.only.mla$bin.fn.use <- as.numeric(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$bin.fn.use)

party.fn.use <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$bin.fn.use,by=list(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$MLA.Party)
,FUN=sum)
party.no.fn.use <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$bin.fn.use
==0,by=list(prayers.no.throne.only.mla$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)

party.fn.use$no.fn.use <- party.no.fn.use$x
names(party.fn.use)[1:3] <- c("Party","num.fn.use","num.no.fn.use")
party.fn.use$total.prayers <- party.fn.use$num.no.fn.use + party.fn.use$num.fn.use
party.fn.use$prop.fn.use <- party.fn.use$num.fn.use/party.fn.use$total.prayers

fn.use.party.glm <- glm(bin.fn.use~MLA.Party,family="binomial",data=prayers.no.throne)
summary(fn.use.party.glm)
anova(fn.use.party.glm,test="Chisq")

write.csv(party.fn.use,file="fn.lang.use.by.party.csv")

##standard prayer by party##

prayers.no.throne$bin.standard <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne$standard.prayer == "Y",1,0)

party.standard <-

```

```

aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.standard,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)
party.no.standard<- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.standard
==0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)

party.standard$not.standard <- party.no.standard$x
names(party.standard)[1:3] <- c("Party","num.standard","num.not.standard")
party.standard$total.prayers <- party.standard$num.not.standard + party.standard$num.standard
party.standard$prop.standard <- party.standard$num.standard/party.standard$total.prayers

standard.party.glm <- glm(bin.standard~MLA.Party,family="binomial",data=prayers.no.throne)
summary(standard.party.glm)
anova(standard.party.glm,test="Chisq")

write.csv(party.standard,file="standard.by.party.csv")

##now look at which standard prayer they use##

which.prayer <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$length
>0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne$which.prayer),FUN=sum)

write.csv(which.prayer,"standard.prayer.use.by.party.csv")

prayers.no.throne$bin.stand.1 <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne$which.prayer == "1",1,0)

glm.1 <- glm(bin.stand.1~MLA.Party,family="binomial",prayers.no.throne)
summary(glm.1)
anova(glm.1,test="Chisq")

prayers.no.throne$bin.stand.2 <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne$which.prayer == "2",1,0)

glm.2 <- glm(bin.stand.2~MLA.Party,family="binomial",prayers.no.throne)
summary(glm.2)
anova(glm.2,test="Chisq")

prayers.no.throne$bin.stand.3 <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne$which.prayer == "3",1,0)

glm.3 <- glm(bin.stand.3~MLA.Party,family="binomial",prayers.no.throne)
summary(glm.3)
anova(glm.3,test="Chisq")

prayers.no.throne$bin.stand.4 <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne$which.prayer == "4",1,0)

glm.4 <- glm(bin.stand.4~MLA.Party,family="binomial",prayers.no.throne)

```

```
summary(glm.4)
anova(glm.4,test="Chisq")
```

```
prayers.no.throne$bin.stand.5 <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne$which.prayer == "5",1,0)
```

```
glm.5 <- glm(bin.stand.5~MLA.Party,family="binomial",prayers.no.throne)
summary(glm.5)
anova(glm.5,test="Chisq")
```

```
prayers.no.throne$bin.stand.4.5 <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne$which.prayer == "4+5",1,0)
```

```
glm.4.5 <- glm(bin.stand.4.5~MLA.Party,family="binomial",prayers.no.throne)
summary(glm.4.5)
anova(glm.4.5,test="Chisq")
```

```
prayers.no.throne <- subset(prayers.no.throne,prayers.no.throne$altered.standard != "?")
prayers.no.throne$bin.altered.standard <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne$altered.standard == "N",0,1)
```

```
altered.glm <- glm(bin.altered.standard~MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne,family="binomial")
summary(altered.glm)
anova(altered.glm,test="Chisq")
```

```
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.altered.standard,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)
```

```
##Secular prayer by party##
```

```
prayers.no.throne$bin.secular <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne$religiosity == "Secular",1,0)
```

```
party.secular <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.secular,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)
party.no.secular<- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.secular
==0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)
```

```
party.secular$not.secular <- party.no.secular$x
names(party.secular)[1:3] <- c("Party","num.secular","num.not.secular")
party.secular$total.prayers <- party.secular$num.not.secular + party.secular$num.secular
party.secular$prop.secular <- party.secular$num.secular/party.secular$total.prayers
```

```
secular.party.glm <- glm(bin.secular~MLA.Party,family="binomial",data=prayers.no.throne)
summary(secular.party.glm)
anova(secular.party.glm,test="Chisq")
```

```

party.secular

write.csv(party.secular,file="secular.by.party.csv")

##secular prayers with amen
prayers$bin.secular <- ifelse(prayers$religiosity == "Secular",1,0)
prayers.sub <- subset(prayers,prayers$amen != "?")
prayers.sub$bin.amen <- ifelse(prayers.sub$amen == "Y",1,0)

prayers.amen.secular <- as.matrix(table(prayers.sub$bin.amen,prayers.sub$bin.secular))
chisq.test(prayers.amen.secular)

##alternative structures of prayers and amen

prayers.sub <- subset(prayers,prayers$other.format != "?")
prayers.sub$bin.alternate <- ifelse(prayers.sub$other.format == "N",0,1)
prayers.sub$bin.amen <- ifelse(prayers.sub$amen == "Y",1,0)
prayers.amen.format <- as.matrix(table(prayers.sub$bin.amen,prayers.sub$bin.alternate))

##Diety names by party##

prayers.no.throne$bin.diety <- ifelse(prayers.no.throne$deity == "Y",1,0)

party.diety <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.diety,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)
party.no.diety<-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.diety==0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)

party.diety$not.diety <- party.no.diety$x
names(party.diety)[1:3] <- c("Party","num.diety","num.not.diety")
party.diety$total.prayers <- party.diety$num.not.diety + party.diety$num.diety
party.diety$prop.diety <- party.diety$num.diety/party.diety$total.prayers

diety.party.glm <- glm(bin.diety~MLA.Party,family="binomial",data=prayers.no.throne)
summary(diety.party.glm)
anova(diety.party.glm,test="Chisq")

party.diety

```

```

write.csv(party.diety,file="diety.by.party.csv")

##prayer length by party and sectarian##

prayer.length <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$length,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne$bin.
sectarian),FUN=mean)

lineplot.CI(bin.sectarian,length,MLA.Party,data=prayers.no.throne,xlab="Sectarian (0 = no, 1 =
yes)",x.leg=1.8,y.leg=60,ylab="Prayer length
(words)",las=1,family="serif",cex.lab=1.6,col=c("red","dark orange"),lwd=3,ylim=c(0,130))

length.party.sectarian.aov <- aov(length~MLA.Party*bin.sectarian,data=prayers.no.throne)
summary(length.party.sectarian.aov)

write.csv(prayer.length,"length.by.party.by.sectarian.csv")

##prayer length by party and Christian##

prayer.length <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$length,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne$bin.
christian),FUN=mean)

lineplot.CI(bin.christian,length,MLA.Party,data=prayers.no.throne,xlab="Christian (0 = no, 1 =
yes)",ylab="Prayer length (words)",las=1)

length.party.christian.aov <- aov(length~MLA.Party*bin.christian,data=prayers.no.throne)
summary(length.party.christian.aov)

write.csv(prayer.length,file="length.by.party.by.christian.csv")

##how many words in prayers were christian?

words.christian <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$length,by=list(prayers.no.throne$bin.christian),sum)
words.christian

##prayer length by party and secular##

prayer.length <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$length,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne$bin.

```

```

secular),FUN=mean,font.lab="bold")

lineplot.CI(bin.secular,length,MLA.Party,data=prayers.no.throne,xlab="Secular (0 = no, 1 =
yes)",ylab="Prayer length (words)",las=1,family="serif",cex.lab=1.6,col=c("red","dark
orange"),lwd=3,ylim=c(0,120))

length.party.religiosity.aov <- aov(length~MLA.Party*bin.secular,data=prayers.no.throne)
summary(length.party.religiosity.aov)

write.csv(prayer.length,file="length.by.party.by.secular.csv")

##prayer length by party and standard and secular##

##first look at frequency of standard prayers
standard.secular <-
as.data.frame(table(prayers.no.throne$standard.prayer,prayers.no.throne$religiosity))
standard.secular <- subset(standard.secular,standard.secular$Var2 != "")
standard.secular <- subset(standard.secular,standard.secular$Var1 != "")
names(standard.secular)[1:3] <- c("standard.y.n","religiosity","num.prayers")

standard.secular$prop.prayers <- standard.secular$num.prayers/836

write.csv(standard.secular,"standard.counts.csv")

my.glm <- glm(bin.secular~bin.standard,data=prayers.no.throne,family="binomial")
summary(my.glm)
anova(my.glm,test="Chisq")

is.secular <- table(prayers.no.throne$bin.secular,prayers.no.throne$bin.standard)

prayer.length <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$length,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne$bin.
standard,prayers.no.throne$bin.secular),FUN=mean)
names(prayer.length)[1:4] <- c("MLA.Party","Standard.y.n","Secular.y.n","Length")
write.csv(prayer.length,"length.by.party.by.standard.by.secular.csv")

prayer.length <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$length,by=list(prayers.no.throne$bin.standard,prayers.no.throne$bi
n.secular),FUN=mean)
names(prayer.length)[1:3] <- c("standard.y.n","secular.y.n","mean")
write.csv(prayer.length,"length.by.standard.by.secular.csv")

lineplot.CI(bin.standard,length,bin.secular,data=prayers.no.throne,xlab="Standard (0 = no, 1 =

```

```

yes)",ylab="Prayer length (words)",las=1,leg.lab=c("Not secular","Secular"))

lineplot.CI(bin.standard,length,MLA.Party,data=prayers.no.throne,xlab="Standard (0 = no, 1 =
yes)",ylab="Prayer length (words)",las=1)
lineplot.CI(bin.secular,length,MLA.Party,data=prayers.no.throne,xlab="Secular (0 = no, 1 =
yes)",ylab="Prayer length (words)",las=1)

length.aov <- aov(length~bin.standard*bin.secular*MLA.Party,data=prayers.no.throne)
summary(length.aov)

write.csv(party.secular,file="length.by.party.by.secular.csv")

##look at effect of sectarian on length##

boxplot(length~bin.sectarian,data=prayers.no.throne,xlab="Sectarian Prayer (0 = no, 1 =
yes)",ylab="Prayer length (words)",las=1)
length.aov <- aov(length~bin.sectarian,data=prayers.no.throne)
summary(length.aov)
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$length,by=list(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian),FUN="mean")
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$length,by=list(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian),FUN="sd")
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$length > 0 ,by=list(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian),FUN="sum")

length.plot <- ggplot(prayers.no.throne,aes(factor(bin.sectarian),y=length))
length.plot + geom_violin(aes(fill=factor(bin.sectarian))) + geom_jitter(height=0,width=0.1)

##changes through time##

##redo this whole thing as a per year##

prayers.no.throne$Date <- as.character(prayers.no.throne$Date)
prayers.no.throne$year <- substr(prayers.no.throne$Date,1,4)
prayers.no.throne$year <- as.numeric(prayers.no.throne$year)

##sectarian.first with party##
sectarian.time <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party,prayers.no.thro
ne$year),FUN=sum)
no.sectarian.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian ==
0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne$year),FUN=sum)

sectarian.time$no.sectarian <- no.sectarian.time$x

```



```

names(sectarian.time)[1:3] <- c("Party","Year","Num.sectarian")

sectarian.time$total.prayers <- sectarian.time$Num.sectarian + sectarian.time$no.sectarian
sectarian.time$prop.sectarian <- sectarian.time$Num.sectarian/sectarian.time$total.prayers

write.csv(sectarian.time,"sectarian.by.party.by.year.csv")

##sectarian no party

sectarian.time <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year),FUN=sum)
no.sectarian.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian ==
0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year),FUN=sum)

sectarian.time$no.sectarian <- no.sectarian.time$x

names(sectarian.time)[1:2] <- c("Year","Num.sectarian")

sectarian.time$total.prayers <- sectarian.time$Num.sectarian + sectarian.time$no.sectarian
sectarian.time$prop.sectarian <- sectarian.time$Num.sectarian/sectarian.time$total.prayers

write.csv(sectarian.time,"sectarian.by.year.csv")

#take off 2019 because only 1 prayer
sectarian.time <- subset(sectarian.time,sectarian.time$Year != 2019)

plot(prop.sectarian~Year,data=sectarian.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Proportion sectarian")
lines(lowess(sectarian.time$Year,sectarian.time$prop.sectarian),col="red",lwd=3)

my.aov <- aov(prop.sectarian~Year+I(Year^2),data=sectarian.time)
summary(my.aov)

##sectarian by party over time

sectarian.time <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year,prayers.no.throne$ML
A.Party),FUN=sum)
no.sectarian.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian ==
0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year,prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)

sectarian.time$no.sectarian <- no.sectarian.time$x

```

```

names(sectarian.time)[1:3] <- c("Year","MLA.Party","Num.sectarian")

sectarian.time$total.prayers <- sectarian.time$Num.sectarian + sectarian.time$no.sectarian
sectarian.time$prop.sectarian <- sectarian.time$Num.sectarian/sectarian.time$total.prayers

write.csv(sectarian.time,"sectarian.by.year.by.party.csv")

#take off 2019 because only 1 prayer
sectarian.time <- subset(sectarian.time,sectarian.time$Year != 2019)

ndp.sectarian.time <- subset(sectarian.time,sectarian.time$MLA.Party == "NDP")
lib.sectarian.time <- subset(sectarian.time,sectarian.time$MLA.Party == "Liberal")

plot(prop.sectarian~Year,data=ndp.sectarian.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Proportion
sectarian",ylim=c(0,0.75),col="dark orange",family="serif",cex.lab=1.6)
points(prop.sectarian~Year,data=lib.sectarian.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Proportion
sectarian",ylim=c(0,0.75),col="red")

lines(lowess(ndp.sectarian.time$Year,ndp.sectarian.time$prop.sectarian),col="dark
orange",lwd=3)
lines(lowess(lib.sectarian.time$Year,lib.sectarian.time$prop.sectarian),col="red",lwd=3)

legend(2014,0.7,legend=c("NDP","Liberal"),col=c("dark orange","red"),pch=16,bty="n")

my.aov <- aov(prop.sectarian~Year*MLA.Party+I(Year^2)*MLA.Party,data=sectarian.time)
summary(my.aov)

##christian over time

christian.time <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.christian,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year),FUN=sum)
no.christian.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.christian ==
0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year),FUN=sum)

christian.time$no.christian <- no.christian.time$x

names(christian.time)[1:2] <- c("Year","Num.christian")

christian.time$total.prayers <- christian.time$Num.christian + christian.time$no.christian
christian.time$prop.christian <- christian.time$Num.christian/christian.time$total.prayers

write.csv(christian.time,"chrtian.by.year.csv")

```

```
#take off 2019 because only 1 prayer
christian.time <- subset(christian.time,christian.time$Year != 2019)

plot(prop.christian~Year,data=christian.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Proportion Christian")
lines(lowess(christian.time$Year,christian.time$prop.christian),col="red",lwd=3)

my.aov <- aov(prop.christian~Year+I(Year^2),data=christian.time)
summary(my.aov)

##christian over time
```

```
christian.time <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.christian,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year),FUN=sum)
no.christian.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.christian ==
0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year),FUN=sum)

christian.time$no.christian <- no.christian.time$x

names(christian.time)[1:2] <- c("Year","Num.christian")

christian.time$total.prayers <- christian.time$Num.christian + christian.time$no.christian
christian.time$prop.christian <- christian.time$Num.christian/christian.time$total.prayers

write.csv(christian.time,"christian.by.year.csv")
```

```
#take off 2019 because only 1 prayer
christian.time <- subset(christian.time,christian.time$Year != 2019)

plot(prop.christian~Year,data=christian.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Proportion Christian")
lines(lowess(christian.time$Year,christian.time$prop.christian),col="red",lwd=3)

my.aov <- aov(prop.christian~Year+I(Year^2),data=christian.time)
summary(my.aov)

##christian over time by party
```

```
christian.time <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.christian,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year,prayers.no.throne$ML
A.Party),FUN=sum)
no.christian.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.christian ==
0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year,prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)
```

```

christian.time$no.christian <- no.christian.time$x

names(christian.time)[1:3] <- c("Year", "MLA.Party", "Num.christian")

christian.time$total.prayers <- christian.time$Num.christian + christian.time$no.christian
christian.time$prop.christian <- christian.time$Num.christian/christian.time$total.prayers

write.csv(christian.time, "christian.by.year.by.party.csv")

#take off 2019 because only 1 prayer
christian.time <- subset(christian.time, christian.time$Year != 2019)

ndp.christian.time <- subset(christian.time, christian.time$MLA.Party == "NDP")
lib.christian.time <- subset(christian.time, christian.time$MLA.Party == "Liberal")

plot(prop.christian~Year, data=ndp.christian.time, pch=16, cex=2, las=1, ylab = "Proportion
Christian", ylim=c(0,0.75), col="dark orange", family="serif", cex.lab=1.6)
points(prop.christian~Year, data=lib.christian.time, pch=16, cex=2, las=1, ylab = "Proportion
christian", ylim=c(0,0.75), col="red")

lines(lowess(ndp.christian.time$Year, ndp.christian.time$prop.christian), col="dark
orange", lwd=3)
lines(lowess(lib.christian.time$Year, lib.christian.time$prop.christian), col="red", lwd=3)

legend(2014, 0.7, legend=c("NDP", "Liberal"), col=c("dark orange", "red"), pch=16, bty="n")

my.aov <- aov(prop.christian~Year*MLA.Party+I(Year^2)*MLA.Party, data=christian.time)
summary(my.aov)

###look at MLAs over time##

mlas.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Name !=
"", by=list(prayers.no.throne$year, prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party), FUN=sum, na.rm=T)

names(mlas.time)[1:3] <- c("Year", "MLA.Party", "Num.mlas")

write.csv(mlas.time, "num.mlas.per.year.per.party.csv")

#take off 2019 because only 1 prayer
mlas.time <- subset(mlas.time, mlas.time$Year != 2019)

ndp.mlas.time <- subset(mlas.time, mlas.time$MLA.Party == "NDP")

```

```

lib.mlas.time <- subset(mlas.time,mlas.time$MLA.Party == "Liberal")

plot(Num.mlas~Year,data=ndp.mlas.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Number of
MLAs",ylim=c(0,50),col="dark orange")
points(Num.mlas~Year,data=lib.mlas.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Number of
MLAs",col="red")

lines(lowess(ndp.mlas.time$Year,ndp.mlas.time$Num.mlas),col="dark orange",lwd=3)
lines(lowess(lib.mlas.time$Year,lib.mlas.time$Num.mlas),col="red",lwd=3)

##look at top individual MLAs##

mla.totals <- as.data.frame(table(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Name))
mla.totals <- mla.totals[order(mla.totals$Freq,decreasing=T),]

top.prayers <- subset(mla.totals,mla.totals$Freq >= 15)

##do they change in prop christianity over time?

top.prayer.data <- subset(prayers.no.throne, prayers.no.throne$MLA.Name %in%
top.prayers$Var1 == TRUE)

christian.time <-
aggregate(top.prayer.data$bin.christian,by=list(top.prayer.data$year,top.prayer.data$MLA.Name
,top.prayer.data$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)
no.christian.time <- aggregate(top.prayer.data$bin.christian ==
0,by=list(top.prayer.data$year,top.prayer.data$MLA.Name,top.prayer.data$MLA.Party),FUN=s
um)

christian.time$no.christian <- no.christian.time$x

names(christian.time)[1:4] <- c("Year","MLA.Name","MLA.Party","Num.christian")

christian.time$total.prayers <- christian.time$Num.christian + christian.time$no.christian
christian.time$prop.christian <- christian.time$Num.christian/christian.time$total.prayers

write.csv(christian.time,"prayers.per.mla.over.time.csv")

plot(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Leonard Krog"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Leonard Krog"],
pch=16,ylim=c(0,1),col="orange",las=1,ylab="Proportion Christian Prayers",xlab="Year")
lines(lowess(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Leonard Krog"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Leonard Krog"]),col="dark

```

```
orange",lwd=3)
```

```
points(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Bill Routley"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Bill Routley"],
pch=16,col="orange")
lines(lowess(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Bill Routley"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Bill Routley"]),col="dark
orange",lwd=3)
```

```
points(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Doug Donaldson"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Doug Donaldson"],
pch=16,col="orange")
lines(lowess(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Doug Donaldson"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Doug Donaldson"]),col="dark
orange",lwd=3)
```

```
points(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Doug Routley"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Doug Routley"],
pch=16,col="orange")
lines(lowess(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Doug Routley"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Doug Routley"]),col="dark
orange",lwd=3)
```

```
points(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Claire Trevena"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Claire Trevena"],
pch=16,col="orange")
lines(lowess(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Claire Trevena"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Claire Trevena"]),col="dark
orange",lwd=3)
```

```
points(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Donna Barnett"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Donna Barnett"], pch=16,col="red")
lines(lowess(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Donna Barnett"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Donna Barnett"]),col="red",lwd=3)
```

```
points(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Jane Thornthwaite"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Jane Thornthwaite"],
pch=16,col="red")
lines(lowess(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Jane Thornthwaite"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Jane
Thornthwaite"]),col="red",lwd=3)
```

```
points(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Lorne Mayencourt"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Lorne Mayencourt"],
```

```

pch=16,col="red")
lines(lowess(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Lorne Mayencourt"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Lorne
Mayencourt"]),col="red",lwd=3)

points(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Marvin Hunt"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Marvin Hunt"], pch=16,col="red")
lines(lowess(christian.time$Year[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Marvin Hunt"],
christian.time$prop.christian[christian.time$MLA.Name=="Marvin Hunt"]),col="red",lwd=3)

my.aov <- aov(prop.christian~Year+MLA.Party+ Error(MLA.Name),christian.time)
summary(my.aov)

##FN use over time

prayers$Date <- as.character(prayers$Date)
prayers$year <- substr(prayers$Date,1,4)
prayers$year <- as.numeric(prayers$year)

prayers$fn.lang <- as.character(prayers$fn.lang)
prayers$bin.fn.use <- ifelse(prayers$fn.lang == "?",0,prayers$fn.lang)

prayers$bin.fn.use <- ifelse(prayers$fn.lang == "N",0,prayers$bin.fn.use)
prayers$bin.fn.use <- ifelse(prayers$bin.fn.use == "0",0,1)
prayers$bin.fn.use <- as.numeric(prayers$bin.fn.use)

fn.use.time <- aggregate(prayers$bin.fn.use,by=list(prayers$year),FUN=sum)
no.fn.use.time <- aggregate(prayers$bin.fn.use == 0,by=list(prayers$year),FUN=sum)

fn.use.time$no.fn.use <- no.fn.use.time$x

names(fn.use.time)[1:2] <- c("Year","Num.fn.use")

fn.use.time$total.prayers <- fn.use.time$Num.fn.use + fn.use.time$no.fn.use
fn.use.time$prop.fn.use <- fn.use.time$Num.fn.use/fn.use.time$total.prayers

write.csv(fn.use.time,"fn.use.by.year.csv")

#take off 2019 because only 1 prayer
fn.use.time <- subset(fn.use.time,fn.use.time$Year != 2019)

plot(prop.fn.use~Year,data=fn.use.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylim=c(0,0.2),family="serif",cex.la

```

```

b=1.6,ylab="First Nations language use")
lines(lowess(fn.use.time$Year,fn.use.time$prop.fn.use),col="red",lwd=3)

my.aov <- aov(prop.fn.use~Year+I(Year^2),data=fn.use.time)
summary(my.aov)

#standard prayer use over time

standard.time <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.standard,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year),FUN=sum)
no.standard.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.standard ==
0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year),FUN=sum)

standard.time$no.standard <- no.standard.time$x

names(standard.time)[1:2] <- c("Year","Num.standard")

standard.time$total.prayers <- standard.time$Num.standard + standard.time$no.standard
standard.time$prop.standard <- standard.time$Num.standard/standard.time$total.prayers

write.csv(standard.time,"standard.by.year.csv")

#take off 2019 because only 1 prayer
standard.time <- subset(standard.time,standard.time$Year != 2019)

plot(prop.standard~Year,data=standard.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Proportion standard")
lines(lowess(standard.time$Year,standard.time$prop.standard),col="red",lwd=3)

my.aov <- aov(prop.standard~Year+I(Year^2),data=standard.time)
summary(my.aov)

##standard prayer by party

standard.time <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.standard,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year,prayers.no.throne$ML
A.Party),FUN=sum)
no.standard.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.standard ==
0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year,prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)

standard.time$no.standard <- no.standard.time$x

names(standard.time)[1:3] <- c("Year","MLA.Party","Num.standard")

standard.time$total.prayers <- standard.time$Num.standard + standard.time$no.standard
standard.time$prop.standard <- standard.time$Num.standard/standard.time$total.prayers

```



```

write.csv(standard.time,"standard.by.year.by.party.csv")

#take off 2019 because only 1 prayer
standard.time <- subset(standard.time,standard.time$Year != 2019)

ndp.standard.time <- subset(standard.time,standard.time$MLA.Party == "NDP")
lib.standard.time <- subset(standard.time,standard.time$MLA.Party == "Liberal")

plot(prop.standard~Year,data=ndp.standard.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Proportion
standard",ylim=c(0,1),col="dark orange",family="serif",cex.lab=1.6)
points(prop.standard~Year,data=lib.standard.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Proportion
standard",ylim=c(0,1),col="red")

lines(lowess(ndp.standard.time$Year,ndp.standard.time$prop.standard),col="dark
orange",lwd=3)
lines(lowess(lib.standard.time$Year,lib.standard.time$prop.standard),col="red",lwd=3)

legend(2015,0.9,legend=c("NDP","Liberal"),col=c("dark orange","red"),pch=16,bty="n")

my.aov <- aov(prop.standard~Year*MLA.Party,data=standard.time)
summary(my.aov)

#secular prayer use over time

secular.time <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.secular,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year),FUN=sum)
no.secular.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.secular ==
0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year),FUN=sum)

secular.time$no.secular <- no.secular.time$x

names(secular.time)[1:2] <- c("Year","Num.secular")

secular.time$total.prayers <- secular.time$Num.secular + secular.time$no.secular
secular.time$prop.secular <- secular.time$Num.secular/secular.time$total.prayers

write.csv(secular.time,"secular.by.year.csv")

#take off 2019 because only 1 prayer
secular.time <- subset(secular.time,secular.time$Year != 2019)

plot(prop.secular~Year,data=secular.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Proportion
secular",family="serif",cex.lab=1.6)
lines(lowess(secular.time$Year,secular.time$prop.secular),col="red",lwd=3)

```

```

my.aov <- aov(prop.secular~Year+I(Year^2),data=secular.time)
summary(my.aov)

##secular over time by party

secular.time <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.secular,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year,prayers.no.throne$MLA.
Party),FUN=sum)
no.secular.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.secular ==
0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year,prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party),FUN=sum)

secular.time$no.secular <- no.secular.time$x

names(secular.time)[1:3] <- c("Year", "MLA.Party", "Num.secular")

secular.time$total.prayers <- secular.time$Num.secular + secular.time$no.secular
secular.time$prop.secular <- secular.time$Num.secular/secular.time$total.prayers

write.csv(secular.time,"secular.by.year.by.party.csv")

#take off 2019 because only 1 prayer
secular.time <- subset(secular.time,secular.time$Year != 2019)

ndp.secular.time <- subset(secular.time,secular.time$MLA.Party == "NDP")
lib.secular.time <- subset(secular.time,secular.time$MLA.Party == "Liberal")

plot(prop.secular~Year,data=ndp.secular.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Proportion
secular",ylim=c(0,0.75),col="dark orange",family="serif",cex.lab=1.6)
points(prop.secular~Year,data=lib.secular.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Proportion
secular",ylim=c(0,0.75),col="red")

lines(lowess(ndp.secular.time$Year,ndp.secular.time$prop.secular),col="dark orange",lwd=3)
lines(lowess(lib.secular.time$Year,lib.secular.time$prop.secular),col="red",lwd=3)

legend(2014,0.7,legend=c("NDP","Liberal"),col=c("dark orange","red"),pch=16,bty="n")

my.aov <- aov(prop.secular~Year*MLA.Party+I(Year^2)*MLA.Party,data=secular.time)
summary(my.aov)

##length of prayer over time##

length.year <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$length,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year),FUN=mean)
names(length.year)[1:2] <- c("Year","Length")

```

```
plot(Length~Year,data=length.year,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Prayer Length
(words)",family="serif",cex.lab=1.6)
lines(lowess(length.year$Year,length.year$Length),col="red",lwd=3)
```

```
length.aov <- aov(Length~Year,data=length.year)
summary(length.aov)
```

```
##length over time by party
length.time <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$length,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year,prayers.no.throne$MLA.Part
y),FUN=mean)
names(length.time)[1:3] <- c("Year","MLA.Party","Length")
```

```
##take out 2019 since small data##
```

```
length.time <- subset(length.time,length.time$Year != "2019")
```

```
ndp.length.time <- subset(length.time,length.time$MLA.Party == "NDP")
lib.length.time <- subset(length.time,length.time$MLA.Party == "Liberal")
```

```
plot(Length~Year,data=ndp.length.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Prayer length
(words)",col=c("dark orange",alpha=0.5),family="serif",cex.lab=1.6,ylim=c(0,160))
points(Length~Year,data=lib.length.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,col=c("red",alpha=0.5))
```

```
lines(lowess(ndp.length.time$Year,ndp.length.time$Length),col="dark orange",lwd=3)
lines(lowess(lib.length.time$Year,lib.length.time$Length),col="red",lwd=3)
```

```
legend(2006,150,legend=c("NDP","Liberal"),col=c("dark orange","red"),pch=16,bty="n")
```

```
my.aov <- aov(Length~Year*MLA.Party+I(Year^2)*MLA.Party,data=secular.time)
summary(my.aov)
```

```
plot(Length~Year,data=length.year,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Prayer Length
(words)",family="serif",cex.lab=1.6)
lines(lowess(length.year$Year,length.year$Length),col="red",lwd=3)
```

```
length.aov <- aov(Length~Year,data=length.year)
summary(length.aov)
```

```
length.time.by.secular <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$length,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year,prayers.no.throne$bin.secular
```

```

),FUN=mean)

##take out 2019

prayers.no.throne.no2019 <- subset(prayers.no.throne,prayers.no.throne$year != 2019)

lineplot.CI(year,length,bin.secular,data=prayers.no.throne.no2019,xlab="Year",ylab="Length of
prayer (words)",trace.label = "Secular?",las=1)

lineplot.CI(year,length,MLA.Party,data=prayers.no.throne.no2019,xlab="Year",ylab="Length of
prayer (words)",las=1)

length.aov <- aov(length~MLA.Party*year*bin.secular,data=prayers.no.throne.no2019)
summary(length.aov)


#diety prayer use over time

diety.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.diety,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year),FUN=sum)
no.diety.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.diety ==
0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$year),FUN=sum)

diety.time$no.diety <- no.diety.time$x

names(diety.time)[1:2] <- c("Year","Num.diety")

diety.time$total.prayers <- diety.time$Num.diety + diety.time$no.diety
diety.time$prop.diety <- diety.time$Num.diety/diety.time$total.prayers

write.csv(diety.time,"diety.by.year.csv")

#take off 2019 because only 1 prayer
diety.time <- subset(diety.time,diety.time$Year != 2019)

plot(prop.diety~Year,data=diety.time,pch=16,cex=2,las=1,ylab = "Proportion
diety",ylim=c(0,1))
lines(lowess(diety.time$Year,diety.time$prop.diety),col="red",lwd=3)

my.aov <- aov(prop.diety~Year+I(Year^2),data=diety.time)
summary(my.aov)


##sectarian through Parliament##

```

```

sectarian.time <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne$Parliament),FUN=sum)
no.sectarian.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian ==
0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne$Parliament),FUN=sum)

sectarian.time$no.sectarian <- no.sectarian.time$x

names(sectarian.time)[1:3] <- c("Party","Parliament","Num.sectarian")

sectarian.time$total.prayers <- sectarian.time$Num.sectarian + sectarian.time$no.sectarian
sectarian.time$prop.sectarian <- sectarian.time$Num.sectarian/sectarian.time$total.prayers

sectarian.party.time.glm <-
glm(bin.sectarian~MLA.Party*Parliament,family="binomial",data=prayers.no.throne)
summary(sectarian.party.time.glm)
anova(sectarian.party.time.glm,test="Chisq")

lib.sect.time <- subset(sectarian.time,sectarian.time$Party == "Liberal")
ndp.sect.time <- subset(sectarian.time,sectarian.time$Party == "NDP")

plot(prop.sectarian~Parliament,data=lib.sect.time,pch=16,type="b",lwd=2,col="red",ylab="Proportion of Prayers that are Sectarian",ylim=c(0,0.45))
lines(prop.sectarian~Parliament,data=ndp.sect.time,col="dark orange",lwd=2,type="b")

write.csv(sectarian.party.time,file="sectarianthroughtime.by.party.csv")

##sectarian through time##

prayers.no.throne$merged.parliament <-
paste(prayers.no.throne$Parliament,prayers.no.throne$Session)

sectarian.time <-
aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne$merged.parliament),FUN=sum)
no.sectarian.time <- aggregate(prayers.no.throne$bin.sectarian ==
0,by=list(prayers.no.throne$MLA.Party,prayers.no.throne$merged.parliament),FUN=sum)

sectarian.time$no.sectarian <- no.sectarian.time$x

names(sectarian.time)[1:3] <- c("Party","Parliament","Num.sectarian")

```

```
sectarian.time$total.prayers <- sectarian.time$Num.sectarian + sectarian.time$no.sectarian
sectarian.time$prop.sectarian <- sectarian.time$Num.sectarian/sectarian.time$total.prayers
```

```
sectarian.party.time.glm <-
glm(bin.sectarian~MLA.Party*Parliament,family="binomial",data=prayers.no.throne)
summary(sectarian.party.time.glm)
anova(sectarian.party.time.glm,test="Chisq")
```

```
lib.sect.time <- subset(sectarian.time,sectarian.time$Party == "Liberal")
```

```
##cut off first few to put on similar footing
```

```
lib.sect.time <- lib.sect.time[-1,]
lib.sect.time <- lib.sect.time[-1,]
lib.sect.time <- lib.sect.time[-1,]
lib.sect.time <- lib.sect.time[-17,]
lib.sect.time$seating <- seq(1,18)
```

```
ndp.sect.time <- subset(sectarian.time,sectarian.time$Party == "NDP")
ndp.sect.time$seating <- seq(1,18)
```

```
plot(prop.sectarian~seating,data=lib.sect.time,pch=16,type="b",lwd=2,col="red",ylab="Proporti
on of Prayers that are Sectarian",ylim=c(0,0.6))
lines(prop.sectarian~seating,data=ndp.sect.time,col="dark orange",lwd=2,type="b")
```

```
write.csv(sectarian.time,file="sectarianthroughtime.by.party.csv")
```