



Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

Hello and welcome to Scripture Untangled, a podcast by the Canadian Bible Society. My name is Joanna la Fleur. I'm a friend of the Canadian Bible Society and I'm going to be your guide for today's episode.

Today, Ray Pennings will be in a timely conversation with Lorna Dueck. Our guest today, Ray Pennings, is the co-founder of CARDUS, a non-partisan think tank grounded in the teachings of Jesus and centuries of Christian social thought. Ray and the team at CARDUS are passionate about seeing people, institutions and governments working together to help everyone thrive.

Ray speaks and writes widely and is proactive about God and Canadian public life. We're going to get into all those issues on today's podcast, including Canada's policy on medical assistance in dying and the difficult choices Canada wrestles with on MAID. As Ray tackles policy analysis from a Christian view, he brings to his work a background of deep thought.

Ray Pennings has a history degree from McMaster and a master's degree in theology from Puritan Reform Theological Seminary. He has described himself as having 30 years of apprenticeship in the school of hard knocks that Christians in public life often experience. Ray Pennings is sought after as a commentator, pundit and critic in many of Canada's leading news outlets.

We're grateful to have Ray on Scripture Untangled today to explore his connection to the Bible and how it can be a gift of wisdom for Canadians. So, here's veteran journalist Lorna Dueck in conversation with Ray Pennings.

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

Lorna Dueck: Hello, Mr. Ray Pennings. I think we're finding you in the historic Balfour House, which is where media begins in Canada, the Southern Family, but almost, almost begins.

Ray Pennings: Absolutely.

My office here in Hamilton is in a historic building that was built in 1836. And this office was the bedroom of one of the kids of the Balfour or the Southern Family. Along the way, I don't know exactly where it is, but they are the family that was the original publisher of the Hamilton Spectator, among many other media publications back in the 1830s.

And CARDUS is just blessed to be able to steward this property and for the last two years. So that's where you find me today.

Lorna Dueck: Last time I found you, we were talking about your upcoming book that's coming out on Ambassadors, but we were in your office, the other CARDUS office, which is mere steps away from Parliament Hill.

And I don't know if many people realize there is a Christian think tank, CARDUS, so close to Parliament Hill. Describe that setting over there as well.

Ray Pennings: It's fascinating.

So, thank you for that, CARDUS. I'm the co-founder of CARDUS together with Michael Van Pelt in 2000. So, we have just celebrated our 25th anniversary.

In 2016, we opened up an Ottawa office. And one of the things that we thought was quite important is to have a profile. Faith should not be in the margins of public life. It's not relegated to church basements; it's in the public square. And so, one of the things that we did, even symbolically, is we were able to secure offices.

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

We have the seventh and eighth floor of the building at the corner of Sussex and Rideau.

For those who know Ottawa at all, when I look out of my office window in the corner of that top corner of that building, I overlook the Senate building, the Chateau Laurier, the War Memorial. And I actually have a direct eye on the Prime Minister's office. What used to be Langevin Bloc is now known as the Prime Minister's office.

So, I can directly look at the window. I don't know which physical one the Prime Minister looks out of, which also means that he can look at us and pay attention to what we're doing. And we have something to say about faith in the public square.

Lorna Dueck: You know, there is a big sign, neon sign out there. And I know you have a relationship with our Prime Minister. CARDUS works in and out of lobbying that office as well.

We've seen him on your stage. Ray, tell us why it is so important for a Christian think tank to be engaged with Canadian government?

Ray Pennings: Yeah, let me just back one step prior to that, because I don't want to assume the audience necessarily grew up thinking I want to be a think tanker when I grow up. It's not the usual thing.

So, the role of think tanks in society is probably one that just needs a bit of explanation. I've been involved in politics my entire life, mostly in the back rooms in volunteer capacity. It was in the mid-90s when Michael Van Pelt, my co-founder and friend since my teens, who had a similar passion than I, were sort of discussing Christian engagement in public life.

Now, this is the 90s. Remember, we're in the midst of sort of culture wars, the sense of growing secular humanism, overtaking and confronting our Christian heritage. And two things sort of emerged, three things really.

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

One, that there was a hostility and a lack of understanding. So, some of it was hostility and a lot of it was amnesia, in which the Christian story, the roots of the foundations of our society that have been inherited from Western civilization and a Judeo-Christian tradition were being misunderstood, not remembered and lost in a way. And that doesn't just involve government.

You know, go down any major city, look at the titles of the hospitals that are part of the public. We think hospitals is public health care and all the rest. Well, where did St. Joseph's Hospital or Mount Zion Hospital come from? They weren't started by government.

You know, go to any of our universities, go to our education system. Faith informs every aspect of public life, and that story was misunderstood. So that was the first premise.

The second was that we were concerned the faith community was not always adept at telling her own story. Sometimes we did it in less than perfect ways, always with good intentions. We're not questioning the intentions, but we felt as people, both of us had been involved in senior levels of political organizing, as well as organizational leadership.

Michael had worked, he was at that point the general manager of the Sarnia-Lambton Chamber of Commerce, worked in the business community. I had worked in labor. I had worked in a number of different areas.

And we always weren't adept. We weren't always the best. And part of our Christian commitment needs to be excellence, needs to be doing things well.

We serve a God who's perfect, who is glorified when we do things well. And so, we felt that there was a way to do things better than was happening in the mainstream. And then thirdly, politics.

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

Sometimes we, the Christian community was increasingly becoming active in the political sphere. We were very adept at using our six social networks to elect Christians as individuals. We sent them to office, and then we expected them to change the world, but we didn't equip them.

We didn't equip them with the best research, we didn't equip them with the tools, the data, that is actually needed to make the public argument. So long story short, we started a Christian think tank in 2000, and really a think tank does three things. We collect data, we make arguments, and we provide platforms for discussion to help change the public conversation.

Lorna Dueck: Okay, I want to pull out one phrase you had there. We equip politicians to understand how Christianity fits into culture. We're recording this on a week where we've had a momentous government ruling on MAID, where finally, after 10 years of MAID being applied in Canada, medical assistance in dying. We have had a government committee say, we need to hold the line and say, no, we recommend never should it be used for mental illness.

I happen to know, because if you look, anyone who looks at your website, for one, you can find years of papers of argumentation on this issue of MAID, and you've actually been able to put material together. So, the parliamentarians studying this issue on should mental health be part of the practicing. You've put material in their hands, right? This is how down to earth it gets.

Ray Pennings: Absolutely. So, we have done a lot of original research. Much of the polling with the Angus Reid Institute on this issue has been commissioned by CARDUS.

We actually have met, we've worked with the committee, we've also worked with witnesses to the committee. So, it's not just our own voice, but we helped equip others who made the submissions to parliament. And the work has been of such a quality, and the leadership that frankly, our senior fellows have been invited to

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

Scotland to testify to that parliamentary committee, when they considered the matter as well.

So, we have been able to do work that is and we have some present requests and doing a major event in the fall in the US. So, the work that we have done not only has equipped Canadian politicians, but it's also been of a calibre that has attracted worldwide attention.

Lorna Dueck: Well, Ray, this is a Christian podcast for readers of the Bible.

And this issue of MAID is hitting every, well, it's hitting every church is discussing it and needing to work it out. What does the Bible have to say about medical assistance in dying?

Ray Pennings: Yeah, I think to start from you know, in terms of a Christian framework of this, we have to start with two questions, who is God and who are humans? So first of all, you know, we're introduced in *Genesis* one in the Bible to a God, who, you know, is a Trinitarian God obviously takes the rest of Scriptures to fully unpack that. But he basically, you know, already in *Genesis* one, we have let us make men in our image, there's a plural there.

God is, and I think there are two things to keep in mind in terms of human dignity, we are made in the image of God. And humans are made for relationship, we have God, we worship and are image bearers of a God who in three persons are in relationship with each other. And we are also created for relationship.

So, you know, it's not good that man should be alone is, you know, what we read very shortly after Adam's created, and then Eve comes. I think, you know, there's much more we don't have you know, this isn't going to be a full theological exposition, but I would start with creation, who is God, and who is man in terms of creation. So, we humans have dignity, and they are created for relationship.

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

Now, you know, Genesis one is followed by Genesis three, we have the fall and one of the you know, the wages of sin is death, death, suffering, decay, brokenness, and certainly the entire issue of euthanasia. I prefer that to medical assistance in dying, because I think it's more truthful communication of what's there. And I can come back to that later, if you will.

The whole issue of euthanasia is a wrestling with suffering. It is a wrestling with the fact that people are going to die and in the process of death and dying, there is suffering. And that's a bad thing.

And it is Biblically a bad thing. It's the wages of sin; the world wasn't intended to be that way. So how do we deal with that? Euthanasia says that you are in control, that at the end of the day, suffering is a bad thing, you shouldn't have to endure it if you don't want to. And you can take control even of your deaths.

I would suggest that's quite an antidote to the essence of the Christian Gospel, which really, you know, the Scriptures don't just talk about creation and fall, they call it to also talk about redemption and restoration. There is hope there is meaning, death and suffering do not have the last word.

But ultimately, there is a way forward to a new heaven and a new earth where suffering will be no more where our bodies will be restored. And we will be able to worship God in relationship with each other and in relationship with the triune God. My own religious tradition, I'm the offspring of Dutch reformed immigrants.

And within our reformed churches, many of us still refer to a 16th century confession called the Heidelberg Catechism. And it begins with this question, what's your only comfort in life and death? And the answer is that I'm not my own, but I belong to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied all my sins so that with body and soul, God doesn't just save our souls. He saves our bodies as well.

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

And the comfort is not that I have autonomy and I get to control when I die. The comfort is that I belong to my faithful Savior, and I trust him. I trust God, even with the timing of my death.

Lorna Dueck: We haven't quoted the catechism, the Heidelberg Catechism for a while here. Maybe this is certainly the first time in my interview.

Ray Pennings: I'll try to work in the Westminster quote yet for our Presbyterian friends before we're all done.

Lorna Dueck: Okay, okay. But let's go back to that very poignant reality of suffering. And this is what has driven medical assistance in dying, euthanasia, let's call it what it is, as you say, this is what's driven euthanasia, and autonomy, our strong urge for autonomy.

And there are Christian families which are saying, autonomy does not mean we prolong death. It doesn't mean that. It doesn't mean we don't alleviate suffering if we can make a quicker end of this.

Ray, it's, as you know, Canada is leading the numbers in this. Help us understand why, yeah, actually, Christians do accept suffering.

Ray Pennings: So, there are several dimensions to this.

And I think the first thing we have to have is a posture, we need to have a pastoral posture. This is not something to pontificate and right and wrong, black and white. On that there are some fundamental principles at play, but they need to be applied in an understanding and pastoral setting.

So, let's just say a couple of things about suffering. What we are not saying is that you needlessly need to extend life to the maximum that modern medicine will allow us to do that. There is, death is natural.

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

I've written a paper with that title. And there is a sense in which the Christian perspective understands that the wages of sin is death and death is going to happen. It accepts that reality for all of us.

And, you know, when you have, when someone receives a diagnosis, you know, you come to the doctor and you say, okay, the doctor, I can, you know, we can go through this chemo, we can go through all of this extraordinary medical intervention, and we may extend your life realistically for three months or six months. But in the process, the next two years are going to be, you know, great suffering and that. My own advice, and I've written on this, has been you need to evaluate that in terms of the purpose of life and also, in the context of death.

And I would say there are five questions you should probably ask yourself. Number one, we all, the only difference between you and having received a terminal diagnosis and someone who hasn't, we all have a terminal diagnosis. We're all going to die.

The only thing is some of us know with more definition as to how likely that is in terms of its timing than others. Ironically, about 90% of the population does have a realistic sense of when they're going to die. So, when you come to the point of, I'm going to die in a week, three weeks, three months, or three years, my suggestion is that a way to think about is through five questions.

There's probably someone you need to say I love you to. There are probably people you need to say thank you to. Sadly, in many of our lives, there are some broken relationships that we really should restore, before we pass.

Fourthly, there are people who you are responsible for who are going to miss your death because you care for them. So, you need to make the arrangements so that you can say to them you're going to be okay when I'm not here. And you need to fifth, finally assure them that you're going to be okay after you're not here.

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

And that's obviously a spiritual question. I would say that make your decision, those are actually questions we should live by, but they become very focused when you know you are going to die in whatever defined period of time. And I would say, first of all, make medical decisions with a view to those questions.

And maybe that means not doing the extraordinary medical interventions and accepting the fact that I'm going to die in three to six months. And I need to prioritize these and I'm not going to be under drugs and all the rest in a way that can do that. So that's the first question. Do not translate being concerned about euthanasia with the fact that that creates a positive obligation to extend life to the maximum possible aspect. But death should be natural. I think that the second piece that I would say when it comes to suffering, modern medicine has advanced.

Yes, there is still suffering in death, but about 95%, if I understand the data correctly, of the pain between palliative care, all of the rest, you can be relatively comfortable, not perfectly comfortable, but none of us, even when we're totally healthy, is perfectly comfortable. Suffering, for the most part, can be managed except for some extraordinary cases with modern medicine. And we can use that.

So, this is not saying we just acquiesce to suffering and we don't care. There are lots of things that we very legitimately can. And one of my major concerns is that, you know, the government does not, you know, we do not fund or have palliative care available for the vast majority of people who need it.

You know, we are looking at euthanasia in the context of social services that are not being supplied. We did a poll a few months ago with the Angus Reid Institutes that showed the fact that Canadian support for euthanasia was for the sort of fictitious euthanasia that does not exist. They had a totally false sense of the rules regarding it, the circumstances.

Most Canadians, when they're polled on euthanasia, think this is a case for extreme sense of suffering with imminent death, when the rules are actually, and the reason

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

Canada is among the leaders, is the rules are much different. And we've seen some of the horror cases, which sadly are not the exceptions. They're the way our system is designed.

The Bible Course: Pausing for a moment here out of the conversation to tell you about The Bible Course. Because whether you're a seasoned Bible reader or you're just starting on your journey, The Bible Course offers a superb overview of the world's best-selling book. This eight-session course will help you grow in your understanding of the Bible.

Using a unique storyline, The Bible Course shows you how key events, books, and characters all fit together. It's great for in-person groups or digital gatherings. It can be used anywhere you like.

Watch the first session for free and review the accompanying course guide. Go to BibleCourse.ca to learn more. That's Bible course . ca. And the link is down in the show notes.

Lorna Dueck: We're recording this shortly after headlines of a small-town incident.

Ray Pennings: My hometown of St. Thomas, Ontario.

Lorna Dueck: Wasn't that two incidents there, but a man assessed in a Tim Hortons parking lot.

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

Ray Pennings: A Tim Hortons that I have taken my parents to, my dad to less than a month before his passing. The very same Tim Hortons. You know, the suffering, it is real.

I'm not going to say for a moment that I can walk with you through, you know, a severe Alzheimer's ward and answer the questions in terms of the purpose of some of the situations that are there. And I want to be empathetic to those, you know, I've experienced with lots of people, those circumstances that don't have easy answers.

I'm not suggesting for a moment there are easy answers, but there are core principles that are there that I think point to a better way of life.

Lorna Dueck: This, you know, and let's keep the severe Alzheimer's wing in view because it is like a thread that gets removed from a critical piece of garment and starts to just mess everything up. When you start to ask caregivers, family members, all of these, what we don't quite understand what we're opening up here.

Language is so important. Like you say, call it what it is. It was a fascinating, troublesome rebranding when we call it medical assistance in dying.

I want to die. You want to die with medical assistance, people helping us through the pain and suffering of our life. But, you know, what we've come to now, let's advance here for finally we saw some breaks applied on this ruling that we're talking about in the week of this recording and that mental illness will not qualify.

As I listened to the debate, I thought, this is a call to being better neighbors, is it not?

Ray Pennings: Absolutely. And while the discussion has narrowed frequently in terms of the legal provisions of the criminal code and under what circumstances is assistance in death a criminal manner and what circumstances it is not. I think it's important for all of us and especially for Christians and a Christian witness to step back.

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

We live in a society where social isolation, where a lack of hope, where loneliness is widespread, where people do not belong to communities, do not have friends. We did a poll a couple of years ago in which I asked, I put on the poll the question, if someone, if you need to call someone for help to either take you to an urgent medical appointment that was unplanned and, you know, there were a bunch of circumstances of that sort, do you know the name of the person who was there? I believe, I'm going from memory now, I believe it was about 23% could not name you, the person they could call this afternoon for an unexpected that was in their community that was local.

You know, so they may have, you know, we have social mobility, people are, you know, people are living in a city disconnected with their extended family. They have a few friends and many of them don't have many or they're all online. So, we don't have that physical body. We don't have those sorts of communities of sharing.

And let's go back to where we started. We started with, you know, you asked me for the Biblical frame. We were created with dignity and worth and we were created as image bearers of a God who is in relationship with each other as three people, and persons, and we are created for relationship.

We are not created to be disconnected with everyone else. We are born into natural families that have a particular type of relationship, the absence of which has consequences. We are created for friends.

We are created with church communities in mind in which there are spiritual relationships. There's also care for each other. None of that has anything to do with government.

None of that has anything to do with our healthcare system. But it is because of the brokenness in so many of those situations and attempting to live our lives without those strengths and those supports that we have a crisis in which we are now asking government to say, why don't you permit us to stand at all? And I'm saying that we're

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

dealing with the symptom of the problem. That is not how we were created to live and we can provide a message of a better hope and a better future.

Lorna Dueck: We certainly can. And it's been such a difficult issue for pastors because compassion runs very close, of course, in all of this. And you take us back to something you said earlier in the podcast about language.

Why, you know, even when we see one of Canada's most beloved authors for children rolling out his euthanasia announcement like a press release and everybody crowding around it, making the national news, and we're going to now watch when this children's author decides to press the button on a dementia diagnosis. Tell us why we should be careful about language and how we call this.

Ray Pennings: I wrote a piece a few weeks ago on using euthanasia as a case study in the evolution of the language. When I was a kid, I don't know what your recollection is, we used to call it mercy killing. Then it went the 1993 Rodriguez decision of the Supreme Court. I may have my numbers slightly out, but I did a control F on that Supreme Court decisions.

And the words assisted suicide, if I remember correctly, were like 246 times or something like that. 20 years later, or 15 years later, no, 20 years later, 1993 to 2015, the Carter decision, the Supreme Court, I believe had 46 references to assisted suicide. And the language had totally changed to; we had turned it from a legal to a medical issue.

And now it became part of the medical vocabulary, except, objectively speaking, it isn't because, you know, there's a violation, there are challenges with the Hippocratic oath, in terms of causing no harm and everything else that is there that are challenged by. So, we have, and in the document, I outline very conscious attempts by organizations, you know, the, you mentioned Robert Munsch, you've got various personalities. Ultimately, social change happens very much by the narrative within which we fit the facts.

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

You know, you and I have both in our career, been using words as the primary tool for communication. And that's important. Words give expression and meaning and all the rest.

At the same time, you know, probably about 10% of our being is cognitive, our, you know, our experience, our relational, there's all sorts of things beyond just language that shape who we are. And we fit language in to make sense of who we are. But those senses come from other parts of our lives.

I would argue, and it's part of one of the reasons, stepping back to where we started with CARDUS, as a Christian think tank, we, as Christians, we have not succeeded in creating the cultural narrative that has a normative understanding. And I'll just use the example I often make is the law of gravity. You know, the law of gravity existed long before Newton discovered it.

It existed as a kid, when I did not understand, it could not explain, but I knew full well that an apple falling on the tree and hit me on the head would hurt. And I knew also that if I jumped out of a second story window, it might seem fine while I was still falling. And I might have even had a wee, this is exciting experience, but it had a bad consequence when I hit the ground.

Why? Because the law of gravity is just part of the nature. It is part of the world in which we are. We have attempted to organize our social life, ignoring all the laws that God has, all the ways that God has created the world.

Lorna Dueck: Including the law, thou shalt not kill.

Ray Pennings: Including, those are those are embedded.

And you don't have to be a Christian, go to societies that were the Gospel of the Bible have not been heard, they still intuitively know something about killing being wrong. It's not the way ahead. Now, there's, you know, different understandings, all the rest, it's complicated.

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

But, you know, the Book of Romans talks in Romans one, the Scriptures teach us a little bit about, you know, that sense of God and that sense of that being created in us. It's who we are. It's the way God made the world, which brings us back to those questions in terms of how to frame it from a Christian understanding.

Who is God? And who are we? And what does it mean to be an image bearer of God?

Lorna Dueck: What a great challenge. What a great challenge. I wanted to talk about it because it's just been such a big part of headlines.

And it's so hard to hear a Christian voice in this narrative, because it just seems like the power of the media wants to take it into, "this is a sweet way to control our future."

And there are some thought people in commentating starting to say, are you sure we're doing the right thing here?

Ray Pennings: It's fascinating. We did an event here for parliamentarians and legal and media people just a couple of weeks ago. We actually had the deputy editor of the Globe and Mail. We had someone from L'actualité in Quebec and a Western independent journalist on a media panel. I don't know these individuals at great lengths in terms of their own belief systems.

My understanding, having read all of them, is that they're all probably actually in favor of MAID in extreme circumstances. But all of them spoke very loudly of how the media had failed to do its job and was complicit in this changing of the narrative of language. And in many ways, not asking the hard questions and not equipping Canadians to ask the hard questions about the implications of what has happened.

I travel globally sometimes. And it's interesting when I'm as a Canadian in a foreign setting for the last few years, almost the first question I get in terms of what's happening in Canada is, what in the world are you guys doing about it? I don't understand. Help me explain.

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

Where does this come from? We've had major features in The Atlantic and The New York Times and The Economist and Global Magazines. This is becoming part of our brand. So, it's not, we have changed the human experience to a particular Canadian expression of it that I think is particularly unhealthy, and frankly isn't as much about euthanasia and dying as it is about a much bigger frame of life within which we understand ourselves.

And everything we just talked about in terms of the other institutions fit in here.

Lorna Dueck: Ray, this has just been a fabulous conversation in challenging us what it means to be followers of Christ, what it means to be good neighbours, what it means to be good lovers of the teachings of our Bibles right till the last difficult days. Thank you for being with us today.

And is there anything else we want to close with?

Ray Pennings: Yeah, let me just close by referencing the text in Peter where it says that when those who would speak evil against you have anything to say about you, let it not be your conduct or anything else. Like we need to be above reproach, but it's our identity in Christ. So, I'm not, it's in God's hands in terms of the effectiveness.

You know, I was very encouraged this week. We don't have a lot of wins on the euthanasia file for the last 10 years. And we had a very significant victory in the political process.

And I celebrate and praise God for that. At the same time, I also recognize that, you know, number one, it requires legislation in the fall and who knows what the details are on that. So that battle is not done.

Let's just understand we won a major battle, but we're still in the midst of that whole discussion. But whether or not we succeed on anything, and I'll go back to the euthanasia thing that we talked at a very personal level. At the end of the day, my hope is not in death, but what lies beyond death.

Scripture Untangled

Season 13: Episode 12 | Ray Pennings | Compassion and End-of-Life Decisions

My hope is not in victory, but what lies beyond that. And in that sense, Christ lives in me, the Holy Spirit dwells in me. And I am to be also a witness in a public life in the way I do that, communicate that, communicate something of the Gospel by my very being.

And I think that's one of the reasons I intentionally seek to be somewhat lighthearted, even on painful and challenging and somber topics. And that is don't take yourself too seriously. I always say to my colleagues, we know who's on the right hand, we know the battle's won.

We know how the story ends. We just don't know the road of getting there. But I have every confidence that the story ends well, and I praise God for giving me the opportunity to be part of it.

Lorna Dueck: Ray Pennings, the co-founder of CARDUS, a treasured Canadian think tank that's now 25 years old. We got show notes below this podcast where people can connect to your website, you can sign up for his letters. Just get engaged in this very unique, needed and treasured work in Canada.

Ray, thank you for joining us on Scripture Untangled.

Ray Pennings: Thank you so much, Lorna.