

the Catalyst

Citizens for Public Justice

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Years of Citizens for Public Justice

The Power We Don't See

By Ronald A. Kuipers

I don't normally think of myself as "an agent of change." The problems we face today are so daunting that I often feel powerless to help bring about the kind of change our world so desperately needs.

I sense I am not alone in struggling with this sense of powerlessness. Yet I think there is something beyond the sheer enormity of the problems we face that provokes this sentiment. We in the West tend to identify power with control, and when things are out of control (as they seem to be right now), we as-

sume we lack any power to make things better. But what if the power we possess is something other than such an 'all or nothing' affair, a capacity we might still exercise even in those situations where we have little or no control?

Hannah Arendt, a twentieth-century German-Jewish political theorist, teaches that humans are never powerless, even in those dark situations where we tend to see only impotence, futility, and impossibility. In her well-known book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, she illustrates this point by com-

paring the stories of two Nazi officers, Peter Bamm and Anton Schmid. While both men were unsympathetic to the Nazi cause and its genocidal aims, each held a completely different understanding of the power they possessed to oppose it. Bamm, an army physician who witnessed the state-sanctioned mass murder of Jews in Sevastopol, argued in his memoirs that any attempt to resist the Nazis' genocidal efforts would have been futile, because the German totalitarian state made certain that anyone who opposed it would disap-

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pear in silent anonymity, rendering all acts of resistance null and void. Unlike Bamm, Schmid used whatever means at his disposal, including procuring false identification papers and securing military vehicles for transportation, to help Jews escape the fatal end the Nazis had planned for them.¹



Anton Schmid was later recognized as Righteous Among the Nations, an honorific used by the State of Israel to describe non-Jews who risked their lives during the Holocaust to save Jews from extermination by the Nazis for altruistic reasons.

Although Schmid ultimately paid for his efforts with his life, we miss Arendt's point about human power if we interpret his action as a type of superhuman heroism. Before his execution for high treason, Schmid wrote to his wife that he "only acted as a human being and desired doing harm to no one."² On his own, Schmid proved to be no match for the fear-

1 Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin, 1994), 230 ff.

2 See "Anton Schmid | Righteous Among the Nations," accessed August 4, 2022, <https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/schmid.html>.

some power of the so-called Third Reich, and certainly he understood his relative weakness in the face of the brutally oppressive Nazi regime. Yet that recognition of relative weakness did not prevent him from noticing and exploiting real opportunities for helping those in his path who came to him in need; he did not equate his weakness with powerlessness.

When the Pharisees asked Jesus when the Kingdom of God would come, Jesus answered them enigmatically, saying, "The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the Kingdom of God is in your midst." (Luke 17:20-21, NRSV) In this passage, I hear Jesus saying that the possibility of participating in God's way of *shalom*, of embracing justice and peace, is always available to us if, like Anton Schmid, we have the imagination to recognize it and the faith to trust it. In this light, Peter Bamm's claim to lack power amounts to relinquishing the power he in fact possessed. It scares me to think how often I do the same thing.

Jesus's preaching about God's kingdom asks us to trust that we will find truly abundant life once we embrace God's call to follow the way of *shalom*. This liberating path will make us alive to the possibilities of healing and transformation all around us, which God has shown us we can make real as soon as we forego the paralyzing assumption that we must be in total control before we can exercise any power.

Perhaps the question we should ask ourselves, then, is not 'what can I possibly change?', but rather, 'What might I become capable of once I trust that change is possible?'

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Becoming Agents of Change: Youth Leading the Charge

By Serisha Iyar

We often see changemakers as those with immense power that can shift societal norms. From politicians to civil society, to activists, we tend to view change through the eyes of social capital. However, more and more youth are being looked to for their leadership and expertise, as we seek to build a better future. And they are succeeding. From climate strikes to defending encampments, they have demonstrated how to draw support for the changes they seek.

Still, there remains resistance to having young people at the forefront of movements and heading up organizations. As we look to follow the lead of the next generation, we must strategize around how to ensure they are valued, supported, and resourced in their efforts. This is especially important for those working within the non-profit sector where youth, particularly those of colour, have a history of being exploited for their labour.

Looking ahead, there are some areas to highlight where altering organizational practices can help champion youth leading the charge.

The importance of challenging and eliminating tokenism is one of them.

Across the sector, the creation of youth advisors and councils in the

name of representation has continued to become popular. Usually, they are unpaid positions aimed at inviting youth to the proverbial table of change-making. Sometimes, this can be a good first step in recruiting new folks, but without decision-making power and agency, these diversity and inclusion measures reap few benefits for anyone. Instead of tokenistic spaces, we need to recognize the labour being used and provide fair and equitable compensation. As well as moving beyond “the checkbox” and towards actively implementing the recommendations youth bring forward.

It is additionally important to recognize who is welcomed into these spaces. Privilege based on race, class, gender, ability, and immigration status often dictates which young people have the opportunity to become changemakers. When looking to learn from or highlight the work youth are doing, we cannot continue to embrace the same few people of stature, while ignoring the rest.

This also means prioritizing accessibility.

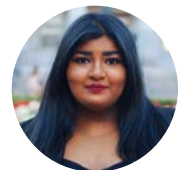
It is essential that everyone feel safe, equipped and able to engage fully. For non-profits, the common rhetoric always revolves around bud-

getary constraints. This then leads to the active exclusion of people who require support services, which are deemed costly. Navigating all barriers to entry should be a core priority for organizations wanting to engage with young changemakers.

A final key consideration for the sector should be how to utilize the status of organizational platforms to amplify the work already being done by youth. This could include promoting work by mobilizing social media audiences, constructing operational methods of funding grassroots movements, or sharing access to tangible resources.

Youth continue to be one of the largest driving forces behind advocating for a better world. And they are doing so in unique ways, from providing intergenerational education to reimagining how our governments and societies could operate. It is time to step back, stop offering guidance, and start learning from tomorrow’s agents of change.

Serisha Iyar serves as the Executive Director of Leading in Colour, an organization dedicated to peer-to-peer knowledge sharing amongst racialized youth.





Becoming Agents of Change: Power, Privilege, and Choice

By Njamba Koffi

I was still living in the refugee camp in Swaziland when, on the night of October 8, 2014, I woke up to high pitched screams and hysterical, distressed cries of three women—two of whom I would soon learn were my teen peers. It was around 4.30 a.m. I seemed to hear sounds of burning. I thought I was dreaming; nightmares are the norm in refugee settings. All sounds seemed too fresh

and too familiar. Then a commotion started with people waking up, shouting and calling for help, others cussing the camp administration. It wasn't a dream, it was a real-life nightmare. A tent owned by a family of 6 had been set ablaze in that early morning. A boy's life was lost and another young girl survived but was burnt beyond recognition. This tragedy had stemmed from ongoing

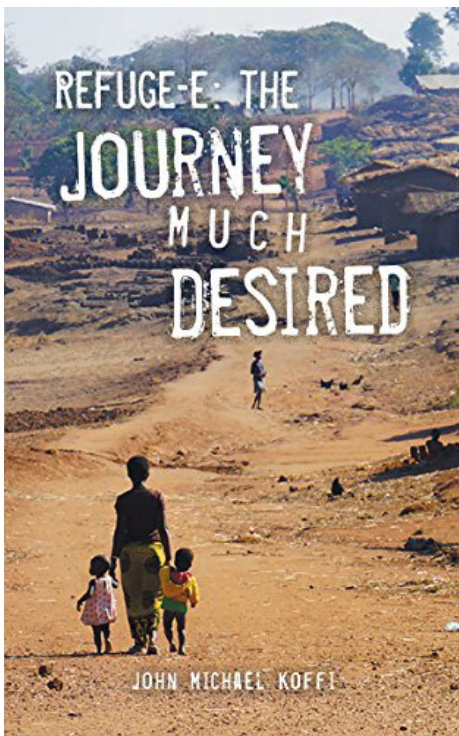
conflicts between different nationalities that lived in the refugee camp. Just 5 years before, my family had gone through a similar trauma—a situation that would be the last blow to send us out of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This happened almost a year and six months after I had founded a youth club in the refugee camp to unite the youth and prevent such

tragedies. It re-enforced my strong desire to do . . . something. Now, I advocate for the rights of refugees, particularly the youth, and the rights of minorities in general. A collection of these tragic experiences inspire me to be an agent of change.

The UNHCR estimates there are almost 90 million forcibly displaced peoples around the world, with more than 27.1 million having been granted refugee status. Each of these individuals has their own stories of trauma and struggles. When we are not fighting for the wellbeing of our families and refugee communities, we are fighting for our survival. Each of us, having picked up a few belongings and lost our homes, is an agent of change.

People in relatively peaceful countries like Canada are born with enormous privileges, and that comes with power. If you are one of them, you have a choice to be kind and to treat humans like humans regardless of whether you know and understand their struggle or not. You can decide to engage in advocacy work



Njamba Koffi is the author of *Refugee: The Journey Much Desired*, an autobiography about his experience growing up as a refugee.



or meaningful community-inspired activism that has the capacity to transform lives: from volunteering in refugee detention centres and immigrant serving organizations to hiring refugee professionals, or even sponsoring refugee youth to study and change the course of their destiny. But even with that kind of power and privilege, the extent of societal and individual desensitization or apathy towards refugees and migrants is appalling. Below is another personal encounter.

I was transiting through South Africa in the summer of 2019, coming from a conference in Victoria, BC, with a stopover at Yale University in the U.S. I had just spent three weeks teaching four courses on the refugee experience to high school students from all over the world during the Yale Young Global Scholars program. At 5 a.m. in the morning, while exiting the O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, a lady nearly refused to give me a transit stamp. I had all the required documents. I needed two weeks in South Africa to visit some friends before heading to Swaziland—which should have been automatic because of bilateral

agreements between the two countries. Except . . . I was a refugee, using a refugee travel document. None of my well documented travel history seemed to matter to her: the Schengen, Canadian, or U.S. visas stared at her as she flipped through the pages of my travel document. When she realized I was well within my rights to travel and she had no choice but to let me go—and possibly that I was holding back the line—she looked at me, disgusted, and said "people like you should never be allowed to travel." She stamped my travel document and gave me 24hrs to be out of the South African soil.

You see, this woman made a choice to express her xenophobia, to mistreat, to hate just because of a label I have been given by my fateful situation. What choices do you make in your day-to-day life and work, especially in contextual encounters with refugees?

Njamba Koffi, 24 years old, is an award-winning community leader, author, poet, public speaker and (amateur) musician. Originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, he has lived and traveled in multiple countries in East and Southern Africa, Western Europe and North America.





Sowing the Seeds of Justice and Joy

By Karri Munn-Venn

In June, 2000, the city of Windsor, Ontario hosted the Organization of American States General Assembly. I had just started my first full-time public policy job and was excited to attend such a high-profile event. Rallies and protests were already familiar spaces to me and I considered them important opportunities to encourage political change. That afternoon in Windsor, though, was the first time I marched in a tailored suit and heels because immediately afterwards, I would be going “inside” to attend the OAS opening ceremony.

At that time, there was an active debate about “inside” and “outside” engagement strategies among civil society. Was protesting “outside” an effective way to raise issues and influence change? Was meeting with officials “inside” indicative of selling-out? Was it possible to do both with integrity?

In the decades since that march through Windsor, I found myself exploring multiple (false) dichotomies: do we offer charity or work for justice? Does personal action matter—or is collective engagement the only way to go? Can “the system” be effectively reformed or does justice require wholesale transformation?

The essence of each of these debates is this: what is the best way to work for social change?

Advocacy and public policy are part of my being and the pursuit of justice is a responsibility I take very seriously. Over the course of my career, I’ve marched in several countries. I’ve met with Cabinet Ministers and Opposition leaders, backbenchers and Parliamentary Secretaries, high profile academics, religious leaders, and activists. I’ve coordinated advocacy campaigns, led workshops, and delivered sermons.

I’ve written hundreds of letters, articles, and discussion guides. And, I’ve made more phone calls than I can count. Political engagement has been my go-to tool in the work of creating positive social change. But it isn’t the only way.

By the time this article is published, I will have left CPJ to farm full-time.

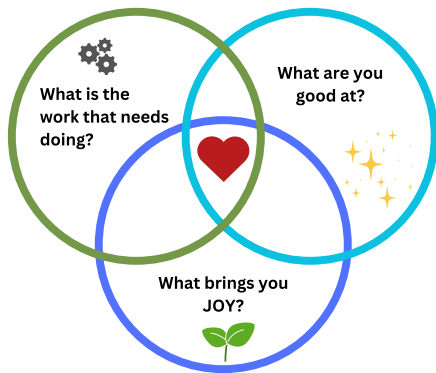
We’ve been on this land for more than two years already: working, learning, building, and growing. Still, the move to full-time farming is a big deal. I’ve been engaged in the work of social, ecological, and climate justice my entire adult life (including the last 14 years at CPJ).

On the surface, going from policy analyst to wool farmer might appear to be a complete 180 degree change. It isn’t. In my climate justice work with CPJ, I’ve often emphasized that “we protect what we love.” And

though I didn't aspire to be a farmer, I have discovered groundedness, connection, and love in this work. Farming has eased my climate anxiety and brought me closer to some of the practical solutions required to address the climate emergency.

Going forward, my day-to-day will look very different. What's beautiful to me though, is that this career change is really about finding new ways to continue the work that I have always done.

Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson (marine biologist, policy expert, and writer) developed a strikingly simple and useful resource that resonates deeply for me: the [Climate Action Venn Diagram](#). (Admittedly, I am quite partial to a good Venn diagram!) What I really like about it is that it moves us away from a linear, predictable, checklist to a more nuanced and personalized approach to climate action. Dr. Johnson asks the question, "How can you – *specifically you* – help address the climate crisis?" She offers three questions (see illustration below) that together lead to your answer.



There is real value in the approach that says:

1. Do this to reduce your emissions;
2. Write to this politician to press for change;
3. Talk to these people to build the movement; and
4. Go to this march to amplify these voices.

It's a path I've travelled for decades and I appreciate its clarity and

direction. What's lacking, however, is a focus on the unique gifts, passions, and abilities that each of us bring. Dr. Johnson's approach emphasizes everyone's individual agency and signals that both personal and collective action matter—as do both personal and collective well-being. She encourages everyone to "get to the heart of your climate Venn for as many minutes of your life as you can!"

Though my personal journey has centred on research and advocacy for better public policy—and I've



Karri's flock of sheep on her Leystone Farms.

found tremendous satisfaction in this work—it has also included making, mending, upcycling; sourcing natural and recycled fibres for my knitting; as well as reducing energy consumption and waste. Now, it also includes growing my own food and yarn, practicing integrated crop-livestock management, and creating useful products from waste (ask me about our wool pellets!).

Farming is definitely hard work, and we've experienced some heart-breaking losses. Still, there is something about being outside, in nature, connected with the source of my food and my craft, that for me is incredibly moving. The depth of joy I have found in farming is awesome. In other words, practicing regenerative agriculture most definitely sits at the centre of my "Climate Venn."

Being an agent of change is about taking action that makes a lasting difference. For me, it is also about sharing the lessons we're learning from the plants, the animals, and the very land that sustains us. It is an ongoing journey of reflection, exploration, and engagement focused on the nurture of self, soul, family, community, and creation.

I know that growing spectacular pumpkins, raising healthy chickens that lay colourful eggs, and converting waste wool into organic fertilizer won't in-and-of-itself solve

the climate crisis. But I also know that modelling a life of relative simplicity and a mindset of abundance will make a difference. I know that practicing small-scale regenerative agriculture and sharing the ways in which our farming decisions can inform climate-friendly agriculture policy also helps.

Truth be told, I'll always be an advocate, I might just go about it a little differently than I did before.

Karri Munn-Venn joined CPJ as the socio-economic policy analyst in 2008. She moved to the climate justice portfolio in 2012 and served as senior policy analyst from 2015 until August 2022. Karri lives, plays, and farms at Fermes Leystone Farms on the unceded traditional territory of the Anishinabewaki and Omamiwinniwag (Algonquin) Peoples in rural west Québec.





Finding Your Inner Activist: Debunking Three Myths about Being an Activist

By Aliénor Rougeot

In the face of the climate crisis and growing inequities, all hands are needed on deck to place justice at the top of the agenda. Polls repeatedly show that concern for inequities and climate catastrophe is on the rise.¹ Meanwhile, opportunities to

¹ Coletto, David. "What Do Canadians Think about Climate Change and Climate Action?" *Abacus Data*. Accessed December 1, 2022. <https://abacusdata.ca/climate-change-cop26-canada/>.

make a life out of activism are more numerous and more accessible than ever before. Why is it the case, then, that throughout the years and across causes, it's always the same small group of folks permanently "on deck" for social and climate justice, while most are content with cheering on the sidelines?

Over the last four years, I have worked to bring young people from the sidelines of climate action onto the playing field. I have learned that

a handful of myths about "activism" are holding back many otherwise motivated and well-resourced individuals. Dispelling these myths is necessary if we want to have sufficient collective momentum to address the colossal challenges ahead of us.

Myth 1: Unless you are a well-spoken, charismatic leader, you won't make an impact.

Truth: You already have the personality and skill set to be an activist.

Activism is not about holding a megaphone, making memorable speeches, or leading crowds, but about leveraging whatever power you have to tip the scale in favour of a cause. Movements run on a diversity of skill sets and personalities, and only a fraction of activists choose to do public speaking and chant-leading. In the youth climate movement, we rely on detail-oriented folks to think through logistics and safety of action, on good communicators to come up with messaging and outreach strategies, on creative minds to bring visuals and a compelling aesthetic to our work, and on caretakers and connectors to ensure relationship building and conflict mediation are not put on the back burner. With every new person who joins the group, we discover a new need. Your first step into activism is to offer your areas of expertise and skills to a few groups whose work you would like to contribute to, and you'll be surprised by how quickly you'll get a full to-do list in response!

Myth 2: You cannot be an activist if you are not a subject-matter expert.

Truth: You'll make a much greater impact by starting now and learning as you go.

I first learnt about climate change in high school. Should I have waited until 2024, enough time for me to graduate and complete a bachelor's and a master's degree in climate before doing any form of activism?

No one expects the folks from accounting and sales at AirCanada to know how to actually fly a plane. Similarly, in our organizing groups, not everyone is a climate science expert or has the lived experience to come up with poverty-reduction strate-

gies. Our movements take guidance from people with lived and learned experience when it comes to writing demands, yet most of the group knows only enough to care about the issue and to explain it at a high level.

It is necessary for activists to commit to lifelong learning on their subject matter, but it is not the case that you need to master all the causes, consequences, and solutions of an issue in order to start advocating for the issue to be addressed.



Aliénor leading the September 23rd 2022 youth climate strike in Toronto, where several thousands of students, youth and their adult allies took the streets to demand climate justice. Photo by Joshua Best.

Myth 3: You need a baseline level of power, fame, or money to start, otherwise it's a waste of time.

Truth: Starting where you are is the most strategic place for you to start.

The rise of "celebrity-activists" has ironically left many people hesitating to join the movement, because it reinforces the myth that an activist is someone with a large following and access to the top decision-makers.

Research shows someone is most likely to change their mind if the information comes from someone they already trust, or to whom they can relate.² I have witnessed parents go

² Kramer, R. M. (2014, August 1). *Rethinking trust*. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved December 1, 2022, from <https://hbr.org/2009/06/rethinking-trust>

from total indifference to active support for climate action in a matter of months after their child joined our group. Entire workplaces have mobilized around issues after hearing about them from one or two of their coworkers. Not only is it possible for you to lead your community into a protest, a fundraiser or a transformation, it is very likely impossible for someone outside your community to do so. You can helicopter in a famous activist from abroad who

might impress and seduce for a day, but lasting change comes when those within communities are empowered to roll up their sleeves.

The best place for you to start being an activist is in your existing communities, whether it be your faith-based group, workplace, friend group, or dinner table. Do not underestimate the power of your relationships, knowledge, and experiences, they are all you need to become a successful agent of change.

Aliénor (Allie) Rougeot is a Toronto-based climate justice activist. She is a climate and energy Program Manager at Environmental Defence Canada, where she advocates for a just transition for workers and communities and for the safe reclamation of the oil sands region. Prior to this, she was a leading figure of the student climate strike movement in Canada. She was featured in *The Starfish's* 25 under 25 Environmentalists, and by *Corporate Knights* in their 30 Under 30 Sustainability Leaders. Photo Courtesy of Environmental Defence Canada.





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The Way Through the Climate Crisis

By Liam Maclure

Collectively, we have lost our way. Across the world, greenhouse gas emissions are rising to levels that threaten other species, biodiversity, and ourselves. We have failed to understand how polluting industries and constant economic growth cannot coexist with sustainable living if profit and materialism remain the focus. We have failed to acknowledge how low-income countries will suffer in extreme and overwhelming ways if the prosperous and democratic West cannot pave the way for everyone to find a livable future.

And perhaps most pertinently, we have lost faith in a way forward together beyond our own individual lives. Faith in God, or what other traditions call inter-being or collective purpose, has been lost in the global move towards individualism that pervades many aspects of Western life. But individualism is a toxic epidemic that sears through society and isolates people from each other. With our individualistic outlook on life, people all over Canada are feeling overwhelmed, imagining they are personally responsible for systemic problems.

The way forward involves us seeing beyond ourselves and organizing our local communities. We must take responsibility for the actions we have taken, and we must also work

to support others in our communities to do the same. Rather than relying solely on governments or corporations for change, we need to first become agents of change in our local communities.

Moving forward, Canadians should prioritize the development of an appreciative, respectful and compassionate relationship with the world. Eating less meat that is produced unsustainably, and using public transportation when possible are two meaningful steps we all can take to develop a better relationship with the natural environment.

At the same time, we must avoid feeling like we are solely responsible for the entire climate crisis. Anxiety and guilt for a systemic problem breeds inaction and hopelessness. The way forward is one created through action in communities and hope through collective change.

It is worth noting the difference between organizing and mobilizing in this context. Frequently, grassroots organizations seek to mobilize people around a particular issue, like community clean-ups or voting for a greener political party. While these initiatives result in great participation in an event and can work towards a particular policy goal, they often fail to compel people to look at their own lives after the event and

seek ways to live a better, more faithful, and environmentally sustainable life.

Organizing is fundamentally about supporting and empowering communities to identify ways to make change. To stave off the climate crisis, we need to let go of our preconceived notions about the right way for others to become politically active, or the “necessary” changes they need to make in their lives. Instead, we need to get to know our community members; we need to understand what issues matter to them, and how we can move them from caring about an issue to understanding how to leverage our collective power to bring about lasting change.

Organizing, unlike mobilizing, builds power from the bottom-up and creates momentum that can transform communities from passive recipients of services or programs to active agents of change. That process of transformation can help us address the climate crisis and also reduce social isolation through building stronger communities.

Liam Maclure is a community organizer in British Columbia who has worked for different grassroots organizing nonprofits, like Greater Victoria Acting Together and Metro Vancouver Alliance.



“It has been told to me that Bravery exists only in relation to fear; an act is not a brave one unless you are afraid.”

- Dr. Ruth Green (Kanién'kehá:ka)

By Steve Heinrichs

Before European contact in 1835, the population of the Haida Nation was upwards of 9000 strong. Fifty years later, disease brought by foreign merchants decimated the people, and there were less than 1500.

Let that sink in.

Over 80% of your community... gone. It's an apocalypse. And yet the Haida's experience, unbelievably, was far from unique amongst the nations of Turtle Island.

How did the surviving Haida live on? How were they able to keep on keeping on “post” apocalypse?

Today, Indigenous land defenders and climate scientists warn of another apocalypse—the breaking of planetary boundaries through global heating. We all know the terrifying facts, so I won't repeat the numbers, losses, and causes. Instead, consider an appeal to the heart from climate scientist Sir David King.

“I have a grandchild who is 2 years old, and she will live to the end of the century. Will she be able to look at her children, if she has children, and say that they will be able to live to the next century?

No. Not at the moment.”

Let that sink in.

We are facing ecological collapse. It's an apocalypse that threatens the possibility of human civilization.

When humanity's house is being set ablaze by merchants of death, how do we live, move and have our being?

Here's one response.

We need bravery. But not just any bravery. *Bravery amidst fear.*

In Mark's gospel we find Christ mobilizing his friends, amidst mobilizing fear, into paths of radical change (4:35-41). Here's the scene:

Having spent the day with the

masses, Jesus wants to take his organizers to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. That's Gentile territory, and not a place that these Jewish boys desire to go. But Jesus gets them in the boat, and as soon as they embark on their voyage a storm kicks up. And it's fierce.

Now ancient sea-storms, as we know from the Hebrew tradition (think Jonah and Job), are like today's rising seas. There's a surplus of meaning at work. Just as super-charged hurricanes proclaim the violence of extractivism (for those with eyes to see), the ancient storm communicates the disciples' fears toward “the Other” on the other side of that lake.

Moreover, since the storm symbolizes the natural order, “everyone knows” that coming together of Jews and Gentiles is not only difficult, but impossible.

But not Jesus.

Though all around him declare, “inconceivable,” “too dangerous,” and “not worth the risk,” he summons bravery and organizes his comrades to face their fears. Head on.

And miraculously, they make it.

[Jesus] rebuked the wind and... the wind ceased (v. 39).

The disciples thought they were going to die, and for good reason. The storm was real. The ship “was nearly swamped” (v. 37). But together, in and through the One who refused defeatism, they get through the climate crisis, to then arrive— like so many climate refugees— in a foreign land.

Reading this word in our world, what do you hear and see?

I hear a call to enter the biggest struggle of our time, with intention, even though it scares the living heck



out of us and we think that “salvation” is impossible.

My eyes see Indigenous and vulnerable frontline communities out there on the lake, in the midst of chaotic waters, courageously fighting climate injustice and the powers of capital at cost.

But where's the church?

Are we in one of those boats, trying to silence the storms? Or are we playing it safe back on the shore? Maybe we're cheering on those who are running the risks? Maybe we're even crafting an e-petition and book study group on the issues? Maybe we want to be on the waters and in the fight, but fear holds us back. Maybe we think, “I cannot do this!”

We're often told, “Do not be afraid.” *But how can one not be afraid as we live in this pre-apocalyptic moment?* As Dr. Ruth Green and the Anishinaabe “Way of Life Teachings” remind, bravery is not found in the absence of fear. But in the midst of fear itself.

Today, the Haida population is more than 4500.

Let that sink in.

The fearful storms of settler colonialism “nearly swamped” their canoe. Yet the Haida organized (check out Davies' *The Haida Gwaii Lesson*), and through persistent bravery, made their way to the Other Side.

Steve Heinrichs is a white settler Christian in Treaty 1 Territory who loves to partner with faith communities in the shared paths of decolonization and decarbonization.

