




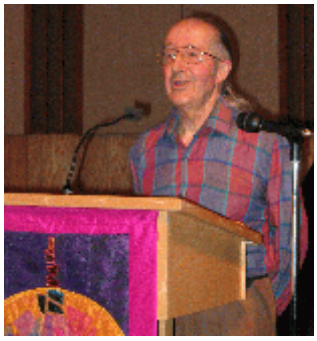

# 40

*years of*
life
faith
policy
politics
**public justice**

Halifax Ottawa Toronto London Winnipeg Edmonton Calgary Vancouver

## Introduction

During 2003 and 2004 Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre celebrated their 40th Anniversary in Halifax, Ottawa, Toronto, London, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver.

At each event we celebrated our blessings through a retrospective multi-media presentation, liturgy and singing, and by being in fellowship with one another. The highlight of the events were the addresses from a diverse and thoughtful group of speakers.

This booklet is a compilation of those speeches. Although a quick glance through the *Contents* attests to their variety, what they have in common is the experience, wisdom, insight, and passion that each speaker brought in challenging CPJ and PJRC to continue and expand their vision of public justice in Canada. I hope they inspire you as much as they did the audiences.

These talks would not have been printed if it was not for some additional efforts by two individuals who deserve mentioning – Nella Scali for her hard work and cheerfulness in transcribing the speeches from hand-written notes or tape, and John Bird, of *Skiff of Snow Productions,* for his excellent editing.

I had the privilege of coordinating these celebrations. My task was made immensely easy by all those who helped make each event such a great success. A few words of thanks to them all.

To the excellent speakers who took the time to challenge and celebrate with us.

To the faithful and dedicated local volunteers and organizers:

| | |
|---|---|
| Halifax | Steve Martin, Dale Poel, Elna Siebring, and David Vroege (music); |
| Ottawa | Lisa Chisholm-Smith, Dani Shaw, and, Louise Slobodian; |
| Toronto | Tim Abraham (guitar), Hiram Joseph (voice solo), Linda Peterson, Doug Romanow (music), Nella Scali, and Becca Siggner; |
| London | Anton Brink, Cal Davies, Willie Hiemstra, and Art & Eda Tiesma; |
| Winnipeg | Jennifer DeGroot, Rick Zerbe Cornelson (guitar), Eta & Henk Meinders, Dale Missyabit, Aiden & Karen Schlichting Enns, Jeanet Sybenga, and Esther Epp-Tiessen; |

| | |
|---|---|
| Edmonton | Anna Beukes, Robert Brink, John Hiemstra, Jim Choles, Jim Joosse, and Janet Wesselius; |
| Calgary | Wendell Koning; and, |
| Vancouver | Wally Braul, Karen Peters, Doris Robertson (piano), Peter Rolston, Gordon & Donna Stewart, and Linda Wiens (sound). |

To my colleagues at CPJ and PJRC for the support they gave to make these events happen, and especially to Louise Slobodian for her good advice and work on design and look and media promotions.

Finally, to all our faithful supporters and friends who have sustained CPJ and PJRC over the past 40 years. As Harry Kits said repeatedly in each location where we celebrated, "We thank God for the blessing of all of you – a loyal supporting community. Thank you for celebrating with us tonight. We continue to feel blessed by God who has sustained these organizations in good times and bad, and has given them an opportunity to be a blessing in Canadian society. We rely on your continued prayers, participation, challenges, and financial support as we go forward, past and future together."

This collection is dedicated to you.

Bruce Voogd
Financial Development/Membership Coordinator

December 2004

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# Silence is Not Always Golden

*A speech on the 40th Anniversary of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre, Halifax, Saturday, March 6, 2004*

by Mayann Francis, Director & CEO, Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Our bartered, busy lives burn dim,
too tired to care, too numb to feel.
Come, shine upon our shadowed world:
your radiance bathes with power to heal.
(Hymn, *O Radiant Christ*)

Good evening everyone. I want to thank Dr. Steve Martin for inviting me to address you this evening on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ). I have spent some time in the last few weeks learning more about the legacy of this incredible organization. If I could think of a tag line for your 40th anniversary, I think it would be "faith in action." Like the words of the hymn I opened with, you are inviting the spirit of your Christian faith to shed its light into the world.

That is not always so easy in a world which has become more and more diversified and where the need to create space for differing points of view is sometimes believed to conflict with cherished values of religious belief. I want to convey the message this evening that I believe your faith can transcend that perceived conflict. I believe Christian faith requires us to be active participants in the dialogue of human rights and inclusion which takes place every day. In a twist to the words of the Frankie Valli song: silence is not always golden, because our eyes still see.

True Christian faith lies in rededicating ourselves to our core set of values and abandoning our attachment to secular vices. Greed, envy, hate, gossip, deception, prejudice, homophobia, racism, discrimination and sexism are all diseases of the world. These are viruses which keep our communities sick. Peace, grace, and love are gifts from our Lord Jesus Christ. These gifts can help to keep our communities strong and vibrant. If we truly believe in God's message, we must ask ourselves how then can such division exist among us? Like CPJ, we must then decide how we can seek to heal that division.

My deep faith and belief in the power of Christ's message give me the strength to face the challenges of promoting harmony, respect and inclusion as the CEO of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. And it prompts me to remind you that human rights are everyone's business. Promoting respect for the value of human rights starts with each of us as individuals. I believe that as individuals we can be powerful. A simple act of kindness such as helping to feed the homeless or contributing to the alleviation of poverty locally can be important steps in promoting the dignity of each person and their human rights.

As an organization, CPJ has the capacity to organize people at the local and national level in ways that magnify individual voices so they can be heard on a broader scale. You can impact the debate on immigration issues, the struggle to counter discrimination and the challenge of poverty. I have been learning more about the work of CPJ and already see that nationally you have been engaging politicians and other decision-makers to consider the human element of public policy making. As your mandate suggests, you affirm that everyone is responsible for the common good. Respect for human rights is part of that common good.

The first place this kind of civic action begins is ensuring that you cast your vote. Our democratic process should be a primary vehicle for influencing public debate and decision-making. Never rob yourself of that tool by passing up the chance to cast your vote. It is one way that, as a group, you can move public opinion and support the values of community and respect for human rights.

By voting, you are also setting an example of participation for succeeding generations to follow. As an organization, you should be thinking about ways to encourage youth to become active in the political life of our community, province and country. In the fall of this year, municipal elections will be held across Nova Scotia, providing a plum opportunity to have your issues considered as part of the political debate. Municipal politicians make decisions which can have a dramatic impact on the inclusiveness and respectfulness of our communities on a day-to-day basis. You cannot afford to miss this chance to influence that electoral process.

Encouraging youth to participate in civic life helps to ensure the longer term health of our democratic system of government. As always, how that message is delivered is a determinant of how well it will be accepted by the target audience. Seek to involve youth in your organization and enlist their help in reaching their peers. Not only will you help to renew our democracy, you will also renew CPJ.

There are so many issues and challenges facing our communities, our province, our country and our world that it can sometimes be overwhelming to envision how we can have an impact and pave the way for positive change. But there are some basic strategies you can employ to be better prepared to play a part both as individuals and as members of the Halifax chapter of CPJ.

As the popular expression says, knowledge is power. The more information you have about an issue the better equipped you will be to take action. So educate yourselves. Invite more guest speakers to address you on issues of concern to the local community. Then take that knowledge and plug into the debates of City Council and the provincial legislature. Invite counselors, MLAs and Members of Parliament to talk and dialogue with you. And do not be afraid to aim high. The mayor, the premier, these elected officials also need to hear your thoughts about emerging issues. Go as far as to organize debates on crucial issues that can bring public spotlight and enhanced dialogue.

Volunteerism is another vital outlet for addressing the challenges we face as a society. Many

community organizations depend on the time and talents of local citizens to run their programs and deliver their services. The act of volunteering also expands your networks of support and helps you to build coalitions around issues of concern to CPJ. In the process of doing that, you will be increasing the capacity of our community to stand on its own feet.

As I mentioned before, our youth need the benefit of your help and concern also. How often have we heard the phrase, "Youth are the future"? When we hear that, do we spend time reflecting how we might be able to help them prepare to play their role in that future as constructive citizens? Become active in your local schools and learn more about the challenges youth are facing in their lives. Violence in our schools has been featured prominently in the headlines. The suicide of Emmett Fralick several years ago focused attention on the issue of bullying. Recently, Sir John A. MacDonald High School has been dealing with the aftermath of a stabbing involving two of its students. How is CPJ coming to grips with this critical issue? How can you work with schools and young people to promote the values of peace and non-violent conflict resolution?

The benefits of this type of engagement will run two ways. You will help to strengthen the ethic of education and civic responsibility in a new generation and you may gain new perspectives on your own faith as you interact with young people. In my home town of Sydney, Cape Breton, Dr. Jack Yazer has lead a program called "Youth Against Racism" for many years which exposes young people to dynamic speakers and debates. Perhaps that could be an outlet for the Halifax chapter of CPJ.

It is wise to promote achievements, not just challenges. Profile the good works that are happening in our local community. Encourage people to become involved in active and successful organizations which promote the values of harmony, inclusion and respect.

Seek to partner with diverse faith communities. One of the initiatives the Commission has pioneered in the last several years has been an annual "Day of Reflection" in November. Each year we focus on a theme related to building strong communities and invite faith leaders from all the various spiritual traditions, both Christian and non-Christian, to come together at Province House and offer their thoughts on our theme. The event has become an important part of the Commission's work and seems to have addressed a thirst for dialogue between the diverse traditions in Nova Scotia. That dialogue should continue year round, and CPJ can help to make that happen.

As I noted earlier, the intersection of faith and public life is not always easy or comfortable. Our pluralistic society can often be a challenge to our personal beliefs. Some might say that the broad mandate of human rights legislation encourages a clash to take place. I believe it is a challenge we all must face. The call of scripture to "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body" (Col.3:15), enjoins us to build a human community that is rooted in unity, not disunity. In acceptance, not fear. In love, not hate. Whenever we believe our values to be in conflict with the need to be open and accepting of different points of view, we must answer the call to love and compassion. True Christians must never be the agents of exclusion. The power of Christ's love must be our constant guide.

I hope I have challenged you to re-examine your relationship to your faith and your community. The values promoted by CPJ are compatible with encouraging respect for human rights:
-analyzing public policy and offering alternatives rooted in the Biblical call for love, justice and stewardship;
-examining issues ignored by our society and affirming life, building community and standing with the poor and marginalized; and
-working with coalitions and other groups to bring your faith perspective to the public debate.

These values will help ensure that CPJ remains a strong voice for change in our society. As I have suggested to you, increasing your involvement with youth, becoming even more active in the political process and reaching out to new partners in the local community will help to strengthen your commitment to these values.

The key is for your organization to continue to find the channels that will ensure your voices are being heard and actually affecting decision-making and debate in this community.

In this turbulent world where the threat of war, hatred, fear, poverty and violence mark our daily lives, it is my wish that when you return to your home, work, family or friends, that you be ready to embrace the message of healing, harmony and faith. Silence is not always golden, because our eyes still see. How can any of us remain silent when the world cries out for healing? Remember our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who faced the fear and frailty of human existence to open eternal life to us all. May He be your guide and inspiration as you face your fears and build reconciliation in our world.

## Mayann Francis

Mayann has been the Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission since August 1999. In mid-December 2000, she was appointed interim Ombudsman for the Province of Nova Scotia. Prior to taking on these roles, she served as an Assistant Deputy Minister at the Ontario Women's Directorate and for the Ontario Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs.

As a senior official in the public service, Mayann takes a leadership role in helping to develop policies. Her professional work does not exclude her interest and commitment to communities.

She is past a member of the national board for the United Way/Centraide Canada, the Mascoll Foundation and other community initiatives both in Canada and abroad. In September 2002, she was appointed to the General Council of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

In 2000, she received a Harry Jerome Award recognizing her excellence in management and leadership in a professional role. The Harry Jerome awards, presented annually in four youth and three adult categories, honour excellence and achievement among African Canadians in memory of world-class track and field athlete Harry Jerome.

In June 2001 she received an award from the Multicultural Education Council of Nova Scotia, for exemplary contribution and commitment to improvements in the area of race relations.

Ms. Francis holds a Masters in Public Administration from New York University, a certificate in Equal Opportunities Studies from Cornell University and a Bachelor of Arts from Saint Mary's University. She is a native of Sydney's Whitney Pier, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.


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PJRC, founded in 1963, is a research and education organization that responds to God's call for love, justice, and stewardship in the understanding and discussion of core values and faith perspectives in Canadian public policy debates. It works closely with its sister organization, Citizens for Public Justice.

**CITIZENS *for* PUBLIC JUSTICE**

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CPJ is a national, non-partisan organization that promotes justice in Canadian public affairs. CPJ responds to God's call for love, justice, and stewardship through research, education and advocacy. CPJ works closely with its sister organization, the Public Justice Resource Centre.

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# Public Justice in a Time of (In)Security

*A speech on the 40th Anniversary of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre, Ottawa, Wednesday, March 24, 2004*

by Alex Neve, Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada

40 years of Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ). 42 years of Amnesty International (AI). Guess what? Seems we all cottoned on to something pretty fundamental around the same time. And that was: that we are all responsible for the state of rights, freedom and justice on this planet. All of us.

I know from my own opportunities to collaborate with and observe the work of CPJ that AI's four decades of human-rights work and CPJ's four decades of public justice work share similar objectives. Our voices, our power, can and will overcome injustice, and deliver a world in which the glorious promise of documents like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are reality and not rhetoric and aspiration, for all people, at all times.

I have been asked to talk to you this evening about public justice in a time of insecurity. And there is certainly much to reflect upon. The public-justice issues, the human-rights challenges that we face in what has been described as the new era of "global security" are vast.

It has been said many times since September 11, 2001 – that nothing is the same, the world has changed. It has been said so many times that it is almost starting to lose meaning and significance; it's sounding more and more like rhetoric. Of course, for the vast majority of people in the world nothing has changed since 9/11. They already lived lives full of violence and fear.

But obviously there has been a crucial political change since September 11 – as now the rest of the world has woken up to the reality of insecurity.

What I want to highlight, is that much of the change is about human rights, even though we don't hear a lot about human rights in our post-September 11 world. We hear much about terrorism and about security, about war and its aftermath in Iraq and Afghanistan, conflict in the Middle East, bombings in Spain, Turkey, Indonesia, Morocco. We don't hear much about human rights. But we need to.

What happened in the United States on September 11 was all about human rights, and everything since has been as well. We need to bring basic, universal human rights principles firmly into the centre of debate, into the events shaping how we will live our own lives, how we will treat neighbours and strangers in our midst, and how we will understand and engage with the world. If we give up or waver in our commitment to fundamental human rights – globally defined, globally applied and globally enjoyed – we will have caved in to

terror, given up on justice and ultimately agreed to a world divided, unequal and full of violence.

Let me share with you two simple, but also quite important observations about what is happening to human rights in the midst of the war on terrorism. One, a daunting challenge. The other, perhaps, a profound opportunity. The first arises from fear. The second through awareness.

Fear has encouraged people to give up on human rights. All that matters now is safety and security. Make me feel secure again. And if that means taking away some of my rights – or the rights of my Arab-Canadian neighbours – that's too bad. It's a price worth paying. If it means war in Afghanistan, Iraq, or anywhere else – war in which there may even be civilian casualties – that's too bad. It's a price worth paying to feel safe again.

We've all felt a twinge of this, sensed it among family, friends, classmates, coworkers. Nothing undermines human rights more than when people give up, give in or give over their own precious rights and freedoms. So the challenge is to bring home the message that now is the time to embrace human rights as never before.

Which brings me to the opportunity I have sensed in these past months. For I also hear, all around me, people asking questions about their world. Knowing and feeling like never before that there is much about their world that is broken and in need of repair. And knowing and feeling like never before that it is about them – not just about faraway wars and faraway grievances in faraway lands. It is both global and local, both faraway and deeply personal.

In that awareness I hear people's determination to understand their world in new ways and to find different ways to engage with it. This is a potentially unmatched opportunity to encourage a true global culture of human rights and a global commitment to human rights.

Let me now look at two big and pressing human-rights issues that have emerged over the past eight months. I'm going to approach them as lessons that we simply cannot fail to learn in the days, months and years ahead, lessons that have been sadly neglected to date. The first I call the lesson of justice. The second the lesson of tolerance and respect.

**Justice**

What happened on September 11, was unquestionably and quite dramatically a serious abuse of the most precious human right of all – the right to life. AI has named it as such and condemned it as such. In fact, we have said it is an abuse of the gravest nature – a crime against humanity.

We have also stressed, however, that the response to any human rights abuse must be justice. Those responsible must be found, charged and brought to justice – in fair proceedings, which do not include the possible imposition of the death penalty. Justice – not revenge, not further abuses, not inaction or silence.

It seems a simple message and a fairly obvious lesson, but it's one to which the world is only now awakening. For unless those who plan, orchestrate or carry out grave human-rights abuses are brought to account, it is inevitable that there will be further abuses. If there is no price to pay, but rather possible rewards of power and wealth – why not kill, torture and terrorize?

Sadly, for years, indeed centuries, justice has not been the response. Rarely have efforts been made, nationally and internationally, to make sure that torturers, architects of genocide, even terrorists, have been brought into a court room, with an eye to having the truth come out and a just penalty imposed. Instead we turn a blind eye while suspected terrorists are tortured and assassinated, or as former soldiers accused of human rights violations are deported to a country where they walk away free.

Justice is a message that we have pressed throughout four decades of human-rights work. Justice is clearly a message at the very heart of what CPJ stands for. But only recently can we begin to see that world leaders are beginning to learn the lesson.

We see it in the Pinochet case. Remember that sparkling, justice-filled moment a few years back when Britain's top court, the House of Lords, ruled that all states have a responsibility to bring all torturers to justice, not only in cases where the torture may have taken place in that country.

We see it in two international courts that are up and running, bringing to justice the masterminds behind atrocities in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. And recently, a third, hybrid national/international court has been set up for Sierra Leone.

Most wonderfully we now see it in the recent birth of a permanent International Criminal Court (ICC). The court should be hearing its first cases later this year – likely beginning with the human rights catastrophe that has all but destroyed the Democratic Republic of Congo. The ICC's birth has been a remarkable, truly ground-breaking achievement, in which Canadian involvement – governmental and non-governmental – has been key.

Sadly, our southern neighbours, who speak passionately about a shared global responsibility for justice in the face of terrorism, continue vehemently to resist the creation of the ICC. This poses a significant challenge for us now to ensure that ultimately the ICC is a strong and effective institution, and the new era of international justice truly becomes global in its scope and reach.

The September 11 crisis is a vital example of where the response must be justice. We all waited with baited breath, fearful that the U.S. would rush to angry vengeance – that we would wake up on September 12, 13 or 14 to news of carpet-bombing of Afghanistan, Iraq or Sudan. We urged restraint, called on governments to creatively and determinedly pursue all possible legal, diplomatic and political options before resorting to military means of achieving justice.

Within a month, of course, the military strikes began in Afghanistan, which several months

later tapered off and entered a mop-up stage. Has there been justice? The stated central goal of apprehending Osama bin Laden still eludes. We hear that many of those detained at Guantanamo Bay are members of al-Qaeda, but with little information, and fundamentally flawed and unjust legal processes being applied, it is impossible to have confidence in those assertions.

Clearly the Taliban – who imposed seven years of harsh, repressive rule upon the people and especially the women of Afghanistan – have fallen. Undeniably there is a sense of justice in that. But addressing seven years of human-rights violations in Afghanistan was never the stated military objective. And more than two years after bombs first fell in Kabul, insecurity still reigns, women outside of Kabul have certainly not experienced emancipation, and human rights abuses are commonplace countrywide.

Then there was Iraq. We gather tonight just one year after that war began. A war that was fought in many different names: fought to find weapons of mass destruction, fought to counter terrorism, fought to restore justice and freedom to Iraqis. AI released a report last week to mark that anniversary. What we said is that one year later:

- Most Iraqis still feel unsafe in a country ravaged by violence.
- Every day, Iraqis face threats to their lives and security.
- Ten thousand Iraqi civilians have been killed during the past 12 months.
- Violence is endemic, whether in the form of attacks by armed groups, abuses by the occupying forces, or violence against women.
- Millions of people have suffered the consequences of destroyed or looted infrastructure, mass unemployment and uncertainty about the future.
- There is little or no confidence that those responsible for past or present human rights abuses will be brought to justice.

So yes, there has been much talk of justice since September 11. But will it be more than just talk?

One notable development is that the events of September 11 led to law-reform initiatives around the world. Laws have been put in place to facilitate bringing suspected terrorists to justice. These efforts, though, have been broad anti-terrorism legislation that puts basic rights at risk in a march to security and justice.

Here in Canada, that played out most clearly during the fall of 2001 as the government moved rapidly to adopt Bill C36, the Anti-Terrorism Act. I will return to this law again when we look at the lesson of tolerance and respect. But it is important here when we consider the lesson of justice as well.

On its face at least the new law is justice-based, focused on bringing alleged terrorists to justice and on denying them the financial support that makes terrorism possible. Past Canadian practice when faced with individuals here who may have committed human rights abuses abroad (including terrorism), has been deportation. Get rid of them, no matter what might happen (for instance torture), or what might not happen (for instance no investigations and no judicial proceedings to look into allegations).

New laws making use of the justice system to deal with terrorism are a good thing. But as I'll point out in a moment, we need to bring resources and political will to bear here, for a consistent commitment to justice for any suspected human rights abusers in Canada, be they alleged supporters of al-Qaeda or possible members of a government-run death squad.

What about the approach to justice in the new law? The commitment, after all, must be to deliver justice that is fair, impartial and upholds and safeguards basic rights. There are concerns here, including about provisions for preventative arrest and investigatory hearings that could infringe against the right not to incriminate one's self.

But little worry, the law is not being used. Instead we have a growing number of cases: Maher Arar, Muayyed Nureddin, Ahmad El-Maati, Abdulla Al-Malki, Helmy Elsherife, where very troubling questions have arisen as to whether Canadian practice has become not to turn to Canadian law, but instead to give a nod and a wink to foreign security services – for example, Syria and Egypt – and stand by while they proceed with arbitrary detention and torture. Fortunately, this issue will soon get close scrutiny through the judicial inquiry that has been called into the case of Maher Arar.

That is what Canadian citizens may face. But with non-citizens justice is not the response either. Rather, the notorious Security Certificate process under the Immigration Act is being used increasingly, with individuals being locked up indefinitely, subjected to legal proceedings where they are not allowed to see the evidence against them or question the witnesses who are the source of that evidence. Deportation may very well mean torture or death at the other end.

Looking beyond Canada, other national initiatives also seriously jeopardize basic rights. Let me stay close to home here and highlight some concerns regarding the United States.

In the U.S., Guantanamo Bay is a perfect example. Hundreds of detainees of some 40 different nationalities have been held there for over two years in contravention of a basic tenet of international law – that due legal process should apply. AI and many others have argued that the detainees must be treated according to the Third Geneva Convention regarding prisoners of war.

U.S. authorities have steadfastly refused to follow the Convention, which would require any uncertainty regarding POW status to be referred to a competent tribunal. That refusal is particularly worrisome given that there is no other alternative legal process being followed, especially as it conveys an undermining message about international human rights and humanitarian legal norms – that governments should feel free to pick and choose among the rules as they see fit. That does nothing to achieve greater global security in the end.

So, the lesson of justice is upon us. In some measure we are getting it right. For example, there is increased talk of how important it is to establish global justice institutions such as the ICC. But much is still to be learned, for example, that we simply will not ever achieve justice through law and procedures that are fundamentally unjust, and that we have to be

so very careful when relying on military might to ensure that justice is done.

**Tolerance and Respect**

Let me move on to the lesson of tolerance and respect. From the outset – the very afternoon of September 11 – it was clear that a major human rights challenge in the aftermath would be guarding against backlash, recriminations and discrimination. Minority groups, particularly Middle Eastern, Muslim and Jewish minorities in countries around the world, would be at risk of vandalized religious buildings, violence, or of becoming police targets because of their faith or ethnic background. Refugees would face further obstacles in their efforts to reach safe haven. Dissenting political voices would be silenced in an increasing anti-other orthodoxy.

Unfortunately, concerns have been proved true on all three fronts: minority groups, refugee protection and dissent. There is an unquestionable need for vigilance in ensuring that tolerance and respect do not fall further victim to the insecurity unleashed by the September 11 attacks.

First, let us consider the plight of minorities. In the weeks immediately after September 11, AI documented numerous examples worldwide of harassment and persecution of minorities:

- A school bus of Muslim children in Brisbane, Australia, was pelted with stones and bottles;
- Muslim ethnic groups in the western Xinjiang region of China face harsher crackdowns as Chinese authorities label any support for autonomy or nationalism as terrorist;
- In Belgium, synagogues have been firebombed, the façade of a synagogue was sprayed with bullets, a Jewish bookshop and delicatessen were destroyed by fire; and
- Calgary police reported that hate crimes doubled in the months immediately after September 11.

Intolerance and racism are wrong at any time and in any form. But now, when the world so desperately needs healing, bridge-building and understanding, we must be even more vigilant against hatred of any sort. And we must insist that our leaders do so as well – at all levels of government, within faith communities, within our schools – and on an ongoing basis.

I also highlighted concerns about refugees being singled out and demonized in this post-September 11 world. We have certainly seen a great deal, here in Canada and elsewhere, of fingerpointing at refugee-protection systems as allowing terrorists in, of calls to tighten up, exclude and make greater use of detention, and of greater willingness to deport, regardless of the dangers that may await people on the other end. The debate has taken hold around the world – what is often missing, though, is recognition that it is the refugees themselves who are suffering most, and who are fleeing in fear of further violence. We must be scrupulously careful, therefore, to make sure new laws and policies do not put genuine refugees at risk.

Here at home, September 11 has pushed the Canadian and U.S. governments towards a shared approach to refugee protection. Within a few months it is expected that the new

Canada/U.S. safe-third-country agreement will become operational. At that time, any refugee who passes through one country on the way to the other, and who makes a port of entry claim for refugee status, will be told to make their claim to the first country. In practice this will have dramatic significance for the approximately 50 percent of refugees who pass through the U.S. on their way to Canada, largely because there is no other way to reach Canada. Now they will be told to stay in the U.S. That would be fine if the U.S. refugee system met international standards. But it does not, particularly in the widespread, lengthy and arbitrary detention of refugee claimants in isolated centres alongside criminal convicts, and the frequency with which refugee claims by women, based on human rights abuses such as honour killings, domestic violence and dowry deaths, are turned down. The agreement should not go ahead without safeguards to ensure that returning someone to make a claim in the U.S. will not lead to human rights violations.

A final worrying challenge to tolerance and respect rests in the degree to which voices of dissent have been silenced or penalized in the new climate of counter-terrorism and security. Groups such as AI, and individuals, have in some countries been attacked and even killed, and in others sharply criticized and intimidated. As a result, the concerns of human rights activists, and even among the general public, range from a noticeable caution to outright terror about what they might normally want to say or do, and how it will be perceived and received.

Yes, I support moves to improve security, but I would also like to see action taken to improve human rights.

I think, for example, of Colombia. I was in Bogota on September 11, 2002, a powerful place to be on that first anniversary of the World Trade Tower attacks. At every turn I heard that every time Colombia's brave, creative human rights activists insist the parties in Colombia's armed conflict commit to human rights, they put their lives on the line. What is happening in Colombia is nothing more than a crude effort to silence important independent voices, using the rhetoric and emotion of anti-terrorism and security.

Neither our current legislation here at home nor what takes place in countries like Colombia can be the way ahead. Our responses to terror must scrupulously protect, tolerate and respect the right to free expression, including dissent and disagreement. If we cave in here, and settle for complacency and passive agreement, we risk losing the most basic freedoms we cherish. The "new security" cannot be allowed to erode our right to disagree.

Let me return to the theme – the challenge of safeguarding human rights in the era of fighting terror. Human rights have faced a double assault over the past year. Clearly, the cold, cruel logic of terrorism is a vicious and very public attack on basic rights. But the sweeping logic of counter-terrorism also challenges rights, and the challenge can be even more insidious and invisible.

The answer has to lie in rejecting the sacrifice of human rights in the name of security – and embracing instead the simple truth that the two are wholly and inescapably interlinked. Security that is not grounded in human rights will always be precarious, and

human rights will remain tenuous if security is not assured.

Let me end by offering words that were shared with me recently by the Director of Human Rights in the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the new Afghan government. We spent considerable time talking about the enormous human rights difficulties the people of Afghanistan face. And he ended by pointing out that the world would never have turned its attention to Afghanistan as long as it was only the security of Afghanis at stake. The challenge he put before me was to press my government to recognize that in our global community when there is insecurity for any of us, anywhere, we are all insecure. That is precisely the challenge that has been at the heart of CPJ's work these past four decades. I look forward to our combined efforts to rise to that challenge in the years to come.

## Alex Neve

Alex Neve has been Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada since January 2000. He has been a member of Amnesty for over fifteen years and has worked for the organization nationally and internationally in a number of different roles, including research missions to Tanzania, Guinea, Mexico and Ghana.

Alex is a lawyer, with a Master's Degree in International Human Rights Law. He has practiced law in Toronto, privately and in a community legal aid clinic, primarily in the areas of refugee and immigration law. He has taught international human rights and refugee law at Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto and has been affiliated with the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University.

Prior to taking up his current position, he served as a Member of Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board.


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# The Next 40 Years

*A speech on the 40th Anniversary of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre, Toronto, Friday, September 12, 2003*

by Carol Goar, editorial page columnist, The Toronto Star

I can't tell you what an honour it is to have been invited to speak at your 40th anniversary celebration.

Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) has been working to right fundamental wrongs for much longer than I have. I salute the courage of your founders and thank all of you for continuing their mission. I hope I can contribute to your quest for a stronger, fairer society in some small way this evening.

Canada has come a long way since 1963. We were a nation of 18 million then. There are more than 31 million of us now. The value of all the goods and services we collectively produced was $42 billion then. It's close to $1 trillion now.

Socially, we've made major gains too. Medicare was still a work in progress 40 years ago. The death penalty had just been abolished. The last segregated Negro school in Nova Scotia had just been closed. The Canada Pension Plan was still working its way through the House of Commons.

And yet, I'm not sure your founders would like the Canada they see today.

They took for granted that hunger and homelessness had no place in a rich, developed nation. They understood that an equitable distribution of wealth was the mark of a healthy society. They were part of a brave and hopeful debate about the kind of country this could be.

Let me take you back to the Edmonton campus of the University of Alberta, four decades ago. One of the journalists whom I admire most, the late Blair Fraser, was giving a speech. He said: "It is within our capacity to experiment in ways that might be impossible for nations that face problems on a larger scale, or whose financial resources to cope with them are less adequate than ours."

He challenged his audience to make Canada a test tube for solving two of the most daunting problems facing humankind.

He believed that his fellow Canadians had a better chance than almost any people in the world of showing that a nation split along cultural and linguistic lines could not only work, but thrive. And he thought Canada had the capacity to end the isolation and impoverishment of its Aboriginal minority.

I think we could safely say that Blair Fraser's first experiment has been a success. In ways that he couldn't even have anticipated, we have learned to make diversity a source of strength.

I suspect he was thinking primarily about French-English relations when he delivered his speech. Those were the two solitudes that bedeviled his generation. It would be premature to say that we've figured out for all time how to accommodate our two founding cultures within one political entity. But we have learned to live together respectfully.

More than that, we've become a society that is extraordinarily open to other cultures. We have allowed the face and texture of Canada – at least urban Canada – to change in ways that really do make this country a model for the world.

I concede that we're not as good as we need to be at integrating newcomers into the economic mainstream. Nor are we as free from prejudice and racial stereotyping as we like to pretend. But on balance, we have shown that a bilingual, multicultural nation can work.

I don't think any of us would say that Canada has succeeded in meeting Blair Fraser's second challenge.

We have failed dismally to address the needs of our First Nations. Conditions on many Canadian reserves rival the deprivation of the Third World. The suicide rate for Aboriginal young people is staggeringly high. Land claims that date back generations remain unresolved. Our federal government persists in imposing Ottawa-style solutions on Canada's original inhabitants, rather than working with them to translate their aspirations into reality.

Despite isolated success stories, the plight of our Aboriginal people is a blot on Canada's human rights record and an embarrassment to every citizen who believes in public justice. I know your organization has been fighting for Aboriginal rights for many years. Please keep fighting. This battle is a test of our values and our ability to live up to them.

As I was reading Blair Fraser's speech, I found myself asking what challenges I would identify, if someone gave me the opportunity to talk about Canada as a test tube for positive change in 2003. You have given me that opportunity. And, like him, I'm going to pick two.

The first may sound ambitious and out of step with the prevailing political ethos. But I'd like to see Canada prove that it's possible for an industrial nation in the 21st century to narrow the gap between rich and poor.

We have the resources to support a decent standard of living for all of our people. We're not as economically polarized as some western countries, notably the United States. And despite the dismantling of many of our safety nets, we still have a residual belief in social equity.

The problem is, we're on the wrong trajectory. Tax cuts, especially those aimed at homeowners and affluent investors, help the very people who don't need more wealth. The discipline of the marketplace, which so many of our political leaders extol, rewards the privileged and punishes the poor. And the off-loading of government responsibilities on to individuals, charities and the private sector often leaves the disadvantaged to fend for themselves.

To make matters worse, we have a government here in Ontario that denigrates social assistance recipients, pushes single parents without child care into minimum-wage jobs and dismisses subsidized housing as a boondoggle.

But we are heading into elections at the provincial, municipal and federal levels in the coming months. There are candidates who have spoken out against regressive tax cuts, who understand the importance of affordable housing and child care, and who believe in sharing the risks and benefits of citizenship.

If ever there was a time when progressive voices mattered, it is now.

Paul Martin, who is poised to become our next prime minister, needs to know that there are a significant number of Canadians who remember that he called a strong, expanding middle class "the backbone of a healthy country" five years ago. He needs to be reminded that there are many citizens who share the conviction he expressed 13 years ago that "housing is a fundamental human right." And he needs to hear that Canadians expect him to act on his stated belief that every child deserves the chance to succeed.

Ontario's three provincial party leaders need to hear that voters are tired of being bribed with tax cuts; ashamed of seeing homeless people on their streets, and offended by suggestions that those who need help are cheats, parasites or bad parents.

I'm using strong language because I think many of us – and let me be the first to admit guilt – have spoken too softly in recent years.

For a long time, I refused to use the phrase child poverty. To me, it implied that only the young and blameless deserved society's compassion. Adults who had fallen on hard times could be overlooked. I still find the phrase disturbing, but I have used it in print.

Conversely, it took me a long time to use the word "greed" to describe the behaviour that our former premier, Mike Harris, legitimized so effectively. I knew what I was seeing, but I dared not put a name on it. Finally I got angry enough to break that taboo.

I understand that it is sometimes necessary – maybe even smart – to cajole rather than alienate right-wing governments. But I think it's time to aim higher than damage control.

We have the tools to reverse the polarization of wealth. Canada still has a progressive tax system. We have a national child benefit plan that could be built into an income support

system for struggling families. We have a network of good (though under-funded) public schools and universities. We have a tentative national housing strategy and a patchwork of child care centres. That's enough to get started.

It's not impossible to make a society more equitable. Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau did it, with the support of groups like yours. Why not now?

A second proposition I would put to you is that Canada has the potential to show what good global citizenship looks like in the 21st century.

Historically, we have played a constructive role on the international stage. We are respected, or least regarded with benign interest, in most of the world. And we are close enough to the United States that our innovations will be noticed, if not always welcomed, in Washington.

But once again, we'd have to change course. Our foreign aid spending ranks an embarrassing 16th out of the world's 22 major donor countries. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has become so inward-looking and bureaucratic that most taxpayers have no idea where their foreign aid dollars go and little incentive to care. And we've been too busy reaping the material benefits of globalization to count the human cost.

Still, Canada is well placed to take a more enlightened approach. We are an outward looking people. Our churches and civil society groups have never stopped fighting for policies that put people before markets. And as Ottawa showed in the campaign for a treaty to ban anti-personnel landmines, we do have the capacity to exercise moral leadership and work with non-government groups around the world for peace.

What we need to do is knit these isolated efforts into a consistent and proudly Canadian pattern of global engagement.

Why couldn't our generic drug industry, for instance, take the lead in getting affordable medicines to people with HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other life-threatening diseases in the Third World? And why couldn't Ottawa subsidize the distribution of these medicines to people who can't afford even cut-rate drugs? The World Trade Organization might not like one country getting out ahead of the pack. The multinational pharmaceutical giants certainly wouldn't. But isn't saving millions of lives worth testing the rules of global trade?

Let me give you another suggestion. Why couldn't Canada be the first developed nation to compensate Third World countries for the loss of highly-trained professionals who immigrate here? There is no question that we need more doctors, nurses, engineers, teachers and scientists. But taking them from countries who have so little, without giving anything back, seems profoundly unfair to me. Think of the difference we could make if we offered to train 10 young professionals from developing nations for every one we took. Think of the debate we could engender if we urged other western nations to do likewise.

And why couldn't we require that any Canadian firm doing business in the developing world meet the same environmental standards as they do here? Responsible companies already follow this practice. It's not fair that they should be undercut by exploitative competitors. It's not right that Canada should be a global polluter. We have a chance to show that globalization doesn't have to mean double standards and ecological destruction. Who better than us to lead by example?

And when better than now? As the Chrétien era ends, we have a chance to re-think Canada's international role. We can remain a respectable, but fading, middle power. Or we can take a few risks to become a global problem solver.

Paul Martin's record on foreign affairs is mixed. As finance minister, he slashed foreign aid to its lowest level, as a proportion of GDP, in three decades. On the other hand, he was instrumental in the creation of the G-20, which brings together industrial countries and developing nations to discuss ways to spread the benefits of globalization more equitably. As he sets his priorities, he needs to hear from citizens who think Canada is too privileged to pinch pennies and has too much potential to be passive.

There are many issues, which I know you care about, that I haven't mentioned. The list includes everything from health care to the rebuilding of Iraq. I'd be happy to take questions. Or if you prefer, please feel free to speak to me privately after this evening's program.

Let me conclude by expressing my gratitude. It's not often that a journalist gets a chance to reflect on what could be, rather than what is. There aren't many audiences who start from the premise that public justice is the only sound basis on which to build a nation, a political platform or a society. You've made my job very easy.

Congratulations on 40 remarkable years. May there be many more.

Thank you very much.

## Carol Goar

Carol Goar is one of those lucky people who knew what she wanted to do at the age of 10. She has been a journalist for 29 years and still thinks it was the right choice. She was born in Hamilton, grew up in Galt (now renamed Cambridge) and studied journalism at Carleton University.

She began her career as a reporter at the Ottawa Citizen and worked for the Canadian Press, FP New Service, and Maclean's Magazine before joining the Toronto Star in 1985. She has been the newspaper's national affairs columnist in Ottawa, bureau chief in Washington, and editorial page editor here in Toronto. She now writes a column on the editorial page three times a week.

She considers herself lucky to work at a newspaper that was founded to promote social justice, strive for an equitable distribution of wealth, and speak out for the disadvantaged. Those principles are as relevant now as they were a century ago. Carol considers it a privilege to defend them.


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# The Struggle for Hope

*A speech on the 40th Anniversary of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre, London, Friday, April 23, 2004*

By Susan Eagle, United Church Minister, London City Councillor

Tonight when we were being asked to put up our hands to remember how long we have been aware of Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ), I was trying to think back to when it was. It certainly was in the '70s, but especially in the 1980s, when I became the United Church representative to the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) and I met first Gerald Vandezande and then Greg deGroot-Maggetti. It really has been a wonderful experience to be associated with CPJ over those many years.

I received a blessing the other day from a man who seemed unlikely to give it. Sitting in the comfort and warmth of my car at an intersection, I noticed a man hunched over to keep the wind and the rain out of his face. His hair was wet and stringy; his clothes, scruffy and torn; a worn and dirty bag over his shoulders seemed to amount to all that he had in the whole world that he owned. He was walking along the line of cars that were stopped, letting it be known that he would receive money if it were offered.

I put some money in the proffered hand and expected the usual, mumbled, thank-you. Instead I watched his face turn into an electric grin and his eyes warm with pleasure. They were not eyes that offered gratitude, but pleasure. "God bless," he said, and moved on. And I felt blessed by that benediction. Not because I had done this charitable thing, in fact he had not said thank-you. Instead there had been eye-to-eye contact and a reciprocal exchange. My money, his blessing. And I left the intersection with the feeling that that had been the best parting of money that I had experienced all day.

I puzzled a little, though, about his obvious grace and cheerfulness. He didn't seem to have much to be thankful for. His deprived existence flew in the face of all our social norms that teach us that happiness is the result of acquisition and personal security. Then I reflected that I was coming here to talk to you about the struggle for hope, that elusive quality that can sustain life and determination in those whose futures seem grim and painful, and yet can seem lost to an entire generation that suffers from a surfeit of affluence and self-gratification.

Let me start tonight by describing for you those many places where I see either lack of hope or loss of hope in our systems and institutions. It seems that part of our loss of hope is in the many battles that we keep losing. We seem to be losing the battle for economic equity. The wealth gap is growing. A recent study by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities entitled “The Quality of Life Report,” documents that in the last decade, the wealthiest 30 percent of the population enjoyed a before-tax income increase, while the poorest 30 percent actually suffered a before-tax decrease of 10 percent or more loss of income.

The same report documents that rents increased faster in the bottom end of the housing market than in the higher end. Those spending less than 30 percent of their income on rent grew from 35 percent of renters in 1991 to 41 percent in 2001. And those spending more than 50 percent of their income on rent went from 16 to 20 percent.

All our cities have seen a huge increase in numbers of families living in shelters as well as in people on waiting lists for subsidized housing, sometimes waiting for years, and often losing existing housing while waiting for subsidized housing to become available.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities "Quality of Life" report says that in all cities studied there is continuing income inequity and social exclusion, as well as pressure on the environment. And it concludes that quality of life in those communities remains fragile. In Ontario we've seen a dismantling of a social safety net that has made life more fragile for people at the bottom. It has targeted, excluded, trivialized and even criminalized those struggling to survive each day. From 1994 to today tax cuts have meant an $11 billion per-annum decrease in provincial revenues, and program spending has been reduced from 15 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1994 to 11 percent today. We're spending less GDP on programs than we were.

Those statistics come to us from the Ontario Alternative Budget Analysis, which goes on to suggest that if the province freezes taxes at the current level, it will have to consider cutting a further $2 billion if it wants to balance the budget.

That's the financial and economic equity battle we're losing in Ontario, but there's another of equal concern. It's the attitudinal battle. The shift in public thinking from entitlement to deservedness gave us workfare, lifetime welfare bans, and incredibly onerous criteria for anyone wanting to access social services.

Perhaps most reprehensible of all, it was done with the slick assurance that it was all for the public good. So legislation marginalizing and punishing the poor was named: Tenant Protection Act; Ontario Works Act; Safe Streets Legislation; Education Improvement; even the Ontario Disabilities Support Plan. All euphemisms that were for the most part swallowed by members of an unsuspecting public.

Has the change in provincial government changed that public attitude? I don't believe it has. I believe it is still very well entrenched. That attitude has allowed our London Housing Corporation, which oversees all public housing in the city and the county, to last night approve having staff develop a policy that would require perspective tenants to submit to a check so those with a criminal record could be excluded from tenancy. Is this the product of a new kinder, gentler Ontario?

The hostile attitude to the undeserving has become entrenched and judgmental. This concept of banning those with criminal records was sold to the public members of the Housing Corporation Board last night as a way to protect tenants and provide safer housing for everybody. It leaves me to wonder if the most insidious evil in contemporary society is

the one that can be rationalized and justified, and which masquerades under the false guise of righteousness and public good. It ensnares those people who are not fluent in prophetic analysis.

When I look at losses, there is a great deal of lost ground which, despite rhetoric to the contrary, continues to undermine our communities and promise grim milestones for the future. Yet I believe documenting our losses is an important part of our rebuilding, and a critical element in any hopeful response we might make. On that note, let me turn to the subject of hope, for which we need to struggle.

You're probably wondering by now if my address is really about hope, or if I should have titled it, “Just when I thought things were bad, they got worse.” I believe, though, that hope has to be born out of the reality we face. Ignoring it just turns hope into false optimism.

In his book, *History and the Theology of Liberation*, Enrique Dussel defines prophecy as discovering the meaning of the present. He adds that the word prophecy comes from the Greek word, "prophemy – which means to speak out before someone." The prophet's job is to speak out before the people, telling them the meaning of events taking place here and now. So I believe our first job in building and reclaiming hope in our communities is not to avoid the pain but rather to both name and expose the reality of what is happening to our people. For the most part, that makes us prophetic and unpopular.

I had a lawyer in one of our legal clinics say to me the other day, "Wouldn't it be nice just to be liked?" He'd had a particularly brutal day of advocating against the system, challenging social service regulations and the decisions that flowed from them.

So we consider the challenge to be faithful, though not necessarily successful. It reminds us, for the most part, and brings us to the inevitable discomfort, even alienation that we are going to feel when we name and expose those places of disconnect we experience in the world around us.

Jesus’ command to his disciples to be in the world but not of it, opens the door for that jarring sense of discomfort that we might call conscience or prophetic awareness. It resonated with me a few years ago when I picked up William Stringfellow's book called *Christians and Other Aliens in a Strange Land*. That discomfort leads us to view the world with a critical self-awareness that isn't always easy to sustain.

A woman coming home after a particularly grueling day of battling the world around her said to her husband, "All I really want is peace and quiet and flowers." Her dear husband said, "I believe they call that a funeral."

So we face the fact that the world around us is sometimes painful, hostile and often devoid of the easy miracles we would like to see. Speaking of easy miracles, the story is told of a good Christian woman who read the Bible every day. She treasured a favourite passage from Isaiah – 'the lion will lie down with the lamb." One day she went to the zoo and came upon

a lion cage where something incredible was taking place. Inside the cage was a huge, ferocious lion and sitting right next to it was a lamb. In total amazement she called over to the guard. "How long have you had a lion and a lamb in that cage together?" she asked. "For more than a year," the guard answered. “That's amazing. How do you do it?" "It's easy," said the guard, "every morning we just put in a new lamb."

Reality isn't easy for those of us who would prefer easy miracles. It's not easy for those who ask questions and expose grim truths. But it opens the door to the knowledge of work that needs to be done and truths that need to be told if we are ever to hope for a different relationship and a different kind of community.

It is in the name of that truth-telling that ISARC collected stories. Indeed, it was a labour of love for us to go around the community, sit down with people and spend the time to hear stories that came from the heart. There's no way in that book (*Lives in the Balance*) we could possibly collect all the stories that were shared, but they were amazing stories. Stories of survival in grim circumstances.

In his book, *Seeds*, Thomas Merton writes: "the theology of love must seek to deal realistically with evil and injustice in the world, and not merely to compromise with them." Theology does not exist merely to appease the already troubled conscience of the powerful and the established. A theology of love is a theology of resistance: a refusal of the evil that reduces a brother to homicidal desperation.

Where did we ever get the idea that to be Christian, we should also be comfortable? Naming truths and exposing untruths not only opens the door to an alternative reality, I believe it also allows us to see more clearly those who stand in solidarity with that alternative vision.

Our United Church creed begins with the words: "We are not alone, we live in God's world." We live with witnesses, with allies. We live in community with those who also see, those who also struggle. The prophet whispers to God, "There is only me Lord, I'm the only one." God sends wind. And after the wind, God whispers in that still, small voice: "There's still 7,000, go out and find them and join them." So our hope relies very much on our ability to intentionally seek out those who are with us. With us in the struggle, with us in the truth-telling, with us in the seeking of the alternatives.

As some of you know, the issue of housing has been a passion of mine for some time. I've participated in community as well as city-hall committees, and coalitions that have worked on housing. I was not just excited, I was elated this year when the local real-estate board appeared before city council to ask that budget dollars be set aside for affordable housing. That request, coming from that business-based body, made a difference, I believe, in the eventual decision by council to set aside $2 million for housing. Not in any way to diminish the other voices, but this was a new voice from a new sector, and it contributed greatly to the alliance of those working to create that strong voice.

A couple of days ago I was contacted by a woman who was a member of the London chapter of the Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Ontario, which I didn't know anything

about. But she told me they had met with the Minister of Child and Family Services in Toronto and some other cabinet ministers, and had presented a brief outline of their concerns. She then sent me a copy of their document. It was a strong and well-articulated championing of the needs for affordable housing, and a call to the province to re-activate its participation in housing programs.

When we feel alone in the fight and our voices become diminished, it is often then that we hear the chorus of those other voices which are also raised in song. To work for the Kingdom does not entitle us to determine its timing or even its participants but to allow ourselves to be open to all the witnesses around us, the partnership of allies and others in community who are also naming the truths we encounter and persevering in that truth-telling.

Finally, let me say a little about that unpredictable and elusive power of the Spirit that enables the strange happenings that show us the Spirit at work in our world and lives. Once I went behind the barricade at Oka. For me it was a powerful experience of Spirit, of politics lived out in a particular moment of our history. It was a reminder to me that we people of the Spirit who feel called to exercise our resistance and solidarity as the Spirit leads us, need to be very careful in how we live.

But my consciousness of the Spirit might best be described by one experience that I had there. Toward the end of the crisis, I and another clergy left Oka as two other clergy had arrived to take our place. That very night, within hours of leaving, the tanks moved in on the barricades. We heard the news shortly after we left. Spontaneously, we turned around and headed back, with no idea of how we were ever going to get in.

In fact the new barricade, comprised of army tanks, was even more fortified than the native community barricade originally in place. We had no clearance to be there. We had handed over our clergy authorization to the two who had come to replace us. We didn't know any of the new troops who had now been sent to maintain this military wall.

We used our cell phones to try to make contact but without any success. So we pulled up in front of the barricade, facing hostile stares from those in charge of monitoring this cordoned-off military zone. I got out of the car and walked over to one of the guards and said, "We're here to go inside." He assured me abruptly that that was impossible. We were to get back in our car and leave the military zone.

His phone rang. He spoke. He signaled someone. Big tanks started moving. They opened up the gateway and directed us through and when our car was through the tanks moved back into place. No one else came through that barricade for five days.

Now I understand that he had confused us with an order that was meant for somebody else. But since then I've always called it the Oka-factor – the stirring up and confusing of those in power, that opens the door for alternative visions and hopes. The fall of power that crumbles and fails and allows new dimensions to take root, and grow, and new opportunities to come into existence. Perhaps I might even call it insurgent hope.

Rene Golden writes: "The fuel that drives courage is hope. Courage is a social gift of a people. Courage is not an individual characteristic, gender-specific, but rather a social-spiritual product of a liberation process. A secret weapon is the insurgent hope, that like a phoenix rises from the ashes of charred villages. Hope is in the hands that have been shackled and hearts that have been broken. They cannot bomb insurgent hope into oblivion. They cannot torture it to death. They cannot kill off hope in battle zones. It rises again, and again."

40 years of truth-telling. 40 years of working in coalition. 40 years of being open to the leading of the Spirit. May this be the first of many 40 years of public justice work for CPJ.

## Susan Eagle

Susan is an ordained United Church minister and a London City Councillor.

Susan has a well earned reputation as one of the most principled and compassionate voices on London City Council and in the United Church of Canada. She comes by her convictions and hard work for the disadvantaged honestly.

She's from a family of ministers who've all been dedicated to social justice in the Tommy Douglas style of service to community and country. Her late father and both of her grandfathers were United Church ministers. Susan's younger brother, Glen, followed her into ministry and the same social gospel tradition. Her mother, Joyce, a retired English and theatre arts teacher, is known for her theatrical productions, insightful and instructive children's stories and welcoming nature.

Susan has been minister of the Kilworth-Delaware congregations on the western edge of London for 19 years and a community worker for the East London United Church Outreach Cluster of six churches during the same period. In the outreach job, she has worked with and on behalf of sole support parents, the working poor, tenants, social assistance recipients and newcomers to Canada.

Susan, an honour's history graduate of Victoria University College at the University of Toronto and master's graduate of Emmanuel College at the Toronto School of Theology, was ordained by the United Church of Canada in 1977.


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# Being Anishnaabe

*A report of an address given by Justice Murray Sinclair, Court of Queen's Bench of Manitoba, on the 40th Anniversary of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre, Winnipeg, March 19, 2004*

by Aiden Enns, a freelance writer and editor in Winnipeg, with assistance from John Bird of *Skiff of Snow Productions*

Justice Murray Sinclair, the first Aboriginal judge in Manitoba back in 1988 and the major figure behind the federal Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, spent the last 40 years learning what it means to be a human being.

Or, in the language of his ancestors, he's on a perpetual journey to be *Anishnaabe* – a responsible person in this world. Being Anishnaabe has "all of the layers and depths of meaning about being a responsible person in the world," said Sinclair during a talk at Indian Family Centre in the North End of Winnipeg in March, 2004.

Sinclair was the keynote speaker at the Winnipeg celebration of the 40th anniversary of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre.

Murray spoke personally and candidly about his encounter with the residential school system, his spiritual quest and constant sense of obligation to help others in need, especially Aboriginal people.

"From the earliest times I can remember, I always had that strong sense of spirit and belief about me," said Sinclair.

**Almost the priesthood**

When Sinclair was only a year old, his mother passed away after giving birth to his brother, as a result of tuberculosis. Sinclair's father, a traumatized veteran of World War II, was not able to raise the children on his own. As a child, Sinclair preferred to stay in his home community and therefore spent his early years raised by grandfather and grandmother.

His grandmother took her Catholic faith very seriously. She wanted at least one of her 10 children to be a priest. But none did. Then along came Murray.

"From the time I was very young, I was told I was going to be a priest," said Sinclair. "I actually embraced the idea. I very strongly believed in the Creator and all things spiritual."

Unfortunately for his grandmother, “puberty hit me rather hard”. The priesthood lost its appeal. He kept the news from her as long as he could. But when he entered grade 11 and decided to take the courses necessary for university, he needed her signature of approval.

"It was a very sad day for her. She cried a lot," said Sinclair. To save face, she insisted that Sinclair complete high school, go to university and "do something" with his life.

"I got out of the priesthood, rather easily I think.... I loved school, I loved learning about things," he said.

As he looked back at this childhood, Sinclair had mixed comments. On the one hand, he acknowledged that the residential school system kept him from following the traditions of his ancestors. There were legal impediments against practising Aboriginal culture following in the traditional ways of faith. On the other hand, he was given a profound sense of the Creator, and a respect for the elders in his community.

"It's not God who worries me, it's my grandmother. I'm going to have to stand in front of her and explain why I did what I did. That's an important part of my spirituality and my faith as well," he said.

**Distance and despair**

University life was a stark contrast to the ordered life back home; Sinclair entered a time of searching and despair. Without the structure and discipline of household and church, Sinclair entered university but then left, feeling dissatisfied, discontent.

"There was something else that I wanted but I wasn't quite sure what it was.... The older I got, the more a sense of responsibility grew within me regarding my role in society and what I should be doing."

He took a more active role in the wider community. He became vice-president of the Manitoba Métis Federation and worked as an assistant to Attorney General Howard Pawley (who would go on to become premier).

This was the late 1960s and early 1970s and Sinclair was heavily influenced by the civil rights movements and Indian rights in particular: the occupation of Wounded Knee in South Dakota, the take over of Anishnaabe Park in Kenora, Ontario. Charged up for a life in politics, he went back to school.

"I decided to get a law degree because I thought it would give me instant credibility, and allow me to become involved in politics. So I went to law school to become a politician. From the priesthood to politics – what a drastic switch."

While at school, he took an interest in the justice system, particularly the judicial process. He'd often duck out of work, run across the street, sit in the courthouse and observe trials.

After graduation, he practised as a lawyer. But the law left him unfulfilled and within a year he quit his practice and found himself searching once again.

"Part of it was the great disillusion I felt about the way the justice system was dealing with Aboriginal people and issues – the way I was being treated as an Aboriginal person by judges and lawyers and the legal system. The way police officers conducted themselves towards my client base didn't impress me. I didn't really see that things were going to change there."

**Elder counsel**

Before abandoning the legal profession all together, his wife Catherine suggested he seek the counsel of an elder. She proposed he speak with Angus Merrick, a magistrate and a respected elder in the Aboriginal community,

"Those of you who have had experiences with elders will know that when you go to them with the big question, you never get the big answer," said Sinclair about meeting Angus.

Angus advised Sinclair: "The thing you must remember is that from the time you are born until the time you leave this world, you'll always be Anishnaabe.... You don't know how to be a lawyer now because you don't know how to be Anishnaabe."

That one word, Anishnaabe, summed up the teachings of his people. Its meaning was worthy of pursuit. Sinclair decided to stay with his work as a lawyer and dig deeper in to his identify as an Aboriginal person.

**Grandmother appears**

At this time, when Sinclair was especially vulnerable to spiritual guidance, his grandmother appeared to him in a dream. Together with his grandfather, she told him to travel down the road, and do not linger at the side, for what is at the end is important.

“To me that message was all about a reinforcement of the way I was finding my faith," said Sinclair.

At first he turned to books for guidance, but found few Aboriginal authors writing about spirituality. Fortunately there was a resurgence of Aboriginal elders coming to town and he took part in several youth-elder workshops.

"One day when one of those presenters said, 'You have to go talk to your mother,' I said, 'I don't know how to do that because my mother's passed away.' He said, 'I'm not talking about the woman who gave birth to you. I'm talking about your real mother. You have to go and find her, out there somewhere. You have to go and sit with the Earth, because that's the one who is the mother for all of us. You'll find your answers there.' He was talking about fasting, and meditating. So that's been part of my exploration as well," said Sinclair.

**Base of support**

This exploration has gone on for nearly 30 years since then. At pivotal moments in his life, he's relied on the teachings. For example, when their youngest child had problems with

friends drinking and experimenting with drugs, Murray and Catherine turned to the wider community for support.

"We formed a circle at our house and we invited... all the people she considers aunts and uncles... to come and talk with her about those things. They did, and she'll tell you that it helped her find her way."

When Sinclair's father died and when Catherine's mother died they found comfort in the traditional teachings about death and the journey of the spirit.

One difficult time was after 1988, in the aftermath of the shooting of J.J. Harper and the onset of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, of which Sinclair was co-commissioner. Shortly after the hearings had begun, a police officer connected with the case unexpectedly shot himself. Sinclair felt "a great guilt" and "particularly fragile for a long time." Initially, the Aboriginal community called to offer consolation. Then they gathered around Sinclair in a circle to share in the sadness and offer support.

"They helped put everything into perspective, that it wasn't what we were doing in the inquiry that brought this about, it was the whole issue that started back on March 8, 1988," he said. This was a time when culture, faith, elders and community came together to deal with grief, pain and injustice.

**Old women in the gym**

In his daily work as a judge, Sinclair is still guided by lessons from the elders. He recalled a trip he made during a circuit to remote northern Manitoba First Nations communities. He entered a school gymnasium in Little Grand Rapids. As the lawyers and police were making arrangements, he joined a circle of old women sitting and talking at the back of the room.

"Finally I said, 'I've got to go and get things started because they're waiting for me over there.' This little lady put her hand on my arm and said, 'Just wait. We want to tell you something.... All those people over there,' she pointed to all the people who were talking to the lawyers and who were waiting to be called, 'we want you to remember, those are our children. Never forget that whoever is going to stand in front of you, that's somebody's child. Never forget that.' And I've tried not to forget that. Whoever this is, this is somebody's child."

Sinclair carries with him a healthy sense of obligation. It's an obligation not borne from duty or guilt, but which stems from a sense of inter-connectedness and respect for life.

For example, when he now makes presentations to Aboriginal students in law school, he says it's important for them to become practitioners.

"The community needs us, not just the Aboriginal community, but the whole legal system. This is not a White man's system, this is our system too. And it's not working right now. We have an obligation to make it better." Some of them have a hard time with this, he said.

His sense of obligation is to help those in society, young and old, who have made decisions that caused them to get into trouble. The vast majority of the people he sees in court are people who have lost their faith.

"And not just their sense of connection to church, or religious teaching, but their ability to believe in their future." He said they've lost their sense of direction and the knowledge that "they are people about whom our Creator has pride. That's why they behave as they do."

How does he suggest we help these people who've lost their way?

"It's actually a relatively simple formula," said Sinclair. He returned to the lesson from the elder Angus – help them understand that no matter what, "they will always be Anishnaabe."

"This has implications for all of us in every profession, for the people involved in education, in medical care, in the legal system, ... even for those helping to take care of people who can't take care of themselves.

"If we help them know where they've come from, their history; and where they're going, what lies in their future in this world and the next; it will help them understand why they are here and who they are. I believe in that. It's the kind of work I try to dedicate myself to."

**Life after judging**

When he first got the call to be a judge, at age 36, Sinclair balked.

"No, it's boring," he said. "Besides, everybody hates you. You can't make one side happy without making the other side mad." He didn't relish the thought. But he took the job, and he's still at it a decade and a half later.

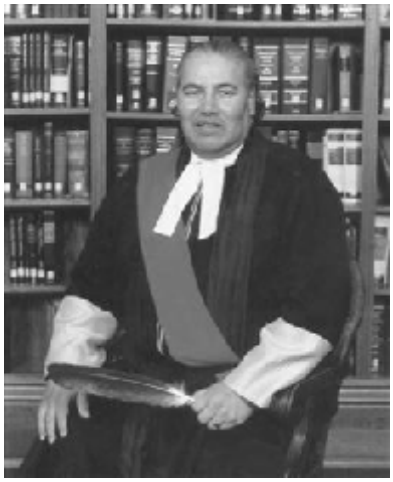
But in his early 50s, Sinclair hints at life beyond the Court of Queen's Bench.

"I still have things to do," said Sinclair at the conclusion of his talk to those gathered at the Indian Family Centre.

He recalled the day when Angus held up a stick and said, "This is like your life. And you may be a lawyer for that much of your life. You might even become a judge. And you'll be a judge for that much of your life." Sinclair doesn't expect to be a judge much longer.

"But who knows how things are going to change? I didn't think I'd be a judge for this long, to be honest," he said.

## The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair



The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair was appointed Judge of the Court of Queen's Bench on January 31, 2001. Prior to this appointment, he was appointed the Associate Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Manitoba in March of 1988. He was Manitoba's first Aboriginal Judge, and at that time, Canada's second.

Murray is deeply connected to his traditional Anishinaabe spirituality. He is part of Three Fires Society and the Midewin Lodge and regularly participates in ceremonies. Murray is from the Fish Clan – traditionally the mediator, the judge, the one that brings people together. Murray connects that spirituality to his understanding of justice.

After serving as Special Assistant to the Attorney General of Manitoba, Murray attended the Universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba and, in 1979, graduated from the Faculty of Law at the University of Manitoba. He was awarded the A. J. Christie Prize in Civil Litigation in his second year of law and articled with a law firm in his hometown of Selkirk, Manitoba.

He was called to the Manitoba Bar in 1980. In the course of his legal practice, Murray practiced primarily in the fields of civil and criminal litigation and Aboriginal law. He represented a cross section of clients but by the time of his appointment he was known for his representation of Aboriginal people and knowledge of Aboriginal legal issues.

Shortly after his appointment as Associate Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Manitoba in 1988, Murray was appointed Co-Commissioner of Manitoba's Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, along with Court of Queen's Bench Associate Chief Justice A. C. Hamilton. Most recently, in December 2000, Mr. Justice Sinclair released the Pediatric Cardiac Surgery Inquest Report, concerning an inquiry he conducted into the deaths of 12 infants in cardiac care.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# Public Justice, Then and Now and Into the Future (1)

*A speech on the 40th Anniversary of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre, Edmonton, Saturday, May 29, 2004*

by Jim Visser, artist, retired farmer, advocate and activist

Can you picture in your mind the early 1960s? The Kennedy years? The cold war at its zenith? A kid from Minnesota who came on singing “Blowin’ In the Wind?"

John Diefenbaker was our Prime Minister, and our country was recovering from second-world-war and Korean-war traumas. It welcomed boatload after boatload of European immigrants.

The Dutch were prominent among the huge number of post-war immigrants to Canada. From 1947 through the '50s they came. They settled in cities and rural areas from coast to coast. Most of them chose Ontario, Alberta and B.C. Many were devout Christians from the Dutch Reformed churches who adopted the Christian Reformed Denomination of North America as their new church home in this new land.

I was an eight-year-old boy in 1947, when our family arrived in Alberta. My parents were active participants in establishing immigrant churches in Edmonton and promoting a culture rooted in Dutch Calvinism. They held a conviction that Christ is Lord and has a claim on all human endeavors. Life is religion, hence our schools should be Christian, as should any other group or society organized to give a value expression to the body politic. In the spheres of human endeavour this would certainly include labour unions and organizations for political action.

Hence, Christian schools were established wherever there were Reformed congregations. In the mid '50s a group of visionaries met in Toronto to form an association with the ambitious goal to some day establish a Christian university. This was also when the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) was organized and established its first bargaining units in Ontario.

It is in this flurry of passionate Christian resolve that we find the beginnings of CPJ. Here is how I remember it. The founders of the CLAC formed the Committee for Justice and Liberty because a separate voice was needed to appeal to the courts. Simultaneously in Alberta, the Christian Action Foundation (CAF) was formed to serve as a vehicle for Christian political expression. This was not just a Christian voice on political and cultural issues; it was intended to serve as a Christian presence in a pluralistic state. It certainly promoted the idea of alternative choices in a pluralist setting.

Prior to 1960 there already existed a small group of workers who met regularly under the name Christian Labour Association of Western Canada and who published a newsletter called

"The Western News." With the advent of the national CLAC, they agreed to dissolve and become part of the CAF, and their publication, "The Western News" morphed into CAF's publication "The Christian Vanguard."

The three principle founders of the CAF were Louis Tamminga, the pastor of one of Edmonton's immigrant Christian Reformed Churches, Andrew Wierenga, a young lawyer, and John Olthuis, a law student at the University of Alberta. Louis Tamminga also edited the Christian Vanguard. I came on board a year later. I think I was 23.

CAF's purpose was to function in the political arena as a body of Christians addressing matters of the state. What cheek! We did have a conviction that gave us the courage to jump into the fray. We did have a sense of how society should function. Hence we were not afraid to wade into the uncharted waters of Alberta's political scene. I am reminded of the apostle Paul's admonition to the new Christians in Corinth to be fools for Christ.

In that era our confidence and insight were nurtured by participation in an active Christian Students club that met regularly on the University of Alberta campus to examine the roots of secularism and to ask how we might walk the walk of faith amid the social structures in which we functioned.

We organized and participated in conferences sponsored by "the movement," which led to the establishment of the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS). We also followed the fight in the Ontario courts that led to the McRuer decision in 1963, and legitimized the CLAC as a rightful alternate bargaining agent.

We felt empowered. Our idealism was fed by the rapid growth of these developments and we were spurred on by leadership from respected theologians and educators. We felt that to follow Christ we needed to launch the beginnings of a Christian engagement in public life in Canada.

So what did this fledgling CAF do?

a) It published the "Christian Vanguard" – 10 issues per year, with free copies mailed to all MLAs and others of influence.
b) It conducted city-wide all-candidates forums during election campaigns.
c) It sponsored a high-school students club as a discussion forum for Christian social action.
d) It organized rallies featuring inspirational speakers.
e) It addressed the issue of pluralism in education and after we had lobbied MLAs from the Social Credit government over a number of years (mostly back benchers as Premier Manning was not interested in 1966), John Fleming from Calgary forwarded a private members bill to provide per-pupil grants to Alberta's independent schools. This resulted in $100 annual per-pupil grants to Alberta's Independent Schools. It also enhanced CAF's status.

Tragically, we lost a fine leader in 1963, when Andrew Wierenga died in a car accident along with his wife Carolyn and his sister Gladys. In 1964, Louis Tamminga accepted a call to a church in Iowa, where he began what is now The Center for Public Justice, the Washington, DC, based sister organization to CPJ. In 1967 John Olthuis moved to Toronto to become the executive director of the ICS.

We in Edmonton soldiered on, as people like Bill Sinnema, Chris Gort, Jim Tuininga, my brother Bill and I kept the CAF going. Peter Nicolai edited Vanguard for one year, then left to study for the ministry. I took it over for about three years and from time to time took breaks from the farm to go on speaking/promotional tours in Ontario and British Columbia. This helped keep the membership base alive and broadened both the scope of, and support for, Vanguard.

Since we wanted Vanguard to expand into a broad-spectrum commentary journal we moved its publishing base to Toronto. Robert Carvill was a brilliant young American who connected to "the movement" by way of the prophetic Pete Steen of the Pittsburgh Coalition. He moved to Toronto and the ICS, and became Vanguard's new editor.

Outside of publishing the Vanguard, there was now very little CAF activity in Alberta, and we focused on a move to go national. The Committee for Justice and Liberty (CJL) functioned as the legal wing of the CLAC and Gerald Vandezande oversaw its role in pleading against the injustices encountered in Ontario. John Olthuis agreed to leave the ICS to become CJL's policy director. So the CAF merged with the support base of the Committee. The CJL Foundation was launched and established in the same building as the ICS.

It was 1973, and with John's systematic, analytical mind and Gerald's political insight and ecumenical connections, the board chose to address Canada's stewardship challenges. It identified Canada's energy resources as a focus, with reference to rapid resource depletion, aboriginal land claims, and our nation's "religious" commitment to an ever expanding Gross National Product as the only route to social progress.

I should share with you that there was division at our early board meetings about taking this direction. Some said we were not ready. Some were fearful of applying Christian political theory in the real world. This early division, unfortunately, led to a rift between CJL and the CLAC.

At this time Bob Carvill died of leukemia. Bonnie Green, a gifted writer and editor, challenged us to engage with society, but the more conservative spirit prevailed, leading to the demise of Vanguard. That was a very sad day for me, considering the years of time and energy invested in promoting this voice.

But CJL, now known as Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ), flourished. It chose to immerse itself in the Arctic Gas issue that Canada was wrestling with at the time. The question before the nation was whether the seven trans-national oil companies should be permitted to construct a huge pipeline from Canada's Arctic down the MacKenzie River Valley and on to hungry U.S. markets. CPJ decided to take on this question, and challenge our society's

addictive reliance on fossil fuels, and our apparent unconcern about destroying Aboriginal cultures and fragile environments to satisfy our appetite for oil.

By doing so, CPJ proved its naysayers wrong – those who said we weren't ready to enter the fray. When little CPJ dove into the major national discussion of the day it discovered a pressing need among our major churches and some national secular organizations, who wanted to address these same issues but lacked a vehicle to do so.

On behalf of CPJ, John Olthuis obtained intervenor status at the National Energy Board Hearings to consider the Arctic Gas proposal. He brought in bishops, pastors and priests as expert witnesses. Never before did Canada's churches have such a secular venue to preach the need for God's redemptive power in the issues before our nation.

At the same time, CPJ also took on the role of principal organizer for a 1976 Edmonton conference designed to engage the public in these matters. This conference brought together 500 participants from many churches, labour and social action groups, and Aboriginal communities and organizations – as well as Thomas Berger and the Minister of Indian Affairs. For three days, all these people discussed the value of a moratorium, to give Canada time to seek alternatives in favour of just land claims and a stewardship ethic for our resources and our fragile north.

Much more could be shared about the Berger Inquiry, and subsequent contracts with the Dené and Grassy Narrows to negotiate land claims. But suffice it to say that in the end the moratorium was adopted, and as the pipeline concept is now being revived, nearly a quarter of a century later, the political context is quite different, with Aboriginal stakeholders in a much stronger partnership position to help ensure any pipeline will be an environmentally and socially sound project. And CPJ has been one of the actors whose ongoing education and lobbying in support of Aboriginal voices has helped bring about that changed political context.

Let us be thankful to God for using CPJ in this fashion in these initial years. It jumped in without flinching. And as we move on from our past reflections, let us celebrate the blessings of the journey. I dare say that CPJ has been humble in its walk and that it has made its choices in response to our Lord’s big question: "Have you fed the hungry, given shelter to the homeless, spoken for the disadvantaged?" Yes, and I believe that we can go into the future expecting to continue to be a balm for Canada.

## Jim Visser

Jim is an artist, primarily a landscape painter. Prior to this he was a seed potato producer.

As a member of TOPSOIL and the Legacy Lands Conservation Society, Jim is involved in addressing urban sprawl and agricultural land conflicts in the greater Edmonton area and in the Province of Alberta.

Jim served on the first Board of the Christian Action Foundation (CAF) and during the 1960s he focussed on promoting *The Christian Vanguard,* editing it for a few years before the transfer to Toronto. When the Committee for Justice and Liberty merged with the CAF, Jim served on the Board for several terms.


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# Public Justice, Then and Now and Into the Future (2)

*A speech on the 40th Anniversary of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre, Edmonton, Saturday, May 29, 2004*

by Kathy Vandergrift, Director of Policy for World Vision Canada and PJRC board member

It's really great to be here this evening. Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) in Edmonton remains home for me because of the social space this community provided me to think about the link between faith and the bigger world, and then to do something about it.

It's particularly comforting for me to come back now, because my journeying this year has taken me to the conflict zone in northern Uganda – a place where injustice reigns without bounds – and then to Amsterdam, the birthplace of some of CPJ's core ideas. For those of you who don't know the situation in northern Uganda, there is a war there, where children are abducted and turned into child soldiers. It was a really gripping experience for me to be there and to see that level of injustice.

I also still enjoy reading stories about Edmonton now that I live in Ottawa. Whenever I read about these "can do" innovation stories out of Alberta I just want to come back to town, and I can tell you when the hockey game was played outside on real ice with Wayne Gretsky, well . . . ! Recently, though, we have a special interest in Klein's essay on Pinochet – I want to get a copy. *[See endnote for an explanation of this statement – ed.]*

40 years. It's a time of maturity, but not yet time for the middle age bulge. It's not yet 50, when tradition sets in. It is a time for celebration with reflection. I thought it might be helpful to lift up a few elements from the time I know best, with a lessons-learned approach. So we can look forward as well as look back. What have we learned from what we did here in Alberta. I selected a number of initiatives that illustrate, I think, the heart and the challenges for all of us who want to be agents of God's good news of justice and shalom for all.

1. Stewardship in Practice.
Does anyone here remember the launch of the blue box recycling program in Edmonton? CPJ and the Mennonite Central Committee formed the Edmonton Recycling Society and then won a contract with the city to start collecting recyclables, in what was at the time the largest blue box program in Canada. We had two objectives in mind: reduce the waste, and create employment for groups who had a hard time finding work at that time in the city. It brought together the concept of stewardship and an economy of care.

What elements stand out that we can still learn from? It was a real-life model of stewardship and social care. It was timely – it responded to a need: you remember, Edmonton's garbage dump was filling up. Other cities followed suit, and it is now pretty common across the country.

That model had a number of strategic alliances. The Mennonites and CPJ complimented each other. The role of faith communities, as I look back, was essential to building the public support we needed. I remember going around to all these churches, with brochures in one hand and a blue box in the other, talking about the importance of what we were about.

We also worked with governing bodies – justice is not always about confrontation.

It was a catalyst to change the way we think about garbage. One radio interviewer questioned me about employing people with mental challenges to sort garbage. The answer was: they see it as resources, so should we.

A lot has changed in the business of waste reduction, but the principles CPJ extablished remain. CPJ should celebrate its role in that movement.

2. Economic Justice

One year CPJ pioneered the concept of an Alternative Budget to show concretely that choices could be made to do justice for those in need, and to have a healthy economy. It addressed head-on the argument that we cannot afford to do justice. Investing in housing and full employment makes economic sense. It was a good initiative, ahead of its time, but a tough sell in Alberta. CPJ continued to advance core ideas. Now other organizations do alternative budgets every year.

Budgets have become a centerpiece of public policy, perhaps too much so. They have become political statements without economic reality. Not one budget across the country in last year has been close to reality, leading one columnist to suggest establishing an independent budget office. It seems we can't trust our governments to add numbers correctly.

3. Canada's Federal Structure

As I reflect on CPJ's work over 40 years, it seems one of the bigger challenges is simply to make notions of social justice work within the federal structure of Canada. In moving from Edmonton to Ottawa's Parliament Hill during the 1990s, I have seen too many reasonable approaches to social policy run aground on the shoals of federal-provincial relations.

Jane Stewart deserves more credit than she ever got for getting the maternity benefits extended up to one year. She had no help from those groups that run large ads in support of family.

4. Geography and Diversity

Within the CPJ community, I wonder if the power of Canada's geography and the challenge of governing this large and diverse country received enough attention in the early days as we developed ideas that were rooted in the very different context of the Netherlands.

Now that I work on international justice issues, I am conscious both of how thankful and of how vigilant we must be. Many countries are torn apart by war over differences less than those that divide Alberta and Quebec.

Diversity remains a strength and a challenge for Canada. Whatever the outcome of the election, we are likely to have another pizza parliament, with heightened regional tensions.

One proposed solution is a concept advanced years ago by CPJ and now taken up by others – proportional representation. Four provinces are moving in that direction and NDP leader Jack Layton is making it one of his qualifications for supporting the Liberals, if we end up with a minority Liberal government. If we come out of the election with a coalition government made up of the Conservatives and the Bloc Quebecois, which is a possibility, then we will see a radical shift in favour of provincial power. I doubt justice will be better served.

Who better than a public-justice minded group in Alberta to help us find a new way to govern with respect for diversity, while doing justice for all within our geographic as well as religious and cultural pluralisms?

Canada is a model for many countries in its struggle to maintain peace among diverse peoples. How well we meet that challenge could be a major contribution to global search for peace with justice.

5. Contentious Issues

It is easy, on occasions of celebration, to ignore the rough spots. But when you're 40 you have to be realistic. During the time I was active in CPJ Alberta, the role of women, abortion, and later same-sex relationships strained the community that supported CPJ.

6. Human Rights

Since then I have focussed more attention on the rights of children and come up against similar strains in the Christian community, in Canada and elsewhere. Why do we get stuck on issues of human rights? What is the way out?

Rights and responsibilities are at the heart of Biblical teachings about justice. Many see "rights-talk" as a threat or as a secular, individualistic replacement for faith. I note that CPJ's work on child poverty, however, is not really rooted in a rights-based approach.

I am becoming convinced that Christians have something important to contribute to the growing field of human rights. But we haven't developed our understanding of the relationship between human rights and responsibilities. Rather than retreating from rights-based approaches, or attacking them, I suggest that we bring to the discussion table approaches that reflect Biblical teachings about dignity and the calling of every person.

Christians can bring to human rights an emphasis on human dignity, in contrast to approaches based on individual self-fulfillment. On the responsibility side, for rights and

responsibilities are two sides of same coin, we can offer approaches based on the covenant, rather than on contracts.

Why is this important?

Behind a façade of positive rhetoric about human rights, Canada is actually slipping in genuine respect for human rights.

Here are three examples:
i. Our anti-terrorism laws have led to a serious erosion of human rights in the name of security. These laws are neither necessary nor effective. In fact, they are counter-productive if we really want to root out terrorism and the reasons people resort to terrorist acts. Christian people have been asleep because the primary targets have not been Christians. For example, the government told Monia Mazigh – the wife of Maher Arar – to be silent. Her church told her to be silent. When she was asked why she persisted, her eloquent answer was that she did not want her children to grow up in a world where people were silent in the face of human rights abuses.
ii. Canada has just adopted a National Action Plan for Children that should and could have been a vehicle to advance the rights of children in this country. On the first page, Canada brags about supporting the Convention on the Rights of the Child. But then it rejects a rights-based approach in favour of old-style child-welfare language that sees children as objects of charity, not as people with dignity, not as subjects with rights and responsibilities in keeping with their ages and in relationship to families, communities and governments.
iii. Canada is developing a new international policy, but human rights is a much lower priority than either security and trade. I could cite examples.

If we don't frame our commitments in terms of rights and responsibilities, then it is easier to make all kinds of trade-offs. We live in a world where trade agreements are binding contractual obligations and military/political power is concentrated in the hands of a few. The only balancing force that puts people at the centre is a human rights system. It is a toothless system – it needs to be stronger. It needs active support from groups like CPJ.

7. Citizenship in Practice
Anyone remember this? (holding up booklet of resolutions from CPJ Alberta meeting) On a similar occasion in 1987, the evening CPJ banquet in Edmonton was preceded by a day in which members deliberated over issues and positions in a variety of areas.

While resolutions themselves are not earth-shattering in their consequences, what was going on during the debate around their formulation is essential for a healthy democracy in Canada. That was a deliberate exercise of citizenship in Alberta, through the vehicle of CPJ. The resolutions represented the work of numerous working groups, including many younger people, and the outcomes were taken to decision-makers.

The form may change, but the exercise of active citizenship, beyond the ballot box and beyond being a taxpayer, is essential. I think Canadians are waking up to an awareness that

our democracy is in trouble and can't be taken for granted. This emerging concern also presents an opportunity for CPJ.

My current work includes working on global citizen-based campaigns. This type of activity is much easier in the age of electronic communications than it was in 1987. The potential to use communications technology like the internet for justice may be one of few redeeming features of globalization.

What better way to celebrate turning 40 than to strengthen some CPJ muscles that may be getting a bit flabby, while using the maturity that comes from 40 years of life lessons, to make a difference where it really counts in the country we love. Canada is still a place where we can contribute to the development of a public space that respects creation and the dignity of every person, a public space that creates room for everyone to contribute to sustainable development through the mutual exercise of our rights and responsibilities in service to the God who gave them to us.

*Endnote – Kathy's reference was to a statement by Premier Ralph Klein to the Alberta legislature May 2004 during a discussion about public auto insurance: "It sounds like (former president Salvador) Allende in Chile, you know, when he took over all the copper mines and said the Americans are out, the government now owns all the copper mines, all the minerals, all the resources, all the mining . . . Pinochet came in, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not saying that Pinochet was any better, but because of the only elected communist in Chile, Allende, and the socialist reforms he put in, Pinochet was forced, I would say, to mount a coup."*

## Kathy Vandergrift

Kathy, currently Director of Policy for World Vision Canada, developed her roots in Canadian advocacy with CPJ when she served as a board member and as the Alberta staff person.

Always in search of effective ways to work for greater justice, Kathy has worked in both government and NGO offices. She served as the Chief of Staff for former Edmonton Mayor Jan Reimer and as a policy analyst on Western Canadian issues within the federal government.

Now focused on international issues, Kathy co-chairs an international advocacy group on Children and Armed Conflict, which brings her to UN Security Council debates, and she chairs a Canadian NGO coalition on Sudan which challenged Talisman Energy on its role in Sudan.


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# Public Justice, Then and Now and Into the Future (3)

*A speech on the 40th Anniversary of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre, Edmonton, Saturday, May 29, 2004*

by Jan Wesselius, philosopher and vice-chair of the board of CPJ

First let me say how grateful I am to those of you who founded Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) and who have supported it over the last 40 years. CPJ has been enormously influential as I've struggled with what it means to be a Christian citizen.

It seems to me that one of the most important things about CPJ both in the past and in its future is that it shows a commitment to respond to God's call for justice for everyone. This is what it means for us to be a responsible citizen: to take responsibility for working for the common good of all, and not just the common good of our particular community.

I'm not a policy analyst nor a political scientist, so my remarks are going to be less about specifics and more to do with overall themes, with a broader picture of trying to be a Christian citizen in a diverse society.

So let me trace connections between two trends that have been observed in Canadian society in the last 40 years.

In Canadian society, the public role for religion has steadily decreased. In other words, religion has become increasingly privatized. Religious commitments and values are fine for private individuals to have. But they must keep them out of the public sphere.

The second trend is the decline of the notion of citizenship. Instead of being citizens, we are consumers who want to get their money's worth out of governments.

These two trends together can, I think, explain in part what we hear about so often: the lack of enthusiasm for politics among the younger generation.

But religious commitments can't really be privatized. When we don't see them overtly in the public sphere, they have just gone underground. The people who founded and support CPJ know that. CPJ is swimming against the current as we insist that faith-based political advocacy and analyses are both legitimate and contribute to the common good. But this swimming upstream is worthwhile. It is worthwhile because it can be very fruitful for our fellow citizens to realise why religious commitments of any sort can't truly be privatized. Let me explain.

All human beings put their trust in something. All human beings have faith commitments. And when we're talking about our deepest commitments, they're religious commitments, whether or not they include theism or membership in an institutional worship community.

Christians or other theists aren't unique in having faith commitments.

Not only are these foundational commitments quintessentially human, but it is from these commitments that our vision of the common good arises. I'm talking now about worldview. Also, it is these deepest commitments that feed our motivations to do things in the public sphere. They give us energy, they give us a reason for doing things, they make our political actions meaningful.

This is why it has been a huge mistake to say, as many liberal democracies say, that religion – any ultimate commitment and value – can't play a role in the private sphere. In fact, as the analysis of CPJ points out, it doesn't really work.

Another part of the faith tradition out of which CPJ was born says that God's world is a coherent, integral whole; and we humans, as part of this creation, are too. What does that mean, especially in politics? How does that show up in CPJ's work?

Well, it brings me back to the replacement of our identity as citizens with an identity as consumers. See, the identity as consumers of government services is impoverished – we are so much more. The consumer identity doesn't take into account our relations with each other in communities and in Canadian society as a whole.

Another implication of the belief that God created a coherent and integral world is that the issues that arise in the public sphere are related. Most times we can't deal with one political issue without paying attention to how it's related to a whole bunch of other political issues. Let me give you a very brief example.

There's a real focus on issues of security right now. But we can't talk about security without addressing some of the underlying reasons why some groups of people have so little security that they turn to terrorism, which ultimately threatens the security of everyone. So to talk about issues of security, we need to talk about refugee issues, poverty, environmental degradation, access to environmental resources, religious freedom and tolerance, the condition of indigenous peoples.

If you are to deal with the complex interrelations between these issues – the reality that they are multi-dimensional and multi-relational – without getting bogged down or paralyzed, you need an integrated worldview from which to understand them. Because CPJ knows that God's creation is integrally interrelated, because CPJ has a coherent worldview, because CPJ is conscious of and up-front about its worldview, CPJ has made a contribution, and can continue to make a contribution, to Canadian society that is out of proportion to its size as a small organization.

So, one of the challenges for public justice in the future is to offer alternatives to these trends, as we've done for the past 40 years. Our staff has the task of identifying the specific issues that need work. For the rest of us, the task is to make time for regular reflection and action.

Let me give one brief example of what responsible citizenship might look like. It might include making the time to participate locally in regular roundtable discussions on local issues – in fact, many of you, I'm sure, remember doing this in local CPJ groups in years past. It might mean committing the time and energy to set something like this up.

Now have I said enough about public justice in the future? Not really, since in part, this is something for us as a community to decide. But the two things that I've talked about – the fact that human beings have ultimate commitments and the integral nature of reality, including the integral nature of us humans – are aspects of the underlying worldview of CPJ and they make CPJ fairly unique as a political advocacy and research organization.

Too often, we're faced with choosing between two extreme views of public justice – either privatize our own deepest commitments **or** try to impose our particular commitments and values on all of society. I don't think these choices let us be responsible to God's call for justice. God makes very clear that there must be justice for all and not just for those who agree with us.

So what can and should we do? We should each offer our own traditions and community as a resource for the common good of all. We members of CPJ can offer the insights of our own religious tradition – which views the nature of reality as coherent and integrated – in the service of the common good.

Even more specifically, in our own faith communities, we can model relations of mutual responsibility that are respectful of the diversity within these communities. CPJ has always said that public justice means justice for everyone. This is something that we have to remember: that Christ is for the world and so we must also be for the world.

## Janet Wesselius

Jan teaches philosophy at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

She has extensive volunteer experience which includes serving as a board member of a housing cooperative in Toronto, being involved with the Jubilee 2000 campaign in both Toronto and Edmonton, and currently as a member of the Ecological Justice Program Committee for KAIROS.

Jan has been a board member of CPJ for Alberta North/Northwest Territories since 2002 and now also serves as vice-chair.


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# Revealing the face of hunger

*A speech on the 40th Anniversary of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre, Calgary, Thursday, May 27, 2004*

by Marilynn Gunn, executive director of Community Kitchen Program of Calgary

As you have heard, community kitchens have grown. And why have they grown, and why has our agency flourished?

I'd like to say from the very beginning that the community kitchens do not belong to Marilynn Gunn, the community kitchens belong to the Lord. It was God's impression on me to start them and I take the Lord's leading every day in how to continue to have this agency grow and to reach out to other people in the city of Calgary.

Right now, the community kitchen last year, believe it or not, put $1.7 million worth of savings back into the city of Calgary – to our various programs we run. I have brought a profile with me and you can take it when you leave.

I want to give you some alarming stats about hunger in our city. A lot of us think hunger is just the homeless in the downtown core but what I found is that hunger is not there. Yes, there are hungry, but they have places like the drop-in centre, they have the Mustard Seed, they have Feed the Hungry on Sunday nights. Many organizations bring down sandwiches and food for them.

Hunger is hidden. It's behind closed doors in all our neighbourhoods and I'm finding it more and more. The faces of hunger of this city are the children living in poverty and going without, and the families.

Did you know that 24 percent of Calgary's children live in low-income households? Do you know how many children that is? That's 38,410. That's an awful lot of children right here in one of the wealthiest cities of Canada. Over 9,000 Calgary families are one-parent families with low-incomes. That means just a single mom, and we're finding a new thing, single dads. We never realized that moms are now leaving the home and dads are left with the responsibility of raising the children. Over 12,000 people live with extreme low incomes – $16,000 a year for a family of four. Could you imagine trying to live on that and pay the rent, buy the food, buy clothing, pay the utility bills, put gas in your vehicle to get to work, even buy a vehicle? That's next to impossible.

But worst of all is 20,889 have poor quality diets. What does that mean, and what does that look like? That means children are going to school with a bag of chips, a can of Coke, maybe a chocolate bar, and maybe that's it, maybe nothing.

Most in low-income families do not get fresh fruit and vegetables. That's the very first thing people cut off their grocery list. They don't cut off the Kraft dinner and the hot dogs. They cut off the fresh fruit and vegetables. Milk to some families is a delicacy. Can you imagine? Every child should be able to have milk anytime they want at any meal.

Another 6,636 children in our city face persistent hunger that goes unmet daily. These are children in our school, these are the ones that we can count, these are not the ones from 0-5. These children arrive at school with no breakfast, and no lunch, and sometimes maybe just two slices of bread and a bit of peanut butter for supper. That's alarming in our city. That shouldn't be happening anywhere in Canada.

Another 9,536 children experience intermittent hunger needs that go unmet. What that means is maybe they get to eat three nights out of the week, instead of seven. Maybe they have complete meals five times a week. Isn't that scary? I find it alarming.

A lot of our mothers, I'm finding now – single moms – they make a minimum wage, which is $5.90, the lowest in Canada, right here in Calgary. I figured that out today. In other words, they bring home $236 a week before deductions. I challenge you, can any of you live on that? That's $12,272 a year and many of them have children.

Hunger is your neighbour. It's in your neighbourhood. It's behind closed doors. Many of these people will not tell you they're hungry. How many of you know whether your neighbours' children had breakfast this morning? Do you know what they ate tonight? It doesn't happen, we don't know.

But when we see the children in the schools now, we realize that their learning capabilities are not there. They're lethargic. Come 10 o'clock in the morning, they're not thinking anymore. Can you believe that? They cannot concentrate. Why? Because they're so hungry.

Many of them become isolated, and when a child isolates himself he pulls completely back. I've been into the schools of Calgary and I've seen the children now. They isolate themselves; they don't have friends; they pull back; they don't play with anybody at recess; they don't go outside at recess; they learn to walk around the washrooms; they don't want anybody to know how they're feeling. Come lunch hour they don't want to let anybody to know that they have no food.

With that, the community kitchen program and myself, I decided to go on a mission. It's very interesting, when I started the kitchens, I started them in my laundry room with one little kitchen. It just kept on growing and growing.

Then one day, I was asked to be part of the Feeding Calgary's Children Initiative. Joanne Kirving said there's an initiative going on and we want you to go and see this, Marilynn, and be part of it. And my eyes were open and that's where I saw the children. That's where I saw hunger like never before. So we started the Good Food Box program. That's a program where families can buy the very first things they take off their shopping list: fresh fruit and vegetables.

And once again we'll "hand up," not "hand out," so we encourage people. We believe that people have to retain their sense of pride, and they have to feel like they can do it, that they are really supporting their family.

We started the Good Food Box three years ago. We started with 31 boxes and we thought, "wow, this is great, 31 boxes a month, we're reaching 31 families in the city." Well this week we are well over 1,000 boxes a month. The calls keep coming in. We can't keep up with them.

Where are these calls coming from, you're going to ask me. Well, the Calgary Interfaith Food Bank, after people get five days of food, they say: "Sorry, you can't apply anymore. You'd better try these other programs." They are referred to us.

We're not a large agency – we have six staff but we have a host of volunteers. So we've said: "Okay, we're going to run with this." But we can't keep up with the calls anymore.

I have a warehouse, and people started dropping off food on my loading dock. So we started a program called Spinsaround. Spinsaround is going out and rescuing perishables because we realized that Interfaith Food Bank (and thank the Lord for them) only gives you canned goods and dried goods. What happens to the fruit and vegetables, the milk and the bread? Did you know that – this is just an example from one of our chains – we will go to one store and pick up 16 shopping carts full of bread and buns daily from that store that were going to be compacted. They were going to put that food it in the garbage and it was going to the landfill – when we have children hungry.

So now we go to six stores and our truck makes two trips a day to rescue food. We have 42 Calgary agencies come to our warehouse on Tuesdays and Thursdays and load up their cars and take food to clients they know are hungry.

One of the biggest agencies is the Alexander House Centre. If you call them they'll tell that they have Spinsaround and they have the Good Food Box, they're on board. What Spinsaround does is it gets those perishables to homes where there is no food, where people have used up their supply of the food bank.

What does a mom do who has four children, is on very low-income, making minimum wage, after she gets her one week's hamper at the food bank? She has to wait two months before she can get the next hamper. And so in six months, she gets three hampers – 15 days worth of food. Is that going to help her?

We as Calgarians in this city have to come up with some initiative and some thinking outside the box to reach these families, because these children are our future. Believe it or not, these are the people that are going to look after you and I when we get old.

I was at a conference down in Lethbridge, and I was embarrassed. They called me down to speak and they had a lady up from Los Angeles. I got up and told about all the wonderful

things Calgary is doing. We are on the cutting edge. Community kitchens like ours don't exist across Canada. The Food Box doesn't really exist across Canada. Spinsaround doesn't exist. We're so proud that we just started a hot lunch program at one school, we're feeding 81 children a hot lunch who never would have had one. I just kept on talking until at one point this woman got up and said, "Congratulations on your hot lunch program. What took you so long here in Canada? Do you know our federal government, our national government, gives $3.26 for every child that is in need of a lunch across the USA? There's no qualifying. Only the principal knows what children get fed." She said, "Do you know that crime goes down in every city where they feed children?"

I said, "I believe that."

She said, "Do you know that even the army goes out to raise funds to feed these children?" I thought, am I ever embarrassed. If I could have crawled under the carpet in that auditorium I would have.

Then I went up to a conference in Edmonton and found out that they have a hot-lunch program up there and I can't understand why Calgary hasn't got one. So I've got a bee in my bonnet now; I want to know why.

This summer we're going out to the city parks. Last year we did 20,000 meals in seven weeks in parks in high-need areas in the city. We have a great big mobile unit; it has a big commercial kitchen in it. They gave it to me for the millennium and it was going to be the pride and joy of the city. It's a 48-foot trailer, totally equipped with a generator and everything you could dream of; two great big commercial stoves. They said, "this can be your training unit."

I thought, "My heavens, I can do a lot more with this than training." So we started a program called Tummy Tamers, because the city of Calgary was saying so many children were arriving at city parks not having had breakfast, no lunch, not even a bottle of water. Now we pull in with our mobile unit, we serve 200 hot lunches out of that unit. We pack it up in coolers and we take it over to another park and feed another 200. Then we give out approximately 450 snack bags which contain a bottle of water, a piece of fruit and a snack, usually cheese or something with a bit of protein in it.

We just did two parks the first year. Now we're on the road the full seven weeks. It's the neatest thing, we stay in an area for one week to 15 days, and then we carry food back to those areas. When we pull up: "The food ladies are here" and children come.

At first they didn't trust us. "Why are these people feeding my children? You can't go and eat there because who knows what they're going to say or do. Where did they come from?" Now we have parents that look for us and follow us during the summer wherever we go. Some mothers will get on the bus and take their children to the next site to ensure they have a hot meal that day.

We also started a program called Feeding our Future which feeds 200 children, the same children every day, in four areas. We do East Huntington Hill, the Mocha Resort Centre, and inner city in the Mission area. And this year, we have a major breakthrough, and you know, sometimes only God can open doors that we can't. I've been trying for years to get in to help the Sarcee of the Tsuu T'ina Nation. They've been in my heart; I've really wanted to help those people. Aboriginal children are at the highest risk.

This year I went to them and said, "Can I come in and feed 65 of your children every day this summer?"

They said, "Why?" And I said, "Because I have food and I want to give it to them." They said, "Yeah, we'll take the food, that's not a problem."

Wait a minute, there's strings attached. And they said, "But you're not-for-profit, how can strings be attached?" And I said, "In our other locations, we teach children good choices, bad choices. We teach them nutrition. We teach them that for 50 cents you can buy a little carton of milk and maybe an apple or a banana, rather than a bag of chips and a chocolate bar. We'll teach them nutrition but can you get them to do baseball games, go on hikes, nature walks, anything like that?"

Do you know who stepped up to the plate? Brent Dodginghorse who used to play for the Hitmen. I met with him and said, "If you'll take these children and walk and teach them in the afternoon after we feed them, I'll bring the feeding program in." And he said, "you're on." So this year we're going into Sarcee of the Tsuu T'ina Nation reserve and we're going to reach those children.

So as you can see, hunger is an issue in our city. And as our community kitchens grow, I'm finding hunger isn't just in our city. I've now had rural Alberta call me, and I've met with three mayors. One of them is the mayor of Cremona. We started a kitchen in Cremona because some of our rural people are in dire straits after the drought, the grasshoppers, and everything. They're really struggling.

So we've opened our kitchen and now we're getting the Good Food Box and we want to do a route and connect Cremona, Airdrie, Didsbury, all those little towns and open up kitchens in them and start the Good Food Box delivery. It looks like it's going to happen, and I'm heading outside of Calgary. That was a shock to my system at first.

I had a call from a lady over in Abbotsford, B.C. She said, "I just read an article and can I come and visit you?" She got so excited when I started talking to her she went back and spoke to her church, and her church said, let's run with it. Last week she came and spent a whole week, stayed at my house. We had a fantastic time. We are now going to be opening our first kitchen in Abbotsford, BC.

What we're finding is that hunger is not just here in Calgary. I'm finding it's all over. Most people don't want to talk about hunger.

There's two stories I want to tell you, just to show you what the face of hunger looks like. One of them was about a little boy.

We got some stuff for Spinsaround. You see schools come and pick it up too, and they put all this food out on the table in the hallway. I was meeting with the principal about going in and doing a hot lunch program in that school and the secretary didn't know who I was. I was looking at the table with all the food on it. I could see moms, dropping their children off, picking food off the table and taking it and not feeling embarrassed. They were smiling and they were sharing. I watched one woman take bread, and one woman was talking and they swapped bread and they were having a great time. And I was just kind of happy inside.

The secretary looked at me and said, "You know we get that everyday. I want to tell you a story about a little boy who came and he didn't have any breakfast, he had no lunch. He never went home at lunch even though he was supposed to. The day was really raining so they went out and tried to coax him to come in, because he was going to get very cold and wet.

He said, 'Oh no, no. My mommy told me I could play outside.'

They said, 'Well, have you gone home for lunch?'

He said, 'Oh yeah.'

But they knew that he hadn't, so they said, 'Well, come on in anyway.' He came in and walked by the table; he was eyeing the food. The teacher said to him, 'Are you hungry, son?'

'No, I had lunch.'

She said, 'Are you sure you're not hungry?'

Then he eyed an apple on the table and she said, 'Would you like some of that?'

He picked it up and he looked at it, then put his head down and said, 'Maybe I better not.'

She said, 'Why not?'

He said, 'My mommy told me never to let anybody know I was hungry because they'll come and take me away.'

You see, Child and Family Services will come in if they know there's no food. So now we work with Child and Family Services. The only problem in that home is that there is no food. Through our Spinsaround program, we will give them food, and we will try to get them into a kitchen and we'll work with them in Good Food Box.

That little boy's story broke my heart. I was determined that I was going to do something different. I was going to work to ensure that the children in this city will have access to food. I believe every child has the right to food.

Then I went back to one of our Feeding the Future sites and this is a story that changed my life and made me more determined then ever. These two little boys came in. That day we had a guest speaker from the Calgary Cannons, because we wanted to bring in people to tell these children that eating properly is good, and to mentor them and to talk to them on sportsmanship and being a team player and all these good things. These kids never got to meet anybody like that.

The Cannons players got all excited. They got a huge cake in the shape of a baseball and they were giving out baseballs and signing shirts. These guys just thought it was the neatest thing since the wheel.

These two little guys came in and they stood back and I thought: "Oh, there's isolation happening" – because you can just pick it up, just like that. They came in and they didn't join the other children. They looked at the food, all the food was out on the table.

I walked over and I said, "Please help yourselves, and just go and sit down and join the other kids."

The oldest boy said, 'I didn't come here for me, just for my little brother. I'm babysitting, you know.' I looked at him and thought, you can't more than ten years old. He said, "I'm a big brother, I'm babysitting. I just brought my brother here to eat."

"Well, wonderful, help yourself." The little guy sat down. The little guy ate so fast, I had never ever seen anything like it. It was like a little conveyor belt going up to his mouth. He had it all over his face, he had it down his shirt, he had it on the table. He couldn't get that food into him fast enough. Let me describe to you what this lunch was. They got a full sandwich, they got yogurt, they got a piece of fruit, carrot sticks, celery sticks, dessert and milk. He wolfed that down faster than any other child there.

A baseball player caught sight of this and said: "Look at that kid, what a pig."

I looked at him and I thought, "Mister, all of a sudden, I don't like you." I said, "That is a hungry child, sir. Maybe you've never been hungry. That's a boy who's hungry."

So I watched him. He didn't get in line to get his shirt or his baseball. He started sneaking over to the table where there was more food, and his eyes were looking around. And then I just watched him and his little hand went out and he grabbed another container, kind of hid it.

I walked over to him and I said, "Son, anything worthwhile taking is worthwhile asking for. And you know what, there's always enough food here, you'll never run out."

Well, he took it and he ate it all and he came back to me and he did something so cute. He tugged on my sleeve, he said, "Hey lady, you said if I ask I could get more."

I thought, how could you eat three? I couldn't even eat one of those meals. Those are big meals. I said, "You know what? You're going to be sick if you eat another one." Because you see children will gorge themselves. They will keep on eating until there's nothing left if there's no food at home because they don't know when they're eating next.

He looked at me, and he put his head down, and I saw fear come over him. He looked at his older brother and said, "Can we?"

Brother said, "No."

"Oh please, can we?"

Finally the brother said "Okay."

My assistant and I packed up. We put three or four packs in a bag and just loaded them up.

He looked in the bag, and said, "Wow, we can all eat tonight." Broke my heart. What do you say to a child who looks at you with tears rolling down his face saying, maybe we can all eat tonight? That meant mom too. What do you say to a child? How do you deal with that? I didn't know what to say.

It's against my rule to hug. I always tell my staff you can't touch the children, then we'll get in trouble. I reached down and gave him the biggest hug I could and begged him, "You come back every day, and we'll send food home with you every day." In that food we sent little brochures home – this is where you can get help. Please call. Don't be ashamed. We're here to help you. No one will ever find out who you are.

In September, after the program had closed, the mom phoned and said, "Hi, I'm the lady you send food to every night." She is now in one of our kitchens. Next September she's going to become a co-ordinator in our kitchen. That's the lady who has come the way back.

What do you say to a child? I would like to take that and ask every politician in this country: "What do you say to a child?" They promise that they're going to eradicate child poverty, they've been saying that, but they won't give us money for food. They said no. No to food. And so, as you can see a lot of work has to be done in this area, and I have to be careful I can only advocate ten percent (or lose charitable status -ed.).

I'm a grandma who says: I'm too old and I don't care anymore. I'm going to speak out because I believe in our children and our future. They are our future and they need a chance. I can't see poverty and the lack of food decreasing, I only see it increasing. It's not getting better, people. It's getting worse. The only thing is we're not hearing about it as much anymore. Because of things like, "I can't tell anybody, my mommy said they might come and take me away."

A woman last year, after we fed her child and gave them milk, walked up to me and said, "Marilynn, thank you so much for feeding the children all summer. The meal you gave them was their only hot meal that day. When you didn't come on Saturday and Sunday, we had toast and butter or margarine, sometimes dry toast and jam."

But she said, "I have one question I want to ask you. You gave them milk every day. What am I going to tell my children now? For years I've been taking their glass, filling it with water, and stirring with a spoon and saying 'it's magic, today it's white, maybe tomorrow it's chocolate'. And they believed me. But now they've tasted the real stuff, what am I going to tell them?" These were three and four year olds.

Once again I was left speechless. I never thought I would see this in our city.

But you know what, there is hope. As long as there's people like you and like me, and like other agencies in this city, that are willing to get up and fight for the children and fight against hunger, one day I hope to work myself right out of a job. I want to retire people. Only if we work together, as a group, are we going to combat this.

It's been such a blessing for me to come here tonight to speak and to speak from my heart. As you know, I didn't write a speech out, I never do.

But I want to tell you, that when you see a neighbour, or a little boy, or little girl, sometimes just wonder. You know, watch your neighbour. You can help them. It's just by one hand reaching out and touching another life that we can make a difference. At the community kitchens, when I started it, I said if I can make a change in one life, and in one family, I'll be happy. Now the community kitchen program in Calgary feeds over 18,000 people a month.

I never thought it would get there. But it's just by the grace of God. It's by His leading and His strength that we go forward. This community kitchen was birthed by Him and through Him it will continue.

I want to thank you all for having me tonight. I hope I haven't saddened you, because there are good things. When we see the children eating and they're happy and smiling, that's our reward. Because I do see it. At the end of the week, in the summer, I'll see children happy and smiling and playing and that way we know we've touched a life, and every life we touch will be better. So thank you very much for having me.

If you want to go on the internet, you can go onto the city of Calgary and get all the information on low-income families and the low-income cut off and all those kind of things to back our stats up. Thank you very much for having me and God bless you all.

## Marilyn Gunn

In 1993, Canada was in the grips of a recession and families were having a difficult time making ends meet. Aware of these difficulties, Marilyn Gunn proposed a plan whereby families with lower incomes could better feed themselves for less money. After presenting her ideas to a number of non-profit organizations in Calgary, the first community kitchen was born in 1995, through the participation of Thornhill Baptist Church. Numerous funding partners have helped this organization to grow to include 50 community kitchens. The organization has also expanded to include many other programs that bring the community together for the development of community solutions to the issues of child and family hunger. Marilyn's dream of helping families to make ends meet by giving them a hand up, rather than a hand out, has now grown into an agency that helps to service the gaps in the emergency food delivery system with an eye towards enhancing individual and family responsibility.

1996 Founder of Community Kitchen Program of Calgary and Current Executive Director
1997 Nomination for Woman of Distinction
1999 Outstanding Service, Calgary Association of Self Help
2000 Citizen of the Year, Mayor Al Duerr, City of Calgary
2001 Integrity Award, Rotary Club
2001 Woman of Vision, Global TV
2001 Bishop Henry Award, Outstanding Commitment and Service to Catholic Charities
Ordained by the International Association of Ministries


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## Stories from the North; Lessons for the South

*A speech on the 40th Anniversary of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre, Vancouver, Wednesday, May 19, 2004*

By René Fumoleau, priest and author

In 1953 I crossed the Atlantic Ocean by ship from France to Quebec City. The train took me to Edmonton and to Waterways-Fort McMurray. Then it was by boat northward to Lake Athabasca, down the Slave River across Great Slave Lake, and down Dehcho (Mackenzie River).

When I landed at Radeli Ko (Fort Good Hope) near the Arctic Circle, I didn't know anything of the K'ashotine Denes, their history, their history, their values and their 100,000 square km territory. Adele volunteered as my history and social studies professor:

> "Me and my husband, we used to trap all winter long. Sometimes way up the Mountain River, close to the Yukon border. At times, to the south, close to Nohfee Ke Gode (Loche Lake). Some winters, we lived near K'ahmitue (Colville Lake) nearly two hundred kilometers to the north-east. Good fishing there, and usually lots of caribou, good fur country, too, around Lac des Bois. Or we traveled North four or five days by dog team, to Tuk a Tue (Loon Lake), Roe Tue (Rorey Lake), and Fichelejee Tue (Canoe Lake). We had good dog teams those days and good legs and good snowshoes. My husband, he was lucky at moose hunting, probably because he was smart and not lazy. Me, too, I was good at snaring rabbits, shooting ptarmigan and partridge, setting and visiting fishnets.
>
> "When the trapping season was over, we returned to the village for a while. Right after Easter, we moved to Tuyahta, you know, way up the Ts'ude nihne (Ramparts River) the country with thousands of small lakes. Hard travelling because the snow was melting, but daylight all night, lots of ducks, geese, beaver and muskrat. Ha! Spring time! The whole world and us, too, we were frenzied with light and warmth.
>
> "Right after the ice broke up, we paddled back to the village. Then, we camped up Dehcho (Mackenzie River), below the big rapid, and the whole summer, we dried fish for the winter. In a good summer, we made eighty bales of dry fish, you know, with one hundred and twenty fish in a bale. It was something to clean and open up all those fish, to hang them in the sun, and later in the smoking tent. Came fall, off we were to the trappings grounds. We were young and smart in those days, and me and my husband, we raised five children."

I couldn't keep my feelings to myself: "You and your husband, you must have worked so hard all your life!"

Adele smiled, and shook her head, possibly wondering if I would ever understand, “No! I told you we never worked, we lived in the bush all the time.”

In 1970 I settled for a few months in T’e’ehda, a small Dene community without phone and electricity, and without a permanent road to Yellowknife, about 25 km away.

I was fascinated by the games Dene children invented according to the seasons. It was perfectly safe for them to play on the "road" between the houses. Joe owned the only truck in the village, and snowmobiles had not arrived yet. In winter, any stretch of road turned into an arena. Children handmade their hockey sticks. Blocks of firewood became goal posts. Players wore moccasins and parkas, and I couldn’t figure out who was on what team and which official rules applied or did not apply. One November afternoon, I decided to watch attentively. The Eagles and the Ravens started with five players each. The score climbed, 1-1. Then, the Ravens scored twice in a row, so they gave a player to the Eagles to even the chances. Later on, the Eagles led by two goals, and in turn, they gave one player to the Ravens. Then I understood why the scores were always so close: 2-1, 4-3, 5-4, 3-2, and no team was ever really beaten.

I moved to Lutsel K’e nine years ago. Antoine, now 50 years old, told me what happened to him when he was 12 or 13 years old and lived in the Barren Land with his parents and his eight brothers and sisters:

> "My dad had set a long trap-line to catch white foxes. Me, I was learning with a few traps not so far from our tent. One December morning, when the sun never rises even at noon, I started with my four dogs. I had already visited a few traps when wind, snow and blizzard enfolded us. Stretching my arm I couldn’t see my hand. I turned my toboggan upside down, and I crawled underneath. The dogs too, they knew their trade: they curled themselves along the toboggan on the protected side. The evening, the whole night!
>
> "Finally the storm tired itself out and a pale daylight appeared. The dogs shook themselves free of snow. The clouds reached the ground. The frozen waves of the snowdrifts looked totally unfamiliar. Not one usual landmark! ‘Where is the north? South? Where is our camp?’ My dogs had often shown better flair than me. I harnessed them. I faced the team in one direction, in another one, but they didn’t move. Nowhere to go.
>
> "Then I heard some noise and I turned my head. Twenty meters behind us a white wolf walked silently, a barren-land wolf, two metres long. The wolf walked by us and veered a bit to the left. I don’t know why but the dogs heeled. I jumped into the toboggan and we followed the wolf, one hour, two hours? I don’t know, I don’t know. At one point, the wolf turned his head and looked at me and the dogs. Then he galloped away towards the left. I looked ahead, I looked around to the right, to the left: ‘Oh, I know where we are. Our tent is behind that hill, ten minutes away, straight ahead'."

I share those stories to show how the Denes lived and felt for 10,000 years when they used to say, "This land doesn't belong to us. We belong to the land."

In the late 1960s, the Dene world came under attack from all sides, especially from the "Territorial Government" which was established in Yellowknife in 1967. "Whatever the policy of the territorial government is called, assimilation, colonization or genocide, its goal has been to destroy us as Denes." To insure their survival, the Denes, in October 1969, established the Indian Brotherhood of the NWT.

In August 1970, the Federal Government issued its *Northern Pipeline Guidelines* on how to move natural gas from the Mackenzie River Delta and the Beaufort Sea to the U.S.A.: the largest ever project of private enterprise in the history of Canada.

The President of Imperial Oil declared: "Our company should move on to our northern properties as an army of occupation." From my own experience in May 1940, when the German army invaded France, I knew what an army of occupation meant. In October 19, 1971, I happened to be in Inuvik when Robin Abercrombie made a presentation at the Research Center. He was the president of Alberta Gas Trunk, one of the five companies forming the consortium called "Gas Arctic." He overwhelmed me with statistics about "the" pipeline. Thousands and millions of tons of steel, of cubic yards of gravel, of manpower hours, billions of dollars….

After his presentation he answered a few questions. The last question was:

"Mr. Abercrombie, about your pipeline: The Aboriginal nations around here say that the land along the Mackenzie Valley is their land and that they should be consulted. Also people who are concerned about the environment say that there haven't been enough studies done, and that such a pipeline could severely disturb the environment and create real problems for the future. What can you tell those people?"

Mr. Abercrombie's answer: "Us, we let those people talk. We have our timetable. We start building in September next year."

Many "white" residents of the NWT were also concerned that the exploitation of northern natural gas, and a pipeline to carry it to U.S. markets, might not be in the best interest of Canada and Canadians. In Yellowknife, they organized "Alternatives North." In September 1971, they invited John Olthuis of the Committee for Justice and Liberty (CJL, now Citizens for Public Justice or CPJ) to Denendeh. We appreciated our first contact with CJL. Many Denes and white people had fears, dreams, desires and aspirations.

True to its motto: "Our research stands up. Our advocacy has bite," CJL provided us with accurate information on the business world and political situations and also suggested strategies to make our voices heard and our action effective. A concert of voices from across Canada forced the federal government to establish the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry in 1974. In 1975, John Olthuis made a presentation, *Economic growth: Blight or Blessing*, to the Institute for Christian Studies. In September 1975 the Canadian Conference of Catholic

Bishops issued the document: *Northern Development At What Cost?* The Presbyterian, Lutheran, United, Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches established the reflection and action organization "Project North", in which the Quakers and the Mennonite Central Committee were also partners.

Until then I had lived only with Catholics, and, as a priest in a small community, I could make all my decisions by myself. Now I was sitting and learning from members of all different churches. Also, for the first time, I had the opportunity to listen to, learn from, and make decisions with women.

In November 1976, CJL published 50,000 copies of a popularized version of the *Evidence presented by Project North to the National Energy Board*. In April 1977, Gerald Vandezande published *Canada at the Crossroads*. In 1977, Hugh and Karmel McCullum and John Olthuis published the book: *Moratorium: Justice, Energy, The North and Native People*. I also remember well my first long interview with Gerald Vandezande which was published in CPJ's Spring 1977 newsletter.

The Denes, the churches and CJL created a network of supporters in 75 Canadian cities. Most of us, after first feeling sorry for the Denes, realized their situations was the result of unjust structures which also affected us negatively. We were not only supporting the Denes but also helping ourselves. In many offices and houses hung a poster with these words from Lila Watson, an Australian Aboriginal woman: "If you have come to help us, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with ours, then let's work together."

Denes and Whites, we discovered that we can enrich each other with different gifts and strengths.

| **Some people favor** | **Some people favor** |
|---|---|
| lines | circles |
| action | patience |
| saving | sharing |
| climbing | dancing |
| competition | co-operation |
| innovation | tradition |
| obedience | participation |

Also, we can help each other to deal with our different brokenness, weaknesses and limitations. In 1976, in Edmonton, three hundred friends of the Denes gathered for a weekend of reflection in the First Presbyterian Church. During a small workshop on Saturday, a woman addressed a Dene man named Frank:

> **You talked about your Dene Nation. How many Denes are you?**
> I don't know.

**Are you a few hundreds? Many thousands?**
I don't know.

**Do you have census, statistics?**
I don't think so…

**You have a vast homeland, how many of you live there?**
Madam, I know that I am a Dene, but I don't know how many people are conscious of being who they are.

On Sunday morning one woman asked George Barnaby: "We listened to you and to how you plan to de-colonize yourselves. We feel good about your courage and your commitment. For us in the south, is there anything we can do to help you?"

"Oh yes, madam, if you really want to help us, try to de-colonize yourselves also."

*Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland: the Report of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry,* was released in September 1977. Judge Berger foresaw that "Oil and gas development in the Mackenzie Delta-Beaufort Sea region is inevitable," but recommended that "a Mackenzie Valley pipeline should be post-poned for 10 years."

Twenty-seven years after the Berger Inquiry, the Mackenzie Valley pipeline is again front news in Denendeh. A few Dene communities have formed an Aboriginal Pipeline Working Group to ensure they can profit from the construction and operation of the future pipeline.

We may still consider what a Fort McPherson man told the Berger Inquiry:

> "I am an old man. I never went to school and I never traveled very far from my village, but I heard that in the world, millions of people have no food and no clean water, millions of people are starving to death. If the pipeline could help those people I would tell you: 'Go ahead and build it right away, even if it will bother us a bit around here.' Because we have to help those poor and starving people. But if the pipeline is going to make richer some people who are already very rich, then it will make all the poor people of the world poorer. Then it's no good."

We still need CPJ.

Thank you.

B E N E F I T S

"I gave you detailed information on the Mackenzie Valley pipeline and I will conclude my presentation. If my company builds the pipeline it will bring enormous benefits to all the people of the valley. Do you have any questions?"

"Sir, will the pipeline eliminate the need for food banks, produce affordable housing for all, reduce the cost of living everywhere, bring all the nurses and doctors we need?"

"Well, . . . another question?"

"Sir, will the pipeline put a stop to the drug traffic, eliminate alcohol-related problems, reduce child poverty and child abuse, lower the crime rate and the suicide rate, provide a cure for the victims of addictions?"

"Well, . . . another question?"

"Sir, will the pipeline remove social tensions, prevent school dropouts, reduce family breakdowns, eliminate the need for jails, rid people of racist feelings?"

"Well, . . . another question?"

"Sir, will the pipeline help reduce the atmospheric pollution, provide better water in every community, clean up all the contaminants left everywhere?"

"Well, . . . really, it's not up to my company to address those concerns."

"So what benefits are you talking about?"

*René Fumoleau*

## René Fumoleau

René Fumoleau, O.M.I., was born in France in 1926. He was ordained a priest in 1952 and came to the Northwest Territories in 1953. He worked with the Dene in Fort Good Hope from 1953 to 1959, in Fort Franklin from 1960 to 1968 and then returned to Fort Good Hope between 1968-1969.

In 1971, he began historical research on Treaties 8 and 11 which resulted in the publication of "As Long As This Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939". From 1970 until 1994 he lived in Yellowknife and then moved to the community of Lutsel K'e.

During his time in the North he was an avid photographer and many of his photographs have been displayed, sold and published. He has also published several monographs, including "As Long as This Land Shall Last." In addition, he has produced and directed several films including "I Was Born Here" and "Dene Nation." He is now active in the area of storytelling, speaking at numerous national conferences.


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# In Diversity, with Faith, Coming Together for Justice

*A speech given at each of the eight 40th Anniversary celebrations of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre*

by Harry J. Kits, Executive Director

Sometimes, despite the real potential of Canada, the inherent goodness of creation and the bounty of this fine country, when we face the challenges of the day, the public mood, our mood, can swing hard to cynicism. Sometimes it swings to intolerance, or to apathy, when it seems solutions are impossible and there's no room to engage. People often feel overwhelmed. What can we do anyway?

For those of us involved with Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) and the Public Justice Resource Centre (PJRC), our faith calls out from beyond apathy or powerlessness. It calls us to open ourselves to our common humanity, our calling to love God by loving our neighbour, including in our political life together. So together, we have adopted the perspective of public justice. It is a perspective vision that helps us not to be lured into false dichotomies, or black-and-white positions when they are not necessary. We see the need for healing steps to be taken. We see real people suffering real hardships, that concrete policies and prophetic vision can alleviate. That's the call of public justice, the call from God for the kind of government which Romans 13 says is "for our good." Justice for all, an economy of care, the joining together of all circles of society for the well-being of all and for the common good. Public Justice.

Public Justice is the banner under which PJRC does research and education, identifying core values in policy discussions, animating emerging themes in public discourse, and creating documents that bring the light of faith to these values and current topics.

Public justice is the standard under which CPJ promotes particular policy alternatives, offering a way forward for public engagement, providing direct advocacy to mainly federal decision-makers, organizing political interventions in Ottawa.

CPJ and PJRC – two approaches, two mandates, one perspective from which to go forward.

So how does this two-part, faith-based Christian organization address the challenges laid before us?

I know that some of those who have become our partners in various coalitions and initiatives have felt a bit uncomfortable about our being so upfront about the Christian vision that drives us. That is understandable, because we all know examples of how faith-based public visions can be inappropriate, but also because we are part of a culture that tries to stifle such faith-based expressions, and often ridicules them.

So speaking out of faith is challenging. We continue to need to learn together how these expressions can best contribute to the common good.

In fact, people of faith often need to challenge each other about whether specific political choices are consistent with their faith commitments. Christians need to challenge each other about how their shared faith commitment leads some to propose policies that cause suffering to other citizens and damage to the environment, and others to argue for a greater role for government in the public good. Christians must do this, just as Muslims need to challenge each other about the meaning of the Prophet's teachings for public life in Canada today, and just as Jewish believers need to wrestle with the Torah and one another about how governments need to act today.

Of course, in the midst of bringing these deepest commitments out of the closet into public life, we must ensure that they are not used as fighting tools. Too often the temptation for people of faith, including those who hold to a secular faith, is to try to impose a sense of "just us" rather than "justice." We try to use the government to impose a particular religious point of view to the exclusion of others. In that way, faith commitments lose credibility and no longer enrich the common good.

Faith commitments, indeed all ways of understanding the world, must engage each other in the public square to help shape the common good. They need to influence the shaping of public values that can be the basis of policies contributing to the well-being of all and the integrity of creation. This open and respectful wrestling around core commitments needs to be the hallmark of democracy in a pluralistic country like Canada.

So CPJ and PJRC are unabashed about the Christian impetus that drives our work. It is something that shapes our vision, gives us coherence, and has provided us with a long-standing framework for addressing the multiplicity of policies we have taken on over the past 40 years. It allows us to continue to strive to meet our mission. It allows us to make a credible enough contribution that we can continue to work with partners who may not share our specific religious vision, but who share our commitment to public justice and the common good.

40 years ago, just as CPJ and PJRC began, Martin Luther King wrote a letter from the Birmingham jail. He said in that letter, that "We are called to be thermostats that transform and regulate the temperature of society, not thermometers that merely record or register the temperature of majority opinion." I trust that we have been blessed to have played some small part in setting the temperature of Canada over the past 40 years.

A 40th anniversary is a significant time, a time that calls to mind both roots and change.

Looking back over those 40 years gives us cause for celebration. We have worked through different political times, with an ever-developing support community, and with an increasingly diverse group of co-workers. We have consistently sought new ways of understanding, of articulating, and of practising the biblical call to advocate and do justice. We have sought new ways of expressing political love for our neighbours and the creation

around us.

The core perspectives remain, but nuances have varied over time, policy issues have come and gone – sometimes from the larger political agenda, sometimes just from our own agenda. There have been differences among us about the practical policies we advocate, some more difficult than others. What we hope is that our common public-justice vision holds us together to keep talking, to keep searching, and to keep seeking healing steps.

I celebrate the increasing diversity of our support community, staff and board, and look forward to that diversity continuing and growing. Keeping our eye on the unity of vision for public justice, we can join hands together to speak in a wider voice, in different colours, and with different accents.

It may seem overwhelming. But, on the other hand, will it be different than in the early 1960s, when a small group of people, many newly arrived immigrants, thought they could help make a contribution to Canada by starting what became CPJ and PJRC?

Paul Loeb in the book *Soul of a Citizen* argues that "we don't have to be saints," but instead should aim to be "good-enough activists" who "take one step at a time." In other words, we should not look on the media stars of social change, the Prime Minister or Premier, as the only ones who can effect change. Stories abound about people who took small steps that built on the small steps of others, and who, sometimes over decades, were able to effect change.

May we each in our own place in life, and together through CPJ and PJRC, take up the challenges to advance public justice, and to let justice flow for the next 40 years.

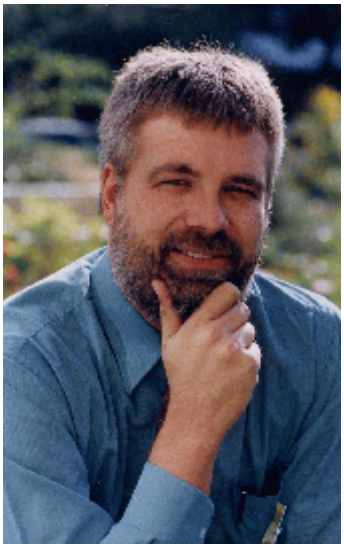
We thank God for the blessing of all of you – a loyal supporting community. Thank you for celebrating with us tonight.

We continue to feel blessed by God who has sustained these organizations in good times and bad, and has given them an opportunity to be a blessing in Canadian society.

We rely on your continued prayers, participation, challenges, and financial support as we go forward, past and future together.

Thank You.

## Harry J. Kits



Harry has been executive director of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre since 1988. He has shepherded the organization through a variety of staff changes and organizational developments while maintaining its core commitments to faith-based public policy development and advocacy. In this leadership role, Harry has been able to demonstrate his quick and thorough grasp of issues and his considerable experience in organizational development and fundraising.

A frequent speaker at public meetings and conferences, Harry also conducts workshops and seminars on public policy issues. Harry has written numerous articles for various books, magazines and newspapers.

Harry's academic background is especially strong in the areas of multiculturalism, pluralism, faith and public policy, and political theory. Harry received his B.A. in Political Science from Dordt College, Iowa and his M.Phil.F. in Political Theory from the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto. His particular interest is pluralism.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**Dance to the Music of Prophets Mending the World**
***Celebrating 40 years of Citizens for Public Justice***

*A poem on the 40th Anniversary of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre*

by Linda Siebenga, CPJ member and poet living on a farm in Blackfalds, Alberta

**Dance to the Music of Prophets Mending the World**
dance with us today on the edge of anticipation
kingdom-coming participation
forty years of Citizens for Public Justice

dance to the music of prophets mending the world
with liberating principles
drawing us to our calling to embrace the sabbath vision

as they perch on the possibility of enough is enough
long enough to celebrate
that one movement

pause to let your name Lord
touch their lips
with requests to see your kingdom coming
your will being done
here as well as there
now

put on their working clothes
and grapple with the grinding wheels
of economics and politics

hand out lessons of care for this household of Canada
eyes to see the children without breakfast
the mothers and fathers stressed out when
their minimum wage doesn't cover their needs
those whose rent soars above their ability to pay
the unemployed and over-employed
both needing a balanced day's work

care for this earth that is nudged off the charts
by producing and consuming
in a trader's game where the poor
and the environment become national pawns

bend the ears of politicians to help them reconsider
their emphasis on debt-reduction
at the expense of the least privileged

help them consider
the crucial needs and deep strengths
of native people
the preciousness of each person who has
a toehold on Canadian soil
help them think through
what it feels like to be a refugee
waiting
in a psychological nowhere land
between persecution and a safe country

celebrate today with these prophets
who work at their calling to be salt

who take up the challenge of Isaiah
to speak up
for those who are unable

**we live as one to love as one**

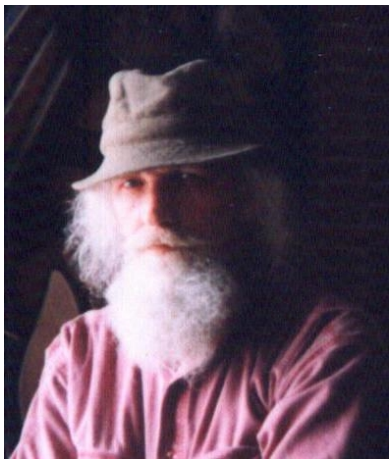
*Artwork for the 40th Anniversary of Citizens for Public Justice and the Public Justice Resource Centre*

by Matth Cupido, artist living in Canning, Nova Scotia


As we are called essentially to be shepherds to one another; and are exhorted to live that life before God and in unity with each other as being just, loving tenderly and to walk humbly and pure with your God … A line that has come to me sometime back is: we live as one to love as one; thinking this might capsulate the efforts of your involvement in the light of Micah 6:8.

Congratulations and I pray that God may continue to bless and keep you.
*Matth Cupido*

Hi there. Allow me to raise a glass to you on this fine day and thank God for His faithfulness, for His Spirit, a Spirit of truth, a Spirit of power, a Spirit of humility and a Spirit of Awe. A Spirit that still shatters the darkness and holds up the truth and Spirit of freedom and reconciliation. Thanks be to God who has provided men and women to help and Shepherd His people - Matth



*Note from Matth Cupido read on May 29, 2004 in Edmonton, Alberta when the artwork was officially unveiled*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PJRC, founded in 1963, is a research and education organization that responds to God's call for love, justice, and stewardship in the understanding and discussion of core values and faith perspectives in Canadian public policy debates. It works closely with its sister organization, Citizens for Public Justice.


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CPJ is a national, non-partisan organization that promotes justice in Canadian public affairs. CPJ responds to God's call for love, justice, and stewardship through research, education and advocacy. CPJ works closely with its sister organization, the Public Justice Resource Centre.

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