



EXCAVATING THE OIL SANDS WITH PUBLIC JUSTICE: Serviceable method or past its 'best-before' date?

By John Hiemstra

"What do you think the oil sands development boom is all about?" a CPJ supporter recently asked me. I've been working on this topic non-stop during my current sabbatical research, and I'm still not sure what to say. So, let's begin by looking at how some prominent Canadians see the oil sands and government's role.

When Prime Minister Stephen Harper examines Alberta's oil sands developments, he sees "an enterprise of epic proportions, akin to the building of the pyramids or China's Great Wall. Only bigger." In the same speech and thereafter, his government promotes Canada as an emerging "energy superpower."

But world-famous University of Alberta water scientist Dr. David Schindler,

who studies tar sands, sees "the world's most unsustainable development." He wants government "to put on the brakes and say: 'Come back when you can get your water consumption down to half, when you can get your greenhouse gas emissions down to half, when you can reclaim these landscapes and then we'll hear about more oil sands plants.' But, our government's not doing that. It's absolutely out of control up there."

When Premier Ed Stelmach examines the oil sands developments, he sees Alberta as "Canada's engine of economic growth." He wants government "to provide the necessary services for the province and industry to flourish ... and the market will eventually control itself." "There's no such thing as touching the brake," he said. "The economy, growth –

that will sort itself out. We just want to make sure we're globally competitive."

But when Melody Lepine, industrial relations director for the Mikisew Cree Nation near Fort McMurray, sees the massive oil sands operations, she concludes: "We haven't even come to terms with trying to understand what it is doing on a national or even on a global scale yet. It's just really too much, it's too overwhelming to understand."

Analysis and approach

What do you see when you examine the oil sands developments? What ought Christians to see? And what does our picture mean for what we think government ought to be doing about these developments? What policies should be enacted?

— continued on page 5

Round-up

Much of the Round-up content below is expanded on in articles on our website, www.cpj.ca. Sign up for our e-newsletter Ola! to see these full features every month.

Budget response

The Federal Budget 2008, introduced in early March, was billed as “Responsible Leadership.” Yet the values and priorities in the budget did not include measures to reduce poverty, address homelessness or protect the environment.

Public justice calls governments to take leadership responsibility on these issues – and Budget 2008 drastically failed to answer this call. CPJ’s annual response to the budget, available on our website www.cpj.ca, challenged its values and priorities, proposing alternatives based on just foundations.

Temporary foreign workers

Temporary foreign workers have been coming to Canada for over 40 years to help with a shortage of workers in the job market. But as CPJ intern **Jennifer Heggland** learned, both agricultural and low-skilled workers are being subjected to unfair conditions in Canada. In March, Jennifer attended a conference about advocating for temporary foreign workers’ rights, and was interviewed on a local radio station about how we as citizens and governments can ensure these workers’ rights are protected.

CPJ in BC

CPJ’s policy staff travelled across the country in March and April. **Public justice intern Trixie Ling** attended the annual congress of the Canadian Housing Renewal Association in Vancouver. Trixie joined with politicians, city planners, housing experts, professors, non-govern-

mental organizations and students to discuss strategies for tackling the housing and homelessness crisis in Canada.

Policy analyst Chandra Pasma made her way to Fleetwood Christian Reformed Church in Surrey to lead a forum on poverty reduction. Chandra wrapped up their six-week forum by exploring how a poverty reduction strategy could address the different facets of poverty and make a real difference for Canadians living in poor today.

Guaranteed livable incomes



MP Keith Martin with CPJ’s Harry Kits.

While in BC, Chandra discussed guaranteed livable incomes with anti-poverty and income security advocates.

CPJ continued this dialogue on Parliament Hill. **Executive director Harry Kits** met with MP Keith Martin in January to discuss Bill C-462, Martin’s bill that would create a refundable tax credit for those living on low incomes.

In February, Harry, Chandra and Trixie met with Senator Hugh Segal, who is also advocating for a guaranteed livable income in Canada. “Everyone needs a basic income,” said the Senator in the course of their discussion on how to ensure everyone has the resources to live in dignity and meet basic needs.

Poverty reduction campaign

Over ten percent of Canadians are currently living in poverty. In April, CPJ launched *Envisioning Canada without Poverty: a CPJ call to action*.

This citizen engagement campaign seeks to raise awareness of poverty in Canada, and calls for the federal government to adopt a national poverty reduction strategy. You can get involved: see pages 6-7 in this issue of *the Catalyst*!

2007 annual report

CPJ recently released its 2007 annual report in the lead-up to our Annual General Meeting on June 9 in Ottawa. The annual report highlights our activities of the past year, which included our move to Ottawa, beginning an exciting new chapter of CPJ’s life with new staff just streets away from Parliament Hill. The report also outlines our budget for 2008.

Catalyst awards

In May, the Canadian Church Press handed out its annual awards. *The Catalyst* received four awards, including two first place honours. Congratulations to the authors and editors – join us in celebrating these achievements! For more details on the awards, visit our website www.cpj.ca.

Welcome Suzanne

In February, CPJ welcomed **Suzanne Boileau** as our **director of finance and operations**. Suzanne joins CPJ with much experience in civic engagement, having worked with social justice organizations across Ontario. Welcome her warmly when you have the chance!



Suzanne Boileau

<p>Agreement no. 40022119</p>	<p>the Catalyst Spring 2008 (v.31, #2) ISSN 0824-2062 Citizens for Public Justice tel. 613-232-0275, toll-free 1-800-667-8046. e-mail: cpj@cpj.ca web: www.cpj.ca</p>	
<p>Undeliverable copies of <i>the Catalyst</i> should be returned to: Citizens for Public Justice, 309 Cooper St., #501 Ottawa, ON K2P 0G5</p>	<p><i>The Catalyst</i>, a publication of Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ), reports on public justice issues in Canada and reviews CPJ activities. Please contact us if you wish to reprint material. EDITOR: Karen Diepeveen DESIGNER: Eric Mills <i>Catalyst</i> subscription: \$15 (four issues).</p>	<p>CPJ’s mission is to promote public justice in Canada by shaping key public policy debates through research and analysis, publishing and public dialogue. CPJ encourages citizens, leaders in society and governments to support policies and practices which reflect God’s call for love, justice and stewardship. CPJ membership fee: \$50/\$25 low-income, includes <i>the Catalyst</i>.</p>



Aboriginal and church leaders herald Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission

By Ali Symons

Ted Quewezance, executive director of the National Residential Schools Survivors Society, is a big man – tall and broad. Standing before the crowd of 200 at Vancouver's Museum of Anthropology, he says that as a boy he was abused for six years at a church-run residential school. Then he turns to the church leaders beside him and says he was moved by their apologies. Then he embraces them, one by one; the crowd stands and applauds.

This was one scene from *Remembering the Children: an Aboriginal and Church Leaders' Tour to Promote Truth and Reconciliation*, which stopped in Ottawa, Vancouver, Winnipeg and Saskatoon in March 2008. Leaders from the Assembly of First Nations participated, as well as from the churches that ran the schools: Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and United. They spoke of their common history, then the churches reiterated their apologies and shared how they're trying to improve relationships with Aboriginals.

The tour heralded Canada's upcoming truth-and-reconciliation commission (TRC) on Indian residential schools. Government-funded and church-run from the early 1800s until the 1970s, the schools were a system of planned assimilation. Aboriginal children were removed from their families and brought to institutions up to hundreds of kilometres away. Some were cared for, but many suffered physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Their language and culture were repressed. Many died of disease.

Ted Quewezance's embrace hints at the healing the TRC could bring after this painful history. Some groups have started this work, but the rest of Canada still awaits, with mixed emotion, the official start of the TRC.

What will the TRC be?

The TRC will be a five-year forum for former students and others involved (teachers, children of former students) to put their experiences on the record. It will include statement-taking and truth-sharing forums, seven large public events, and will create a research centre, and a permanent commemoration. The \$60 million budget is part of the residential schools settlement that financially compensated many of the 80,000 former students still alive. South Africa's TRC is the closest model, although the tone will be shaped by the commissioners.

Finally things are starting to roll. On April 28, Aboriginal judge Harry LaForme was named chair of the TRC, to be established June 1. In the meantime, Canadians await the government's announcement of the other two commissioners and its official apology to former students.

This wait is wearing. "We in the church community are impatient for the federal government to fulfill the commitment they made in the last throne speech to apologize on behalf of the people of Canada to Aboriginal Peoples," said Rev. Hans Kouwenberg, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, in Vancouver March 5. "We are impatient, and we have told them so, for the launch of the TRC."

The churches aren't alone. Aboriginal activists like Stewart Phillip, head of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, have accused the government of dragging its heels in announcing the TRC. Federal NDP Aboriginal affairs critic Jean Crowder has said, "The delay means that healing can't start I know that some of the elders in communities that I've been in have been asking: 'What's going on?'"

Photo: Wayne Chose.



Musqueam drummers lead a ceremonial walk from the Vancouver School of Theology to the Museum of Anthropology.

A spiritual movement

While the TRC stalls, emotions swirl. Many are skeptical of a TRC organized by a government with a poor Aboriginal justice record – one that did not sign the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and dissolved the Kelowna Accord, a \$5 billion package to improve the standard of living in Aboriginal communities.

There's also anger, reluctance, fear, and most of all, apathy – much of this in church circles, where many

are either unaware of residential schools or feel the issue was resolved years ago.

If Canadians are to be engaged, it's through the radical spirituality of the TRC. It will not be a venue for action – though this is of course needed – but a rare collective space to talk, listen and heal. People will open up deeply as they share stories, participate in ceremonies and discuss ideas like "forgiveness." In these moments the commission will reach beyond itself, to touch the lofty goals of Truth and Reconciliation.

National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald's reflections on the *Remembering the Children* tour capture a sense of what is possible: "The Spirit of a loving Creator was calling us to a surprising new reality and transformation. Pain, regret, sadness, mixed with hope and joy – few moments in life are just like it. [The tour] was not just a well-staged media event; we were witnessing the beginnings of a spiritual movement."

May Canada's TRC also not just be a well-staged media event, but may it continue this work of a spiritual movement, one that is God-breathed and leads to tangibly improved relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. Much healing needs to take place, and Canadians need to start soon.

CPJ member Ali Symons, a web writer at the Anglican Church of Canada, helped plan the Remembering the Children tour.

Living out diversity? Neighbours in Canada

By Karen Diepeveen

At the beginning of April, Statistics Canada released data from the 2006 census. One particular finding created media buzz: Canada's visible minority population is now over 5 million, comprising 16.2 percent of the population.

The visible minority population grew 27.4 percent from 2001-2006, compared with the population as a whole, which grew 5.4 percent. The census also showed that most immigrants – more than 80 percent – come from places outside Europe.

While the numbers are new, this announcement points to something Canadians have long known and proudly stated: we are a diverse country. Our history of welcome extends far back, and we have received people from around the globe to be part of our multicultural mosaic.

This pride may stem from our history as a newcomer nation. Today, Canada is made up of many newcomers, some who arrived yesterday, others who arrived 60 years ago. Whether people are immigrants from Belgium or refugees from Rwanda, we have shown we will extend open arms to them. Our neighbourly attitude is seen to be a typical Canadian trait.

Truly welcoming?

This ideal of Canada as a warm, welcoming and diverse country has been upheld for many years. But when the ideal is compared to reality, we don't always measure up. Our reputation is marred by events revealing we haven't always fulfilled our duty as neighbours. For example, the Colour of Poverty website (www.colourofpoverty.ca) shows that many new immigrants have trouble finding jobs and accessing basic health care. And when they do not have a good grasp of either official language, it can be difficult to find classes to help them learn.

This lack of welcome, this lack of becoming neighbours, extends back to the settlement of our country. Coming to this 'new world,' European explorers chose not to become neighbours with the Aboriginal peoples. Instead, Aboriginal peoples were subjected to harsh assimilation measures and forced integration.

Many Aboriginal peoples live in third-world conditions on reserves, without adequate housing, clean water or access to

health care. Many older Aboriginal generations are still scarred and broken from the abuse they suffered in residential schools.

Today, living out our diversity is not as easy as it may appear. For example, poverty affects different groups more severely. In Toronto, racialized Canadians (people of colour who are Canadian-born and newcomer communities of colour) are three times more likely to be living in poverty. Canadian social policy does not always ensure that everyone is equally welcomed and cared for. So while many people are happily welcomed into Canada each year, the commitment to being neighbourly is not always realized.

Being neighbours

While the reasons behind these facts and statistics are many, our actions as neighbours – or lack thereof – have contributed to these problems. As neighbourhoods become more diverse and our culture is enriched, how do we make sure we as citizens and our governments welcome the stranger and become neighbours?

Public justice includes a call to be welcoming. Within this call lies a deep and compelling call to action – action that includes responsibilities for governments and citizens. Through public policy, governments can respond to the needs of diverse populations – including refugees in need of language training and Aboriginal peoples lacking basic necessities. Public policy needs to account for how people are affected differently by policies, social structures and environmental change.

As citizens, we are called to be welcoming and to respond to our neighbours in need. These actions could include greeting your new next-door neighbour with a word of welcome and a smile. It could mean removing policy barriers so refugees can find safety here and escape countries of harm. Recognizing diversity and being welcoming means we need to ensure public policies and the common good are actually good for everyone.

Responding to this public justice call to action involves being creative and open to new ways that we can be welcoming. And it requires openness to structuring our public dialogue differently so that everyone – regardless of how long they have lived in this diverse country – can participate.

Karen Diepeveen is CPJ's communications coordinator.

Joe Gunn is CPJ's new executive director

After a prayerful and thorough search, the Board of Directors for Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) is pleased to announce the appointment of a new executive director, Joe Gunn.

Chair Janet Wesselius expressed the board's delight: "We are excited about Joe's vision for CPJ. His extensive knowledge of justice issues will complement the in-depth research CPJ has already done, strengthening CPJ's unique public justice presence in Canadian policy debates."

Harry Kits, outgoing executive director, agreed. "Joe's appointment is great



Photo: Marie Weeren

Joe has been part of many justice initiatives. In Latin America, he worked in refugee camps and for Canadian Save the Children. In Canada, he has engaged in policy development, research and advo-

news for CPJ. I have every confidence that, with Joe's wide experience and his commitment to advancing public justice, CPJ will continue to make a great contribution to Canada."

cacy, most recently at the Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation established by the Notre Dame Sisters in Ottawa.

Enthusiastic about participating in CPJ's public justice approach to policy debates, Joe anticipates linking his past work to CPJ's research and analysis. "CPJ's practices of public justice and seeking the common good give concrete expression to what I experienced in Latin America's expression of 'the preferential treatment of the poor,'" he said.

CPJ staff are eager to welcome Joe.

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BOOKS

SUMMER BOOK SUGGESTIONS FROM CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE

A faithful, meditative, strong voice for peace

Rabble-Rouser for Peace: The Authorized Biography of Desmond Tutu. By John Allen
New York: Free Press, 2006.

Reviewed by Joe Gunn

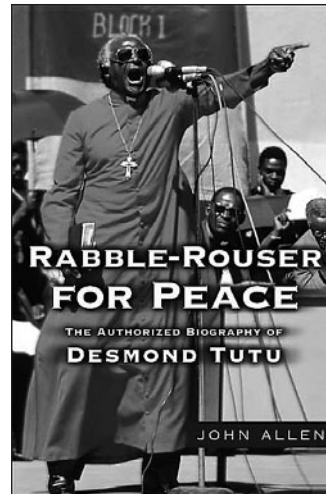
Is Desmond Tutu a noisy gong, a clanging cymbal, or, as this authorized biography attests, “a rabble-rouser for peace?”

Two dozen years after winning the Nobel Peace Prize, South Africa’s first black Anglican archbishop, now in his 77th year, has recently made forceful demands on world leaders to boycott the opening ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics. In March, while seated beside the only two South Africans who rival him in esteem, Nelson Mandela and Albertina “Ma” Sisulu, Tutu issued a frontal attack on the corruption and arrogance of the ruling leaders of the African National Congress (ANC).

Author John Allen, a white South African journalist, worked as Tutu’s press secretary, and later as director of media

liaison when Tutu chaired the country’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Allen’s third book about Tutu limits criticism to the diminutive cleric’s “folly” of insisting that a poorly designed fountain be built at the Archbishop’s residence. (Tutu also had playground equipment installed on unused land and opened the swimming pool to the diocese for picnics.)

Allen does allow us some privileged access to understanding what has made the great man tick. Tutu’s immense commitment to a disciplined prayer life is described in one of the book’s most moving passages. “Tutu the ebullient extrovert” and “Tutu the meditative priest who needed six or seven hours a day in silence” are shown to be two sides of the same coin. A telling anecdote



recalls how Tutu agreed to meet Oliver Tambo and Thabo Mbeki, two of the ANC’s most senior leaders in exile, early one morning. The archbishop had the two attend Mass before getting breakfast!

Former U.S. Vice-President Al Gore, who worked with Tutu at Harvard, has likened Tutu’s moral authority to Gandhi’s “truth-force.” Christians interested in social change will benefit from reflection on Tutu’s

“African model for expressing the nature of human community” in the crucible of one of history’s greatest liberation struggles.

Joe Gunn is the incoming executive director of CPJ. Currently, he is the coordinator of the Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation established by the Notre Dame sisters in Ottawa.

Eating local: a new take on an old theme

The 100-Mile Diet: A Year of Local Eating
By Alisa Smith and J.B. MacKinnon
Toronto: Random House of Canada, 2007

Reviewed by Annie McKittrick

In her 1971 book *Diet for a Small Planet*, Frances Moore Lappé wrote that “feeding the earth’s people is more profoundly a political and economic problem than an agricultural one” and “you must help to solve the problem.”

The 100-Mile Diet is a new take on this theme. This book is about a couple who decided to eat only food produced within 100 miles of their home. Fortunately they live in Vancouver, not in Prince George, so with some effort they find enough varieties of local food to meet their nutritional needs, with an occasional lapse. The story of their food foraging and culinary adventures is interspersed with discussions on how we humans are spoiling the earth.

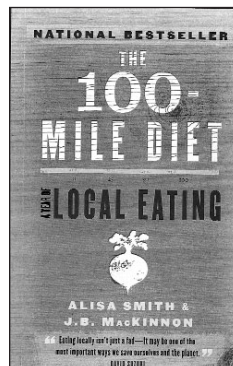
By the time I read the book, I had heard the authors discuss their adventures numerous times in the media, and found the book itself to be too focused

on the authors’ emotional state and their “yuppie” lifestyle. It was clear from the book that only those with a lot of disposable income can successfully eat a 100-mile diet, even in Vancouver with close proximity to the ocean and Fraser Valley farmers.

The book does create awareness of the environmental cost of all our food, and of the need to preserve agricultural land and support local farmers and food producers. It has sparked 100-mile dinners and activities throughout Canada.

While the premise of eating only food produced within 100 miles of your home is interesting and worthwhile, it is impossible for most. So it may be time instead to find our copies of *Recipes for a Small Planet* by Ellen Buchman Ewalt and *More-with-less Cookbook* by Doris Janzen Longacre, and adapt the recipes to use as much locally produced foods as possible.

CPJ board member Annie McKittrick is a local food enthusiast who is blessed with the opportunity to walk every Saturday through the woods to a local organic farm. She works to research and promote the social economy.



Books on poverty, inequality and finding hope

Sub-merge: Living Deep in a Shallow World: Service, Justice and Contemplation Among the World's Poor

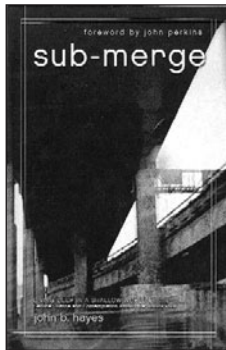
By John B. Hayes. Ventura, California: Gospel Light Publications, 2007

Reviewed by Emily Hutten

“Our planet is spiritually, socially, and environmentally at risk, and the vulnerable poor are the first to pay the price. How we respond to this situation, individually and collectively, matters deeply.”

John Hayes offers this manifesto as a prophetic call to individuals and the church: follow Jesus into a new way of living, join what God is doing among vulnerable communities. Through stories and reflections about InnerCHANGE, a Christian order among the poor, Hayes introduces women and men who have committed their lives to building community with the poorest, most forgotten around the world.

Hayes' wise reflection on the challenge and journey of choosing to “nail your feet to the floor” among a vulnerable community will nurture and affirm anyone following a similar path. You will connect with members of faithful mission orders who live ‘presence ministry’ in Christ’s name and understand deeply the commitment “to care and care some more. Then care again.”



Poverty and Policy in Canada: Implications for Health and Quality of life

By Dennis Raphael
Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2007

Reviewed by Maria Páez Victor

Dennis Raphael writes masterfully about inequality and public policy in our country, and how these affect the quality of life of our most vulnerable citizens. He demonstrates that inequality, the root of poverty, is the most prominent determinant of disease and illness, individual unhappiness and social unrest.

Raphael also clearly indicates that the social determinants of good health are the same crucial elements in reducing poverty:

adequate income and employment, access to education, support for social networks, and the quality of the workplace and the environment. Eradicating poverty requires serious consideration of social justice and equality.

Unfortunately, income inequalities in Canada have increased, while social assistance benefits and minimum wages not kept people from poverty. Free-market ideology has led all levels of government to cut crucial programs and public policies that can directly diminish inequality. We should get all politicians to read this book.

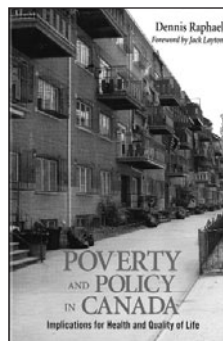
Less Than Two Dollars a Day: A Christian View of World Poverty and Free Markets

By Kent A. Van Til. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007

Reviewed by Greg deGroot-Maggetti

Less Than Two Dollars a Day examines different theories of distributive justice to find one that would change the reality that 40 percent of the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day.

Kent Van Til successfully argues that a theory of justice must do more than protect life, property and contractual exchanges, the bases of free market economics. It must also include a universal right to basic sustenance. But Van Til's final recommendation of providing basic sustenance through charitable giving to international development agencies falls short: it does not do justice, for example, to communities whose land, water and livelihoods are destroyed by mining companies. Van Til's theory of distributive justice needs to be applied to those situations and must ask what responsibility different spheres of society have in



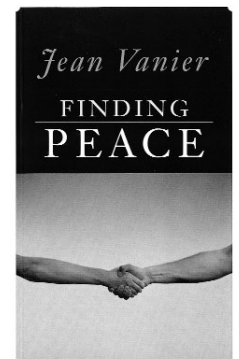
making sure justice is done. At its best, *Less Than Two Dollars a Day* provides an accessible walk through different theories of distributive justice. Unfortunately, the final chapter offers a disappointing conclusion to an otherwise compelling work.

Finding Peace. By Jean Vanier
Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003

Reviewed by Jim Joosse

In this book, Jean Vanier charts a path from conflict and fear to a place of peace, identifying several stages. The first stage of this journey is to identify the origins of conflict, followed by recognizing the need for change, and then the difficult and risky business of leaving familiar places to reach into another person's experience and space for healing and reconciliation.

This fine little book is not a philosophical treatise or political theory. Instead it is a practical manual for finding peace as the daily calling of every person. Vanier provides a guidebook that could apply within the intimacies of our relationships, but could also stand as a manifesto towards international peace.

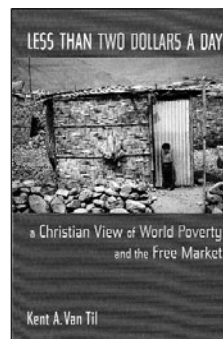


Dorothy Day: Champion of the Poor
By Elaine Murray Stone
New York: Paulist Press, 2004

Reviewed by Lorraine Land

Elaine Murray Stone's book is more than an overview of Dorothy Day's fascinating journey, from tempestuous youth to conversion to Catholicism to radical activism as an advocate for the poor and marginalized. Stone provides a helpful overview of Day's impact on religious, peace and activist movements of the past century.

Stone also traces the movement to canonize Day. As Stone rightly points out, Day was not the picture of a stereotypical meek and unassuming female saint – she was unsentimental and unrelenting in her radical love for the poor. She refused to treat poverty and misery as an abstract problem, instead attending personally to those in





front of her and their real and immediate needs.

Day's life's work and writing help the rest of us better understand the importance of living out justice, peace and love, providing an inspiring and clear call to com-

munity, simplicity and pacifism. Stone provides a readable introduction to Day's life and those ideas.

Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement

By Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian J. Walsh. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008

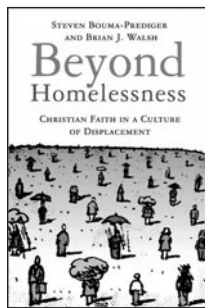
Reviewed by Trixie Ling

"A home is more than bricks and mortar," explain Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian J. Walsh in a book that unravels the socioeconomic, ecological and spiritual dimensions of homelessness. With homelessness rampant in an affluent society, the search for home is seen in the longing for belonging, identity, and security. Bouma-Prediger and Walsh illustrate these dynamics while engaging us to think deeply about a future beyond homelessness.

The authors also show how environmental destruction compounds homelessness. "What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?" They argue we can deepen our understanding of ecological homelessness if we see the world as God's creation and "turn from earth as home to earth as holy." Practicing "earthkeeping" through peace, justice, compassion and wisdom, we can be faithful homemakers.

The book ultimately succeeds in giving us a rich understanding of the biblical vision of home by weaving together a dynamic account of creation, fall and redemption, and revealing a memory of home, the experiences of homelessness and the longing for homecoming.

The different dimensions of homeless-



ness in our time call us to respond accordingly. We are offered a vision of homecoming that nourishes us for the journey and gives us hope of a place we deeply long for.

The Economics of Happiness: Building Genuine Wealth

By Mark Anielski. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 2007

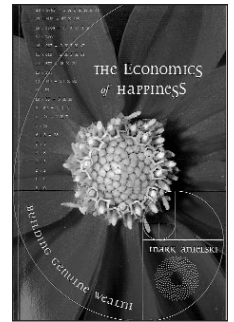
Reviewed by Gerda Kits

The core message of the book is simple: we need to orient our societies and economies around what we truly want. Mark Anielski is convinced that this goes far beyond the material. Our economic systems should help achieve genuine wealth – good health, meaningful relationships, spirituality, a clean environment, peace, justice, joy.

The Economics of Happiness includes

little discussion of how an economy committed to genuine wealth might function. Instead, it focuses on the first step: choosing the direction to go. The book has little economic jargon or theory; the discussion of values and goals Anielski calls for is one in which everyone can participate.

But Anielski's hopes may be a little too idealistic. It may be that everyone wants peace, love and harmony – in the abstract. Deciding what that concretely means may not be as easy as he makes it seem. Nevertheless, the discussion needs to take place, and this book is a good place to start.



Igniting a revolution of hope

Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crises, and a Revolution of Hope

By Brian D. McLaren. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2007

Reviewed by Henni Helleman

In *Everything Must Change* we hear an echo from the life and teachings of Jesus. But are we ready to listen?

Brian McLaren invites Christians to translate their faith into a way of life that makes a positive difference in this world. He shares a nagging question, one central to his journey: "How do the life and teachings of Jesus address the most critical global problems in our world today?" This question forms the foundation for the book and presents a fresh, holistic and provocative vision of Jesus's teachings.

Throughout, McLaren's predominant metaphor for our society is a suicide machine. He writes, "When the social, political and economic machinery of a society gets out of control, or through some flaw of design or operation begins to destroy its creators and intended beneficiaries, then it has become a suicide machine."

McLaren believes the suicide machine developed through the "framing story" our society believes in. A framing story tells what is important in this life, what is worth fighting for, what is the purpose of humanity's existence. McLaren says we have let ourselves believe the lies of a deficient framing story. It's important to both open ourselves up to a new, alternative story, and examine how Jesus spoke truth in love to the powerful and inadequate framing story of his day.

This book forced me to acknowledge how we are living a dual narrative, wearing a mask of piety while being complicit in our world's inequitable system. Provocative and refreshing truth-telling must be awakened, and McLaren has certainly ignited a revolution of hope that can change everything. We have been challenged to defect from the dominant system, to disbelieve the destructive framing story and to trust instead in the new framing story of Jesus.

Henni Helleman is a retired principal and teacher. She and her husband volunteer with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee and have been to Africa several times helping with disaster relief.



Equality and diversity: Which is trump?

Uneasy Partners: Multiculturalism and Rights in Canada

Janice Gross Stein, et. al. Guelph: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007.

Reviewed by Kathy Vandergrift

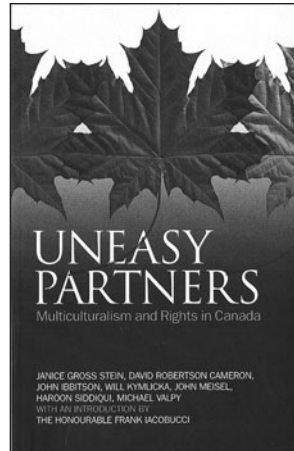
Multiculturalism and equality rights are uneasy partners heading for conflict, according to the lead essay by Janice Gross Stein in this collection of essays. Other contributors, all leading Canadian political commentators, assert that Canada is managing diversity issues well; that these issues are unrelated; or that multiculturalism is a subset of human rights.

Stein thinks it is time Canadians have a national family conference about the rules that govern life together in the home we love. Easy banter about love of diversity and respect for human rights becomes a sticky question when she asks whether the resurgence of religious orthodoxy in all major religions threatens the equal rights that define our life together. Stein challenges her own experiences by asking if synagogues that discriminate against women should be eligible for tax exemptions.

This is just one example of many

public policy tensions that arise in Canada's pluralist society. CPJ has long advocated for space within Canada for different communal worldviews and ways of living, and we too struggle with how that fits with respect for individual rights.

In true Stein style, she invites other viewpoints to the table. Leave the issue alone, advises political journalist John Ibbitson, because some issues are better left unopened to preserve the family. Reflecting on Canada's history, both Haroon Siddiqui and John Meisel are optimistic that time and accommodation will resolve most of the issues, while Michael Valpy proposes a stronger focus on social cohesion. Will Kymlicka cautions against mixing religious freedom issues with multiculturalism; recent debates, however, show that the divide between religion and culture is porous. Everyone agrees that dealing with Canada's treatment of Aboriginal peoples is a higher priority. Should Canada open up this debate?



For many it is not worth the trouble it will cause and there are greater priorities. But is that true for the young girl coerced into becoming another wife of an old man in the polygamous religious community in Bountiful, BC, where religious

freedom trumps protecting the rights of girls?

It is not a coincidence that the woman writer in this volume says we need this debate; the rights of women and children are often compromised in the name of religious freedom and respect for cultural diversity.

This easy-to-read book sets the table by outlining the history and introducing different views. Stein's question will continue to

crop up in specific sticky issues across Canada, and we will continue to fumble through. Is there a better way?

Kathy Vandergrift, vice-chair of CPJ's board, is pursuing graduate studies in Public Ethics and also chairs the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children.

A handbook for 'do it yourself' advocacy

The Art of the Possible: A Handbook for Political Activism

By Amanda Sussman
Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2007

By Chandra Pasma

Recently, I turned to the Internet only to find that the organization dealing with my husband's medical condition no longer existed. A little more searching, and I discovered an advocacy campaign waged last year by the now-defunct organization. It targeted Members of Parliament, requesting funding for medical research and organizational support. Obviously, the campaign was not a success.

As someone who works in policy, the reasons for the failure were immediately clear to me: the group had asked the wrong things of the wrong people! Individual MPs have little say over what goes into a federal budget, and once that bud-

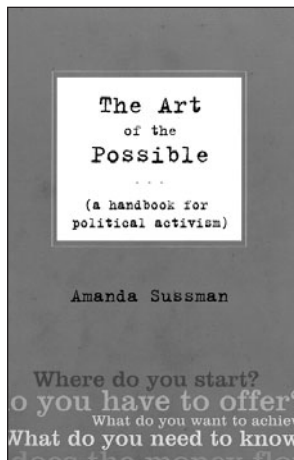
get is passed they can't start handing out funds to new causes and organizations. Applying for grants, approaching department officials and raising awareness about this particular condition might have led to a different outcome for this organization.

Amanda Sussman's book, *The Art of the Possible: A Handbook for Political Activism* is a good primer for anyone interested in avoiding similar mistakes. It is a step-by-step guide to how our political system works, who makes decisions how and when, and how you can contribute to those decisions. Sussman starts at the beginning – finding and defining your issues – and works her way through the process, includ-

ing a chapter on understanding why your issue might get stuck. In easy, accessible terms, Sussman manages to break down advocacy so that anyone can understand and engage in it.

One thing Sussman does not do, however, is address how government priorities can be changed. If your proposed change does not fit within the government's values, she notes, this is not the time to expect successful advocacy. Those seeking to change the values on which a government bases its decisions and actions will need to look elsewhere for advice.

Chandra Pasma is CPJ's public justice policy analyst.



Making sense of the oil sands

— continued from the front page

These are quintessential questions of analysis and approach. How do we understand a series of economic, social, political and environmental developments that are so large, so influential and so filled with risks and implications that, as Lepine says, it's almost "too overwhelming to understand"?

And how would we assess who or which agencies and institutions were responsible for each element of these developments — whether positive or negative? How would we untangle the complex web of responsible agents, organizations, institutions and relationships that have, over time, produced the current oil sands development boom? How would we know which agency ought to have been doing what type of function(s)?

How should we identify and frame the policy problems? Furthermore, how would we come to clarity on what government(s) ought to have been doing historically in this development, and what government(s) ought to do today?

These questions are all about approach. What system of inquiry should a Christian public policy group, such as CPJ, use to make sense of the developments occurring in our culture and times?

Past its 'best-before' date?

Over the past decades, CPJ has often engaged Canadian public life with a public justice approach, raising critical policy questions on problems such as the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline, poverty, Aboriginal rights, pluralism and refugee policy.

But is this approach still serviceable with the advent of explosive global issues such as climate change, the war on terror, or massive problems growing from the oil sands boom? Can a public justice approach still provide insight and direction, for government and other actors, on what ought to be done about these emerging issues and problems? Or has this approach passed its 'best-before' date? Is it time to explore new approaches?

The answer, in my humble opinion, is both yes and no.

Yes, we should explore new approaches because Christians should always have their eyes wide open for new possibilities, approaches and tools for analysis. Most approaches are onto something in God's good creation, and if appropriated



Author John Hiemstra stands inside a dragline bucket, used in mining oil sands.

with spiritual discernment and wisdom, can teach us new insights.

But no, we shouldn't dump the public justice approach just yet. If used in a wise and dynamic manner, it has a number of insights and features with a unique capacity to perform significant qualitative and holistic analyses of complex realities.

I return to the CPJ supporter's ques-

tion: "What do you think the oil sands development boom is all about?" I can't answer this in a short article. But at CPJ's Annual General Meeting on June 9 in Ottawa, I will explore how we can use a public justice approach to make sense of this development. Join me for this discussion; if you can't make it, look later for the full text of the speech on www.cpj.ca.

Homework assignment

In the meantime, spend some quality time thinking about the quotations below on the oil sands. What understanding of the oil sands boom does each one reflect? What approach should we use to best make sense of each quotation? Clearly, there are deep differences in how we perceive the oil sands. What does each quote say about the dispersed responsibilities of various actors, and more directly, the distinct task of the state? What exactly is public justice?

Former CPJ policy analyst John Hiemstra is a professor of political science at King's University College in Edmonton. He will be speaking on the oil sands and public justice at CPJ's AGM on June 9 in Ottawa.

Quotable Quotes on the oil sands

"For every barrel of oil they extract there, they have to use enough natural gas to heat a family's home for four days. And they have to tear up four tons of landscape, all for one barrel of oil. It is truly nuts. But you know, junkies find veins in their toes. It seems reasonable, to them, because they have lost sight of the rest of their lives."

— **Al Gore, commenting on Canada's tar sands**

"There's a myth out there that oil sands production comes at too high an environmental cost. There are ongoing attempts in some quarters of this country [US], and of course in ours [Canada], to slow down or even stop oil sands production. These attempts don't really reflect reality. Even worse, they could serve to jeopardize this country's [US] energy security, at a time when Asian markets are clamouring for oil."

— **Premier Ed Stelmach, March 2008, in Washington, D.C.**

"Harper sees himself as the leader of a 'global energy powerhouse' and is committing Canada to a fossil-fuel economy."

— **editorial in Nature, a leading science journal**

"Keeping America competitive requires affordable energy. And here we have a serious problem: America is addicted to oil, which is often imported from unstable parts of the world. The best way to break this addiction is through technology..."

— **President Bush, State of the Union Address, 2006**

"Most of the oil to be taken from the tar sands will go to the United States. In effect, the Athabasca deposits will be the centrepiece of a new continental energy grid. Its main purpose will be to provide a secure supply of fuel for the American industrial and military machines."

— **Hugh McCullum, Fuelling Fortress America**

Envisioning Canada without poverty



By *Chandra Pasma and Trixie Ling*

In 1989, the House of Commons passed a unanimous resolution calling for an end to child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. It was a moment of hope and inspiration for the millions of Canadians living in poverty.

But nothing happened to make that commitment a full reality. In fact, as we approach the 20th anniversary of that occasion, not much has changed. Poverty rates have not changed significantly in the past 25 years, and today 3.4 million Canadians live in poverty.

For Christians committed to public justice in Canadian policy, it can seem as though “the poor you will always have with you” is a curse of inevitability rather than a challenge to become engaged in a politics of hopeful citizenship!

But something can be done about

poverty in Canada. Poverty reduction strategies have been used successfully elsewhere. A comprehensive anti-poverty strategy can provide the vision and the framework for accountability needed to effectively deal with poverty.

Recently, the National Council of Welfare outlined the elements of successful poverty reduction strategies. They include a national strategy with measurable targets and timelines, an action plan and budget that cut across and within governments, mechanisms of accountability, and poverty indicators to monitor progress. The comprehensive strategy provides vision and an accountability framework for the government’s commitment to reducing poverty. Within this strategy, policy goals and targets can be set and promoted.

Several Canadian provinces have already recognized the value of a poverty reduction strategy. Quebec and New-

foundland and Labrador already have strategies, while Ontario and Nova Scotia are working on defining their own.

Within Canada’s system of government, however, it is important that the federal government also be involved in fighting poverty. Only the federal government can do certain things, and the Newfoundland and Labrador government has already stated publicly that it needs federal involvement for its strategy to succeed.

The federal government has tools like tax credits and transfers, and national programs like employment insurance, that could help reduce poverty. The federal government also has a leadership role to play in setting national standards and contributing funding and support to the provinces, with appropriate accountability, in areas like housing, child care and pharmacare.

A federal poverty reduction strategy could have a significant impact for the 1 in 10 Canadians who live in poverty.

Citizen engagement

This is where we come in. As CPJ discovered in meeting with Members of Parliament (as noted in our last issue of the Catalyst; see “Fighting poverty with policy: MPs share party visions with CPJ”), it’s going to take some work to create the political will among MPs to achieve a federal poverty reduction strategy for Canada.

CPJ believes that citizenship for public justice requires active engagement in promoting the common good. We need to be involved in dialogue with our leaders and decision makers. We should challenge them, encourage them, support them and work with them for change.

Poverty represents a significant public justice concern. Poverty is more than just lack of income, it is also lack of access to

What is a poverty reduction strategy?

A plan to substantially reduce poverty and inequality; ensuring that all citizens have access to a sustainable livelihood.

Why a poverty reduction strategy?

- Poverty rates in Canada have not changed significantly in the past 25 years.
- The poverty rate in 2007 was 10.8%.
- Strategies work: in Ireland, persistent poverty levels dropped from 15.1% to 5.2% between 1994 and 2001.

What could such a strategy include?

- Renew and extend existing housing programs due to expire March 2009
- Commit to long-term strategic planning with appropriate funding on affordable housing
- Reform EI to give access to people engaged in precarious or non-traditional employment
- Create a genuine national childcare system and early learning plan

well-being and full participation in community life. Poverty has a significant cost for individuals, their families and their communities. It also exacts a heavy toll on society. Poverty seriously undermines the dignity of people created in God's image.

God's vision of Jubilee is a society in which there is no poverty: the Bible speaks often of God's concern for the poor. For Christians, reducing poverty is therefore an important part of the biblical call to do justice. Poverty is a serious challenge in seeking a society in which all people can flourish and fulfill their callings, contributing to the common good.

This challenge calls us to be completely involved: as individuals, as volunteers, as business owners, as community members, as faith communities. It also requires a public policy response. Public justice requires government involvement, creating structural change and providing leadership to our collective commitment to eliminate poverty.

As citizens, we have the opportunity and responsibility to challenge and encourage our MPs to take serious action on poverty. CPJ is calling citizens to action on poverty. We want you to write or visit your MP and ask for their commitment to work towards a federal poverty reduction strategy announcement in Budget 2009.

You can begin by learning more about poverty and how a poverty reduction strategy works on our website, www.canadawithoutpoverty.ca. You'll discover information there about how to find your MP, how to write a letter or conduct a visit. There are also suggestions for more ways to get involved in fighting poverty, and a community forum to be inspired by what CPJ members are doing across the country.

If you write your MP a letter, send CPJ a copy of your letter, and address it to the spokesperson for poverty issues of each political party (Lynne Yelich, Ken Dryden, Tony Martin and Yves Lessard). We will present them when we meet with each of the parties this fall to encourage them to adopt a federal poverty reduction strategy.

Engaging faith communities

CPJ Board member Sue Wilson notes that faith and action exist in community. "We know that faith is nurtured and deepened in the context of community where personal relationships call us to make our love concrete in different ways. But the prophetic voices of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures call us to live commu-

A CPJ call to action

Envisioning Canada Without Poverty:

20 years after the House of Commons voted unanimously to end child poverty in Canada, 1 in 10 Canadians live in poverty. This is a significant public justice concern.

It's a concern we can do something about. A comprehensive anti-poverty strategy would make a significant difference in the lives of the millions of poor Canadians.

This poverty reduction strategy should include a vision with measurable targets and timelines, an action plan and a budget, mechanisms of accountability and poverty indicators to monitor progress.

How can you be a part of this change?

- Write or visit your local Member of Parliament and ask for their commitment to work towards a federal poverty reduction strategy announcement in Budget 2009.
- Send CPJ a copy of your letter addressed to the parties and we will present them on your behalf this fall.
- Explore poverty reduction from a faith perspective in your church community.

Together, we can work toward a Canada without poverty.

– www.canadawithoutpoverty.ca

nity in even deeper ways. It is not enough to be a caring individual."

What does it mean for us as members of community to respond to God's call for justice? At www.canadawithoutpoverty.ca, you'll find reflections engaging this question and exploring the connections between faith and poverty, with questions to stimulate dialogue in a small group. You'll find suggestions for putting together a worship service that reflects on poverty and justice, including prayers, litanies, hymns and songs. There are also tips for

holding a letter-writing event at your church and links to other faith-based organizations.

Together, we can work toward a society in which all people can flourish and fulfill their callings, making God's vision of a society without poverty a reality. It begins with a vision. Will you let that vision lead to action?

CPJ policy analyst Chandra Pasma and public justice intern Trixie Ling are excited to engage with CPJ members on poverty reduction.

New director to start in August

— continued from page 4

Policy analyst Chandra Pasma said, "The policy staff are very happy to have Joe join us in our advocacy for a federal poverty reduction strategy. We also anticipate the insights Joe will bring to our dialogue on diversity in Canada."

Joe has also been active in various ecumenical circles and in community engagement. He served as the founding vice-chair of KAIROS Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, and was campaign coordinator for Make Poverty History, where he developed the campaign through public education and grassroots initiatives.

Joe will join the CPJ team on August

5, and is very much looking forward to this time after watching CPJ's development over the years, including the recent move to Ottawa.

"I've long been attracted to CPJ's articulation of public justice and work for the common good as essential elements of 'hopeful citizenship,'" said Joe. "It will be an exciting and welcome challenge to bring this positive message to life through CPJ's work in Ottawa and across the country."

Living in Ottawa, Joe and his wife are being raised by their 15-year old twins, who have been fundraising to go to Ecuador this summer "without Mom and Dad" with Free the Children.

“For you always have the poor with you...”

By Rev. Gary Hauch

About two days before Jesus was crucified, a woman broke open an alabaster jar filled with costly ointment and poured it on his head. Some witnesses were outraged and said, “Why was the ointment wasted in this way? It could have been sold for more than 300 denarii, and the money given to the poor.”

300 denarii were worth about a year’s wage and could have fed so many hungry people! No wonder they were upset with her apparently wasteful display of extravagance.

But surprisingly, Jesus comes to her defence. “Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish, but you will not always have me...” (NRSV; see Mark 14:3-9).

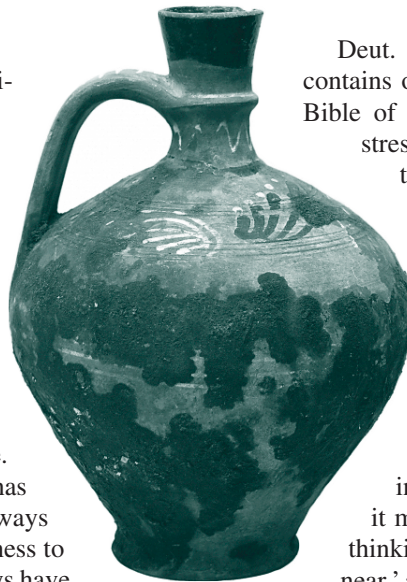
These words “you always have the poor with you” are sometimes used to deflect attention away from meeting the needs of the poor. But is this a legitimate use of this verse? Is Jesus really encouraging his followers to turn from the poor?

Not at all. Immediately after Jesus said, “you always have the poor,” he went on to say, “and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish.” The issue here is not rejecting the poor, but that this woman sensed something the others did not: Jesus’ immediate, overwhelming need – he is about to die. She acts by anointing him for his burial with an extravagance foreshadowing the extravagance of the suffering he is about to endure, itself a sign of the extravagance of his love out-poured. Soon it would be too late to show such kindness.

The contrast Jesus sets out is between an immediate need that must be addressed now and an ongoing need that can be addressed after. Rabbinic teaching on good works makes a similar point: burying the dead, which must be done today, is to take precedence over visiting the sick, which can be done tomorrow.

The text is clearly not concerned with dismissing the poor. In fact, by using the phrase, “you always have the poor with you,” Jesus alludes to Deuteronomy 15:11, which is all about caring for the poor. It reads, “There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward those of your people who are poor and needy in your land” (NIV).

By alluding to Deut. 15:11, Jesus ups the ante from alms giving (giving proceeds of the ointment to the poor) to social justice (addressing a major structural condition of poverty in Israel: crushing indebtedness). The context of this verse is the Year of Release, the Sabbath Year, when all debts incurred during the previous six years are to be fully cancelled.



Deut. 15 calls the reader to pay close attention, as it contains one of the highest concentrations in the Hebrew Bible of a grammatical construction that lays emphatic stress on what is being said. Here, we’re to be attentive to the twin practice of lending generously without charging interest to the poor whenever they are in need, and then, remarkably, freeing them from the burden of their unpaid debt every seventh year. Here’s how the narrator puts it:

“If there is among you anyone in need... do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor. You should rather open your (*emphatic in Hebrew*) hand, willingly lending (*emphatic*) enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. Be careful not entertain a mean thought, thinking, ‘The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,’ and therefore you view your needy neighbor with hostility and give nothing; your neighbor might cry to the Lord against you, and you would incur guilt. Give (*emphatic*) liberally and be ungrudging when you do so; for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake” (Deut. 15:7-10, NRSV).

Clearly, concern for the well-being of the poor is important. The text expresses this concern by drawing attention to the hand, the heart, and the eye, calling for compassion and generosity that embraces all that we are and have.

Concern for the poor continues after verse 11, but focuses on releasing those who had to sell themselves into indentured service. Not only were they to be released from their debt slavery on the Sabbath Year, but they were to be released with a bountiful supply of grain, wine and animals (Deut. 15:12-15). Why? So they could begin a new life in the community with adequate resources, without the overwhelming burden of poverty.

Practicing radical generosity towards those in need is not only an act of profound obedience; it can also make a real difference in lived history. If these command-

ments are carefully followed, then, as part of God’s blessing in verse 4, “there will be no one in need among you.” Astonishing!

Returning to the story of the anointing, it is clear that costly care for the poor is important. The phrase “you always have the poor with you” in Mark 14:7 reaches back to Deut. 15:11’s injunction, saying to Jesus’ followers then and now, “Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward those of your people who are poor and needy in your land.” And we might add with a nod to Matthew 25, “whatsoever you do to the poor, you do to me.”

Rev. Gary Hauch serves as the priest at Church of the Ascension in Ottawa. The full text of this reflection, written for CPJ’s Envisioning Canada without Poverty campaign, is at www.canadawithoutpoverty.ca.

Practicing radical generosity can make a real difference in lived history