the ecumenist
a journal of theology, culture, and society
Vol. 50 No. 1 • Winter 2012

From Charity to Justice: The Evolution of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, 1967–1982

Peter Baltutis
University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, Ontario

In 1967, the Canadian bishops launched the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP, or Development and Peace) as a response to the Second Vatican Council's 1965 document *Gaudium et Spes* ("Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World"), which called Catholics to promote social justice for the world's poorest. Created to function as the official international development organization of the Catholic Church in Canada, CCODP was entrusted with a twofold mandate: to provide financial support for socio-economic development projects in the "Third World" (the poorer regions of the world, concentrated in Latin America, Africa, and Asia) and to educate Canadians about the causes of global injustice. This article explores how Development and Peace understood and fulfilled the first part of its mission, specifically the evolution of the organization's approach to development. The organization's method of faith-based international development began in the late 1960s as a paternalistic approach of providing primarily economic assistance with limited collaboration with its partners in the global South. By the early 1980s, however, its development program operated out of a new partnership model that sought to empower local communities through a proactive vision of social, political, economic, and cultural liberation. Development and Peace still sought to increase the economic vitality of regions, but the organization also understood that lasting improvement in the global South required the promotion of human rights, the empowerment of local communities to take charge of their own lives, and the mobilization of local groups for political change.

Contents

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 1 13-02-17 15:56

Creation of Development and Peace (1965–1967)

The genesis of Development and Peace began during the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). In a 1977 pastoral letter, issued on the tenth anniversary of Development and Peace, the Canadian bishops underlined the influence of Vatican II in creating this organization.

> In retrospect, Development and Peace was conceived in the cradle of Vatican II. During the Council, the Bishops of Africa, Asia and Latin America conveyed to the Canadian Bishops the harsh realities of poverty and underdevelopment in the Third World. It became clear that the growing gap between the rich and poor peoples in this planet is a great threat to mankind. The Council also made us aware of our responsibilities to work together as a universal church, to erase these injustices.[1]

Working with bishops from the economically underdeveloped regions of the world at Vatican II opened the eyes of the Canadians to the alarming fact that an estimated 80 percent of the world's population lived in extreme poverty, while the other 20 percent (including Canadians) lived in great prosperity.[2] Confronted with this harsh reality, the world's bishops at Vatican II committed the Catholic Church to the cause of social justice in *Gaudium et Spes*. In this landmark document, the Council deplored the widening gap between the affluent nations and the poor of the world. As *Gaudium et Spes* announced, "Let us not be guilty of the scandal whereby some nations, most of whose citizens bear the name of Christians, enjoy an abundance of riches, while others lack the necessities of life and suffer from hunger, disease, and all kinds of misery."[3] According to Bishop Alexander Carter of Sault Ste. Marie, the Canadian delegation returned to their dioceses possessing a collective awareness that the Canadian Church faced a "challenge" that demanded "a new vision" and "new forms of social action" to respond to the problem of widespread global poverty.[4]

As a response to this challenge, the national conference for Canadian Catholic bishops established a task force to study the feasibility of creating a "permanent foreign aid institution under aegis of the Catholic Church of Canada."[5] After a year-long program of consultation with laity and international relief experts across Canada, the task force proposed a "National Fund to Help Underdeveloped Countries" that was to provide "socio-economic aid and international assistance" to "concrete projects which display an attitude of international co-operation based on 'self-help.'"[6] Unanimously approved by the Canadian bishops on 13 October 1966,[7] this proposal is considered the founding document of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.

When the Canadian bishops created Development and Peace, they did not view the work of development as theirs alone. Consciously drawing upon Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* ("Dogmatic Constitution on the Church"), which defined the Church as the "People of God,"[8] the new organization was envisioned as a "Bishops-Clergy-Lay Association."[9] Thus, the Board of Governors was comprised of nineteen lay persons who were democratically elected from across Canada and two bishops representing both English and French Canada.[10] While this board served as the ultimate decision-making body for Development and Peace, a national secretariat was hired to manage the organization. With a national office in Montreal and a second office in Toronto (for English-speaking Canada), the secretariat coordinated the annual Lenten fundraising campaigns known as Share Lent, evaluated and awarded funding requests from the developing world, and created a program of year-long educational activities to inform Canadians about the issues surrounding development work.[11] Initiatives of the national secretariat were implemented by volunteers within their local dioceses and parishes.[12] From 1967 to 1982, Development and Peace staff and volunteers were able to raise and allocate over $93 million to thousands of projects in 80 countries throughout the global South.[13]

Within their twelve-page proposal for the creation of Development and Peace, the Canadian bishops never provided an explicit definition of "development." Only two instructions were given as to how the funds were to be spent in underdeveloped countries. First, funds collected by Development and Peace were not be used for the purposes of evangelization.

> Such a relief fund should not be part of the funds earmarked to promote the missionary activity of the Church. In the present proposal, we are concerned with funds to be used in community development on the essentially "temporal" level, whereas the missionary activity of the Church, as such, is essentially "spiritual."[14]

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 2 13-02-17 15:56

While Catholic activity in the temporal sphere of development was to be "a concrete expression of the pastoral charity of the Church and ought to complement her other [pastoral and missionary] activities," these funds were to be raised and administered separately from the existing missionary activity of the Church.[15] Second, funds for emergency relief (such as food, clothing, and shelter) were to be "given regardless of colour, race or creed."[16] This point was expanded upon in the 1968 pastoral letter, in which the Canadian bishops introduced Development and Peace to the Canadian public. According to this letter, projects funded in the global South would take no account "of the religious belief or ideologies of the people to whom aid is given. The only consideration will be intrinsic value of the projects, their conformity with criteria of priority, and the evaluation of their human and social effectiveness."[17] Thus, funds would be allocated on the effectiveness of the project, not for religious, political, or ideological reasons.

Implementation (1967–1972)

Within the initial group of permanent staff members, a "projects department" was formed to manage the funds collected and to ensure that these funds were properly sent to developing countries. To establish the first set of rules and procedures for decision making and project administration, the projects department recruited a "project review committee" that consisted of eight professionals with international experience. In the early years, it was easier to identify what types of projects Development and Peace did not want to support. The initial committees drew up a "criteria of refusal" list: large infrastructure proposals (deemed too expensive), construction of schools (the proper responsibility of national or local governments), formation for women religious or seminarians (too pastoral), construction of chapels (too pastoral), and individual study grants (helps the individual, not the community).[18] Over time, certain concepts became important features for approval: participation (local communities taking responsibility in the project) and community development.[19] In making distinctions between what type of projects it did or did not want to support, the organization was slowly working towards a definition of development.

Development and Peace also had to make itself known in the global South. The early pattern for the location of its work was largely determined by the location of Canadian missionaries. From 1968 to 1970, 45 percent of the funding requests came from Canadian missionaries (which had an 80 percent approval rate).[20] Understandably, these individuals were among the first to know Development and Peace and to have recourse to its funds. Thus, the countries receiving the most aid during this period were the ones with the greatest numbers of Canadian missionaries.[21] Many partners and projects in the global South were also found through the international Catholic Action movement, the organized apostolate of young lay people who actively spread Catholic values and political ideals through secular society. Virtually all of the early staff members of Development and Peace came from this lay-directed Catholic social movement.[22] As a worldwide movement, Catholic Action provided Development and Peace with a vast network of local groups engaged in social action.[23] While these initial projects met the project review committee's criteria, Development and Peace wanted to be sure that its funds were going to places where they were most needed (not which countries happened to have Canadian missionaries or active branches of Catholic Action).

To make Development and Peace better known in the Third World, its staff began making regular trips through Latin America, Africa, and Asia.[24] As a result of these trips, by 1971–1972, only 24 percent of the funds went to Canadian missionaries doing development work.[25] This does not mean that the number of projects submitted by missionaries decreased significantly (this number remained the same), but rather that the number of projects originating from other types of partners increased. Even more important for members of the project department, these excursions provided opportunities to become more familiar with geo-political realities within the global South and to dialogue with partner organizations on how to improve development.[26] These trips served as a key catalyst for Development and Peace to re-evaluate its international development program.

Reassessment (1972–1977)

By the early 1970s, the prevailing development paradigm was in crisis. During the previous decade, world leaders, bishops, and international development agencies were all optimistic that the unprecedented economic productivity of the postwar period would provide the opportunity to eliminate poverty once and for all.[27] As a result, during the 1960s, development was viewed in linear terms and was measured primarily by economic growth.[28] While many developing countries had

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 3 13-02-17 15:56

achieved high rates of economic growth, little of this had "trickled down" to the poor. Along with new currents of thinking, the OPEC oil crisis of 1973 (which sent prices soaring and ended the era of cheap energy and cheap industrialization—and therefore of cheap development) and the global food shortage (brought about by two disastrous world harvests in 1972 and 1974) led to a new climate of development thinking.[29]

One of the most important theological critiques of the prevailing 1960s notion of development came from Pope Paul VI's 1967 social encyclical *Populorum Progressio* ("On the Development of Peoples"). Moving the concept of development beyond economic terms, Paul VI insisted that authentic development must be *integral* in that it moves people from less human to more human conditions of life.[30] This involved not only ensuring food, shelter, and access to health care and education, but also freedom from oppression so that people could assume responsibility for their own lives.[31] Another strong voice against a narrow type of development was the Second General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate (CELAM), which met in Medellín, Colombia, in 1968. These bishops criticized the existing economic development strategies imposed by outsiders as engendering an unhealthy dependency on the industrialized nations of the West.[32] Analyzing the Latin American social reality in terms of widespread poverty, military repression, a wide gap between the elite and the poor, exploited indigenous populations, and economic uncertainty, the bishops described the situation in terms of domination, oppression, and liberation.[33] They concluded that the poverty suffered by the vast majority of the population could be addressed only by changing the unjust political, economic, and social structures that undermined hopes for peace and prosperity in the region.[34] Adopting language and social analysis from the documents of Medellín, the 1971 World Synod of Bishops and its summary document *Justitia in Mundo* ("Justice in the World") presented development as a process of liberation from "social structures" that were "objective obstacles" to progress.[35] In this document, development entailed social and economic participation, as well as the promotion of human dignity and human rights. It would take some time before Development and Peace internalized this message into its programs, but *Populorum Progressio*, the Medellín Conference documents, and *Justitia in Mundo* provided the theological vision for Catholic development in the 1970s and beyond.[36]

The first evidence of Development and Peace reassessing its own development program came in May 1972, during an international seminar in Blankenberge, Belgium, hosted by International Cooperation for Socio-Economic Development (abbreviated as CIDSE)—a loose consortium of Catholic development agencies in Europe, North America, and Australia. At the seminar, the majority decided to admit developing countries as members in CIDSE in order to establish a more balanced partnership in development work.[37] For Romeo Maione, executive director of Development and Peace, these resolutions did not go far enough. In response, he wrote a minority report that boldly proposed greater coordination of efforts and more collaboration with local partners in development work. In what is now known as the "Blankenberge Declaration," Maione articulated his growing opposition to the "paternalistic" approach of providing funding to the poorest regions of the world without any genuine collaboration with the recipients.[38] No matter how kindly money was given to the developing world, he argued, the existing donor–recipient relationship only reinforced domination and dependency.

According to Maione, to break this cycle of dependency, power needed to be transferred to the poor. The problem was that when proposals were sent from the global South to the various CIDSE members, the final decision of whether to transfer funds was made by the churches in the developed world. Those in the poor countries were effectively excluded from the decision-making stage. Maione's remedy was to create one common Christian fund for an entire region. This regional fund would receive money from all members; receive projects from all concerned; maintain one overall project list for each region; study and check each project; and develop one overall aid program for the region.[39] Most importantly, Maione insisted that all decisions regarding aid allocation for this regional fund should be discussed and decided with the members of the local communities having "full voice and voting powers."[40] Maione argued that this common fund would not only make development more efficient (by avoiding duplication) but it presented a new paradigm for development that would "liberate men from the sins of domination and dependency."[41] While rejected by the majority of CIDSE delegates for being too ambitious, this report was supported by the French delegation.

Back in Canada, the "Blankenberge Declaration" was unanimously approved at the Board of Governors meet-

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 4 13-02-17 15:56

ing in June 1972, with the notation that "more decisions must be put in the hands of people in the developing regions."[42] The pilot project for the post-Blankenberge "partnership" model was the Asia Partnership for Human Development (APHD). Development and Peace and Australian Catholic Relief (ACR) pooled their resources and invited the episcopal conferences of Indonesia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka to join them as partners in administering a multilateral fund for specific self-help projects within Asia. These four nations were co-responsible, with representatives from Development and Peace and the Australian Catholic Relief, for making decisions on which projects should receive funding.[43] By 1975, the Asian Partnership had grown to include five donor countries and thirteen Asian countries.[44] Through such initiatives, Development and Peace ensured that local communities were given an equal voice in how international funds were spent in their region.

Another watershed moment in Development and Peace's understanding of development was the May 1975 International Seminar that it hosted in Montreal. The seminar brought together the organization's members from across Canada and partners from the developing world for the purpose of "revising and redefining, more clearly, the priorities and policies of Development and Peace's aid program."[45] The strong representation from the developing world at the seminar presented the Canadian participants with new ideas about development and challenged them to reassess their personal attitudes. In the words of Development and Peace's president, Molly Boucher, in 1975 most members of the organization still operated at "the first level" of commitment and understanding—"an awareness that two-thirds of the world's people go to bed hungry, and [Development and Peace members were] willing to share with them from our bounty. We were at the 'band-aid' stage, anxious to treat the symptoms, to bind up the wounds."[46] At the seminar, participants were bluntly told by representatives of the developing world that they must decide if they were really on the side of the poor and the oppressed. If so, they must not only support grassroots self-help projects in the global South ("the second level"), but also moderate their lifestyles and commit themselves to political action aimed at transforming Canada's laws and practices that impact developing countries ("the third level").[47] For many members of Development and Peace, this was the first time they were challenged to make this level of commitment.

The keynote address of the seminar was delivered by Belgian priest and sociologist François Houtart on "Underdevelopment: An Induced Phenomenon." Houtart provided a historical overview of how underdevelopment in Asia, Latin America, and Africa was not a natural occurrence—as traditional development theory posited—but a deliberate result of Western economic domination.[48] According to Houtart, overcoming the problems of underdevelopment would not be achieved through transfers of capital and technical know-how, but through political action that put pressure on industrialized countries to exercise control of their economic power and to promote responsible foreign policies.[49] From this point forward, Development and Peace would adopt Houtart's language in its educational and promotional materials. For example, in the document entitled "Policies of Education" that was adopted by the Board of Governors in 1977 for the organization's tenth anniversary, the problem of underdevelopment was described as being "provoked" by "colonization enabling extension, on a world-wide scale, of a mercantile system resulting in the exploitation of Third World countries."[50] From 1975 on, the problem of underdevelopment was understood by Development and Peace as being the result of the oppressive domination of an unjust international economic system.

During the 1970s, Development and Peace continued to refine its criteria for project funding. For the first time, the organization formally articulated the orientations and priorities it would use to determine the types of projects it would fund (which were based on the criteria that were informally established when the organization was first founded).[51] In principle, approved projects needed to have the following characteristics:

1. Projects which support those who are trying to eliminate the causes of under-development rather than the symptoms;
2. Projects in which the beneficiaries themselves contribute according to their capabilities either by working or contributing financially;
3. Projects which involve or encourage the active participation of the local populations;
4. Projects which presumably become self-supporting after a reasonable amount of assistance;
5. Projects which could serve as examples for other local communities;
6. Projects which concentrate on the development of the area or country concerned.[52]

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 5 13-02-17 15:56

In 1976, the projects department added that it also prioritized projects that were concerned with the defence of basic human rights (often against authoritarian "military" governments) and the promotion of native peoples (enabling those who have been historically excluded from participating in the economic cultural life of a given country).[53]

During this decade of reassessment, CCODP scrutinized its own activities in the global South, asking, "Do our projects promote development?"[54] To answer this question, it was decided that projects had to give top priority to empowering local communities and grassroots groups (points #2 and #3 above). Development had to come from the people themselves and not from the top down. Thus, the organization insisted on the participation of the local community in all phases of the project: its preparation, its realization, its administration, and its evaluation.[55] Every project also had to be educational. Inspired by Paulo Friere and his influential 1970 work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* the organization's leaders insisted that projects needed to raise the consciousness of local people to an awareness of the basic causes of the marginalization they experience and help them to organize themselves to overcome injustice and achieve liberation.[56] With this new ethos, Development and Peace's criteria for project funding became much stricter. For example, in 1974 it drastically cut its funding to projects in Haiti, since over 90 percent of the projects in this country came from Canadian missionaries (not the Haitians themselves), and there appeared to be very little coordination between the Haitian church and the Canadian missionaries.[57] Similarly, in 1976, a Quebec-based group was denied funding for a rural development project in Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) because "it [was] run by non-Africans."[58] In denying these kinds of project requests, Development and Peace made it clear that in order to receive funding, projects must be operated by local people from the developing world. Unless these people actively participated in their own development, the pattern of neo-colonialism, which was considered one of the principal causes of underdevelopment, would continue.[59]

New Definition of Development (1977–1982)

In 1982, after fifteen years of experience, dialogue with local partners, and critical reflection, Development and Peace was able to articulate, for the first time in its history, a formal definition of "development." This definition was published in "Basic Principles and Orientation," a report that summarized and systematized the results of an extensive nationwide consultation (1978–1980) that assessed the organization's fundamental orientation, policies, activities, structures, and operations. Development was conceived as

> a process of improving the conditions of life of people and their liberation from all forms of oppression and servitude: a process by which a people in a given social and economic milieu at a particular moment in history transforms its structures of production, establishes new social links, and renews its social, political, economic, cultural and sometimes religious institutions with the intention of altering a better quality of life.[60]

In contrast to the original 1966 proposal, which understood development as primarily economic growth, Development and Peace's 1982 understanding of development had evolved to emphasize full social, political, economic, and cultural liberation.[61]

According to René Lacoste, the director of the projects department during this period, Development and Peace's approach to development was heavily influenced by the Latin American bishops at the Medellín Conference in 1968.[62] This is not surprising, since throughout the 1970s, the organization formed close relationships with many leading Latin American bishops who supported social justice and liberation theology, such as Archbishop Dom Helder Câmara of Olinda and Recife (Brazil), Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns, OFM, of São Paulo (Brazil), and Bishop Tomás Balduino, OP, of Goiás (Brazil), all of whom made frequent visits to Development and Peace events in Canada.[63] These individuals, among other local partners, persuaded the organization that real development in the global South would not come simply from infusions of outside financial help, but from liberating people to be agents of their own development. Thus, from 1977 to 1982, the organization increasingly invested in projects that involved "conscientization," educating local peoples to challenge unjust political, economic, and social structures.[64] These projects mobilized communities to push for land reform, promote democratic government, and defend basic human rights.[65] A prominent example was the increase in funding for South African projects—such as the South African Conference of Bishops, trade unions, and grassroots organizations—that were working against apartheid.[66] In summary, Development and Peace's projects evolved to address social, political, cultural, and

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 6 13-02-17 15:56

religious conditions as well as economic conditions as a means of battling underdevelopment and establishing a more just society.[67]

Conclusion

This article has traced the evolution of Development and Peace's understanding of "development" from economic prosperity to social, political, economic, and cultural liberation. During its early operations, funds raised were spent on small-scale projects aimed at economic improvement. The paternalistic belief was that people in the global South were going hungry because they lacked the technology that industrialized countries like Canada had acquired.[68] The more time was invested in dialoguing with local partners in the developing world, the more the organization came to realize that the small-scale projects it funded could never come close to addressing the underlying problems of underdevelopment. Any real or lasting improvement in the global South would have to come as the result of profound political and economic change. This was a move from a focus on charity to a deep concern for justice. With this new perspective, Development and Peace articulated new priorities, criteria, and policies for the distribution of financial resources. By 1982, it defined "development" as "a process of improving the conditions of life of people and their liberation from all forms of oppression and servitude."[69] Development and Peace's projects still focused on improving the economic vitality of regions, but they also branched out to include promoting human rights and mobilizing local groups for political change. Rather than being "mere fundraisers,"[70] Development and Peace endeavoured to empower people of the global South to be the architects of their own development.

Peter Baltutis received his doctorate in History of Christianity from the University of St. Michael's College in 2012. He has taught courses at Niagara University in Niagara, New York; St. Augustine's Seminary in Toronto; and the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto.

1 Bishop G. Emmett Carter, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, "To the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, February 1977" in *Do Justice! The Social Teaching of the Canadian Catholic Bishops (1945–1986)*, ed. E. F. Sheridan (Toronto: Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice, 1987), 322.

2 This figure was offered by a study group that was commissioned by the Canadian bishops in 1966. Archives of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in Ottawa [hereafter ACCCB], "Fonds Nat. De Secours (CANADAIDE)/Nat. Fund to Help Developing Countries, 1966" [5226], "Proposal for a National Fund to Help Underdeveloped Countries" [Amended Version], 13 October 1966, 1.

3 Vatican Council II, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" (*Gaudium et Spes*), in *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents: A Completely Revised Translation in Inclusive Language*, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1996), #88.

4 Quoted in Jack Panozzo, "Two Bishops Remember," in *Journey of Solidarity: The Story of Development and Peace*, eds. Susan Eaton, Gabrielle Lachance, Fabien Leboeuf, and Eileen McCarthy (Ottawa: Novalis, 1992), 31.

5 ACCCB, "Fonds Nat. De Secours (CANADAIDE)/Nat. Fund to Help Developing Countries, 1966" [5226], "Minutes of a Consultation on the Establishment of a Canadian Bishops' Overseas Aid Organization," 15 July 1966, 2.

6 ACCCB, "Proposal for a National Fund to Help Underdeveloped Countries," 3.

7 ACCCB, "Fonds Nat. De Secours (CANADAIDE)/Nat. Fund to Help Developing Countries, 1966" [5226], "Resolution adopted by the Canadian Catholic Conference concerning a National Fund to Help Underdeveloped Countries," undated, 2.

8 Vatican Council II, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" (*Lumen Gentium*), in *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents: A Completely Revised Translation in Inclusive Language*, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1996), #9–17.

9 ACCCB, "Proposal for a National Fund to Help Underdeveloped Countries," 5.

10 ACCCB, "Fonds Nat. De Secours (CANADAIDE)/Nat. Fund to Help Developing Countries, 1967" [5227], "Procedure for the Selection of the 19 Applicants and first Directors of the National Fund to Help Developing Countries, Addendum No-19-A," 5 April 1967, 2.

11 ACCCB, "Proposal for a National Fund to Help Underdeveloped Countries," 8.

12 Ibid., 6.

13 These figures include funds for socio-economic development as well as for emergency relief and special appeals. For a full explanation of this information, see Peter Ernest Baltutis, *Forging the Link Between Faith and Development: The History of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, 1967–1982* (Ph.D. diss., University of St. Michael's College, 2012).

14 ACCCB, "Proposal for a National Fund to Help Underdeveloped Countries," 2.

15 Ibid., 2–3.

16 Ibid., 3.

17 Canadian Catholic Bishops, "On Development and Peace," 14 March 1968, in *Do Justice! The Social Teaching of the Canadian Catholic Bishops, 1945–1986*, ed., E. F. Sheridan, 142–148 (Toronto: Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice, 1987), #21.

18 Michel Rousseau, "Action in the Third World," in *Journey of Solidarity: The Story of Development and Peace*, eds. Susan Eaton, Gabrielle Lachance, Fabien Leboeuf, and Eileen McCarthy (Ottawa: Novalis, 1992), 74.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., 75.

21 Ibid.

22 Early staff members of Development and Peace who were recruited from the Catholic Action movement: Romeo Maione (Executive Director); André Tremblay (Assistant Director), Tom Johnston (Associate Director and Director of the English Education Department), Denyse Gauthier (Assistant Director and Director of the French Education Department). See Michel Côté, "The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace: A Critical Theological Overview" (unpublished research paper, 1997), 6.

23 Fabien Leboeuf (former executive director of CCODP), interview with the author, 9 May 2012.

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 7 13-02-17 15:56

24 Archives of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace in Montreal [hereafter ACCODP], Archives DG, Conseil National Reunions, CN Reunions 1972, CN.PVA.JUIN.1972.SUITE, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 16-17 June 1972, "Report: Socio-Economic Department and Emergency Relief," 58.

25 ACCODP, Archives DG, DP Historique, DP Anniversaires, DP 10ème anniversaire, DP 10ème anniversaire EV, "Development and Peace: 10 Years of Achievements," 19.

26 ACCODP, CN.PVA.JUIN.1972.SUITE, "Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors," 16-17 June 1972, "Report: Socio-Economic Department and Emergency Relief," 58.

27 "Message of His Eminence Maurice Cardinal Roy, President of the Pontifical Commission 'Justice and Peace,' on the Occasion of the Launching of the Second Development Decade (November 19, 1970)," in *The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Social Teaching Since Pope John*, ed. Joseph Gremillion (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976), #4–14.

28 Tom Hewitt, "Half A Century of Development," in *Poverty and Development Into the 21st Century*, eds. Tim Allen and Alan Thomas (Oxford: The Open University and Oxford University Press, 2000), 292-–93.

29 Ibid., 294–95.

30 Pope Paul VI, "*Populorum Progressio*: *On the Development of Peoples,*" in *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, eds. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), #6.

31 Ibid., #6–21.

32 Edwards P. DeBerri, James E. Hug, Peter J. Henriot and Michael J. Schultheis, *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret,* Fourth revised and expanded edition, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books and Center of Concern, 2005), 168–69.

33 Christian Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology: Radical Religion and Social Movement Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 122–49.

34 Official English translations of the four Medellín Documents are reprinted in: [Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM)], "Medellín Documents: Justice, Peace, Family and Demography, and Poverty of the Church*"* in *The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Social Teaching Since Pope John*, 445–76.

35 Kenneth R. Himes, OFM, "Commentary on *Justitia in Mundo (Justice in the World)*," in *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations*, ed. Kenneth R. Himes (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 343–44.

36 Fabien Leboeuf, interview with the author, 19 April 2012.

37 ACCODP, Archives DG, Conseil National Reunions, CN Reunions 1972, CN PV Juin, CN.PVA.JUIN.1972, "Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors," 16-17 June 1972, "A Synthesis of Performance in the Seminar: Information Document #3," 28.

38 ACCODP, "Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors," 16-17 June 1972, "Joint Declaration: Information Document # 4," 32–35.

39 ACCODP, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 16-17 June 1972, "Possible Asian Consortium: Appendix 2; Information Document #2," 26.

40 ACCODP, "Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors," 16-17 June 1972, "World Development and the Churches by Romeo Maione: Information Document #2," 18.

41 ACCODP, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 16-17 June 1972, "Joint Declaration: Information Document 4," 32.

42 ACCODP, "Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors," 16-17 June 1972, 4.

43 ACCODP, Archives DG, CE Reunions, CE Reunions 1974, CE.PVA. FEVRIER.1974, "Minutes of the Executive Committee," 15 February 1974, 4.

44 ACCODP, Archives DG, Conseil National Reunions, CN Reunions 1976, CN PV Juin, CN.PVA.JUIN.1976, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 18-19 June 1976, "Projects Department: Plan of Action-1976-1977," 39.

45 ACCODP, Archives DG, Conseil National Reunions, CN Reunions 1974, CN PV Novembre, CN.Eng Documents.NOVEMBRE.1974. SUITE.2, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 9-10 November 1974, "Project of a Seminar-Spring 1975," 64.

46 ACCODP, Archives DG, CN Reunions, CN Reunions 1975, CN PV Novembre, CN.PVF.NOVEMBRE.1975, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 22-23 November 1975, "President's Message – Annual Meeting 1975," 20.

47 Ibid., 21.

48 ACCODP, Archives Promo, "1975 Seminar issue of *Developax*," 12.

49 Ibid., 13.

50 ACCODP, Archives DG, CN Reunions, CN Reunions 1977, CN PV Novembre, CN.PVA.NOVEMBRE.1977, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 26-27 November 1977, "Policies of Education," 103.

51 ACCODP, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 26-27 November 1977, "Do Our Projects Encourage Development?" 109.

52 ACCODP, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 18-19 June 1976, "Projects Department: Plan of Action – 1976–1977," 38.

53 ACCODP, Archives DG, CN Reunions, CN Reunions 1976, CN PV Novembre, CN.PVA.NOVEMBRE.1976, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 20-21 November 1976, "Projects Department Activity Report – 1975–1976," 118.

54 Rousseau, 75.

55 Ibid., 76.

56 Ibid.

57 ACCODP, Archives DG, CE Reunions, CE Reunions 1974, CE PV Novembre, CE.PVA.NOVEMBRE.1974, "Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting," 8 November 1974, "Evaluation de l'Action de Développement et Paix en Haïti," 91.

58 ACCODP, Archives DG, CE Reunions, CE Reunions 1976, CE PV Juin, CE.PVA.JUIN.1976, "Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting," 18-19 June 1976, 11.

59 ACCODP, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 18-19 June 1976, "Projects Department: Plan of Action – 1976–1977" 40.

60 ACCODP, Archives DG, "Basic Principles and Orientations," (November, 1982), #2.3.

61 ACCODP, Archives DG, Conseil National Reunions, CN Reunions 1981, CN PV Novembre, CN.PVA.Novembre.1981, "Minutes of the Meeting of the National Council," 14-15 November 1981, "President's Report" [of Brian O'Connell, President of the National Council], 42.

62 ACCODP, Archives DG, Conseil National (CN) Reunions, CN Reunions 1980, CN PV Juin, CN.PVA.JUIN.1980, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 7-8 June 1980, "Projects Department: Perspectives and Directions 80-81," 103.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid., 104.

65 ACCODP, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 10-11 June, 1978, "Projects Department: Plan of Action – 1978–1979," 58.

66 ACCODP, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 7-8 June 1980, "Projects Department: Perspectives and Directions 80-81," 104.

67 Ibid., 103.

68 Marjorie Ross, "Setting the Table for All God's People: Canadian Churches and Development," in *Canadian Churches and Foreign Policy*, ed. Bonnie Greene (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1990), 73.

69 ACCODP, Archives DG, "Basic Principles and Orientations," (November, 1982), #2.3.

70 ACCODP, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors," 7-8 June 1980, "Projects Department: Perspectives and Directions 80-81," 102.

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 8 13-02-17 15:56

Cornfields, Catholicism, and Critical Stewardship

By Scott Kline
St. Jerome's University, Waterloo, Ontario

In early August, Iowa farmland is jam-packed with acre upon acre of corn. Travelling down Iowa's farm roads this time of year can lead to tunnel vision, as you begin to feel hemmed in by walls of cornstalks reaching 10 to 12 feet high. Corn seems to be everywhere. In 2012, Iowa farmers planted corn on nearly 14 million acres of land. To put that in some perspective, imagine almost the entire the province of Nova Scotia as a cornfield—that's Iowa in August.[1]

So what are Iowans doing with all of this corn? According to the United States Department of Agriculture, around 15 percent of Iowa's corn was used in 2011 for livestock feed in the U.S. Another 15 percent went toward the production of food products such as cornstarch and high-fructose corn syrup, which is widely used as a sweetener in beverages, candy, and processed foods. Roughly 16 percent of Iowa's corn was exported, mostly to Japan, Mexico, Korea, Russia, and Egypt, to be used mainly for livestock feed. And approximately 53 percent of Iowa's corn went in to the production of ethanol, or grain alcohol, which can be used as a biofuel or a fuel additive in combustible engines. In other words, the majority of Iowa's corn isn't being used for food, but instead for fuel to be burned in cars and trucks on our roadways.

Since 2005, domestic production of ethanol fuel in the United States has increased by almost 500 percent, and Iowa produces almost 30 percent of all ethanol in the United States. This spike in ethanol production is due to two major factors. The first factor is the widespread ban of a fuel additive called MTBE (for the scientifically minded, that's methyl tertiary butyl ether). MTBE had been used for more than a decade to help the fuel industry meet the standards imposed by the Clean Air Act, which were intended to reduce carbon monoxide emissions. While the additive was effective in reducing carbon emissions, there were unintended consequences. In the late 1990s, scientists discovered that MTBE levels in water wells were abnormally high, and likely high enough to be harmful to humans. In 2000, the state of California enacted legislation to phase out MTBE over a four-year period. Other states soon followed suit, bolstered by further studies conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency, which found high levels of MTBE in other water supplies. With MTBE being phased out, researchers looked to ethanol, a clear and relatively clean fuel, as a replacement. Ethanol could be added to current fuel mixtures to increase octane levels and reduce carbon emissions. The problem facing the fuel industry back in 2004, just after MTBE bans started to take effect, was how to produce enough ethanol to meet demand. It was at this point that Iowa farmers and the biofuel industry partnered to ramp up the supply of ethanol.

The second factor has to do with the U.S. government's desire to create a domestic renewable energy source. This desire stems from foreign policy and national security concerns. Simply put, the U.S. government wants to reduce America's dependence on oil rich, but also politically unstable, countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. To provide support to the biofuel industry, and in the process try to rid the U.S. of its "addiction to foreign oil," the U.S. government began providing large subsidies to corn-ethanol producers.[2] The initial subsidy in 2005 amounted to $10 billion, but subsidies eventually levelled off at around $6 billion a year by 2011, before being cut in 2012. Moreover, to help further spur on the biofuel industry, the U.S. Congress passed an energy bill in 2007 that required fuel blenders to use 15 billion gallons of conventional biofuels, mainly corn ethanol, by 2015, and an additional 21 billion gallons of so-called second-generation or advanced biofuels by 2022. In other words, ethanol production has become a government-mandated industry in the United States.

The net effect of the snap-turn toward ethanol has been an economic bonanza for agribusiness and rural economies in the U.S. Corn Belt. In Iowa alone, the ethanol industry accounted for nearly 74,000 jobs in 2011 and $6 billion in gross domestic product. On the outskirts of Cedar Rapids, a town of about 125,000 people, Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), one of the world's largest producers of biofuels, recently completed work on the largest ethanol plant in the United States, capable of producing upwards of 420 million gallons of ethanol a year.[3] Rural Iowa is now home to some 41 ethanol

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 9 13-02-17 15:56

plants. The Iowa Corn Promotion Board summed up the importance of ethanol to Iowa's economy in a recent advertising campaign: "We grow jobs by the bushel. Keep jobs green in Iowa. Buy ethanol."[4]

Biofuels and Food Security

While ethanol and the biofuel industry have revived economies in the Corn Belt, they have had disastrous effects elsewhere. The rapid expansion of biofuels production has threatened food sovereignty and aggravated the problem of world hunger. In early 2008, a global crisis emerged as price hikes in grains used in the production of biofuels drove up food prices. According to a World Bank report published in 2008, biofuels had increased global grain prices by nearly 75 percent.[5] In Mexico, for example, the increase of corn exports in early 2007 to sustain the ethanol market in the U.S. resulted in a 400 percent spike in the price of corn, the population's main food source. The price spike spawned the Mexican "Tortilla Riots," as people took to the streets to protest the government's unwillingness to set price caps on food commodities essential to the Mexican diet.[6] In the Arab world, the food crisis set off a wave of bread riots in Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan, Egypt, and Morocco. It is no coincidence that by 2011, with the rise of the "Arab Spring," these countries had suffered political uprisings. However, the media in North America chose not to focus on food and agricultural concerns, such as the fact that Arab countries import more than 50 percent of their food. Instead, the North American media concentrated on the emergence of Islamist political parties and the struggle for democratic reforms. Lost in this analysis was the reality that skyrocketing food prices, impending famines, and the inability of regimes to respond to these crises played a significant role in fuelling the Arab Spring. As *The Economist* noted in one of its retrospective analyses of the Arab revolutions, "It is sadly appropriate that Mohamad Bouazizi, the Tunisian whose self-immolation triggered the first protest of the Arab spring, should have been a street vendor, selling food. From the start, food has played a bigger role in the upheavals than most people realize."[7]

Catholicism and the Environment

The cornfields of Iowa are, I believe, a good example of why Catholics should treat our relationship with the environment as a central ethical concern. First, they ask us to consider how we understand God's creation. Does the natural world have an intrinsic value or goodness? Or is the natural world valuable only inasmuch as human beings are able to use it to better our lives? What is our relationship to God's creation—are we a master, manager, steward, servant, or slave of creation? Second, Iowa's cornfields cause us to reflect on how we live in God's creation. Are there general ethical principles or virtues that should guide our actions? Or should we simply let the market decide? And third, Iowa's corn—which the locals sometimes call "money trees"— compels us to ask about the connection between environmental practices and social, political, and economic justice. How are the poorest and most vulnerable among us affected by our environmental policies and practices? Should we make an ethical distinction between food as a human right and crops sold as commodities for biofuels? Answering all of these questions is beyond our scope in this article. But I would like to outline an ethical framework to address this issue—a framework based on Catholic Social Teaching and called "critical stewardship."

Catholic Social Teaching and Critical Stewardship

According to Catholic Social Teaching, there is always a connection between the way we treat the natural environment and social justice. In the social teachings of the Church, we find that our relationship to and treatment of land and the natural world have been concerns since Pope Leo XIII's groundbreaking 1891 encyclical, *Rerum novarum* (On Capital and Labour). Pope Leo wrote that God gave the earth to "[hu]mankind in general" so that human persons, regardless of wealth or status, could use and enjoy it. No matter how property is allocated, the pope wrote, "the earth, even though apportioned among private owners, ceases not thereby to minister to the needs of all, inasmuch as there is not one who does not sustain life from what the land produces." [8]

Pope John XXIII, in his encyclical *Mater et magistra* (Christianity and Social Progress, 1961), continued the Catholic tradition of placing the natural world under the authority of humankind to preserve an interdependent relationship between nature and human beings. Writing amid fears that the world was undergoing a so-called population explosion, Pope John argued that food shortages and famine were not due to nature's lack of capacity to produce food; rather, these conditions were created by poverty, political mismanagement, and deficient socio-economic structures. As a moral matter, humankind should work toward creating just social, political, and economic structures that recognize the

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 10 13-02-17 15:56

dignity of the human person. Moreover, to address concerns that arise when the interdependence of humanity and the natural environment break down, Pope John argued that nations must work together in ways they have never done before because scientific and technological programs have made nations dependent on one another. "As a rule," the pope concluded, "no single commonwealth has sufficient resources at its command to solve the more important scientific, technical, economic, social, political, and cultural problems which confront it at the present time. These problems are necessarily the concern of a whole group of nations, and possibly of the whole world" (no. 201).[9] As he wrote this, in Pope John's mind was undoubtably the Catholic principle of *the universal common good*, which he developed in his next encyclical, *Pacem in terris* (Peace on Earth, 1963) just two years later.[10]

Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples, 1967), described the relationship between the natural environment and social relationships in these terms:

> The Bible, from the first page on, teaches us that the whole of creation is for humanity, that it is men and women's responsibility to develop it by intelligent effort and by means of their labour to perfect it, so to speak, for their use. If the world is made to furnish each individual with the means of livelihood and the instruments for growth and progress, all people have therefore the right to find in the world what is necessary for them.[11]

The idea that nature must be preserved for the benefit of humanity was reaffirmed in Pope Paul's apostolic letter to commemorate the 80th anniversary of *Rerum novarum*. He wrote:

> [Humanity] is suddenly becoming aware that by an ill-considered exploitation of nature [it] risks destroying [nature] and becoming in […] turn the victim of this degradation. Not only is the material environment becoming a permanent menace—pollution and refuse, new illness and absolute destructive capacity—but the human framework is no longer under [human] control, thus creating an environment for tomorrow which may well be intolerable. This is a wide-ranging social problem which concerns the entire human family.[12]

With echoes of Pope John's plea for global cooperation in his encyclicals *Mater et magistra* and *Pacem in terris,* Pope Paul encouraged Christians to "take on responsibility, together with the rest of men, for a destiny which from now on is shared by all."[13] Indeed, by the early 1970s, Catholic Social Teaching had firmly established that the ecological crisis had to be addressed as a matter of global ethical concern.

In his 1990 World Day of Peace address entitled "The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility," Pope John Paul II brought to prominence the growing trend in Catholic Social Teaching to address the environment as a central element of justice and peace. In particularly blunt words, Pope John Paul said to Catholics:

> I would like to address directly my brothers and sisters in the Catholic Church, in order to remind them of their serious obligation to care for all of creation. The commitment of believers to a healthy environment for everyone stems directly from their belief in God the creator, from their recognition of the effects of original and personal sin, and from the certainty of having been redeemed by Christ. Respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation, which is called to join [humanity] in praising God (cf. Psalm 148:96).[14]

Pope John Paul insists that the ecological crisis is fundamentally a moral problem. First, the crisis reveals the indiscriminate application of science and technology. Although science and technology have resulted in "undeniable benefits to humanity," it is now clear, the pope said, that their application has "produced harmful long-term side effects" to nature, putting at risk the well-being of future generations.[15] Such is the case with the gradual depletion of the ozone layers caused by industrial waste, greenhouse gases, deforestation, increased energy needs, the burning of fossil fuels, and the use of certain types of herbicides, coolants, and propellants.

Second, the crisis reveals a "lack of respect for life," which for Pope John Paul means both human and non-human life. When it comes to human life, often "the interests of production prevail over concern for the dignity of workers," he said, "while economic interests take priority over the good of individuals and even entire peoples."[16] When it comes to non-human life, the reckless exploitation of natural resources upsets natural ecosystems, which in turn harms not only animal and plant life, but also human life.

John Paul II and a New Solidarity

In search of a solution to the ecological crisis, Pope John Paul called for a "new solidarity." Consistent

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 11 13-02-17 15:56

with the emphasis in Catholic Social Teaching to bring countries together to solve international problems, Pope John Paul's call for a global solidarity means that highly industrialized countries must forge strong relations with developing nations to share the responsibility for developing just environmental practices. The basis of this relationship must be one that recognizes both economic justice and ecological concerns. According to the pope, "newly industrialized states cannot, for example, be asked to apply restrictive environmental standards to their emerging industries unless the industrialized states first apply them within their own boundaries. At the same time, countries in the process of industrialization are not morally free to repeat the errors made in the past by others, and recklessly continue to damage the environment."[17] To achieve any success in meeting the challenges of the crisis, world leaders must be convinced of the "absolute need for this new solidarity."[18] Moreover, this new solidarity means that there must be a critical assessment of the "structural forms of poverty that exist through the world."[19] The pope noted that rural poverty and the unjust distribution of land have resulted in unsustainable farming practices, such as exhausting soil through lack of crop rotation. In some cases, poor farmers have found themselves clearing forests for farmland—and once there is no more land to farm, they find themselves looking for work in urban centres. The pope concludes that the single most important element in this new solidarity is the cessation of war and the promotion of peace. Wars, whether regional or local, destroy fields, ruin crops and vegetation, and upset social, political, and economic structures. This, in turn, often adversely affects the environment.

In response to Pope John Paul's 1990 World Day of Peace message, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops released a 20-page pastoral statement in 1991 entitled "Renewing the Earth." In this statement, the bishops summarized for the first time the nine ethical principles at the core of the Church's teaching on the ecological crisis: a sacramental universe, respect for life, the planetary common good, the new solidarity, the universal purpose of created things, the option for the poor, authentic development, limiting consumption while protecting life, and the interconnectedness of life. The following year, the U.S. bishops published a lengthy pastoral letter entitled "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response" (1992) that named the Catholic Church's approach to the environment: stewardship.

There is a critical principle in the Catholic social tradition that complements the stewardship metaphor. For example, we see this critical principle in the preferential option for the poor, which calls us to begin with *and* to return continually to the stories of those people on the margins of society who are, in most cases, the ones who experience most profoundly the effects of our individual and collective environmental actions. In effect, this critical principle is a demand for justice.

If we act on this critical principle, we need to turn to the victims of our environmental actions and their stories of injustice. We don't need to look long or far to find them: women using polluted water and suffering from water-borne illnesses, environmental refugees, migrant workers labouring in unsafe working conditions, and the hungry.

Take the situation of those Iowa cornfields, the biofuel industry, and the production of corn. In Mexico, small farmers and agricultural workers who have relied on corn and other grain farming for a living have been displaced from their land and jobs by exorbitant corn prices created by the biofuel industry. With few prospects in Mexico, many of these dispossessed farmers and agricultural workers look for work and economic opportunities in the United States, which has contributed to the increased rates of illegal immigration in recent years. Meanwhile, in the Sahel region of West Africa as of August 2012, more than 17 million people are facing possible starvation. According to a World Bank report, the crisis in Sahel is due to a combination of drought caused by poor rainfall in 2011, too little food, high grain prices, environmental damage, and a large number of internal refugees.[20] With world grain prices set to go higher in 2013 because of drought in the American Corn Belt, external factors contributing to the crisis in Sahel will likely only put more people at risk of starvation. Tragically, we note that the corn used to produce one car tank of ethanol fuel is enough to feed a person for a year. To put matters bluntly, there is no reason, other than placing human desires for convenience and wealth over the human need for food, why anyone must suffer from starvation. The "fix" isn't more technology or science—it's an ethical commitment to justice.

Scott Kline is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo. This article is a much revised version of a chapter entitled "Ethics and the Environment" from his new book, *The Ethical Being: A Catholic Guide to Contemporary Issues,* being published by Novalis in 2013.

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 12 13-02-17 15:56

1 Iowa ranks as the leading corn producer in the United States, ahead of Illinois, Nebraska, and Minnesota. In 2011, Iowa produced 2.3 billion bushels of corn on 13.7 million acres of land, which accounts for roughly 18 percent of all corn produced in the U.S. The corn brought roughly $14.5 billion to the state in 2011. See the Iowa Department of Agriculture, "Quickfacts," www.iowaagriculture.gov/quickfacts.asp (accessed July 14, 2012).

2 In the 2006 State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush began talking about America's "addiction" to foreign oil and the need for a new energy plan. See the transcript at C-SPAN, www.c-span.org/SOTU/ (accessed July 21, 2012).

3 The State of Nebraska, "Ethanol Facilities Capacities by State and Plant," www.neo.ne.gov/statshtml/122.htm (accessed July 15, 2012).

4 Unless cited otherwise, the statics regarding Iowa corn and ethanol production used above are from the website Iowa Corn, sponsored by the Iowa Corn Promotion Board and the Iowa Corn Growers Association: www.iowacorn.org (accessed July 15, 2012).

5 Aditya Chakrabortty, "Secret Report: Biofuel Caused Food Crisis," *The Guardian* (July 3, 2008): www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/jul/03/biofuels.renewableenergy.

6 British Broadcasting Corporation, "Mexicans Stage Tortilla Protest," (February 1, 2007): http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/6319093.stm (accessed July 15, 2012). Eventually, the Mexican government agreed to put a cap of 8.5 pesos per kilo—in early 2007 the price was 10 pesos per kilo. One way that Mexico keeps corn prices low domestically is by purchasing corn futures and importing corn from the U.S. for consumption, even though Mexico easily has the land capacity to grow its own corn.

7 *The Economist*, "Let Them Eat Baklava" (March 17, 2012): www.economist.com/node/21550328 (accessed July 15, 2012).

8 Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum novarum* (On Capital and Labour, 1891), no. 8.

9 Ibid., 201. These three points summarize much of Pope John's argument in nos. 188–206.

10 Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in terris* (Peace on Earth, 1963), esp. nos. 100, 132–35.

11 Pope Paul VI, *Populorum progressio* (On the Development of Peoples, 1967), no. 22.

12 Pope Paul VI, *Octogesima anno* (On the Eightieth Anniversary of *Rerum novarum*, 1971), no. 21.

13 Ibid.

14 Pope John Paul II, "The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility," 1990 World Day for of Peace (January 1, 1990), no. 16.

15 Ibid., no. 6.

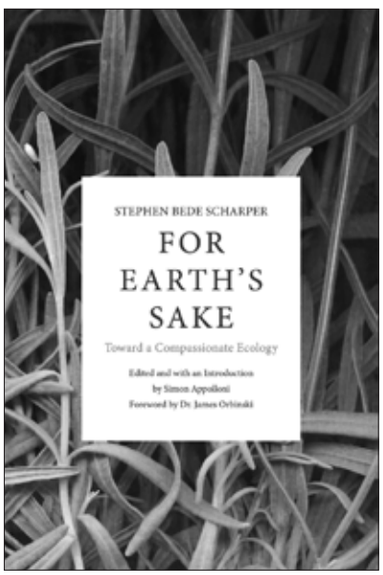
16 Ibid., no. 7.

17 Ibid., no.10.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., no. 11.

20 The World Bank, "Drought Worsens in the Sahel Region of Africa—Millions of People at Risk, (May 31, 2012). Search the story at www.worldbank.org (accessed July 26, 2012).



For Earth's Sake:
Toward a Compassionate Ecology
Stephen Bede Scharper

Stories of environmental devastation and climate change bombard us. While scientists and governments struggle to address the problems, we are left angry, confused, sad—even helpless. This book shows that it's possible—and necessary—to do something. Scharper takes us on a journey, reminding us that we are all part of the environment and can personally change our relationship to the planet. By engaging our minds, bodies and hearts, we can live in harmony with other people and the rest of creation, ready to truly address the current environmental crises.

Stephen Bede Sharper, MA, PhD, is Associate Professor of Environment, Religion and Anthropology at the University of Toronto, a Senior Fellow of Massey College and a columnist for the *Toronto Star*. He is co-editor of *The Natural City* (2012).

224pp PB 6"x9" 978-2-89646-521-7 $19.95

Available at your local bookstore or call 1-800-387-7164 to order

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 13 13-02-17 15:56

Atonement, Violence, Martyrdom: Engaging Tom Yoder Neufeld's Killing Enmity

By Jeremy M. Bergen
Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ontario

In December 2012, Tom Yoder Neufeld retired as Professor of Religious Studies and Theological Studies at Conrad Grebel University College, the Mennonite college at the University of Waterloo, where he had taught since the early 1980s. Yoder Neufeld is a gifted teacher and writer who specialized in the New Testament. However, he was also deeply concerned with the Anabaptist tradition of social justice and peace-making. At a recent seminar on the work of Yoder Neufeld, Conrad Grebel theologian Jeremy M. Bergen offered the following reflection on Yoder Neufeld's latest book, Killing Enmity: Violence and the New Testament. *Because this theological reflection on resistance to violence and faith was so timely and so well done,* The Ecumenist *is pleased to reproduce a fuller version here.*

The cover of Tom Yoder Neufeld's book *Killing Enmity: Violence and the New Testament* features an image of a metallic figure, pierced and encircled by what appear to be over a dozen knives or spears. As it turns out, the cruciform piece by Paraguayan sculptor Hermann Guggiari consists of *shivs* made by prisoners who surrendered them "as a sign of 'being conquered by divine love.'"[1] This juxtaposition of beauty and ugliness points evocatively to a recurring theme throughout the book: even the overcoming of violence is often depicted violently in the New Testament, and this renders the interpretive task all the more complex. In what follows, I draw some preliminary connections between Yoder Neufeld's approach to violence and the New Testament, especially violence and the death of Jesus, and the intertwining of violence and nonviolence of one contemporary practice of the Church—martyrology, the commemoration of suffering and death in particular ways.

The book *Killing Enmity* is rigorous and accessible. Its rigour is evident not only in all the scholarly habits brought to bear, but also in its refusal to settle for pat answers. Part of its accessibility lies in being fully cognizant and engaged in the extensive scholarly debates about particular texts and violence in the New Testament more generally, while holding some of the intricacies of these debates at bay in order to return afresh to the biblical texts themselves. The book's accessibility lies also in its probing structure. Selecting several significant or controversial texts that implicate Jesus and violence in some way—such as Jesus' commands to love enemies and turn the other cheek, Jesus' action of clearing the temple, or the image of the war of the Lamb in the Book of Revelation—Yoder Neufeld proceeds to offer what he calls "soundings" of the text and the received traditions of interpretation. I will not offer a chapter-by-chapter summary here, but will rather point to four significant themes that emerge.

Wrestling with Violence and Nonviolence

The first is suggested by the term *wrestling*, from the UK title of Yoder Neufeld's book: *Jesus and the Subversion of Violence: Wrestling the New Testament Evidence*. In wrestling with difficult texts, like Jacob's wrestling with a "man," or God, one may well limp away. The results are not always neat and tidy. As Yoder Neufeld leads the reader into particular texts, he often warns against the development of a "theory" that will neatly account for all the evidence. Thus, despite the vigorous contemporary debates about "theories of atonement," and especially whether the "Anselmian substitutionary theory" ascribes violence to a God who sends his son Jesus to die in order to appease his wrath, it is crucial to bear in mind that New Testament writers did not have "theories," let alone "a theory," of atonement. They used metaphors, images, analogies, which may nevertheless be clustered thematically. One of the problems with "theories of atonement" is that they tend to ask the abstract/hypothetical question "What *would* it take for God and humans to be reconciled?" Such a point of departure invites the massive imposition of our assumptions, desires, and projections. Admittedly, these will always be intertwined in the process of interpretation, but they do indeed threaten to do violence to the texts at hand. However, the question "What *did* it take for humans and God to be reconciled by Jesus Christ?" is already a disciplined attempt to start from the concrete, the particular, and the actual.[2]

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 14 13-02-17 15:56

The second theme is closely related. Yoder Neufeld consistently reminds and equips the reader to return to often familiar texts with new eyes, and in particular, with a sense of the surprise and wonder that must have characterized those who were compelled to write what we now know as the New Testament in the first place. Jesus' followers did not have an expectation that his ministry, life, death, and resurrection would provide a "theory of atonement"; rather, they scrambled to make sense of the fact that, in Jesus, God *has* undone hostility and murdered enmity. After the fact, they cast about for ways to articulate what had completely surprised them. Elsewhere, Paul drew on the image of God as divine warrior in Isaiah only to completely surprise those to whom he wrote when he enjoined *them* to put on *God's* armour. It is as we glimpse the surprises already contained in the text that we might cultivate our own openness to surprise which, as an interpretive posture, may at least mitigate against the tendency to find in texts only confirmation of our prejudices and settled views.

The third theme in *Killing Enmity* is recognition that the social location of the interpreter matters—though it is not all that matters. Many biblical texts have, in fact, functioned violently. The response Yoder Neufeld counsels is not the excision of these texts from Scripture but a patient listening both to the texts themselves and to the experiences of interpreters in different locations. For example, on the Romans 13:1-7 text on being subject to the ruling authorities, Yoder Neufeld makes a nuanced case for it as a kind of "sermon illustration" that highlights God's sovereignty over all earthly rulers, forbids violent insurrection, and yet does not simply endorse whatever rulers may be doing. Indeed, followers of Jesus are called to exercise their "subordination" to the authorities through "aggressive overcoming evil with good" and "defiant vulnerability."[3]

Yoder Neufeld concludes his discussion by asking,

> Does [Romans 13:1-7] condone, even support violence? The answer is yes. And the answer is again also no. It depends who is reading or misreading it. Decisive, in my view, is what readers bring to the text. Are they in positions of power, or of marginalization, or even oppression? Do they read 'Romans 13' as a timeless charter for government and the Church's call to subjection and obedience? Or do they read it from within the call to radical nonconformity to this age and its ruling powers? Who is the Christ the readers bring to the reading? What is the *ekklesia*, and its mission as the Messiah's body? The matter of violence will depend entirely on how those questions are answered or, better, how the text is lived.[4]

The reader is reminded that the task is not only one of interpretation, at least not only at an intellectual level, but of practice and embodiment, which will in turn shape and reshape the character of those who return to the texts and read them again.

The fourth theme is the love of God, a love that enters concretely into this world. That phrases like "God's love" or the "love of God" sound like agreeable but somewhat empty platitudes today impoverishes interpreters and blinds them to both the surprise and radicality of such love. Readers miss the wonder of what this love might mean if they assume in advance that they know what it must mean. For example, the "love of enemies" to which Jesus calls his followers is an imitation of God. God's love is patient and forbearing. It seeks repentance and restoration "By keeping the future open in a way that looks maddeningly passive vis-à-vis violence, and might in fact be taken as abject weakness by the violent,"[5] it seeks repentance and restoration. Love of enemies is thus not ultimately a tactic within a calculus of cause and effect, nor is it rooted in an ideological commitment to "nonviolence" though it may often issue in nonviolence; it is the profoundly vulnerable seeking of the good of the other. God's love of rebellious creatures is indeed mercy, but precisely so also judgment, unsettling precisely our expectation that judgment per se is violent.

Yoder Neufeld integrates these themes in a telling comment near the end of the book: "[E]very one of our soundings has also shown that there is a great mystery to the intrusion of God into the affairs of humanity, also in judgment, a mystery residing in the love of a Creator of his creation, in both the persistent and ingenious drive to reconcile, and the equally baffling patience to give it time. No system can accommodate such dynamic sovereignty."[6]

Nonviolence and Atonement

The ways in which Jesus' suffering and death have been integrated into various theories of atonement has been a particularly contentious subject of debate within several guilds, including among Mennonite biblical scholars, theologians, and ethicists. Because of a conviction that Jesus was nonviolent, and that the example of Jesus is normative for Christians, some Mennonites have expressed concern that biblical portrayals of God

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 15 13-02-17 15:56

as seemingly violent ought not to be interpreted in that way or even effectively removed from the Church's Scripture. With respect to the atonement, the target is usually the penal substitutionary theory of atonement, given expression by Anselm. The basic problem is that God essentially has Jesus killed in order to appease his wrath. If violence is redemptive and reconciling in God's hands, humans may well conclude violence is redemptive in theirs.[7]

Violence is indeed done to the New Testament if the many images of reconciliation, atonement, forgiveness, and so on are reduced to a single theory, such as Anselmian substitution. Yet, eliminating the cluster of images in which Jesus pays a debt, for example, is not the solution. J. Denny Weaver and others who propose a nonviolent atonement[8] risk substituting one totalizing theory with another one—in Weaver's case, "Narrative Christus Victor" theory in which the nonviolent example of Jesus, and most especially his vindication through resurrection, is the means by which God defeats the powers of sin and evil. Jesus dies "incidentally," at our hands, not God's, in the course of embodying this nonviolent way of life. There is much to this that is indeed right, but also much that misses the mark.

One overriding danger is that ultimately, nonviolence has hermeneutic priority over the particularities of the biblical witness. Biblical texts are sorted and judged on the basis of what we take to be their value for nonviolence. Moreover, nonviolence as we understand it must be characteristic of God for it to be normative for us, and it is therefore ascribed to (projected onto) God. As a consequence, the Bible is not read "as a complex and in the end unfathomable interweaving of true human agency and true divine agency."[9] Rather, since the Bible itself doesn't appear to ensure a particular reading, the Weaver's task becomes finding a hermeneutical grid by which to secure a particular "nonviolent" interpretation. Yoder Neufeld agrees with Weaver on the normative status of nonviolence for Christians; at issue are the ways in which that commitment is understood to derive its authority from the Bible, and moreover, the significance of the agency of God within an economy oriented towards love of enemies.

For Yoder Neufeld, the sovereign love of God is the big picture within which atonement is intelligible. This love does indeed include indebtedness and forgiveness, judgment, wrath, and mercy, as well as vindication and victory. The reality is that different readers will draw from these elements different kinds of conclusions; some may experience them as difficult texts, texts of terror, or even texts that authorize violence. Yoder Neufeld argues that there is no hermeneutical bullet that can secure the "right" interpretation. He writes, "The 'Gotcha!' approach to violence within the biblical narrative is prone to miss the ingenuity of love the evangelists saw on the cross."[10] Rather, there are communities of interpretation which continually try to make sense of the love that has convened them in the first place. The challenge is to be rightly unsettled by the texts, and to "get the scandal right."[11] Yoder Neufeld recognizes that there are indeed risks in placing the hermeneutical task in worshipping communities over against Weaver's more ideological approach. Yet, these communities seek also to discern God's actions in their midst; in faith, they affirm that moving from text to life involves divine as well as human agency.

Violence and Martyrology

I will make some preliminary connections between Yoder Neufeld's approach to violence in the New Testament and the violence that adheres to Christian martyrological traditions. Christian martyrs are often seen as models of patient suffering, nonresistance, or nonviolence; even in Christian traditions that affirm the possibility of a just war, those who die in even such "justified" combat are not typically named martyrs. Nevertheless, the celebration of martyr stories may also be related to some of the ways that the death of Jesus is taken to be a kind of legitimation of violence: first divine violence, and then perhaps human.

The deaths of many individuals in the first centuries of the Jesus movement who were named martyrs are narrated as some kind of repetition of the death of Jesus, but also as interpretations of the death of Jesus. For example, the lowly status of the slave Blandina, as a woman even lower than Jesus, is emphasized in the account of her martyrdom and then contrasted with the exalted status she receives when hung on a stake in the arena. The others executed alongside her look upon Blandina's cruciform pose and see in her Christ on the cross—or so one ancient writer maintains.[12] What is significant here for the connections I want to make with Yoder Neufeld's work on the death of Jesus and violence is the way in which the deaths of the martyrs are assimilated into various clusters of images for the meaning of the atonement.

Some martyrial deaths are described as sacrifices. For example, the Christian bishop Polycarp is described as a sacrifice—his burning flesh echoing both the tradition

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 16 13-02-17 15:56

of animal sacrifice and the liturgical burning of incense. For those contemporary theologians who see in the Anselmian substitutionary atonement God's violence, the language of martyrs as a sacrifice pleasing to God might well be equally problematic, or even more so, given that whereas Jesus' death, even if violently demanded by God, effected salvation, the sacrifice of martyrs in imitation of Jesus is not efficacious in that way.

However, Candida R. Moss argues that the theme of sacrifice is actually quite rare among early Christian martyrologies. The predominant atonement motif to which martyrs are assimilated is that of Christus Victor. Martyrs are portrayed as athletes and soldiers, fighting the good fight alongside Christ, against the forces of evil. One of the famous images of Christus Victor—of Jesus as the bait on a fishhook, which the devil consumes, but cannot retain, and so is forced to relinquish his rights over all sinners—was actually developed first with respect to martyrs and was only later applied to Jesus' death.[13] This might serve as additional evidence for the resonance of the Christus Victor, especially as received by more "ordinary" people in the early churches.

The legacy of the early martyrs continued after Constantine, and their various cults grew and prospered. Michael Gaddis argues that the active memory of the martyrs instilled in some Christians a particularly oppositional set of habits such as intolerance, and a violent demand for purity. The title of his book *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ* is a quote from a fifth-century Egyptian monk who drew on the non-compromising tradition of the martyrs in order to execute righteous violence against those Christians he perceived as heretics or idolaters.[14] As Yoder Neufeld notes, the "divine warrior" imagery throughout the Bible is indeed playing with fire, even as he argues its rhetorical intent is to portray the killing of enmity.

Finally, the Anabaptist tradition holds high the memory of sixteenth-century martyrs, but this is a contested legacy.[15] The *Martyrs' Mirror* of 1660 portrays many martyrs following Jesus in the forgiveness of their persecutors just before their deaths. However, it also contains stories of martyrs praying for divine vengeance and even appearing to relish the prospect of participating in an eschatological "devouring of enemies like bread"[16]—raising again the relationship of human nonresistance with divine "violence." Furthermore, this martyrological tradition may be connected with the practice of "shunning," and as such experienced as violent. If the martyrs died rather than compromise, how can the Church tolerate anything other than holiness in its members? The memory of having been martyred at the hands of other Christians has, in my view, perpetuated self-righteousness and hostility among Christians. This was acknowledged by Mennonite World Conference leaders in response to the 2010 request for forgiveness from the Lutheran World Federation.[17] Recently, one Mennonite leader has argued that the "victim mentality" engendered by martyr memories is one factor that has made it difficult for many Mennonites to recognize ways in which we create victims: through racism, for example.[18]

Though identified as a "peace church," the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition encompasses the potential for violence as well as nonviolence. From a strictly human perspective, "peace" is not the source or foundation of the Mennonite churches. Rather, insofar as they seek to follow Jesus Christ, they may *receive* peace, and must continually interpret what that means in ever new contexts.

In *Killing Enmity*, Yoder Neufeld reminds readers that Jesus' subversion of violence necessarily takes place in a world of violence, and therefore is often narrated in the language of violence. For any community that regards the New Testament, indeed the entire Bible, as authoritative Scripture, there is no substitute for ongoing wrestling with the text and its complicated entanglements in the language and realities of violence. As the doctrine of atonement rises on the contemporary theological agenda, the many aspects of the death of Jesus—including contemporary interpretations in martyrologies—will rightly be considered through lenses that include the question of violence. Yet, the attempt to bring this interpretative process to an end by fixing a single meaning, even with the best of intentions, does violence to the text itself. It ultimately deflects attention away from the incomprehensible love of God that the New Testament writers tried, nevertheless, to bring to expression.

Jeremy M. Bergen is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ontario. Versions of this paper were presented at the University of Waterloo Religious Studies Department seminar on the work of Tom Yoder Neufeld, January 11, 2013, and the Faculty Forum of Conrad Grebel University College, January 25, 2013. His latest book is *Ecclesial Repentance: The Churches Confront Their Sinful Past* (London: T&T Clark, 2011).

1 Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, *Killing Enmity: Violence of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), front cover, back cover. This book has now been shortlisted for the 2013 Michael Ramsey Prize for theological writing under the title given by its UK publisher: *Jesus*

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 17 13-02-17 15:56

and the Subversion of Violence: Wrestling the New Testament Evidence (London: SPCK, 2011).

2 Ibid., 91.

3 Ibid., 119.

4 Ibid., 120–121.

5 Ibid., 31.

6 Ibid., 134.

7 Yoder Neufeld has participated in these conversations at formal and informal levels, and *Killing Enmity* is another intervention in that debate. The themes I've outlined above help to unpack his approach. See, for example, the Mennonite Scholars and Friends forums at the AAR/SBL, which have addressed themes such as "Is God Nonviolent?" (2001), "Responses to J. Denny Weaver's *The Nonviolent Atonement*" (2007), and "The Judgment and Wrath of God" (2012).

8 J. Denny Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001).

9 Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, "Weaver and Nonviolent Atonement: A Response," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 27, no. 2 (Spring 2009), 35.

10 Yoder Neufeld, *Killing Enmity*, 95.

11 Ibid., 96.

12 "Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne," in *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, ed. and trans. Herbert Musurillo (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 75.

13 Candida R. Moss, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 93–94.

14 Michael Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 151.

15 See Kirsten Eve Beachy, ed., *Tongue Screws and Testimonies: Poems, Stories, and Essays Inspired by the Martyrs Mirror* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2010). I discuss some of the theological issues in "Problem or Promise: Confessional Martyrs and Mennonite—Roman Catholic Relations," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 41 (2004): 367–388.

16 Thielemann J. Van Bracht, *Martyrs Mirror*, 3rd English ed. (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1994), 983, 1032. I owe these references to Jacob Peter Letkemann, "A Critical Evaluation of the Anabaptist Conception of Martyrdom in the *Martyrs Mirror*," unpublished M.A. thesis (Hamilton, ON: McMaster University, 2004), 78.

17 I analyze this event, including implications for revisiting the Anabaptist martyr tradition, in "Lutheran Repentance at Stuttgart and Mennonite Ecclesial Identity," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 86 (2012): 315–38.

18 André Gingerich Stoner, "Becoming Unbound," *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 51

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 18 13-02-17 15:56

Remembering the Life and Work of Dorothee Soelle

By Gregory Baum
Centre Justice et Foi, Montréal

Renate Wind, *Dorothee Soelle: Mystic and Rebel*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012. 203 pp.

This is the first biography of Dorothee Soelle, gifted theologian and ardent social activist, whose eloquent voice was heard in her native Germany and, in English translation, in North America. She persuaded vast numbers of Christians that the Gospel called them to stand up for justice, become critics of their society, and engage in political and cultural reconstruction. Her thoughtful theological reflections, published in a series of books, helped many Christians, tired of their Church, to remain believers and discover their mission in the world. She was a socialist, a feminist and an internationalist. Located at the edge of the German Protestant Church, she gathered around herself and cooperated with Christians of all churches. In dialogue with them she produced a liberation theology in the context of capitalist empire.

Dorothee died in 2003. I had the honour to be acquainted with her and her husband, Fulbert, and to have visited them several times in their house in Hamburg. I am grateful to Renate Wild for having written this biography and to Nancy Lukens and Martin Rumscheidt for having translated and edited it in English.

This biography recounts a number of important elements in the life of Dorothee Soelle. It reveals the events and experiences that made her a passionate theologian and social actor. It follows her activities as a public speaker and an active participant in various social movements. It offers useful summaries of some of her books. The biography also records some of Soelle's controversial statements, which made some people angry at her. For example, in her address to the Sixth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, held in Vancouver in 1983, she told the audience that she came from "a country with a bloody history that reeks of gas," a remark that rubbed some German Lutherans the wrong way. As Renate Wind admits, Soelle occasionally made outrageous claims, of which even her friends disapproved. She was a poet and an artist, and occasionally exaggerated to make a point.

While this book may be the first biography of Dorothee Soelle, I suggest that her life and work actually deserve many more detailed studies. She was an intellectual, an original thinker, in dialogue with philosophers and theologians of past and present. At the same time, she did theology in her own way, raising issues and having insights neglected by the scholars at the German theological faculties. She reflected theologically outside the box. While no German university invited her to teach theology, she was grateful to the Union Theological Seminary in New York for giving her space and appointing her as professor over many years. Her thinking was greatly affected by her pastoral experience in the United States and her contacts with radical Christian projects in that country. Canadians will regret that the book does not mention that Soelle actively participated in the conference on Political Theology held in 1977 in Saskatoon, the report of which, including a summary of her talk, was published in *The Ecumenist*, in March–April 1977.

The author calls Soelle a mystic. While most liberation theologians begin their theology with outrage over people's enslavement, Soelle always began her thinking, following Aristotle and the classical tradition, with amazement, marvelling at the good in the world. She had a strong sense of the sacramentality of everyday life.

It is my impression that the life and work of Dorothee Soelle are part of an emerging phase in Christian history that reads the Gospel as a summons to serve God's reign and to act and pray that God's will be done on earth. This new reading of the Gospel summons forth a sociospiritual mission in the world that can be reconciled with the Protestant and Catholic traditions and creates spontaneous cooperation between Christians of different churches in the one Spirit. This emerging phase may flourish in the future or remain a minority current.

Today, all Christian churches have become internally pluralistic. All of them contain a liberationist current securely founded upon divine revelation that defines the Christian stance against present-day evil, leaving behind the inherited doctrinal discord between Catholics and Protestants. Christians respect the different denominational traditions and the diversity of doctrine because each denomination, faithful to its own inheritance, is able to recognize social justice as God's will for the world, hears the summons of Jesus to be in solidarity with "the least of the brethren," and acknowledges the work of Spirit renewing the face of the earth.

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 19 13-02-17 15:56

Disruptive Theology and Homelessness

By Megan Shore
King's University College, Western University, London, Ontario
Laura Stivers, *Disrupting Homelessness: Alternative Christian Approaches*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011. 176 pp.

Laura Stivers' theological reflection on homelessness in the United States is an important and timely study. The 2008 economic crisis saw a dramatic increase in homelessness in the United States. As a result, Christian individuals and Christian communities have struggled to respond. Stivers' book is an attempt to critique traditional Christian responses to homelessness and to offer an alternative approach to homelessness, an approach she calls "prophetic-disruptive."

Stivers draws on the work of Christian ethical theorist Traci West for her methodology. Using West's "resistance" or "disruptive" ethics, Stivers focuses on the Christian call to resist and confront oppression and injustice. According to Stivers, disruptive theology "refers to our Christian calling to conflict, just as Jesus did, that which denies human well-being and community" (7). Stivers maintains that a true Christian response to the homeless should have three aspects. First, it "must affirm the needs of those who are homeless for community, connection, and meaning" (8). Second, it must "celebrate the agency and spiritual vitality" that emerges with the resistance to oppression (8). And third, it must "entail building just and compassionate societies in solidarity with the homeless and poor, not on behalf of the poor" (8). Using a method of strategic resistance and disruption of individual and communal ideologies of homelessness, Stivers advocates engagement in a participatory process of creating just and compassionate communities. Consistent with liberationist approaches to theological ethics, she calls for a social movement that starts with the experience of the marginalized and oppressed. From this point of departure, the disruption of homelessness must address and transform the structural inequality of power and privilege, as well as promote economic practices and policies that are more just.

Stivers has both a deconstructive and constructive agenda, which sets the stage for the structure of the book. The first part of the book, the deconstructive, focuses on deconstructing traditional Christian ideologies about homelessness to demonstrate how these oppressive ideologies perpetuate inequality and oppression. She provides an overview of Traci West's ethical method of resistance and disruption, and then uses this methodology to address dominant ideologies of homelessness through a brief historical and social analysis of homelessness. Consistent with the liberationist tradition, Stivers provides historical context, and explores the current realities and experiences of homelessness in the USA. She offers a fairly rich discussion of the dominant ideologies that frame the issue of homelessness and demonstrates how they reinforce power, privilege, and social domination by shaping both perceptions and responses to homelessness. One such example is the idea of the homeless person as a "deviant." She shows how the idea that the homeless are homeless because of a personal fault or choice, such as laziness or alcohol addiction, is reflected in policies that focus on empowering people to take better control of their lives through job-training or self-esteem building. The problem with this approach to homelessness, Stivers argues, is that there is no structural analysis. The problem is defined as the individual person, thus the solution has to be found in correcting the individual person's defective character.

Stivers identifies two typical Christian responses to homelessness in the United States. The first response is the direct-service approach, also known as the charity approach. This is an approach that provides immediate relief in the form of shelter, food, and basic services. She calls the second approach "a structural Christian response." (6) According to Stivers, this approach focuses on a "more structural approach of building low-income housing." (5) She concludes the deconstructive component of this book by providing a case study for each approach in order to highlight the common themes and ideologies she sees emerging from typical Christian responses to homelessness. The Association of Gospel Rescue Mission (AGRM) is the case study she uses for the charity approach. AGRM is a national religious organization with over three hundred affiliates that offers "direct charity" in the form of emergency shelter and soup kitchens, among other services. And she uses the case study of Habitat for Humanity to demonstrate the structural approach. Habitat is an international Christian

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 20 13-02-17 15:56

organization with over 1,700 affiliates and is open to various theological and religious perspectives.

The second part of the book, the constructive, begins by assessing and analyzing the two case studies. Stivers concludes that *both* AGRM and Habitat for Humanity fail to disrupt and challenge oppressive policies and practices of institutions and the political economy. Indeed, although she refers to Habitat for Humanity as a more structural approach, she does acknowledge that it fails to address structural injustice. In spite of this lack of structural critique by these two organizations, Stivers suggests that they can and do have liberating aspects. By focusing on these liberating aspects, Stivers begins to outline her alternative Christian approach to homelessness, which she calls "prophetic disruption." This disruption means that the churches can address homelessness by confronting poverty and inequality and offering structural solutions to homelessness. The policies and practices that exploit and exclude people, as well as ideologies that justify exploitation and exclusion, need to be disrupted. Moreover, a social movement that addresses the structural causes of poverty and homelessness would lead to the creation of a community of compassion that works to alleviate homelessness.

This book is written in an accessible style and conveys pastoral tone. The book includes discussion questions at the end of each chapter, making it an excellent choice for undergraduate classes, church groups, congregations, and religious organizations.

There are, however, two main weaknesses in Stivers' book. The first is her use of case studies. As the title and thesis of this book clearly indicate, this book is about homelessness. Stivers' entire purpose is to disrupt homelessness, yet the cases she has selected for this book are weak. Indeed, there is only one case study that actually deals specifically with homelessness, and that is AGRM. Stivers herself admits that Habitat deals more specifically with low-income housing and not homelessness (88). So essentially Stivers only has one case study, and it is not evident that one case study can prove that the charity response to homelessness is different from the structural response.

The second weakness is that she is not consistently true to her liberationist methodology. The liberation tradition starts with the experience of the poor and marginalized. In the interviews Stivers conducted, she primarily spoke with the people who work at the two organizations she profiled, which means we only occasionally hear the voice of the homeless who use the services. The result is that readers do not know what the homeless want and what they think ought to happen to disrupt homelessness in the United States.

Still, this is a book worth reading. Stivers has identified a three-step approach that may actually disrupt homelessness. While this book is incomplete, readers will likely see ways in which Stivers could respond with another book that includes a fuller application of her approach. I look forward to that second book.

Megan Shore is Associate Professor of Social Justice and Peace Studies and Religious Studies at King's University College at Western University in London, Ontario.

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 21 13-02-17 15:56

Retreating from Justice: An Open Letter to Canadian Bishops

Élizabeth Garant, Executive Director of the Centre justice et foi, Montréal
Introduction by David Seljak

On October 30, 2012, Élizabeth Garant, Executive Director of the Centre justice et foi in Montreal, sent an open letter to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) protesting its apparent change of orientation on social and political issues in Canada. Garant's concern is that the CCCB has given up on the quest for social justice, a quest that the World Synod of Bishops called "a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel."[1] The letter has attracted some publicity and was reported in a number of Catholic newspapers, including the Catholic Register.2 The Ecumenist is pleased to reproduce the letter, in which Garant lists examples of the developments in the external relations and internal affairs of the CCCB that support her conclusion. In order to give readers access to documents that will provide further information and context for each of Garant's examples, I have added annotation in the endnotes.

Garant argues that the constellation of these developments illustrates a retreat from a commitment to social justice and an appeasement of the current government. The bishops have been vocal about international issues, such as the suppression of religious freedom, she states, but this makes their silence on Canadian issues all the more obvious. One might add that the recent letters of the CCCB protesting violence against Christians (especially in Muslim societies) tend to fall in line with the agenda of the Conservative government, which recently created an Office of Religious Freedom as a watchdog for the violation of religious freedoms around the world (that is, outside of Canada).

The Ecumenist has decided to reprint Garant's letter below because it is time for those interested in the many connections between faith and justice to ask if their leaders have not made too many concessions to the Conservative government. Where, for example, are the inspiring letters on the priority of labour over capital, the need for protection of refugees and immigrants, and other issues of social concern that the Canadian bishops produced a generation ago? 3 Moreover, this letter should inspire us all to reflect on our own commitment to the emancipatory dimension of the gospel of Jesus Christ which promises to "proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, [and] to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18-19). When it comes to social justice, have Catholics lost the faith?

Martin Luther King Jr. criticized the religious leaders of his day for accommodating Christianity to the unjust structures of segregation and racism that were supported by the dominant culture of the United States. He wrote:

> There was a time when the church was very powerful—in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being "disturbers of the peace" and "outside agitators."[4]

Garant's letter challenges us to ask, when it comes to the important political, economic and social questions of the day—at least those outside of the usual questions of sexual morality-whether the Canadian Roman Catholic Church has not become a mere "thermometer." Has Catholic faith and justice teaching from the CCCB become a simple reflection of the pervasive—and secular—culture of neo-liberalism? In the search for respectability (access to government ministers, acceptance by those with power and money, prestige among decision-makers, etc.), have the Canadian bishops lost their prophetic voice? Have they become mere priests-in the Weberian sense-celebrating the values, attitudes, ideas and actions of the secular leadership?[5]

While those committed to a critical theology in solidarity with the poor and powerless may lament the new orientation of Canada's Catholic leadership, it is not enough to complain. It is time to undertake a rigorous analysis of the new forces of conservatism and passivity that have now made their way into the Church so that we may respond more effectively to the unresolved problems of church and society.

Editor of *The Ecumenist*, **David Seljak** is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at St. Jerome's University in Waterloo, Ontario.

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 22 13-02-17 15:56

Montreal, October 30, 2012
His Excellency Richard Smith, President
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Bishop,

We have been dismayed in recent months by some of the decisions taken by the CCCB or by the silence that the CCCB has chosen in face of certain issues. Beyond that, the manner in which some members of its leadership have carried out their duties disturbs us profoundly.

Ultimately, the principles of ecclesiology inspired by the Second Vatican Council seem to us to be imperilled by the current orientation of the CCCB. Concretely, this is happening through serious steps backward with regard to the rich tradition of the Church's social teaching and by a political conservatism that has nothing to do with the Gospel. This new orientation also shows a loss of willingness within the Canadian episcopacy to exercise its responsibility to denounce the political choices that harm the dignity and rights of people. There is also a loss of will to bring about a more just society rooted in solidarity-whatever the political party in power. Finally, these actions reveal an official Church that is less and less interested in working together with organizations and social movements concerned about social justice.

Moreover, so we note that no letter denouncing the many policies of the current government that attack human dignity and social justice has been made public for quite a long time, whether through your Justice and Peace Commission or through your executive. Nevertheless, there is no lack of issues! You have, instead, preferred to denounce the policies of foreign governments. While that is certainly justified, it highlights even more on your silence with regard to Canadian policies.

Furthermore, for some time now we note the repeated absence of the CCCB as signatory to important collective texts submitted to you (the appeal on climate change, the intervention by the Canadian Council of Churches on the major cuts among prison chaplains, and so on). Meanwhile, other Christian Churches and religious leaders did participate.

This refusal to denounce the current political authorities has even led the executive of the CCCB to short-circuit the democratic process of Development and Peace, a flagship institution of the Catholic Church in Canada.[6] By reorienting its fall campaign and by unilaterally suppressing the citizen action (the postcards) proposed to faithful by which they would challenge the federal government on the new and unacceptable orientation of Canadian international aid, you seem to put the preservation of your "good relations" with the Conservative government above all other considerations.

It is perhaps this attitude that explains your highly questionable decision to welcome Minister Jason Kenney to a closed-door meeting during the recent plenary assembly of the bishops. We have already sent you a letter expressing our disagreement with this decision and with the culture of secrecy that surrounded it. (We have not, by the way, received any recognition of that letter.) We continue to note that your positions with regard to Canadian policies on immigration do not always seem to be clear and transparent. During this same period, the Harper government continued to contribute to the weakening of the status of the most vulnerable immigrants. The most recent announcement in that list is the introduction of permanent temporary residence. This is a move that will have serious consequences, especially for the more disadvantaged women.

Finally, we have just learned, to our stupefaction, that the position of Senior Social Justice Advisor has been abolished. As you know, this advisor was precisely the person who allowed the bishops to be well-informed regarding issues related to justice, solidarity and peace. He represented the bishops at gatherings of other Churches and organizations in regard to dossiers that made it possible to keep the social commitment of the Church up to date and incarnated. He was also the person who undertook the research and writing necessary for your public positions on matters of a social character. The elimination of this position has been justified by economic considerations. It is nevertheless difficult for us to ignore, in this decision, additional proof of the regrettable orientations that we deplore in this letter.

Sincerely,
Élizabeth Garant, Executive Director
Centre justice et foi, Montréal

---

1 *Justice in the World,* 6. "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation."

2 See http://www.catholicregister.org/news/canada/item/15413-bishops-%E2%80%98silent%E2%80%99-on-social-justice.

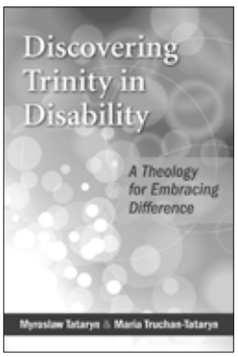
3 For examples of this tradition, see: E.F. Sheridan, *Do Justice! The Social Teaching of the Canadian Catholic Bishops (1945-–1986),* (Sherbrooke, QC: Édition Paulines; Toronto: Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice, 1987).

4 "Letter from Birmingham Jail": http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html (accessed February 14, 2013).

5 See the distinction between priestly and prophetic religion—along with the distinction between utopian and ideological religion—discussed in Gregory Baum, *Religion and Alienation,* 2nd ed. (Ottawa: Novalis, 2006), 82–104.

6 See http://www.catholicregister.org/news/canada/item/15095-dp-fall-campaign-is-put-on-hold (accessed February 14, 2013).

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 23 13-02-17 15:56



Discovering Trinity in Disability:
A Theology for Embracing Difference

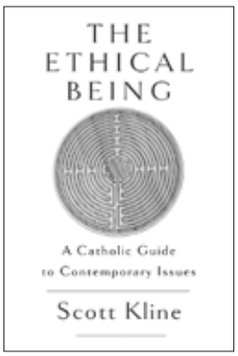
Myroslaw Tataryn and Maria Truchan-Tataryn

As parents of three daughters, two of whom are labeled disabled, the authors explore the Scriptures and writings of early Christian thinkers to challenge conventional attitudes – and fears – toward those who are different. Through their exploration of historic and contemporary disability issues, they draw on the theology of the Trinity to bring to light a new, theological perspective on inclusiveness in our communities.

Miroslav Tataryn, ThD, has a Doctorate in Theology from the University of Toronto and is currently a professor of Religious Studies at St. Jerome's University in Waterloo, Ontario.

Maria Truchan-Tataryn, PhD, has a Doctorate in Literature from the University of Saskatchewan and currently works as a registered massage therapist.

144pp PB 6″ x 9″ 978-2-89646-486-9 $18.95



The Ethical Being:
A Catholic Guide to Contemporary Issues

Scott Kline

Kline engages readers with a lively review of the history and framework of Catholic ethics. He explores the nature of ethics and the themes and sources of Christian moral thought so as to equip us with the tools for dialogue. We are invited to consider, then, the many moral problems that speckle our daily lives and what our tradition may offer to guide us. Ultimately, Kline challenges us to consider who we wish to become in light of our morality and values.

Scott Klein, MA, PhD, is an associate professor of Religious Studies at St. Jerome's University in Waterloo. His specialities are ethics, social justice, and contemporary culture and politics.

224pp PB 6″ x 9″ 978-2-89646-324-4 $19.95

Available at your local bookstore or call 1-800-387-7164 to order

The Ecumenist: A Journal of Theology, Culture, and Society is published quarterly by Novalis © Novalis 2013.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical or otherwise, without prior permission of and proper acknowledgment of *The Ecumenist: A Journal of Theology, Culture, and Society.*

Editor: David Seljak – **Editor Emeritus:** Gregory Baum – **Contributing editors:** M. Shawn Copeland, Lee Cormie, Charles Curran, Virgilio Elizondo, Scott Kline, Marilyn Legge, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Harold Wells, Don Schweitzer – **Design:** Gilles Lépine – **Layout:** Audrey Wells

Subscriptions: $15 (postage and taxes included).
To order: Periodicals Dept., Novalis, 10 Lower Spadina Avenue, Suite 400, Toronto, ON M5V 2Z2

Tel: 1-800-387-7164 Fax: 1-800-204-4140 E-mail: ecumenist@novalis.ca

ISSN: 0013-080X

Address editorial correspondence to: Novalis Publishing Inc., 10 Lower Spadina Avenue, Suite 400, Toronto, ON M5V 2Z2

Printed in Canada

NOVALIS

POSTES CANADA CANADA POST
Port payé Postage paid
Poste-publications Publications Mail
40063645

Ecumenist WINTER 2013.indd 24 13-02-17 15:56