

# Stirrings



A Basilian Peace & Justice Newsletter

Spring 2018

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## Voices for Peace Conference Explores Prayerful Activism

By Joe Gunn - Blog on May 1st, 2018

Years ago, before I came to work for Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ), I was asked to review a book for *The Catalyst*. The tome was entitled, “*Rabble-Rouser for Peace*,” a biography written about South African Desmond Tutu. What impressed me to this day is not any one specific incident (among many) in which the great religious leader made an imprint on history. Rather, what stays with me was realizing how much time, every day, the Anglican Archbishop spent in prayer. His relentless activism and leadership – as well as the overwhelming challenges, criticisms, and controversies stirred up by his witness in the battle against apartheid – could not be sustained without hours spent in contemplation.

Who can continue effective activism forever – without stopping, taking stock, recharging one’s emotional and spiritual batteries, and counting on true, engaged friends and mentors for support?

At Voices for Peace, a conference in Toronto on Saturday, April 28, over 120 participants took advantage of opportunities to re-charge and refocus. The conference (sponsored by CPJ, The Henri Nouwen Society, (Anglican) Church of the Redeemer, and the Basilian Centre for Peace and Justice) provided a healthy and invigorating mix of energy and reflection.



Peace activist Jim Forest (Cassidy Hall)

“Prayerful activism” was explored among Indigenous people opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline in the US (in the Canadian preview of a short documentary film), in groups pressuring Canada to end arms sales to Saudi Arabia (Sonal Marwah of Project Ploughshares), with Canadians pressing

the Trudeau government to join the treaty banning nuclear weapons (Rob Acheson of Science for Peace), and with peacemakers confronting the Israeli army in Palestine (Rachelle Friesen of Christian Peacemaker Teams).

Morning breakout sessions offered grounding in nurturing the peacemaker within. Sr. Mary-Ellen Francoeur’s group rooted peacemaking activism in contemplative practice. Ken Herfst (a professor at Redeemer University) asked participants to “dare to dream with eyes wide open.” And Fr. Bob Holmes offered suggestions on how to disarm our own hearts – as well as those of the oppressor, based on real experiences of Christian Peacemaker Teams in the Holy Land.

Two of the conference’s keynote sessions were offered by Amsterdam-based writer, Jim Forest. His books include writings on some of the major American religious peace activists: Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton and most recently,

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Stirring: (adjective) exciting, arousing, awakening, animating, quickening

## Prayerful Peace Activism

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Daniel Berrigan. A conscientious objector during the Vietnam War, Forest later served as General Secretary of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation and is now a communicant in the Orthodox Church (indulging his obvious enchantment with all we can learn from contemplating religious icons).

Forest understands that peacemaking is “always a work in progress,” but also that unique roles are played by an expanded circle of activists who display varied backgrounds and temperaments. Not every peacemaker must be arrested for civil disobedience at protests, for example. Forest’s enduring claim to fame, in my mind, is that he was the recipient of many letters from the contemplative Thomas Merton (not himself a front-line protestor on most occasions), and in particular, a communication from Merton now widely known as the “Letter to a Young Activist.” Merton consoled the frustrated young man who could not see how any action could end the American War in Vietnam, essentially arguing that our commitment to peace does not rest on signs of obvious and initial success. Rather, the monk famously concluded, “In the end, it is the reality of personal relationships that saves everything.”

Here lies the tension all peacemakers and public justice advocates must face. We must disarm and decolonize our own hearts if we are to become truly effective in reaching out to others. While we must always confront the sources of evil in the world, it is crucial to employ social analysis, allowing us to understand how systems are failing to be just, even as they sometimes involve people who are striving to be good. For real change to take place, the point



Shad speaks at Voices for Peace

Credit: The Henri Nouwen Society

is not to bring the oppressor to his knees, but to his senses.

Juno-Award-winning Shad Kabango, perhaps best known for hosting CBC radio’s flagship arts and culture show “q”, delivered a similar message directed to newer generations. His favoured métier, hip hop, speaks a “language of the underside” and can especially connect with people there. For Shad, a song “doesn’t feel real unless I have some skin in the game... unless I take some risks, it just doesn’t communicate.” Vulnerability as a privileged entry-way into art comes second nature to a 35-year-old born in Kenya of parents who had fled the genocide in Rwanda and grew up as a black man in Canada.

Voices for Peace may become an annual event, if enough people conclude with the organizers that changing history must begin with changing ourselves, and if this formula of bringing art, activism and contemplation together can aspire new generations to deepen our commitments to justice.

*Joe Gunn serves as Executive Director at CPJ.*



*The Basilian Centre for Peace and Justice* was pleased to co-sponsor and host the Voices for Peace Conference. We also co-sponsored the Palestine Liberation Theology Conference which was originally scheduled for the University of St. Michael’s College but was moved to the Mary Ward Centre when silenced by the Israeli lobby.

One week before it was scheduled, the President of St. Michael’s cancelled the event, without consulting either the Faculty of Theology or the Basilians who had arranged the venue in early March. The Sisters of Loretto offered space at their Mary Ward Centre even though they too received an attempted silencing from the Israeli lobby.

These two conferences brought together peacemakers young and old, academics and activists, Christians of many denominations, supported by the efforts of a myriad of peacemaking organizations.

Bob Holmes csb

## Stirrings

*A Peace & Justice Newsletter  
A project of the Basilian Centre for Peace & Justice*

Stirring: (noun) the act of moving or putting into motion, activity

# My friend Dan Berrigan

## another Daniel in the lions' den

by Jim Forest - May 8, 2018

The biblical Daniel was not the only Daniel to have spent time in a lions' den and survived to tell the tale. There was also my friend Daniel Berrigan, the troublesome Jesuit priest and poet who spent two years in federal prison for making it more difficult for the American government to send young men to fight in Vietnam, an unjust war if ever there was one.

Thanks to Catholic Worker co-founder Dorothy Day, we first met in 1961. She brought me with her to a small gathering in Harlem at which Dan read a paper on new winds that were blowing in the Catholic Church, thanks to windows being opened by Pope John XXIII. At the time Dan was a lean, wiry man with closely cropped black hair, dressed in tailored black clericals and a Roman collar, very much the upcoming Jesuit academic.

It wasn't until 1964 that we met again, in Paris. At first sight I didn't recognize him. The tailored clericals and Roman collar had been replaced with a black cotton turtleneck, black chino slacks, a faded green wind-breaker jacket. After six years teaching theology at Le Moyne, Dan had been given a yearlong sabbatical in France. "Was this meant as a sugar-coated exile?" I asked. "Very likely," Dan responded, "but what a place to be!" Our three-day Parisian stay included meetings with several remarkable people, including two "worker priests," plain-clothed men whose mission was among anti-clerical workers in factories rather than pious Catholics rooted in parishes. We also spent several hours with Jean Daniélou, fellow Jesuit and eminent scholar of the early church.

"I returned to the United States," Dan later recalled, "convinced of one simple thing — the war in Vietnam could only grow worse. We Americans were about to repeat the already bank-

rupt experience of the French."

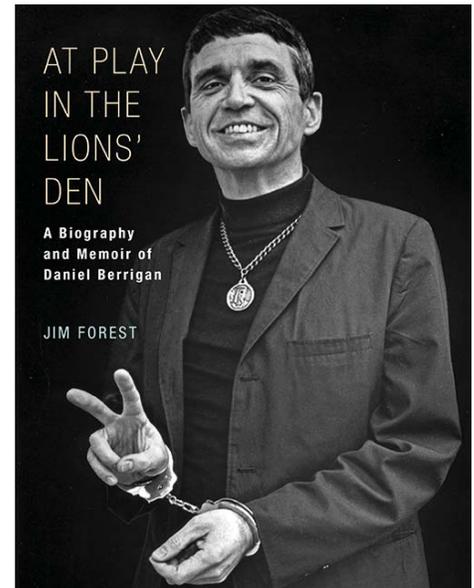
By 1968 he and Phil decided it was time not only for opposition but resistance. On May 17, half-a-century ago, the two brothers and seven others burned 378 draft records in a parking lot adjacent to a draft center in a Baltimore suburb. The event was first-page headline news. The Catonsville Nine, as they were known, are still being talked about.

Dan was nothing if not a writer. One needs at least a shelf or two for his 60 books of prose and poetry. But the text he is best known for was quite short — a two-page declaration in which he explained what led him to Catonsville. Here are some extracts:

"Our apologies, good friends, for the fracture of good order, the burning of paper instead of children, the angering of the orderlies in the front parlor of the charnel house. We could not, so help us God, do otherwise. For we are sick at heart. Our hearts give us no rest for thinking of the Land of Burning Children."

Dan, who once described his entire life as an act of protest, was the target of sharp criticism until the day he died, April 30, 2016, age 94, but lived long enough to witness some remarkable validations. Not least he saw a fellow Jesuit with a similar conscience elected pope and take the name Francis, thus linking his pontificate to the poor man of Assisi who became a missionary of mercy and an enemy of war. He lived to hear the same pope stand before both Houses of Congress and single out for praise two of Dan's principal mentors, Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton.

Just months before Dan's heart stopped beating, the Vatican hosted a global meeting of peacemakers who proposed that it was time to bury the "just war" doctrine and focus instead on nonviolent methods of conflict



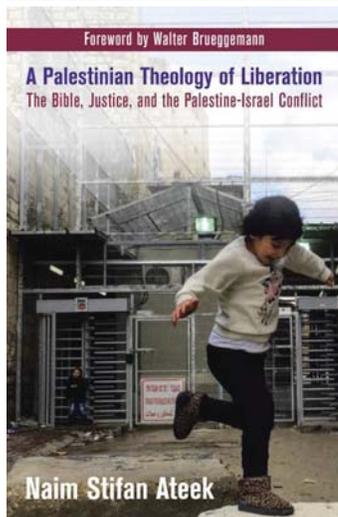
Jim Forest's latest book is *At Play in the Lions' Den: a biography and memoir of Daniel Berrigan* (Orbis)

resolution and what makes for a just peace. In all the 16 centuries of the just war theory, it was pointed out at the conference, no national hierarchy had ever condemned as unjust any war its nation's military was engaged in. Dan was one of those who has helped speed the day when Christians, whether Catholic or otherwise, could no longer attach the adjectives "just" or "holy" to the word "war."

Playing in one lions' den after another, throughout his life Dan was a performer and artist but his art was rarely art for art's sake. His was a life of lived-out translations of such biblical commandments as "thou shalt not kill" and "love one another." How sadly rare it is to find a person — Dan was one of the exceptions — who regards such a straightforward mandate as obliging us to protect life rather than destroy it, even if that requires saying a costly "no."

Perhaps his most notable quality was his immense compassion, which guided him one way or another on a daily basis, even late in life when it was a challenge just getting out of bed in the Jesuit infirmary at Fordham University that had become his last home.

Stirring: (adjective) exciting, arousing, awakening, animating, quickening



## *A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* The Bible, Justice and the Palestine-Israel Conflict

Addressing what many consider the world's most intractable conflict, Naim Ateek offers a succinct primer on the theology of liberation in the context of the Palestinian struggle for freedom and self-determination. From the historical roots of this struggle, Ateek shows how the memory of the Holocaust

has served to trump the claims and aspirations of the native inhabitants, and how later Israeli occupation and settlements in the West Bank have contributed to their suffering and oppression.

As a Christian theologian himself, Ateek shows how Western Christian support for Israeli claims to the land rely on a particular and exclusivist reading of the Bible. In contrast, a Palestinian theology of liberation responds with a counter-strategy for biblical interpretation, one that emphasizes the prophetic themes of inclusivity and justice. Ateek concludes by providing broad principles of achieving security, peace, and justice for all the peoples in Israel/Palestine.

Rev. Dr. Naim Stifan Ateek, an Anglican priest, is a Palestinian Arab and a citizen of Israel. A former canon of St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, he is founder of Sabeel, an ecumenical center in Jerusalem that uses a theological approach to work for liberation for Palestinians. He is the author of *Justice and Only Justice* and *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*.

## *Israel Lobby Smears Will Not Extinguish Palestinian Priest's Liberatory Message*

Excerpts of the Joint Statement  
from Canadian Friends of Sabeel  
and Independent Jewish Voices Canada

Carrying a message of non-violent resistance to the Israeli occupation, Palestinian liberation theologian Rev. Naim Ateek's tour to promote his latest book, *A Palestinian Theology of Liberation: The Bible, Justice, and the Palestine-Israel Conflict*, began in British Columbia and concluded with a theology of Liberation course at the University of Toronto (May 2-3).

Once again, as it has done on so many other occasions, B'nai Brith has tried to spread unfounded allegations of antisemitism to silence a Palestinian voice. It has failed – all planned events have gone forward successfully. But B'nai Brith's action may be an opportunity to encourage more serious discussion of the issues that Ateek raises.

Ateek's book emphasizes the proud history of partnership between Jews, Muslims, and Christians of conscience. It repeatedly cites Jewish critics of the use of Biblical scripture to justify violence against the Palestinians.

Sid Shniad – a member of the Steering Committee of Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV) who attended Ateek's lecture in Abbotsford, British Columbia – explains: "The B'nai Brith statement is total BS. Ateek cited from the Talmud and other sources showing that there is no basis for Israel or Zionists to claim Biblical or other religious foundations for creating a Jewish state or discriminating against non-Jews."



Ateek is a steadfast ally to Jewish liberation theologians. Indeed, his event in Hamilton (April 3) was hosted by the Jewish Liberation Theology Institute, building on Ateek's decades of ecumenical and interfaith work.

Meanwhile, the organizers of Rev. Ateek's tour are gratified that so many people across the country have come out to engage with these issues meaningfully, with supplies of the book sold out in city after city. "The tour has been a great success," says Kathy Bergen, the Canadian Friends of Sabeel (CFOS)'s national coordinator for the book tour. "We are proud to be providing an opportunity for people to hear Rev. Ateek for themselves and to hear about, and hopefully support, the quest for justice, peace, and reconciliation in the Holy Land."

CFOS and IJV stand united in the quest for justice and peace in Israel-Palestine and condemn B'nai Brith's attempts to silence and defame Rev. Ateek, a principled advocate for a just future for all in the Holy Land.

*Canadian Friends of Sabeel (CFOS) is a grassroots organization working for justice, peace, and reconciliation in the Holy Land primarily through education and solidarity projects in Canada.*

*Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV) is a grassroots organization grounded in Jewish tradition that opposes all forms of racism and advocates for justice and peace for all in Israel-Palestine.*

Stirring: (noun) the act of moving or putting into motion, activity

# SCANDAL

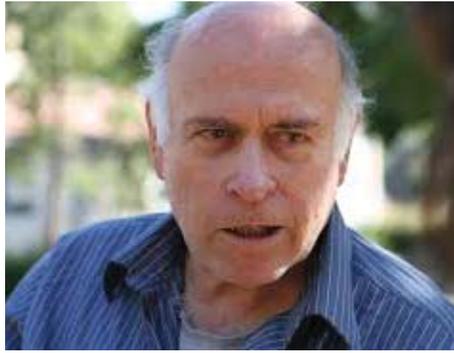
By Amos Givirtz

When robbers are caught, the accepted practice is to arrest them and bring them to trial, to send them to jail in accordance with the severity of their crime, and to require them to pay compensation to their victims. But this is not the case in Israel when the robbers are the settlers who steal Palestinian land and build their homes or grow their crops on it. They receive special treatment, and if the state is forced to act according to the law, then it is the settlers who receive compensation!

Unfortunately, this scandalous situation is a substantial element in the corruption of Israeli society caused by the occupation. The land grabbing started when the State of Israel chose to begin its process of territorial expansion after the Six Day War in 1967. The Israeli government sent its army to carry out policies which stand in contradiction to the ethics of combat, to morality, and to international law.

Along with the land theft, settlements were established, water was stolen, houses were demolished and some Palestinians were expelled - all this while attempting to lie to us and the world that everything was being done for security reasons. Only right-wing governments began to partially come clean about their desire to annex the occupied territories, while still continuing the lie that they were interested in a two-state solution for the sake of peace.

The political falsehood was joined by a legal falsehood. When the issue of the legality of the settlements in the occupied territories was brought before the High Court of Justice, the latter ruled that it had no jurisdiction in the matter which was a case of government policy.



The "Prophet" Amos

And, being naïve, I thought that was exactly the High Court's role - to criticize government actions.

For example, what the government does as official policy, the settlers do privately. They establish settlements on their own initiative. These, of course, are illegal, but after a while they are recognized by the government, which in itself is a violation of international law. We especially see this in the unauthorized outposts.

And here begins the biggest scandal of all – the Israeli government, instead of immediately evacuating the robbers from the outpost and indicting them for their crimes, offers them huge compensation and an alternate site. In this way, the criminal act of establishing a settlement in the occupied territories became a joint venture of the government and the robbers! And this was nothing new.

So yes, the occupation corrupts and continues to corrupt. You won't see civil society organizations fighting against this official corruption. Nor will you see popular protests against this ongoing scandal. And the lonely few who are still outraged by this scandalous behavior are, here in Israel, called leftist.

*Amos is a Jewish Israeli born in Israel, living on a Kibbutz. He is known as the "Prophet Amos" calling Israeli leaders to justice for the Palestinians.*

## Basilian Peace & Justice Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

We have been brought not only to the Holy Land but also to meet the Holy People and to hear their stories.

We return home to the comfort and relative safety of our North American homes, but we return changed.

We return enraged by the injustices that we have seen with our own eyes and heard about through their stories.

We return humbled by their ability to live with dignity in the face of a bureaucratic nightmare designed to frustrate and humiliate.

We return inspired by their passion in resistance and their *sumud* (steadfastness).

a Returning Pilgrim



**25 Sept-9 Oct 2018**  
**contact:**  
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# Custodians of the Common Home

*Latin American bishops make urgent call for an ecological conversion in new pastoral exhortation*

By Development and Peace - May 10, 2018

The Bishops' conference of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAM) has released a pastoral exhortation entitled "*Missionary Disciples Custodians of the Common Home, Discernment in Light of Laudato si'*," that calls for care of creation in response to the damaging consequences of the over-exploitation of the Earth's natural resources.

*"...as pastors of our peoples, we want to express our great concern about the reality that in several Latin American countries there are thousands of high-risk environmental liabilities that, in addition to polluting water, soil and air, affect the health of people living in the surrounding areas."*

Development and Peace welcomes this pastoral letter, which recognizes the important work of land defenders and the urgent need to care for creation. Many of Development and Peace's partners in Latin America place their lives at risk on a daily basis as they walk alongside Indigenous and peasant communities who are threatened and criminalized for protecting their land and the Earth's gifts.

Latin America is blessed with an abundance of natural resources, yet, this has also made the continent a theatre of exploitation, often by foreign investors. The Church in Latin America has witnessed the impacts of this search for profits on communities: human rights violations, conflict, dis-

placement, pollution and even at times death.

For example, in November 2015 a dam containing mining waste broke in the municipality of Mariana, Brazil. Millions of cubic meters of iron ore waste formed a wave of mud that destroyed homes, schools and churches, killing 19 people and contaminating local water sources.



Wave of mud from broken dam in Mariana, Brazil

The Bishops express particular concern for the Amazon and its Indigenous peoples. The unique biodiversity of this ecosystem contributes significantly to purifying the very air we breathe, yet it is being destroyed at a rapid rate that directly threatens the lives of at least 30 million people.

"We would like to draw special attention to the fact that the Amazon has been affected by oil spills that have polluted river and underground water at alarming levels, with serious consequences for the health of the nearby population and the flora and fauna in

the region. In the case of mining, water is often the cause of persistent disputes and conflicts because of the high amount required for mining activities while at the same time the adjacent population suffers severe water shortages."

This attention to the destruction of the Amazon and recognition of its Indigenous communities as defenders of our common home harks to the *Synod*

*on the Amazon* that will take place at the Vatican in October 2019. The Synod places the need to move towards an integral ecology to save the Amazon, and by extension the planet itself, at the heart of the Church's universal mission.

"With the *Synod of the Amazon* planned for 2019, a horizon of theological

renewal and pastoral creativity is opening up, inviting an ecological conversion, a spirituality of communion and a commitment to Good Living (Buen Vivir), in harmony with the cycles of nature, with water as a fundamental right and intrinsic value for each and every creature."

The letter emphasizes that land, water and climate are common goods and denounces the privatization of the Earth's riches. It questions the actual benefits of extractivism, as it feeds into a consumerism that is destroying the planet and is at the expense of the poorest countries, which contribute the least to climate change yet are suffering its worst impacts.

From the perspective of our preferential option for the poor, we insist that States and businesses must do everything in their power to effectively protect the climate and, together with many other civil society actors, we join those efforts.

As Christians, the bishops remind us, we have a mission to care for the Earth. We must be leaders in our own communities in rejecting the “throwaway culture” that places profit and materialism before the dignity of others, even that of Mother Earth. Furthermore, we must stand by side by side with those who defend the land and water, because their actions are for the benefit of all, most importantly for future generations who will walk the Earth after us.

“It is also necessary to take care of the caretakers of the common home, because they are often threatened, mistreated, repressed and imprisoned for announcing the Good News of the Kingdom and denouncing the “gods of power and money.” There are already many martyrs who have given their lives in Latin America in the struggle for the defense of Life. Their blood is the seed of freedom and hope.”



Oil Spills in the Amazon



## Injustice in the Bay of Taganga

By Bob Seguin CSB

In the bay of Taganga, located on the northern shore of Colombia along side of and part of the city of Santa Marta, a local company, Grupo Daabon, has plans to expand the port of Santa Marta to include a dock in the bay of Taganga. Taganga is a traditional fishing village and a present day tourist area which offers people tours to the various beaches of Parque Tayrona as well as trips to the different areas of the Sierra Nevada. It is an especially attractive area. It boasts of eighty diving schools for deep sea diving to see the wonders of the underwater life.

There has been an effort on the part of different organizations to block the construction of the port of Taganga. Yet there are some people that see it as an opportunity not to be missed. And the different agencies in charge of protecting the natural areas have issued a license for the construction of the port. There is a promise of jobs and development. In reality the jobs offered would be minimal in terms of the population (estimated at 7,000). The port itself would employ 60 trained and experienced people.

The port would completely change the area from a tourist and fishing area with small hotels and a good number of restaurants and residences to an industrial complex. The

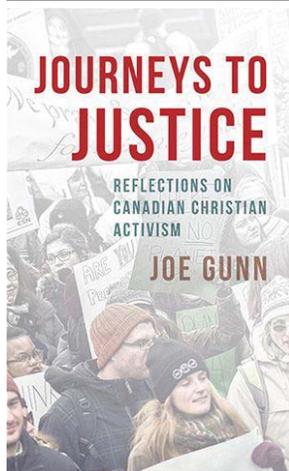
construction of the port would mean the construction not only of a dock but of all the storage facilities and piping for a multi-purpose port for palm oil and liquid chemicals.

Recognizing the call of Pope Francis to preserve our common home we have spoken out as part of the Church community of Taganga in favor of preserving the natural beauty of the area and the way of life of the Tagangueros. We helped fund a short documentary along with the generosity of many people, “Taganga Despierta” which presents the area and its problems. It was filmed and edited through the generosity of Viana Producciones of Medellin who do professional documentaries.

Please include this intention in your prayers. They are planning to start construction at the beginning of June of this year, but there are a number of efforts to block this through the courts and on the international level as well.



*Bob Seguin (right) lives in Taganga and serves as pastor at San Francisco de Asís Church. Seen with Óscar Gómez CSB, and Bishop Luis Adriano Piedrahita*



## Journeys To Justice

*Reflections on  
Canadian Christian  
Activism*

By Joe Gunn

Canadian churches have made a huge impact on key justice issues over the past 50 years on education, economics, refugee sponsorship, the environment, domestic violence, public health care, women's rights, and the cancellation of the debts of Global South countries.

But as the years go by, has this momentum been lost?

A new book from CPJ's Joe Gunn features interviews with ten key people who have been active in social justice struggles across Canada for many years. How did Christians from varied ecumenical backgrounds work together to help end apartheid, admit refugees from Chile and Indochina, defend Indigenous Peoples' rights, promote economic justice, and more?

These wonderful stories from tireless labourers for justice present relevant lessons for today. Their words and experience inspire a direction and model for faith-based action for social and ecological justice today - and in the years ahead.

Current leaders of justice ministries will find guidance from these accounts, as well as inspiration from the newer generation of activists who reflect and act upon them.

*"Reading this book has given me a new appreciation for the impact that men and women of faith have had – and can have – on vital social issues in Canadian society.*

*I encourage all Church leaders to read it and share it with others: this inspiring, challenging and encouraging text calls us all to renew our commitment to God's Reign of justice, peace and joy here and now."*

**Mgr. Paul-André Durocher**  
Roman Catholic Archbishop of Gatineau

**Journeys to  
Justice  
Features  
Interviews  
with:**



**John Foster** on how the churches influenced refugee policies in Canada

**Bill Janzen** on negotiating the private sponsorship of refugees program Interview

**John A. Olthuis** on the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline proposal

**Tony Clarke** on the Catholic bishops speaking out about economic justice

**Moira Hutchinson** on when Canadian churches opposed apartheid in South Africa

**Marie Zarowny** on northern Canadian bishops responding to violence against women

**Bill Phipps** on how churches challenged the economic system

**Peter Noteboom** on the defense of medicare

**Fabien Leboeuf** about the Women around the World March for Rights

**Jennifer Henry** on the campaign to cancel the debts of countries in the Global South

The book concludes with three reflections on where we go from here by **David Pfrimmer, Christine Boyle, and Leah Watkiss.**

These are folks who have served as active models of social justice struggles across the nation over the years. While their witness, and that of many Christians, have contributed to the ending of apartheid, the partial cancellation of debts to poor countries, and the engagement in reconciliation and solidarity with Indigenous people, challenges remain: poverty, in Canada alone, continues to deprive families of abundant life, and achieving climate justice in a world addicted to oil appears daunting. This book evaluates 'what works' from varied perspectives in every era, as well as to know where we have been in order to discern how to proceed. **Novalis**