

# STREAMS OF JUSTICE



...let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream" (Amos 5:24)



"Dignity for All" is a campaign for a poverty-free Canada. The campaign was endorsed by the 136th General Assembly (2010) and is organized by Citizens for Public Justice and Canada Without Poverty. Visit [www.dignityforall.ca](http://www.dignityforall.ca).

## Reducing Poverty in Pictou, Nova Scotia

Unless we have lived in poverty, few of us can adequately address the complex knot of issues that emerge when one asks why one in ten Canadian children live in poverty. For many people, the face of poverty is seen through second-hand reports of distant crises, haunting images and a passionate plea for help.

**We are caught up in a "money is no object" culture where far too many people are living hand-to-mouth.** I have lived and worked among people like this all of my life without really seeing the problem. Poverty can be invisible.

No matter what the perceptions, poverty is my neighbour. It is in my community, it confronts me in my vocation, and a response is vital.

In March, at the invitation of the Mission Committee of the Presbytery of Pictou, a small but passionate group gathered to consider our response.

As Christians, we are united by a common concern for our neighbours. Poverty distorts personal pride, and passes over person-hood. Workshop participants came together because we know that poverty, whether it is seen or unseen, is in most communities, and affects our neighbours. It is in our churches. It should be a pressing issue for every level of government.

Under the guidance of Stephen Allen, we were challenged to consider what our response as disciples of Christ might be to the poverty in our communities. Around workshop tables, and in group discussion, we discovered we were united by a common desire for justice. That search for justice continues. The Mission Committee of the Presbytery of Pictou will meet in June 2011 to consider how best to continue the struggle to reduce poverty—that common enemy of human dignity.

*Jeff Lackie, minister at Union and Sutherland's River Presbyterian Churches, Thornburn NS.*

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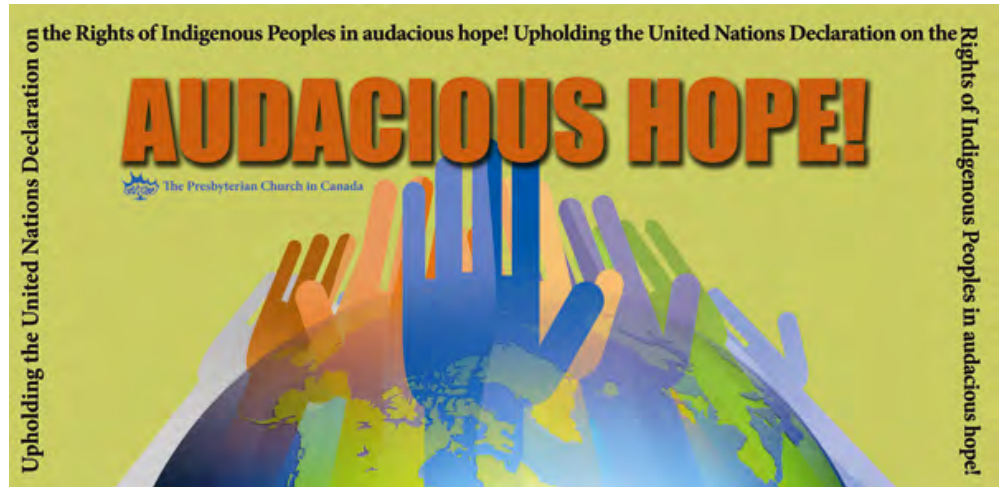
## KAIROS "The Land, Our Life" campaign update

The 2010-2011 KAIROS campaign is entitled "The Land, Our Life: Indigenous Rights and Our Common Future." On November 12, 2010, the Government of Canada endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This is a welcome decision. The Moderator of the 136th General Assembly (2010), Herbert F. Gale, wrote to the Government of Canada commending the endorsement

of the Declaration. The endorsement is an important step toward building a new relationship with Aboriginal people in Canada. The KAIROS campaign "The Land, Our Life," encourages the Government of Canada to collaborate with Aboriginal people to develop plans to implement the Declaration.

Presbyterians participated in a December 5, 2010 "Drumming for Indigenous Rights" activity, and wrote to their Members of Parliament to commend the endorsement of the Declaration. Read about one congregation's celebration of the Government's endorsement online at [www.presbyterianrecord.ca/2011/01/01/drumming-for-indigenous-justice](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca/2011/01/01/drumming-for-indigenous-justice).

"The Land, Our Life" will conclude with a public event in



This banner was prepared by volunteers at the national office for participation in the Ottawa June 20 event.

Ottawa on June 20, 2011. Congregations and church groups were encouraged to prepare banners with messages of solidarity, celebrating the endorsement of the Declaration. Banners from across Canada will be sent by train June 13-19 to Ottawa for use at the June 20 event on Parliament Hill. A map of banner train stops across Canada is available on KAIROS' website (<http://www.kairoscanada.org/en/take-action/the-land-our-life/roll-with-the-declaration/>). Aboriginal and Church leaders will participate in the June 20 event.

Mark June 19, Aboriginal Day Sunday, in prayer. Check the banner train schedule, and meet the train at the station. Pray for participants of the June 20 event. Liturgical resources are online at [presbyterian.ca/healing](http://presbyterian.ca/healing).

### Attend a KAIROS regional meeting

Learn about the KAIROS 2011-2012 campaign. Meet Presbyterians and ecumenical brothers and sisters in **Christ working to fulfill the biblical imperative to "do justice" (Micah 6:8). Meetings begin on Friday evening and conclude at lunchtime on Sunday.** Contact Katharine Masterton to register.

Atlantic Region: Sept. 23-25.

Reseau Oecumenique Justice et Paix: to be announced.

Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Region Sept. 30—Oct. 2.

Cambrian Agassiz Region: Oct. 21-23.

Prairies North Region: Sept. 23-25.

British Columbia/Yukon Region: Oct. 21-23.

### Study trip – migrants and human rights

Visit the Arizona, U.S./Sonora, Mexico border region and learn about the systemic injustices that cause people to leave their homes to make a dangerous journey across the desert from Mexico to the United States to seek employment, safety and hope.

Date: Oct. 23-29, 2011

Cost: \$1,600

Deadline to register: Sept. 15, 2011.

Write to [experiencemission@presbyterian.ca](mailto:experiencemission@presbyterian.ca) for more information, or call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 259.

This trip is hosted by BorderLinks ([borderlinks.org](http://borderlinks.org)).

## Equipping Ambassadors of Reconciliation

From May 4-6, 2011 fifty-one people, representatives of at least seven denominations and of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal backgrounds, met at the Tatamagouche Centre (Nova Scotia) for a workshop designed to equip leaders in churches to assist their church communities to continue to respond in a positive way to the legacy of the Indian residential schools. Ten Presbyterians were present; seven were from congregations in the Maritimes.

Repeatedly I heard participants say, "I knew it was bad but I had no idea how bad." Over two days, in a warm, open, welcoming environment, and in the context of Sacred Circles and with leadership from Aboriginal Elders and resource people from the Ecumenical Planning Team\* and others, we were able to encounter something of the pain of our Aboriginal sisters and brothers and explore some of the daunting issues of our shared history.

**Ed Bianchi's (KAIROS' Indigenous Rights Program Coordinator) comprehensive "blanket exercise" enabled participants to experience the broader story of how the Canadian government gained control over Aboriginal land and peoples, disrupted Aboriginal governments and economies, and sought to repress Aboriginal cultures and spiritual practices. There were presentations by residential school survivors and other resource people, including Marie Wilson (Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner). A young woman from Prince Edward Island sang a heartrending song. Through these experiences we were invited to enter into the story of the residential schools described by Prime Minister Harper as "...a sad chapter in our history." Sad indeed!**

The workshop carried us beyond sadness however. Thanks especially to the Elders and members of Aboriginal communities present at the gathering, friendships were established, connections were made, and insights were gained that will hopefully lead to ongoing



From Left: Lori Ransom, Sydney McDonald, Lindsey Rankin, Lloyd Murdock, Hans Kouwenberg, Bonnie Crockett, Carol MacLennan, Idabel McDonald, Katharine Masterton, Barb Fotheringham.

action. The climax of the conference was a very moving forgiveness ceremony, and an exchange of gifts. We were reminded that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) mandate was not about blaming and shaming but about healing and forgiveness. Surely, as Christians, we can hardly fail to be moved and motivated!

What next? For some of the participants, especially in the Halifax area, the national TRC event in Halifax in October 2011\*\* will be a specific opportunity to pursue healing activities. It is an opportunity the churches must not miss! But it goes beyond that. We all need, with prayer, patience and love, over the long haul, to **help our Christian brothers and sisters, to "see and meet" their Aboriginal neighbours. We need to help our Christian brothers and sisters to accept and affirm their Aboriginal neighbours, and their unique place in Canadian society. We are called to seek justice, and to work and pray for the day when they, far from being assimilated, Aboriginal people will occupy the proud place as the first of Canada's founding nations.**

*Continued on page 4*

Again and again, during the workshop the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:23-24 kept swimming into my consciousness: **“So, when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.”**

Can we afford to fail this test or miss this opportunity?

***W.G. Sydney McDonald, member of the Healing and Reconciliation Advisory Committee, Halifax NS.***

\*The Ecumenical Planning Team is made up of representatives from the Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and United Churches. The EPT works ecumenically with their members to engage with and support the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

\*\*Justice Ministries will inform the church of the date.

## Crossing Cultures Together

The walls of our church buildings are no longer able to keep the world safely out, nor worshippers safely in. **That was obvious at this year’s Crossing Cultures Together event.** Much to our benefit Ratna Omidvar, President of the Maytree Foundation, enabled us to peer beyond our stained-glass windows and see the changing Canada at our doorsteps.

Thanks to the collaboration of The Centre for Asian-Canadian Theology & Ministry, Knox College and Justice Ministries, 55 lay and clergy reflected on the theme **“moving beyond the mono-cultural church.”**

Three workshops were offered: (1) Preparing to minister beyond one’s own culture at personal, congregational and Presbytery levels. Penny Garrison and Eun-Ju Chung spoke of experiences of a Korean minister and a non-Korean congregation; (2) Peter Ma offered insights that help mono-ethnic congregations bridge cultural barriers; (3) Daniel Cho and George Sookdeo led a workshop that focused on how to develop a session that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of the congregation.

Ideas, challenges and learnings discussed by workshop participants were recorded and will be summarized in event proceedings.

Participants enjoyed the jubilant singing of the multi-ethnic members of University Presbyterian Church Choir and a Taiwanese feast arranged by Tina Lin.

***Willard Pottinger, retired minister and Crossing Cultures Together Planning Team Member.***

One participant, Eugenia Labi, member of Knox (Agincourt) Presbyterian Church in Toronto, reflected on what she had learned at the workshop, and what she would share with her congregation:

- ✦ All people should be encouraged to bring their talents and gifts to be used by the Holy Spirit to build up the kingdom of God.
- ✦ We must improve our cultural competence\*. (Just as we develop technological competence to interact with computers and social media, so too we need to develop cultural competence to wisely and sensitively function in a multi-cultural society.)
- ✦ Developing a multi-ethnic leadership (such as session) must be intentional.
- ✦ Where hurts have occurred, reconciliation is needed.
- ✦ Cultural change is generational.
- ✦ Cultivating unity (though not assimilation) among the people of God requires that we uncover our hidden prejudices and fully embrace one another in all our colours.

\* The term “cultural competence” was introduced to workshop participants by Ratna Omidvar in her keynote presentation.



Participants at Crossing Cultures Together VII.

## Appreciation for Lori Ransom

It has been a great pleasure having Lori Ransom as a member of the Justice Ministries team over the past five years. In her role as Program Animator for the Healing and Reconciliation Program, Lori has brought her deep Christian faith, her love for The Presbyterian Church in Canada and her vision and commitment to building a new relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada.

Lori has displayed sound professional judgement and brought a pastoral heart to her ministry. She has been an exemplary representative of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in her work with Aboriginal and ecumenical organizations and with our sister denominations. She has been a liaison, an ambassador, an emissary for our church in this vital issue at this time in Canada's history.

Presbyterians who have had the good fortune of working with Lori or seeking her advice on building connections with Aboriginal neighbours have appreciated her encouragement and wise advice. Lori has thoroughly enjoyed the many opportunities of meeting with Presbyterians across Canada, of preaching and leading workshops.

Lori has served The Presbyterian Church in Canada so very well these past five years. As she returns to her career in the federal civil service, we thank her and we **will miss her. We offer her God's blessings and remain confident** in the realization that there will be new opportunities to draw upon her knowledge and wisdom in the future.

*Stephen Allen, Associate Secretary, Justice Ministries.*

## "The Earth is God, and all that is in it" (Psalm 24)

An ecumenical conference (May 1-3) on the impact of Canadian mining activities brought together participants from Africa, Asia, Canada, Europe, Latin America and the Pacific. Organizers included KAIROS and Norwegian Church Aid.

Canadian mining companies are prominent in a number of countries in the global south. 75% of the world's mining and mineral exploration corporations are based in Canada. And a full 40% of all mineral exploration capital globally is raised on stock exchanges in Canada. Canada is a major player in global mining.

Mining activities do bring some jobs and investment in countries and communities that are desperately in need of jobs and investment. But much more attention needs to be given to the environmental and social impact of these activities. Legislation in many host countries to regulate the behaviour of mining corporations, including Canadian corporations, is non-existent, weak or weakly enforced.

We heard the testimony of a Mennonite pastor from Honduras who headed a small agency calling for stricter mining laws in his country. He received numerous death threats and is now in exile. Roman Catholic Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini, Bishop of San Marcos in northern Guatemala has courageously supported communities in his diocese affected by mining activities. He has spoken out against the negative impact of mining

activities, including the Marlin mine, which is owned by the Canadian company Goldcorp. Bishop Ramazzini receives death threats because of his public witness.

There is no legislation in Canada to regulate the activities of Canadian mining companies overseas to ensure that they are held to the same human rights and environmental standards they have to meet in Canada. A **Private Members' bill (Bill C-300)** was intended to do just that. It was narrowly defeated in the last Parliament.

Many institutions and individuals hold shares in Canadian mining activities. Given the prominence of Canadian mining corporations around the world, this is the time to do what we can as shareholders and stewards **of God's creation to give this issue serious attention.**

As we listened to the many moving and troubling testimonies and reflected on what we need to do as churches, we drew inspiration and resolve from scripture and from our liturgies. The banner which hung prominently in the hall we met in was an essential reminder - **"The Earth is God's, and all that is in it" (Psalm 24).**

The statement on this groundbreaking conference is available at [www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org).

*Stephen Allen, Associate Secretary, Justice Ministries.*

## 2011 Dates to Remember

### JUNE

- 19—National Aboriginal Day Sunday  
20—World Refugee Day

### August

- 6, 9 Anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945)

### September

- 21—International Day of Prayer for Peace (World Council of Churches)

### October

- 16—World Food Day  
17—International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

### November

- 22—National Housing Day  
13-20 Restorative Justice Week

### December

- 1—World AIDS Day  
18—International Migrants' Day



## People helping people

Our voices and our pens can help protect vulnerable people. Please join our Urgent Action Network.

### Justice Ministries

Stephen Allen: Associate Secretary  
Lori Ransom: Healing and Reconciliation Program Animator  
Katharine Masterton: Program Coordinator

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## Presbyterians caring for creation

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church is a valuable centre in Owen Sound for individual and community, spiritual and social health. We have taken steps to act out creation stewardship in order to walk more lightly on the earth.

**In 2008 St. Andrew's initiated a project to draw on \$75,000 of trust funds to install solar panels on our flat roof.** A committee was struck and agreed that a first step should include an assessment of our church building energy use. An energy efficiency consultant completed an energy audit on the building. The consultant suggested a number of ways the church could improve its energy efficiency and consider possible retrofit projects such as solar panels.

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church has a twenty year contract with Ontario Hydro whereby we earn \$0.80 per kilowatt hour for the energy generated by the solar panels (which is fed into the power grid) and are charged \$0.11 per kilowatt hour for hydro use. The solar panels were a good investment for St. Andrew's.**

The solar panels were installed in June 2009, and started generating energy at Christmas 2009.

The solar panel project is one facet of a much larger greening initiative. Almost all of our lighting has been replaced with high efficiency bulbs. The insulation and ventilation in our roof has been increased significantly. Weather-stripping and sealing has been used on windows and doors. The session and the board of managers have made a commitment that all future decisions affecting the environmental impact of our ministry will be considered in the light of minimizing our church's ecological footprint.

Our church makes an important statement concerning its Christian witness through decisions and actions like this. Consider ways that your ministry may be a similar influence in your community.

*Scott Sinclair, minister at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Owen Sound ON.*

**Presbyterians honour God as Creator in many ways. St. David's Presbyterian Church in Halifax held an ecumenical Good Friday service that marked Earth Day (April 22). Knox Presbyterian Church in Calgary suggested 40 ways for church members to reduce their carbon footprint during Lent. The Moderator of the 136th General Assembly, Herbert F. Gale spoke about The Presbyterian Church in Canada's commitment to caring for God's creation at a church leaders' panel in Toronto on May 11, 2011. Herb's speaking notes are online at [presbyterian.ca/justice](http://presbyterian.ca/justice).**

**How is your congregation caring for God's creation? Justice Ministries is preparing a congregational resource for Earth Day 2012. We want to share your stories! Please contact Katharine Masterton at [kmasterton@presbyterian.ca](mailto:kmasterton@presbyterian.ca).**