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COMMENTARY:

“Look at what we say. Look at what we are engaged in. The Catholic Church is at the forefront of social justice issues...the Church...needs to get its voice heard on social justice topics such as poverty and housing. We need to speak, to be engaged in the dialogue of the broader community... There has to be that immediate reaction. If someone is hungry, we feed them. If someone is homeless, we house them, But we also need to look at the roots of these sorts of things. Are there policies of society that could be changed?”

Toronto Archbishop Thomas Collins in Toronto Star, January 30, 2007

OUR RESPONSE TO ARCHBISHOP COLLINS. YES!!! AND THE ONTARIO CWL IS ALREADY DOING THIS!!!

At press time, both our diocesan and provincial Catholic Women’s Leagues are gearing up for their respective annual conventions in Waterloo and in Windsor. Now, on our job, we keep hearing various accolades about the CWL; namely, “The CWL are doing lots of good stuff – they have community life conveners” (a reference to the community outreach rep that many CWL parish executives have). And, “The CWL are socially conscious – they pressured the government to ban BST (the growth hormone, bovine somatotropin) from Canada.”

However, the BST lobby happened more than a decade ago. We know that they must have made other social statements since then. Which is why I was surprised when I learned that the Ecological Farms Association of Ontario has adopted a CWL resolution calling upon Queen’s Park to make some hefty changes to farmland preservation policies before Ontario’s rapidly-declining farmland gets paved under by urban sprawl.

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The resolution was one of seven passed at the CWL’s 2006 convention – which can be found under www.cwl.on.ca/resolutions It critiques the Ontario Places to Grow Act of 2005, which placed a greenbelt on the remaining farmland within the Greater Toronto Area (including Halton and Hamilton), froze new “development” on this farmland, and demanded “smart growth” with greater intensification. The Act also created a “Greater Golden Horseshoe Area” which effectively extends the GTA into Waterloo, Wellington, Brant Counties, North Haldimand, to

Collingwood in the north and Peterborough in the east – while increasing this area’s population to four million more people by 2037. This in turn, resulted in developers and overseas “land banking companies” such as Walton International “leapfrogging” over the greenbelt and eating up farmland in these areas. (See the Greenbelt Alliance report at www.greenbelt.ca/reports/secondreportcard for details.

As one personally aware that Ontario has 56% of Canada’s prime farmland and 100% of Canada’s ideal climatic growing temperature in terms of corn heat units, this news got me checking out the CWL website and calling provincial and diocesan executive members. The “Amendment of the Greenbelt Legislation” was written in the formal “Whereas...” format and read like a well-researched essay, drawing upon 17 references to the Act itself and authorities such as the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance, StatsCan, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO). A copy of this resolution follows for your edification.

The six other resolutions tackled were issues ranging from “Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide”, “Labelling of Pest Control Products”, “Renewable Energy”, and “Plastic Bags – the High Cost of Convenience” (all of which came from our diocesan CWL) to one calling for an income increase for those on Ontario Works.

The one on the high cost of “convenience” of plastic bags says: “Whereas it is estimated that world wide use of over 500 billion plastic bags each year and many billions end up as litter” and “plastic bags... photo degrade or break down into smaller and smaller pieces, contaminating soil and waterways, ...causing death to marine life, wild life, and farm animals that accidentally ingest these pieces”. And the resolution reminds us that their production “requires petroleum and often natural gas, both non-renewable resources that cause damage to fragile habitats and ecosystems around the world.”

As proper activists, the CWL state some concrete alternatives. They call upon the national CWL to urge the federal minister of the environment to “introduce an awareness campaign on the use and abuse” of plastic bags, while also “encouraging the reduction of single use bags” and “promoting the use of alternatives for consumers, i.e. cloth bags/tote boxes”. (ON.06.05).

“I think that the CWL is right on top of the situation”, said Muriel Murphy of Goderich, who coordinates all diocesan resolutions for the Ontario provincial convention. She explained that the provincial and federal CWL executives follow up on these statements by having a subcommittee meet with the appropriate cabinet minister. In the case of the farmland resolution, CWL executive met with the minister in charge of the Greenbelt Act as well as with Laurie VanDen Hurk of the Greenbelt Secretariat. That minister indicated receptivity to changing the act if sufficient public pressure warrants it.

The minister encouraged the CWL to continue educating the public about single use bags, said Murphy, who added, “If you lived in Europe, you wouldn’t go out without your green bag – why can’t we do that here?”

This summer’s provincial convention features the provincial minister of the environment, Laurel Broughten, as the keynote speaker. That means that she’ll have to be accountable for her province’s actions in front of delegates from across Ontario.

Why does the CWL include lobbying as part of its social mandate?

“We are 100,000 strong across Canada”, concludes Oakville’s Georgina Bourke, from our diocesan executive. “That means that governments must listen to us.”

We can hardly wait to learn what comes out of this year's convention!

Diane P. Baltaz, Director

RESOLUTIONS Passed at the Ontario Provincial Convention 2006

ON.06.01 Amendment of the Greenbelt Legislation

Editor's Note: This 2006 resolution is even more relevant in this diocese as the October 10, 2007 provincial election approaches. There is a growing movement throughout this western end of the "Greater Golden Horseshoe Area" that questions the way the "Places to Grow" or "Greenbelt Act" inadvertently resulted in developers and "land-banking" firms such as the Asian-based Walton International leap-frogging over the Green Belt to buy hectares and, in some cases, entire concessions of farmland for speculation or outright development. Concerned citizens have spoken out in places such as the Six Nations, Brant County, Centre Wellington, for instance. In Brant County, farmland that cost \$5,000/acre in 2005 is now selling from \$15,000 to \$50,000/acre, depending upon the intensity of the development pressure. Besides asking "what kind of growth do we want?" some of these groups call for more incentives to keeping farms in the area viable, as farms within the GTA greenbelt are receiving.

Due to space concerns, we left out the 17 footnotes in this motion but they can be found on the CWL provincial council's website at www.cwl.on.ca

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

"We are prone to think of our response to God purely in terms of personal behaviour and private assistance. Essential as these are, they still fall short without public justice. What use is it to live a simplified life, volunteer at a food bank, and contribute money, while doing nothing about public policies that lock people into hunger? Is it sinful to waste money but okay to waste influence that could bring a far greater benefit to the poor?...Christians often behave like believers when it comes to private morality but not when it comes to public justice. They are then far more apt to judge economic and political policies by how their pocketbooks are affected, not by how these policies affect others. All of this plays squarely into the hands of the culture of Mammon, which, having reduced faith to private life, claims everything else. Privatized faith becomes our "tithe" – the part of life that God gets. In this way, our lives get shaped by secular values rather than by God's values."

Arthur Simon, How Much is Enough? - pp. 184-85 (available from the Chancery Library)

"Our concern extends to those parts of today's world where Christians live and to the difficulties they have to face, particularly poverty, wars, and terrorism, but equally to various forms of exploitation of the poor, of migrants, women, and children. We are called to work together to promote respect for the rights of every human being... Above all, we are wise to affirm that killing innocent people in God's name is an offence against him and against human dignity... At present, in the face of the great threats to the natural environment, we want to express our concern at the negative consequences for humanity and for the whole of creation which can result from the economic and technical progress that does not know its limits. As religious leaders, we consider it one of our duties to encourage and to support all efforts made to protect God's creation and to bequeath to future generations a world in which they will be able to live."

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Common Declaration by Pope Benedict XVI and Patriarch Bartholomew I, November 30, 2006

GREAT MOMENTS IN CANADIAN CATHOLICISM: The Antigonish Movement

This is the movement founded by Father Moses Coady, a priest who landed a teaching job at St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, in 1910. A believer in adult education, Coady assisted an academic friend, J. J. Thomkins in establishing a "People's School" for such education. In 1928, Coady became director of that university's newly-created Department of Extension Education.

Through this department of the "Antigonish Movement", as the work was dubbed, Father Coady changed the economic condition of the people in Nova Scotia, where there was much unemployment and functional illiteracy. With the help of trained leaders (often the local priest or school teacher), "discussion circles" or "study clubs" began in order to self-educate people to co-operatively create their own economic, cultural, and recreational opportunities.

The work assisted local farmers, fishers, miners, and other disadvantaged groups to overcome their own poverty. However, it wasn't until 1944 that the six principles of the "Antigonish Movement" were best articulated. This was by a Professor Harry Johnson, although Father Coady later endorsed them:

The primacy of the individual: based upon both religion and democratic teaching. Religion emphasized the dignity of human beings; democracy stresses the development of individual capacities as the aim of social organization.

Social reform must come through education of the citizens themselves.

Education must begin with the economic: economic reform is the most immediate necessity, because the economic problems of the world are the most pressing.

Education must be through group action: because people are social being and problems are usually group problems.

Effective social reform involves fundamental changes in social and economic institutions.

The ultimate objective of the movement is a full and abundant life for everyone in the community.

Adds the St. Francis Xavier University website on this issue: "Respecting the inherent dignity of every person, the institute believes in a participatory group process of development based upon adult education and socioeconomic co-operation to effect positive change in both local and global institutions and structures."

According to the *Canadian Encyclopedia*, the Antigonish Movement was controlled by the Catholic Church with funding from the Carnegie Foundation.

In more recent times, the Moses Coady International Institute which evolved from it mainly does overseas extension work rather than in Canada. However, one of the federal candidates running for the riding of Central Nova, which includes Antigonish, wants to revive the Movement for Eastern Canada. That is because one of that region's major source of "employment" involves commuting to Fort McMurray for six-week stints, returning home for two weeks, and then commuting back to the Fort McMurray oil sands because of insufficient opportunity in Nova Scotia. Instead of calling it the Antigonish Movement, however, this candidate may call it, "Bring Our Boys Back Home!"

<http://www.devp.org><http://www.kairoscanada.org><http://www.insidethebottle.org><http://www.playtoys.ca>

<http://www.interfaithgrandriver.org><http://www.planetbean.com><http://www.greenadvisor.org><http://www.straightgoods.com><http://www.planetfriendly.net><http://www.cog.ca><http://www.worldwatch.org>[an](http://www.canadian)

<mailto:rbarnett@escarpment.ca><http://www.eco-labels.org><http://www.gks.com><http://www.ethicalfunds.com><http://www.oen.ca><http://www.hwcn.org><http://povertylink.com><http://www.guelphorganicconf.org>

BULLETIN BOARD

June 9 **HAMILTON DIOCESAN D & P Annual General Meeting** at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre on Highway 6, 1 km. north of Guelph. 9:30 - noon. For information, charlesfalzon@hotmail.com

Oct. 12-14 **KAIROS Regional Conference: SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR TODAY.** Keynote speaker is Ian Thomson of KAIROS Canada Corporate Social Responsibility. "Regional" means Great Lakes/St. Lawrence area but this time it's at Mount Mary Retreat Centre, Ancaster. Details to come out soon; but in the interim, contact Gail Lorimer (905) 634-7654 or Dorothy Wilson ah_wilson@sympatico.ca

Nov. 2-3 **THE ANNUAL CHALLENGE FOR CHANGE CONFERENCE:** Eco-Theologian, Steven Bede Scharper of St. Michael's University, is this year's keynote speaker. Scharper has previously served as the launch speaker for the *Right Living, Right Relationship* Lecture series, which the diocesan Justice & Peace Commission co-sponsored in 2001-2002, and is a guest panellist on CBC Radio's "Sounds Like Canada" spirituality panel, among other things. There will be workshops on Food and Conviviality, Automobile Use and Sustainable Homes. Stay tuned to your church bulletin and the autumn CONTACT for more details.

OUR EVER-POPULAR KUDOS COLUMN

Kudos this time goes to -

The **School Sisters of Notre Dame** for their continued work on the trafficking of women. Their presentation at **Blessed Sacrament Parish, Kitchener**, made it on the CTV Kitchener program, "Province Wide", in March.

Father Lloyd Cummings of the Archdiocese of Kingston Justice & Peace Commission. Father Cummings has an introductory Catholic Social Teachings course that he presents not only in his diocese but elsewhere. The course can be adapted to one-day sessions or take place over the course of several evenings. If you are interested in bringing Father Cummings to your diocese, contact Father Lloyd at lcum@rideau.net

The **Hamilton Diocesan Development & Peace Council** for organizing a fantastic Share Lent Solidarity Vigil on March 17 at the cathedral. While this is an annual event, this year's vigil was extra special because it is the 40th anniversary of the founding of Development & Peace and, thus, extra festivities were a must. These included the sale of Conavigua, Guatemalan crafts by Canadian Martyrs, Hamilton and fair trade coffee and chocolate by the Bishop Tonnos High School students in the cathedral basement, as well as music, dancing, a Fair Trade chocolate cake, testimonials by early D & P veterans, and having Bishop Tonnos as the celebrant/homilist at the mass which preceded this event.

<http://www.nottoopretty.org><http://www.alive.com><mailto:jkennedy@kairoscanada.org><mailto:rex.barger@hwcn.org><http://www.maquilasolidarity.org><mailto:dbaltaz@hamiltondiocese.com>

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The **Canadian Catholic Organization for Development & Peace**, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. Forty years ago, Pope Paul VI released the encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (on the Development of Peoples), which led to the foundation of D & P by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB). Since 1967 D & P stuck to Paul VI's principle that peace is not possible unless communities in the Global South assume their own development. Over the past 40 years D & P has contributed \$500 million to 15,000 projects in the Global South, working in partnership with well-established local groups in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These projects allowed these communities to manage their own development in a sustainable way. D & P also works on peace-building projects which help communities rebuild in the wake of war and natural disasters.

Five Oaks Retreat Centre for adopting more sustainable models of functioning. In addition to using only fair trade organic coffee, banning the use of biocides on the property, the centre staff are also starting up an organic garden this year. (Their director, Mardi Tindale, incidentally, drives a Smart Car!) Of course, **Loyola Retreat House** in Guelph shares similar visions, being located on Ignatius organic farm! Both retreat centres are popular with area RCs.

The **Dominican Republic Faith Experience Group** for their success in helping of the first fair trade coffee co-ops land a Canadian distributor. Last year this faith experience group financed a visit by Rufino Hevarez and his daughter to meet with Canadian coffee roasters and vendors, because there was no "D.R. brand" of coffee in this nation's marketplace. They obtained a contract with a Montreal distributor. The co-op's coffee is marketed in this diocese through the **SpeakEasy Roastery** of Hamilton. SpeakEasy sells their coffee through the Skydragon Centre and St. Joseph Parish, the Hamilton Farmers' Market, or they may be contacted through www.speakeasycoffee.ca

The **Working Centre of Kitchener**. They got an honourable mention by Canadian Organic Growers (COG) in the spring issue of their publication,

“The Canadian Organic Grower”, whose theme is “Planting the Seeds of Justice”. It was one of several models of local, just food systems which an increasing number of non-profit community organizations are striving to create. Working Centre projects described included St. John’s Kitchen, a community-based food centre – a marketplace where donated food can be picked up to be taken home, Kitchen Community Gardens --which obtains compost from St. John’s Kitchen. Also mentioned were GROW Herbal Gardens – a shared greenhouse and garden tool space – as well as Maurita’s Kitchen, a certified kitchen and place for processing, learning, and gathering around food projects. Bread and pizza dough are made here, as well as seasonal, natural vegetarian food which is served in the centre’s café – The Queen Street Commons. For details, check out www.theworkingcentre.org

Rev. Peter Hartmans, Palmerston, to position of Hamilton Conference for Faithful Witness effective September 1. Hartmans is thus the local United Church’s social awareness director!

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BOOKS IN THE CHANCERY LIBRARY

Sacred Water: The Spiritual Source of Life by Nathaniel Altman (Hidden Spring/Paulist Press, 2002): “Water becomes sacred when we recognize its powers... it is perhaps humanity’s oldest symbol of life, sustenance, fertility, movement, generosity, permanence, and strength”. This is a book that inspires everything from homilies to an appreciation of baptism to ecological actions. It’s yours to sign out!

Lives Still in the Balance: Ontario’s Social Audit by ISARC (Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition), April, 2007. The updated version of the ISARC poverty hearings that were held across Ontario. As the Anglican bishop of Toronto, Colin Johnson, says in his promo blurb: “This book contains consequences of real policies...” with study questions. Several copies are for sale from the Social Awareness Office, \$20 postage paid. (Please make cheque out to ISARC.) We’ll include a copy of editor, Murray MacAdam’s study guide gratis!

Ecology at the Heart of Faith by Australian theologian, Denis Edwards. (Orbis Books, 2006). The most practical, no-nonsense guide that teaches how our world born of the “big bang” is intimately linked to the fullness of life imaged in the Resurrection of Jesus. Edwards is a big advocate of Pope John Paul II’s call for an “ecological conversion” as the heart of faith.

How Much Is Enough? Hungering for God in an Affluent Culture by Arthur Simon (Baker Books, 2003). Says theologian Walter Brueggemann: “Direct, concrete, deeply rooted and compelling”. The chapter headings explain the book: “Fat Wallets, Empty Lives”, “Spiritual Hunger and Poverty”, “The Sorrow of Pleasure”, “Love and Justice: More than Private Piety”.

*Copies are available from the Social Awareness Office for \$25. The bargain tool of a lifetime!
For purchasing details, contact dbaltaz@hamiltondiocese.com or (905) 528-7988, ext. 2233.*