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“There is No Justice There will be No Peace”

- Arthur Solomon

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*Allen Boesak's poem from his address before the World
Council of Churches, Vancouver, 1983 29

If there is no Justice
There will be no Peace,

Today, the world has motion, but no direction.
Passion, but no compassion.
Production, but no equitable distribution.
Religion, but no faith.
Laws, but no justice.
Goods, but no God.

Each new economic advance
Gives birth to a new moral pain,
Each new technological discovery to new fears from the seas
as much as from the skies.
(Allen Boesak, 1983)*

Our people were given many prophecies.
Before the Strangers came across the oceans
to this sacred land with their strange ways,
There were none of our people in prison,
There simply were no prisons
Because we had a better way.

We were called savages and pagans,
And, like all people everywhere,
We were less than perfect, but we had no prisons then,
And we have no need of them now.

We know how the history books were written to make us out
As less than humans, and we know that even today
in the prisons our people are called wagon burners
and every despicable name that can be used.
It is hatred in its vilest form.

Our people were told long ago
that a strange people would come to this sacred land,
The first ones would have hair like fire (Norsemen),
but they wouldn't stay long.
Then later would come other people with white faces and
white skins.
They would have two faces:
One would be the face of brotherhood
And one would be the face of anger.

If they came with the face of brotherhood everything would
be okay;
If they came with the face of anger,
It would be very hard for us.
It's very clear to us which face they were wearing when they
came.
It was also told that these white skinned strangers
would have no eyes and no ears,

And it has become very clear what that meant for us
because of the desecration of the earth and the people.

Somewhere back in history those strangers had dispensed
with
the fundamental laws of creation and made their own
laws,
out of which came the chaos of prisons and wars
and oppression of all life on this planet.

The fundamental laws of creation were established by the
Creator God
So that all things would work in harmony and balance for all
time.

Having dispensed with the natural laws of creation,
The God of Worship became the God of Materialism
And to the God of Creation, lip service only was given.

How long can we laugh in the face of God, while we
mindlessly
And deliberately destroy what God has created?

What differentiates Native people in North America
From the strangers who came to this sacred land is
a difference in philosophy.
One philosophy is based on a false principle and
that principle is materialism.
The principle that our people lived by was based on the
power
and the beauty and the sacredness and
the harmony of creation.

Our people always understood very clearly that we could not
own
What belongs to the Creator of all things in the Universe.

Our purpose was to live in harmony with the rest of Creation
Not to possess what belongs to God.

For that we were called savages and pagans and
We are still seen that way
Today by the vast majority of people in this society.

In contrast to the principle on which our philosophy was
based
There came a people with a philosophy based on ownership,
They could own anything regardless of how they got it,
Whether by violence or by deception.

Both methods were used to the fullest extent possible,
Along with those methods were two other principles, and
they were
Self deception and rationalization so that it was possible
To rationalize the most evil deeds right out of existence,
Such as wiping out whole nations of people in the western
hemisphere.
And all this was done by people who insisted that they were
Christian and civilized.

These people who came to this land, came in violence,
They have lived in violence, and they will go in violence
But it will be the violence of the one who will re-establish
The right order of creation again, as it once was.

After more than seventy-five years, I have finally come to
understand
What was meant by the Bible saying that
“The meek shall inherit the earth.”

We have never claimed to be the owners of this land
Because we can not own what belongs to God.

We claim to be the caretakers of this land because
Our bond is with
The Creator and the ones who lived here before us
And those who will come after us.

It is a sacred trust that we hold for all time.

We are totally dependent on creation for life and health
and well being,
But creation is not dependent on us.

We are responsible to leave this earth in a good way
For those who will come after us,
not to contaminate or make it uninhabitable.

We have lived on this sacred land for a hundred thousand
years,
Our teachings tell us that we were put here
by the One who gave us life.
We did not cross the Bering Strait as the anthropologists say.

We have lived here since long before there was written
history
And we had no prisons, we had no police, we had no
prison guards,
We had no lawyers and no judges, but
That does not mean that we had no laws to live by.
We had strict codes to live by and they still exist today.

The laws of the people were written in the hearts and minds
and the souls of the people.
When Justice had to be done it was tempered with mercy,
Something I have never seen in a court of law in Canada
or the U.S.A.
Where it seems that the law is more important than the
people.
Especially if the people are Native or black or dispossessed,
For then the law comes down with full force.

Courts of law are fearsome places to go into
Where it is always the state against the individual
and if the individual has no money then God help him
or her
Because the state has no mercy as it is represented by the
courts.
We live in a society that blames the victim for being
victimized
Where money and possessions are
vastly more important than justice.

There was one case last summer where a young man was
convicted of rape in a court in Sault Ste. Marie.

The judge gave him four or six months in prison, which he
could serve on weekends, on the basis that, as the judge said,
"He came from a good family (rich, white people) and they
had suffered enough already".

In contrast to that, two Native women at Kenora broke five
hundred dollars worth of windows, according to a newspaper
report, at a school at White Dog Reserve. One of the women
was given nine years and the other seven to be served at the
Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario.

Only a massive intervention by Native organizations in
Canada modified their sentences.

What is Justice?

In another case, a young Native man at Kingston penitentiary
was shot dead at short range by a prison guard.

The prisoner had let go of his hostage and was asking for my
help as a Native spiritual helper.

It is an eight hour drive from where I live on the French
River. A float plane might have come to pick me up. The
authorities chose to murder that young man instead. I could
have prevented that murder with their help.

"Thou Shalt not kill"

Does the state not have to live by the same law of God as
others?

He could have been wounded or quickly overpowered. He
had no gun. He had let go of his hostage. Why murder him in
cold blood?

Was he killed to put terror in the hearts of other prisoners?

There was an enquiry sometimes after that official murder at
K.P. The guard was exonerated.
It was so incredibly absurd and so evil that one friend who
was there
at the time of the enquiry said,
"I have to go outside and puke.
This is too much for me to stomach".

One commits murder and in an official court it is covered up.
Is that Canadian justice?
Prisons are an abomination.
They are a blasphemy in the face of God.
The criminal Just Us System is obscene,
It has nothing to do with Justice.
It has only to do with vengeance and control.

The poor people have to obey the laws
But its the rich people who make the laws.

They said that piracy on the high seas was abolished
a long time ago,
When all they really did was to
bring it ashore and make it legal.
Mark Twain once said,
"I don't know which is the bigger crime,
whether to rob a bank or to start a bank".

I can not come to believe that God ever intended
For any of her children - his children to be locked up
in iron cages behind stone walls.
And it is incredibly strange to me that only those
Who call themselves Christian and civilized
Are the ones who need prisons.

Perhaps it is because a violent people
need a violent means of control
And that is what prisons are all about.

Prisons in Canada are simply a white racist institution
with a track record of eighty per cent failure

If the healing professions had an eighty per cent failure rate
they would soon be abandoned

So why do we persist in trying to heal social ills with a
system that is an eighty per cent failure?

The truth is that prisons are a growth industry,
a vestige of empire
run on military lines
Where people choose to become robots for the state,
which is nothing other than criminal,
captive state governments
Who take orders from the robber barons,
the invisible government,
the real government in Canada.

To claim that Canada is a democracy is simply
another self delusion.
In order to serve the god of materialism,
that great negative power,
It is essential for the individual to dispense
with his or her humanity.
Otherwise, it simply can not work.
A rabbi was heard to say, long ago,
"If these Christians lived by only one of their ten
commandments, everything would be all right."
That commandment was,
"Love thy neighbour as thyself."

What we have, instead, is a racist greed,
an arrogance beyond comprehension
with which the whole society is infected.

There is nothing so much in need of correction
as the Corrections System of Canada.
It has been in chaos from the beginning
and is now coming into its total dissolution.

If it was truly based on justice
It would have been very different than it is.

We are coming into a time when what is evil will be removed
from before the face of God.
Mahatma Ghandi once said,
"There's enough in this world for every one's need but
not enough for everyone's greed."
When the rich stop stealing from the poor
there will be very little need for prisons.
As it is now, prisons serve to multiply the evil.

Two wrongs never made a right in the past
Nor will they in the present or in the future.

At no time in the history of the human family
Has the earth and the people
of the earth been so desecrated,
To believe that it can continue
is to believe that God is going to let this creation
Be destroyed by the hands of fools.

It is guaranteed that this planet will not be destroyed
by nuclear holocaust or by human devastation.
To believe otherwise is to believe that there is no God,
No divine Creator
Who made it all and keeps it all together.
There are those of us who believe that there must be
Peace and tranquility on the earth
And who are willing to work to make it happen.
We are called terrorists and communists;
We are a threat to the evil designs of the state.
We are aware of the racism whipped up by the governments,
By Hollywood, and by the big business dominated
media
Which provides a cover for the corporate plunder
Of native lands and Native people.
We are aware of the deliberate genocidal policies

practiced by all governments of North America
over the last five hundred years
against the aboriginal people of this land
And that the main line churches of North America
very willingly participated in that genocide.

We remember the infested blankets that were given to our
people to wipe them out.
We do not seek revenge,
instead we endure the continuing atrocities
practiced against us.
We are much aware of the wanton killing of our people
not only in the past but in the present
by police and prison guards
in the name of the law.
We can not forget and we know that
God has not forgotten either.

But we know also that the way it is now
is not the way it is going to be for very much longer.

We have not forgotten our people who suffer
in the prisons of K.K.K. KANADA:
Donald Marshall Jr., Cameron Kerley,
Flying Eagle, Leonard Peltier and countless others...

We know that most of our people in prisons have been ripped
off from their families by the Children's Aid Societies
who operate without control out of an unbelievable
arrogance that can not be fathomed.

They are totally involved with
the genocidal policies of this nation.

Where can we turn for mercy or justice?
We have been under attack for five hundred years,
but we will endure.
If this earth will survive, we will survive.

God did not put us on this earth to disappear
from the greed and the wrath of those
who could never comprehend the purpose
and the meaning of life for all living things.

Like the prisons, the National Parole Board is out of control.
It is my experience that the Parole Board is interested only in
keeping the prisons full.
There is no mercy there either,
only another part of the evil empire.

There was an investigation of the Criminal Just Us System
in Nova Scotia
about the false imprisonment of Donald Marshall Jr.

There is presently an inquiry in Manitoba
And an inquiry in Toronto.
There is also an enquiry into the many killings by the
R.C.M.P.
of the people of the Blood Nation in Alberta.

We believe that all this is only the tip of the iceberg:
One day the whole truth will be revealed
in its stark nakedness.

There has been an open season on Native people
And Black people
All the way through the years.
We are hated simply because we are different
But the law of God is
"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

There are alternatives to prisons,
in fact there need be no prisons at all.
But it means right living.
It means sharing the gifts of God
Equally with all of God's children.

That is what all faith traditions teach,
But between the teaching and the living
There appears to be no connecting link.

It seems pointless to propose the abolition of prisons
to a society that does not want to look at working
models
That existed in the past and would still work today
if they were not prevented by the rich and powerful and
their captive state governments.

The whole criminal justice system
serves as an excellent camouflage
For the robber barons who impoverish the whole world
Stealing even the inheritance of their own children.
Long ago, Pope Gregory said,
"Those who steal the inheritance of the poor
are the murderers of those who die every day for the
want of it."
Stokely Carmichael once said,
"The more money you got
the less they gonna ask you how you got it."

Yes, the rich get richer
And the poor go to jail.
For us, the Native people of this country
with its genocidal policies
Recognize three faces of the beast:
The Department of Indian Affairs;
The Children's Aid Societies; and,
The Criminal Just Us Cystem.

It is of more than passing interest
that racist South Africa sent representatives to Canada
to learn how this country did it for "their Indians",
Then went back and did the same thing
to the indigenous black people in their own homeland.

Two years ago, when Pieter Botha said,
"There has to be law and order,"
We who cared asked aloud,
"Whose law and whose order?"

It is no different here in Canada.

We have survived the onslaught of Christianity
and civilization.
When the earth is made clean again
we will be here to take care of it,
to make sure that it stays clean
For the ones who come after we are gone.

This document does not speak to my sense of outrage
against the Children's Aid Societies of Canada
who have worked so diligently and deliberately
To destroy Native families
in their superior and arrogant belief that they knew
best.

It does not speak to the reality that most of our people
in the prisons

Started out by being ripped off
from their families by Children's Aid,
becoming lost people without roots as a result.

It does not speak to the unutterable lack of humanity
and sense of common decency
That exists within the National Parole Board of Canada.
Racism is alive and well in Canada
and there is no justice
for the Aboriginal people of Canada
in the law courts of Canada.

The reality for the Aboriginal people of Australia
is precisely the same except that the churches of
Australia
have picked up their responsibility
and expressed their outrage
Against a system that is out of control.

CONCLUSION

I do not propose to talk about alternatives to prison
because a question so serious must be dealt with at
another place and another time
Where we can access
the sincerity of those who propose alternatives.

We have always had alternatives
But those whom we tried to talk to
were such that they could not hear us.

Dr. Gilliam Baker was asked
by the United Nations
to write a document

From her studies of previous empires
from the Sumerian Empire eight thousand years before
Christ

To the present.
She described in words and graphs
how each empire rose
"to their highest point of arrogance and
from there fell to their total dissolution."
She said of the United States
that their highest point of arrogance
was when they dropped those two bombs on
Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

She said that the U.S. empire would come apart by 1982.
Well, that has not happened but it is obvious
That the disintegration is well along.

I said at the beginning that
We were given many teachings or prophecies
About what was going to be
And one of those teachings was about
"When the money will die."

When that happens there will be total chaos.
And according to some of the Native shamans,
That will happen before the year 2000.

Another is that the Thunder People
Will take back their power, electricity
And all those satellites in the sky
On which so much now depends
Will be like the pebbles dropped by
A little boy into the ocean.

The Mayan teachings said
 We would live through nine descending hells,
 Each would be worse than the last
But that time would end at sunrise on August 17, 1987.
 From there would begin a new time,
The time we are in now,
 The time when the positive is transcending the
negative.
At some point there will be
 peace and tranquility on the earth again
But it will not come until after the purification has happened
 when peace and justice and good order
 will be the way of things again.
 This document is only a thumb nail sketch of what is
and what will be.