

Interfaith Summer Institute for Peace, Justice and Social Movements

Redistribution of Wealth: Economic and Environmental Justice from Indigenous and Faith Perspectives

**March 5, 6 and 7 – 2010 Maritime Labour Centre
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada**

Sunday Morning:

Response, Responsibilities and Building Relationships

Summary of Tree Reflections – Final Working Groups of the Redistribution of Wealth Conference – using Philosopher Cafe format – moving from table to table three times to work on each question with a different group.

We used the tree design, inspired by the sacred cedar tree and because the branches, trunk and roots are appropriate metaphors for the work at hand.

TREE 1.

What did you learn? (what teachings have been fostered)

- Intersectionality in application
- Complexity in simplicity
- Power in masses
- Power of the individual
- Upholding each other in solidarity
- Being accountable for one another
- Breaking down general abstract terms so that they are deconstructable, obtainable, changeable (ie: corporations)
- Decolonizing the mind
- Analyzing and rethinking our lifestyle and its effects
- Looking glass self
- Challenging “norms”

What feeling are you leaving with or emotional highpoints? (what will hold you up and sustain you – the heart for you)

- Numerous people concerned about the environment and the people loosely linked to it (ie: Indigenous)
- Songs by cultural medicine cabinet

Song written as message from the earth

Song uniting different forms

- Sense of ownership in nourishing ?
- Terri-Lynn's honor song
- Involvement of Larry Grant and Protocol followed
- Incorporating "mother earth" in Bolivia
- Passion shown by Mritiunjoy for the planet

What will you apply from this to your work or life? (How will you spread your roots further?)

- Finding relation in a sister faith
- Reconnecting to oneself's needs
- Learning our personal history/ancestry
- Recognizing the power of individual stories
- Incorporating knowledge into lifestyle
- Connecting intellectual with spiritual
- Learning the history of our shared home
- Incorporating nature's rules and laws into own lives
- Getting reconnected to nature
- Finding the connectivity between individual experiences
- Learning to be more sustainable

TREE 2.

What did you learn?

- Young people here, new generation
- Value is the Haida Achievements to control 48% of their land
- Not alone in understanding the kind of transformation needed
- Need basic conditions to choose
- Limit to choice
- No one has absolute rights
- Power distributed - new forms of governance
- Limitations on property rights'
- Choices we have illusionary, need to be challenged
- Recognize grounded/indigenous/non-commercial/way of living/choices

What feeling are you leaving with or emotional highpoints?

- Idea of sabbatical every seven years
- Idea of people as an "occupying army" on the land
- Being real honest with yourself
- Give more than you get
- Frustration with established politicians

- Diversity of people/issues

What will you apply from this to your work or life?

- Gift – gratitude – central notion in Christianity - need to work with this idea more
- Need to make commitment to change my life in light of what I have learned – consume less
- Find text (Christian) on gift giving/living well & taking “deeper understanding” to our everyday work
- Fostering networking, sharing stories key
- Working model of successful models of sustainable use of resources by communities
- Ethical & faith based approach needed to create legitimacy
- Bringing both stories of successful alternatives, analysis of these alternatives to our work
- “Witnesses” – remind of our history – take this into work

Tree 3.

What did you learn?

- The gift
- Connection to community, people and nature, legacy, stewardship
- Bolivia: what is possible, goal & process
- 1st world’s gotta walk the walk
- Food sovereignty
- Living well
- Witness – the way we keep our history straight
- Defend your responsibilities
- Tree left standing - redistribution
- Self determination

What feeling are you leaving with or emotional highpoints?

- Moved by community
- Delight about the purposefulness – lived up to the title
- Excited success story – Bolivia
- Inspired & moved by diversity of approaches, backgrounds

What will you apply from this to your work or life?

- To encourage our understanding of our indigenous roots
- Writing about basic assumptions eg; property rights
- Encouraging people to recognize their connection to one another & the earth

- Buddhist practice & awareness
- Encouraging the dialogue between indigenous peoples around the world – not just a local perspective but a universal one

Tree 4.

What did you learn?

- New perspectives – recognizing our feeling of lack
- Gift giving
- Multiple discussion needed to unravel the system
- Grounded in self to best support community
- Sharing alternative lenses
- Engaging as both activist & academic
- Engaging in both defense (saying “no”) & offense (gift giving)
- Remembering our interconnectedness
- Freedom to reinvent our world
- Richness within aboriginal cultures – organizing, resource management, living with the earth

What feeling are you leaving with or emotional highpoints?

- Connecting spirituality to social action
- The medicine cabinet!
- Vanessa Richard song “not an occupying army”
- The success story of Bolivia
- The richness of gifts within the people here

What will you apply from this to your work or life?

- Blog about the conference on work website
- Building connections between orgs and First Nations
- Hardships provide opportunities for root deepening
- Build connections with other participants
- Create opportunities for alienated people to reconnect
- Rekindling my spiritual practice to further ground
- Deepening my faith to give opportunities for others to be free
- Deepen discussions about empowerment in my work
- Be more aware & choose conscious choices (eg. Affirm rather than apologize)

Tree 5.

What did you learn?

- Choice
- Responsibility
- Growth?
- Lighter footprint
- Eternal principles
- Corporate accountability
- Balance
- Sharing
- Don't give up (hope)!!
- Holistic ecology

What feeling are you leaving with or emotional highpoints?

- Have we given up our traditional ways to the oppressors?
- Our healing circle
- Connectedness with people all around me (globally) and with the biosphere
- Feeling of calmness
- Feeling excited by the beginnings of a community who are ready to tackle the big challenges, plus anger and frustration
- Hopeful!

What will you apply from this to your work or life?

- Building a trusting community
- Increase knowledge base
- Carry what we've learned back to our communities
- Reach out and find out who other communities in my neighbourhood are and establish relationship
- Looking beyond my usual circles to promote awareness and learn about others & facilitate communication
- Shifting discourse to frame issues in terms of environmental and social and economic justice

Tree 6.

What did you learn?

- Interconnection & interdependence
- Importance of honouring depression & despair
- How many planets do I need if everyone lived like me?

- Spiritual groups can work on economics issues
- Clash of paradigms
- Self-sufficiency
- Deeper appreciation of First Peoples
- Food sovereignty – producing food locally
- There are both rights and responsibilities
- Need to revitalize with song, dance, joy, food, faith – living well
- Rights of Mother Earth
- Nobody talked about control of population growth
- Change is possible – hope
- Gift – giving and principle of giving back
- Rethinking property

What feeling are you leaving with or emotional highpoints?

- Peace
- Anger
- Commitment
- Opening ceremony
- Talk of immigrants and their plight and about borders
- The new race for land in Africa
- Songs
- Hope
- Fortunate to hear Pablo's Mother Earth resolution
- Community
- In-touch academics
- Cora from HEU
- Common and age-old principles
- We know what to do, even as we are confused of how to do it
- Disturbed by discussions of “growth” without distinguishing it from development

What will you apply from this to your work or life?

- Reflection
- Continue learning, sharing
- Discuss issues around indigenous people and education with director of JIBC to integrate it into fabric of institution
- Continue to go to as many conferences as I can and build community
- Going deeper into work in Mexico
- Start a circle of people interested in deep spiritual practice and social justice
- Question & resist “divide and conquer” mentality and bring people together, find common ground & solidarity within diversity
- Make sure Indigenous languages are included in DTES literacy plan

- Question ideas of “progress”, “growth”, and “success” in employment training programs and find what really works

Tree 7.

What did you learn?

- Re-examine “property” in light of the history of the development of the concept
- There are no “victims” only victimized people
- The earth and its animals and inanimate inhabitants are living beings
- Connect to community understood in terms of “ all my relations”
- We are profoundly interconnected – our actions affect others eg; how much we do & do not pay for things
- Living well
- Life abundant
- “Just enough” vs conceiving wealth in terms of material possession and consumption
- The need for new governance structures & process based on a commitment to inclusion

What feeling are you leaving with or emotional highpoints?

- Living well, dancing well, loving well, eating well, drinking well
- Drumming & singing – experience of connection
- Moved by the sense of humility and non-competition - willingness to listen
- Moved by the genuine desire people feel to change and this will involve courage – meeting resistance

What will you apply from this to your work or life?

- Stay true to traditional ways of life, respect
- Keep eye on responsibilities as a father and not be too distracted by other people’s needs
- Buy less – try to take only what you need
- Go deeper in my Buddhist practices in order to listen better – cultivate better speech

Tree 8.

What did you learn?

- We need to do it
- Compassion

- Moving from individualism to community
- How knowledgeable & diverse our allies are
- World view of “7 days” (ie Sabbath) & how It applies to personal, political, economic, & ecological justice
- How do we engage with people who are not like-minded

What feeling are you leaving with or emotional highpoints?

- Terri-Lynn drumming & singing from all the performers
- The spirit in the room
- Cultural Medicine Cabinet
- Message of hope & compassion
- None of us is free when one of us is chained
- Human connection
- Message of despair & grief
- Diversity
- Open heartedness
- Trust & suspicion
- Timelessness of values & universal
- Gratitude
- Humility

What will you apply from this to your work or life?

- Dialogue with mining companies about environment issues in other countries
- Spread the word on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth
- Exploring other forms of spirituality & putting it into my working life
- Rethinking conference design i.e: the importance of process
- Dialogues that you can broadcast
- Take audio from this conference & put it into broadcast quality
- Following up on many things in the conference
- Improving the celebrations of earth day
- Re-evaluate consumerism
- Witnessing spread the word about what we learned today, how important it is to protect the environment
- Use the “tree” exercise