

**“THE POWER OF KINDNESS  
CREATING A SPIRITUALLY FULFILLING,  
SOCIALY JUST,  
ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE,  
HUMAN PRESENCE ON THIS EARTH”**

**Sermon by Karen Hilfman Millson  
St. Paul’s United Church, Orillia  
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- a) Micah – one of my fav social justice –  
links justice with kindness – required?  
Seek justice and love - kindness
- b) Martin Luther King Jr. –  
known to argue against doing social justice  
if love of neighbour missing
- c) When we lack simple kindness
- d) – destructive story – airport
  - 1) kids - excited
  - 2) dad arrives – grumbles
- d) quotes on kindness:

Kind words can be short and easy to speak,  
but their echoes are truly endless. – *Mother Teresa*

When death, the great reconciler, has come,  
it is never our tenderness  
that we repent of, but our severity. – *George Eliot*

When you carry out acts of kindness  
you get a wonderful feeling inside.  
It is as though something inside your body responds  
and says, yes, this is how I ought to feel. – *Harold Kushner*

Sometimes someone says something really small,  
and it just fits right into this empty place in your heart.  
~ From the television show *My So-Called Life*

During my second year of nursing school  
our professor gave us a quiz.  
I breezed through the questions until I read the last one:  
“What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?”  
Surely this was a joke.  
I had seen the cleaning woman several times,  
but how would I know her name?

I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank.  
Before the class ended,  
one student asked if the last question would count toward our grade.  
“Absolutely,” the professor said.  
“In your careers, you will meet many people.  
All are significant.  
They deserve your attention and care,  
even if all you do is smile and say hello.”  
I’ve never forgotten that lesson.  
I also learned her name was Dorothy. ~ *Joann C. Jones*

Article – identifying similarities  
between Desmond Tutu and Martin Luther King  
reflects the importance  
of weaving together kindness and social justice  
Quote from Desmond Tutu’s “The Rainbow People of God”  
expected to be both kind and active for justice.

We expect Christians to be people of a certain kind,  
not by what they say through their mouths  
but by the kind of people they are.  
We expect them to reflect the character of Jesus Christ.  
We expect Christians to be gentle,  
not always quarreling and scratching.  
We expect Christians to be humble  
as Jesus was humble,  
as he said in the Gospel.  
We expect Christians to be loving.  
We expect Christians to be  
those who try to create peace  
among those who are quarreling.  
We expect Christians to be people who are caring.  
We expect Christians to be people filled with love.  
We expect Christians to be people  
who forgive as Jesus forgave  
even those who were nailing him to the Cross.  
But we expect Christians  
also to be those who stand up for the truth,  
we expect Christians to be those who stand up for justice,  
we expect Christians to be  
those who stand on the side of the poor  
and the hungry  
and the homeless and the naked,  
and when that happens  
then Christians will be trustworthy,

believable witnesses.  
Desmond Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 131-2.

So what exactly is justice –  
the answer to that question  
is often clear when compare justice with charity.

Charity = social service.  
Charity provides direct services  
like food, clothing, shelter.  
Justice = social change.  
Justice promotes social change  
in institutions or political structures.

Charity responds to immediate needs.  
Justice responds to long-term needs.

Charity is directed at the effects of injustice,  
its symptoms.  
Charity addresses problems  
that already exist.  
Otherwise put: LOVE MOPS UP.

Justice is directed  
at the root causes of social problems.  
Justice addresses  
the underlying structures or causes of these problems.  
Otherwise put:  
JUSTICE TRIES TO MAKE SURE  
THE MESS ISN'T MADE TO BEGIN WITH.

Charity is private, individual acts.  
Justice is public, collective actions.

Examples of charity:  
homeless shelters, food shelves,  
clothing drives, emergency services.  
Examples of Justice:  
Legislative advocacy,  
changing policies and practices,  
political action.

We need both  
– charity –  
– caring for current problems is needed –  
– until there is justice and the problem is no more.

Martin Luther King –  
reflected on charity and justice  
through Jesus' parable story  
of the Good Samaritan saying:  
“It is not enough to aid a wounded man on the Jericho Road...  
it is also important to change  
the conditions which make robbery possible.

- a) a story that makes that clear – is a South African proverb:  
Village on banks of river
- One day – people –  
bloody and screaming for help  
Being carried by current of river
  - Came together and rescued –  
and mended their injuries
  - Soon saw a few more – did same
  - Every day more and more –  
coming and needing to be saved
  - Village – 24 hour river watch  
- hospital to care for the people
- everyone had a role – pull from river -cook meals -hospital
- > but no one ventured up the river  
to find source of problem
  - > would have noticed bridge with
    - > simply fixed hole –  
no more people would wash up  
on shore in need

“While Charity is necessary Justice is as well.  
They are partners that cannot be separated.  
To do so is to not follow the teachings of the Bible.  
To do only Charity  
without the work of justice  
is counter productive  
and missing part of the call to follow Jesus.”

Look at the world around us -  
can feel overwhelming  
but when we look back in our history –  
even just back to the beginning of the United Church of Canada  
we see incredible examples of change  
that we have been able to effect –  
when we have found our voices  
and listened to the wisdom amongst us.