CONFERENCE DESCRIPTION

On May 12 & 13, 2014, The King’s University College and the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) will co-host a conference on economic justice in Edmonton, Alberta, entitled Are We There Yet? Economic Justice and the Common Good.

While economic issues continue to dominate Canada’s political agenda, popular participation in such protest movements as Occupy and Idle No More signals a growing concern about the effects of free market forces on the ecological health of the land and the general welfare of Canadian society. Disagreement about the beneficence of these forces threatens to polarize the citizenry, while any opportunity for meaningful dialogue between both the defenders and critics of these forces remains relatively rare. The conference we are planning seeks to address this deficiency in Canadian public discourse by setting a hospitable table around which a broad range of opinions, political perspectives, and socio-economic experiences can be gathered and shared.

We plan to generate and sustain conversational momentum both before and after the conference through strategic use of the internet and social media, as well as the publication of conference materials in digital and print formats. We thereby seek to encourage greater networking and cooperation among conference participants, facilitating relationships that can positively impact future work.

Please see our Call for Participation here.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

The Honourable Diane Ablonczy has been a Member of Parliament for over two decades. When first elected in 1993, she became a key member of the shadow cabinet of Her Majesty’s Loyal Opposition, serving as chief critic for citizenship and immigration, health and human resources development. Upon forming government in 2006, Prime Minister Stephen Harper appointed Mrs. Ablonczy Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance. In 2008 she became Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), a position she held until 2010, when she was appointed Minister of State (Seniors). From January 2011 to July 2013, she held the position of Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), representing Canada in the Americas and overseeing consular affairs around the world. Mrs. Ablonczy is also a member of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence and an alternate member of the Treasury Board.

Prior to entering political life, Mrs. Ablonczy enjoyed a varied career, which ranged from teaching junior high school to managing a grain farm operation to building a successful law practice.

Dr. Bob Goudzwaard is an internationally recognized economist whose influence extends well beyond the circle of his disciplinary expertise. Throughout his career, he has purposefully designed his lectures and publications to reach all people who seek wisdom in finding their way in our culture. His texts stand out as widely accessible, creative approaches to the deep economic fault lines that divide and alienate us. He not
only makes our problems understandable, but his alternative suggestions open paths that inspire hope for a better future.

Dr. Goudzwaard is Professor Emeritus of Economics and Social Philosophy at the VU University, Amsterdam, and a former member of the Dutch Parliament. From 1959–1965, Dr. Goudzwaard served as a Policy Researcher for the Doctor Abraham Kuyper Foundation, the intellectual arm of the Dutch Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP), for which he also served as a member of Parliament from 1967–71. In 1971, Dr. Goudzwaard was appointed Professor of Economics in the Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam (now called VU University), a position he held until his retirement in 1999. Dr. Goudzwaard also played a formative role with several Christian social institutions in Canada, including the Christian Labour Association of Canada, Citizens for Public Justice, and the Institute for Christian Studies. A passionate advocate for “an economy of care” that looks beyond traditional market growth indicators, Dr. Goudzwaard is the author of many books and articles, including (in English) *Capitalism and Progress: A Diagnosis of Western Society* (1979), *Beyond Poverty and Affluence* (1995, with Harry de Lange), and *Hope in Troubled Times: A New Vision for Confronting Global Crises* (2007, with Mark Vander Vennen and David Van Heemst).