



This “thought sheet” is produced as a service of the L’Arche Canada Foundation to the Canadian public. We offer it as a contribution to the public conversation about values and the shaping of the social ethos in which we live. Our perspective comes from two broad sources: (1) from thirty-five years of living together in community as a diverse group of people, differently abled and from various cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds; and (2) from contemporary thinkers who are open, fresh and responsive to the human spirit and are reflecting deeply on the individual and society today. Our goal in this publication is to strengthen the experience of human solidarity in Canada by making available some of this combined wisdom and reflection.

The vision and confidence to create a healthy Canadian society lies in the nexus where humanistic thinking and spirituality cross-fertilize. Indeed, today the best spiritual thinking engages contemporary culture with a view to the good of human society and the best humanistic thinking integrates spiritual values. We believe it is possible to live consciously in the gap between an ideal society and everyday reality and to make choices that contribute to the closing of that gap. It is a hopeful view, based on human and spiritual values embodied in daily life.

COURTESY OF CBC



Linden MacIntyre has produced documentaries and stories around the world. Many have influenced Canadian society for the better. His penetrating work in broadcast journalism has garnered Gemini, Michener and Sinclair Awards. Prior to joining the CBC in 1976, he worked with *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald* in the Ottawa parliamentary bureau, and in Cape Breton, and with *The Financial Times of Canada*. At the CBC he hosted *The MacIntyre File*, worked on *The Journal*, and was host of CBC Radio’s Sunday Morning before moving to *The Fifth Estate*.

A Human Future

VOLUME 2 ■ NUMBER 3 ■ SEPTEMBER 2003

The Media and Society: The Passion of Linden MacIntyre, Host of CBC’s Fifth Estate – part one

In June I had the pleasure of interviewing Linden MacIntyre, in many ways the dean of Canadian investigative journalism. This issue provides a glimpse into the humanity of this man whose sensitivity, courage, intelligence and compassion have for many years combined to address issues of vital concern to Canadians, from deceitful corporate cover-ups to wrongful convictions. Linden MacIntyre’s thoughts on the state of journalism and the media in Canada today will be the focus of our next issue – part two of this interview. – Beth Porter, ed.

BP: You grew up in Cape Breton and studied at Nova Scotia’s St. Francis Xavier University. St. FX is noted for academic excellence and also for its Coady International Institute and its practical pioneering of Roman Catholic social teaching. How did these experiences influence you?

LM: I got a sense of the world through St. FX – because there were people from all over the world there. And it had a tradition of social activism. I hadn’t thought much about that before, because when you’re living in a particular echelon of society you tend not to reflect much on that echelon. I grew up in circumstances where you never expected anybody to pay much attention to what you thought or felt. But I started to see certain realities as being connected. And I was astonished by simple people, ordinary priests and nuns and community people, who decided to have a hand in their own affairs and used a socialized approach to try to change their circumstances.

In my early teens I had the priesthood in mind – and

Edward L. Greenspan



AL GILBERT, C.M.

We are living in a time when the defeat of terrorism is on everyone's mind. But that does not mean we are supposed to simply trust the government to act wisely on correct information. The rule of law is the bedrock of our nation, not blind faith in the unchecked judgment of government officials. Any country that lives by a rule of "trust us, there is no need for due process," is totalitarian....

The challenge is to figure out a way to deal with the threat of terrorism without losing the freedoms that make Canada the great nation it is.

Everyone must be able to respond to their accusers, whether in the realm of a criminal trial or a security hearing. It's terrifying that in ordinary criminal cases mistakes are still made. How many mistakes could the government be making in security cases?

From "In Defence of Freedom," by Edward L.

Greenspan, *Macleans*, July 28, 2003.

Mr. Greenspan is a respected Canadian defence lawyer.



then my mother, who was an old-fashioned Irish Catholic, gave me a strong cross-examination. She got out of me that I had been deeply inspired by an Oblate missionary's stories about the world and what you could do out there. So my mother said, "If all you want to do is go out into the world and do things, you don't have to be a priest. Don't become a priest to do something other than being a priest!"

BP: How did you get started in journalism?

LM: I always sensed I had some ability in writing. A sociology teacher suggested I consider journalism. I needed an income, and journalism was a convenient place to learn more about what was going on in the world, and how people respond. At first I thought it might be just a transition. But I came to see that this is a way not only to earn a living but also to be engaged – that it's possible to do this job with some real value as opposed to just cranking things out. And I realized that I could adopt a point of view that attempts to represent the outlook of people who are either marginalized or for some reason silent.

Early on, I took a job at *The Financial Times of Canada*. I had never had much interest in financial reporting but I saw that a couple of years there would be kind of equivalent to taking a master's degree in Economics, and that economics and financial knowledge are crucial to understanding the way the world works.

BP: Often the Fifth Estate focuses on issues of injustice. Do you have a sense of mission in your work?

LM: I don't have a sense of mission in terms of justice. I just want to be part of the dynamic in which people can feel that they're not isolated from the sources of power. Ever since the democratization of western society, people have felt that there are institutions – the mass media being one – that give them access to the people who make decisions that control their lives. My mission, if you want to call it that, is to work out that traditional notion of what the mass media is for – which is

June Callwood



IRENE BORIN ASH

Journalism stands at the heart of democracy. Politicians used to be ardent about democracy.... [Now] the dependency of politicians on large donations tends to shape the political agenda. Sadly, rich media barons have an affinity to those with wealth.... What's come to be called "responsible journalism" all too frequently is responsible only to the status quo.... In this country heads roll quite frequently when journalists annoy testy owners....

The dispossessed, children, the homeless, the old, people with disabilities, those who come here from hard scrabble countries have no voice in the corridors of power. Unless the media pay attention to this pulverizing imbalance, the change in the country's well being will continue to be for the worse....

This country depends more than it knows on the handful of men and women who toil away to uncover abuses of power and get their stories published or aired because of the sheer weight of their unassailable research and good writing.

Extracted from the 2002 Dalton Camp Lecture, recorded and broadcast by CBC *Ideas*. June Callwood is an esteemed Canadian writer and social activist.



becoming more and more difficult to do, and more and more lonely in the sense that fewer people set out to do that today.

I'm not talking about advocacy journalism. I'm just talking about being available. People phone me, send me stuff (gesturing to a large pile on his desk). Rarely am I able to do anything with it, but I call back and often they're astonished. They feel they've achieved something. And I answer letters. You can tell the desperate from the crazy. There are people who are completely wrecked – the world has made them mad. I may write to them for a while, but their anger and general alienation are beyond my ability to deal with. Certain letters, I will always answer – the jailhouse guy, for instance.

BP: Do you get something out of writing to the person in jail?

LM: I've got a lot of heartache out of it. One of those exchanges led to a friendship that became tragic. This fellow was only 27 years old when I met him, and he was doing 47 years for robbing banks. Karla Homolka didn't get that! He was a classic product of a bad adoption. He died of a gunshot wound after escaping from prison. I had become so thoroughly involved in his life that I was able to write a book about it after he died. I'll never leave that relationship behind me because it was such an illumination of the caprice of the justice system.

Another was the Canadian from Alberta who was executed in Texas in 1999, Stan Faulder. He had been convicted of a murder and had been on death row for over 20 years. He'd always refused to talk to the media, but someone here at the CBC suggested I try. Eventually we became good friends. He wanted me to witness his execution. I couldn't say 'no' to him, but at the last minute the Texas Corrections people blocked my attendance.

I spent a few hours with him on the day they killed him. He had never admitted his guilt. He had been part of a bad group of people. The others pinned it on him and got paid for their testimony, and he always figured they were just as guilty. That day he admitted his guilt to me in three coded ways. I was

completely transfixed by this conversation. It was his confession. I asked him if he was going to perhaps tell the victim's people he was sorry. He said, "I have felt sorry since the day that happened, and I could say it again, but they're so implacable in their hatred of me that they wouldn't hear it." Then he added something I found very deep. He said, "I'm very sorry for what I took away from them, but I'm even more sorry for the pain that they will continue to feel tomorrow. They'll realize, 'We've exacted the maximum penalty, and we're no better off.'"

BP: You went to meet him as a reporter but you also met him at a very human level. Is this difficult?

LM: It's just how I grew up. To me, nobody is invisible and the hard part is to compartmentalize yourself. I've often thought maybe I'd be better off if I could do that. I don't claim that I willfully wear my humanity on the job. It becomes uncomfortable. I would happily have avoided a lot of the pain of these relationships, and a lot of complicated feelings in what are essentially exercises in storytelling.

A Human Future is edited by Beth Porter



The L'Arche movement was founded by Jean Vanier, in France in 1964. Today there are 121 communities of L'Arche on five continents, 26 in Canada. In L'Arche, people with developmental disabilities and those who come to assist them share life together.

If you would like to receive this publication at no cost, please contact us indicating how you would like to receive it: e-mail or fax.

L'Arche Canada Foundation, 21 Dunlop Street, Suite 201
Richmond Hill, ON L4C 2M6, Tel: 905-770-7696 Fax: 905-884-0580
Email: office@larchecanfoundation.org
Web-site: www.larchecanfoundation.org

The L'Arche Canada Foundation is supported solely by voluntary financial contributions. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation. Charitable number: 88990 9719 RR0001

FOR REFLECTION

"Arthur Miller says that 'the good newspaper is a nation talking to itself.' For us to talk to ourselves, we have to have the continued commitment of all of you who are involved in the journalistic profession – to reflect our society as it really is today; to alert and warn us about what may be coming; and to provide a texture and a description of the lives that we cannot live, but that we know are lived around us."

(from Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson's Speech at the Presentation of the 2002 Michener Award for Journalism.)

Where do you go to read, listen to or watch journalism of this calibre? What kind of society is depicted in the journalistic material you encounter? Do you find yourself alerted? Warned? Informed and perhaps inspired by others' lives?

FOR YOUR INTEREST

- *Who Killed Ty Conn?* by Linden MacIntyre and Theresa Burke, (Penguin, 2001); *The Long Stretch*, by Linden MacIntyre, (Stoddart, 1999). This is a penetrating novel set in Cape Breton, the tragic story of one extended family.
- "In Defence of Freedom," by Edward L. Greenspan, *Maclean's*, July 28, 2003: www.macleans.ca
- The 2002 Dalton Camp Lecture by June Callwood can be ordered in CD form at: www.cbc.ca/shop/tapes_tr.html
- "Life and Times" bio of June Callwood: www.tv.cbc.ca
- Article on the the CBC's recently successful 3-year access-to-information lawsuit regarding Ipperwash and the killing of Dudley George: www.torontostar.ca
- Canadian Association of Journalists: www.caj.ca/index.html
- Summer 2002 issue of the CAJ Media Magazine: www.caj.ca/mediamag/summer2002/ On efforts of the Canadian government to control expressions of dissent: www.caj.ca/media_mag/summer2002/award-open-news.html

The mission of the L'Arche Canada Foundation is to encourage financial support of L'Arche and to help create a human future for Canadians.