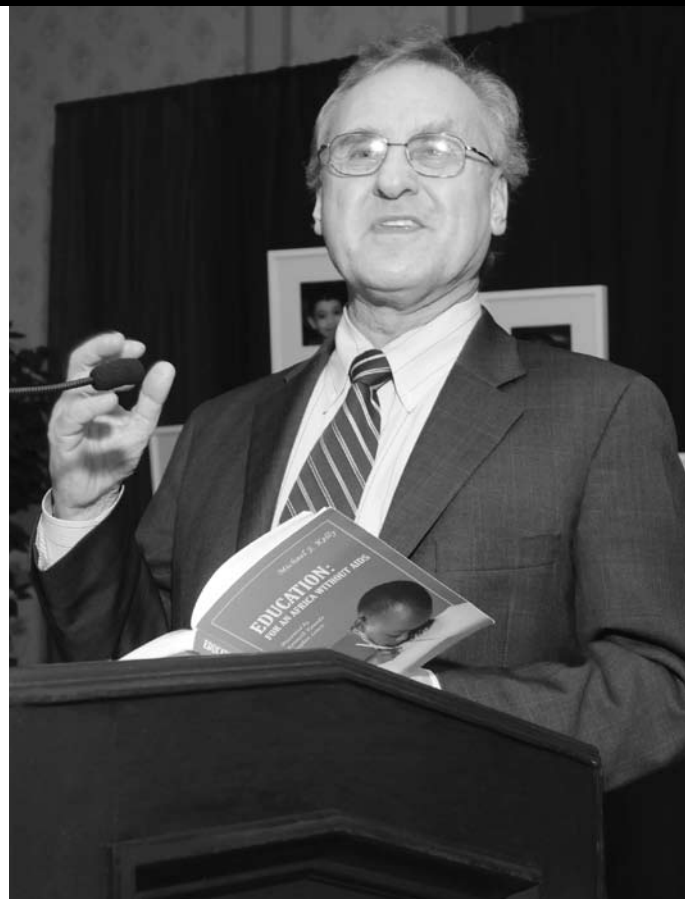


Keynote Speaker

Stephen Lewis

Stephen Lewis began by addressing the controversy that surrounded his appearance at a Catholic principals' conference. He stated that he had "something to get off his chest." The attacks on his beliefs and convictions, specifically that he is pro-choice and believes in the use of condoms, have often become personal attacks and he finds this unsettling. He has always upheld social justice issues. The Holy Ghost Fathers are close allies in his work in Africa. As leader of the Ontario NDP party, he supported the extension of funding to Catholic schools, because it was morally right. From 1995 to 1999, as deputy executive director of UNICEF, he was the Vatican go-between. Presently, as chair of the board of the Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) in Canada, he works closely with Catholic charities in Africa. He recently wrote the preface for Fr. Michael Kelly's book, *Education for an Africa without AIDS*. Fr. Kelly is a Jesuit, a leading figure in the fight against AIDS in Africa and a friend of Stephen Lewis.

Stephen Lewis noted that he loved the emphasis on the human dimension of our conference, referring to the theme, *Celebrating the Human Face of God*. He connected the theme to the eight Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations (UN) to be met by 2015. As he spoke to each goal, he illustrated the work that has been done and what remains to be completed, through his personal observations and the work of the Stephen Lewis Foundation in Africa. Through his stories, he certainly did put a human face on the problems facing African countries.



The 8 Millennium Development Goals

Goal 1 - Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

The targets are to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day, to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people, and to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. The present international financial turbulence is greatly hindering this goal. There are 14 to 15 countries in Southern Africa living in great poverty. Over 1.4 billion people are living below the UN set rate of \$1.25 a day poverty level. In meeting with a group of women suffering with AIDS, Stephen Lewis noted that it was not medication that they requested, but food.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

The target is to ensure that children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. Stephen Lewis stated that kids have a yearning to go to school. However, in Africa today there are 77 to 100 million children of elementary school age that cannot afford to attend school. Only 16 per cent of girls are enrolled in secondary education. They cannot afford the cost of books, uniforms and fees. There never used to be user fees for education until the World Bank became involved and said there had to be a fee for education.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

The UN wants to eliminate gender disparity in all levels of education no later than 2015. Stephen Lewis said that they cannot continue to marginalize 52 per cent of the population. Respect for each other should be the foundation for social justice. Schools should work to achieve respect from young men towards young women. However, discrimination towards young women is staggering as illustrated by the statistics on rape. Women are isolated and brutalized. He stated that South Africa is the rape capital of the world. In Liberia, they have elected the first woman president and the civil war is over, but the rape of young women continues. In Zimbabwe, the SLF is recording affidavits from women who were raped during the 2008 election. These were politically orchestrated rapes. All of the women were associated in some way with the opposition party. The Congo remains the worst country for women. Rape is a strategy of war. Whole communities are destroyed by raping the women in the presence of their families. Doctors in hospitals spend time trying to repair the reproductive tracts of victims of rape. The new medical term is "vaginal destruction" and this creates a breeding ground for the AIDS virus. In Africa today, 800 to 1000 people die every day due to AIDS-related illnesses. Life would be different if there was gender equality.



From Left: Silvana Gos, Stephen Lewis, Sarah Russell, Deborah Downey, Ed McMahon

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

The UN's goal is to reduce by two-thirds the under-five mortality rate. In Africa ten million children under the age of five die from preventable diseases. Stephen Lewis wants to see solidarity among the continents to address this issue.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

The target is to reduce by three-quarters, the maternal mortality ratio and to achieve universal access to reproductive health. In Africa, half a million women die in childbirth each year. Complications in childbirth should not lead to death.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

The UN targets are to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, to achieve universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it, and to halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases. Women and young girls comprise 75 to 80 per cent of those affected by AIDS-related diseases. They have no right to refuse sex in their male-dominated society. Orphanages are full of children that have watched their parents die of AIDS. *Grandmothers of Africa* have buried their adult children and some now have ten to 20 grandchildren in their care. Stephen Lewis applauded the grandmothers who are resilient, courageous, and have so much nurturing and love to give. No one understood the human consequences of the AIDS virus. He said that if one wants to put a human face on the issue, pay attention to the children affected.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

The targets are: to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources; to reduce biodiversity loss, achieving by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss; to halve by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; and to achieve by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers. Stephen Lewis feels that there is a catastrophic event coming between 2030 and 2050. The factors that affect climate change and global health have gone too far. He believes that the effects of carbon released into the environment are irreversible. There is an opportunity here for education. Mr. Lewis implored us to make this issue part of the curriculum. Young people will identify with those of other cultures. Educated children should care about the plight of their neighbours.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

The UN has eight targets for this goal. Stephen Lewis summarized these by saying that the haves must help the have-nots. A partnership needs to be fostered between developing and developed countries that would be honoured. He went on to tell the story of a hospital in Zambia, where he witnessed five infants per crib, teetering between malnutrition and AIDS. He could hear agonizing screams every ten minutes. These were the screams of mothers, whose children had died.

Stephen Lewis implored us to put a human face on the realities of existence in Africa. He stated, "Schools are led by those who believe that a global citizen should emerge from the school." At the grassroots level, we need to educate ourselves and make our children aware of these realities. The rest of the world needs to act in a responsible way towards their neighbours in Africa.

Test Prep Ontario Ontario Provincial Test Student Workbooks

2010 Edition

- Available this Fall
- Grade 3 and Grade 6
- Ontario Curriculum Compliant

For more information or to place an order:

www.TestPrepOntario.com
info@testprepontario.com
905-430-9402



ONTARIO PIONEER CAMP OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

*Acknowledging God,
having fun, and meeting
curriculum expectations
for all ages through
experiential learning in
beautiful Muskoka*

1.800.361.CAMP

*Call today to make
inquiries or to book your
next retreat*



www.pioneercamp.ca