

# Just Leisure

Things That We Believe In

Keri Schwab

Daniel Dustin

*editors*

SAGAMORE  
PUBLISHING

©2013 Sagamore Publishing LLC

All rights reserved.

Publishers: Joseph J. Bannon, Peter L. Bannon

Director of Sales and Marketing: William A. Anderson

Director of Development and Production: Susan M. Davis

ISBN print edition: 978-1-57167-753-2

ISBN ebook: 978-1-57167-754-9

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2013935129

Printed in the United States.

Sagamore Publishing LLC

1807 N Federal Dr.

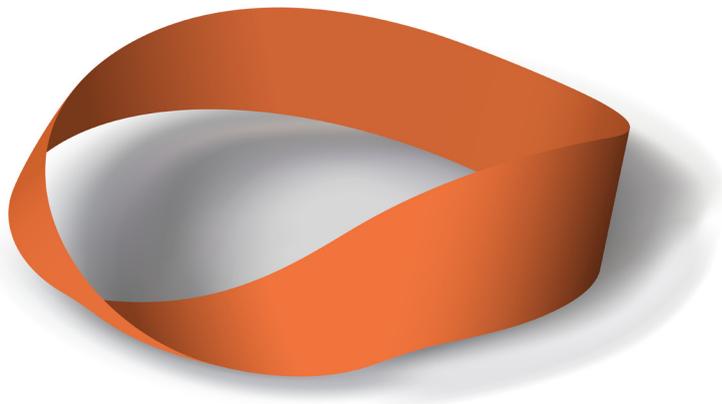
Urbana, IL 61801

[www.sagamorepub.com](http://www.sagamorepub.com)

To Karla Henderson

*for her pioneering work in women's leisure*

---



## *The Möbius Strip*

A Möbius Strip is a one-sided surface created by placing a single twist in a strip of paper and connecting the ends. The strip appears to have two sides, but really has no discernible front or back, beginning or end. If you were to draw a line starting on one side and try to go all the way around that same side, you would end up with a line around the entire strip without ever crossing an edge. You might think of social and environmental justice similarly. In the long run, they may be part and parcel of the same thing.

# Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i> .....	ix
<i>Preface</i> .....	xi
<i>Foreword</i>	
<b>Sharon J. Washington</b> , <i>Executive Director, National Writing Project</i> .....	xiii

## Part One—Questioning Injustice

1	What Will Become of Our 20 Grandchildren? .....	3
	<b>Tom Goodale</b> , <i>Professor Emeritus, George Mason University</i>	
2	At Whose Expense? How Our Commitment to Conservation has Propagated Social Injustice.....	10
	<b>Diane Samdahl</b> , <i>University of Georgia</i>	
3	Beyond the Right to Inclusion: The Intersection of Social and Environmental Justice for Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities in Leisure .....	17
	<b>Mary Ann Devine</b> , <i>Kent State University</i> <b>Jennifer Piatt</b> , <i>Indiana University</i>	
4	Meeting at the Crossroads: Progress for Multiracial People or Delicate Balance Amid Old Divides? .....	27
	<b>Nina Roberts</b> , <i>San Francisco State University</i>	
5	Ecofeminism(s) and Just Leisure in the 21st Century.....	35
	<b>Karla Henderson</b> , <i>North Carolina State University</i>	
	<b>Synthesis: Living With Our Imperfections: A Personal Reflection on Justice, Accountability, and Social Change</b> .....	43
	<b>Jada Lindblom</b> , <i>University of Utah</i>	

## Part Two—Naming Injustice

6	Our Town's a Drag: Drag Queens and Queer Space in Athens, Georgia .....	49
	<b>Joshua Barnett</b> , <i>Indiana University</i> <b>Corey W. Johnson</b> , <i>University of Georgia</i>	
7	Contesting Homelessness: Public Nature, Political Ecology, and Socioenvironmental Justice.....	58
	<b>Jeff Rose</b> , <i>University of Utah</i>	

8	John Dewey’s Moral Philosophy as a Route to Social and Environmental Justice Through Youth Development Theory .....	67
	<b>Daniel Theriault</b> , <i>Texas A &amp; M University</i> <b>Rudy Dunlap</b> , <i>Middle Tennessee State University</i>	
9	Facebook’s Status in the Lives of Generation Y: Exploring Power Structures in an Online Leisure Space .....	75
	<b>Callie Spencer and Jeremy Jostad</b> , <i>University of Utah</i>	
10	Tourism and Environmental Justice .....	91
	<b>Freya-Higgins Desbiolles</b> , <i>University of South Australia</i> <b>Kyle Powys Whyte</b> , <i>Michigan State University</i> <b>Deirdre Tedmanson</b> , <i>University of South Australia</i>	
	<b>Synthesis: On Hierarchical Marginalization</b> .....	101
	<b>Zachary Schwing</b> , <i>University of Utah</i>	

### Part Three—Teaching Justice

11	Spirituality as a Resource for Social and Environmental Justice Through Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Leisure .....	109
	<b>Paul Heintzman</b> , <i>University of Ottawa</i>	
12	Experiential Education, Social and Environmental Justice Pedagogies, and Globalization: From Theory to Praxis.....	117
	<b>Mary Breunig and Samantha Dear</b> , <i>Brock University</i>	
13	Canada’s First College of Sustainability: Teaching about Social and Environmental Justice and Sustainability .....	126
	<b>Susan Tirone, Claire Campbell, and Karen Gallant</b> , <i>Dalhousie University</i>	
14	Eco-Justice Education: Learning to Speak Up and Out.....	135
	<b>Adrienne Cachelin</b> , <i>University of Utah</i>	
	<b>Synthesis: On Interconnectedness and Interdependence</b> .....	139
	<b>Anita Ledford</b> , <i>University of Utah</i>	

### Part Four—Doing Justice

15	Virtue Ethics: An Emerging Discourse in Social and Environmental Justice Inquiry .....	143
	<b>Donald McLean</b> , <i>Western Illinois University-Quad Cities</i>	
16	Recreating Culture: Slow Food, <i>Scholé</i> , and Critical Pedagogy .....	153
	<b>Rudy Dunlap</b> , <i>Middle Tennessee State University</i>	

17	Ecotourism as a Venue for Environmental and Social Justice: A Case Study of a Fijian Vanua .....	160
	<b>Kelly Bricker</b> , <i>University of Utah</i>	
18	Healthy Parks and Communities: Green Access and Equity for Los Angeles .....	167
	<b>Robert García and Seth Strongin</b> , <i>The City Project, Los Angeles, California</i>	
19	Public Memory for an Inclusive Society .....	189
	<b>William Stewart</b> , <i>University of Illinois</i>	
	<b>Synthesis: Philosophy as Leisure of the Most Vital Kind</b> .....	197
	<b>Ed Barbanell</b> , <i>University of Utah</i>	
	Notes .....	203
	About the Authors.....	248
	Index .....	252



# Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Sagamore Publishing's Joe and Peter Bannon for their unwavering support of this work and Susan Davis for managing the production process so meticulously. We are also indebted to delegates to the "1st International Symposium on Speaking Up and Speaking Out: Working for Social and Environmental Justice through Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Leisure" held on the campus of the University of Utah, May 17-19, 2012. Their keen interest in social and environmental justice energized the three-day conversation and provided much of the grist for what follows. A special thank you to Rhonda Larson and Lee Stetson as well for embellishing the symposium's theme with their artistry. Finally, we would like to thank the book's contributors, many of whom spent the better part of a year refining their thinking for presentation and publication.



# Preface

This book is the product of a three-day symposium held on the campus of the University of Utah, May 17-19, 2012. The symposium was a follow-up to *Speaking Up and Speaking Out: Working for Social and Environmental Justice through Parks, Recreation, and Leisure*, edited by the University of Utah's Karen Paisley and Daniel Dustin and published by Sagamore Publishing, LLC in 2011. Capitalizing on the momentum of that book, Joe Bannon, publisher and CEO of Sagamore, suggested holding a symposium to further the conversation to see if an interest in social and environmental justice in the context of the work we do in parks, recreation, tourism, and leisure could be sustained.

We took Dr. Bannon up on his suggestion and organized the "1st International Symposium on Speaking Up and Speaking Out: Working for Social and Environmental Justice through Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Leisure." We circulated a call for papers and selected 19 for presentation.

The symposium attracted 75 delegates from the United States, Canada, and Australia. All of the presentations were plenary, which meant that everyone in attendance had a chance to hear what everyone else had to say. This made for a spirited give and take on a wide range of social and environmental justice themes. It also motivated us to share the essence of what transpired in book form.

*Just Leisure* captures much of the symposium's content. In addition to the 19 invited chapters, we have divided the book into four sections with syntheses at the end of each section. The syntheses were written by delegates who were moved sufficiently by what they heard at the symposium to comment on some aspect of it.

When we put the symposium together, our intent was to try to get beyond the ideas of social and environmental justice in a way that combines them into one larger comprehensive notion of justice. The Möbius Strip represents that aspiration. We fell short of that goal. What we learned instead is that social and environmental justice, at least in the short term, are often at odds with one another. In our enthusiasm for securing one kind of justice, we often compromise the other. We do not know if this is a temporal problem. Perhaps we are still correct in thinking that social and environmental justice will come to be seen as opposite sides of the same coin in the long run.

Our hope for this book is that it causes you to stop and ponder long-held assumptions and beliefs and that it challenges your world view. Social and environmental injustices do not always announce themselves. They often lay hidden beneath the surface of what otherwise appears to be a civilized world. In the absence of people speaking up and speaking out about such injustices, we risk being lulled into moral and spiritual complacency. This is as true of parks, recreation, tourism, and leisure as it is of any other human service profession. With this thought in mind, we encourage you to read this book with discerning eyes and take its lessons to heart.

**Keri and Dan**

*“Justice is what love looks like in public.”*

**—Cornel West**

# Foreword

*“We’re seekers of truth, keepers of faith, makers of peace, wisdom of ages...”*

—Ysaye M. Barnwell

I have been asked to speak on behalf of Black folks, women, Black women, the LGBT community, lesbians of color, and the mythically homogeneous Black church’s stance on homosexuality. My assumption is that these requests were well-intended, from individuals who sincerely want to understand the perspective of someone they view as different. The fact that I have not been asked to speak on behalf of the middle class, Christians, or the temporarily able-bodied, would suggest I am viewed first and foremost as someone who is a member of traditionally oppressed groups in the United States (U.S.) rather than as someone who also has privilege.

All of us are complex beings made up of multiple social identities that intersect in numerous ways with our personality traits. We live, work, and play in a variety of settings. Everything is interconnected. The choices we make regarding fuel efficient automobiles, city planning, and energy policies impact the environment. What we do in one part of the world impacts people living in other parts. When we speak out against bullying, yet deny equal rights and equal pay, we send mixed messages about who is valued in society. The relatively inexpensive food prices in the U.S. rely on unfair labor and ineffectual immigration policies. The air we breathe has passed over oceans, mountains, farmlands, remote villages, and waste sites into the cities we inhabit. All of these issues are intricately interconnected, and it is a condition of privilege that creates false boundaries between issues of identity and social and environmental justice.

While it is important to see the connections between issues, it is helpful at times for me to view issues more discretely when I am trying to deepen my own understanding of the broad interdisciplinary nature of social and environmental justice. If nothing else, our machinations to parse people’s identities, control variables, and isolate justice issues are great entertainment for the gods. Moreover, we need to be aware that too often activists in both areas have built silos for specific issues and engaged in what some have called “Oppression Olympics,” futilely trying to establish a hierarchy of oppressions with each other and other justice movements, such as animal rights activists, child welfare activists, etc.

Issues of social and environmental justice are intimately intertwined with one another. We are who we are wherever we are. Often our privilege determines the quality of our environments. I grew up in a rural suburban area in central Ohio, where having a car was essential because my parents commuted 10 to 15 miles to their workplaces in Columbus. Thanks to my continuing class privilege and a reliable car, I, too, have ready access to fresh produce and other healthy foods, a wide selection of healthcare providers, and green space far removed from environmentally toxic locations. I understand that every day we breathe in contaminated air, and people who live in areas with traffic congestion, refineries, bus stations, docks, mills, and landfills, are being harmed to a greater extent than those of us who live at a comfortable distance from congested highways or large scale agribusinesses in homes free of lead paint and asbestos.

Research shows that low-income communities and communities of color often do not have access to the benefits our transportation system can provide, yet they bear the burdens of that system. For example, many low-income neighborhoods have little or no efficient, reliable public transportation to get them to jobs and essential goods and services. But these communities are often situated near bus depots, highways, and truck routes, where pollution levels are high—and not coincidentally, asthma rates are high as well.

When Keri and Dan asked me to write the foreword for *Just Leisure*, I did not hesitate to accept. I have known Dan for more than 20 years and have a great deal of respect for his persistence and openness as a learner, and his unwillingness to rest in what is comfortable. This book grew out of the “1st International Symposium on Speaking Up and Speaking Out: Working for Social and Environmental Justice through Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Leisure,” held in Salt Lake City in 2012, which was a wonderful combination of thought-provoking sessions by well-known scholars and practitioners, as well as undergraduate and graduate students. As someone who left leisure studies and moved into social justice education in the mid-1990s, attending this symposium was akin to leaving home one day and returning later to find it beautifully remodeled.

This book has particular cultural significance and relevance in today’s world. There is growing awareness of the intertwined nature of justice issues, and combined with the proliferation of social networking, it is possible to view the aftermath of natural disasters within minutes of their occurrence and witness the disproportionate impact on poor communities around the world. Some of the issues addressed in *Just Leisure* are particular to the U.S., while many are relevant to a broader global context. Thirty years after the first Earth Day and numerous oil spills and the contamination of ground water in many communities, there continues to be proposals for new drilling sites and pipelines, and the expansion of hydrofracking. More than 40 years after the Stonewall riots, federal civil rights for lesbians, gays, and their families are still considered “special rights.” Nearly 60 years after *Brown vs. Board of Education* our K-12 schools are more segregated today than they were in 1960s. And almost 95 years after the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, gender bias continues to create huge barriers for many, especially poor women, women of color, and immigrant women.

Fortunately, this book brings together a wide range of respected scholars in the field of parks, recreation, and tourism who are passionate about issues of social and environmental justice in one insightful publication. If you are someone who is generally interested in justice issues but are cautious about discussing them in mixed company, this book will not disappoint. *Just Leisure* will spur your curiosity and bring you to your learning edge—the place that I know I have come to when I am a little anxious and uncomfortable, and can either pull back into my comfort zone and stay with the familiar or lean into my discomfort, suspend my disbelief, and open myself to the possibility of learning something new.

*Just Leisure* is for anyone who wants to deepen his or her understanding of social and environmental justice in the context of leisure. It is for the white woman who primarily works against sexism, and who wants to expand her understanding of how race and class intersect with gender. It is for the antiracist educator who wants to learn how working to reduce negative impacts on the physical environment is inextricably linked to living conditions in poor communities and communities of color. It is for the heterosexual man who works for disability rights and wants to develop greater awareness of the pervasive nature of heterosexual privilege and how to increase civil rights for LGBT people. And it is for the environmentalist who wants to deepen her or his knowledge of the bias inherent in the dominant view of wilderness.

Whether you come to this work through your concern for the environment or through your desire for greater social equity among people, we all come to justice work because we recognize

the need for it, and believe we can make a difference. We are colleagues connected through our shared interests and persistence on multiple fronts. Like a pebble dropped into a body of water causing ripples radiating outward, let our actions for greater social and environmental justice touch the lives of others, pointing to a future where justice, as Cornel West so eloquently put it, will be “what love looks like in public.”

**Sharon J. Washington, Ph.D.**

National Writing Project, Executive Director

July 2012



## PART ONE

# Questioning Injustice

*“Should all children have legitimate opportunities to realize their potential? If yes, are children lacking those opportunities part of my family? If yes, what am I going to do about it?”*

—Tom Goodale



# What Will Become of Our 20 Grandchildren?

**Tom Goodale**

*George Mason University*

This year is the golden anniversary of two warning shots fired across the bow of the American Titanic steaming toward disaster: Carson's *Silent Spring* and Harrington's *The Other America*. Both addressed problems largely invisible until then; both had a profound and positive impact on America.

By 1970 *Silent Spring* spawned the National Environmental Policy Act and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Today the EPA is under attack—from the left for not doing enough, from the right for doing anything at all. Meanwhile, the environment deteriorates in alarming ways: species extinction,<sup>1</sup> global warming, severe weather events, and not only “peak oil” but also peak water and food and much more.<sup>2</sup>

Like *Silent Spring*, *The Other America* was largely invisible. Disproportionately Black, the poor were found in remote rural communities and congested urban enclaves. Coupled with a Civil Rights movement well underway, Harrington's book helped launch a flurry of activity in the 1960s summarized as “The Great Society” and the “War on Poverty.”<sup>3</sup> As important as Civil Rights are, poverty fighting initiatives may be more important. Paraphrasing Dr. Martin Luther King, it does not matter if you can eat in any restaurant you want if you cannot afford a hamburger.

## **Our Grandchildren's Future**

I share Dr. King's view and thus will focus on economic or distributive justice, but with the caveat that justice is justice whatever adjectives bring focus to our discipline or career field. In addition, as teachers, scholars, and service providers, we are duty bound to advocate for justice for those we serve. But that is not enough. We can succeed as careerists but fail as citizens. Furthermore, we cannot speak of justice without speaking of government. After all, the government is not some alien “them.” The government is us (Remember Pogo? “We have met the enemy and it is us.”), and we cannot speak about government without speaking of economic or distributive justice because much of government is about protecting property, allocating resources, and providing insurance against numerous forms of harm.

Although social and environmental justice often involve some form of oppression, the focus of this introductory chapter is not on the oppressed but on the ignored. In pursuing justice, we should give priority to those among us who are the most vulnerable and the least culpable. The focus here is on children, especially poor children. In this chapter, justice means every child has

a good opportunity to realize her or his potential. Anything short of that is injustice. Clearly, to focus on children and grandchildren means to focus on the future.

We ignore poor children probably because too many of us know too little about being poor in America. In our culture, time and effort are required to determine what is verifiably true. We do not separate facts, evidence, and logic from opinions and non sequiturs. Popular media, especially electronic formats, often entertain, simplify, and misinform. The alternative to being un- or misinformed is that we do not care, that our ignorance is willful, which of course we deny.

That problem is compounded by millions of voters living in a mythological America. We are not God's chosen people; based on Jesus's teaching, our being (mainly) Christians is even questionable. Because we strive mightily to avoid taxes, we are not patriotic. We are not a generous people.<sup>4</sup> Growth is not going to feed us. Technology is not going to rescue us. America is no longer the land of opportunity. Education is not the answer to unemployment. Our justice system might not be just if you are a person of color, or poor, or female, or. . . . "American exceptionalism" is mostly negative.

Evidence that we will do better in the future than in the past is not compelling. Today our college programs are "embarrassingly white."<sup>5</sup> Forty-one years ago, at a Park and Recreation Educator's workshop, a resolution was introduced to increase the number of Black and other minority students in our park and recreation master's and doctorate degree programs. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 25 to 17, reminding me of a card, the front of which reads, "Your office mates decided to send you this get well card." Inside it reads, "The vote was 11 to 8."

### **A Nation in Disarray**

In global terms, five institutions exist that should advance justice for children, the government primary among them. The others are the private (market) sector, community, family, and not-for-profit charities.<sup>6</sup> Even with all these efforts combined, we are failing our children and will continue to do so without significant and wrenching change.

Today we have a safety net in shreds, in part due to a president with a booming economy and government surpluses seeking to end welfare as we know it. Welfare legislation, enacted in 1996, was titled The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act. A more Orwellian title would be hard to conceive.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, those for whom welfare is a true lifeline have suffered dramatically. For example, more than 2 million people now experience severe poverty, defined as not more than \$2 per person per day, \$56 per week, \$2,912 per year, for a family of four. At the other end of the spectrum, between 2009 and 2010, our national income grew by \$288 billion; 37% went to the top 0.01%, whose average income of \$23.8 million rose an additional \$5.12 million, or 21%. The average increase for the bottom 99% was \$80.80.<sup>8</sup> There are far too much similar data into which to delve, but as others have noted before me, mining such data fills us with equal measures of outrage and sorrow. This also dispels "the land of opportunity" myth, as Gini coefficients (a measure of mobility between income classes) indicate that as of 2008–2009, the United States ranked 26th of 34 countries. After accounting for taxes and transfers, the numbers are worse; the United States ranked 31st of 34, and gaps between ranks were wider.<sup>9</sup>

Sixteen million of our children live in poverty today—more than the population of 14 states combined. But the children do not have 28 senators representing them. In fact, those whose incomes place them in the lower one third of households appear to have no representation or, apparently, no influence over their members of Congress.<sup>10</sup>

The poverty rate for children (aged 18 and younger) is for Whites 12%, Blacks 38%, Hispanics 35%, and Asians 14%.<sup>11</sup> The poverty line for a family of four is \$22,350, an amount so low many states have expanded eligibility for benefits to 150% and even 200% of the poverty line.

Some economists argue “low income” should be defined as 200% of the poverty line, \$44,700 per year for a family of four. That now includes 50% of America’s households, thus well over 50% of our children.<sup>12</sup>

Shifting from United States data to international comparisons, among the 33 most developed nations, 32 have universal health care.<sup>13</sup> The United States is the unconscionable exception. Among 31 nations ranked by the Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD), the United States ranks 27th in Social Justice. The top ranked countries were Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland.<sup>14</sup> Because we find these countries at or near the top on measures of well-being, the names are not repeated below.

In a United Nations research report, *Child Well-Being in Rich Countries*,<sup>15</sup> the United States ranks 20th of 21 countries. In a Save the Children report titled *State of the World’s Mothers, 2011*, the United States ranks 31st of 43 “More Developed Nations.”<sup>16</sup>

“Why doesn’t the United States do better in the rankings?” the authors asked.

1. The United States ranks 40th on maternal mortality.
2. The United States ranks 41st on under age 5 mortality.
3. The United States ranks 38th on preschool enrollment.
4. The United States has the least generous maternity leave policy.
5. The United States lags behind regarding political status of women.<sup>17</sup>

“Why is Norway number one?” It is at or near the top on all indices, including

1. the highest ratio of female-to-male income,
2. the highest prevalence of contraceptive use,
3. the lowest under age 5 mortality rate, and
4. one of the most generous family leave policies.

Which country is dead last? Afghanistan. Why? The status of women. That is not an oversimplification. Such contrasts beg discussion of the status of women in the United States, but we must pass on that; just chant “We’re #31.” The war against women is real, violent, and destructive. It is also a war against children.

### Public and Private Downfalls

We must also pass on wealthy people complaining about class warfare.<sup>18</sup> Chesterton explained away the apparent irony; his last sentence explains much of what has been happening to federal and state governments for the past 30 years:

The poor have been rebels but never anarchists; they have more interest than anyone else in there being some decent government, the poor man really has a stake in the country. The rich man hasn’t, he can go away to New Guinea in a yacht. The poor have sometimes objected to being governed badly; the rich have always objected to being governed at all.<sup>19</sup>

As heiress Leona Helmsley said, “We don’t pay taxes. Only the little people pay taxes.” Though she went to jail for flaunting it, she was right. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is losing an estimated \$410 to \$500 billion per year in fraudulent tax reporting. Little of that fraud is committed by people whose income is from salaries and wages. Those with W-2s are the little people.

Much of the fraud comes from Schedule C or S Corporations, mainly from treating all manner of personal benefits as business expenses. But fraud is not the biggest drain on government

revenue. “Tax expenditures” include revenue lost through tax concessions such as mortgage interest deductions and subsidies to giant, extremely profitable corporations. Beyond subsidies, billions are lost each year through loopholes. G.E. made \$5 billion last year and paid no taxes. Apple made \$34.2 billion last year, paid \$3.3 billion in taxes worldwide, and has \$31 billion parked in Ireland.

In addition, regulatory capture, a large chunk of the billion-dollar lobbying business, ensures that an enterprise for which regulations may be forthcoming is minimally affected by the regulations. That is why banks “too big to fail” are now bigger than ever and why no one complicit in a massively corrupt and illegal financial meltdown is in jail—or even in court.

The government is paralyzed and broke. The private sector, or the market, does an excellent job with most goods and services but fails at three that are critical for poor people: food, shelter, and health care. Furthermore, nefarious behavior of corporations and their chief executives is not uncommon. Tyco’s CEO threw a \$2 million birthday party for his wife and charged it off as a shareholder meeting. Enron had 881 subsidiaries before it collapsed, 692 in the Cayman Islands, the rest elsewhere in the Caribbean.<sup>20</sup> Now, mortgage fraud occurs on a massive scale; derivatives are dealt behind closed doors, and securities known to be worthless are hyped. Thus, in 2009, Harvard MBA students pledged to behave ethically, embarrassed that *B* in MBA had come to stand for Boot Camp for the war of everyone against everyone.<sup>21</sup>

### To Whom Can We Turn?

If the government has been brought to a standstill by polemicists and has been starved by tax cuts, wars without budgets, unfunded benefits, and a weakened IRS, and if the pursuit of profit makes the private sector amoral, to whom or what can we turn to seek justice for the most vulnerable and least culpable among us? The family? The village? Charitable organizations?

Some say it takes a village to raise a child. Some of us were raised in such villages. But the villages we have in mind are increasingly scarce. Everyone knows about *Bowling Alone* and bemoans the lack of social capital. Now millions live in virtual communities, everyone in their smart phone bubbles, oblivious to the actual community around them.<sup>22</sup>

Actual capital is also increasingly scarce at the village (i.e., local government) level. The thousands of government jobs lost from the recession and compromised efforts at recovery impact municipalities and school districts, fire departments and police departments, libraries and parks, and special districts of various kinds. In short, the village is beleaguered; preschool and other services for children are among the cuts made routinely. Furthermore, funds transferred from federal and state agencies to fund local services, for children with disabilities for example, are shrinking and were never adequate to begin with. Local workers trying to coordinate these programs regard them as Band-Aids designed to cover up but not remedy problems. Underfunding programs makes them ineffective, hastening a downward spiral.

When families fail, children wind up in public welfare agencies and the courts, many landing in foster care. Nearly half a million children were in foster care in 2012 nationwide; detailed data on foster care are sketchy given inherent difficulties such as confidentiality protections. If Massachusetts data are representative, most children will be released back to parents, relatives, guardians, or other agencies. About 8% will be adopted by foster parents. About 15% are *emancipated*, an ironic term used to describe those who “age out” of foster care. Most face daunting challenges with precious few resources other than their own wits. Additional thousands of children are homeless but still living with a parent or relative. Massachusetts also reports more than 6,000 high school students who are homeless, parentless, and not in foster care.<sup>23</sup>

There are obvious truths about it taking a family to raise a child but, like villages, the conjugal family of mom, dad, and kids is a shrinking minority household type. Today, only 30%

of all children live in such households. The divorce rate is 50%, only 49% of women over 18 are married and living with a spouse, and 56% of births to women under 30 are to unwed mothers. Social pathologies among children without fathers are by large multiples more numerous than average; for example, they are 9 times more likely to drop out of high school.<sup>24</sup> The United States ranks 54th of 184 nations on premature births; its rate is above the global average.<sup>25</sup> Again, most children live in low-income or below poverty line households. To what other source can parents turn for support?

Among major categories of charitable organizations, such as education, health and medicine, environment, and culture, religious institutions receive the largest share of charitable giving, about 35% of the total.<sup>26</sup> In addition to maintaining the faith, the church provides a source, a sense, and a site for belonging, especially for the elderly. But most church spending goes to maintain the institution. Despite its aspirations, only a small sliver of church revenues goes to caring for the poor. There are exceptions, of course, but even vaunted Catholic Charities receives about 70% of its revenue from governments and most of the rest from foundations.<sup>27</sup> Because categories of charitable giving are broad, one can only estimate how much of the \$291 billion total giving in 2010 went to help those in need of food, shelter, or emergency health services. It appears to be about 12% of total giving, or about \$35 billion.<sup>28</sup> Although a considerable sum, it is only 12% of what we give to “charity.”

In brief, all institutions combined do not meet, much less reduce, current needs, and needs continue to grow. Gerrymandered congressional districts result in even greater polarization in Washington, D.C., and in state legislatures, and political polarization is highly correlated with income disparity.<sup>29</sup> Huge sums are spent on elections, making candidates beholden not to voters but to sponsors. Huge sums remain offshore, to be repatriated only if granted tax concessions costing billions in lost revenue. Huge sums are lost to fraud, tax expenditures, and waste, often due to half-hearted or compromised efforts. Besides being trillions of dollars in debt to others, the United States has a backlog of trillions more in infrastructure alone and in extremely costly new challenges such as severe weather events and an obesity epidemic.

### What Will Become of Our Grandchildren?

We all have at least 20. Or do you not consider them family? These 20 children are poor. These 20 children are poor, very young, and multiracial. A few have a disability, way too premature to label. Some speak no English. That is the average Head Start class. We have about 53,000 grandchildren. We should have many thousands more.

Our scale of justice is already badly tilted against our children. Now we know it is badly tilted against their future as well. Highly respected, independent economists have clearly demonstrated this. Saez from the University of California-Berkeley and Piketty from the Paris School of Economics have produced a series of studies demonstrating the greater a nation's economic disparity, the poorer its economy is going forward.<sup>30</sup> The chair of the President's Council of Economic Advisors reported data clearly indicating the higher the Gini coefficient, the lower the intergenerational mobility. The United States and United Kingdom were nearly tied for last on this measure. The greatest intergenerational mobility is found in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland.<sup>31</sup>

In their seminal book, *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Nations Stronger*, British epidemiologists Wilkinson and Pickett analyzed a huge volume of health and economic data. They concluded the health status of any nation—all of a nation's people, not just the poor—was influenced by the degree to which income was distributed equally or disparately, healthier nations being those with higher degrees of equality.<sup>32</sup>

More recently, Acemoglu and Robinson concluded in *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty* that a nation must be orderly if it is to prosper, but it must also have inclusive institutions, especially economic and political, if it is to be sustained.<sup>33</sup> In other words, prosperity must be widely shared and government truly democratic. If not, the institutions are captured by a wealthy, powerful elite. “If the very rich can use the political system to slow or stop the ascent of the rest, the United States could become a hereditary plutocracy under the trappings of liberal democracy.”<sup>34</sup> Might the rich seek to slow or stop the ascent of the rest? Perhaps. A summary of seven studies conducted by researchers at the University of California-Berkeley and at the University of Toronto is captured in the title “Higher Social Class Predicts Increased Unethical Behavior.”<sup>35</sup> Are the rich targets or sponsors of the voter suppression activity already legislated in about 20 states and under consideration in a dozen more?

A few corporations spent over \$400 million lobbying from 2009 through 2011, mostly to block the EPA, the Affordable Health Care Act, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. In March 2012, HR 347, the Federal Restricted Buildings and Grounds Improvement Act, was passed. It restricts protests on or near federal buildings and grounds. We often see police power used to suppress demonstrations. Lieutenant John Pike, for example, used military strength pepper spray 3 or 4 ft from the faces of University of California-Davis protesters. Paranoid? No, attentive.

### Our Jobs Large and Small

Those most familiar with the work of Saez, Piketty, Acemoglu, Robinson, and other scholars find them not particularly optimistic. The election and the “Tax Armageddon” looming at the end of 2012 have put Americans and the global village even more on edge. Things could be very different before very long. Surely the concentration of wealth and power in fewer hands must and will be addressed somehow.

If it is not, many believe we will need a nonviolent political movement at least on the scale of the Civil Rights movement a half century ago. A worst-case scenario is a revolution accompanied by more violence than in the 1950–1970 period. A pie-in-the-sky alternative for restoration of justice is found in Edelman’s “The Next Century of Our Constitution: Rethinking Our Duty to the Poor.”<sup>36</sup> Substantive due process coupled with equal protection should ensure that every American child has a legitimate opportunity to realize his or her potential.

Fortunately, there is much potentially fertile soil between those extremes. Prior to getting in harness, we must ask ourselves three questions: Should all children have legitimate opportunities to realize their potential? If yes, are children lacking those opportunities part of my family? If yes, what am I going to do about it? We need to start by ridding ourselves and everyone we can reach of the mythological America and find, at bottom, who we really are. That requires the most complete and objective information we can gather about our situation and prospects, nationally and locally. From students and professors, we should expect no less.

The best alternative might be to speak up and speak out about social and environmental justice and economic or distributive justice, too. Then we must add actions to our words and children to our worlds. Speaking up and speaking out means advocating where it does the most good, not so much in the woods as in city halls and state capitols, at aldermen and women’s and supervisors’ meetings, in court houses, in hearing rooms, at public comment sessions, and in the print and electronic media. Should not advocates for justice be on a first-name basis with local and state officials and delegates in Washington, D.C.? Lobbyists are.

Thus we become better models of the behaviors we espouse. We should take our expertise, interests, energy, colleagues, and students into the community; adopt a school where most of the children are eligible for free or reduced price meals; teach sustainability or compare rivers to

arteries or teach whatever children can get enthused about (outdoors maybe, but in classrooms as well); meet with the area director of Head Start (take colleagues and students along); volunteer as a classroom assistant 1 day a week for a semester or a year; or volunteer to give a science or geography lesson in a few Head Start classes 1 day a week, but we should not skip the Head Start class—the kids will miss us, and we better not let them down.

Can we instill in our students the sense that they can make a difference and offer curricula and schedules in such a way that making a difference becomes central to their preparation? Poor children need thousands of advocates, as smart as highly paid lobbyists, with inexperience offset by committed faculty, a never give up attitude, and history and justice, on their side. We can do this.

### Discussion Questions

1. The United States prides itself in being a leader in world affairs. Tom paints a different picture of the country when it comes to quality of life. Do you agree or disagree with this assessment? Please explain your thinking.
2. Tom thinks we could stand to learn a thing or two from other countries. If you agree, give an example of something you think we could benefit from knowing about another country. If you disagree, why do you think we have nothing to learn from other countries?
3. If the United States does not lead in quality of life measures, what does it lead in? What, if anything, should other countries look up to in the United States?
4. Tom believes each generation has an obligation to leave the next generation a solid foundation upon which to build its future. He also thinks we are not doing a particularly good job of it. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain your response.
5. How does this chapter relate to social and environmental justice? What is Tom calling for? What is he asking of us? More specifically:
  - a) Having thought through the issues raised in this chapter, what are three things you could do to address them in your community?
  - b) Do you know your local, state, and national elected officials? What issues are they working on right now? How can you get involved in helping resolve those issues?
  - c) Tom's concerns are directed toward children. As park, recreation, and tourism professionals, we often work with children. In what ways do we have the opportunity to improve the quality of their lives through the work we do?