

Feb 20 2007

Dear Mayor

By way of introduction, I am a member of NPA^[1] and voted for you. I am also member of WECAN,^[2] whose leader Sheryl Harms-William you know well. In fact, I campaigned for her at the Burrard Bridge that one cold morning that you were there as well and we shook hands.

The major reason you do not see or hear from me is that I am in the process of writing an 8-volume series *Studies In Christian-Muslim Relations*, a case study of Nigeria, where I spent 30 years and where there are some 60 million Christians and 60 million Muslims facing each other down. That project is taking all my time and energy.

I would like to help you get into a different box when it comes to our social safety net, whether housing, drugs or whatever. The problems have been increasing over the years. I have attended a number of city-sponsored workshops and seminars and constantly heard people talk about "getting to the root cause." But **no one ever names the root cause(s)**. The problems increase but the root cause seems to elude us.

I want to suggest that the root cause is **secularism**. Secularism is a philosophy of life that sucks the lifeblood out of people's hearts and spirits. People with money and those with strong constitution may be able to live with it, but even among the rich and famous it is taking its toll. It has weakened family ties, created extreme loneliness, is leading to a rejection of all traditional values, norms and structures and replacing them with untried alternatives. It also has led to business practices that are subhuman. Above all, it has led to **meaninglessness** in the lives of many of your citizens.

If you want to get to the root of our social problems, that's where you will have to go. I know, it is not politically correct to bring up that subject. But unless you do, you are spinning your wheels. The need for an effective social safety net will continue to increase year after year. You will never catch up. There are always more numbers coming out of the wood works.

I would be happy to discuss this further with you.

Dr. Jan H. Boer (West End)

[1] NPA stands for "Non-Partisan Association," the party of Mayor Sullivan.

[2] A local community social organization.