

Derek G. Evans

Madam Chancellor and members of Convocation, it is an honour for me to bring before you for the degree of Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, Derek G. Evans, a philosopher who can actually get things done, a peace activist who has directly helped reduce world conflict, a human rights worker who has saved lives, a person of deep, Christian faith that leads him into communion with many faiths.

While known locally as a friend of the church for his leadership on numerous projects, large and small, and of the Vancouver School of Theology for his work with the Board on redesigning its governance principles and practices, Derek is primarily an international figure. He worked at top level posts with Amnesty International for nine years and is still being consulted widely by government and non-governmental international agencies. He has led more than 70 international delegations in all world regions, primarily dealing with human rights and conflict resolution. More recently he wrote major position papers for UNICEF, Peace Brigades International, and the government of Denmark, each of which contributed significantly to major policy and organizational change. Derek is recognized around the world as a major thinker and practitioner in human rights and conflict/security arenas.

The respect the international community has for Derek's interfaith sensibilities and effectiveness led to his appointment as the Chair and facilitator for the recent Global Faith Leaders Summit on HIV/AIDS in the Netherlands. The Summit involved leaders of the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and indigenous traditions, together with senior representatives of governments, UN agencies, and organizations of people living with HIV. The resulting commitment on behalf of the faiths to eradicate AIDS and its stigma was called "an historic moment" by the New York Times and a "sea change in attitudes" by a UN official.

In 2008 Derek was recruited to be the founding Executive Director/CEO of CUSO-VSO, the largest international development NGO working through volunteers in North America. The organizational challenge of combining two international organizations, along with the re-visioning of the organization's mission, demanded

an individual who combines the organizational, personal, reflective, and communication skills many around the world have found in Derek. The success and innovation of his work in establishing this dynamic new organization was recently recognized in Ottawa with the Vision Award for Strategic Leadership.

Derek's faith and skills combined in a more overt way when he served as the Executive Director of Naramata Centre, a United Church retreat and education centre. While the institutional church will honour Derek for his work at providing much-needed strategic planning, financial stability and program development, participants will recall a calm, personable presence, with a remarkable way of engaging people in deep, meaningful conversations that enlarged their horizons. While at the Centre new relationships were established with people of Jewish, Islamic and First Nations traditions and faiths.

In the education field Derek is an Associate at the Centre for Dialogue (Simon Fraser University), a member of the Canadian Academy of Independent Scholars, and a published author of, and contributor to, numerous books, including one of his poetry.

Derek has undertaken all of his work with the mind and training of both a philosopher and a theologian, combined with a brilliant realism that has allowed him to be highly successful as an organizational leader. He combines a passion and acumen for reflection and teaching with an extraordinary breadth of experience of the world. Equally comfortable with the world's government and spiritual leaders, union shop managers, prisoners of conscience, or workshop participants, Derek brings curiosity, openness, commitment and honesty to each of his encounters.

Derek has significantly changed the lives of individuals, national and international organizations and, without doubt, of countries.

Chancellor Rolston, members of Convocation, with deep appreciation, I present to you for the degree of Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, Derek Evans.