

Cardinal Léger was a member of the Preparatory Commission for the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and won a reputation as a progressive, urging his colleagues to confront the problems of poverty, birth control and the relevance of the Church's teachings for the everyday lives of men and women.

Following a visit to Canadian missions in Africa in 1963, Cardinal Léger founded the Fame Peree Institute for Lepers, which has since distributed aid to some eighty leper colonies in twenty countries in Africa. New dispensaries and facilities for craftsmen have been built and villages equipped with electricity, water and sanitation. Fame Peree raised nearly two million dollars in 1985 for projects throughout the world.

His visit to Africa and his meetings with his African colleagues at Vatican II inspired Cardinal Léger to resign as Archbishop of Montreal in 1967 and begin missionary work in Cameroun. There he founded the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped near Yaoundé which provides medical, therapeutic and educational facilities for young handicapped people.

In 1970, Cardinal Léger founded the organisation called "Cardinal Léger and his Charitable Endeavours" to administer and raise funds for his projects. This organisation now supports more than 150 projects in 32 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, for which it raised over \$5 million between January 1984 and June 1985. It raised a further \$5 million for projects in 12 drought-stricken countries in Africa during the same period.

Upon his return to Canada in 1979, he developed with his brother, the late Jules Léger, the concept of a foundation to support charitable and philanthropic activities to help the poorest among the poor. In 1981 the Canadian Parliament created the Jules & Paul-Émile Léger Foundation by special Act of Parliament; it was hailed in our House of Commons as "as testament to the important work that the Légers have performed and the desire ... to recognize (their) valuable contribution". Today, at age 81, Cardinal Léger continues his many humanitarian activities.

I believe that the life and work of His Eminence Paul-Émile Cardinal Léger is an example of outstanding dedication to the plight of the world's poor and most cruelly afflicted. He has personally given help and hope to thousands and, through his fund raising activities, to millions more.