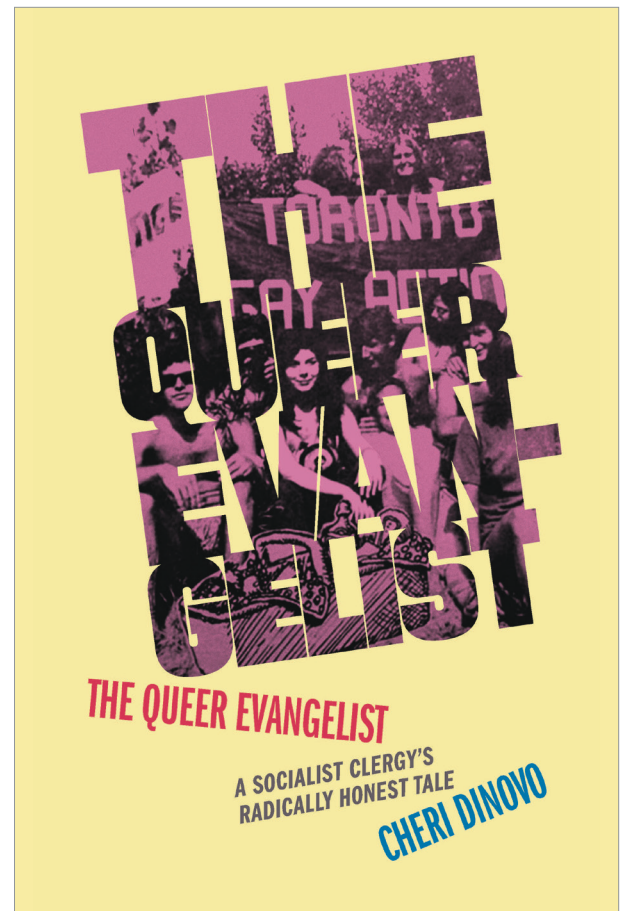


# The Queer Evangelist

## A Socialist Clergy's Radically Honest Tale

Cheri DiNovo

A queer minister, politician and staunch activist for LGBTQ rights, Cheri DiNovo went from living on the streets as a teenager to performing the first legalized same-sex marriage registered in Canada in 2001. From rights for queer parents to banning conversion therapy, her story will inspire people (queer or ally) to not only resist the system—but change it.



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In *The Queer Evangelist*, Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo (CM) shares her origins as a young socialist activist in the 1960s, and her rise to ordained minister in the '90s and New Democratic member of provincial parliament. During her tenure representing Parkdale-High Park in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from 2006 to 2017, DiNovo passed more LGBTQ bills than anyone in Canadian history.

She describes the behind-the-scenes details of major changes to Canadian law, including Toby's Law: the first Transgender Rights legislation in North America. She also passed bills banning conversion therapy, proclaiming parent equality for LGBTQ parents, and for enshrining Trans Day of Remembrance into Ontario law. Every year on November 20th in the legislature, the provincial government is mandated to observe a minute of silence while Trans murders and suicides are detailed.

Interspersed with her political work, DiNovo describes her conversion to religious life with radical intimacy, including her theological work and her ongoing struggle with the Christian Right. Cheri DiNovo's story shows how queer people can be both people of faith and critics of religion, illustrating how one can resist and change repressive systems from within.

"Living on the street, using drugs, abandoned by the adults in her life, all while identifying as 'queer' in a hostile world—any one of these things could have unravelled many of us. Cheri hauled herself up and not only survived but thrived. I love that this strong, brilliant, competent woman has told her story so honestly." —Kathleen Wynne, former premier of Ontario

**Cheri DiNovo** grew up in Toronto in a rooming house owned by her parents and spent time on the streets as a teenager, leading to her to social activism. Formerly a member of the Ontario Legislative Assembly, she is host of *The Radical Reverend Show*, and Minister at Trinity St. Paul's Centre for Faith Justice and the Arts. Her book *Qu(e)rying Evangelism: Growing a Community from the Outside In* won the Lambda award in 2005. She has won numerous awards for her activism and is a Member of the Order of Canada.



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Contact: Clare Hitchens | 519-884-0710 ext. 2665 | [chitchens@wlu.ca](mailto:chitchens@wlu.ca)  
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## Advance Praise for *The Queer Evangelist: A Socialist Clergy's Radically Honest Tale*

"What a life! From street kid to church minister to politician and back, Cheri Di Novo fights for social justice and equality all the while practicing compassion and honesty even in electoral politics. An astonishingly honest life story told by an extraordinary person who breaks boundaries wherever she is. A brutally honest picture of the life of a socialist politician who is making change within the system, combined with an eye opening vision of progressive queer feminist Christianity, *The Queer Evangelist* will challenge your assumptions whatever they are.

— Judy Rebick, author of *Heroes in My Head*

Cheri DiNovo has lived an incredible journey. She's been a street kid, a Sixties rebel, a doctor in ministry, a Reverend and one of the most influential socialist parliamentarians in Canadian history. A tireless revolt against the injustice of status quo runs through her life like an unbroken thread. She tells her story rapidly and with good humor. She never loses you, and you can seldom put the book down. This is essential reading not just for those interested in queer and socialist histories but for anyone who wants a riveting, humane tale of a woman who decided that the oppressed should make their own history.

— Arash Azizi, author of *The Shadow Commander: Soleimani, the US, and Iran's Global Ambitions*

I've long admired Cheri DiNovo as an intrepid, passionate, inspiring activist, but I had no idea she had such an intriguing life story. From her early days growing up in an eccentric, matriarchal family, to her teen years dabbling in street life, drugs, and politics, to her transformation into an effective rebel against the establishment, *The Queer Evangelist* is a riveting tale. And through it all, her insight and her quest to make the world a better place comes shining through.

— Linda McQuaig, journalist & author

"A deeply powerful memoir from one of Canada's most courageous feminist activists. An instructive tale on the perseverance of unapologetic activism from a woman who has dedicated her life to creating justice, through activism, spirituality, and politics. Canadian activists can all benefit from DiNovo's frank, sharp and generous retelling of a spirit born to create social change."

— Sandy Hudson, Co-Founder, Black Lives Matter–Canada

"Living on the street, using drugs, abandoned by the adults in her life, all while identifying as 'queer' in a hostile world—any one of these things could have unravelled many of us. Cheri hauled herself up and not only survived but thrived. I love that this strong, brilliant, competent woman has told her story so honestly."

—Kathleen Wynne, former premier of Ontario

"Minister and former Canadian legislator DiNovo blends left-wing politics and religion in her excellent debut memoir. ... DiNovo's remarkable life story serves as an impressive example of the possibilities of the religious left."

— *Publishers Weekly*, 2021 March