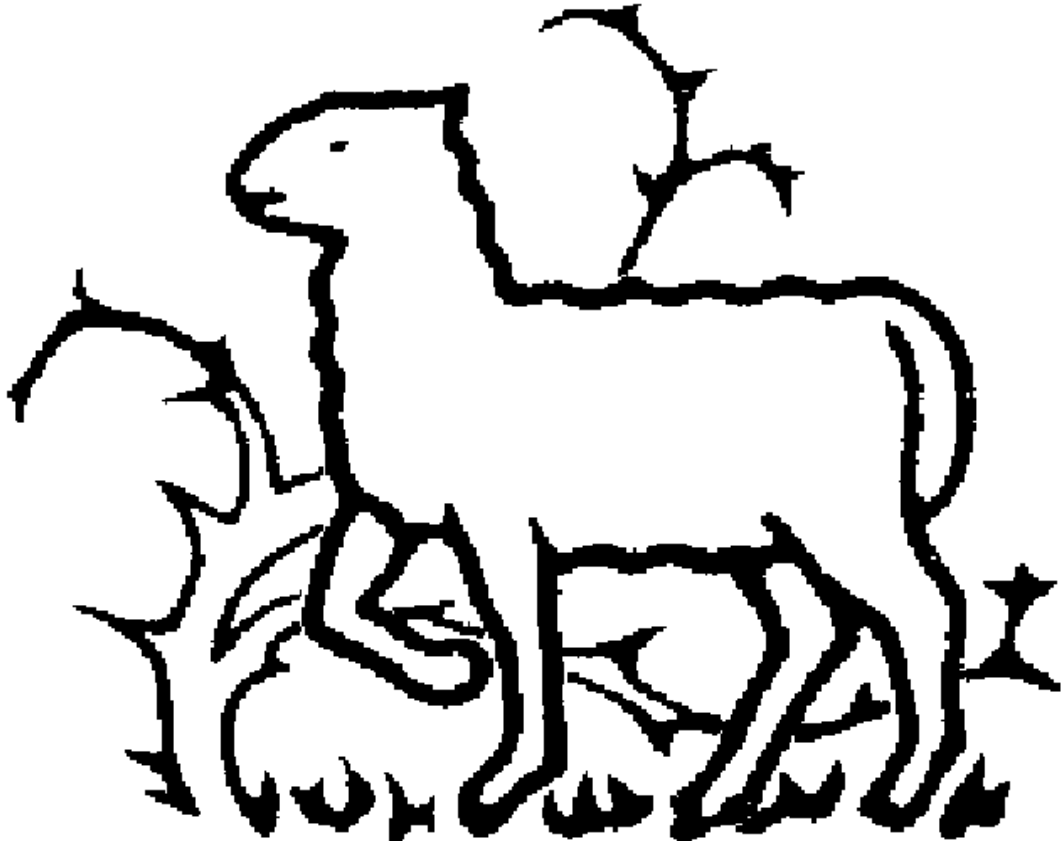


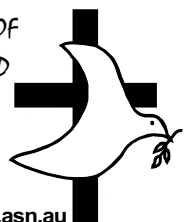
# ON THE ROAD



**Newsletter  
of the  
*Anabaptist Association of  
Australia and New Zealand Inc.***

**No.13  
SEPTEMBER 2001**

THE  
ANABAPTIST  
ASSOCIATION OF  
AUSTRALIA AND  
NEW  
ZEALAND



[www.anabaptist.asn.au](http://www.anabaptist.asn.au)

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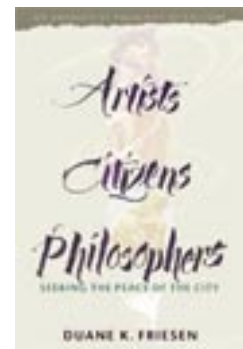
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In our contemporary world, the use of violent force to solve problems is paradoxical. While it may provide some limited kind of order or accomplish limited short-range goals, the resort to armed force, even in defense of just causes and for the sake of order, perpetuates the cycle of violence.



For example, it is clear now that the 1991 Persian Gulf War did not secure the promised new world order, nor did it provide even a minimum of stable order and justice in the Middle East. The short-run gains, such as expelling the Iraqis from Kuwait, are being offset by the long-term consequences. Thousands of people met death and destruction. The destruction of the infrastructure of Iraq has turned it into a third world country. The very resort to violence undermines the global political goal of non-violent conflict resolution. The war continued the long history of mutual humiliation and hatred between Muslims and non-Muslims. The environment was destroyed, thousands of refugees were created, and the Israeli/Palestinian conflict was ignored. Above all, the war did not solve the persistent problem of biological and chemical weapons.

**Artists Citizens Philosophers: Seeking the Peace of the City**, Duane K. Friesen, Herald Press, 2000, p.234.

### On The Road

The AAANZ quarterly newsletter publishes news, articles, book reviews, and resource information. It is published online with a paper edition available for those without computer facilities. (Paper edition A\$20 per year) To be added to the mailing list write : [ontheroad@today.com.au](mailto:ontheroad@today.com.au)

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**COVER SYMBOL:** The lamb in the midst of briars is a traditional Anabaptist symbol. It illustrates the suffering Lamb of God, who calls the faithful to obedient service and discipleship on the road. This particular rendition is from **Hymnal A Worship Book**. Copyright 1992. Reprinted with permission of Mennonite Publishing House, Scottsdale, PA, USA.

This issue began as one with a major focus on missions. You will still see a number of articles on what Anabaptists are doing in the area of missions – in Australia and around the world. The events of 11 September changed a bit of our focus toward peacemaking. Missions and peacemaking go hand-in-hand for Anabaptists and we hope you see this linkage in the articles that follow.

With the attention of the world squarely on the US and its military actions in the Middle East, it is easy to forget the rest of the world. Our articles cover countries like Colombia (one of the most violent settings in the world), Mexico, Afghanistan, Korea, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Palestine, several countries in Europe, inner-city Chicago, the AIDS disaster happening in Africa, and the on-going conflict in Northern Ireland. These situations get lost in the regular media as they go after the hot stories of the moment.

The poor in the world suffer most from warfare. We see this in the millions of refugees trying to find safety in places like Australia. Another example is the AIDS sufferers in Africa. Top artists in the USA planned a large concert to raise funds and awareness for the effort to combat AIDS in Africa. After the September 11 events, the theme of the concert changed to aiding survivors of the tragedy in the US. Once again, the poor lose.

It is important to remember “the least of these” that Jesus spoke about and not let the mainstream media sidetrack us in our attempts to live out the gospel in our needy world.

Book reviews, letters, web-site suggestions, and quotations to make you ponder make up the rest of this issue. Enjoy!

Note on Abbreviations: Some Mennonite “in-house” abbreviations sneak into the news articles. Below are some of the common ones you will see.

COM = Commission on Overseas Missions, mission board of the General Conference Mennonite Church  
[overseasmissioncom.mennonite.net](http://overseasmissioncom.mennonite.net)

CPT = Christian Peacemaker Teams is a faith-based organization that supports violence reduction efforts around the world. CPT has roots in the Mennonite Church, the Church of the Brethren and the Society of Friends, and includes members from Protestant and Catholic traditions.  
[www.cpt.org](http://www.cpt.org)

EMM = Eastern Mennonite Missions, mission board of Lancaster Conference, Mennonite Church  
[www.emm.org](http://www.emm.org)

MBM = Mennonite Board of Missions, mission board of the Mennonite Church  
[www.mbm.org](http://www.mbm.org)

MCC = Mennonite Central Committee is a relief, service, community development and peace agency of the North American Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches. [www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org)

MennoLink = Mennonite online information site  
[www.mennolink.org](http://www.mennolink.org)

MWC = Mennonite World Conference an international fellowship of churches in the Anabaptist tradition, representing 84 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches from 49 countries on five continents [www.mwc-cmm.org](http://www.mwc-cmm.org)

## LETTERS

This edition of On The Road [Issue 12] is fantastic. Congratulations! I found so much of interest in it. I'll send a copy to all my colleagues.

Ross Langmead, Melbourne

The article about the ANZACS ["Reflections on ANZAC Day", Issue 12] was interesting. I agree about chaplaincy of armies being wrong, but feel that most young Australians are becoming interested in the ANZAC history - not because the ANZACS saved our country or ideals (Gallipoli was a failure) but because they were losers who were gallant and brave.

The young people are seeking symbols of Australian identity. I understand too, that the Australian Army is not like the American or British Army.

When I taught primary school here in the late 1950's and early 60's we still taught Australian History and our heroes were the explorers - no battles or conquests at all. Of course, the history of the indigenous people should have been included too.

Anne Clarke, Melbourne

**Missions and peace-making go hand-in-hand for Anabaptists**

**...young people are seeking symbols of Australian identity.**

**Nonviolence is the constant awareness of the dignity and humanity of oneself and others; it seeks truth and justice; it renounces violence both in method and in attitude; it is a courageous acceptance of active love and goodwill as the instrument with which to overcome evil and transform both oneself and others. It is the willingness to suffer rather than to inflict suffering. It excludes retaliation and flight. -Wally Nelson.**

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**DOUG HYND**

**There is a need to raise funds for program costs to meet for example, the cost of publication, website development, and travel to the regions.**

Doors have continually been opening this year for Mark and Mary Hurst to exercise their ministry in a way which has been very encouraging. Much of the teaching and conflict resolution work is being paid for which provides much needed financial support.

Various members of the Association have taken an active role in identifying opportunities for Mark and Mary. I would particularly mention Colin Isaac and Gary Baker in this regard. The work undertaken so far has encouraged the Committee to begin to “dream” and envision ways in which the peacemaking and conflict resolution ministry of the Association could be extended. More of that I hope within the next few months.

I want to use the rest of this report to bring you up to date on a number of administrative issues with which the committee has been dealing over the past few months.

Communication with the dispersed membership of the Association is a continuing issue and a number of initiatives are being undertaken. The committee has agreed to post monthly reports from the President and the Hursts on the AAANZ website. There is an article in this newsletter on how to access and participate in the Anabaptist chatroom.

A group of committee members has met in Melbourne to plan for activities over the next year. If you want to get involved and meet other members and supporters of the Association you can contact Bessie Pereira, Marcus Curnow, or Neil Horsburgh.

The committee has agreed to put forward a number of changes of Association rules to an Annual General Meeting of the Association later this year. The proposed rule changes will include provisions to -

- make it easier to nominate members;
- focus membership on the purposes of the Association
- provide for a fixed minimum number for a quorum, rather than for a set proportion of membership – due to the difficulties of organising annual meetings over the phone; and
- provisions for institutional membership.

The draft rule changes will be made available to everyone as soon as possible.

## **Financial issues**

Recent correspondence with Eastern Mennonite Missions highlights some financial issues:

1. There is a need to raise funds for program costs to meet for example the cost of publication, website development, and travel

to the regions . Specific costs could be raised by fees for activities, as proposed for hardcopy version of the Newsletter or specific gifts or fund raising in the region. The target for program funding this year was \$5000.

2. There is also a need to commence direct raising of funds for the ministry of Mark and Mary in addition to money earned for work which falls within the mandate of the Association.

## **Regional visits**

The experience with the Hurst's visit to Perth earlier this year has provided some valuable guidance on how to proceed but also identified some issues that require some further work. To assist in planning such visits I have drawn up some draft guidelines for comment.

- Costs of travel should be identified. If there are possible sponsors identified who would be able to meet part of the costs of travel this should be agreed in the planning process so that the committee is clear of the extent to which travel will need to come from national program expenditure.
- If Mark and Mary are to conduct seminars or workshops for other organisations charges for these should be worked out and agreed upon ahead of time.
- An overall indicative budget with costs and sources of income should be provided to the Committee.
- A strategy for providing information on the Association should be drawn up that would include follow up of contacts and possible supporters for the Association.

## **Treasurer**

There is an urgent need to identify replacement treasurer is a priority as the current Treasurer Gary Baker needs to be freed up for other areas of work for the association. The work done in computerising the financial records of the Association will make this job easier in future.

## **Webmaster**

The webmaster is a key position and there is a strong need to identify a possible candidate who could assist Mary and Mark to develop and maintain the web site.

I am thankful for the progress that has been made this year. Lots of work has been done to make the administrative side of the association work effectively and accountably. With that structure in place it is time for us to look harder at the ministry of the Association and identify priorities and possibilities and to pray that we may “see visions and dream dreams” and be open to the disturbing empowering breeze of the Spirit.

# THE VIEW FROM EPHESIANS FOUR

MARK AND MARY HURST

## ...to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service

It is not popular to be a peacemaker in a time of war. Barbara Lee, US Congresswoman from California, is learning that lesson the hard way. She was the only Congressperson to vote against giving US President Bush a free hand in attacking the alleged September 11 terrorists.

The Washington Post reports that as a result of her vote she is under police protection. She received numerous death threats and her email is so full of hate mail that if you want to write in support of her you need to send a snail mail letter. (See the article "The Solitary Vote of Barbara Lee" at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A52813-2001Sep18.html>.)

Last week the US administration said "Either you support our war against terrorism or you are against us." There is no middle ground. Empires do not take kindly to voices of reason when they are trying to whip up the masses for war.

Anabaptists have always been the odd ones out in times of war. Early on in our movement, Michael Sattler was accused of supporting the enemy because he refused to support the empire's war against the Turks, their current enemy. The accusation against Sattler was:

*He has said: "If the Turk were to come into the land, one should not resist him, and, if it were right to wage war, he would rather go to war against the Christians than against the Turks," which is after all a great offense, to take the side of the greatest enemy of our holy faith against us.*

All good Christians were to get in line against "the greatest enemy of our holy faith". Sattler replied to his accusers in this way:

*If the Turk comes, he should not be resisted, for it stands written: thou shalt not kill. We should not defend ourselves against the Turks or our other persecutors, but with fervent prayer should implore God that He might be our defense and our resistance. As to me saying that if waging war were proper I would rather take the field against the so-called Christians who persecute, take captive, and kill true Christians, than against the Turks, this was for the following reason: the Turk is a genuine Turk and knows nothing of the Christian faith. He is a Turk according to the flesh. But you claim to be Christians, boast of Christ, and still persecute the faithful witnesses of Christ. Thus you are Turks according to the Spirit.*

(The Legacy of Michael Sattler, ed. John H. Yoder, Herald Press, 1973, 71-73.)

Part of the preparation for war is demonizing the enemy but this is not a nice, neat process. In painting the enemy, others get splattered too. The

American government would like to limit its demonizing to only the terrorists and their supporters but all Arabs and all Muslims are now splattered with the paint of hatred.

Individual Muslims and Mosques around the world are now under attack. What should be our response as peacemakers? Duane Friesen in his book Artists, Citizens, Philosophers (Herald Press, 2000) says that one thing we should do is practice "deeds of solidarity and love". We should find ways "to share the gospel through authentic love modelling an alternative cultural vision of the Christian faith." (270) He gives the following example of Coptic Orthodox Christians in Egypt, who have been subject to persecution and harassment by Islamic revivalists in recent years.

*In this climate of hardship and suffering, some Coptic churches have adopted an interesting practice. During Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, some Coptic Orthodox Christians have taken to hosting evening meals, or iftars, for their Muslim neighbours to mark the end of their day's fast. For a religious minority to adopt the practice of the majority is a potentially risky act. Christians might legitimately fear that by appropriating a Muslim practice such as hosting Ramadan break-fasts, they are contributing to the Muslim view of Christianity as a partial, incomplete version of the true religion, and thus relativizing their own claims to ultimacy. Copts, who as a persecuted minority are understandably concerned with strengthening their religious identity, might also worry that the adoption of an Islamic practice could blur their communal self-understanding.*

*Despite these risks, Coptic Christians have continued the practice of hosting iftars for Muslim neighbours, for the good, to my mind. First, the practice demonstrates an ability on the part of the church to discern positive values at play in the camp of the oppressor. By hosting iftars, Christians at least implicitly recognize the value of Ramadan as a practice of consciously abstaining from evil and directing oneself to God. Second, the act of a persecuted minority reaching out to its "enemies," ministering to their physical need (hunger) by extending its tables manifests the truth that the kingdom of God surpasses religious boundaries, as*

**It is not popular to be a peacemaker in a time of war.**

**Anabaptists should be able to identify with people painted with the brush of hatred.**

*well as demonstrates the powerful example of love of enemy. One is also reminded of the most fundamental Christian act of sharing bread, the Eucharist, in which the suffering nature of the kingdom is made real.” (270)*

Friesen says “This Coptic Christian practice models an alternative to the Christian practice of crusade, Western imperialism, or the Persian Gulf War. The deed communicates far more about the Christian gospel than preaching or verbal dialogue could accomplish.” (271)

Anabaptists should be able to identify with people painted with the brush of hatred. We have been called fanatics by some ever since 1535 due to the events at Munster in northwestern Germany. A group of Anabaptists tried to set up their own version of God’s kingdom on earth. It went horribly wrong, as do most of these attempts, and Anabaptists have been called heretics ever since by people who only know about Anabaptists through this one event.

We should be able to identify now with Muslims in our communities who are blamed for the actions of terrorists who may or may not have been Muslim. Guilt by association is an age-old practice that needs to be overcome through Christian love and action as the following story taken from Sojourners web service (SojoMail 09/19/01) illustrates.

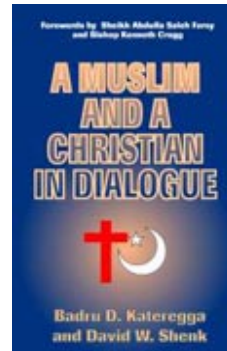
*I am an American citizen from an Arabic origin and of Muslim faith. I have watched the media paint the Islamic world as all hateful toward America and all she stands for. Here in the land of the free my wife has not left the house for fear of retribution. My children ask, as Americans, are they going to be safe too, just as President Bush promises? I know as a Muslim, there is nothing in my religion that says it is okay to kill innocent people. So I am proud to be part of this faith.*

*And then at noon today something happened that made me even prouder to be a Muslim American. As on every Friday around noon, I went to our weekly service at the Fort Collins Mosque. All of the Islamic females in the community have not been able to attend this week out of fear. When I arrived, I was completely touched by what I found there. Our mosque was completely surrounded by members of the Fort Collins community forming a human shield with white carnations in their hands. Tears came to my eyes, and I saw beautiful light shining through the darkness that has covered us this week. As we went in to worship, I said extra prayers that we are so lucky to be living with this kind of people. I have never felt as proud as an American Muslim as I did today.*

*As goodness is not a monopoly for any one race or religion, neither is darkness.*

Blessed are the peacemakers.

**This Coptic Christian practice models an alternative to the Christian practice of crusade...**



**A good book looking at Islam and Christianity is A Muslim And A Christian In Dialogue, by Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk, Herald Press, 1997.**

## The War Prayer BY MARK TWAIN

It was a time of great and exalting excitement. The country was up in arms, the war was on, in every breast burned the holy fire of patriotism; the drums were beating, the bands playing, the toy pistols popping, the bunched firecrackers hissing and spluttering; on every hand and far down the receding and fading spread of roofs and balconies a fluttering wilderness of flags flashed in the sun; daily the young volunteers marched down the wide avenue gay and fine in their new uniforms, the proud fathers and mothers and sisters and sweethearts cheering them with voices choked with happy emotion as they swung by; nightly the packed mass meetings listened, panting, to patriot oratory which stirred the deepest depths of their hearts, and which they interrupted at briefest intervals with cyclones of applause, the tears running down their cheeks the while; in the churches the pastors preached devotion to flag and country, and invoked the God of Battles beseeching His aid in our good cause in outpourings of fervid eloquence which moved every listener. It was indeed a glad and gracious time, and the half dozen rash spirits that ventured to disapprove of the war and cast a doubt upon its righteousness straightway got such a stern and angry warning that for their personal safety’s sake they quickly shrank out of sight and offended no more in that way.

Sunday morning came — next day the battalions would leave for the front; the church was filled; the volunteers were there, their young faces alight with martial dreams — visions of the stern advance, the gathering momentum, the rushing charge, the flashing sabers, the flight of the foe, the tumult, the enveloping smoke, the fierce pursuit, the surrender! Then home from the war, bronzed heroes, welcomed, adored, submerged in golden seas of glory! With the volunteers sat their dear ones, proud, happy, and envied by the neighbors and friends who had no sons and brothers to send forth to the field of honor, there to win for the flag, or, failing, die the noblest of noble deaths. The service proceeded; a war chapter from the Old Testament was read; the first prayer

was said; it was followed by an organ burst that shook the building, and with one impulse the house rose, with glowing eyes and beating hearts, and poured out that tremendous invocation “God the all-terrible! Thou who ordainest! Thunder thy clarion and lightning thy sword!”

Then came the “long” prayer. None could remember the like of it for passionate pleading and moving and beautiful language. The burden of its supplication was, that an ever-merciful and benignant Father of us all would watch over our noble young soldiers, and aid, comfort, and encourage them in their patriotic work; bless them, shield them in the day of battle and the hour of peril, bear them in His mighty hand, make them strong and confident, invincible in the bloody onset; help them to crush the foe, grant to them and to their flag and country imperishable honor and glory —

An aged stranger entered and moved with slow and noiseless step up the main aisle, his eyes fixed upon the minister, his long body clothed in a robe that reached to his feet, his head bare, his white hair descending in a frothy cataract to his shoulders, his seamy face unnaturally pale, pale even to ghastliness. With all eyes following him and wondering, he made his silent way; without pausing, he ascended to the preacher’s side and stood there waiting. With shut lids the preacher, unconscious of his presence, continued with his moving prayer, and at last finished it with the words, uttered in fervent appeal, “Bless our arms, grant us the victory, O Lord our God, Father and Protector of our land and flag!”

The stranger touched his arm, motioned him to step aside — which the startled minister did — and took his place. During some moments he surveyed the spellbound audience with solemn eyes, in which burned an uncanny light; then in a deep voice, he said:

“I come from the Throne — bearing a message from Almighty God!” The words smote the house with a shock; if the stranger perceived it, he gave no attention. “He has heard the prayer of His servant your shepherd, and will grant it if such shall be your desire after I, His messenger, shall have explained to you its import — that is to say, its full import. For it is like unto many of the prayers of men, in that it asks for more than he who utters it is aware of — except he pause and think.

“God’s servant and yours has prayed his prayer. Has he paused and taken thought? Is it one prayer? No, it is two — one uttered, the other not. Both have reached the ear of Him Who heareth all supplications, the spoken and the unspoken. Ponder this — keep it in mind. If you would beseech a blessing upon yourself, beware! lest without intent you invoke a curse

upon a neighbor at the same time. If you pray for the blessing of rain upon your crop which needs it, by that act you are possibly praying for a curse upon some neighbor’s crop which may not need rain and can be injured by it.

“You have heard your servant’s prayer — the uttered part of it. I am commissioned of God to put into words the other part of it — that part which the pastor — and also you in your hearts — fervently prayed silently. And ignorantly and unthinkingly? God grant that it was so! You heard these words: ‘Grant us the victory, O Lord our God!’ That is sufficient. The ‘whole’ of the uttered prayer is compact into those pregnant words. Elaborations were not necessary. When you have prayed for victory you have prayed for many unmentioned results which follow victory— ‘must’ follow it, cannot help but follow it. Upon the listening spirit of God fell also the unspoken part of the prayer. He commandeth me to put it into words. Listen!

“O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle — be Thou near them! With them — in spirit — we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it — for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Amen.

(After a pause.) “Ye have prayed it; if ye still desire it, speak! The messenger of the Most High waits!”

It was believed afterward that the man was a lunatic, because there was no sense in what he said.

---

Twain apparently dictated this story around 1904-05, it was rejected by his publisher, and was found after his death among his unpublished manuscripts. It was first published in 1923 in Albert Bigelow Paine’s anthology, *Europe and Elsewhere*.

The story is in response to a particular war, namely the Philippine-American War of 1899-1902, which Twain opposed. See Jim Zwick’s page “Mark Twain on the Philippines” for more of Twain’s writings on the subject.

*Transcribed by Steven Orso  
(smorso@facstaff.wisc.edu)*

**When you  
have  
prayed for  
victory you  
have  
prayed for  
many  
unmentioned  
results**

## The Challenge of Terror: A Travelling Essay

BY: JOHN PAUL LEDERACH

16 September 2001

**...our greatest threat is not in Afghanistan, but in our own backyard.**

So here I am, a week late arriving home, stuck between Colombia, Guatemala and Harrisonburg, Virginia when our world changed. The images flash even in my sleep. The heart of America ripped. Though natural, the cry for revenge and the call for the unleashing of the first war of this century, prolonged or not, seems more connected to social and psycho-logical processes of finding a way to release deep emotional anguish, a sense of power-lessness, and our collective loss than it does as a plan of action seeking to redress the injustice, promote change and prevent it from ever happening again.

I am stuck from airport to airport as I write this, the reality of a global system that has suspended even the most basic trust. My Duracell batteries and fingernail clippers were taken from me today and it gave me pause for thought. I had a lot of pauses in the last few days. Life has not been the same. I share these thoughts as an initial reaction recognizing that it is always easy to take pot-shots at our leaders from the sidelines, and to have the insights they are missing when we are not in the middle of very difficult decisions. On the other hand, having worked for nearly 20 years as a mediator and proponent of non-violent change in situations around the globe where cycles of deep violence seem hell-bent on perpetuating themselves, and having interacted with people and movements who at the core of their identity find ways of justifying their part in the cycle, I feel responsible to try to bring ideas to the search for solutions. With this in mind I should like to pen several observations about what I have learned from my experiences and what they might suggest about the current situation. I believe this starts by naming several key challenges and then asking what is the nature of a creative response that takes these seriously in the pursuit of genuine, durable, and peaceful change.

### **Some Lessons about the Nature of our Challenge**

#### **Always seek to understand the root of the anger.**

The first and most important question to pose ourselves is relatively simple though not easy to answer: How do people reach this level of anger, hatred and frustration? By my experience explanations that they are brainwashed by a perverted leader who holds some kind of magical power over them is an escapist simplification and will inevitably lead us to very wrong-headed responses. Anger of this sort, what we could call generational, identity-based anger, is constructed

overtime through a combination of historical events, a deep sense of threat to identity, and direct experiences of sustained exclusion. This is very important to understand, because, as I will say again and again, our response to the immediate events has everything to do with whether we reinforce and provide the soil, seeds, and nutrients for future cycles of revenge and violence. Or whether it changes. We should be careful to pursue one and only one thing as the strategic guidepost of our response: Avoid doing what they expect. What they expect from us is the lashing out of the giant against the weak, the many against the few. This will reinforce their capacity to perpetrate the myth they carefully seek to sustain: That they are under threat, fighting an irrational and mad system that has never taken them seriously and wishes to destroy them and their people. What we need to destroy is their myth not their people.

#### **Always seek to understand the nature of the organization**

Over the years of working to promote durable peace in situations of deep, sustained violence I have discovered one consistent purpose about the nature of movements and organizations who use violence: Sustain thyself. This is done through a number of approaches, but generally it is through decentralization of power and structure, secrecy, autonomy of action through units, and refusal to pursue the conflict on the terms of the strength and capacities of the enemy.

One of the most intriguing metaphors I have heard used in the last few days is that this enemy of the United States will be found in their holes, smoked out, and when they run and are visible, destroyed. This may well work for groundhogs, trench and maybe even guerrilla warfare, but it is not a useful metaphor for this situation. And neither is the image that we will need to destroy the village to save it, by which the population that gives refuge to our enemies is guilty by association and therefore a legitimate target. In both instances the metaphor that guides our action misleads us because it is not connected to the reality. In more specific terms, this is not a struggle to be conceived of in geographic terms, in terms of physical spaces and places, that if located can be destroyed, thereby ridding us of the problem. Quite frankly our biggest and most visible weapon systems are mostly useless. We need a new metaphor, and though I generally do not like medical metaphors to describe conflict, the image of a virus comes to mind because of its ability to enter unperceived, flow with a system, and harm it from within.

**The way to break such a cycle of justified violence is to step outside of it.**



This is the genius of people like Osama Bin Laden. He understood the power of a free and open system, and has used it to his benefit. The enemy is not located in a territory. It has entered our system. And you do not fight this kind of enemy by shooting at it. You respond by strengthening the capacity of the system to prevent the virus and strengthen its immunity. It is an ironic fact that our greatest threat is not in Afghanistan, but in our own backyard. We surely are not going to bomb Travelocity, Hertz Rental Car, or an Airline training school in Florida. We must change metaphors and move beyond the reaction that we can duke it out with the bad guy, or we run the very serious risk of creating the environment that sustains and reproduces the virus we wish to prevent.

**Always remember that realities are constructed.**

Conflict is, among other things, the process of building and sustaining very different perceptions and interpretations of reality. This means that we have at the same time multiple realities defined as such by those in conflict. In the aftermath of such horrific and unmerited violence that we have just experienced this may sound esoteric. But we must remember that this fundamental process is how we end up referring to people as fanatics, madmen, and irrational. In the process of name-calling we lose the critical capacity to understand that from within the ways they construct their views, it is not mad lunacy or fanaticism. All things fall together and make sense. When this is connected to a long string of actual experiences wherein their views of the facts are reinforced (for example, years of superpower struggle that used or excluded them, encroaching Western values of what is considered immoral by their religious interpretation, or the construction of an enemy-image who is overwhelmingly powerful and uses that power in bombing campaigns and always appears to win) then it is not a difficult process to construct a rational world view of heroic struggle against evil. Just as we do it, so do they. Listen to the words we use to justify our actions and responses. And then listen to words they use. The way to break such a process is not through a frame of reference of who will win or who is stronger. In fact the inverse is true. Whoever loses, whether tactical battles or the war itself, finds intrinsic in the loss the seeds that give birth to the justification for renewed battle.

The way to break such a cycle of justified violence is to step outside of it. This starts with understanding that TV sound bites about madmen and evil are not good sources of policy. The most significant impact that we could make on their ability to sustain their view of us as evil is to change their perception of who we are by choosing to strategically respond in unexpected ways. This will take enormous courage and courageous leadership capable of envisioning a horizon of change

**Always understand the capacity for recruitment**

The greatest power that terror has is the ability to regenerate itself. What we most need to understand

about the nature of this conflict and the change process toward a more peaceful world is how recruitment into these activities happens. In all my experiences in deep-rooted conflict what stands out most are the ways in which political leaders wishing to end the violence believed they could achieve it by overpowering and getting rid of the perpetrator of the violence. That may have been the lesson of multiple centuries that preceded us. But it is not the lesson from that past 30 years. The lesson is simple. When people feel a deep sense of threat, exclusion and generational experiences of direct violence, their greatest effort is placed on survival.

Time and again in these movements, there has been an extraordinary capacity for the regeneration of chosen myths and renewed struggle. One aspect of current U.S. leadership that coherently matches with the lessons of the past 30 years of protracted conflict settings is the statement that this will be a long struggle. What is missed is that the emphasis should be placed on removing the channels, justifications, and sources that attract and sustain recruitment into the activities. What I find extraordinary about the recent events is that none of the perpetrators was much older than 40 and many were half that age. This is the reality we face: Recruitment happens on a sustained basis. It will not stop with the use of military force, in fact, open warfare will create the soils in which it is fed and grows. Military action to destroy terror, particularly as it affects significant and already vulnerable civilian populations will be like hitting a fully mature dandelion with a golf club. We will participate in making sure the myth of why we are evil is sustained and we will assure yet another generation of recruits.

**Recognize complexity, but always understand the power of simplicity.**

Finally, we must understand the principle of simplicity. I talk a lot with my students about the need to look carefully at complexity, which is equally true (and which in the earlier points I start to explore). However, the key in our current situation that we have failed to fully comprehend is simplicity. From the standpoint of the perpetrators, the effectiveness of their actions was in finding simple ways to use the system to undo it. I believe our greatest task is to find equally creative and simple tools on the other side.

**Suggestions**

In keeping with the last point, let me try to be simple. I believe three things are possible to do and will have a much greater impact on these challenges than seeking accountability through revenge.

**Energetically pursue a sustainable peace process to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.**

**Military action to destroy terror... will be like hitting a fully mature dandelion with a golf club.**

**The biggest blow we can serve terror is to make it irrelevant.**

**Do it now.**

The United States has much it can do to support and make this process work. It can bring the weight of persuasion, the weight of nudging people on all sides to move toward mutual recognition and stopping the recent and devastating pattern of violent escalation, and the weight of including and balancing the process to address historic fears and basic needs of those involved. If we would bring the same energy to building an international coalition for peace in this conflict that we have pursued in building international coalitions for war, particularly in the Middle East, if we lent significant financial, moral, and balanced support to all sides that we gave to the Irish conflict in earlier years, I believe the moment is right and the stage is set to take a new and qualitative step forward. Sound like an odd diversion to our current situation of terror? I believe the opposite is true. This type of action is precisely the kind of thing needed to create whole new views of who we are and what we stand for as a nation. Rather than fighting terror with force, we enter their system and take away one of their most coveted elements: The soils of generational conflict perceived as injustice used to perpetrate hatred and recruitment.

I believe that monumental times like these create conditions for monumental change. This approach would solidify our relationships with a broad array of Middle Easterners and Central Asians, allies and enemies alike, and would be a blow to the rank and file of terror. The biggest blow we can serve terror is to make it irrelevant. The worst thing we could do is to feed it unintentionally by making it and its leaders the center stage of what we do. Let's choose democracy and reconciliation over revenge and destruction. Let's do exactly what they do not expect, and show them it can work.

**Invest financially in development, education, and a broad social agenda in the countries surrounding Afghanistan rather than attempting to destroy the Taliban in a search for Bin Laden.**

The single greatest pressure that could ever be put on Bin Laden is to remove the source of his justifications and alliances. Countries like Pakistan, Tajikistan, and yes, Iran and Syria should be put on the radar of the West and the United States with a question of strategic importance: How can we help you meet the fundamental needs of your people? The strategic approach to changing the nature of how terror of the kind we have witnessed this week reproduces itself lies in the quality of relationships we develop with whole regions, peoples, and worldviews. If we strengthen the web of those relationships, we weaken and eventually eliminate the soil where terror is born. A vigorous investment, taking advantage of the current opening given the horror of this week shared by even those who we traditionally claimed as state enemies, is immediately available, possible and pregnant with historic possibilities. Let's do the unexpected. Let's create a

new set of strategic alliances never before thought possible.

**Pursue a quiet diplomatic but dynamic and vital support of the Arab League to begin an internal exploration of how to address the root causes of discontent in numerous regions.**

This should be coupled with energetic ecumenical engagement, not just of key symbolic leaders, but of a practical and direct exploration of how to create a web of ethics for a new millennium that builds from the heart and soul of all traditions but that creates a capacity for each to engage the roots of violence that are found within their own traditions. Our challenge, as I see it, is not that of convincing others that our way of life, our religion, or our structure of governance is better or closer to Truth and human dignity. It is to be honest about the sources of violence in our own house and invite others to do the same. Our global challenge is how to generate and sustain genuine engagement that encourages people from within their traditions to seek that which assures the preciousness and respect for life that every religion sees as an inherent right and gift from the Divine, and how to build organized political and social life that is responsive to fundamental human needs. Such a web cannot be created except through genuine and sustained dialogue and the building of authentic relationships, at religious and political spheres of interaction, and at all levels of society. Why not do the unexpected and show that life-giving ethics are rooted in the core of all peoples by engaging a strategy of genuine dialogue and relationship? Such a web of ethics, political and religious, will have an impact on the roots of terror far greater in the generation of our children's children than any amount of military action can possibly muster. The current situation poses an unprecedented opportunity for this to happen, more so than we have seen at any time before in our global community.

**A Call for the Unexpected**

Let me conclude with simple ideas. To face the reality of well organized, decentralized, self-perpetuating sources of terror, we need to think differently about the challenges. If indeed this is a new war it will not be won with a traditional military plan. The key does not lie in finding and destroying territories, camps, and certainly not the civilian populations that supposedly house them. Paradoxically that will only feed the phenomenon and assure that it lives into a new generation. The key is to think about how a small virus in a system affects the whole and how to improve the immunity of the system. We should take extreme care not to provide the movements we deplore with gratuitous fuel for self-regeneration. Let us not fulfill their prophecy by providing them with martyrs and justifications. The power of their action is the simplicity with which they pursue the fight with global power. They have understood the power of the powerless. They have understood that melding

**We will not win this struggle for justice, peace and human dignity with the traditional weapons of war.**

and meshing with the enemy creates a base from within. They have not faced down the enemy with a bigger stick. They did the more powerful thing: they changed the game. They entered our lives, our homes and turned our own tools into our demise. We will not win this struggle for justice, peace and human dignity with the traditional weapons of war. We need to change the game again. Let us take up the practical challenges of this reality perhaps best described in *The Cure of Troy*, an epic poem by Seamus Heaney no foreigner to grip of the cycles of terror. Let us give birth to the unexpected.

So hope for a great sea-change  
On the far side of revenge.  
Believe that a farther shore  
Is reachable from here.  
Believe in miracles  
And cures and healing wells.

John Paul Lederach is the founding director of the Conflict Transformation Program at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

From MennoLink's Website:

[http://www.mennolink.org/peace/sept11\\_jpl.html](http://www.mennolink.org/peace/sept11_jpl.html)

**“Am I not destroying my  
enemies  
when I make friends of them?”**  
Abraham Lincoln in a letter to William  
Roscoe,  
December 27, 1820

*The following is from a newspaper column in  
the INTELLIGENCER JOURNAL,  
Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 10 February 1998.*

## **“Bombs Away,” a fable for these menacing times**

**BY JEFF HAWKES**

On a moonless night over hostile territory, Stealth bombers streaked toward their targets.

Far below, air-raid sirens sounded, sending civilians scurrying for cover.

Dogs howled and babies cried. Soldiers readied anti-aircraft guns and scanned the dark horizon.

Meanwhile, across the ocean, people sat up as their television programs were interrupted. The leader of their country had an announcement.

He sat at a desk next to a flag and looked at the camera, his tired eyes radiating confidence.

“My fellow countrymen,” he said. “We live in a world rich with possibility and promise, but not without risk.

”Today,” he continued, “we are on the verge of a new century, a new millennium, a time when the peoples of the world should come together to help build an even brighter future.

”Unfortunately, as freedom and democracy spread around the globe and the family of nations joins hands for progress, one head of state persists in marching out of step.

”I believe peace must be given every chance, and I have patiently pursued diplomacy to bring him into the fold of peace-loving nations.

”But there comes a time,” the commander in chief said, “when we must back up our words with deeds.

”This evening, we are. After consultation with our allies, and in accordance with my oath of office, I ordered, earlier today, our armed forces into action.

”My prayers are with these brave men and women as they carry out their mission. I know yours are too.

”Good night, and God bless.”

The Stealth bombers, in waves, zeroed in on their targets. Gunfire raked the sky and shook the capital. A bomber took a hit.

By sunrise, the shooting had ended, and a wary calm fell over the city.

The people rose, expecting to see smoke and ruin. Instead, they found sidewalks and streets and parks littered with millions of silver cones, the size of thimbles, each with a little paper streamer.

Pigeons pecked at them, but they did not explode or emit gas. They crunched harmlessly under bus tires. A horrified mother rushed her son to the hospital after he chewed on the brown substance beneath the silvery foil.

The boy said it tasted like chocolate. He did not fall ill.

After dark, again, the sirens wailed and people huddled for another sleepless night.

In the morning, they opened their windows to perfumed breezes. Rose petals floated in the air and landed in the hair of playing children.

Waging peace

Night after night, the bombers swooped overhead. And with each night, they were met with less and less resistance.

Every morning brought a new surprise. One day, the people found soccer balls. The next, apples.

The bounty seemed endless and the variety unbelievable: Frisbees, butter pats, Oreos, toothbrushes, aspirin, work gloves, crayons, macaroni, sugarless bubble gum, tube socks, red hot chiles.

Across the ocean, communities competed to have something from their town used in the bombardment. Other countries contributed, too.

France parachuted in bottles of champagne. The Greeks dropped olives.

From the Japanese, digital wristwatches. And

**I believe  
peace  
must be  
given  
every  
chance...**

**In responding to terrorism we need to do something different. Something unexpected...**

from Panama, bananas.

As the air campaign continued, the pilot shot down on the first night was discovered in a farmer's field. His leg was broken. He was thirsty, hungry and scared.

Farm hands made a litter with their shirts and hoes and hoisted the pilot above their shoulders. A crowd gathered around him. They could not speak his language, but they whistled and clapped and cheered.

They brought him water and food. And a little boy reached into his pocket, pulled out a handful of Hershey Kisses and gave one to his hero.

Hawkes' column appears Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. E-mail is welcome at [jhawkes@lnpnews.com](mailto:jhawkes@lnpnews.com).

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*A MennoLink writer added his thoughts to the article.*

A military response, particularly an attack on Afghanistan, is exactly what the terrorists want. It will strengthen and swell their small but fanatical ranks.

Instead, bomb Afghanistan with butter, with rice, bread, clothing and medicine. It will cost less than conventional arms, poses no threat of US casualties and just might get the populace thinking that maybe the Taliban doesn't have the answers. After three years of drought and starvation looming, let's offer the Afghan people the vision of a new future.

One that includes full stomachs.

The Taliban are telling their people to prepare for Jihad. Instead, let's give the Afghan people their first good meal in years. Seeing your family fully fed and the prospect of stability in terms of food and a future is a powerful deterrent to martyrdom.

In responding to terrorism we need to do something different. Something unexpected, something that addresses the root of the problem. We need to take away the well of despair, ignorance and brutality from which the Osama bin Laden's of the world water their gardens of terror.

It is important that we learn to think in NEW ways. If we continue attacking in the old ways we will get the same old results. Look at what has been happening the Middle East for thousands of years to see what we can expect if we attack with bombs and military force.

**If we continue attacking in the old ways we will get the same old results.**

## Informative Websites

The following websites are helpful ones in reading news and finding ideas from a perspective different to that of the mainstream media outlets. Most of these are from North America. Please share with us your favourite Aussie and Kiwi sites.

Altnet.org [www.altnet.org](http://www.altnet.org)

Common Dreams.org

[www.commondreams.org](http://www.commondreams.org).

Foreign Policy In Focus [www.fpif.org](http://www.fpif.org)

The Progressive [www.progressive.org](http://www.progressive.org)

The Nonviolence Web [www.nonviolence.org](http://www.nonviolence.org)

The American Prospect [www.prospect.org](http://www.prospect.org)

The Christian Science Monitor

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

Antiwar.com [www.antiwar.com](http://www.antiwar.com)

The World Press Review [www.worldpress.org](http://www.worldpress.org)

Yes! Magazine [www.yesmagazine.org](http://www.yesmagazine.org)

War Resisters League [www.warresisters.org](http://www.warresisters.org)

Fellowship Of Reconciliation [www.forusa.org](http://www.forusa.org)

Pax Christi International [www.paxchristi.net](http://www.paxchristi.net)

Center for Action and Contemplation

[www.cacradicalgrace.org](http://www.cacradicalgrace.org)

Conflict Resolution Network [www.crnhq.org](http://www.crnhq.org)

Eastern Mennonite University's Conflict

Transformation Program [www.emu.edu/ctp](http://www.emu.edu/ctp)

Alternatives for Simple Living

[www.simpleliving.org](http://www.simpleliving.org)

**The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish the truth. Through violence you murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.**  
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

We believe that the **mission** of the church is to proclaim and to be a sign of the kingdom of God. Christ has commissioned the church to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe all things he has commanded.

**Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective**

## CHRISTIAN MISSION...

is not primarily a matter of convincing people that they are spiritually lost and need to confess Jesus in order to be saved for eternal life. Christian mission is not simply a process of getting people to believe a set of doctrines, or to assent to a series of propositions that will “get them to heaven.” People become Christians when they become inwardly convinced by the truthfulness and significance of the story of God’s restoration of life in all its dimensions. People become Christian when they identify their lives with the story of God’s action in Christ, when they see in that story the key to their own and the world’s restoration to wholeness. It is not the task of the church to convert others. When the church thinks it does the converting, it tends to distort the gospel by watering down the good news to make it palatable, by turning the gospel into the acceptance of easy dogmatic formulas, by manipulating others through fear by pressure tactics not born out of love, or by substituting successful results for the good news of the gospel. The task of the church is simply to be faithful – to witness through word and deed in the service of others. Its task is simply to sow the seeds and then hope for transformation. The sprouting and emergence of the seed from the soil is the work of God’s spirit.

**Artists Citizens Philosophers: Seeking the Peace of the City**, Duane K. Friesen, Herald Press, 2000, p.263.

## House of the Gentle Bunyip

*The following account of one mission effort in Australia – one of Christian presence - comes to us from **Neil Horsburgh**. Neil has been the Church Life Worker at Community Church of Saint Mark (Clifton Hill Baptist) since 1997 and one of the two part-time Pastoral Care Workers with Fintry Bank Supported Accommodation program since 1999.*

For the past three years, ‘The Bunyip’ has received much publicity. Frequent updates in the local papers often with photograph plus occasional feature articles in the Melbourne daily papers and radio talk-back spots and even the ABC radio national news have chronicled the efforts of a broad group of dedicated people, mostly local, to ensure that the house, 94 Hodgkinson Street not be demolished. Whilst the motives of the protestors have been multiple, their common desire has been that the house remain. The myth of ‘The Bunyip’ has formed a major part of their case.

This original house was built in 1868 and is the oldest in this part of Clifton Hill. It is of great historical significance, recognized by Heritage Victoria and listed by the National Trust. It sits in the middle of a large corner block, single level with brick walls, slate roof, and like no other house locally, has a large veranda on three sides. Across the five-way intersection is the large Queen Victorian-era Darling Gardens, with its ornate introduced large canopied shade trees and cycads. A decorative rotunda is at the centre of the several radiating footpaths. The house dates from the time of subdivision, when the Colonial Government opened up this area, north of Alexandra Parade.

Just over thirty years earlier, John Batman had encountered not far away, several members of the Wurundjeri-willam clan. He negotiated what white historians have regarded as the only treaty ever struck between the European settlers and the indigenous people of Australia. Now it is understood the Aborigines were agreeing to permit Batman to enter their traditional land.

From 1974 to 1997 this building served as a central place of activity and community life of the Ecumenical Christian Community, called ‘House of the Gentle Bunyip’, a group oriented towards mission and having much impact on the local neighbourhood and far beyond it. It is this tradition that has formed a large part of the case the protest group have used to argue for its protection.

**For historical details of the HOGB community, following is an edited version of an article published in the Victorian Baptist Witness, by Helen Woodall, based on a recent public lecture by Marita Munro. It is reprinted with kind permission.**

“While the past is past it is not dead. Its hand is on our shoulder,” said the Rev Marita Munro, the Athol Gill lecturer, at Whitley College on Tuesday night 26 June 2001. Marita’s lecture, “Billabong Stirrings”, covered the history of the House of the Gentle Bunyip at Clifton Hill, as well as parts of her own story and that of Athol Gill, who was instrumental in establishing it.

“In 1972 the Baptist Union of Victoria conducted a commission of enquiry into the number of ordination candidates, their ministry, part-time ministries and training in the university college. The report handed down twelve months later noted that many young pastors were dissatisfied and it recommended diversity was desirable,” said Marita.

“In 1973, 42 Victorian Baptist churches had 100 or more members and 64 had less than 50. The

**While the past is past it is not dead. Its hand is on our shoulder.**

**...it sought to faithfully heed the call of Jesus to radical discipleship in a community, resisting consumerism and individualism.**

Clifton Hill church was in a perilous situation. Its eleven members struggled with enormous social problems and disintegrating buildings.”

“The general superintendent of the Baptist Union of Victoria (BUV), the Rev Norman Pell, produced a blueprint for the future, proposing to deal with the dwindling numbers in inner city churches and the maintenance of large old buildings,” said Marita. “He proposed aggressive evangelism, the use of small groups, regional ministers and that churches with less than 100 members should co-operate with each other.”

The BUV purchased 94 Hodgkinson St, Clifton Hill, which became the House of the Gentle Bunyip, for \$35,000 and 106 Hodgkinson St, which became known as Fintry Bank, after the stained glass window above the front door with that title, for \$13,500. Another property was deemed too expensive at \$28,500.

“Norman Pell had a glorious vision of these buildings and the Clifton Hill church forming the Baptist Union headquarters, an overseas mission base, a café, a centre with resources to assist in team ministries and evangelism and a place for Sunday night combined youth services. A small chapel was to be kept for the eleven-member Clifton Hill congregation. But Baptists decided Clifton Hill was not a desirable residential area and in February 1974 the general council decided to abandon the idea. At this stage the future of the Clifton Hill church looked bleak,” said Marita.

“Athol and Judith Gill moved to Melbourne in 1974 and joined the Clifton Hill church. Athol, who had failed first year law and second year agricultural science, had after a stint at Woolworths, discovered a passion for theology. He studied at Morling College in NSW with Ken Manley, Tony Cupit, Thorwald Lorenzen and others, then at Spurgeons College in London and Rüschnikon in Europe. In 1968 Athol became a lecturer in the Qld Baptist College. He had returned from Europe with some strong social justice ideas and the College chose to reappoint their conservative evangelical principal and not renew Athol’s contract for a second term.”

In 1974 Athol attended the Lausanne conference representing the Radical Discipleship Movement and at Clifton Hill he founded the House of the Gentle Bunyip (HOGB) with a group of mainly young tertiary educated people. The choice of the name “House of the Gentle Bunyip” originates from the children’s picture story book “The Bunyip of Berkeley’s Creek”, popular at that time. They strongly believed in positive Christian evangelism, social involvement and community action. Many of these young people had found their conservative home churches irrelevant to daily life and there was a lot of energy and excitement in the birth of this vision.

By 1976 there were ten staff workers at the HOGB, working with the street kids, where truancy was rife and illiteracy high, and in innovative music programs for the frail aged, leading arts and craft courses and working with organizations such as Scripture Union and Fusion.

The Clifton Hill Baptist Church, The Community Church of St Mark, now had open membership and most of the HOGB workers were members there. The HOGB ran a twelve-month School of Prophets, an intensive discipleship internship program. They had a community household and were involved in worship, study, many of them at Whitley College, and housework as well as mission. For those less sure there was the Month for a Monk one-month program and the Friar’s Fortnight. The Collins St Baptist Church Urban Mission Unit, established by Rev Tim Costello follows this program to some extent today.

The HOGB attempted to respond to the needs of the poor and oppressed and was the first to respond to the issue of youth homelessness. Up until then most homelessness programs were for alcoholic males. In 1986, a supported long-term accommodation, providing pastoral care to people with schizophrenia was established. This operated on a model of holistic care, a ‘presence’ ministry and was unusual and very effective. This programme used the name “Fintry Bank”. Many of the HOGB folk were also involved in the Bunyip’s peace mission and food ministry.

Many women were attracted to HOGB because there they were given leadership opportunities denied to them in traditional church settings. All the HOGB staff workers were encouraged to undertake theological study and fourteen women graduated in theology and five became ordained.

The Bunyip was an intense community life with very little free time which made it difficult to maintain relationships outside the community. The day began with half an hour of prayer at 6.30am on weekdays and at 7.30am on weekends. In 1992 Athol died suddenly, aged 54. He had been a charismatic leader.

The buildings needed a lot of work and the demographics of the area were changing with gentrification. The BUV wanted to sell the building so in 1998 the property that had been the centre of the community that was the HOGB was closed.

But in its twenty years’ life countless people had been helped through poverty, mental illness and in mission. Many others had been challenged by its theology. Many went into Christian leadership.

“What stands out for me,” said Marita, who served on the staff of the HOGB, “is that it sought to faithfully heed the call of Jesus to radical discipleship in a community, resisting consumerism and individualism. And its results were out of all proportion to its size.”

Many international links were established. HOGB members lived in international communities in the USA and elsewhere. Christian teachers including John Howard Yoder and Ched Myers visited HOGB and have acknowledged the significant part it contributed to the development of Radical Discipleship world-wide.

In the years after the death of Athol Gill, there was continuing life in the HOGB community, new energies and restructuring in leadership. However overall there was a progressive withdrawal of many members. Community life diminished. There had been no formal closure of the HOGB. Some of the former members sought to plan a special celebratory ritual, open to all of the hundreds who had been part of its more than 20 years of existence. In late 1998 such an event took place, a thanksgiving service held at Clifton Hill Church to celebrate. A large number of people were deeply moved as stories were told, memories were shared, prayers were expressed.

Rowena Curtis, former member, now minister at Collins Street Baptist, saw parallels of the HOGB and the early Christians as described in the letters of Paul, noting both the rich beneficial aspects and the tensions and limitations. After lunch, past members chronicled people and ministries of five-year periods. Many met others they had only known of by name before. Many photographs were displayed.

The pastoral support and accommodation programme for people with mental illness, called Fintry Bank continued in its own right even as HOGB diminished and closed. With its own loyal group of supporters and Rev Ojitha Goonetilleke as 'Pastoral Care Worker' the well-being and security of many people was maintained.

Negotiations with the organization, Ecumenical Housing to procure Victorian State Government funding for the program, occurred in 1996, using the 94 house. Applications had been submitted and there was hope there would be success. However a State election intervened, the Kennet government scrapped the programme.

As the BUV proceeded to sell the 94 property, joint negotiations involving BUV, Community Church of St Mark, the committee managing the remaining HOGB community assets (HOGB Inc) and Fintry Bank ensued. The ongoing viability of the Pastoral support program was desired. From January 1998 CCSM has freely provided office space, 'Drop-In centre' and meal room in its buildings and some funding. BUV has provided 106 with a special low rent plus some funding, and HOGB Inc. has provided 104 for accommodation and the flat at the rear.

The developer that purchased 94 obtained a demolition order and intended to replace it with a number of units. Local residents and others submitted appeals to the Minister for Planning and an Urban Conservation Control was placed for

twelve months. Subsequently, a court appeal for the preservation of the house was lost, despite the strong multi-pronged, well-documented case.

At this point a community picket was set-up, with 'Green Ban' support of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Worker's Union (CFMEU). This became the longest 24 hour, picket in Australia's history. The table with people, the caravan and protest banners, the large steel drum with logs burning through the cold winter's nights became a familiar sight to the thousands who daily passed the busy corner.

"The 3068 Group", a grassroots community group concerned that local housing developments be appropriate to the nature of the largely intact Victorian and Federation precinct, established a roster of dozens of people that maintained a continuous presence for over 400 days. All manner of brain-storming was undertaken. Support from local government, neighbourhood community house possibilities, purchase by a wealthy person with concern to preserve the historical building, collective fund-raising for group purchase all were explored. The Kennet government was voted out and hopes rose that the Bracks administration would be more open. This was not initially the case. When all avenues seemed closed, in late 2000, someone suggested Ecumenical Housing be approached.

John Timmer, of Ecumenical Community Housing had only weeks before been cleaning out his old files and discarded the thick bundle of Bunyip document from the submission of several years earlier. The new government had established the Social Housing Innovations Program (SHIP) and welcomed applications. With extreme commitment and much work of many over a short time, ECH applied for funding for the redevelopment of the 94 house and the 104 house together as a package.

The project involves 75% government contribution, matched by 25% contribution from the applicant's sources. This includes amounts raised by 'The 3068 Group', the value of the 104 property, offered by HOGB Inc, a major contribution from CFMEU and several other sources.

There would be two components. The old house would be one project, initially described as a rooming house for 12 low-income people. Later this has been revised to be relatively self-contained room, kitchenette facilities for seven people. There is great need for such accommodation as inner city housing prices rise steeply and many existing rooming houses are being closed and homelessness is increasing significantly.

The other component would be for Fintry Bank's accommodation : a two-storey, four apartment annexe at the rear of the 94 property plus two apartments in the rear of 104. The refurbishment of the existing four roomed 104 house would also occur. Total people accommodated would increase by five.

**...that holistic pastoral care dimension which gives Fintry its uniqueness, is to continue into the future.**

**In working together with a common cause, diverse as the picketers and supporters were, the local neighbourhood has been greatly enriched in its community dynamics.**

The application proved successful, pending required community consultations to permit questioning and protestation. These ensued. Some local people objected, with concerns about their land values dropping and increased density of low-income people to be housed. Expressions of concern about additional 'schizophrenics' living near were responded to by other local residents. They described their ease and familiarity with those already living in Fintry for many years.

Fintry Bank struggled with the decision whether to put their program into the project. While the physical housing conditions for residents would be maintained at a much improved level, the financial arrangement involves rent moneys of the residents being paid to ECH. Presently, rent money is what provides the major part of the salaries of the two Pastoral Care workers. Other sources of funding will be needed if that holistic pastoral care dimension which gives Fintry its uniqueness, is to continue into the future. With some positive signs but no definite promise from Department of Human Services, of future funding, Fintry took a major step of faith and decided to proceed.

As I was at this point in preparing this article, the phone rang. Margaret Pitt, Fintry Committee President had just opened a letter from the Department of Human Services. The granting of recurrent funding for two support workers to commence during the 2002-3 year has been approved. Negotiations will follow to determine the specifics. Rejoice!!

Over the front of the house now is a banner **SAVED**, being a re-working of the larger **SAVE THE BUNYIP BANNER** adorned the fence for years. After a long wait with many announced dates that did not eventuate, in the first week of September, Ecumenical Community Housing took legal possession of the Bunyip house, the developer having been paid.

A week before on the Friday evening, a scheduled celebratory gathering by the caravan had occurred, with fun and fanfare. Dozens who had been part of the picket and associated support initiatives laughed and reminisced about funny and sad incidents, about the many dogs of the picket, the times of hope, the occasions of near-despair, confrontations with the developer and vitriolic passers-by. Various people who especially contributed, who held the vision high, persevered at great cost to themselves were applauded. These included well-known entertainer Mary Keneally who has devoted the past 18 months of her life to this cause. Rod Quantock also has spent many overnights in the caravan.

A few days later a working bee by a team of the picketers cleared the metre high grass and weeds and much other rubbish. Some want to continue to have some part in the future of the place, assist with gardening. The picketers have been amazingly broad spectrum of people: teens to golden-agers, professional workers, lawyers, teachers, social workers, mechanics, tradespeople, homeless and

unemployed, some Fintry residents, poets and artists and writers, comedians, church organist, politically leftist to very much right-wingers, conservatively-dressed to gothics. From this range of people you may imagine the degree of community-in-reality that has been, for the past two years outside the old Bunyip house. The lives of people who have squatted in the house have literally been turned around through the personal contacts.

CCSM and Fintry Bank has been privileged to have had this form of networking. I (Neil) have been so enriched by the many conversations and relationships formed these past years around the wood fire and by the table. Matters of faith and values have often been a part of the conversation. Picketers have joined in the weekly Fintry community lunches. We've been able to provide toilet facilities, a room for meetings, access to electricity supply and the barbeque for the many Saturday morning sausage sizzle fundraisers. Fintry residents have so appreciated the warmth around the fire late at night, the cups of coffee and conversation, the acceptance and respect shown them. The Community Church of Saint Mark has been seen to be a very active part of the social fabric, with actions that match its words about faith in action.

In working together with a common cause, diverse as the picketers and supporters were, the local neighbourhood has been greatly enriched in its community dynamics. Here is perhaps a key to understand the special appeal memories of the vibrant 'House of the Gentle Bunyip Community' has for many of them.

A new chapter for the old Bunyip is beginning. In the coming twelve months we anticipate the building will be occurring and a different type of community will be established in the house that was the geographical centre of the HOGB. In this new decade, with changed social realities and altered spiritual consciousness, I hope that CCSM may be open to new possibilities that God affords us.

## **Mission Workers Expelled From Afghanistan**

10 September 2001

*Editor's Note: Mission workers in this release are unnamed for security reasons.*

KABUL, Afghanistan (COM/MBM) - As many as 700,000 Afghan people will feel the brunt of a decision by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to expel its expatriate personnel of a mission agency based here. Four Mennonite mission workers were impacted by the August 31 decision by Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs asking all expatriate personnel of the International Assistance Mission to leave the country within 72 hours.



“The International Assistance Mission is deeply saddened by the decision of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to send all IAM personnel out of the country, which will have severe and negative effects on the people of Afghanistan,” said Harri Lammi, IAM’s executive director. “IAM remains committed to the mutually agreed protocols with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and to the alleviation of human suffering and the development of Afghanistan, and asks for an opportunity to resume discussion ...[for renewed assistance to the Afghan people].”

According to IAM figures, the decision will impact hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries in 2001 alone:

- \* 150,000 outpatients in eye-care clinics.
- \* 9,000 eye operations
- \* 28 students studying physiotherapy
- \* 3,000 patients suffering from movement-related problems.
- \* 36,000 clients in Mother-Child Health Care.
- \* 40,000 people from 5,600 families in communities that will benefit from sanitation improvements, health care and construction.
- \* 200,000 people in drought-affected areas who were to receive food assistance.
- \* As many as 400 orthopedic operations.
- \* Expanded relief and recovery assistance (in 2002) with more than 300,000 beneficiaries in Afghanistan’s northern and central regions.

Mennonite Board of Missions has been a member agency of IAM since 1966, when it was established as a private voluntary agency and is registered with the Swiss government. IAM consists of 117 professionals (some with families) from 17 countries and employs nearly 300 Afghans in projects.

Motivated by a Christian faith-based concern for the poor, IAM has served the people of Afghanistan, working alongside Afghans in health, economic development, and education and rehabilitation for 35 years. IAM employed nearly 300 Afghans, while other government-employed Afghans worked in or were supported by IAM projects.

IAM’s work consists of 10 programs:

- \* National Organization for Ophthalmic Rehabilitation, the primary provider of medical and surgical eye care in Afghanistan.
- \* The Physiotherapy School in Kabul, which has been teaching physiotherapy for the past 15 years.
- \* English as a foreign language schools.
- \* Skills development.
- \* Maternal child health-care clinics and community-based training programs.
- \* Schooling for blind children and adults.
- \* Community development.
- \* Primary mental-health care.
- \* Renewable energy source development.
- \* Disaster management.

All IAM programs focused on training Afghans to be able to take over management of long-term programs once situations in the country made the option viable.

In a written statement September 2, IAM officials said the agency “is stunned by the sudden and total closure of its activities. ... IAM is very concerned about the effects of this action both on local staff and program beneficiaries. Hundreds of thousands of people will be deprived of vital assistance at this critical time.”

## **Colombians Assemble to Declare Their Dedication to a Nonviolent Struggle for Peace**

by Melanie Zuercher

Newton, Kan. (COM/MBM)—About 3,000 Colombians gathered July 19-21 to talk and dream about peace

Participants in the third National Plenary of the Permanent Assembly of Civil Society for Peace gathered from all over the country in several towns in the Antioquia region of north central Colombia, said Mennonite worker Bonnie Klassen. They came from twenty different regions of the country and represented various sectors of Colombian society: campesinos (peasants and farmers); women’s groups; youth; senior citizens; displaced people; labour unions; both Protestant and Catholic church groups; ex-combatants; indigenous people; human rights groups; several levels of government; business; and others. There were also 30 international guests from Canada, England, France, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Spain, Sweden and the United States.

Klassen works with JustaPaz, the peace and justice organization of the Colombia Mennonite Church. She is jointly appointed by the Commission on Overseas Mission (General Conference Mennonite Church) and Mennonite Board of Missions (Mennonite Church), and was deeply involved in the planning and logistics for the peace assembly.

She described the Permanent Assembly of Civil Society for Peace as “not just a series of events, but a process that seeks to strengthen civil society’s participation in the peace process in Colombia. We don’t want peace agreements like those in Central America that didn’t include the common people and have not led to real peace.”

The peace assembly has been meeting weekly (as a much smaller group) since 1997. The first plenary was held in Bogotá in 1998, with 4,000 in attendance, and the second in Cali in 1999, with 2,500. Klassen has been deeply involved in planning each of the plenaries, as well as with the peace assembly.

“The large meetings are to bring people together from all over the country and from all different sectors of society in order to reach some consensus on large issues,” she said, “and then be able to express our position with the greater weight of the larger community behind us.

“We want to try to reach a more common vision about peace-work, not just among the elite peace leaders, but also among everyday people—those who are overwhelmed by countless massacres and violations, and who do simply amazing things in their own context to change the world around them, without trying to get into the newspaper every other day.”

**We want to try to reach a more common vision about peace-work, not just among the elite peace leaders, but also among everyday people—**

For three days, assembly participants focused on the complexities of three main themes: “The Protection and Value of Life,” “Social Development” and “Strengthening Civil Society.” Sub-themes addressed included the peace process and negotiations between the Colombian government and the various armed factions; urban conflict; peace culture; the role of the international community in Colombia; human rights; employment; health policies; and others.

On the first day of the plenary, Klassen reported, everyone met together to hear key-note speeches and proposals. On the second day, they gathered in eighteen working groups to share experiences and work on fine-tuning proposals. The third day was devoted to another mass meeting to hear conclusions and suggestions for further action.

“It’s hard for civil society here to have an impact on the conflict here in the sense that it has no power,” Klassen said. “Political and economic power are held by a small handful of Colombians. However, the peace talks [between the government and the largest leftist guerrilla group, the FARC] started in 1999 largely because ten million Colombian citizens had voted for peace in 1997. We need to continue to show our desire for peace, and that we have proposals to help overcome the obstacles in the peace process.”

She continued, “There is a general agreement that the current model of peace talks within the war simply isn’t working. The plenary is asking for a ceasefire. Two years ago, there wasn’t much agreement among us on that point, so we have advanced that far.

“We are also pressuring for greater citizen participation in the peace process and changes to the social-economic system in general. The population of Colombia has been hit hard by government policies that are only increasing the level of absolute poverty, although this continues to be a wealthy country.

“The plenary reached consensus to stand against fumigations [of coca fields] promoted by the U.S., because of the grave damage done to the environment and human health, as well as the fact that huge amounts of food crops have been destroyed, causing serious levels of hunger in some parts of the country. The number of hectares of coca cultivation has only increased. The fumigations don’t work and they are killing Colombians.”

Klassen was one of about thirty Mennonites (most of them Colombian) who took part in the plenary. “We participated in many of the different working commissions and shared our visions of [congregations as] ‘Sanctuaries for Peace’ with these diverse audiences,” she said. “[JustaPaz director] Ricardo Esquivia is a member of the general secretariat of the peace assembly and has played a strong leadership role over the past four years.”

The very act of pulling off the assembly was an exercise in and test of, faith, she said. The Spanish Embassy in Bogota had promised \$50,000 U.S., which would pay for most of the event. However, in early July, embassy staff informed JustaPaz that no money would be available until after the assembly was over.

“I was highly involved in managing the assembly’s money, so this became quite a personal concern, although I was not the only one responsible,” she said. “Now the embassy has told us the money—which also pays for the general functioning of the assembly year-round—won’t arrive until November.

“But every month, we have been able to pay our bills. I believe in miracles. The money for the plenary ended up coming from various sources such as a Colombian peace group called Planeta Paz, the Oil Workers’ Union, Catholic Relief Services, Inter-Church Action [a Canadian church coalition that includes Mennonite Central Committee], a Dutch church organization and others.”

A personal highlight of the plenary for Klassen was meeting two Nicaraguans—one had been a Sandinista leader and the other had led Contra battalions trying to overthrow the Sandinistas. “For decades, these two men had faced each other only as enemies,” Klassen said. “Now they travelled together and shared a room as two men who could look into the other’s eyes and see common dreams. I was inspired by the warmth of their smiles and drawn in by their emotionally charged words about forgiveness.”

When she returned to Bogota after the plenary, however, Klassen found out that “the extremely cordial Contra leader had been responsible for countless hair-raising, stomach-turning crimes against humanity—against men, women and children whose lives were stamped out during the campaigns of terror.

“I wondered, ‘Are the pretty words about reconciliation just a farce? What about the many widows left alone because their husbands had suddenly disappeared one day?’ Suddenly I was forced to examine whether I really believed that people can forgive each other for such horrors, and that those who commit such atrocities can truly be transformed.

“If I don’t believe in reconciliation when real enemies stained by each others’ blood, enter the picture, then what in the world am I working for in the first place?” she continued. “I want to continue to plant seeds of love and justice while we wait for God’s face to turn towards us and to grant us peace.”

## **Colombian Mission Workers Promote Anabaptism in Ecuador**

QUITO, Ecuador (MBM/COM) - When the Mennonite Church of Colombia heard God’s call to missions in Ecuador, they gave sacrificially of their best leaders. In the seven years preceding his departure to Ecuador, Cesar Moya had been either president of the Mennonite Church of Colombia or its executive secretary. Moya, his

wife, Patricia Uruea, and their three children, Daniel (age 13), Juan (11) and Andrea (10), live in the capital city, Quito. Both Moya and Uruea, COM/MBM workers in Ecuador since January 2000, are teachers at the Latin American Christian University where they teach courses on Anabaptist themes and lead workshops on conflict resolution.

Outside the university setting, Moya and Uruea bring the Anabaptist perspective to various groups and projects.

Uruea organized "Free to Build Peace" seminars that were attended by 70 people from different denominations, and has completed a manual on human rights. Moya also helped to write a manual on conflict resolution for women in prison. They are frequently asked to preach in Quito churches.

Increased enthusiasm lights the eyes of Moya and Uruea as they begin to talk about their weekly visits to the mountains of Riobamba where they teach at many educational levels. They help with administration and teach on the university level at the Indigenous Centre for Theological Studies. In addition, intensive seminars are held for youth in the indigenous evangelical churches.

Uruea takes a special interest in the Yachai project for preschool children. The Quichua name means "wisdom of the people." In the project, sponsored by the non-governmental organization, Indigenous Foundation for Development, Uruea works with the Quichua community to find educational models that are consistent with their cultural values. Parents participate in their children's education by demonstrating how to take care of pigs, how to make cheese, and through the sharing of legends.

"We are called the teachers, but we learn a lot from the Quichua," Uruea said. "Mission is so much more than 'taking the gospel' to a people. They have taught us about what it takes to have strong community relationships, about active non-violent resistance, about gratitude to God, about people being co-creators with God, and about responsible ecology."

Although indigenous populations account for 45 percent of the Ecuadorian population, they are held in contempt by the majority, the mestizos. "It is false to see the indigenous people as poor and insignificant," Moya said. "They are a strong people and a large, political force. They helped to oust the president in 2000. A few months ago, it looked like they would throw out the current president as well.

"They converged on Quito - men, women and children - walking for days down from the mountains and filling the city streets. They took over the Salesiana University. In order to starve them out, the government turned off the water and sealed off the food supply. The government didn't succeed in discouraging them. Eight thousand more indigenous people came to spell them off. The sit-in at the university continued in shifts."

As well as learning from and enabling indigenous peoples, Mennonites are uniquely placed for reconciliation work in a country where the walls between the Catholic and evangelical churches are colossal. If a member of the Catholic church wants to marry an evangelical, neither church will officiate at the wedding.

Moya was asked to participate on a committee of five Catholics and five evangelicals working at understanding and increased cooperation between the two groups. This committee has the blessing of the Catholic bishops of both Quito and Riobamba.

MBM's director for Latin America, Janet Plenert, said, "[Moya and Uruea] have found a vacuum in the Christian community - that of conflict resolution. They have been called upon by the Christian university, human rights organizations and indigenous groups to bring this Anabaptist strength to the table. Caesar and Patricia are well-trained in this area and fully capable of having a major transformative impact in the Christian community in Ecuador."

Even though Colombia and Ecuador are neighboring countries, cultural adaptations need to be made by Moya and Uruea's family. "We are experiencing another culture," said Uruea. "If we don't talk, people on the street might think that we are Ecuadorian. However, as soon as we open our mouths, people know we are Colombian."

"What is a normal statement in Colombia is seen as abrasive in Ecuador," Moya added. "While Colombians run red lights without a second thought, Ecuadorians will not go 50 miles per hour in a 40-mile-per-hour speed zone."

As foreigners, it was difficult to obtain places for their children in the school system. Moya and Uruea needed to pay higher school fees. Market women try to charge them more for food and it was difficult to rent a house.

The family misses the close communion that they enjoyed at Iglesia Cristiana Menonita de Villas de Granada, their home congregation in Colombia. But they are excited about a group of 25 adults and 15 children in Quito that has met together weekly for table fellowship in each other's homes since April. No one in the group attended church regularly before becoming part of this informal fellowship.

Although Moya and Uruea didn't go to Ecuador with a church-planting assignment, they ask whether a Mennonite church might be the logical next step for their students and friends who are embracing the Anabaptist vision.

Moya defines their ministry objectives as "bringing more people to the table." That is happening both literally and figuratively.

## **Worker Sees Scar as a Sign of Transformation**

by Melanie Zuercher

Abbotsford, B.C. (COM/MBM)—A time of communal pain and fear helped Amanda Falla face some personal fear and strengthen her faith in God. Falla and her husband, Gamaliel, have been workers in Cali, Colombia, with the Commission on Overseas Mission (General Conference Mennonite Church) and Mennonite Board of Missions (Mennonite Church) since 1996.

Falla told a group of COM and MBM workers who had gathered for an annual seminar, held this year in British Columbia, Canada, that back in March, she and a member of her church in Cali were traveling by bus to another city to visit Amanda's brother in the hospital.

There was an accident, and the bus turned over. When they realized what was happening, Falla said, she and the other woman "held hands and prayed. When the bus stopped moving, I realized I was [bleeding]. My shoes were gone and so was my friend. I had to crawl out of the window."

A woman passenger on the bus died. Falla's friend had fractured vertebrae, while Falla had a cut on her face that required stitches.

The ambulance came to take the injured, including

Falla and her friend, to the hospital. "As we rode, we sang and praised God, and the [medical personnel] in the ambulance just looked at us in amazement."

Once at the hospital, Falla noticed that the bus driver was being ostracized by the other passengers, who blamed him for being careless and causing the accident.

"I went over to him and said, 'I don't know how my face will look. I don't know if my friend will walk again. But I forgive you. As God has forgiven me, I forgive you.'

"I prayed with the driver. He began to cry, and he asked Jesus to come into his heart.

"I had been afraid for years that I would have a scar on my face. But after that, I said, 'Lord, if this is what it takes to bring someone to faith, I will accept many scars.'"

Falla told the mission seminar group that up until two weeks previously, she had kept the scar from the accident covered. "But now God has put it on my heart not to hide it," she said. "God is transforming me."

## Chiapas: "Just like the Mustard Seed, Our Resistance Grows"

by Matt Guynn, 12 August, 2001

Armed civilian groups, leftist political parties, the Army, center-right political parties, municipal government, State police forces, County government, Zapatistas, State government, Federal government...this list, created by indigenous Mexicans, includes many of the groups that affect the social and political situation of daily life in Chiapas. The list was created in a July 14 reflection on active nonviolence by members of the Civil Society of the Bees (Abejas) and the CPT Mexico team.

After the workshop, as rain pounded down on the tin roof of the meeting room, Kryss Chupp and I sat and looked at the list again. I thought of Richmond, Indiana, where I come from. Paramilitaries? State police running daily armed patrols? What a stark contrast to my life in the Midwestern U.S.! So what is my "social and political situation?"

Then it hit - this is what privilege is. Folks with privilege (like me) don't have a "social and political situation." Do we? Actually, we do but our social standing, even if we make average wages, means that we don't have to think about it.

Our social and political situation is the inexpensive coffee we buy for the office or for church fellowship hour, it is the garden hose bought at Wal-Mart, it is the cheap petrol burned in our cars. We don't have to think about the farmers who got paid fifteen cents a pound for that coffee or the worker who made ten cents an hour to make our hose or the accumulation of toxic gases in the ozone layer.

That's what having an empire, or at least living by the waters of Babylon does for us: We don't have to think about it. The corporations provide, and we blithely consume.

A nun from the Catholic pastoral team in Chenalhó county took my arm during an animated conversation. "We have to resist the transnational corporations even though it seems difficult! Just like the mustard seed our resistance starts small, but it grows large. It depends on us, clear-minded people with privilege, to say 'No, we won't buy.'"

Let's say that again, all together now.

## Chiapas, Mexico: The Heartbeat of Cordial Relations

by Kryss Chupp

Jet black braids against pure white shawls adorned with bright red embroidered flowers, the Abejas women were first in line to register for the assembly. Then came the men in their white knee-length tunics, black wool ponchos and traditional hats donned with colourful, dancing ribbons.

After nearly 100 members of the Mayan pacifist group, Las Abejas (the Bees), had taken their seats at long rows of white tables on one side of the convention hall, the municipal authorities from Chenalhó, a small county in the heart of the Chiapan highlands, entered the lobby to sign in.

Then came a few select observers: religious leaders, human rights lawyers, the Red Cross, and the moderator of the meeting, Chiapas Governor Pablo Salazar. When the hall was full, there sat the Abejas face to face with many of the men who had run them out of their homes at gunpoint four years ago.

The August 24th event was initially announced as a meeting to sign a "Non-Aggression Pact" between the Abejas and local government authorities in preparation for the return of more than 300 people displaced by paramilitary violence to their home communities. But the Abejas clarified their intentions: "A non-aggression pact implies that two parties are fighting with each other. We, Las Abejas, have not committed any acts of aggression against anyone." So the negotiations resulted in an "Accord of Mutual Respect" in which the government agreed, among other things, to prohibit the possession of firearms in the villages and to ensure the safety of those returning home.

During a break when each side went to caucus in separate rooms, several priests and nuns came over to chat with CPTers who were maintaining a prayer presence outside the convention hall.

"This is an important opening of space," they reported. "Each side is speaking and listening to each other with respect." They emphasized that although the Governor would like to call it "reconciliation," this "acercamiento" (establishment of cordial relations) is an early step in a long process to come.

Near the end of the break, CPTers noticed two men standing in the corner talking amiably and shaking hands. One was Abejas leader José Vásquez from X'oyep. The other was Manuel Pérez Arias, pastor of the Presbyterian church in Pechiquil - the home community of many of the paramilitaries who participated in the massacre of 45 Abejas in December, 1997. These two old friends, who worked together to translate the Bible into their native language of Tzotzil, had not spoken to each other for several years following the massacre.

The prophet Ezekiel (11:19) announces God's promise of transformation: "I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh." The word for "peace" (in relationships) in Tzotzil is "jun 'ontonal" - one heart. Today in Chenalhó we can hear the nascent heartbeat of "cordial relations."

## European mission workers, Mennonites gather to focus on the city

August 22, 2001

BARCELONA, Spain (MBM) - Focusing together on the theme, "The Mission of the Church in the City," 60 adults and 30 youth from 10 European countries gathered here July 28-Aug. 3 to worship, fellowship and study the Bible together during the Mennonite Colloquium 2001.

"The reality of much of Europe is that the countryside is emptying," said Tom Rutschman, one of the conference organizers and a Mennonite Board of Missions associate in Sweden. "So we need to be theologically versed in how to do mission in the city. You're definitely very anonymous in the city. How can you let your light shine?"

Speaking during the opening worship and communion service, pastor Iñaki Alonso of Barcelona Mennonite Church challenged participants to see their mission as living differently than the values of the urban society around them.

Drawing on the dual imagery of the city of Babylon and the city of God described by John of Patmos in Revelation 18 and 21, Alonso urged listeners to join the "mission of pilgrimage from the great city of Satan to the new city of God."

Pointing out that throughout history the commercial centre has been the centre of the city, Alonso told those gathered that the trend continues into the present when communications link everyone into a "global village."

"We are all part of one same city," he said. "Material profit is our supreme modern value."

"Babylon seeks as its ultimate goal profit that is only obtained by exploitation of the poor," said Alonso, pointing out that "Today, the riches of Europe are based on the exploitation of the Third World."

"We are invited [by Christ]," Alonso said, "to not take part in the sins of Babylon, the greed, idolatry and associated violence."

"The people of God are called to a simple life," Alonso said, of solidarity with the poor. They are called to share the word of God through "a lived-out witness," to present the values of the New Jerusalem, love and peace.

Drawing from Revelation as well during a morning input session, John Powell, Mennonite Board of Missions director for Evangelism and Church Development, told participants, "The city seems a far cry from the kingdom of God. And yet, among the many signs of the 'anti-kingdom,' some of us are able to find glimpses of the kingdom of God right here among us. We live in the tension between the signs of the anti-kingdom and these precious glimpses of God's kingdom."

Powell outlined two tasks for the church in the city:

- \* Help others imagine God's vision for the city, and discover how Christ has already initiated that vision in our midst.

- \* Recognize that God's transformation of the city to an egalitarian community filled with God's presence is not yet complete.

Other participants, like conference organizer Jose Luis Suarez, pointed out that churches are challenged in the city by an overwhelming secularization of society. "How do we share the gospel in a secular world?" he asked. "What significance does the message have when people have no reference points?"

Another obstacle to mission in the city, said Suarez, is the distance many members live from the church facility.

Drawing a circle to represent the city, he placed a cross on one side to represent the church, then many small circles scattered about the city circle to represent the congregation's members.

When the congregation reaches out to the surrounding neighbourhood where no members live, Suarez said, people say, "Who is this person talking? I don't know this person."

Mary Thiessen Nation, an MBM worker in London, England, where she ministers to people engaged in urban ministry, also provided input during one morning session.

Drawing on her three decades of service in Los Angeles, California, and London, Thiessen Nation said that if church members are "going to be agents of healing and hope in the city, we need to be equipped to do healing and hope within the church. In order to bring healing and hope to others, we need to experience it [first]."

While the colloquium raised many of the challenges for churches in the city, it also encouraged participants.

"One of the important elements of the colloquium is the opportunity to experience community," said Suarez. "We are the only [Mennonite] church in Barcelona. We feel very alone. To know what others are doing, to share different perspectives is very encouraging."

Alonso also concluded his sermon on Sunday with an encouragement to those gathered. "There is no room for doubt," he said, looking out at those gathered. "The City of God will outlast Babylon."

The European Colloquium is a biannual gathering of MBM Europe workers and members of European Mennonite congregations. It was begun in 1976 to strengthen connections between European congregations and MBM workers in Europe. Tentative plans are to hold the 2003 event in Finland.

## The challenge of ministry in post-communist Lithuania, Albania, and Germany

Eastern Mennonite Missions, August 30, 2001

**HALLE, Germany** — With the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, Christians rushed to openly proclaim the gospel in formerly communist countries. Underground churches went public, and evangelists flooded eastern European capitals. Religion was given airtime on radio and television, and foreign missionaries arrived. In some places, the church has exploded with phenomenal growth. In other places, growth has been slow, and ministry is fraught with challenges.

At Soli Deo Mennonite, a new church plant in the former East German city of Halle, EMM worker Sharon Norton says, "Since the Berlin wall came down, people have been inundated with new things to buy and try. It's become almost an addiction to go shopping and buy lots of things just because you can. We hope that people will soon realize how empty possessions leave them feeling after the newness has worn off."

After the reunification of East and West Germany, businesses were shut down and revamped to western standards. Massive layoffs occurred. With 22% unemployment, Sharon says, "people are left feeling bitter and hopeless, which creates other problems, such as alcoholism." Many of the people she and husband Steve minister to call themselves atheists. "We

often hear, ‘If there was really a God, he would have helped us,’” she said.

Sharon observes that people fear hearing and telling the truth. “The mentality is still there to protect yourself and not let anyone get too close. It takes a long time to build trust, and we’ve found that many people lie about their problems instead of being honest.”

One of the positive things she finds, however, is that people freely admit they don’t know anything about God and church. “You don’t have to cut through layers of pretense and old religious traditions to get to the real issues. People are curious enough to give it a chance.”

**KLAIPEDA, Lithuania** — At Lithuania Christian College (LCC), where many new students steeped in scientism are introduced to the Bible and hear the gospel for the very first time, Bible teacher/EMM worker David Shenk says, “Debates occur in the dormitory at night after classes. The struggle between non-belief and the Spirit of Christ can be intense.”

Along with his wife Grace, Shenk sees many students come to Christ. Six years ago, 30 such graduates invited a faculty member to help them launch a “new wineskin” fellowship in Klaipeda. They had a vision for something different than the few tradition-bound, or newly-planted churches with authoritarian leadership already established in the area.

Recently, the congregation invited unchurched friends to a picnic in a park. “In Lithuania,” Shenk notes, “where mistrust of one another in the wake of the Soviet experience is still a prevailing spirit, the picnic was an excellent way to nurture trust and provide friends with an opportunity to experience the loving relationships Christ gives to the church.”

Grace Shenk tells of an LCC student with whom she had a special relationship. The young Lithuanian pleaded with the academic dean at LCC to admit her — that it was her last chance to turn her life around. Five years later, she is a graduate transformed by Christ. “I simply walked with her in this deep, dark valley,” Grace says.

Such is the way of Christ, giving hope to people everywhere — one person at a time.

**LUSHNJE, Albania** — In southern Albania, at Guri Themelit, (Cornerstone) church, EMM workers Willy and Barb Keener say that “everyone wanting to leave the country” is a major problem. “It’s mostly because of economics or for education,” Barb says. “Nearly every time leaders get trained in the church, they leave.” With the unemployment rate over 60 percent, people remain discouraged because development isn’t where they want it to be.

Willy says it’s hard to get people to move out of the victim mentality left over from the oppressive days under dictatorship. Begging can be a problem. “Sometimes we struggle with feeling used. We want to help in practical ways, but wisdom is needed,” he said.

Barb agrees. “Since we ‘have it,’ there is the feeling that we owe it to them.” But the couple are quick to point out that lives are changing. “It gives us joy when we see people begin to take leadership, pray, and give testimonies straight from their hearts. One couple started reading Christian books together at night. Another woman memorizes scripture in her greenhouse — all without our prompting.”

## “Why don’t you get a gun?": Reflections on peacemaking in Guatemala

by Scott Jantzi

GUATEMALA CITY — “Hey, Scott, why don’t you get a gun?” my neighbour yelled from across the street.

“What did you say?” I stammered, stepping out of the vehicle. This neighbour loves to tell long stories, and I was exhausted. I really hoped he would just keep walking.

Jorge, however, crossed the street to talk to me. “Why don’t you get a gun?” he repeated. “Jorge,” I replied, “I’m not sure I know what you’re talking about. Why do I need a gun?”

“Man, to get those robbers!” he replied. “I heard about what happened; you need to protect yourself, you know. This is a dangerous place.”

Finally, it dawned on me what he was referring to.

About a month earlier two armed gunmen had held up my wife, Rhoda, in front of our house and stole the MCC vehicle she was driving. Three weeks later the same gunmen returned, jumped the fence around the house, pointed their guns at our friend’s head and forced her to open the house so they could rob the contents.

After the second incident, our Guatemalan friends unanimously agreed we shouldn’t live in the house anymore. So Rhoda, our two girls and I moved into a single MCCer’s two-bedroom apartment until we could find another place to live. Rhoda was eight months pregnant. This conversation with Jorge was about a week after the second robbery when many of our belongings were still at the old house. I occasionally had to stop by to pick something up, and all I wanted was to get in the house, get the stuff, and get out.

When I saw Jorge coming toward me, I was so tired that the last thing I wanted to do was to be drawn into a long conversation. But since personal relationships are very important in Guatemala, and since I knew I couldn’t avoid Jorge without appearing rude, I leaned against the car for what I knew would be a lengthy chat.

“Why don’t you get a gun?” he repeated excitedly.

“Oh, God,” I thought. “You’re going to have to help me with this one.”

“Well,” I said slowly, “don’t you think that answering violence with violence just produces more and more violence? I’m glad we didn’t have a gun when the robbers stole the vehicle. I’m glad Rhoda gave them the keys without resisting them. I would much rather have my wife than that vehicle.”

Now it was Jorge who seemed to be at a loss for words. “But you should have a gun so you could protect your wife and kids if the robbers come back,” he stated earnestly.

“I don’t want a gun,” I replied. “I just think it increases the chance of getting shot yourself. In addition, I belong to a church that believes violence is not the answer.”

“But I am a Christian, too,” he replied emphatically. “I think God wants us to protect ourselves and stand up for what is right. In fact, I was a guerrilla,” he continued, “because I also wanted to stand up for the rights of all of the poor people in my country.”

And so our conversation continued. I think Jorge must have thought that this gringo was very strange. He told me he had never before heard anything like what I was telling him. As

our conversation drew to a close, Jorge looked into my eyes, grabbed my hand and squeezed it hard. "God bless you brother," he said. "I'll be praying for you."

"Yes, he'll be praying for me," I thought. "He probably thinks he needs to pray for someone so naive as to think they don't have to protect themselves with a weapon."

And secretly I admit I sometimes thought, "Yeah, I would like to have had a gun and been at the house when those robbers came back."

My thoughts come back to Jorge. Had I been in his position and faced the oppression he has certainly seen, would I also have "got a gun" and joined the guerrillas? What did he think of my claim that to truly follow Christ means to live a life of non-violence and love, even toward those who persecute you?

Several weeks ago Rhoda and I ran into Jorge at a local vegetable market. It was the first time I had seen him in several months, and the first time we had talked since our "gun" conversation. I wondered if he had thought about our conversation as much as I had.

"Where is this 'Menonita' church of yours?" he asked.

"Just up the street," I answered, and pointed to where it was located. "The service starts at 10," I said. "We would be glad to have you come and visit."

"I'm gonna do that," he smiled as he walked off. "I'm gonna do that."

*Scott Jantzi, originally from Oregon and most recently from Harrisonburg, Virginia, is MCC Guatemala country co-representative. Guatemalan names have been changed to protect privacy.*

## **Botswana workers deal with HIV/AIDS one life at a time**

by **Melanie Zuercher, 9 August 2001**

Gaborone, Botswana (COM/AIMM)—When Rudy and Sharon Dirks first went to Botswana in 1996, they had no idea that in less than five years their ministry would be consumed by a disease of epidemic proportions.

The couple are natives of Ontario, although Rudy grew up as a missionary kid in Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo). They went to Botswana as workers with the Commission on Overseas Mission (General Conference Mennonite Church) under the auspices of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, and joined the Mennonite Ministries Botswana team, a joint effort of AIMM and Mennonite Central Committee.

Rudy, a trained and experienced marriage and family counsellor, worked as a Bible teacher with African Independent Church leaders. Sharon, with a background in psychology and social work as well as Teaching English as a Second Language, taught at the Naledi Adult Education Centre, an alternative school for children and adults.

It soon became apparent, however, that the disease that seemed to be coming under some kind of control in North America in the mid-'90s was taking a terrible human toll on sub-Saharan Africa. In Botswana, a country of under 2 million where up to a third of the adult population between 15 and 50 is HIV-positive, everyone is either "infected or affected."

While Rudy still does preaching and teaching with AICs in Gaborone, much of his time over the last two years has gone into helping to develop and then launch, last March, the Tshepong Counselling Network. The goal of Tshepong, which means "trust," is eventually to have trained counsellors available

in all of the city's clinics as well as at a drop-in location.

Tshepong counsellors will deal mainly with issues surrounding HIV and AIDS, from a Christian perspective, but are available for other counselling needs as well. Currently there are nine Tshepong counsellors working in four of the city's 16 clinics. The drop-in office opened in mid-May.

Tshepong recently hired a full-time Motswana head counsellor, which has freed Rudy from some administrative responsibilities. It may also relieve Sharon, who no longer teaches at the Naledi school, of her current counselling duties at one of the clinics. If so, she hopes to be able to start seeing only clients who come for long-term counselling and to work with Rudy to supervise the Tshepong counsellors. She would also like to spend time visiting clinics where there is currently no Tshepong counsellor, to encourage them to hire one.

Stigma. "Working with the new clinics is tricky. Often you have to teach them how to use a counsellor," Sharon says. "Some nurses are trained in counselling, though not from a Christian perspective. Counselling [still] carries a huge stigma in Botswana."

She now spends one long day (about 12 hours) a week seeing clients. Many of these are pregnant women referred under the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission program, called MTCT. This helps the woman and her infant get access to AZT and other services if the woman first submits to AIDS testing as well as at least one counselling session.

With a woman who comes because of MTCT, Sharon tries to assess her understanding of the modes of HIV transmission to both mother and baby, as well as her levels of risk, then to see if the woman wants to take an AIDS test. "Most don't," Sharon says. "They're afraid and don't want to know."

Other clients come on their own, out of the clinic waiting room. "They see the poster on the door. Maybe they see it's in English and know it's an expatriate counsellor and they can be more anonymous," Sharon says. "We also have Setswana-speaking counsellors available. Maybe they're waiting to see a nurse and they know they have a long wait, so they knock on the door. As Tshepong is becoming known, sometimes they come into the clinics and ask for one of the Tshepong counsellors."

Acceptance. The typical walk-in is female and worried she might be HIV-positive, Sharon says. "They'll say, 'I don't trust my boyfriend,' or 'I have some symptoms,' or that they've been drinking a lot and/or sleeping around. If they've had an AIDS test, we look at the possibilities: 'How will you feel if the test is negative? How will you keep from getting infected in the future? If it's positive, what are you going to do?' The answer to the last one continually blows me away. I can count on one hand those who have said something other than 'I'll just accept it.' It's like they've all been prompted."

Counselling from a Christian perspective is appropriate whether the AIDS test is negative or positive, she says. "There is plenty of opportunity to teach healthy Christian sexuality regardless of test results," she says. "But sometimes it comes before the test results come back, when we're talking about the possibilities, and I ask, 'How will your community—your church—help you and support you?'"

When counselling those who are HIV-negative, Sharon says, the emphasis is on "working to develop a healthy sexuality. For example, I think of one couple who have both tested negative and had a healthy baby who tested negative. They are

so excited to realize that they have choices. They can be faithful to each other and find what they need in each other. I use a biblical basis to talk about marriage as being [monogamous].”

Young Batswana women often face great pressure from their families to have children, while at the same time it is difficult for couples to get legally married since the “bride-price” costs for the man are so high. The result: pregnant single women, single-parent families, a higher risk for infection with HIV.

Another problem is a lack of respect for marriage. Companies or even the government will transfer employees to branches across the country with no regard for marriage or a family. To refuse such a transfer is to lose a chance for advancement. Couples can end up living hundreds of miles apart, which puts great pressure on them to remain faithful to each other.

Given sexual practices and the overwhelming numbers of HIV-infected people and AIDS orphans, a Christian counselling network with fewer than a dozen counsellors seems to be facing frighteningly long odds of making a difference. The stories are often deeply discouraging.

Hope and joy. Yet Rudy and Sharon Dirks are far from being people without hope. They have faith in a God who can work in any situation, no matter how seemingly hopeless. They exercise regularly, spend leisure time with their three children and frequently attend an English-speaking church on Sunday mornings in addition to AIC services. And two small projects they have taken on are sources of great hope and joy for both, they say.

One is an every-other-week meeting with a small group of youth (which in Botswana can mean up to age 30 or more) at St. Michael’s Apostolic Church, which the Dirkses have been doing now for a little over a year. For the first six months, they worked on a Bible timeline as a way of improving biblical literacy, but most recently the discussion and study has turned to Christian relationships.

This includes looking at self-esteem, communication, family issues, love, sexuality and Christian marriage. “By approaching the youth in this way, we hope to give them skills and maturity that will help in all aspects of Christian life, not simply regarding HIV/AIDS,” says Rudy. “The most common question they ask is, ‘How can I find a man/woman I can trust?’ In a setting where there is such a high level of distrust, and assumption of unfaithfulness, this is a desperate plea.”

The other project is a married couples’ fellowship, which began meeting earlier this year with seven couples, including the Dirkses and their Mennonite Ministries colleagues Bryan and Teresa Born. The couples range in age from early 30s to mid-60s.

“In a country where there is so much pain relating to promiscuity and broken relationships, this opportunity to strengthen Christian marriages is exciting,” Rudy says. “There is so much potential in this group and we look forward to the day when not only have they grown in their own marriages but they can share what they have learned with other couples as well.”

“This work [with the youth and the couples] is our way of looking at the future, the possibility of ‘saving’ a few,” says Sharon. “And we hope for the ripple, when each of these affect a few others, and so on.”

## Indonesian Mennonites celebrate first missionaries’ ministry 150 years ago

by Lawrence Yoder

JAKARTA, Indonesia — In November 1851, Dutch Mennonites Pieter and Wilhelmina Jansz arrived from the Netherlands in what is now Jakarta, Indonesia. In the ancient town of Jepara, where they later founded the first Mennonite congregation outside of Europe and North America, Indonesian Mennonites recently celebrated 150 years since their coming.

The July 26 to 28 festivities were attended by nearly 200 Indonesian Mennonites from three conferences stemming from the Dutch Mennonite Mission. Representatives from the Netherlands and North America also attended.

A tour of historic locations took participants to the site of the first indigenous Javanese congregation, early mission hospitals and the burial place of Pieter and Wilhelmina Jansz, who remained in Indonesia for more than 50 years.

Mennonite Central Committee began its work in Indonesia at the request of the Dutch Mennonite Mission Board following World War II.

Some 160 Mennonite congregations now worship in Indonesia, and dozens more are forming. In the context of conflict-ridden present day Indonesia, church leaders are giving increasing attention to Christ’s call to be peacemakers.

*Lawrence Yoder is a missiologist at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and former MCC Indonesia country representative.*

## Personal touch: Relationship-building is vital to ministry in South Korea

by Melanie Zuercher

Abbotsford, B.C. (COM/MBM)—Even in a society as technologically savvy and up-to-date as South Korea, face-to-face meetings are of primary importance.

Although in different forms and different settings, they are what comprise ministry for Karen and Tim Froese, workers with the Commission on Overseas Mission (General Conference Mennonite Church) and Mennonite Board of Missions (Mennonite Church) with additional support from Mennonite Central Committee.

The Froeses—who have three children, Michelle, 15, Lucas, 14, and Stefan, 11—went to Korea in 1998.

Karen has spent much of her time in the past year involved at Seoul Foreign School, where her children attend and on the grounds of which the family lives. She assisted with volleyball and other sports and was a substitute physical education teacher in the middle school.

“This has given me a good chance to develop relationships with the middle school kids, about 75 percent of whom are Korean-American,” she says. “I’ve found it very interesting, and feel like [working with these kids] might be a place where I ‘fit.’”

“I’ve been asked to think about starting some kind of Christian club for middle school kids, focusing on the girls since there is already something for the guys—it’s supposed to be for both, but the Korean-American teacher who leads it finds



it harder to relate to the girls.

“So many of the kids don’t ‘fit in’ [because they are third-culture kids],” she says. “I never really fit in any place as a child. As a teenager, I was a Christian in a non-Christian high school. I remember and understand what it felt like not to fit in.”

There would be plenty of challenges to starting a girls’ group, not the least of which is the expectation that even in an international school, students will have a minimum of four hours of homework each night, in addition to sports and other extra-curricular activities.

“I would see it as a discipling group, which for me would mean a lot of role modelling, and include going to events as a group and doing community service projects plus having Bible study and discussion,” she says. “The hard part will be finding a way to fit it into an already tremendously busy Korean society.”

In addition, she says, “only 10 to 15 percent of the students at Seoul Foreign School are Christian, so I would need to work at building trust with the non-Christian students. At least I already have a presence there.”

As for Tim, he continues to work at strengthening a growing network of Anabaptist-related individuals and groups within South Korea.

“Up until the week before we left for Canada (for home-leave), there was an almost steady stream of people wanting to see me and talk to me,” he says. “I had one meeting that I thought would be with one person but turned out to include five.

“The original person was a pastor from the Jungno Community Church, in the southernmost part of the country in Busan [formerly Pusan]. He is part of an intentional community—along the model of Acts 2—of five families.

“Then there was a pastor from an established church in Kangwon province who has a lot of interest in Anabaptists, and three young men from WATCH, which stands for We Are The Church. They all wanted just to meet me as the official ‘Mennonite representative’ in South Korea. The people who had arranged for the first pastor to meet me also contacted the others.”

Those “people,” he says, constitute another strand in the growing Anabaptist web in South Korea—the Bruderhof.

“They are from the Darvel community in the United Kingdom,” Tim says. “They regularly receive visitors there who want to see what the community and their communal life are like, but by far the largest percentage of their visitors are from South Korea. So about a year ago, they began sending some of their members to live in Korea for varying periods of time to learn more about the people and the culture.”

The Bruderhof members have been gathering periodically with the Froeses over the past year “to share and talk together about Koreans and their interest in Anabaptism,” Tim says.

The Internet and World Wide Web are also playing an increasing role in building the network, he says. “About two weeks before we left, I got an e-mail from a Korean in Chile, written in Spanish. He might have gotten our address from a seminary professor, a mission directory or the web—I don’t know.

“Use of the web further broadens our task and makes it more interesting,” he adds with a smile.

Tim has also spent time “apart from all these individual meetings, working to get a place where we can invite people to come for meetings, study or research”—a Korea Anabaptist Center.

Logistically, it has not been easy. “Because of transportation issues, we need a place that is decent in terms of being accessible to a wide variety of people, and you pay through the nose for that kind of space.” There is a possibility that such a space at a reasonable rent, owned by the Methodist church, will come available at the end of August, and “we’re praying about that,” Tim says.

In anticipation of the day there will be an Anabaptist Center, Tim has been building a collection of Anabaptist-related material. “I recently happened on a five-volume set, translated into Korean, from the Presbyterians on peace and peace-making. It includes [reprints of] Glen Stassen’s *Just Peacemaking* and *The Meaning of Peace* by Willard Swartley and Perry Yoder. Right now there are about 20 titles written by or about Anabaptists and translated into Korean.”

He has on file the addresses of 130 of the 200-plus Christian publishers in South Korea and subscribes to a monthly booklist from Korean Christian booksellers. He spends time searching the web, which can be interesting because of the variety of spellings of the same word. “For example, Elmer Martens has three books translated into Korean, but each one transcribes the spelling of his name differently,” Tim says.

Currently, the “Korea Anabaptist Library” has about 600 volumes, including donations from North American libraries and archives as well as Books Abroad. He has also received back issues of periodicals such as *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. Tim has a wish list with around 1,000 additional titles.

“I keep a supply of *The Upside-Down Kingdom* [by Donald Kraybill] and *The Anabaptist Story* by William Estep, both translated into Korean, on hand to give as gifts, usually as a pair to give to people I’m meeting for the first time,” he says.

## A church takes root in US’s most ethnically diverse community

September 26, 2001

CHICAGO (MBM) - Since Jesus-centred community life and hospitality are two of the defining characteristics of their congregation, it was not unusual that Adeniki Fagunwa, Amy Ornée, Angelo Peterson, Chris Shapiro, Ludi Polanco and Rick Lee should find themselves seated around tables after church on Sunday to enjoy Pastor Sally Schreiner’s lentil soup and each other’s company. Stories flowed as the 20 people present shared how they found themselves in Chicago at Living Water Community Church. Located in Rogers Park, the US’s most multicultural community (according to 1990 census figures), those gathered around the table reflected that diversity.

“I am here because of a small, inconsequential thing,” Peggy Beazley said. “I think they call it ‘love.’” Beazley had just moved into a newly renovated apartment in a former crack house. She wanted a house blessing and the Living Water Community Church agreed to do one the following Sunday.

“Sundays are always busy at this church,” Beazley said. “First, with all the praising and sharing, you never know when

the worship service will end. On this Sunday, there was also a baptism in the lake and then a potluck. Finally, late in the afternoon, 10 tired people showed up at my door looking like something the cat dragged in. There were no fancy words, just, 'Bless the kitchen,' 'bless the bathroom,' and finally, 'Thank God we made it through the house.'

"I trembled before informing [the praying members of Living Water] that I had told other occupants of the building that they could have their rooms blessed, too. [The people from Living Water] just looked at each other and divided into three teams to begin the rounds of nearly a dozen other apartments. What I saw that day wasn't victorious Christian living. It was a great treasure in paper bags, the Lord working through exhausted people. That day, I learned that if you use all your strength just to show up, that's OK. God will do the rest."

The idea that was to become Living Water Community Church was conceived and incubated within the Reba Place Church for 10 years before the first service was held in 1995. A group of Reba Place members that included Schreiner and Karl McKinney, who became co-pastors of the new church, moved into the Rogers Park area.

This nucleus and the Reba Place Church provided spiritual and financial support for three years until Living Water became self-supporting. Renting worship space on the third floor of a Methodist church helped to minimize the financial burden.

"We are not highly defined by programs," Schreiner said. "We're into hospitality, not being a social service agency. We seek to be a Jesus-centred place where people's lives are transformed when they come into contact with the Holy Spirit."

Half of the 140 people who attend Living Water regularly are youth. The congregation is in the process of calling a youth pastor, as Schreiner became the sole pastor after McKinney resigned to become an urban ministry director with Mennonite Board of Missions in 2000.

"Prayer walking" is a significant part of Living Water's ministry. On Friday nights, a group from the congregation walks through the neighbourhood invoking God's presence in the trouble spots.

On one such occasion, a Living Water team of three saw the manager of a drug-infested house sitting on her front steps. When asked if she wanted prayer, she said, "Yeah, I'm getting ready to kill somebody." A group of people drinking nearby joined hands with the threesome and surrounded the manager in prayer. When the prayer was finished, the manager said, "My spirit is quiet now."

One of the houses on the Living Water prayer beat has been transformed into a housing co-op, and another building known to be a centre for drugs and prostitution is now a home for Russian immigrants. "Dare we say it was because of our prayer?" Schreiner said.

"I don't know what I'm doing much of the time," Schreiner said. "We go because the Lord wants us to. This neighbourhood has challenged me to grow in my faith and boldness. We meet such crazy situations that we really can't do anything about, but we invite God into them."

"When I go back to the monocultural, suburban community I grew up in, I feel impoverished," she said. "Life here is a daily adventure. I don't need to read novels. I'm living one."

Although many nations of the world are represented at

Living Water, Schreiner, who was a member of Mennonite Board of Missions Board of Directors for 10 years, encourages an awareness of global mission. Indeed, the congregation is sending its fifth missionary overseas: Amy Ornée, who was inspired during a mission presentation by Joe and Linda Liechty, MBM long-term mission workers in Ireland, is on her way to Belfast, Northern Ireland.

In order to be more visible and to accommodate the new people that God keeps sending their way, Living Water Community Church hopes to have its own building in the near future. Schreiner defined the congregation's vision for the next five years: "We want to continue to be engaged in the ministries that Jesus began on this earth," she said.

## A missional church before the word was coined

September 26, 2001

CHICAGO (MBM) - Reba Place Fellowship in Evanston, Ill., a suburb of Chicago just to the north of Rogers Park, began in 1957 as an intentional community committed to economic sharing and to ministering from within the community.

"Geographic concentration is an important expression of our ministry," said Virgil Vogt, a founding member and one of Reba Place Church's four pastors. "When we began, no one was using missional church terminology, but that was the concept that we based our work on. We saw the recovering of the Anabaptist vision discussions that were taking place at that time as having special relevance to the city."

"One important Anabaptist concept is community," Vogt said. "In order to call city people into fellowship, you need to first create that community. Our community living sprinkled throughout the neighbourhood enhanced the life in this neighbourhood."

After more than four decades, Reba Place Fellowship has given birth to many ministries. One is Reba Place Church, which became distinct from the fellowship in the early 1980s with the acknowledgement that not all people drawn to worship were called to be part of the intentional community.

The Reba Place congregation had more than 200 members before sending church-planting groups to nearby Rogers Park and to Madison, Wisconsin. "It is a wonderful way to plant a church," Vogt said. "We help them to start and hit the ground running, then we release them."

Today, the relationship between the Reba Place community and Living Water Community Church is characterized more by informal cooperation than by a prescribed structure.

Reba Place Church's pastoral team of four leads the congregation toward the original vision of being multicultural, though today the 150-member congregation remains 80 percent white.

"Racial reconciliation is a nice word, but we're looking for transformed relationships," said George Providence, pastor of evangelism. "None of our 29 million programs will make a difference if we are not transformed by Jesus Christ. [Also, when we speak of] being in mission, it implies a willingness to be transformed by those who are different from ourselves."

Reba Place Development Corporation, a non-profit organization, seeks to provide safe and affordable housing in

Evanston while preserving the racial and economic diversity of the community. The development corporation works closely with the municipal government and has had success in transforming crack houses into houses of peace.

“Prayer under girds all that we do at Reba Place,” said Pamela Sullivan, pastor of ministries. Sullivan coordinates morning and evening daily intercessory prayer, days of prayer and fasting, women’s prayer breakfasts, neighbourhood prayer walks, a program that assures that every person in the congregation is prayed for each day, and occasions of interdenominational prayer for the world’s trouble spots.

Other ministries include a two-month summer camp combining academics, fun and God’s love; a program for people with special needs; various publications; neighbourhood block parties; a second-hand shop; and a home for people in transition.

## Mission worker begins service in Northern Ireland

August 29, 2001

ELKHART, Ind. (MBM) - When Chicago native Amy Ornée talks about her faith, she says, “I have a fair amount of clarity about whose I am, which enables me to rejoice in my being. I have always struggled a bit more when it comes to doing.” In September, Ornée will begin a one-year assignment in Belfast, Northern Ireland, that will provide her with an opportunity to work one-to-one with people whose lives have been shaped by the centuries-old conflict between Protestants and Catholics in that country.

She heard about a new research position with an organization in Northern Ireland just as she was in transition between jobs. She recounts, “I felt that it might be a place where God could use my flexibility and my long-time interest in the Irish conflict to contribute to work that might never be done, but that glorifies him in the doing.”

She will be working as a research assistant for ECONI, Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland. ECONI assists “evangelical Christians in the continuing process of engaging with God’s word and the hurts facing [Northern Ireland’s] divided community.” In her position, Ornée will help maintain a library of existing resources, draw up a development plan - both in resources and funding - and assist in examining new resource materials and evaluating them for use by ECONI.

Ornée heard about the position from MBM worker in Ireland, Joe Liechty, following a presentation at her Chicago congregation, Living Waters Community Church. Ornée was moved by Liechty’s discussion of comfort zones that subtly control how a community will function. She saw many parallels between her own community and the communities in Northern Ireland.

Ornée was also in a time of personal transition. She was truly at home in her church community, but was seeking employment. Only days before meeting Liechty, she found out that an originally planned six-week temporary job would finish after only three weeks.

Ornée grew up in the Christian Reformed tradition and is relatively new to Anabaptism. However, she sees this new opportunity to serve in Northern Ireland as an opportunity for her to “be in the world with the indwelling Spirit in a transforming way.”

## Canned meat reaches Palestine

by Alain Epp Weaver

JERUSALEM — Muhammad Abu Zneid sits in his living room surrounded by 12 children, holding a can of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) turkey. “This is the only meat we’ve had in months,” he says. “It has brought a drop of happiness into our lives.”

The Abu Zneid family, of Khreisa village in the Hebron district of the West Bank, was one of nearly 2,000 families to receive MCC canned turkey this summer as part of a food-for-work program. Recipients are Palestinian families suffering economically in the Israeli occupied territories.

Since October 2000, Israel has established a network of roadblocks and checkpoints throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, separating Palestinian towns and villages from one another and preventing tens of thousands of Palestinians from entering Israel to work. While Israel cites security as the pretext for their roadblocks and checkpoints, they are viewed as a form of collective punishment crippling the Palestinian economy.

In Hebron and its surrounding villages, for example, Palestinian unemployment runs around 60 percent, while the poverty level in this once overwhelmingly middle-class society nears 50 percent. The ability of many families to meet basic needs has been stretched to the breaking point. A healthy meal on the table is no longer taken for granted.

“Palestinians are a proud people who don’t want handouts,” says Nidal Sultan, coordinator of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) in the Hebron district. “We want to get food to hungry people, but in a way that preserves their dignity.”

To meet human need in a way that preserves human dignity, MCC joined with the UAWC in a food-for-work program. Through the program, overseen by UAWC extension workers, families struggling economically and those living in areas hard hit by Israeli shelling received MCC canned turkey (along with flour, rice, sugar and oil donated by Catholic Relief Services and the World Food Program) in exchange for work on land reclamation projects operated by the union. Each participating family received seven cans of turkey.

“Reclaiming our land for cultivation is an essential part of promoting our self-sufficiency as a society,” notes Sultan.

Beginning in 1967, many Palestinian landowners started working inside Israel, attracted by the relatively high wages. Israel, for its part, encouraged this trend, wishing to maintain an inexpensive labor pool. Now that the doors have been closed to work inside Israel, however, Palestinian landowners are returning to their land, looking to plant trees and other crops on the rocky soil.

Abu Falah, a blind Palestinian farmer in the village of Khirbet Salameh, reclaimed 7 dunams, (a bit less than two acres), of his land as part of the project and planted fig trees and squash. His wife, Imm Falah, cooks the canned turkey with tomatoes, onions and garlic and then serves it over rice, making a hearty meal for them and their six children. “The meat is delicious,” she says.

“But the squash we planted as part of this program will be even more delicious,” her husband adds.

*Alain Epp Weaver is the country co-representative for MCC in Palestine.*

## What Makes a Mennonite Leader? One Ethiopian Mennonite's Point of View

By Phyllis Pellman Good

Consider the fact that the President of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) grew up in a family that practiced Confucianism and ancestor worship, and that MWC's Vice President was raised a Muslim. What makes a leader in the Mennonite world today? Apparently not the length—or the entanglement—of one's roots in a Mennonite family tree.



Bedru Hussein of Ethiopia, now in his fourth year as Vice President of Mennonite World Conference, carries three striking qualities—a giant stillness that is almost tangible, a view of leadership that bears consideration, and a coming-to-Christ that one might be tempted to call an accident.

“My parents were very ardent Muslims,” he explains. And so they raised him to be as well. From them he learned that what one believes, one lives. “My parents were very pious; they held monthly religious meetings in our home. My father was also recruited as a soldier.”

Believing that their son was securely fixed in their Muslim faith, Bedru's parents sent him at the age of five to an Orthodox priests' school so would have a better education. “There I was introduced to the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments.” Somewhere between his Muslim upbringing and his brush with Christianity, Bedru remembers that “I began to want to thank God. And there was a low voice that I heard, urging me to keep the Ten Commandments.”

One day on the playground during recess, a handful of paper fragments swirled over 13-year-old Bedru's feet. One of the torn papers particularly attracted his attention. “On it, in English, was part of the rich young ruler's story. Who is Jesus, I began to wonder. My classmates tried to explain a lot to me, but they couldn't seem to answer that question to my satisfaction.”

Despite the displeasure of his family, Bedru continued his curiosity about Christianity through his teen years and into his university training. A Billy Graham film and University Christian Students' Fellowship brought him to a confession of Christian faith in 1966 when he was 18.

“I was part of the Ethiopian revival; the Lord was raising up Christians at that time. But hand-in-hand with that action was another by a group of students who were forming a Communist party. The two movements grew simultaneously.”

### A Developing View of Leadership

From the beginning of his involvement with the Christian church, Bedru and his Christian compatriots realized that the work of the church could not be left primarily in the hands of a few select leaders. There were too many demands, too

many needs, too many expectations. Teachers of the gospel were needed on university campuses where interest in a new approach to life was at a peak. But teachers were also in demand throughout the entire country where the church was growing and spreading. “When both students and faculty returned to their homes, they needed well prepared churches to join,” observes Bedru.

Education has been his burden ever since. “Not all pastoral gifts can be in one person,” he states emphatically. “The only way the church can grow is to involve all lay members.” But preparation of church members has not been left to chance among Ethiopian Mennonites, with whom Bedru affiliated after he was hired as a teacher by a Mennonite high school in 1976.

Not only was he an instructor in biology for six years in that school, but he began teaching “apologetics, especially to young people of Mennonite and other denominations.” In that mix of professional and religious activity, Bedru demonstrated an ideal that has become a hallmark of the Meserete Kristos Church (MKC). “Members participate in every aspect of church life. Wherever an MKC member goes, he or she becomes a leader,” Bedru explains. “It's part of the culture of our church life.

“We believe in team leadership. And we believe in freeing the lay members. They are all ‘priests’; each has a gift.”

The exercise of those gifts, however, is not left to chance. A careful system is in place to nudge members toward the areas where they can be most useful. Bedru, who acknowledges that his own abilities and experience lie in administration and teaching, helped to hatch the methods for involving everyone in particular responsibilities within the church.

After 13 years as a biology teacher in one church school and two government schools, Bedru spent seven years as Executive Secretary of the Meserete Kristos Church. The experience as a church executive made him face the Ethiopian Mennonites' desperate need for trained pastors and leaders. In 1994, the Meserete Kristos College opened about 25 miles outside Addis Ababa, on the slope of a hillside where the city is fast approaching. At this point, courses are offered at a variety of levels in biblical and theological studies, especially for pastors and evangelists. The college's master plan calls for developing a Liberal Arts program, offering degrees in science, business administration, computer technology, nursing, and pharmacology.

The formation of this major institution prompted Bedru himself to head back to school, this time in North America. In the fall of 1997, he said goodbye to his wife, Kelemework Belete, and his four half-grown children and enrolled in Eastern Mennonite Seminary's three-year Master of Divinity program. His studies “shaped my conceptualization of things, not just to go forward, but to see in all directions. I wanted to be introduced to the tools of theology and to add a level to what I had already experienced in the church.”

Bedru is now back in Ethiopia, appointed as Associate Principal of the Meserete Kristos College and teaching courses in leadership, administration, and missions.

Leaders who leave their country for extended training in another culture, and then return home, have to deal with re-entry. So, too, do their home communities. Bedru spent most of each summer in Ethiopia while he was studying in the States for three years, and he and his family established regular times for a monthly phone call during the school year. But the strain can't be completely avoided. "Some persons may be hesitant; they may think I'm liberal for having studied in the States. But my convictions are the same, although my approach may now be somewhat different," he comments.

### **Ethiopian Mennonites Train Other Christians, Too**

The college is being noticed by other Christian groups. "We have some students from the Coptic Orthodox renewal movement," says Bedru. "We train them to return to their own churches." But MK College doesn't hide its particular emphases. "We have a peace stand. And that is part of our training for everyone. But we don't take sheep from other churches. We urge those leaders to stay in their churches. We can't make the whole church MKC!"

Nor does he want to. He speaks of a "laxity" within the MKC and of an effort on the part of leadership to have membership and attendance requirements become more vigorous. "We have an open meeting on Sunday and cell group meetings once a week. Those who don't attend are followed up on."

Bedru's years in North America gave him a close view of the Anabaptist-Mennonite churches there. "There is an individualistic attitude, but also a pluralistic attitude," he reflects. "People seem to think 'maybe this idea is good and that idea is good, and Jesus is one of many options."

"Church work is put heavily on the pastor. People are too busy to develop relationships. Pastors are kept on the move; people want something new; they seem to want entertainers rather than serious Bible teachers."

### **The Pastor's Proper Part**

He speaks softly but with firm conviction about what he believes are appropriate ways for the church to accomplish its tasks. "I think the Lord has given people to the church—and each has a gift—and they are all needed. A pastor can't have them all. A pastor can mobilize these gifts.

"Pastors should present themselves to God; ask to sense the peoples' hearts; look for people who can be leaders; spend time with them; discover the Bible together; fellowship together; train the laity; fast and pray together; involve all in church life. The pastor's task is to mobilize." It is a theme with him. "Pastors ought to engage members in a meaningful way so they can experience the visiting of the Spirit."

This Ethiopian leader explains the energy and boldness of his faith as a result of his "exposure to the baptism of the Holy Spirit." But he also thinks like an executive. "Too often there is no connection between seminary teaching—and congregations. People without a calling come to seminary. They can't quote scriptures, but they come because they have the mental capacity. For some it's a profession. They market themselves in seminary.

"If churches want to grow, they need to mentor young people from their congregations, visit them when they go away to school or work, bond with them, call them back to leadership."

The strategy appears to be working. "The majority of our members are young people. We attract a lot of college students. We have a minister in Addis who cares for members who are in college. Every year we have 30-40 college students who become church leaders."

### **A Practical Proposal**

When he's not deep into educational strategizing, Bedru dreams about Anabaptist-Mennonite churches from scattered places around the globe having intentional and meaningful interchange. "Why not have training institutes where Anabaptist-Mennonites from the Southern hemisphere and the Northern hemisphere come together to work at practical theology—living, working, praying, studying, doing research together. That kind of training would keep the Anabaptist identity clear, especially as we would study together. It would help to focus our identity.

"How about sending North American seminary profs to satellite training centers around the world for short periods of time? That would certainly enrich their teaching when they return home.

"We're hoping that our Bible college can begin accepting students from North America. And I'm also working on having Eastern Mennonite Seminary [in Harrisonburg, Virginia, USA] professors come to Ethiopia to teach on their sabbaticals. If they do, their lives will be different; their teaching will be changed.

"We need the North, and the North needs the South. We can talk to each other when we get together in big meetings, but doing together brings changes of attitude; it strengthens the bond in all directions."

### **His Essential Practices**

How does Bedru maintain his energy and faith when resources lag so mercilessly behind the needs in Ethiopia? Those who have been his roommates at Mennonite World Conference meetings comment about his consistent discipline of rising early for several hours of prayer each morning. "I have prayer time for myself alone in the morning and before I go to bed. I read the Scriptures," he says simply. "Almost every day I get a message about what I should think about that day."

The Ethiopian Mennonites, and the global Anabaptist-Mennonite family, are the richer for having Bedru among them—with his broad worldview and his passion for mentoring all church members.

**Bedru dreams about Anabaptist-Mennonite churches from scattered places around the globe having intentional and meaningful interchange. "Why not have training institutes where Anabaptist-Mennonites from the Southern hemisphere and the Northern hemisphere come together to work at practical theology—living, working, praying, studying, doing research together."**

## AROUND THE NETWORK

### AAANZ Online Discussion Group BY DANNY KLOPOVIC, Discussion Group Moderator

Email to: [anabaptists@yahoo.com](mailto:anabaptists@yahoo.com)

Yahoo!Groups is a popular web facility that allows for the hosting of email discussion groups. One could find the home page at <http://groups.yahoo.com/>. There one will find literally thousands of email discussion groups on all sorts of topics and for a wide range of interest groups.

It is useful for providing internet exposure as it is open to the public. Anyone who searches keywords at the Yahoo! home page such as Anabaptist, Anabaptism, pacifism, non-violence etc will automatically bring up our email group. The email group is linked to the AAANZ home page at <http://www.anabaptist.asn.au/>

An email group has been created at [anabaptists@yahoo.com](mailto:anabaptists@yahoo.com) for the use of AAANZ members and anyone else interested in joining our conversations. To date, the email group has 21 members who have registered themselves on this email discussion group. Apparently, we have already attracted members in the USA and Spain from the member list. You can see the home page for this email group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/anabaptists>

If you are not already a member of the email discussion group, you can join as follows:

1. Open the home page to Yahoo!Groups at <http://groups.yahoo.com/>
2. You will see on the left column a bar titled "Sign In". If you are not already a member of Yahoo!, you can register yourself under "New Users".
3. This will pop up a form for you to complete your details such as your ID name, password, etc. Once you complete this form, you click "Submit this form". There are instructions at each step that you can follow.
4. You should now have a Yahoo! ID name and password. Make sure that both the ID and password are easy for you to remember or that you have them written down somewhere in a safe place. Both the ID name and password are case-sensitive – in other words, capitals and lower-case letters matter.
5. You then will be able to sign in as a member of Yahoo! and join any group. If you look at the home page for the email discussion group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/anabaptists>

[groups.yahoo.com/group/anabaptists](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/anabaptists) one can see on the right side a "Join this Group!".

Click on this to join.

6. Of course, if you wish for the moderator to subscribe you directly, you could email me at [radikal@ains.net.au](mailto:radikal@ains.net.au) with a request to subscribe or with any other queries that you may have.

The email traffic is quite reasonable – so far 8 emails a month. There is no fear at this stage of having your Inbox flooded with countless emails. It would be nice to see more discussion as we seem to have non-AAANZ people who have joined the list and this is a way of "spreading the message"!

NB: Spammers and junk mailers, of course, will be banned to keep our Inboxes free.

## Tampa Impasse a Profound Moral Challenge

30 August 2001

The plight of the Afghan asylum seekers on the Norwegian container ship, the 'Tampa' is 'a profound moral challenge for the nation', said Rev Tim Costello, President of the Baptist Union of Australia, today.

'This is especially so for Christians', Mr Costello said, 'because we are called to side with the defenceless in the teeth of popular opinion condemning them and even against the national interest. We should not fail in this test at this time.'

Responding to Mr Costello's challenge, the National Director of the overseas development and relief arm of Australian Baptists, Australian Baptist World Aid, Dr Les Fussell, said that some of these people are fleeing a particularly oppressive regime in Afghanistan. 'It is ironic that while we are expending such effort on gaining the release of two Australians incarcerated in Afghanistan, we are prepared to turn away people, some in desperate straits, who are fleeing from that country', Dr Fussell said.

Dr Fussell called on the Government to put humanitarian considerations ahead of political and national interests. He said. This position is consistent with a statement by the Baptist churches of NSW and the ACT.

On a wider note, Dr Fussell said that the tendency for both sides of politics to put political point scoring above principle on the whole refugee issue displayed a lack of moral leadership. 'The demonising of asylum seekers for political purposes is despicable', Dr Fussell said, 'and the recent moves to reduce the criteria for refugee status and other measures to make it more difficult to qualify or appeal would demean us further in the eyes of the world.' Dr Fussell called for an independent review of the system of mandatory detention with a view to establishing a more flexible and humane system, drawing on overseas precedents.

### Christian Resources Exhibition

Hall 4 Sydney Showgrounds Homebush Bay

11-13 October 2001

9 am – 5pm Thursday and Friday

9am – 4pm Saturday

Entry \$10 / Adult

Exhibitors include:

**AAANZ, OIKOS and Danthonia Bruderhof**

# BOOKS AND RESOURCES

## Peace Books

A good source for peace books online is

<http://www.MennoLink.org/peace/>.

A recent letter on the MennoLink network recommended two books, one for children and one for adults:

Each year I give the beloved children in my life a peace picture book. It doesn't much matter how old they are! This year's choice helps answer the perennial question, "But what about Hitler?!"

**The Yellow Star The LEGEND of King Christian X of Denmark**, by Carmen Agra Deedy, Illustrations by Henri Sorensen, US\$16.95

From the inside cover: For centuries, the Star of David was a symbol of Jewish pride. But during World War II, Nazis used the Star to segregate and terrorize the Jewish people - except in Denmark. When Nazi soldiers occupied his country, King Christian X of Denmark committed himself to keeping all Danes safe from harm.

The adult book:

**The Missing Peace: The Search for Nonviolent Alternatives in United States History**,

by James C. Juhnke & Carol Hunter, \$26.50 US, Pandora Press 2001

<http://www.pandorapress.com>

Peace,

Susan Mark Landis

Minister of Peace and Justice for the Mennonite Church

PO Box 173, Orrville OH 44667-0173 [mepjc@sssnet.com](mailto:mepjc@sssnet.com)

## New Releases From Herald Press

*The following releases were recently announced by Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania. Herald Press is the publisher for the Mennonite Church USA.*

ALL HERALD PRESS BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FROM PROVIDENT BOOKSTORES  
E-MAIL [PBSORDER@MPH.ORG](mailto:PBSORDER@MPH.ORG).

**Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community Before the Watching World**, by John Howard Yoder, Paper, 90 pages, Price: US\$14.99, Classification: Ethics, Theology

"A crucial advance in recent philosophy and theology is (re)discovery of the fact that we do not know what our words mean if we do not know how to put them into practice. Yoder's Body Politics embodies this understanding of the intimate dialectic of thought and life, doctrine and liturgical practice."

- Nancey Murphy, Fuller Theological Seminary

Binding and loosing, baptism, eucharist, multiplicity of gifts, and open meeting; these five New Testament practices were central in the life of the early Christian community. Some of them are still echoed in the practice of the church today. But the full social, ethical, and communal meaning of the original practices has often been covered by centuries of ritual and interpretation. John Howard Yoder, in his inimitably direct and discerning style, uncovers the original meaning of the five practices and shows why the recovery of these practices is so important for the social, economic, and political witness of the church today.

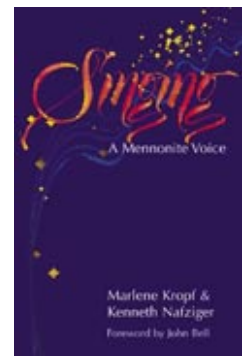
"Protestant Christians are often tempted to think of the

public practices of the church as ornamental or secondary representations of more fundamental theological realities such as personal spirituality or social ethics. In Body Politics, Yoder shows how the communication practices of the church-from decision making to baptism to table-fellowship-constitute the building materials for God's coming reign." - Gerald J. Biesecker-Mast, Bluffton College

About the Author: John Howard Yoder (1927-1997) taught ethics and theology as a professor at Notre Dame University and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. He received his doctorate from the University of Basel, Switzerland. Widely sought around the world as a theological educator, ethicist, and interpreter of biblical pacifism, he is best known for **The Politics of Jesus**.

**Singing: A Mennonite Voice**, Paper, 192 pages, Price: US\$14.99

"This book underscores the unparalleled importance of congregational song. I hope it will revitalize the belief that the most important musical sound in worship is the voice of the people." - John L. Bell



The ideas and questions that grew out of producing **Hymnal: A Worship Book** resulted in a two-year listening and research project in which Marlene Kropf and Kenneth Nafziger asked hundreds of people in the church, "What happens when you sing?" The answers to this question and others along with favourite hymns are presented here.

About the Authors: Marlene Kropf is Associate Professor of Spiritual Formation and Worship and Director of Spiritual Formation at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana. Kenneth Nafziger is Professor of Music at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia. Ken founded and is director of the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival, also in Harrisonburg.

**Singing: Treasures from Mennonite Worship**

Cassette, Price: US\$10.99; CD, Price:

US\$15.99, Classification: Recorded Music, Worship; Mennonite/tradition

The music featured here is based on the book, **Singing: A Mennonite Voice**, a collection of stories and reflections gathered from ordinary Mennonite worshipers throughout North America.

Hymns featured include: "Praise God from Whom;" "What Is This Place;" "I Owe the Lord a Morning Song;" "Ehane he'ama/Father God, You are Holy," "In the Rifted Rock I'm Resting/Wehrlos und Verlassen Sehnt Sich," "Jesus, Priceless Treasure," "Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth," "Children of the Heavenly Father," "Be Thou My Vision," "For God So Loved Us/Gott ist die Liebe;" "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," "Tu has Venido la Orilla/Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "I Am the Bread of Life," "Lift Your Glad Voices,"

“When Peace, Like a River,” “Precious Lord, Take my Hand,” and “God of Grace and God of Glory.” Features the Eastern Mennonite University Chamber Singers conducted by Kenneth Nafziger. Part of the Hymnal Masterworks series of recordings.

**Hebron Journal: Stories of Nonviolent Peacemaking,**

by Arthur G. Gish

Paper, 256 pages, Price: US\$17.99; Classification: Peace; international relations

“Art Gish’s testimonies are characterized by honesty and veracity, providing a firsthand description of a harsh situation. I hope his work can be an eye-opener for those who have been misled.”

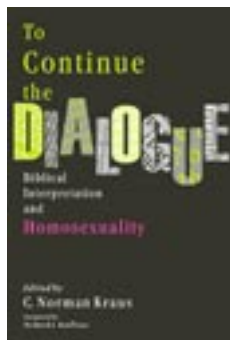
- Khalid Amayreh, Journalist and Islamist leader

Arthur G. Gish records a moving story of the turmoil and suffering of the Palestinian people, the agony experienced by Israelis, and a vision of hope and new possibilities of reconciliation between Jews, Muslims, and Christians. From 1995 to 2001, Gish experiences living with Muslim families, engaging in nonviolent actions with Israelis and Palestinians, and struggling to find creative responses to situations of injustice. Selected excerpts from his journal tell of the Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) work and give a vision of how small peacemaking groups can make a difference in violent conflicts.

“The CPTers dared to speak out, and for that we are grateful. Let us pray together to find, as Art says, ‘strength and courage to act in calmness and love.’” - Nora Arsenian Carmi, Armenian-Palestinian Christian, Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center

“As an Israeli Jewish rabbi, it seems to me that the work of Art Gish and his fellow Christian peacemakers is today’s real-life application of In His Steps.” - Arik W. Ascherman, Executive Director, Rabbis for Human Rights  
About the Author: Arthur G. Gish, Athens, Ohio, has been active in peace and social justice work for over 40 years, beginning with work as a conscientious objector with Brethren Volunteer Service in Europe. He is the author of **Beyond the Rat Race** (1972) and **Living in Christian Community** (1979).

Pandora Press U.S. is pleased to announce release of **To Continue the Dialogue: Biblical Interpretation and Homosexuality**, in which editor C. Norman Kraus presents a range of carefully written chapters by noted authors wrestling with the question of how the church might find its way through one of our era’s more difficult and controversial issues.

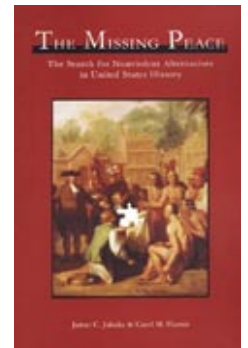


Here are reasoned yet passionate calls for all who care about biblical interpretation, homosexuality, and discerning a way forward to join together, no matter their perspectives, in sober and prayerful deliberation under guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Publication date: October 15, 2001 (copies available now), Pages: 334, Price: US\$23.95

<http://www.PandoraPressUS.com/ctd/ctd.htm>

**The Missing Peace: The Search for Nonviolent Alternatives in United States History** by James C. Juhnke and Carol M. Hunter, Herald and Pandora Press, 2001, Pages: 322, Price: US\$26.50



The Missing Peace contests the myth of redemptive violence that has formed the subtext of United States history courses for decades. James C. Juhnke and Carol M. Hunter view U.S. history from the perspective of mutuality and interdependence. They set out to lay the foundation for a less violent future by remembering the events and the people who worked for nonviolent alternatives, whose stories have been passed over in conventional historical writing. A highly readable book, with chapters focusing on each of the principal periods in U.S. history, from first contact with the Native peoples to the Cold War era and the present day.

## Seeing Jesus

You’re invited to explore the “Seeing Jesus,” web pages at on Third Way Cafe at <http://www.thirdway.com/Jesus/>. The pages attempt to look at Jesus in new ways, especially the life and ministry of Jesus. The creators, Jerry L. Holsopple, Kristen Kennedy and Wayne Gehman, say that while much of the historical art about Jesus focuses only on his birth or death, this collection of images, scripture and quotations from believers around the world looks primarily at his life, ministry and teachings. Be prepared to experiment and take your time— it is purposely not a web site where you figure everything out at once glance. You may find different things every time you go back, just like it is in our walk with Jesus.

Let us know what you think! Respond at [www.thirdway.com](http://www.thirdway.com)

***In The Unnecessary Pastor by Marva Dawn and Eugene Peterson, Eerdmans, 2000 Dawn says: “We all need to become [USA] Southerners to read the Bible correctly, because to inhabit its world is to speak about our lives as y’all (plural), instead of you (singular).***

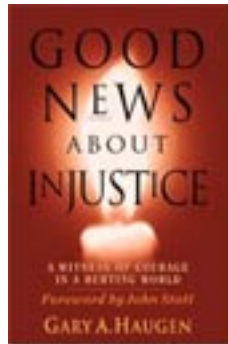
***About the only individual instructions in the Bible are those given to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, since these three received personal letters, rather than congregational ones. Most of the rest of the descriptions and commissions in the Bible are plural: “Be blessing those persecuting you, y’all (Romans 12:14); y’all consider it all joy, brothers and sisters, when y’all fall into diversified testings”(James 1:2); “Do not be thwarting the Spirit, y’all”(1 Thessalonians 5:19). (page 214)***



# BOOK REVIEWS

*The following eight reviews are by Chris Marshall from the Bible College of New Zealand*

## **Good News About Injustice: A Witness of Courage in a Hurting World**



Gary A. Haugen, IVP, Leicester, England/Downers Grove, Illinois, 1999, 200 pages.

This simple but passionately written book would make an excellent resource for student or church home groups. It would be particularly suitable as part of a consciousness raising exercise for evangelicals who doubt (or deny) that justice is central to biblical faith, or who pay lip service to the idea of justice but do little practically to advance the cause of justice in their personal or congregational lives. The strength of the book is the way it interweaves biblical reflection with real stories of appalling injustice around the world, including the author's own story of personally confronting situations of unspeakable barbarism. As John Stott says in his Foreword, it is hard to emerge unscathed from exposure to the book's heart rending accounts of massacres, child abuse, torture and violence.

The author is president of a Christian organisation called International Justice Mission. In 1994, he was seconded to the United Nations genocide investigation in Rwanda. In that capacity he had to sift through the skeletal remains of thousands of Tutsi men, women and children massacred by their Hutu neighbours. Confronted with the sheer scale of such a horror, or with the massive extent of other forms of injustice in the world, the temptation is to despair, to think that the problem is too great for ordinary people to make any difference. But Haugen insists that the most powerful weapon in the struggle against injustice is not political power but hope — hope that change is possible, that something can be done.

For Haugen, this hope is rooted in two things — the example of courageous evangelical Christians of the past whose apparently feeble witness achieved huge shifts in public opinion against such atrocities as slavery, child prostitution and lynching, and in the God of scripture, whose core attribute is justice and who detests nothing more than the abuse of power, which is the essence of injustice.

In the central section of the book, Haugen highlights four aspects of the biblical testimony — God's love of justice, God's compassion for those who suffer, God's judgment on those who perpetrate injustice, and God's active rescue for the victims of injustice. After rightly emphasising the importance in scripture of this fourth dimension, Haugen asks the reality question: Precisely how does God intervene to save the oppressed? His answer: Primarily through the actions of his people. "Over time I have come to see questions about suffering in the world not so

much as questions of God's character but as questions about the obedience and faith of God's people" (100).

In the final section, Haugen outlines some "real-world tools for rescuing the oppressed". Understanding injustice as a combination of coercion and deception, he outlines practical ways for exposing deceptions and intervening to rescue victims. In the final chapter insists that every Christian must be involved in doing something, however small, for the advancement of justice, even if dealing with more complex situations of oppression will require the intervention of trained specialists.

This book as a useful entree for Christians into the importance of working for justice in God's aching world.

## **The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom**

Alan Kreider, Trinity Press International, Harrisburg, Pa., 1999, 126 pages.

Most of us know very little about church history, and what we do know tends to be dominated by the history of doctrinal developments. In this fascinating and important little book, Alan Kreider introduces us to the history of Christian conversion. His basic thesis is that with the emergence of "Christendom" in the fourth and fifth centuries, the nature of conversion changed, and in a way that had a far-reaching impact on the character of Western Christianity.

In the pre-Constantinian era, becoming a Christian was an exacting and extended process. It entailed moving through three or four distinct stages which, in some places, could take anything up to five years to complete. Only at the end of the process was the candidate baptised and permitted to partake in the Eucharist, recite the Lord's Prayer and share the kiss of peace. The process was intended to effect a comprehensive transformation in the person's beliefs, behaviour and belonging. This, Kreider helpfully suggests, is what conversion is — change not just in theological belief but also in ethical behaviour and in individual's belonging. The candidate once belonged to mainstream pagan society; after conversion, he or she now belonged to the Christian community, a community that nurtured a distinctive set of values and behaviours. Converts became "resident aliens" in the world.

Despite the disciplined, protracted and costly nature of Christian initiation, the pre-Constantinian church grew rapidly. It has been estimated that it increased in size by 40% each decade for the first three centuries. It grew not by grand evangelistic campaigns (there were none) nor by "seeker-sensitive" worship services (outsiders were not permitted to attend church gatherings). Rather it grew by cultivating an attractive lifestyle and by addressing the real needs of people. These needs essentially stemmed from the common addictions of pagan society to money, sex and power. By disciplined moral instruction and by the extensive practice of exorcism, the church aimed to become "an addiction-free society", and it was this reality that drew in unbelievers.

After the conversion of emperor Constantine (which Kreider locates late in his reign), things began to change. The four stage conversion process shrank to two - infant baptism and confirmation. Belonging to the church became automatic, a function of genes and geography not personal commitment. Greater emphasis was given to orthodox belief than to counter-cultural behaviour. Whereas conversion once made Christians resident aliens, it now made them simply residents. The age of "Christendom" had arrived. The church continued to grow rapidly, but as much as by what historians have called "inducement and compulsion" or "flattery and battery" as by genuine conversion.

Kreider offers an extremely helpful summary of the salient features of Christendom (pp. 91-98). The book is worth getting for this summary alone, both because it demonstrates the contrast that existed between Christendom and what prevailed in the earlier centuries and the contrast with what prevails now, in post-modernity. As Kreider points out, "...throughout most of the West, Christendom is in a state of decrepitude if not decomposition." This is no cause for despair however, for Christianity remains alive and well, and once again has the opportunity to become a community of resident aliens, not just resident parishioners. Kreider concludes by drawing clues from the experience of the early church which are relevant to the future of Christian mission.

I highly recommend this insightful little book.

## **The Jubilee Challenge: Utopia or Possibility? Jewish and Christian Insights**

H. Ucko (ed.), Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997, 197p.

In the years leading up to the turn of the millennium, much was heard about "Jubilee 2000" — the campaign to encourage Western governments and banks to forgive third world debt. As the name implies, the campaign drew its inspiration from the redistributive dimensions of the biblical institution of jubilee (Lev 25). The campaign never called for a literal implementation of a year of jubilee. Rather it appropriated the symbol of jubilee to represent its demand for a release of the poorest nations of the world from their enslavement to Western creditors. This book is not about the Jubilee 2000 campaign. It is about the biblical sabbath and jubilee regulations themselves and the way these have functioned throughout Jewish and Christian history. As such it provides an excellent theological context in which to locate Jubilee 2000.

If fully observed, biblical sabbatical and jubilee regulations (Exod 23:10-11; Deut 15:1-11; Lev 25:8-17, 23-55) would have functioned to prevent the institutionalising and absolutising of poverty. Every seven years economic inequalities between creditors and debtors were to be righted and the land left fallow. Every 49th or 50th year, slaves were to be released, debts remitted and land restored to its owners, ensuring that the family could not be permanently dispossessed of land. The utopian nature of the jubilee regulations, together with the enormous practical difficulties entailed in putting them into

practice, has led to a general scholarly suspicion over whether the institution was ever actually implemented. But the jubilee has served throughout Jewish and Christian history as an ideal or divine benchmark against which to measure empirical practice. The jubilee regulations presuppose a right to participation in social and economic life by the most vulnerable groups in society and the need for regular action to restore such participatory rights given the inherent tendency of all economic systems to concentrate wealth and power in the hands of the few at the expense of the many.

Although they approach the topic from a variety of perspectives, the 18 Jewish and Christian contributors to this collection of essays seem to agree on this point. They all recognise the hermeneutical difficulties involved in treating the biblical texts and the pragmatic problems that make enforcement of jubilee and sabbatical-year provisions today impossible. But they see something of profound importance and continuing relevance in the values and priorities at work in sabbatical and jubilee institutions, of which the Jubilee 2000 campaign is a good example.

## **Beyond Impunity: An Ecumenical Approach to Truth, Justice and Reconciliation**

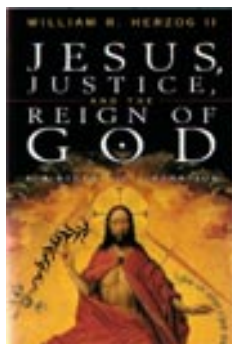
Genevière Jacques, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2000, 61pp.

A significant barrier to the achievement of justice and reconciliation in places where there have been serious violations of human rights is the practice of "impunity". By this is meant either the refusal of the legal authorities to pursue those guilty of human rights violations or the granting of blanket amnesties by new governments to those responsible for atrocities under previous regimes. This was the common strategy used by newly elected governments in Central and Latin America in the 1970s and 80s, often out of fear that the previous military rulers would overthrow them if any action was taken to prosecute their crimes. Still today in many countries, a culture of impunity is considered normal. The legal system is co-opted by those in power so that they can literally get away with murder. The struggle against impunity is therefore an integral part of the defence of human rights. It has become a priority in places such as Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia and East Timor, as they struggle to reconstitute themselves as functioning societies in the aftermath of massive human rights abuses.

Sometimes impunity is justified on the basis of letting the past be past and starting afresh. But as Genevière Jacques explains eloquently in this little book, the problem with impunity is that it prevents genuine reconciliation from happening. Victims are silenced, and thus prevented from dealing with their suffering and despair in a way that makes for healing. Perpetrators too are unable to recover their human dignity until they acknowledge their guilt and repent of their wrongdoing. Without collective remembrance and truth-telling there can be no justice, no forgiveness and no reconciliation. Moreover unless the crimes of the past are confronted, similar things are liable to happen in the future. Behind the ethnic cleansings of recent decades lie unresolved injustices from earlier times.

The author's aim in this book is to help churches understand the issues surrounding impunity in order to help them combat it. Christian churches have often proved vital in resisting the cruel silence that envelopes places where evil is done, and in affirming and empowering victims to speak. Biblical themes to do with memory, truth, repentance and restoration offer theological resources for the battle against impunity. And, thank God, there is evidence the battle is being won. Two recent events are significant markers of this. The first was the decision by an intergovernmental conference in Rome in 1998 to establish an International Court of Criminal Justice. The second was the ruling by the British law lords that the Chilean dictator Augustus Pinochet could legally be tried under foreign jurisdiction for crimes against humanity. Never again will retired bullies and butchers feel they can travel the world with impunity; their sins shall surely find them out!

## Jesus, Justice, and the Reign of God: A Ministry of Liberation



William R. Herzog III, Westminster John Knox, Louisville KY, in 2000, 316pp.

In this book, William Herzog makes a valuable contribution to the so-called “third quest for the historical Jesus” now into its third decade. The book's value lies partly in its methodology and partly in its subject matter.

In terms of method, Herzog does not rely on speculative reconstructions of the earliest traditions behind the gospel accounts nor on isolating “authentic” sayings of Jesus. Instead, very much like Tom Wright, he begins by reconstructing the social world of first-century Palestine, then proposes a hypothesis about Jesus' identity and work for testing against the available data. “In brief, I am persuaded that Jesus of Nazareth cannot be fully understood unless we understand the world in which he conducted his public work and comprehend the prophetic role he played in that world. This means that the task of understanding the politics, kinship networks, economics, social life, symbolic world, and the systems of meaning in ancient Palestine is an indispensable part of any quest for the historical Jesus”.

The result is an account of a historical figure who is very much earthed in the social structures and religio-political issues of his day. The apolitical Jesus of much traditional interpretation, who focuses solely on the affairs of the heart and has no interest in social or political change, is a pious figment of the imagination. The real Jesus was “prophet of the justice of the reign of God”. He emerged from the margins of society and functioned as a “pedagogue of the oppressed” Specifically he

addressed himself to the plight of the Galilean peasants who were being increasingly squeezed by Roman colonial domination and by the exploitative practices of local elites. In his words and his deeds, Jesus interpreted to the “little people” of Galilee what was happening to them and encouraged their resistance.

Three themes recur frequently in Herzog's reconstruction. Most important is Jesus' intractable opposition to the temple and its priestly hierarchy. The temple functioned to confer divine legitimacy on its current custodians and to project an ordering of the world which progressively excluded people by means of degrees of impurity. Moreover through its excessive demands for tithes and offerings, the temple reduced the peasantry to a state of permanent indebtedness to God, and hence to abiding religious impurity and vulnerability. By presenting himself as an alternative “broker of God's forgiveness”, Jesus challenged the temple's monopoly on sacrifice and forgiveness, thereby liberating the common people from its tyrannical control.

The second theme is Jesus' critique of the control exercised over the common people through the extension and strict enforcement of the biblical purity codes. Ritual purity became the lense through which the entire Torah was interpreted, with a corresponding neglect of those strands in Mosaic Law which emphasise cancellation of debts and sabbatical redistribution of wealth. By contrast Jesus focused on the “weightier matters of the law” - justice, mercy and faithfulness (Matt 23:23). Whereas the Pharisee's core value was purity, Jesus' core value was forgiveness.

The third theme is taxation. It has been estimated that 20-40% of the subsistence-level production of peasant farms was claimed in tributes and taxes — by the Romans, the Herodians, the temple rulers and local aristocrats. In a convincing exegesis of the “tribute passage” (Mk 12:13-17), Herzog argues that Jesus encouraged his hearers to see their payment of the Roman poll tax, not as a sign of their ownership by Caesar, but as a symbolic expulsion from the land of the unclean and blasphemous denarii bearing Caesar' image.

Not all of Herzog' arguments are equally persuasive. But cumulatively he makes a strong case for the centrality of justice concerns to Jesus' ministry. Accordingly, that it was the Jewish elites who engineered the execution of Jesus becomes not only credible but virtually inevitable. This itself is a helpful contribution to the current Jesus quest.

## The Public Forum and Christian Ethics

Robert Gascoigne, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, 248pp.

This book, by an Australian Catholic theologian, is the latest in the Cambridge series “New Studies in Christian Ethics” The series aims to engage with contemporary debates in philosophical ethics “at the highest intellectual level” and to demonstrate the relevance of a distinctively Christian contribution. Robert Gascoigne's book certainly succeeds in this

respect — it is one of the most demanding books I have read in ages! It addresses the difficult question of how Christian ethical insights may be communicated in the public forum of liberal pluralist societies. This is a difficult question because the liberal polity is based on the common recognition of individual rights rather than on any shared religious commitments. Liberal democracies deny any normative public role to ideas and values depending on religious belief because in a pluralist social order no one religion can enjoy universal assent. The challenge facing those wishing to contribute to public life from a self-consciously Christian position therefore is both one of justifying the public significance of Christian convictions and of finding ways to communicate Christian claims that are intelligible and plausible to those who do not share Christian premises.

Gascoigne identifies two main strategies Christians have used to speak into the public forum. One strategy has been to appeal to a kind of shared public truth derived from rational reflection on nature or human experience, without making explicit recourse to religious language or revelatory claims. In Catholic natural law theory, for example, the exercise of human reason alone is sufficient to know moral truth. Christian revelation can help clarify such truth, and provides unique motivation for obeying it, but it adds nothing to the content of morality. Kant's categorical imperative goes one step further: the objective character of ethical truth rests entirely on the universality of reason and freedom; religious tradition or divine revelation is completely superfluous to ethical discourse.

The strength of this first strategy lies in its recognition of the potential for a common ethical mind to exist across diverse cultures and traditions. Its main weakness lies in its failure to recognise the extent to which reason itself is shaped and controlled by historical tradition, and its tendency to dilute the character and basis of Christian identity.

The second main strategy, typified today by such "communitarian" thinkers as John Milbank and Stanley Hauerwas, is to appeal to the unique narrative and symbolic resources of Christian tradition. Rather than seeking to address public life on the basis of some artificial consensus or body of shared insights, Christians should develop their own ethical practices derived from Christian revelatory sources and justified by the distinctive praxis of Christian communities. For Christianity is not simply the religious explication of universal human experience or of objective moral truths that exist prior to or independently of actual traditions. It is an alternative interpretation of reality, a competing story that seeks to "out-narrate" the story of liberal secularism. Christian truth is "public" in this approach not because it appeals to human commonalities but because its truth claims are publicly visible and accessible.

The strength of this approach lies in its concern to preserve the distinctive identity of the Christian community and the special revelatory claims of Christian faith. It affirms post-modernity's rejection of universal reason and tradition-neutral epistemological foundations. Its weakness lies in its exaggeration of Christian distinctiveness, its tendency to regard concrete traditions as self-contained rather than dialectically interacting realities, and its disregard for "the real elements of common culture which are present in pluralist societies and the public influence of particular narrative traditions" (177). In view of the drawbacks of these two dominant approaches,

Gascoigne proposes a third way of understanding the contribution of Christian thought to public life, based on a "theology of mediation." In expounding this strategy, Gascoigne attempts to do justice both to the reality of pluralism in liberal societies and to the significant elements of ethical consensus that exist in pluralist communities.

Gascoigne accepts the legitimacy of the liberal state as one in which no particular religion should exercise a dominant role. He also accepts post-modernity's awareness that all assertions of meaning and value have their source in particular historical experiences mediated by concrete traditions. The world cannot be known by neutral reason independent of faith tradition. With the communitarians, Gascoigne stresses the historical particularity and irreducibly narrative character of Christian revelation, and the priority of the church's lived praxis in communicating its truth to others.

At the same time, Christian revelation has a universal orientation — since it is the revelation of the mystery of the God who has created all things and intends to sum up all things in Christ. "The theology of mediation...does not appeal to a rationality which transcends revelation but rather to the universality inherent in revelation itself" (160). This means, among other things, that Christianity must be open to disclosures of truth outside the church and willing to let other traditions modify and enrich Christian insights, without surrendering the epistemological privilege that attaches to Christian narrative. Gascoigne thus offers a theological basis for insisting that it is possible to achieve a public ethical consciousness that goes beyond the bare minimum of respecting individual rights and honouring legal contracts. Its achievability resides in the existence of certain "mediating principles" (such as the sanctity of life, the freedom, dignity and responsibility of the human person, the right to equality of access to the basic requirements of human existence, and so on) that, while deriving from particular theological or philosophical anthropologies, can achieve a relative independence of specific traditional contexts and a fair degree of public intelligibility. These principles can form the basis of dialogue between different traditions in the liberal square, and may be used by Christians to articulate Christian insights.

Gascoigne also suggests that the Christian tradition holds the solution to the central problem of secular liberalism - how to reconcile autonomy (its emphasis on the freedom of individuals from the normative authority of any particular traditions of the good) with community (which cannot flourish without some common sources of meaning and value). The Christian conception of freedom-in-relationship offers a resolution, for it holds in tension the freedom of individuals with the inherently relational character of human nature. Gascoigne distinguishes this understanding sharply, and helpfully, from the view promoted by contemporary "religions of self-realisation", which are essentially individualistic in character.

This is a profound and sophisticated book. In a sense, it advocates of a kind of post-modern natural law theory. Protestants who have been taught to be suspicious of natural law thinking have much to learn from it because, like so much else on the intellectual landscape, post-modernism has moved the goal posts, requiring a reconsideration, and reconceptualising, of all traditional solutions to the problems of human existence.

## Where Needs Meet Rights: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in a New Perspective

Berma Klein Goldewijk & Bas de Gaay Fortman, WCC Publications, Geneva, 1999, 146 pages.

Social, cultural and economic rights — such as the right to an adequate standard of living, to housing and education, to work and equal pay for equal work, the right to practice and enjoy one's own religious and cultural traditions, and so on — have been enshrined in international law for many decades now. They are deemed to be of equal importance as civil and political rights, for in theory human rights are universal and indivisible in character. Yet in practice, both the language of human rights and international efforts at their promotion remain largely focused on civil and political liberties - the right to political expression, to freedom from torture and summary execution, and so. Yet every day, over a billion people struggle to survive without access to clean water or shelter, and every year millions die of malnutrition.

That this happens is technically an abuse of human rights of massive proportions. Yet rarely is it spoken of in such terms, and nothing is done to hold any parties accountable for such conditions. Clearly traditional human rights strategies are of limited effectiveness in implementing or monitoring economic and social rights, or responding to their violation. This is the dilemma addressed in this brief but sophisticated discussion of the interface between poverty and human rights.

The authors' basic contention is that unmet basic human needs - to food, shelter, education and work — must be recognized, not just as symptoms of poverty but as violations of intrinsic human dignity. "Adequate health and nutrition, access to clean water, employment, education and cultural identity are not just laudable development objectives. They are basic human rights" Yet the primary requirement today is not simply for the codification of such rights but their urgent implementation. In exploring how progress can be made on this front, the authors touch on a range of thorny issues, revealing how deeply they have thought about the area. For instance, they make a helpful distinction between problem-solving approaches and dilemma-oriented approaches. They also have helpful comments to make on the role of religion in both the abuse and pursuit of human rights, and offer a way out of "the sterile and paralysing impasse of the universalism-relativism debate"

This book will be of particular interest to those involved in aid and development work. It includes a number of short case studies but is mainly concerned to make a theoretical contribution to the categories used to understand and respond the massive problems of poverty, violence and population displacements.

## Christian Justice and Public Policy

Duncan B. Forrester, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

The author of this book has recently retired as Professor of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology at New College, University of Edinburgh, where he was also founder and Director of the Centre for Theology and Public Issues. In this stimulating book, he explores the interface between Christian understandings of justice and the various secular theories of justice that have profoundly shaped the public sphere of most contemporary Western societies. The task of theology, Forrester argues, is not to present an all-encompassing "Christian" theory of justice but rather "to offer 'fragments'— insights, convictions, questions, qualifications — some of which may be...necessary complements or modifications or enlargements of conventional and commonly accepted accounts of justice" (3).

Part One explores how the notion of justice has become enormously disputed in contemporary discussion, while at the same time the place of theology in public life has become increasingly problematic. It was once commonly accepted that there is an objective, true standard of justice against which the exercise of political power could be measured. Today however there is no agreement on what justice is. Different interest groups make justice in their own image, so that justice no longer has the power to restrain or limit. What is historically unique about our situation, Forrester proposes, is not so much the existence of uncertainty about the meaning of justice but the way in which "many thinkers embrace pluralism and a kind of moral relativism as if this were an achievement rather than a predicament" (43).

In Part Two, Forrester looks at two areas — the prison system and the problem of poverty — where confusion over the meaning of justice has enormous practical impact. Then in Part Three, he offers an illuminating critique of three recent secular theories of justice. John Rawls' influential explication of justice as "fairness" has much to commend it. But Christian faith requires a conception of justice that is more than fairness, a justice that includes a preference for the poor, a commitment to self-sacrifice, and an overcoming, not merely a channelling, of adversarial competition in human relationships.

Even more influential on public policy in recent decades has been Friedrich Hayek's minimalist understanding of justice as the set of rules that governs market exchange. Forrester exposes the religious character of the New Right's deification of the market and the disastrous consequences that follow when market values are allowed to "colonise" other areas of social life, such as the health system. The third thinker discussed, Jürgen Habermas, offers not so much on a theory of justice as a method for discovering justice based on discourse or dialogue. But a major problem with all consensual approaches to justice lies in furnishing a basis for rejecting consensus views that are oppressive or evil, such as the consensus that prevailed in Nazi Germany.

In Part Four, Forrester offers a series of "theological fragments" or Christian insights into justice which have the potential for enriching and sometimes correcting secular theories. These insights include the relational nature of justice,

the inseparability of love and justice, the role of generosity, mercy and forgiveness in the achievement of justice, and the need for hope or a social vision in the pursuit of justice.

This is an excellent resource for those interested in the contours of a Christian understanding of justice and in how Christian faith can inform the evaluation of contemporary trends in social policy.

## Narratives of Hope and Healing

**REVIEWER: DOUG HYND, CANBERRA**

Johann Christoph Arnold, *Escape Routes : For People who Feel Trapped in Life's Hells*, The Plough Publishing House of the Bruderhof Foundation, Farmington PA, 2001, 88pp RRP \$19.95

In this post modern age, narrative theology, we are being told is the way to go. This brief book provides a good illustration of the strengths and the limitations of a story centred approach to popular theology. In this case the theology is in what David Tracy describes as the 'third voice', engaged with society but not shaped by the agendas of church and academy.

The author of *Escape Routes* Johann Christoph Arnold is the grand son of Eberhard Arnold, the founder of the Bruderhof Community, and a contemporary of Karl Barth. There are in fact some indirect clues to this connection in a couple of quotations from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century German pastor Christopher Blumhardt late in the book.

Despite this connection this is not a book directed at academic theologians. It is written to appeal to a popular audience and could confidently be placed on the bookshelves of secular bookshops under the self help /spirituality category. Some of its references are to situations and people that might not be as well known in Australia as in the USA but in that regard it would be simply on a par with most of the other titles on sale in that category.

Where *Escape Routes* stands out from most of the literature in the self help category and their evangelical/charismatic equivalents is that it does not offer any quick fix easy solutions to the personal issues of loneliness, despair and suffering that are among the issues that it addresses. The author is up front about his religious commitments but he does not hang his hat on the peg of direct scriptural citation.

The stories of individuals around which the discussion of these issues is developed point to the ongoing journey that is involved in the process of healing. Underlying this approach is a spirituality which seeks to embed itself in the reality of life as we live it now not one which is detached from the life of the body. While the stories in each chapter are of individuals attention is drawn in varying ways by the author to the communal dimensions of the journey. We are linked to each other and we need a community to sustain us in the process of repentance and change.

The pastoral theology undergirding the author's discussion is not spelled out and is only alluded to and it is at this point that a narrative theology is limited. The author though does make clear his rejection of any simplistic connections between

suffering, prayer and healing. Arnold challenges us to face the evil and truth of a world of suffering which is not limited to the stories of the suffering of an affluent dysfunctional community

This is a book that I think could be used as a starting point for discussion with people who are on the edges of faith, looking for spiritual guidance but not too impressed by quick fix offerings.

The author's choice of travel guides in his closing chapter is certainly eclectic and not completely predictable for someone from the pacifist tradition. It is at this point that we find a level of personal disclosure by Arnold with his brief account of how Che Guevara, Dorothy Day and his father's respectively have stretched his understanding life's battles in a fuller way.

## Difficult Conversations/ Taking Risks, Acting With Integrity



by Katie Day, Alban Institute, 2001,  
*reviewed by Mark Hurst.*

This is another helpful book from Alban Institute. Katie Day, a professor at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, writes about discussing difficult topics. She claims this is happening less and less because "...we have lost the capacity to talk to each other in significant ways." (9)

Most churches are full of "conflict avoiders". Out of fear of encountering conflict, we end up avoiding topics that might upset someone else. Day says, "Congregational cultures, like other social networks, gravitate to the lowest common denominator in conversation. (21) It both brings about the bonding of the group and limits the depth of bonding. It does so in three ways:

- \* By simply filling up the airtime
- \* By communicating that only topics on which we agree on can be introduced
- \* By communicating that issues not on the agenda are therefore not important". (23)

This practice of experiencing only shallow conversations stunts our growth. "By engaging in avoidance of potential conflict, we undermine the possibilities of creativity, vitality, and change. We also demonstrate that we do not truly endorse two primary faith commitments - trust in the work of the Holy Spirit and in the sisters and brothers who make up our community of faith." (26)

Day discusses the importance of "trust" in having meaningful conversations with others. "Thick" trust is built up over time between people who have come to know one another. "Thin trust" is what we extend to strangers. (30) Both types are essential components of social capital and all the conversations that contribute to it. (32)

Trust comes through relationship and relationship develops through time spent together. "Less face-to-face interaction means lower levels of the "thin" trust so critical for

the maintenance of community.” (35) Day asks the question “Are we withdrawing from church life because trust is waning, or does trust recede because we simply don’t have as much opportunity to get together and build trusting relationships?” (36)

“Difficult conversations do not often happen on their own. Sometimes they are possible only within a process or structure that provides some sense of security for all participants...a process needs to take place in the context of covenant.” (47)

Day writes, “In any congregation there are a myriad of sticky issues brewing. We put our energies into *not* discussing them... The congregations’s first task is to identify a focus for such conversations; that is, what are members not talking about but should be?...One creative church organized a “controversial issues committee”...to identify what should be on the congregation’s agenda and what type of format would work best. (47)

The following tip from the book we have found helpful in our work with churches. “Instead of reacting to another’s perspective judgmentally (i.e., “I can’t believe she holds such heretical views!”), learn to respond with curiosity (“I wonder why she believes that? How did that perspective come about? What purpose is it serving?). Turning judgment into curiosity is a spiritual discipline.” (88)

While reading this book and thinking about how congregations can truly discuss the difficult issues of our day, I came across the following letter in **the Mennonite** (August 7, 2001, p.2).

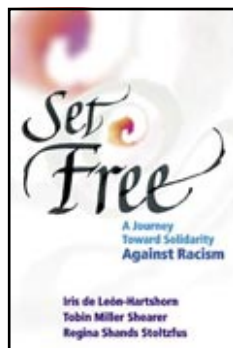
“Many question the need for dialogue on issues already processed and official positions already taken. But consider this approach to dialogue: “My readiness to dialogue with you does not necessarily imply my willingness to change my position on the issue, but it absolutely implies my willingness to change my opinion of you.” Continued dialogue then does not communicate timidity or uncertainty about issues, but rather it communicates an ongoing commitment to relationship, to community and to the ministry of reconciliation. Dialogue is not a temporary technique to try during short, official periods of discernment on issues, but it is an integral part of the lifestyle of the church. The primary focus of dialogue is the other person, not the issue at hand, not on winning or losing arguments, but on being transformed by the encounter because Jesus is there among you.”

My only complaint about *Difficult Conversations* is the size of the book. It is an odd size and shape that does not fit neatly on the bookshelf with my other Alban publications. I guess I will have to have a conversation with Alban Institute about that.

## Three authors collaborate to explore how racism shapes identity

by Rachel Beth Miller

AKRON, Pa. — Regina Shands



Stoltzfus remembers a childhood rhyme that said “If you’re black, get back,” and “If you’re white, you’re all right.” Iris de Leon-Hartshorn remembers her grandmother’s pity for having a face that showed the “Indio” part of her Latina heritage rather than the European part. Tobin Miller Shearer remembers a teacher talking about the “good old days,” when most pupils, like Shearer, were white.

Although they might not have been aware of it, racism was shaping their identities. And although racism affected them — an African-American woman, a Mexic-Amerindian woman and a white man – in different ways, it left them all wounded.

Brought together through their anti-racism work with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S., these three writers share stories and analyses in a recently-released book from Herald Press, **Set Free: A Journey Toward Solidarity Against Racism**. In addition to their individual perspectives, they describe honestly the struggles and joys of working together and offer suggestions for sustaining inter-racial relationships.

The idea for the book stemmed from a need the three sensed as they prepared anti-racism workshops for the MCC U.S. Damascus Road program, which Shearer and Stoltzfus co-founded. Materials aimed at white people — such as Shearer’s earlier book, **Enter the River** – were plentiful, but not much was out there for people of colour.

At the same time, all three authors emphasize that Internalized Racist Oppression — a term for how racism affects people of colour — can’t be separated from Internalized Racist Superiority, or how racism affects whites.

“We wanted to have a resource that reflected what we felt we were doing in our work — that is, to have people of colour and white people working together,” Stoltzfus explains.

Each author wrote three chapters individually, and all three collaborated on two chapters describing “Missed opportunities” and “Opportunities taken” based on shared experiences. In addition, de Leon-Hartshorn and Stoltzfus wrote a chapter on “What do people of colour need from white allies?” while Shearer addressed “What white people need from people of colour in solidarity relationships.”

“Writing clarifies experiences,” says de Leon-Hartshorn, director of MCC U.S.’s Peace and Justice Ministries, adding that people of colour often hesitate to take on the role of authority a writer is presumed to have.

Stoltzfus noted that any vulnerability she may feel from sharing personal stories is mitigated by knowing that her co-authors are also taking that risk.

“Having this model, being part of a group — that makes you stronger,” she says. This collaborative approach is what makes the book unique, Shearer notes.

“It’s also significant in that it combines the theoretical and the experiential,” he says.

The authors hope their book will be useful in a variety of settings, including anti-racist trainings, small group studies and college studies. **Set Free** is intended for those who have already had a general introduction to the concepts of racism and white privilege, rather than as a “first-step” book.

**Set Free** is available at MennoLink – see <http://www.MennoLink.org/books/racism.html> — and in Provident bookstores

# THE ANABAPTIST ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND INC.



## Background to the Association

The initiative for the establishment of the Association came out of a meeting in Tasmania in May 1995 of Christians from a variety of denominational backgrounds who had been influenced in a variety of ways by the anabaptist tradition. To provide a means of building on the contacts established at the meeting the Anabaptist Network of Australia and New Zealand was formed which became the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand following its incorporation in 1998.

## Purposes of the Association

The purposes of the Association are:

- To nurture and support the Christian faith of individuals and groups in Australia and New Zealand who identify with the Anabaptist tradition.
- To network and link individuals, churches and groups of Christians who share a common Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith.
- To provide religious services including teaching, training, pastoral care, mediation, and counsel to its members and others interested in the Anabaptist tradition.
- To provide resources and materials relating to the tradition, perspectives, and teaching of Anabaptists to both the Christian and general public.
- To convene conferences and gatherings which provide opportunity for worship, teaching, training, consultation, celebration, and prayer in the Anabaptist tradition.

To extend the awareness of Anabaptism in Australia and New Zealand assisting individuals, churches and groups discover and express their links with the Anabaptist tradition.

To provide an opportunity for affiliation for churches and groups who wish to be known in Australia and New Zealand as Anabaptists.

## What is Anabaptism?

Anabaptism is a radical Christian renewal movement that emerged in Europe during the sixteenth-century Reformation. Whilst Anabaptism was a grass roots movement with diverse expressions in its early development, its enduring legacy usually has included the following:

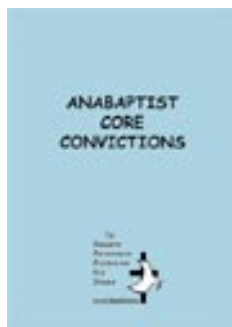
- ◆ Baptism upon profession of faith
- ◆ A view of the church in which membership is voluntary and members are accountable to the Bible and to each other
- ◆ A commitment to the way of peace and other teachings of Jesus as a rule for life
- ◆ Separation of church and state
- ◆ Worshipping congregations which create authentic community and reach out through vision and service

## AAANZ Homepage on the internet

<http://www.anabaptist.asn.au>



AAANZ publications available online or from the AAANZ postal address



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## Leap, Twist, Spy, Listen: Doing Nonviolence

Four interactive, biblical lessons which teach the basis and skills of nonviolence  
Youth booklet: 24 pages, full color



These and other peace resources are available at the AAANZ postal or email address.

