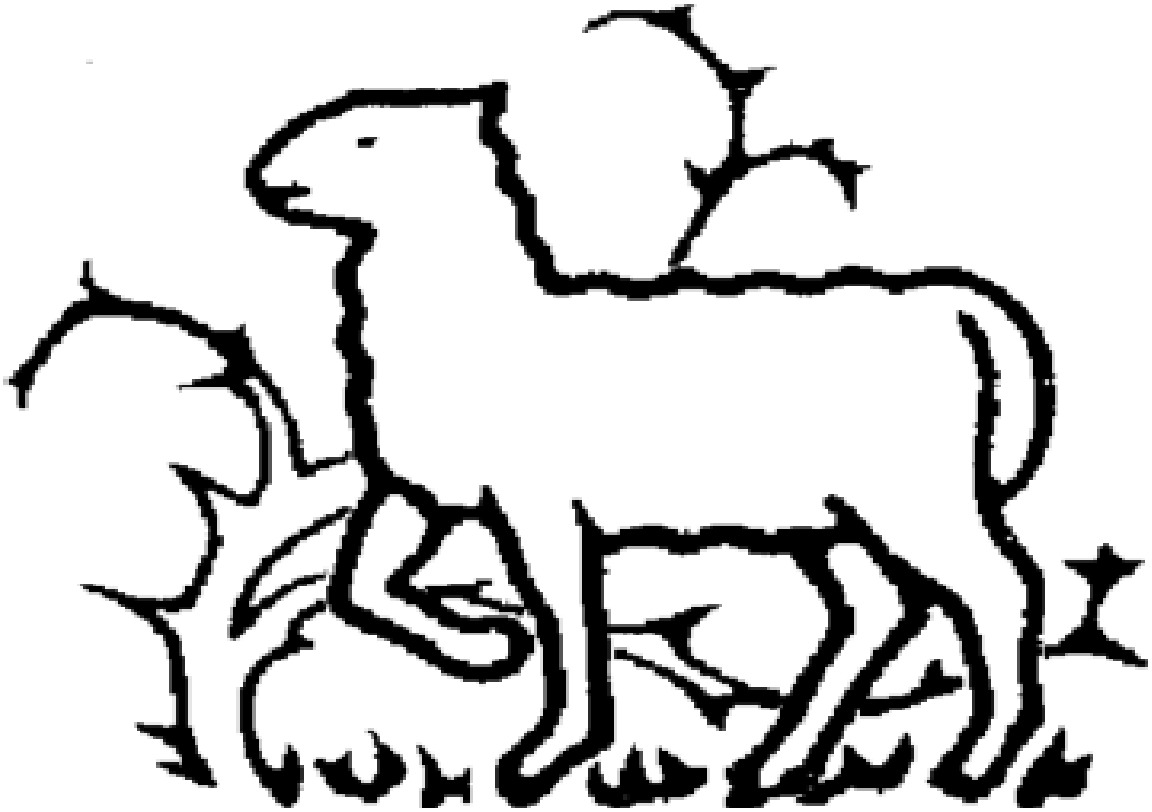
ON THE ROAD



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

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C O N T E N T S

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, Scottdale, PA, USA."

FROM THE EDITORS

This issue brings you a mix of announcements about resources, reflections on the Australian holiday of Anzac Day, and book reviews. It is running a bit late for a number of reasons including our learning a new computer program, Adobe PageMaker, that will hopefully bring you a newsletter that is easier to read with fewer formatting problems.

We also had the problem this time around with having too much material so the next issue is already taking shape. This is a good problem to have. Continue to send us announcements about events in your area, book reviews, and articles growing out of your reading and life experiences. Also, respond to what you read here and answer questions that the different writers raise. We currently do not have a "Letters From Readers" section but look forward to having one in the future. Write to us at **ontheroad@today.com.au** or On The Road Editors, 3/653 Princes Highway, Sutherland, NSW 2232, Australia.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Association has to live with a continuing paradox which cannot be ignored. It is committed to a form of Christian life which has a strong practice and theology of community, yet it is comprised of individuals with varying degrees of linkage to local Christian communities who may or may not be sympathetic to or embody elements of the Anabaptist tradition in their life.

That perhaps is to understate the issue. Let me put it more bluntly. A significant number of members of the Association are having difficulty finding a church community where they can be at home and be nurtured and supported in their journey. I find myself increasingly in that position. Church as community is fundamental and the pain of isolation, of not being part of a community is particularly acute.

I have no answers to offer. I simply ask that we remain aware of this reality and that we make special efforts to maintain contact and encourage and support and pray for one another. The demands on Mark and Mary for travel and teaching make it difficult for them to envisage taking responsibility for setting up an Anabaptist style home church in the immediate future. The need for a model to point to is pressing, however, and will have to be addressed one way or another in the coming year.

Regional initiatives

One issue that was affirmed in our discussion at the AAANZ conference in January, and that I have since raised with the committee, is the planning for regional initiatives. The first effort in this direction was a visit by Mark and Mary to Perth on their way back from family visits to the United States and Europe. My thanks go particularly to Ian Packer for his work in organising the Perth events and Ian and Ann Duckham for their hospitality.

At present there are plans for Mark and Mary to visit Canberra while doing a workshop at the Baptists Today conference in late August. Planning is also under way for a visit to Armidale, NSW to do some work on conflict resolution and peace with school children and possibly trainee teachers.

I would encourage you to look for opportunities to organise discussion and study groups as well as planning for visits by Mark and Mary. I am working on an outline for a reading/discussion

resource that could be used to introduce people to the Anabaptist tradition and will be circulating it for comment soon.

Conference 2002
The committee has agreed in principle to work with the Baptists Today network to co-sponsor a conference in Canberra in August 2002 with the theme "Overcoming Violence". It offers a strong opportunity to bring the Anabaptist tradition and experience of peacemaking to a wider audience. The sharing of resources for planning and organising such an event offers an opportunity to stretch our resources a good deal further than would otherwise be possible.

Retaining our vision
In preparing to lead the first of a series of studies on the Sermon on the Mount for a home group that Jillian and I participate in, I came across the following comments by Chris Marshall which raised the question as to how we see the world and how we can avoid being socialised into accepting as beyond redemption a world of violence and apathy.

… the beatitudes are best understood as descriptions of a whole way of life that we as a Christian community are called to live, a life modelled on Jesus and bearing witness to the transforming reality of the kingdom of God. They offer us a vision of reality that stands in stark contradiction to the world around us. The radicalism of the beatitudes only makes sense – and will only seem practical – if we accept Jesus' assertion that the world as we know it is passing away and God's new creation is being born. (p.10 "The challenge of the Beatitudes" Faith and Freedom *Vol 4 no.2 June 1995)*

To live with that sense of a world being reborn requires a continuing discipline of reflection prayer, conversation and worship which both makes possible and demonstrates the reality it seeks.

Peace,

Doug

THE VIEW FROM EPHESIANS FOUR

Mennonites in North America like to have conferences that examine the state of the church and talk about where they are headed. A recent conference in Kansas dealt with the question of being Anabaptist in the twenty-first century. At the end of several days together one speaker told the following story.

By the way, I'm sure you have all heard by now about the Mennonite who was lost at sea and washed up on a deserted island. When he was rescued several months later, they noticed he had built two buildings. When they asked him about it he explained, "This one here is my church." And the other is your house, they inquired? "Oh no," he replied. "That's the Mennonite church I wouldn't be caught dead in." (Anabaptist Visions For The New Millennium, Pandora Press, 2000, p.218).

As we travel and speak with groups about Anabaptism we often talk about a different way of being church. This is what has drawn many of us in AAANZ together, a sense that something is not right about current ways of being church and a longing for something different.

One of the first books I (Mark) read about Anabaptism was Walter Klaassen's *Anabaptism:Neither Catholic Nor Protestant.* I was excited by this "third way" of being church, drawing both from the Protestant and Catholic traditions but not being bound by either.*

Klaassen talks about the sixteenth century Anabaptists' view of church. *"For them the church was a company of disciples. The church was a human community, voluntarily accepting*

and ordering itself according to the law of love, forgiveness and truth as revealed by God through Jesus. The weight of emphasis was on community; the establishing and nourishing of open, loving, and truthful relationships between people." (80)

We long for that kind of community. Where can it be found?

Another book we often refer to when speaking with groups about Anabaptism is Wally Fahrer's helpful book *Building On The Rock, A Biblical Vision of Being Church Together From an Anabaptist-Mennonite Perspective* (Herald Press, 1995). Fahrer's description of the church is that "the church is a primary, alternative, faith community" (30). It is a community of people that are characterized by "an intentional invitation, a specific spirituality, an authentic authority, and a deliberate discipleship" (115).

Once again, where are these churches?

We have been visiting churches in our area looking for a place where we can worship with like-minded folks and have not found one. Our experience is like the grandfather who was asked why he left the Amish church many years before. He answered, "There were too many Sundays when I went to church feeling good and came home feeling bad." (*Anabaptist Visions*, 219)

Something we notice as we talk with people in the Anabaptist Network is that while we all share this longing to be part of a loving, worshipping, alternative community, many of us have not found it. Many of our members do not attend a local church on a regular basis. Why? Are we a bunch of idealists looking for the perfect church? Are we oddballs that just don't fit anywhere in the Australian and New Zealand church scene? Have we only found those churches we "wouldn't be caught dead in"? Or are we...?

We would like to start a dialogue on "church" throughout the Network. For those who haven't found a church home, tell us why. What is it that you are looking for? For those just hanging in there with a congregation, what gives you hope? And if you are part of a living primary, alternative, faith community, tell us about it.

When Conrad Grebel and his sixteenth-century cohorts in Zurich got frustrated with the state church they left it and started something new. They met in homes, caves, forests, and wherever they could to live out their vision of church. They started what came to be known as the Anabaptist movement. Do we have that kind of energy to step out in faith and start new expressions of the church today?

Simon Holt talks about being church in Australia in a book called *Fair Dinkum Ministry* (Spectrum Publications, 1999). He says "We have found in house churches a model of church life which we are convinced has much to offer, especially in the Australian context, and which deserves consideration in our search for a 'fair dinkum' expression of Christian community and mission." (150)

His experience would be similar to some of you in the Anabaptist Network. The atmosphere of informality and lack of formal structure allow house church participants the freedom to be church in refreshing ways. The house church model is one way of finding the community experience many of us are looking for through meeting with like-minded friends to pray, study, worship, and fellowship.

Earlier this week I (Mark) read *We belong To The Land, The Story Of A Palestinian Israeli Who lives For Peace And Reconciliation*, by Elias Chacour (University of Notre Dame Press, 2001). It is the story of Elias Chacour and his amazing courage to live out his faith in the context of constant oppression. (It is a must read for anyone interested in the Middle East and the conflict going on there.)

One of the things Chacour talks about in his book is the meaning of "Blessed are you..." in the beatitudes of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. He says this:

"Knowing Aramaic, the language of Jesus, has greatly enriched my understanding of Jesus' teaching..."'Blessed" is the translation of the word makarioi, used in the Greek New Testament. However, when I look further back to Jesus' Aramaic, I find that the original word

was ashray...it means "to set yourself on the right way for the right goal; to turn around, repent; to become straight or righteous"...When I understand Jesus' words in the Aramaic, I translate like this:

Get up, go ahead, do something, move, you who are hungry and thirsty for justice, for you shall be satisfied.

Get up, go ahead, do something, move you peacemakers, for you shall be called children of God." (143-144)

These words challenge us. For those of us not experiencing church as a primary, alternative, faith community I can hear Jesus saying "Get up, go ahead, do something, move!"

What do you think? Send your thoughts to us at **ontheroad@today.com.au.**

Shalom,
Mark and Mary Hurst

*A third edition of the book has recently been released by Pandora and Herald Presses and on the back cover is called "a classic description of the Anabaptist movement".

FROM AROUND THE NETWORK

Announcing the Publication of

BEYOND RETRIBUTION: A NEW TESTAMENT VISION FOR JUSTICE, CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

(Grand Rapids Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001)

by Christopher D. Marshall

Over recent decades, many Christians have become active in promoting the concept of restorative or transformative justice and in developing programmes for dealing with criminal offending based on restorative principles. Yet to date comparatively little has been done to explore the biblical basis for such an understanding of justice. This study seeks to remedy this lack. It first examines the problems involved in applying ethical teachings from the New Testament to mainstream society.It then surveys the extent to which the New Testament authors address criminal justice issues, looking in particular at the justice of God in the teaching of Paul and Jesus. The book includes extensive reflection on the topic of punishment, both in contemporary social thinking and in the New Testament. A concluding chapter explores the meaning of forgiveness and its relevance to the pursuit of justice.

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THE DANTHONIA BRUDERHOF COMMUNITY OFFICIAL WEBSITE

Visit **www.bruderhof.com.au** to learn about the Danthonia Bruderhof Community in Inverell NSW. The Bruderhof Communities have a number of companies including Plough Publishing House. One of their latest books is *Six Months To Live, Learning from a young man with cancer***,** by Daniel Hallock.

The book tells the story of Matt Gauger, a Bruderhof member in his early twenties who develops cancer and dies within six months of its detection. During that time he gets married, the cancer goes into remission, and his parents travel back and forth from the community in Australia to Pennsylvania. The book chronicles the ups and downs of these six months as the whole Bruderhof community goes through this journey with Matt.

The author is a member of the Bruderhof community and says in the Preface "In our community death - like everything else, from work, worship, and meals, to care of children and the elderly - is shared, and we live on communally owned grounds that might best be described as a monastery for families." (xii) This aspect of the story removes Matt's experience from those of us who do not live communally. Parents not part of a communal living arrangement cannot normally take off from their work to be by the bedside of their sick son for months at a time. It raises the question of community for all of us. Are there people who will be there for us when we need them? How do we experience this level of caring and sharing outside of "a monastery"?

The story is told in the words of the people who experienced the cancer most closely - Matt, his new wife Cynthia, community doctor Jonathan, and Matt's parents Randy and Linda (currently resident at Danthonia Community in Australia). The author narrates the story and gives very little commentary along the way. He allows the participants to be seen and heard, warts and all.

The strength of the book is in the talking about death. The author says "I grew up in a typical middle-class home where the subject of death - like illness, grief, heartache, or other sources of anxiety - was assiduously avoided...We simply didn't 'go there,' conversation-wise." (xii) We find this in our work with churches when we mention conflict. People think if you don't talk about conflict, you will never have any. It is like that with death. If we avoid talking or reading about it, we can possibly avoid it. As this book points out, it doesn't work that way. Illness and death can come at any time and discussing it and reading about how others have experienced it can be helpful.

The book is short and can be read in one sitting. It won't win any scholarly awards but it tells a very human story and raises important questions for all of us.

The Sydney Morning Herald Spectrum of April 21-22, 2001 ran an article called "Holy Wars" reflecting on Anzac Day. The "cult of Anzac", the article said, has become a major part of Australia's civil religion. **Doug Hynd** shares some reflections on Anzac Day in the following article which will also appear in the September issue of Zadok Perspectives.

REFLECTIONS ON AN ANZAC DAY SERVICE

The first Anzac Day of the millennium saw me make the substantial sacrifice of the several hours sleep required if I was to get up in time for the Dawn service in Canberra. This was a first for me. My eighteen-year-old son wanted to go, because as he put it, "I don't want to take the holiday for granted. I want to show some respect for what it is about." He was certainly not alone in that concern. The estimated 7,000 people in attendance that morning included a very large number of under thirties.

The sense of place and occasion, in the open air outside the Australian National War Memorial, was striking. The pre-dawn setting of grey-scudding clouds, lighted candles, an air of quiet reverent expectancy, the lone bugle-call and the occasional harsh cry of sulphur-crested cockatoos provided an appropriate atmosphere for "worship", for that is what was what took

place. The language and structure of the liturgy had sufficient Christian connotations and resonance to slide easily by. I couldn't quite manage to let the liturgy just wash over me. When I started to probe the implications of what was expressed I was haunted and troubled by the questions that came, then and subsequently.

The result was that over the period since that April morning I have found myself trying to probe the theology that had come to expression in the service. The following reflections on the Dawn service are not meant to be in any way disrespectful or critical, either of those who constructed the service, or of those whose death and loss was, and is appropriately mourned. The questions that came pressing on me surfaced because I found myself trying to take seriously both the claims embodied in the liturgy of the Dawn service and the claims of the Christian gospel. How compatible in the end are the two sets of claims for someone who wishes to be a disciple of Jesus?

The liturgy of sacrifice

It quickly became apparent to me that the language of the dawn service gained its moral force, and made its liturgical claim on the assent of those of us who were there, from its appeal to the theme of sacrifice. They, the Anzacs, had sacrificed their lives, we were told, so that we might have the freedom and the sort of society that we have in Australia today. And the application of the logic and benefits of this sacrifice was extended both implicitly, and explicitly to all who had died during other subsequent episodes of warfare in which Australians had been engaged.

Now this claim to the benefits of sacrifice is a powerful one. It is grounded in an emotionally appealing narrative which points to the giving of life as the basis for our assent. The appeal to us is to respond to this ultimate gift with a lived out response of gratitude in the way we shape our lives as Australian citizens. The exact shape or substantive nature of the response that we as Australians should make to this gift was not, however, clearly spelled out.

As a moral argument calling for such a serious response on our behalf it demands thoughtful consideration from a number of angles. I found myself asking questions as I drove home after the service. Can the appeal carry the moral freight that is required? Does the reading of history provide support for the underlying claim? In other words is the claim true in its account of history and in the light of the actual outcomes of military conflict? Should we stake our life and death on this account of the death of Australian servicemen and women in warfare?

The historical issues

Take the case of the episode at Gallipoli. Historically the claim for the benefits that we as Australians have received from the deaths of the servicemen is surely difficult to justify. Certainly it proved to be an important moment in the history of Australian self definition and the development of the national identity. However, that sense of recognition came much later and it is hard to argue that the deaths in that theatre of war made any real difference to the outcome of World War 1. The campaign was a bungled affair of dubious strategic significance.

More widely applied I find the implied argument of the Dawn Service liturgy that the relatively open society that Australia is today is the result of the willingness of men to go to war in a variety of conflicts difficult to sustain. Even during World War 1 the justification for Australian engagement was a matter of bitter political division within this country and the call for conscription was voted down on two occasions. We have the society that we do due to a wide variety of contributory causes, historically, socially and religiously, most of which have little to do with whether Australians fought in a specific battle or not. The form of the claim as advanced has the interesting effect of tending to make sacred the shape of the society we have and place it above criticism.

There are I think further difficulties with this claim of our debt in the present to those Australians who died in war. The claim tends to underplay the ongoing commitment that is required of us all to sustain a relatively open society. It is a commitment which cannot avoid an

ongoing struggle to place limits on the exercise of political and economic power. The claim at the same time tends to devalue the commitments of those who have sought to deal peacefully with the ongoing evil within our societies.

Other voices from history whisper in our ears. The issue of violence involved in the dispossession of the indigenous people during the European invasion of Australia cannot be bypassed. The settlement of this land was not peaceful. What "sacrifice" did those who fought the indigenous people of this land make and what do we owe to them for the shaping the sort of society we have today, or should we celebrate the death of the indigenous people who resisted the invaders with the weapons at their disposal?

Let me return to the best case that can be made for the claim of the sacrifice of life by our armed forces so that we can have freedom, the case of World War 2. Even this episode is not quite as cut and dried as it seems. Some of the results of that war include the expansion of the range and scope of weapons of mass destruction and a massive arms trade which cause ongoing havoc in many nations across the globe over the past fifty years.

If we want to credit the positive outcomes to those killed in the battles of World War 2, are we willing to credit them with the destructive consequences that we have been left with? If we want to claim the benefits then it will require a lot of qualification if we are to bracket out the other consequences of that war.

Sacrifice in biblical perspective

So much for the ambiguity of history. Theological issues remain to claim the attention of Christians. At first glance there is a strong case in Christian Theology and the Scriptures for an appeal to the theme of sacrifice as a source of moral claim on the way we should live. The main point that I think needs to be acknowledged is that the understanding of sacrifice in the New Testament has little to do with giving up your life in the course of participating in war.

Now the language of sacrifice certainly lends itself to depict the action of service people in war because it does capture the moral commitment to self-giving that may be displayed in acts of genuine self-sacrifice in the course of war. But the liturgy of Anzac Day and the accompanying myth goes on to project from this limited range of actions, to ask us to believe that our nations' entire history of military undertakings has been motivated by a commitment to self-giving love.

It is worth stopping to consider the nature of sacrifice in both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. In ancient Israel actual sacrifices were made for a wide variety of related purposes. What was important about sacrifice, was not so much the offering itself, as the dedication and commitment it represented on the part of the person offering it. The New Testament writers use the language of sacrifice to capture the attitude of moral commitment displayed by believers. Romans 12 is an example of this where the sacrifice we are called to make as the people of God is that of our lives, as a form of dedication to God which requires us not be conformed to the world in our behaviour.

The classic text appealed to in the Anzac Day service is "Greater love has no man than this, than a man should lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13) While the appeal of this text is unmistakable, if examined closely in the context of the surrounding argument it will not stand up to support the sacrifice of life in war. The phrase must be read in context. The invocation is preceded by the command: "This is my commandment. Love one another as I have loved you." You are my friends if you follow my example says Jesus. The laying down of lives to which we are called is in the pattern of Jesus who refused to take up the sword against his enemies. It has nothing to do with taking up arms to destroy the enemy.

The difficulty with being a chaplain

So much for the liturgy and moral claims of the language of the service. Considered more broadly the Anzac Day service left me ill at ease with the ambiguous role played by Christian chaplains in the service. It struck me as a good example of the transitional place that Christians and the churches find themselves in with respect to their relationship to Australian society at

large, and signalled both the possibilities and difficulties of engagement and evangelism.

The secularisation thesis in its strong form, that we are moving to a non-religious society, is down right wrong. Australians are ready to worship and seek a spiritual home. The characteristics of how they will respond in worship are I think ambiguous and the possibilities for misunderstanding substantial.

I found this ambiguity particularly poignantly expressed in the role of the chaplain who delivered the address at the Anzac Day service. It was a moment in which for her to have spoken a distinctly Christian message would have been to cause offence No doubt about it. To raise a question as to whether the language of sacrifice in war was at odds with the Christian gospel would have been shocking in the extreme. To ask the question as to which gods were the lives of those who died in war offered up as a sacrifice would have seemed un-Australian. Yet to me it is a blasphemy to associate the name of the God revealed in Jesus Christ to justify or bless in any way the deadly violence of the twentieth century.

What can you say under such circumstances? What could she say? The message the chaplain offered at the service was one of "inspiration" which had no intrinsic connection with the story of Jesus. The religious appeal and authority of the chaplain, grounded on her identity as a religious professional, formed the basis for an appeal which used a least common denominator religious, spiritual language stripped largely of its specificity and its challenge. The story she told that morning was also stripped of the elements of the judgement and hope and reconciliation that are all inescapably part of the Christian story.

This stripping away of both the challenge and hope of the gospel seemed then, and still seems to me to be problematic. To use the authority to speak in such contexts, an authority that you have because of your commissioning by the Christian church to its service and then to avoid saying anything which makes that identity explicit, yet using that identity to provide an aura of connection with the Christian faith, is to run the risk of misleading people as to what being a Christian and a servant of the church is all about. The chaplain in such a moment faces the danger that the claim of their role of as a servant of the state in the form of the military, will trump her primary identity as a member of the people of God.

Remembering truthfully

How do we as Christians speak truthfully in such an occasion? I left the occasion both moved and deeply troubled. Perhaps the way forward is to have conversation and discernment within the church itself over these issues. We need to take this as a first step. We have a tangled history of complicity as the Christian community with the powers of the age and supporting the justifications offered by the state for the use of violence. We need to seek forgiveness for that complicity as part of our journey to recover our identity as a people committed to being witnesses to a reconciling God.

The power of the worship that morning in Canberra came out of the activity of remembering times of great pain and loss and acknowledging the grief of that remembering as a way of trying to find guidance for living in the present. This is something which Christians can understand. Each Sunday we gather to remember in a way which acknowledges both its present power to shape our lives, and its demand for a response in the way we live, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

This weekly moment of remembering is foundational for our identity as the people of God. Shaped by that memory then, how can we find a way to remember truthfully these other powerful moments of grief and loss of the city in which we are resident aliens? Can we remember them in a way which makes for life among us and does not provide further leverage for the powers of death in the world to shape our identity and claim our lives and those of our neighbours as a further sacrifice to its power?

BOOKS, RESOURCES AND WEBSITES

DREAMSEEKER MAGAZINE Welcome to DreamSeeker Magazine, founded to link readers interested in attending to "voices from the soul" with Anabaptist-related writers committed to exploring from the heart, with passion, depth, and flair, their own visions and the issues of the day. For more, follow the link below. DreamSeeker Magazine main page: **http://www.PandoraPressUS.com/dsm/**

PEACE RESOURCE LISTS

Go to the MennoLink site below for some recently updated peace resource lists. **www.MennoLink.org/peace** The peace news and discussion forum is sponsored by the Mennonite Church Peace and Justice Committee.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON MEDIA AND THE FAMILY WEBSITE

Did you know that last year in the USA the number one show watched by three-year-olds was *Friends*? Have you heard of the violent video game *Duke Nukem*? Less than ten percent of American adults have heard of it, but more than eighty percent of teens have. These figures would probably holdup in Australia and New Zealand too.

What we and our children watch shapes us. We all need to become more media wise. A website with some resources in this area can be found at **www.mediaandthefamily.org.**

MENNONITE LIFE ARTICLE

Ted Grimsrud, a New Testament professor at Eastern Mennonite University in the USA, writes about the roots of Anabaptist peace convictions. His article is in the March 2001 online issue of Mennonite Life, "A Pacifist Way of Knowing: Postmodern Sensibilities and Peace Theology." **http:/www.bethelks.edu/mennonitelife/2001mar/grimsrud.html**

CHRISTIANITY TODAY ARTICLE ON PEACEMAKING

Check out "Anonymous Are the Peacemakers" in the December 4, 2000 edition of Christianity Today at: **http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2000/014/1.34.html** The article was written by Gerald Shenk, professor of church and society at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Virginia, USA. He studied and worked for nine years with churches in the former Yugoslavia and has returned each year since its breakup to encourage ministries of reconciliation.

Shenk says that "a growing body of evidence suggests that religion in [conflict-ridden regions] can and does serve as a resource for unravelling the tensions, alleviating fear or suspicion, and calling people to live up to their own highest values."

He tells the story of peacemaking behind the scenes in places like South Africa and the former Yugoslavia. He concludes with this thought: "To stand at the cusp of a new millennium and recall the mortal struggles that swept the globe in the past century inspires little warmth. At the same time, to dismiss faith as a healing factor in current conflicts would invite great suffering. Countless religiously-grounded heroes escape the attention of the watching world, and few of these actors will come up for consideration as Nobel nominees."

Following the article are some helpful peacemaking resources .

NEW MENNONITE WOMEN BIBLE STUDY GUIDE LOOKS AT THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Newton, Kan. (MC USA)—Matthew 5-7, the text most cherished by the early Anabaptists, remains relevant to Christians today. The new Mennonite Women Bible study guide gives some additional insights into what is known as Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In How Then Shall We Live?, author Linda Gehman Peachey describes the historical setting in which Jesus' words originally were heard. She shows what a radical message of hope the Sermon on the Mount was in a time of oppression and hardship. As the fulfilment of the law given to Moses, Jesus challenged the old ways of thinking and called believers then—and calls them now—to a new level of faithfulness.

How Then Shall We Live?, Part 1 of Mennonite Women's "Call Us Anew" Bible study series, is geared to small group or Sunday school settings. The booklet also offers guidance for meditation and prayer, using symbols and simple rituals drawn from the lessons, to women who want to study on their own. A new feature of the 2001 study guide is a section of 10-minute devotionals, based on the Bible lessons, for women's groups who seek short meditations for their meetings. Each devotional begins with an attention-grabbing activity or a sharing topic, and concludes with prayer.

Peachey is a case manager and facilitator with the Lancaster (Pa.) Area Victim Offender Reconciliation Program. Previously, she and her husband, Titus, co-directed Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries. They co-edited Seeking Peace (Good Books, 1991), a collection of 70 true stories of Mennonite peacemakers from around the world.

Copies may be purchased for $5 U.S. /$6 Cdn. from Mennonite Women, 722 Main St., P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114-0347, USA, phone 316-283-5100, e-mail **mw@gcmc.org**

THE CONRAD GREBEL REVIEW The Conrad Grebel Review is an interdisciplinary journal of Christian inquiry devoted to thoughtful sustained discussion of spirituality, ethics, theology and culture from a broadly-based Mennonite perspective. Published three times a year by Conrad Grebel College. Visit our website at: **http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/cgreview/index.html** for a list of back issues and to order or email the circulation manager at **cgreview@uwaterloo.ca**.
The most recent issue is Winter 2001: Religion & Science.

PEACEWORK MAGAZINE

Published by the American Friends Service Committee since 1972, Peacework serves the movements for nonviolent social change by covering social justice and peace issues in a way that links grassroots work with national and international perspectives. Ten issues/year for $20 US(discounts for students, low-income subscribers, and prisoners).

Check us out at:**http://www.afsc.org/peacewrk.htm** or contact us at Peacework, AFSC, 2161 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA, USA, 02140.

VISION: A JOURNAL FOR CHURCH AND THEOLOGY

This new journal is published semiannually by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (USA) and Canadian Mennonite Bible College. Its goal is "to encourage theological reflection by church leaders on the identity, mission, and practices of the church from an Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective." The first issue was published in Fall 2000 on the topic of "Spirituality". The second issue focuses on "Communion—history and issues for the church today". To read an excerpt or subscribe to the journal, see **http://www.mennovision.org.**

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR ARTICLES

A good online source for US and world news is the Christian Science Monitor's website found at **www.csmonitor.com**. They have a free email service that daily brings the news to your email address. They often have articles covering peace and justice issues with insights not often found in the mainstream media. Below are excerpts from sample articles and the addresses where they can be found.

Headline: **When a brother murders, what does a brother do?**
Byline: Jane Lampman
Date: 06/21/2001
http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/2001/06/21/fp13s1-csm.shtml

Bill Babbitt and David Kaczynski share a special bond and burden born of tragedy. They both took the wrenching step of turning in a brother for committing murder.

In giving the FBI the break in the Unabomber case, Mr. Kaczynski and his family were caught in the unwelcome glare of the global spotlight. Mr. Babbitt's anguish was more private, but ultimately more devastating. He watched his brother, Manny, a Vietnam vet, be executed by the state of California, despite his mental illness.

The families have become close, finding healing in their relationship and in ties to Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation, where Babbitt is a board member. MVFR recognizes that the pain of violence touches families on both sides of homicide...

Headline: **"Don't kill for me"**
Byline: Jane Lampman Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
Date: 06/21/2001
http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/2001/06/21/fp11s1-csm.shtml

"In memory of Julie Welch and the 167 others killed in Oklahoma City, and with prayer for Timothy McVeigh and the persons who are his executioners...," says Bud Welch, as he casts the first shovelful of soil onto the newly planted tree in Boston.

"In memory of my son, Tom, and his beloved wife, Charlotte...."

"In memory of my daughter, Catherine, who will always be 19...."

"In memory of Nancy Langert and Richard, and their unborn child," continues Jennifer Bishop, of Kankakee, Ill.

As, one by one, the group moves forward to honor loved ones lost to inexplicable murders committed all across the US, the profound feeling beneath their simple act and words pervades the crowd.

Ever since the shock of the 1995 bombing, Oklahoma families have felt the sympathy and support of an entire nation. But thousands of other Americans affected by no less stunning losses have had to go it on their own, and none have felt more isolated in their grief than these families.

This June 7 memorial tree-planting ceremony opened the first national conference of a unique group of families of murder victims - those who do not want the killers to be killed. For various reasons, they do not believe that an execution will either help them heal or contribute to reducing homicide in the US, a goal to which many of them are now dedicated. Instead, they are pursuing alternatives to retribution.

..."We don't rape rapists and we don't break the legs of those who cause car accidents, but there is almost the implication that if you really loved someone who was killed, you would want to put to death the person responsible," says Renny Cushing, executive director of Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation (MVFR). The 25-year old group has more than 4,000 members...

Headline: **“You’ve got faith”**
Byline: Jane Lampman
Date: 05/24/2001
http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/2001/05/24/fp18s2-csm.shtml

Just as houses of worship dot urban, suburban, and rural landscapes around the globe, sacred sites have proliferated in the virtual landscape called cyberspace. More than a million Internet sites now draw seekers and believers to diverse expressions of religion, testifying to the vitality of the spiritual impulse even among those not drawn to traditional worship.

While some may consider the Web simply another place to share their message, for Brenda Brasher, “online religion is the most portentous development for the future of religion to come out of the twentieth century.” Dr. Brasher makes this bold claim in her new book, Give Me That Online Religion, after a decade of exploring the byways of cyber-spirituality - from church Web pages to apocalyptic prophets to interfaith marketplaces like Beliefnet.com.

This imaginative, fascinating, and troubling book focuses not on a tour of websites, but on an exploration of the significance of this outpouring of spiritual energy, and how it is likely to transform the future of religious expression...

Headline: **On Forgiving McVeigh**
Byline: Bud Welch
Date: 06/11/2001
http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/2001/06/11/fp9s1-csm.shtml

(OKLAHOMA CITY)I’m the third of eight children and grew up on a dairy farm, and I’ve run a service station in Oklahoma City for the last 34 years. Until April 19, 1995 - the day my daughter Julie and 167 others were killed in the bomb blast that destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah Building - my life was very simple. I had a little girl and loved her a lot...

All my life I have opposed the death penalty. Friends used to tell me that if anyone ever killed one of my family members, I would change. “What if Julie got raped and murdered?” But I always said I’d stick to my guns. Until April 19.

The first four or five weeks after the bombing I had so much anger, pain, hatred, and revenge that I realized why, when someone is charged with a violent crime, they transport him in a bullet-proof vest. It’s because people like me would try to kill him.

By the end of 1995 I was in such bad shape, I was drinking heavily and smoking three packs of cigarettes a day. I was stuck on April 19. But I knew I had to do something about it.

That’s when I went down to the bombing site.

It was a cold January afternoon, and I stood there watching hundreds of people walking along the chain link fence that surrounded the lot where the Murrah Building had stood. I was thinking about the death penalty, and how I wanted nothing more than to see Timothy McVeigh (and anyone else responsible for the bombing) fried. But I was also beginning to wonder whether I would really feel any better once they were executed. Every time I asked myself that question, I got the same answer: No. Nothing positive would come from it. It wouldn’t bring Julie back. After all, it was hatred and revenge that made me want to see them dead, and those two things were the very reason that Julie and 167 others were dead.

Once I arrived at this realization, I returned to my original belief that executing criminals is wrong. Since then I have become a leading opponent of the death penalty, constantly flying from one city to the next, telling people about my daughter and why the death penalty is wrong. The speaking and traveling keep me busy, but they don’t bring me much peace. Nothing like going to visit Timothy McVeigh’s father...

Bud Welch runs a gas station in Oklahoma City. This article is excerpted from the book *Why Forgive?* by Johann Christoph Arnold (Plough).

Headline: **Anti-SUV query: "What would Jesus drive?"**
Byline: Marilyn Gardner Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
Date: 06/04/2001
http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/2001/06/04/fp3s1-csm.shtml

(LYNN, MASS.)At first glance, the half-dozen cars could pass for a wedding procession. But look again. A hand-lettered message on the back of a green sport-utility vehicle reads: "Just married to the pump." Four empty gas cans dangle from the rear bumper, and yellow police tape serves as streamers. On one door, the words "SUV + GAS" are encircled with a heart.

Don't bother looking for the bride and groom. This eye-catching vehicle is part of an anti-SUV rally... At a time of high gasoline prices and SUV-safety concerns, the vehicular icons of the 1990s are already taking some heat. But this SUV protest is unusual for the kind of people who participated and helped organize it: local churchgoers and members of the clergy.

Call it Harvard Divinity School takes on Detroit. The 100 or so protesters on this rain-soaked day, with children and a golden retriever in tow, have launched a moral crusade that they hope will ultimately transform America's car-buying habits. But they are up against a formidable foe: products whose rugged, ready-for-anything image has captured legions of consumers.

"We're asking our neighbors not to buy sport-utility vehicles when they purchase their next cars. We want to let the dealers know that customers need cleaner choices," says Bill McKibben, author of The End of Nature and a fellow at Harvard Divinity School's Center for the Study of Values in Public Life...Gas-gulping SUVs and the environment are not a marriage made in heaven...

Headline: **More women to the peace table**
Byline: Swanee Hunt and Cristina Posa
Date: 05/21/2001
http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/2001/05/21/fp13s2-csm.shtml

Allowing men who plan wars to plan peace is a bad habit. But international negotiators and policymakers can break that habit by including peace promoters, not just warriors, at the negotiating table. More often than not, those peace promoters are women. While most men come to the negotiating table directly from the war room and the battlefield, women usually arrive straight out of civil activism and - take a deep breath - family care...

Headline: **World's poor look past aid**
Byline: Peter Ford Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
Date: 05/21/2001
http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/2001/05/21/fp1s2-csm.shtml

(BRUSSELS)Once upon a time, Jean-Pierre Ouedraogo had a dream. As economic boom times brought new prosperity to Americans and Europeans, he thought, they would share a little more of their wealth with the rest of the world.

Mr. Ouedraogo, his native Burkina Faso, and other developing nations have been sorely disappointed. In fact, the world's richest countries have grown stingier. Over the past 10 years, they have been spending a smaller and smaller chunk of their money to help developing countries, and the effects are clear. "It means schools that close, hospitals without medicines, roads that aren't maintained," says Ouedraogo, a social activist who was in Brussels last week for a United Nations conference studying ways to pull the world's least developed countries out of their poverty. "That makes development even harder. We have fallen into a trap."...

The following three book reviews come to us from Chris Marshall.

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Punishment

by T. Richard Snyder, Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2001, 159 pages.

Recently in America a twelve-year-old boy was sentenced to life imprisonment with no possibility of parole. His crime was horrific - the battering of a much younger child to death. But his punishment was also horrific. To punish a child by incarcerating him until he dies of old age is utterly inhumane. It is also anti-Christian. Why? Because so-called 'real life sentences' systematically remove grace from the equation. They leave no room for mercy, no space for repentance and forgiveness, for redemption and restoration - realities which lie at the heart of the Christian gospel.Yet among those who support such punishments in the US, and who are demanding similar penalties in New Zealand law, are many Christians, people who celebrate God's mercy in their own lives yet seem to rule out mercy for other sinners whom they deem worse than themselves.

In light of this situation, Richard Snyder's book is to be welcomed, and for two reasons in particular. It is, first, a welcome addition to the growing body of literature advocating restorative rather than retributive mechanisms for dealing with crime. *"The differences between retributive and restorative justice are striking"*, Snyder explains. *"Retributive justice is primarily concerned with maintaining power, while restorative justice is concerned with restoring relationships. Retributive justice is primarily concerned with punishment, while restorative justice is concerned with healing. Retributive justice focuses on a narrowly circumscribed set of actors - the offender and the state - while restorative justice seeks to encompass the larger circle of injury and destruction that includes the victims and the community. Retributive justice utilizes punishment as its primary approach, while restorative justice utilizes mediation, non-punitive sanctions, reparations, and the full participation of all those damaged"* (76).

But Snyder's book is even more welcome as an attempt to explain theologically the highly punitive spirit that prevails in American culture, and increasingly in New Zealand as well. His thesis is that distorted theologies of grace in popular Protestantism fan the flames of punishment. Grace is misunderstood in two main ways. First, grace is associated almost wholly with redemption, with little attention being given to the presence of grace in creation. Humanity is divided into the redeemed, who possess grace, and the unredeemed, who do not. This easily encourages the demonization of deviants, like criminals, as wholly corrupt, lacking in any beauty, dignity or worth as God's creatures. The second distortion is the radical individualizing of redemptive grace, and a consequent failure to recognize the corporate nature of sin, our collective responsibility for wrongdoing, the need for institutional redemption, and the interconnectedness of all people.

Not all readers will agree with Snyder's linking of the Protestant ethic with the spirit of punishment. But his analysis of the consequences that flow from abbreviated conceptions of grace is telling, and well worth pondering further. And his analysis of the spirit of punishment undergirding American culture is, simply, irrefutable.

The Expanding Prison:
The Crisis in Crime and Punishment and the Search for Alternatives

by David Cayley, Ananasi Press, Toronto, 1998, 405pp.

The attitude that most of us have to prisons is "out of sight, out of mind". We know prisons exist, we're glad they exist because they remove dangerous criminals from the streets, but what goes on in them, and whether they do any good, are not questions that much concern us. But it's high time they did. Our society's excessive reliance on the inherent brutality of imprisonment is, as one prison chaplain describes it, "a poison in the bloodstream". Not only is prison a hugely expensive option that does little or nothing to solve the problem of crime, it makes matters worse. Prison fosters the violent and anti-social behaviour it purports to control, then, when prisoners are released, dumps it back on the streets.

This book, by Canadian broadcaster David Cayley, is a superb commentary on the way

imprisonment has "expanded" not only to dominate the criminal justice system but also to shape social life in general. Part One documents the relentless growth in prison numbers over the past generation. Such growth cannot be simplistically ascribed to increasing crime rates, since even where reported crime rates have fallen prison numbers have continued to increase.

Part Two examines some of the theories proposed to explain our use of incarceration and also traces its historical growth. Many would find it surprising to learn that reliance of prison as a mode of punishment and reform stems only from the late 18th century. Even more surprising, and shameful, is the fact that the primary model for the modern penitentiary, with its heavy use of solitary confinement, were mediaeval monastic prisons, and that justifications for such harsh treatment was often grounded in Christian theology.

In Part Three, Cayley describes a wide range of alternative methods for dealing with criminal offending. Pride of place is given to the "Family Group Conferences" utilised in the NZ youth justice system, a concept that has reached around the world. Other models are also mentioned, such as victim-offender reconciliation schemes, the use of "circle sentencing" in Canada and "reintegrative shame" in Japan, and various community-service options.

Cayley concludes by proposing that Western criminal justice systems now stand at a cross-roads. "They have inherited a procedural account of justice that proliferates rights but has nothing to say about what justice actually is; a retributivist theory of punishment that satisfies the public cry for the restoration of the moral order, but degenerates into pure revenge in the absence of a convincing mode of punishment; and a prison system, based on a mishmash of incoherent and unbelievable principles, that in reality does little more than warehouse the problem" (347). The alternative models recorded all offer promise of a better way of dealing with the issue, though Cayley is wisely cautious about regarding any as a panacea. This is both a disturbing and a hopeful book, one Phil Goff should certainly read.

God and the Victim:
Theological Reflections on Evil, Victimization,Justice, and Forgiveness
edited by Lisa Barnes Lampman & Michelle D. Shattuck, Wm B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1999, 316 pages.

This book comprises thirteen essays, most of which were delivered at a theological forum in 1997 organized by Neighbors Who Care, a crime-victim ministry of Prison Fellowship. As the sub-title indicates, the essays deal with victimization, the nature of evil, the meaning of justice, and the place of forgiveness, all related primarily to crime and its aftermath.

As in all such collections, the essays vary in appeal and somewhat in quality. But most are full of expert insight into the complex and painful issues surrounding victimization. It is only in the last 50 years that the experience of victims has been the subject of serious research. And it is even more recently that we have come to realise the extent to which the criminal justice system often re-traumatizes crime victims by failing to provide for their needs. Victims' needs include the need for physical and emotional safety, for validation of their feelings and vindication of their innocence, the need for restitution and re-empowerment, and, most of all, the need for answers to the profound questions victimization throws up. The physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual devastation caused by crime is enormous, and the ensuing fear, anger, grief, guilt, shame, self-doubt and moral confusion can blight the lives of victims for years to come.

While comment on victims' needs is common to all the essays, I found the contributions by Marlene Young and Howard Zehr to be most compelling. Young gives a comprehensive overview of the care victims need from the point of the crisis itself to the period after the court case is over and the offence is all but forgotten by others. Zehr's outstanding essay not only reviews the profound needs of victims, but also details how our criminal justice system, not to mention the regular worship life of most churches, fails to meet these needs. Zehr finds clues on how better to respond to crime and its consequences in the Psalms of lament.

Two other contributors warrant mention. Dan Allender offers an eloquent and perceptive

analysis of evil as a calculated assault on three essential components of human wholeness - faith, hope and love. In a second essay, he looks at some of the myths surrounding forgiveness. The Christian philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff offers a useful exploration of God' justice in the Bible, helpfully teasing out the connections between justice, peace and holiness in Old Testament teaching.

So this is a valuable collection on a crucially important topic, made even more useful by an appended study guide for groups to use. Hopefully many churches will utilise this resource, for, as the final contributor notes "only apathy is more dangerous than crime."

WORLDWIDE ANABAPTIST NEWS

BRITISH ANABAPTISTS REFLECT ON MISSION COUPLE'S LEGACY

MIDDLEBURY, Ind. (MBM) - In 1575, officials in London, England, arrested 26 Anabaptist refugees from Flanders. Three of those prisoners died either in prison or at the stake, and the rest were deported, ridding the British Isles of the Anabaptist movement.

That absence lasted nearly 400 years, until Alan and Eleanor Kreider arrived in England on assignment with Mennonite Board of Missions in 1974. Since then, the Kreiders' witnessing through their steady presence has laid the groundwork for current ripples of Anabaptist thought shimmering on the surface of the British religious waters.

According to Sian and Stuart Murray Williams, who spoke April 19 to more than 150 people at the annual Northern Indiana Hand-in-Hand banquet to celebrate the Kreiders' quarter-century of ministry, Anabaptism has become a quietly growing inter-church movement. All this accomplished without traditional church-planting evangelism; there is but one Mennonite church - Wood Green - in Britain.

Stuart Murray Williams, who edits the British journal Anabaptism Today and co-edited the new book Coming Home, Stories of Anabaptists in Britain and Ireland with Alan Kreider, called Christianity in Great Britain a "choir of many voices."

"What has happened in the last 30 years or so is that the Anabaptist voice has begun to sing again," Williams said. "For us, Anabaptism is about mission. It is about engaging a post-Christian culture in prophetic issues. ... It is a movement of renewal."

Sian Murray Williams, pastor of Littlemore Baptist Church in Oxford, England, and personnel director for the Baptist Missionary Society, called Anabaptism "a non-threatening but deeply subversive presence in all traditions." The Kreiders' leadership and the way they lived their faith allowed a broad body of believers to learn about Mennonite beliefs.

The Kreiders arrived at the London Mennonite Centre in 1974. They eventually led the Centre's transformation from a guest house for students to "thinking of a much broader ministry of the leavening possibilities of Anabaptist witness for Jesus across the British Isles," said J. Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Kraybill, who spent several years in London with MBM, said, "That ministry took root in astounding ways. ... It's not an exaggeration today to say that there are thousands of people in the British Isles whose lives have been touched by their ministry."

In his tribute, Kraybill said the Kreiders taught him several important aspects of ministry and discipleship, including the overflowing joy of mission work, the passion needed for preaching and teaching, the importance of emphasizing peacemaking, prayer and evangelism together, and the fact that Anabaptism continues to be a forward-looking movement. "For them, Anabaptism is a living stream of church renewal. It's a Jesus-centered spoken and lived faith that is rooted in peace and rooted in justice and most of all rooted in articulating the faith," Kraybill said. "Like leaven in a lump of dough, [the Kreiders] brought witness and radical discipleship into Britain."

Stuart Murray Williams said the Kreiders brought with them influential texts like John Howard Yoder's The Politics of Jesus and The More-With-Less Cookbook, the latter of which especially made accessible the ethos and lifestyle of Anabaptism.

The tenets of peace, community and group leadership appeal to Britains in a subversive way that lends itself to healing and hope, Stuart Murray Williams said. While pacifism itself is a minority position in Britain, Christians are starting to take Christ's peace teachings seriously. The Anabaptist Network, formed in 1992 and now consisting of about 600 people from across Britain, provides support for believers from other denominations seeking to follow Anabaptist ideals.

The Kreiders said Mennonite Board of Missions gave them the freedom to find their own way in the islands that lacked Anabaptist influence. That autonomy allowed them to make mistakes, but also to develop relationships that in themselves promoted the gospel. "We were not sent to do a job that was already prescribed, but sent to find our vocation in the church," Eleanor Kreider said."Our hearts are very full tonight. Full of gratitude and full of joy," she continued, speaking both of their experiences in England and their current work as itinerant missionary educators with MBM in North America. "Our friends (in Britain) said to us, 'It's time. It is right. You should go.' And they sent us with their blessing back here, back to you, back to our churches."

Stuart Murray Williams added, "We really do feel it is time to test out the legacy." The British couple said Anabaptism is not the Kreiders' only legacy on the islands. On one of Stuart's visits, there was no room at the Kreiders' "inn," so Alan and Eleanor sent him to the house of a friend for the night - Sian. "(They said) 'She'll look after you well," Stuart said. "She has." The Murray Williamses were married last year.

MENNONITES HELP KICK OFF "DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE"

Newton, Kan. (MC USA)—An initiative to help overcome violence that was first suggested by a German Mennonite was introduced at a World Council of Churches U.S. gathering in Nashville, TN., April 21-23. "The gathering was an opportunity for WCC representatives from North America to plan together how they will encourage their denominations to meet the goals of the Decade to Overcome Violence," said Mennonite Church peace and justice minister Susan Mark Landis.

The Decade to Overcome Violence was adopted by the WCC Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1998, in response to a motion from Fernando Ens, a German Mennonite who had studied at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana. Rather than beginning new projects, the Decade to Overcome Violence will identify and work with peace efforts already in operation. The U.S. office of the WCC devoted its annual meeting to the new initiative, and asked Mennonites to join them in kicking off the Decade to Overcome Violence. The WCC recently recognized "the steady witness of the 'historic peace churches'."

Kathleen Kern told the group in Nashville about her experience—as a member of Christian Peacemaker Team's Peacemaker Corps in Hebron, West Bank—of sitting on the roof of the Zalloum family home and watching it be demolished. "What if there had been a team of four on the roof of every house threatened with demolition in the West Bank, or a team of Christians in every Haitian village during the coup?" she said. Church of the Brethren and Friends United Meeting representatives at the Nashville conference suggested that the Decade to Overcome Violence could be an opportunity for Christian Peacemaker Teams to expand its ministry.

While Mennonites in the United States are not members of the WCC, the group gathered in Nashville encouraged Mennonites, especially CPT, to be involved in teaching with other Christian churches about ways of actively overcoming violence. Representatives of the WCC's U.S. office said that through biblical reflection, worship and sharing experiences of those in ministries of peace and reconciliation, "we will begin our decade walk together, praying the prayer of St. Francis, 'make me an instrument of your peace'."

The Anabaptist Association of Australian and New Zealand

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 incorporated. in 1998.

Purposes of the Association

The purposes of the Association are:

1. to nurture and support the Christian faith of individuals and groups in Australia and New Zealand who identify with the Anabaptist tradition.
2. to network and link individuals, churches and groups of Christians who share a common Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith.
3. to provide religious services including teaching, training, pastoral care, mediation, and counsel to its members and others interested in the Anabaptist tradition.
4. to provide resources and materials relating to the tradition, perspectives, and teaching of Anabaptists to both the Christian and general public.
5. to convene conferences and gatherings which provide opportunity for worship, teaching, training, consultation, celebration, and prayer in the Anabaptist tradition.
6. 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.
7. 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 account able 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