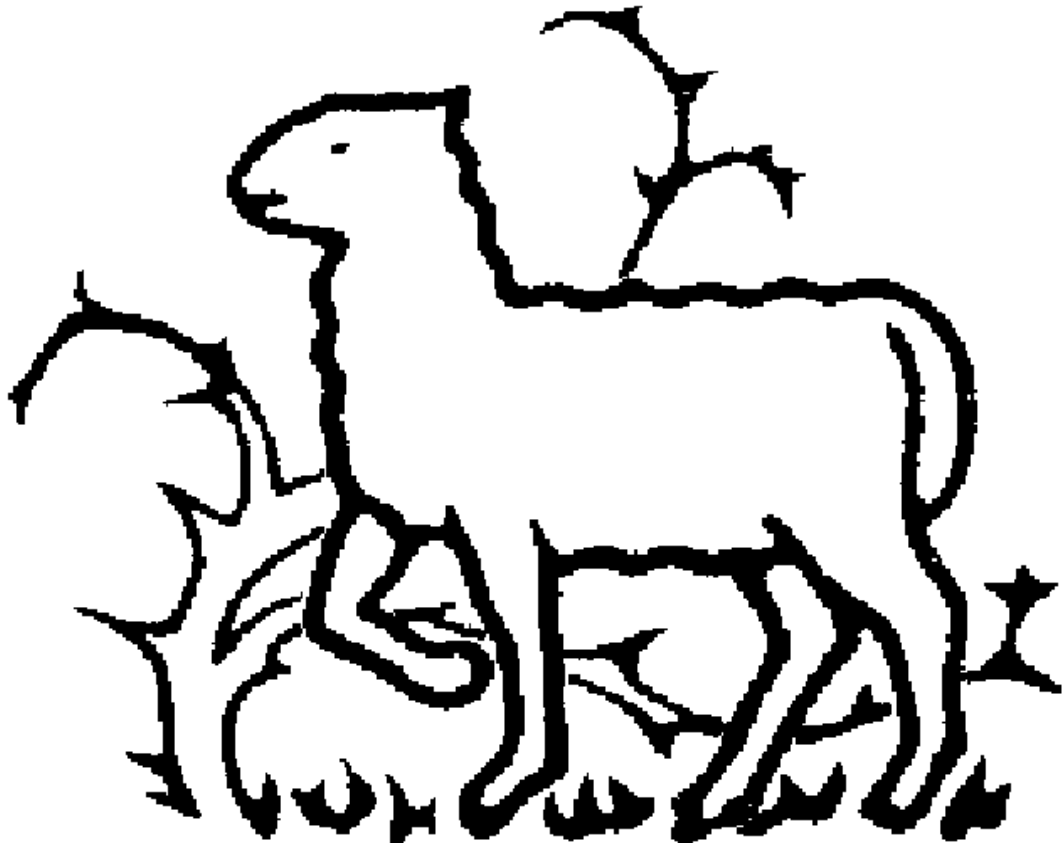


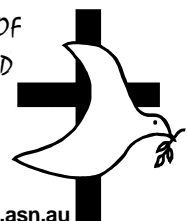
ON THE ROAD



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

**No.14
DECEMBER 2001**

THE
ANABAPTIST
ASSOCIATION OF
AUSTRALIA AND
NEW
ZEALAND



www.anabaptist.asn.au

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**Do not neglect to show
hospitality to strangers...
Hebrews 13:2**

FROM THE EDITORS

MARK AND MARY HURST

Refugee and immigration issues lead off this edition of *On The Road*. Events surrounding September 11 and the war in Afghanistan also get some coverage. Books, websites, and resources are included as usual.

Our last edition was larger than usual and we heard from some that it was too large. That issue was a special one prepared for an exhibition we were attending. Our aim is to produce a newsletter that is 20 to 24 pages long. Does that seem right to you? Too short? Too long?

We realize that we have used a lot of overseas material recently, partly due to September 11 and its aftermath. Has it been too much, too little, or just about right? Our aim is to have as much Australian and New Zealand material as possible but that depends on you the readers helping out. We need your contributions.

We want this to be your newsletter so look forward to hearing from you as we enter a new year. Have a blessed Advent and Christmas!

LETTERS

Thanks so very much for all the work you are doing! I appreciated the last *On the Road* with the perspectives on September 11. I found it so refreshing and hopeful.

Grace, love and peace to you,
Sally and Jim Longley

Thanks, Mark and Mary. There is a wealth of good material here. Our church is coming to similar conclusions to the "Challenge of Terror" article, but it is argued so well that it will both inform us and be a boost to action we propose to take in our local newspaper, for example.

Blessings,
Ken Goodlet

Congratulations on an excellent journal!

Stuart Murray Williams

The Anabaptist Network of Great Britain

www.anabaptistnetwork.com

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 :

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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.

During the course of the recent election campaign in which the appeal to a variety of fears seemed to have become the staple fare of both major political parties, I found myself reading the prophet Isaiah. The following passages snagged my attention like a woollen jumper on an obtruding nail.

*Do not call conspiracy
All that these people call conspiracy;
Do not fear what they fear,
do not be afraid of them.
It is Yahweh Sabaoth,
you must hold in veneration,
him you must fear,
him you must dread.*

....

*I bind up this testimony,
I seal this revelation,
In the heart of my disciples.
I wait for Yahweh
Who hides his face from the House of Jacob;
in him I hope*

...

*Distressed and starving he will wander through the
country
and, starving, he will become frenzied,
Blaspheming his king and his God
Turning his gaze upward,
then down to the earth,
He will find only distress and darkness,
the blackness of anguish,
and will see nothing but night.
Is not all blackness where anguish is? (Isaiah 8)*

There is a passion in the prophet's message which makes most of the preaching in our churches look anaemic. The recovery of such passion and an honesty about our emotions and the violence within in us is an important step beyond violence and towards shalom.

For me coming to honesty about my emotions has been difficult. During the past few weeks I have found it hard to face up to the anger within me and have been shocked at its intensity:

- anger at those who have resorted to violence with no regard for the gift of human life,.
- anger at the Australian government for the creation of fear and demonising of the stranger and refugee for its own political ends and its willingness to provide misleading information for those same ends to give shape and focus existing fears.
- frustration and helplessness, torn inside with a chill at the photos of war and the techno-speak and spin doctoring of the military and political leadership.

What resources do we have to live as disciples, to live humanly in a time of fear and anger, so that we do not become conformed in our reaction to the violence to which we are opposed?

The first thing to note about this time of crisis is that it represents I sense, a moment of opportunity. It is one of those rare moments when the automatic and unquestioning identity between

being a Christian and being an Australian has been jolted open, or at least awareness of that gap has been nudged into our awareness.

The passage quoted above from Isaiah offers us some clues about the virtues and spirituality that we need.

- We need to find the words to truly describe what is happening, which is to say that we need to learn how to speak truthfully. ... *do not call conspiracy all that they call conspiracy...* For the prophet to speak truthfully is to draw out clearly the tragedy but to enter into the awareness of tragedy with empathy.
- We need to learn how to fear appropriately, that is how to fear rightly. In our case we need to learn not to fear the stranger but to fear God. The god that we are called to fear is not the god of violence and destruction whose power is easy to name and recognise but the God revealed in Jesus Christ. We are to fear the god who comes to us in the form of the servant.
- We need to learn how to wait, how to be patient. Isaiah waits for the right time, a patience and a waiting in which he shares the pain and the darkness with his community. He shares this pain and anguish not as a judge from a position of moral superiority and distance but as someone who can sense the anguish and the darkness and has it reverberate within his own being. The kind of patience Isaiah is called to has its echo in the New Testament. We find this call to patience embedded in the Lord's prayer. Will Willimon and Stanley Hauerwas in their wonderful account of the Christian life **Lord Teach Us: The Lord's Prayer and the Christian Life** (Abingdon, 1996) highlight the importance of such patience.

We have just prayed "your kingdom come", a petition full of hope. Now we are taught to say "your will be done" a petition for patience. That the virtues of hope and patience should be so joined is not surprising for a people on a journey called kingdom. Indeed our hopes as Christians can make us dangerous if they are not schooled by patience. Without patience we are tempted to storm the walls of injustice, destroying our enemy and thus betraying God's way of forgiveness. Instead we are called to be a patient people schooled as we are by the patience of our crucified God so that the world might know that love not violence rules this world. God's way of dealing with us and our evil is called the cross, the unlimited suffering patience of god. We are called to take up our cross and follow god's patience. (p.65)

Issues facing the Association – comments to the Annual General Meeting

- The challenge facing the Committee this year has been the need to continue dealing with some of the necessary administrative issues while gradually shifting attention to developing a shared sense of priorities for the AAANZ mission and providing support for Mark and Mary Hurst.
- The relevance and challenge of the Anabaptist tradition of community and discipleship has never been clearer. We have hit a threshold moment in the life of the Christian community in Australia and New Zealand. The automatic

and association between our Christian commitment and our identity as Australian has received a significant jarring and created opportunities for conversation with other Christians around the shape of our witness to the wider community. We have a *kairos* moment. I pray that we may have the wisdom and boldness to respond.

- The Association has to position itself as a resource for Australian Christians and church communities in helping to equip them to respond to issues of conflict, peacemaking and individual and communal transformation. This will inevitably raise issues about the form of church life which can sustain those initiatives. The challenge to reflect theologically and ecclesially on the shape of such church planting initiatives is upon us

and will stretch our resources and courage.

- Finally, I want to express my thanks to all the members of the Committee for their support this year. I would particularly thank Gary Baker as he finishes his stint as Treasurer for the work he has done in establishing systems and procedures and for continuing to work in area in which he was not confident. We all owe him a substantial debt for stepping in to fill the gap. Ross Coleman in addition to turning around an excellent set of minutes promptly has been thoughtful and supportive in the time he has given to me over the phone. In closing I can only express my amazement at the fellowship and encouragement I have received in the course of the committee teleconferences this year. God has been very good.

THE VIEW FROM EPHESIANS

MARK AND MARY HURST

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

Immigration and refugee issues have been on the political agenda recently in Australia and much has been written about the role these played in the government's recent election victory.

We were interested to see how our local community newspaper dealt with this. One election article described a candidate running for the Australians Against Further Immigration party. The candidate is a tradesman who travels all over Sydney and said "he could not believe how heavy traffic had become." His response to this situation? "Obviously, there are too many people and therefore too many cars. Of course this adds to the pollution. It also means that workers like myself have less time with their families. Being a family man, I am very concerned about the ethnic-based assaults in southwest Sydney, drug dealing in Cabramatta and the fact that there are not enough jobs to go around for Australian youth without their having to compete with the never-ending stream of immigrants as well."

It sounds like immigrants are the easy scapegoats for everything from lack of jobs, not enough time with the family to Sydney's pollution.

The One Nation candidate in our area was interesting too. Her party platform included "having illegal immigrants (boat people) deported on arrival" and "retain our cultural identity – end divisive multiculturalism". The background information on the candidate tells us that she was born in Turkey and moved to Australia in 1971! Had One Nation been in power, she would still be in Turkey. (Had the Aboriginals had such policies most of us would not be here!)

Some in the Anabaptist Association have been asking "What is an appropriate Christian response to this issue?" An online search for articles about "Jesus, refugees, and immigration" turns up various Christian responses. The Christian Democratic Party's response is given in an article by Rev Fred Nile entitled "Illegal Militant Moslem Boat People Versus Law Abiding, Patient, Christian Refugees". You can probably guess where he went

from there.

A sermon preached by the Rev Dr Lorraine Parkinson at St Aidan's Uniting Church North Balwyn, on 26th August, 2001 gives a different perspective. Entitled "Away From Home" and based on Psalm 71:1-6, 17-24 and Matthew 25:31-46 it raises a number of good points. Here are some excerpts:

"Everywhere you look, people are leaving their homelands in search of something better. At present it is estimated there are about 23 million people who fit the description of 'refugee' - let alone people simply looking for a better way of life. It's helpful to remember that 23 million is the equivalent number of every man, woman and child in the whole of Australia and New Zealand combined... regardless of where such people come from, or why they are refugees, there is an underlying condition common to all of them. They are outside their country of nationality. They are - unwillingly - away from home. On the basis of that thought there is a very simple definition of a refugee. A refugee is anyone outside of his or her own country, who would go home if they could.

The Bible has many stories about people forced to leave their own country - their own home. It's not for nothing that the worst possible punishment to be inflicted on Adam and Eve for their disobedience is that they become refugees - banished from their home in the Garden of Eden.

And in Psalm 137 the intense longings and overpowering emotions of the refugee are encapsulated in nine short verses. The scene is a riverside in Babylon. The displaced Israelites are in a

The entire New Testament is written from the perspective of exile. -Daniel L. Smith, *The Religion of the Landless*, 214.

green and pleasant land, with flowing water in plenty. Yet when they remember their home, they sit down on the river bank and weep. No matter how good the food, or how pleasant the surroundings, it is not home! ...

What, if anything, can we do to be helpful in this time of crisis for these 'strangers in our midst'? ...time and again it has been proven that within Australia there is a vast reservoir of goodwill toward the 'underdog', the 'have nots'. This is closely identified with the ethos of the 'fair go'. The average Aussie is fair-minded, and responds very generously to good causes when they are made known.

The problem is that the ordinary Australian is not being asked to help the asylum seekers. No government appeal has been issued to the community for help in meeting the needs of these 'strangers in our midst'. ...all of us remember the enormously generous response to a call for volunteers to help organize the Sydney Olympics. The fact is, Australians are good at volunteering. The task is not too big for us...

The Australian people need to hear about help already being given to asylum seekers by ordinary volunteers in local churches like East Kew Uniting and the Sunshine Uniting Church Mission. Probably the best way the churches can help is to provide the media with clear examples of work already going on."

A number of website articles pick up on the fact that Jesus was a refugee. Here is a sampling from around the world:

"The Archbishop of Canterbury has called for more tolerance of refugees... In his (1999) New Year message, delivered at the Refugee Council in South London, Dr Carey said Jesus was "history's most well-known refugee", and Christians had a duty to welcome strangers. "Of course, the presence of strangers can make us nervous or even angry," the primate of the Anglican Church said. "Some instinctively think of refugees as 'scroungers' and newspaper headlines sometimes whip this fear into hostility."

Dr Carey pointed out: "Probably history's most well-known refugee was a baby called Jesus. Shortly after his birth, the Bible tells us, his family had to flee to Egypt, a refugee from political powers that were determined to destroy him.

"And the Christian faith has a special place for the

The first image for a contemporary theology of exile is the realization that we are not "home," we live in Babylon. And the one who would be faithful to the creator God must resist the temptation to slip back into a modern "Ba'al" worship of a graven image: the nation-state, power over other humans, power from nature and creation.
-Daniel L. Smith, *The Religion of the Landless*, 206.

stranger, the ones we may not yet understand, those different from ourselves. When we welcome the stranger, the outcast, the refugee, we welcome Jesus himself." He added that refugees fleeing persecution and war only reluctantly left their homeland, and often brought "rich gifts" to their new countries."

From the Disciples of Christ's refugee work we get the following:

It is a familiar story...



A young couple and their newborn baby—fearing the "ethnic cleansing" happening around them—flee for their lives. Today the flight of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus into Egypt is re-enacted by millions of people around the world. Modern-day refugees and immigrants are being pushed to the margins of life—driven out of their homes and communities by armed conflict, gross violations of human rights, severe economic repression, and fear of persecution. They come from countries we hear about in the nightly news and from countries that never get our attention, but they come seeking a better life full of opportunity and freedom.

Jesus, who had nowhere to lay his head, calls us to respond to these modern-day refugees and immigrants. Jesus calls us to welcome the stranger.

"The Alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:34 NRSV).

An award-winning article from the United Methodist Church in the USA entitled "Strangers in Our Midst: The Good Samaritan Today" and written by Lilia Fernandez talks about how...

"Most people are overwhelmed and confused by the complex realities of living in globalized and multicultural communities. People feel insecure and yearn for decisive one-step solutions to difficult problems. It is therefore not surprising that anti-immigrant legislation has won widespread approval...

Jesus taught us about the reign of God and what kind of world God seeks for us by speaking in parables—examples in story form taken from everyday life. Through these stories, Jesus teases our minds into the deeper reflection that assures the continuing relevance of the Gospel message. The symbolic language Jesus employs prevents us from using his teachings to create simple legalistic solutions to our problems. Instead, through the eyes of the Good Samaritan, Jesus challenges us to grapple with what love and neighbour mean in action.

How might our reactions...be changed if we were to view ourselves as people called by God to be neighbourly? How might the story of the Good Samaritan force us to sort out our connections to or disconnections from others within a Christian way of life and sense of community?

Jesus recounts the story of a man who, while

To be exiled is to be away from home, but home does exist; for the Christian "home" is the promised Reign of God that was initiated, "planted," during Jesus' ministry. The temptation is to artificially end exile before God ends our exile.

-Daniel L. Smith, *The Religion of the Landless*, 207.

travelling the dangerous road from Jerusalem to Jericho, is accosted by bandits, severely beaten, and left for dead in a ditch. First a priest and then a Levite (a temple functionary) pass by and ignore the man's plight. We are repelled by the idea that people in the professions would fail to intervene in such a dire situation. We are then astonished when the injured man is not only rescued but extensively cared for by a despised outcast—a Samaritan. We are compelled to widen our focus from stereotyped categories of people—respected professionals, despised outcasts—to consider whose actions were the more neighbourly. More critically, we are being asked to enlarge the scope of our adherence to the commandment to love our neighbours as ourselves by expanding our concept of who our neighbours are.

The reversal of the legal expert's question—from a focus on others to a focus on our own responsibilities—gives a clue to the parable's message. God's commandment to love your neighbour is not limited by the number of people in need of love but by the capacity to love of those subject to the command. The change of focus in the parable also forces us to confront the responsibilities of discipleship—not from the comfort of our own perspectives and goals but from the point of view of those who are in dire need. This means that it will not be our own agendas and comfort levels that will control our decisions but the well-being of those "in the ditch" that will govern the scope of our obligation. It is wholeheartedly agreed that immigration controls must be effective and that fraud and other criminal acts must not be a part of the process. But conscientious citizens and people of faith must demand that people's real-life situations be brought to bear when public policy is formulated.

In contemplating a modern version of the parable of the Good Samaritan, we might ask ourselves how to confront the root causes of forced human migrations today. Why are we not speaking about the welfare, responsibilities, and work opportunities of all God's children—especially in the light of growing poverty and prejudice: problems that are exacerbated by global economic restructuring. How are we, who experience not only God's grace but also economic well-being, to respond to our encounters with the world's uprooted—whom we now find on our own doorsteps?

When we ask only for simple legal solutions, we effectively exclude the strangers in our midst from the communion table of fellowship in God's household. We treat them as impediments to our own progress instead of seeing them as opportunities for redeeming and reconciling discipleship. Even worse, we stereotype them. We use harmful labels—such as

illegal aliens—to effectively preclude our ever having to consider them as members of our neighbourhoods and congregations.

The parable of the Good Samaritan challenges us to understand that violence towards those who are the least powerful among us can take the form of legislative acts or of human indifference and disconnection. Jesus asks that we who would be good disciples be good neighbours—be willing to think and act beyond what has ordinarily been expected. This is the message of the incarnation itself and the meaning behind the message when Jesus tells the lawyer to "go and do likewise."

Phillip Adams has used a number of his recent columns in *The Weekend Australian* to speak prophetically on the refugee/immigration issue. It is ironic that Adams who claims no faith in God comes out being more Christ-like on this issue than many who profess Christianity. In his December 1-2 column he said: "There's something absolutely monstrous about the indifference of the nice to human suffering. And there's something odd when an atheist has to remind these characters, who so frequently profess their Christianity, that they'd make Jesus Christ want to puke."

In response to the government's warning, that anyone helping detention centre escapees faced ten years in jail, Adams started a civil disobedience campaign. Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock "said that he doubted whether more than 200 Australians would behave so reprehensibly." Adams "invited people to submit their names and addresses for a register of civil disobedience – provided they were willing to face ten years in the slammer or behind one of Ruddock's barbed-wire fences."

At first there was no response but then the names began pouring in. By mid-November there were "almost 10,000 letters, faxes and emails". If you want to make a statement about the Australian government's treatment of refugees, write to Phillip Adams, Elmswood, via Scone, NSW 2337. Tell him why you are willing to take a stand. The Lord living among the "least of these" will appreciate it.

It is the function of minority communities to remember and to create utopian visions. There is no hope for society without an awareness of transcendence.

-Daniel L. Smith, *The Religion of the Landless*, 208.

Debunking the Myths About Asylum Seekers

Myth 1 Boat People are Queue Jumpers

Fact: In Iraq and Afghanistan, there are no queues for people to jump. Australia has no diplomatic representation in these countries and supports the International coalition of nations who continue to oppose these regimes and support sanctions against them. Therefore, there is no standard refugee process where people wait in line to have their applications considered. Few countries between the Middle East and Australia are signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and as such asylum seekers are forced to continue to travel to another country to find protection.

People who are afraid for their lives are fleeing from the world's most brutal regimes including the Taliban in Afghanistan and Sadaam Hussein's dictatorship in Iraq. Antonio Domini, Head of UN Humanitarian Program in Afghanistan, states that Afghanistan is one of the most difficult places in the world in which to survive.

Myth 2 - Asylum Seekers are Illegal

Fact: This is untrue. Under Australian Law and International Law a person is entitled to make an application for refugee asylum in another country when they allege they are escaping persecution. Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution."

People who arrive on our shores without prior authorisation from Australia, with no documents, or false documents are not illegal. They are asylum seekers - a legal status under International Law. Many Asylum Seekers are forced to leave their countries in haste and are unable to access appropriate documentation. In many cases oppressive authorities actively prevent normal migration processes from occurring. 'Illegals' are people who overstay their visas. The vast majority of these in Australia are from western countries, including 5,000 British tourists.

Myth 3 - Australia Already Takes Too Many Refugees

Fact: Australia receives relatively few refugees by world standards, In 2001 Australia will receive only 12,000 refugees through its humanitarian program. This number has remained static for three years, despite the ever-increasing numbers of refugees worldwide. Australia accepted 20,000 refugees each year at the beginning of the 1980's.

According to Amnesty International 1 in every 115 people on earth are refugees, and a new refugee is created every 21 seconds. Refugees re-settle all over the world However, the distribution of refugees across the world is very unequal.

Tanzania hosts one refugee
for every 76 Tanzanian people (1:76)
Britain hosts one refugee
for every 530 British people (1:530)
Australia hosts one refugee
for every 583 Australian people (1:583)

Myth 4- We're Being Swamped by Hordes of Boat People

Fact: 300,000 refugees arrived in Europe to seek asylum last year. In contrast, 4,174 reached Australia by boat or plane. In 2000, Iran and Pakistan each hosted over a million Afghan refugees. The real burden of assisting refugees is borne in the main by the world's poorest nations.

Myth 5 - They're Not Real Refugees Anyway

Fact: 97% of applicants from Iraq and 93% of applicants from Afghanistan seeking asylum without valid visas in Australia in 1999 were recognised as genuine refugees. Therefore, under Australian law they were found to be eligible to stay in Australia. Generally, 84% of all asylum seekers are found to be legitimate refugees and are able to stay in Australia.

Myth 6 - They Must Be 'Cashed up' to Pay People Smugglers

Fact: It is alleged that people who have the resources to pay people smugglers could not possibly be genuine refugees. The UNHCR disputes claims about 'cashed up' refugees saying that payments made to people smugglers in fact range from \$4000 - \$5000 AUD. In reality, many families and communities pool their resources in an attempt to send their relatives to safety. People smuggling is a crime that the international community needs to combat. However, this does not negate the legitimacy of asylum seekers' claims, nor their need to seek refuge. The international community, in eradicating people smuggling, is also required to address the growing numbers of asylum seekers throughout the world. As a Western nation, Australia has a role to play.

Myth 7- There is no Alternative to Mandatory Detention

Fact: Asylum seekers claims need to be assessed for legitimacy. Australia is the only Western country that mandatorily detains asylum seekers whilst their claims are being heard. Asylum seekers are not criminals and detention should be minimal. At a cost of \$104 a day per head the policy of detention is very expensive. Community based alternatives to mandatory detention can be found internationally and within the current Australian parole system.

A select Committee of the NSW Parliament has costed alternatives to incarceration including home detention and transitional housing. The average cost of community based programs are (per person, per day): Parole: \$5.39. Probation: \$3.94. Home Detention: \$58.83. 'These options are clearly more economically efficient, and much more humane.'

Sweden receives similar numbers of asylum seekers as Australia, despite having less than half the population. Detention is only used to establish a persons identity and to conduct criminal screening. Most detainees are released within a very short time, particularly if they have relatives or friends living in Sweden. Of the 17,000 asylum seekers currently in Sweden 10,000 reside outside the detention centres. Children are only detained for the minimum possible time (a maximum of 6 days).

Myth 8 - If We Let Them In, They'll Take Our Benefits

Fact: A common misconception is that refugees arriving in Australia will 'steal' the entitlements of Australians. The reality is that refugees, like migrants, create

demand for goods and services, thus stimulating the economy and generating growth and employment. A recent UCLA study has shown that unauthorised immigration boosts the US economy by \$800 billion per year.

Just Comment

A joint publication of Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education & The School of Education, Australian Catholic University

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Teaching Refugees to drive

This column is supposed to be about the big issues of the day. "Something a bit reflective that moves beyond the immediate headlines, something that opens up the connections between public policy and Christian faith," I was told by the editorial committee when we were planning this column. Sometimes, though, the "big issues" can sneak up on you through apparently small incidents, like a story about teaching some Afghan refugees to drive, for example.

A couple, from the church where we worship here in Canberra have been involved in supporting refugees from Afghanistan, a mother and her two daughters, for over a year now. While the family has visited our church on at least one occasion, my friends have worked hard to help the family find appropriate contacts in the local Muslim community.

The husband has also been involved in teaching the daughters to drive. We have been hearing stories about her progress for quite a while now and it has been a long slow process with some interesting moments. Peter's patience was crowned with success only recently when the elder daughter received her P plates. Nothing special in that you might think. Yet these apparently simple gestures of hospitality, embodying as they do patience and an acknowledgment of cultural and religious difference stand in stark contrast to the rhetoric of the Federal government over the past year. As I have thought about that contrast it has become clear to me that if there is one issue on which continuing conflict and tension between churches and the Australian government can be just about guaranteed it will be on the issue of how we treat refugees.

There has been little subtlety about the government policy and its implementation. The images of detention centres, in remote localities are striking and hostile. When combined with the scapegoating content and fear raising style of the Immigration Minister's comments on refugees over recent months I was left wondering at times who in fact had won the last election and was now forming the government. A quick reality check however confirmed that the Liberal National Party coalition rather than One Nation had won the last election. I was feeling seriously confused there for a while.

The calculation has obviously been that the way to get back some of the votes from Australians who are feeling angry and alienated is to appeal to that fear and be seen to come down tough on those who are seeking asylum. Reconciliation within Australia has multiple dimensions but that is an issue for another time.

What needs to be said and done on the plight of the refugees, has in fact been said, and is continuing to be said eloquently, by what is being done, out of their own resources by

the churches through parishes and associated denominational welfare agencies.

The critical voice and action of the Australian church on this issue has a number of sources. One of these is simply information – churches have extensive international links with missionaries and aid workers in most of the areas from which refugees are coming. Another critical source of information is that many local churches have been engaged in providing hospitality for refugees over many years. The people in those churches have faces and names to bring to mind when refugees are discussed in the media. They have heard the stories of people who may well be now their friends. For them attempts to press the button of fear of the stranger will not work.

But that begs the question why has there been this predisposition in the churches for practical engagement with refugees?

While churches have not drawn out the connections out explicitly I think the worship of the church with its rehearsal of the story of Israel and the New Testament reflections on the nature of the church itself provides the key.

When you stop and think about it what else can we do given that the founding stories in the Hebrew Bible point to the requirement to exercise hospitality to the stranger and the alien? The story of Israel is a story of a people who are mostly in exile or on pilgrimage seeking a home. In the New Testament Jesus is remembered in the gospel stories as a refugee from a genocidal agent of an imperial power. The teaching of the gospels make very clear that to show hospitality to the stranger is to welcome the presence of God.

The story doesn't stop there though. A significant strand in the story of the early church is the discovery that the new nation, the ecclesia, the public assembly called into being by God was not to be restricted by ethnic, religious or political origin. Paul was emphatic about the principle of our oneness in Christ though on occasion pastorally prepared to compromise on its full and immediate implementation. These stories are read and sung and preached upon weekly. Out identity as church as a people who are resident aliens whose primary identity has to do with being a follower of Jesus should make us prepared to be hospitable to those whom state terror has forced out of their homeland.

It seems very clear that fear and anger, for whatever reason have been allowed to take control of political policy and discourse within Australia. The humanly destructive tendencies of nationalism can only be resisted effectively by people and communities who take their bearings from the stories of Scripture and are willing to tell Caesar to "get nicked".

- with a shrug of the shoulders and the question: "Well, where else could they go? I had to take them in."

- What the people in Le Chambon said about rescuing Jews during World War II in Philip Hallie's *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, 286.

In this context gestures of hospitality to the refugee are an integral part of Christian witness. The church can afford to take on the government because at the grass roots they are composed of people like my friends who take the time to teach refugees to drive and help them find their way to the local mosque.

This article first appeared in Doug Hynd's column in *Zadok Perspectives*

Australian Church Leaders Letter on Immigration

31 October 2001

The Right Honourable Kim Beazley
Leader of the Opposition
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2610

Dear Opposition Leader

We are writing to you as the leader of the Opposition to urge you both to announce a bipartisan agreement to raise the number of refugee re-settlement places from the current 12,000 quota to 25,000 per annum. We do this for the following reasons:

Firstly it is now a matter of moral urgency given that so many refugees are fleeing a regime we have judged so evil that we have joined the war against the Taliban Government. Because it is an emergency situation, many of these extra places should be reserved for Afghans and a time frame of twelve to eighteen months be set, after which there might be a review. This would be both just and credible to the Australian electorate which has supported the commitment of troops to this war.

Secondly the global refugee crisis of some 23 million refugees means that all nations must equally increase their share of the responsibility. Otherwise the notion of an orderly queue is completely hopeless and we will see refugees and their families waiting for the rest of their lives in squalid depressing refugee camps.

Thirdly as we join with the United States and Britain we are conscious that the heads of those states profess a Christian faith. We appreciate that both of you are Christians also. Our commitments oblige us, we believe, to send an urgent signal to the Muslim world that we are committed to caring for many of their refugees, particularly those from Iraq and Afghanistan.

With an average migrant intake of approximately 88,000 per year we believe there is more than adequate scope to increase the refugee quota to 25,000. We are confident that, given the difficult and uncertain times often alluded to in this election campaign, the Australian people would accept such an increase.

Finally while we as Christians do not claim special privilege in a way that could offend Church-State separation, the Gospel message and particularly the story of the Good Samaritan should motivate this increase in our quota for those fleeing persecution and who arrive on our shores.

We urge you to give this your immediate consideration.

The Bible makes the experience of marginality normative for the people of God...For the Israelites and the early Christians, understanding themselves as aliens and sojourners was a reminder of their dependence on God. It provided a basis for gratitude and obedience.

-Marva J. Dawn, *Powers, Weakness, and the Tabernacling of God*, 140.

Yours faithfully,

Reverend Tim Costello,
President Baptist Union of Australia
Reverend Professor James Haire,
President of the Uniting Church in Australia
Archbishop Francis Carroll,
President Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
Archbishop Peter Carnley,
Primate Anglican Church of Australia
Archbishop Aghan Baliozian,
Primate Armenian Apostolic Church
Reverend Terence Corkin, General Secretary
of the Assembly of Uniting Church in Australia
Reverend David Gill, General Secretary
of National Council of Church in Australia
Reverend Mike Semmler,
President Lutheran Church in Australia
Reverend Robert Smith,
General Secretary of the Churches of Christ
Colin Wendell –Smith,
Presiding Clerk of Religious Society of Friends
Pastor Chester Stanley, President of Australian Union
Conference of Seventh Day Adventists
Reverend John Henderson, General Secretary Designate
of the National Council of Churches of Australia

Sudan's 'Lost Boys' Find Shelter

(Editors' Note: The following article tells about the latest refugees to arrive at Jubilee Partners in rural Georgia in America's South. The folks at Jubilee have been working at living out the Gospel as a Christian community for close to thirty years now. We had the pleasure of working with them in the early 1980's, tracking the White Train which carried nuclear weapons from Texas to Georgia. You can read more of their story in the book *With Our Own Eyes*. Information about the book follows this news story.)

The exodus spanned 14 years, a thousand miles and three countries. Half were killed by gunfire, crocodiles and lions. The rest ate wet mud so that the moistness would sooth their parched throats, their aching bodies. This is how the "Lost Boys of Sudan" (and some girls) grew up.

Today, more than 40 of them have journeyed from the east African country of Sudan to Comer, Georgia — from civil war to an international Christian service community called Jubilee Partners. They are not “lost,” they are a chosen few. They are no longer “boys,” but men who are refugees of a war that has claimed almost three million lives.

“Out of 2,500 refugees that have lived here,” said Don Mosley of Jubilee Partners, “I have never heard of anything more terrible. They are ultimate victims.”

In southern Sudan, the home of the Lost Boys, it was traditional for young boys to roam far from their villages, taking care of their families’ cattle. According to Mosley, about 20,000 boys and 2,000 girls returned to villages throughout southern Sudan in 1987 and 1988, only to find their families murdered by troops from the northern Khartoum government. The northern Sudanese, lighter-skinned and Muslim, were wreaking mass destruction upon the dark-skinned southern Sudanese who primarily practiced Christianity and other religions, such as animism.

“The 18-year civil war has been racist, cultural, and ethnic more than religious. The religion is almost coincidental,” said Mosley.

Yet race, culture, ethnicity and religion were nonetheless interwoven in the Sudanese war, and these boys, spanning mostly from 5 to 10 years old, left their destroyed villages and set off on a journey.

The boys formed groups, living off the dry land of southern Sudan as they migrated east. They finally reached Ethiopia and lived there until 1991, when the Ethiopian dictator was overthrown by rebels. According to the Lost Boys, the rebels chased them back across the Gilo River and into Sudan, shooting and killing many of the fleeing boys. Many of those who escaped the gunfire drowned in the river or were eaten by crocodiles.

“Some who were not knowing how to swim, they were dying. So many people lost their life,” said John Akuei, one of the 11 Lost Boys currently at Jubilee Partners.

The surviving Lost Boys then spent six months walking in Sudan, on their way to a northern Kenyan refugee camp called Kakuma. They reached Kakuma in 1992, where they barely escaped starvation for the next nine years.

“Every 15 days we get six kilos of wheat and one-half cup of lentils. The food runs out after 10 days. The other five, we call them black days,” said Akuei.

Finally the Lost Boys received political refugee status and have been arriving in the United States in shifts. From Kakuma they are flown to America, where they are scattered around the states to stay in places like Jubilee Partners, apartments and private homes.

The Lost Boys had never seen cardboard, toilets, food packaging or buildings, light bulbs, tall trees, ice or television. They were, quite literally, leaping from a land far, far away into the sphere of “Western civilization” — a transition that was documented by a crew from the CBS News production “60 Minutes II.”

At Jubilee Partners, the Lost Boys are learning English and becoming acquainted with American culture. They can live there up to two months, before moving somewhere else on their own.

Sitting around their kitchen table at Jubilee Partners, the Lost Boys talk about their new-found “balanced” diet. About being offered “soda” and a choice of meat on the airplane to

America. Now they have a stocked kitchen — Pringles and Sprite, pasta and meat. Stray pieces of rice left on the table from a meal are vestiges of their new life.

The conversation then turned to their first visions of America — a land that was supposed to symbolize freedom and safety. They were travelling on September 11, the day terrorists attacked New York City and Washington, D.C., and some were stuck in New York for several days.

“It was the first time watching television, we were watching New York,” said Akuei.

“We were looking at the very big house. We were so worried about the people in the big house,” said James Gak, speaking about the World Trade Center whose twin towers were destroyed when terrorists rammed passenger airliners into them. “We come from Sudan because of war. We are many years without our parents. We came here and do not want to see war.”

“We do not want again to hear the sound of the guns,” said Akuei.

Now more than 150 of the uprooted Sudanese men, led by Lost Boy Abraham Yel Nhial, have signed a “Call for Peace” urging forgiveness by the Sudanese who have been oppressed for years. In the statement, they write they will use the opportunity in America to gain education and resources that will enable them to return to Sudan and rebuild their villages.

And while much of America is calling for “war,” the Lost Boys, survivors of one of the century’s bloodiest, are warning against it.

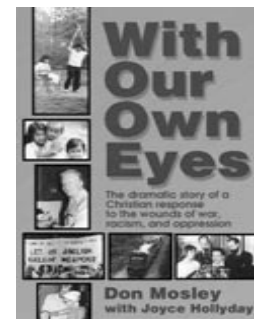
“In Sudan, people lose their limbs and lose their lives. Those are the bad things of war,” said Akuei.

At a time in which the world seems to teeter precariously on the edge of war, Mosley is adamant about the lessons the Lost Boys have to teach the United States.

“People of this country are wanting to do something violent in response to the violence,” said Mosley. “I think the Lost Boys, in their profound innocence and wisdom borne of great suffering, demonstrate some of the highest ideals I’ve ever seen — of Christians or anyone else. They know that more fighting will only perpetuate the suffering.”

This article was published in the Athens Banner-Herald on Sunday, 30 September 2001.

With Our Own Eyes
by Don Mosley with
Joyce Hollyday,
Herald Press, 1996



Here is the story of people who threw themselves into an effort to take the teachings of Jesus seriously, “in scorn of the consequences.”

The “consequences” have been amazing. These passionate Christians have participated in saving hundreds of refugee lives, travelled to war zones around the world, chased midnight trains bearing nuclear weapons, and endured imprisonment. They have experienced nationwide media

attention. These Christians, based at Jubilee Partners in Comer, Georgia, have experienced an ever-deepening commitment to being channels of God's love in a violent world. Through sharing their story, Don Mosley with Joyce Hollyday invites thousands more Christians to join them in this effort.

"*With Our Own Eyes* is the inspiring story of what can happen when a group of Christians take seriously Jesus' call to be peacemakers in a world full of violence. I have been encouraged by the work of Jubilee Partners as I have tried to put my own faith into action."

—Jimmy Carter

A set of three 90-minute audiocassettes containing stories from *With Our Own Eyes* is available from Jubilee Partners, 706 783-5131

As winter approaches in Afghanistan, MCC calls for blankets and donations

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is calling for winter blankets, handmade comforters and cash donations to help the growing number of Afghans who have fled their homes due to drought, civil war and U.S. military strikes.

In late October, MCC shipped 20,000 handmade comforters to Iran. MCC hopes to collect an additional 20,000 new store-bought heavy blankets by December 1 for a second shipment. The comforters and blankets will be distributed through the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. A suggested US\$20 cash donation per blanket will purchase additional blankets and relief supplies on location as needed.

For more information go to:

<http://www.mcc.org/afghancrisis/index.html>

Eastern Mennonite University Warms to Blanket Drive

Below is a report about how some US university students did something to aid Afghans.

HARRISONBURG, Va. - A warm, celebrative spirit pervaded Lehman Auditorium at Eastern Mennonite University.

Stacks of homemade comforters and store-bought blankets covered the stage of EMU's Lehman Auditorium at a chapel service held Wednesday morning, November 21, one day before Thanksgiving. The service culminated a month-long drive on campus to collect blankets and money for Afghanistan relief.

That the effort was successful is not a blanket statement.

According to a student organizer, EMU junior Hannah B. Clymer of Shirleysburg, Pa., both the blanket and contributions goal were exceeded.

"We were hoping to complete 100 homemade comforters and actually finished a total of 159," Ms. Clymer

said. "Another 350 store-bought blankets were contributed by people on campus, from local churches and by the larger community."

Cash contributions to the blanket drive from the campus and local churches and individuals totalled \$8,860, Clymer told the chapel assembly, noting that each ten dollars will purchase an additional blanket- making a grand total of some 1,360 blankets.

Jewel Swartz Martin, associate campus pastor, led the audience in a litany of blessing for the blankets, calling the effort "a true gift of community."

Jane Wenger Clemens, instructor in social work, affirmed the students for their work in planning both a series of teach-ins held in October and early November on campus in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks as well as the blanket drive.

"These have been tangible ways of following Jesus, the Prince of Peace," she said.

Clemens also publicly thanked Roger and Rachel Bucher Kauffman, EMU alumni from Bellefontaine, Ohio, who contributed the material for the hand-made blankets. The couple helped supervise a "blanket blitz" held November 2-3 in the University Commons for persons to sew and knot many of the comforters.

Following the chapel service, students, faculty and staff carried the blankets - along with the donated funds - to an awaiting truck for delivery to Mennonite Central Committee headquarters in Akron, Pennsylvania. They will be forwarded to a relief agency in Pakistan for distribution to refugees in Afghanistan and neighbouring Pakistan.

Clymer appeared overwhelmed with the outpouring of campus and community support for the project.

"May God receive all the praise and honour for this response," she said, and the chapel assembly responded by singing the hymn, "To God Be the Glory."

As cluster bombs fall in Afghanistan, MCC continues calls for ban

by Rachel Beth Miller

AKRON, Pa. — In Afghanistan, the United States is broadcasting an important warning. Yellow objects on the ground may be food packets, radio announcers say, or they may be volatile cluster bombs. Both are being dropped by U.S. military planes.

The news of cluster bomb use in Afghanistan has sharpened Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) peace education workers' resolve to speak out in international forums against the use of these weapons. MCC is also witnessing renewed interest in its call for a cluster bombs moratorium.

Composed of a dispenser and dozens to hundreds of submunitions, or bomblets, cluster bombs are designed to explode on impact. They fragment into hundreds of sharp pieces of steel and are used to destroy "soft" targets such as humans or lightly armoured vehicles.

But 5 to 30 percent of cluster bombs fail to explode when first dropped. Like landmines, they remain "live" for years — and can be triggered by a child at play or farmer at work.

Titus Peachey, MCC U.S. peace education coordinator, initially feared that the events of September 11 would dampen

support for any plan to limit weapons.

“But due to the number of press reports about cluster bombs and civilian casualties [in Afghanistan], as well as the confusion with food packets, we’re finding that the war has drawn attention to the indiscriminate nature of cluster bombs,” Peachey said.

According to a Human Rights Watch report, the CBU-87 cluster bombs being dropped in Afghanistan are difficult to target and often fail to explode on impact. Already living in the most heavily mined country in the world, Afghan villagers near the city of Herat now also fear the yellow soda can-like objects littering the ground, reported a U.N. official.

These reports are the latest in a long history of cluster bombs’ deadly legacy. In Laos, parts of which the United States carpeted with cluster bombs during the 1960s and ’70s, more than 11,000 civilians have died from cluster bombs and other unexploded weapons since bombing ended in 1973.

Laos was the site of a major MCC initiative to clear the land of “bombies,” as the weapons are referred to there. In partnership with the British organization Mines Advisory Group, MCC launched a program in 1994 to train Lao workers to find and detonate bombs safely.

Laos was also where Peachey first witnessed cluster bombs’ effects, as an MCC service worker 1980 to 1985.

Since the Lao government assumed leadership for the bomb-clearing project several years ago, he and others are focusing on pushing for an international moratorium, and eventual ban, on cluster bombs.

Peachey and Virgil Wiebe, MCC legal consultant and teaching associate at the University Of Maryland School Of Law in Baltimore, travelled to Geneva in December 2000 for a meeting of the U.N. Convention on Conventional Weapons. They sought to raise awareness among government delegates and other organizations, especially those that have been involved in successful attempts to ban the use of landmines.

Since the United States began bombing Afghanistan, several non- governmental organizations — including Amnesty International, the Red Cross and London-based Landmine Action — have issued their own statements against cluster bombs. Peachey is fielding calls from others interested in joining the call for a moratorium.

He and Wiebe are now seeking funding to expand their efforts. They hope to attend this year’s meeting of the U.N. Convention on Conventional Weapons.

MCC volunteer brings stories from Afghanistan

LOLAGUZAR, Afghanistan — Doug Hostetter of Evanston, Illinois, recently returned from a trip to northern Afghanistan for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), where he visited camps of displaced Afghan families and helped distribute food.

Hostetter was in the country November 1 to 8 with the director of Help the Afghan Children Inc., a U.S.-based humanitarian organization that supports schools and clinics in several areas of Afghanistan. MCC contributed \$15,400

“But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and then denounce the peacemakers for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country.”

— WWII Nazi Leader Hermann Goering

U.S. to the organization for emergency food aid, more than \$5,000 of which was raised through the Evanston Mennonite congregation.

MCC has contributed 21,000 comforters and food aid valued at more than \$2.83 million U.S. for Afghanistan since September.

Hostetter and Suraya Sadeed, director of Help the Afghan Children Inc., distributed 239 tons of wheat, sugar and cooking oil — enough to feed more than 3,750 families of six for one month.

“It brings an amazing message when Muslims and Christians contribute to the need together,” Hostetter said, “especially in a country where religion is so sensitive.” At Lolaguzar camp 875 families live in makeshift tents of blankets and straw mats.

Camp residents are mainly women and children. “You see few men of military age there,” Hostetter said. “Twenty-two years of war bring a lot of tragedy.”

Hostetter said he, as a U.S. citizen, felt no hostility during his visits to the camp. Most families in Lolaguzar fled fighting between the Taliban and Northern Alliance in early 2001.

The camp has seen evidence of U.S. military presence, however. “Just days before we arrived, food packets dropped by the U.S. government had rained down about 5 miles from the camp,” Hostetter said.

Residents claimed much of the packaged food was inedible, but they have found many uses for the plastic food packets; some children use the yellow packets to carry school supplies, while adults sew the packets together to make tarpaulins. Women in Lolaguzar Camp, northeastern Afghanistan, make flatbread from food supplies provided by MCC.

Like much of the country, this region has suffered a severe drought for three consecutive years.

“People in the camp said this area of Afghanistan was once a wonderful, wheat-producing area,” Hostetter said. But in recent years the land has become barren and covered with several inches of dust.

Hostetter was fortunate to witness the second rain in more than three years during his brief stay in the country. Although the rain quickly created a thick mud in the camp and soaked through the makeshift tents, residents took it as a sign of hope, he said.

On several occasions, Hostetter saw B-52 bombers flying overhead. He mused over how many Afghan people could be fed for the cost of one plane.

“As peace churches, we have a responsibility to reach out to meet human need,” he said. “It is much more cost-effective to help feed and educate people than to bomb them.”

Beyond September 11 Articles

Greetings from the Conflict Transformation Program at Eastern Mennonite University!

Several articles, one by John Paul Lederach and one by Jayne Docherty, have been posted on our website recently. I have included below descriptions of other articles that have been posted.

A Long-Term Strategy for American Security: By Jayne Docherty and Lisa Schirch — Posted November 16, 2001
<http://www.emu.edu/ctp/bse-longterm.html>

World Council of Churches/WCC Press Statement: WCC urges USA & UK to bring prompt end to military action against Afghanistan. From World Council of Churches — Posted November 5, 2001
<http://www.emu.edu/ctp/bse-wccstmt.html>

After military action, Pakistani Christians express concern: New Delhi, 8 October—Ecumenical News International (ENI)—With violent protests erupting in Pakistan against the military strikes by the United States and the United Kingdom in neighbouring Afghanistan, leading Pakistani Christians have expressed concern about the situation. By Anto Akkara — Posted November 5, 2001
<http://www.emu.edu/ctp/bse-nccpakistan.html>

A Visit at Camp Unity: First Person Reflections: The following article presents the author’s personal reflections of her September 24th trip to Camp Unity, the area near the Pentagon where investigators and search and recovery workers eat and take breaks from their work. By Hannah Lapp — Posted November 4, 2001
<http://www.emu.edu/ctp/bse-hannah.html>

Strategy in Afghanistan: Initial responses to September 11 focused on the question of how to eliminate Osama bin Laden and the threat of terrorism. In recent days a broader set of related questions are emerging. First, how do we relate to the people of Afghanistan? This is a key question. Second, how do we gain support of Afghans to apprehend bin Laden and take him to trial? This is an immediate question. A longer-term question, but nearly as important to the success of efforts to address terrorism

and support the emergence of stability in the region is, third, how do we assist the creation of a credible government in Kabul? By Ali Gohar and Ron Kraybill — Posted November 4, 2001
<http://www.emu.edu/ctp/bse-strategy.html>

Moving On: Kenya’s bomb blast survivors, three years on: All three of the people mentioned in this article were involved in an exchange program in July 2000 between survivors of the Oklahoma City Federal Building bombing and survivors of the American Embassy bombing in Nairobi. The exchange program was coordinated by the Conflict Transformation Program and funded by Church World Service. By Katy Salmon — Posted November 2, 2001
<http://www.emu.edu/ctp/bse-nairobi.html>

Suicide-Murder, Murder-Suicide, and Mass Terrorism: After the initial shock (of the events of September 11) had passed, we were left to ponder these questions, “Why do they hate us? What did America do to the Islamic world?” While the focus was placed on historical and cultural factors, little attention has been paid to the psychological mindset of the individuals responsible for such horrendous acts, a mindset that leads recruits down the path to certain death. In order to understand such actions, we need to comprehend the nature of suicide itself. By Katherine van Wormer — Posted November 2, 2001
<http://www.emu.edu/ctp/bse-vanwormer.html>

Please feel free to let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely, Janelle Myers-Benner, bennerj@emu.edu

Duo’s Recording Responds to Terrorism and War

HARRISONBURG, Va. - Two Mennonite professors responded to the September 11 terrorist attacks and its aftermath with a story and a song. And now the story and song are available on a compact disc, titled “Dream the Light.”

Ten days after the terrorist attacks, singer Herm Weaver and storyteller John Paul Lederach were scheduled to emcee the “variety show” at the annual fall retreat of their congregation—Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg. They knew they had to address the disaster and its aftermath at the retreat.

Over the years, both have tried to work on the questions of how reconciliation and healing actually happen in human relationships—and they think stories and songs are powerful ways to do that.

Dr. Lederach drew on his own experiences by telling a story at the church retreat about how a high school changed the world by learning Arabic and reaching out to Middle Eastern people in their community. “This is a true story,” he said, “except for the parts that haven’t happened yet.”

Dr. Weaver accompanied the story with a song by Peter, Paul & Mary— “Weave Me the Sunshine.” When he and Lederach decided to produce a CD, he wrote his own song— “A Dream of the Light.” Weaver is assistant professor of

psychology at EMU. His avocations include singing and songwriting. He is also a former pastor and roofer. Lederach, founder of EMU's Conflict Transformation Program, is currently professor of international peacebuilding at the Joan Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies at Notre Dame. He continues part time at EMU as a distinguished scholar.

The two repeated their performance at the annual convention of the Mennonite Secondary Education Council, at Eastern Mennonite High School's fall spiritual renewal week and at an EMU chapel service.

The story has led to action by students in several schools. In one high school, 75 students have started Arabic lessons and established a sister-school relationship with a high school in the Middle East. They also invited Arab residents of their community to speak to them and gathered blankets to send to Afghan refugees.

"This CD is a small response to the escalating cycles of violence," said Lederach. "We don't have answers to the complex questions facing us. We do have faith. We have faith in a loving God and that small actions make a difference."

Added Weaver: "We have faith in children and that we can find our way back to community, family and being the children of God across this globe we share. We have faith in dreams that lead to action."

The CD is especially appropriate for youth groups in churches, communities and schools and can be purchased for US\$6 at the EMU bookstore—(540) 432-4250—or by going to the website created by Weaver and Lederach—

www.dreamthelight.com.

"Nothing justified the killing of innocent people in America on September 11, and nothing justifies the killing of innocent people anywhere else. By killing innocents in Afghanistan, Blair and Bush stoop to the level of the criminal outrage in New York. Once you cluster bomb, "mistakes" and "blunders" are a pretence. Murder is murder, regardless of whether you crash a plane into a building or order and collude with it from the Oval Office and Downing Street."

Quote from a British newspaper

Responding to Terrorism with Faith and Courage: A Call to Action from the Board of Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

As members of the board of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. representing the churches in MCC's constituency in the United States, we add our voices to many others expressing concern about our nation's response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

We continue to mourn the thousands of lives lost and hurt on September 11, and we grieve that our nation has once again acted on an assumption that violence can only be overcome with more violence. We believe, in keeping with our understanding of biblical teaching and the example of Jesus Christ, that God calls us to seek peace and pursue it, love our enemies, overcome evil with good, and suffer rather than fight. Therefore, we offer the following actions as responses for Mennonite and Brethren in Christ individuals and churches in the United States who seek to follow Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Engage in spiritual and theological reflection and prayer: Reflect on the God of comfort, compassion and courage; and trust in God rather than military might for security (Psalm 46; Psalm 34:10-11; Isaiah 31:1).

Consider biblical teaching about forgiveness and Jesus' words of forgiveness to those who participated in his crucifixion (Matthew 6:14-15; Luke 23:34).

Pray for those who have been identified as our enemies and for our leaders (Matthew 5:43-45; Luke 6:27-28; 1 Peter 2:17).

Seek to understand: Learn what motivates persons to be involved in terrorist activities, including religious convictions.

Learn from MCC's experience in the Middle East and elsewhere to understand how foreign policies have contributed to the anger that many people in other parts of the world feel toward the United States.

Teach peace: Use the present "teachable moments" to teach peace to our children and to people in our congregations who do not understand or accept our heritage as peace churches. Promote the use of the "Christian Peacemaker Registration" form as a way to think about and affirm conscientious objection to war and violence.

Witness in our communities and to our government: Express appreciation for the freedom and democracy we enjoy in the United States in ways that do not compromise our primary allegiance to God's kingdom rather than any one nation.

Promote an approach to justice that is restorative rather than retributive.

Encourage the U.S. government to lead the world in finding real and long-lasting solutions to the poverty, oppression and violence that help to legitimize terrorist activities, and to choose foreign policies and practices that reject military and economic dominance, promote human rights and seek the well-being of the entire global family.

Model a consistent and holistic peacemaking lifestyle that demonstrates active nonviolent responses to conflict, injustice and evil.

Be compassionate and generous toward victims on all sides of this conflict: Mourn with those who grieve the loss of friends and loved ones in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.

Support ethnic and religious groups who have become targets of discrimination and racism.

AROUND THE WORLD

HEBRON: Ramadan Reflections

Ramadan Hunger

By Mary Lawrence November 27, 2001

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) is an initiative among Mennonite and Church of the Brethren congregations and Friends Meetings that supports violence education efforts around the world.

During the month of Ramadan, November 16 to December 15, members of CPT Hebron will be fasting from sunup to sundown along with their Muslim neighbours.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be filled” Matthew 5:6 (paraphrased).

“As this Ramadan begins, the Palestinians are in the worst situation they have been in since the Israeli occupation befell them,” writes Gideon Levy in the November 17 edition of the Israeli newspaper, Ha’aretz. “Their lack of freedom has reached a level that they have never known before. Only a few people in the world live under such dire conditions of occupation, and none of them have been subjected to occupation for such a lengthy period of time.”

Levy points out that during this holy month of Ramadan, the Israeli occupation has effectively decided who will eat with whom. This is a month of fasting and prayer, and of family feasting. However, a Palestinian friend of CPT tells us that her brother was stopped and beaten by soldiers at the checkpoint and is now afraid to come into this part of Hebron to join the family for the evening celebrations. Many others are simply not allowed through checkpoints from one town or village to another.

What is worse is that the tight closure imposed on Palestinian villages and towns is responsible for creating a forty percent unemployment rate in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. “Poverty,” says Levy, “has turned to hunger.” Many Palestinian families will not be serving the traditional meat dishes during Ramadan. Young men and fathers of families who have tried unsuccessfully to cross “illegally” into Israel to find a day’s work, are now under “administrative detention” in Israeli jails. Their families remain without a breadwinner.

As we move into observing this second week of Ramadan, I become more deeply aware of all the hungers in this place. Most Palestinians are hungering during the day because they are observing a religious fast, hoping to grow closer to God, and remembering with compassion all those who are poor and hungry. Some Palestinians are hungering because they are unable to buy enough food to feed their families. All Palestinians are hungering, day and night, for justice.

Praying for the Peace of the City

By Anita Fast December 5, 2001

“God shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!” (Isaiah 2:4-5)

If there was ever a time when I needed the Holy Spirit to

pray the longings of my heart it is now. How to pray, or what to pray for, in this time of disgust, anger, grief, and anxiety? Every day I experience the humiliating grind of the Israeli occupation as it eats away at every corner of life and hope and sanity for the Palestinian people. And yet I do not nor can not know the rage and despair that brings a young man to the point of clothing himself in explosives and destroying the worlds of countless men, women, and children he has deemed “enemy”.

Even less can I imagine the distress, the fury, the bitterness and the fear that drives like a sharp knife into the hearts of Israelis as mothers, fathers, and children yet again face the emptiness of a life without those they have loved.

And so I am left to wrestle with my own hardened heart, which threatens to close itself off against the pain of facing this bloody back-and-forth of atrocity after atrocity. As hospitals in Jerusalem and Haifa still work day and night to bind up the wounds of the victims of the recent suicide bombings, Palestinian militants from Hamas announce that they will continue to carry out attacks. As Palestinian cities are under attack by helicopter gunships and tanks, Israeli sources say that the strikes are just the beginning of Israel’s response.

At a time like this it seems to me useless, if not irresponsible, to point fingers here and there at the one who started it. Perhaps from the time of Cain and Abel we have been in a constant cycle of revenge and counter-revenge. The prophet Isaiah’s vision of the days to come, when God will judge between the nations, is a comfort to me at a time when no one seems innocent. For, Isaiah clearly prophesies, God’s judgement and justice does not result in one side claiming military victory, nor in the eradication of the enemy, but rather in full reconciliation where the weapons of war are beaten into the instruments of life and peace.

In the next few days, Christian Peacemaker Teams in Hebron will offer our prayers for Jerusalem, for Haifa, for Gaza, Ramallah and Hebron in a silent vigil at the edge of the market where we live. A banner, facing both onto the main street Israeli settlers and soldiers use, and back into the market where Palestinians shop, will read: “Praying for the Peace of the City.” O house of Jacob; O house of Ishmael; O house of Jesus, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

COLOMBIA: Building peace one game at a time

by Scott Kerr

Soccer is very important to the people of Colombia. Ceasefires have been negotiated around soccer games. More recently the spirits of Colombians were lifted as the National Selection team won the Americas Cup, the equivalent of the Super Bowl in Latin America.

We were excited about using the energy and competition around soccer to help with the reconciliation process in the zone where Christian Peacemakers Teams,

CPT, maintains a presence.

It all began a few weeks ago. Pierre Shantz and I visited a community an hour and a half upstream from Ñeques (Where the team lives in the campo). This community is occupied by the AUC (Autodefensas of Colombia), and the community members pay taxes to this paramilitary group to support their presence. It was with some apprehension the team travelled to this community with our partners to explain what CPT is doing in the area.

There, on the river banks, the team spoke with community members about the continuing violence. They heard stories of mutilated bodies and continuing conflicts between the guerrillas and the paramilitary in the area. The team had a very good talk with community leaders, and set up another meeting later in the month.

On the way out, the team met with the sports director of Puente Opón and talked about the possibility of a soccer game with the community of Los Ñeques. "We can't go there, the guerrillas will kill us," he said. When we asked the Ñeques representatives the same question, the team heard the same reply, "It's too dangerous for us to travel there alone; there is no way." Then someone said, "But if CPT can accompany us then we might be able to play," and with this began the talk of playing soccer together for the first time in years.

It's so important for people to get to know the faces again of the people up and down the river. Right now the people think that all the people in this community are paras, and the ones in that community are guerrillas, but that's just not true. It is our hope that by beginning to play soccer games together the communities with the team accompanying can put a human face on a conflict that has lost much of its humanity.

Building peace takes time, but the small hope that a soccer ball can bring is a good start, and it is something concrete to build on in the future. Now they just need to find the jerseys.

Congolese eager to increase awareness of 'Africa's World War'

AKRON, Pa. — Unnoticed by most North Americans, a new round of peace talks aimed at ending what has been called "Africa's World War" were set to begin October 15. Several Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)- supported grassroots peace workers from Congo, the scene of the conflict, were to travel to the talks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. They planned to lobby for reconciliation and to channel accurate information back home.

The under funded talks ended, however, after just a few days. This failure highlights the need for greater outside understanding of the three-year war and the vast humanitarian crisis it has triggered, say Congolese peace workers and MCC staff.

Home to more Mennonites than any other country except the United States, the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) has struggled since the days of brutal Belgian colonial exploitation. The current war — fuelled by complex alliances as well as a struggle for Congo's diamonds, oil and

other resources — pits Joseph Kabila's government against rebels who control the eastern half of the country. Six other countries (Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia) as well as various foreign rebel militias are also involved.

The week peace talks were set to begin, Bakamana Mouana, a Congolese Quaker and director of an organization that encourages interaction among various ethnic groups, visited MCC offices in Akron, Pa. He spoke eagerly of his desire to travel to Addis Ababa and encourage reconciliation.

"We have to work together," he said. "If not, Congo will die."

Bakamana Mouana lives in Kinshasa, the capital city, where hunger and poverty are not as intense as in the eastern half of the country. Still, he said, "To get food is a problem. Some families rotate who will eat. One child eats one day, another the next."

The statistics from Congo are staggering: Some 2.5 million people have died in eastern Congo as a result of the war since August 1998, according to a recent study by the International Rescue Committee. This figure is greater than the total number of people who have died in all other conflicts around the world during this same time.

Between 2 to 3 million people are displaced within Congo, with another .5 million refugees living outside the country.

Some 16 million Congolese are starving or malnourished; 18.5 million have no access to health care of any kind.

In one district of rebel-occupied eastern Congo, 75 percent of babies die before their second birthday; other districts have infant mortality rates of 40 percent.

Congo's road system has been nearly destroyed. Rivers are filled with debris, hindering boat traffic; decade-old airplanes provide the only transportation between cities in Congo, a country the size of Western Europe.

Despite the overwhelming problems, Bakamana Mouana and MCC staff express hope for the future. They point to the energy and resilience of the Congolese people and the potential role of the church in peacemaking.

Much MCC work has focused on providing forums and training for Mennonite and other Protestant churches around the country who want to foster peace and address poverty. Meetings have brought together church leaders from both government- and rebel-held territories. An MCC worker is also helping develop a peace curriculum for use in schools.

MCC is also organizing distribution of \$200,000 U.S. worth of seeds and tools through local agencies in the hardest-hit areas of the country, and exploring more possibilities for aid.

Bruce and Ann Campbell-Janz, recently returned from a term with MCC in Congo, also point to longer-term efforts such as job creation and health.

Official peace talks may resume in the near future, with South Africa offering to host them. Epampia mbo Wato, MCC Congo country representative, said plans are in the works for MCC to facilitate a trip to South Africa for the peace workers who would have gone to Ethiopia.

In the meantime, most Congolese feel that the United States should press the United Nations to be more involved in the peace process, Epampia noted. While Congo may not be

considered a high priority by the U.S. government, North American corporations and customers profit from Congo's plundered oil, diamonds and coltan, a mud-like material used in cell phones and computers. Mouana also pointed out the U.S.'s alliance during the Cold War with Mobutu Sese Seko, Congo's now-deceased dictator.

"Congo was behind the U.S. [during the Cold War]," Mouana said. "Today there is the impression that we have been abandoned."

MCC U.N. Liaison office seminar addresses forgiveness

NEW YORK — Planning for a seminar on "Breaking Cycles of Retaliation: Forgiveness as a Political Act?" took a different turn after the events of September 11.

The theme for the annual Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.N. Liaison office student seminar, held October 4-6 in Manhattan, had been decided months earlier.

"Where we had previously been considering forgiveness in geographically remote settings, such as South Africa [and] Palestine/ Israel, the attacks on civilians 2.5 miles from our office made such issues as retaliation and forgiveness unexpectedly concrete," wrote office intern Kristen Mathies in a report on the seminar.

Around 40 university students attended the seminar, which also provided an introduction to the work of non-governmental organizations at the United Nations. Participants worshiped together and had discussions led by a distinguished group of speakers from U.N.-related and other organizations.

William O'Neill, senior researcher at the International Peace Academy and leader of a U.N. human rights mission in Rwanda in 1999, outlined steps necessary before forgiveness can take place.

Using stories from Rwanda after the 1994 genocide, Kosovo after the ethnic cleansing of Albanians, and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he listed these steps: uncovering information; having the record of events stamped as "truth" to validate the experiences of those who have suffered; and the acknowledgment of those involved that the events happened.

Finally, O'Neill said, there must be justice, which may mean trials, monuments or reparations. Perpetrators must be held accountable and the ideologies that supported the injustice must be unlearned.

O'Neill and other speakers noted that true forgiveness cannot be rushed.

"The events of September 11 are still very recent and painful, and to impose some quick notion of forgiveness wouldn't work," Mathies said. "Instead, the speakers said that at this point the focus should be on breaking the cycle of retaliation."

Bonganjalo Goba, visiting South African

professor of theology and ethics at Lancaster Theological Seminary, outlined the mandate of his country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Forgiveness is political because it has to do with power, he said, and with how people relate to one another.

Dr. Goba joined Bridget Butt, of MCC Rwanda and Burundi, and Alain Epp-Weaver, of MCC Palestine, in a panel discussion on whether forgiveness can "work." Epp-Weaver described the whole world as "the theatre for God's reconciliation," with God desiring forgiveness between victims and perpetrators. Forgiveness does not demonize the perpetrator, and does not condone amnesia; a moral "right of remembering" exists.

The current situation in Palestine/Israel is similar to South Africa under apartheid, Epp-Weaver noted, with a similar structure of house demolitions, settlements, people pushed onto "reservations" and required to use identification cards, torture, and executions. No process of reconciliation will be possible under occupation, he said.

Butt's discussion of grassroots peacemaking in Burundi highlighted the long-term nature of peacebuilding. Forgiveness and peacebuilding are both processes that must grow out of practical needs, she said. Held together with truth and justice, forgiveness can work as a political act, by freeing the victim and transforming the offender.

Not only are the direct perpetrators to be held accountable for their acts; bystanders to injustice are also responsible, panelists agreed. Felicity Hill, U.N. office director of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Bridget Moix of the Quaker U.N. Office; and Butt addressed the issues of advocacy and complicity.

Panelists said that choices about spending money, silence at international injustice or other lack of action, point to the truth of the following saying, originally used in reference to the Holocaust: "All are responsible, some are guilty." Hill illustrated a similar point in making the distinction between being "unracist," which no one raised in a racist society can claim, and being "anti-racist," which must be a daily choice.

The tension sometimes depicted between justice and peace is not a helpful one, Moix said: "Our advocacy should be reconciling and our reconciling should uphold justice." Nor need advocates be completely neutral, but instead biased in favour of reconciliation, and "passionately attached to all sides," she noted.

Kristen Mathies, intern at the MCC U.N. Liaison office, is from Waterloo, Ontario. She is a member of Kitchener (Ont.) Mennonite Brethren church and attends Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship.

Forgiveness is political because it has to do with power, he said, and with how people relate to one another.

"All are responsible, some are guilty."

The winter
2001/2002
issue of *YES!* is
available now at



<http://www.yesmagazine.org/>

The lead article of the issue is:

CAN LOVE SAVE THE WORLD?

Yes, but only if it's the smart,
militant, hard-edged kind of love
that Jesus, Gandhi, and Martin
Luther King, Jr., had in mind
by Walter Wink

African Assembly 2003 Planner Calls For Solidarity

Kitchener, Ont. (Canada) — Heading home on a trans-Atlantic flight on September 11, Ray Brubacher reflected on work he had just done with Brethren in Christ and other leaders in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. They had discussed program, negotiated a contract for facilities and considered issues within the country that affect planning for the Mennonite World Conference Africa Assembly 2003.

Brubacher is MWC Associate Executive Secretary, Events and Administration. He left Zimbabwe convinced of the need to stand in solidarity with brothers and sisters there who face uncertainty. He believes that it is important for the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ global family to worship and pray together and to celebrate God's goodness despite adversity.

When Brubacher's plane landed in Toronto, passengers learned of the terrorist attacks in the U.S. a few hours earlier. Where is safe? He wondered, an ironic twist on the question often posed to him: "Is Zimbabwe a safe place for Africa Assembly 2003?"

The assembly theme will be "Sharing gifts in suffering and in joy." The theme is drawn from I Corinthians 12, the primary biblical text selected for the gathering. "I Corinthians 12 states concerning the Body of Christ, 'If one part suffers, every part suffers with it.' The church is not about being 'fair weather friends' but it is about coming together for encouragement and prayer during times of adversity," planners said.

Brubacher believes Zimbabwe is a good place to hold the assembly in 2003. The Brethren in Christ of Zimbabwe, with a membership of about 26,000, is excited about hosting the gathering. They are beginning to realize what it means to be part of a global family of Anabaptist-related churches. Their North American counterparts, with just under 23,000 members, are coming to terms with being the conference at "centre stage" for the event, said Brubacher.

The country is experiencing unrest and some conflict at this time. A central issue currently is land redistribution, which is causing agricultural production to plummet and other businesses to close. The economy has declined sharply, accompanied by high inflation. Tourism is one business that is suffering greatly. As a result, hotels are more willing to negotiate prices.

Some people considering attending the assembly wonder about health care should they require emergency medical treatment. Zimbabwe is ravaged by HIV/AIDS, but the affliction need not affect visitors, Brubacher said. He learned that Zimbabwe was the third country worldwide to institute blood screening for HIV and that doctors now use fewer blood transfusions. They said that assembly participants could volunteer to donate blood if someone requires a transfusion. Brubacher also learned that Bulawayo, site of the assembly, has an excellent private hospital which provides 24-hour service.

Assembly gatherings will be held at the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair Centre. It has numerous locations for workshops, small group meetings and exhibits, dining rooms and options for mass meeting halls that can accommodate up to 10,000 people.

The program will include morning and evening mass meetings for worship, singing, prayer, preaching, Bible study, story-telling and MWC reporting. Afternoons will be open for tours, workshops, visiting global village exhibits and performances and free time.

Youth will receive special attention. In addition to having global village youth stewards, following the 1997 Calcutta model, plans are progressing for a youth summit with representatives from around the world gathering for several days before the assembly. Youth groups that plan fund-raisers will be encouraged to raise extra money to support youth who need a subsidy to attend.

In Bulawayo, Brubacher saw the word "Woza" in a sign above a take-away refreshment stand. What does it mean? he asked. "Come, there is something here for you," was the explanation—a good word for Africa Assembly 2003, Brubacher concluded.

Ten years after Gulf War, ex-soldier and wife say thanks for letters

by Rachel Beth Miller

PENINSULA, Ohio — For 10 years, Tim and Yvette Coil have treasured the encouraging letters that were their lifeline during the Gulf War. Now the former soldier and his wife want to express their thanks.

While serving with the U.S. Army in the early 1990s, Tim had come to the conclusion that military service was incompatible with following Jesus. He was sent to the front lines in Iraq, where he faced death threats for refusing to carry a weapon. Back at the base in Germany, Yvette was ostracized as "the C.O.'s wife."

Cathy and Andre Gingerich Stoner, then serving with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Germany, asked

Mennonites and other pacifists to write to the Coils during those difficult months.

“[The letters] saved me from self-destruction. They helped me at a very hard time in my life,” wrote Yvette in a recent e-mail to the Stoners.

Now, as the United States again steps up military action, the Coils are sharing their story.

Originally from Ohio, Tim joined the Army in 1985 and reenlisted for a second tour after marrying Yvette. In Nurnberg, Germany, where they were stationed, the Coils began attending church and studying the Bible. As the build-up toward war in the Gulf got underway, Tim befriended a soldier applying for conscientious objector status. At the same time, Tim’s sister passed away and Yvette was pregnant with their first child.

“When my son was born — December 3, 1990 — that’s what crystallized my beliefs in non-violence,” Tim remembers. “I realized that God created my son, and God created everyone else’s sons. God gives life, so what right do I have to take it?”

His commanding officers were not happy about this realization.

“We’ll drag you down there, or you’ll go to prison,” Tim remembers one yelling. Not certain of his options, he went to the Gulf but refused to carry a weapon.

At the same time, the Stoners and their network of peace counselors in Germany were offering information to military personnel seeking to apply for conscientious objector (C.O.) status. After phone conversations between Cathy and Yvette, Tim’s was one of the cases they followed.

In Saudi Arabia, and eventually in Kuwait and Iraq, Tim felt under attack on all sides. Ordered to drive a fuel truck on the front lines, he saw the carnage of war on the battlefield.

He was harassed and taunted by other Americans, and one day he overheard two colleagues discussing shooting him and blaming his death on a sniper.

In Germany, Yvette maintained contact with the Stoners as Tim attempted to compile the extensive list of documents and statements needed to apply for C.O. status. Through MCC and other peace networks, the Stoners spread the word about Tim’s situation and called for letters of support to the couple, their Congressional representatives and Tim’s commanding officer.

Letters came by the dozens, then hundreds, from Mennonites, Quakers and Bruderhof members.

“This letter is to promise my prayer and moral support for your deeply held beliefs,” wrote Virgil Brenneman, a member of Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana. A former C.O. himself, Brenneman encouraged Tim to continue to follow Jesus. Like many of the letters they received, Brenneman’s was one the Coils kept to show to their children.

Tim told the men he worked with, “I won’t expect you to defend me. I’m out there without a weapon, ready to stare death in the face — but I don’t want to cause someone else to die.” Yvette, meanwhile was speaking out against the war and publicizing her husband’s situation.

“She probably had just as hard a time as I did,” Tim says. “I’m very proud of her.”

When Tim returned to Germany in May 1991 after six months in the Gulf, he finished compiling the records and reference letters needed for his C.O. application. Finally released from the military in May 1992 — Tim accepted an honorable discharge on other grounds after his C.O. application had been

held up for a year — the family moved to Ohio.

The years of trauma had taken their toll. Tim became withdrawn and couldn’t find a church where he felt comfortable. He had health problems, which he attributes to the war, and struggled to control his temper.

“I had lost my confidence during Desert Storm,” Tim says. “My own brother [when he heard about the threats on Tim’s life] said he’d have tried to kill me, too. I felt like I couldn’t trust anyone.”

The dark clouds finally began to lift about a year ago when Yvette suggested they see a counselor. In July, she found the Stoners’ e-mail address on the Internet and wrote to thank them.

“What was amazing was the reams of letters they had received — we had no idea how many had come in,” says Andre. “It’s encouraging to know these kinds of letters really do make a difference in people’s lives.”

Andre suggested that the Coils try attending nearby Aurora (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

“We immediately felt like we were home,” Tim says. “The church has been a real blessing.”

While many of the books and materials Tim read while applying for C.O. status were written from an Anabaptist perspective, the Coils hadn’t realized the extent to which a belief in non-resistance is central to Mennonite faith. They are now looking forward to sharing their experiences with others in the church.

The need for what they have to say has been especially clear since the events of September 11, Tim says.

“The recent violence has solidified my beliefs even further,” he says. “Violence begets violence. ... For Christians, the values of our country shouldn’t come before the values of God.”

Tim and Yvette also share their experiences with their children, Joshua, now 10, and their daughter, Brittany, age 9.

“I want people to know that not one little bit of support, not one letter went unnoticed,” Tim says. “Their help continues to affect me and my family. They were a blessing, and I’m grateful.”

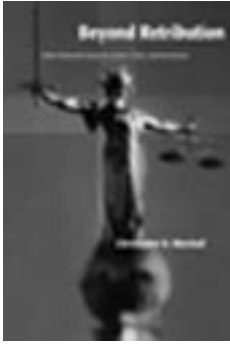
Rachel Beth Miller is a writer/editor with MCC Communications.

“If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being.”

Alexander Solzhenitsyn in *The Gulag Archipelago*

BOOKS AND RESOURCES

Crime and Punishment Revisited



***Beyond Retribution:
A New Testament Vision for
Justice, Crime and Punishment,*
Christopher D Marshall,
Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2001**

Crime and the nature of appropriate punishment have been a staple item of political debate and broadsheet headlines across Australia over the past decades. With the advent of mandatory sentencing the issue has achieved a high national political profile. If, like me, you are uneasy about the terms in which the debate has been conducted, but uncertain as to what the Christian tradition might have to offer to the debate, then you will want to put in some time reading and reflecting on the results of painstaking and probing scholarship that Chris Marshall has brought together in *Beyond Retribution*.

Chris Marshall, who is Vice President of AAANZ, teaches New Testament studies at the Tyndale Graduate School of Theology in Auckland New Zealand. In *Beyond Retribution* Chris has demonstrated what can be achieved when a biblical scholar sets out to use his understanding of the biblical text, his scholarship and commitment as a disciple, to gain a perspective on a pressing social issue.

In bringing together a detailed examination of what the New Testament has to say about crime and punishment along with a substantial engagement with the philosophical debate on crime and punishment, Chris has demonstrated how biblical scholarship can be of service and provide a challenge to both the Christian and the wider community.

In Chapter One Chris explores the issues that we need to confront in any attempt to apply to the wider society perspectives derived from 'ethical' teaching from the New Testament, teaching initially directed to the community of faith and an integral part of the call to discipleship. This introduction sets out the assumptions that guide the author in undertaking this study and developing the connections he seeks to draw between the biblical material and the ethical issues, which he describes in the following terms: my main intention is to survey a broad range of New Testament texts pertinent to the subject of crime and punishment in order to ascertain the extent to which they reflect what might be called a vision of restorative justice.(p.32) It is important to note however that the approach that he develops for this task is capable of much wider application and could prove useful to developing Christian insights into a wide range of issues.

The author summarises his thesis as follows:

My premise is that the first Christians experienced in Christ and lived out in the faith communities an understanding of justice as a power that heals, restores and reconciles rather than hurts, punishes and kills, and that this

reality ought to shape and direct a Christian contribution to the criminal justice debate today. (p.33)

In many ways the key chapter in the book is chapter 2 in which Marshall develops an understanding of the concept of "justice" that the New Testament authors worked with. His argument is that Paul's teaching on the justice of God is largely restorative and that the same is true of Jesus ...who personally embodies the saving justice of God and summons his followers to live consistently with the character of divine justice by practicing forgiveness and non-retaliation towards their enemies. (p.xv)

With this account of the New Testament perspective on justice on the table the author then devotes a chapter to an account of the current debate on the ethics and purposes of punishment. This sets the context to return to the New Testament to consider what it has to say about both human and divine punishment. A further chapter is devoted to a critical approach to the common biblical and moral arguments used in support of capital punishment in the light of the arguments developed in the preceding chapters.

The final chapter brings together the threads of the argument to focus on the pervasive New Testament challenge to imitate the justice of God by following the way of Christ in dealing with offenders and offending through the practice of forgiveness.

You do not have to be either a New Testament specialist or ethicist to get to grips with this book. What you do need is a willingness to work at following the argument and exploring the detail with the author who has not taken any shortcuts. The scholarship in this book displays the passion of the author for the importance of the issues. This passion is manifested in an approach in which the author attempts to weigh the evidence with real care and displays a concern for fairness in stating the position of those with whom he cannot in the end agree. Among the unexpected rewards of this book for me was the challenge to rethink my understanding of some central Christian doctrines particularly relating to the atonement.

I strongly commend this work as a good example of theology which is rooted in engagement with the New Testament text, inspired by radical reformation perspectives and which moves us toward engagement with society with transformative intent. This theological approach calls sharply into question the validity of the categorisation of church/world relationships offered to us by H R Niebuhr, an analysis which has been used to dismiss the relevance of the anabaptist stance as sectarian and world denying.

In closing I want to note that Chris Marshall's engagement with these issues is not a purely academic one. He is actively involved in programs of restorative justice in New Zealand and the launch of this book in Auckland included senior members of the legal profession, restorative justice practitioners as well as theologians.

Beyond Retribution is part of the series "Studies in Peace and Scripture" sponsored by the Institute of Mennonite Studies, though the volumes in this series appear under various publishers.

This is a revised version of a review originally prepared for publication in St Mark's Review by Doug Hynd.

Powers, Weakness, and the Tabernaciling of God

by Marva J. Dawn, Eerdmans, 2001.

This book grew out of a lecture series Dawn gave in 2000. I was immediately grabbed by the timeliness of the book when I read this passage on page one of the book:

News commentators denounced the political powers of Osama bin Laden, whose threats of terrorism disrupted or disquieted many vacationers' plans, especially after one of his operatives was arrested in Seattle for possessing a very large bomb with the kind of exploding device used in the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City.

Dawn uses this book to investigate the "principalities and powers". She examines the biblical material on this subject and what theologians have written about them. She interacts with the writings of John Yoder, Karl Barth and others. She has one of the best reviews of Walter Wink's work on the "powers" that I have come across. Dawn speaks about being in Australia and draws on the work of Hugh Mackay.

From Mackay's book *Turning Point* she quotes him saying:

Given the extent and depth of Australians' doubts and uncertainties, the present time might be considered ripe for a revival of religious faith and practice. But the signs do not seem to be pointing in that direction. (117)

Dawn says "Our churches act as fallen powers when they forget the cross at their center." (71) She develops a "theology of weakness" for the church and examines seven practices of the early church taken from Acts 2 to spell out what she means.

She also spends time looking at the weapons of the panoply in Ephesians six. She draws on the work of Thomas Yoder Neufeld who she says "radically reoriented my thinking by demonstrating that the panoply of God's armor is offensive and not just defensive, as we are usually taught." (128)

Some gems from the book:

Since the root meaning of the Greek word for 'fellowship' is 'having in common,' it means sharing deeply in each other's needs and carrying one another's burdens...This fellowship is violated by such powers as business policies, mammon, technology, and even democracy, when these are stretched beyond their proper vocation. (95)

...whenever we fall for the trap of thinking that the dispensing of information is communication, we are in serious trouble. (96)

...if we eat the body and blood of Christ in expensive churches without care for the hungry, the sacrament is no longer a foretaste of the feast to come, but a trivialized picnic to which not everyone is invited. (99)

...the most recent and spectacular is always the least important and the least decisive. (101)

To be Christian churches is to resist being swept up into the values and powers of our cultural milieu. (119)

...two essential paradoxes...The first is that to counteract the principalities and powers requires a

battle, but one that is essentially and entirely non-violent because it is against the powers and never against the people who might be aligned with them. The second is that the battle requires our active engagement, but it is always God's work through our weakness." [Dawn quotes one Christian activist who] moved from 'this world is a mess and I need to fix it' to 'God is moving in history to do something, and I can join in.' (131)

The Church's call is to exorcism, rather than effectiveness. Perhaps one of the most recalcitrant spirits that needs to be exorcized is that of needing to be effective. (133)

[Talking about Mother Teresa] *When asked about how God had called her to work amongst the poor, she replied that God had not called her to work among the poor. He called her to follow him and led her there. (133)*

Dawn includes questions for reflection and a good "Works Cited" section at the end of the book.
Reviewed by Mark S. Hurst

Herald Press: The Place to Look for Books on Peacemaking

Fear, terror, insecurity, war. How do we respond to these emotions and events? Here is a listing of resources to help Christians interpret and respond in non-violent ways.

• *Christian Peacemaking and International Conflict: A Realist Pacifist Perspective*

Duane K. Friesen suggests ways Christians can interpret and respond to international conflict. He draws on both theological and social scientific literature to suggest that living in a more peaceful world is no utopian dream, but a realistic alternative.

• *Coals of Fire*

Written for elementary age children (but of interest to teens and adults), this book by Elizabeth Hershberger Bauman contains the true stories of men and women who practiced returning good for evil. For some it meant martyrdom. For others it meant nursing sick refugees and giving them warm clothes.

• *Disarming the Heart Toward a Vow of Nonviolence*

A nationally recognized peacemaker, John Dear calls on North American Christians to allow God to disarm our violent hearts. He upholds the dream of nonviolence and makes that gospel vision practical and personal.

• *How Christians Made Peace with War: Early Christian Understandings of War*

John Driver tells the history of the early church from the close of the New Testament through Augustine. A popular treatment of the "Constantinian shift."

• *Nevertheless: The Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism*

John Howard Yoder's classic book. Yoder points out assumptions, strengths, and shortcomings of each pacifist position. He brings clarity to the many-sided conversations about peace, nonviolence, war, proliferation of arms, and power politics.

- *The Way God Fights: War and Peace in the Old Testament*

In 15 brief chapters, Lois Barrett explores the themes of war and peace in the Bible. She examines how God worked with the nation Israel in Old Testament times.

- *What Would You Do?*

What would you do if someone attacked your grandmother, wife, daughter (or grandfather, husband, son)? John Howard Yoder explores the pros and cons of a nonviolent response. Viewpoints on the subject and examples from life are included ranging from Dale Aukerman to Leo Tolstoy, from Joan Baez to Tom Skinner.

- *Yahweh Is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel*

Millard C. Lind's classic study of warfare in ancient Israel. Israel saw God alone as delivering his people, without the need of human warriors.

- *Hebron Journal: Stories of Nonviolent Peacemaking*

Here is 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.

Arthur G. 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 CPT work and give us a vision of how small peacemaking groups can make a difference in violent conflicts.

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

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.

- *Peace and Justice Shall Embrace: Power and Theopolitics in the Bible*

Edited by Ted Grimsrud and Loren L. Johns, this book provides fresh exegetical insights from the Bible and penetrating theological analysis with regard to peace, justice, power, and theopolitics.

- *Violence Renounced: René Girard, Biblical Studies, and Peacemaking*

"In this rich collection of essays, we witness a vigorous exchange between spirited scribes and René Girard. His work has challenged them to grapple with the relationship between violence, religion, the God of the Bible, and the death of Christ."-Tom Yoder Neufeld, Conrad Grebel College

Edited by Willard M. Swartley, response by René Girard.

- *Threatened with Resurrection: Self-Preservation and Christ's Way of Peace*

Jim S. Amstutz examines key biblical texts and the model of Jesus to help guide us to the faith understanding that Christ's way of peace challenges the assumption of protection of the self.

- *Where Was God on September 11?: Seeds of Faith and Hope*

The events of September 11, 2001, have stirred anew many old and enduring religious questions. Why does God permit evil? How should people of faith respond to violence and terror? This collection of essays, articles, and sermons reflect the heartthrob of Christian leaders and thinkers as they struggle with profound questions of faith and seek to be people of peace in a world of terror. Edited by Donald B. Kraybill and Linda Gehman Peachey.

- *But Why Don't We Go to War?: Finding Jesus' Path to Peace*

Susan Mark Landis helps parents communicate Jesus' way of peace to their elementary school-aged children. Each session has dialogue about God and the Bible, stories about peacemakers, and ideas for parents.

- *Growing Toward Peace*

This book, edited by Kathryn Aschliman, shows parents and teachers ways to provide children with an island of peace and sanity in a world of fear, war, and brokenness-and to counter violence appearing in books, games, toys, music, videos, and television.

- *How to Teach Peace to Children*

J. Lorne Peachey surveys what has been written in Mennonite, Brethren, and Quaker publications since World War II on how parents can pass peace values on to their children. These suggestions have been brought together in 21 specific ideas that anyone can use.

- *Walking with Jesus*

Twenty true stories about people who followed Jesus' way when going the other way would have been much easier. With God's help, the main characters of these stories return good for evil, risk their lives to help others, or become peacemakers when conflict erupts. Written by Mary Clemens Meyer for ages 4-to-10 and up.

- *The White Feather*

Ruth Eitzen's story for children ages 7-to-10 tells of a kind of courage that is not often tried. Indians were on the warpath. Friends and neighbours were moving away to escape danger. Only Abe and Sarie's family stayed. Father always had his own way of looking at things. He believed that friendliness and fair treatment would be respected by their Indian neighbours.

For more information:

<http://www.mph.org/hp.htm>

Michael Kelly wrote an article published in the *Washington Post* called "Pacifist Claptrap". It was picked up by the *Melbourne Age* as "Why the pacifist view is evil". A number of the people in the US and here in Australia sent letters to the editors in response. If you would like copies, we have the original article and the responses. Write to us at ontheroad@today.com.au.

Children/teachers web site

<http://www.celebratingpeace.com>

Peace Pin

“Pray for Peace” pins developed by Mennonite Church USA are now available. Proceeds above expenses will go to support the ministries of New York Mennonite churches and MCC relief efforts in Afghanistan. Pins are \$5.95 U.S. each, including postage. Credit cards are accepted with the purchase of three or more.



The pins feature the green logo and lettering, trimmed in gold, on a white background with gold trim. The actual size: ¾-inch x 1-inch. For more information email Newton@MennoniteUSA.org

Herald Press announces the release of *Engaging Anabaptism*

Engaging Anabaptism: Conversations with a Radical Tradition, edited by John D. Roth

Michael G. Cartwright	Christopher Rowland
Stanley M. Hauerwas	Richard J. Mouw
Nancey Murphy	Richard B. Hays
Glenn Stassen	Stuart Murray
Samuel Escobar	Rodney Clapp
Christopher Marshall	Eoin de Bhaldraithe
James Wm. McClendon Jr.	

“These conversations are must reading for those who have forgotten the radical nature of Anabaptism or who consider the issues raised in the 16th century blase in this postmodern time.”-Lydia Harder, Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre
Here 13 Protestant and Catholic scholars reflect on how their understandings of the Christian faith have been shaped by their encounter with the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition.

Written in an engaging, autobiographical style, the essays balance commendations with incisive critique, providing a good reference for anyone who wants to know what is being said and thought of the Anabaptist tradition by what one of the authors calls the “hyphenated Anabaptists.”

TIKKUN

a Jewish journal committed to spiritual renewal peacemaking and justice

<http://www.tikkun.org/magazine/index.cfm?action/tikkun/issue/tik0109/article/010903.html>

Herald Press Announces New Parenting Book

Herald Press announces the release of *Parent Trek: Nurturing Creativity and Care in Our Children* by Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi.

“When the children were young, our nighttime ritual was to say to them, ‘I am with you,’ and they would respond ‘and will keep you in all places.’ ‘I will trust,’ we would say, and they said, ‘and not be afraid. I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety.’” -Naomi Lederach in *Parent Trek*

Are you looking for a resource to help you raise your children to be more creative, generous, peacemaking, and joyful in today’s society? Volunteers associated with Mennonite Central Committee, an international relief and development agency, offer these “more-with-less” ideas on doing just that.

Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi follows the rhythms of life with children: shopping, school, play, traditions, celebrations, relationships, self esteem, and faith. Each chapter includes a meditation, brief essay, and reflection questions, along with a set of practical ideas to try. - Includes table graces with words and music and a list of resources for children and parents.

Each chapter is short enough for busy parents to read easily, yet crammed with insight.” —Andrea Brown, mother and pastor
About the Author . . .

Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi with her husband, Dan, and sons Benjamin, David, and Paul are currently serving with Mennonite Central Committee in Indonesia. They previously served in Congo and Nigeria.

ALL HERALD PRESS BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FROM PROVIDENT BOOKSTORES E-MAIL PBSORDER@MPH.ORG

Peace Resources From Mennolink

HERE they are! 10 lessons for Sunday school from youth group up, basis for sermons, something to send to youth in universities or the armed services who are examining what they believe:

Eight lessons on peace theology from Ted Grimsrud, suitable for people just beginning to think about pacifism from a Mennonite viewpoint.

Bonus: NINE MODEST PROPOSALS for Mennonites on the road toward peace by Phil Kniss

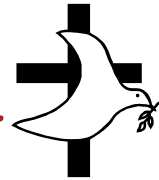
You can find these by going to the PJC web site <http://www.MennoLink.org/peace> and clicking on either the “New” page, or to the Sept 11 page under “Pacifist Resources for Beginners” or directly to <http://www.mennolink.org/peace/binserts/index.htm> While you’re there, look over Anne Meyer Byler’s article on Pacifism.

Reality: Christian Reflections On Today’s World

While Chris Marshall was on a recent visit to Oz, we asked what New Zealand Christian publications we should be reading to be informed about the Christian scene on the other side of the puddle. One that he named was *Reality* published by the Bible College of New Zealand (BCNZ). Despite the fact that Chris works for BCNZ and he is the Book Review editor for this journal, he gave it a good recommendation.

We went to its web site at www.reality.org.nz and were impressed by the quality of the articles. We subscribed through the site and just received our first copy. If you want to know more about the Kiwis than what Australian sports pages tell, check out *Reality*.

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:

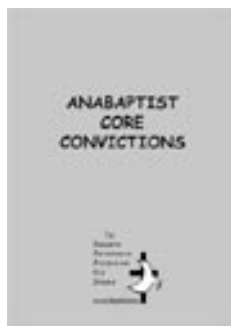
- ◆ Baptism upon profession of faith
- ◆ A view of the church in which membership is voluntary and members are accountable to the Bible and to each other
- ◆ A commitment to the way of peace and other teachings of Jesus as a rule for life
- ◆ Separation of church and state
- ◆ Worshipping congregations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

AAANZ Homepage on the internet

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



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 c/o Mark and Mary Hurst
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 Sutherland NSW 2232
 Australia
 ontheroad@today.com.au



AAANZ publications available online or from the AAANZ postal address

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and Peace on Earth to those with whom he is pleased!

- Luke 2:14

May God grant you a Blessed Christmas and a Shalom-filled New Year.