ON THE ROAD

Newsletter
of the
Anabaptist Association of
Australia and New Zealand Inc.
No.22 MARCH 2004

Mark Your Calendars
"CHRISTIANITY AND VIOLENCE"

The AAANZ Bi-National Conference
21-24 January 2005
Greenhills Centre Canberra
Speaker: Dr.Chris Marshall
Internationally known Bible Scholar, Teacher and Author from New Zealand

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ross Coleman

It was one of the worst meetings I had ever attended; even worse than some of those terrible ones in churches that we hear about from time to time. I knew it would be tense because on our arrival there were two policemen waiting at the entrance to the hall. They had been requested to attend in case the meeting got out of hand!

And it did. Strong comments were made, interjections were numerous, and emotions were running high. People stood up speaking loudly with lots of finger pointing. The tension in the room was extreme.

In that context listening, clarifying issues, and seeking resolution on some issues was hopeless. There was a long history of fractured relationships and inappropriate behaviour that clouded people's capacity to hear. The person in charge of the meeting was out of their depth.

I walked away feeling bewildered and shell shocked. What does being a peacemaker look like here when divisions are so deep and when the history of hurts casts a shadow over so many people? Or a lady who said to me later that she finds it so hard to trust people? How does a broken group and community move forward? I'm not even sure my presence added anything positive other than talking with people after the meeting.

Diane and I will attend future meetings because we believe that the way of peace is the most constructive way forward for the community. It will be a challenge.

In this issue of ON THE ROAD, you will be reading of the work of peacemakers in the Middle East. Grounded in the strong conviction that the essence of the Good News is shalom or peace, these people are seeking to be agents of change in a volatile situation.

Whether it is overseas or in a local context, our call remains the same – actively seeking to be agents of peace with those around us. It is messy, tricky, hard, complex, time-consuming, and emotionally draining but that is the path we are called to walk.

CONTENTS

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***.

THE VIEW FROM EPHESIANS FOUR

Mark and Mary Hurst

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

On the TV news last night (27 January), I watched Alexander Downer the Australian Foreign Minister being welcomed to Israel by its Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Sharon talked of how Australia is a great friend of Israel. In the same news story, it mentioned that Downer was not meeting with the Palestinian Prime Minister because Downer refused to meet with Yasser Arafat.

Israel and Palestine. What comes to mind when you read or hear these words? For some of our readers, they see red anytime we publish something that is critical of the present government in Israel. Strong emotions kick in when the topic is raised. Several have asked to be removed from our mailing list. We have been called evil and demonic for passing on some emailed articles and news stories. Some readers are kinder in their judgements but disagree with us all the same. A recent email from a reader in New Zealand fits the latter category:

"Just want to say how much I appreciate your continued mailings, and especially the variety and thoughtfulness of articles. That said, I still find myself really concerned about your continued "anti-Israel" stance in prayer requests such as the one below. Equating Israeli "military operations" with the need for "a swift end for violence" boils down to the same one-sided view of the situation as the BBC and European Union are guilty of. Nablus is at the end of the day part of the land which God gave to the Jewish people; if Israeli soldiers need to put their lives at risk to deal with the reality of fanatical terrorism in their homeland - and civilian lives are lost in the process - then that certainly is a reality which warrants prayer. Only word it like it is!"

One source we use for news and prayer requests about the Middle East is Mennonite workers in the Middle East. We wrote and asked some of them to respond to the concerns of our readers. Three articles in this issue come from them. Read the articles and respond. Let's keep the discussion going.

Along with our regular news and reviews, we include in this issue a tribute to David Hunter. His loss will be felt by many in our network who knew him. Lent is an appropriate season for us all to think about life and death. How are we using the days God has given us? How do we live in light of Jesus' death and resurrection? One of our book reviews tells the story of Frank Coaldrake. He was chosen to be the Archbishop of Brisbane and died twelve days later. Each day counts.

Doug Hynd writes a review of ***Resurrection – Discipleship – Justice: Affirming the Resurrection of Jesus Today*** by Thorwald Lorenzen. This recent release is a good Lent resource from an Anabaptist pastor and teacher.

May God give each one of you the grace to follow Jesus through this season of reflection and repentance, preparing again for the great Easter celebration.

A Life Well Lived

A Discipleship Journey Finished Too Soon

David McMorris Hunter

23 February 1962 – 19 December 2003

Some readers of this edition of ***ON THE ROAD*** may not be familiar with David Hunter whose life and witness are celebrated in this issue. The network of Australian and New Zealand Christians engaged with the Anabaptist tradition of discipleship that AAANZ has been set up to nurture, while small, is widely dispersed and dependent upon links that take time to build.

Due to his illness over the past few years, David did not have the opportunity to participate in and support actively AAANZ in the way he would have liked. He expressed this regret to me on several occasions over the past couple of years during visits to events at Canberra Baptist Church where he worshipped with his family and where his wife Jeanette Mathews is the assistant pastor.

David died on 19 December 2003. The Service of Thanksgiving at Canberra Baptist was a powerful celebration of his life of discipleship and a lament that his wife and family, his local church community, and the poor and the marginalised had lost a husband, father, brother in Christ and advocate respectively far too soon. He still had so much to give.

AAANZ, as part of the wider church community is also the poorer for his departure. As the Tribute from David Neville that follows makes clear, David Hunter's discipleship was powerfully shaped by the Anabaptist tradition. This connection was underlined in two of the hymns chosen for the service. "By gracious powers" based on one of the poems written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer written while in prison during World War II, testified to a deep faith in the goodness of God in the midst of sorrow. The concluding hymn "Our Father God" came from the Anabaptist Ausbund the earliest hymnal within the Anabaptist tradition with its testimony to the desire to continue to be led by Jesus.

As someone who participated in the service of thanksgiving I find it hard to put down in words what that experience meant to me. Beyond a powerful testimony to David's life in which we gave thanks for the way in which faithful discipleship, committed scholarship and a witness to peace and justice were inextricably merged, the service voiced a lament and cry from those gathered. It was a deep cry to God, a heartfelt questioning of why have we lost David and his gifts so soon, in a time in which the strands of faithfulness that were woven in his life are so rarely exhibited. For myself beyond this there was a probing challenge to my priorities and faithfulness.

I would like to express my thanks to Jeanette Mathews for her permission to publish two meditations by David written over the past couple of years following diagnosis of his illness. Both testify powerfully to the importance in his experience of the love of God, a theme which has deep roots in the Anabaptist tradition. I have in mind particularly the writings of Pilgram Marpeck.

I would also like to thank as well David Neville for his permission to reprint his tribute to David from the Thanksgiving service.

In closing my introduction, I cannot find better words than those from the three hymns at the Thanksgiving service – a week before Christmas they put the celebration in a whole new light for me and between them captured much of the substance of David's discipleship.

Doug Hynd, Canberra

Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread broken for others,
Shared until all are fed.
("Christ Be our Light" Farrell)

And when the cup you give is filled to brimming
with bitter suffering hard to understand,
we take it gladly, trusting though with trembling,
out of so good and so beloved a hand
("By Gracious Powers" Bonhoeffer)

the power is thine, O Lord divine
the kingdom and the rule are thine
may Jesus Christ still lead us!
("Our Father God" Anabaptist Ausbund)

DAVID NEVILLE'S TRIBUTE for DAVID HUNTER

(Monday, 22 December 2003)

It is my privilege to speak of David Hunter as a scholar within the community of scholars at St Mark's National Theological Centre. Yet before I say anything about this, it needs to be said that David had strong and lasting ties with communities of scholars elsewhere, both in Australia and in other parts of the world. Certainly no less, and perhaps even more, than at St Mark's, teachers and fellow students at Whitley College and the House of the Gentle Bunyip in Melbourne, the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and the University of Cape Town in South Africa made lasting impressions on David. He both honoured and treasured the work of those with whom or under whom he studied, so it is wonderful that representatives of both Whitley and Ruschlikon are present here today.

Last Friday, upon hearing that David's journey here had come to an end, we at St Mark's gathered together to read a passage from David's beloved fourth gospel, to pray for David's family and to reflect on what he meant to us, individually and collectively. Few people were in that day, but as word filtered out about why we were gathering, our chapel filled with fellow research scholars, lecturers, staff, library volunteers, students and friends. Then as now, it was obvious how many lives had been blessed by knowing David.

Jeanette asked me to speak about David as a scholar, yet it is impossible for me to detach his scholarship from his faith and life. A single thread connected his faith, identity, scholarship and commitments. As with a number of his revered teachers and friends, there was no fragmentation of his life into easily divisible compartments; what he believed and how he lived formed an integrated whole. This is reflected in his published essays. His earliest, on the origins of Anabaptism (1991), not only reinvestigated Anabaptist historiography but also concluded that 'Anabaptism was a movement which included varied ways of thinking but which emphasised adult baptism as a sign of an uncompromising commitment to a society based on God's values, which included economic and social justice.' And his latest essay, published earlier this month, explored how reflections by Paul Ricoeur on forgiveness and healing might apply to both the past and future of Christian mission among Aboriginal people.

Next to David's desk in the St Mark's research centre is a pin-board cluttered with photos, artwork by his boys, posters, a Leunig cartoon, newspaper clippings and the like. In addition to pictures of Jeanette, Daniel, Benjamin and Joshua, there are pictures of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Athol Gill and Paul Ricoeur, indicating how much he thought of them and their respective legacies. Ricoeur in particular was decisive for his own interpretive work. Yet I know that he read Thorwald Lorenzen, John Painter, Mark Brett, Keith Dyer, Dorothy Lee and the work of his fellow doctoral candidates no less respectfully than he read and reflected upon the writings of Bonhoeffer, Gill and Ricoeur. David Hunter was a care-full and critical scholar, by which I mean that he attended with care to whatever someone had written or said before engaging critically and meticulously with it.

David developed an inclusive view of God, which in turn issued in his own brand of inclusiveness. Those who knew David found themselves wholly included within the sphere of his interest and concern. Not long ago, I attended the last of this year's postgraduate seminars. Before beginning her presentation, Merilyn Clark offered everyone coffee and some kind of sweetbread. This was a tradition initiated by David to celebrate the progress of people's work; he would often drop by Silo's Bakery in Kingston in order to have something to share with friends and colleagues. Those who worked alongside him in the research centre attest that he always shared with them his morning muffin, no matter how many were present; and whenever he needed to fortify his concentration with good coffee, he never failed to ask others whether they, too, could use a cuppa. Come to think of it, the majority of my own conversations with David occurred over coffee. I also have it on good authority that until recently, no one's secret stash of chocolate was safe if David was in, working on his own!

David spent much of the past decade studying those extraordinary stories in the fourth gospel that the gospel writer designated 'signs'. No summary statement can do justice to David's rich and textured analysis of the role of these stories within the fourth gospel, but as a result of his reflections on the story of the raising of Lazarus in John 11 he concluded that this story contained within it 'the assurance that the powers of death do not have the last word'. Because David trusted God in both his living and his dying, this was his hope. 'Signs of Life' was the title he chose for his doctoral thesis. In so far as his own life witnessed to the life-creating, life-restoring and life-enhancing God pictured for us in the gospel stories of Jesus, David, too, was a faithful sign of life.

LOVE AND PRAYER

"que tout ne soit pas amour, voila ce dont souffre l'amour"
[that everything is not love - that is what love suffers from]
Paul Ricoeur

One of the privileged aspects of the last eighteen months experience of illness has been to know that I am loved - from the intimate love of my wife and family, through the encouragement of friends and colleagues, to the professional care of doctors and nurses. Although I can at times be frustrated, scared, sad, overwhelmed and physically low, I reckon I have had an experience of God, in the sense of the love that undergirds the world.

Of course I want to be well. But when people pray for me I want them to know that I am not far from God. And in a way I would rather they pray for people who are. (I hope this doesn't sound ungrateful – it's just that their love for me has already borne wonderful fruit.)

I would want my friends to pray for those who do not experience love - for those who experience grief, fear, persecution, isolation. It is those who cannot see their life experiences in the context of love that need our solidarity - for example, the baby removed from their family, the child growing up in poverty, violence or exploitation, the young person for whom society has no work, the refugee whose choice of life over death finds no echo in other human hearts, even the adult who lives with uncertainties and fears that they cannot share.

I value your love, companionship and care. I deeply appreciate your prayers for us. But prayer is also the first step toward focussing love and a passion for justice where it is needed, those places where everything is not love.

David Hunter 2002

It seems to me that we Christians have an idea here that the world is tremendously in need of. When we're tottering fearfully on the brink of utter annihilation, looking so desperately for hope from somewhere, walking in deep darkness, looking for one little streak of light, do not we Christians have some light? Can't we say, "Sure, we know the way. It's the way of love and peace. We shall not confront the world with guns in our hands and bombs behind our backs. We shall confront the world without fear, with utter helplessness except for the strength of God."

***Cotton Patch Sermons*, Clarence Jordan, 76-77**

The world is waiting...for new saints, ecstatic men and women who are so deeply rooted in the love of God that they are free to imagine a new international order.

- Henri Nouwen, *Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding*, page 355

JOURNEY TO EASTER

Readings and Meditations
from Ash Wednesday to Easter Day 2002

John 11:1-45

Reading the Text in our context

Can you imagine the distress of the sisters Martha and Mary as their brother falls dangerously ill? They send a message to Jesus for help: "Lord, he whom you love is ill" (verse 3). But Jesus doesn't come soon enough. When he arrives they are grieving and they both confront him: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (21, 32).

All of us know the anguish of seeing a loved one suffer. A parent can be no more distressed than when their child is struggling. Seeing a friend or partner in trouble evokes empathy and worry for those around. How can we best express our support and love? Those of us within the church turn to God for help and yet often the intervention of God does not seem to come. We may find ourselves praying 'God, this is a difficult situation, and your loving presence isn't evident'.

Reading the Text in the context of the Gospel of John

One of the intriguing aspects of the story is the comment of Jesus when he hears about Lazarus' illness: "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God" (4). This comment resonates through the whole passage. We read that Lazarus does die but is raised by Jesus (17, 44). We read that the disciples fear (correctly) that Jesus will precipitate his own death by going to Bethany (8, 16). We read that many people responded to Jesus after the raising of Lazarus (45) and in this way receive eternal life (see John 5:20).

It is also fascinating that Lazarus is described in the original message, not by name but as: "he whom you love". For me the raising of Lazarus is one of many biblical stories that helps us see that God's love will not allow death to have the last word.

Reading the Text in the context of God's love

But does this mean the raising of Lazarus is a happy story? Not at all. It is rather an account of the realities of faith. We know that there will be times when we cannot sense the presence of God. We also know that we will experience the real pain and turmoil of illness and death. In the story of the raising of Lazarus these moments neither defeat the love of God, nor are they superficially erased. Rather, these moments are encircled by the action of Jesus. When we pray this Easter we may pray in the context and the knowledge of difficulties and suffering but God's love still surrounds us.

David Hunter 2002

Seeking The Peace Of The City
A Critique of Zionism

Alain Epp Weaver

"I gave you a land on which you had not laboured, and towns that you had not built, and you live in them; you eat the fruit of vineyards and oliveyards that you did not plant." (Joshua 24:13, NRSV)

God's words to the people of Israel at the end of the book of Joshua are haunting, particularly in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In 1948 well over 400 Palestinian villages were destroyed and the property of more than 700,000 Palestinian refugees was taken over by the new State of Israel. The majority of Palestinians became exiles from their lands, while Palestinians who remained inside what became Israel but had lost their lands were classified by the new government as "present absentees," strangers or resident aliens in their own country.

Zionism, as a modern nationalist movement, appeals to parts of the biblical heritage, like the promises of the land and narratives of conquest of the land, to support its contemporary claim on the land of Palestine. From 1948 onward, however, this claim has meant the active dispossession of Palestinians. Not only the hundreds of thousands of refugees from 1948 lost their lands, but, since 1967, Palestinian farmers and landowners in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip have had their lands confiscated by the Israeli government for the construction of illegal Israeli settlements, or colonies. What word does Scripture offer these dispossessed Palestinians? Can Scripture only be read to justify Zionism? Or does Scripture also present a theology of land which does not involve the dispossession of others?

A Christian engagement with Zionism must begin with a confession regarding the church's deeply flawed history with and theology of the Jewish people. Not only has the church encouraged or stood silently by as "Christian" nations conducted pogroms and, most horrifically, a Holocaust of the Jewish people, our traditional theologies have written the Jewish people out of God's history. Official theologies and sometimes even liturgies have assumed that, with the coming of the church, the role of the Jewish people in God's work to renew creation and bless the nations has come to an end. Over the past few decades more and more churches have recognized the flaws in this theology of replacement (often called "supersessionism"). Christian Zionist theologies, which view Jews and the State of Israel as part of an apocalyptic drama in which the majority of Jews will end up condemned, are but one form of this "supersessionist" theology.

The church, Paul teaches us, has not replaced the Jewish people, but has rather been grafted onto the tree of God's people (Romans 11). Acknowledging the church's organic connection with the Jewish people does not, of course, mean that there are no differences between Christians and Jews: Christians, after all, confess that the promise of the Messiah has been fulfilled in Jesus. It does mean that Christians should approach the history of Judaism and contemporary Jewish communities with the hope and expectation of learning something new about the God whom Christians and Jews both worship.

An example of what we can learn from Judaism is how to live in exile. In a post-Christendom era, churches struggle with how to sing the Lord's song in the indifferent, even hostile, context of secular society. We can no longer assume that the wider society is "Christian." More and more theologians are thus suggesting that the church has much to learn from the history of Jewish communities in diaspora who lived as minority communities within the indifferent, even hostile, context of Christendom.

This theme of learning to live as God's people in exile, argued the late John Howard Yoder, provides a fruitful way of reading the Old Testament and suggests a shared Jewish-Christian critique of Zionism. Yoder, in a series of lectures on Jewish-Christian relations, outlined a convincing reading of the Old Testament as a story of how the people of Israel learn over time to rely on God alone, a reliance which refuses to take violent control of history and which can turn the curse of exile into an opportunity for renewed participation in God's plan to renew creation. The holy wars of the conquest of the land involved complete dependence on God, not on human military might. This theme of total reliance on God, as opposed to political or military might, surfaces again and again in the Old Testament, from the repeated prophetic critique of Israelite kingship which turns Israel into a nation like other nations to the prophet Jeremiah's appeal to the exiles in Babylon to "Seek the welfare (*shalom*) of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare" (Jer. 29:7, NRSV). Yoder views Jeremiah's exhortation as the pinnacle of Old Testament theology, a concrete example of Jesus' nonviolent ethic which does not seek violent control over history and does not attempt a violent return to the land but rather seeks the *shalom* of the city of one's exile.

The model of the synagogue worshipping God in diaspora serves as a model for the mission to which the church is called. Unfortunately, the church did not long retain its sense of being a stranger in the *galut* (diaspora) of the world, and, through its alliance with state power in the political arrangements known as Constantinianism, turned away from its missionary calling to seek *shalom* without taking violent control of history. Even as the church turned away from its calling, however, rabbinic Judaism served as a concrete embodiment within Christendom of community life not dependent on violence to sustain it. Jews in diaspora, Yoder suggested, "were able to maintain identity without turf or sword, community without sovereignty. They thereby demonstrated pragmatically the viability of the ethic of Jeremiah and Jesus. In sum: the Jews of the Diaspora were for over a millennium the closest thing to the ethic of Jesus existing

If you would sing the song of this land, you must listen to the dreams of its inhabitants. Only those who can feel the hope of the future have the courage to undo the knots of the past. If you are to sing free of fear, sing free of suffering, then you must catch the dreams of your people and dissolve them, liberating their future.
- David La Chapelle, *Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding*, page 2

Affirming the Rights of Palestinian children

Judith Dueck looks at the Palestinian children trapped in the cycle of violence in the Middle East.
http://www.mcc.org/themes/palestinianchildren/index.html

on any significant scale anywhere in Christendom." The revelatory role of the original people of Israel thus did not come to an end with the arrival of the church, but continued on as Jewish communities lived as embodied critiques of the church's alliance with violence.

The implications of this reading of the Old Testament and post-biblical Jewish history for an understanding of Zionism should be clear. Just as Constantinianism represented a temptation for the church, so does a Zionism which depends on the violent, colonialist conquest of land represent a temptation for Judaism. Jewish theologian Marc Ellis joins Yoder in drawing the parallel between Constantinianism and the practices of the State of Israel. Ellis notes that it is tragic "that Jews, who have suffered from Constantinian Christianity, have, at the moment when Christians have finally awoken to the devastating effects of that synthesis, plunged headlong into a Constantinian Judaism. Like Christianity in its Constantinian phase, Constantinian Judaism orients its texts and memory, and with that its religious rituals and intellectual endeavors, to serving the state, legitimating power, arguing in moral terms for policies that displace and disorient others, and silencing dissent."

Christian voices like Yoder's and Jewish voices like Ellis's, drawing deeply from the wells of Scripture, thus articulate in similar, parallel ways the problems with Zionism as an alliance of Judaism with violent power which dispossesses others. Yoder and Ellis articulate a powerful prophetic critique from the perspective of exile. Can this critique, however, also provide a positive theology of land, a theology of return from exile, be it for Palestinian refugees and dispossessed farmers or for the many Israeli Jews who experienced their arrival in Palestine not as part of a colonialist venture but as a refuge from the horrors of the Holocaust? These are the questions with which we'll struggle in the second part of this article.

For Further Reading on the Issues Discussed in this Article:

Christianity in Jewish Terms, ed. Tikva Frymer-Kensky (Westview Press 2001)

Scott Bader-Saye, ***Church and Israel after Christendom*** (Westview Press 1999)

James Carroll, ***Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews*** (Houghton Mifflin 2001)

Marc Ellis, ***Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation*** (Orbis 1987)

Michael Prior, ***Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry*** (Routledge 1999)

R. Kendall Soulen, ***The God of Israel and Christian Theology*** (Fortress 1996)

Alain Epp Weaver, "Constantinianism, Zionism, Diaspora: Towards a Political Theology of Exile and Return," MCC Occasional Paper #28.

John Howard Yoder, ***The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited*** (Eerdmans, 2003).

Sitting Under The Vine
A Theology Of Exile And Return

Alain Epp Weaver

I have learned the words of blood-stained courts
in order to break the rules.
I have learned and dismantled all the words
to construct a single one:
Home
—Mahmoud Darwish, "I am from There"

"They shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid."—Micah 4:4 (NRSV)

The Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish repeatedly tackles two interrelated themes: exile and home. For the majority of Palestinians in the world today, living in refugee camps throughout the Middle East, life is one of involuntary exile. Many refugees still hold keys to their former homes (many of them destroyed long ago) and the title deeds to their properties. Returning home is a concrete hope and desire for these refugees.

The prophet Micah, for his part, also recognized the importance of home. In his vision of the LORD's day when all will come to the mountain of the LORD, Micah stresses that all will sit under their own vines and fig trees, secure in their land.

In the previous article, I sketched out a critique of Zionism which drew on the late John Howard Yoder's reading of Scripture and post-biblical Jewish history as revealing a pattern of communal life which is nonviolent in character, refuses a violent return to the land, and embraces the calling to seek the *shalom* of the cities of one's exile (Jer. 29:7). Jeremiah's call to the exiles is, I believe, a powerful one: it empowers dispossessed refugees to transform the curse of exile into a new opportunity for participating in God's mission in the world and it serves as an effective critique of all violent, premature efforts to grasp at land, to return from exile.

But, we must ask, does this exilic theology do justice to the real longing refugees have for their former homes? Does it provide an adequate theology of justice and land for those who have been dispossessed?

The Palestinian experience since 1948 has been one of being violently separated from land, from home: the hundreds of thousands of refugees from the 1948 war; farmers whose lands are confiscated for the construction of illegal Israeli settlements, or colonies, in the occupied territories; the thousands whose homes have been demolished by bulldozers; thousands more whose identity cards have been stripped from them and can no longer live in the land of their birth. Is the call to seek the peace of the city of one's exile the only word which Scripture offers to dispossessed Palestinians? Does it say nothing about return to one's land or about justice in the land?

Furthermore, even if we can and should be critical of Zionism as a colonialist enterprise which dispossessed and continues to dispossess Palestinians, we must listen respectfully when Jews speak of the meaning of *Eretz Yisrael* (Land of Israel) for them and also recognize that the State of Israel was experienced as a refuge for many Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. While we must be critical of the dispossession of others, we must certainly also long for the day when Israeli Jews as well as Palestinians sit in their own lands under their vines and fig trees.

The attachment of Palestinians and Israeli Jews to the piece of land which I'll call Palestine/Israel is a challenge to many of us. Mennonites of European descent, with a history of leaving one home to establish another, might well resonate with Jeremiah's call to the exiles more than many others. We must be careful, however, to avoid several temptations. We must, first, not blind ourselves to the ways in which we (speaking as a Mennonite of European descent to other Mennonites of European descent) have in fact had deep connections to land, have at times become landed following the dispossession of others, and have benefited economically from our landedness. Second, we must not close our ears to the spiritual significance of particular land for others. The dreams of a refugee who wishes fifty years later to return to his destroyed village in order to rebuild it might be hard for some of us to understand. Capitalist society promotes rootlessness and destroys the significance of place, of particular land to such an extent that those who hold deep connections to particular land seem strange to many of us. Our brothers and sisters from indigenous communities in North America, with their own stories of dispossession (not to mention genocide), have much to teach us on this score.

Mennonite theologian Gerald Schlabach poignantly observes that "we do no favour to any dispossessed people if we think of land only in a figurative rather than an earthy sense." We must, therefore, in addition to critiquing Zionism from the perspective of the exile outlined with such force by John Yoder, also consider what resources we find in Scripture for visions of justice in the land.

A biblical theology of justice in the land will begin by recognizing that Scripture records a vigorous debate about how to live faithfully in the land. Schlabach, for example, describes how the period after the partial end of the Babylonia exile in 539 BCE set off a debate on the question of faithful life in the land, with Ezra and Nehemiah offering an exclusionary, ethnocentric vision, God's mercy to Nineveh in the book of Jonah providing a more open vision, the Maccabees' dream of sovereignty free of foreign influence standing in contrast to a growing diaspora which "argued with its feet that Israel might not need territory to be a people."

Tracing one metaphor, that of the vine, will help to focus this scriptural debate. Psalm 80:8-13, for example, describes Israel as a vine brought out of Egypt. God drives out the nations in order to plant the vine, whose branches go out to the sea, its shoots to the Jordan River. While the Psalmist records this as a history of liberation from bondage in Egypt, he also records the fact that entry into the land meant the dispossession of others, the driving out of the nations. The Psalmist then continues to mourn the fact that the vine is now ravaged and preyed upon. The tenth chapter of Hosea suggests why the vine of Israel is now ravaged: Israel, as a luxuriant vine which builds itself up, which trusts in the multitude of its warriors, which plows wickedness, reaps injustice and eats the fruit of lies, will be cut off. To live in the land in a way which promotes injustice and depends on falsehood will lead, Hosea suggests, to loss of land. But just as God gives us up to the consequences of injustice and lies, so God also wills for His creatures security, peace, and well-being in the land, and this is the promise recorded by Micah that all will sit under their own vines and fig trees.

Sitting under the vine is more than a metaphor: I have spent idyllic afternoons drinking tea with Palestinian friends under grape vines trellised above their porch. Sadly, thousands of vines and trees have been uprooted by Israeli military bulldozers during decades of occupation rule. Neither Palestinians nor Israelis sit secure under vine and fig tree today, nor will they so long as injustice is perpetrated, so long as the lie that peace can be had while injustice reigns is believed.

Today's "exilic community," argues Jewish theologian Marc Ellis, "is composed of those who are fleeing from contemporary injustice and hope to build a world beyond what is known today." Courageous Israeli peace activists proclaim that living faithfully and securely in the land is not compatible with military occupation and the denial of justice for refugees; they join together with Palestinians in their exile, recognizing that none will be free in the land until all are free. The Palestinian writer Emile Habiby, a "present absentee" within Israel from 1948 until his death, spoke of a "longing for the land within the land." Israeli Jewish writer Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin expands on Habiby's idea, suggesting that exilic consciousness from within the land, a longing for the land from within the land, could be "a new starting point of all who dwell in the land, a basis for their partnership." May Israeli Jews and Palestinians together long for the land from within the land, recognizing that no one will truly be at home in the land so long as political structures which dispossess are perpetuated.

Alain Epp Weaver, with his wife, Sonia, is country representative for Mennonite Central Committee in the occupied Palestinian territories. He has two children, Samuel Rafiq (7) and Katherine Noor (6).

For Further Reading on the Issues Discussed in this Article:

Naim Ateek, ***Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation*** (Orbis 1989)

Gerald Schlabach, "Deuteronomic or Constantinian: What is the Most Basic Problem for Christian Social Ethics?" in ***The Wisdom of the Cross*** (Eerdmans 1999).

Tobin Miller Shearer, "Quieted by the Land" ***the Mennonite*** (June 19, 2001): 6-7

Laurence Silberstein, ***The Postzionism Debates*** (Routledge 1999)

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, ***Original Sins: Reflections on the History of Zionism and Israel*** (Olive Branch Press 1992)

Alain Epp Weaver, "Constantinianism, Zionism, Diaspora: Towards a Political Theology of Exile and Return," MCC Occasional Paper #28.

Issues of Land, Promise, and Love in Israel/Palestine

Ed Nyce

Abu Victor is a Palestinian Christian from Bethlehem. Since the mid-1990's, as a Palestinian, he needs an Israeli-granted pass to get from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, ten kilometres away. Unlike many people, including his adult son, Abu Victor at times can obtain the pass. When he has one, he heads to Jerusalem seeking work. He would also like to share the significance of Jerusalem for his Christian faith with family and friends.

Abu Victor was in Jerusalem in early autumn, 2002, during the annual week of Sukkoth. In Sukkoth, Jews recall the temporary nature of life in the past, including the Exodus, and reaffirm ongoing dependence on God. Some Jews build temporary small shelters wherever they live worldwide as part of the commemoration.

Each year, thousands of Christians from around the world come to Jerusalem for Sukkoth. While estimates vary, in 2002, at least 7000 came, and 5000 or more in 2003.

At one point during the week, the visiting Christians join some Jews in marching through part of Jerusalem. Rather than affirming that Jews also have a share in Jerusalem, the participants proclaim Jerusalem as the eternal, undivided capital of Israel. The impression left regarding Jerusalem and, by insinuation, all of the Holy Land, is exclusion rather than inclusion.

Abu Victor saw the march and heard the slogans. Back in Bethlehem, he told me what he had seen. Then, he had a question for me: "What kind of Christians are these?"

Taking the Bible and, Therefore, Abu Victor Seriously

Is the Holy Land only for Jews? Will Jesus return sooner if the Jews are in the land? Are we being faithful to Scripture if we question assertions that all of the land is meant for just one group?

What does our theology mean on the ground, when it involves real people? Are we saying that Abu Victor, a Palestinian Christian, must leave his home in the town where Jesus was born because he is not Jewish? What is a faithful response to Abu Victor?

These are some issues, which arise when we seek to be true to God's Word regarding land, love, and good news in the Middle East. While one article cannot address every detail, the following is intended to be a practical theological reflection. The article works with the texts as we have them, acknowledging that some who seek to be faithful honestly question whether references which appear to provide for one people at others' expense genuinely express God's will for past or present understanding.

The Measure of the Rest of the Torah

A vital consideration regarding how we are to understand the Law, or Torah, with the coming of Jesus the Messiah is found in Matthew 22:34-40 and Mark 12:28-34.

Jesus is asked to identify the greatest commandment ("first" commandment in Mark). He replies that we are to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind (and strength, in Mark). And, he says, we are to love our neighbour as ourselves.

In Matthew, Jesus, the Jew, interpreting Jewish scripture, who came to fulfil and not destroy or supersede the law, says that on these two commandments, love of God and neighbour, hang all of the law and prophets. All of the Torah, all interpretations of its promises and prohibitions, are measured by whether we are loving God and neighbour when holding a given belief.

With respect to issues of who gets what land and what our role should be in the process, these are some of the questions which arise:

- With the theology I hold regarding land, do I love God? How am I showing love to both my Jewish and my Palestinian neighbour?
- If I were the target of my own theology, would I sense love on the part of the person directing that theology toward me?
- What does it mean in real life to say that all of my beliefs, whether Torah-based or otherwise, are in the final analysis judged by whether I love God and neighbour?

Hastening the Day of the Lord

One factor for some Christians is an interpretation of Scriptures which can appear to indicate that the sooner the Jews are all in Israel/Palestine, the sooner Christ will return.

Through God's grace, we need not fear Jesus' coming, and we may even eagerly anticipate it. A different issue is how rapidly that time approaches, and what our role is to be.

In 2 Peter 3:8-9, we're reminded that, " . . . with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think about slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance" (NRSV).

According to verse 12, we are to be "waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of the Lord . . ." though a Greek variant for "hastening" reads, "earnestly desiring." Regardless of which version is most correct, the point made in vv. 8-9 is reiterated in verse 15: we are to " . . . regard the patience of our

Lord as salvation."

Perhaps the question can be framed in this way:
- A reason some believe that Jews [only] must be in the land immediately is because Christ will then return soon;
- Some believe that if we actively encourage Jews to live on the land, we have a hand in hastening the Day of the Lord;
- Meanwhile, God is patient and not in a hurry so that we and others will not perish;
- Is it possible that in therefore seeking to determine who is and is not in the land, we are moving at a different speed than God regarding Christ's return?

The Big Bear from the North

When I was a teenager in the 1970's, those who focused intently on "prophecy" spoke often of "the Big Bear from the North." I cannot recall which text(s) were used when discussing the bear. However, I remember clearly that one's faith and eternal destiny were in doubt if one did not readily affirm that the Big Bear meant the Soviet Union, and that either God or Satan was planning to act through the USSR.

Then came the events in 1991 which transformed the USSR into the CIS, the Commonwealth of Independent States. Since then, I have not heard about the Big Bear from the North.

This is not said to ridicule any Biblical text. Rather, "rightly dividing the word of truth," means taking the Bible seriously enough to examine who wrote a given passage to whom, and what the issues of the day were, as we seek to discover how the word may be also applicable to us.

The same is true regarding questions of land and promise. Besides investigating the circumstances surrounding the writings, with the coming of Jesus, all prophecies are to be brought under the Jesus-specified act of love of God and neighbour. To do otherwise diminishes the gospel's essence, and may repel people from rather than invite them to peace with God.

From Within the Torah

The Old Testament is replete with commands to remove people from the land in favour of the Israelites. Judges, Joshua, and some passages in the Torah are several examples. Yet, the Old Testament does not fully shed concern for people other than Israelites in the land.

Some such concern can be found in the prophets. In the Torah, there are hints that Jesus was indeed able to claim that he was fulfilling the law, not superseding it, by insisting on love for all.

In Leviticus 19:18 we find "love your neighbour as yourself" language. In the context of surrounding verses, the reference appears to be one Israelite loving another Israelite neighbour as him/herself, and may not necessarily be speaking of Gentiles.

However, in vv. 33-34, we have these words: "When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. 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."

When the text was first given, and for those who would apply the Torah to today's situation, yet wish to do so in light of Jesus' coming, these questions can be helpful:

- If the alien "in your land" is to be as a citizen, is the land therefore seen as mutual land?
- Did the Israelites love the alien as *themselves* if they did not understand God to be telling them to share the land?

This is not to negate the aforementioned texts in Judges, etc. However, one might ask why the annihilation texts are so much more familiar to us than are love of neighbour/alien references. Even if the former outnumber the latter, with the coming of Jesus the Messiah, what does it mean to take seriously Jesus' words that those texts, too, come under the judgment of the greatest commandments?

What God Might Do

The above focuses on what individuals or community might believe and do regarding land, promise, and love. But what is God going to do?

A certain humility, due to God's awesomeness and our failed past predictions, will hopefully restrain us from pretending to "know it all." Perhaps familiar interpretations of such passages as Luke 21:24, Acts 1:6-7, and Romans 9-11, that the kingdom will be restored to Israel and that God's covenant is not finished, are accurate. Perhaps such interpretations are inaccurate. In either case, such passages talk about God's actions.

Other frequently used passages talk about loving Jerusalem, and about blessing rather than cursing Israelites. These are actions, which we as humans can do. The good news of the gospel is that we dare not choose between loving one group of people or another!

To love Palestinians, to treat Palestinians as we would want to be treated, need not diminish our love for Jews by one iota. To do to Jews as we would have people do to us need not decrease our desire to do to Palestinians as we want others to do to us. And perhaps the land, though small, is also big enough for all. Certainly God's love is huge, and big enough for all. In any event, Jesus' words regarding the greatest commandments (Matthew 22, Mark 12) and a component of what leads to eternal life (Luke 10:25-37) highlight the centrality that love of God, neighbour, and enemy are to play in our lives.

As humans, we do not know all that God will do. However, it seems clear that what we are to do is to love all people whom God has created. That is the supreme gauge as to whether our theology is faithful, imperfect though it/we may be. By so doing, Abu Victor may yet gain a clearer understanding of what kind of Christians we are, perhaps as Palestinians, Jews, or any of the rest of us someday share a meal together in his Bethlehem home.

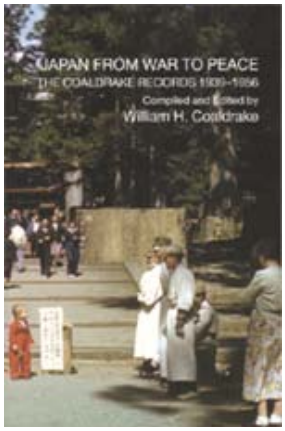
- Ed Nyce is MCC peace development worker in Palestine

Don't change Christ's message signs found at:
http://www.octanecreative.com/american_prayer/message/

BOOK REVIEWS

Japan From War To Peace The Coaldrake Records 1939-1956

William H. Coaldrake, Routledge Curzon, 2003.



"We need stories of Australian peacemakers." We have heard this at numerous AAANZ meetings. Well here is a book about a home-grown Aussie Christian pacifist.

"Frank William Coaldrake (1912-1970) was an Anglican priest and the first Australian civilian to enter Occupied Japan after World War Two. He was one of the pioneering members of the brotherhood of St. Laurence, the Anglican religious order working for social justice in the slums of Melbourne from the late 1930's onwards. He has been acknowledged as 'the outstanding figure among Australian pacifists in the difficult years of the Second World War.'" (3) He founded the pacifist journal ***The Peacemaker*** and spoke out about the war at a time when pacifism was extremely unpopular and "priests were expected to become army chaplains or, at the very least, support the war effort against Japan from their pulpits." (4)

His mail was opened and he was interrogated by the security police. The Archbishop of the Diocese of Melbourne warned him that his career in the church was at risk and said "I don't want you pooping off on public platforms." (4) Coaldrake spoke out and acted anyway, declaring that "revolutionary action is very common with God." (5) He embarked on a program of direct action for social justice and in 1944 led two "sit-in" protests in the slums of Melbourne, using Gandhi's concept of non-violent civil disobedience.

He felt he had to go to Japan because Japan was the enemy. Killing was wrong and there must be another way. In May 1942, he began formulating a plan to go to Japan "on a mission of reconciliation" but it took till 1947 for this to happen. He arrived in Japan before the authorities had given him official permission to be there.

This book contains Coaldrake's letters to supporters in Australia as well as articles and reports he wrote. His son William is the compiler and editor of these materials and does a good job of putting the story together. His short summaries before each chapter would make a good book on their own.

Frank Coaldrake married Maida Williams after his first missionary term in Japan. Many of the letters home after their return to Japan were written by Maida. She adds a different perspective and we get glimpses of the personal costs of being missionaries in post-war Japan.

The Coaldrakes spent their "furlough" times in Australia involved in a personal "mission against prejudice". In one month, Frank travelled 7000 miles by plane, 2000 miles by Land Rover and gave over 300 speeches and talks. Maida, who was pregnant with their first child, gave 65 talks on her own during that month.

It was a tough job. Frank wrote:

The depressing thing, as I look back now, was to find that among the several thousand people I spoke to in meetings and services very few began by acknowledging the human-ness of the people of Japan...There must have been some special feature in our war-time ideas about the Japanese and we ought to be trying to recognise what it was, because it has warped the mind of even the Christians among us.

Fear and horror caused by stories of war atrocities told by returning soldiers, "often played upon by highly coloured press and radio reports," overpowered "any attempt to size up the situation reasonably with calm thought." (23)

Frank was very open about his faith and its connection to his political views. He told a Commonwealth Investigation Branch Inspector:

My main driving force is the religious conviction that the truth about God has been revealed to men in the person and life of Jesus Christ. My only unalterable intention is to share this knowledge far and wide...My calling is to preach [the Word of God] and live it. (37)

Coaldrake called on each Christian pacifist "to win over in his own branch of the Church in Australia recognition of the rightness of the pacifist emphasis on the way of the cross." (46) He also recognized the "race prejudice" in Australian society illustrated by the Whites Only immigration policy. The Tampa affair and recent riots in Redfern tell us we still have work to do in this area. His comments like the following are still true.

Australians cannot expect to be met with open trust so long as they jealously keep advantages which have been gained in part by industry and initiative, but in part by force and fraud. (47)

The American occupation administration in Japan wanted to use Christianity as a way to "pacify" the Japanese. They encouraged Christian missionaries, particularly the American ones, and made the way easy for them to return to the country.

> Pacifists are often Negative. Pacifism is a positive attitude.
>
> Pacifists often accept the restrictions which war brings, fold their arms, and await for peace. Pacifism is the attitude which stands out in the midst of war, and continues to act in ways of Peace and for Peace.
>
> Negative pacifists decline into pacifism. Positive Pacifists think, speak, write, act, pay, and perhaps, pray, for the things which belong to peace.
>
> The Negative pacifist is a passenger carried by the whole community. A positive Pacifist works his passage – he is worth his place in the community just as salt is worth its place in the stew.
>
> The Pacifist who apologises for his views is probably being negative. If he were working his passage he would not need to apologise to anyone.
>
> Passenger Pacifists should look for a hearse to ride in. Positive Pacifists are slowly but surely making the coffin of war.
>
> "Negatives," ***The Peacemaker****, 15 February 1944,* ***(Japan From War To Peace****, 43)*

The Coaldrakes saw through this. Maida, in particular, is critical of this special treatment for American missionaries. Frank knew that what he was working at was something different. One comment he made in a report when talking about this "pacifying" goal was "though a non-pacifist Christian Church can be the very devil." (163) Strong words for a man who was called home from Japan after ten years to head up the Anglican mission board.

One of Frank's heroes was the Japanese Christian pacifist Toyohiko Kagawa. He writes about the joy of meeting him and hearing him speak. [For more on Toyohiko Kagawa go to: http://www.unchuusha.or.jp/zaidan/e/1e.html]. Another famous pacifist of that era that the Coaldrakes met was Muriel Lester. [For more on Muriel Lester go to: http://www.ecapc.org/articles/WestmoW_2003.04.21.htm .]

After his time in Japan, Coaldrake was Chairman of the Australian Board of Missions [Anglican] and in July 1970 was elected Archbishop of Brisbane. "He was the first Australian and the first Queenslander to be elected" to that position. William adds in his notes, "It was highly unusual for a priest not already a bishop to be chosen as an archbishop. The nearly unanimous vote for him on the first ballot represented a new recognition and acceptance of his leadership in mission and in reconciliation both within Australia and in the Asia-Pacific region." (512)

Unfortunately, Frank died twelve days after his election so we never get to see what kind of archbishop he was to be. Would his time as archbishop been a time of putting issues of peace and justice on the front burner for the church? We will never know.

The book's length, 530 pages, and its price, $46, will keep the book from becoming a bestseller. But the Coaldrake story should be told. At least Aussie Christians should know about this brave peacemaker who successfully combined mission work and peacemaking.

[See "An Aussie Anglican in Japan" Program Transcript from ABC's Program **The Spirit of Things** http://www.abc.net.au/rn/relig/spirit/stories/s1011081.htm]

Reviewed by Mark S. Hurst

Interface: A Forum for Theology in the World

John Howard Yoder always insisted that he was not a denominational theologian but a theologian in service of the church catholic. The ongoing response to his theological work suggests that this was an accurate account of his vocation.

Take for example the latest issue of the Australian Theological Forum journal, ***Interface: A Forum for Theology in the World*** Vol 6 No.2, October 2003. It is devoted to the theme of the just war. As usual, ***Interface*** is an intellectually substantial collection of essays covering a wide variety of approaches to the just war tradition and with a particular focus on the recent war in Iraq.

Two essays may be of special interest to readers of ***ON THE ROAD***. They pay particular attention to the work of John Howard Yoder in his engagement with the just war tradition. Michael T Siegal SVD wrote "Can the Just War Tradition be made to work?" and Katsuhiro Kohara wrote "Hiroshima and the Pacifism/Just War Debate".

Bruce Kaye, General Secretary of the Anglican Church in Australia takes an interesting and critical stance towards the use of the just war tradition in public debate in Australia in "Epilogue: On putting Just War theory in its Place, an Anglican Perspective on Human Rights'. He makes particular use of the work of Stanley Hauerwas. Bruce Kaye summarising Hauerwas's critique of the just war in the context of the 1991 war in the Persian Gulf, highlights Hauerwas's point that:

> *The so-called just war theory, rather than helping Christians discern where their loyalties should be, in fact, made it more difficult for Christians to distinguish their story from the story of the United States of America. As a result appeals to that theory led to an uncritical legitimation of the Gulf War by most American Christians. (p.113)*

Bruce Kaye then briefly summarises the different context in which the churches engage in the public policy context in Australia, from that which applies in the USA. His comments are tantalising in their brevity but nevertheless acute in their diagnosis.

Commenting on his own church, he observes that: *Our traditions have not encouraged, especially in Anglicans, a strong dissenting tradition on public engagement. (p.114)* Having taken that step he moves on to ask the question as to how the church can shape its life so as to be able to critically engage as Christians in the public policy debate on issues such as war and peace. This is an essay that deserves a wide circulation and debate within Australian churches.

Reviewed by Doug Hynd

Herald Press Release

Discipleship as Political Responsibility

by John Howard Yoder.

"Discipleship as Political Responsibility is an invaluable resource for helping us understand Yoder's challenge to Mennonite and non-Mennonite alike."

-Stanley Hauerwas, Gilbert T. Rowe Professor of Theological Ethics, Duke University

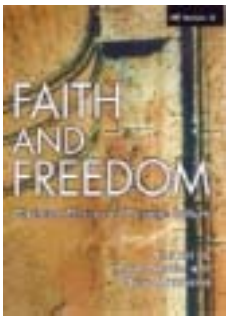
John Howard Yoder went to Europe after the Second World War as a young volunteer. He worked as an aide in a children's home in Elsace, France and completed his doctorate under Karl Barth in Basel, Switzerland. Because of his incomparably clear and sharp thinking, Yoder quickly became one of the most sought after speakers on pacifism at seminars as he worked toward an Anabaptist renewal of the church.

In this context, Yoder succeeded in reopening the theological debate on Christians and political responsibility with the larger church to which persecution had put an end 400 years earlier.

Biblical scholar, Timothy J. Geddert has translated two of these lectures, originally given in German, as a resource to understand Yoder's invitation to begin an exploratory journey that leads to Jesus Christ's peace church.

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

Faith and Freedom
Christian Ethics in a Pluralist Culture
EDITED BY DAVID NEVILLE & PHILIP MATTHEWS, ATF PRESS, ADELAIDE
ATF SERIES 9 2003



The title of this collection of essays points to the source of all bar one of the articles. ***Faith and Freedom: a Journal of Christian Ethics*** was published by the Baptist Peace Fellowship of Australia between 1992 and 1998. The then editors of that now deceased journal have joined forces to prepare an anthology of ***Faith and Freedom*** articles. This new publication has been co-sponsored by the Australian Theological Forum and St Mark's National Theological Centre.

As with anthologies where a choice has been made from previously published material, the basis on which the choice has been made is inevitably of interest. Not very much is said explicitly in the Introduction about the selection criteria used. The only comments that bear explicitly on this issue point to the editors focussing on articles that they have identified as being of ongoing theological interest and have omitted some of the more topical articles where inevitably the debate has moved on.

Several pages of the Introduction are devoted to a summary account by David Neville of articles on indigenous issues that were published in the journal but not included in the anthology. I detected something of a note of regret, reading between the lines of the Introduction, that some of these articles were not included in the collection.

While the rationale for choosing to omit certain articles is briefly noted by the editor, the rationale for the choice of the articles that were included, and the basis on which the essays that were included are grouped is given little attention. The unfortunate result is that the theological commitments underlying the choice of articles and the editorial stance that shaped the journal in which they were originally published remains implicit and unarticulated.

An argument can be made that the anthology articles themselves should be the focus of attention and David Neville provides a good summary of the articles in his Introduction.

Perhaps the account that I was looking for that could tell us why this collection is important and how it serves the public witness of the church could have been supplied by some background to the journal in which the articles were originally published. There is no real account of the journal, ***Faith and Freedom***, its purposes, sponsorship, and theological location. It was an important initiative that resulted in the publication of some important articles by authors from a tradition of theological reflection that unfortunately remains a distinct minority within the Christian community in Australia.

The editors have in a word been far too modest. It would have been appropriate for them to have spoken up, as Karl Barth might have said, in a slightly louder voice.

The subtitle of this collection of essays, *"Christian Ethics in a Pluralist Culture,"* raises an interesting question in that the significance of the pluralist context is not explicitly addressed as a theme in its own right. An account of pluralism and its significance for the Christian church is however implicitly assumed in almost all of the essays. The assumption about pluralism and culture that the authors of the articles are working with is that it is not as a step towards a relativism in theological method leading to a convergence of Christian action with the values and practices of the prevailing culture.

The way I read it is that the authors are largely writing out of the assumption of pluralism as defined by the location of the church in a time after Christendom, and beyond modernity. The argument takes all this as a given and in so doing, despite a wide range of formal denominational affiliations, the authors are by and large operating with a view of that this represents an opportunity for the church, not a source for lament.

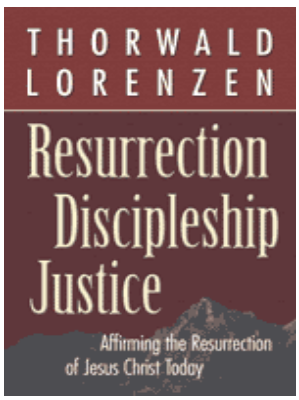
I will not attempt to discuss individual essays in detail but simply point to a few highlights. The collection includes a number of pieces that should become standard for anyone teaching Christian ethics. I have in mind in particular, though it is a bit invidious to pull out a couple of essays from a good quality collection, John Dunnhill rightly querying whether the bible is a handbook for ethics and Christopher Marshall on "The Moral Vision of the Beatitudes." Both of these essays challenge commonly held assumptions and are written with clarity and passion. Also good are Graeme Garrett's piece on the ethics of ecumenical relationships and Thorwald Lorenzen's sketch of a contemporary spirituality shaped by our following of Jesus Christ, both essays that deserve reading and re-reading.

The commitment to Christian discipleship as the way of peace is highlighted in the third section of the book that collects a number of essays under the theme of "The Politics of Jesus and Christian Pacifism". While John Howard Yoder and Stanley Hauerwas get a guernsey, there are also substantial essays by each of the editors as well as Ian Barnes. Both Barnes and Hauerwas engage with an application of Yoder's thought to the Australian context.

This is a collection which will repay reading and demands attention. The (ana)baptist vision which is committed to engagement in the world and to the following of Jesus, neither to the exclusion of the other, finds a voice here.

Reviewed by Doug Hynd

Resurrection – Discipleship – Justice
Affirming the Resurrection of Jesus Today
BY THORWALD LORENZEN SMITH & HELWYS, 2003



To attend the launching of this book was a rare privilege. Rev Pat Power, Assistant Bishop of the Canberra-Goulburn diocese of the Catholic Church introduced the book – an ecumenical move that gestured to a common commitment and a step forward in moving beyond the divisions of the past.

Thorwald Lorenzen is a passionate preacher, passionate about the Gospel and passionate about what Christian discipleship calls us to by way of engagement with the world and

struggling for justice. All these qualities of his life and ministry, familiar to those of us who live in Canberra, are on display in his latest book.

Thorwald's approach to the theme of resurrection within Christian scholarship and teaching arises out of his dissatisfaction with the way this central theological theme has been "handled" in the pulpit, in the pew as well as in the classroom. The heart of the case that he wants to make is probably most clearly expressed in the following comments from the introduction to this book:

Theology must be concerned not only with the question of whether the resurrection occurred or not, but especially what it means for our understanding of life and its challenges...The resurrection of Christ has started a process, but Christ is not dissolved into the process. Christ remains the power, the measure, the meaning and the end of the process. This dynamic understanding of the resurrection is often missing in the modern debate, while I think it is the main thrust the power of the risen Christ aims to transform history in the direction of God's shalom. (p.5)

The first two chapters of this book are devoted to a debate with both liberal and conservative theologians with whom he is both dissatisfied. He is deeply concerned that the concentration on what can be achieved in discussion or consideration of the resurrection within the framework of reason is centred around a concern for control and detaches the debate from lived experience. It detaches knowledge from participation and involvement. It undercuts both liturgical worship and its outworking in our discipleship.

Much of the resurrection debate takes little account of the essential interrelation of the resurrection with Jesus life and death on the one hand and with the believer and the community of faith on the other. The focus is on whether the tomb into which Jesus' corpse had been placed was empty or not or whether there was a tomb at all. Yet the New Testament traditions emphasize that it was the crucified One who was raised from the dead and that he was recognised as Jesus in the event of faith. ...there is the clear intimation that the crucified Christ calls for an existence of faith in which it becomes evident that the resurrection of the crucified Christ established a new reality. The new reality calls for a corresponding lifestyle. (pp 4-5)

The confession of the resurrection of Jesus is not an intellectual issue about which we can have an abstract theological debate. The theological confession is a call to discipleship and the call to commitment to the cause of the crucified Jesus, the cause of God's justice and shalom.

Having engaged both liberal and conservative theologians on his way to recovering the significance of the resurrection the remainder of the book is devoted to charting out what the resurrection calls us to in respect to issues ranging from ecology and the ordination of women to relationship with other religions.

Fittingly the last chapter deals with the theme of discipleship. This is no surprise given Thorwald's acknowledgment in preaching and conversation of the importance of the Anabaptist tradition for whom this is a central concern. In his final paragraph, he makes clear his indebtedness to this tradition and challenges us all:

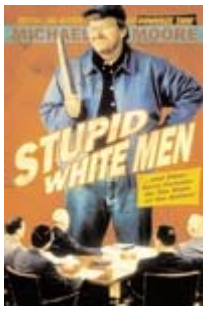
I have argued that neither individual piety, nor worship liturgies, nor doctrinal orthodoxy, but the concrete following of Jesus in our everyday lives is the most adequate way of responding to the resurrection of the crucified Christ. By retrieving some theological emphases from the nonviolent Anabaptists of the sixteenth century ... I have suggested that the believer and the believing community are part of the resurrection reality ... The resurrection of the crucified Christ calls for a life of faith in which Jesus' passion for God and therefore for justice is echoed. (p.169)

Thorwald has provided us with theology that is substantial and accessible, challenging us to engage the world as faithful disciples committed to God's cause of justice.

Reviewed by Doug Hynd

Stupid White Men And Other Sorry Excuses for the State of the Nation!

by Michael Moore, Regan Books, 2001.



The 'left's' Rush Limbaugh on steroids. That's how I would describe Michael Moore's book ***Stupid White Men***. For anyone who experienced his award winning documentary on gun violence in the US, *Bowling for Columbine*, this is in the same bellicose style only a print version. Moore is all over the spectrum exploring social maladies that plague civil society in the US. The genius of Moore's technique is that he is still in touch with the average person and has great sensitivity to the underbelly of society. While the issues he raises of systemic oppression in the US need to be addressed, his delivery opens him up to some criticism. One fault is that he stacks the stories and data in such a way as to brush off any scholarly critique. Others include inaccuracies or, at best, inconsistencies, in his recounting of history.

In a populous and humorous way, Moore tackles issues of the 2000 US presidential election fiasco, racism, male (white male) dominance, the environment and a non-responsive government committed to only big corporate interests. The latter issue has been Moore's hallmark ever since his seat of the pants documentary on General Motors closing auto plants in his hometown of Flint, Michigan. I can't wait for Moore to finish his film piece on Bush and Bin Laden. It will undoubtedly chronicle the Bush Business interests over the years with the despots of the world. His latest book, ***Dude, Where's My Country***?, "a polemic against President Bush" according to a review by Bryan Keefer, hit the shelves last year. (**http://www.spinsanity.org/columns/20031016.html** .

Moore's independence in his book and film making efforts give him license to address critical social issues in a way that few others can in today's fear-driven America. Judging by the number of book sales, movie receipts, and popularity as speaker his style, but more so the content of his rants and raves, have hit a nerve in a disgruntled and disillusioned mainstream in the US.

Love him or hate him, Michael Moore speaks from the heart about issues affecting the down and out. As workers for justice, we would do well to pay attention to this modern day prophet.

Book Reviewer: Jon Rudy, MCC Asia Peace Resource

Obedience, Suspicion and the Gospel of Mark

A Mennonite-Feminist Exploration of Biblical Authority,

Lydia Neufeld Harder,
Wilfrid Laurier University Press,
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 1998.

Don't be scared off by this book's very scholarly sounding title. This 168-page volume is very readable. I've had this book on my "to be read" shelf for awhile and recently picked it up because of a renewed interest in the Gospel of Mark.

I did not expect a summary and critique of recent Anabaptist theology and practice but that is what chapter two offers. This chapter entitled "Discipleship and Authority: Mennonite Hermeneutic Community" by itself makes the book worthwhile reading.

Many of our ***ON THE ROAD*** readers are familiar with John Howard Yoder's ***Politics of Jesus*** and ***Body Politics***. A good summary of these books is presented by Harder in chapter two but the added treat is a critique from a Mennonite-Feminist perspective.

While Yoder captures the radical and revolutionary nature of the Anabaptist vision in his writings, Mennonite/Anabaptist practice has not always lived up to this radical vision. When it came to male/female issues, Harder says "It is clear that the authority structures in the Mennonite church were not very different from those which prevailed in all of society."(47)

Yoder's writings and explanation of the Anabaptist vision have inspired many, including me, but Harder says "His interpretation does not show evidence of understanding the different ways in which the dominant and the marginal tend to hear these words."(54) For "dominant and the marginal," you can read "male and female". Yoder was writing as a male theologian, university professor, and ethicist. Harder says Yoder "did not seem to be aware of how his position...and his predominantly male conversation partners influenced his interpretation."

This issue hit me several years back when I preached about servanthood in a church in Tasmania. I preached a good Anabaptist version of what servanthood is all about (Yoder would have liked it) and we even ended with a footwashing service. After the worship time, a woman came to speak to me. She said, "I'm tired of being a servant. I've been doing it all my life."

I realized I was preaching from my male perspective where serving others was a radical idea but for this woman it was nothing new. I was calling for a setting aside of power and this woman had never experienced being "in power". I learned that servanthood looked very different to males and females in that church. (I went into the kitchen after the church's shared lunch and found only one man helping with the clean-up and he was not one of the congregation's male-only leaders. My sermon failed to reach its desired audience.)

How we read Scripture and Yoder and Anabaptist theology depends on where we are coming from. Are we in a place of dominance or are we on the margins? Harder raises questions from her place as a female in the Mennonite/ Anabaptist tradition.

...if Jesus could make Simon the Zealot and Matthew the [tax collector] walk down the main street in Jerusalem, holding hands and calling one another "Brother," the God Movement was here! This was to be a demonstration plot – not so much a preaching platform, but a demonstration plot that the God Movement was under way.

Jesus was trying to make a concrete, living demonstration of the God movement...He was not talking about the Kingdom of God in an abstract sense. He was saying, "The Kingdom of God is in your midst." Where? "Right here. Here they are. Here are the fellows. This is the God Movement – right in your midst – and you are being confronted with it." The Christian movement resorted more to fact than to argument. Those people were the direct evidence of the "kingdom" – the God Movement.

***Cotton Patch Sermons*, Clarence Jordan, 61**

Chapter three takes a look at the "Feminist Hermeneutic Community". Harder uses Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza and her interpretation of discipleship as the main conversation partner. She examines issues of authority in light of a feminist hermeneutic of suspicion.

Gayle Goober Koontz is quoted, among other women theologians, to question whether suspicion is enough. Koontz says "...our particular task might be to practice a hermeneutic of generosity...the gathering together of different selves and communities may well become an occasion for God's words of justice and grace to break forth." (87)

Harder is not entirely taken by this "suspicion" position (as she was not with the "obedience" one) and says "Neither obedience nor suspicion alone will define my approach to the Bible. Instead, I will make deliberate choices within the dialectical process that describes the relationship of text and interpreter. My hope is that this will lead to a reading open to God's disruptive voice in the text and in the broader interpretive community." (95-96)

In chapter four, Harder summarizes the Gospel of Mark looking particularly at the themes of discipleship and authority. She concludes the book with a few thoughts on this "experiment" of bringing together her Mennonite tradition with feminist thought and what this has meant for her. She invites others to broaden their "circles of dialogue" with the hope of this leading "to a greater sensitivity to God's Word." (150)

Reviewed by Mark S. Hurst

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Mission worker's ministry continues in retirement

ELKHART, Indiana (Mennonite Mission Network) - Baking bread and building furniture in his workshop are two of John Driver's favourite activities as a retiree. But along with these hobbies, he is kept busy responding to invitations from Latin America to teach on Anabaptist history and theology, spirituality, church and mission, and the theology of peace.

Driver's expertise in teaching comes from 40 years of mission work for Mission Network's predecessor, Mennonite Board of Missions, and Mennonite Central Committee. Since his retirement 15 years ago, Driver has continued teaching seminars and workshops, sometimes spending 12 hours a day in conversation with Christians who are eager to hear about the Anabaptist perspective.

"They're excited about the social alternatives the gospel implies," said Driver. "They see that the church can be a community and not a hierarchy."

For many Latin Americans, who have seen the effects of what Driver calls "a legacy of militarism and economic conquest" built on such hierarchies, learning that leadership in the church can be shared is "a radical view of the gospel." Many are excited about the idea of the holistic understanding of salvation that Driver presents, based on "sound living, not just sound doctrine."

During Driver's recent five-and-a-half-week trip to Bolivia, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile, he was pleased to discover several congregations "intentionally promoting their own culture. They want the gospel to take indigenous forms," Driver said.

Puerta del Rebaño (A Door to the Sheepfold) in Concepción, Chile, is one such congregation. Driver's visit to this congregation left him impressed by a special performance of narration, indigenous music and dance that was "a powerful display of hope.

"I return with a prayer that these brothers and sisters will be graced by the power to resist the pressures to conform that continually pour in from the north," he said.

Between at least one extensive trip to Latin America each year, writing church history and theology books in both Spanish and English, and teaching as an adjunct professor for Goshen College's Hispanic Education, Theology, and Leadership (HETL) program, Driver is quite busy.

"Sometimes I'm tempted to go back to work to simplify my life," he said.

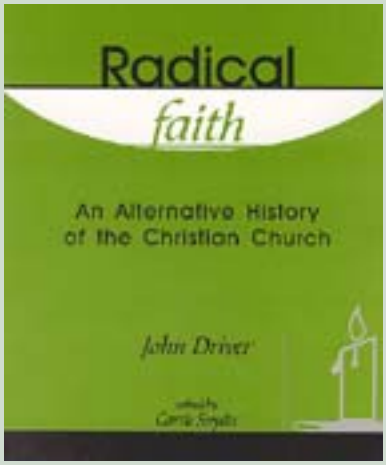
Driver said many of the people he visits are surprised that a man of his age is still travelling such distances to share the wisdom his many years afford.

"Getting up in the morning and feeling good is a gift from God," he said.

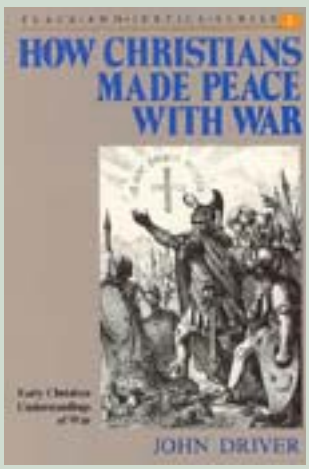
Bonnie, his wife, has a background in nursing. She spends much of her time volunteering to help take care of older people whose health is deteriorating. When travelling alone, as he often does these days, Driver tells people Bonnie "stayed home to practice what I preach."

John Driver Books

John Driver has authored 13 books, three of them are currently available at http://www.mennolink.org/books/johndriver.html

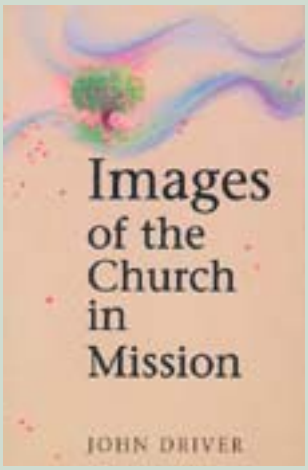


John Driver outlines the story of Christian people whose radical faith and commitment relegated them to the margins of a powerful church. Recovering the story of God's people in this unique way provides readers with a valuable new perspective on Christian History.



John Driver tells the history of the early church from the close of the New Testament through Augustine. He shows how there was a gradual shift in thinking as Christians became involved in the military until they lost their peaceful approach to solving conflict. A popular treatment of the "Constantinian shift".

The Bible shows that the very existence of the church is grounded in God's saving mission. John Driver offers studies of 12 biblical images for understanding the church. He explores images of pilgrimage, of God's new order, of peoplehood, and of transformation.



In our own time, such images can inspire the church to live up to its reason for being. They steer us toward a church more in harmony with God's missionary purpose for his people and toward a mission solidly based in the biblical vision of peoplehood. The images the church uses to understand itself will largely determine what the church will become. By its calling, the church must be in mission.

Anabaptists in Spain send request for mission workers

"During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them." - Acts 16: 9-10 (NIV)

MADRID, Spain (Mennonite Mission Network) - Anabaptist leaders in Spain have a vision based on multiplication: take five churches with 160 baptized believers and increase the numbers to 12 churches with 500 believers by the year 2025.

In order to work toward this goal, they have issued an invitation for mission investment in Spain to their fellow believers in North America, Latin America and Europe. While the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations are currently seeing their numbers grow, they have few resources to work at church planting or leadership training.

"It is my hope that the churches in North and South America will receive this invitation from our handful of Anabaptists in Spain, as something of a 'Macedonian call,'" said Dennis Byler, long-term Mennonite Mission Network worker in Spain, citing Paul's vision as recorded in Acts 16: 9-10, after which he carried the good news of Jesus Christ into Europe. Byler said the hoped-for numbers would be the minimum requirement for a self-sustaining, self-replicating Anabaptist presence in the country. Otherwise, he said, the denomination must rely on imported leadership or face "the disappearance of a specifically Anabaptist witness lived out in local congregations in the country."

José Luis Suarez, pastor in Barcelona, said his congregation's focus during its first 25 years was "living out the gospel," but now there is interest in trying to grow in numbers from the fairly constant numbers they have had over the past few years. The Brethren in Christ congregation in Madrid, whose pastor is Bruce Bundy, has been a cell church since its inception and has already started a church plant 40 minutes outside the city. Davide Junquera, pastor of the church in Vigo, and José Ignacio Díaz, an elder there, said that their congregation hopes to grow to 60 members, and then begin a new church plant in a neighbourhood where two or three church families now live.

"The veneer of pseudo-Christian piety with which Europeans for so many centuries covered their deeply pagan faith and lifestyles has finally peeled away," said Byler, who sees the urgency with which Spain needs "answers to the deepest needs of humankind which only the defenseless gospel of Jesus Christ can address." Byler shared the vision of the Anabaptist churches with a group of Latin Americans during an emotional meeting at Mennonite World Conference in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, last summer.

After first acknowledging the pain that Spain has caused Latin America in the past, he asked for assistance in building up the Mennonite witness in Spain through sending mission workers and praying. Tears flowed as prayers were lifted and many of the delegates from Latin America shared their own vision and calling for ministry in Spain.

Fikru Zeleke, a pastor from the Meserete Kristos church in Ethiopia, also called for a "powerful new missionary thrust in Europe" during the Global Mission Fellowship sessions the Sunday before the conference. Anabaptist leaders are hoping for partners in mission who will have the patience to wait several decades for results, rather than having three- or four-year goals. "Anyone who does invest in missions in Spain must do so in the awareness that Spain is a deeply secularized society, profoundly cynical about Christianity, individualistic to a fault and therefore slow to make any kind of commitment," said Byler, who has worked in Spain since 1981. "They must be able to invest for decades in the expectation that eventually the Lord will begin to give an increase."

The leaders met twice in 2003 with J. Robert Charles, Mennonite Mission Network's Europe director, to discuss their vision and ways of working with Latin American Mennonites who are coming to Spain for employment and witness opportunities. During the annual leadership meeting in March, they will continue to explore methods of implementing their vision.

"I do not want to encourage and to perpetuate this tradition of bringing about change through violence. Because I'm afraid that if we achieve democracy in this way we will never be able to get rid of the idea that you bring about necessary changes through violence...It would simply not assist us in building up a strong democracy."

...peace, democracy, and human rights...would enable people to participate freely in building a civil and non-violent society. But it would have to be a society, which would not be preoccupied with economic growth in order to feed desires for material wealth. On the contrary, the persistence of poverty as a result of the dominance of economic policies, which benefited powerful elites, was a violence, which should have no place in, a democracy grounded in Buddhist values. (171)

- Burmese democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi in *Passion for Peace*, Stuart Rees, UNSW Press, 2003, p. 171.

US Mennonite Youth Discover Footwashing Goes Both Ways

BY LAURIE L. OSWALD

LANSDALE, Pennsylvania (MC USA) — Footwashing will never be the same for Laura Gaugler, a Grade 12 student from Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, Lansdale, Pennsylvania, who met children without shoes during a Honduran mission trip in January.

Now when Gaugler participates in footwashing services in her congregation, Bally Mennonite Church, with familiar hymns filling the sanctuary, she'll remember the skinny children walking muddy streets — and it will all be different.

She'll remember how she cleaned the infected wounds on children's feet, mindful that the mud contained parasites that burrow into their skin – and received smiles as pay for bandages and love. She'll remember washing tiny toes during footwashing and knowing she was touching lives in a big way. She'll remember that in having the children wash her white, unscarred feet with brown, malnourished hands, she'd come home marked forever.

"During devotions one night, we talked about how we'd been cleaning dirty feet all week, and wouldn't it be neat to end our time with a footwashing service," said Gaugler, who helped to organize the trip sponsored by MAMA Project Inc., a non-profit ministry supported by congregations in Franconia Mennonite Conference (FMC) and Eastern District Conference and beyond (**www.mamaproject.org**).

"I'll never forget how they giggled about my white feet when I took off my shoes, or how they grinned so big during this simple little service. I couldn't understand anything they said, but I sure understood the joy we all felt. Footwashing will never be the same again."

Footwashing symbolizes the entire trip, during which Gaugler and nine other Grade 12 women from Christopher Dock spent seven days in poor neighbourhoods near Santa Rita and San Francisco de Yojoa. They helped Priscilla Benner –a physician and MAMA director and founder — to run medical clinics, give nutritional information and provide Vitamin A and deworming medicine. The medicine kills intestinal parasites that enter bodies through bare feet and contaminated food and water. The parasites grow into worms that rob children of nutrients.

The students and group co-leaders Benner and Marlene Frankenfield — Christopher Dock's campus pastor and FMC's youth minister – provided medical care, made new friends, played games with children, and interacted with families. In the evenings, the tired work team shared devotions and connected what they'd seen and felt each day with their ideas about faith and service.

"I told the students that the whole seven days was one big footwashing experience," said Frankenfield, co-leading her second trip to Honduras with Christopher Dock students. "I reminded them it wasn't just about giving to the people and washing their feet but also learning to receive and having their own feet washed, as well."

Inspiring this mutuality is a driving passion for Benner, who runs a medical clinic in Pennsburg, and is a member of Shalom Christian Fellowship, a Mennonite congregation in East Greenville.

"I feel these trips do as much for the visitors as it does for local communities," she said. "It's not just a one-way street. We come away blessed with a multicultural exchange, and we are so privileged to share in their lives.

"It's very sobering to see poverty so up close and personal. Justice issues come alive when you see real people suffering real pain. But we need to let ourselves be exposed to this."

Benner hopes that by exposing young people to these moments of poverty, they will become wise decision-makers in local congregations and make justice a way of life.

"I hope that 50 years down the road when these women are attending church business meetings where they have to vote about whether to cut the missions budget or buy new red carpet for the sanctuary, that they will remember these children."

Benner, who founded MAMA in 1987, provides some of these impacting memories through the 14 service trips MAMA sponsors for congregations and groups each year. MAMA is a network that promotes health and wholeness to tackle the problems that rob children of the opportunity to reach their full potential.

MAMA uses many avenues to show concern for others, including the medical and nutritional care the January work team participated in. Benner exchanges ideas on deworming programs with Claude Good, a volunteer at FMC who spearheads The Worm Project Inc. It supports the manufacture of the 5-cent deworming pills that reduce world hunger.

MAMA provides educational care — offering scholarships for youth that cannot afford uniforms, books and school fees and operating preschool centres. And MAMA does community development — supplying teams to help rebuild villages after catastrophes, providing workshops on nutrition, hygiene and gardening and giving sewing classes.

Benner dreams that Mennonite Church USA will more fully realize its potential in reaching out to a needy world. In her mind, many creative partnerships wait to be born.

"I feel that Mennonite Church USA is a sleeping giant," she said. "I don't think we know our own power or potential. I think it is time that we wake up and see all the ways God wants us to be involved.... But that doesn't mean we become a giant that comes in and stomps all over the developing world with our ideas and programs. We need to learn to move but to also move with God."

Young people are particularly open to moving with God in relational ways, Benner said. For example, Allandria Edwards, a January work team member who came to the United States from the West Indies, naturally flowed into mutual friendships in Honduras. She saw much poverty growing up. So

If you want to build a ship, then don't drum up men to gather wood, give orders, and divide the work. Rather, teach them to yearn for the far and endless sea.
- Antoine De Saint Expery, *Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding*, page 406

even though she doesn't speak Spanish, she sensed the struggles of the Hondurans by heart, rather than by words.

"The poverty in Honduras didn't shock me, because I saw a lot of it in my homeland," said Edwards, who commutes to Christopher Dock from Philadelphia. "But there's a different attitude in Honduras than back home in the city.

"Down here, people are more concerned with what others don't have rather than what they don't have. They make sure that their loved ones and friends have the things they need, even if it means personal sacrifice.

"That's how it was back in the West Indies, too. My cousins there don't have half as much as we have in the States, and yet they don't complain. I think I've gotten numb to all I have now, and this experience has woken me up again and made me more sensitive."

Edwards and Gaugler took home new friendships. But they also took home a vision for what it will mean to be servant leaders. Gaugler is enrolled in Messiah College's nursing program in Grantham for next year. Edwards hopes to enrol in a college where she can prepare to become a medical missionary as a paediatric surgeon.

Seeing the six-inch worms crawling out of a Honduran girl's mouth after she took deworming meds didn't steer the students away from their plans. Rather, the trip drew them into the sense of wanting to care for the world rather than building lucrative careers.

"After being here and participating on mission trips with my youth group, I see how important it is to get out of your comfort zone," said Gaugler, who works as Benner's office assistant. "So even though I've known since fifth grade that I've wanted to be a nurse, now I know I'd love to do that nursing outside the U.S. in a place like Honduras."

Edwards said, "After being with these children and learning from them, seeing how happy they are in these tough circumstances, I know that my decision to go into medicine on the mission field is the right one.

"They've shown me what really matters in life, and it's not things, but people. I want to be a vessel for God. I want to act out of giving myself away and alleviating suffering."

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA.

First, they came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist – so I said nothing. Then they came for the Social Democrats, but I was not a Social Democrat – so I did nothing. Then came the trade unionists, but I was not a trade unionist. And then they came for the Jews, but I was not a Jew – so I did little. Then when they came for me, there was no one left who could stand up for me.

- Pastor Niemoller, quoted in *Fellowship*, Sept/Oct 2002, 20.

THE STONE AGE did not end because people ran out of stone. The Petroleum Age will not end because we run out of petroleum, but because we develop superior technologies.

- Fritjof Capra, physicist and philosopher, speaking at the Bioneers conference, Oct. 2002 (Utne Buzz <listmaster@ml.utne.com Tue, Jan 28 2003)

Mennonites Share Peace Theme On German Television

Weierhof, Germany — On January 18, the worship service of a German Mennonite congregation was telecast across the country for the first time in 20 years. The Weierhof Mennonite Church's service focused on the theme, "Peace—overcoming violence worldwide."

The public channel, ZDF (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen), televises a worship service live every Sunday morning from a Catholic or a Protestant church. All 26 Protestant services in 2004 - three from free Protestant churches - will have a peace theme. It was the first time that a Mennonite congregation was asked to prepare a service for television. An estimated 1.28 million people watched the service.

Besides giving a brief historical introduction of Mennonites and the Weierhof congregation, there were reports on bridge-building programs and activities such as the Intermenno Trainee Program and International Visitors Exchange Program. Information was given on tours to Poland to former Mennonite places in the Gdansk area where a lot of friendships have developed.

A Mennonite Trainee from the US talked about his experiences at school after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center in New York in 2001 and how difficult it had been then to stand up for his beliefs.

Andrea Lange, Weierhof pastor, based her sermon on a text from Ephesians 2. She referred to experiences and stories from Mennonite World Conference Assembly 14 in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe in August, 2003. She also mentioned the World Council of Churches "Decade to Overcome Violence" which was proposed in 1998 by the German Mennonite theologian Fernando Enns.

The offering at this service was designated for an AIDS project in Zimbabwe. The large "Koinonia Quilt," which was made in Bulawayo during the world assembly to raise HIV/AIDS awareness worldwide and funds for projects to address the pandemic, was displayed at the church for that purpose.

- Mennonite World Conference report by Helga Driedger

Colombia, Fear and Security

BY LORA STEINER

Security is a basic human need. Security can be as simple as having a home and a family (the security of belonging); it can also include the need for safety. Small children express this well, by clinging tightly to a parent when they're unsure of a situation. Whatever security includes, it's often taken for granted, and indeed expected, by most Americans. We expect a high level of security, both at a personal and a national level.

Some characters of the Bible, such as King Hezekiah, expressed their need for reassurance openly. "O Lord, I am oppressed," cried Hezekiah, "Be my security!" (Isaiah 38:14)

Sometimes our attempts to create security lead to greater insecurity. The Gospel of Luke records Jesus admonishing his followers that "those who try to make their life secure will lose it, but those who lose their life will keep it." (Luke 17:33)

For those who live in conflict-ridden areas, ideas about safety and security sometimes need to be redefined. MCC country representative Bonnie Klassen interviewed women from Cazucá, Colombia about what makes them afraid and what security is for them. She describes Cazucá as an "unrecognized slum built on mountain land sold to displaced people (internal refugees) under illegal terms. The inhabitants struggle to survive under the threats of a very unsanitary environment, unclean water service, hunger, miserable housing, and the constant presence of illegal armed groups."

The women of the neighbourhood responded to Klassen with these stories:

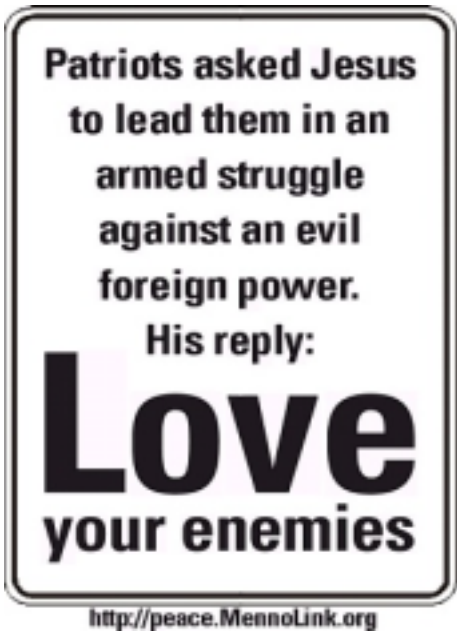
* "We fear death. In recent months, young people have been killed by the illegal and legal armed groups almost daily. Whenever we hear that another teenager has been shot, each one of us fear - is it my son? Our stomachs knot up every time we hear shots. Our children are afraid to use the outhouses alone at night because, as they say, 'there are too many men carrying dead people down to the sewage water.'

* "We work hard to rebuild our lives after being displaced by the armed conflict, to shape a new life project - nothing more than a humble home - but then new threats come from the armed groups here and we see our dreams fall apart. Our future is so uncertain. We don't know whether our sons will grow up to be adults."

* "Where then does security come from? From a job that pays enough to put bread on the table and a roof over our heads. From a sense of solidarity among all of us, where we choose to share instead of compete. From respect for all people's dignity. All people, including those suffering in poverty, deserve affection and love, not humiliation and useless leftovers. Security comes when we learn to call each other by our names, not by numbers or statistics. Hope arises when we look into each other's eyes and see brothers and sisters. Hope comes when we support each other in our dreams of life."

The Colombian church has asked that its sisters and brothers around the world stand with it in solidarity. As we listen to their stories and stand with them in prayer and action, may we continue to reflect on our own safety and security, and the source of true security, Jesus Christ.

Interested in more analysis from the MCC Washington Office? Contact them at mccwash@mcc.org to order a subscription to their bimonthly publication, the Washington Memo. First time subscribers receive the first year free!



E-mail Magazine Looks at News Through a Mennonite Lens

BY KENDRA KING

GOSHEN, Indiana (MC USA) — How do you view the news? A new "e-zine" — e-mail magazine — called PeaceSigns challenges readers to look at current events from a Mennonite perspective.

PeaceSigns is designed to share Christ's call to peace and justice through the 21st century medium-of-choice-the Internet. The goal of the articles, commentary, comics and posters contained in PeaceSigns is to invite people to explore Christian peacemaking.

Brainstorming for PeaceSigns began last summer when Mennonite Church USA peace staff tried to help churches respond to US military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Knowing how to respond is difficult, especially because news media did not portray the whole story, said Susan Mark Landis, PeaceSigns publisher and peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA Executive Board. "We wished people in our congregations had access to better news analysis," she added.

As a result, PeaceSigns was created to equip believers with tools to analyse current issues from a faith-based perspective, to share faith-based perspectives with others and to deepen commitment to peace- and justice-making. It's also a place for various peace theologies to be in conversation with each other.

"We will meet our objective if peace folk forward e-zine articles to their quizzical friends, who then subscribe; if web surfers find us and stay with us; if pastors who wonder how to preach peace to their congregations draw fresh inspiration here," said Landis.

The e-zine is available through the Peace and Justice Support Network, a ministry of Mennonite Mission Network and the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA. Melanie Zuercher of Hesston, Kansas, edits PeaceSigns.

To subscribe to PeaceSigns, visit: **http://peace.mennolink.org/peacesigns/index.html.** The first issue will be released March 17.

WEBSITES

http://www-personal.umich.edu/~bpl/menno.html
The most comprehensive and organised collection of Mennonite links on the Web.

http://www.gw.org/Sos/index.htm
An online version of Peter Hoover's book ***The Secret of the Strength: What Would the Anabaptists Tell This Generation?*** Good resource for connections between Anabaptist history and contemporary discipleship.

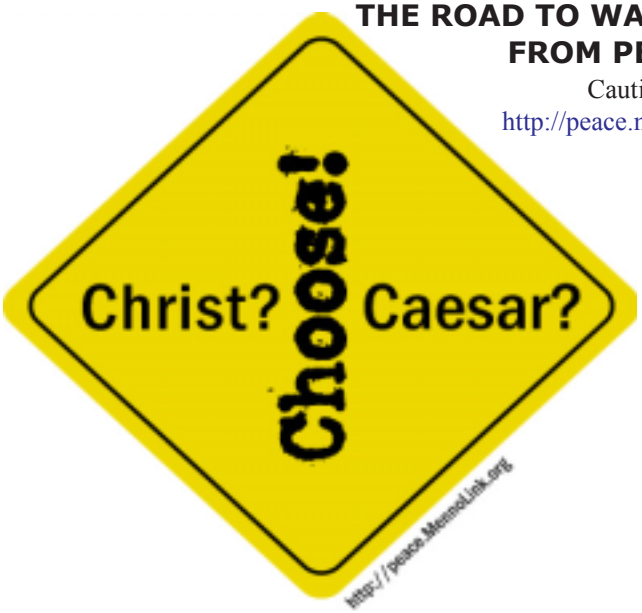
http://www.jesusradicals.com/ "This resource is designed for Christians who know something is wrong with the church."

Women and Peacebuilding Sites:
http://codepink.utne.com/ Women for Peace website
www.un.org/womenwatch UN Advancement and Empowerment of Women
www.peacewomen.org Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
www.iwtc.org International Women's Tribune Centre
www.international-alert.org/women/ Women Building Peace
www.ifor.org/wpp/index.htm International Fellowship of Reconciliation's Women Peacemakers Program

http://www.celebratingpeace.com/ Celebrating Peace! Enriching the lives of children through the pursuit of peace for all!

THE ROAD TO WAR NEEDS CAUTION SIGNS FROM PEOPLE OF FAITH.

Caution signs found at:
http://peace.mennolink.org/clipart.html



The Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand Inc.

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 grassroots 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

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