
CREATION CARE CROSSROADS

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Where the church meets for inspiration to care for God's creation

Fall 2009



**This Issue:
Community Solutions**

Making a Difference - Together

Darren Kropf – Creation Care Program Coordinator

Can one person make a difference? Some would argue, “yes,” the individual is the ONLY way we can make the changes needed. If each person does their part, these small actions will add up. We can’t afford to waste time waiting for leaders to take action; each person can and must start now. Others would argue, “no,” the individual cannot make a significant difference. The scope is too large for anyone to affect real change through personal lifestyles choices. What difference does it make if one person changes a light bulb when China is building new coal-fired electricity plants at an alarming rate? Only political advocacy to make large-scale changes is effective.

Me? I’d say I’m somewhere in the middle on this debate. It is absolutely essential that each person takes personal responsibility for taking care of the resources entrusted to us by God. Not only is this our calling as disciples of Jesus, it also gives us credibility when we attempt to influence the actions of others. At the same time, we cannot possibly make the necessary changes acting independently and without taking into consideration the larger systems that shape and inform our ability to make conscientious decisions. We need individual actors, working together, for a common cause. In a word, we need community.

In community, we hold each other accountable for our individual choices in a way that acting individually cannot. Without this accountability, one person can never make a real impact. The typical challenges of economics, lack of education and simple laziness and inconvenience will eventually wear away the individual’s desire for change. All of us need encouragement and, at times, admonishment. By doing this, in a spirit of humility of course, we begin to create the conditions necessary on a societal level to make long and lasting change.

Community is one of those things that everyone knows and has experienced, but cannot be neatly defined. In this issue, we have everything from sharing one’s home, to grassroots political movements, to exchanging ideas globally. Each form of community is contributing something to the transition to a sustainable world. As you read them, I encourage discernment on how God is calling you to participate in community efforts to bring healing to creation. Yes, YOU can make a difference, WITH the creativity energy that comes from working together as a community.

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Distributing the CCC

Please save paper - limit making extra copies of this newsletter! Instead, read and pass on to the following people in your church:

- **Creation Care Committee**
- **Missions/Peace & Justice Committee**
- **Anyone else interested!**

To receive this newsletter directly to your inbox, send an email to

darrenk@mennonitecc.on.ca

Back issues are posted online at

ontario.mcc.org/creationcare

RESOURCE CORNER – WENDELL BERRY



Wendell Berry is required reading for anyone thinking about faith, community and the environment. He is the author of more than forty books of essays, poetry and novels, all of which are firmly rooted in his experience as a farmer in Henry County, Kentucky.

"My work has been motivated," Wendell Berry has written, "by a desire to make myself responsibly at home in this world and in my native and chosen place."

He advocates for local economies, appropriate technologies, good work and the interconnectedness of life. Prepare to be stretched by the wisdom of Berry and the bold and prophetic message he proclaims.

Visit your local library for his most popular titles. For a full listing of Berry's writings, see: www.wendellberrybooks.com

REDUCE, REUSE...SHARE!

Angela ElzingaCheng, Parkdale Neighbourhood Church and Doug Johnson Hatlem, Toronto United Mennonite Church

For the Junia House Community, four years of learning to live together in community has not exactly been a 'more with less' paradise, but it has most definitely meant living more greenly. And it has given us insight into what it will take and a real potential for more radical transformation.

Living with other people offers energy in regards to steps that might be taken - cloth diapers, environmentally friendly products, eating less meat, eating meat that is ethical ... or making the move to not own a car (for the first three and a half years we shared a vehicle). Cooking for a large group is certainly more fun and more sustainable than one person cooking for a nuclear family. We have been able to stretch things further amongst a larger group of people.

Operating with multiple families living under the same roof has inspired us to choose differently in our lives and against the pressures of culture. Living together certainly reduces your footprint, the space you take up and the resources you might use as a single family.



Junia House Members in Alumnus High Park Summer 2009: L to R Back Row: Kristen Essery, Steve Grant; Middle Row: Jodie Boyer Hatlem, Doug Johnson Hatlem, Angela ElzingaCheng, Samantha Ko; Front Row: Simeon Hatlem, Jacob ElzingaCheng, Jobanna Hatlem, Mei Ling ElzingaCheng - Not Pictured: Benjamin ElzingaCheng, Kayla Sutherland, Sabrina Sutherland

With a committed group of people, moving ourselves towards living more justly is full of possibility and creativity. Critical projects that we have undertaken for careers or side projects have been inspired by the unique passions or gifts that each one of us brings to our community and by the support for those passions and gifts by other members. We have supported each other, with some bumps, in neighbourhood-based projects such as a community garden that one member helped to get off the ground. Two of us work for a living with homeless or otherwise poor people and one woman in our midst works full time for Food Share, a food security, very green-friendly not-for-profit in the heart of downtown Toronto.

Living sustainably also includes our own emotional ability to deal with the pressures of a consumer culture. At its most basic and best, our household doesn't have the room to have a lot of stuff - though it seems to pile up anyway! Community living means that we encourage each other to buy less, to buy second hand (reusing or recycling, I suppose), or to not buy at all (reducing)!! Supportive peer pressure in a positive direction; more common goods, meals, and energy; and a genuine vision for sustainable growth. Share with us here in Toronto or wherever you dwell!

CCC SURVEY

Share your thoughts on the Creation Care Crossroads!

What do you find useful about this newsletter? What is missing? Should we switch to an "e-zine" style over email rather than a narrative style by print?

We want to know! Please fill out a 5 minute survey on the effectiveness of this newsletter by clicking the link at: ontario.mcc.org/creationcare

A MOVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE

Derek Alton, Shantz Mennonite Church



I have always been interested in nature, ever since I was a little boy catching frogs with my dad or picking broccoli at my cousins' vegetable farm. I understood the innate connection we shared with the world we live in. As I grew older and learned more about life I grew very concerned with how we were recklessly and ignorantly treating this world, as if it were there for us to pillage as apposed to us being part of a complex interconnected web of life. I grew frustrated and angry at our leaders and to be honest, people in general, as they did not head the warning of the major top scientists out there. I felt like my future was being put into jeopardy because of people's ignorance in the innate connection we share with life and their stubbornness to change.

It was at this point when a student at my university suggested the idea of creating a massive gathering on climate change to show the leaders that we cared about this issue, that we wanted to protect our future. This fed right into my desire to create change in attitudes about this issue, so I joined the team of organizers.

The more we dug into this topic the more people we found were doing the same thing and as we networked this movement grew from a few university students in Guelph to an international wave. Recently we were part of a wake up call that made international headlines, even getting face time with

UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown. Now we are focusing on October 24th International Day of Climate Action. On this day millions of people around the world are gathering to show their leaders that they care about climate change and that we want to see changes, both in ourselves, our people and our leaders. I am going with hopefully tens if not a hundred thousand people to Ottawa for the national gathering in Ottawa called Climate Day (www.climateday.ca). There are also local gatherings listed at www.350.org.

This is a grass roots movement; it is a movement of the people. One that I think as a community of faith we are called to be a part of – for our future and our children's future. Where will you be on October 24th?

To learn more and to join a bus to Ottawa, contact Derek at derek@climateday.ca

KYOTO PLUS

Kairos Canada

As people of faith, we are summoned to view the earth as not simply a source of resource extraction and wealth generation, but as a community in which we live and move and have our being.

Faith requires us to defend the rights and dignity of our brothers and sisters in other parts of the globe, many of whom are already suffering the effects of climate change.



Take a moment to sign the KYOTOplus petition calling on Canada to commit to a new global agreement on combating climate change at the December 2009 climate change meetings in Copenhagen.

To learn more and sign the petition, see: <http://www.kairoscanada.org/en/get-involved/campaign/>

WHAT'S HAPPENING

MCCO CREATION CARE
PREACHING TOUR

Recently: Avon Mennonite Church (Stratford), Waterloo MB Church, Wellesley Mennonite Church

Upcoming:

October 25, 2009 – St. Jacob's Mennonite Church
November 22, 2009 – Crosshill Mennonite Church

Words of Wisdom

“America has allowed itself to become a hyperindividualized society. That's why we've done more than anyone else to wreck the planet. That hyperindividualized domain flows from one place: the oil wells and coal mines that have provided us with cheap energy. The society we've built is an artifact of that cheap energy—it's allowed us to sprawl endlessly out across the countryside. The American dream for 50 years has been to build bigger houses farther apart from each other... And the more we've grown apart, the more we've grown apart—the average American has half as many close friends as 50 years ago. When you've got no neighbors, spend two hours a day commuting, and work all hours to pay for the mortgage, friends are hard to come by.” Excerpt from *A Difference that Matters*, by Bill McKibben. Sojourners Magazine, September/October 2009 (Vol. 38, No. 9, pp. 15).

NEXT GENERATION OF CANNERS LEARN FROM THE BEST

What are young adults to do when they feel called to eat locally but have few skills to preserve food year round? They ask the experts!

On September 12, 2009 young adults from various congregations joined at Floradale Mennonite Church to can salsa, zuchinni relish, peaches and more. The participants split up into three groups. Each group was provided with recipes, ingredients, supplies, and most importantly, an expert who has canned for years. Chris Frey, of Hawkesville Mennonite Church, glowingly shared about his expert: ““I think I absorbed canning skills just by being around Vera [Bauman of Floradale Mennonite Church].”



Chris Frey stirs raspberry jam.

The experts shared time-saving tips and the proper technique to ensure food safety, not to mention great conversation.

The event was coordinated by Pam Bartel of Hawkesville Mennonite Church. Pam has hosted a series of cooking classes

for young adults in her church as a way to build community while developing essential life skills. “I always learn things in the process, and this time I learned that if you heat your jars up too quickly in the canners, they lose some of their liquid – they still seal but they get sticky and don’t look as pretty. It’s these kinds of simple things we learn best through hands-on practice,” said Pam.



mmmmm.....

For a small registration fee, each young adult went home with a dozen jars of canned food, new skills for caring for creation, new friendships... and a weary body!



Jenn Toews, of Breslau Mennonite Church, and Matthew Wiebe, of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, prepare vegetables for salsa.

NEW BOOK DRAWS ON WISDOM OF PEOPLE AROUND THE GLOBE



Whatever you are doing to make the world a better and more sustainable place to live, the authors of a new Mennonite Publishing Network book, “Simply Sustainable,” want to know.

Says co-author Mark Beach, “The book will encourage readers to make choices based on a value system firmly rooted in a spiritual commitment, connectedness to others and a sense that we all are part of something greater than ourselves.”

Like previous MPN books, such as *More With Less* (1976) and *Simply in Season* (2005), *Simply Sustainable* will also draw on the wisdom of people around the globe. Categories people can write about include food, cleaning, energy conservation, fair trade, money and barter, recycling as well as physical, spiritual and mental health and other topics.

“The goal is to help people meet the challenges facing the earth and our communities by offering realistic alternatives to many of the consumer choices they make everyday,” said co-author Mary Beth Lind.

Simply Sustainable is scheduled for release in the fall of 2010. To offer a submission, become a reviewer, or to learn more about the book, go to www.simply-sustainable.org

SHARE YOUR STORY!

To submit your creation care story, contact Darren Kropf, Creation Care Program Coordinator: 519-745-8458, darrenk@mennonitecc.on.ca

Next Issue... Embracing Sabbath