

## Peace and Justice Support Network Leadership Team letter to Mennonite Church USA congregations

**Y***ou are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

— Matthew 5:14–16

The leadership team of PJSN gathered Oct. 8–11, 2009, for our fall meeting in Elkhart, Ind., for two reasons. The first was to respond to staff changes within Mennonite Mission Network that have affected our work together. The second was in recognition that Elkhart County has experienced firsthand the impact of our national economic crisis. In addition to agenda items, we learned about these effects by visiting the Center for Healing and Hope, and Emerge Ministries. We share the following concerns, observations and hopes with the congregations we serve.

### We lament:

- ✎ The economic challenges that have hurt so many people, including our friends.
- ✎ The structural challenges to women in leadership and the absence of women in top leadership positions in our Mennonite agencies, schools, affiliated agencies, and their boards.
- ✎ With individuals who have experienced job loss and continue to face uncertain futures.
- ✎ Where we have failed to support those in our communities and our congregations who seek justice and peace.

### We affirm:

- ✎ The staff members and volunteers of the Center for Healing and Hope and of Church Without Walls as they minister to the needs of their communities.
- ✎ Evidence of positive shifts in attitudes about women in congregational ministry and the number of women participating in congregational ministry.
- ✎ The focus and emphasis that Goshen College is giving to peace—calling their students and staff members to consider who they are making peace with in their lives.
- ✎ The many staff members at Mennonite Mission Network who work as support staff for the projects of PJSN.
- ✎ The staff of MVS, Radical Journey, and other mission and service opportunities that encourage individuals to experience the connection between mission, peace and justice.

### We look forward:

- ✎ To the possibility of working with MVS participants, and to finding new connecting points with the current work of Mission Network.
- ✎ To the ways in which recent changes in structure will provide new ideas and opportunities for PJSN to connect with congregations.

### We challenge:

- ✎ Our institutions and agencies to consider what underlying attitudes hinder women from sharing their gifts in top leadership positions.
- ✎ Congregations to continue to find new ways to link theology and practice.
- ✎ Individuals to pray together for clarity as we all seek to be followers of Jesus Christ in a world that does not seek God's justice and God's peace.

*The mandate for the Peace and Justice Support Network is to strengthen Mennonite Church USA's commitment to peace and justice by equipping persons across the church called to this ministry, and by encouraging the church to embody and communicate Christ's reconciling way.*

Members of the leadership team include Melonie Buller, Columbus, Ohio; Chris Hoover Seidel, Lancaster, Pa.; Jack Knox, Keizer, Ore.; Sara Nissley, Philadelphia, Pa.; Saulo Padilla, Goshen, Ind.; Vikki Pruitte-Sorrells, South Euclid, Ohio; Jim Roynon, Archbold, Ohio; Elizabeth Troyer-Miller, Shickley, Neb.; and Susan Mark Landis, denominational minister for peace and justice, Orrville, Ohio.