

# Dove Tales

*Prairie Boy in the Big City:*

## God's Good Creation

by Dr. David Neufeld

When I was a boy growing up in Saskatchewan I dreamed of owning a cattle ranch and riding my horse all day in the wide open prairie. I was born in the short grass prairie region and spent much of my spare time after school tramping in marshes and old fields outside of the city where I lived. When the weather was bad, my best friend and I used to go to the local natural history museum and contemplate the beautiful displays of our past and present landscape.

In my growing up years I witnessed changes in that local environment. Most noticeable were the disappearing marshes that were being drained and falling victim to periods of drought. Beautiful birds such as the long billed curlew and American avocet became scarce, and families of burrowing owls that we enjoyed watching from a safe distance as kids also disappeared. Little of the original drought resistant and pest resistant prairie grass remains today.

My current home is Canada's largest city, Toronto. It has been dramatically modified by human activities over the past 200 years. Beginning in the 1830s this region witnessed unprecedented rates of deforestation and subsequent land erosion to make way for new farms, mills, and factories. Now, sprawling subdivisions and new industrial warehousing districts are pushing agriculture out of the region, consuming land at wasteful rates, and impacting fish habitat and wildlife. Our water supplies have also been impacted by urban and rural run-off, storm sewers and industrial farms. Where will this end?

It is important to face up to the impact of our harmful activities. At the same time, if we look for it, we can also see promising signs of renewal. In my home province, some of the hopeful signs include successful re-introduction of the kit fox to

southwestern Saskatchewan, creation of new wetlands by non-profit organizations, organic farming, and protection of original prairie grassland by ranchers and others. In my new home in the Toronto region a large swath of sensitive land across the top of the city has recently been protected from urban sprawl by provincial legislation. It is an area of rolling hills created by the last glaciation almost 10,000 years ago, and is the source of dozens of springs and streams that flow into Lake Ontario.

Humans have the capacity to destroy, but also have the capacity to imagine a better future that would reduce toxins, eliminate wasteful consumption, design communities that are sustainable, and protect wildlife and fish habitat. As Christians we are invited to play our part in caring for Creation. God's original mandate to Adam and Eve to tend the garden still holds true for us. We are called to take part in a new creation that replaces continuous consumption with decisions that take into account the well-being of others, including all of God's creatures. We fall short of the glory we have been called to, but with God's help and a little humility, we can make a difference.

*Dr. David Neufeld is Acting Chair of the Mennonite Environmental Task Force, which has been promoting creation care since it was mandated at a Mennonite gathering in Normal, Ill., in 1989. An overview of the Mennonite Environmental Task Force can be found in a Mennonite Church USA news release from 2001 at [www.mennoniteusa.org/news/news/06011.html](http://www.mennoniteusa.org/news/news/06011.html).*

### Mission Statement

The mission of Peace and Justice Support Network of Mennonite Church USA is to proclaim and promote God's desire for justice (Micah 6:8), Christ's call to peacemaking (Matthew 5:9), and the Spirit's reconciling work (Ephesians 2:11-22).

The Mennonite Environmental Task Force is undergoing a process of review and renewal of its mandate, with encouragement from Christian Formation Council of Mennonite Church Canada, the Peace and Justice Support Network Reference Committee and Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA, Mennonite Mission Network, and the Merry Lea Centre at Goshen College. Neufeld can be reached at [eraconsulting@yahoo.ca](mailto:eraconsulting@yahoo.ca).

## Spread the Peace Grants

Peace and Justice Support Network seeks to encourage congregations and conferences within Mennonite Church USA to “spread the peace” beyond the MC USA. Your generous support of PJSN in 2003 has provided us with funds for offering small grants to start local peace and justice projects. One time grants of \$500 and \$1,000 will be given:

- ✦ to Mennonites;
- ✦ for sharing, witnessing, reaching out for peace and justice;
- ✦ through congregations or conferences (rather than individuals);
- ✦ while recipients raise local matching funds from individual donors both within and outside the congregation to demonstrate local ownership and commitment.

Applications for Spread the Peace grants are due September 3, 2004. Consideration should be given to the vision of the project, peace and justice issues the project addresses, and assets your congregation/conference brings to the project. Decisions about disbursements will be made at the October 2004 Peace and Justice Reference Committee meeting. Funds will be distributed late November 2004. Please contact for us for an application form:

Valerie Weidman  
Administrative Assistant  
Peace and Justice Support Network  
543 Garden Hill Lane  
Lancaster, PA 17603  
717-397-3855  
valeriepjsn@comcast.net

## 10 Simple Ways to Care for the Earth

- 1 Use public transportation or carpool to work. Reduce consumption of non-replenishable natural resources.
- 2 Avoid using non-perishable items at home, office, and church gatherings, such as styrofoam cups and plates.
- 3 Plant a tree, especially in urban areas. Trees provide shade to cool homes. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen.
- 4 Plant a community garden. Share the fruits of the earth. Use natural fertilizers.
- 5 Don't use harmful pesticides. Home pesticides are just as harmful as agricultural ones.
- 6 Don't buy aerosol cans containing CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons), which deplete the ozone layer.
- 7 Recycle, recycle, recycle. Paper, plastic, aluminum, glass, batteries.
- 8 Reduce home energy consumption. Lower heat. Turn off lights. Install water-saving devices.
- 9 Contribute to groups which seek to preserve rainforests and wilderness, such as the Audubon Society, Rainforest Action Network, or Friends of the Earth.
- 10 Join an environmental education/advocacy group, like the Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Fund, Evangelical Environmental Network, or Mennonite Environmental Task Force.



### PJSN Resources: Got Guts?

Do you have our new Peace Takes Guts t-shirt? It features six peacemakers: Lawrence Hart, Phil Berrigan, Sojourner Truth, Maeken Wens, Women in Black, and Caesar Chavez and comes with a brochure that gives brief biographical

sketches of each person or group. \$15.00 for all sizes. Your purchase of this t-shirt, and many other peace and justice resources, help support the vision and work of Peace and Justice Support Network within Mennonite Church USA. Products available on our website: <http://peace.mennolink.org> or through Mennonite Media, LoisH@MennoMedia, 1-800-999-3543, fax-540-434-5556 (attn. LoisH).



*Dove Tales* is a biannual newsletter created by Peace and Justice Support Network to inspire creative thinking and action in our collective peace and justice work. Ideas, articles, and reports can be sent to the Editor. **PJSN Reference Committee:** Leo Hartshorn, Susan Mark Landis, Valerie Weidman, Dick Davis, Malinda Berry, Titus Peachey, Mark Frey, Yvonne Diaz Keeler, Andy Peifer Nissley, and Jorge Vielman. **Editor:** Leo Hartshorn, Minister of Peace and Justice, Mennonite Mission Network, 202 South Ann Street, Lancaster, PA 17602, 717-399-8353, LeoH@MennoniteMission.net. **Designer:** Cynthia Friesen, volunteer, Americus, Ga. **Web site:** <http://peace.mennolink.org>.

# Will there be a draft?

By Titus Peachey, Mennonite Central Committee U.S., March 2004

*Note: this article contains a brief summary of lengthier material available at <http://www.mcc.org/ask%2Da%2Dvet/>*

Since the end of the war in Vietnam, the United States has conducted military operations in many countries, including Grenada, Haiti, Panama, Iraq, Kuwait, Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia, and Yugoslavia/Kosovo, without a return to the draft. An extended war on terrorism could make it politically possible to reinstate a military draft, but the Pentagon has been resistant to the idea, and so far it seems unlikely.

It would take legislative action by the Congress and implementation by the

President to reinstate a draft in an emergency.

The best way to ensure that a draft will not be instituted is to work hard to prevent war.

## How would a draft work?

If the President and Congress would authorize a draft, a lottery would be held to determine the order in which inductees would be called. Those turning 20 years old in the calendar year in which the draft is enacted would be the first to receive call-up notices.

Those turning 21 would

be called next, and on up through the age of 25 until sufficient numbers were inducted. Those turning 18 and 19 would only be called in the event of a very large personnel requirement.

A return to military conscription may include an effort to draft women. Whether or not this effort would succeed, it is very important that both

young men and young women prepare themselves for this eventuality. Those youth who are drafted would be given a physical and mental evaluation. After receiving the results of the evaluation, these youth would be classified. Under one scenario, after classification, youth would have *only ten days* in which to submit a request for conscientious objector status. This is why preparation now and when any youth turns 16 is vital.

There could also be a registry of medical personnel between the ages of 20–45, and a draft of selected medical personnel. A plan for such a draft, known as the Health Care Personnel Delivery System *has been prepared by Selective Service* but would not be passed into law unless there were a national emergency.

For more details on this and other Selective Service regulations, see: [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov)

## Are Mennonites ready?

Mennonite Central Committee and denominational peace staff continue to monitor developments related to Selective Service and a draft. In the event of a draft, many church agencies would likely offer service opportunities which would qualify as alternate service under Selective Service guidelines. Selective Service is not maintaining a list of qualified alternate service employers at this time.

## Military Registration Developments.

All 18-year-old males are required to register with Selective Service within 30 days of their 18th birthday. Failure to do so is punishable by fines (up to \$250,000) and time in jail (up to 5 years). No one has been prosecuted for failure to register since the early 1980's. Instead, Selective Service has used other methods to ensure compliance with the registration law.

Young men who do not register with Selective Service are ineligible for federal student aid and federal jobs. In addition, many states now also deny non-registrants financial aid for education. Recently a new mechanism to increase registration compliance

**Our call from Christ is to live as peacemakers, whether or not there is a draft, whether or not there is a war. We ask every congregation, every year,**

- ✦ to provide opportunities for youth and other seekers to examine the basis of Christian peacemaking,
- ✦ to plan a special event to support and deepen your congregation's commitment to God's call to peacemaking and justice seeking in all areas of life.
- ✦ to give public expression to your congregation's commitment to peace
- ✦ to have at least one person staying knowledgeable in the current state of registration and draft.

has been introduced into many states: the requirement to register with Selective Service when applying for or renewing a drivers license. As of February 2004, 32 states and, two territories and the District of Colombia had passed such legislation.

Mennonite Church USA has a fund to help replace potential government grants and loans lost by students who for reasons of Christian conscience have chosen not to register with the U.S. Selective Service System. Non-registrants wishing to apply for such an education loan or grant or persons wishing to contribute to the fund should contact Susan Mark Landis (PH: 330-683-6844, or SusanML@mennoniteusa.org

## Suggested Actions

### 1 Intergenerational conversation about peace—The *Christian*

*Peacemaker Registration Form* helps youth think about the questions they would be required to answer in the event they were drafted and they wished to apply for CO status. The form is available from MCC and can be found on-line at: <http://www.mcc.org/askavet>.

We urge congregations to use the Peacemaker Registration form as an intergenerational activity. It is important to communicate that Christ's peace is a life-long journey. Arrange for several adults to share *current experiences* (not just historic stories) which demonstrate their commitment to Christ's way of peace. Invite others to share their conscientious objector stories. Invite youth to fill out the Peacemaker Registration forms. Have pizza!

Another useful resource for this conversation is the video *Change of Command*, available from MCC. The video tells the stories of military veterans who are now conscientious objectors to war. Two of the featured veterans received a CO discharge from the military in 1998. For a brief profile, see: <http://www.mcc.org/ask-a-vet>.

### 2 Outreach to those in the military, or those considering military service—

In the wake of the September 11 tragedy, military recruiters reported a marked increase in inquiries. You may be in touch with youth from your church or community who have already enlisted in the armed forces. Others may be serving on active duty or in the reserves. Be alert to what these military enlistees are thinking and feeling during this time. Make sure your congregation stays in touch through letters or phone calls. Times of tension and

war can force all of us to rethink our basic values and commitments. If youth begin to question their participation in the military, they may be developing convictions against killing. It is possible to obtain a conscientious objector discharge from the military. Rarely, however, are discharges easy or quick.

Many youth who enlist in the military do so through the Delayed Enlistment Program. Under this arrangement, youth are given a report-date for basic training anywhere from several weeks to a year after enlistment. During this time, it is much easier for a young person to change his/her mind and be discharged. Again, feel free to call Mennonite Central Committee (PH: 717 859-3889) and ask to speak to Titus Peachey or Conrad Moore. Or go to: [www.girights.org](http://www.girights.org)

## More Resources

For information on new initiatives, see one of the following websites:

1. Mennonite Church USA—  
<http://peace.MennoLink.org>
2. Mennonite Central Committee—  
<http://www.mcc.org>
3. Christian Peacemaker Teams—  
<http://www.prairienet.org/cpt/>
4. Every Church a Peace Church—  
<http://www.ecapc.org/mainframe.asp>

## Christian Citizenship Sunday

July 4, 2004

As Christians living in the United States, we have religious and civic freedoms that are not enjoyed by many other people in the world. As a particular kind of Christian, Mennonites, we also have a faith heritage that has challenged us for centuries to be wary of the pressure of friends and neighbors to offer the government allegiance that is reserved for God alone. Many of us believe that the U.S. government has an important role in God's world ("There is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God" Romans 13:1b), and we know that Jesus teaches us to think carefully about what that might mean for us as his disciples (Give to Caesar). In observing Christian Citizenship Sunday, we urge Mennonite Church USA worship committees and pastors to grapple with Article 23 of Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, particularly the portion based on Colossians 2:15: "We understand that Christ, by his death and resurrection, has won victory over the powers, including all governments."

Worship resources based on the lectionary readings will be available later. For more information, contact Susan Mark Landis, peace advocate, Executive Board, 330-683-6844 or SusanML@MennoniteUSA.org

The best way to ensure that a draft will not be instituted is to work hard to prevent war.

## Worship Resources

# God's Eye is on the Sparrow

by Leo Hartshorn, minister of peace and justice

The following worship resources can be used at any time of the year in a service centered around the theme of creation care or included in other services. For Creation Sunday worship resources go the PJSN web site: <http://peace.mennolink.org/articles/earhday.html>. For a sample creation care sermon, "God's Eye is on the Sparrow" based upon Luke 12:6-7, go to the PJSN web site <http://peace.Mennolink.org>.

### Call to Worship

God created the world and everything in it.

God created the galaxies and the far flung stars.

*God created the streams and the seas.*

*God created the mountains and the meadows.*

God cares for the world and everything in it.

God has an eye on the sparrow and the tiny baby.

*God looks on all creation and calls it "good."*

*God seeks the good of all living things.*

God has given us stewardship over all creation.

God has given us the responsibility for its care.

*We gather together to worship our Creator.*

*We go back into our world to care for creation.*

### Invocation

Creator of heaven and earth, Architect of stars and galaxies, Designer of sparrow and sunset, we come into your presence already graced by the bountiful gifts of your creation.

Creation is a sacrament through which you bless us, a window through which we glimpse your glory (Romans 1:19-20). You have blessed all living things with an environment that sustains and nurtures life in its many and varied forms. For all things bright and beautiful we give you thanks and praise! As we gather for worship remind us that your creative work continues through us as we use our God-given gifts of intellect and action for purposes of enhancing our lives, our world, and our environment. Guide us into those ways that promote the sustainability of the earth, care for our environment, and your call to be good stewards of creation. Amen.

### Our Creator: A Prayer for Creation

Our Creator, your name and your creation are to be honored as holy. May your reign, which all of creation has groaned for, come on earth as it is in the heavens. Give us

our daily bread that nourishes our bodies, and rain and sunshine that nourishes the earth. Lead us not into the temptation to dominate the earth, but into responsible care for your creation. Deliver us from pollution of the air, ground, water, and abuse of living creatures. For your will is the healing and redemption of all creation, now and forever. Amen.

### Songs

- God's eye is on the sparrow—No. 475, New Century Hymnal (Pilgrim Press)
- For the beauty of the earth—No. 89, Hymnal: A Worship Book
- I sing the mighty power of God—No. 46, Hymnal: A Worship Book
- God of the earth, the sky, the sea—No. 53, Hymnal: A Worship Book
- All things bright and beautiful—No. 156, Hymnal: A Worship Book

### Benediction

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of God's hands (Psalm 19:1-4).

*We behold God in creation.*

*We are blessed by God's handiwork.*

The earth is the Lord's

and all that is in it (Psalm 24:1).

*We are but pilgrims on this earth.*

*We are but stewards of creation.*

Let the earth be glad.

Let the fields be jubilant (Psalm 96:10-12).

*We are called to make the earth glad.*

*We go forth rejoicing that*

*we have been given the care of the fields!*

# Support Peace and Justice Support Network!

## Your donations

- ✦ make possible five congregational “Spread the Peace” grants this year.
- ✦ fund our inviting e-zine, *PeaceSigns*, to spread the news of Christian peace and justice (Pass a free subscription on to ten of your closest friends! See <http://peace.mennolink.org/peacesigns/index.html>)
- ✦ maintain our website of over 1000 pages and distribution of our publications
- ✦ funds a fall peace gathering Oct. 29–30 in Columbus, Ohio.

We support your work for peace and justice with resources, ideas and networking. Please support us through your prayers, finances and ideas. We’re in this together! We can’t do our work without your support. Send financial or written responses in the enclosed envelope, or write a check to “Peace and Justice Contributions” and send to:

Peace and Justice Support Network, Financial Services  
Mennonite Mission Network  
P.O. Box 370  
Elkhart, IN 46515-0370

## One supporter recently wrote:

“Blessings on your good work. I always feel inspired when I see the ways you find to teach and remind, teach and remind. Every age group in the church needs your ministry.”

## Congregations who support us:

Akron MC, Wildwood MC, Tabor MC, Spring Valley MC, Shalom Community, Sermon on the Mount MC, Salford MC, Salem MC, Rainbow MC, Prince of Peace MC, Perkasio MC, Peace MC, North Baltimore MC, Meadows MC, Maplewood MC, Hyattsville MC, Germantown MC, Forest Hills MC, First MC-Wadsworth, First MC-Reedley, First MC-Iowa City, First MC-Hillsboro, First MC-Allentown, Corvallis ME, Chicago Community MC, Blossom Hill MC, Bethel MC-Rittman, Atlanta ME, Americus ME

For ideas to encourage *your* congregation to join this valued list, see <http://peace.mennolink.org/resources/budget/invite.html> or call Susan Mark Landis, 330-683-6844.

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