



MennoLetter from Jerusalem

VOL. I, No. 2, JUNE 1, 2002

*A Middle East View for North American Mennonites
by Church Representative, Glenn Edward Witmer*

*“Israel is at war for its very right to exist. It’s not about occupation. It’s about terror, terror, terror,
and a hidden agenda to destroy Israel.” –Former prime minister Ehud Barak*

*“I have seen the humiliation of the Palestinians at checkpoints and roadblocks,
suffering like us when young white police officers prevented us from moving about...
Have our Jewish sisters and brothers forgotten their humiliation?
Have they forgotten the collective punishment in their own history so soon?”
–South Africa’s Archbishop Desmond Tutu*

Pray not for Arab or Jew, for Palestinian or Israeli, but pray for yourselves
that you may not divide them in your prayers but keep them both together in your hearts.
–a pass-along prayer via Canon Bill Broughton, VP of Ecumenical Fraternity, Jerusalem

~MY VOICE ...

Do They Solemnly Swear?

IN American courtrooms it is customary for witnesses to promise “to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” Seems a bit redundant, doesn’t it? Isn’t the truth just...the TRUTH? Part of this issue of *MennoLetter* covers some of the fundamental concerns of news reporting and hearing. The same story can be told and heard in several different ways—mostly true in the details, and still false in the message. It’s not for nothing that Pilate, already weary of religious hair-splitting in a cause that wasn’t his, wondered aloud, “What is truth?” Lawyers, and errant teenagers, are well versed in the methodology of telling only a part of the account—just the part that supports their case, that benefits their interests. In these articles you will see again how easy it is to paint a picture that colors an issue and skews the readers’ perspectives very effectively, depending the other’s agenda. (Case at hand: any Bible excerpt produces many interpretations.)

The Middle East strugglers are focusing ever more consciously on the PR war to win the hearts and minds of the international community. How each story is told, and what is left out, has a great deal to do with how a report is understood elsewhere. There’s a lot at stake in the international arena, and the fights are dirty. That’s the challenge for us at home: We must become sharper at sensing the political or religious agenda of the reporting source, at reading between the lines, and hearing what *may be the truth, yes...* But is it the whole truth? What has been left out? What has been added? We cannot just blame others; we all do the same thing when we are talking to friends, and to family. Some things they don’t want to hear. Some things we don’t want to tell. It might change their perception of us, or color our story.

Dan Dyck, director of communications for Mennonite Church Canada, wrote a complimentary note about the May issue of this modest production, commenting that it was “one of the more balanced pieces I receive on Middle East issues/conflict.” He added, “Too many pieces only serve to further incite through the use of language and tone. The sad part: I don’t think the writers realize it—perhaps a case of unacknowledged passion for one side or another.” That’s it exactly—passion! People are passionate about *their* homes, *their* land, *their* religion, *their* security and heritage. The stakes in Israel and Palestine are life threatening and not to be left to

the faint-hearted. A little lie now and then—perhaps just not telling *the whole truth*—may be required to make a point more convincingly, and safer politically.

The infection is widespread: Christians, including Mennonites, are not immune from the disease. Not all reporting from over here is balanced [Be critical of what you read in *MennoLetter* too!] Fundamentalists tell a vastly different version of events than do certain evangelicals and mainline churches. Who are you listening to? Have you perhaps predetermined your viewpoint just by your information source? Is it balanced? The whole truth? Maybe the most important thing for us to realize is the subtlety of it all. We cannot go about suspecting everyone; but let's at least wonder if there is more to the story we have heard so far! Dan Dyck passed on another idea: Why doesn't *MennoLetter* provide a range of sources for news that may not be commonly known, especially for the North American readers who want to investigate further? It is a good suggestion—see our last page for this issue's list!

An uproar in the Knesset a while ago occurred when some members complained about BBC bias in its news coverage—reporters had been given instructions about using neutral vocabulary in their dispatches so as not to appear to be taking sides through the wording of their reports. For example, the word 'terrorist' would now be replaced with 'militant.' Angry Israelis saw this as biased British identification with the Palestinian side, and filed a strong complaint against the broadcaster. This excerpt by journalist Phil Reeves adds another dimension on language use:

ISRAEL IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY INTOLERANT OF DISSENTS as war, and the perception that it is under collective threat, hardens attitudes. New rules have been issued for journalists working on the state-controlled *Voice of Israel* radio station. Israel's army is now referred to as "our Forces"; its Arabic division has reportedly issued orders that Palestinians are not to be referred to as "assassinated" but "killed," and that the armed forces do not "take over" cities, they "enter" them. The once vibrant and diverse Israeli media has become markedly more nationalistic and less willing to broadcast criticism. Ishaï Menuchin, chairman of an organization representing Israeli soldiers who refuse to serve in the occupied territories, says that he can barely attract any news coverage. Issues that used to command acres of space—such as the fact that the number of Israeli "refuseniks" in prison rose to 68 last month—now barely merit a few paragraphs, he says. —*Phil Reeves in The Independent*

Telling Lies, Culturally Speaking

Yoav Peled, of *The Guardian*, comments on an interview between a right-wing Israeli and the former prime minister, Ehud Barak. What is revealing, he says, is Barak's view of the people with whom he was trying to reach a peace agreement. Repeatedly Barak is reported as speaking of the Palestinians as products of a culture "in which to tell a lie...creates no dissonance. They don't suffer from the problem of telling lies that exists in Judeo-Christian culture. Truth is seen as an irrelevant category. There is only that which serves your purpose and that which doesn't."

"*Polite Western society no longer tolerates* such characterizations of entire cultures," Peled says, "although I suspect things may have changed, at least in the US, since September 11. But here in Israel the public denigration of Arab culture was historically acceptable; like all colonial movements, Zionism had to dehumanize the indigenous inhabitants of its country of settlement in order to legitimize their displacement. Thus, as many studies have shown, depictions of the Arabs as conniving, dishonest, lazy, treacherous and murderous were commonplace in Israeli school textbooks, as in much of Israeli literature in general.

For the past two decades, however, Israeli society has been going through a profound and wide-ranging process of liberalization. A great deal of effort was invested, by the upper-middle strata of Jewish Israeli society (the people who voted for Barak in 1999), in the struggle against the mutual stereotyping of Jews and Palestinians. A whole industry of "dialogue and coexistence" groups sprouted up. As a result, generalizations such as the ones used by Barak were de-legitimized to the point where it became difficult, in classroom situations for example, to make any general statement about a particular group in society. Tragically, all of this was halted by the breakdown of the peace process and the onset of the second intifada. —*from a Rapprochement release*

Opinion Polls Surprise Some Observers

Israel and its wealthy supporters in the United States would like one to think that they have the American people on their side for keeps. Typical of this focus is the full-page advertisement in *The New York Times* on May 20, placed by a pro-Israeli group, claiming in a bold, big-type headline, “*The American street has spoken. Two out of three Americans support Israel’s war against terrorism.*” Below photos of Osama Bin Laden and Yasser Arafat, the advertisement citing ABC News, *The Washington Post*, and CBS News, claimed that 67 per cent of Americans agreed that Israel was justified in taking military action in response to suicide bombers; 90 per cent of the Americans agreed that Arafat had not done enough to combat terrorism; and 59 per cent of Americans agreed that Israel’s military action against Arafat and the Palestinians was not different from the US’ taking military action against Bin Laden and Al Qaeda.

[However] the results of a survey undertaken by the Programme on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) of the University of Maryland have been an eye-opener. “A hefty majority of the US public disagrees with congressional and administration support for the current Israeli government in its conflict with the Palestinians, (and) American voters want a much more evenhanded US approach,” is how InterPress Service put it. Nearly half of the respondents (49 per cent) show equal sympathy for the Palestinians and Israelis. But more significantly, 58 per cent of Americans blamed both sides for “the failure to reach peace in the Middle East,” despite the reports about a “generous offer” given by the Israelis at Camp David.

A MAJORITY OF 67 PERCENT OF THOSE POLLED WERE AGAINST the United States taking Israel’s side in the conflict, and 56 per cent favored more US pressure against Israel; 41 per cent wanted the United Nations to take the lead in trying to resolve the conflict, while only 13 per cent supported a major US role in this respect. By a margin of 61 to 35 percent, the respondents were willing to support the Bush administration, should it want to withhold some of the \$3 billion a year in aid it gives to Israel if it refused to comply with a US call for a ceasefire and resumption of peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

In Beit Sabour, the place of the ‘shepherds fields’ next to Bethlehem, there is an office operated by Palestinians who are aware of the importance of getting their message out to a broader international audience, especially to churches and religious media. It has enjoyed some organizational support from MCC West Bank. George Rishmawi of this Palestinian Center for Rapprochement Between People regularly sends us their reports, some of which appear in this issue.
Rapprochement doesn’t pretend to offer “balanced” news—just their news. —ed.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF A FOREIGN ARMY INVADED and occupied your country? If you fight against that invasion, or if you resist the occupation, do you become a terrorist? When Germany invaded France no one accused the French militant resistance as being an ‘act of terror.’ Even for someone like myself, who believes in non-violence as the way to resist occupation, I cannot accept the naming of Palestinian fighters, who stood to defend my home against the Israeli military invasion, as terrorists. They are, morally speaking, more legitimate soldiers than the invaders themselves...

“*An eye-for-an-eye and a-tooth-for-a-tooth*” is what really matters right now for the two sides in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Palestinians, thinking there is nothing more to lose, are breeding more and more death seekers. Israelis, fearing what can be lost, are motivated to use more violence and force trying to avoid it. Everyone has turned into a monster and all are bloodthirsty. The fact that mighty Israel is fighting against powerless Palestinians makes no difference. What really happens with each escalation of violence is only an additional insensitivity to human sufferings and losses, making it easier to accept killings, brutality, and massive suffering as inevitable.

—Ghassan Andoni, Executive Director, Palestinian Center for Rapprochement Between People

American recognition of a Palestinian state has jumped to 68 percent in late April, from 55 percent last fall, according to an ABC/Washington Post survey last fall. Nearly two-thirds say that achieving peace in the Middle East should be an important foreign policy goal. And most think the United States should try to be a neutral broker. The biggest loser in these surveys has apparently been Arafat, whose popularity is now at the one digit level. —George Hishmeh, Washington independent journalist, writing in *The Jordan Times*

Tensions Resume Over Temple Mount Access

The Temple Mount may soon become a battleground once again, according to *Israel National News*. Following a recent recommendation by the General Security Service to re-open the site to Jewish worshippers, Jerusalem Police Chief Mickey Levy said recently that the police are preparing for such an eventuality. Informed sources say that the cabinet is soon expected to implement a recommendation by the *Shin Bet* [Israel's FBI] to gradually reopen the Temple Mount to Jews and Christians, returning to the status quo that existed before September 2000, when the site was open to all.

The issue was supposed to be addressed earlier this spring, but the wave of suicide bombings and Operation Defensive Shield put the move on hold. Fearing renewed violence, police have barred all non-Muslims from entering the Temple Mount since then-opposition leader Ariel Sharon visited the site in September 2000, setting off the second intifada. The 20 months since then has been the longest that the site has been closed to non-Muslims since the Israelis took over the Old City in 1967. In response, Adnan al-Husseini, head of the Moslem Waqf at the site, threatened that he would not allow non-Moslems to enter. "Only Palestinians will decide who will and who will not enter," he said. [See following article on the red heifer.]

The End May Be Near! Red Heifer Born in Israel

In an announcement that could further increase tension around the Temple Mount, a group dedicated to building the Temple says it has discovered a newborn red heifer in Israel—a key step in its plans for the world's most contested holy site. Lack of a pure red heifer has played a part in the fragile status quo between Jews and Muslims at the Temple Mount since Israel conquered the site in 1967. Sacrificing a three-year-old red heifer is necessary for the purification ritual—described in chapter 19 of the Book of Numbers—for anyone who has become impure through contact with a corpse. Without such purification, it is forbidden under Jewish law to set foot where the Temple once stood, a key reason that nearly all rabbis have banned their congregants from visiting the Mount. The ban has helped Israeli civil authorities maintain a policy under which Jews pray at the Western Wall, and Muslims pray at Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock.

A leader of the early-80s Jewish underground plot to blow up the Dome of the Rock, Yeshua Ben-Shushan, cited lack of a red heifer as one of the "spiritual difficulties" that foiled the plan. In 1996 Temple activists announced finding a red heifer at an agricultural school near Haifa in northern Israel. The news caused intense excitement among far-right Jewish groups and American Christian fundamentalists who believe the Temple must be built before the Second Coming—and who saw the heifer as proof that 2000 would mark the beginning of the End. [That cow sprouted white hairs before it reached the age of three, disqualifying it for the ritual.] News of the new birth has already begun appearing on Christian fundamentalist websites as evidence of the approaching end. —*The Jerusalem Post*

New Anti-Missionary Bill Proposed

Two members of the Knesset/Israeli parliament, Yosef Lapid of the Shinui party, and Moshe Gafni of United Torah Judaism, recently submitted a joint anti-missionary bill that proposes that individuals convicted of inducement to religious conversion would be subject to a one-year prison sentence. The sentence for trying to persuade a minor to convert would be raised from six months—as it stands now—to two years. Gafni and Lapid said that the increase in the activities of missionary institutions of late necessitated the intervention of the legislature. Gafni initiated the joint bill after hearing Lapid speak out against missionary activities on a TV talk show. —*Ha'aretz*

*America Can Persuade Israel to Make a Just Peace: Jimmy Carter**

"Ariel Sharon is a strong and forceful man and has never equivocated in his public declarations nor deviated from his ultimate purpose. His rejection of all peace agreements that included Israeli withdrawal from Arab lands, his invasion of Lebanon, his provocative visit to the Temple Mount, the destruction of villages and homes, the arrests of thousands of Palestinians, and his open defiance of President George W. Bush's demand that he comply with international law have all been orchestrated to accomplish his ultimate goals: to establish Israeli settlements as widely as possible throughout occupied territories and to deny Palestinians a cohesive political existence.

“There is adequate blame on the other side too. Even when he was free and enjoying the full trappings of political power, Yasser Arafat never exerted control over Hamas and other radical Palestinians who reject the concept of a peaceful Israeli existence and adopt any means to accomplish their goal. Mr. Arafat’s all-too-rare denunciations of violence have been spasmodic, often expressed only in English, and likely insincere. He may well see the suicide attacks as one of the few ways to retaliate against his tormentors, to dramatize the suffering of his people, or as a means for him, vicariously, to be a martyr....

“There are two factors that offer success to United States persuasion. One is the legal requirement that American weapons are to be used by Israel *only for defensive purposes*, a premise certainly being violated in the recent destruction of Jenin and other villages. Richard Nixon imposed this requirement to stop Ariel Sharon and Israel’s military advance into Egypt in the 1973 war, and I used the same demand to deter Israeli attacks on Lebanon in 1979. (A full invasion was launched by Ariel Sharon after I left office.) The other persuasive factor is the approximately \$10 million daily in American aid to Israel. President George Bush Sr. threatened this assistance in 1992 to prevent the building of Israeli settlements between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. *“The existing situation is tragic and likely to get worse.* Normal diplomatic efforts have failed. It is time for the United States, as the sole recognized intermediary, to consider more forceful action for peace. The rest of the world will welcome this leadership.” *—Excerpted from Sojourners magazine.*

** Former U.S. president is chairman of the Carter Center, working to advance peace and human health.*

“PALESTINIANS HAVE THE RIGHT TO SEE THE END of Israeli military occupation of their territories occupied in 1967, and to create on them their independent state,” says the top Catholic in the region. “As long as the occupation lasts, they have the right and the duty to claim their land and freedom, and to organize resistance to reach this goal. But we affirm again, that in this resistance, only the ways of peace can lead to peace. The conflict between Palestinians and Israelis is not basically a question of Palestinian terrorism that threatens security or the existence of Israel. It is a question of Israeli military occupation that started in 1967, which provokes Palestinian resistance, which then threatens the security of Israel. To go on speaking about Palestinian terrorism, without seeing the right of the Palestinians to their freedom and to end the occupation, is condemning oneself not to see reality, and to remain impotent in reaching a solution.

“Some people insist on the necessity of issuing declarations that condemn violence. Condemning violence is necessary. But to take away its cause, i.e. the occupation which produces it, is more efficient. In the same way, to call Palestinian violence ‘terrorism’ and Israeli violence ‘legitimate defense,’ renders futile any declaration or condemnation and makes impossible all cessation of violence. Therefore, better than condemnations of violence, what we need is action which puts an end to all forms of violence, by putting an end to its primary cause, the occupation.” *—Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem*

“Will You Destroy the Innocent Along with the Guilty?” *by Rabbi Arik Ascherman**

OVER SHABBAT I REFLECTED ON HOW ABRAHAM ARGUED WITH GOD on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah. Terribly evil people lived there, but Abraham still challenged God: “Will the innocent be destroyed along with the guilty?” (Gen. 18:13) We know that God was willing to spare the entire cities if ten righteous people were found. When ten were not found, Lot’s family was led out to safety. The Israeli army apparently did call Jenin residents to safety, but was not willing to spare the civilians who remained. Some people argue that all Palestinians are guilty by association, and therefore civilians cannot be considered innocent. Others will argue that the army fulfilled its obligation after calling on people to leave.

[The Talmud’s] *Tractate Sanhedrin* teaches us that we can not harm innocent people, even in the name of our own defense. I believe that the lesson of Genesis, *Tractate Sanhedrin*, and the Israel Defense Force’s vaunted “Purity of Arms” is that, even with the price to be paid if some terrorists might have been allowed to escape, the moral act would have been not to rain down fire and brimstone on civilians [in Jenin]. I wonder, “Where was Abraham when the invasion decision was made? Was there even one person along the military chain of command who argued, ‘Will the innocent be destroyed along with the guilty?’ We may never know. If there was, nobody listened. *—*Rabbis for Human Rights*

“THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY IS SACRED TO MUSLIMS AS WELL AS TO CHRISTIANS, and it should not be desecrated by these Israeli attacks,” a well-known Muslim leader told the interviewer during the recent military standoff in Manger Square, Bethlehem. He brought out a copy of the Koran and stated that the Virgin Mary is specifically mentioned with honor, and that the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem is in the Koran, as is his ascension into heaven. “Jesus’ message was ‘I will save you.’ Since Jesus is revered in the Koran, Muslim Palestinians join with Christian Palestinians in the belief that this message is for them too.”
—Yasser Arafat

FOUR WEEKS IN AN ISRAELI PRISON CAMP was the punishment meted out to Elad Lahav, an Israeli army reserve staff sergeant, for refusing to join his infantry unit in this spring when it was called up and ordered to Hebron, a Palestinian city in the occupied West Bank. “I agree we have to fight terrorism. I’m not naive,” Staff Sergeant Lahav said during a visit to Toronto recently. “But the root of terrorism is the Israeli occupation, which has humiliated Palestinians and driven them to despair.” —*Rapprochement* release

~ OTHER VOICES...

A view from Philip Yancey, editor at large for Christianity Today

“WHY DO THEY HATE US?”

Ever since September 11, Americans have been asking that question. President Bush voiced it with a tone of bewilderment. *Newsweek* devoted a cover story to it. We Americans think of ourselves as generous, optimistic, and fair, so it comes as a shock to realize that we inspire hatred strong enough to incite mass murder. The results of a study conducted by the Princeton Survey Research Associates underscore the gulf between Americans’ self-perceptions and that of the rest of the world. Whereas only 18 percent of Americans considered ‘U.S. policies and actions in the world’ a main cause of the attacks, elsewhere that figure rose to 58 percent, and to 81 percent in the Middle East. (emphasis added)

Not long ago, most Islamic nations were championing the ideal of a secular state. Now, fundamentalists are on the ascendancy, vigorously resisting some cardinal values of the West: human rights, democracy, sexual equality, capitalism, a scientific worldview, religious pluralism. [We] understand the difference between a committed Christian who accepts Jesus as a model for living and a ‘cultural Christian’ who happens to live in a nation with a Christian heritage. Not everyone overseas can make that distinction. Much of the world draws conclusions about ‘the Christian West’ from MTV, violent movies, and *Baywatch*. This TV series, which features hunks and babes cavorting on the beaches of California, replaced *Dallas* as the most popular U.S. television export. “We are attracted to what we most fear,” said a Muslim. “Imagine what [that view of] American culture represents to a young Muslim who, outside his or her family, has never seen a woman’s knee, or even her face.”

PERHAPS AMERICAN CHRISTIANS SHOULD GIVE MORE ATTENTION to the ‘clash of civilizations’, the inevitable conflict between two overlapping kingdoms. Living in a decadent Roman empire 1,600 years ago, Augustine of Hippo made a crucial distinction between ‘the city of God’ and ‘the city of man.’ We hold dual citizenship, he said, and must carefully weigh whether loyalty to one conflicts with loyalty to the other. Some in the United States judge our nation’s success by such measures as gross national product, military might, and global dominance. The kingdom of God measures such things as the care for the downtrodden and love for enemies. We must not forget that Jesus’ parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25 presents a judgment of the *nations*. In that final reckoning, God judges us by how we treat the poor, the sick, the hungry, the alien, and the prisoner.

Even as the U.S. government pursues the war against terrorism, perhaps we as Christians should launch our own private war—not against terrorists, but against their breeding ground...How differently would the world view us if it associated the U.S. with Jesus rather than *Baywatch*. —*Excerpted from recent CT article.*

More voices: As mentioned in my opening article, here is a list of some of sources that might be of interest to those wanting to hear other opinions. **Note:** *This is a list, not a recommendation!* Some of these groups may be just as guilty of ‘incomplete reporting’ on the facts as those we spoke about earlier. That is not a problem if you are aware of it, if you watch for it, and are interested in a range of opinions:

(1) Rabbis for Human Rights, info@rhr.israel.net (2) The Shalom Center, “A North American network drawing on Jewish wisdom, old and new, in order to pursue peace, justice, and the healing of the earth,” www.shalomctr.org (3) Israeli right-wing viewpoint, www.actagainstviolence.org (4) Left-leaning daily newspaper in Jerusalem, *Ha’aretz* (in English), www.haaretzdaily.com (5) “A Jewish Voice for Peace” www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org (6) From England, www.guardian.co.uk (7) Christian Peacemakers Team newsletter from Hebron, cptheb@palnet.com (8) From Beit Sahour, West Bank, www.rapprochement.org (9) Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org (10) MCC West Bank, newsletter, mccwb@palnet.com.

IN CLOSING As I wrote in last month’s issue, few people need more unsolicited things to read, so why are you receiving *MennoLetter*? With my appointment in April to this position in Jerusalem by church agencies in Canada and the United States [WITNESS in Winnipeg, MMN in Elkhart, and EMM in Salunga] one aspect of the assignment is to provide another view—with an Anabaptist eye—on issues confronting the people and churches in the Middle East: Jews and Muslims, Arabs and Israelis, the ancient churches and current Church activity—plus matters relating to Jewish-Christian dialogue. Our intention is to provide a window on political/cultural/religious issues that is separate from the reporting in the secular press, focusing in particular on the questions that may interest Mennonites most.

~ YOUR VOICE...

MennoLetter is a refreshing change from the deluge of directly or indirectly biased information that hits you from every direction... Rights on both sides are being violated, and bias towards one side robs the other side of their right to be heard and respected. Newsletters of the kind you wrote may at least restore some of this balance. —*Tiberias, Israel*

This is the kind of alternative news source that helps us to have a more balanced picture of events in Israel and Palestine. —Ontario, Canada

A stunningly fine piece of communication—It’s a bit on the long side, but is designed in bite-sized pieces that make it relatively easy to work with. —*Manitoba, Canada*

I saw the MennoLetter at church today. It is needed and thought provoking. —Pennsylvania, USA

Thank you for providing a varied and honest view of the current conflict...collecting a comprehensive range of accounts and opinions. —*Melbourne, Australia*

PLEASE WRITE. We respect your time and privacy, and do not want to send this newsletter unless you want it. *We ask you to tell us your wishes*, by writing to the e-mail address below. To let you know what it is about, we are sending out several issues for your perusal. We hope it will assist your understanding of some of the complexities that abound in this part of the world. *Perhaps it will help you focus your prayers*, or better inform your study group discussions, or challenge your thinking on issues relating to your Christian outlook and worldview. *Your comments and suggestions will help us meet your needs.*

If you found this issue informative, forward it to others, and encourage them to add their personal and/or church names to our distribution list. Also, please help us by announcing this publication and its availability in your church bulletin, on your web page, or in other church communications. To subscribe or unsubscribe, to praise or complain, write to newsletter@mennojherusalem.org Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editor or of our church agencies. Contents copyrighted by the writer—if reprinting outside of local congregational publications, please request permission from the publication office above.

With shalom/salaam, from Jerusalem. —Glenn Edward Witmer