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March 2010, *Equipping* #104

In the midst of Lent.

In this Equipping Dave Bergen encourages us to use the season of Lent to work towards Truth and Reconciliation. In addition, Robert Suderman guides us through the emotional conflict many of us have experienced in trying to comprehend the tragedy of the earthquake in Haiti. While the words of Job prompt us to acknowledge the “anguish of our spirit,” we must also recognize the hope and redemption of Easter.

Leanne Plett – Equipping Coordinator

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Christian Formation

- *Lent: Truth and Reconciliation* – Dave Bergen
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- *Children’s Stories* - on-line only, based on lectionary readings
(for worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committee, librarian etc.)
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/126
- *Resource Update No. 3*
(for worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committees, librarian, etc.)
- **Special Sunday Worship Resources**
View and download the entire Special Sunday grouping: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/482
(for worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committees, librarian, etc.)
 - o **Many Peoples Sunday, May 2**
download at: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/491

Extending our Faith

- MPN Great Books
- What’s Ahead Gather Round
- MPN Spring Order Form
- Max Mutual Aid Services



Robert J. Suderman,
General Secretary,
Mennonite Church Canada

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Haiti: Unspeakable tragedy – Unfathomable Wisdom

It is difficult to imagine saying *anything* today without saying *something* about Haiti: its devastation and its miracles.

The earthquake in Haiti brings to light the multiple calamities of this Caribbean island-nation. Its plight goes well beyond the earthquake to embedded ecological devastation, economic dispossession, political dysfunction, and widespread social injustice. Its profound challenges are systemic, endemic, and chronic. Even before the earthquake there were reportedly tens of thousands of charitable organizations working to improve its conditions. It is difficult to know now how best to understand and to respond.

In many ways, Haiti confronts us with the dilemmas identified in the book of Job. How can we understand our humanness under God when what happens to us is not visibly linked to some cause that we can identify? Where is God when righteousness seems unrelated to reward and blessing? Or when suffering appears to be unwarranted punishment for faithfulness? Why is there no cause and effect relationship between innocence and blessing? Or between guilt and affliction?

There seems to be no good way to talk about the unrelenting, serial tragedy of Haiti. It is not right to speak lightly of it as deserved retribution, or as the beginning of redemption. It is not divinely-bestowed discipline; nor is it simply incidental or accidental. Categories such as bad luck and bad choices don't fit. It's not like a probationary period that will come to an end, or as an inevitable stage of development, like puberty is for maturity. It is difficult to be resolutely grateful for the profound celebration of life of the survivors even though the capacity to rejoice is one of the daily miracles we see, hear, and feel from Haiti.

We do not want to pre-empt the vital expressions of grief that witness to profound distress, with premature gratitude for those who are living. Yet, in the midst of unspeakable suffering, it is impossible to not be inspired by the incredible fortitude and resilience of spirit so clearly present in the Haitian soul.

It seems what we can best do, like Job, is lament and cry out to God that much of what is happening in Haiti is simply not right. With Job we say:

Therefore I will not restrain my mouth;

I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;

I will complain in the bitterness of my soul
(Job 7:11).

And, with Job, we can surrender to the mystery of God's wisdom and humbly confess:

I know that you can do all things,

And that no purpose of yours can be thwarted (Job 42:2).



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

Equipping Prayers Notes News

A resource packet for equipping Mennonite Church Canada pastors and leaders

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Please insert these prayer requests and notes into your bulletin.

Remember, you can also find these at www.mennonitechurch.ca/equipping for easy "cut and paste" insertion.

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Sunday dates	Prayers: Please pray for and with the Church	Ministry Notes: This is how your financial support of Mennonite Church Canada is ministering...from across the street to around the world	News/Announcements: Stay in tune with the wider church
Mar 7/10	Mennonite Church Canada Executive Board Members Andrew Reesor McDowell, Garth Ewert Fischer, Gordon Peters, Don Friesen and Hilda Hildebrand comprise the committee searching for a new General Secretary. Robert J. Suderman will retire from that position later this year. Please pray that members of the Search Committee will bring unique gifts and perspectives together for a harmonious, Spirit-inspired quest.	With your support, MC Canada Witness workers Phil and Julie Bender plus Jeanette Hanson were joined by a group of Chinese pastors for a winter conference of our partner ministry, Mennonite Partners in China (MPC). Thank you for helping us to build relationships with and among Chinese pastors	What Makes a Mennonite? Find out how Mennonites across Canada responded to 6 FAQs in this newly released Mennonite Church Canada video at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1258 - and share it with your non-Mennonite friends and families.
Mar 14/10	Please pray for the seven participants taking part in the Mennonite Church Canada Learning Tour to the Philippines (Mar 4-15) as they prepare to engage, grow and learn through the Peacebuilders Community in Mindanao. (<i>WoW Prayer Directory pg. 77-79</i>).	MC Canada Witness and Native Mennonite Ministries (U.S.) are planning for Native Assembly 2010, "I Am the Potter; You are the Clay," which will take place July 19-22 on the Northern Cheyenne reservation in Montana, Thank you for supporting this vital, relationship building ministry!	
Mar 21/10	Join together in prayer for Joseph Liou , the newly installed pastor of Calgary Chinese Mennonite Church. Pray that Joseph and his family have the wisdom and gifts to give leadership to the congregation and reach out to the community. Thank God for the opportunities we have to serve as a multi-cultural church!	Youth Ambassadors are invited to attend Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2010, June 29 to July 10! Thank you in advance for your support in encouraging high school students in your congregation to participate, and for your help in find a congregational mentor to guide them. Reduced rates and special activities for Youth Ambassadors are being planned. More details will be posted at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1249 as they become available.	Got peace? Perform an Act of Peace this Easter and inspire others toward peace by becoming a member of the 1,000 Acts of Peace community at www.liveforpeace.org Come for the assembly, stay for the Stamped! Mennonite Church Canada is holding its delegate assembly in Calgary from June 29 – July 3. Visit www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1249 for details as they become available.
Mar 28/10 Palm Sunday	Loving, living God, your Son has become our teacher and brother, our example and companion, our servant king and Lord. Help us to walk humbly with Jesus and serve with him, even when others turn against him.	Christians are a minority in the land where Christ walked. With your support, Mennonite Church Canada Witness is exploring short term assignment possibilities in Israel/Palestine. Thank you for helping us strengthen unity and fellowship among the various Christian denominations in the region. (<i>WoW Prayer Directory, pg. 66 to 68</i>).	

