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*For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:12-13)*

## Horizons and headlights....



Our heads were swimming. In our week-long series of meetings, the words we had heard most often were: “complexities” and “complications.” These were the words used to describe the dynamics of partnership and ministry in Cuba. And our hosts never tired of giving more details. Normal complexities are exacerbated by actual and anticipated rapid changes such as: the growth of the church; transitions within the Cuban government; expectations of change with Obama’s presidency (speculations about the trade embargo, freedom for Americans to do business in and travel to Cuba, eliminating the ceiling on families supporting families in Cuba); and the global financial crisis.

Our inter-Mennonite delegation (from Mennonite Church Canada, Canadian Mennonite University, Mennonite Central Committee Canada, Mennonite Mission Network) had been listening, attempting to discover the best ways to proceed with ministry in Cuba.

At the end of the week, as we began to debrief what we had heard, two separate conversations helped us move toward clarity.

One of the key Cuban leaders told us: “In Cuba, the road ahead is unlit. We don’t know how things will be. It is complex. But, we need to think of our needs and your ministry as a vehicle with headlights. We don’t have enough light to light up the whole road ahead. We do have enough to move forward. And we are confident that when we do, the road further down will be lit up, allowing us to keep moving. And that’s the best we can offer because the future is cloudy. But that is enough.”

When we shared this insight with another Cuban leader, he responded: “The road may be unlit but the horizon isn’t. It is very clear. You and we want to consolidate and strengthen what the vision of the Radical Reformation offers to Cuba. And we are convinced that this is important and urgent. That horizon is clear. This is what we need to move toward. Of course, we will need to find the best road to get there, and the headlights will help us. But let’s not think that our direction is unlit or unclear.”

Horizons and headlights! How important these lessons are also for us in MC Canada. At times we get confused. Sometimes, we are prone to believe that the headlight is the horizon. If we do, then needed detours actually become our destinations and horizons evaporate. Or we may believe that there is only one road to the horizon. If we do, we pretend that the horizon is already here, and that headlights are unnecessary. In both cases, the horizon is absorbed by our myopia.

I think the Apostle Paul’s wisdom is helpful. The road is dim; headlights are needed. These headlights are called “love.” They help us to move ahead to the horizons that faith and hope continue to set before us.

May this wisdom from scripture, and the counsel from our Cuban friends, enlighten our roads and horizons as we are the church together in this New Year.

—Robert J. Suderman, General Secretary, Mennonite Church Canada

*“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 3:11*