

Every Square Inch

Reports on Christian Reformed Representation in Canadian Ecumenical Ministry

April 2011

Volume 2, Issue 2

"God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing."

C.S. Lewis

Inside this issue:

KAIROS Is **1**
^NOT^ Going
Away

2
Muslim
Christian
Perspectives

Project **3**
Plougshares

KAIROS **4**
(cont'd)



CHRISTIAN
REFORMED
CHURCH

KAIROS IS ^NOT^ GOING AWAY

Louisa Bruinsma, CRCNA representative on the KAIROS national Board

Anyone who is a regular reader of the daily newspaper or who watches the news will no doubt have heard the name KAIROS in the news during the past few months. (Even my Edmonton hairdresser now has heard of KAIROS!) KAIROS is a church-based ecumenical social justice organization working on issues of human rights and ecological sustainability. The CRCNA is a founding member.

Although the CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) funding proposal from KAIROS was rejected in November, 2009, the rejection letter became a front page story a year later, a disclosure made possible through the Freedom of Access of Information Act. The perplexing handwritten insertion of "not" in the letter, initially written to *approve* the \$7 million funding (over three years), stirred up accusatory partisan missives in the House of Parliament. In February, the letter was the top story on CBC's *The National*, and the sole topic for the At Issues Panel. Mary Corkery, Executive Director of KAIROS, and her staff, were dealing with multiple requests for media interviews every day (one evening, the KAIROS website actually crashed due to the heavy demand on its website). The subsequent investigation by a Parliament's Procedures and House Affairs' Committee into the actions of Minister of International Development Bev Oda seemed likely to result in a motion of contempt being brought before the House. However, this was pre-empted by a similar motion on other matters, and by thus the vote of non-confidence which finds us now in the middle of an election campaign.

You may wonder how such drama and living in the glare of the national spotlight affects the work of KAIROS. CIDA funding for global partners (Guatemala, Colombia, the Philippines, the Congo, Palestine; see

www.kairoscanada.org for a complete list of partners) has been lost and so these partners have had to make program cuts. KAIROS' global education work has been affected as well. Yet KAIROS continues to provide small grants to partners and to educate Canadians on issues of human rights and ecological sustainability. In March, 2010, KAIROS submitted a new proposal to CIDA for funding in keeping with revised CIDA guidelines. KAIROS continues to function effectively. At its February meeting, the Board issued a public statement expressing

... deep gratitude for the many words and actions of solidarity from churches and religious communities, networks, regional groups, Canadian and global partners, and individuals. In particular ... this support has been offered at a time when many ... themselves are facing budget and program reductions.

On the home front, the first stage of the campaign *The Land, Our Life: Indigenous Rights and our Common Future* (involving petitioning the government to endorse the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) was completed when the Declaration was endorsed by the federal government (November 12, 2010). Now the focus of the petitions is to request effective *implementation* of the Declaration.

A major celebration is planned for June. Called *Roll with the Declaration*, to honour National Aboriginal Day (June 21), KAIROS staff, southern and indigenous partners, and network members will be travelling June 14 – 19 across Canada on a train, culminating in a march through Ottawa on (continued on page 4)

Muslim-Christian Perspectives and Collaborations on the Millennium Development Goals

Report by Jim Payton, CRC representative and Christian co-chair of the NMCLC

"A Muslim scholar and a Christian one each offered stimulating presentations on peace, poverty, and environment from the faith traditions."

On January 11, 2011, the National Muslim-Christian Liaison Committee put on a special dinner event at the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Toronto. The event was entitled, "Peace, Poverty, Environment: Muslim and Christian Initiatives." We welcomed nearly 90 participants, including three Members of Parliament.

Attendees enjoyed a delicious dinner. Student spokespersons reflected on the collaborations of Muslim and Christian students at the University of Toronto to address these three Millennium Development Goals. A highlight of the evening was the video they had prepared chronicling

some of what they had done, plus interviews with young adults from both religious traditions on the importance of the goals and of people of faith working together to meet society's needs. A Muslim scholar and a Christian one each offered stimulating presentations on peace, poverty, and environment from the faith traditions. The three MPs each brought greetings and spoke about their own involvements toward meeting the MDGs.

The event was stimulating – indeed, we ran out of seats for the meal and evening and had to turn some people away.

"Miracles are a retelling in small letters of the very same story which is written across the whole world in letters too large for some of us to see."

C.S. Lewis

Project Ploughshares

Submitted by Steve van de Hoef

The Board of Project Ploughshares held its semi-annual meetings on November 26-27, 2010 in Toronto. It is not surprising that Project Ploughshares continues to be one of the premiere peace and security NGOs in Canada. The quality and depth of work accomplished by a small and committed cadre of staff is impressive, and affirms the important role of the ecumenical community in contributing to constructive public dialogue concerning peacebuilding and disarmament.

Project Ploughshares works on a wide range of interconnected peace and security issues. Over the next three years, Ploughshares will focus on four core program areas:

Canadian Foreign and Defence Policy

– Ploughshares will update and re-emphasize its “5-D” analysis of human security – diplomacy, defence, development, disarmament, democracy – as it analyses the role that Canadian Forces will play nationally and internationally, and Canada’s military procurement.

Conventional Arms – Ploughshares is embarking upon a 3 year armed violence reduction project in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). This is an extension and deepening of past work in that region, and complements ongoing work toward an international Arms Trade Treaty.

Nuclear Disarmament – Recently, nuclear disarmament talks have gained momentum within Canadian and international civil society, but the same is not true of Canada’s government. Ploughshares continues to engage the Canadian government to adopt a stronger position supporting nuclear disarmament, and supports efforts for a Nuclear Weapons Convention that would spell out and enforce a disarmament agenda.

Space Security – Ploughshares is one of very few agencies working on the policy, rather than technical, side of space security. Outer space is currently non-weaponized but there is no international treaty limiting the weaponization of space or regulating outer space activities.

The Board bid a fond farewell to Ernie Regehr, co-founder and long-time Executive Director of Project Ploughshares, who officially retired from Project Ploughshares on Dec. 31, 2010. Ernie has provided years of faithful and visionary service to Ploughshares and the wider ecumenical community, and the Board expressed its deep appreciation for Ernie’s valuable contributions. Ernie will continue his work as a Research Fellow at Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo.

“The quality and depth of work accomplished by a small and committed cadre of staff is impressive, and affirms the important role of the ecumenical community in contributing to constructive public dialogue concerning peacebuilding and disarmament.”

Christian Reformed Church in North America

Canadian Ministries
3475 Mainway
PO Box 5070 STN LCD 1
Phone: 905-336-2920
Fax: 905-336-8344
E-mail:
bruceadema@crcna.org

**Transforming Lives
and Communities
Worldwide**

Our Mission

As people called by God,
We gather to praise God, listen to him, and respond.
We nurture each other in faith and obedience to Christ.
We love and care for one another as God's people.
We commit ourselves to serve and to tell others about Jesus.
We pursue God's justice and peace in every area of life.

Our Vision

The Christian Reformed Church is a diverse family of healthy congregations, assemblies, and ministries expressing the good news of God's kingdom that transforms lives and communities worldwide.

www.crcna.org

KAIROS IS ^NOT^ GOING AWAY (continued from page 1)

June 20, 2011 for a time of prayer and ceremony to honour First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities. Churches, students, children – all -- are invited to make banners for the train and to display at the closing ceremony.

Want to become more involved in the work of KAIROS? Here are some suggestions:

- Make a banner for KAIROS' banner train (details www.kairoscanada.org/roll)
- Sign the petition for effective implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (see www.kairoscanada.org/en/take-action/the-land-our-life/un-declaration-petition/)
- Plan a special event at the train station as the KAIROS train rolls through your area.
- Consider a bike trip, car pooling, canoeing, or other low-carbon way of getting your banners to the train.
- Include the bulletin insert on the UN Declaration (available on KAIROS website after Easter) for the Sunday June 19 church service (or focus the service on the call to justice in the treatment of our aboriginal communities).
- Visit your local federal candidates to request support of KAIROS effective development work overseas and request for transparency of process in the government decision making.