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# Partnering for Change

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## A New Way to Think about Partnership

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by Rebekah Sears

Partnerships are one of the essential elements of the work of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), be it in promoting peace, supporting sustainable agriculture, or helping to facilitate reconciliation initiatives. Genuine partnerships are about working together with others, as equals, listening to each other and making changes collaboratively. This applies to the ways in which MCC works alongside local partners on the ground, both domestically and internationally, ensuring that local needs are met in ways that work best within specific contexts.

But what about beyond the work of MCC? How can we apply the idea of partnership to broader issues within the fields of peace-building and development?

From March 17–19, 2011, MCC, along with the Canadian International Development Agency, Canadian Mennonite University, and the University of Winnipeg hosted a global forum called Partnering for Change. The Forum brought together development practitioners and academics from North America and the Global South to dialogue about effective ways to bring about positive change.

Global South participants included MCC partners from the Christian Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) in India, the Utooni Development Organization in Kenya, the Wi'am Conflict Resolution Center in the West Bank, and others.

The themes of the Forum included Complex Emergencies and Responsibility to Protect (R2P), Livelihood Adaptation and Sustainable Development, and Transformative Justice and Indigenous Practice, each with a keynote address, panel discussion and

a series of workshops. Keynote speakers, Peter Walker, Melissa Marshke, and Val Napoleon initiated discussion and prompted participants to look more closely through the lens of partnership in addressing global and local issues.

This issue of the *Peace Office Newsletter* focuses on making connections across these themes as a means to promote peace, understanding, and collaboration.

Peter Walker explores the idea of partnerships and the big picture issues, like continuing globalization, climate change, adaptation and the current state of disaster relief. John Siebert delves into the implications of R2P in light of the situation over this past year in Libya.

Pugeni Vurayayi speaks to the importance of building partnerships in sustainable agriculture initiatives through an approach called *Farming God's Way*. Val Napoleon promotes a kind of partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples through storytelling and developing an understanding of people of different cultures.

MCC's Alain Epp Weaver closes the discussion with the challenge to think outside the box and incorporate a partnership approach in the broad and specific aspects of our work to bring positive change.

Finally, this issue is dedicated to Joshua Mukusya, a long-time MCC partner and a panelist from the Forum. Tragically, Joshua was killed in September 2011.

*Rebekah Sears is the Program Associate for MCC Canada and will soon begin working as the Policy Educator for MCC Colombia.*

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# The Shape of Things to Come

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by Peter Walker

**Analysis of parish and court records also shows an absolute correlation between the change in climate and rise in crime and violence across the continent.**

**We, agencies and states, need to change our perception of crises. In the future crisis will be normal, not exceptional.**

The past decade has seen a rash of major complicated disasters; the 2004 Asia tsunami, the Haiti earthquake, the Pakistan floods, the Japan tsunami, and drought and famine in the Horn of Africa. It is a seeming complex of climate change, globalization and the breakdown of any semblance of good governance, tipping communities from survival to destitution. What's going on; a statistical anomaly, a glimpse of things to come? In this essay I will seek to put these recent crises in context, looking at the role climate change and globalization are playing in driving disasters. I'll then reflect on what this means for how humanitarian agencies and governments need to respond and plan for the future.

Fortunately we have a great laboratory to see how climate change affects human society: it's called history. Human history is peppered by periods of rapid climate change. If we go back to the middle Holocene, 7,000–5,500 years before today, records laid down in the sediments of the rivers flowing out of today's Sahara show that before 5,700 years ago this was a fertile place. Then something changed, the rivers dried up, the savanna turned to much more marginal land and the only places left habitable were the valleys where ground water came to the surface forming oases. This rapid change took place over a period of about 700 years and drove a major change in society, away from a hunter gatherer and pastoralist existence to a more concentrated urban society in oasis settlements. It also led to shorter and more violent lives, to a more authoritarian form of government, and to the first ever land disputes in the Sahel.

Fast forward to 400 AD and we find the breakup of the Roman Empire coinciding with another period of rapid climate change, forcing mass migrations across Europe: Goths, Visigoths, and Vandals, all on the move in search of survival. Take another step forward to the beginnings of the "little ice age" in Europe, around 1570 and a twenty year period of systematic decline in temperature. Crop yields plummeted or failed, throwing this agrarian economy into rapid decline. Analysis of parish and court records also shows an absolute correlation between the change in climate and rise in crime and violence across the continent.

And finally, recent economic research in the Sahel, still dominated by agrarian communities, shows that in a year of bad rainfall, GDP, driven by agriculture, tends to fall by maybe 5 percent, and that for every 5 percent fall in GDP, the probability of marked civil unrest goes up by 50 percent.

The message is clear: society does not cope well with stress, particularly stress applied at a pace it cannot adapt to. When stress outpaces social adaptation, things break.

And by the way, the pace of climate change, in all these historical periods, was never more than 50 percent of the pace of change today.

We know we are entering a period of rapid climate change, but that is not the only change hitting us. The globalizing of our economy is unleashing major economic, social, and political change, and we are struggling to bring our human adaptation up to speed. Globalization is creating tremendous wealth. The rise in living standards in Southeast Asia is something many of us only dreamed of a generation ago. The political rise of China, to now be the world's second largest economy and the biggest investor in Africa, would have stunned the political pundits of the 70s. The ability of mobile phone technology and social networking media to allow remote African villages to have banking facilities and become part of the global credit culture, or the use of Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google maps to plan and execute peaceful revolutions in Georgia, Tunisia or Egypt, seem like the plot of a Sci-Fi movie. All great stuff, but it does have its dark side. It is also driving the most rapid increase ever in wealth disparities to a point where disparities in the U.S. and China now outshine those of the Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire, or Nineteenth Century Britain. It is a gravy train that seemingly comes as a package—all or nothing and that all embraces free market economy, consumerism, scientific positivism, and a squeamishness towards religion unless it supports the greater objective of the free market.

Those disparities and exclusions coupled with a sense, for those at the bottom of the economic miracle, that they are either left behind or impotent in the control of their destinies, fuels violence and discontent. In its most extreme form it pushes whole cultures to feel abandoned and discriminated against.

And here is the concern. If we were only facing a near future of rapid climate change, that would be worrying enough, but this change is taking place at the same time as globalization. Our global society is riding two roller coasters, and we control neither of them. So, here is the key question: what can we do to help human society adapt quickly enough to absorb the stresses of change, stresses we cannot predict?

One way we try to adsorb these stresses is through curtailing their worst excesses. That, in effect, is what humanitarian assistance does. It doesn't seek to change anything, just patch things up, and keep people alive in extremis. But there are signs that this safeguard of last resort is also under stress.

Humanitarian assistance is supposed to be a short term measure, an exceptional response to an exceptional set of circumstances. It provides life-preserving aid, keeping crisis victims going whilst a more durable solution is found for their plight. But, what if there is no durable solution being sought? Figures recently compiled by Development Initiatives, a UK-based group tracking aid spending, show that today a full 70 percent of all humanitarian aid is spent in programs that have been ongoing for at least five years, and 40 percent is going to programs that have been running for more than eight years! 60 percent of all humanitarian aid goes into countries with ongoing protracted conflicts.

This is not quick-in, quick-out emergency assistance. Humanitarian aid is shifting from being an emergency service to a safety-net service, but when we look at where this funding is going—into Sudan, Somalia, Afghanistan, Ethiopia—there is really no evidence of a broad system in place seeking those durable solutions. In effect humanitarian aid is holding people in limbo (or is it purgatory?) keeping them alive, but offering no hope for the future.

So where does this take us, with the probability of crises, fueled by climate change and globalization, becoming more frequent, and the mechanisms of humanitarian aid being morphed into palliatives, stopping people from dying for sure, but maybe also locking in a false stability to society, holding back the much needed social and political adaptation?

What do we need to do differently in the future? I would offer the following possibilities.

First, we (agencies and states) need to change our perception of crises. In the future crisis will be normal, not exceptional. Expect the unexpected. This implies that crisis response should become part of the normal business of government. It means seeing international assistance as a normal part of the sovereign relations between states, not as a sign of weakness or the acceptance of charity. The attempts by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to draft, and help states enact, template national disaster response legislation mark an interesting move in this direction. And as importantly it means building true partnerships among community action groups, national, and international structures. This should come as no surprise. All the significant social changes in the North in the past two decades, in particular in rendering inner cities safer and more prosperous, have come from such alliances.

Second, crisis responders need to accept the consequences of their increased global role. Principally this means creating and applying much more rigorous standards of competence to agencies and agency individuals. If a global system of crisis response is going to be the norm, then agencies seeking global accreditation for their competence will follow.

Finally, and maybe most difficult, can we continue to sustain the moral ambiguity of knowingly being part of a system which keeps people alive but offers them no chance of a better future? Do we need a new, maybe an additional form of work, which is neither the highly limited, impartial, neutral and life-saving humanities aid, nor the plodding holistic development program, but rather some more agile form of aid which both seeks to sustain life in crises and seeks to offer opportunities for adaptation, adaptation of economies, society, and political structures?

The great thing about the future is that nothing is certain, particularly in economics and politics. Aid agencies can choose to carry on, business as usual, and I dare say they will prosper financially. Or they can choose to play an innovative role in helping society adapt to the new world ahead. A riskier course, for sure, but then, humanitarianism's greatest successes have all come when we have taken risks and had the courage to run with them.

*Dr. Peter Walker is the Irwin H. Rosenberg Professor of Nutrition and Human Security and the director of the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University*

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Recent reappraisals of the role of aid, principally Joint Church Aid, in the Biafra conflict of the late 1960s, suggest that their relief intervention, far from saving lives, actively prolonged the war by 18 months, contributed to the deaths of 180,000 people and allowed Nigerian and the UK to seek a "humanitarian" solution to Biafra, rather than a political one.

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**Can we continue to sustain the moral ambiguity of knowingly being part of a system which keeps people alive but offers them no chance of a better future?**

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# Libya and R2P: Protecting Vulnerable Civilians or Regime Change?

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by John Siebert

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This article is being revised on October 20, 2011, as reports of Moammar Gadhafi's death are being circulated in the media without final confirmation. The question in my mind is: Who will mourn the defeat of Gadhafi's regime and his death today, beyond his family and hard core supporters? Not most Libyans, we can assume. During 42 years in power, the eccentric and terror-producing Gadhafi took dictatorial control over their lives, denying personal freedoms and committing gross and systematic violations of fundamental human rights.

To the extent that Gadhafi personally embodied the Socialist People's Arab Jamahiriya, that regime has died with the man. Libyans are left to recreate the form of government and society that they choose, but not without advice and incentives from the international community that enabled the rebel forces of the NTC to overthrow Gadhafi. It remains an open question if Libya will now become a freer, more democratic, and sustainably peaceful country, and whether the foundation was properly laid for this transition by NATO forces acting for the United Nations (UN) that stretched its civilian protection mandate to facilitate regime change.

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The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctioned the military mission in Libya starting on March 19, 2011. Gadhafi had threatened the rebelling citizens of Benghazi with massive death. On August 23 rebel forces swept the capital of Tripoli and Gadhafi and his regime were no longer in control of most of the country and effectively replaced by the National Transitional Council (NTC). While representing only part of the Libyan population, the NTC has nonetheless been recognized by a significant number of countries as the legitimate representative of the people of Libya, and the NTC representative has taken Libya's place at the United Nations.

UNSC Resolution 1973 authorized "all necessary means" within the context of the language of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) to safeguard civilians there and elsewhere in Libya from atrocities by Gadhafi's forces. The international military mission handed to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) by the UN quickly morphed from implementation of a no-fly zone into support to one side in a civil war, effecting regime change by bombing runs.

The evolution of the doctrine of the "responsibility to protect" vulnerable civilians, or R2P, has suffered as a result.

What began in Libya in February as apparently peaceful civilian protests by people emulating their neighbors in Tunisia and Egypt, quickly devolved into a civil war. Rebels located primarily in the east of Libya were pitted against the government forces of Gadhafi, which held sway in the west and quickly advanced with vastly superior firepower. Threats of attack and human rights violations by government forces against civilians were widely reported.

In the space of a few short weeks in February and March the UN Security Council leapt from diplomatic and economic preventive measures in Resolution 1970 to sanctioning military intervention in Libya in Resolution 1973. Tomahawk cruise missiles, launched from U.S. and British ships, started landing on strategic military sites in Libya on March 19, with jet fighters from France and the U.S. following close behind. Canada and other nations joined the effort.

The UN Security Council prominently infused Resolutions 1970 on February 26 and 1973 on March 17 with the language of the international community's responsibility to protect vulnerable civilians, while also paying heed to the precautionary principles embedded in R2P.

The R2P doctrine itself was crystallized in the Canadian-sponsored report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), which was published in 2001. The ICISS codified a stream of international norms and practices from what was then referred to as "humanitarian interventions." It also provided an analytic grid to define and properly constrain the use of military interventions relying on R2P.

The ICISS report (2001, p. 29) states explicitly that "for military action ever to be defensible the circumstances must be grave indeed." Only genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and ethnic cleansing provide "just cause" for an R2P military intervention. The qualifying modifiers, "actual or apprehended" (p. 32), are important when considering the Libya case.

Verifiable facts do not unequivocally prove that the gravity of the situation in Libya had reached the just cause threshold by March 17. It is difficult to establish from reliable public sources the number of people actually killed in Libya in the lead-up to the military intervention. Stephen Zunes (2011), a critic of the intervention, writes that "some estimates run as high as 8,000, some as low as 1,000, but most estimates put the number of civilians killed during the five weeks between the start of the uprising and the Western intervention at approximately 1,700." The imminent attack on rebel-held Benghazi by Gadhafi forces, with the stated intent of massive killings, provided the "apprehended" threat justifying an R2P military intervention.

"Right authority" was secured through UNSC Resolution 1973. With the passage of the resolution, the legality of the military intervention is settled, but not necessarily its legitimacy. Over time questions increasingly have been raised about how bombing raids on Tripoli and Gadhafi's various home compounds are protecting vulnerable civilians. Disabling Gadhafi's military command and

control centers is NATO's explanation. It is difficult, however, to believe that the framers of R2P would agree that such actions directly protect vulnerable civilians.

Ultimately it is the dependence on air assets in this military intervention that raises the greatest uncertainty about the primary mission. "Boots on the ground" normally is the surest route to protection of non-combatants. It is also messy and risky and therefore politically costly for the nations that contribute intervening forces. Three issues confront the NATO military mission in Libya, as they did the 1999 bombing campaign in Serbia and Kosovo:

1) Bombs are imprecise. Air strikes are not the neat precision instruments they are touted to be. Civilian deaths and the destruction of civil infrastructure are inevitable, very costly, and cannot be simply dismissed as collateral damage. Civilians, ultimately, cannot be protected from the air.

2) Diplomacy, not bombing, is the key to the long term resolution of virtually all conflicts. Project Ploughshares made this point in a letter to the Canadian Prime Minister in 1999: "In our experience, bombs have no capacity whatsoever to protect innocent civilians or to soften the hearts of an aggressive military and its political masters. Once again a catastrophe has been allowed to develop without the international community's having equipped itself with the means to intervene in ways that make peacebuilding and conflict prevention possible."

3) Choosing means primarily based on protection of the intervening military forces will fail, according to the ICISS. The primary virtue of an air war for the interveners is that there is very little threat to the bombers and their crews once air defenses have been neutralized. The ICISS report (2001, p. 63) put its finger on the problem when considering *force protection*: "Often, modalities for the proactive use of force have been determined more by military expediency than by any sense of responsibility to protect humanitarian interests. . . . Force protection of the intervening force is important, but should never be allowed to become the principal objective."

Early in this conflict veteran human security advocate Mary Kaldor (2011) focused on the weakness of an air approach to protect civilians in Libya. International intervention should focus on providing robust security in UN-protected areas or safe havens, rather than on degrading or defeating Gadhafi's military forces. This is both a principled

and a practical concern for Kaldor. "If the Gaddafi regime is overthrown by force, the division is likely to persist, leading to a 'new war' rather than democracy." She views the intervention's impact beyond the immediate goal of stopping slaughter in Benghazi: Can it also create a sustainable peace in Libya?

The International Crisis Group (ICG 2011) helpfully provided background information on Libya in a June report that calls into question the potential impact of successful regime decapitation. "Instead, the priority should be to secure an immediate ceasefire and negotiations on a transition to a post-Qaddafi political order."

The fall of the Gadhafi regime and his own death has been touted as a victory and a vindication for NATO. Former Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations Paul Heinbecker enthusiastically wrote on August 23: "Success, vindication, satisfaction, optimism; there are many legitimate ways to characterize the so far happy events in Libya." Being an old hand, Heinbecker knows his way around a qualifier, in this case the caveat "so far."

Caution is warranted. The difficulty with some of the current upbeat take on Libya is that we have seen the opening scenes of this movie before—in Afghanistan and Iraq—and the rest of the show has not been very pleasant. Granted, no two wars are the same. Libya is not Afghanistan, nor is it Iraq. But the similarities are worth noting. Each are riven by ethnic and tribal divisions, exploited for decades by dictatorial governments, and blessed with valuable natural resources such as oil deposits that could finance new futures.

Like Afghanistan and Iraq, there is a flood of arms into Libya that will enable violent responses to grievances by all factions for decades to come. Before March the Gadhafi regime was armed to the teeth. During the fighting of the past seven months, NATO members and others supplied NTC rebels with small arms and light weapons to even the fight. Now Government arsenals are reportedly being looted. How long before a franchise of "IEDs R Us" opens in Libya as it did in Afghanistan and Iraq?

The inherent catastrophe fuelled by the prevalence of guns and bombs in Libya is worsened by another casualty in this civil war: the UN arms embargo on Libya. Reports indicate that the Chinese offered and perhaps supplied arms to the Gadhafi regime in defiance of the embargo. However, NATO members and others supplying

**It is difficult, however, to believe that the framers of R2P would agree that such actions directly protect vulnerable civilians.**

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the Libyan rebels with arms must also come under scrutiny. Did the embargo only apply to supplying one side? There is considerable difference of legal opinion on this.

Initial tallies by the interim health minister of the NTC of deaths in Libya since fighting began in February are 30,000, with 50,000 wounded and possibly 4,000 still missing. These numbers have not been independently verified, but clearly the NATO-enabled fight has not spared civilians. Fighting likely will continue. And it is not clear yet if Libya's regional neighbors will all fall in line to support the NTC, or, as in Afghanistan and Iraq, provide sanctuary and support for a prolonged insurgency against the new government. In other words, winning a war does not mean that the peace will be won.

The failure of the operationalization of Resolution 1973 through the military focus on inappropriate means (bombing from the air) and inappropriate ends (regime change) creates an unfortunate precedent that has the potential to fatally weaken the concept of R2P for future acceptance and proper use by the international community.

R2P was born out of the horrible tragedies of Rwanda and elsewhere. "Never again" is still relevant. The international community needs the legal norms, implementation guidance, and capacity to override the principle of sovereignty where civilians are indeed threatened. Although R2P deems preventative means as superior, under specific and highly circumscribed circumstances, the international community has a responsibility to intervene militarily to protect vulnerable civilians from mass abuses and deaths

The clear alternative to the NATO bombing campaign would have required intensive diplomatic mediation to stop the fighting and negotiate a new form of government for Libya. Simply saying "give diplomacy a chance" will never make such an undertaking easy or quick or cheap. The current situation still requires engaging the relevant actors in Libyan society to negotiate a post-Gadhafi era of sustainable peace. Extensive international political support and patience will be required to ensure the success of such a process. Ultimately, this is the only reliable route to protecting vulnerable citizens in Libya and ensuring a sustainable peace there.

*John Siebert is the Director of Project Ploughshares, the Ecumenical Peace Center of the Canadian Council of Churches.*

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## Effective Partnership Ensures Food Security in Zimbabwe: Farming God's Way in Nkayi District

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by Vurayayi Pugini

**E**ffective partnership in transferring sustainable agricultural technologies to small-scale farmers has proven to be the most effective way of curtailing the food insecurity of vulnerable households in Zimbabwe. Through a partnership between multiple stakeholders, farmers in Nkayi District of Zimbabwe have embraced a new farming technology that has now transformed their livelihoods from perennial starvation to food sufficiency and sovereignty.

With so many stakeholders involved, cooperation throughout the whole partnership was essential. The small-scale farmers were part of the decision making process and as a result, there was effective feedback during the project design and implementation and an increased sense of ownership and pride by the farmers.

The outcome of this partnership was an improvement in the way the small-scale farmers were working, by introducing a farming technology that is culturally appropriate, inexpensive, ecologically appropriate, sustainable and relevant to the climatic conditions obtaining in Zimbabwe called Farming God's Way (FGW).

FGW, or Conservation Farming (CF), is a spiritually-driven, sustainable agricultural production system that is synonymous with zero tillage. It involves the empowerment of food insecure small-scale farmers to harness the God-given potential of the land and encouraging them to mimic creation as they farm. Farming is practiced in harmony and partnership with nature. The small-scale farmers' spirituality is integral as this fosters faithful stewardship over the way they farm and manage their crops.

Improved soil fertility and increases in annual yields have contributed significantly to the widespread adoption of FGW and achievement of high plot management standards among small-scale farmers in Nkayi District. It is a response to the effects of climate change and variability that addresses household food insecurity through soil and moisture conservation, minimum soil inversion, crop rotation, mulching, the application of organic fertilizers through micro-dosing, and refraining from using the practice of burning.

These fundamentals are supported by four simple principles that define this innovative farming system: conducting all work on time according to the season, wasting as few resources as possible, holding very high standards, and conducting all work with joy.

The technology supported by FGW is suitable for regions faced with farming challenges including soil fertility, recurring droughts, changing farming seasons, and impediments to accessing agriculture inputs. It differs significantly from the conventional farming system used by small-scale farmers before the partnership began in 2006, in that it utilizes God-given natural resources and indigenous technologies readily available to farmers. The basic farming inputs include the small-scale farmer's spirituality, a hoe, open pollinated seed, organic fertilizer such as animal manure or compost, mulch (commonly referred to as God's blanket) and the knowledge and skills which is acquired during the capacity building training workshops.

In FGW, a hoe is used, instead of ox-drawn ploughs. Using a hoe instead of an ox-drawn plough makes economic sense as a hoe is affordable, with minimum repair costs, and ensures minimum soil disturbance. Other equipment is more expensive and difficult to replace.

The use of open-pollinated variety seeds is more sustainable than planting hybrid variety seeds because they can be re-planted for more than three farming seasons if protected from contamination. Small-scale farmers have effectively managed to make income savings by producing seeds for themselves instead of relying on huge seed production companies that continually market and sell hybrid seed varieties to them at exorbitant prices. In addition, during the 2007 to 2009 farming seasons, the farmers effectively managed to plant their seeds on time despite the fragile and hyper-inflationary market that could not supply agriculture inputs following the economic meltdown that affected Zimbabwe.

In Nkayi District, FGW is becoming more popular and is close to completely replacing the conventional farming method which has proved to be less effective in attaining food security at household level in this drought prone district of Zimbabwe.

Through the partnership and in line with the FGW principles, small-scale farmers in Nkayi district do all of their work in accordance to specific weather patterns at certain points in the calendar year, beginning their preparations each year four months before the rainy season. Land preparation mainly involves digging the planting basins as opposed to overworking the soil. The other activities include applying mulch, micro-dosing organic manure, planting, thinning, and weeding.

Farmers are also trained to understand that everything was created for a purpose and waste is minimized through avoiding broadcasting inputs. Small-scale farmers ensure that there is no waste of labor, time, and seeds by ensuring that they place three peeps per planting station. They avoid depletion of the precious top soil by applying mulch which reduces surface runoff. In addition, the mulch is important for moisture conservation and improving the humus content of the soil. Organic fertilizer is applied per planting station rather than broadcasted. Effective weed management helps save the soil nutrients and water and reduces plant competition for sunlight. Evidence has shown that this farming technology uses fewer inputs as compared to the traditional farming methods utilized by most rural households in Africa.

The small-scale farmers in Nkayi District of Zimbabwe are enjoying the benefits of this farming system despite the challenges posed by climate change. Yields have increased more than five times with harvests soaring from around 0.2 tonnes per hectare with conventional farming to over 5 tonnes per hectare with FGW. Using only organic fertilizers and mulch, partners reported increases of over 1000% after two to three years after the implementation of FGW.

In addition, FGW allows for increased production of crops on smaller plots of land than conventional methods. Farming using animal traction and a plough requires between 1.5 to 2.3 hectares of land to provide a household's annual grain needs, between 600 to 900kgs of maize. In contrast, the average land area used to produce maize under FGW is between 0.1 to 0.2 hectares. Despite the smaller size, the total amount of maize produced was greater.

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The stakeholders for this project included the United Church of Canada, the Canadian Food Grains Bank (CFGB), a local private voluntary organization Christian Care Zimbabwe, church leaders, political and traditional village leaders, and government services, including Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX) and District Authorities.

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Less land leads to a reduction of labor needed to till and manage the land, allowing more members within the community more time to care for children or family members suffering from HIV. The farmers have also formed community seed banks and are donating some of the seeds to the more vulnerable households in their community.

Drawing from lessons learned in the experience of Nkayi District of Zimbabwe, it is clear that with Farming God's Way and a proper functional partnership, vulnerable households in African countries experiencing droughts or unpredictable rainfall partners during the farming season can achieve

food security. The continent can make the transition from food import dependency to self-sufficiency in a single generation. Africa has abundant land and labor which, with an integrated partnership for development that utilizes a mutually reinforcing approach and sound public policies, could translate into greater production, increased incomes, and food security.

*Vurayayi Pugeni has many years of experience working directly with small-scale farmers to promote efficient farming techniques in his home country of Zimbabwe. Vurayayi is currently living in Canada and finishing his Masters Degree in Disaster Management.*

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## Learning about Justice and Law through Stories

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by Val Napoleon

**S**tories are a way to create spaces for critical conversations and historically they enabled people both to theorize about their worlds and practically to solve problems. It is helpful to think about stories as a cognitive unit—a way to organize information for future recall and application. Our minds work better with stories as opposed to lists.

Some people, such as the wonderful and wise Ted Chamberlin, go so far as to argue that what we do in universities is tell stories—many stories, old, big, complex—but stories nonetheless.

All societies have different kinds of oral traditions. These reflect how the society is organized. They fulfil different functions—different pedagogical goals with different methodological approaches.

In thinking of transitional justice, the pedagogy found in stories is potentially useful for the fields of restorative justice and peacebuilding—particularly where there is interaction between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

This pedagogical approach is intended to enable us seriously to draw on the intellectual resources within indigenous societies—for critical consideration and application to today's complex issues, problems, and justice initiatives.

Stories tell us many things about societies and provide much to consider about human and non-human relationships; forms of resistance, both positive and negative; and

internal and external power dynamics. Stories can also provide insight into how to deal with responsibilities and injuries and for identifying levels of comfort or discomfort within a specific culture or tradition. All of these conversations about stories can be meaningfully connected to issues of justice and citizenship.

These themes are very evident in the stories of the Gitksan and Nisga'a peoples of British Columbia. For the Gitksan, there are two main types of oral traditions that I draw on in my work. First, there is the formal and owned *adaawk*, which are ancient, and tell of the origins and migrations of groups to their current territories, explorations, covenants established with the land, songs, crests, and names that result from the spiritual connection between people and their land. Second, there is the *antamahlaswx*, which are considered to be the stories and collective properties of all Gitksan people.

Within these stories we can find the sources, origins, and history of law and justice practices. When doing so it is crucial contextually to locate the role of the oral tradition in that particular society and the internal validation processes for the oral traditions (what was learned, and why it is important). History is always contested—so the outer bounds of a people's collective history encompasses all the versions and disagreements of individual, family, or group histories.

Some stories are also a way to record law; they are a form of precedent and contain legal processes, principles, and procedures.

**People in the margins have the space to act otherwise as forms of resistance.**



Law is collaborative; law is not just rules but involves the working out and application of rules to solve real problems. Law always operates against a backdrop of disagreement and this is a quality found in all legal systems. Finally, legal traditions contain contested conceptions of justice that people aspire to.

Other concepts addressed in conjunction with the Gitksan stories, and also tied to contemporary experiences of the Gitksan and other Indigenous peoples, are the ideas of citizenship and resistance. To set this up, consider three complex practices of freedom that are also practices of citizenship that are available to us—and think about their implications in a contemporary setting (Tully, 2009).

1. *Act otherwise within the rules of the game—resist.* The actions and results can be positive or negative. If it is positive, we create positive change. If negative, we re-create the power dynamics and structures of oppression.

2. *Challenge a relation of governance or enter into “the available procedures of negotiation, deliberation, problem-solving, and reform” to modify the practice.* Indigenous peoples are good at this. We litigate, protest, negotiate, and so on, but we need to be critical of these practices, too. If our efforts are positive, again we create positive non-oppressive change. But again, if our efforts are negative, we re-create the power dynamics and structures of oppression.

3. *Bypass or subvert the process—and refuse to be governed.* Acting otherwise includes the individuals in the institutions of power. Their conduct has the potential to modify practices. But again, if our efforts are negative, we re-create the power dynamics and structures of oppression (e.g., gangs).

In Gitksan and Wet’suwet’en country, I participated in many blockades—of logging roads, railway tracks, and highways. This was work on the ground that paralleled the *Delgamuukw* title court action and other legal initiatives.

But, at one point, the Gitksan had the highest rate of suicide in Canada. Some of the young people I knew during the time of the blockades killed themselves, others are incarcerated, and others are caught up in a world of violence and addictions. So the question that haunts me is, “Why didn’t our political work sustain the younger generations?” Or, is there a way to recognize the politically inarticulate acts of citizenship? Is there a way to re-inscribe political meaning to the

actions of the marginalized? What might the work of such re-inscription involve?

There are three sites of local struggle to build citizenship and *glocal* connections (a term used by James Tully for connecting the local with the global):

1. Individuals who cannot imagine themselves as citizens—these are not the citizen agents who are able to explicitly connect their actions to the practices of citizenship;
2. Diverse individuals and groups who are working tirelessly, but often in isolation, and who need to connect their actions to other localities of struggle;
3. Individuals and groups who need to locate their local methods of struggle against oppression within larger, broader practices of freedom—so that they have a larger political analysis.

In other words, we need to reframe local individual and collective struggles as part of *glocal* practices of citizenship, connection, and cooperation. At the ground level the actions of the least privileged and least powerful matter *and* they have a purpose and an effect. This is about exploring and expanding the agency of the governed to act otherwise: to push against the imprinting of oppression to create some intellectual space within which the marginalized can be public philosophers.

To illustrate this further, I will focus on four contemporary stories drawn from the rough ground of civic struggles. These stories are about people who do not imagine themselves as citizens, but who are important in the world. The purpose of the stories is to ground this conversation and to try and get at the nerve centers of justice and resistance.

The first story is that of the street kids in Edmonton. These are young people hardened by life and who call themselves “throw aways,” thinking of themselves as disposable. Can such people recognize themselves as citizens?

The second story is that of an inmate, my brother, whose story I can share. He was recently up for parole, which is a terrifying experience. He understands himself to be condemned, and his interactions in the world have confirmed his condemnation—over and over again. He has been incarcerated off and on in various institutions since he was an adolescent—now half of his life has been in prison. Can Frank, and others like him, learn to see themselves as public philosophers? Can he and other inmates

**From these stories we learn that citizenship is about citizens understanding how their actions matter.**

**History is always contested—so the outer bounds of a people’s collective history encompasses all the versions and disagreements of individual, family, or group histories.**

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learn to see that they and their actions matter in the world, beyond being criminals but as citizens, as agent citizens?

The third story is the women we meet, from different walks of life, at a women's shelter. How do these women locate their experiences in the world around them as beyond the personal? Often it is the personal survival that takes all the oxygen—all the energy.

Finally, there are almost 600 indigenous women and girls missing and murdered in Canada over the past 30 years. Can we appreciate these missing and murdered women and girls as citizens? How would an understanding of them as citizens change Canada?

These stories are not meant to add an "ain't it awful" lament to this conversation. These stories are the stuff of Canada's underbelly—and they need to be at the center of discussions about political change. What are the citizenship options available to them at their differing locations? We look a little bit at some ways that we can deepen the idea of how those who understand themselves as powerless are also agents so that we don't disregard them as victims.

And from these stories we learn that citizenship is about citizens understanding how their actions matter, despite drawbacks. Inarticulate acts of citizenship or inarticulate acting otherwise is not sufficient to building citizenry.

To conclude, I will reflect on the needs for shifts in thinking of Indigenous peoples, their stories and their participation as citizens within society.

The first shift includes the way in which society views Indigenous peoples and to remember:

1. Indigenous peoples were and are reasoning and reasonable peoples;
2. Use present tense to talk about and consider indigenous law so that it is not relegated to the past or rendered into a static thing
3. Think about indigenous law as a response to universal human problems—as is other law.

The second shift is when looking at or thinking about indigenous legal traditions, to move from:

1. Looking for rules to looking for legal processes;
2. Thinking about cultural values to thinking about legal norms;
3. Focusing on cultural appropriateness to legitimate procedures;
4. Looking for answers to looking for principles for reasoning;
5. Finding categories to finding legal concepts.

People in the margins have the space to act otherwise as forms of resistance. We need to learn to recognize disparate acts of citizenship in the behaviours and actions of people at the local level.

Practices of citizenship need to be a recognized part of indigenous and non-indigenous justice initiatives.

*Dr. Val Napoleon is of Cree heritage and is an adopted Gitksan member. She is an Associate Professor at the University of Alberta in the faculties of Native Studies and Law.*

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## On Not Being Ashamed of the Margins

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by Alain Epp Weaver

**D**iscussions of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine and of humanitarian intervention more broadly tend to locate moral agency at the level of nation-states and the international community of nation-states, asking under what conditions it would be permissible (or even morally obligatory) for a state (or group of states) to intervene in the affairs of another state with the aim of protecting that state's citizens who have been rendered vulnerable by the state's severely weakened authority (in the case of failed states) or by the state's predatory, or even genocidal, actions. With the weight of

moral agency thus placed on the shoulders of nation-states, the moral questions for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) become framed in reference to the state: Should NGOs advocate for or against particular interventions by one state into another state, interventions justified on humanitarian grounds? To what extent should NGOs work, collaborate, or coordinate with state military apparatuses as they carry out humanitarian interventions, engaging not only in traditional military operations but also in the rapid movement of humanitarian aid to targeted populations?

Since the United States (U.S.) invasion of Somalia in 1992, an invasion presented and defended in humanitarian terms, Mennonite theologians and peacebuilding scholars have discussed and debated whether or not Mennonites could or should support—or even advocate for—particular forms of humanitarian intervention and what stance MCC, as an organization supported and owned by Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Canada and the U.S., should take in the midst of complex emergencies like humanitarian interventions in which military actors shape the environment in which NGOs like MCC operate and in which military forces increasingly carry out a wide array of aid distribution and development functions.

While the Partnering for Change forum organized by MCC Canada in March 2011 addressed issues beyond R2P and humanitarian intervention, the presenters helped open up new perspectives for me on the contested questions outlined above. Specifically, the forum's focus on partnership provided a helpful lens to think about how "we" as MCC should think about "our" response to R2P. By highlighting the question of partnership, the forum shed light on the question of where "our" work, MCC's work, is located. That question of course begs the question of who the "our" in "our work" is: while the forum's title of "partnering for change" was fairly vague, the forum presentations and workshops pointed towards answers about the location of MCC's work and about the make-up of the "we" and "our" in MCC's initiatives. Over the course of the forum, attendees heard about a wide variety of partnerships: humanitarian NGOs brought into reluctant and sometimes not-so-reluctant partnerships with military actors during complex emergencies; NGOs partnering with government aid agencies, like MCC partnering with the Canadian International Development Agency; international NGOs like MCC partnering with NGOs such as CASA in India, Utoomi in Kenya, or Wi'am in the Occupied Palestinian Territories; NGOs like CASA partnering with communities to promote rice intensification, like Utoomi partnering with communities to build sand dams, or like Wi'am promoting transformative justice in Palestinian communities.

If the question, where is the location of our work, is directed to an organization like MCC, then the answer to me seems clear: we should be accompanying groups like CASA, Utoomi, and Wi'am; groups that are working at the margins, as Melissa Marschke might say, at the margins of our globalized order. Peter Walker helpfully counseled that

northern NGOs—MCC included—need a strong dose of humility; need to recognize that we're but bit players among the forces that shape our globalized order. But rather than be ashamed of this bit player status, I would hope that we can embrace with excitement the mission of accompanying groups like CASA, Utoomi, and Wi'am who work at the margins.

A commitment to working at the margins of the globalized order, an embrace of partnering with communities at the fringes of political and economic structures: these stances require epistemological humility, a confession that we are often in the dark about the full picture and that we are unable always to anticipate all of the consequences of our actions. Peter Walker's counsel at the forum to "throw away the models, and start with the data" was an important reminder not to let our theories of change blind us to stubborn reality. Melissa Marschke's insistence that what local organizations need for international partners are organizations that aren't rigidly going to demand compliance with the logframe, but are ready to be nimble—nimble like a dancing elephant, one might say—and accept surprises and failures as par for the course also pointed to the need to avoid epistemological overreaching, to avoid making excessive claims about the projected outcomes of our actions. And Val Napoleon's counsel that we non-Gitxan peoples patiently immerse ourselves in the seemingly strange texts and stories of Gitxan legal and oral tradition movingly suggested that questions of justice are often not susceptible to being addressed by the rapid-fire deployment of weapons systems or by the imposition of a uniform code of law, but instead demand the slow learning of other ways to conceptualize justice and an unhurried, anticipatory listening to Gitxan tribe members as they grapple with how to right wrongs and to restore broken relationships.

In their different ways, then, Walker, Marschke, and Napoleon were all urging an epistemological humility upon us. This type of epistemological humility, this necessary openness to the unknown, comes easier, I would suggest, to those at the margins, more so than to nation-states and multi-national corporations whose global infrastructures help to foster fantasies of being able to project power and to shape the world order to one's liking. The debates we as Mennonites and as humanitarian NGO staffers have had around R2P and humanitarian intervention have too often been marked by what James C. Scott has identified as the phenomenon of "seeing like a state" or, one might add, seeing like a multi-national corporation or institu-

**Specifically, the forum's focus on partnership provided a helpful lens to think about how "we" as MCC should think about "our" response to R2P.**

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tion (Scott, 2009). We see like a state when we forget our limited, finite natures, when we imagine that we can anticipate with bravura the outcomes of our actions, when we think in terms of speed and the swift projection of our power rather than in terms of the slow, patient work of sharing power in partnership. For MCC, the antidote to seeing like this is to embrace the mission of accompanying communities, churches, and other groups at the margins. Perhaps this will mean that as

MCC we will have little to contribute to discussions among military, political, and NGO actors as they debate R2P and humanitarian intervention, but our silence in those contexts will be offset by the richness of learnings and conversations we will continue to discover at the margins.

*Alain Epp Weaver is the Director of the Program Development Department with Mennonite Central Committee.*

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## In Honor and Memory of Joshua Mukusya

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by MCC staff

This edition of the *Peace Office Newsletter* is dedicated to the memory of Joshua Mukusya, a long-time partner of MCC in Kenya, the founder of the Utooni Development Organization and a champion of initiatives in sustainable agriculture for the rural populations of East Africa.

He is most famous for his work with the construction and maintenance of sand dams. Sand dams are concrete structures designed to catch excess water and sand in the river beds during the rainy seasons. As the sand collects in front of the dams, water also collects under the sand, maintaining a permanent source of fresh water within a community. The sand keeps the water clean and safe from evaporation. In just a few seasons, these dams can collect millions of litres of water and sand, replenishing with each rain fall, and allowing communities to have easy access to water all year round, even in times of drought. Before the construction of a sand dam, Joshua would work with community members to dig terraces beside the river beds, creating ideal places for growing crops and planting trees, which further helped in the collection and purification of the water. Over the past 30 years, Joshua and the self-help groups have helped facilitate the construction of over 1400 dams in Kenya.

In March 2011 Joshua and his wife Rhoda visited MCC constituents and spoke at events in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Manitoba, including participating in the Partnering for Change Global Forum held at the University of Winnipeg from March 17–19.

Tragically, on September 5, 2011 Joshua was shot to death at his farm. His funeral was held on September 17, 2011 and was

attended by 5,000 people and held in the open air. During his time with the Utooni Development Organization Joshua often held his meetings outside, under the trees. In the same way, his funeral was held outside, as a way to welcome the surrounding communities to honor his memory.

The world has lost a visionary and prophet of sand dams as well as an indefatigable champion of rural people and their pursuit of lives of justice and abundance.

Below are several excerpts from the address of MCC Kenya Country Representative, Ron Ratzlaff, at Joshua's funeral.

“You did not have to spend a long time with Joshua before realizing that he was a man of passion that emerged in preaching about *maize* or encouraging groups to develop strategies to empower themselves to address their own problems, rather than waiting for someone else (government or NGO) to solve these same problems.

“In addition to passion, he had the community needs in his heart. His joy was seeing the situation in rural Kenya improve, through water, terracing, introduction of drought resistant crops, planting of trees and growing of vegetables. I still recall the protective spirit that he displayed when he felt that the community might be getting tainted aid supplies.

We all miss him today and we will all remember him.

We pray for the family of Joshua, his mother, his spouse, Rhoda, all the children, in-laws, and grandchildren. May God keep you and be gracious to you. May He make His face to shine upon you. God bless you all.”

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The *Peace Office Newsletter* is published quarterly by the Mennonite Central Committee International Program Department. Editor is Krista Johnson. Opinions expressed in this newsletter reflect those of the authors and not necessarily those of Mennonite Central Committee.

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