



Northern Lights

Salt & Light

By John Kapteyn

“You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

—Matthew 5:13-16



We are the salt of the earth—churches are like salt mines, filled with a great supply of salt that God wants to de-

ploy in the world to build his kingdom of love, peace, and justice. Many missions and organizations (sometimes churches) are like salt shakers, sprinkling us out to make a difference. How do we get the salt from the mine into the shakers?

A new missional website is designed to “distribute salt”—

www.besaltnlight.ca. We are inviting salt shakers across Canada, in communities where an RCA church is located, to register with this site and to send requests for volunteers. These requests will be shared with

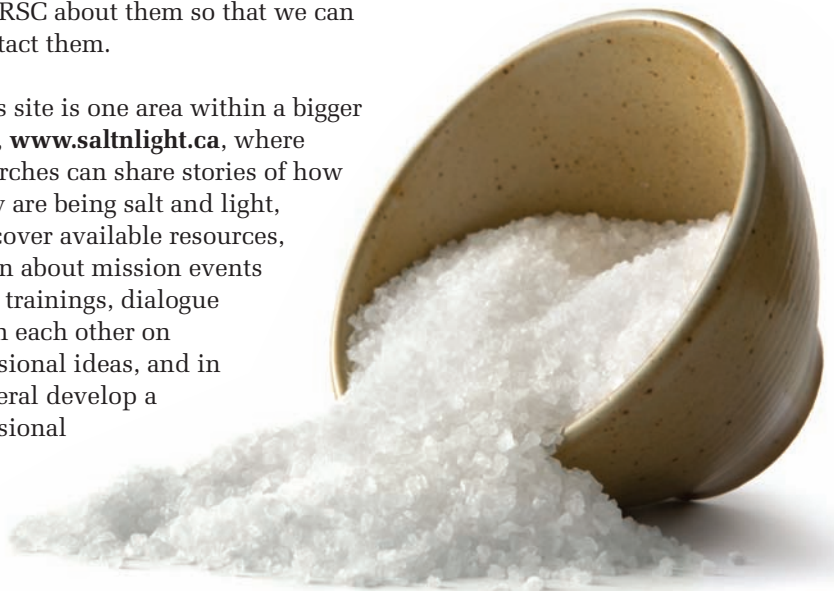
local churches, where they can be included in the weekly bulletins. Then members or attendees can go online and offer to fill the needs.

This is a new initiative and it may take some time to get activity going, but we ask that you either contact salt shakers in your communities and invite them to visit the site or email the RSC about them so that we can contact them.

This site is one area within a bigger site, **www.saltnlight.ca**, where churches can share stories of how they are being salt and light, discover available resources, learn about mission events and trainings, dialogue with each other on missional ideas, and in general develop a missional

mindset and lifestyle. This will include evangelism, outreach, discipleship, worship, mission trips, and vision casting. We are utilizing a blog, Facebook, and Twitter as part of this site.

We invite you to visit and interact with us. ●



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A Positive Voice Of Faith in Public Life

By Debbie Van Hoeve

The Centre for Public Dialogue's goal is to present a positive voice of faith in Canadian public life, helping all to live out the links of justice, hope, and reconciliation. Using conversation, learning, and action, we lift our voices together.

While prison populations decline, the rate of aboriginal peoples in prisons increases. A First Nations child living on a reserve receives less welfare funding than a non-aboriginal child. Land claim settlements are few while others stall out in courts

Debbie Van Hoeve represents the RCA at the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue.

and bureaucracy, leaving their communities fractured and festering. The colonization cycle continues to spin with misinformation, abuse, stigma, discrimination, and poverty. Yet there is hope:

- The Canadian government endorsed the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Persons in November 2010. It establishes a minimum standard for the survival, dignity, security, and wellbeing of indigenous peoples.
- A Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was appointed to meet with survivors of residential schools. "It is important that we come away with

a better understanding of the lingering impacts of residential schools...to lay the groundwork that will move us beyond the truth telling of experiences to revealing gestures of reconciliation," stated Marie Wilson, TRC Commissioner.

- Ecumenically, a Canada-wide movement will take place in Ottawa June 14-21, celebrating the declaration alongside indigenous communities speaking to decision-makers.

From where you and I sit in our pews, what does this mean to us? Jesus, who was there in the beginning, declares who he is—the master of truth and reconciliation. The body of believers can follow his lead and be moved to respond in justice and love. We can ask questions, educate ourselves, raise awareness by making a banner for our church, have a community event, forge a relationship with an indigenous person, or invite someone to tell their story of life at a residential school.

To learn more, contact debvanhoeve@hotmail.com.

Facilitating Change: The Commission on Justice and Peace

By Elizabeth Oosterheert

“One of our goals is to connect the Regional Synod of Canada to a broader faith-based community in our pursuit of global change,” says Louise MacRae, who represents the RSC on the Canadian Council of Churches’ Commission on Justice and Peace.

The commission champions several causes and engages in theological



reflection in regard to facilitating transformation and educating congregations about responding to injustice. Currently, the commission is involved with the Dignity for All campaign, an anti-poverty movement that recognizes that everyone deserves a good standard of living. Smaller sub-groups are targeting poverty reduction worldwide.

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MacRae says, “My colleagues and I are also moving to support an initiative designed to provide better access to generic medications in Third World countries. In addition, we have focused a lot of energy on the tragedy of human trafficking. We are looking at ways to increase awareness of this atrocity and reduce the incidence of it during international events such as the upcoming Summer Olympics.”

Among other issues, the commission is addressing nuclear disarmament, racism, and care for the environment. “It is important that we question the role of the church in the world and in relation to our

“I am only one voice, but through the Commission on Justice and Peace, even one voice can make a difference.”

environment. We must promote care for all that God has created,” she says.

While it can be daunting to be a catalyst for change, MacRae is confident that the commission can educate congregations through resources like anti-racism publications and packets that share what the Bible teaches about social problems. “This is our opportunity to take a stronger stand on issues that matter to God. As a commission, we can commit to understanding people’s passions for social justice and, together, accomplish more. I am only one voice, but through the Commission on Justice and Peace, even one voice can make a difference.” ●

Leaving a Legacy

By Doug Waymark

“May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.” —Colossians 1:11-12

As God has promised our inheritance in him, we are expected to respond with joy and thanksgiving. We give of our time, talents, and treasure. Serving the Lord can come in many forms, from teaching Sunday school to serving in leadership to working on missions. We give of our treasure through tithes and offerings and support the work of the Lord through our own congregation, our synods, and other worthy organizations.

We can “leave a legacy” in different ways—through our work in the church or community, our children, our success in business, and specified gifts in our wills. We have been blessed by God in many ways, and it seems that today’s boomer generation is financially wealthier than many previous generations.

When our time on this earth ends, we often leave the residue of our wealth to our family without giving thought to how we could show our love of the Lord beyond our passing into heaven.

There are a number of ways to leave a financial legacy when we end our time on earth:

- Leave a bequest in your will before leaving the residue to your spouse or children. This is often expressed as a percentage of the estate so that the residue is not compromised if our final estate is not at the level we anticipated. Your gift can be a general offering or a specified gift to accomplish a certain objective.
- Gift the proceeds of a life insurance policy or a retirement savings plan by appointing a charity or charities as beneficiaries.
- Set up an insured charitable gift annuity, which provides a lifetime income flow for the donor with the insurance proceeds going to a specified charity or charities.
- A charitable gift annuity provides for a gift now for a portion and an income for life based on the residual amount.
- A charitable remainder trust creates a tax benefit now based on the present value of the gift. The owners receive all income from the trust while they are alive, and the charity receives the gift when they pass away.

These are just some of the ways to honour God’s blessings. For more information on leaving a legacy, contact Doug at dwaymark@shaw.ca. ●

Doug Waymark is the treasurer of RCA Foundation Canada; of his church, Emmaus Christian Fellowship in Langley, British Columbia; and of Classis British Columbia. He also serves on the RSC Executive Committee.

Prayer in and for the Churches

By Gerry Dannen

Every Sunday, most churches in the Regional Synod of Canada (RSC) join together in praying for a sister RSC church. These requests are based on a schedule set up at www.reformed-church-prays.com.

Many people today worry about the

Gerry Danen is the designer of the RSC prayer website and resides in Edmonton, Alberta.

future of the church in a non-Christian society. A quote on the site's homepage reiterates that we have an alternative to worry. Philippians 4:6-7 (*The Message*) says, "Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful

what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life."

Automated emails are sent to designated people of the churches scheduled, and the actual requests are sent out each week to all the churches. If you wish to receive the prayer requests, please register on the site. You can leave requests for prayer or sign up as an intercessor to pray for the requests of others.

To find out more, sign up and look around. You can leave comments or questions on the site, addressed to the executive secretary of the Regional Synod of Canada or the webmaster. ●

New Ministry Shines a Light in Montreal

By Liz Groen

In 1998, Carlos and Meire Rosa moved to Toronto from Brazil to help out at a new Portuguese-speaking RCA church start, Vida Nova. They had no idea that a little more than five years later they'd be at the helm of a new church plant in an area with no other RCA ministries.

One day an elder from Vida Nova called Carlos Rosa. "He said they were trying to plant a church in Montreal for years," says Rosa. "God said to him, 'What about Carlos and Meire? They're waiting.' Well, I wasn't waiting! But I said, 'I can pray. If God says go, we will go.' We wanted a clear answer."

After a lot of time in prayer, the Rosas got their answer. They were approved by the Classis of Ontario to represent the RCA as church planters in Montreal, and they began to feel called to minister in the city.

Igreja Luz para as Nações (Light for the Nations) has been meeting in Montreal, Quebec, since the fall of 2005. Today, around 50 people gather each week for the church's Portuguese-language service. The congregants are mostly Portuguese-speaking Brazilian immigrants, but there are a few worshipers from Portugal and a few French-speaking



Canadians. As the congregation grows, the Rosas hope to add an English service and a French service to reach a greater number of people.

The church's services are contemporary, but the Rosas are committed to a strong Reformed theology. "I believe we should keep the doctrine, the fundamentals. We need to not compromise anything, but still touch people's hearts in this age," Rosa says. "We still keep some hymns, which is important especially because sometimes you have older people with hymns in their hearts. We try to keep a balance [between contemporary and traditional]." ●