

# MENNONITE CREATION CARE NETWORK

*A Network of Mennonite people and agencies  
actively engaged in the restoration of God's creation.*

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## General Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Calls for Action on Climate Change

Willard Metzger, the General Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, attended the United Nations Forum on Climate Change in Durban, South Africa, November 28 to December 9. He reported on his experiences in a blog called *Church Guy*.

The blog describes tense scenes between Canadian politicians and disillusioned youth calling for action. It mourns Canada's decision to pull out of the Kyoto Protocol, but also wrestles with the complexities behind this decision. Metzger was particularly gripped by the voices of small island nations reporting on the effects of rising sea levels. He calls each

of us to re-evaluate our consumption and to speak forcefully to our politicians. "As politicians, they need a platform of unmistakable public opinion in order to provide the leadership we are requesting," he said.

David Neufeld, Winnipeg, Ont., was one of several network members who sent us news of Metzger's trip. "The head of Mennonite Church Canada is saying some very positive and direct things about our mandate as Christians to care for creation," Neufeld observed. § [click here to read Metzger's blog](#)

## Streetside Footwashing Service Protests Keystone Pipeline

Not many congregations hold worship services on busy sidewalks or conduct footwashing in the middle of the street, but to members of at least six Mennonite churches in Winnipeg, Man., it seemed like the right place to speak forcefully about climate justice.

The hour-long worship service was part of a global day of action on September 24, sponsored by 350.org, a grassroots organization working on climate change. Concerns related to the Alberta Tar Sands and the proposed Keystone Pipeline which would bring this oil south to the U.S. were part of what inspired participants. §



Photo by Tamara Petkau

[Click here to read the article, Foot-washing Ends Climate Change Protest, in the Canadian Mennonite.](#)

# Sustainable Living:

## Partial Zero Emissions Vehicles Offer Consumers a Hidden Choice

*This is the first of a series of articles by Creation Care Council members describing some of their own struggles to live sustainably.*

*by Jennifer Halteman Schrock, Creation Care Council*

This November, my husband and I invested in a new car. If you are in the market for a car any time soon, please read on! We'd like to pass on what we learned along the way:

### **Not all engines are created equal.**

Through reading on the web, my husband learned about Partial Zero Emissions Vehicles (PZEVs). PZEV cars are designed to meet California's emissions standards, which are more stringent than the rest of the country's standards. A PZEV engine must also have zero evaporative emissions and a 15-year, 150,000 mile warranty on the emissions system.

These cars look identical to their non-PZEV counterparts of the same make and model, but emit far fewer pollutants. For example, a 2005 Ford Focus with a PZEV engine earns a smog score of nine\* (234 grams per year) compared to the four (1248 grams) its conventional twin wears on its window sticker. According to the California Air Resources Board, the air coming out of the tailpipe of a PZEV is cleaner than the air in some cities. Not all models of cars come with a PZEV option, but many do.

When we discovered that cars with cleaner engines were available at a mark-up of only about \$200 per vehicle, we made a PZEV engine a non-negotiable part of our car search.

### **Do not depend on your car dealer to brief you on your options regarding clean, efficient vehicles.**

We quickly discovered that PZEVs were a best-kept secret in our home state of Indiana. Not only had our friends never heard of PZEVs; neither had most of the half-dozen car dealers my husband spoke with. Some of the dealers had not even encountered the question before. The one I visited was unable to explain the difference between the smog scores and the greenhouse

gas scores\* posted on the windows of his cars.

Sadly, these are not the kinds of questions consumers focus on. While hybrids entice buyers with savings at the gas pump, cleaner air is a less obvious payback. Manufacturers claim that consumers are not willing to pay a few hundred dollars more for a PZEV engine and then their companies get stuck eating the cost by selling PZEV cars for the same price as their non-PZEV models. Since our state is not one of the thirteen states that follow California's auto emissions standards, there is no pressure to sell or market PZEVs here.

### **Technology is often way out ahead of policy.**

I am heartened to see how vehicle emissions have improved. When I looked up our old 2000 Ford Focus, I learned that its emissions are 13 times that of the Hyundai Elantra PZEV we bought. The older car's smog score on the current rating system would be under 1. However, I am sad and angry that my state doesn't value clean air enough to require auto manufacturers to sell PVEZs here. Why isn't every new car on the planet required to meet PZEV standards? Why must we wait until 2025 for cars that get 55 miles per gallon? When will consumers value environmental impact over heated seats and stereo systems?

### **Making choices on behalf of a cleaner environment requires advance planning.**

Fortunately, we were able to buy a car before we hit a transportation crisis. If we had had to replace our car fast, we probably would never have learned that PVEZs were an option. Since we were not able to get a PZEV version of the car we wanted in Indiana, our purchase required a train trip to Pennsylvania to pick up our car. This could have been highly inconvenient on the spur of the moment.

I was also grateful for the money we had saved over the years toward this goal. I hadn't thought of saving money as a "green act" until I wrote this article, but it did give us the ability to make gas mileage and emissions a priority. In the popular article, "Forget Shorter Showers," (*Orion Magazine*, 2009) Derrick Jensen ar-

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gues that simple living is not a political act that brings social change. What he fails to mention, however, is that simple living saves money; money that can then be used to think beyond the bottom-line and create markets for greener products.

Not everyone has the means to lay away money for a car in advance, but even small savings can enable planet-friendly choices. An evening of homemade fun instead of a movie across town can finance a gallon of organic milk or a bag of Fair Trade coffee.

### Learn more:

Here are some web sites we found helpful. Just click:

*California's Drive Clean Buying Guide*

*The EPA's Green Vehicle Guide*

*A 2003 article from USA Today announcing the advent of PZEVs.*

If you enjoy car lots, take a field trip this month and see what your local dealers can tell you about PZEVs or other clean car features. Let them know you place a high priority on low smog scores and greenhouse gas scores. Also make politicians' stance on emissions a factor in your voting. §

\* New cars are rated from 1 to 10 in two categories, with a score of 10 representing the lowest possible emissions. The smog score covers regulated pollutants such as carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides and particulate matter. Since greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide aren't yet regulated, they get a separate score. Gas mileage is the best estimate of a car's greenhouse gas emissions.



### Are your Christmas lights LEDs?

A string of LEDs consumes as little as 4.5 watts and is 80 to 90% more efficient than old incandescent bulbs.

## Resources

### GoodGuide

<http://www.goodguide.com/>

Want to know if your shampoo is harmful to local waterways? Not sure which dishwasher manufacturer treats its employees best? Goodguide rates over 140,000 products on the manufacturer's environmental record and social policies. A third category looks at health concerns raised by the ingredients. Each product receives a 1 to 10 in these categories.

At first glance, the reason a product received its rating appears unclear. Which ingredients raise health concerns? What specific management practices were deemed unacceptable? However, if you look under the "about" tab, you'll find a sidebar where detailed methodologies for evaluating company practices are spelled out. One can find a wealth of information on the environmental and health issues involved in manufacturing, say, diapers or lighting.

Have a Smart Phone? GoodGuide has an app that allows you to scan bar codes in the store and get an immediate rating on your purchase. -JHS

### Anti-Idling Primer: Every Minute Counts

<http://www.thehcf.org/antiidlingprimer.html>

Many of us grew up in the carburetor era. We were taught to warm up our cars in the winter and that constantly turning a car on and off was bad for the engine. Cars have changed, and the current wisdom is that any time your car is sitting still for longer than 10 seconds, it has no need to run. Check the above article to see how much money and carbon dioxide emissions you can save by cutting down on your idling.§

Mennonite Creation Care Network (MCCN) is a bi-national Christian organization affiliated with the Mennonite Church USA and the Mennonite Church Canada. Everence and Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College contribute to the support of the organization. This electronic newsletter is edited by Jennifer Halteman Schrock and Annalisa Harder. Luke Gascho provides leadership for the Creation Care Council. Email [mccn@mennocreationcare.org](mailto:mccn@mennocreationcare.org) if you have a submission or comment.



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100 Shades of Green Congregations:

## Osler Mennonite Church

**Joined MCCN:** February 2011

**Creation Care Liaison:**

Pastor Gordon Allaby

Osler Mennonite Church, Osler, Saskatchewan, has a unique angle on caring for creation due to its location. While many congregations are just beginning to consider their impact on the earth, this church has a long history of thinking about environmental issues. Osler's chief concern rumbles by in trucks daily.

Saskatchewan is one of the world's largest producers of uranium, which is mined in the northern part of the province. A concentrated powder called yellowcake is formed at the mines and then shipped south along Route 11 for further processing.

This road passes directly through Osler, a small town about 15 minutes north of Saskatoon.

In the mid-to-late 1970s, the church became very involved in resisting a nuclear processing plant scheduled to be built near Osler. Most members of the congregation were opposed to the plant for health and safety reasons and also because of the direct connection between uranium and the military. Reactors can produce plutonium for nuclear weaponry, and depleted uranium is used in munitions such as armor-piercing projectiles. Current Pastor Gordon Allaby attributes the fact that the nuclear plant was not built near Osler to the strong Mennonite presence in the community and the level of resistance this provided.

Allaby is not a fan of nuclear power, even as an energy source. "The myth is that nuclear power is a clean energy alternative, but it is not," he told MCCN. "The real hazard is in the mining and processing of

uranium, and in the waste generated. It is a horrific and archaic way to produce energy." Allaby cited the example of a Kentucky processing center that is still using fluouorocarbons to refine uranium.

Allaby describes Osler Mennonite Church as a progressive congregation of about 180 members. It is a congregation where numerous people have voluntary service experience in organizations such as Mennonite Central Committee, and people enjoy being engaged in issues.

The church continues to oppose nuclear development and mining, as the concern hasn't gone away. Since Lockheed Martin, one of the world's largest defense contractors, donated money to the University of Saskatoon for nuclear development, there is talk of a nuclear waste site and nuclear reactor being built in Saskatchewan.

In 2008, a Sunday school class at Osler Mennonite hosted a seminar on the nuclear industry and invited experts to speak. In August 2011, some members of the congregation fed and housed First Nations groups who were doing a 7,000 Generations Walk protesting the possible nuclear waste storage facility. Marchers walked over 500 miles, concluding their protest at the Saskatchewan Legislature in Regina.

While the congregation's struggles with uranium mining are likely to continue a long time, the congregation did reach a happy ending on another front. In 2009, they were instrumental in encouraging the town of Osler to offer curbside recycling. §

*To become a 100 shades of Green Congregation, churches need to agree to make caring for creation a part of their mission and to assign a creation care liaison to MCCN. We welcome congregations with all sorts of interests and approaches, even those who are just beginning the journey.*