

Experts based on his reputation for team building and ability to build a diverse set of relationships with leaders from armed groups. And it was on a visit to some of those leaders that he and Zaida were killed.

Michael was a much-loved son, brother, friend, and colleague. Many said of Michael that he lived “fully engaged” (30). The brief video that was eventually received of Michael’s last moments of life reveals him fully engaged in conversation with his captors. The C. S. Lewis quote utilized in one of the last chapters aptly asserts: “Submit with every fiber of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep nothing back” (214). This story is a must-read as an inspiration to what a life committed to peace can look like. It counters apathy and prompts reflection, for all who read it, as to what one can do for building peace. Michael leaves a legacy, asserts Congolese Bishop Bulambo Lembelembe Josué: “Michael taught us to strive for peace, justice, and social cohesion,” he said. “His fight is our fight today” (135).

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William Janzen, *Advocating for Peace: Stories from the Ottawa Office of Mennonite Central Committee, 1975–2008*. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2019. Pp. 169. Softcover, \$24.95.

In 1975, Mennonite Central Committee Canada (MCCC) opened its Ottawa Office with the purpose of monitoring, responding to, and influencing government policy impacting their areas of humanitarian concern, both nationally and internationally, on behalf of Mennonites and the Brethren in Christ. Janzen was the first director of the MCC Ottawa Office and served in that capacity for thirty-three years, and *Advocating for Peace* is his focused memoir of that time.

Janzen organized this slim book around stories on eighteen selected topics. Domestic topics include capital punishment, refugee settlement in Canada, constitutional reform, abortion, conscientious objection, and Amish milk cans. Equal space is given to international concerns in such places as Vietnam, Cambodia, Palestine, Israel, Iraq, North Korea, and the USSR. Within his advocacy anecdotes, Janzen describes his work mostly in the contexts of writing letters to prime ministers or detailed submissions to parliamentary committees and building personal relationships with politicians. All

his work, and that of the MCC Ottawa Office, was to advocate for justice for Mennonites and others.

Since *Advocating for Peace* is about Janzen's role in MCCC, other examples of the organization's work with government are not included. Early on he explains that appealing to governments was nothing new in Mennonite history, but for the most part such appeals were on their own behalf, usually for permission to settle and exemption from military service. What had changed by the 1970s was MCCC believed it was time to advocate on behalf of others around the world and that the traditional ideal of "quiet in the land" no longer had currency. In fact, by the time Janzen was on the scene, MPs from ridings with large Mennonite populations were often eager to work with MCCC.

If there is a thesis to this collection, it is contained in the chapter on MCCC's practice of writing letters to newly elected prime ministers. Janzen concludes that "by preparing such letters in broad consultation with Mennonite leaders, they became a means of expressing how the Canadian Mennonite people saw themselves. They helped to articulate, and thereby to build, a self-understanding and common approach to the world" (24). However, Janzen immediately qualifies this with the observation that "people in the churches were not of one mind" (25). The letters to prime ministers, while important markers of modern Mennonite concerns in Canada, were more reflective of the MCCC type of Mennonite than the broad national population of Mennonites.

Over his time in MCCC, Janzen worked hard and the Ottawa Office was deeply involved in federal politics, counting successes and a measure of influence through conscientious letter- and paper-writing that was informed, professional, and clear. Many papers were submitted to committees as the government re-evaluated policies; papers also addressed concerns during the Canadian constitutional reform efforts of the 1980s and early 1990s. There were also cases where an issue was solely about the politicians voting on a bill, capital punishment being one of these. In that instance, Janzen confronted a Mennonite constituency split on the issue and the resistance of at least one MP towards MCCC articulating their position as one of conscience, implying the alternative was not. Janzen helped develop a significant letter-writing campaign opposed to it, and that position carried the vote. With no evidence other than insinuation, Janzen claims success on account of their work. That is an aspect of the book that could use buttressing beyond the author's recollection, as in quotes from politicians that speak well of MCCC's advocacy drawn from memory, with no supporting documentation.

The bulk of the book regards four themes: refugees, Vietnam and Cambodia, Israel and Palestine, and Mennonites from Mexico. MCCC was deeply involved in the refugee issue and played a vital role in changing Canada's processing of refugees through private sponsorship, where MCCC became the responsible entity between the refugee and government, enabling churches and individuals therein to host newcomers. Long-standing involvements in South-east Asia and the Middle East, and in assisting the many Mennonites from Mexico who returned to Canada, helped bring the advocacy of MCCC to prominence.

Janzen concludes that MCCC's Ottawa Office, while not getting everything it wanted, was influential and benefited from Canada's middle-power status in the world and focus on multilateralism that inclined the government towards listening to groups like the Mennonites. Moreover, as MPs from Mennonite-heavy ridings were natural conversation partners, so too were the growing number of Mennonite politicians themselves. Despite a general celebratory tone throughout the book, Janzen acknowledges some of his less successful times in Ottawa and reflects briefly on the thorny issue of reconciling Mennonite pacifist religious faith with the realities of government. He ends by observing that on the question of what should guide the work of governing, the principles of sacrificial love, the common good, the will of the majority, or what seems fair and just at any given time all seem inadequate. Thus, he recommends that Mennonites commit to learning from other Christian traditions when it comes to thinking about church and government. The book concludes that "selfishness and greed will continue to yield injustice and conflict" (169), reminding the reader why an MCCC is necessary.

*Advocating for Peace* is a breezy book that provides an insider view of political advocacy. Anyone with an interest in non-governmental organizations will enjoy this memoir.

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