



# The Vine

April 2015

*Becoming a community through which God's healing and hope can flow to the world*

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# **The War in Colombia Affects El Divino Redentor and Us**

Colombia has had an ongoing civil war for at least 50 years and very little peace since 1948. For the past 28 months, the Colombian government and the country's largest left-wing rebel group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), have been meeting in Cuba to try to negotiate an end to the war. Related to the war, more than seven million people have registered with the government's Victim's Unit and most are internally displaced by the violence. Much of El Divino Redentor ministry is assisting those displaced by the war; so although the war is largely in other parts of Colombia, it directly impacts them.

To date, agreements have been reached on three key issues. Nearly two years ago, they agreed on a plan for land reform, a very contentious issue, that "will be the start of a radical transformation of rural Colombia". The deal calls for the economic and social development of rural areas and the provision of land to poor farmers. In November 2013, both sides agreed on the rebels' political participation should a peace deal be reached and one year ago they reached a compromise on the illegal drugs, a main sources of funding for the FARC. This would eliminate all illicit drug production in Colombia and would treat drug consumption as a public health problem. There are three tough issues remaining to be solved: the rights of the victims of the

conflict, the disarmament of the rebels, and how all the agreed points will be implemented.

Fighting continues because under the terms of the negotiations, nothing is implemented until the final accord has been signed. In the past, the rebels used ceasefires to re-arm, so the government has not agreed to a ceasefire during currently negotiations, so the killings continue. In December the FARC declared an indefinite cessation of hostilities and in January 2015, President Santos said his government was prepared to begin talks on a bilateral ceasefire. This would be an important development, because according to a report by Colombia's National Centre for Historical Memory more than 220,000 people have been killed in the armed conflict and 80% of them were civilians. There are many hopeful signs for this beleaguered country with mass demonstrations and the backing of key European and regional leaders in favor of the peace process. However, there are many powerful interests in Colombia, including the former president Alvaro Uribe, who objects to the concessions being made to the rebels. The outcome of these negotiations will play a major role in what the future holds for Colombia and for El Divino Redentor





# Ask Ms. Menno

**Dear Ms. Menno:**

I must ask for your forgiveness. I made up a quote by you to get some laughs at Menno Nite. And it wasn't even that funny of a joke. What must I do to atone for my sin?

*Mennonite Charlatan*

**Dear MC:**

Who among your accusers is without sin? Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more. You are by no means the first person at FMC to make up something in order to try to get a laugh. As they say about chastity being its own punishment, so is telling an unfunny joke.

**Dear Ms. Menno:**

As you are no doubt aware, there is within the congregation considerable speculation as to your own identity. During fellowship hour I have heard names mentioned such as Tammie Bouseman and Cindy Breeze. Some people even doubt that you are a woman. Imagine! I have overheard people suggest Perry Biddle or even, Doug West. Since you are obviously someone with an impressive knowledge of the Bible and church history, I wonder if you would be willing to give everyone at least a little hint as to who you are.

*Intrigued Mennonite*

**Dear IM:**

To quote God, "I am that I am." Or to quote the famous Popeye cartoon short of 1933, "I Yam What I Yam." All of the people you've mentioned are plausible candidates to be the real me. There might be a few others. To end the speculation, here is a picture of me:



**Dear Ms. Menno:**

I recently visited the Creation Museum in northern Kentucky. This is a theme park based on the idea that the world is only 6,000 years old because that is what the Bible says. The most surprising thing about the park is the idea that people co-existed quite happily with dinosaurs, partly because before the fall all animals were vegetarian. There is a picture of what I took to be a T-Rex munching on what looked like a pineapple. There are dinosaurs inside the very impressive model of Noah's ark and I noticed that many of my fellow visitors wore plain clothes. So, I am wondering if there is an official Mennonite position on the happy co-existence of people and big eating dinosaurs. Do you think that in the event of people outside the church asking our pastors for the





church's position, we should have a discernment circle?

*Discerning Mennonite*

**Dear DM:**

See the first letter re: unfunny jokes. Also, remember that brevity is the soul of wit. I guess if you're surprised about the idea that people co-existed happily with dinosaurs, you are too young to remember the television documentary series, "The Flintstones." Look it up on YouTube. Surely, you know without asking that Mennonites don't have an official position on the happy co-existence of people and dinosaurs. They can't even agree on an official position on the happy co-existence of people and people. If you would feel better with a discernment circle, go for it.

**Dear Ms. Menno:**

The undefeatable (sic) FMC treasurer keeps reminding us of how short we are of funds. I think I have the solution. During the Middle Ages, many churches publicized relics in order to have pilgrims come and pay to see them. These included St. Paul's toenails, St. Michael's sweat, St. Peter's tooth, Doubting Thomas's finger, not to mention Jesus's multiple foreskins and John the Baptist's multiple skulls, most miraculously one of him as a boy. Do you think we could resurrect this long-established church tradition and so alleviate our current financial embarrassment? What kind of relic do you think would bring in the faithful nowadays? Could Perry Biddle be asked to make one?

*Happy To Help Mennonite*

**Dear HTHM:**

I think you meant the indefatigable treasurer not the undefeatable treasurer. Although she is also undefeatable. FMC in its 45 years of existence has never failed to meet its budget, although every year giving is behind what it needs to be until the last two Sundays of the fiscal year. I have serious doubts about the ethics of asking Perry Biddle to make a fake relic. If we someday get into a real financial bind, we could ask Perry's mother, Sue, to donate John Calvin's heart, which I hear she keeps in her freezer. This would be poetic justice since Calvin and his follower were mean to Mennonites in Zurich in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.





# MennoNite Suggestions

In planning for the Menno Nite dinner at Hawthorne Suites, the Hospitality and Fellowship Committee often found themselves saying, "people expect....." So, in an attempt to find out what people expect and what they desire with regards to the cost of the meal, we are taking a survey.

Menno Nite has traditionally offered a buffet meal. As the prices for this continue to rise, we would like to know if you would prefer a "plated meal" (salad, rolls, entree, vegetable, starch, dessert) at a lower cost.

Prices range as follows:

- vegetarian meal \$17.73 - \$20.25
- meat meal \$19.02 - \$24.11
- buffet \$24.72

We also pay an 18% gratuity on top of that. We would be able to offer 2 choices and would use place cards to inform servers.

If you have opinions, please send them to Marcia E. Nelson via e-mail at [sunboat@soltec.net](mailto:sunboat@soltec.net).

## Solar Panel Update

Monitoring Website: [https://enlighten.enphaseenergy.com/pv/public\\_systems/WgEG401654](https://enlighten.enphaseenergy.com/pv/public_systems/WgEG401654)

It has been a couple months since the solar panel update has been published. Solar production has started to increase again as the days are getting longer, but production in February and early March were significantly hampered by snow covering the solar panels and cold temperatures that kept it from melting.

FMC Solar Panel Dashboard			
	Electricity Generated (kWh)	Electricity Used (kWh)	Percent Solar Energy
JANUARY	337	1,299	26%
FEBRUARY	386	1,808	21%
MARCH	404	1,627	25%
TO DATE	5,820	13,228	44%

  

<p><b>FUN FACT:</b></p> <p>Our electricity generated to date avoided emissions equivalent to:</p> <p><b>1.4</b></p>	<p>Source: EPA Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator</p> <p>tons of waste sent to the landfill</p> 
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