



Moundridge, Kan-

# EDEN ECHOES EXTRA

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## Book Review By Marlene Harder Bogard

Whoa, there sister!: some thoughts after reading: *Mennonite in a Little Black Dress* by Rhoda Janzen. Henry Holt, 2009

Ok. First things first. This book begs for some clarification. I too am a Mennonite. But a very different kind of Mennonite that Janzen portrays. I grew up in a family that did not strongly frown upon dancing, movies, card-playing, drinking or smoking or even higher education. (That was the 1960's). My 91 year-old mother has a university degree. Most of my extended family has master's degrees. Point is: the Mennonite she describes is not the classic, or common Mennonite experience in America. This depends on where you were reared geographically, as well as what "brand" of Mennonite you claim to be. As far as Janzen is concerned, being Mennonite is mostly about the food, the restrictions, the conservative life style. There are plenty of us who would rather see the "Mennonite" lens as one way to nuance our Christian faith. So when Janzen seems to define being Mennonite as a culture-based phenom, there are a bunch of us who will react. Sure, some of that stuff (carbo-based German foods, home-sewn clothes, living more with less) continues to be a stalwart in some of our homes, but far less all the time. In fact the greatest population of Mennonites is actually on the continent of Africa and they don't have the last name of Janzen, Yoder or Friesen or Stucky.

One more rant, please. I would be remiss if I didn't comment on the gratuitous, vulgar language in the book. Not sure if it was included to inspire, shock or offend the reader, but it seemed like just one more in-your-face way of countering all the prim ways of her childhood. I may be expressing my own kind of naiveté for the kind of language that seems common place today. As my 26 year old son said, "Gee mom, you are the only one I know who doesn't use the F-word." OK. I get that. But if I don't take a little tiny stand against the ever-growing crass nature of the English language, then I too would not be faithful to my own brand of Mennonite Christianity. What indeed makes me different than the rest of the world?

Sure the book was funny at the beginning but I was less enchanted as I made my way through.

Rhoda, dear sister, next time, spend more time in therapy, and save the ink and paper. Or...maybe I should be in therapy and you should write more.

Marlene Harder Bogard, who owns the book, is thinking of adding a little brown wrapper to it before loaning it to all curious folks.

## Thinking About Christmas Giving?

Are you tired of the commercialized Christmas? Are you tired of the advertising that just promotes more consumerism? Do you want your gifts to share the message of love and caring for your neighbor?

Then look at the list below. These are organization that have limited budgets and wish lists.

### Camp Mennoscah

[www.mennowdc.org/Camp.html](http://www.mennowdc.org/Camp.html) or contact us at [campmno@mennowdc.org](mailto:campmno@mennowdc.org) or 620-297-3290



Make a gift by Credit or Debit Card by going to [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org) or call 888 5-HUNGER

### Mennonite Central Committee

[Christmas giving](#)

[Give hope](#)

[Give food](#)

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### Mennonite Education Agency

<http://www.mennoniteeducation.org/MEAPortal/Portals/57ad7180-c5e7-49f5-b282-c6475cdb7ee7/JwG%20Kindergarten%20Crse/2009%20Gift%20Response%20Sheet.pdf>

### Pet Kansas

For more information email [petkansas@hotmail.com](mailto:petkansas@hotmail.com)

## A Prayer for the Earth

by [Brian McLaren](#) 10-27-2009

*Tim Costello of World Vision Australia and I have been working behind the scenes to compose a prayer that could be used by individuals and groups leading up to the Copenhagen gathering on climate change Dec. 6.*

Most gracious God, creator of all good things, we thank you for planet Earth and all creatures that share it.

Have mercy on us, Lord. Through ignorance and carelessness we have poisoned clean air and pure water. For monetary gain we have reduced verdant forests to barren wastes. In our craving for more we have plundered your beloved creation and driven many of our fellow creatures to extinction. Only recently have we begun to realize the dangerous future into which our current patterns of consumption and waste are driving us, especially in relation to Earth's climate. Only recently have we begun to see our need to find a wiser and better way of life in the future, before it is too late and our choices are limited by the consequences of inaction.

We who join in prayer today believe the time has come, Lord. Please guide us now, our God, at this critical moment in history, to better fulfill our role as stewards of this fragile planet. Guide the leaders of nations who (will) gather in Copenhagen (on Dec. 6). Give them courage to set noble goals that reach beyond short-range political expediency, short-term economic profit, and short-sighted self-interest. Impress upon their conscience our sacred duty to bequeath to our children and grandchildren a healthy and thriving environment rather than a world in climate crisis.

If our leaders fail, Lord, if they fail to take the necessary action, they will violate both our trust and your calling to use their power for the common good. If they fail, every person will be affected, including generations not yet born. Rouse us all to action, for we are all woven together in the fabric of creation.

This is the moment, God, when a great turning of hearts must begin. So through this prayer, we of many traditions who follow Christ — joined by friends and neighbors of many faiths — unite our hearts in a cry for change. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray in the name of Christ, through whom you have given yourself to the whole world in incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. Amen.



**Brian McLaren** ([brianmclaren.net](http://brianmclaren.net)) is a speaker and author, most recently of *Everything Must Change* and *Finding Our Way Again*.

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*Family Systems and Pastoral Care*  
*The Arts in Worship*  
*Understanding the Church's Contexts*  
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*Understanding the Church's Contexts*

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Find the seminary catalog at: [www.ambs.edu/academics/catalog](http://www.ambs.edu/academics/catalog).