

## CREATION CARE

When I was 8 or 9, my job was to sift through the ashes and rescue unburned bits of coal so that they could be put back into the furnace to keep us warm. We were poor. I learned a life lesson back then: try not to throw anything out that still has a use.

In 1979, MCC invited Dorothy and me to be *Living more with less* consultants, following the philosophy of Doris Janzen Longacre, author of the *More-With-Less Cookbook*. We'd organize workshops on practical ways of living simply so that others could simply live. These sessions were popular with women, but where



were the men? Often, younger women would ask how they could live more simply. Older women would smile knowingly so we'd ask them to teach us how they were living simply and caring for creation. Now these older women grew up during the "dirty '30s", the Great Depression years. They had learned how to live on little. Their ideas flowed spontaneously: kitchen gardens; canning and filling root cellars; making gifts, clothing, and soap; using hand-me-downs; repairing instead of replacing; sharing. Knowledge is most often found within a group.



A few years after the 1984 drought and famine that took tens of thousands of lives in Ethiopia, I was introduced to a Canadian group that was planting trees there. I wanted to help, so I purchased hundreds of Austrian pine seedlings and sold them locally. Profits went towards planting other trees in Ethiopia. I also placed Plant-a-Tree-in-Africa t-shirts in MCC Thrift Shops and SELFHELP Crafts of the World stores in Ontario with the profits going towards more tree-planting. The power of t-shirts: over 100,000 trees were planted in Ethiopia through t-shirt sales.

Last year the United Nations declared that it would take one trillion new trees at the cost of \$300 billion to reverse the climate crisis.<sup>i</sup> That's less than 10% of what governments are spending during the COVID-19 pandemic.



I read, attend public events, write and speak about creation care and the climate crisis. Each year Dorothy and I support tree planting projects funded by MCC and MEDA. We give our Carbon Tax Rebate to Trees for Woolwich, a volunteer group that has planted over 30,000 trees so far. I grow tree seedlings to give away. I grow brightly colored flowers and sow white clover seeds in the lawn to attract pollinators. I appreciate all living creatures I meet in the garden and on walks. Like so many I blue box, green bin, compost and use less energy. I eat less meat. I give thanks to our Creator.

I am trying....I need to do more.

Richard MacBride

Jen MacBride, Editor

<sup>i</sup> Carrington, Damian. "Rhapsody in Green." London, UK: *The Guardian Weekly*, 12.07.19, pp. 24-25.