



Photo by Chase Snyder

Rachel Halder of Parnell, Iowa, responds to a question by Patricia Burdette during a videotaped interview at the Mennonite Women USA booth in the Exhibit Hall.

Mennonite Women Capture 'Kitchen Table Theology' on Video

Rachel Halder
Goshen College

"Where do you have kitchen table conversations other than the kitchen table?"

Sitting in a chair at the Mennonite Women USA exhibit hall booth, I drew this question from a bowl as a camera stood a few feet ahead anticipating my answer.

The current theme for Mennonite Women USA is "Kitchen Table Theology." Patricia Burdette, editor of *Timbrel* magazine, is responsible for videotaping women at the Mennonite Women USA booth in the convention center exhibit hall.

She explained that the theme draws from 1970s feminist theology, which discusses "the informal way that women talk about their theology over the kitchen table."

Mennonite Women USA is wanting to acknowledge the issues of the church through the voices of women. "We're encouraging women to come talk, share their opinions, and be videotaped," said Burdette.

"The videos may be posted on the Web, and will eventually go to the Mennonite archives as a picture of women's opinions in 2009," explained Burdette.

Questions might be "What would you like to see Mennonite USA doing for women?" or "What are the current issues for women about the church?" But women are invited to share whatever they feel compelled to say in the five-minute time slot each interviewee is given.

Although this idea has received overall positive responses, there are a few frustrations, said Burdette: "A lot of women think this is a good idea, but then they say 'Oh, no, don't tape me!'"

And as for my answer, I have found a beautiful "kitchen table" in my living room at Goshen College, where I join with the women who have grown closest to my heart. There we sit and discuss spirituality, peace, current news, feminism, sorrows and joys.