

# Let our little light shine

Last May two events occurred for me in the same week. First, I emailed a proposed Resolution Against Human Trafficking, brought by the MW USA Board of Directors, to the Columbus delegate assembly committee. Second, I helped my husband Bob finish our annual spring task of splitting and stacking wood to heat our home in the coming winter. After covering the wood with tarp to keep it dry, I noticed a large pile of kindling around the splitter.

As I picked up scraps, soon filling a box and wheelbarrow, Bob asked, "Where are you going to put that?" Standing with an armful of splintery wood, I realized I had moved inwardly to another place, somewhere with women and children in villages around the world, who might be searching for kindling to start their fires to cook dinner. It seemed wrong to waste these scraps when others might need fuel to survive.

Passing the Resolution Against Human Trafficking (see [www.MennoniteWomenUSA.org](http://www.MennoniteWomenUSA.org)) started a small fire in Mennonite Church USA. Like the kindling needed to cook food, this issue is deeply lodged at a survival level. In this issue of *timbrel* focusing on Women and Poverty, we note that poverty is a root cause of human trafficking. In the June 2009 "Trafficking in Persons" report, which tracks "modern slavery" such as forced labor and the sex trade, the U.S. state department said: "Growing poverty around the world has sparked an increase in both the supply and demand for human trafficking."

Along with poverty, human trafficking touches pornography, sexual abuse, violence, racism, greed, and beliefs that objectify women. One of the delegates asked how we can know if our purchases and investments are made by enslaved people. Passing this resolution, lighting this fire, however small right now, is the beginning of educating ourselves. With knowledge comes responsibility.

It reminds me of the wheelbarrow in the garage full of kindling. What is the good in one small piece of wood when a whole log is needed to heat the house? I trust God to lead us step by step in how we "let our little light shine" against the darkness of modern day slavery. 📌

*\*Suzanne Stauffer, Sugarcreek, Ohio, sent an annotated bibliography to MW USA which has been posted on our webpage—ed.*



*Rhoda Keener is executive director of Mennonite Women USA. Contact her at 5207 Heisey Road, Shippensburg, PA 17257-9242; 717-532-9723; <[rhodak@MennoniteWomenUSA.org](mailto:rhodak@MennoniteWomenUSA.org)>.*

*If you know about sites or resources regarding human trafficking in USA, or resources for survivors, send information to [office@MennoniteWomenUSA.org](mailto:office@MennoniteWomenUSA.org) and we'll post it on our website.\* An excellent resource is David Batsone's book Not for Sale: The Return of the Global Slave Trade—and How We Can Fight It (2007).*