

CANADIAN MENNONITE

June 22, 2009

Volume 13 Number 13

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EDITORIAL

Let that land talk

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Henry Funk thinks the era of *Die Stille im Lande* (the quiet in the land) is over. He wants that land, now in the hands of many Mennonite farmers, to talk. Talk to the tens of thousands of motorists driving by with a message of peace.

Funk, a farmer and interim pastor in rural Hague, Sask., has some of his land along Route 11, a four-lane highway that takes tourists and local residents to Prince Albert. He sees this as an opportunity to witness to our Anabaptist belief in peace. A huge billboard saying something succinct, like “Imagine life without war” (see back cover for a sample ad), would grab the attention, however fleetingly, of passing motorists. A one-line reference to Mennonite Church Canada’s liveforpeace.ca website, or, perhaps with more local punch, the phone number of the local Mennonite church, would give the passersby a reference point.

Funk was to the microphone at the MC Canada assembly in early June with this innovative touch to a proposal that Dan Dyck, director of communications, presented to the delegates gathered in Saskatoon. That proposal was prompted by a 2008 resolution presented by Gordon Allaby on behalf of Osler Mennonite Church, Sask., which has taken out print ads in the local paper with peace messages. Dyck fleshed out the proposal with suggestions on how churches, working together in a community, could do an outdoor media

campaign with messages such as “Make a date with peace” on the side of buses, or “Give your conscience a workout” at transit shelters.

Two exciting things are at work here. It is a very practical and low-cost way to use modern media in reaching more than a few hundred souls on a Sunday morning with something that is, in effect, preaching to the choir.

Most of us probably aren’t as passionate about peace as Allaby, who, in 1971, spent eight hours in a room surrounded by military officials drilling him on his conscientious objection application during the time of the Vietnam War. But it is an issue that, with few exceptions, we can rally around.

It is also the thrilling evolution of a good idea whose time has come. Out of his own spiritual formation, a pastor of non-Mennonite background found one of our core beliefs attractive enough to join our community of faith. He thought something more than “talking” about it should be done.

That triggered the imagination of a communications director, who then researched the possibilities and came up with the outdoor promotion campaign, an effort that could be shared by several churches in the local community.

That stirred the imagination of a farmer/pastor in rural Saskatchewan, who immediately thought about all the Mennonite farmers owning land along major highways. What an opportunity,



Funk told the gathered delegates, to use the resources we already have to spread the message of peace.

But is this message consistent with our practices, some delegates asked. “What about our families whose members have participated in war(s)?” “We still have unfinished business from World War II,” said another. “Do we have peace in our families?” asked yet another.

Acknowledgement of, and sensitivity to, all of these questions should be a part of this ongoing discussion. But if we, as imperfect saints, would wait until all of our lives are in order and all of these issues are resolved, we would continue to sit out our time as *Die Stille im Lande*.

There is little doubt that both Canada and the U.S. are increasingly militarized societies, giving us a growing discomfort and hopefully new motivation to counter this prevailing evil with reminders of peace. Seems like a small effort that could have a big impact. Let’s go for it!

New advertising representative

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Lisa Metzger of St. Jacobs, Ont., as our new advertising representative, replacing Karen Suderman, who, with her husband Andrew,



is beginning a three-year term with MC Canada in South Africa as directors of the Anabaptist centre there. Lisa, a mother of a five-year-old and a member of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, has 15-plus years of marketing, communication and event-planning experience. She was most recently a marketing specialist for FaithLife Financial, Waterloo, Ont., and has also worked as the marketing communications director for Mennonite Savings & Credit Union, Kitchener, Ont.

ABOUT THE COVER:

MC Canada longs to see its congregations and parishioners ‘living inside out.’ Its 2009 assembly theme was ‘unzipped’ by frank discussions around promoting peace in the public square and the need to be a faithful church in relation to our interpretation of Scripture. Assembly coverage begins on page 4.

PHOTO: MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA

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Mission statement: *Canadian Mennonite (CM)* is a bi-weekly Anabaptist/Mennonite-oriented periodical which seeks to promote covenantal relationships within the church (Hebrews 10:23-25). It provides channels for sharing accurate and fair information, faith profiles, inspirational/educational materials, and news and analyses of issues facing the church. In fulfilling its mission, the primary constituency of *CM* is the people and churches of Mennonite Church Canada and its five related area churches. *CM* also welcomes readers from the broader inter-Mennonite and inter-church scene. Editorial freedom is expressed through seeking and speaking the truth in love and by providing a balance of perspectives in news and commentary. *CM* will be a vehicle through which mutual accountability can be exercised within the community of believers; the paper also encourages its readers to have open hearts and minds in the process of discerning God's will.

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:23-25, NRSV).

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New blog postings

[at canadianmennonite.org/blog/](http://canadianmennonite.org/blog/)

Call me by my true names: **CHERYL WOELK**

My first conference: **REBECCA JANZEN**

A building project: **CHERYL WOELD**

Biking: **REBECCA JANZEN**

Clothed by God

Like the poet of the Psalms, Christians today need to understand that God is 'mindful of us'

BY ALLAN RUDY-FROESE

The following sermon was preached by Allan Rudy-Froese of Kitchener, Ont., at this year's Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Saskatoon. A minister for more than 20 years, Rudy-Froese is currently studying homiletics (the art of preaching) at the Toronto School of Theology while serving as interim pastor at Wellesley Mennonite Church, Ont., and chaplain at Erb & Good Funeral Home in Waterloo, Ont.

MC CANADA PHOTO



Allan Rudy-Froese, left, and Jerry Buhler, MC Saskatchewan conference minister, fit each other up for compassion, humility and kindness during Rudy-Froese's assembly sermon.

It is not easy to bring the big picture and the small picture together. We struggle for words. Three thousand years ago a poet looks up at the stars—feeling rather small—and speaks to God:

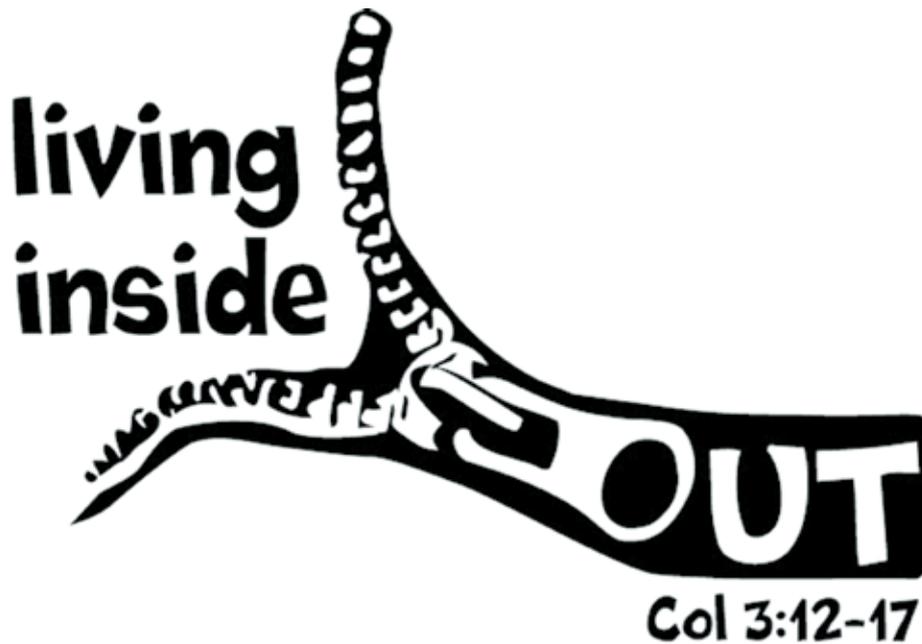
*When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
who are we that you are mindful of us?*

This is a way of saying it. A poem and prayer: it is leaning towards thankfulness, but it is also loaded with significant wonder.

Poets and scientists over the years still speak and pray standing under stars and over maps. We marvel when we look out into the sky on a clear night, looking at countless stars, some of which have taken billions of years to travel to our eyes. We are small: Who are we that God would be mindful of us?

Our solar system, which seems so vast to us, hardly rates with reference to the universe. Our sun, on the edge of the Milky Way, on the inner rim of the Orion Arm, is hardly a light in other heavens. We are small in the scheme of things, but “small” hardly says it.

We reach for words to put this big picture/small picture thing into perspective. It is not surprising that our broken attempts form prayers directed to the Creator.



*When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
who are we that you are mindful of us?*

But there is hope, as the poet continues: *"You made us a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned us with glory and honour."* We are small in the context of the universe, but we matter. Somehow we matter significantly.

The poet of Colossians is trying to add to this pool of words on who we are in the vastness of time and space. This poet does not go to the stars, but goes to the creation of the world, saying that the one who we know as the Christ was there at the beginning of it all: *"For by him [Christ] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."*

This is a way of saying it. Time and space in this vast universe are held

together in Christ. This is a poetic, prayerful, thankful attempt to bring it all together. But the poet of Colossians does not stay there. We visit the beginning of creation and then we go to simple human concerns like patience, envy, greed and forgiveness; how people get along or do not get along; and the fact we are clothed.

Yes, clothing. The God who has clothed the universe with stars is passionate about how we are clothed in community. The line we have experienced here this weekend [as MC Canada Assembly 2009] is: *"Therefore as God's chosen, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, gentleness, humility and patience."*

These words—as we have been celebrating this weekend—are not addressed to me as an individual. I am not encouraged to somehow put on kindness in the privacy of my individual faith as I would put on a shirt in the privacy of my room. Rather, we have taken these words communally. We are invited to allow others to dress us with kindness and patience. We are invited to dress each other. This may strike us as too intimate, but then we are

called to drink and eat together in close proximity, and to wash one another's feet.

Before too many images form in our minds about dressing one another, I could say to someone, "Get rid of that jacket of greed and let a brother replace it with a jacket of gentleness." The jacket might be a good image, but this dressing of each other called for by the poet of Colossians is more intimate than this.

One month after high school I went to Jamaica for a year with the Mennonite Central Committee Serving and Learning Together program. I worked there in a home for children. These children were orphans, rejected by their parents and rejected even by other orphanages. When a child came to our home, the first thing that happened was the shower. The old clothes came off, the child went into the shower, where shampoo and soap were applied liberally. After the shower was finished, new clothes were put on.

So there is little four-year-old Ezworth and he had never had a shower before. He is afraid of the water that comes from on high but he is loving the soap. When he gets out of the shower he is greeted

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by a towel the size of which he has never seen. After the towel comes new clothes to replace his old, dirt-stained ones. He wears his new red T-shirt, new underwear and short pants with a big smile.

Good enough. But just before meeting the other children he is nervous. You see, what Ezworth is used to is some big kid coming up and stealing his stuff. That is the world that he knows. So Ezworth is defensive at first, but soon realizes that in this home no one will take his new clothes from him. This is a place where his older brothers and sisters will respect him and the clothes on his back.

Ezworth's new red T-shirt is real. But it also is "symbolic salvation." Ezworth was once in tattered clothes, in a community of greed and hostility. With those clothes shed, Ezworth is "baptized" in the shower. The old is cast off and he is plunged into the waters of life. He comes out a "new boy." Squeaky clean. Transformed to live in a new community. In his undressing and dressing he has been taken through the death and resurrection of Christ. His new red T-shirt and his smart little pants are the stuff of "new life." We could say now that Ezworth is "chosen, holy, and dearly loved, clothed with kindness, compassion, gentleness, humility and patience."

The God whose fingers fashioned the

universe with stars and galaxies beyond our wildest projections, reaches to clothe even the least of us. Ezworth did not just get new clothes. He was clothed by God, through the church, in the name of Christ. At least, this is one way of saying it.

What can we do?

We could plan an event where we could clothe each other. An evening in the fall might be nice. Children and adults could gather at the church wearing old jackets, scarves and hats. We would also bring

new jackets, scarves and hats, but keep them in the foyer for a time.

We could start with a song of confession there in our old clothes. There could be a time for the taking off of the old scarves of greed and envy. It could be a big group thing for a while and then there might be time for smaller conversations.

I might ask another to take the hat of anger off of me. Maybe we could talk and pray, and then ditch the hat.

There may be another conversation in the corner where someone is asking for forgiveness for something that happened

20 years ago. A part of that conversation might include the jacket of resentment taken off.

We could heap up the clothing of anger, envy, and resentment in the middle of the room.

At some point, the new clothing would come out. We could clothe one another with scarves of compassion, jackets of forgiveness, and hats of patience. We could bless one another as we clothe each other.

The evening would end—now that we

The God whose fingers fashioned the universe with stars and galaxies beyond our wildest projections, reaches to clothe even the least of us.

are all bundled up in new fall jackets—with a walk outside under the stars. All warm and at ease with one another, with our confessions made and new life reaffirmed, with thanksgiving in our hearts, we would look to the stars as God's dearly loved people and wonder in thanksgiving with the poet of old:

*When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
who are we that you are mindful of us? ʘ*

MC Canada reports \$200,000 deficit

BY DICK BENNER
Editor/Publisher

Mennonite Church Canada wasn't spared the pain of the economic downturn when it reported a nearly \$200,000 deficit to delegates at its Friday night session in Saskatoon.

Driving the loss mostly was a drop of some \$456,920 in revenues, due primarily to fewer grants from partner agencies for shared ministry with such partners as Mennonite Mission Network (MMN), said Randy Wiebe, MC Canada's chief financial officer. "As the two national church bodies [MC Canada/MC USA] grow further apart in what have been joint projects, the fewer contributions MC Canada can count on," he said.

The heavier MMN losses on the U.S. side contributed inadvertently to the Canadian contribution level, Wiebe said, making it difficult to prepare for the losses.

Taking a hit, too, was investment income, with nearly \$60,000 less coming into the coffers.

Other shortfalls were made up with transfers from various funds, said Wiebe.

Staff expenses generally held the line, with one exception—that of a nearly doubled cost of the 2008 annual assembly and MC Canada-MC USA joint event in Winnipeg, compared to the 2007 event. The longer four-day event in 2008, to which far fewer MC USA representatives came—contributed to a \$56,010 spending increase for Support Services.

Wiebe emphasized that no staff were terminated to make up for the deficit, but the filling of some vacant staff positions has been indefinitely postponed. He said the downturn was "sudden and unexpected," not something to which the national organization has been accustomed.

'Public peace' and a 'faithful church' top discernment issues

BY KARIN FEHDERAU AND AARON EPP

Canadian Mennonite Correspondents

Declaring peace in the public square and being a faithful church were the two topics that drew the most excitement from delegates at the 10th annual meeting of Mennonite Church Canada, held from June 5 to 7 in Saskatoon, Sask.

The impetus for a proposal to declare peace in the public square came from a request by Osler Mennonite Church, Sask., at the last assembly, which expressed concern for the increasing acceptance of militarization in Canadian society.

"War does not bring peace," Osler pastor Gordon Allaby told the delegates. "It makes sense to share a better way to solve problems."

Osler Mennonite has taken a number of steps to inform its community about Mennonite beliefs. Peace message ads have been placed in the local paper. It has hosted a peace conference, sponsored a forum on the nuclear industry, and asked the local school to broaden its presentation of Remembrance Day.

"Our society is changing, building up our military. . . I wonder, who is protesting these shifts?" Allaby said.

Together with MC Canada communications director Dan Dyck, delegates took an informative look at how such a movement might look. Several cost-effective ways to send a peace message to the world were offered. Dyck asked if several congregations could pool resources and foot the bill for a very important undertaking. Other, less public ways to spread Mennonite convictions on peace were also offered. But the topic was on peace in the public square and this was about taking a very public stand against war.

Delegates discussed if their home church families might support this idea.

"We need to start with living peace in our homes," said Ted Jahnke of Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon, referring to the prevalence of violent video games.

Speaking for his table, Norm Voth of MC

Manitoba admitted, "Some congregations would be resistant."

While MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman reminded delegates that the proposal calls for each church to practise peace with one act each year, Dyck challenged people to be prepared for the response that might follow when someone's church name would be prominent on the ad.

"This calls for no longer being 'the quiet in the land,'" one man observed.

Ernie Epp from Saskatoon spoke in favour of the proposal, but called for circumspection. "Our position is seen as a put-down of those who serve in the military," he cautioned. "Let's be sensitive as to how we present this publicly."

When the vote was called for, the response was wholeheartedly positive.

No one voted against the proposal which called MC Canada churches to step out in faith and asked that "each part of the body . . . commit to publicly engage one local/regional issue per year for the next four years."

Being a faithful church

The "being a faithful church" discernment session revolved around how the members of MC Canada look at the Bible and interpret it.

The General Board had noticed a trend among the churches, calling it "a state of hermeneutical ferment." "We read the same Scripture, calling upon the same Holy Spirit, and yet come up with different interpretations," it noted.

The process began when a request came to the board on how to interpret the sexuality issue. It gradually evolved into a discernment process. In preparation for the assembly, MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman wrote a paper to get delegates thinking. And think they did.

Rudy Baergen, chair of MC Canada's Faith and Life Committee, walked delegates through the lengthy document Suderman wrote. "Discernment is at the heart of what church is about," Baergen said. "At its root, there is a need to discern what is sin."

Baergen's comments helped set the stage for group discussion to follow. Reporting for one table, Emily Toews summarized the different voices. "The paper is empowering," she said.

After several tables reported comments and concerns, the floor microphones were opened up to individuals.

"Its strength is that it takes a high view of Scripture," said Muriel Bechtel from MC Eastern Canada.

PHOTOS BY AARON EPP



Dan Dyck and Janet Plenert interview Gordon Allaby during a live taping of Church Matters, MC Canada's monthly radio program and podcast.

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David Martin, also from MC Eastern Canada, wondered if an addition should be made to clarify the statement. No motion was made, but other delegates made similar suggestions to bring the document down to earth and simplify the ideas in it.

Dan-Epp Tiessen and Melissa Miller urged that the document be more clear in its communication.

Delegates were then asked to respond to a statement of affirmation, which agreed with the “direction” of the paper. After a lengthy process, delegates voted in favour of using Suderman’s paper to guide the church in matters of unity and diversity, human sexuality in the church, and other concerns.

Frequency of assemblies

Should the national church continue to meet every year, or move to an alternate year schedule like the youth assembly? That was the focus of Friday evening’s discernment session, as church leadership tested the denomination’s meeting schedule in preparation for a proposal and delegate vote in 2010.

Support Services leaders Louie Sawatzky, Kaye Rempel and Ed Janzen walked



Harry Lafond, executive director of the office of the treaty commissioner in Saskatchewan, welcomes MC Canada delegates to Saskatoon.



MC Canada delegates spent much time discerning a number of important issues at the annual assembly in Saskatoon.

delegates through a review of delegate discussion from Charlotte 2005, citing advantages and disadvantages of meeting annually versus biennially, as well as creative options for years without a delegate meeting in the biennial model—such as gatherings focused on spiritual formation and worship, rather than business.

Reduced costs and increased flexibility were cited as advantages of meeting less frequently, but possibly at the risk of slowing discernment and decision-making processes, and diminishing fellowship and Mennonite identity.

Selected table groups responded at the floor microphones. Overall, respondents leaned toward continuing to meet every year.

Growth and health of MC Canada

The health and growth of the national church was the topic for Saturday afternoon’s discernment session.

More than anything, the discussion was a time for area churches to report where they have seen growth in their communities. Representatives from MC British Columbia, MC Manitoba and MC Eastern Canada each told unique church development stories, mostly involving attraction of newcomers to Canada.

The Mennonite Church is on a journey, noted Janet Plenert, executive secretary of MC Canada Witness. “It’s a story only God holds the script to.”

MC Eastern Canada missions minister Brian Bauman, who facilitated the discussion with Plenert, added that “to be the church is to be a multiplying organism.”

One story of the way the church has multiplied in recent years in Winnipeg came from Norm Voth, director of evangelism and service ministries at MC Manitoba. Voth told delegates of the Little Flowers Community, a church that began in Winnipeg’s west end as a small group of people who live in intentional community. The joint MC Manitoba/Youth With a Mission initiative includes the Dusty Cover, a used bookstore that serves as a place of refuge for neighbours and after-school activities for kids. Through the Dusty Cover, the church is a missional presence in an economically challenged neighbourhood with a strong gang culture.

“When we think about dreaming in our church, we often say we can’t afford it. But that isn’t the first question to ask. The first question is ‘What is God calling us to do?’ . . . It’s God’s work and God provides the funding,” said Jim Loepp Thiessen, pastor of the five-year-old Gathering Church in Kitchener, Ont.

In B.C., Lee Dyck said they have a motto: “Churches planting churches.” She was referring to the advice of Nhiem Pham, pastor of Vancouver Vietnamese Mennonite Church, who says, “Do not plant a church unless people are praying for a church there.” There is plenty of church growth activity in MC B.C., primarily among new Canadians from Asia. Pham is planting his third church now.

Voth warned that a Mennonite Church identity as a “family” can make newcomers feel excluded, when the “who are you related to” game is played out.

He echoed the words of a Vietnamese

pastor he is friends with: “The family metaphor that pulls you together and gives you your identity is also the very [thing] that makes you exclusive.”

Assembly held on aboriginal land

The opening session included greetings from special guest Harry Lafond, executive director of the office of the treaty commissioner in Saskatchewan.

“I want to welcome you to this territory of Treaty 6, the homeland of the Cree,” he

said, adding that Mennonites and aboriginals have yet to really connect. “We have only touched fingertips till now,” Lafond said. “We have yet to really reach out to each other for a full handshake.”

MC Canada moderator Andrew Reesor-McDowell acknowledged this fact before beginning the assembly’s business sessions. ❧

With files from Dan Dyck and Deborah Froese.

A new name and a new life

*‘Canadian Women in Mission’ becomes
‘Mennonite Women Canada’*

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent

Deliberations only lasted a few minutes at the annual Mennonite Church Canada Women in Mission luncheon during the national church assembly in Saskatoon, Sask., earlier this month. And during that time, the vote to change the name of Canadian Women in Mission to Mennonite Women Canada proceeded

quietly and came in with a two-thirds majority. A new entity was thus born and, with it, a new vision.

The name change reflects the changing focus of the group. The word “missions” doesn’t apply in the same way any more, Canadian president Erna Neufeldt noted. For more than 50 years, missions was the



This “Canadian Women in Mission” quilt hung outside the meeting room at the University of Saskatchewan, where those present voted to change the organization’s name to Mennonite Women Canada

main focus of the organization, as women gathered to support overseas work.

It all began as the only place in the church where women could be involved, noted Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, a co-pastor of First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, and Alberta correspondent for *Canadian Mennonite*.

But not all women today enjoy quilting or arranging bake sales to raise money. Women in various congregations do still decide to meet in settings that are a good fit for them, though, Neufeldt noted. “There are breakfast groups, book clubs etc,” she said, explaining the idea that the new organization is like a tent with open doors—a place where everyone will fit.

With declining membership and two regional groups having closed over the past couple of years, it was time to consider the future of the organization, Neufeldt said. A visioning process was begun in 2005. At the time, priorities were set to become more intergenerational and to reach beyond the walls of local churches. Two years ago, the process to change the name began. ❧

PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



Erna Neufeldt, right, the president of Canadian Women in Mission, spoke at the organization’s meeting during the annual MC Canada assembly in Saskatoon, Sask., explaining the need for a new name and a new vision for the venerable women’s group. She is pictured with returning Witness worker Yvonne Snider-Nighswander.

Proclaim the gospel

Ministers reminded that Mennonites can't find salvation through their own efforts

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent

Two valuable themes emerged strongly from the ministers conference on June 4, when MC Canada pastors from across Canada gathered at the University of Saskatchewan the day before this year's general assembly began.

As guest speaker, Dan Epp-Thiessen, associate professor of Bible at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, developed the idea of how pastors and members relate to each other and the role of each. After pinpointing the many challenges of a pastor's job, he arrived at his conclusion: "Proclaim the gospel."

He then fleshed out what needs to be done. "Whenever things go wrong in the church, we say that we need more discipleship," he said.

Calling it the Mennonite approach, Epp-Thiessen talked about the denomination's tendency to always do more. "We're supposed to trust God more; give more generously," he said. "But that doesn't nurture fervour for God because no one can be saved by their own efforts," he counselled. "Our churches will not thrive unless we're

pointed toward the Spirit of Christ," Epp-Thiessen concluded.

Ervin Wiens, retiring pastor of Trinity Mennonite Church in Calgary, summed it up in his own words: "As pastors, we feel pressure to find the right program to get people mobilized. The only hope I have for . . . all churches is to preach the gospel."

Nurturing a vision for both "sleeping" and "waking" congregations came to life during stories from different Mennonite pastors across Canada. Beginning with an example in Saskatchewan and moving west across the Prairies and over the Rockies, several pastors told of their experiences of how they were able, with God's help, to nudge their hesitant groups towards involvement in their local setting and beyond.

Eigenheim Mennonite Church, Rosthern, Sask., framed on either side by small centres with a big concentration of church-goers, decided to take its dream for missions to South America, where it now partners with a Mennonite congregation in Uruguay. Teens are included in the delegations that go down, and pastor Allan Friesen said he is

MC CANADA PHOTO



Well-known local musician Darryl Bueckert adds his drum to the worship session during the ministers conference that preceded the MC Canada annual assembly.

pleased with the impact it has made in their young lives.

Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary, Alta., has a different challenge. It is surrounded with so much need, but it has been hard to find the right fit. God, it seems, has closed one door after another. An opportunity finally came when pastor Doug Klassen was working at the nearby hospital while on a church sabbatical. He noticed that people coming to visit friends and family in the hospital's trauma centre were forced to stay in high-priced hotels thickly set in the business district nearby. He casually mentioned the idea of developing a guest house that would offer people a cheaper place to stay. Offering the idea to the church set the ball rolling and now the congregation has a guest house for that purpose.

The pastors were happy to report that the choices to reach out by their congregations had been good for everyone involved.

The day-long pastors conference ended with prayer and anointing for pastors.

"They have it every year and I always appreciate it," said Naomi Unger, co-pastor with her husband Don of the Hoffnungsfelder churches in Saskatchewan of the anointing service. ☿

PHOTO BY KARIN FEHDERAU



Pastors and graduates of Associate Mennonite Biblical Seminary clap enthusiastically while singing at the Mennonite Church Canada ministers conference on June 4 at the University of Saskatchewan. Pictured from left to right, foreground: Emily Toews, Alissa Bender, Craig Neufeld, Ryan Siemens and Sherri Martin-Carman.



UNZIPPING THE CHURCH: ASSEMBLY 2009 COVERAGE

'Living inside out'

*Assembly worship times take their queue
from Colossians 3:12-17*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent

A red banner at the front of the University of Saskatchewan gymnasium bore the overarching theme of "Living inside out," based on Colossians 3:12-17. It read in part: *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."*

Each of the five worship services throughout the weekend featured a different sub-theme: "Gathered as God's people,"

"God's wardrobe," "Thread of forgiveness," "Above all . . . love," and "Be thankful!"

Because of the short nature of the assembly, worship times were also shortened, book-ending each day and lasting for a half-hour. As in the past, though, they were characterized by much singing and Scripture reading. Sermons were skipped in favour of readings, dramas, prayer and silent reflection.

Effort was made to include each area church, with area church leaders participating in a reading Friday morning. Forty-five MC Canada congregations reflect languages and cultures other than Russian or Swiss Mennonite, so a variety of languages MC Canada congregations speak were also incorporated, with Scripture readings translated into Chinese, Spanish, Korean and others.

The assembly concluded on June 7 with a 90-minute worship service, to which all

local Mennonite churches were invited.

In his sermon, Alan Rudy-Froese, interim pastor at Wellesley Mennonite Church, Ont., reflected on the assembly's theme verse. "We are invited to allow others to dress us with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience," he said. While clothing one another might seem uncomfortably intimate at first, part of being God's people means loving one another and caring for each other, he said.

Sunday's service also included the commissioning of Karen Martens Zimmerly, who began her role as MC Canada denominational minister and director of leadership this past fall. ❧



Ben Pauls, pastor of Carrot River Mennonite Church, Sask., leads delegates in song.



Muriel Bechtel, right, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada conference minister, serves communion during the final worship service of the MC Canada annual assembly.

/// For discussion

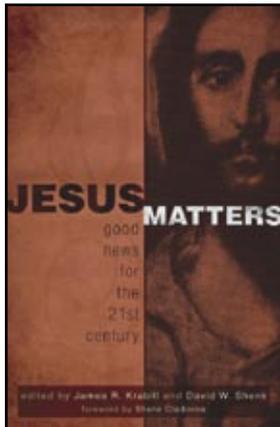
1. How often should Mennonite Church Canada delegates meet? What are the advantages and disadvantages of meeting annually?
2. Has your church spoken out against militarism in your community (the public square)? Would your congregation feel comfortable doing that? What is something your congregation could do in the next year to engage your community in a peace issue?
3. At the assembly in Saskatoon, the General Board of MC Canada acknowledged that we don't all agree in how we interpret the Scriptures. Why do you think we have difficulty agreeing? Why might we have difficulty discerning what is sin?
4. Do you think it is inspiring, or a matter of concern, that growth in MC Canada mostly involves newcomers to Canada? Is that where growth is happening in your community? How can older congregations support these church plants most effectively?
5. At the ministers conference, Dan Epp-Thiessen declared that trying to do more won't help our churches thrive. Why are we so apt to try to step up our efforts in this area?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. Respecting our theology of the priesthood of all believers and of the importance of the faith community discernment process, this section is a largely open forum for the sharing of views. Letters are the opinion of the writer only—publication does not mean endorsement by the magazine or the church. Letters should be brief and address issues rather than individuals.

Please send letters to be considered for publication to letters@canadianmennonite.org or by postal mail or fax, marked "Attn: Readers Write" (our address is on page 3). Letters should include the author's contact information and mailing address. Letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines.



Jesus Matters Good News for the 21st Century

Each author in this collection teams with one or more young adults to consider the various ways we encounter and experience Jesus. Topics include Jesus and creation, Jesus and the cross, Jesus and salvation, Jesus and the Bible, and Jesus and the future.

Authors include Stanley Green, Michele Hershberger, Mark Thiessen Nation, Willard Swartley, Jack Suderman, and April Yamasaki. Edited by James R. Krabill and David W. Shenk.

Paper, 260 pages, \$19.54



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✉ MCC counsels Canadian government on Afghanistan mission

The following letter was sent to Prime Minister Stephen Harper on May 20 and appears on the mcc.org website.

WE WRITE TO offer our concerns and counsel regarding Canada's ongoing engagement in Afghanistan.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has worked in Afghanistan for over a decade, providing assistance in the areas of food aid, education, irrigation and support for community-level peacebuilding. In the past month our regional staff visited Kabul and our partners there. The purpose of this letter is to identify some of the concerns that our partners raised.

From our experience and the recent counsel of our Afghan partners, we encourage the following:

1. Canada should invest a higher proportion of its assistance for Afghanistan to providing direct aid to improve the lives of ordinary Afghans. Our partners estimate that up to 90 percent of people join the Taliban for economic reasons. Afghans are hungry, impoverished and without work, and the Taliban provides them with an income. Measures to improve food security, to meet basic needs and to foster economic development will lessen support for extremist militants.

Canada recently passed a law stipulating that our country's official development assistance be guided first and foremost by the goal of alleviating poverty. We appreciate Canada's involvement in polio vaccinations and in rebuilding the Dahla dam and irrigation system, and would support a much greater investment in direct poverty alleviation.

2. Canada should discontinue the practice of engaging military personnel in development and reconstruction work through Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

We acknowledge the Canadian government's desire to have an integrated approach to its engagement with Afghanistan. Nevertheless, our partners and, again, our own experience insist that this linking of military/security objectives with development objectives is highly problematic. It blurs the line between defence

/// Corrections

In the photo accompanying the "Laps for life" article on page 25 of the May 25 issue, Stuart Martin holds a medal he won at the 2004 World Masters Invitational swim meet in Italy. And in the photo accompanying the Saskatchewan Women in Mission Enrichment Day article on page 18 of the June 8 issue, Eileen Ewert is a member of North Star Mennonite in Drake, Sask. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the errors.

and development, politicizes the delivery of aid, and endangers both aid workers and civilian recipients of aid. In 2008, 38 aid workers were killed by insurgents and 147 were abducted.

Furthermore, because soldiers are not trained to deliver aid or to do development, it is not surprising to hear reports that work is often poorly done, inefficiently carried out, and lacks a process of consultation with local people.

While we admire the concern the Canadian Forces has for development, evidence shows us that humanitarian aid and long-term development [are] most effectively and efficiently performed by non-governmental organizations and government development agencies, not military personnel.

3. Canada should give even greater attention to the promotion of a comprehensive peace process at both the diplomatic and grassroots levels. Moreover, all

parties—including members of the Taliban and other disaffected groups—must be brought into this process.

We appreciate that your government has identified political reconciliation as one of its six priorities in Afghanistan. Yet we believe that the conditionality attached to engagement with the Taliban—particularly, the insistence that reconciliation only involve those parties that accept the legitimacy of the Afghan government and constitution—is much too stringent. Insistence on such conditions does not build trust, nor does it pave the way for real dialogue.

We welcome your recent comments that the Afghan insurgency will not be defeated by a foreign military force. We hear this as your recognition that military means alone will not resolve the Afghan conflict.

As an organization of Historic Peace Churches—Mennonites and Brethren in Christ—we affirm this for reasons of our Christian faith. Our faith teaches

GOD, MONEY AND ME

'I choose' . . . not 'I can't'

DARREN PRIES-KLASSEN

My friends were nearing completion of a small renovation project in the entryway of their home and wanted to replace the old light fixture. After a few fruitless trips to various lighting stores, they found one they felt was perfect. The problem was the \$1,500 price tag.

"We can't afford that," they said to the salesman. "Yes you can," was his response. Surprised at hearing this, they restated that although the fixture was beautiful it was well beyond their price range. The salesman paused briefly, smiled and said, "If it is a priority, you will find a way to afford it."



much as priorities.

Later, my friends concluded that the salesman was right. They did have the cash to purchase the \$1,500 light fixture, but it would have meant scaling back other parts of the renovation in order to stay within budget. This was something they were not prepared to do.

Furthermore, my friends were not comfortable with owning a \$1,500 light fixture regardless of their renovation budget and income level. What at first appeared to be a case of "we can't afford

The salesman paused briefly, smiled and said, 'If it is a priority, you will find a way to afford it.'

Regardless of income, all of us have limits when it comes to money. For some, those limitations are such that they are denied even the basic needs of human existence. For others—and probably the vast majority of you reading this—that financial limitation may feel constrictive, but upon closer look we realize we have more choice than we care to admit. The issue is not price tags as

this," was actually a case of "we choose to spend money differently."

When we say things like, "I choose to spend money this or that way," and "buying that product would violate my values," it empowers us. It affirms the choice we have in how we spend—or whether to spend. It also recognizes the potential that money has for either the betterment

or destruction of our world and the life in it.

Talking about what we can and cannot afford often makes a bigger statement about our values than the size of our wallets. Saying "I can't afford . . ." is good if it keeps us from foolish spending, but when the same language is used to keep us from being generous and investing in the lives of others and the work of God's kingdom, it is problematic.

Most of us have far more financial choice than we are willing to recognize. We may not always like the choices we have, or they may feel minimal, but having financial choice is a lot more than many people have. If the way we use money reflects our values and choices, what are we saying each time we spend,

or choose not to spend, our money?

Darren Pries-Klassen is a consultant at the St. Catharines, Ont., office of the Mennonite Foundation of Canada. For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest foundation office or visit mennofoundation.ca.

us to love our enemies, to seek the well-being of our neighbours, and to do so through peaceful means.

We also affirm your statement because of our own peacebuilding experience. While we recognize that the situation in Afghanistan is extremely complex, our experience has taught us that violence begets more violence. We believe that international military operations, even though carried out with the best of intentions, will continue to contribute to new grievances that will fuel the cycle of violence.

Like other Canadians, we are deeply saddened by the losses this war has meant for both Afghans and for our own Canadian soldiers. We long for a peaceful

resolution. We believe that the measures identified above can assist in moving in that direction.

We will continue to pray for the people of Afghanistan, and for the Canadians serving in both military and non-military roles in Afghanistan. Our prayers are also with you as you lead our country. I thank you for your attention to this letter, and look forward to your response.

DONALD PETERS, OTTAWA

Donald Peters is executive director of Mennonite Central Committee Canada.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Calling future church leaders

GORDON PETERS

Where will our future leaders come from?

At the 2009 annual assembly of Mennonite Church Canada in Saskatoon earlier this month, we were told that in the next four years we will need 120 new pastors—30 a year. We were also told that our seminaries and theological schools are not turning out nearly that many graduates.

As was pointed out, our churches will find pastors, but will they be trained or aware of and receptive to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology? Will peace be important to them? Will they preach nonviolence and resistance in our churches?

If we are unable to hire empathetic Anabaptist leaders, will churches hire pastors trained in other institutions and perhaps move us farther away from what our forbears and martyrs believed in? Will we more strongly emphasize our past tradition of calling pastors from within our congregations? Will we look to lay leaders while we continue our search?



The uncertainty of this situation will create a lot of tension in our churches and turn us into focusing on ourselves for survival, rather than looking to build God's kingdom.

I feel strongly that we, as a church, need to work much harder at encouraging our children to attend our church's elementary and high schools. We have schools that begin a process of teaching

Many philosophers have said that if we don't know where we came from, we won't know where we're going.

our young people about our Anabaptist roots and our Mennonite history.

Many philosophers have said that if we don't know where we come from, we won't know where we're going. We have schools all across Canada, save Quebec and further east. We have fewer high schools, but they are not that remote that they cannot be accessed by our whole church membership.

I don't know of any public high schools that teach Mennonite history. Learning about peace and reconciliation are part

of Mennonite school curricula. They are also available at a university level, but we need our teenagers to hear these stories before they get there. With a better understanding of who we are and what we believe, we can begin the process of identifying who our future leaders will be.

Perhaps our schools need to look for new ways of identifying future leaders. Schools do offer leadership opportunities through student councils and other programs, but I wonder how many of our pastoral workers were student council presidents? I think our pastors came around to leadership later through other motivating factors. How can our schools search out these potential leaders and steer them to our seminaries and theological training centres?

And what kind of training or mentor-

ship programs are offered in our churches? We need to encourage our young people to look at pastoral work as a great calling and vocation. If we don't take action quickly, our churches will change in ways we have not imagined. The time for action is now! Look around you and find out what your young people are hoping for as a career. Is being a pastor on that list?

Gordon Peters is treasurer of Mennonite Church Canada.

✉ Pentecost takes many Mennonites out of their comfort zone

RE: "NEIGHBOURHOOD PENTECOST," May 25, page 2. I commend you in an attempt to tackle the subject of Pentecost. It appears that fear strikes the hearts of Mennonites when the words "speaking in tongues" is mentioned and we want to run when the suggestion that God may want them to do something they are uncomfortable with.

The apostle Peter reacted the same way when the Lord, in a vision, told him to eat from what he considered unclean. The Lord repeated his request and it appeared that Peter repeated his original response.

Fortunately for us as gentiles, Peter opened himself eventually to the Lord's message and we were included in those to receive God's good news and grace. I pray that God would be merciful to us as his children, by replacing hearts of stone for hearts of flesh.

GARY DYCK, ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

FAMILY TIES

Let God inspire our vacations

MELISSA MILLER

As spring gives way to summer, some of us are fortunate to be thinking about summer vacations. It is a blessing to be able to take a holiday. If we are gifted with sufficient health and financial resources, we have the opportunity to leave our familiar homes and routines, and travel to a new, different place.

How do we use this blessing well? Is there a stewardship of vacations to guide us, like the stewardship we seek as we consider our finances, our land, our use of our time? Thirty years ago, Mennonites addressed this question in a book entitled *Living More with Less*. Compiled by Doris Longacre, the same woman who gave us the *More with Less* cookbook, it's packed full of ideas from Mennonites about how we can live simply and faithfully.

The ideas for vacations include things like: packing lightly (for one individual, that meant fitting it all into a briefcase); roadside lunches; the *Mennonite Your Way* travel directory; and engaging with the people and land along the way.

Perhaps a stewardship of vacations comes down to relationships: our relationships with people, with all of creation and with God. If we consider

relationships with people, it could be the people we're travelling with, our family or friends who are sharing the journey with us. The late actress Helen Hayes recommended, "When travelling with someone, take large doses of patience and tolerance with your morning coffee." Or maybe those qualities come into play with the people we meet as we travel, those who help us by getting us to our accommodations, renting us canoes or bikes, feeding us, cleaning up after us, or those whom we encounter on the plane or the boat or the trail.

Christians carry the mark of Christ with us wherever we go. How are we carrying the good news of God that we have heard? How are we seeing it in



Our relationships, like all of our lives, are shaped by our relationship with God.

others? How do we live out Christian virtues like kindness, simplicity, fairness and respect for all persons regardless of their race, culture or economics?

In our relationship with creation, we use our vacations to consider our place in the environment. Maybe we include visits to nature reserves or eco-tours as a way of deepening our appreciation for

God's world. Or we ask questions about our consumption and our lifestyle: What is the planet-friendly way to get to our destination?

Many of us are hesitant to travel on airplanes because of the negative environmental effects. Such a concern is in keeping with the Christian values of love for, and care of, the earth. Perhaps those of us who fly could levy a voluntary carbon tax on our vacations, and make a financial donation to an environmental clean-up organization, or plant trees in recognition of the environmental harm we've caused.

Our relationships, like all of our lives, are shaped by our relationship with God. As blessed children of God, we manage the gifts God has placed in our hands with joy and responsibility. When we are focused on God's love, standing firmly in the thrilling river of the Creator's abundant love, we join in singing, "*How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your*

creatures" (Psalm 104:24).

Blessed by God's grace, we are irresistibly drawn to use our hours, money and vacations for good.

Melissa Miller (familyties@mts.net) lives in Winnipeg, where she ponders family relationships as a pastor, counsellor and author.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Barnes—Coralyn Eabha (b. May 30, 2009), to Michael and Meghan Barnes, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Fox—Xander Lewis (b. May 15, 2009), to Treva (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Shane Fox, in Winnipeg.

Goerzen—Kenna Blayke (b. May 3, 2009), to Mike and Kayla Goerzen, Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.

Reimer—Adam Alexander (b. March 27, 2009), to Ken and Kathryn Reimer, Graysville Mennonite, Man.

Wiens—Alina Simone Redekopp (b. May 22, 2009), to Matthew Wiens (Glenlea Mennonite, Man.) and Elizabeth Redekopp (Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg).

Baptisms

Craig Neufeld, Troy Voth—Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 3, 2009.

Adam Closs, Allison Closs, Ryan Friesen, Dustin Wiens—Glenlea Mennonite, Man., May 31, 2009.

Rachael Janzen, Adrien Friesen, Myron Plichota—Hamilton Mennonite, Ont., May 31.

Justina Friesen, Susana Friesen—Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta., May 31, 2009.

Philip Bartel, Tami-Lynn Friesen, Vicky Friesen, Emily Hoehn, Cara Warkentin—North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., May 31, 2009.

Ben Leis, Nicholas Fast, Dustin Bueckert—Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., May 31, 2009.

Kirstie Carter, Rosie Hartung, Amanda Herrfort, Matthew Kuepfer, Greg Lamure, Daniel Steckly—Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., June 7, 2009.

Naomi Langelotz, Stephanie Rempel—Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 31, 2009.

Sumonchai Phonchiangkvang, Wunpen Phonchiangkvang, Ounheuane Phouvong, Moukdala Phouvong, Samuel Patterson—Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., May 31, 2009.

Christina Edmiston, Greg Edmiston—Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont., May 24, 2009.

Tony Staller—W-K United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., May 31, 2009.

Taylor Hildebrand—Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 31, 2009.

Marriages

Braun/Janzen—Suzanne Braun and Aaron Janzen, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 16, 2009.

Chennette/Friesen—Lisa Chennette and Kenneth Friesen, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., May 23, 2009.

Dettweiler/Morel—Andra Dettweiler (Brussels Mennonite, Ont.) and Martin Morel, at Brussels Mennonite, May 9, 2009.

Dyck/Rego—Katharina Dyck and Resyl Rego, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., May 9, 2009.

Enns/Lungal—Cael James Enns (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Brittani Lungal, at Buffalo Point, Man., May 2, 2009.

Musselman/Trendle—Bradley Musselman (Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.) and Lea Trendle, at St. Clements, Ont., June 6, 2009.

Deaths

Penner—Margaret (nee Peters), 94 (b. Oct. 15, 1914; d. May 19, 2009), Erie View United Mennonite, Port Rowan, Ont.

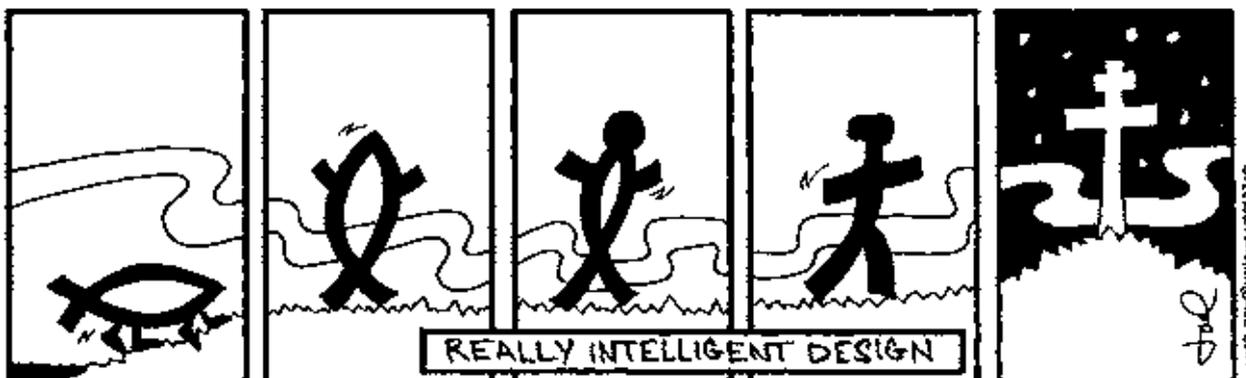
Reimer—Anna (nee Schmidt), 96 (b. May 3, 1913; d. May 6, 2009), Erie View United Mennonite, Port Rowan, Ont.

Wiebe—Tina (nee Pauls), 69 (b. Aug. 21, 1939; d. June 1, 2009), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event.

Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to milestones@canadianmennonite.org, including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please include birth date and last name at birth if available.

Pontius' Puddle



VIEWPOINT

The science of environmental care

BY HENRY EPP

As stewards of creation, we are called upon by God to manage it for sustainability. The Mennonite Creation Care Network (mennocreationcare.org) provides advice on how to change lifestyles and assists Mennonite administrations.

We also can familiarize ourselves with scientific knowledge to improve our stewardship. The Mennonite Environmental Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG) has been formed to provide science-based information and advice that follows Christian principles.

What do Mennonites expect of science concerning creation care? My experience tells me they expect accurate information when possible; best guesses, reasonably explained, where accuracy is not possible; and honesty about what scientists really know and don't know.

Environmental science identifies sustainability as the chief goal of environmental management. Biodiversity ensures sustainability by providing the ability of creation to survive disturbances to it. Biodiversity loss is the major human-caused danger to natural processes at this time; global warming is considered to be next in importance, but its causes are less certainly known.

Biodiversity loss

Biodiversity loss includes habitat and wilderness destruction, ecosystem dysfunction, sustainability loss and species extinction. Causes include pollution and unsustainable resource allocation. Environmental scientists consider it desirable to retain 50 percent of each ecosystem in a natural state, with 12 percent as the minimum to maintain sustainability.

In North America, 90 percent of the western mountains remain in a natural state, as does half of the northern forests

and tundra, 11 percent of the West Coast forests, less than 2 percent of the Prairies, and only one-tenth of 1 percent of the eastern forests. The situation in most of the rest of the world is worse, although 90 percent of the Amazon ecosystem remains relatively undisturbed. In African and southern Asian wildernesses, human population pressures make the long-term prognosis poor, especially for large animals and predators.

Over-fishing is resulting in population crashes of many fish stocks. Regulation is difficult because no one country can control the fish harvests. Whale populations have rebounded due to whaling bans, but the reduction in fish will affect whale and other sea mammal populations as well.

Another gloomy fact is that, at present, species extinction proceeds at about 100 times the natural rate. Loss of diversity causes uncertainty and lack of sustainability in natural systems, a situation dangerous to creation, including people.

Global warming

Scientists know the causes of global warming, but information about its effects is debatable. Causes include greenhouse gas increases (carbon dioxide, methane, water vapour), and variations in solar radiation. Human activities certainly increase greenhouse gas concentrations, but the extent of their influence is not known, and heat from the sun is beyond human influence.

Carbon dioxide levels in the air have risen in concentration from 316 parts per million to 385 parts per million. The predicted maximum is about 900 parts per million. Over the last century, the world average temperature has risen by about three-quarters of a degree Celsius, peaking in 1998. Warming predictions range from one to six degrees C.

Science can describe what the earth will be like if global warming reaches the predicted maximum. We know, for example, that when North America was warmer than now by between two and five degrees C, ecosystems were pushed northward about 300 km. The nature of the ecosystems was similar to now, but the boundaries were clearly different.

How bad is it, really?

Over the past three decades, human regulation has begun to control pollution and is now addressing resource sustainability. However, shortages of water in arid areas loom. The following observations are consistent with scientific findings:

- Human activities continue to threaten biodiversity and natural systems stability.
- Global warming has stopped for now, but levels of human-caused greenhouse gases continue to escalate, influencing the ups and downs of natural trends in unpredictable ways.
- The greatest environmental danger to humans is not changes in ecological boundaries, but the destruction of natural processes.

In the final analysis, the environmental situation is still not past the overall point of no return. The need is urgent, but science does provide information to turn the situation around.

What can Mennonites do?

Mennonites are already proactive in many parts of the world, assisting needy people to use their environments to provide necessities and income. Applying sustainability principles obtained from science helps address biodiversity concerns among Mennonites and in the advice given to impoverished people. Helping people to adapt to ecological zone shifts is a useful role regardless of our uncertainty about the future. %

Henry Epp is a retired environmental assessment manager and member of MESAG (htepp@shaw.ca). He has published more than 50 scientific articles and has written, edited or co-edited eight books on the environment and history. He is a member of Trinity Mennonite Church, Calgary, Alta.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Still labouring together

Manitoba women encouraged to maintain close ties despite the demise of their Women in Mission organization

STORY AND PHOTO BY TERESA FALK
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
WINNIPEG

For 67 years Manitoba Women in Mission (MWM) members have been labourers together with God. Approximately 185 of them gathered to celebrate God's work during the final MWM Enrichment Day on May 2 at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

MWM was founded in 1942 in memory of Margarethe Toews, who was a woman of integrity and faith. A memorial was set up in her memory in the creation of a scholarship fund for needy girls to attend Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna. Margaret Bergen was the first recipient of the scholarship. The first of 18 MWM presidents was Maria Siemens of Winkler, who served for 10 years.

The work that began more than 60 years ago has come to a close as MWM decided to fold at a meeting in May 2008. Local women's groups will continue, but there will be no provincial chapter.

"Women are just too busy and they have different priorities," said current president Betty-Anne Hildebrand. "The need for this women's group just isn't there anymore."

Hildebrand said she will miss the connections made at the events both with Manitoba women and women from other

'It is with some nostalgia, but yet I can see how the attendance is declining and it's hard to get people to work here anymore.'
(Marlene Plett)

provinces. "I have really enjoyed meeting all these women," she said. "And the beauty of it is that you all have the same faith and you're all rooted in the same gospel."

Hildebrand recalled many of the project the women have participated in over they years, including this year's project that provided funding for two aboriginal Manitoba women to attend the Mennonite World Conference in Paraguay this summer. "When you're a group of many you can cover so many more projects than if you're one group," she noted.

But Hildebrand is eager to see what the future holds for Mennonite women in Manitoba. "The women's groups are still very active. So part of me is a little bit

excited that the present Manitoba Women in Mission is folding, because something new can maybe come out of it," she said.

Marlene Plett knows the importance of connecting with other Mennonite women. She attended the first MWM conference when she was nine years old. "I was baby-sitting for my aunt," she recalled. "I remember all the ladies wore hats and, of course, they were dressed in their Sunday best. And it was outdoors and in German."

In the 1950s, when Plett was in her 20s,

she joined the Edenburg Sewing Circle in Gretna. "That was my first ladies aid experience where I was a member," she said.

From there, she would go on to join other groups, including her current one, the Altona Mennonite Church Ladies Auxiliary. "Our Altona group is still going strong," she noted. "We have various activities similar to what we've done in the past."

Plett had mixed feelings about the final Manitoba Enrichment Day. "It is with some nostalgia, but yet I can see how the attendance is declining and it's hard to get people to work here anymore," she said. "The social aspect is still alive and well, but women are active in church altogether, so maybe this is not as necessary."

Helen Redekopp of Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg agrees. "There comes a time when things have to change and this is one of them," she said. "The older people pass from the scene and the younger ones have a different lifestyle."

Redekopp has been involved in MWM since it began, and she served on the executive for several years. "It's been a part of my life for so long," she said.

Redekopp wrote a historical skit for the event, which included a mass choir. "We used to have a mass choir and so we put together a wonderful choir for one last time," she said.

And so one last time the women sang their theme song, "The Work is Thine." ❧



Attending the final Manitoba Women in Mission Enrichment Day were some of the organization's past presidents. Pictured from left to right, front row: Helga Froese, Jolanda Friesen, Kathleen Driedger and Betty-Anne Hildebrand; and back row: Helen Schultz, Helen Bergen, Linie Friesen and Phyllis Wiebe.

Our stories about ourselves shape us

*Beyond visioning and strategic planning:
Transforming the culture of the congregation*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

“**W**hen we reach 200 people, we will plant a new church; we value being small, intimate, a community,” was one congregation’s founding narrative. Good as that sounds, the narrative played itself out as, “We value being small, so we can’t welcome people beyond our limit of 200. We want to stay small so we can’t build an addition. We value community, so we can’t divide our group.”

On May 5 at Conrad Grebel University College, Sue Steiner and Betty Pries of Associates Resourcing the Church led an evening seminar on transforming church

narratives.

“Founding narratives can continue to form a congregation for a long time, even after the people who were around at the time of the formation have passed on,” said Steiner. But those forming narratives can mutate into something different than was originally meant.

Using Deuteronomy 6, the group learned how Moses moved the people of Israel from slaves to free people, from impoverished to rich, from no control (helpless) to responsible people. Under God’s guidance Moses imagined a different future and led

the people, although they often did not want to follow.

Congregational narratives need to be acknowledged, even if they aren’t helpful, participants were told. And then they need to be healed. Often the underlying values need to be challenged.

Being a peaceful people can mean Mennonites feel like they can’t speak in their community or society, the presenters said, because the culture around them shapes the culture among them. That society has often devalued organized religion, to the point where churches and individuals feel like they cannot speak and have nothing to offer, and that what they treasure—their relationship with God—is backward, naïve or worthless.

Leaders need to lead congregations to celebrate what is good about them, and to recognize where they have successfully shifted in the past, according to Steiner and Pries. These stories need to be told and symbols of hope need to be introduced into each congregation’s worship and work. Stories of God, the creator and re-creator of people and congregations, are places of hope for congregations, they said, suggesting that narratives of God’s intervention and change help change people now. Congregational narratives need to be about God, God’s love for the church and its congregants, and their individual and communal worth in God’s sight. ❧

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(November 16-28)

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❧ Briefly noted

Scottish church to consider 'virtual ministers'

To stem a nationwide shortage of full-time clergy, the Church of Scotland is considering the use of “virtual ministers” who would preach over a live video link to congregations that do not have a permanent minister. “Preaching by live video link to vacant congregations is one of many radical changes being proposed,” says Gordon Bell, media relations officer with the Church of Scotland.

—ENI Release

Calling on God instead of ourselves

Canadian pastors learn from their Chinese counterparts during spring learning tour

BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada Release

A 13-hour flight from Toronto to Beijing launched an eye-opening tour of the church in China for three Mennonite Church Canada pastors.

From March 11 to 26, with Witness worker Jeanette Hanson as their guide, Jim Loepp Thiessen from The Gathering, Kitchener, Ont., and Barb and Wilmer Froese, co-pastors of Rosthern Mennonite Church, Sask., explored the work of MC Canada Witness in urban and rural areas. It gave them the opportunity to see China through a broader lens than the one provided by evening newscasts.

"We think of China as a mass of 1.3 billion people, [and wonder], can they be a

threat to us?" Wilmer says. "These are the images we have, but they're wonderful people, eager to know and understand us. . . They want to have peace with the world." He spoke with one medical student, who said that between the destruction China experienced during World War II and the current "one child" policy, no one in China wants war, since parents don't want to lose their only offspring.

Loepp Thiessen embarked on the journey with a desire to connect with the vibrancy of Chinese church culture. "And that's exactly what happened," he says. He described the Chinese approach to "the priesthood of all believers" as a breath of fresh air, and found encouragement in church leaders there who are attracted to the Anabaptist emphasis on peace. "Anabaptism empowers them where they are, instead of imposing something on them," he says.

Chinese believers are clearly committed. The Canadian pastors found standing-room-only when they arrived for a Sunday service in a Nanjing church. The congregation had already been singing and praying for two hours—after many of them had endured a two-hour walk to arrive.

Foreigners cannot proselytize in China, but the Chinese can. As a result, the church is growing and vibrant. "They are witnessing

to their friends and neighbours all the time, just not on the street," Barb says.

A Nanchong pastor told his Canadian visitors that people were drawn from the street to his church by its peaceful spirit, and they would stay.

To Loepp Thiessen, this shows how the church in China is empowered by the Holy Spirit, a reflection of the early church in Acts 2. "That kind of spirit needs to be recaptured in the church in North America," he suggests. "Calling on God, instead of ourselves."

And the people do call on God. The pastors heard story after story of miraculous cures and responses to prayer that brought people to faith:

- A seriously ill child, who could not have surgery because of a high fever, was prayed for by her Christian mother, a pastor. The fever abated, and her father was soon baptized, saying, "I cannot deny the power and presence of God in the healing of my daughter."
- Another man coughs up blood despite ample medicine—until he is prayed for by a Christian.
- A man with stomach cancer receives healing Christian prayer and becomes a pastor.
- Yet another man is healed of alcoholism and praises God for his release.

In China, church resources are scarce and needs are high. At a Christian bookstore in Chengdu, the Canadian pastors purchased resources for rural congregations in Anqing and Sichuan.

"One has to realize that these churches are new, with new Christians," Wilmer says. "These [churches] are five or 10 or at the most 20 years old, without the same exposure to Scriptures."

It was evident to him that Chinese pastors carry far more responsibility than those in North America. "We do more networking here, we work together, share ideas and resources," he says. "Pastors in China are more isolated and individually responsible for hundreds or thousands of people."

He referred to Pastor Timothy in Anqing as an example. While there are 700 people in his congregation for any given worship service, he is responsible for 150,000 Christians. "It's an enormous job and he feels alone," Wilmer notes. ❧

PHOTO BY BARB FROESE



Chinese pastor Wang Jun is pictured with her daughter Zhang Yu Han, whose fever was healed through prayer. As a result, Wang Jun's husband acknowledged the power of God and was baptized.

Reality check

Rosthern pastor returns from learning tour with a new appreciation for the work her Chinese peers undertake

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent

Barb Froese has new eyes and a new heart for the Christians in China. As co-pastor of the small-town church of Rosthern Mennonite, along with her husband Wilmer, Froese was one of three pastors invited by Mennonite Church Canada Witness to visit churches in China over a period of 15 days this past March.

She also relished the chance to travel with Jeanette Hanson, who is back in North America with husband Todd on a two-year-long furlough. The Hansons have been missionary partners with the Rosthern congregation and that connection was one of the main reasons the couple chose to go. “We knew she could show us the real China,” says Froese, who is still being impacted by what she saw and heard.

Despite certain restrictions placed on them by the communist government,

Chinese churches are growing. And this growth brings increased pressure on pastors, who shoulder large loads of responsibility and work with few resources.

They face much bigger challenges than leaders here, says Froese, who admits she would feel overwhelmed with the same expectations. One urban pastor shepherds 150,000 believers by himself. Because of such large congregations, pastors have little time with their families. “It’s hard on family life,” she notes.

Chinese churches must be registered with the authorities. Some smaller house churches are not registered, says Froese, but as long as they are relatively quiet and don’t cause problems, the government doesn’t bother with them.

While in China, Froese and Hanson met with the religious affairs rep. The communist government has been tolerant of the church on the grounds that it produces good citizens. And they see the difference it makes in the lives of those Christians.

But although she saw the overwhelming odds Chinese church leaders struggle with, she also came to realize the amazing results of such commitment and sacrifice. “It’s like the early church,” she says of the miracles and answers to prayer people are experiencing there.

Froese also came back with a new appreciation for—and desire to partner with—the churches there. She hopes that the Chinese church’s struggle and resulting story will give them faith to believe that God can move in difficult situations.

“Their church is surpassing our church,” Froese acknowledges. “There’s healing, there’s life.”

Two of the rural congregations the learning tour group visited were birthed with much prayer and sacrifice. One woman, who prayed her group into existence, now has a son who will soon pastor the church.

“She’ll spend the rest of her life in poverty,” says Froese of the woman, demonstrating how important children are to the economic future of the parents.

Froese hopes that what she came back with will inspire her home church and other Saskatchewan Mennonite congregations to reach out. Fundraisers put on by Rosthern Mennonite brought in \$1,500 to be given to the Chinese pastors. A large chunk of it went to provide training for them.

Froese hopes that Saskatchewan congregations might even develop partnerships with one of the Chinese churches she visited. “We could provide money to make that trip or for them to come here as well,” she says. ☿

PHOTO COURTESY OF BARB FROESE



Wilmer and Barb Froese, co-pastors at Rosthern Mennonite Church, Sask., stand with some of the Chinese students they met while on a learning tour to China this spring.

FOCUS ON PARAGUAY: PART III OF III

The Mennonite 'utopia' today

BY CAL REDEKOP

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

While the non-Mennonite utopias are no longer in existence, the relationship between Paraguay and the Mennonite utopia remains to this day. The Mennonite tendency to build their own separate religious societies as utopian is especially noteworthy in the Russian, Mexican and Paraguay colonies, and has been offered as the prime examples of utopian efforts based on explicit religious traditions by numerous scholars.

Why has Paraguay functioned so largely in the utopian tradition, especially the Mennonite one?

Paraguay's history reflects one of the most tragic in all of Latin America. The triple alliance wars (Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina), the conflict with the Spanish Crown, devastating dictatorships and, finally, the Bolivia war reduced Paraguay to one of the most backward or undeveloped countries. Thus, a practically destroyed and undeveloped country is open and receptive to any utopian or separatist groups to develop unused land by providing various types of assistance, including such concessions as freedom for self-government, religion and social life.

Freedom from religious persecution is often the most important factor to attract foreigners, especially those groups with strong religious beliefs, cohesion and utopian characteristics. This applies to most Mennonite migrations. Conversely, most utopian groups are often desperately in need of financial and logistical assistance to get started. And the physical isolation Paraguay provided allowed for great freedom for "separatist and utopian" societies to emerge, develop, expand and survive.

What unusual lessons or insights do the Mennonite attempts to build utopian societies present us with?

Surprisingly, we have Harold S. Bender,

who wanted the Mennonites to settle in Paraguay, to help answer this question. After Bender visited the Russian Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia in 1929, and saw what he called a "theocracy," he stated in a 1939 edition of *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, "I would be inclined to say that the experiment was a success and that it offers one solution of the problem of maintaining a nonresistant, non-participant Mennonite social group in the midst of a state which requires service to the state in some form or other."

In his book *These Are My People*, Bender further stated his belief that a "peoplehood"

wealthy and prestigious, it becomes transformed intentionally into a part of the normal social, economic and political environment of the host state, and the utopian vision becomes inverted. In other words, the utopian society becomes the desired "city on a hill," to which even the "host nation" becomes attracted, if not beholden. Stated another way, the Russian Mennonite Commonwealth was described as a successful "state within a church" by Bender, which sounds suspiciously like the church-state against which Anabaptists railed during the Radical Reformation.

The Russian commonwealth was brutally

It is apparent that the Mennonite vision of 'being in the world but not of it' has had a variety of incarnations . . .

must be consciously established in order that the Christian faith could be preserved: "The identification of the disciples of Jesus [was] as a covenant people of God."

Bender saw in the Paraguayan situation an opportunity to achieve the utopian goals of a Christian peoplehood. After reviewing why the Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia failed, he concluded that Russia had become too organized and advanced, while Paraguay was still rather primitive and, therefore, offered a better chance for the goal of utopia to be realized. The functions of church and state in Paraguay seemed acceptable for Bender, who asked in 1939, "Is this not an ideal solution . . . ?"

It is apparent that the Mennonite vision of "being in the world but not of it" has had a variety of incarnations in the Anabaptist tradition, especially in groups such as the Amish, Old Colony, Hutterite, and the plain Mennonite groups. But the most intriguing, exciting and amazing "separatist-utopian" experiments have appeared in Russia, Paraguay and Mexico, experiments reminiscent of the Jesuit "reducciones" (see parts I and II of this series). Is there a social arrangement which will allow Jesus' prayer to "be in the world but not of it" to be realized? Bender felt the Russian and Paraguayan Mennonite experiments were getting close. But Bender felt the modern "state" seemed to interfere.

But the irony of the "utopian" model is that when it becomes successful, powerful,

destroyed because the Marxist host society felt threatened by it. Bender felt there seemed to be little chance of Mennonites undergoing the same fate in Paraguay. As a matter of fact, the most supreme irony for a utopian group is that if it achieves its objectives in total freedom, it may become the model, maybe even the economic and political power, for the host nation's social, economic and political development, and thereby may become implicated in it.

The Mennonite presence in Paraguay seems to have reached this point, as conscientious objectors have rights, and Mennonite officials are found in the state and national governments. How, one wonders, does this affect the "separation from the world," which is the mainstay of a religious utopia?

The Moonies: a social, economic, political, religious utopia.

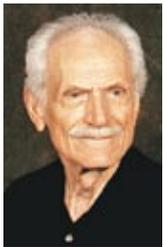
That Paraguay is still in the business of "utopias" is proven by the fact that the country is now hosting the latest utopian settlement, the "New Hope East Garden Unification Church."

Beginning in 1999, Sun Myung Moon began the dream of establishing a "world unification kingdom" with the alleged purchase of 600,000 hectares just north of the Mennonite colonies in the Chaco of Paraguay. The vision was the establishment of an integrated rural/urban model society with agricultural, commercial,

technological and cultural industries and centre. Very little ground has actually seen the shovel, but the reported planning is impressive.

The rumours of strange events and activities both in high government levels in Asunción and the northern Chaco have created furious local, indigenous, and national opposition.

Rampant rumours implicated both of the presidents Bush for “influencing” the Paraguayan government to “allow this to go forward.” They are also said to have been influential in getting the Paraguayan government to approve the sale of the land to the Moonies. ❧



Cal Redekop, professor emeritus of Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., is a retired sociologist living in Harrisonburg, Va. As author of The Pax Story (Pandora Press, 2001), he was one of the driving forces behind a documentary on Pax in Paraguay that aired recently on the Hallmark Channel.

❧

❧ Briefly noted

Silver Lake paddlers raise \$20,000-plus for camp

The sun was shining and the water was perfect for Silver Lake Mennonite Camp’s first “Paddle the Grand Fundraiser” on May 23. Forty canoeists collected pledges for the two-hour paddle from Waterloo Region’s West Montrose to Kaufman Flats. The event, which was modelled after the longtime Camp Squeah in British Columbia, was a great success, raising over \$20,000 for the camp. Interim camp director Dave Erb says, “These funds will allow the camp to continue its important ministry to our youth and children.” Silver Lake’s programs provide an enjoyable and supportive setting where Christian/Anabaptist values and teachings are emphasized.

—Silver Lake Camp Release

‘Homewood’ legacy to live on at Camp Assiniboia

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent

Before Homewood Mennonite Church closed its doors in 1999, the congregation made a significant donation to Camp Assiniboia, located along the Assiniboine River, for a building project.

When David Hogue assumed the position of camp manager, he realized the need for a replacement building for the blockhouse. “I think the blockhouse was built in the 1960s,” he says. “Over the years it served as staff housing and other things. When I got here, it was in pretty rough shape. When I found out that there was a sum of money given to the camp by Homewood Church, the idea of replacing the blockhouse with the ‘Homewood House’ was born.”

Plans are for a post-and-beam frame building with about 130 square metres of living space. It will be a one-and-a-half-storey, three-bedroom house that will accommodate at least 12 people.

“Timber-framed buildings are built to last and have a warmth and strength that makes them a pleasure to spend time in,” Hogue says.

Homewood House will serve as the

nurse’s quarters and infirmary during the summer camp program and will be available to rental groups or families during the rest of the year.

On May 10, a Mother’s Day lunch was held at Camp Assiniboia to help raise funds for this project. Kathy Hogue, the camp’s guest group coordinator, says, “The day was a huge success. We had 240 dinner guests who enjoyed the dinner, a dessert auction, visiting, wagon rides and hiking.”

Presently, an empty cement pad sits where the original blockhouse once stood and where Homewood House will soon be erected. The camp is within \$35,000 of being able to complete its goal for the project. Plans are to begin construction on Sept. 12 and to have Homewood House completed in time for the 2010 summer camp program.

“All of the cabins here are named after local trees and plants,” says Hogue. “Even though Homewood is not an actual tree, it was a local homegrown church and one of the last things they planted as a church was this project.” ❧

PHOTO BY ART WIEBE



Helen Rempel of Winnipeg, right, along with her children and grandchildren, were among the 240 guests who celebrated Mother’s Day at the Camp Assiniboia fundraiser for the new Homewood House project.

A gift of hope

CMU confers degrees to largest graduating class ever

By JOSIAH NEUFELD

Canadian Mennonite University Release
WINNIPEG

Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) graduates were told they face a different world than graduates just a year ago by Nettie Wiebe as they readied themselves to shift the tassels from one side of their mortarboards to the other. Wiebe, an organic farmer, environmental activist, co-founder of Via Campesina—an international peasant movement—and professor of church and society at St. Andrew's College in Saskatchewan, spoke at the CMU commencement service on April 26.

"Your prospects look noticeably different than they did one graduating class ago," she said to the 80 students, CMU's largest graduating class ever, in a gymnasium packed with family and friends. The economy is failing, workers are losing their jobs, the gap between rich and poor is widening, and climate change is dealing a harsh blow to the planet's most vulnerable populations, Wiebe warned.

"It will require radical and fundamental social, political, cultural and economic changes to stem the destruction and injustices among us," she said. "But I want to persuade you that the most important gift you can bring is hope in the work you are going to do. . . . Hope is not fantasy or

wishful thinking. Real hope is grounded in faith and kept alive by loving action."

Earlier in the day, Abe Bergen, director of enrolment services, urged the graduating class to imprint the passage from Isaiah 30:21 on their minds as they searched for the way of God: "*Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'*"

Many of this year's graduates are poised to follow the voice Bergen alluded to in ways of their own, including Joseph Naimodu, who hails from Kenya. He graduated with a three-year B.A. focused on theology and international development. Naimodu came to Canada hoping to find a school where he could study those two fields in tandem.

"I was inspired not just to be a minister in church, but to be involved with bringing physical transformation. Africa struggles with poverty. We need holistic development as well as spiritual development," he said.

Naimodu returns to Kenya in July. Upon his return, he will be directing a project that provides for the needs and education of 210 Kenyan children in a community where 98 percent of the population is illiterate. ❧

/// Briefly noted

CMU student to study at Kroc peace institute



Enns Fehr

WINNIPEG — Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) student Niki Enns Fehr of Winnipeg has been accepted into one of North America's most prestigious peace studies programs. She

is one of 20 students from around the world accepted into the master of arts in peace studies program at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Ind. Enns Fehr, a member of Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship, Winnipeg, graduated this year from CMU with a bachelor of arts degree with a major in peace and conflict transformation studies (PACTS). "Niki is a compassionate soul, with a sharp mind who is unafraid to embody peace wherever she goes," says Jarem Sawatsky, a PACTS assistant professor. "The Kroc Institute is . . . lucky to get to her. She will be a wonderfully compassionate and disruptive presence, demanding that peace talk be incarnated in daily practice." In 2006-07, she and her husband served at the Corrymeela Peace and Reconciliation Centre in Ireland.

—CMU Release

CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY PHOTO



Eighty students graduated with degrees from Canadian Mennonite University this year, the most ever.

Going for the 'green'

AMBS honoured by the U.S. Green Building Council with a gold award

STORY AND PHOTOS

BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Release
ELKHART, IND.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary celebrated the gold certification its library received from the United States Green Building Council with an event on June 4.

The certification marks the level to which AMBS met standards set by council in its Leadership in Environment and Energy Design (LEED) program. LEED is a rating system that sets nationally accepted benchmarks for the design, construction and operation of green buildings. Of the 69 points possible in the rating system, AMBS received 47, qualifying the building for gold certification.

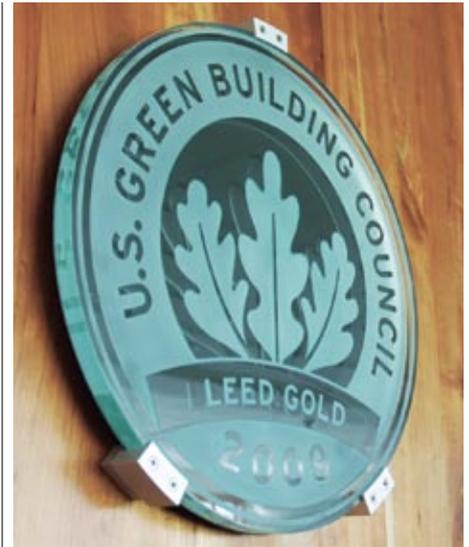
The June 4 celebration was an opportunity for the seminary community to mark the final facet of the project, which began with planning in 2004. Construction was completed in 2007, so the library could be ready to welcome students at the start of the 2007-08 school year. Certification comes after a project is completed, so features can be documented and assessed according to LEED standards.

"Already 2000 years ago, the apostle Paul said that someday 'creation, which has been groaning in labour pains . . . will be set free from its bondage to decay.' Until that divine restoration comes, we are committed to honour God's creation," said AMBS president Nelson Kraybill, in announcing the certification. "That commitment played a central role in planning and building of this library."

At the event, Kraybill and Eileen Saner, AMBS librarian, unveiled a seal indicating the gold certification, which is mounted next to the service desk in the library.

Honoured in the event was Saner, who had the initial vision to make the library a green building, along with the architectural firm and general contractor.

The building comprises approximately 2,300 square metres, including the library, bookstore, gallery and restrooms. Green building features include a geothermal ground-source heating and cooling system, triple-pane windows, efficient insulation, use of natural light and photocells that control lighting according to how much natural light is available. Materials from the region were used in the construction process as much as possible, to reduce the need for transporting them,



and 92 percent of building waste was recycled. Rain gardens and prairie grasses around the building help restore rain water to the underground aquifer and reduce the need for mowing parts of the 16-hectare campus. ❧

AMBS PHOTO BY MARY E. KLASSEN



Charissa Retzlaff, left, and Emily Dueck are the two Canadian graduates of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in the class of 2009 that included a Kenyan and 12 Americans. Retzlaff, a member of Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, Alta, earned a master of divinity degree and is pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. Dueck, a member of Leamington United Mennonite Church, Ont., earned a master of arts degree in peace studies and will pursue work in the area of peace and justice issues. Both women are graduates of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Alberta Mennonites oppose human rights legislation

They disagree that schools should inform parents when curriculum involves religion or sexual issues

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent
EDMONTON

Mennonite educators in Alberta are worried about new human rights legislation in the province.

In the wee hours of June 1, Bill 44 passed final reading in the Alberta legislature. The controversial bill puts the parental right to exempt a child from certain classes under human rights legislation. Schools must inform parents when curriculum involves teaching about religion, human sexuality or sexual orientation.

It is not clear why the move is necessary. Under section 50.2 of the Alberta School Act, parents receive notification of potentially offensive material already.

Vince Friesen, principal of Park Allen School and a Mennonite church member, says, "I'm still not clear at all why this was necessary because parents could always remove their students from classes they found offensive."

The Alberta Teachers Association (ATA) is firmly against the legislation, fearing it will severely restrict class discussion, cause logistical confusion, and result in human rights charges against teachers.

Byron Thiessen is the junior high principal at Masters Academy and College. In September 2009, he will take over as principal at Menno Simons Christian School. Both are alternative programs under the public Palliser School division in Calgary. "I think it's a sad bill," he says. "I think it reflects a lot of misunderstandings or mistrust among the communities of Alberta. . . . There should be a sense of trust between parents and educators."

At recent teachers association meetings in Lethbridge, Thiessen heard teachers express concerns. "It's not helping in the

understandings of cultures, religions, beliefs or anything," he says. "It's inhibiting my child's or my students' worldviews. That is the largest voice I'm hearing among ATA teachers."

Doug Klassen is pastor at Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary. Asked how Bill 44 resonates in Mennonite thought, he says, "That's not who we are as a missional church. In some ways, we used to be there. In our history we used to leave

the country when government imposed educational curriculum. Now, I think we see the church's mandate a little broader than that. Beyond preservation, we are about witness, invitation and transformation. Those things only come when there is engagement with cultures, institutions and structures."

Asked what Mennonites should do about the legislation, Thiessen said, "In my opinion, at this time, we should oppose it. . . . When we came to Canada we were the immigrants. We were the people that were different and new, and we, by example, should be tolerant and open to hear the voice of minorities. . . . We have to seek to understand."

"I think that if we don't give our children a full understanding of why people think the way they do, we don't give them a choice, we don't give them an authentic faith, we give them a closed and shielded faith about who we are as a Mennonite people," he says, concluding, "To be an authentic Mennonite, we have to understand how other people think." ❧

ROUGE VALLEY MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO



Unlike the fearful steward in Jesus' parable, the middlers and junior youths at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, Markham, Ont., multiplied the \$10 each one was given 20-fold over the course of six months, raising nearly \$2,000 to help Ugandan orphans in Bukoto to attend school for an entire semester. Fundraising activities spanned the gamut from making gourmet chocolate treats to recycling plastic bottles into decorative Christmas candleholders. With the success of this effort, a program to sponsor individual Ugandan children is in the works.

No easy 'fix'

Pastors, elders, caregivers learn to minister to those with chronic mental illness and their families

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

“The brain is a plastic organ, not fixed, a malleable part of the body,” said Dr. John Hershberger, a therapist for more than 25 years and an ordained Mennonite Church USA minister. He was the presenter at the “Ministering to Persons with Chronic Mental Illness and their Families” seminar, sponsored by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada’s Leadership Commission, for pastors, elders and caregivers last month.

His goal was to help the group understand the differences and interrelated issues of mind, brain and mental illness. Hershberger noted that some view mental illness as biological or genetic, and, therefore, hopeless, while others demand that people “just try harder.” Hershberger noted that the best science would note that there are both genetic and environmental aspects to mental illness.

In the first half of the full-day seminar, Hershberger focused on different groups

of mental illnesses:

- Schizophrenia, which most often strikes between 17 and 30 years of age;
- Mood disorders, including bipolar disorder (mania and depression);
- Anxiety disorders, in which people are

preoccupied with present or future problems; and

- Personality disorders.

Mood disorders are the most responsive to medication and cognitive therapies, while personality disorders are the least responsive, he said. In part, according to Hershberger, this is because many with personality disorders think that it is

the world around them, rather than they themselves, who have the problems.

It was here that the term “chronic” in the title of the seminar seemed most appropriate. When asked how people or a congregation could live with those with anti-social or other personality disorders, Hershberger noted that caregivers needed to “detach from responsibility for the other,” and that they would benefit from the kind of support offered the families of persons with addictions. Caregivers need to learn to “manage their emotional responses to those with mental illnesses,” he said.

Allan Strong from Waterloo Region Self Help; Kendra Whitfield Ellis, associate pastor at Floradale Mennonite Church; and

Hershberger noted that some view mental illness as biological or genetic and, therefore, hopeless, while others demand that people “just try harder.”

Bruce Wiebe, pastor at North Leamington United Mennonite Church, shared firsthand experiences with mental illness. Strong and Wiebe told powerful stories of their own struggles, while Whitfield Ellis told the story of a family member. Each also told about how congregations had been helpful and unhelpful in the course of the illnesses. Wiebe, in particular, noted that now that his depression is managed, people are less likely to ask him to take on strenuous tasks in the church or community, as if he is wounded.

The day ended with a panel discussing theology and spirituality in regard to chronic mental illnesses, focusing on what is supportive and not supportive, boundaries and self-care for caregivers, and resources for caregivers.

An idea that came up over and over was that those concerned about people with mental illness need to stop taking responsibility to “fix” them. Instead, they need to accompany both the mentally ill and their families through the long process. ❧



Marvin Shank, left, a teaching supervisor in clinical pastoral education at St. Joseph’s Healthcare, London, Ont., and Dr. John Hershberger, right, of the Oaklawn Psychiatric Center, Elkhart, Ind., discuss ministering to the chronically mentally ill at a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada seminar with Marianne Mellinger, coordinator of leadership formation for MC Eastern Canada.

'The Relief Sale is New Hamburg'

Provincial tourism ministry provides funds to annual sale, measures where visitors came from

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
NEW HAMBURG, ONT.



Many hands from Grace Lao Mennonite in Kitchener, Ont., prepare spring rolls by the dozen at this year's New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale.

"Do you have your free arm band yet?" Janice Harder, board member for the annual New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale, would ask as she passed through the crowds at the 43rd sale on May 29 and 30.

The arm bands identified participants as either from within 40 kilometres

(blue), beyond 40 kilometres but from within Ontario (green), from other parts of Canada (red), or outside of Canada (yellow).

The bands had been counted in advance so as to know how many had been given out, in an effort to let the Ontario Ministry of Tourism decide if the \$18,500 grant

for sale enhancements had been a good investment.

Harder estimated that only half the attendees received bands, but "it will help us estimate from where attendees come."

Local businesses, in their letters of commendation to the Ministry of Tourism, wrote "The Relief Sale is New Hamburg."

Couple combines travel with love of relief sales

STORY AND PHOTO BY BARRY BERGEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Travelling to Saskatoon, Sask., during the summer months has become a welcome change of pace for Gene and Karin Forshaw, members of Faith Mennonite Church in Leamington, Ont. For the past nine years, they have begun their trek west to coincide with the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale. Their return trip is timed to allow them to attend the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Relief Sale in Morris, Man.

The lure of a relief sale comes at many levels for these two. Gene is a self-proclaimed pack rat, who enjoys learning about the history of the items he purchases. Karin enjoys seeing the beautiful quilts.

For both of them, though, the really important reason for attending a relief sale has little to do with what they might pick up, or how tasty the sausage or pie is. The atmosphere around a relief sale is integral to the experience.

And in their view, a relief sale is not a place to hunt for bargains or search for a deal. "When we attend a relief sale," Gene says, "our purchases help those who need help."

Karin recalls that one of her more memorable

purchases was a blanket which her sister had made and donated to the sale. When her sister realized the bidding on the blanket was getting quite high, she told Karin to stop, but Karin simply told her that she really wanted it!

Gene recalls bidding on a beautiful cedar strip canoe without any real way to transport it home. Thankfully, someone else wanted it just a little bit more, he says.

The highest price they saw paid for any one single item was for a quilt that fetched \$44,000. The atmosphere in the room was electric, they recall.

Relief sales have been a part of Karin's life since her childhood growing up near Saskatoon. She got Gene to attend the MCC sale in Leamington and he's been hooked on sales ever since, too.



Gene and Karin Forshaw of Leamington, Ont., have made it a habit over the last nine years to visit the relief sales in New Hamburg, Ont., and Morris, Man., during their annual trek to Saskatchewan and back each summer.

The sale earned more than \$320,000 for Mennonite Central Committee. Quilts brought in a significant amount and the second annual Run for Relief more than \$12,000.

One of the enhancements which the government grant made possible was a House of Doc concert on May 29. Grant money was used to pay for the venue, lighting and other tech support. The sale's website notes that the concert played to rave reviews, a standing ovation and an encore.

The grant was only for extras, though, as the sale still needs all the work of volunteers and fundraising.

Harder also drew attention to the spirit of volunteerism. Martha Chapman, herself not Mennonite, donated more than five hours of time at her Tourism Marketing International business, located in Toronto, to promote the sale. Her work resulted in the London (Ont.) *Free Press* publishing a first-time article in advance of the sale, and three travel writers touring the sale to publicize next year's event. ❧

Solar power proves a 'hot' topic

STORY AND PHOTO
BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

Expecting "a more intimate crowd" of around 40, Darren Kropf, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario creation care program co-ordinator, explained to the crowd of more than 100 on May 27 that he had not arranged for a microphone.

Undaunted, the crowd stuck with him and the many presenters who came to describe the components of the Mennonite Initiative for Solar Energy (MISE). Sponsored by MCC Ontario, MISE has done the research among both solar electric installers and solar water heater installers to find what it believes are the most cost-effective and dependable products.

/// Briefly noted

Generosity of Canadians breaks annual record despite recession

WINNIPEG—Canadian Foodgrains Bank received \$12.4 million in donations during the 2008-09 fiscal year, \$4 million more than its previous annual record. "Despite the recession, we've seen the generosity of Canadians increase this year," says executive director Jim Cornelius. "We are pleased and humbled to see so many people committed to the work of ending hunger regardless of the challenges they may face in their own lives." Donations to Canadian Foodgrains Bank take the form of both cash and grain. Cash donations increased by approximately 15 percent, while the increased value of grain and the higher yields in the Prairie provinces have seen the value of grain donations increase even more significantly. "In addition to increases in cash and grain donations, we've received more in transfer funds from our 15 member agencies, and we've also seen our annual contribution from CIDA [Canadian International Development Agency] increase from \$20 million to \$25 million," Cornelius adds. In addition to the annual contribution of \$25 million, CIDA also recently approved an additional \$9 million for the Foodgrains Bank's programs in Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

—Canadian Foodgrains Bank Release



Darren Kropf, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario creation care program co-ordinator, explains why the organization is promoting solar energy by drawing attention to an article in the May/June 2009 issue of A Common Place on how MCC is supporting the installation of photovoltaic systems in Nicaragua.

These companies, Solera Sustainable Energies Company for photovoltaic systems and Merlyn Power for solar hot water installations were among the presenters.

Bill 152—The Green Energy and Green Economy Act—has opened the door to make home solar energy installations profitable for Ontario homeowners. These new systems allow homeowners to sell their excess power back to the provincial electricity regulator through an outgoing meter.

Kropf was careful to explain that solar energy fits many of the components of MCC's vision. Coal for electricity is often mined with little regard for the environment or the people around the mines,

causing injustice and inequality, he said. At the same time, it is the poor who will bear the brunt of global warming, making changes in North American energy use a justice issue. Care of the creation which God has given humans to manage, rather than abuse, is another reason why Christians should be interested in solar power, a renewable resource, he said.

Also present were representatives from the local Residential Energy Efficiency Project, which does energy audits of homes and worship spaces. Such an audit is necessary before the government will enter into a contract for energy purchases from homeowners. ❧

Military aid often shoddy

MCC Canada calls for depoliticized relief and development work in Afghanistan

By ROSS W. MUIR

Managing Editor

Engaging the military in development and reconstruction in Afghanistan is endangering aid workers and civilian recipients, according to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada.

In a recent letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, executive director Don Peters states that blurring the line between military operations and development is politicizing the delivery of aid. (*See full letter on page 12. Ed.*)

“While we admire the concern the Canadian Forces has for development, evidence shows that humanitarian aid and long-term development is most effectively and efficiently performed by non-governmental organizations and government development agencies, not military personnel,” he writes.

In the same paragraph, Peters also suggests that, “because soldiers are not trained to deliver aid or to do development, it is not surprising to hear reports that work is often poorly done, inefficiently carried out, and lacks a process of consultation with local people.”

The militarization of aid is one of several concerns identified in Peters’ letter. These concerns arise from the counsel of MCC’s partners in Afghanistan. In April, MCC representatives met with local Afghan partner organizations to hear their perspective on the impact of international groups on their country, a country in which 38 aid workers were killed by insurgents and 147 were abducted last year alone.

Peters laments the loss of life on all sides, writing, “Like other Canadians, we are deeply saddened by the losses this war has meant for both Afghans and for our own Canadian soldiers.” But violence begets violence, and international military operations, even with the best of intentions, contributes to new grievances that fuel the cycles of aggression, according to

Peters.

Peters urges Canada to more actively promote a comprehensive peace process that will engage Afghans from all sectors of society. “[A]ll parties—including members of the Taliban and other disaffected groups—must be brought into the process,” he writes, adding that “we [MCC] believe . . . the insistence that reconciliation can only involve those parties that accept the legitimacy of the Afghan government and constitution . . . is much too stringent. Insistence on such conditions does not build trust; nor does it pave the way for real dialogue.”

While peace and peacemaking are central to all aspects of MCC’s work, the letter stops short of calling for a withdrawal of Canadian troops, since MCC’s partners have counselled against it at this time.

MCC’s Afghan partners estimate that up to 90 percent of people join the Taliban for economic reasons. Afghans are hungry, impoverished and without work, and the Taliban provides them with an income, they indicated. To counter this, MCC believes that Canada should invest more in projects that directly improve the lives of ordinary Afghans, praising Canada’s “involvement in polio vaccinations and in rebuilding the Dahla dam . . .”

MCC has worked in Afghanistan for more than a decade, providing assistance in the areas of food aid, education, irrigation, and support for community-level peacebuilding. ❧

From a Mennonite Central Committee release by Amanda Thorsteinsson.

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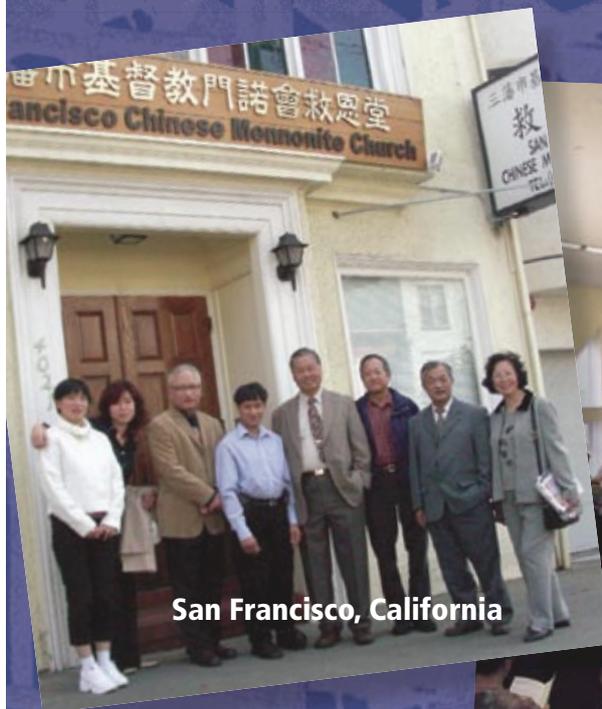
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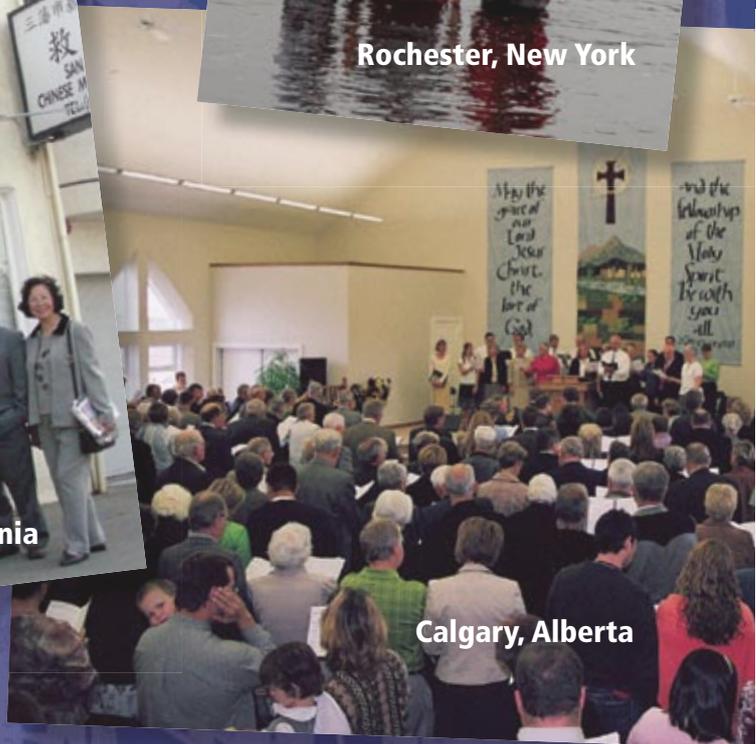
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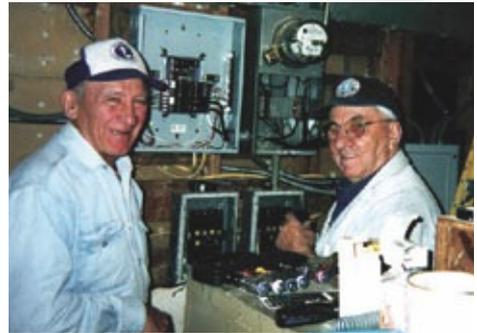
JoinHands

A Program of Mennonite Men

PROMOTIONAL INSERT



Church of God Prince of Peace in Miami, Fla., received a grant of \$45,000 in 2007. This Haitian congregation has grown rapidly since it began in 1997 and currently has an attendance of about 250.



Los Angeles Faith Chapel, which received a grant of \$50,000 in 2003, was the recipient of a Mennonite Disaster Service/Mennonite Men partnership in which volunteers worked on renovation of the congregation's building.

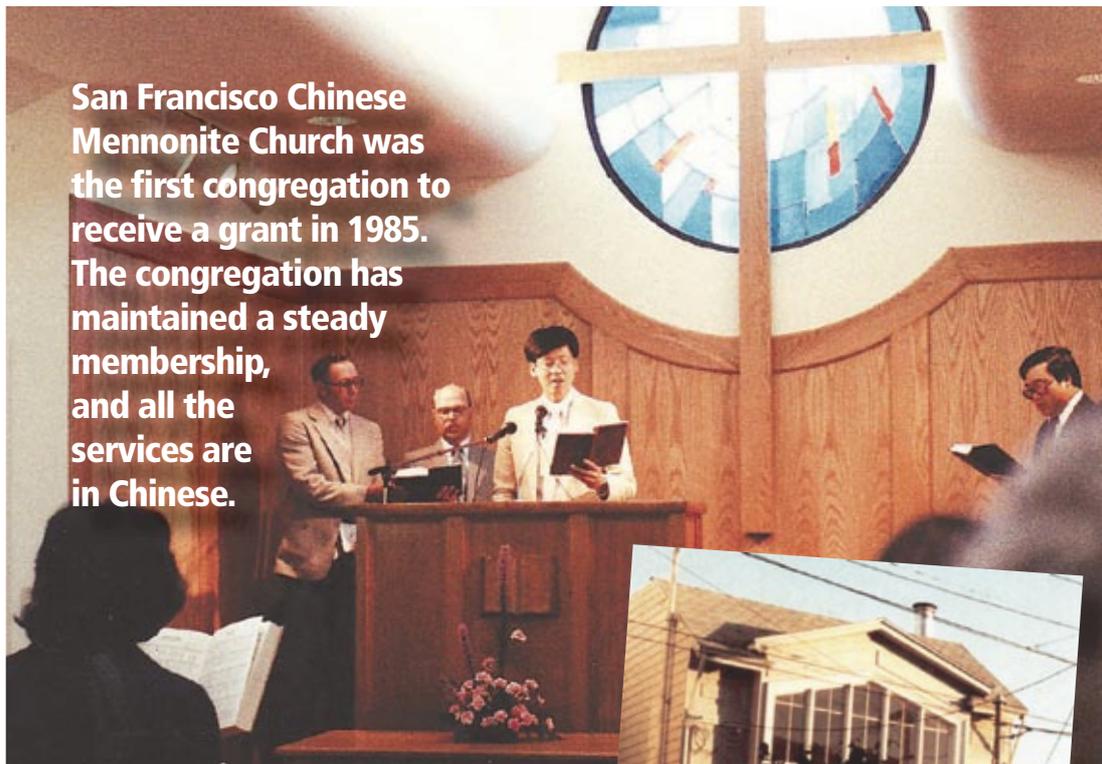


Trinity Mennonite Church in Calgary, Alberta, received a grant of \$50,000 in 2006. The congregation began in 1983 and has added a Korean language service to better serve the needs of its growing Korean membership.



Living Water in Borabur, Thailand, is an emerging church supported by Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network. It has an attendance of about 70 and received a grant of \$10,000 in 2006.

San Francisco Chinese Mennonite Church was the first congregation to receive a grant in 1985. The congregation has maintained a steady membership, and all the services are in Chinese.



JoinHands, the church-building program of Mennonite Men, is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

David Quiring (above, at left, behind the pulpit), Mennonite Men treasurer, and Irvin Voth (next to him), president of Mennonite Men, worship at San Francisco Mennonite Church in 1985. They presented the congregation with the church-building program's first grant, \$50,000. Stan Bohn, executive secretary of the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church, says CHM presented the idea for a church-building program to Mennonite Men at the Bethlehem '83 conference. It was, says Bohn, "a way to let people know what was going on and to promote church planting." Quiring "really took hold of it," Bohn says, "and immediately enrolled 50-60 people from Henderson, Neb." J. Winfield Fretz suggested the program be called "Tenth Man," from a Russian Mennonite system of community organization in which every 10th man watched over the needs of the other nine households. Quiring says \$500 came in at the end of 1983. A year later that had grown to \$5,000, and by June of 1985, the program had \$50,000. The program changed its name to **JoinHands** in 2003.

Mennonite Men, an organization related to both Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, oversees this program, which enlists members who



commit themselves to contribute \$100 twice each year to support new congregations. Members may be individuals or groups such as Sunday school classes or men's fellowships. In its first 10 years, Tenth Man distributed grants totaling \$371,000 to 15 congregations. In its next 10 years, grants totaling \$656,000 went to 24 new congregations. In 2003, this program passed the \$1 million mark in grants. A tithe of all donations received is put aside to help congregations overseas acquire their first meeting place. **JoinHands** has given more than \$1.5 million to more than 50 congregations.

In Canada, approximately 80 donors participate in the construction of meetinghouses of new congregations while offering new congregations an opportunity to finance the construction or purchase of their first meetinghouse. In the United States, there are about 500 **JoinHands** donors. Both congregations in need of the financial support and donors to help young congregations are needed.

PROMOTIONAL INSERT



Rochester (N.Y.) Area Mennonite Fellowship, which began in 1980, received a grant of \$35,000 in January 2009. With a regular attendance of about 55, the congregation is in a city of 200,000 with many opportunities for outreach.



Luz del Evangelio in Dallas, Texas, is scheduled to receive a grant of \$35,000 by the end of 2009 and hopes to begin construction on a new sanctuary this spring. This Hispanic congregation has an attendance of about 180.



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PERSONAL REFLECTION

Rippling forward

*MDS service trip will not be soon forgotten
by Conrad Grebel student*

STORY AND PHOTO BY ERIC KENNEDY

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Trips, especially service projects, tend to have a natural “high” that lingers in the days and weeks that follow. You’ve spent time working together, you’ve been mentally refreshed through manual labour, you’ve been around old and new friends, and you’ve experienced the “trip of a lifetime.”

But is there something deeper than that short-lived rush? Four months later, does our time with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) still have any effect?

It was in February that about 25 students left their residence rooms at Conrad Grebel University College and piled into vans for a southbound migration to Louisiana. Although we followed the tracks of many peers bound for beaches and vacations, Spring Break 2009 brought us something very different: the promise of early morning alarms, hard manual labour and far more gnats than we ever wanted to see in our lives.

MDS knows the story well: You arrive for an orientation and settle in for the night. Virtually everyone underestimates how much food they need to pack for lunch the first day on the site, and

The buildings may no longer be in our hands, but the memories certainly are.

When I returned on a cold, snowy Sunday evening, I was interrupted by a friend during one of my long stories. “Eric,” she said, “you don’t need to tell me any more. I can see it on your face and in your smile.” That smile still hasn’t faded from any of our faces.

The experiences we shared in Louisiana really did change us. Having raised the proverbial barn together, we are a more trusting, open and close group of friends than before. Having seen a different world, we’re quicker to listen and slower to judge during conversations around the dinner table. Having served, we better understand our faith and our humanity.

Four months later, we appreciate what we have. We smile when the wind picks up—because it will blow the gnats away! We enjoy shared meals and each other’s company, although we

More than anything, we cling to the friendships that blossomed in the southern sun.

absolutely everybody learns to appreciate a good night’s sleep. The teams work together well, and you look back fondly on all the progress that was made.

But the months have now come and gone. The gnat bites have healed and the new homes we helped build have likely been handed over to their new families.

eat substantially less at breakfast now! More than anything, we cling to the friendships that blossomed in the southern sun.

None of this is to say that life suddenly became perfect when we returned. It is still just as easy to lose our motivation in piles of work, or to let those smiles

be briefly masked under the grimaces brought on by exams. But even considering all that, there isn’t a week that goes by where I don’t think of the Gulf Coast, remember something I learned or questioned there, or spend time with friends I made when I was on the bayou.

Was the trip and investment worth it? Four months, four years or 40 years from now, we will be profoundly impacted by how we served with MDS. Personally, the experience I had in Louisiana in February propelled me to be writing this article



Conrad Grebel University College students take a ride through the U.S. Gulf Coast during their service trip with Mennonite Disaster Service earlier this year.

from Québec, on an exchange I might not have had the desire or courage to undertake without my MDS experience and friendships I made.

The impact of such service ripples forward, shaping the people we become in a substantial and meaningful way. Four months later, Louisiana still matters, the bayou still flows through my mind, and the experience still shapes who we are. ☘

Four months after his service trip to Louisiana with Mennonite Disaster Service, Eric Kennedy, a student at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., filed this reflection.

FOCUS ON CHILDREN'S BOOKS & RESOURCES

Children's Books & Resources

Books

Don't Be Afraid: Stories of Christians in Times of Trouble. Rebecca Seiling and Cindy Snider. Herald Press, 2009, 48 pages. These stories of Christians who responded faithfully in times of crisis are designed for children aged nine to 12.

Julia's Words. Judith L. Roth, illustrated by Brooke Rothshank. Herald Press, 2009, 42 pages.

Designed for ages six to 10, this book explores a friendship that is challenged by the fact that one of the girls is deaf.

Little Bear's Big Sweater. David Bedford, illustrated by Caroline Pedler. Good Books, 2009, 32 pages.

This hardcover book with some touch-and-feel illustrations tells the story of what happens when a favourite sweater is passed on to a younger sibling.

Me and My Mom. Alison Ritchie, illustrated by Alison Edgson. Good Books, 2009, 32 pages.

This hardcover book explores the loving relationship between a mother and child.

Timna. Lucille Travis. Herald Press, 2009, 168 pages.

This story for nine- to 14-year-olds is a fictional account of life in the time of Noah. Timna is the wife of one of Noah's sons.

Tom's Tree. Gillian Shields. Good Books, 2009, 32 pages.

This hardcover book is a tale about growth and maturity.

Walk in Peace. Ingrid Hess, writer and illustrator. Herald Press, 2009, 44 pages.

Like Ingrid Hess's *Sleep in Peace*, this is a book-length illustrated poem for pre-

schoolers, reminding them that God watches over them.

Resources

Come Aboard the StewardShip: Children's Activity Book. Cindy Snider, illustrated by Jesse Graber. Mennonite Church USA, 2009, 12 pages.

Yellow Page Business Directory

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This activity/colouring book is designed to teach children about stewardship.

Water Bugs and Dragonflies Colouring Book: Explaining Death to Young Children. Doris Stickney. Wood Lake Books, 2009.

This classic storybook, now in colouring book format, can help young children deal with grief.

DVD

VeggieTales: Abe and the Amazing Promise: A Lesson in Patience. Big Ideas Inc., 2009, 53 minutes.

The story of Abraham and Sarah is part of this episode that teaches children about waiting for God's promises.

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Calendar

Alberta

Sept. 18-19: Mennopalooza! A music, worship and social gathering hosted by Trinity Mennonite Church, Calgary. All MC Alberta churches and people of all ages welcome. Battle of the Bands, baseball, arts and crafts gallery, and more. For more information, call 403-256-7157.

Saskatchewan

July 6-10: MC Canada youth assembly, Caronport.

Aug. 16: "A taste of China" event at RJC.

Oct. 14-18: MC Canada IMPaCT.

Oct. 16-17: MC Saskatchewan women's retreat, Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Manitoba

July 6-9: Family Camp at Camp Moose Lake. Contact Camps with Meaning at 204-895-2267.

July 6-12: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate 50th anniversary camping trip along the Bow River, Kananaskis Country, Alta.

July 25: Rekindle old friendships and make new ones at the second annual Eden Foundation Tractor Trek through Mennonite villages south of Winkler. For more information, visit edenhealth.mb.ca.

Sept. 11-14: Camp Moose Lake work days.

Sept. 12: Camp Assiniboia workathon.

Oct. 16-18: Scrapbooking retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

Oct. 24: Camp Koinonia work day.

Oct. 24, 25: Camps with Meaning celebration banquets at Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain (24) and Winkler Berghaler (25).

Ontario

June 27: Nithview Community is hosting a strawberry social from 2 to 4 and 6:30 to 8 p.m., in the Nithview Auditorium, New Hamburg. Sponsored by the Auxiliary. For more information, call 519-578-3453.

June 28: Ordination service and celebration for Juanita Laverty, pastor at Hanover Mennonite Church, 2:30 p.m.

July 6-10: Wanner Mennonite

Church is hosting a VBS program called "Jonah the Runaway"; 9 to 11:45 a.m. weekdays. Register online at wannerchurch.org.

Aug. 8: Cornstock Music Festival at Willowgrove, Stouffville; 1 to 9 p.m. Connected to the Anabaptist community, the festival showcases young and emerging talent. Rain or shine. For more information, visit myspace.com/cornstockontario.

Aug. 9: The annual Reesor picnic at Backus Mill Heritage Conservation Area Park, Port Rowan. Worship service at 11 a.m., followed by lunch and a social time. All Reesorites welcome.

Aug. 20: Deadline for entries in the Pax Christi Chorale's Great Canadian Hymn Competition. Canadian composers are invited to submit original compositions set to a hymn text. For competition rules and entry forms, visit paxchristichorale.org. Three winning compositions will be performed at Pax Christi Chorale's "Fanfare of Canadian Hymns II" concert on Oct. 25 at Grace Church on-the-Hill, Toronto.

U.S.A.

Oct. 17: Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society day-long field trip, "Trail of the Conestoga from Lancaster County to Canada." The field trip will explore the Lancaster, Pa., origins of the Mennonite immigrants to Canada around 1800. Original early pioneer homesteads, meetinghouses and cemeteries in northern Lancaster will be visited. For more information, call 717-393-9745 or visit lmhs.org.

Ukraine

Oct. 9-11: Celebration weekend featuring the unveiling of a monument to "Mennonite victims of tribulation, Stalinist terror and religious oppression" in the main square of the one-time village of Khortitsa, Ukraine. For more information, visit mennonitememorial.org.

To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight weeks in advance of the event date by e-mail to calendar@canadianmennonite.org.

Classifieds

For Rent

For Rent: Sleepy Hollow Cottage. All-season, 3-bedroom home in a peaceful wooded valley in the heart of the Niagara region. Small retreat centre or family accommodations. Bruce Trail. Shaw Festival, Wine tours. Phone: 416-534-6047 or e-mail: shcottage@sympatico.ca for complete brochure.

Advertising Information

Contact *Canadian Mennonite*

Ad Representative

Lisa Metzger

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Volunteer Opportunity

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

SHEKINAH RETREAT CENTRE, owned and operated by Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, is inviting retired couples to consider a four- to six-month volunteer opportunity at Shekinah.

Position includes hosting and sharing housekeeping duties. Housing and volunteer stipend are provided.

Next term to begin Sept. 1, 2009.

Come and enjoy the river hills of the North Saskatchewan River.

Contact Shekinah Retreat Centre at email: office@shekinahretreatcentre.org/phone: 306-945-4929

Employment Opportunities

Wellesley Mennonite Church seeks a **PASTOR** to join Julie Ellison White to create our pastoral team. Time commitment is negotiable up to 1.0 FTE.

WMC is a well-established, growing congregation in the rural village of Wellesley, Ont., located in diversified Waterloo Region. We are a community-based church, with close proximity to the universities and seminaries in Kitchener/Waterloo. For further details, please see: <http://www.wellesleymennonite.ca/>.

We are seeking a pastor who:

- Supports and nurtures a team model that builds on each pastor's strengths and experience
- Will share pastoral care, preaching and teaching and worship planning
- Is committed to an Anabaptist/Mennonite theology and practice

Post-secondary and/or seminary education is preferred. Start date is negotiable.

Please reply to:

Muriel Bechtel, Conference Minister
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
4489 King Street East
Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2

Tel: 519-650-3806 / 800-206-9356 ext 107 Fax: 519-650-3947
Email: muriel@mcec.ca/Web Site: www.mcec.ca



Mennonite Publishing Network seeks applicants for **CONTRACT EDITOR** of *Purpose: stories of faith and promise*, a monthly magazine published by Faith & Life Resources for adult Christians in Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. The editor is expected to work with the editorial committee in choosing themes, solicit and edit articles and manage issues through to production. Candidates for this position should have editorial experience, awareness of the Mennonite Church constituencies, and enthusiasm about representing God's healing and hope in the world. They should also be active members in good standing of a Mennonite congregation in one of these two denominations. This position is available for fall of 2009. To apply, send a letter of application and resume by June 30, 2009, to Eleanor Snyder, Director, Faith & Life Resources, Mennonite Publishing Network, 490 Dutton Dr., Unit C7, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7, or e-mail esnnyder@mpn.net.

Job Opportunities at CMU



- Director of Marketing & Communications
- Director of Human Resources
- Outtown Program Manager
- Admissions Counselor
- Bookstore Manager

To learn more about these positions and how to apply, please visit our website at www.cmu.ca or call Susan Warkentin at (204) 487-3300.



MEDA
Mennonite Economic Development Associates

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE

The position exists to increase financial support for MEDA. Responsibilities include developing and fostering positive relationships on behalf of MEDA with existing supporters and bringing awareness about MEDA to others. The position is based in Waterloo, Ont. Travel is required. The start date is June 2009.

Qualifications:

- Demonstrated track record in not-for-profit fundraising or sales in business.
- Strong results orientation.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including building & maintaining relationships with supporters.
- Strong organizational, time management and administrative skills.
- Appreciation and support of MEDA's faith, values and goals.

To apply, send resume to jobs@meda.org.
www.meda.org

Mennonite Collegiate Institute
Gretna, MB



MCI is a provincially accredited independent Anabaptist Christian high school (Gr. 9-12), a member of Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools & Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools.

MCI invites applicants for the following positions in September '09:

1. **75% to 100%, term teacher (Sept. '09 through June '10)** with duties in content areas which may include Bible, Church History and English. Specific post-secondary study in biblical studies is an essential asset.
2. **Full time positions (male & female) on Residence Staff team.** This is a 6 member team whose duties include programming & supervision of resident students, student leadership development, personal mentoring & other co-curricular involvement including athletics & fine arts. Experience and training in youth ministry is an asset.

All candidates must have an active faith & declare commitment to the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.

Please send a resume and cover letter to:

Darryl Loewen, Principal
Mennonite Collegiate Institute
Box 250 - Gretna, MB - R0G 0V0
principal@mciiblues.net

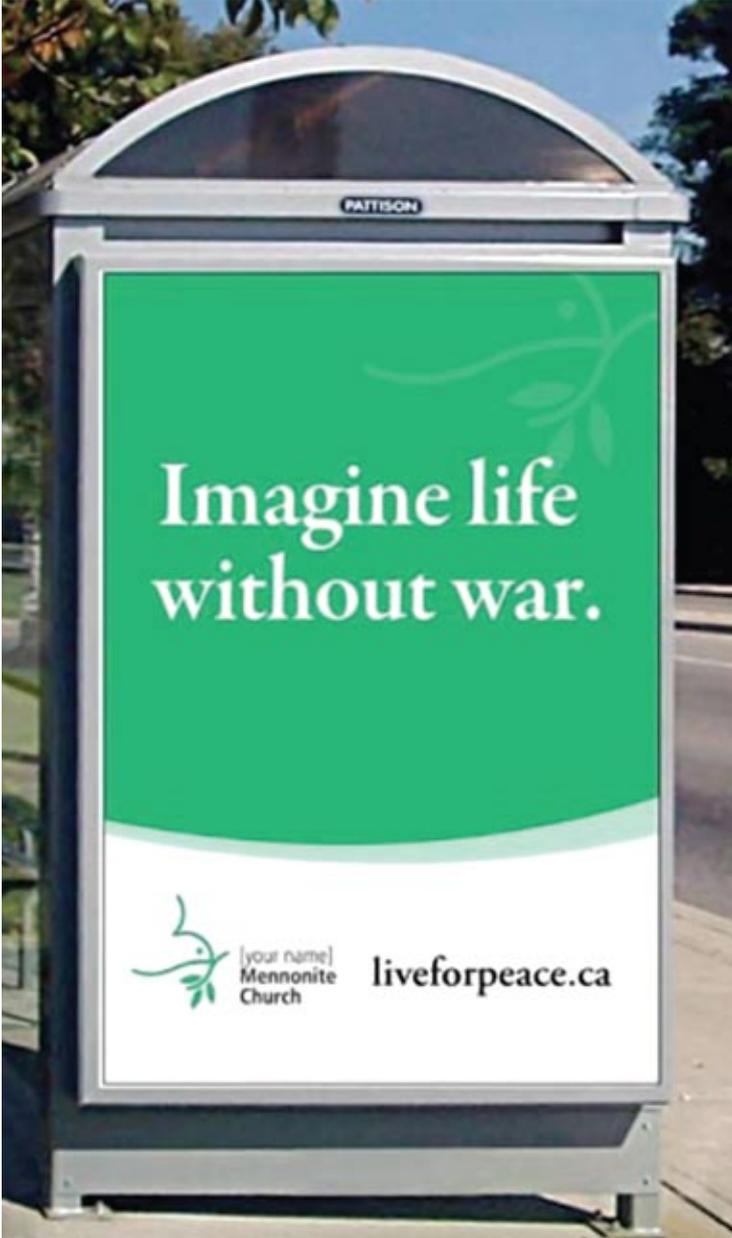
Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
July 27	July 14
Aug. 17	Aug. 4
Sept. 7	Aug. 25
Sept. 21	Sept. 8

Focus on Education



Mennonite Publishing Network seeks applicants for a **CONTRACT EDITOR** for Adult Bible Study, a quarterly curriculum based on Bible outlines determined by the Committee on Uniform Series, published by Faith & Life Resources. The editor is expected to assign writers for the teacher guide, student book and online weekly edition, edit the manuscripts and manage these resources through to production. The ideal candidate will have an advanced degree in biblical studies and Anabaptist theology, editorial experience and an awareness of current adult education teaching methodology. Applicants should be active members in good standing of a Mennonite congregation in Mennonite Church USA or Mennonite Church Canada. This position is available for fall 2009. For more information, or to apply, send a letter of application and resume by June 30, 2009, to Eleanor Snyder, director of Faith & Life Resources, Mennonite Publishing Network, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C-7, Waterloo, ON, Canada N2L 6H7, or e-mail esnnyder@mpn.net.



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