



C A N A D I A N
Mennonite

February 9, 2004
Volume 8, Number 3

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Lesson from the Psalmist

Reading the Psalms can be an unsettling experience. Within one chapter, we can move from great joy to deepest anguish, from lavish praise to grovelling self-loathing. And then there are the curses. The vitriolic language is difficult to harmonize with a vision of God's peace.

Much of the time the Psalmist is shrieking for vengeance on his enemies. Psalm 58 is typical: "O God, break the teeth in their mouths.... Let them be like the snail which dissolves into slime, like the untimely birth that never sees the sun...." What are we to make of this?

I believe the Psalms can teach us a lot about peace. For one thing, the Psalmist is right on when it comes to the psychology of human conflict. I dare say many of us can identify with the Psalmist's rants against fate and his denunciations of people who abuse him. The scriptures don't hesitate to expose the conflicting impulses and vengeful thoughts that drive even the most religious people.

Psychologists tell us that getting it all out is a way to get rid of the hatred, to restore peace to your psyche. And mediators tell us that conflicts can be "transformed" into something more manageable. But what about the situations that never change and the conflicts that cannot be resolved? Many people in our world live with horrendous injustice, generation after generation. All of us live with conflicts arising from circumstance or inner turmoil.

The Psalmist knew all about "unresolvable" conflict. That's why, when he was finished cursing his enemies, he just pushed the whole problem onto God. He didn't forget his anger, but he projected his emotions into a fantasy about how God would get even for him. Psalm 58 continues: "The righteous will rejoice when he sees his vengeance; he will bathe his feet in the blood of the wicked. Men will say, 'Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely there is a God who judges on earth.'"

That may not be the language of reconciliation but it is a theological answer to our human dilemma. Leaving justice to God helps us transcend our violent impulses and our need to solve all problems. It helps us live with the contradiction between working for peace and knowing that conflict will always be with us. The Psalmist reminds us not to speak glibly about reconciliation, to recognize that ultimately we have to trust God to judge and to punish.

Interpretation

Willard Swartley, longtime seminary teacher and scholar, is offering the church a resource in his new book, *Homosexuality: Biblical Interpretation and Moral Discernment*. As a respected New Testament specialist who cares deeply about the church, Swartley is well-placed to help us think about this contentious topic.

The responses to the book are proving to be as varied as the church's responses to homosexuality itself. To give you a sense of the range of opinion, we decided to publish several views (see page 8). The reviews raise some crucial questions about interpretation and discernment in the church today.

Mennonites have always prided themselves on having a "biblical faith." The Bible is our authority. We have excellent biblical scholars who help us discover what the Bible says.

But then what? How do we make the leap from that mixed collection of ancient texts to the ethical questions we face in 2004? How do we "apply" what we find in the Bible to our situations today? As one reviewer observes, "There is further interpretive work that needs to be done."

While the Bible remains our foundation, the "texts" for the church must also include theological analysis and tradition, the knowledge of the sciences and the revelation of the arts, personal experience and cultural context—all to be examined in the light of Christ's revelation of God. That's why we need to keep on talking.—**Margaret Loewen Reimer**

Mission statement: Published by Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, *Canadian Mennonite* serves primarily the people and churches of Mennonite Church Canada and its five area conferences. *Canadian Mennonite* is a bi-weekly Anabaptist/Mennonite 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, news and analysis of issues facing the church.

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CANADIAN
Mennonite

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Website: www.canadianmennonite.org

PAP Registration No. 09613. Contact head office for subscriptions and address changes. See order form on inside back cover. ISSN 1480-042X
 We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing cost.

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Cover: MCC volunteer Caili Woodyard with inner city children at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery. See page 11. Photo by Ray Dirks.



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Web site preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail.

Selections are posted on our web site at

www.canadianmennonite.org on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the February 23 issue by February 19.

Toronto, Ont.

Helen Brenneman inspired all she met

Many people will walk into and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart." This quote from Eleanor Roosevelt was aptly applied to Helen Brenneman at her memorial service on December 6.

Brenneman left indelible footprints in the hearts of many. Her instinct of caring for others was developed when, as a teenager, she lost her mother and became surrogate mother to her younger siblings. She continued to nurse close family relationships with nieces and nephews.

Teaching faith went hand in hand with living it. As a Sunday school and Bible school teacher in the Western Ontario Mennonite Conference, Brenneman helped build the strong leadership evident today in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

Her enthusiasm for teaching and meeting people took her to Toronto to help with Summer Bible School. In 1950 she moved here and became a charter member in the Warden Park congregation.

Many have memories of her as a church visitor, teacher and girls' club leader. During her eight years of teaching in the public school system she took a year out to serve in the Ozarks (Arkansas) with Mennonite Central Committee.

As the social services project at Warden Woods was emerging, Brenneman was taking courses in early childhood education. The Woodland Nursery School, which opened in 1966, provided her with an ideal milieu to touch the lives of children and parents in the new housing development.

"All the most important things my kids know, they learned at Woodland Nursery School," said one father. For 23 years, Helen taught children how to handle their frustrations by talking rather than hitting. Parents learned by watching Brenneman and her staff model ways to handle children in the

classroom and on outings to city attractions. They discussed their problems at weekly parents' sessions.



Brenneman

the lives of Sunday school children, adults in Bible studies and women's groups. Seniors enjoyed tea parties in her beautiful garden. She volunteered at the St. Clair-O'Connor community, on the church's care team and on a group sponsoring refugees. She related

When

Brenneman retired as superintendent in 1989, she was succeeded by someone who had been involved as a mother and student teacher.

After her retirement, she continued to touch

easily to all ages and retained a multitude of names, faces and events, making her an invaluable source of information.

Brenneman's enormous contribution to Warden Woods Church and Community Centre was recognized on several occasions: on her 60th birthday, her retirement from the nursery school, and her farewell service at church before she moved to Kitchener in 1995. In Kitchener she volunteered at the office of MC Eastern Canada, at the Rockway thrift shop and teaching English as a second language. Wherever she lived, people felt the touch of Christ.

Because of a long battle with pulmonary fibrosis Brenneman gradually had to relinquish activities. Letting go was hard, but what helped her was the long investment she had made in a world beyond this one. —**Mary Groh**

Saskatoon, Sask.

Book lover joins publishing board

In the quiet darkness of a cold December morning, I make my way toward the Great Canadian Bagel shop to meet Carry Dueck for breakfast.

Dueck and her husband Wayne are almost household names for those in the Mennonite community here who like to read or have kids who reach for a book rather than the television remote.

Reaching for a good book has been Dueck's passion for much of her life. She recently accepted an appointment to the board of the Mennonite Publishing Network and brings over 25 years of experience in book sales and publishing. The Network, run jointly by Mennonite Church Canada and USA, operates Faith & Life Resources as well as Herald Press. As part of her role, Dueck wants to raise awareness about the network in the Saskatchewan community.

"There is sadness about some of the things that have happened," she observed, referring to the financial woes of Herald Press. But there has to be forward movement. She would like to

explore how the network can be an effective tool in the international scene of Mennonite publishing.

Dueck's journey into the world of business began when she and her husband were preparing for a stint with Mennonite Central Committee in Africa. Warfare broke out in their assigned country and plans changed.



Dueck

Trading in a trip to Swaziland for a month in northern Saskatchewan, the family made alternate plans for the future. While their two boys enjoyed swimming and fishing, Dueck and her husband tossed ideas back and forth.

"I had a dream to make a children's book store happen," she recalled. Wayne decided to work with her.

In August 1977, the dream turned

Kitchener, Ont.

Award-winning nurse has big heart for others

Barbara Burkhardt, a member of Hillcrest Mennonite Church, recently received the Reverend Rip Kirby Award of Excellence from St. Mary's Hospital here for her work as a nurse.

She was nominated by nursing peers, patients and families as someone who exemplifies the mission statement of the hospital where she has worked for 30 years.

The award was a surprise. The chief executive officer, director of nursing and others arrived on the ward with balloons, a rose, a gift certificate to a restaurant, free hospital parking for a month, and the award itself. Burkhardt later met the hospital board at a tea party given in her honour.

A news release stated: "Described by her peers as a nurse who consistently offers her patients and their families excellence in care, she is also a strong patient advocate, Barb is respected for her knowledge, expertise and her willingness to help others. She is often

called upon to help with the orientation of new staff..."

Burkhardt's call to nursing began in public school. She concedes that there were few options available to women then—nursing, teaching or secretarial work.



Burkhardt

As a teenager in the Conservative Mennonite Church, Burkhardt was not allowed to take the five-year program in high school. An astute vice-principal, knowing that several students were interested in nursing, introduced the prerequisite science courses into the four-year program.

Burkhardt trained in Stratford, Ontario, graduating in 1972. She received a gold medal for bedside (clinical) nursing. Although her father did not readily show his approval, she knew he was proud of her.

After working for a year at Stratford General Hospital, Barb began in the intensive care unit at St. Mary's. Currently she works in the cardiovascular intensive care unit, an assignment for which she took special training last fall.

In her catechism class in the Conservative church, one minister said: "We must avoid professions that make us work on Sunday." Burkhardt drummed up the courage to retort: "But if your wife were in the hospital on Sunday, would you not want her to have a Christian nurse?"

Burkhardt and her sisters left that congregation several years later. Two of her sisters became teachers, one a nurse.

"Mom was very supportive," says Burkhardt. "She always wanted to be a nurse or a teacher, but had to quit school after grade 10."

Burkhardt has done occasional stints as a charge nurse, but is always glad to get back to primary bedside care. She senses that people who have support of family, friends and church have a resource that helps them to be less afraid.

St. Mary's Hospital still has strong links to the Catholic Sisters of St. Joseph. Burkhardt believes those links affect the style of patient care, create a welcoming atmosphere and account for the strong spiritual care component in the hospital.

The pastoral care department is readily available to debrief with nurses after a difficult case. Tough decisions for Burkhardt include making decisions about the "Do not resuscitate" status of some critically ill patients.

Burkhardt finds it challenging to keep up with changing medical techniques. People are more demanding—they used to accept a nurse's word but now they ask questions, she says, and sometimes they become belligerent.

"All the changes, things I've needed to learn to do the job, have kept nursing alive for me," she says. Burkhardt plans to study further to become a critical care nurse.

—**Maurice Martin**

into "Bookworm's Den," a small store tucked into the corner of a busy shopping mall. It was a career leap that Dueck admits "was harder for others to see happen than for us to do." A nurse by training, Dueck had no background in business.

Over time, the Duecks built up contacts with the school market and the store became a landmark for all who love children and books. The business lasted 20 years. It was forced to close because of declining orders from schools and competition with big box stores.

"Stores like Costco and Superstore were moving in and they priced their books so low, we just couldn't compete," said Dueck. "It was the most difficult decision we've made in our lifetime."

Because both were heavily involved in the business, the impact hit harder. However, before closing down the store, the couple had begun a bed and breakfast on their acreage about seven miles south of the city.

"We didn't know how long it would last," said Dueck. They worked at it for three years and enjoyed it immensely, but they didn't have enough customers

to make it work.

While entertaining guests from as far away as Switzerland, they got to know Paul and Holly McNally, who own a chain of bookstores across the prairie provinces. Through that contact, Dueck landed her current job as manager of children's books at the new McNally-Robinson bookstore in Saskatoon. Connecting with her community has been a guiding principle for all that Dueck does.

"We were raised in a home where every child mattered," she points out. Her years at Rosthern Junior College developed a feeling of being valued in the wider church community. Valuing every person and serving the community have directed her business ventures at every turn.

Longtime employee Helen Epp, who has worked for Dueck at both stores, agrees.

"She brings out the best skill in each staff member," noted Epp. "She treats each employee with respect."

These values will serve her well in her new role with Mennonite Publishing Network.—**Karin Fehderau**

Revisiting the ‘missional church’ vision

The first article in this series summarized the impact of the missional vision in Mennonite Church Canada. These articles explore criticisms, practical successes and ongoing challenges of that vision.

Young people do not need convincing that we live in a missionary context.

While responses to the missional church framework have been overwhelmingly positive, there have also been some recurring criticisms:

- *Fad.* There is a sense from some that the missional emphasis is another fad moving through the church. Given that fads go as quickly as they come, it is not worth the energy to “get on board.”
- *Language.* There has been resistance to the word “missional” by some. Dis-ease seems to be focused on three issues: 1) Is it legitimate to introduce new meanings into familiar language? 2) Can words be changed by informal use? 3) Is new language a useful teaching tool?
- *Suspicion of missions.* Some fear that the missional emphasis is simply a screen that hides the continuing colonial vision of missions associated with North American imperialism and aimed at other nations.
- *Mission taking over agenda.* Some assume that missional emphases are encroaching on Christian education, peace and justice concerns, etc. Strong words are being used, such as “mission kidnapping the agenda of the church.”
- *Shift from Christology.* Some are uneasy because the missional emphasis begins with God. Is this moving away from the centrality of Jesus?
- *No sense of confession.* Some feel that a fundamental plank of the missional vision should be confession for the “mission mistakes” of the past.
- *Presumptuous.* Some argue that to “align ourselves with God,” to have “God’s healing and hope flow through us to the world,” to speak about “discerning God’s activity in the world,” are too presumptuous. More humility and less confidence are required.
- *Critique of past ministry.* Some suggest that missional concepts imply critique of past efforts. People have been dedicated to mission via other models.
- *Gender bias.* One persistent voice is convinced that missional language of being “sent” (*aposteleo* in Greek) is a “male” notion connected to military images of mission.
- *Skewed priorities.* Some blame MC Canada’s recent financial crisis on the missional vision. The missional emphasis, they suggest, has led to more local ministry, leaving less funding for national and international ministry.

Successes of the missional vision:

- *Generating curiosity.* Debate over the word “missional” has generated many opportunities to explore its meaning. The word itself signals a new direction.

- *Mennonite Church Canada existence.* Many suggest that it would have been more difficult to make the denominational changes had they not been linked to a renewed vision. The integration of denominations and reorganization into two country bodies benefited from the enthusiasm for the missional vision.
- *Unity.* We must be tentative about assessing unity within our church, but we have heard much about how the missional vision has helped generate both anticipation and patience. This has been true in area conferences and congregations that have tended toward disenchantment with MC Canada, and also among those who have expressed disenchantment with the disenchanted. The missional vision has provided needed elbow-room to work with those who have not been enthusiastic about structural or other issues in the church.
- *Congregational renewal.* Several congregations have re-designed their program and structures to reflect renewed understandings of how they wish to be the church in Canada.
- *Young people.* Youth and young adults, more aware of our post-Christendom setting, do not need convincing that we live in a missionary context. Young adults that applied for jobs in MC Canada were attracted by the missional vision.
- *Pastors.* Many pastors report that passion for their ministry has been re-kindled. The missional vision has been of practical help for the everyday tasks of leading a congregation.
- *Doors being opened.* The missional vision has provided opportunities to re-visit agenda that had been closed. One pastor told me: “In my congregation we can’t talk about ‘mission,’ but if you talk about it in that way, then

Answering the critics, taking up the challenge

The previous article outlines responses to the missional vision. How do we assess these? Let me begin with the criticisms.

Language is always fluid and shifting, so arguments that resist semantic change are difficult to justify. Part of our common life is that new words are introduced (such as “gigabyte and “postmodernism”), familiar words are nuanced differently (“virtual reality”), and old words are resurrected for new purposes (“mouse” and “ram”).

The discussion that is more useful is whether unfamiliar language is a good teaching device. Does it help us to communicate more clearly?

The word “missional” is not new, but it has been useful in other sectors and we can learn from the experiences of others. Cultural or linguistic rigidity is not helpful in being the church. We need openness to incorporating wisdom from others into the truth that is already with us.

We have a history of defining ever more carefully the heart of our church as we understand it (e.g., *Peace church*, *Anabaptist church*). These are not fads. They are legitimate ways of naming what we believe to be impor-

we’re willing to have another look.”

• *Responding to dichotomies:* The missional church agenda brings together emphases that we have separated and that have separated us from each other. Evangelism and peace, service and church planting, for example, should not be competing ministries but missional expressions of a committed church. Reuniting what should never have been separated is a welcome direction for those weary of defending competing loyalties.

—**Robert J. (Jack) Suderman**

The writer is executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness. This series is also available online at www.mennonitechurch.ca/news.



tant. I suspect that the resistance to “missional” terminology is not to language but to concepts perceived to be behind the term. There may be a fear that the missional vision is simply a disguise for evangelicalism or colonialist mission. This fear is unfounded.

Missional church concepts emphasize that all contexts are legitimate places for engagement with the gospel, and they point to different ways of interacting with others in learning, discipleship and partnership. Missional concepts run counter to the separation between how we are the church (ecclesiology) and how we do outreach (missiology). To attempt to join together what should never have been “torn asunder” is urgent agenda for the church.

Is this unfairly criticizing the mission efforts of the past? I think not. The intention of missional articulation is not criticism but faithfulness. The question is not “does this align with the past?” but “is this being faithful to our best understanding of the biblical message?”

Whether the missional vision is radical and revisionist, or continuous and resonant with our past, is not the primary issue. The adage “If the shoe fits, wear it,” could be applied here. We could also say, “If the shoe doesn’t fit, don’t let it rub you the wrong way.”

Blaming the missional vision for re-directing congregational giving is misplaced. The availability of funds for ministry outside the congregation has been shifting over the last decades. Factors include: higher costs of local facilities; more salaried ministers; congregational bursaries for students. Indicators are that the missional vision is in fact increasing funding for ministry at every level of the church.

The theological suspicions concerning Christology are interesting. I had not anticipated that missional dialogue would lead us to re-examine our understanding of the Trinity. It is not the intention to “side-line Jesus” in favour of God. It is to present the story of God as it is narrated in the Bible.

The fear of presumption is equally interesting. I understand the reluctance to self-proclaimed godliness. It is important to be realistic about what the church has been, and is now.

I have worked in Latin American where one of the biggest obstacles to being the church is what the church has been. This obstacle is also present in Canada where, for many, the church has been an instrument of oppression and violation. “Alignment with God” takes seriously past failures and suggests course adjustments for our future path.

When we acknowledge God as our source of being, we are acknowledging that we are not God. Nowhere have I seen missional church emphases deny the importance of confession and humility. Confession and initiative need not be sequential; they can be undertaken at the same time.

What about the successes of the missional vision? Even if only a few of the claims are only partially true, the potential of the missional vision is indeed significant. Take, for example, increased confidence through clarified purpose and strengthened identity. If this is beginning to happen two

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Missional church concepts emphasize that all contexts are legitimate places for engagement with the gospel, and they point to different ways of interacting with others in learning, discipleship and partnership.

Missional *From page 7*

years into the process, what impact might this have twenty-five years from now?

If some pastors are finding this framework to be energizing and practical, what are the long-term implications for leadership? If this framework is helpful to young people who are confronting our post-Christendom society more directly than some of us, what potential does this suggest for the future of our church?

If our schools are developing course content around missional church ideas, it suggests that these ideas are catching. If Christian imagination is indeed ignited among our people, this bodes well for the continued relevance of our witness.

If this vision is effective in uniting us in identity and purpose, it can lay the groundwork for the future. If it can help us set aside some of the dichotomies that have separated us for so long, we have the potential of embracing each other's ministries in refreshing and vital ways.

Ongoing challenges

We will need to structure ourselves to tend the vision more intentionally at every level of church life. We structure carefully for such things as financial accountability, proper representation and gender sensitivities. We need to be just as intentional about the missional vision.

I believe we can learn from Mennonite Church USA, combining its missional structural initiatives with our educational activity. This could mean creating a "tending the vision" task force for MC Canada.

Careful delineation of roles for the national church, the area church, the congregation, institutions is very important. Our call is too significant to be stumbling over unclear mandates or competing loyalties. It is critical to encourage and nourish each part of the body in its tasks.

Resources and formational processes are needed to empower our congregations and structures. We need to dedicate budgets to help "form" ourselves and our institutions to be missional. If we decide to make it happen, funding will follow.

Any shifts in mental or program

Resource for the church gets mixed review

Willard M. Swartley, *Homosexuality: Biblical Interpretation and Moral Discernment*. Herald Press, 2003, 248pp., \$23.49.

I wish that I had been asked to review some obscurantist theological tome that dealt with esoteric notions of ontology or some such thing. To write about homosexuality these days seems a Sisyphean task (the poor guy had to roll a boulder up a hill only to have it roll down again—eternally)

realities cannot be expected to happen quickly. I remember when the word "Anabaptist" was reintroduced into our churches after centuries of dormancy. There was strong resistance, yet it has been energizing and good. It has clarified identity and brought us together.

Our church is facing significant societal change. The recent Canadian census illustrated how dramatic this change is. Church attendance has dropped to 20 percent of the population, while 76 percent continue to identify themselves as "Christian." We could call these folks the "once-churched," people who are disenfranchised with the church because of their experiences.

Theologian John Stackhouse summarized the Canadian scene this way: "Canada continues to resemble European patterns more and more: majority, but nominal, allegiance to once-influential Christian churches now relegated to the sidelines of cultural life; a rising cadre of 'no [particular] religion;' a vital evangelical minority—maybe 8 percent of the total (versus American figures of close to 40 percent); and a small but growing group of world religions mostly transplanted from overseas" (*Sightings*, May 29, 2003).

Either our church will embrace its missional role in this context, or it will become irrelevant. Our challenge is to generate the will to choose, and then to inspire the courage to act according to what we have chosen.

—**Robert J. (Jack) Suderman**

and means the writer can expect to be condemned vociferously by those who disagree or, if the writer is especially adept, be criticized by everyone.

Willard Swartley believes homosexual activity to be sinful. I hope that this stark statement will not cause some simply to dismiss the book. On the other hand, I hope that those who hold a similar view will not be tempted to read the book in order to scribble "See, I told you" where Swartley supports what they already believe.

Either of these reactions is against the spirit in which this book was written. As Swartley points out, he has been writing about homosexuality for decades, always in the context of the church. This book reflects his concern that the life of the church is central to any discussion concerning ethics. (Swartley teaches New Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.)

As the book contains material that has been previously published, there is a bit of a patchwork feel to it. Some material that didn't fit into the chapters is included in seven appendices.

The theme text is from James 3:17: "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy." It reflects Swartley's hope that his contribution will lead to "richer understanding of and humble commitment to both Scripture and those with homosexual struggle and/or identity who come to us in the church for counsel and support."

Prayers that conclude each chapter, and sections that address the way forward for the church signal that this



Swartley

book is not so much technical biblical studies as a pastoral letter of sorts—a call to faithfulness.

Swartley places homosexuality within the context of his own exegetical work on “Slavery, Sabbath, war and women” (title of an earlier book). It has been suggested to Swartley that, just as he was able to show that the Bible was read first to support slavery, for example, and later to prohibit it, surely the same ought to be done regarding homosexuality.

Not so. Texts regarding homosexual activity “*always* appear in prohibitive language,” he says. Homosexuality is “a deviation from the model of life fitting to God’s community.” Freeing slaves, refusing war, and celebrating male-female interdependence are “possibilities of grace, through nonconforming values to the world’s cultural practices of that time. Scripture thus moves in a redemptive trajectory on these issues” as compared to other cultures. But on homosexuality, Scripture takes an even stronger position against it than surrounding cultures do.

This clarifies Swartley’s starting point—the authority of Scripture—and yet there is further interpretive work that needs to be done: hermeneutics, theology, and cultural analysis must also be part of the conversation. Swartley is at his best when dealing with the biblical text, carrying on an accessible conversation with key scholars, some of whom agree with Swartley and some who do not.

Swartley’s analysis of Western culture is not nearly as strong. This chapter is cranky, underdeveloped, and ends abruptly. He presents the history of Western culture as one of decline and moral decay, leading to current deviant sexual mores, both heterosexual and homosexual.

Such analysis, while it contains some insight, may do more harm than good here. Western culture is not monolithic, and it is impossible to sustain an argument that says a certain moral trajectory holds true. Much of this chapter reads too much like a rant to move Swartley’s argument forward in any convincing way.

More helpful is his focus on the role of the church, which is called to teach, to provide pastoral care, and to

discipline. The model for congregational discernment in chapter 8 is useful, and the final chapter on reconciliation strikes an appropriate final note.

Three further things of interest. First, Swartley mentions several times the gift of celibacy, as well as chastity, as important to the discussion of sexuality—either homosexual or heterosexual.

Second, he hints that the church must not be distracted from its call to mission by concerns such as homosexuality. While this contention is problematic (the church is never faced with a zero-sum game regarding which issues it can address; faithfulness regarding homosexuality is part of the mission of the church; the discussion is embedded in questions of fidelity, marriage, the body, and so on), it is important as the church continues in patience to be the body of Christ.

Third, Swartley warns that the issue of homosexuality is essentially pastoral and not political. He hopes that we might be able to de-politicize it as we seek wisdom from above. This seems to me impossible, and surely unwanted. I understand that Swartley doesn’t want the issue decided through pressure tactics and lobbying, as

though this were just another piece of legislation that lives or dies by astute assertion of power, but what we do is political. The church has an impact on people; it changes the way things are done; and it constructs and reveals its own identity as it deals with moral issues—the church is political.

As should be obvious, I am ambivalent about this book. I think Swartley tries to do too much, and ends up doing too little. If he had pushed his exegesis and hermeneutics to greater depth, and explored more fully the process of congregational discernment, this book would be all the more helpful for the church. (A good model is Richard Hays’ book, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*.)

A continuing conversation will also need other gifts: more fully developed theological discussions (such as *Theology and Sexuality*, edited by Eugene Rogers), listening to people’s experiences, discerning what forms our witness to the state should take. To receive all of these gifts to the church we will need moral patience.

—Paul Doerksen

The reviewer, from Winnipeg, is completing a PhD in Religious Studies at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

Differing views of Swartley’s book

Willard Swartley’s book on homosexuality has elicited a variety of responses. Following are excerpts from two more reviews.

If I were a pastor needing to offer counselling on the perplexing question of homosexuality and were to look for answers in Swartley’s book, I would soon be out to sea with no shoreline in sight. If I had a homosexual orientation and was looking for guidelines for a meaningful life, I would find the book even more distressing.

Swartley notes early on that “the concept of orientation plays into the notion of a fixed and unchangeable identity,” which notion the author questions. This theme is elaborated in chapter 5 and heavily footnoted to shore up the argument that change is possible.

That still begs the question of what to do with those for whom therapy will not work. Shall we continue to marginalize

them, shun them, aid and abet their suicides?

I do not have a problem with Swartley finding the biblical writers unsympathetic to the homosexual, although other scholars allow for alternative hermeneutics. My own view is that the biblical writers reflected the tenor of their culture. As Jesus was prepared to reject certain sayings in the Old Testament, as quoted in Matthew 5, so must we wrestle with the biblical teachings on slavery, Sabbath, war, women and homosexuality if we would reflect the mind of Christ.

I did not find Swartley’s argument compelling that homosexuality should be treated differently. His emphasis is more on theological orthodoxy than on ethics. Lessons from science and society are downgraded too much.

Use of this study in churches, unless accompanied by other materials, may

Continued on page 10

Tell me the stories of Jesus

The audience sat in rapt delight as it absorbed every cadence of the master storyteller, a media personality, who weaved story into story during his keynote address. Yet as I left the auditorium, I couldn't dismiss a niggling question. How exactly had this parade of stories related to the theme?

I wonder too how many people leave a church service having been warmed by the jokes or anecdotes in the sermon, but would be hard pressed to connect them to a single truth that would permeate their souls and shape their worldview.

I agree with those who defend storytelling as the preferred mode of communication in our culture. After all, Jesus was the ultimate storyteller! Why then do we not spend more time rehearsing *his* stories?

There is a wealth of material for the storyteller in the Bible. There are the epic dramas of Joseph, David and the Judges, with all the naughty bits! There are the parables and stories about Jesus.

Can anyone improve on the image of a loutish camel squirming his way through the hole in a sewing needle? Or what can match the dramatic effect of Mary self-consciously using her hair to absorb what's left of a liquid fortune from the feet of Jesus under the gaze of a jaundiced Judas?

If we use only the "chicken-soup-for-the-soul" style of storytelling we inculcate a kind of spiritual sloth, giving the listener no motivation to search the biblical text for its meaning and application.

Some modest proposals, then, on the use of stories:

Know your flow of thought. There is an old standard among preachers that says, "If there's mist in the pulpit, there's fog in the pew." Spare your listeners the agony of trying to figure out where you are going with a particular story and how it relates to your point.

Use stories and illustrations only as they relate to your point. When I started pastoring, I noticed that the libraries of my more experienced

colleagues invariably contained a title such as *One Thousand Sermon Illustrations*. I could never figure out how someone could find an illustration that would relate adequately to what the sermon was about. My suspicion is that they were made to fit.

Use media wisely. I think the greatest boon to communication today is the development of electronic projection, especially for visual learners. But Sunday worship is no time for electronic spectacle. Use movie clips with extra care and keep them short.

Don't claim or even infer originality if it is not so. With the Internet, and online sermon services, there exists a serious temptation for speakers to "borrow" stories without citing their source. More sinister is the practice of telling another's story as if it were your own.

Anyway, the best stories you can tell are your own. Authentically engaging stories come from your own experience.

Tell and retell the stories of Jesus. Or did I already say that?

—**Stephen Mortley**

The writer lives in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

Differing views *From page 9*

simply support the homophobic attitudes among us. Jesus noted such an attitude among the Pharisees who were faithful in their study of Scripture, but who missed the spirit of its teachings.

The church must draw the best from Scripture, science and social studies, recognizing that, as Luke points out, "sometimes the children of this world are wiser than the children of light," and that fairness and justice for all is also a virtue.—**Aaron Klassen, Kitchener, Ont.**

A guide for discernment

Willard Swartley's book is a helpful resource to the Mennonite church on an issue that is too often polemical and hurtful. Swartley brings to bear his considerable proficiency in considering the relevant biblical material, gives attention to the cultural and pastoral realities connected to the issue, and does so in a way that is prayerful and careful.

The tone of the conversation is important to Swartley; he practises communicating truth in loving ways. At the same time, he would like to move beyond dialogue to discernment.

Swartley outlines the way various texts are interpreted, including those which lead to acceptance of homosexual behaviour. He then offers observations on the merits and weaknesses of the different interpretations and shares his own conclusions. In the chapter on "Hermeneutical analysis and reflection" he brings in broader theological material, asking questions such as: How do we balance biblical justice with its concern also for boundaries and discipline? How does biblical holiness fit with compassion and inclusion?

In "A model for congregational discernment," Swartley reflects on the four sources of authority recognized by the church: scripture, teaching and tradition, experience, and the Holy Spirit. He observes that "scripture and church tradition clearly regard same-sex genital relationships to be morally wrong." He notes that experience can be a "chameleon" in regard to ethical authority.

Swartley proposes an experiment for the church to test the leading of the Spirit on this matter: "Same-sex partners and their congregation or support group read and prayerfully reflect for forty days

on Romans 8:1-27—a text that connects us to the Holy Spirit in many ways—and 1 John 4:7-21—a text on God's love and love for one another—and seek to discern what happens to thought, attitudes, commitments, and behaviours, as well as sexual desires on the part of the covenant couple. Reporting from a dozen cases, where both partners confess Christian identity, would be helpful."

Most helpful is the chapter "The church's belief and response." Swartley outlines the range of possible responses (from "rejecting-punitive" to "full acceptance"), encouraging the church to put energy into teaching and pastoral care related to sexual standards; compassionate ministry to homosexually-inclined people and their families; equipping pastors for such ministry; and to do all of this without letting this issue "overwhelm the mission and energy of a congregation."

His hope is that "the vision that guides us is a holy vision for the church, the vision of unity and faithfulness to Jesus Christ."—**Gary Horst, Stratford, Ont.**

Forging a future out of desperate fires

Erica Jantzen, *Six Sugar Beets: Five Bitter Years*, Pandora Press, 2003.

Edith Elisabeth Friesen, *Journey into Freedom*, Raduga Publications, 2003.

Here are two more stories of lives ripped asunder in the Soviet Union.

Erica Jantzen's book tells of the harrowing experience of Anna Kroeker—a sister of Jantzen's step-mother—as a young woman in Kyrgyzstan during the turbulence of the Stalin era. Because Jantzen is recreating a life, she gives Kroeker a fictive name, Mia Peters.

Staggering, how a seemingly small matter can lead to things of great consequence. Mia scoops up six beets on a muddy road—and gets sentenced to six years in Siberia (she was freed after five). Thousands of miles from her children, she helps construct a bridge, does railroad maintenance and

works in a sawmill.

These are vignettes of incomprehensible privation: Mia's braids frozen to the canvas of her bed; the violent coughing and blinding headaches from her mind-numbing toil. She is sustained by several "God visions" that come to her like powerful cords of protection, assuring her that she and her family are in God's hands.

Jantzen's remarkable tale of faith and stoicism moves along like a locomotive. I could not put it down.

Edith Elisabeth Friesen's book is another heartrending tale. Friesen's mother and three siblings were caught in the Soviet Union in the 1930s.

Friesen had heard the stories all her life but they became real when, in 1997, she and her mother returned to Ukraine, to the world where Anne's "childhood came crashing down" and life on the run began.

Friesen's story reads like a court-

room drama, with the intermingled voices of her four characters and chunks of commentary from her as narrator. Sometimes the commentary feels overly didactic, occasionally like an interruption, but for the most part it is helpful in filling in the gaps.

How hungry can a person be? Friesen's near-starving fugitives eat eggs from birds' nests, garlic, grass and horsemeat. How uncomfortable? Jammed in cattle cars with chickens, in barracks with bedbugs, in open boxcars in the freezing cold, children wailing. They run like animals before a forest fire, outfoxing all who would detain them.

In Vancouver, years later, Anne and her husband sponsor a family from Vietnam. Anne understands the losses boat people experienced—she, too, has cobbled together a new life from shards of loss.—**Betti Erb**

Aboriginal themes

A boriginal dancing, drumming and a prayer by an elder opened an exhibit at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery on January 16. *The Disappearance of the Plains Buffalo*, featuring paintings by Metis artist Jo Cooper, examines the encounter between aboriginal and European cultures on the Canadian prairies.



Woodyard

When Cooper returned to Selkirk, Manitoba, after 30 years in Quebec, she met Terry Widrick, native elder, who encouraged her to bring her paintings to the Ancient Echoes Interpretive Centre in Herschel, Saskatchewan, headed by Dave

Neufeld. They are on permanent exhibit there.

Cooper and Neufeld both attended the opening and gave presentations to school groups. The exhibition is on loan from Ancient Echoes until March 4. The upstairs gallery is featuring art by aboriginal children from the Andrews Street Family Centre in Winnipeg's North End—one of the poorest areas in the country.

The exhibition was organized by Mennonite Central Committee volunteer



Jo Cooper leads students from Leila North Elementary School through the Andrews Street Family Centre art exhibit.

Caili Woodyard (see cover). Many of the young artists were present at the opening.—From Gallery release by **Ray Dirks**

Nanaimo, B.C.

Novelist explores world of young adults

Gayle Friesen's first young adult novel, *Janey's Girl* (1998), won three literary awards and was nominated for more. Her second and third novels, *Men of Stone* and *Losing Forever*, have been shortlisted for awards in Canada and the United States.

Friesen's stories about ordinary kids facing change have stood up well against stiff competition.

From memories of her happy childhood in Chilliwack, B.C., a good ear for words, keen imagination and her own teenage children, Friesen has recreated the world of young adults. Storytelling came naturally, but the courage to publish came later.

Friesen felt her own life had been too ordinary, without the drama and crises that make for good reading. She also held herself back.

"I wondered where the act of writing would lead me and sometimes it scared me. I think I had a smaller idea of who God was back

then. I was concerned that writing might take me away from my faith but it's actually had the opposite effect," she said.

Friesen's novels are written in first-person. All three are filled with lively, believable dialogue between loveable, and fallible, characters.

Christian faith provides both backdrop and anchor for the characters. In *Janey's Girl*, Claire meets her father and half-brother for the first time and encounters life-threatening illness. Ben in *Men of Stone*, who is fatherless and the target of bullying, learns about his Russian Mennonite heritage and gains strength from it.

Jessica in *Losing Forever* is encouraged in her struggles by a Buddhist tale.

When asked about labels such as "Christian" and "Mennonite" in reference to her work, Friesen says, "I prefer if my books are read and enjoyed according to the merits of the story and the characters. My whole life has been, and continues to be, in-

formed by the person of Jesus Christ. I'm also moved by the values...of other religions, and love nothing more than to discover a saying or a story from a different tradition that reminds me of a parable or axiom from Jesus."

Gayle and her husband Brian are members of Killarney Park Mennonite Brethren Church. They and their two children live in Delta, B.C.—From report by **Judy Wilson**

Arts notes

Concert features poetry


Menno Singers will present "Poetry and Music" at St. John the Evangelist Church in Kitchener, Ontario, on February 29 at 3:00 p.m. The concert features poetry of Henry David Thoreau and James Joyce, interpreted by Canadian composers Andrew Ager and Donald Patriquin. The choir will be accompanied by the Penderecki String Quartet. Tickets are available from choristers, Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, or at the door.

—**Betti Erb**


MennoFolk Manitoba

The sixth MennoFolk Manitoba will be held on February 29 at the West End Cultural Centre in Winnipeg, from 2:00 to 10:00 p.m. The afternoon will feature more "folksy, bluegrass, acoustic kind of music, and the evening will have louder and larger bands," said Brenda Grunau, planning committee chair. Visual art, poetry, clowning and other performing arts will fill the day. *Faspa* (lunch) will be served at 5:30 p.m. Income will be used to support young Mennonite artists. MennoFolk provides a context "for art that may not be acceptable in the church," according to its mission statement. "It is an effort to be a welcoming community...to demonstrate that our God can be recognized, and worshipped, in a variety of ways." Tickets may be purchased from Mennonite Church Manitoba at (204) 896-1616 or at the door.—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

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Mennonite ice breakers for selected occasions

Traditionally, Mennonites exhibit a mating pattern called “social homogamy.” Before you fire up your typewriters and get out your copies of the Listening Committee report, “social homogamy” means that Mennonites tend to marry Mennonites.

In fact, many of the older generation may remember when a “mixed marriage” referred to the union of people from two different conferences! But how do we find these other Mennonites for partners, and what do we say to begin the conversation? What kind of “pick-up” lines might Mennonites use?

I have compiled a number of suggestions from anonymous and untrustworthy sources who didn’t have the sauerkraut to try the lines themselves. So I don’t know if they actually “work.”

Lines to use at church:

- What’s a contemplative person like you doing in a charismatic church like this? (Or vice-versa.)
- You look familiar. Are we related?
- Mind if I share your bulletin? I forgot to pick one up at the door.
- So, what do you think of the new hymnal?
- I bet that a talented person like you is popular with the Gift Discernment Committee.
- Do you have a match? I have to light the Advent candle today.

Lines to use at a potluck:

- You eat here often?
- I can sense you’re a terrific cook, and that intimidates me a little.
- Did you try the seven-layer salad? It’s not as runny as usual.
- I brought the doughnuts. What did you bring?
- I couldn’t help noticing that you left your carrots. Care if I finish them?

Lines to use at a youth conference:

- Hi. (Almost anything is a “pick-up”

at such a function.)

Lines to use at a VS reunion:

- How do the words to that old song ‘Unity’ go again?
- I just realized that everything I’m wearing was bought second-hand!
- Excuse me, but weren’t we in different VS units together?
- Have you written much poetry since getting out of VS?
- I like your shirt. Did you sew it yourself?

Lines to use at Bible study:

- I’m having trouble finding Habakkuk. What page is it on?
- Would you like to come over to my



Emke Retro

Ivan Emke

place and study the *Song of Solomon*?

- If you show me your favourite Bible verse, I’ll show you mine.
- Whoa, do you believe in prayer being answered?
- Proverbs 7:18. (Too risqué to print here.)

Line for the reckless:

This approach is inspired by Mr. Rogers (no, not the gentle, “Can I be your neighbour?” Rogers; I’m talking about the “Can I be your cable TV master?” fellow). Send a proposal for marriage to your intended. Note that if he/she doesn’t respond within 15 days, you will assume that the answer is “yes.”

It’s called a “negative option proposal” and it’s only for the truly reckless.—February 20, 1995

Letters

Letters express the opinion of the writer, not necessarily those of Canadian Mennonite or the church. We publish as many as space permits, unless they attack individuals or become too repetitious. Letters are edited for length and style. See page 2 for address information.

Why non-Christian drama for moral teaching?

Regarding “Gallery 7 presents ‘angry jurors’ (Jan. 12), I am bothered by the fact that churches, supposedly Christian, think it necessary to look to the non-Christian segment of our society to find good moral teaching. This is the impression I got from the article.

Have the moral teachings of the Bible lost their meaning for us? Neither “Twelve Angry Men” or “Driving Miss Daisy” have any spiritual content, in my opinion. Surely Christian dramatists can do better than to fritter away their time with so much “nothing.”

While I was attending Columbia Bible Institute (at that time MBBi),

some students did a dramatic presentation which spoke of the evils of attending theatres. These days, Christians not only attend theatres with impunity but bring those non-Christian dramas into our religious institutes.

I can’t help but wonder: does the church think that the words of our Lord, “Come out from among them and be separate” do not apply to us anymore?—**Ike Fehr, New Hamburg, Ont.**

Humour is good for us

Thank you that we may again be “In Conversation” with Ivan Emke. His communication style blesses us with humour’s rich potential to be instructive, as we observe and critique ourselves as God’s people in the world.

God be with you as you continue to nurture our souls with discerning journalism that responds to vital issues and events in our lives.

—**Kathryn Hunsberger Seitz, Reedley, California**

Winnipeg, Man.

Another side to global trade

Global trade is often criticized for its negative impact on small producers and the environment. But there's a positive side, says Ed Epp, director of new business development and strategic planning for MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates).

A recent trip to a food processing plant 60 miles south of Lima, Peru, demonstrated the power of informed consumers in an increasingly connected world.

A company that processes and exports snow peas and asparagus provides a vital market link for small farmers in Peru. This MEDA project provides technical assistance for small farmers to produce crops in the quantity and quality that can be fed into the export chain, greatly improving income in rural villages.

I was struck by the high level of concern for the environment through the production chain. At the field level, workers had cleansing solutions to wash their hands, protecting themselves from pesticide residue. The

fields (and people) that provided produce for this plant were noticeably different than these not participating.

In the processing plant itself, gowns, caps, special footwear and barriers were used to protect against contaminants. Facilities were spotless and washrooms, with showers, were clean. Posters reminded workers about environmental awareness. Conditions for employees in this plant were much better than in plants not accessing export markets.

The day we visited, managers were preparing for a visit by a produce-importing company from England which was going to do an environmental audit of the food chain—from production and harvest to processing. Thanks in large part to MEDA in-

volvement in environmental training for the farmers and the plant, the standards as set by the British company were met. This resulted in increased orders and greater markets for the small farmer.

Much has been said about the negative impacts of global trade. Some accuse global trade of making it possible for companies to evade environmental and labour standards to which they are subject at home. This example in Peru shows the opposite effect. Companies such as this plant in Peru are meeting international standards far exceeding those set by their own governments.

It is the power of informed consumers that is raising the bar. In many cases it is the private sector itself monitoring production chains (such as the British company), not a tax-paid public inspection system.

The end result is higher standards in countries such as Peru, better working conditions for workers, and better prices for the small farmer.

—Ed Epp

Building bridges with apologies

Who apologizes in your family, and what does it mean? Are you the kind who frequently says, "I'm sorry," or do the words rarely pass your stubborn lips? I'm more of the latter myself, but Deborah Tannen's observations (in *I Only Say This Because I Love You*) have led me to further reflection.

Tannen concludes that women apologize more frequently than men, often because of concern for the other's feelings and to elicit a reciprocal apology. Men often avoid apologizing because they see it as a humiliating act which puts the apologizer one down in the hierarchy of relationships. In addition, men value actions over words—what's important is changed behaviour, not "empty apologies." You can see how this gender difference might strain relationships.

Whether or not you agree with Tannen, it is worth pondering how apologies hurt or help family dynamics. This column addresses the positive nature of apologies; the next one considers how too-frequent or ill-timed apologies strain relationships.

Both columns are directed at the mundane missteps that plague us, like forgetting a commitment, misplaced

anger, and insensitive teasing. (The big offences—addictions, affairs and abuse—require more than a simple apology and may take years before regrets can be adequately named and accepted.)

What stops us from saying "I'm sorry?" Often we are loath to admit we are wrong—curious, given that we all make mistakes. Another factor is different understandings of what is wrong. Some-



**Family
Ties**

Melissa
Miller

times we're waiting for the other to make the first move, which can lead to a stalemate. Insecurity, mistrust or pride may bind our tongues.

"Look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others," invites the writer of Philippians (2:4). An effective apology demonstrates consideration of the other person's interests. According to Tannen,

apologies are most helpful if there is acknowledgment of the other's perspective, paired with an admission of fault and contrite expressions of regret.

It's the demonstration of empathy that often cools anger and opens up possibilities for connection. Apologizers demonstrate a willingness to put themselves in the other person's shoes—a compelling offer.

I live with someone who apologizes freely, receives apologies graciously, is willing to acknowledge his shortcomings, make amends and move on. I've learned from him that a willingness to offer apologies early on in a misunderstanding often turns the dynamic away from recrimination and retrenchment towards harmony and cooperation.

In our attempts to be faithful Christians, we might see apologies as a two-dimensional bridge over fractious waters. A willingness to offer an apology is one half of the arch; a willingness to receive it is the other. Joined together, we create a gift that enables us to enjoy our companions.

The writer, a counsellor and author, operates Family Ties in Winnipeg. She is a member of Charleswood Mennonite Church and a part-time Master of Divinity student.

Winnipeg, Man.

New camp policy meeting some resistance

Last fall, the camping program of Mennonite Church Manitoba (Camps with Meaning) sought legal counsel to rewrite its guest group policy. Many schools, youth groups, churches and other groups use the three MC Manitoba camps outside the summer months.

The decision to review the policy was prompted by the recent experience of Camp Arnes, operated by Manitoba Mennonite Brethren churches. Last year, Arnes was faced with a human rights challenge when it denied the use of its facilities to a gay choir.

"We needed to make our policy more clear," said Bob Wiebe, director of Education Ministries for MC Manitoba. "We needed to state the connection between what we are doing and what our values are." In the new policy, Camps with Meaning articulated why it is unable to welcome certain groups to the camps.

Groups engaged in the following practices are excluded from MC Manitoba camps:

- planning for or rehearsing violence, including military defence,
- sexual practices not in keeping with Jesus' teachings, including sex outside of marriage, reading or viewing pornographic material, homosexual activity or promotion,
- activities which practise or promote racism, gambling, or which threaten life, including abortion,
- criminal activities,
- worship or religious instruction or practice other than Christian, unless by special permission.

One of the consequences is that Winnipeg School Division No. 1, a significant user of the camps, has decided that the new camp policy is no longer consistent with its own criteria. Camps with Meaning is in discussion with the school board.

At a December discussion with the school division superintendent and secretary-treasurer, the school division

indicated its interest in a continuing partnership. As a result of that meeting, Camps with Meaning made some editorial changes to its policy.

"We were led to believe these changes would restore us to their favour," said Wiebe. School division personnel did review the revisions, but "they continue to withhold their funds if schools choose to use our facilities."

As a result, the camping program is experiencing a considerable financial shortfall.

"This matter has significant implications for our overall camping ministry and our budget," noted Wiebe. "Moreover, the options for children to experience God's creation in the outdoors during the winter months are now greatly reduced, as all the year-round

camp programs are provided by Christian camping organizations," said Wiebe.

He added, "We have a very good relationship with dozens of schools who have been sending their students for as many as 20 years. Schools are quite unhappy when they call and have to cancel their reservations." He is hoping that the conversation will continue. Many teachers and parents have expressed their support of the camps.

"Some hope we might return to favour because they could see that religious groups have rights to set limits on what groups they include as long as individuals are not being targeted," said Wiebe.—**Evelyn**

Rempel Petkau

Winnipeg, Man.

New fund attracts MEDA supporters

MicroVest One, the newest investment fund supported by Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), was launched January 22 in New York.

MicroVest is a joint venture between MEDA, CARE U.S.A.—the second-largest relief and development agency in the United States—and the Seed Capital Development Fund. Its goal is to link poor entrepreneurs in the developing world with investors in North America. MicroVest hopes to assist two million entrepreneurs over ten years.

According to Gerhard Pries, MEDA's chief financial officer and vice chair of MicroVest, the fund will enable investors to provide debt and equity capital to micro-finance institutions (or micro banks) that serve poor people in developing countries.

"These banks fill a critical need for credit in the developing world," said Pries. Commercial banks won't lend to poor people because they consider them too risky and because of the high costs involved in servicing small loans.

"Without these small loans, poor entrepreneurs can't escape poverty," he said.

By December 31, the new fund had raised \$20 million from private investors and the sponsoring organizations. Over \$2.6 million came from 18 investors connected to MEDA. According to Pries, the number of MEDA-related investors was a pleasant surprise.

"I had told MicroVest's partners that because MEDA members were family business owners and had their capital actively employed in their businesses, we shouldn't expect much investment from them," he says. "I was wrong. Since MEDA members identify themselves as working at the nexus of faith, business and development, using their capital to help the poor makes sense to them."

One entrepreneur being helped is Mselem Ally, a restaurant owner in Tanzania. His loan of \$1,700 from a MEDA-operated micro bank enabled him to buy food in bulk, qualifying him for discounts. Now his profits have increased by 50 percent, and he dreams of leaving a thriving business to his children.

A number of micro banks have become key players in the developing world. MEDA has been a pioneer in helping to develop this sector.—MEDA release

News briefs from MCC

Relief sales total \$5.7 million

Relief sales across Canada and the United States raised \$5.7 million for Mennonite Central Committee in 2003, up from \$5.67 million in 2002. There were 46 sales in 2003; of these, 7 raised more than \$260,000 each. The Penny Power project raised \$414,241, a 42 percent increase from the previous year. Many congregations collect coins for Penny Power throughout the year and donate them at relief sales. The highest-selling quilt was sold at the Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale for \$44,000. Other successful items included restored cars and tractors, and auction items that raised money for specific MCC projects. For a listing of 2004 sales, go to www.mcc.org/respond/relief_sales.



with the Center for JustPeace in Asia, has been named coordinator of a committee representing Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Muslim faiths. The committee grew out of a consultation of people from 14 Asian countries—a meeting driven by concern about growing violence around the world and the tendency to label it “religious violence.” The committee will develop programs to identify more clearly the roots of conflict in Asia and find ways to bring healing and transformation.

Web materials on abuse

MCC Women’s Concerns has created a Web resource with materials on domestic violence and sexual abuse. The site, at www.mcc.org/abuse, is for survivors as well as pastors and church members. It offers material in English, German, Spanish and French. Two new publications on abuse are also available. “Understanding Sexual Abuse by a Church Leader or Caregiver” is by Heather Block of Winnipeg and sells for \$7.00. “Making Your Sanctuary Safe: Resources for Developing Congregational Abuse Prevention Policies” sells for \$5.00. To order print materials, call (204) 261-6381.—From MCC release

Cats save crops

In rural Vietnam where MCC is doing development work, families are relying on cats to protect their crops from rats. In response to a request for help, MCC provided loans to 231 families to purchase cats. As families repay the loans, the money is available to help other communities acquire cats.

Opportunity for play

In Kabul, Afghanistan, not only roads need rebuilding—children have been traumatized by years of war. MCC-supported Le Pelican, a French Mennonite organization, has established a day centre where working children, orphans and others not enrolled in schools can participate in play and sports activities, and learn to relax and express their feelings. The centre offers lessons in Dari, English and French, and information on land mines, sexual abuse, kidnapping and human rights.

Ediger to coordinate interfaith efforts

Longtime MCC worker Max Ediger, now living in Hong Kong and working



Madame Patrick uses Mennonite Central Committee canned beef to prepare meatballs and rice at a centre for restavek children (household servants) in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. MCC also provides sewing and health kits for the centre. Most restavek children don't attend regular schools and may not be fed properly by the families for whom they work. The centre also provides tutoring in reading and writing, arts and crafts and lunch for the 60 participants. Since April, MCC has sent 33,150 pounds of canned meat and 2,775 school kits to Haiti.—From MCC release

Photo by Bradley Fair

Paksan, Laos

Ontario scientist helping Lao farmers reclaim soil

For centuries, farmers in the mountainous regions of Laos have chopped and burned trees to make new fields for growing rice. That worked when forests were extensive and the population smaller.

Now rice harvests are barely providing enough food for villagers. The land is eroding and becoming depleted of nutrients, and the government is forbidding slash and burn practices in an effort to preserve what forests are left.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), in conjunction with Bolikhamxay Agriculture and Forestry College, is turning to soil science for alternatives. David Bowman, an MCC consultant from Ontario, is helping with experiments in alternative crops and strategies to improve the soil.

Possibilities include the rotation of rice with peanuts—a technique that utilizes a native plant to rejuvenate the soil—and slashing trees but not burning them. Because conventional

fertilizers are too expensive, researchers seek techniques that rely on affordable organic alternatives. They are also testing traditional techniques to cut down on insect damage, as well as cultivating fruit trees and edible bamboo.

MCC Laos has presented an introductory course in soil science to students and teachers at the college, said Bowman, a physicist and agricultural researcher from Guelph, Ontario. Books on soil science have been purchased to begin a library at Bolikhamxay. Soil sampling and test methods have been demonstrated to senior students, who, along with MCC

workers, will take that knowledge to farmers.

To protect what forest remains, the government is restricting land available for crops. Farmers are encouraged to plant alternative crops and to use the same fields year after year.

"This is not sustainable, unless measures are taken to maintain the soil," Bowman said. Bounchan Khammoungkhoun, MCC Laos project officer for agriculture, and Hien Phimmachanh, MCC program coordinator, believe this research will also be applicable to rice farmers in Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and China.

—From MCC release

Moncton, N.B.

Circles coming to Moncton

Given that she is a victim of sexual violence herself, it is easy to see the motivation behind Debbie Barriault's work with the provincial health department where she helps troubled families and youth.

But it is her part-time position funded by Mennonite Central Committee that raises eyebrows.

Through Moncton Community Chaplaincy, she is working at ways to mend relationships between sex offenders and the public.

"We need to build bridges between the prisons and faith groups," explains Barriault. "To be Christ-like, we need to walk with those that [Christ] walked with." She is beginning the search for volunteers willing to work with the kinds of people most of us would like to keep in jail indefinitely.

Barriault is building Circles of Support and Accountability groups of four to seven people to be a peer network for sex offenders following their release. Through regular meetings, they hope to keep ex-prisoners responsible for their actions, and encourage them to stay away from the "triggers" that might lead to another offence.

This idea has been successful around the globe because of its focus on public safety. Most ex-prisoners face a hostile public after their release and have few options.

"This program is designed to prevent more victims," says Barriault.

Like many, Barriault had limited knowledge of the criminal justice system and assumed that the tools for rehabilitation were in place. The incarceration of a friend changed all that. His violent acts, unrelated to her own experience as a victim, landed him in jail.

After seven years of silence, Barriault knew it was time to re-establish communication with him.

"I felt God was calling me to this," she says. She had come to terms with her past, as had her friend. An exchange of letters showed how much things had changed. His regret and desire to make better choices indicated that he was no longer on a path of self-destruction, says Barriault.

"It was a wonderful healing," she says. After spending time together, they eventually married.

Barriault does not deny the extreme nature of what she is doing in her chaplaincy work, but says inmates need more help to adjust back into society.

"The community needs to have a better understanding that there is a human being underneath," she says.

Barriault knows it is difficult to change public attitudes, but she views her role as vitally important to both sides. She sees herself working not only for the benefit of ex-offenders, but for the interests of the public as well.—

MCC Canada release by **Jonathan Tiessen**

Resource

Congregations (and children in them) are invited to use the MCC WaterWorks Giving Calendar. The calendar, which tracks a month of giving, encourages kids to do a sharing activity every day and then colour in a ripple of water below each day that they give. Use a bucket to collect your money, says the poster, and send your contributions to Mennonite Central Committee. Families and groups can use the Giving Calendar at special times of the year to raise awareness of human need. For more information, call MCC Ontario toll-free at (888) 622-6337 or go to www.mcc.org.—MCC release



Hebron, West Bank

American Jews defy walls in Israel

Art Gish, a Christian Peacemaker Team member in the West Bank, recently hosted a delegation of American Jews. The following is from his report.

Recently I had an opportunity to help build some bridges by hosting a delegation of seven Jewish people from New York who came to Hebron for two days to connect with Palestinian people here.

They told me they wanted to be identified as Jews so that “they could tell Palestinians that some Jews care about them, that not all Jews are bad.” Within minutes, as we walked through the Palestinian market, a Muslim shop owner invited us to his home for coffee.

Our host expressed delight at having Jews in his home. He told them that during the massacre of Jews in Hebron in 1929, his family, like many other Muslim families, hid Jews in their home to save their lives. He then went on to tell how horrible the Israeli settlers are who live beside his home.

His family has experienced continual harassment from the settlers. In 2002, they threw rocks through the windows of his home, one of which hit his 13-year-old daughter and blinded her in one eye.

From there we went to the Beqa’a Valley just east of Hebron to spend the night in Palestinian Muslim homes. On the way we saw “The Wall” being built, and saw land which just 10 days before had been confiscated from the families with whom we would spend the night. We saw where a beautiful Palestinian vineyard had been bulldozed just days before and was now being covered with rock.

In addition to eating scrumptious Palestinian food, the Jews listened to the painful stories of loss, physical attacks by settlers and soldiers, and fears for the future. There, near the wall that is meant to separate Jews and Arabs, Jews and Arabs came together.

The visiting Jews expressed amazement that these Palestinian Muslims showed no sign of bitterness or hatred

toward Jews. One of the hosts told the group, “If I hate, then my heart will turn cold.”

Ironically, Israeli soldiers stopped the group as they tried to enter the old city, saying Jews are prohibited. The group argued that they needed to get their things at the Christian Peacemaker Team apartment and get to their bus, but the soldiers were not convinced. The group walked down the

street and entered the old city from the next entrance, again defying the wall that separates people.

I witnessed a miracle. People who are supposed to be enemies hugged and kissed each other in the midst of horrible fear and suffering endured by both sides. Meanwhile, the bulldozers are busy in Hebron, destroying Palestinian land to build more walls. —CPT release

Jos, Nigeria

Exchange leads to career with deaf

When Athanasius Dapul left his home in Nigeria in 1982 for a year in Mennonite Central Committee’s international exchange program, he didn’t know his experiences in the United States would shape his life.

Now, more than 20 years after first working with people with disabilities, Dapul is teaching Bible and religion here at the Plateau School for the Deaf.

Dapul, an MCC Nigeria worker, credits his U.S. experience with sparking his interest in special education. At the Association for the Disabled of Elkhart County, Indiana, he cared for and learned from young people with developmental disabilities.

It really opened my eyes, Dapul says. “It opened my heart, too.”

After returning to Nigeria, he earned a university diploma in special education and a degree in Christian education. Now a father of five, he has taught at the Plateau School since 1991. He also serves as a guidance counsellor.

In a country where education is often limited even for children with no special needs, attending the Plateau School is a rare opportunity for deaf children. They learn sign language and lip-reading, and study a full range of subjects. The boarding school, which currently serves 350 students and receives government and

private support, is also beginning a program for people who are deaf and blind.

Dapul’s goal is to help his students see that they are valuable to God. He uses the story of Jesus and the blind man in John 9 to assure them that being blind or deaf is not divine punishment.

“Jesus said it’s so the name of the Lord can be glorified. When they read this passage, they are happy.”

Discussing faith with children who are learning to communicate in sign language is also a joyful experience.

“Many of those deaf from birth know there’s a God, but until they get here they have no language to describe these ideas and feelings,” Dapul says.

He is introducing new ideas for employment and independent living to the graduates of his school.—MCC release by **Rachel B. Miller Moreland**



Athanasius Dapul (right) welcomes Ubin Akims to the Plateau School for the Deaf in Nigeria.

Photo by Matthew Lester

Strasbourg, France

Global mission network takes first steps

The planning committee for Global Mission Fellowship, established in Zimbabwe last August, had its first meeting here December 11-13.

The new group hopes to provide a forum where Anabaptist-related churches and mission groups around the world can meet for “encouragement, vision-sharing, networking and cooperating in mission.”

Emmanuel Minj, director of Mennonite Christian Service Fellowship of India and the representative of Asia on the Planning Committee, closed his morning meditation with the call to “come and share in holistic mission.”

The committee discussed criteria and costs for membership, and terms of reference to guide its work. It projected expenses and income for the next three years, including the next Global Mission Fellowship gathering. The group plans to explore connections with other global and interdenominational mission networks and conduct a survey of Anabaptist-related cross-cultural mission churches.

Peter Rempel of Mennonite Church

Canada is part-time staff member for the committee.

The committee will explore Almaty in Kazakhstan as a location for the next gathering in 2006. The group will decide on a theme at its next meeting, to be held in conjunction with the Asia Mennonite Conference in Shamshabad, India, in November.

The committee is also considering guidelines for cooperation in cross-cultural missions for Anabaptist-related churches, facilitating exchanges for mission leaders from different regions, establishing a web site, and reporting on one mission frontier annually.

All Mennonite mission groups in Europe have been invited to the European Mennonite Mission Conference in Elspeet, Netherlands in February. Mission leaders from East Africa will also meet in February, and an all-Africa meeting is scheduled for June.

In North America on January 30-31, the Council of International Anabaptist Ministries is considering forming a regional mission fellowship to include groups with cross-cultural

mission interests. The Council has been primarily a gathering of administrators of North America-based agencies.

Global Mission Fellowship members in Central and South America intend to work in the Southern Cone, the Andean zone, Central America and the Caribbean. The vast distances and fewer mission fellowship members in that region pose formidable challenges.

Representatives were encouraged to promote regional fellowships within their areas, and identify three gifts for mission—people, ideas and practices—that could be shared globally.

Eddy Sutjipto of Indonesia said he hopes for “a centre for training in mission in each continent rather than sending persons to North America and Europe for training.”—From MWC release

Altona, Man.

Video series on Anabaptism

A 12-lesson video series, *The Radical Followers of Jesus*, has been released by the Evangelical Anabaptist Fellowship, a Manitoba group emphasizing a return to biblical and Anabaptist roots.

Launched this fall at Grace Mennonite Church in Winkler, the teaching series began as a response to questions South Africans asked about Mennonites at Grace church. The series documents the development of the believer’s church, Mennonite migrations, the Russian Mennonite experience and contemporary life.

The series also examines the principles of Anabaptism, from its understanding of the Bible, baptism and communion to peace and congregational life. Lecturers are Jerry Hildebrand and Bernie Loeppky from Winkler, Harvey Plett from Steinbach, and Peter L. Friesen from Winnipeg.

The series is suitable for adult education and Bible study groups. For more information, phone (204) 325-9441 or e-mail:

bloepky@mb.sympatico.ca

—Elmer Heinrichs

Weierhof, Germany

Church shares peace theme on German television

On January 18, the worship service of a German Mennonite congregation was telecast across the country for the first time. The theme of the Weierhof Mennonite Church service was “Peace—overcoming violence worldwide.” An estimated 1.28 million people watched.

The public channel ZDF (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen) televises services every Sunday from a Catholic or Protestant church. Throughout 2004, all 26 Protestant services will have a peace theme.

The service included a brief introduction of Mennonites and the Weierhof congregation, and reports on bridge-building programs and activities such as the Intermento Trainee Program and International Visitors Exchange Program. Information was given on tours to

former Mennonite areas of Poland where friendships have developed.

A Mennonite trainee from the United States spoke about his experiences after the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, and how difficult it had been to stand up for his beliefs.

Andrea Lange, pastor of the Weierhof congregation, referred to stories from Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe and mentioned the World Council of Churches’ “Decade to Overcome Violence,” proposed in 1998 by German Mennonite theologian Fernando Enns.

The offering was designated for an AIDS project in Zimbabwe. The “Koinonia Quilt,” made at the MWC assembly to raise awareness of AIDS, was on display at the church.—From MWC report by **Helga Driedger**

FOCUS

Camps & Summer Christian Education

Music camp just keeps on singing

The line from the hymn, "How can I keep from singing," continues to be the driving force behind Ontario Mennonite Music Camp. This past summer was no different. From day one, musical energy poured from the staff and campers.

The two-week camp at Conrad Grebel University College included performances at a nursing home and church service, and culminated in a concert and musical on the final evening. In spite of the usual panic about whether campers would learn their music, memorize their lines, and remember the choreography, everything came off successfully.

The camp committee has taken time to reflect now that the camp has celebrated 20 years. Many churches have been blessed by music and worship leaders who are either previous campers or staff. We feel proud that music camp has fulfilled its vision by encouraging young people to use their musical gifts in church leadership. We thank congregations for recognizing that camp is a place to train and nurture the faith of young people, and to develop leaders in ministry.

Comments from this summer's campers include: "I learned how to sing better and that every individual is unique and beautiful," and "I learned how to worship God

more freely through music while still having an awesome time."

Music camp is unique. Where else would campers disagree about who is the better piano player? Staff were challenged to build conflict mediation skills and support those who were homesick. Despite a challenging start in developing camper cohesion, the tears of goodbyes demonstrated that, once again, camp forged many friendships.

We look forward to another camp season and working with new staff and new and returning campers. We will keep on singing.—Susan Schwartzentruber

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Odessa, Ukraine

Ukraine evangelicals have faced huge changes

Last summer, the first graduating class of Odessa Bible School held a 10-year reunion and watched a video of its student days. The synthetic shoes, badly cut suits and coarse knitwear reminded viewers of a Soviet world that barely exists anymore.

Then there were the old Baptist folkways: the smacking kisses between men, fervent songs after a meal, elaborate homemade entertainments.

Where else in the world have changes in worship, education and opportunities for ministry taken place with such furious speed? Where else have evangelical Christians been called from isolation to creative engagement with a society that used to persecute them?

The video called to mind the buoyant spirit of the early 1990s. Students seemed willing to put up with discomfort, hard chairs, and eating outdoors in freezing weather. No sacrifice seemed too much.

Nor could Christians do enough to meet the sudden onrush of opportunities. Beginning around 1989, doors flew open and ministries multiplied: libraries, hospital and prison visitation, evangelistic meetings, sacred music concerts, Bible studies in schools, camps.

"It was hard work, and there wasn't enough pay...but we gave 100 percent and expected the Lord to take care of us," said Valentina Chernova, director of Our House, a rehabilitation centre for children.

Change to September 2003, as 11 congregations gather for a joint service in Kyiv. The sanctuary still looks rough, but balloons and flowers decorate the chancel. A praise group with drums leads choruses, projected in PowerPoint on the wall. A pastor in jeans reads prayers from other persecuted people around the world. "In comparison with us, these people have nothing," he says.

Yet when asked to reflect on the changes, many believers express ambivalence.

"There's a lot of Western influence now," comments a Baptist pastor from Cherkassy.

"I see degradation at work in the church," says Pavel Grishchenko, another pastor. He cites sacrificial service among the casualties of freedom. "Earlier, we couldn't do enough. We carried heavy musical instruments for long distances through the snow to get to a meeting. Nowadays you can't get people to take communion to old women in the village unless there's a car available."

Chernova agrees. "It used to be that everybody wanted to help. Now everybody wants money."

One big change is that Christians now have more choices. Now, church is just one aspect of a believer's life, rather than its sole focus. For Christians who equated faithfulness with attending at least four two-hour services each week, the trend toward selective attendance is distressing.

Ukraine's shaky economy requires that considerable effort go into making a living. Christian organizations can no longer count on retaining personnel without offering wages.

Worship in transition

A culture war is raging in Ukrainian churches as believers sort out which religious practices are worth preserving and which should be accepted from other sources, especially the West. Opinions differ.

In the Kyiv congregation, only a portion of the congregation stood to pray, a time-honoured expression of reverence. Is it all right for Sunday school children to sing with hand motions? Should believers applaud?

Westerners accustomed to "celebrating diversity" may not grasp what is at stake.

"We're losing unity," says Grishchenko. "Instead of submitting to church discipline, people just go somewhere else until they find what

suits them."

Another change is the brain- and energy-drain caused by the departure of thousands of believers to the West.

"All at once we could preach anywhere we wanted, and immediately everybody left!" noted one pastor. The lack of experienced leadership to disciple new believers is a critical concern. Yet some believe that emigration is God's way of clearing out old wineskins to make space for the new. Strikingly, church membership has remained stable with new members

taking the place of the old.

Change is accelerated by the members who joined in the 1990s. Newer members may have more secular education. They may be less afraid to ask questions or challenge traditions. Churches

are making efforts to move from destructive relational patterns and authority structures. More attention is being paid to balancing ministry and family responsibility.

"The traditional church leaders operated alone," remembers Sergei Timchenko, director of an educational centre in Kyiv. "They were always concerned for purity.... They tended to control people, not mentor them."

Perhaps the biggest change is the way Christians are relating to the wider culture. Most striking are endeavours in social services. In Soviet times, Christians looked after one another but were prevented from doing charitable outreach in the community. When the system began to deteriorate in the late 1980s, Christians were among those who picked up the pieces.

It is not unusual for churches and missions to operate centres for drug addicts, raise orphans, provide homecare for the elderly, or advocate for people with physical disabilities. These ministries have forced Chris-

'Earlier, we couldn't do enough.... Nowadays you can't get people to take communion to old women in the village unless there's a car available.'

Winnipeg, Man.

Ukraine Mennonites again have own church

It's been many years, but a Mennonite congregation in the former Chortitz region in Ukraine again has its own house of worship.

During World War II, church life in this Mennonite settlement ceased. This past Christmas Eve, after several years of searching, the Zaporozhye Evangelical Mennonite Church purchased its own building.

A letter from the church (translated) says: "Now we have our own building! This building is located right in the centre of the city. A new period begins for our congregation. We understand that this is a great blessing from the Lord, but also a great responsibility."

For the past year, the congregation has met in a five-room apartment. The new building, a former kindergarten that will require major repair, is next door to a building rented by the local Communist Party. The Zaporozhye Building Fund, administered by Mennonite Church Canada Witness,

tians to deal with government officials as well.

Making common cause with the rest of society is leading many believers to think in new ways about their place in Ukraine. Although they are often labelled sectarians, outside the mainstream Orthodox culture, they often describe their ministries as part of building a viable future for Ukraine.

Freedom has been a mixed blessing for Ukrainian believers, but there are many signs of remarkable, healthy changes. Every Sunday morning at the Baptist church in Odessa, about 100 children are blessed before they leave for Sunday school. Says Olga Sergeyeva, one of the teachers, "I remember how life used to be and think what a great thing it is that all these kids can freely learn about God."

Tatyana Sannikova agrees. "This is the freedom we prayed for. We need to use its opportunities and be grateful."—From report by **Mary Raber**

The writer is a Mennonite Central Committee volunteer in Ukraine. The above is from the winter issue of the East-West Church & Ministry Report.

will help finance the work.

The main floor can accommodate the 50-80 worshipers and has room for growth. The lower level will be offices, classrooms and storage.

The congregation began in 1994 through the efforts of local people of Mennonite background, aided by Frank and Nettie Dyck from Calgary who were distributing Bibles in Ukraine. In 1996, Peter and Susan Kehler were sent by the North American church to serve as pastors, followed by Jake and Dorothy Unrau in 1998.

In June 2003 the Unraus handed over leadership to Ivan and Violetta Dushenko, a local couple.

Even with migrations to Germany, the congregation has grown to about 80 members. There are a dozen or so baptisms each year. Worship has shifted gradually from predominant use of the German language to Russian, and is attracting people from other backgrounds.

The congregation works with youth, conducts Bible study groups and offers Sunday School. It has an outreach ministry in another former Mennonite settlement, Nikolaipolye, which may become another congregation. It also participates in care for seniors in a program sponsored by Mennonite Benevolent Society and Bethania Personal Care Services in Manitoba. Ann Goertzen works in that program.

The building fund has been especially supported by Yarrow United Mennonite Church in British Columbia, and by Mennonite Men, under its JoinHands (formerly Tenth Man) church building program.

The letter from the congregation concludes with gratitude to brothers and sisters in North America: "We are very grateful that you remember our church and support it.... We are praying for you. Our hearts are with you."—MC Canada release



Jake and Dorothy Unrau (right), Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers from Rosemary, Alberta, are welcomed by Johannes Bechstedt, chair of the Christliche Glaubensgemeinschaft in Niedergoersdorf, Germany. The Unraus were installed as pastors of the congregation on November 30. Interim pastor John R. Friesen from Manitoba conducted the service. Bringing greetings were German Mennonite conference representatives, the mayor and local Lutheran pastor, and Peter Rempel, representing MC Canada Witness. The Unraus recently served in Zaporozhye, Ukraine.

Bogota, Colombia

Colombian church leader at risk

Ricardo Esquivia, a peace activist and leader in the Colombia Mennonite Church, is allegedly being threatened with arrest by Colombian authorities.

Reports say that Esquivia is being accused of belonging to a guerilla group. It appears that government authorities are building a case against him based on fabricated evidence from paid informants. This strategy has been used against many other leaders of Colombian social movements, against labour leaders and members of non-governmental organizations who are now under arrest.

Justapaz and the Mennonite church sent out urgent appeals for action, asking North Americans to send letters to government officials in Colombia and in North America requesting that Esquivia's safety and right to work for peace be protected.

Esquivia served as director of Justapaz, a peace and justice organization affiliated with the Colombia

Mennonite Church. Currently he is national coordinator of the Commission for Restoration, Life and Peace, of the Evangelical Council of Churches of Colombia.

Apparently North American responses are having an effect. A co-chair of the Colombian Human Rights Committee in Washington, D.C., reported that Esquivia met with a Colombian official recently to talk about his situation.

"Mr. Esquivia, you have a lot of friends!" said the official, referring to the number of faxes the Colombian government has been receiving about his case. Officials promised Esquivia that his case would take priority.

Bonnie Klassen, Mennonite Central Committee representative in Colombia, reports that government officials have now unplugged the fax machines, so Justapaz is receiving them and taking to the government offices. Klassen, from Canada, is spending considerable time trying to respond to

messages and calls from people wanting to know about Esquivia's situation.

People can send messages through the web site: www.ucctakeaction.org.

The current administration of Alvaro Uribe Vélez has been implementing a policy of total war against guerrilla groups. Security measures and the military structure have been tightened. Last year, more than 40 Protestant pastors and church leaders working for peace in Colombia were assassinated.

Various faith-based groups are taking Esquivia's case as an opportunity to put pressure on the government to stop the detention of peace and justice advocates, and the imprisonment of innocent people.—From MC Canada releases

News briefs

Israelis jailed for refusing to serve

Five young Israelis began one-year jail sentences in January for refusing to serve in the military. They all object to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. These sentences are unusually harsh for "refuseniks," but these youths were not typical—they came from families with long attachments to the peace camp. The judges said these young men were guilty of a "very severe crime which constitutes... danger to our existence." There is a growing group of "refuseniks" to military service in Israel. Nearly 1,000 people have signed letters refusing to serve, and recently 28 pilots and 13 members of elite commando units objected to policing the occupied territories.—From Guardian Newspapers release

Anglicans still committed to abuse settlement

The Anglican Church of Canada's commitment to raising \$25 million for residential schools settlements has not changed, despite a recent British Columbia Court ruling that the government is solely responsible for liability arising from abuse at the

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schools. The B.C. Court of Appeal allowed the United Church to appeal a decision that assessed liability at 75 percent against the government and 25 percent against the church. In overturning that decision, the court ruled that the church should not, in this case, have been held liable for the wrongdoings of the employee. The chief goal of the Anglican Church, said archdeacon Jim Boyles, is to effect healing and reconciliation with former students who suffered abuse.—From Anglican News Service

Grocery chain owner supported higher education

Jim Penner of Steinbach, Manitoba, president of Penner Foods, has been honoured by Trinity Western University (TWU) in British Columbia with a \$10,000 scholarship in his name. Penner died of cancer on January 17 at age 64. A memorial service was held at the Emmanuel Evangelical Free Church in Steinbach. Penner began serving as a board member at TWU, a Christian university, in 1981. In 2002, he received an honorary Doctor of

Laws degree from the school. "Jim was an influential and tireless contributor on our board, and a passionate ambassador for Trinity Western," stated TWU president Neil Snider. "I've admired his love for God, for people, and his commitment to leading a life marked by integrity and grace."
—From Trinity release

CPT sums up delegation activities

Between January 2000 and June 2003, Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) sponsored 53 delegations to various countries. Mennonites made up 37 percent of the 476 participants. Eleven percent was Catholic, ten percent Quaker, nine percent Church of the Brethren or Brethren in Christ, seven percent Presbyterian, and one percent United Church of Canada. There were 96 repeat delegates. There were 19 delegations to the Middle East, 9 to Puerto Rico, 7 to Iraq, Colombia and Mexico, and 4 within North America.—From CPT release

Casketmaker sells directly to customer

Rick Zerbe Cornelsen has begun an unusual business in Winnipeg—building caskets and urns in a shop near his home. Cornelsen, a carpenter, named his business The Village Casketmaker. His father, a master woodworker in postwar Germany, brought his family, and his lathe, to Canada in 1956. He crafted his own "his and hers" caskets out of reclaimed wood. "Someone ought to build sensible caskets!" is how Cornelsen and his four brothers would often end conversations about excessive prices and limited choice in the funeral industry. Families can legally supply their own caskets for funeral homes. Cornelsen builds with pine or veneered plywoods, with non-toxic finishes—relatively inexpensive and environmentally sound. He is exploring the feasibility of using reclaimed materials. "I want to be part of a gentle movement for change in the way we deal with death," he says. For further information, call (204) 228-4741 or go to his web site at www.thevillagecasketmaker.com.



Photo by Paul Jeffrey

Sonya Reyes, a nurse in Honduras, removes a tattoo from the back of Jimi Jeancarlos Machuca. The Honduran Mennonite Church operates a tattoo-removal program for former gang members. It is supported by Mennonite Central Committee. Getting rid of identifying tattoos can save a person's life in this gang-ridden society. The program also offers Bible study, job assistance and service projects for youth. A Pennsylvania congregation recently raised over \$5,000 for a tattoo-removal machine for the program. MCC's web site, www.mcc.org, features photos and a feature on gangs in Honduras.—From MCC release

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Why not taxes for peace?

An Edmonton Mennonite has been debating with government officials about taxes for the military.

Last February, Dave Hubert heard John Manley, then finance minister, speak in Calgary. Hubert, a member of Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church in Edmonton, was pleased at some of what he heard.

But Hubert was troubled about Manley's commitment to increased military spending. So he wrote to Manley on April 28.

"It is now tax time and I am again faced with a legal and ethical dilemma regarding paying taxes to support the military," Hubert wrote. He followed this with numerous examples of Canadian soldiers violating human rights and international law.

For example, after a Canadian corporal was accused of desecrating the body of Afghani fighter in 2002, General Lewis MacKenzie came to his defence, saying: "These aren't choir-boys.... They've been sent over there to kill or be killed."

"As a taxpayer, I am helping to finance this violence, lawlessness and criminality," he wrote. He argued further that "Canada could be defended by nonviolent means" and gave examples from history. (Hubert has written a book entitled, *Canada@Peace: Coactive Security.*)

Exercising his freedom of conscience under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Hubert informed Manley that he had sent 7.8 percent of his tax payable to the Canadian Peace Tax fund, recognizing that this fund is not legally recognized.

"This fund," said Hubert, "could be used to fund third world development that will eliminate, or at least reduce, the underlying causes of violent conflict, terrorism and war."

Manley replied on September 12, noting that the Income Tax Act does not allow taxpayers to determine how their taxes are allocated.

Manley sent Hubert's letter on to Elinor Caplan, Minister of National Revenue. Hubert replied to Manley and Caplan on October 22, requesting

that the taxation system be "consistent with the rule of law—that in paying my taxes I am not forced to become an accessory to crimes committed by the Canadian Forces, a branch of the Government of Canada."

He expressed his disappointment that Manley did not respond to this concern. "If the Income Tax Act is not in compliance with the Charter, the Income Tax Act must be changed," said Hubert, citing the "change" in law that allowed Mennonites to be exempt from military service.

If Canadians were given the choice of spending their money on war or on development that would eliminate the causes of conflict, "I'm sure many, many would opt for the latter," said Hubert. "Canada's chief export should be our civil society."

We need peace and security, concluded Hubert. "However, for 6,000 years of recorded history, the human family has tried to guarantee its security with violence.... We cannot continue on this path." For more information on the Peace Tax Fund, visit www.consciencecanada.ca.—From reports

Harrow, Ont.

Congregation reminisces about 50 good years

Harrow Mennonite Church celebrated its 50th anniversary on October 11-12.

The original church was built in 1951 and the congregation applied for a charter in 1953. Herman Lepp was the first minister, from the time of his arrival from Reesor (in northern Ontario) in 1944. He continued to serve until his death in 1966. His son, Herman Lepp, Jr., took over as pastor until his retirement in 1978.

Henry Paetkau became pastor in 1978 and served until 1985. Audrey Mierau became minister in 1986 and continued her caring leadership until 1998. Calvin Laur served the congregation briefly, and Henry Dueck served as interim pastor until Jim Brown came in 1990. Brown served until 1998.

In September, 1996, a new church was built. Since August 1999, the congregation has been served by pastor Greg Yantzi. The church and community have benefited from his energy and enthusiasm.

It was truly a weekend of thanksgiving. Photographs displayed in the



Pastors at Harrow, from left: Henry Paetkau, Audrey Mierau, Greg Yantzi (current pastor) and Herman Lepp, Jr.

fellowship hall covered events since the church's founding. Visitors from the community, political dignitaries,

leaders from other churches and conference representatives attended the celebration.—From report

Native leaders empowered for ministry

Imagine that it's Saturday afternoon. For the third time this year, you are sitting in a small classroom where over the past 12 months you have been discussing Anabaptist theology, sermon preparation and pastoral counselling—all at a college level.

Now imagine that you are a First Nations person of Cree descent who has a limited grade school education and whose first language is not English. What are the thoughts that come to your mind?

Native people such as Sam Ross and Lorna McIvor Ross are committed to becoming equipped for the ministry. The challenges, however, are significant. Mainstream Bible colleges and

seminaries hold little appeal to adult learners such as this couple. Nor are the teaching methods able to overcome the cultural understandings that Lorna and Sam have as native people.

In 2003, Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry began the Native Anabaptist Missional Educational program (NAME). Its primary objective was to make training for ministry accessible to native peoples.

What it has become is more than was hoped for. Sam Ross put it this way: "Now I understood everything that the teachers said...it will help us to know the Bible better and teach it better."

As facilitator of the program, I find no greater satisfaction than in looking around

the room and seeing the light in the eyes of the participants, knowing that what has been presented has hit home. When you see dialogue over ideas and theology taking place, you see that learning is taking place.

God has graciously opened a door of opportunity for native peoples. Let us pray and support native learners who are called by their churches to serve and minister.—**Donovan Jacobs**

The writer is education facilitator for Native Ministry, Mennonite Church Canada. The above is from "Moments of celebration" distributed to congregations through "Equipping."

Winnipeg, Man.

Holocaust journey transforms young students

"I need some people for the first car," the guide projected over the crowd. A group stepped forward and almost filled the elevator.

"Oh no, not near full enough! I need more people!" he called again. So he shoved us in, packed like sardines.

"What's happening?" someone whispered as we waited. When the doors opened we stepped out into a dark corridor looking at the gates of death—the gates of Auschwitz.

This year I have been on a journey, along with other grade nine students and Mrs. Dirks, our teacher. For the third year, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate was accepted into the Holocaust and Human Rights Study Program sponsored by the Asper and Winnipeg Foundations.

Those who wanted to get into the

program had to write an essay about why they wanted to go. The eight chosen attended nine classes about the Holocaust and human rights.

I have lived in this camp for a long time. I have lost track of the days I have been tortured and hit, of the number that have died. I cannot count the diseases. What food there is can hardly be called food. There is no escape except death.

We learned that six million Jews were killed during the Holocaust—that is one person a minute for twelve years. The Nazis also targeted at least five million other people. We learned that many countries knew what was going on, but chose to ignore it. We learned about the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and what we can do to stop violations of human rights.

They have taken us into a large building full of people. I can hardly move. It is hot; I hear people crying. People are banging on the doors, trying to get out. People are beginning to scream. People are trying to climb higher, crushing others under them. They are trying to escape the gas.

There is no way out.

Our classes led to a trip to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. The museum followed a chronological order, beginning with the Nazi party coming to power in Germany and ending with the final year of the war. Although our teachers had prepared us, we were unprepared for the intense impact of what we saw.

The first exhibit was based on a children's book, *Daniel's Story*. I thought, "If this is for kids, do I really want to go to the adult exhibits?" At the adult exhibit passports were handed out. Each passport told a different story. On each floor we read the next page of the story. Few people lived to the end.

Some pictures from the museum remain in my head: the room full of shoes, each pair indicating yet another person who had died; the movie clips of people being used in medical

experiments; walking through an actual boxcar that had taken countless people to their doom; touching stones that people carried back and forth for no reason except to exhaust and eventually kill them; the pictures of half starved people that looked more like skeletons than human beings.

Soldiers marched into the camp today. We are finally free. But it will take a long time until we can truly fit into the world that hated us so much.

A goal of this program is that the knowledge we have gained will be passed on to others. We have already presented seminars to other students. We will never look at the world in the same way again. We also hope to do all that we can so that it never happens again.—**Dustin Loewen**

The above is from the fall 2003 issue of A Westgate Perspective.

Lanigan, Sask.

Lending a helping hand

The following poem is a tribute to the Lanigan Community Gift and Thrift store which helps out needy families in the community and charity organizations such as Friendship Inn in Saskatoon, while raising money for Mennonite Central Committee.

The family's house burned down
With nothing left, destitute;
Nowhere to turn—until
Father heard of a generous store.

Willing hands gave them clothes
Willing hands of a thrift store.
Donating clothes and kitchen tools,
Blankets and pillows, too;

With Jesus' love in their hearts
The managers freely gave
To those in dire need,
Thanks to donors freely given.

Filling hearts with gracious love,
Guided by the Father above
Let us to His kingdom go
Abundant love to others show.

—**Gilbert Epp**

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Lithuania

Lithuanian churches explore Mennonite connection

Not many people tackle a new language in mid-life. But when Jim and Donna Dombach attended a commissioning for Youth Evangelism Service participants in January 1999, they sensed God saying, “You’re not too old. Follow me.”

By September that year they found themselves at Vilnius University, deciphering Lithuanian and assisting pastor Arturas Rulinskas with a new church plant, the Vilnius Free Christian Church. They are serving with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM).

“We survived the exams, tears, and frustrations of language learning, and graduated June 7, 2000, on our 31st wedding anniversary,” said Donna. It was no small feat for folks who had said goodbye to six grandchildren when they headed overseas.

Long before they felt ready, Jim and Donna—who had worked as an optometrist and optician, respectively, in Quarryville, Pennsylvania—were



Photo by Dale D. Gehman

Donna Dombach teaches English with the Free Christian Church in Panevezys, Lithuania. Her students are Violeta, Laime, Daiva and Jurgita.

immersed in marriage counselling, mentoring, preaching, and teaching Bible and English.

The young church in Vilnius had already begun to reach out in Panevezys, Lithuania’s fifth largest city. The Dombachs were first asked to join home Bible studies in Panevezys. Later they became part of the core group for church planting there.

As they have walked with the six Lithuanian Free Christian Churches, the Dombachs have wondered what broader connections would be helpful for this young movement.

Lithuanian leaders from this group had studied at various Mennonite and evangelical schools in North America and Europe. Dennis Brooks, another EMM worker, helped launch the Evangelical Bible Institute in Siauliai.

In church planting, leadership development and in Lithuania Christian College in Klaipeda, EMM has partnered with Mennonite Brethren Mission and Service International and the Lithuanian Christian Fund.

Dombachs invited Rulinskas and Simonas Kiela, another Free Christian Church pastor, to accompany them to Mennonite World Conference. This was their first opportunity to connect with

the wider Mennonite family. The two enjoyed hearing what God is doing internationally, and they sought out seminars such as Arnold Snyder’s “Anabaptist Seed.” They eagerly made connections for the Free Christian Churches of Lithuania.

“We’re testing whether or not Anabaptism is a good fit for us,” said Rulinskas. “I went through the Youth Evangelism Service program with EMM, and attended Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary in Cochrane, Ontario. We’ve also had connections with Russian Mennonites who lived in Lithuania during the communist era.”

Rulinskas is eager for the Free Christian Churches to benefit from the resources available in the wider Anabaptist family.—From EMM release by **Jewel Showalter**

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Canadian Mennonite

Christian artists gather

More than 50 Christian artists from eastern European countries as well as Asia gathered in Visegrad, Hungary October 6-11. They came to exhibit their art and reflect on being Christian artists in a post-communist, postmodern era.

Esther Augsburger of Harrisonburg, Virginia, convened the festival, with support from Tim Bentsch, a vocal artist with Eastern Mennonite Missions, in Hungary. Vladimir Illiushenko from Moscow urged the artists to take seriously their role as upholders of faith and morality. Several responded to Myron Augsburger's invitation to respond to Christ for the first time. Other speakers included Hari Atanasov from Bulgaria and

Pavel Holeka from the Czech Republic.

Many of the artists said that they cannot find a place to serve in the church, but believe their work is an extension of the church in mission. Augsburger and Bentsch urged the group to consider national gatherings.



Photo by Dale Gehman

Esther Augsburger, right, opens the Visegrad Artists' Exhibition. The translator is Fruzina Kovács from *A Song for the Nations*.

Plans are underway for meetings in Romania and Hungary.—From EMM release

Publishing notes

After publishing 14 books by Carrie Bender, Herald Press is ending the series. Bender's final title is *Beyond Mist Blue Mountains*. Carrie Bender is a pen name for a member of an Old Order group. She began writing for Herald Press in 1993. Her books reflect an era when Herald Press took a special role as publisher of Amish folk fiction, beginning with the "Ellie's People" series by Mary Christner Borntrager. The Borntrager series, from 1988 to 1997, sold over a half million copies. Herald Press will continue to publish fiction, says director Levi Miller, but will choose titles closer to Mennonite Church USA and Canada's current aesthetics and culture. He noted the *Crossings of Promise* books by Janice Dick of Saskatchewan, which feature young people caught in the upheavals of the

Russian revolution. This year Herald Press is publishing *When the River Calls*, a second Hutterite romance by Hugh Alan Smith of Alberta, and *Katelyn's Affection* by Kirsten Klassen from Indiana.—Herald Press release

A recent book by Laurie L. Oswald, *20 Ways to Join God's Mission in the World: First Steps on a Missional Journey*, tells stories of people and churches in Mennonite Church USA. "At first I disliked describing the word 'missional' on paper," said Oswald, news service director for MC USA. "It was hard to define for readers. But when I saw it being expressed in countless ways in countless congregations, a light went on in my soul." The book can be ordered for \$1.00 US by e-mail:

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People & Events

Saskatoon, Sask.—On January 16, First Mennonite Church here held a borscht and cheesecake fundraiser for Mennonite Central Committee. The other four MC Saskatchewan churches in the city were invited to attend. The event was organized by a senior women's group and a group for young families at First Mennonite. A total of \$4,400 was raised for two MCC projects: Generations at Risk and the new MCC Centre in Saskatoon.—**Karin Fehderau**

Ottawa, Ont.—Three Mennonites were among 102 Canadians appointed to the Order of Canada on January 27. Leonard Ratzlaff of Edmonton was named a member, the highest rank. Named as officers were Arthur A. DeFehr of Winnipeg and Ernie Regehr of Waterloo, Ontario. Ratzlaff, a choral conductor who teaches music at the University of Alberta, was cited as "one of Canada's foremost conductors and educators," one who "has mentored countless young musicians." DeFehr was named as "a man of leadership and vision...respected for his business acumen and for his commitment to humanitarian initiatives." DeFehr's role in launching the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and Canadian Mennonite University were also noted. Regehr, director of Project Ploughshares, "is one of Canada's most prominent and respected voices on international disarmament and peace," said his citation. "Canadian and foreign governments as well as the United Nations call upon him as an expert on disarmament.... A dedicated humanitarian, he has made a significant contribution to Canada's international reputation as a leader in peacemaking."—From reports

New York, NY.—The United Nations Liaison Office of Mennonite Central Committee has named Molly Graver, a lawyer with extensive human rights experience, as its new director. A graduate of Maryknoll School of



Graver

Theology, Graver worked with women's human rights groups in El Salvador from 1995-97, through the Church of the Brethren. Her most recent position was as attorney for the New York State Court of Appeals. The MCC UN office monitors policies that affect MCC and serves as a conduit between MCC workers and the work of the UN. Former director John Rempel, who now teaches at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, built strong connections with officials and organizations during his more than a decade with the office. The office also offers internships to young adults.—From MCC release

Tokyo, Japan—Peggy Gish of Athens, Ohio, received the Yoko Tada award for her work with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Iraq in a ceremony here on December 18. A Tokyo journalist nominated Gish after he interviewed her in Jordan last March. Gish noted that the foundation sponsoring the award chose someone working with Iraq because it hoped to mobilize Japanese public opinion against sending troops. "I just happened to be the one he interviewed," she said. The award gave her the chance to share her CPT experience with groups in Japan.—From CPT release

Salunga, Pa.—Mary Anne Cressman from Plattsville, Ontario left December 2 for a six-month assignment leading a Youth Evangelism Service (YES) team to Lithuania. The YES team, sponsored by

Eastern Mennonite Missions, provides discipleship training and cross-cultural mission for about 100 young adults each year. In partnership with a local church, Cressman and three others will focus on children and youth, providing tutoring, leading cell groups and field trips, and playing sports. Cressman attends Nith Valley Mennonite Church.—From EMM release

Leamington, Ont.—Hilda and Henry P. Epp, married on December 12, 1943, in Rosemary, Alberta, celebrated their 60th anniversary with two



Henry and Hilda Epp

events. They spent a weekend last August with children and grandchildren at their daughter Linda Penner's farm here. Then, on December 12, the Epps and their four daughters and friends met to eat together and reflect on what 60 years has brought. Those years included service in churches and schools, and conference work in Canada, Latin America and Germany.—From report

Grantham, Pa.—Rodney Sawatsky, president of Messiah College, has announced his retirement, effective June 30. He cited health concerns and a desire to spend more time with family (he had surgery for a brain tumour last March). Before coming to Messiah in 1994, Sawatsky was dean and then president of Conrad Grebel College in Ontario. "It was a difficult task to accept President Sawatsky's letter of

retirement," said Eunice Steinbrecher, board chair of Messiah, a college with links to the Brethren in Christ Church. "Rod and Lorna have been the public face of and a personal inspiration for our institution." They plan to move back to Ontario next summer.—From Messiah release

Hillsboro, KS.—Douglas B. Miller, professor of Biblical and Religious Studies at Tabor College, has been appointed Old Testament editor for the Believers Church Bible Commentary series published by Herald Press. Miller, who is currently writing the *Ecclesiastes* commentary, succeeds Elmer Martens who has been with the project since it began in the late 1970s. Miller is editor of *Direction*, the academic journal of the Mennonite Brethren church. Gordon Zerbe of Canadian Mennonite University is New Testament editor, succeeding Willard Swartley. Representing Mennonite Church Canada on the Editorial Council is Derek Suderman of Toronto, replacing Lydia Harder. To date, 17 volumes have been published. Of the New Testament books, 7 volumes await completion; the Old Testament has 15 volumes yet to be completed.—From Editorial Council release

Drake, Sask.—The Cheerful Mission Circle of North Star Mennonite Church celebrated its 50th anniversary on January 18. Festivities included a worship service with speakers Leola Epp and retired missionary Anna Dyck, reminiscing and theme songs from the past. The 21-member women's group spent many years quilting and catering. In recent years the group has offered prayer support to the church and community. "God has blessed us richly," said Susan Neufeld, a longtime member. "We want to be a blessing to others."—**Susan Neufeld**

Transitions

Births

Buhler—to Ashley and Sean, Osler Mennonite, Sask., a daughter, Adria Jade, Jan. 23.

Dyck-Steinmann—to Tanya and Don, Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta., a daughter, Ruby Irene, Jan. 1.

Frederick Cook—to Marcille Frederick and Paul Cook, Holyrood Mennonite, Edmonton, Alta., a daughter, Jocelyn Lillian Rita, Jan. 11.

Giesbrecht—to Margita and Abe, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C., a son, Bennet Johannes, Jan. 11.

Nagge—to Sarah and Paul, Waterloo, Ont., a son, Hunter Charles, Jan. 6.

Neufeld—to Heather and Tim, Schoenfelder Mennonite Church, St. Francois Xavier, Man., a son, Matteus, Jan. 1.

Suderman—to Rebecca Seiling and Derek, Hagerman Mennonite, Markham, Ont., a daughter, Zoe Jeanene,

Dec. 18.

Toews—to Jennifer and Rick, Holyrood Mennonite, Edmonton, Alta., a son, Jeremy Walter, Dec. 15.

Venne—to Susan and Gord, Pleasant Point Mennonite, Clavet, Sask., a son, James Robert, Jan. 5.

Marriages

Braun-Bergen—Matthew and Julie, Osler Mennonite, Sask., Dec. 28.

Wahl-Klippenstein—Ryan and Rachel, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Dec. 20.

Deaths

Bender—Anson, 77, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Sept. 12.

Berg—Maria, 92, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 3

Bueckert—Helen, 82, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Dec. 25.

Eisenbeis—Walter, 83, of Granville, Ohio, member of Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 29.

Epp—David John, 83, Carman Mennonite, Man., Jan. 13.

Epp—Mary, 82, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Jan. 21.

Krahn—Fred, 78, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Dec. 19.

Loewen—John, 82, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Jan. 24.

Neufeld—Agnes, 96, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., Jan. 2.

Neufeldt—Emilie (Giesbrecht), 89, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Jan. 6.

Patkau—Katie, 87, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 25.

Rempel—Katherine, 90, Coaldale Mennonite, Alta., Jan. 15

Roth—Edna, 90, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Jan. 9.

Schroeder—Maria (Nickel), 90, Clearbrook Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., Jan. 13.

Thiessen—Helene, 92, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 27.

Warkentin—Jacob, 93, Schoenfelder Mennonite Church, St. Francois Xavier, Man., Jan. 9.

Wiebe—Anni, 98, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 23.

Wiebe—Eva, 88, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Jan. 7.

Wiens—Rudy, 79, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 14.

Baptisms

Bethel Mennonite, Langley, B.C.—Terry Wadhams, Michie Wadhams, Jan. 4.

Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont.—Jean McMahan, Paul Kubech, Jan. 11.

Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.—Laura Jutzi, Bethany Kastner, Maria Steinman, Kelsea Zehr, Luke Zehr, Jan. 18.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes transitions announcements within four months of the event. When sending by e-mail, please identify congregation (name and location).

God as corporate asset

We've ended the year in the black. "Clearly, God has endorsed our work," said an executive with a Christian organization. But the next year wasn't so great. Income was down and expenses were up.

Was the red ink a sign that God no longer endorsed the ministry? Had God's blessing been withdrawn?

The executive found other ways to explain the poor bottom line. Perhaps the ministry was being tested.

As part of a farming family, I learned early that financial fortune was tied to weather. When the rain was right and the crop was good, we thanked God. Sometimes we did so cautiously, like the year when hail ravaged our "unblessed" neighbour's field but passed us by.

We could say "God is good" but if we then lost half our crop due to early frost, that wouldn't mean that God is bad. We knew of no guaranteed connection between faithfulness and financial success. Some fine Christians lost their shirts, while some scoundrels seemed to have the Midas touch.

I'm still careful how I say thanks. I believe God is the author of all good, but

how that good is apportioned remains the stuff of mystery.

Successful Christian businesspeople have been known to credit their prosperity to God. That can sound like spiritual one-upmanship: "Since I'm more faithful, I'm also more wealthy." More often, it's an effort to be humble: "Shucks, I'm just plain folks; must have been God that did it for me."

A leading businessman in our community routinely attributed his success and affluence to God. Whenever his achievements were praised in public, he blushed and said, "I've been blessed."

Other equally devout business folk who were mired in misery may have wondered, "Why haven't I been blessed, Lord?" His comments made them feel like worms.

The term "bless" has several shades of meaning. One is "to hallow or consecrate," as in "bless this food." Another is "to confer prosperity or happiness"—probably what the wealthy executive meant.

"Bless" can also suggest "divine approval." If this is what the businessman had in mind, he was perhaps less than modest. Humble people seldom boast that God has bestowed approval on them.

Usually it's the rich and successful who

invoke blessing language to explain good fortune. The poor don't. When was the last time you heard someone say, "I'm unemployed and broke. God has surely blessed me!" It's only natural to link blessing with a happy outcome.

If we are going to use blessing language in business we may want to explore deeper layers of meaning. One of my former seminary professors says that in Scripture "to bless" is to fortify, to enable, to empower.

"Blessing is the bestowal of generative powers," said my professor. "When God blesses, God makes productive. To bless is to affirm, but it is more, for to bless is to authorize and enable through empowerment."

Can a business be blessed? Of course, especially when its activities are in tune with God's kingdom. Businesses that empower people to shape the kind of world God intended warrant divine approval. They may—or may not—earn big profits, too. With blessing comes increased responsibility. To whom much has been given, much is expected.

—**Wally Kroeker**

The writer is editor The Marketplace, MEDA's magazine about connecting faith and work.

Photo by Dan Dyck



At the end of the Missional Leadership course, colleagues talked about challenges they face as they return home. The group prayed especially for the churches in B.C. as they struggle with their relationship to Mennonite Church Canada. At the centre of the prayer circle are, from left: Henry Kliever, B.C. conference minister; Henry Krause, MC Canada moderator and B.C. pastor; Billy Chiew, Vancouver Chinese youth pastor; Samson Lo, MC Canada multi-cultural director and Grace Chinese pastor; and Gerd Bartel, MC Canada western director of resource development.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Planning for Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School takes place in many congregations in MC Eastern Canada, conducted either by individual congregations or in partnerships with neighbouring Mennonite churches. Some are conducted on an interdenominational basis.

MC Eastern Canada, through the minister of Christian Education, Sandi Hannigan, provides consultative services and resources on VBS for churches. The annual VBS Coordinators' Gathering is taking place February 10 at Erb St. Mennonite Church in Waterloo, to be repeated on February 21 at Grace Mennonite Church in St. Catharines, Ontario, from 10.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

VBS curriculum materials

for 2004 include *Jesus Christ: Mission Accomplished* (8th in "The Bible Then and Now" series) by Faith & Life Resources, and *Kids and Blessings: Living the Beatitudes* by Sandi Hannigan and Eleanor Snyder.

MC Eastern Canada also assists congregations with their VBS program through the VBS Troupe. This group consists of five young adults in grade 12 or beyond. The only criterion for joining the troupe is that you enjoy nurturing children in their faith journey. Gifts in storytelling, music, drama, crafts and recreation are useful!

There is a training component for troupe members. These are paid positions, lasting approximately nine weeks. Interested young adults may download an application at www.mcec.on.ca/christianed, or call Lisa at (519) 650-3806. Deadline for application is March 10.

Days of Quiet Prayer

Persons of MC Eastern Canada are invited to experience quiet prayer in community, rest in God and learn more about spiritual direction.

Each day of prayer includes a time of worship and ample time for silent prayer and reflection. The day is led by Mennonite spiritual directors who are available for conversation with participants.

The program allows participants to choose time slots: 9:00 to noon, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. or 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. The first day of prayer is March 3 at Erb Street Mennonite Church in Waterloo, on the theme "Preparing for Lent." The second is May 5 at Nith Valley Mennonite Church in New Hamburg. To register, call Lisa at (519) 650-3806.

If a congregation or group is interested in hosting a Day of Quiet Prayer, contact Miriam Frey at (519) 880-9684, e-mail: miriamfrey@nonline.net.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Leadership conference coming up

Formerly known as the Ministers' Conference, the Leadership Conference is intended for lay leaders as well as pastors. This year's event will take place on February 20, just prior to the annual delegate sessions, from 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Boissevain Mennonite Brethren Church.

"Talking about tough issues" is the theme for the conference. Dean Peachey, seminar leader, will offer ways to shift the discomfort and fear associated with contentious issues toward opportunities for growth and discovery.

The seminar will provide general principles as well as specific strategies for creative

dialogue and working through conflict. It will include a framework for making congregational decisions, but the primary focus will be on ways to foster constructive discussion on difficult subjects.

Peachey has worked extensively with congregational conflict over the past 20 years as mediator and congregational consultant. He was instrumental in starting Mennonite and Brethren Conciliation Services in Ontario (now Conciliation Services Canada) and has worked with congregations in several denominations. He has a PhD in social psychology and is dean at Menno Simons College where he teaches conflict resolution studies.

Pre-registration is necessary for this seminar. Contact Diane Funk at 896-1616 or e-mail: office@mennochurch.mb.ca.

New series on web site

The MC Manitoba web site has a new series called "Our stories in God's story." Vicki Friesen, through text and photo, profiles how congregations participate in what God is doing in their community.

"Isaiah project: A voice crying in the wilderness?" profiles congregations in the federal riding of Portage-Lisgar. These 13 churches are calling for creative alternatives to war through conversation with their local member of parliament.

The second story profiles an urban community outreach program.

"We hope to offer a new profile every month," said Norm Voth, director of Evangelism and Service Ministries. He welcomes feedback and suggestions of other congregational outreach programs.

The MC Manitoba web site

is found at www.mennonchurch.mb.ca. Contact Voth by e-mail: nvoth@mennonchurch.mb.ca, or phone: (204) 896-1616.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

RJC lays out hopes for future

Erwin Tiessen, principal of Rosthern Junior College, together with staff, is holding six meetings in Saskatchewan and Alberta to connect with the constituency and share RJC's dreams of expansion. RJC is supported by Mennonite churches in those two provinces.

Tiessen refers to the meetings as "The Road to 100." At a January 22 meeting at Bethany Manor, Tiessen laid out a four-point overview of the college and its needs. He talked about the renewed agriculture course and the international student programs. He explained the college's "Live the legacy" campaign designed to raise \$1 million by the school's centennial celebrations in 2005.

Finally he opened up discussion about the future and what the school would like to do to enhance facilities.

"This is our wish list," he said. "Maybe we can only do

one of these before the centennial." Tiessen was careful to point out that these were dreams and not plans. Possibilities include an office addition, a new chapel and music centre, and updated science labs.

"We want our school to be attractive," noted Tiessen, suggesting that improvements would help to draw in more students. Some changes need to be done to bring the campus up to current safety standards.

Mennonite Church Alberta

Intense study of Ephesians

Tom Yoder Neufeld, New Testament professor at Conrad Grebel University College (University of Waterloo), was the lecturer at the 2004 Theological Studies week at Camp Valaqua January 19-22.

A total of 36 participants gathered for an intense study of Ephesians. The impressive depth and scope of the presentations gave all involved a deeper understanding of the Ephesian context and what it says to the church in 2004.

Jim Shantz, MC Alberta conference pastor, said it was a little like "trying to take a drink from a fireman's hose." He was impressed by Yoder

Neufeld's knowledge of the subject and found the course encouraging for the work of the church today. A particular highlight for Shantz was the discussion surrounding Ephesians 4:1-6, which emphasizes unity in the body of Christ.

In addition to the study and related discussion, Theological Studies Week provides an opportunity for church leaders and members to socialize around the shuffleboard, the rook cards, and the gorgeous forest setting.

The congregational leadership commission is currently narrowing options for next year's study week. The commission attempts to alternate between pastoral and theological foci each year.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Put your 'paddle in the water'

When a paddle hits the water, it creates ripples that can go a long way. This summer a camper will be at the end of a similar "ripple effect." She will spend a week with a counsellor who has given up a summer job for the opportunity to serve.

That counsellor will apply for a bursary from The Squeah

Staff Bursary Fund, and the fund will be there because people participated in the 5th annual Squeah Paddle-a-thon and asked someone to sponsor them.

Do you want to be a part of this ripple effect? On April 24-25, paddlers will journey down the Fraser River testing their skills between Hope and Fort Langley. Take the opportunity to sponsor them. You can also make your donation to Camp Squeah directly.

Squeah will support paddlers with training prior to the event and with T-shirts, hats, safety support and food. Each paddler must raise a minimum of \$500. The person who raises the most will go home with a new canoe!

Pray for this event and for Squeah's summer staff. Pray for our campers that they will grow in their journey with God. Complete information about the event can be found at www.campsqueah.bc.ca, or call 1-800-380-2267.

Unless otherwise credited, the articles in TheChurches pages were written by: Leona Dueck Penner (Mennonite Church Canada), Maurice Martin (Eastern Canada), Evelyn Rempel Petkau (Manitoba), Karin Fehderau (Saskatchewan), Donita Wiebe-Neufeld (Alberta), Angelika Dawson (B.C.). See page 2 for contact information.

Dare to leave the sheepfold

This issue includes a focus on summer and camps. Perhaps a connection with Mennonite summer camping programs has strengthened your faith. It has often strengthened mine.

My present connection to camp is at the board level of the Mennonite Camping Association. In that role, I recently reflected on what it means to follow the Good Shepherd as I prepared a worship-planning guide for this year's Camp Sunday. Watch for it in the "Equipping" packet.

As I explored what shepherding really consists of, I learned anew how important the protection of the sheepfold is for sheep that graze near predators. However, I also learned how smelly and unhealthy it is if sheep stay in the

sheepfold during the day.

Nothing but bacteria and insects grow in the layers of trampled dung that build up in a sheepfold, so a wise shepherd leads his or her sheep out of the sheepfold in the early morning hours, when insects are still relatively dormant and while the dew is still on the meadow. In arid regions, that dew-soaked meadow often provides the sheep with enough moisture and nutrition to survive on for the day.

As I reflected on this, I wondered how often we listen to the calling of our Shepherd to leave our protective sheepfolds so we can feed on what truly nurtures and sustains us.

Just what are our sheepfolds? Are they the warm blankets that tempt us to sleep through the time when we can begin our

day with God? Are they old views that once served us well? Or are they those protective cliques we slip into so easily? Do we linger in sheepfolds longer than is healthy for our bodies or souls? Our Good Shepherd regularly calls and wants to send us forth to fresh, new dew-soaked pastures. Let us rise and follow.

I believe the Mennonite Camping Association vision of "seeking God's face in creation, receiving God's love in Christ, and radiating God's Spirit in the world," can help to guide us on our way.

Elsie Rempel, director of Christian Education and Nurture, Mennonite Church Canada



From our leaders

Employment opportunities



Winnipeg
Mennonite
Elementary
Schools, Inc.

SENIOR PRINCIPAL/CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools, Inc. ("WMES") is seeking a suitable candidate to assume the role of Senior Principal/ CEO, effective August 16, 2004. The Senior Principal/CEO is responsible to the Board of Directors and provides overall day-to-day leadership for the organization. The successful candidate will have a broad educational background and experience; will support the mission and mandate of WMES; will have (or qualify for) a Manitoba teaching certificate; will be a good communicator; will have an interest in development; will relate well to the public, to staff and to the Board and be a self-motivated person who has a passion for leading a superior team of educators.

WMES is a church-related independent school, operating schools on two campuses (Bedson K-8 and Agassiz K-6), with a total enrolment of approximately 500 students. The mission of WMES is to "provide Christ-centred education, integrating faith and life, within a caring school community." The WMES school communities are vibrant, energetic educational centres of excellence, reflecting its open admissions policy.

Please submit resumes by March 31, 2004 to:

**WMES, 250 Bedson Street
Winnipeg, MB R3K 1R7
Attention: Bob Peters, Board Chair
or send by e-mail to: boardchair@wmes.ca**

Please visit WMES online at: www.wmes.ca

Portage MCC Community Assistance Centre Inc. (Portage MCC) is seeking qualified applicants for the full-time service opportunity of

MANAGER

in Portage la Prairie at the MCC Thrift Store. Qualifications include:

- college/university degree or equivalent life experience;
- supervision and leadership of volunteer and paid staff;
- organizing and prioritizing work;
- ensuring that standard accounting practice is observed in the operation of the thrift store;
- processing donations for sale, disposal or recycling;
- public/media relations;
- liaison to Provincial level of MCC Thrift Stores, Portage Quilt Shoppe and Resource Centre;
- reporting to the Board of Directors.

As all MCC personnel, this person also needs to be a Christian, active church member and committed to non-violent peacemaking. This is a salaried position based on 40 hours per week. The position is available as of February 28, 2004. Deadline for resume submissions: February 20, 2004.

Contact:

**Personnel Committee
Portage MCC Thrift Store
Phone: (204) 274-2180
Fax: (204) 274-2131**

Application review begins immediately.

BRUBACHER HOUSE MUSEUM HOSTS

Conrad Grebel University College and the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario are seeking a couple to serve as hosts for the Brubacher House Museum beginning Spring 2004. Located on the beautiful north campus of the University of Waterloo, this historical home (ca. 1855) requires a host couple who is willing to live on site in a furnished apartment and provide tours during the summer months. Rent and utilities are free in exchange for performance of duties.

Applicants should be responsible and able to relate to a broad range of people. Preference will be given to persons who have a familiarity with the history of Waterloo County. Application deadline is February 18, 2004.

If interested contact:



**E. Paul Penner
Conrad Grebel Operations Manager
Phone: (519) 885-0220, ext. 231
E-mail: eppenner@uwaterloo.ca**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
WELCOME INN COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Applications are invited for a full-time Executive Director who is committed to an Anabaptist understanding of faith. The Centre, located in North End Hamilton, offers programs to various segments of the community and collaborates with agencies and the Welcome Inn Mennonite Church.

Primary responsibilities of the applicant include: administration, fundraising, supervision, visioning and planning, relating closely to Welcome Inn Church, working with diverse participants. Responsibility is to the Board of Directors.

Inquiries and applications should be forwarded by February 28, 2004 to:

**J. H. Cornies, Chair of Search Committee
26 Lynden Ave., Dundas, ON L9H 4J9
Phone: (905) 627-4482
E-mail: corniesp@interlynx.net**

Faith Mennonite Church, in Leamington Ontario is seeking a

FULL TIME PASTOR

to serve a congregation of about 250 persons. We are a church with a large number of young families. We are seeking a person/s, who will provide spiritual leadership and guidance to our congregation. Previous pastoral experience is preferred. The position is available as of July 1, 2004.

For further information, or to send a resume, contact:

**Muriel Bechtel
MCEC (Mennonite Church Eastern Canada)
4489 King St. E., Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2
Phone: (519) 650-3806; Fax: (519) 650-3947**

For rent

New Zealand House to rent in hot end of NZ, to Christian couple, from April to Sept 2004. Situated in beautiful park-like acreage and includes car. Contact RJB, 115 Fairburn Court, Saskatoon, SK S7M 5P7 or Phone: (306) 384-6300.

Canadian Mennonite

Advertising deadlines

**March 8 issue : Feb. 24
March 22 issue : Mar. 9
April 5 issue : March 23
1-800-316-4052**

Bluffton College invites applications for the following tenure track positions beginning August 2004:

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Doctorate preferred; ABD considered. Certification in early childhood education and experience in literacy. Certification in special education (mild to moderate education needs) preferred. Required minimum of three years teaching in early childhood, additional experience in literacy required, K-12 special education experience preferred; graduate level teaching experience preferred. Teach graduate and undergraduate education courses in curriculum and instruction in early childhood education and literacy. Teach graduate and undergraduate courses in special education (mild to moderate education needs) preferred. Supervise student teachers in early education and special education classrooms.

SECONDARY or MIDDLE CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Doctorate preferred; ABD considered. Evidence of effective teaching crucial. Certification in Adolescent/Young Adult (Secondary) Education or Middle Childhood (gr. 4-9) Education. Undergraduate and graduate level teaching in higher education preferred; a minimum of three years teaching at the secondary or middle childhood level; student teaching supervision experience. Teach undergraduate and graduate education courses in educational foundations, curriculum methods, assessment, and classroom management. Supervise early field experience students and student teachers.

BAND/INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC EDUCATION

Proven excellence in developing and conducting bands. Strong preference for candidate to have doctorate (or near completion) in instrumental conducting or music education, but will consider persons with masters degree. Candidate must show a strong background of public school teaching experience. Demonstrated excellence in college level teaching is desirable. Brass or percussion background is also desirable. Conduct the Bluffton College-Community Concert Band. Teach undergraduate courses in instrumental music education, supervise student teachers and possibly teach applied lessons. Other areas may include conducting, instrumental methods courses, and related areas. Provide leadership for a dynamic music program that is growing. Recruit and advise students.

BIBLICAL STUDIES

Ph.D. required (ABD considered). Specialization in Old or New Testament. Demonstration of commitment to the Anabaptist-Mennonite, peace church tradition. Teach introductory biblical studies courses in an innovative general education program, and advanced courses related to specialization in an expanding religion department. Participation in scholarly and churchly activity expected.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Ph.D. required (ABD considered). Generalist in Christian Ethics, with area of specialization open. Training in theology desirable. Demonstration of commitment to the Anabaptist-Mennonite, peace church tradition. Teach multiple sections of introductory course in Christian Ethics in an innovative general education program; possibly a section of Christian Theology; and advanced courses related to specialization in an expanding religion department. Participation in scholarly and churchly activity expected.

Review of applications begins immediately. Additional information is available at www.bluffton.edu. Send letter of interest, vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee), and official transcripts to:

Elaine Suderman, Admin. Assist. for Academic Affairs
Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Ste. 1
Bluffton, OH 45817-1196

Crossroads Community Church, Chilliwack, British Columbia invites applications for a full time

SENIOR PASTOR

We are a contemporary evangelical Anabaptist church of 120 people located in the heart of the beautiful Fraser Valley. We are looking for a passionate follower of Jesus Christ willing to provide leadership and guidance as we reach out to our community.

Please respond in writing to:

Crossroads Community Church
Search Committee
c/o 46285 Velma Avenue
Chilliwack, BC V4Z 1A1
E-mail: alan@dowco.com

Western Mennonite School Board of Directors has announced a search for applicants for the position of

PRINCIPAL

to begin July 2004. Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students both local and at a distance. Located on 45 acres in the Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith building experience with a comprehensive vision for expanding enrollment, program and facilities.

Request for information can be addressed to:

Search Committee
Western Mennonite School
9045 Wallace Rd. NW
Salem, OR 97304
wmsoffice@teleport.com

Announcement



**PIANO
 TECHNICIANS
 GUILD**



The Piano Tuner

Ralph G Corlis (Associate)

Piano Tuning 519-883-0252 Waterloo
and Repairs 416-221-2740 Toronto
ralph.corlis@sympatico.ca

**CANADIAN
 Mennonite**



**Advertising
 Information**

**Contact
 Barbara
 Burkholder at:
 1-800-316-4052**

advert@canadianmennonite.org

Consultation on spiritual powers

Elkhart, Ind.—“Hard cases: Confronting the spirit world” is the topic of an April 15-17 consultation at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. The event is sponsored by the Bondage and Deliverance Committee of the Indiana-Michigan Conference and the Institute of Mennonite Studies.

Pastors, teachers, therapists and other caregivers are invited to explore issues related to spiritual powers, generational sin and dysfunctional social systems. It will also be a resource for those dealing with very troubled families. Presenters include Clinton Arnold, author of *Three Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare and Powers of Darkness: Principalities and Powers in Paul's Letters*; Paul Hiebert, missiologist at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; Lawrence E. Burkholder, pastor from Markham, Ontario; and Ron Hammer, pastoral counsellor and former professor in psychopathology.

The event will include people who have been involved in deliverance ministries. For more information, e-mail Bev Sawatsky at bsawatsky@ambs.edu or call (574) 295-3726.—From AMBS release

Spend a day at MCI

Gretna, Man.—Mennonite Collegiate Institute is promoting “A day in the life” experience for prospective students. Students or parents can call the school and book a day to spend at the school, attending classes and chapel and finding out what MCI is like. To book “A day in the life,” call Jenn in Admissions at (204) 327-5891 or e-mail: admissions@mciblues.net.—From MCI release

Events celebrate 200 years in Molochna

Toronto, Ont.—This year marks the bicentennial of Mennonite settlement in Molochna, Ukraine. Celebrations will occur the first week of June and in the fall.

V. Peter Harder, Canada's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, himself of Molochna Mennonite background, will be the speaker at the June event. On June 6, a memorial will be unveiled at the Zentralschule in Halbstadt/Molochansk, the administrative centre of the former Mennonite settlement.

In keeping with modern Ukraine's effort to embrace its multi-ethnic past, a Ukrainian folk orchestra and choir will perform Mennonite hymns.

Plaques will also be unveiled in Waldheim/Vladovka (remembering the founders of the Waldheim hospital and a farm implements factory), in Gnadenfeld/Bogdanovka, and at the Lichtenau railway station where painful separations took place in Soviet times.

An international conference (June 2-5) at the University of Melitopol is being organized by Nikolai Krylov, University of Melitopol, and John Staples, State University of New York.

Fall events will feature a thanksgiving service in Molochansk-Halbstadt. A monument to leader Johann Cornies will be unveiled at his Jushanlee estate.

Other bicentennial events will include lectures in Dnepropetrovsk by Peter Harder and others, and in Zaporozhe by author Rudy Wiebe. Historian Paul Toews of California, working with local museums, will stage a photographic exhibit in the Melitopol Historical Museum for the June conference.

For further information contact: Harvey Dyck, phone (416) 946-8944, e-mail: hdyck@chass.utoronto.ca.—From coordinating committee

Calendar

British Columbia

February 21: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. lecture on “Umsiedler” by Heinrich Loewen at Garden Park Towers, Abbotsford, 7:00 p.m.

February 27, 28: MCC Relief Sale banquets: Broadway Mennonite Brethren Church, Chilliwack (27); Fraserview MB Church, Richmond (28).

February 28: Church music workshop with Mary Oyer and Angela Neufeld at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford. More information at

www.emmanuelmennonite.com.

March 5: MCC Relief Sale Dessert Evening at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

March 6: MCC Relief Sale lunch at Garden Park Towers, Abbotsford. Banquet at Bethel Mennonite, Aldergrove.

March 12-13: Youth workers conference at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford on worship and discipleship, with Tom and Christine Sine. Phone (604) 853-3567, ext. 323.

March 13: MC B.C. delegate meeting at Bethel Mennonite Church, Aldergrove.

April 3, 4: Abendmusik Lenten Vespers at Evangelical Free Church, Abbotsford (3), and Knox United, Vancouver (4). Benefit for Menno Simons Centre.

Alberta

February 20-22: Senior Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua.

February 21: “Cowboy church,” featuring cowboy poetry and music with Doris Daley and friends, at Trinity Mennonite Church, Calgary, 7:00 p.m.

February 27-28: Mennonite Church Alberta delegate sessions at Rosemary Mennonite Church.

March 19-20: Missional

Church training at Camp Valaqua.

April 23-24: Conference and annual meeting of Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta in Edmonton, at Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church (23) and First Mennonite (24). Speakers: John B. Toews, Tena Wiebe, Lorne Buhr.

June 18-19: MCC Alberta Relief Sale in Coaldale.

Saskatchewan

February 21-22, 27-28, March 5-6: “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” by Superb Mennonite Church. Call church for locations.

February 27-28: Mennonite Church Saskatchewan annual sessions in Rosetown.

March 3: MEDA breakfast at Grainfields Restaurant, Saskatoon, 7:30 a.m.

March 5-6: Songfest at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, with Henry Engbrecht and Joanne Wiens.

March 27: Shekinah fundraising banquet and silent auction at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

April 19-23: Seminary class on “Becoming a missional church.”

May 16: Rosthern Junior College spring concert.

June 6: Shekinah Bike-a-thon.

June 24-27: Rosthern Junior College musical and graduation (27).

Manitoba

February 20-21: Annual session of MC Manitoba at Whitewater Mennonite Church, Boissevain.

February 26-28: Drama, “The Zeal of Thy House” by Dorothy Sayers, at Canadian Mennonite University, 8:00 p.m. (Feb. 29, 3:00 p.m.).

February 29: MennoFolk Manitoba at West End Cultural Centre, Winnipeg, 2:00-10:00 p.m.

March 5, 7: Benefit concert by Mel Braun and Laura Loewen

for mental health programs of Eden Health Care Services, at First Presbyterian Church, Winnipeg (5) 7:30 p.m.; Winkler Berghaler church (7), 3:00 p.m.

March 5-7: Retreat for families with mentally handicapped members, at Camp Assiniboia.

March 7: Choral Connections concert at Canadian Mennonite University, 7:30 p.m.

March 8: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate board banquet. Phone (204) 775-7111 for details.

March 11, 12, 13: Musical "Annie" at Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, 7:30 p.m. March 13 includes supper at 6:00 p.m. Call (204) 327-5891.

March 12-14: Junior high retreats at Camps Koinonia and Moose Lake.

March 12-14: Peace-It-Together for high schoolers at Canadian Mennonite University. Speaker: Dave Worth on "Food as a peace issue." Call 1-877-231-4570, e-mail: bgrunau@cmu.ca.

March 13: Celebration Jamboree at Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, for Native Ministries work in Riverton, 3:00 p.m.

March 31: Open house at Canadian Mennonite University.

April 2-4: Marriage Encounter weekend in Winnipeg. Contact Peter and Rose Dick at (204) 757-4705.

April 15-17: Senior high drama at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg.

May 27, June 3: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate concerts at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. Senior high (May 27), junior high (June 3).

June 28: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate graduation at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

Ontario

February 20-22, 27-28: Alumni operetta at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington.

February 28: Tenth dessert

and auction at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

February 29: Menno Singers concert of Canadian composers at St. John the Evangelist Church, Kitchener, 3:00 p.m.

March 4-5: Bechtel Lectures at Conrad Grebel University College with Nancy Heisey.

March 5-7: Marriage Encounter weekend at Niagara Falls. Call Marjorie Roth at (519) 669-8667.

March 6: Concert with House of Doc and Five-on-the-Floor at King Street Theatre, Kitchener, 8:00 p.m. Phone (519) 741-8224, e-mail: harder@sentex.net.

March 10: Family night at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington, 6:30 p.m.

March 18: MEDA Breakfast at Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, 7:30 a.m. Speaker: Steve Rannekleiv.

March 26-27: Engaged Workshop at Hawkesville Mennonite Church. Call (519) 656-2256.

March 27: Menno Singers second Hymn Sing Fundraiser at W-K Mennonite Church, Waterloo, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Call 576-9853.

March 27: Mennonite Aid Union Management Association annual meeting, Bingemans, Kitchener, 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Register at (519) 634-5267, ext. 210.

March 30: Mennonite Savings and Credit Union 40th annual meeting at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church. Speaker Henry Paetkau; music by Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir, 7:30 p.m.

April 19-23, 26-30: MCC meat canning in Leamington (19-23) and Guelph (26-30).

April 23, 24: Menno Singers and Pax Christi Chorale perform Vaughan Williams' "Dona Nobis Pacem" and Durufle's "Requiem" at Benton St. Baptist, Kitchener (23), and Yorkminster Park Baptist, Toronto (24), 8:00 p.m.

April 30: MEDA spring banquet at Conrad Grebel University College with speaker John Fast.

April 30-May 1: Engaged

Workshop at Living Water Mennonite Fellowship, New Hamburg. Call (519) 656-2256.

May 8: Springfest at Niagara United Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

May 16: Spring concert at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington, 7:30 p.m.

May 20: Spring concert at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

May 28-30: "Sound in the land" music festival/conference at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

June 15-18: Summer Training Institute for church leaders by Conciliation Services Canada, at Conrad Grebel University College. Contact Nan

Cressman, phone 1-866-782-0287.

June 19: Graduation at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

June 20: United Mennonite Educational Institute (UMEI) graduation, Leamington, 2:30 p.m.

United States

March 22-25: Mennonite Camping Association convention at Drift Creek Camp, Lincoln City, Oregon.

March 25-28: Mennonite Health Assembly in San Francisco. Phone: (219) 534-9689, e-mail: info@mhsonline.org.

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