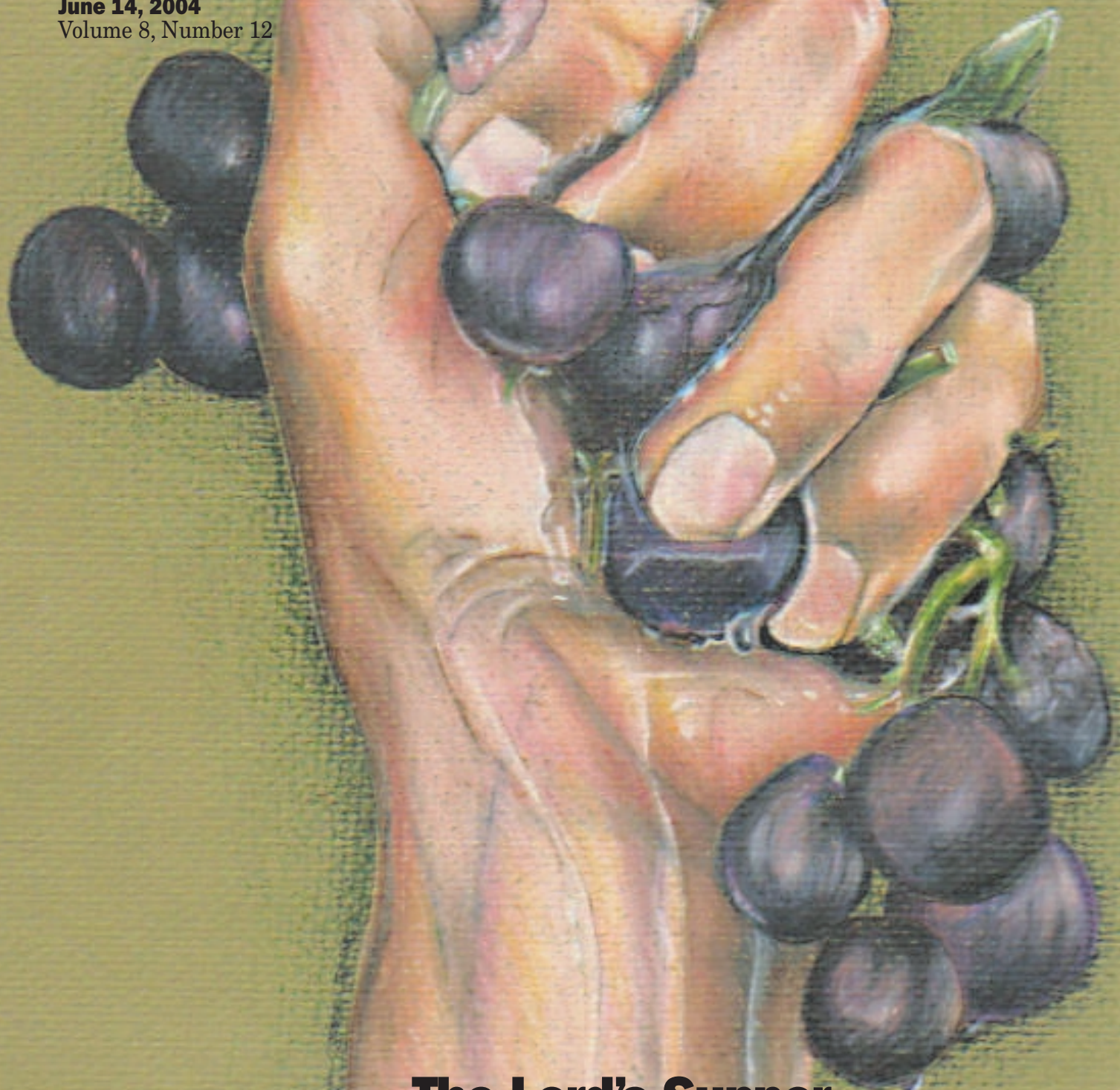


C A N A D I A N
Mennonite

June 14, 2004
Volume 8, Number 12



The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper

How do we celebrate the Lord's Supper in our churches? What theological convictions lie behind our practices? This issue focuses on these questions in a larger-than-usual feature section (pages 4-14).

To set the stage, John Rempel traces the theological roots and development of Anabaptist-Mennonite communion practices (page 6). As a pastor and scholar, Rempel has a passion for this topic and has written extensively on it. Some of his historical work is collected in his 1993 book, *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism: A Study in the Christology of Balthasar Hubmaier, Pilgram Marpeck, and Dirk Philips*

(Herald Press). Rempel also wrote the section on the Lord's Supper in the current *Minister's Manual* (Faith & Life/Herald Press, 1998).

'The Lord's Supper is our most profound and formative symbol.'

"The Lord's Supper is our most profound and formative symbol," says Rempel.

"How we practice it reveals more of what we believe about grace, the church, and mission than any other aspect of congregational life; it is our theology incarnate."

If that is true, are we giving enough thought to how we observe communion? Are we aware of how our practices express our faith? Questions about whom to invite to the Lord's table, how to include children and how to serve the elements are not easy to answer—they depend on what we believe about the nature of the church and our life together.

The other articles in this section survey the variety of ways in which our churches currently observe communion (beginning on page 4). Many still follow traditional patterns, while others are including new ways of observing the Lord's Supper. Perhaps these articles can help churches think

about how their communion practices reflect what they believe about the community of faith.

The next issue of *Canadian Mennonite* will focus on mental health issues in the context of the church. The feature will include an article from last fall's Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly in Winnipeg. A panel at that assembly talked about ways that congregations and individuals can respond to Jesus' call to "heal the sick."

A mother's death

I am writing this just hours after the death of my mother-in-law. She was 86 years old and had been ailing for several years before a massive stroke rendered her immobile just over two weeks ago. I was able to spend a week at her bedside in Manitoba before she died (time I had expected to spend in Europe on vacation).

It was a week out of time—strange and disorienting, but full of unexpected richness. My husband's family was fortunate—all five siblings were able to keep watch together, while getting reacquainted with each other.

As many have observed, our culture does not easily incorporate the fact of death into our daily living. It's often a struggle to set aside one's own routines, both physical and psychological, to attend to a person's dying.

The questions that one faces are suddenly so ultimate—how can we judge what "quality of life" is present, or when to remove the intravenous lifeline? How can we plan for a funeral when we have no idea when death will come?

It's a stark lesson in realizing the limits of our control. All we can do is acknowledge that the days of our life and the moment of our death rest in the hands of God.

Mary (Zacharias) Reimer, rest in peace.—**Margaret Loewen Reimer**

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June 14, 2004
Volume 8, Number 12



Page 19

4 **UpClose**
Communion services **4**
Variety of observances **5**

6 **Faith&Life**
The Lord's Supper **6**
Communion in Alberta **11**
Shifting practices **13**

15 **InConversation**
Two desks **15**
Letters **15**
Pilgrim Pieces **16**
Emke Retro **17**

18 **WiderChurch**
Sudan **18**
MCC youth program **22**
Aid to Gaza **24**
Bomb clearance **25**

26 **LocalChurch**
Wingham closes **26**
Toews lectures **27**
Meat canning **30**
Transitions **32**

34 **TheChurches**

38 **ToMorrow**



Page 31

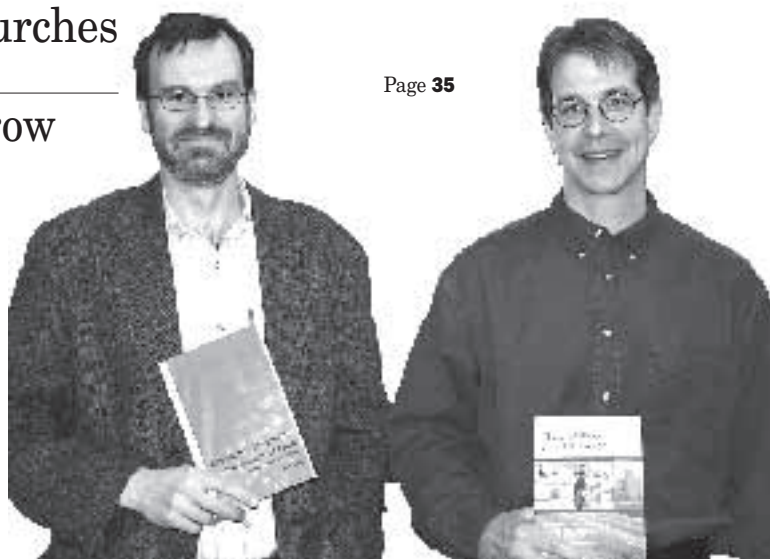
Web site preview

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Selections are posted on our web site at

www.canadianmennonite.org on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the June 28 issue by June 24.

Cover: Coloured pencil drawing by Karmen Krahn.



Page 35

Winkler, Man.

Emmanuel has various communion services

Communion at Emmanuel Mennonite Church here is a sacred event celebrated eight or nine times a year.

Every Maundy Thursday, just before Good Friday, the church holds a love feast. The evening begins with a meal of soup and bread, followed by the story of Jesus' betrayal and the last supper. Seated around tables, members break bread for one other and

is celebrated in midsummer, when the church family is more scattered.

"In a time when we're all going different ways it serves to draw us together," said Koop.

Emmanuel Mennonite also brings in the new year with a communion service.

In addition, Easter Sunday, World Communion Sunday in October, and the first Sunday of Advent are always celebrated with communion. Every

means, have a prayer of confession and then pass the peace of Christ."

Sometimes the two pastors and lay minister invite participants to come to the front in small groups to receive the communion elements and a blessing. Other times the deacons serve the elements to members in the pews.

"Sometimes, especially at our Easter Sunday communion service, we have a more celebratory communion," said Koop. "We have a banquet-type of display with special fruits. We have a large communion banner which we display at all communion services."

—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Acrylic painting by Chad Friesen



share grape juice.

The story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet in John 13 leads to an invitation for members to demonstrate their willingness to serve one another, and accept service, by participating in footwashing or hand washing.

A rugged cross is a focal point.

"People are invited to pray at the cross," said Marvin Koop, pastor. "There is continual movement to the cross. We try to connect our Lenten theme to the service. One year we had a broken pot and the pieces were placed on each table. People brought these pieces to the cross as symbols of their brokenness."

Another occasion when communion

baptism service includes a communion celebration.

"In 2002 we had four or five baptism services, but usually there aren't more than two," said Koop. Emmanuel Mennonite has two worship services every Sunday to accommodate a membership of over 200.

Koop recalled that when he came nine years ago, communion services were sometimes held Sunday evenings. Attendance, however, was low and now communion is part of morning worship, except for Maundy Thursday.

"At our communion services...all who are baptized are invited to partake," he said. "We begin with an explanation of what communion

Natural altar call

Communion symbols point to God's greatest expression of grace and forgiveness. Communion is therefore the most natural "altar call" opportunity that the church has. We don't need to guard the gate of grace; we need to open it for all.

While communion is for those who confess Jesus as Lord, I have always used it as an occasion to invite any who hear God calling them to make a confession of faith to come and receive the bread and wine. In this way they make their intentions known that they want to become disciples of Jesus.

I have found that having people come forward as households, blessing the children, and having pastors and elders who are offering the symbols use people's names as they give communion, make for powerful connections.

I sometimes have a quick prayer with a person I know is experiencing difficult times. If new people come, I ask them their names.

Communion should not be less than four times a year, and preferably more. For me, Good Friday has been a time to include a service of healing. As people come forward, they have an opportunity to have an anointing service first, then communion.—

Lawrence Martin, Minister of Pastoral Leadership Training, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Variety of observances in Ontario

As an incoming pastor from the General Conference out west, I asked a lot of questions in anticipation of presiding over communion at Hawkesville Mennonite Church.

The responses: “Anything goes!” “We love variety!” “Tell us what you’d like to do.”

So, for our communion this past October we invited everyone to come forward to a table set with homemade bread, grape juice, grapes and crackers. Those who felt comfortable could help themselves. In addition, I as pastor offered anointing oil as a blessing.

The result? A community “feast” of everyone coming for at least something that was offered (the response apparently sought after in gospel parallels of kingdom as banquet table).

At our next communion, the day of our annual congregational meeting, we will worship, commune, wash feet, sit down to dinner, and talk business. “Being community” will be our theme.—**Perry Bartel, pastor**

At Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite we have a traditional “Russian Mennonite” service most of the time. We use a baking powder biscuit for the individual wafers and wine. We supply grape juice as well. The deacons serve the bread and then wine, in individual cups. Each person holds the element until all have been served.

The invitation we give is to all baptized who are in a good relationship with God and their fellow human beings.

We have had “alternative” services on Maundy Thursday and Christmas Eve. Maundy Thursday is usually designed to include non-baptized people.—**Dave Rogalsky, pastor**

At Community Mennonite in Stouffville, we celebrate communion five to six times a year. Around Labour Day we celebrate Covenant Sunday in which members recommit for the coming year; during Advent the theme is coming to the

manger for nourishment (the bread of life, living water); at church retreat in February the theme is community, being part of the body of Christ; at the Good Friday inter-Mennonite service the theme is remembering the last supper and passion of Christ; at Easter, the theme is the resurrected Christ being revealed.

Sometimes another communion service happens around the theme of healing. The preferred way is for people to come to the front to receive

communion. Each person takes a piece of bread and a cup. It is not served.

We practice “open” communion. All who follow/believe in Christ or who wish to make a commitment to do so can take bread and juice. We have grapes for children and for those who do not take communion. The grapes are a sign of God’s blessing, with the hope that some day they will respond to this blessing by committing their lives to God.—**Gord Alton, pastor**

Communion traditions in Saskatchewan

Communion takes many forms among Saskatchewan Mennonites. Some sit; others walk to the front to receive the elements. In some churches members receive the bread and cup from the pastor; in others, they serve each other.

Whether or not to include children in communion is also handled differently by different congregations.

Some churches, like Grace Mennonite in Regina, welcome all children to the table. In this congregation, a number of families come from different faith backgrounds where children have participated in communion.

Grapes and fish-shaped crackers are given to those children who “anticipate making an adult decision for baptism in the future,” said Grace co-pastor Terry Zimmerly.

Carrot River Mennonite allows children to be involved according to the parents’ discretion. “If the parents feel that their children understand the significance of communion, they can include them in the service,” said pastor Craig Friesen.

“I have invited parents to educate their children about the significance of this service,” noted Ed Olfert, pastor of Grace Mennonite in Prince Albert, who allows the children to take communion, citing the constitutional qualifier of “all believers in Jesus Christ are welcome to participate.”

Where ailing seniors are unable to come to a communion service, the pastor and deacons take a communion kit to the care home and administer the elements there.

Other variations pop up in which

elements are used and how they are used. In Hague Mennonite and Grace Mennonite, Prince Albert, for example, there are both formal and informal expressions of communion. During the formal times, juice or wine is used in a somber, reflective service, along with traditional baked biscuits or bread. The elements are carried through the sanctuary and served by deacons or other members.

In a less formal setting, such as an evening service or a church retreat, a French bread loaf is shared around the group. Sometimes even cinnamon buns are used.

Hague Mennonite observes a “love meal” twice a year in the evening. First Mennonite in Saskatoon has a healing and communion service once a year in January.

Deciding who serves the communion can sometimes be a struggle. At one larger church in Saskatoon, deacons help the pastors serve the 200 members. In other churches, some women deacons feel they should not be in that role. Sometimes, in more relaxed settings, teenagers may serve the sacraments or people partner up and serve each other.

For communion on Maundy Thursday, some churches use a cross, a crown of thorns and palm branches as visuals to enhance the worship. Grace Mennonite in Prince Albert includes a Christ candle in this service (although allergies are becoming an issue). In Carrot River, the church moves the pulpit over and puts the table in the centre.

Churches differ in using wine or juice. Some churches offer both.—**Karin Fehderau**

The Lord's Supper in our tradition

How we practise the Lord's Supper 'reveals more of what we believe about grace, the church and mission than any other aspect of congregational life; it is our theology incarnate,' says John Rempel. This article traces its practice through Mennonite history.

In the New Testament, we have only hints of how the Lord's Supper or Eucharist was practised. I have concluded that this sparse record is a blessing, lest we imitate the form rather than the spirit of the event. The same is true of Anabaptism.

Anabaptism came into existence by means of its renegade celebration of the Holy Supper in 1525. It did not become a church through a political or theological declaration but

through a liturgical act. Its most trenchant criticism of the existing order was not a document but the ceremony of baptism.

Anabaptism retained a positive role for ceremonies but changed the actor. It was not the priest but the congregation that "consecrated" the bread and wine. At the same time, the Anabaptists never got over their fear that outward signs easily become a substitute for inward faith.

The only complete service is that of Balthasar Hubmaier, a Catholic liturgical scholar before he became an Anabaptist. He compiled a "reformed mass," a purified version of the medieval liturgy, with a preparatory service, preaching on the sacrifice of Christ, simple prayers of thanks for the bread and cup. The outcome is that believers are set free to lay down their lives for their neighbours, as Christ laid down his life for them.

Ulrich Zwingli, the great reformer of Zurich, and Conrad Grebel, his rebellious disciple, had an interesting debate on distributing the elements. Zwingli saw nothing wrong with communicants coming forward to receive from the minister, as of old. But Grebel insisted that the supper must be served in the rows with the members passing the elements to one another, to symbolize the communal nature of the event.

Other Anabaptist writers note only that believers met for the breaking of bread as often as they could. For them, the supper was a participatory meal, the bond of their unity—and the event from which they excommunicated one another. Some Anabaptists tried to overcome the medieval dread of unworthy partaking. In the end, the Anabaptist tendency toward perfec-



The New Testament: A Pictorial Archive From nineteenth-Century Sources. New York, Dover.

tionism led to a different dread of unworthy communion, and Anabaptists reverted to communion only once or twice a year.

Anabaptists carried over medieval traditions such as the preparatory service in which congregants went before the priest and declared whether or not they were at peace with God and their neighbour. They had to seek reconciliation before they could come to the Lord's Table.

In the Prussian-Russian stream, it was customary to bring along a fine cloth in which to hold the bread. In the Amish tradition, there is the practice of bending one knee when receiving the cup. There is no theological warrant for such practices, but these ancient acts of reverence remained meaningful.

There was no uniform theology of the Eucharist in Anabaptism. The most anticlerical pronouncements come from court hearings of Anabaptists who refused to bow before the elements or to confess that Christ is physically present in them. Menno Simons denounced idolatry, seeking salvation in outward things, but he also said that the Lord's Supper is "a communion of the body and blood of Christ."

The term "body of Christ" in Anabaptism signifies the historical person of Jesus, the bread of the sacred meal, and the church. The body of Christ is those who have covenanted with Christ and fellow believers in baptism. In the breaking of bread, this community is recreated. The transformation that happens is of people, not things.

Further, the supper is a "communion of the body and blood of Christ." It is a relational event. Christ is present not in the bread and wine, but in the act of their being shared. In a gathering of believers who break bread in faith and love in the power of the Holy Spirit, there is an assured union with Christ (Pilgram Marpeck).

While Anabaptist writers argue that the bread remains bread, the emphasis on the Spirit as the agent of Christ's presence leads to an understanding of the supper as the mystical communion of the body and blood of Christ, as in John 6 (Dirk Phillips).

There is tension in Anabaptism concerning liturgical ceremonies. Do they signify only the faith of the believers or also the grace of God? Protestants, especially Anabaptists, agreed that grace is the cause but faith is the condition. But even in Hubmaier's and Menno's theology, something transformative happens in the supper; grace is at work. In Pilgram Marpeck's thought, a sacrament is the point of intersection between grace and faith.

How did the Anabaptists' practice of communion incarnate their theology? Their practice suggests that they had an unbounded vision of mission. They created simple, inviting forms for new converts.

But after believers were baptized, the community was closed. Only fellow believers in the narrow sense were welcome at the Lord's Table—and in the kingdom of God. Grace was not unconditional; it had to be manifested in holiness of life.

Establishing practices

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, Anabaptism had changed from a protest movement into a settled denomination. Everywhere but in Switzerland ministers were writing prayer books and sermon collections.

Leonard Clock published a collection with a number of communion prayers (one abbreviated in *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, #787). Hans de Ries's book of communion sermons included an order of service for communion (Form 2 in *Minister's Manual*, 1998).

Christ on the cross is the heartbeat of these prayers. There is "real presence" but it is not clearly related to the breaking of bread itself.

The Dordrecht Confession of 1632, adopted by the Dutch, South Germans and Amish, emphasizes remembrance and fellowship in its article on the supper. The High German Confession of 1660, the mother creed of Prussian and Russian Mennonite strands, adds union with Christ as a mark of the sacred meal. Both confessions emphasize footwashing.

Handwritten manuscripts reveal a normative pattern but with much variation in wording. Common to most is an emphasis on preparation and on reverence. Most of them talk of a counsel meeting or preparatory service. Baptism and holiness of life are the door to communion.

Preaching texts are usually from the Passion accounts of the Gospels, Isaiah 53, and 1 Corinthians 11. Prussian and Russian sources contain references to a thanksgiving service for the work of Christ on the Sunday after communion, and to the fact that the supper is held apart from worship, often Sunday afternoon.

In these circles, Good Friday and Pentecost (with baptism)

Anabaptism retained a positive role for ceremonies but changed the actor. It was not the priest but the congregation that 'consecrated' the bread and wine.

Continued on page 8

Lord's Supper *From page 7*

are common communion days. In the Swiss-South German realm there was a practice of spring and fall communion.

All references I have seen speak of the bread being served by the bishop to each communicant in the rows. In the Swiss tradition, he also served the cup. In the Russian tradition, the deacons passed a cup through the rows, with each partaker nodding assent to the next person before passing the cup along.

How did the practice of communion in this era incarnate the theology of the time? The only mission the community was permitted to pursue was to its own offspring. Thus, forms of worship became routine and were understood only by insiders. The gateway to the Lord's Table was conformity more than sanctity.

Nineteenth century

In 1807, Valentine Dahlem, a South German minister, published the first Mennonite minister's manual of which copies remain. In more than 300 pages, Dahlem included instructions and prayers for every Sunday and for all occasions. He created two sections on the Lord's Supper.

The first included elaborate prayers of thanksgiving and consecration, clearly adapted from Lutheran formularies. The second section preserves the old practices referred to above.

Dahlem explained that he had created these liturgical resources to bring new life to worship. My sense is that he turned to Lutheran forms because these were richer than Mennonite ones and because Mennonites were assimilating into a Lutheran culture.

In Canada, three decades later, Benjamin Eby pub-

lished another manual. His goal was not to innovate but to preserve. Eby included no prayers—only instructions on how to pray. This suggests the Swiss Mennonite aversion to written prayers. Eby's work was translated into English in 1890 and remained the norm into the 1960s.

In 1860, a revolution in communion practice took place in Russia with the formation of the Mennonite Brethren. They protested the tradition-bound practice of the supper, its gracelessness and its admission of all baptized members whether or not they exhibited holiness of life.

Because of their missionary vision, the Brethren simplified the order of service, emphasizing grace and the assurance of salvation. Ministers as well as bishops could officiate. Members passed the bread and the cup through the rows. They celebrated the supper monthly.

In North America, Mennonites were reinvigorated (and assimilated) by revivalism. It kindled the missionary impulse and, with it, the transition from German to English. In revivalism, the emphasis was on inward conversion, and theology had a rationalist bent.

"Outward" religion, including sacraments, was suspect. Two developments added fuel to the fires of suspicion. One was a wave of anti-Catholicism; the other was a scientific worldview that attacked religion—especially ritual—as magical. Both conservative and liberal Protestantism shared these suspicions. Both left an enduring mark on the Mennonite theology of the Lord's Supper.

How did communion practice incarnate the theology of this era? There was more



Photo by Sue Careless

diversity and the wall around the Mennonite church was less firm, although open communion was inconceivable. A sense of missionary responsibility was rising and the language God spoke was changing. Believers were becoming conscious of the fact that their rituals had to be accessible to newcomers.

Communion today

The mid-twentieth century was a time of liturgical assimilation and contraction. Conservatives tended to gravitate toward Baptist practices and liberals toward Presbyterian ones. The outcome was communion as a simple memorial service appended to Sunday morning worship, shorn of a preparatory service and footwashing. Gone was much of the theology of the body of Christ and the real presence.

I think that reasons for this shift were more pastoral than theological. The passion for a church “without spot or wrinkle” had led to a legalistic nonconformity. The preparatory meeting had become a day of judgment. The breaking of the bread had become burdened with a fear of unworthiness.

An evangelical confidence in grace and forgiveness rightly challenged the old forms but had few liturgical resources consistent with a Mennonite understanding of the church to offer in return.

The process accelerated with the upheaval of the 1960s. Three trends affected the shape of the Lord’s Supper: the charismatic movement, the liturgical movement, and the “Anabaptist vision” movement. For all of them the big issue was what to make of diversity (different cultural expressions and gifts of the Spirit) and inclusivity (welcoming unbaptized Christians, opening the table to divorced and gay people).

Particularly in the Mennonite Church and General Conference, the congregation’s voice was restored—through spontaneous prayer and singing, and through liturgical responses. Ordinary members took up roles as worship leaders and communion servers.

The revolutionary biblical insight that changed ecumenical and Mennonite eucharistic theology was

that the meaning of communion is not exhausted by the Last Supper. The meals Jesus held during his ministry became an essential part of the church’s understanding of the breaking of bread.

Jesus’ meals were wildly inclusive: he ate and drank with sinners. They were also acts of justice: he fed the hungry. These insights established a direct link between Eucharist and mission. The church gathers to eat “the bread from heaven” and scatters to offer that bread to the world. Not only that, outsiders are invited in. This rereading of Scripture inspired both evangelistic and social mission.

Yet both approaches have had to come to terms with a tension in the meal accounts. In the Last Supper and the resurrection meals, Jesus’ companions were only those who had accepted his call to mission (Judas is the startling exception). The tension between these meal accounts mirrors that of the church’s ministry: unconditional grace and holiness of life.

How does our practice of communion incarnate the theology of our time? First, baptism is seen less and less as the door to the table. In the mid-nineties the Mennonite Brethren, influenced by the church growth movement, officially decided that all believers are welcome to the bread and cup.

Mennonite Church Canada and USA still link baptism and communion in their confession of faith and minister’s manual, but encourage a completely open Lord’s Table. The decisive weight is on unconditional grace, but we differ in our understanding of how grace and obedience fit together.

On the one hand, grace alone saves us. On the other hand, the encounter with grace always wants to make relationships right. The decisive factor is not being an insider or outsider, but being willing to be changed.

As I understand the sources, baptism initiates us into the covenant with Christ and the church, and therefore to the Lord’s Supper, which is the renewal of that covenant. I would make the case for a pastoral exception to this norm. Someone seeking faith might be drawn to the company of Jesus and his friends as they gather at the table.

But accepting the offer of grace implies a decision—not agreement on the contentious theological and sexual questions of the day—but a decision for Christ. Thus, the participation of an unbaptized believer in communion is an exception on the way to baptism.

Our practice of the Lord’s Supper enacts the competing claims at work in our midst—between grace and sanctity, boundary and inclusion. How we celebrate the Lord’s Supper profoundly shapes, and is shaped by, our belief about the work of grace and the nature of the new humanity.

—**John D. Rempel**

The writer teaches theology and Anabaptist studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). The above is a shortened version of his article in Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology, Spring 2001. Vision is published by AMBS and Canadian Mennonite University.

Christ is present not in the bread and wine, but in the act of their being shared.

Do this in remembrance of me...

The communion services that I've found most memorable," my husband told me recently, "were both outdoors: a United Church of Zambia annual meeting I attended in 1970, and the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) service at the Winnipeg Stadium two decades later.

"What really moved me at the Zambian service was the diversity and breadth of the church universal. There was such a feeling of being part of something very large, very important.... Suddenly I was more fully aware of being part of a community of faith circling the globe which had been around for 2000 years."

He also noted the incredible sense of acceptance—no feeling of being an outsider.

"We stood together among thorn bushes and acacia trees on a hot afternoon, surrounded by red dust and children and dogs running all over while people were singing in such incredible harmony! It was my first real experience of that African sound."

Everything was wide open: blue sky, no walls, no benches. The Zambian pastors walked around offering bread and wine—"well, coke and ordinary bread, actually, the same kind of bread the students would share with me in the boarding school dormitories when I did my nighttime checks. There too, I had a sense of being welcomed into their circle."

So that communion service wasn't just one experience on a special Sunday. It was an entry point into how a Mennonite man from Manitoba, where solemnity and separateness characterized communion at that time, began to experience the openness and welcome of Africa over the next few

decades.

A similar thing happened at the MWC service. "The inter-cultural singing was spectacular and the bread and wine, offered in tiny disposable cups and bits of bread, reinforced that feeling of belonging, this time in a worldwide Mennonite communion. That was very satisfying."

For me, too, the experience of worshipping and working in cross-cultural settings has widened my understanding of what communion "means." Any restrictions about who could or could not participate flew out the window as we fellowshiped with Salvation Army workers in Zambia and Quakers in South Africa, neither of whom celebrate communion (or baptism) in a traditional way.

Instead, they sought to embody the essence of the Eucharist in their daily lives. The Zambian Salvationists frequently shared bread with each other in their tightly knit mission community and with the poor around them. They healed broken bodies in their leprosy and HIV/AIDS work, some of the best in Africa.

Although the South African Quakers shared regular "bring and share" meals after worship, they also gave their bodies to be broken quite literally as they were imprisoned and harassed because they opposed apartheid or refused to do military service.

Though there were times when my husband and I missed the traditional communion service during those years, we also realized that by focusing our "remembering" too much on a formal rite, we might be in danger of mistaking the the ritual for the thing itself.

Even though I deeply cherish many Mennonite traditions, some of the

most memorable communions I have experienced were not formal or even "religious." They were times when we shared "bread and wine" with people in ways that changed us.

For example, I remember a farewell supper given by the Christian Council of Mozambique. In the midst of war and famine, they prepared a lavish feast for us. It was a humbling experience for us, the "rich givers," to receive food from the poor.

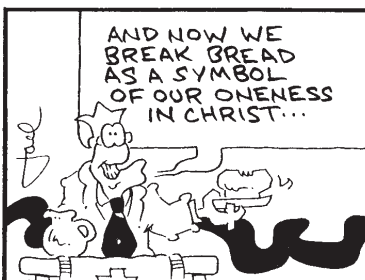
Another experience was a sumptuous lunch we shared with Chipewyan friends on an island on Reindeer Lake, near the 60th parallel. The lives of our northern hosts had been disrupted by flooding because of the ever-increasing hydro needs of their southern Manitoba neighbours.

They served us fresh fish (from the flooded land), deep-fried bannock and strong tea, prepared over an open fire and served on "platters" of spruce boughs. It was a delicious and deeply significant meal reminiscent of Jesus cooking breakfast over a fire for errant disciples long ago.

And finally, an experience of foot-washing in Zimbabwe:

That day,
having walked together
in the greening rain-
wet hills of the eastern highlands,
my Zimbabwean host
(who became a friend in
the space of one brief hour)
knelt before me with a bowl of warm
water
and a bar of aloe-
scented soap in her hands
lovingly (in spite of my red-
faced protests),
she lathered
and rinsed
and dried,
first
one mud-spattered foot,
then the other,
until tear-stained, I rose
from that fragrant cleansing,
and continued on my journey.—**Leona
Dueck Penner**

Pontius' Puddle



Communion in Alberta churches

Ask middle-aged or older Albertans about their baptism and first communion, and the responses are likely to be fairly uniform.

Baptism was traditionally held on Pentecost Sunday morning. Candidates dressed formally—women in white dresses and men in suits. After candidates shared testimonies and answered a few doctrinal questions, the pastor asked them to kneel. Water from a pitcher was poured or sprinkled on their heads in the name of the

uncommon, as communion is generally held during Sunday morning worship.

The invitation to participate has changed noticeably from the past. Now most congregations invite all who believe and confess Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

It is interesting to note that this widespread practice is contrary to the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, which states: “All are invited to the Lord’s table who have been baptized into the community of faith...” (page 51).

Many congregations assume that parents will take responsibility for their children’s understanding of communion. Ken Buller, pastor at Hillcrest Mennonite in Grande Prairie, articulates this clearly for his congregation.

“Communion is a part of the worship service, and we ask parents to instruct their children and participate with them,” he said.

Congregations such as Calgary First Mennonite, which has a regular children’s church, generally does not have younger children present during communion.

Congregations tend to celebrate communion at least four times annually, especially on the first Sunday of Advent, Good Friday and Pentecost. Hillcrest celebrates communion regularly on the second Sunday of alternate months.

In general, pastors officiate at the services, while deacons and others pass the elements or invite participants to come forward in small groups.

A few congregations occasionally have a separate service such as a Sunday evening communion. Edmonton First Mennonite recently held an evening communion service in the “Taize” style, incorporating silent meditation, music, candles, confession, sharing and group prayer. The service was in a multi-purpose room to allow for chairs to be arranged in a circle.

The Springridge congregation has had joint services with other local churches, among them United and Anglican.

“This is a good way of testing our beliefs about communion and testing our tolerance,” said Buhler. “It particularly caught my attention when I was serving wine in the Anglican Church out of a cup that was dedicated to a military personnel.”

A number of congregations also hold services for the homebound, sometimes with a group from the congregation.

“Communion continues to have a somber note, yet is combined with joy,” summed up Buller. Buhler remarked that communion “is one of the few rituals we have in our tradition and that makes it even more important.”

—Donita Wiebe Neufeld



Artwork by Rita Corbin

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The pastor then extended the right hand of fellowship, welcoming the candidates into the fellowship of Christ and membership in the church. After lunch, baptized members returned for the afternoon communion service.

This service was solemn and quiet, with male deacons/elders assisting the pastor in distributing the bread and cup. Small white handkerchiefs appeared from between the pages of women’s Bibles to receive the bread. The newly baptized, not having seen a communion service before, watched carefully, imitating the actions of others.

Since then, communion services in Alberta Mennonite churches look quite different. Separate services are now

“This raises interesting questions for me,” said Marvin Thiessen, pastor at Calgary First Mennonite. Although the issue has been discussed in a number of settings, nothing formal has been done.

Incorporating communion into the regular worship service and inviting all believers to partake makes it necessary for churches to consider how children fit in. Edmonton First Mennonite and Springridge Mennonite in Pincher Creek occasionally include explanations for the children.

Sometimes the children are served grapes along with anyone who might not prefer full participation, said Jerry Buhler, pastor at Springridge. “Always they have the privilege of observing.”

Communion meals in British Columbia

On Maundy Thursday evening, First Mennonite Church in Kelowna met for a fellowship meal and communion. The service was begun a few years ago by John and Grace Kroeker. The simple meal was followed by a service of readings and song, and the evening ended with communion around the tables.

Led by the pastor, the bread was symbolically broken and then each person at the table shared the bread and cup with those around them. People left the service in silence when they were ready.

Usually communion is held on Sunday mornings, about four times a year, and is led by the pastor and deacons, says pastor Clare Neufeld. They always serve juice. A loaf is symbolically broken and then pre-cut pieces of bread are passed around. Sometimes music accompanies the distribution of the elements; other times it is done in silence.

As for who can take communion, Neufeld says that the constitution says nothing about that matter.

"It is generally understood, and expected, that persons should be

baptized, and fully participatory in the life and work of the Christian faith, at peace with God and neighbour," he says.

At First United Mennonite Church (FUMC) in Vancouver, the same expectation holds true, but they include children and those who are not baptized by using grapes. It is a way of acknowledging that everyone is on a journey of learning to know Jesus more.

"We say...that just as the grapes become the juice or wine, so it is our hope that as people hear the Good News of Jesus and experience his love in the congregation they will come to a decision to follow Christ and be baptized," says pastor Ingrid Schultz. "Each time we have communion it is an invitation to that commitment.... People have said they appreciate the grapes as a way of saying that they are important to us and a part of us."

At FUMC, the form of the communion service varies. Sometimes people remain seated as the elements are passed around; at other times they come to tables at the front of the sanctuary to receive the elements.

"Communion is given out by leaders in the church. We do try to mix it up with married and singles and people from different cultures," Schultz says. "The grapes are given out by a mix of youth leaders, people who have been newly baptized, and Sunday school teachers."

A highlight for Schultz is bringing the communion elements to those who cannot come to church. This is done twice annually, during Lent and Advent, and usually involves 8-10 homes.

"We go with a group of people from the church and meet around the person's table in their home or a care home," she says. "We do prayers of healing for the person and share in table fellowship (tea and coffee and baking). This brings people into the circle of prayer and leading who might not do it from the front on Sunday mornings.... We have had some very deep and meaningful times of sharing." —**Angelika Dawson**



Photo by Lynette Wiebe

Steinbach, Man.

Communion at Grace reflects shifting practices

For the past two or three years our practice has shifted to a more open one," says Dave Bergen, pastor of Grace Mennonite Church here. "We extend the invitation to all those who have a living relationship with Christ and are living in right relationship, not necessarily to only those who are baptized."

In earlier years, recalls Bergen, those who would not be participating in communion were told at a certain point in the service that they were free to leave.

"It seemed we were missing an opportune time for education, for modelling and discipling, and so we have discontinued that," he said.

Communion is celebrated four times a year at Grace—on World Communion Sunday in October, Advent, Good Friday (together with other churches in the community), and in spring (with baptism). It is generally celebrated during morning worship.

There has been some discomfort about including unbaptized young people. Although they are believers, including them does not reflect the position of the Confession of Faith and the church constitution, explained Bergen.

An adult Sunday school class studied the issue this winter. They invited speakers to help them look the tradition and a more open practice.

"Essentially, this study has not changed our present practice except to

give more information to the congregation head of time," said Bergen. "We offer an open invitation and encourage families with children to sit together. This gives them an opportunity to decide amongst themselves how to respond."

Communion is usually served in the pews.

"Generally the pastors officiate but in our absence it is not an issue for the board of deacons or past members to serve.... We use grape juice and the last while we have cut up a loaf of bread instead of using the thimble-shaped cubes. People know it is not about the externals but sometimes slight changes disturb their experience."

Last fall, the communion service had a multi-cultural focus. An array of breads reflecting ethnic diversity and a variety of grains were displayed on an African cloth. Drums played as people came forward to receive the bread and cup.

"This was one way we could bring back some of what we experienced at the Mennonite World Conference last summer," said Bergen.

When communion is celebrated with three or four other congregations on Good Friday, more than 800 people participate.

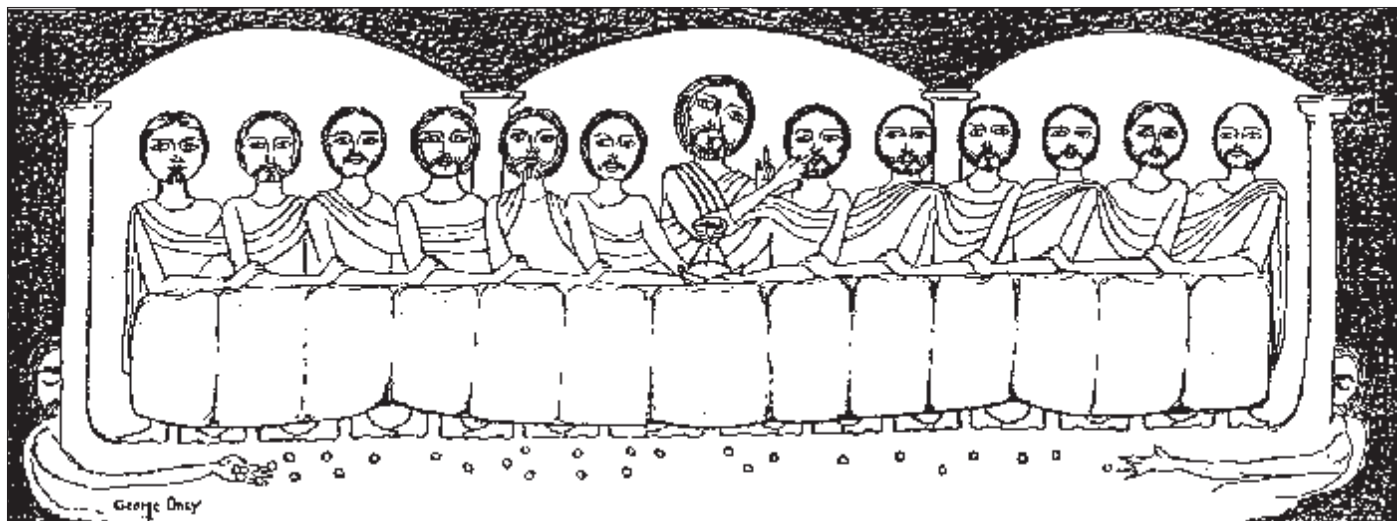
"There we have an open invitation

and people are instructed to come forward to receive communion or a blessing. The inter-church nature makes these differences more acceptable," said Bergen.

Grace Mennonite anticipates a celebrative communion service with baptism this spring.

"It is like the icing on a huge celebration," said Bergen.—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

We offer an open invitation and encourage families with children to sit together. This gives them an opportunity to decide amongst themselves how to respond.



Artwork by George Onsy

Communion in three Ontario churches

With what words should we invite people to participate in communion?

Some believe the invitation should be “to all who hunger after a relationship with Christ.” Others believe it should be only “to those who are baptized.” Some persons are caught up in the issue of their worthiness, as described in I Corinthians 11:27.

St. Jacobs Mennonite Church opts for an “open” communion, understanding it in the context of grace, meeting Jesus at the table with our sin and brokenness.

Members believe that the table belongs to Christ. Is the church then a co-host with Christ, or are we guests at Christ’s table?

Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener

invites persons with these words: “We invite now to the table of our Lord, those who have confessed Christ as Lord and Saviour and have resolved to follow him in life.” It is assumed that children and non-baptized persons will not participate, but this is not “policed.”

Harrow Mennonite Church tends to say “all those who have accepted baptism on confession of faith.” This includes several persons in the congregation who were baptized as infants.

What is the focus of communion—a memorial? a covenant? a gift of grace? At Stirling and at Harrow, each communion service has a slightly different (seasonal) focus. On World Communion Sunday, the focus is on a common bond in Christ. During Advent, on the gift of Christ given to us. On Good Friday, the passion of Christ. And at baptism it is on covenant and commitment to Christ.

The focus may be in memory of Jesus, or it may be a commitment to following in his steps.

The focus at St. Jacobs includes memorial, and the thanksgiving, repentance, commitment and celebration of the hope we have in God, and the promise of full reconciliation of all

things. It is strong in its invitation to Christ—to come and commune with him, live in him and find our home in him.

In all three congregations, the pastors conduct the service, though elders or lay persons assist in the distribution. Harrow specifies that servers can be anyone who has been baptized.

“The act of communion is not so holy that ‘common folk’ can’t help out as well!” says the pastor at Harrow.

How the elements are distributed varies. At Stirling, half loaves are sometimes passed along the pews, and people tear off a small portion and wait to eat together. The “cup” consists of disposable glasses, passed on a tray through the pews.

Sometimes people are invited to come forward to receive the elements, and serve the person in line behind them.

At St. Jacobs, servers come to the pews with the cup; they break a piece of bread and offer it to the people who stand pew by pew until the entire congregation is standing. This is a powerful visual image, a wave of standing in commitment, solidarity, hope and hunger. Sometimes they invite people to come to tables in groups of 10-12 and share communion around a circle.

Harrow most often uses small communion cups served in the pews, and individuals tearing off a piece of bread from a basket held by the server. They sometimes share communion around a table, one group at a time, as music is played. They have also on occasion had people file past two servers, tear off bread and dip the bread in a goblet of juice.

At St. Jacobs, children are invited to stand alongside the adults and receive a verbal blessing or a symbol tying into the scriptural emphasis of the service. They have chosen not to offer grapes or crackers because they are not sure what that means—a watered

down experience or a symbol of inclusion?

Harrow has explored the matter of how to include children. For a short time they offered pretzels and grapes. Some people felt uncomfortable with it. Now they invite children to come forward to receive a blessing from the pastor. On Good Friday past they handed out “Veggie Tales” bookmarks for the children.

All three congregations use music for reflection. There are also occasions for silence during the service. Flowers and “household of faith” candles, or a Christ candle, are included on the communion table at Stirling Avenue. St. Jacobs has a strong visual ritual of pouring the juice from the pitcher to the cup, and of holding and breaking the bread.

Other symbolic rituals accompany the practice of communion. At Harrow, the pastor is available for anointing and prayers for healing as part of communion. Footwashing, a traditional part of Swiss Mennonite services, is no longer universally practised. St. Jacobs on occasion invites people to a ritual of hand washing in the communion service.

—Maurice Martin

Who leads communion?

A 2002 survey of Mennonite Church Canada congregations asked questions related to leadership of communion services. Over 80 churches out of 250 responded to The Leadership Project, led by Maurice Martin.

How often does someone other than the pastor lead worship? was one question. About 50 respondents said “every week;” 16 said every other week; 2 said “rarely.”

How often does someone other than the pastor conduct communion? Here, 62 said “never;” 14 said “sometimes;” 8 said “always,” though some added “with the pastor.”

How often does someone other than a pastor conduct baptism? Here, 76 said “never;” 4 said “always,” some as assistants to the pastor.

So while lay people frequently lead worship, the communion service, like baptism, is primarily the reserve of the minister.

Kelowna, B.C.

A tale of two desks

The night last August when the Okanagan Mountain Park fire burst across Bellevue Creek and into our area of Kelowna, Marg and I were safely across the lake, having been offered hospitality by good friends.

During the day we had seen the dramatic progress of the fire northward along Okanagan Lake and towards the homes. During a restless night, I was overwhelmed by a flood of images. In the morning, two images remained: a desk that my father had built around the time I was born in the “dirty thirties,” and another desk—my first effort as a teenager, built with dad’s help.

As we heard the news about the devastation—over 80 homes destroyed that night—we prepared for bad news about our home. I thought again about the two pieces of furniture. Why? They were only “things,” covered by insurance, though hardly replaceable.

I had not seen my father make his desk out of apple box ends and scraps of wood during a time when he could not get work and had a large family to feed. And yet he had built a desk that stands in our front hall and is the envy of my siblings. It tells a story of courage and imagination during a difficult time.

The desk’s intricate construction symbolizes the resourcefulness and caring of our parents, who came out of want and danger in Russia only to find themselves in the prairie dustbowl of the thirties.

The other desk, a double pedestal desk built from two sheets of plywood without hardware, is neither as intricate nor as beautiful as my father’s. It was my own design. Father showed me how I could use materials economically. When my finished product threatened to break in half if lifted, he showed me how to build in the necessary framing—the infrastructure—to keep it together.

I don’t know how much my desk helped in my studies. Father wanted his children to have gainful employ-



Vic Doerksen took this photo of the fire nearing his home in Kelowna last August.

ment, and it was only after his early death that several of us began further studies. The desk was consigned to the basement and there it is today, the centre of operations for “Opa’s railway.” Father’s, meanwhile, greets visitors in the entrance hall.

Perhaps these pieces of furniture are “just things,” but they have taken on a rich symbolism for me. They tell me about my family and about myself. I have been brought closer to my father by meditating on the love he demonstrated in making things. He did not always succeed in communicating in words, but when I consider how he helped me to make something that was really mine, I begin to understand what was beyond my perception earlier.

As Christians we know about the power of symbolism—the power of the cross, for example—but we are inclined to take it for granted. Images too often become clichés. And so it is remarkable when a comparison or metaphor suddenly appears in our imagination, in all its power.

That is what happened that night

last August, when fire swept through our district and we assumed our home was lost. I thought of many things, but my imagination would not let go of two desks that told so much about me and my relationship with my father.—**Vic Doerksen**

Letters

Don’t confuse GenX and GenY

The article, “Young adults find community in non-traditional ways” (May 17, page 24), seems to confuse GenX and GenY (Millennials or Echo Boomers). Either the article writer or the thesis writer has lumped together two groups of people who see the world very differently.

Supposedly the people being talked about are my generation, GenX (typically those born between 1964 and 1981), who are described as self-centred and individualistic (don’t forget cynical!). However, the article refers to GenX as those aged 18-30

and those born after 1981, so that even within the article there are mutually exclusive (both incorrect) definitions of GenX.

There are many similarities and differences between these two generations. For example, Millennials know the Cold War only as history, whereas GenXers grew up with the very real awareness that only a half hour might separate us from nuclear oblivion. And there are a host of other factors that distinguish the generations.

I agree with the overall point that young adults are finding community in non-traditional ways. Many in both GenX and GenY have found the traditional church wanting (GenX tends to mistrust it and GenY tends to find it irrelevant).

There is definitely room for these generations in the church (lots of room judging by the empty pews), but the question is whether those of us in these generations will find anything salvageable in the current model of church or just go and start something new.—**S.K. Funk-Froese, Edmonton, Alta.**

Help available to link faith and investments

A number of staff at Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC), including me, appreciated Derek Suderman's article, "A goring ox and a wealthy man" (May 17, page 6).

Far too often we don't do the difficult work of minimizing our blind spots to ensure that our deeds and investments are consistent with our beliefs. Derek is to be commended, and we need more of these conversations in our communities of faith. MFC consultants have the privilege of helping congregations get started with some of these important conversations.

Recognizing the need to do more in the area of informed investing, MFC was happy to join with the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union and Mennonite Mutual Aid to form Meritas Financial Inc.—a mutual fund company with a family of socially responsible investments. This Canadian faith-based company is accessible to those who want to ensure that their investments aren't working at cross-purposes with their beliefs.

The three challenges that Derek issues in his article are exactly what Meritas tries to help people with.

As Derek suggests, we should not get tangled in guilt or hair-splitting, but focus on what each of us can do to effect change. Resources are at our fingertips to make conscious, life-changing decisions about our investment portfolios.

What is stopping us from connecting our faith to our investment practices? Thanks for a thoughtful and challenging article.—**Robert Veitch, Winnipeg, Man.**

Low German Bible deserves more coverage

Thank you for the full-page coverage of the Samogho language Bible stories developed by Mennonites in Burkina Faso.

Try to understand my disappointment that with regard to the hundreds of thousands of Latin American Mennonites, you chose to sensationalize their problems ("The Mennonite Mob," May 3), while never giving more than two sentences (one in each of two

All in a day's work

My cousin Joel and I have a long-standing joke. It usually starts with a bit of dialogue.

"Tim! I need to come over to your place and pick up a few tools. People are bugging me to do some major repair work."

"Sure thing, Joel. They're yours as soon as I'm done with the engine overhaul I'm planning."

We usually continue in our borderline construction/mechanical vein for quite some time, before breaking down in laughter. Neither of us, you see, is a particularly handy fellow.

Given this information, I was a little reluctant at first to accept Joel's invitation to join him at Camp Moose Lake, in Manitoba's Whiteshell region, for its annual work-a-thon. Joel, however, was not to be denied.

"Tim," he said, "this experience will put you in touch with the real you. On top of that, the food is fantastic."

Well, that clinched it. I filled a booklet with sponsors' signatures, sent two of our kids off on Friday evening with friends who had signed up for the event, and began my own journey to the east early on Saturday morning.

I arrived just in time for a huge breakfast: bacon and eggs, quiche, toast, fruit, cereal and lots of goodwill. Thus fortified, I looked for the lowest-tech job possible. That turned out to be raking detail with the young people. Trying to appear hip and youthful, I kept up with the teenagers as best I could.

In the morning, I made a Mennonite connection as we raked the yard of a long-time Moose Lake supporter. In the



afternoon, I observed the cottage culture in action as we helped an upwardly mobile doctor and his family get ready for the summer. His kids were bouncing on the trampoline and said "thanks!" in so many varied and irritating ways that I was ready to do something actively nonviolent to disciple them.

Fortunately, we filled our leaf-trailer

before I did anything drastic. I enjoyed the trip to the nuisance grounds and reflected on how good the weekend had been so far. Emily was with the other youth on raking detail and Steve was helping a few carpentry types re-panel a cabin.

Once we reached the dump, I jumped lithely off the trailer, began pushing off the leaves—and stepped on a rake that had fallen from the vehicle. The rake straightened, smashed me in the face, and re-arranged my glasses to an off-center locale. (I will not indicate left or right of centre lest someone infer a political bias.)

There was no major harm done. In fact, I was rather proud of my injury. I felt as though I'd sacrificed something to take part in the weekend. I felt even more proud, however, in a self-effacing, Mennonite sort of way when I saw cousin Joel cutting lumber as part of the cabin panel crew.

As he took a break between pieces, he looked at me, grinned, and shrugged his shoulders as if to say, "Who'dda thunk?"

I grinned back. I smelled the farmer sausage supper that would mark the end of our working day and thought to myself, "Now a knife and fork—those are two tools I know how to handle."

different issues) to the completion of the Plautdietsch Bible.

Of course, I should not be surprised, given that the funding for that project, completed last November, is still not covered.—**Ed Zacharias, Winkler, Man.**

Church needs the Holy Spirit

Unity in Christ. What a wonderful challenge! (“Many members of one body” by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, April 19). It’s true we need each other. But there is something else we need.

In a 1946 book, *The Way*, E. Stanley Jones writes, “In our faith, in our unity and in our virtues, the Holy Spirit is central. But the Holy Spirit is not central in our present-day Christianity. The emphasis...has been pushed from the mainstream of Christianity into the cultic. There the teaching has been thrown out of balance, often identified with rampant emotionalism. That queers it. The queers have quenched Pentecost for many.”

1 Cor. 14:39 tells us, “So, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; but all things should be done decently and in order” so that God may be glorified.

On May 23, pastor Ken Quiring from North Star Mennonite Church in Drake, Saskatchewan, had a remarkable sermon on the Holy Spirit.

“When the Spirit of truth [counsellor in the RSV] comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority but...will glorify me” (John 16:13,14).

The time for refreshing in the Holy Spirit is at hand. “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it” (Song 8:7).

“Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying, but test everything; hold fast to what is good, abstain from every form of evil.... The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you” (1 Thess. 5).—**Wes Epp, Calgary, Alta**

This section is a forum for discussion and discernment. Letters express the opinion of the writer, not necessarily that of Canadian Mennonite or the church. We publish most letters, unless they attack individuals or become unnecessarily repetitious. See page 2 for address information.

Celebrating family at the summer reunion

They start arriving in the mail around April. Brightly-coloured announcements, with a drawing of people playing softball or running races. I’m talking, of course, about invitations to family reunions.

(Here in Newfoundland, when I tell people I’m Mennonite, they think for a minute and then ask, “Does that mean you have two wives?” Imagine the reunions I could go to if I did!)

I realize that my experience may not be the same as yours. Then again, there may be a few universal characteristics of family reunions.

The site of the reunion is decorated with the ever-expanding family tree (although it’s a child or two behind and has some unsightly blemishes where cousin Leroy’s divorce and remarriage is documented).

Behind the tree are the pictures of ancestors, solemn women with sensible shoes and stern bearded men who look like they’d split a conference at the drop of a hat (or a head covering).

The first order of business is the food. The available selection illustrates the familiar anarchy of the potluck.

Dishes range from macaroni and sardine casserole to a jello-pretzel salad that proves harder to get rid of than old copies of *Sing and Rejoice*. All of this is washed down with institutional-strength koolaid in some bright colour that stains.

Then there is the after-dinner entertainment, as promised by the invitation. I’m not suggesting that it isn’t of some interest, but how many times can one stand to see Uncle Frank’s slides of his trip to Switzerland? Especially when each one looks like the previous one—slightly out of focus scenes of cows with bells standing on hills, accompanied by a person whose identity becomes a source of lively debate.

But we dutifully watch them. From the muggy darkness a voice offers,

“That’s Lloyd and Millie’s boy, isn’t it?” Someone else counters with, “Nope, he’s allergic to cows.”

Then a third chimes in, “You know, he looks like that second cousin I met at World Conference in France.” And so on until Uncle Frank flips to a new slide of a different cow, with a different unidentified person.

Then, to remind us of the importance of competition among friends, there are the mandatory games and races. The perfect game is one that can combine some

useless skill (such as walking with a spoon in one’s mouth) with a messy item (such as an egg). Anything with a water balloon will be an instant hit.

And who can forget the conversation that brightens a

family reunion? As a child, I got tired of the dizzying monotony of the same comments over and over.

The first 18 years of my life I listened to the comment, “Oooh, my, but he’s growing like a weed, isn’t he?” or “So what grade are you going into next year?” But nowadays, caught in the midst of yet another debate on the “homosexuality issue,” I wouldn’t mind a bit of monotony about grades or growth rates.

Clearly, one of the most jarring elements of any family reunion is meeting those cousins who were once little urchins you scorned, but who are now responsible members of society.

I walk around shaking my head, thinking, “Little cousin Eddie couldn’t stack two boards without getting a splinter, and now he’s running a dairy farm,” or “Cousin Emma never had the money for a popsicle, and now she’s a stock investment analyst!”

I always thought of family reunions as Sunday school picnics without the sermonette. But I suspect that, despite their shortcomings, people go to reunions, year after year, with even more anticipation than they attend Sunday school picnics.

I guess that just proves once again the old adage, “Blood is thicker than baptismal water.”—August 1, 1994



Emke Retro

Ivan Emke

Akron, Pa.

Sudan reeling from recent massacres

As reports of massive suffering and slaughter emerge from the Darfur region of western Sudan, church leaders who partner with Mennonite Central Committee are requesting prayer and advocacy.

While the Sudanese government has been battling southern Sudan rebels for decades, violence in Darfur is more recent. The conflict pits militias from the area's Arab herders against the farmers of black African origin. Both groups are Muslim.

Tension over scarce land and water resources has long been high. African villagers demanded that the government stop favouring Arabs. In response, the Arab militias are attacking villages, killing thousands of civilians and driving a million people from their homes.

Jan Egeland, a United Nations official, has described the conflict as "ethnic cleansing." Militiamen are employing mass rape, burning villages to the ground and destroying crops, he said.

Harold Miller of MCC Sudan recently heard eye-witness reports during meetings with agencies active in Darfur. A member of the Sudanese parliament confirmed that "genocide and gross human rights violations" are occurring in Darfur.

The Sudanese government denies that it is supporting the Arab militias. Until recently, humanitarian groups and reporters were denied access to the region due to government restrictions.

Meanwhile, peace negotiations continue between the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army, the southern rebel army. Fear of jeopardizing this peace process has left some international leaders hesitant to speak out against abuses in Darfur. Sudan's civil war has claimed two million lives in the past two decades, and driven more than one million into exile.

A statement from the Sudan Council of Churches calls on Christians all



MCC Canada photo

Two orphaned Sudanese boys and their uncle arrived in Winnipeg on April 9, assisted by Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba. They are living with Henry and Bettie Bergen of North Kildonan Mennonite Brethren Church. At the airport, from left: Henry Bergen, Walter Thiessen, Monynuer Monywach Daw (age 13), James Bilen Monywach Daw (15), Gew Mony Buony Ater (20), and Mukai Muza and Ionka Hristozova of MCC.

over the world to "pray and advocate for the suffering people of Darfur so that God may give them peace."

Bill Janzen of MCC's Ottawa Office joined with representatives of other agencies in signing a letter to Prime Minister Paul Martin.

"It has been 10 years since the genocide in Rwanda and many Canadians are still tormented by the international community's lack of concern and response to the early warnings of mass killings," the letter states. "Humanity cannot afford to repeat these mistakes in Sudan."

MCC is exploring options for providing food and relief supplies in neighbouring Chad, where some 120,000 to 160,000 people from Darfur have taken refuge. Only seven percent of these refugees, mostly women and children, are living in protected camps;

the rest are foraging for themselves in the countryside.—From MCC release

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Winnipeg, Man.

Yoder Neufeld named partnership facilitator

Rebecca Yoder Neufeld from Waterloo, Ontario, has been named Mennonite Church Canada's missional formation and congregational partnership facilitator for Eastern Canada.

In her half-time job, Yoder Neufeld will invite MC Canada congregations

to connect with missional church ideas and with partners in the global church. The organized church is important to international church partnerships, said Yoder Neufeld.



Yoder Neufeld

"To be visible and incarnated [the church] needs to be organized in a way that allows it to do its work, that allows it to use the gifts of people." It's crucial for the church to have a corporate life, to be an organic community, not just "a program that individuals drop in on," she said.

Through church-to-church partnerships around the world, congregations in vastly different cultures can begin to grasp the challenges and tensions of living a faithful Christian life.

Yoder Neufeld has plenty of international experience to draw from. A childhood in France and later French studies provided her with ability in that language. As a young adult in Argentina, she became fluent in Spanish. She has also lived in Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Jerusalem, Guatemala and the United States.

She has taught theology in Latin America, and English as a second language in the U.S. and Canada, and has done immigration and paralegal work with Central American, Mexican and Puerto Rican people. She organized translation services at the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe.

Yoder Neufeld has a master of divinity degree from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and a master's degree with specialization in bilingual education.

But Yoder Neufeld says she was

most transformed during her role as pastor of the Spanish-speaking congregation at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener. There she was able to integrate her training and international experience to help break down cultural barriers within the church.

Her new job with MC Canada will allow her to extend her transformation experience to others.

"I'm very much a teacher at heart, and the opportunity to work with

congregations is attractive, as is the part of the job that has to do with making connections and partnerships between the global church and local congregations," she said.

She succeeds Jim Loepp-Thiessen, who has been working in that role for the past two years.

Rebecca is married to Tom Yoder Neufeld. They have two teenage children, David and Miriam.—From MC Canada release



Photo by Larry Guengerich

In a camp for displaced people in Bosnia, three-year-old Amira Martic clutches a blanket made by children from Elmira Mennonite Church in Ontario. Beside her is Jan Adams, MCC Ontario material resources coordinator. Last fall, the grade 2/3 Sunday school class made the blanket with their teacher, Judy Martin. The children drew interpretations of Old Testament stories on fabric patches, and helped sew the blocks and knot the layers together. The children were delighted when Adams came to their church with this picture. "It was almost like as soon as she [Amira] got it, she thought it was going to be her best friend," said eight-year-old Rebecca Bauman.

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School notes

New music scholarship

Winnipeg, Man.—Alisa Wiebe, a music student at Canadian Mennonite University, is the recipient of the new Myrna Friesen Music Scholarship. The \$1000 scholarship is awarded to a student who has demonstrated outstanding ability in music and worship, “with a particular emphasis on congregational and choral singing in a church setting.” The award was created this spring from funds donated by alumna Myrna Friesen. Wiebe has performed in a variety of musical ensembles and had several opportunities this year to direct the choir.—
 From CMU release

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Waterloo, Ont.

Project will benefit farmers in Tajikistan

Thousands of rural families in the remote central Asian country of Tajikistan will benefit from a new project of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

MEDA has a contract with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to boost fruit and vegetable production among impoverished people in Tajikistan, a land-locked, mountainous country that was part of the Soviet Union.

The four-year program (worth \$6 million) is to help poor families through technical assistance and training, farm credit and the establishment of small businesses to process and market agricultural products.

“Northern Tajikistan has been known historically for the magnificent fruits and vegetables of the Ferghana Valley, and this provides a rich opportunity for effective agricultural programming,” says Jerry Quigley, MEDA’s director of production-marketing linkages.

The first part of the assignment is to help farmers adapt to a market economy. The program will provide technical assistance, affordable micro-irrigation, and help in organizing farmers into associations that promote their needs.

One MEDA partner will be the National Association of Business Women of Tajikistan. This group “has achieved considerable success in lending to micro-entrepreneurs, 75 percent of them women,” says Linda Jones, Canadian project manager. MEDA will provide the technical expertise for the group to expand into rural programs.

At the processor level, MEDA will partner with a local organization to promote enterprises to process and market the agricultural output of Sogd’s rural population.

“This will fill an important gap between primitive farm-based processing that meets the needs of local markets, and the antiquated and inefficient mega-processing facilities that remain from the Soviet era,” Jones says.

Tajikistan was the poorest republic of the Soviet Union. Since independence in 1991, civil war and economic collapse have reduced 84 percent of the population of 6.4 million to poverty. More than 70 percent of people live in rural areas that have been further devastated by floods, landslides and a major drought in 2000.

“Interventions have focused largely on relief, but the country is ready for innovative strategies for development, especially in agriculture,” says Quigley.— From MEDA release



Women in Tajikistan shape dried apricots for sale. MEDA believes that there is rich potential to expand agricultural output.

“The great deceit of the globalizing model is that the only things spoken about are ... macroeconomic indicators that never get to the stomach of the farmer and the indigenous.”

— Abel Barrera Hernández



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**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

Montreal, P.Q.

Harmonie encourages youth to share abilities

Nineteen-year-old Nicole Cober Bauman didn't realize the extent to which Harmonie, a Mennonite Central Committee cross-cultural youth program here, would open her eyes to the needs of the world.

"It's shown me how much more there is to discover," said Bauman.

Harmonie is an MCC Quebec initiative that promotes relationship building among French-speaking youth between the ages of 18 and 24. For eight months, from September through May, participants share their musical talents, study theology and work for local community organizations.

The experience encourages them to use their gifts, discover the relevance of their Christian faith and meet the marginalized of society. Participants spend at least 16 hours a week working with refugees, the homeless and poor.

Bauman was one of three participants from Ontario. The other two were from Switzerland and Burkina Faso.

Bauman provided administrative services at Refuge Juan Moreno, a Catholic-run agency. Here she met people from a variety of countries, including China, Congo and Afghanistan. Many had left everything behind.

Some afternoons we would just sit and get to know each other, she said. Three mornings a week were spent singing and practising their instruments. They shared their music with people in prisons, churches and nursing homes.

For many Harmonie participants, it was a first experience living away from home. Bauman noticed how small events could create conflict. They couldn't always agree on the grocery list, or the difference between a basic and luxury item. Eventually, we came to an understanding, said Bauman.

"It can be a challenge to spend eight months living and working with people you've never met," said Annie Brosseau, Harmonie coordinator and MCC Quebec co-representative. "We had a good group of young people to work with. I think it was good for all of us."—From MCC report by Jonathan Tiessen



MCC Canada photo

Harmonie participants, from left: Christina Horst from Stratford, Ontario; Jean Calvin Kitata, theology instructor; Garrett Zehr from Tavistock, Ontario; Nicole Cober Bauman from Shakespeare, Ontario; Karim Traore from Burkina Faso; Cornelia Kocker from Switzerland.

Eritrea

Eritrean Christians suffering persecution

Don't pray that the persecution will stop, Eritrean Christians recently told an American missionary. Instead, "Pray that we will be strong."

The missionary visited Eritrea in April to learn how believers with ties to Mennonites are faring in the current situation. It's been 12 years since Eritrea achieved independence from Ethiopia, and 2 years since many churches were "deregistered."

The Eritrean government maintains that it has not closed churches; church offices, in fact, are allowed to remain open. However, Christians who meet to worship and pray are likely to be arrested. The government views them as extremists—a Christian equivalent to Muslim fundamentalists.

Over 350 Christians are being held, many in shipping containers in tropical heat.

"We want you to tell the world about us," they said. They cautioned against using names. The missionary experienced something of the danger as he accompanied leaders to prayer meet-

ings.

"We went from house to house after dark. Doors were locked and lights were turned out for secrecy. It was like nothing else I have ever experienced," he said.

"Up to 18 people would pack into a small room. The order of service started with about one hour of prayer for personal repentance, followed by repentance for the nation and prayer for the infilling of the Holy Spirit and power to resist evil. A teaching followed, and then another hour of prayer, before moving to another area and home to start the same process over.

"At times, when someone knocked on the door, people seemed a bit anxious. The believers left two by two over a period of about a half hour, to avoid the appearance of a large gathering."

Persecuted groups maintain denominational identities but cooperate freely. Orthodox, Catholic and Evangelical Lutheran churches are not under legal restrictions.—From Eastern Mennonite Missions release

News briefs

**Canadians support
refuge for war resisters**

A growing number of Canadians—among them David Suzuki, Naomi Klein and Anton Kuerti—are demanding that the federal government help American war resisters find sanctuary in Canada. “From the time of the United Empire Loyalists who fled to Canada in the eighteenth century, to the draft resisters of the Vietnam era who came here more than 30 years ago, Canada has been providing refuge for Americans,” said writer June Callwood. “We have a moral obligation to continue to do so.” At least two American soldiers are seeking refugee status in Canada in objection to the war on Iraq. A May 27 press conference in Toronto launched the War Resisters Support Campaign.—From release

**Evangelicals press
for action on poverty**

The “Micah Challenge,” which takes its name from the call to do justice in Micah 6:8, is an evangelical initiative that works against global poverty. “The Micah Network” began in 1999 and now includes over 250 relief and development organizations, the majority in the southern hemisphere. The network helps members address poverty and press governments in richer countries to promote justice for the poor within the context of “holistic transformation.” The World Evangelical Alliance has joined an initiative that invites people to sign “The Micah Call,” at www.micahchallenge.org. Plans are for a major international lobbying effort to press governments to implement the eight Millennium Development Goals adopted at a United Nations conference in 2000: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; develop a global partnership for development.—From MCC Ottawa

Winnipeg, Man.

New web site on conscientious objectors

On May 26, the Mennonite Heritage Centre launched a web site that tells the story of the 10,000 Canadians who said “no” to fighting in World War II—and chose an alternative.

They became known as conscientious objectors (COs). A majority were Mennonite. From 1941 to 1946, they built roads and bridges, fought fires, taught school, mined, logged, farmed, and worked in manufacturing and medicine. By law, most of their earnings went to the Red Cross for relief work.

Their stand was not popular. Some of their churches were vandalized or torched. Some went to prison for refusing to wear a military uniform. Their time had a profound impact on them, their communities and the country, but their story has been little

more than a reference in the public record.

At www.alternativeservice.ca, visitors can hear the stories through letters, interviews, photographs, audio recordings, historical documents and archival film clips. The content converges with curriculum that Manitoba students study from grades four to eleven. Lesson ideas for teachers are included.

Creators hope that the web site will help people see service as an honourable alternative to war.

The Mennonite Heritage Centre received financial support from the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canadian Council of Archives, as well as Mennonite organizations and private donors.—From MC Canada release

Lincoln City, Ore.

Camp leaders meet in Oregon

Representatives from Mennonite camps and retreat centres across Canada and the United States met for Mennonite Camping Association (MCA) convention at Drift Creek Camp here March 22-25.

Drift Creek Camp, situated among towering Douglas firs on the Oregon coast, is one of 46 camps and 172 individuals that are members of Mennonite Camping Association.

The association, established in 1960 to promote Christian camping, continues to strengthen outdoor ministries that date back to the 1920s.

Marlene Kropf, director of Congregational Life for Mennonite Church USA, led inspirational sessions on the theme, “Grounded in God.”

“Discernment is not about doing more,” she said. Rather, it has everything to do with becoming aware of God’s presence and ways.

Kropf was accompanied by music leader Darryl Neustaedter Barg, director of Media Ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba.

Special recognition was given to Bob Wiebe of Manitoba, whose two-year

term as president evolved into six. As director of Camps with Meaning, Wiebe has oversight of Mennonite Church Manitoba’s three camps.

MCA members heard about plans for a new book. Larry and Mary Jane Eby, former directors of Drift Creek, have been commissioned by MCA to compile a sequel to Jess Kauffman’s *A Vision and a Legacy: The Story of Mennonite Camping 1920-80*. The book will explore how Mennonite camping programs tie in with the Anabaptist heritage and what impact they have had on the church.

Current president of MCA is Jerry Markus, co-director of Drift Creek Camp. Kyle Barber, executive director of Willowgrove in Stouffville, Ontario, is president-elect. Keith Zehr, former administrator of Crooked Creek Christian Camp in Washington, Iowa, serves as past-president. Christine Epp, co-manager of Shekinah Retreat Centre in Waldheim, Saskatchewan, will serve another term as fourth member.—From MCA release

Winnipeg, Man.

Supplies for homeless in Gaza Strip

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is contributing \$13,700 for food and relief supplies to 180 displaced families in the refugee camps of Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip.

More than 2,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have been left homeless as a result of the Israeli military's house demolitions in May. More than 11,000 people in Rafah have lost their homes since the beginning of the *intifada* (Palestinian resistance) in October 2000.

"The needs of people in the camp have dramatically increased with the loss and destruction of their homes," said Rick Janzen, MCC Middle East program co-director. MCC is partnering with the Culture and Free Thought Association to distribute packages of corned beef, tuna, rice and tinned beans to families. They will also receive a mat for their tents, which are provided by the United Nations and Red Cross.

On May 23, MCC worker Ed Nyce travelled to a temporary shelter for homeless families. He reported that people whose homes had been bulldozed were sleeping in United Nations schools—women and children in classrooms, men in the courtyard



Photo by Ryan Beiler

Sabreen Atwa al-Faramaway and her family are among thousands of Palestinians who lost their homes in May.

outside.

"Some seemed stunned, still facing the loss, while others were clearly struggling with frustration and

helplessness," he says.

MCC provided a similar response to the demolition of homes in Rafah last fall.—From MCC Canada release

Jerusalem, Israel

Conference explores Christian Zionism

The title of an April 14-18 conference here was "Challenging Christian Zionism: Theology, politics and the Palesine-Israel conflict." It was sponsored by the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center here, an organization supported by Mennonite Central Committee.

Mennonite World Conference participants were Mario Higueros from Guatemala, Albert Ndlovu from Zimbabwe, and Pastor Romero from Belize.

Higueros, a pastor who teaches at the Mennonite seminary, SEMILLA, came to the conference out of concern about the "very aggressive development" of Zionism in churches in Guatemala, "especially in Mennonite congregations."

Romero sees the church in Central America heavily but unwittingly influenced by Christian Zionism. He is a Bible teacher and board president of SEMILLA.

Ndlovu said he had "been dying to get this kind of opportunity to walk around here [the Holy Land]." The issue is pertinent to him as a Brethren in Christ pastor and member of a peace and justice committee.

The conference included sessions in Ramallah because Israeli policy makes Jerusalem inaccessible to most Palestinians in the West Bank. The Mennonites visited areas affected by the "separation" wall and fence system in the West Bank.

"Now that Israelis will have taken so

much for themselves, they will 'need to protect it,' worried Ndlovu. "Israel is building prisons for itself."

Higueros was touched by the story of a Palestinian mother who brought her sick child to the separation fence to get to a

'One does not embark on the path of nonviolence unless one is ready to lay down one's life for it.'

doctor. The soldier at the gate would not let her through. A doctor had to come to examine the child as best he could from the other side of the gate.

Akron, Pa.

Tenth anniversary of cluster bomb clearance

Ten years ago, Mennonite Central Committee and the Lao government signed an agreement that sparked a bomb-clearing effort and brought attention to a danger farmers had lived with for nearly two decades.

During the Vietnam War—from 1964 to 1973—U.S. planes dropped an estimated 90 million cluster bombs on Laos. These bombs fragment into hundreds of sharp pieces of steel on impact. Up to 30 percent failed to explode and remain a danger, especially to children and farmers.

Titus Peachey, who worked for MCC in Laos from 1980-85, recalls how MCC modified a tractor to detonate the bombs and experimented with other methods, none of which were effective.

The failure of those early efforts led MCC to spearhead the first systematic cluster bomb removal effort in the country. In 1994, in conjunction with the British organization Mines Advisory Group, MCC launched a program to train Lao workers to find and detonate bombs safely. More than \$1.3 million was raised. It was the largest non-food project MCC had ever undertaken.

Peachey remembers that the first 20



Photo by Titus Peachey

In 1994, when this photo was taken, MCC began to work in with the British Mines Advisory Group on a bomb disposal project in Laos.

bomb technicians had just completed training when he left in 1994. When he returned in 2000 to make a film about “bombies,” the project had 1,000 employees and was removing 100,000 pieces of ordnance a year.

MCC’s direct involvement ended in 1996, but efforts have continued. A current Global Family project supports the education of victims of cluster bombs and provides vocational training for families who have lost a wage earner.

Peachey, who now works in peace education for MCC, remains dedicated

to advocacy about the dangers of cluster bombs. He notes that 300,000 were dropped in Kosovo and another 300,000 in Afghanistan; 2 million were dropped in Iraq.

“My hope is that advocacy will limit, if not completely end, the problems of weapons continuing to cause suffering even years after a war has ended,” said Peachey.

To read more about MCC’s advocacy work with cluster bombs, see www.mcc.org/clusterbomb/index.html.—From MCC report by **Marla Pierson Lester**

Romero found hope in places such as the Bethlehem Bible College.

“It was enlightening to see firsthand the implications the movement [Zionism] has for real people’s lives,” he said. The sessions on nonviolence in the struggle for justice were of most help to Ndlovu.

“One does not embark on the path of nonviolence unless one is ready to lay down one’s life for it,” he said. Romero appreciated Sabel’s willingness to do politically risky things, “living and constructing relevant theology in its own context.”

Higueros noted that he and Romero feel equipped to present what they gleaned from the conference and saw firsthand, as they seek to help their church communities live faithfully.—From MWC/MCC release by **Ed Nyce**

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Elm Creek, Man.

Wingham church closes its doors

Today marks the end of the story of the Wingham Mennonite Church but not the end of God's faithfulness in our lives," said pastor Martin Sawatsky at the closing service of this congregation on April 25. "The local church is always a temporal expression of the universal church."

After 71 years, this small rural congregation decided to close its doors. For a congregation that was actively missional before the word was popularized, this decision did not come without pain. The realities of expanding farms and a shrinking population caught up with this congregation.

Despite its small size, Wingham carried on a Sunday school program for eight community children who had no church home. Susan Froese, who has taught Sunday School for the past 18 years, kept the program going with the help of others, even though members no longer had children attending.

Since its early years, Wingham church ran a Vacation Bible School program with more than 80 children some years. The choir was an important part of every Sunday morning service. Alvin Janzen doesn't recall missing Saturday evening practice in 50 years.

"I started singing in the choir when I was 14 and haven't missed a practice except when I went away to study at MCI [Mennonite Collegiate Institute]."

"Today there is pain but God's blessings outweigh the hurt," said Isaac Bergen, chair of the congregation who has sung in the choir and taught Sunday school for close to 50 years.

It was hard work for the small group of Mennonite families who moved to the Wingham district near Elm Creek in 1933. They built community by worshipping together in their homes. By 1939, this worshipping community had grown to about 30 families and they realized the need to build a church.



John Klassen, left, visits with Martin Sawatsky (right) and Peter Zacharias over lunch at the Wingham church. Zacharias is pastor of the Blumenort Mennonite Church which has had a close relationship with Wingham.

A mixed group from at least five different Mennonite groups, they were served by ministers from surrounding communities.

"It was the best thing that could have happened to us," said a founding member, Roland Dyck. "We invited ministers from all over."

"What a joy it was for me to be part of this community of faith," said Sawatsky, who served as pastor for seven years. "Yours is a story of faith, vitality and enthusiasm." He also recognized the struggles they have suffered over the years and the difficult decisions of the past year.

John Klassen, director of Leadership Ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba, came to represent "the 48 sister congregations of MC Manitoba who are praying and thinking of you."

Klassen assured the congregation that "there is power and promise in planted seeds.... It is comforting to know that the good seeds you have planted are not vanishing but are in God's hands."

The church hosted one last fellowship meal. As one guest said, "Nobody puts out a fellowship meal like

Wingham." Other notes of gratitude from the community and beyond reflected the hospitality of this worshipping community.—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Calgary, Alta.

Fundraising continues on MCC building

Fundraising for a new Mennonite Central Committee building here is continuing while construction is in progress. As of June 1, the walls are all up and building is progressing somewhat ahead of schedule. The building, at 2946 32nd St. NE, is scheduled to be completed by September 22.

Sale of the existing Skyline Crescent facility was confirmed on May 14. Since February, \$261,000 in pledges and donations have been received toward the building. Another \$664,000 is needed.—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**

Edmonton, Alta.

Historical society features Toews lectures

Did Ed and Edna really say “hysterical” society? During lunch in an otherwise serious meeting here April 23-24, members of the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta enjoyed some humour from “Ed and Edna of Barley Gove.”

In an interview with Ms. Martens, a reporter from the CBC, Ed and Edna discussed what they knew of the organization. They called on the “Old Historian” who enlightened them from his dusty collection of books. Amanda Pauls and Bob Bartel did a great job in the Readers’ Theatre presentation.

The featured speaker at the historical society annual meeting was John B. Toews, well-known historian and author. Toews, born in Coaldale, Alberta, retired recently from teaching at Regent College in Vancouver.

Toews’ Friday evening topic was, “Why did we fight in 1860?” He explained the background of the Mennonite Church in Russia in the mid-1800s.

Some Mennonites were sharing

their faith with their Russian neighbours, and even baptizing them, which was viewed by the official church as contrary to its agreement with the Russian government.

Out of this conflict arose the Mennonite Brethren church. Its focus was on repentance and forgiveness. They were ridiculed for their exuberant expression of faith. The dissension between the two groups lasted many generations.

In Toews’ second presentation,



John B. Toews (facing the camera), speaks with John Bergen at the annual sessions of the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta.

“Michael, row your boat ashore,” he spoke of returning to one’s roots. Some church practices, such as restrictions in dress and behaviour, have made young people turn away from the church, he said. After stretching their wings, they are often ready to “row their boats back to shore” in a more tolerant frame of mind.

Another speaker was Tena Wiebe, who has recently published *Neu Samara, a Mennonite Settlement East of the Volga*. The book is a translation of writings by Jacob H. Brucks and Henry P. Hooge. She explained the journeys from the Molotschna Colony in Russia, and conditions under which people lived.

A third speaker was Lorne Buhr, who until his retirement was a librarian in the Alberta Legislature. Buhr spoke about the new Privacy Act and what impact it could have on getting personal information from the archives.

The business session, included an update on library and archives expansion in the MCC building, and a vote to comply with MCC policy not to accept lottery funding. The budget of \$56,890 was adjusted accordingly.

—From report by **Irene Klassen**



Lorne Epp (centre), pastor of Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan, was ordained recently. Epp, shown here with his wife, Hilda, and conference minister Ken Bechtel, has pastored at the church for three years. He is the seventh pastor to be ordained in this church—the last ordination was in 1969. The first church leaders, Peter Regier and Abraham Friesen, were ordained in West Prussia prior to coming to Canada in the 1890s.

Canyon, B.C.

Homeschoolers discover world through MCC magazine

When a *Common Place* magazine arrives in the Gailius household, it disappears quickly. One of the children will sneak away to a quiet place and read it cover to cover.

Odd, when you consider that a *Common Place* isn't necessarily designed for children. It introduces the people, programs and vision of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and tells inspiring stories from around the world. In the Gailius household, it is also a textbook.

The magazine provides "real social studies," says Joanne, mother of 14-year-old twins Julie and Leah, and Grant, 9. "They learn history, geography and social science, political economy and world food distribution in a way that touches their hearts."

The Gailius family has home-schooled for a decade. They began when they were living in Black Creek, on the east coast of Vancouver Island where many families home-schooled.

Mornings are devoted to academics, including French lessons on Tuesdays for the twins at a neighbour's house. Fridays include a trip to town, German class at the home school centre, and tea out with dad. In the afternoons there are music lessons, sports, horseback riding, or meeting for a "random act of kindness" group of other home-schooled children.

Joanne first heard about a *Common Place* when she attended Black Creek Mennonite Brethren church on the island.

"I had worked in the developing world with CUSO [Canadian University Services Overseas] and had heard of MCC," she says. "We were so happy to find a *Common Place*—a community with similar interests and concerns." The magazine has become the children's social studies program.

Copies of the magazine photos go up on the wall, with the world map and timeline, she said. Then they find the country, cities and regions on various maps. "We read the history of the country and mark the important spots on our timeline. We read the story, take notes and pray about, ponder on



The Gailius children enjoy an Afghan dinner with friends. Julie and Leah Gailius are in the back, with shawls.

the issues, concerns."

The family reads more about the chosen country in the encyclopedia. They have developed other ways to support their learning.

"The girls find a fact-based fiction book at the library on the area or on the issues presented, read it and write a book report," said Joanne. "We make the craft, research the food [provided by the magazine] and invite a family over for a night of dress-up, food, music and fun.

"We often find movies at our little library about that country too, and often borrow ones from the MCC video library."

Each child also researches a topic and writes a report on it, often using the MCC web site. For example, one child did a report on cluster bombs while studying Afghanistan.

"It takes about a month per country, but we don't rush," said Joanne. A *Common Place* is available free from MCC at Box 500, Akron Pennsylvania, 17501-0500, or e-mail: acp@mcc.org. Visit the web site at www.mcc.org/acp.—From a report by **Angelika Dawson**

News brief from MCC

Recent religious and ethnic violence in Nigeria prompted the president to declare a state of emergency in May in Plateau State where MCC's Nigeria program is based. While the capital, Jos, was thrown into confusion and offices were closed temporarily, tension has now subsided somewhat, according to MCC worker Gopar Tapkida. MCC is involved in bringing together Christians and Muslims from various ethnic groups together for discussion and reconciliation.

In Bangladesh, MCC agriculture staff are bringing mosquito nets, commonly hung over beds, into the field to protect young cucumber plants from the red pumpkin beetle. In the first four weeks, 80 percent of the plants that were not protected by the nets died, while the plants under nets grew lush and healthy. Researchers are exploring less expensive alternatives to mosquito nets.

One of the outcomes of the 1994 Rwanda genocide has been a skyrocketing HIV infection rate, especially among women. Rape was widespread during the genocide, and many women

Congo and Tanzania

African youth taking initiatives

Youth in the Democratic Republic of Congo are acting on challenges presented at the Mennonite World Conference Global Youth Summit in Zimbabwe last August. Recently they organized a day of music that brought together more than 20 choirs.

A three-day evangelistic campaign resulted in spiritual growth and increased numbers in the church. Future plans include a two-day prayer crusade.

At the summit, youth agreed that they should be in dialogue with church leaders about the concern they have for God's work. They felt a lack of access to church activities and a lack of interest on the part of adults in youth activities. Since then, Congolese youth have worked with their leaders.

In Tanzania, the youth department of Tanzania Mennonite Church—Umoja wa Vijana Kanisa La

Mennonite Tanzania—is holding workshops in its four dioceses to learn what challenges young people face in their Christian lives.

The first workshop on April 22-25, involved 45 youth from 30 districts. Topics included HIV/AIDS and how to help children attend school, since lack of education leads to unemployment, idleness and poverty.

"You can not be a good Christian if you are living without hope," said one participant.

Youth felt that the church should make greater efforts to help them. They are asking brothers and sisters from around the world to pray for them as they face financial challenges in continuing these gatherings.

The workshops follow "Strangers no more," a program from Holland in which African and Dutch youth worked and learned together.—From Mennonite World Conference releases

People & Events

Ottawa, Ont.—Bill Janzen, director of Mennonite Central Committee Canada's Ottawa office, received an unexpected invitation in April. A Canadian immigration official asked him to travel to Brussels where European churches were considering increased involvement in refugee resettlement. The official asked Janzen to present Canada's private refugee sponsorship program as a model for Europeans, noting that Mennonite churches have been exceptional in refugee sponsorships. Janzen found a mixture of interest and caution among the Europeans. They referred to the "anti-refugee" mood in Europe, but also recognized that increasing resettlement work was imperative. Currently, only about 100,000 refugees are resettled every year, with the largest numbers going to the United States, Canada and Australia. The world has about 20 million refugees and an equal number of internally displaced people.—MCC Ottawa

and children were forced into prostitution. Now nearly 15 percent of the population is HIV-positive. Through the Generations at Risk program, MCC is helping a local Christian organization address the crisis through youth and women's clubs.

Increased violence in Kosovo in March between Serbs and Albanians has emphasized the importance of the MCC-supported Close to Children program, which uses art as a tool for healing. Through writing, drawing, music and drama, the children externalize their difficult experiences.

About every two months, staff from a Christian organization take a truckload of clothing and groceries along the hazardous road to Gudermes, Chechnya. They distributed the items, some from MCC, at a dormitory housing families who lost their homes in the war between Chechnya and Russia. Funds come through MCC's Global Family program. Among those receiving aid is Rosa who is too ill to work and uses nearly all her pension to pay for medication. "I wait for your help as though it's coming from God," she said.—From MCC release

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 FALL FOLIAGE TOUR of NEW ENGLAND (October 4-10)
 CHRISTMAS MARKETS in AUSTRIA and GERMANY (December 1-8)

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 TULIP TIME in HOLLAND (April 25 - May 4)
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Guelph, Ont.

Meat canning brings people together

Volunteering at the Mennonite Central Committee meat canning project here can be a cross-cultural experience. The 600 volunteers who processed over 20,000 cans of beef from April 26-30 came from a wide variety of Mennonite communities—from Old Orders to students at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate.

The volunteers enjoyed meeting each other and sometimes they sang as they worked together.

Once again, this canning venture took place on a parking lot at the University of Guelph. Except for the meat cutting, which is done at the university's meat science lab, all the work is done in a portable setting. The meat is processed in one semi-trailer, the cans washed and labelled in another, and the volunteers are fed in a portable classroom.

For the past year, many countries have restricted beef imports from Canada due to BSE (mad cow). While other meat canning projects in Canada decided to can pork or turkey, the Guelph committee decided to continue canning beef, partly because beef farmers are among their best supporters.

This year they restricted donations of live cattle to those under 30 months of age. In spite of this restriction, 70 head of cattle were donated, up considerably from previous years.

When the price of beef dropped last summer, the committee arranged the purchase of 30,000 pounds of boneless meat which was frozen. This year they were not able to process all the meat before the last shift ended and the total number of cans is down slightly from previous years.

The Guelph project is the last site for MCC's meat canning season which began in October. The volunteers who travelled with the canner were Marcus Heinrichs from Ontario, Tim Friesen from Nebraska, Aaron Yoder of Pennsylvania, and Jerry Hiebert from Paraguay. They visited 34 locations in 13 states, as well as Winkler, Manitoba, and Leamington and Guelph in Ontario.

The total number of cans for the



Photo by Verneida Weber

Jerry Hiebert prepares to load 140 cans of meat into the pressure canner. Each 28-ounce can feeds from 5 to 10 people.

season was up considerably from last year at 504,174. Some of the meat is already on its way to Bosnia, Haiti, North Korea and Ukraine. Meat is also distributed in the United States and Canada.

The Guelph committee is very grateful to the University of Guelph—the use of its federally-inspected meat lab is crucial. They also wish to thank all the volunteers and donors.—From reports

**Check out the
Canadian Mennonite
web site at**

www.canadianmennonite.org

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Zaporozhye, Ukraine

Ukraine gardeners share harvest

Each summer, produce from gardens here is wasted because gardeners cannot afford enough canning jars to preserve it. Now Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is providing small grants so church members can preserve their produce and support the church.

Under the program, which began last summer, church members donate and prepare food for canning. The jars of food are distributed to various churches and ministries, including a children's centre and a drug rehabilitation centre.

The products provide a welcome taste of home for the elderly in a church-supported care home in Zaporozhye.

"They no longer have their own gardens, and miss the taste of their pickles!" says Tamara Kishuna, co-director of a church-based social centre. Some jars are distributed to hospital patients by members of the

"mercy groups" from two churches who visit the sick, disabled and bedridden.

The food is also used for pastor training seminars, youth conferences, and other events. Canned vegetables and fruits are a welcome variation in a winter diet that consists mainly of starches like potatoes, macaroni and rice.

Zoya Gerasimenko, who came up with the idea and organizes distribution in Zaporozhye province, tells of going to a village to pick up a batch of canned goods.

"The women were all bustling around the kitchen," she says with a chuckle. "Some pots were still boiling on the stove, while filled jars were anxiously being watched to see if they would seal properly."

Church members, who are often quite poor themselves, give of what they have to help the broader community. MCC helps fill in the gaps, thus magnifying local production.—From MCC release by **Elisabeth Harder**



Photo by Dave Regier

Preserved apples on a windowsill in Ukraine.

Arts note

Art walk in Abbotsford

An "art walk" at Garden Park Towers in Abbotsford, British Columbia, on May 8 featured 17 local Mennonite painters. The artists' ages spanned seven decades, and their styles ranged from realism to fantastic imagery. The event was sponsored by the Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. In an evening lecture on "Mennonites and art," Ray Dirks, curator of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg, linked faith and artistic expression. He told of many places where he has been able to display his Christian beliefs through his paintings. He also spoke of Mennonites' historical attitudes towards art, and of his personal journey as an artist. Harpist Heather Pauls offered musical interludes. Dirks also displayed the book, *In God's image: A global Anabaptist family*, which he compiled from his exhibition at the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe last summer.—From report by Helen Rose Pauls



Photo by Susan Dueck

Dan Kehler (centre) was ordained as assistant minister at the Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church in Manitoba on April 18. Officiating was John P. Klassen (left), director of Leadership Ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba. On the right is Crystal Kehler, Dan's wife. Speakers included the pastor, Rick Neufeld, and former pastor, Peter Penner.—From report by Elmer Heinrichs

Saskatoon, Sask.

Native businessman works with reserves

On May 5, aboriginal businessman John McLeod spoke at a meeting of the Mennonite Economic Development Agency (MEDA). He spoke on aboriginal people in the marketplace.

Instead of discussing racism, he focused on his experiences around politics and greed, and his desire to see change in the way First Nations bands are governed.

McLeod, a status Indian with Scottish roots, and his wife, Crystal, own Cornerstone Consulting Services which offers financial advice to bands across Canada and into the United States. They live in Saskatchewan but have offices in Calgary, Winnipeg, Kelowna, Toronto and Los Angeles.

McLeod encourages economic development on the reserves.

“What I try to do at Cornerstone is work with the First Nations to...look at tactical solutions,” he said. Part of that relationship, he admits, involves working with abuses of position and ill-advised decisions in money management.

“We need to separate economic development from the leadership,” he said.

His work includes providing practical advice. In one case, a lumber business was going to charge a band \$20,000 to shingle one house because of the distance involved in bringing workers and supplies to the reserve. McLeod arranged for roofers on the reserve to do the job.

McLeod receives 1,000 requests per year from large firms who want to strike a business partnership with the bands. Although a few show interest in Saskatchewan, small industry is more common here.

McLeod also arranges contracts between bands and training agencies to “train people in the band for service work.” He stresses the importance of education when meeting with band leaders.

“It’s still as bad [on reserves] as third world countries, in terms of training,” he said. That is why many leave the reserve.—**Karin Fehderau**

Photos by kids

Attention children: If you are 12 or under, *Canadian Mennonite* would like to see some of the photographs you take this summer. They can be about your vacation, time at camp or other summer adventures. We will print some of the best ones.

Send them electronically to
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490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5,
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People & Events

Baden, Ont.—Earle Hamilton has been appointed director of insurance operations for MAX Canada, a property and casualty insurance company for the Anabaptist community. “He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in underwriting, strategic planning, operational management and business development,” said Nelson Scheifele, director of administration and mutual aid ministries at MAX Canada. Hamilton was formerly vice president of underwriting management services for Insurers’ Advisory Organization in Markham, Ontario. For more information about MAX Canada, call (519) 634-5267 or visit the web site at www.mutualaidexchange.com/canada.—From release

Winnipeg, Man.—Leo Driedger, long-time sociology professor at the University of Manitoba, received an Outstanding Alumnus Award at Bethel College in Kansas on May 22. Driedger was honoured for his career in sociology, his writings (including 20 books) and his church work. He has served on executive boards for Mennonite Central Committee, Conference of Mennonites in Canada and the General Conference Mennonite Church. Driedger and his wife Darlene are members of Charleswood Mennonite Church.—From Bethel release

Abbotsford, B.C.—People in career transitions can get help from Compass, a program of Mennonite Central Committee B.C. Compass offers career workshops that help participants learn more about themselves and their abilities, and about applying for jobs. They also learn about resources in the community.

John Dawson is the program manager. For more information, contact Christine at (604) 859-4500 or visit www.mccemployment.bc.ca.—From Compass release

Akron, Pa.—MCC relief kits and school kits packed in British Columbia were welcomed recently in war-torn Mindanao, Philippines. In April 2003, families in coastal towns were attacked by rebels, and communities of primarily Muslims were bombed, raided and occupied by the government. During 2003, nearly 40,000 people were displaced by fighting, along with at least 150,000 people in other regions. Some 487 relief kits containing towels, soap, toothbrushes and other items were distributed in mid-April, along with 538 school kits and 30 newborn kits—MCC release

Transitions

Births/adoptions

Bender—to Jeanette and Todd, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., a daughter, Fayth Brianna, May 28.

Dueck—to Amy and Mike, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Emmit Michael, Apr. 12.

Epp—to Heidi and Wade, Laird Mennonite, Sask., twins, Lyndon Gary and Hayley Jeanne, Mar. 13.

Epp—to Karen and Dwight, Peace Mennonite, Richmond, B. C., a daughter, Miranda Joy Katherine, Jan. 1.

Ezekial—to Helen and Ab, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Ellery Elizabeth, May 26.

Friesen—to Diane and Kevin, of Langley, B.C., Tiefengrund Mennonite, Laird, Sask., a son, Samuel Nathan, May 17.

Harder—to Michelle and Tim, of Seattle, Washington, Plum Coulee Berghaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Noah Roger, May 1.

Koop—to Anita and Darryl, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Riley Darryl, Mar. 2

Matheson—to Cathy (Janzen) and Brent, First Mennonite,

Kitchener, Ont., a daughter, Lauren Andrea, Feb. 4.
Neufeld—to Lisa and Andy, Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain, Man., a daughter, Erika Taylor, Jan. 14.
Pauls—to Treena and Dan, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Adam John, May 8.
Payne—adopted by Marcia and Richard, Salem Mennonite, Tofield, Alta., a daughter, Bethany Dawn, born Apr. 16.
Penner—to Lisa and Weldon, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a son, Mason Zachary, May 7.
Smit—to Rachel and Eryn, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Calvin Hendrik Thomas, May 19.

Marriages

Giesbrecht-Wall—Jake and Tina, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, May 22.
Janzen-Ukrainetz—Bob and Donna (Dalmeny Bible Church), Osler Mennonite, Sask., Mar. 20.
Matthews-Roth—Kris and Krista, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., May 29.
Strickland-Epp—Richard and Rita, Vineland United Mennonite, Mar. 20.
Wiens-Beyer—Brent (not Chris as listed May 3) and Jessica, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Apr. 16.

Deaths

Banmann—Agatha, 81, First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., May 17.
Bowman—Andrew, 87, Breslau Mennonite, Ont., May 27.
Dyck—Esther (Plett), 90, Clearbrook Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., May 23.
Friesen—John, 77, Mennonite Church of Vernon, B.C., May 8.
Friesen—Mary, 75, Coaldale Mennonite, Alta., May 12.
Friesen—Mary, 76, Winkler Bergthaler, Man., May 22.
Harder—Catherine (Tina), 90, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., May 26.
Janzen—Helen, 91, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.,

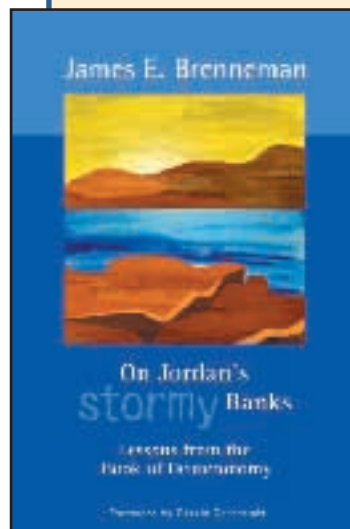
May 25.
Loewen—Helen (Ens), 59, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C., May 26.
Metzger—Joseph, 96, Floradale Mennonite, Ont., April 18.
Nickel—Karl Heinrich, 82, Niagara United Mennonite, Ont., May 16.
Penner—Heinrich, 76, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., Apr. 15.
Petkau—Abe, 78, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., Mar. 7.
Schmitt—Daniel, 94, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., May 20.
Schmitt—Lillian Matilda, 91, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., May 21.
Wideman—Barbara, 96, Salem Mennonite, Tofield, Alta., Apr. 16.
Wideman—Mary, 84, Floradale Mennonite, Ont., May 5.

Baptisms

Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man.—Cornie Bueckert, Helen Ens, Amanda Gerbrandt, Jodi Hildebrandt, Ashley Penner, Kristen Peters, Maury Peters, Pam Peters, Paul Peters, Ken Rempel, Rachele Rempel, May 16.
Carman Mennonite, Man.—Carly Enns, Misty Enns, Kelly Enns, Leah Jeffers, Stacie Letkeman, Philip Wieler, May 30.
Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.—Chris Dasch, Jeremy Kroeker, May 30.
Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.—Megan Braun, Mike Currie, Sam Dueckman, Trevor Klassen, Colby Redekop, Miriam Shrimpton, Marty Thiessen, Alfred Younis, May 30.
Grace Mennonite, Regina, Sask.—Justus Zimmerly, Victor Penner, May 30.
Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.—Ashleigh Tomlinson, Christopher Skeoch, Haydee Bayona Ortiz, May 30.
Mennonite Fellowship of

Rosthern, Sask.—Jason Fehr, Kristen Fehr, May 30.
Niagara United Mennonite, Ont.—Mark Bergen, Justine Tissen, Daniel Froese, Daniel Kulchar, Cory Goerzen, Gary Friesen, May 30.
Osler Mennonite, Sask.—Donna Janzen, May 30.
Sherbrooke Mennonite, B.C.—Mark William Regier, May 30.
Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.—Aaron Janzen, Laura Moyer, May 30.
Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont.—Melinda Goertz, May 30.
Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain, Man.—Conrad Klassen, Angela Neufeld, May 30.
Winkler Bergthaler, Man.—Luke Liu, Wes Reimer, Anita Toews, Viktor Toews, Tim Wiebe, May 30.

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



On Jordan's Stormy Banks Lessons from the Book of Deuteronomy

No other book addresses human longing as Deuteronomy. **James E. Brenneman** guides readers across the spiritually barren, dangerous, silent void of life's desert-wanderings. With humor and honesty, **On Jordan's Stormy Banks** walks the in-between spaces of life to the river's edge and encounters with God.

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how it can and does address critical crossroads of life.”
 —Gerald Gerbrandt, President, Canadian Mennonite University

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Mennonite Church Canada

Seminar on managing change

At a March meeting of moderators, secretaries and conference ministers, managing change was a common topic of conversation.

“Whether it was organizational, structural, program changes or a reworking of mission and vision statements, change seems to be something most of the conferences are dealing with,” said Edgar Rempel, executive director of Mennonite Church Manitoba.

The group decided to hold a seminar on managing organizational change just prior to Mennonite Church Canada assembly in July. Planners Rempel and Ken Bechtel invite conference and church leaders—board members, administrators and pastors—to the event on July 6, from

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at Morden Mennonite Church.

The seminar will be led by David Leis, vice-president of advancement at Canadian Mennonite University. Leis brings a wealth of training and experience to the topic.

“The topic of this seminar affects all leaders in our church organizations and congregations,” said Rempel, who was a board member and staff person during recent MC Manitoba changes. “It is a timely opportunity to address the many issues related to organizational change...”

Registration forms are at www.mennochurch.mb.ca/events/040706_managing_change.

Assembly festival to welcome host town

Planners hope that an experiment at this year’s Mennonite Church Canada assembly July 7-11 in Winkler, Manitoba, will help people in the host community get



acquainted with the church.

The Friday Festival in the Park (July 9, 3:30 p.m. on) will invite area residents to join a celebration of faith. There will be concerts, games and activity stations representing national and international ministries in seven countries. The intergenerational festival will be held in Winkler Park.

Pam Peters-Pries, MC Canada staff representative on the assembly program committee, said that the idea was considered last fall.

“Conversation around the initial idea always included some sort of witness or outreach to the community we will visit for nearly a week,” said Peters-Pries. “We asked

ourselves, ‘How can we engage the delegates and the host community together in a celebration of faith?’”

Six music groups are confirmed. A Korean group will present a mime, and there will be an international fashion show. Face painting, refreshments and a barbecue supper are also planned. An evening worship service will be followed by a wrap-up concert.

“We have a contingency plan to move indoors, but it would be much nicer to enjoy the festival outside,” said Peters-Pries. “We think the festival is a great opportunity to help assembly goers and others to experience the theme of ‘Enough for all.’”

Prayer request

Peter Rempel, director for European ministries with MC Canada Witness, was in Zaporozhya, Ukraine, May 23-26. He and Witness workers Cliff and Natasha Dueck

Combining our assets for God’s work

From our leaders

Every once in a while I like to indulge in a peanut butter and onion sandwich. Freshly baked bread, a few slices of mild Spanish onion and a dollop of peanut butter—what a combination!

The playful act of combining familiar things to create something new need not be only for the culinary daring. Congregations are discovering previously-unimagined possibilities for ministry as they combine gifts and strengths in new ways.

Combining existing strengths to discover new ministry possibilities is called asset building. Rather than dwelling on that which we don’t have, asset building is grounded on the premise that we can combine the passions, skills and things that God has given us to join in God’s work.

Asset building first invites people to identify what they like to do and what they’re good at. Individuals might not only identify the “gifts” for filling the

slate of congregational leaders, but may include assets such as gardening, driving, knotting comforters, woodworking, reading, home decorating, camping, community advocacy or creative writing.

On their own, these assets have the potential to support congregational ministry. When combined, however, they can create an entirely new set of assets that can be used by God in ways beyond our wildest imagining.

One congregation has discovered links among the following assets: folks who have a passion for teaching music, seniors who desire intergenerational relationships, and a public school staff interested in providing a safe space for “latchkey” students after school.

This congregation is exploring the possibility of partnering with the school to host an after-school program that would connect seniors with students, and provide musical instruction. What potential might a program such as this have to build

“across the street” relationships, becoming a vehicle for sharing the love of Christ?

In Mark’s account of feeding the five thousand, Jesus commands the disciples to “go and see” what food is available for the crowd. We too must “go and see” what is available to us, naming and claiming the assets that God has given to our congregations. Moreover, we are invited to discover the miracle of combined assets, in ever-new ways we might join God in God’s work.

Peanut butter and onion is a wonderful combination. I wonder what peanut butter and shredded carrot would taste like?

Jeff Steckley, Giving Project Consultant Coordinator with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.



attended meetings of the Evangelic Mennonite Churches of Ukraine. One item discussed was the formation of a Conference of Mennonites in Ukraine. Pray for the church there.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Youth enjoy north exchange

Twelve young people from southern Ontario participated in the Extreme North Exchange to Weenusk First Nation, April 29 to May 4. They were hosted warmly by the Cree village of 200 on the shore of Hudson Bay where it was much colder than at home.

They sampled caribou stew, learned about hunting geese, and saw abandoned army bases, part of the Cold War Dew Line of the 1960s. The exchange was sponsored by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, Weenusk First Nation and YMCA Youth Exchanges Canada. In June, youth from Weenusk First Nation are visiting the Mennonite community in southern Ontario.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Golf tournament for Camp Koinonia

On June 26, supporters of Camp Koinonia will golf to raise money for camp maintenance and development. The tournament is at Winkler Golf Course, beginning at 8:30 a.m. Dinner and prizes will follow.

Camp Koinonia, one of three Mennonite Church Manitoba "Camps with Meaning," was founded in 1966. It is located in Turtle Mountain Provincial Park near Boissevain. Participants and sponsors should call Karl Enns at (204) 325-9563/8307, Ron Hildebrand at (204) 873-2313 or the MC Manitoba office at (204) 896-1616.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

New slant on Missionfest

This year, the Ministries Commission of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan is trying a new approach to its Missionfest. Instead of a fall event in several venues throughout Saskatoon, the commission is changing the style of event and time of year.

"We're having a travelling Missionfest," said Claire Ewert-Fisher, commission chair. The idea being explored is having at least two bus tours between various Mennonite churches. Each tour will include one urban church and two or three rural ones.

At each stop, participants will hear how the host church is practising missions. For example, what missionaries are being supported and in what country are they working? Perhaps the host church will serve food found in those countries.

Another idea being pursued, said Ewert-Fisher, is to look at what each church is doing in its community. How are people being Christ to those around them?

"We're going with the theme of "Across the street and around the world," said Ewert-Fisher.

Since November is an unusually busy month, the commission hopes to focus on missions during a less busy time of year.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Kelowna church leaves conference

Mennonite Church British Columbia said goodbye to Kelowna Gospel Fellowship at a special delegates' meeting at Bethel Mennonite Church in Aldergrove on March 13. Kelowna's decision to leave was formalized at a meeting at the church on April 25.

In the conference newsletter, the church ministries committee described the decision as based on "the reality, not of theological or doctrinal but of procedural differences, as was the case between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15."

Representatives from both the church and Mennonite Church B.C. were present at both gatherings, to pray for and encourage one another. The parting happened in an atmosphere of blessing.

Kelowna Gospel Fellowship

will seek affiliation with another church conference.

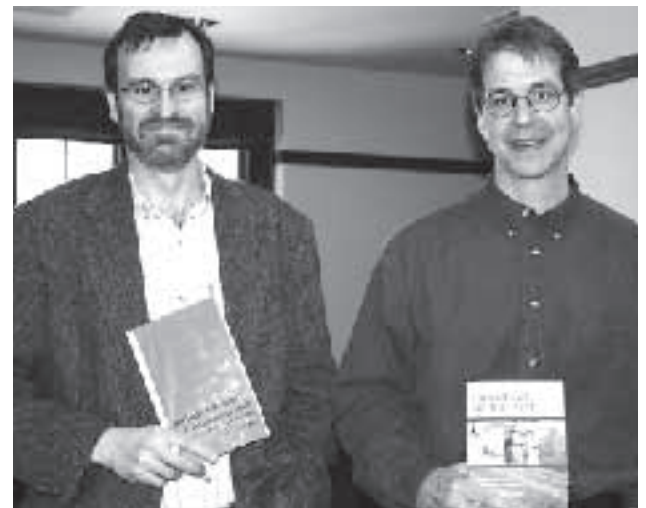
Unless otherwise credited, the articles in TheChurches pages were written by: Leona Dueck Penner (Mennonite Church Canada), Barb Draper for Maurice Martin (Eastern Canada), Evelyn Rempel Petkau (Manitoba), Karin Fehderau (Saskatchewan), Donita Wiebe-Neufeld (Alberta), Angelika Dawson (B.C.). See page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

Conference history and other new books

A new history of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, entitled *Becoming a National Church*, will be launched at the Mennonite Church Canada assembly on July 8. The book, commissioned by the Mennonite Heritage Centre, is written by Adolf Ens, former professor of history and theology at Canadian Mennonite Bible College. It is published by Canadian Mennonite University Press.

The 250-page book encompasses the years 1902-1999. Many of the issues that Mennonite Church Canada faces today are related to issues that CMC and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada predecessors have faced along the way, notes Ens. "One can learn from the approaches that worked and the approaches that didn't work." A full list of CMU Press publications is available at www.cmu.ca/publications.

On May 11, two professors at Canadian Mennonite University presented their new books to the CMU community. Karl Koop, who teaches history and theology, recently released *Anabaptist-Mennonite Confessions of Faith: The development of a tradition*, published by Pandora Press. Jerry Buckland, who teaches international development studies at Menno Simons College (also part of CMU), wrote *Ploughing up the Farm: Neoliberalism, modern technology and the state of the world's farmers*. Published by Fernwood Books, it presents possible solutions for sustainable agriculture.—From CMU releases



Karl Koop and Jerry Buckland show their newly-published books.

Employment opportunities



Christian Labour Association of Canada
Benefit Administration Office

Due to the continued growth of CLAC's benefit plans, the Grimsby Benefit Administration Office is currently seeking a candidate for the following full-time position:

BENEFIT PLAN ADMINISTRATOR

The successful candidate will be a highly motivated self-starter and possess a degree in business administration or the equivalent. In addition, this individual will have excellent communication skills, both oral and written, as well as strong interpersonal skills. Preference will be given to those knowledgeable in the areas of finances, insurance and pension benefits. Knowledge of Microsoft Office (especially Word and Excel) and DataEase computer programs would be a definite asset. We offer a competitive salary and benefit package.

Applications should be addressed to:

Peter Van Duyvenvoorde, General Manager
CLAC Benefit Administration Office
89 South Service Rd, PO Box 219
Grimsby, ON L3M 4G3
Tel: (905) 945-1500
Fax: (905) 945-7200

Westgate Mennonite Collegiate is seeking to fill full and part-time teaching positions for the 2004-2005 school year in:

LANGUAGE ARTS

(Grade 10, 11, 12 Language Arts, and ESL)

FRENCH

(Junior and Senior High French)

Qualified applicants should forward resumes to:

c/o Principal
Westgate Mennonite Collegiate
86 West Gate
Winnipeg, MB R3C 2E1
Fax: (204) 786-1651

TWO-THIRDS TIME PASTOR

Erie View United Mennonite Church, Port Rowan, Ontario is in search of a two-thirds time pastor to commence in November, 2004. We are a rural congregation located on the north shore of Lake Erie in southwestern Ontario. Average Sunday attendance is 50 people. General duties would include worship planning, preaching, pastoral care, and working with the youth and young adults.

For further information or to submit an application, please contact:

W. Michael Wiebe
21 Norfolk Street North
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4L1
Phone: (519) 426-5840; Fax: (519) 426-5572
E-mail: wmwiebe@brimage.com
or RR 3 Langton, ON N0E 1G0
Phone: (519) 875-1377



Applications invited for

DIRECTOR OF FOOD SERVICES

Menno Home is a 196-bed complex care facility, part of a growing, multi-level care and housing campus operated by the Mennonite Benevolent Society in Abbotsford, BC.

Position requirements:

- Eligibility for membership in the Canadian Society of Nutrition Management
- Proven experience in healthcare food services, implementing audits and meeting nutritional standards
- Ability to provide leadership to a kitchen staff of 33, including hiring, scheduling and evaluations
- Additional experience in Support Services management preferred

Successful candidate will combine proven experience with potential for assuming increased responsibility in a dynamic, Christian healthcare organization.

Applications received until July 8, 2004. Position to commence in September. Please direct inquires and applications to

Chief Operating Officer
Menno Home, 32910 Brundige Ave.
Abbotsford, BC V2S 1N2
Phone: (604) 853-2411; E-mail: a.enns@mennohome.org

FULL-TIME PASTOR

Living Water Community Christian Fellowship is a dynamic 23 year old congregation in New Hamburg, Ontario. New Hamburg is a growing community twenty minutes from Kitchener-Waterloo. We are looking for a full time pastor sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading, seeking to build relationships in our community. We have a contemporary style of worship, a vibrant small group program, an active outreach into our community. Starting date is January of 2005. Living Water is part of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Closing Date June 30, 2004

For further information contact:

Muriel Bechtel, MCEC, Kitchener, ON
Phone: (519) 650-3806; Fax: (519) 650-3947
or Living Water Fellowship at (519) 662-3300

Vineland United Mennonite Church invites applications for

FULL-TIME LEAD MINISTER

We are a 350 member, active congregation located in a growing rural community, in the heart of the Niagara Peninsula.

Our church is seeking a full-time pastor with a strong desire to nurture our church spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually. Candidates should possess a desire to work with our church with a vision to the future and be committed to an Anabaptist understanding of faith.

Please submit inquiries, resumes and references to:

Vineland United Mennonite Church
c/o Dave Gossen
4563 Cedarbrook Lane
Beamsville, ON
L0R 1B5
Phone: (905) 563-6482
E-mail: dgossen@sympatico.ca



Stewardship Consultant

Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC) is a charitable foundation serving seven Anabaptist church conferences across Canada. MFC is seeking a full-time stewardship consultant to manage its new Calgary office. This person will be responsible to promote MFC's Biblical stewardship message and provide charitable gift and estate planning services to the Alberta constituency.

Candidates for this position should:

- Be able to communicate effectively in group settings and with individuals
- Possess an understanding of charitable gift and estate planning
- Be creative, organized, and self-motivated
- Support MFC's stewardship mission
- Be a contributing part of the staff team

Each candidate must be a member of one of MFC's seven participating conferences.

Submit applications by June 30, 2004 to:

Robert Veitch, General Manager
12-1325 Markham Rd, Winnipeg, MB R3T 4J6
1-800-772-3257 fax: 204-488-1986
e-mail: rveitch@mennofoundation.ca
www.mennofoundation.ca



Parkwood

Our Parkwood Community is growing!

Parkwood Mennonite Home, a non-profit corporation supported by 27 Mennonite Churches, has provided compassionate care to seniors in the northern part of Waterloo for over 40 years. Our new, enhanced long-term care facility opens Summer 2004 and is located adjacent to the massive RIM Park Millennium Project, a comprehensive recreation facility.

Due to expansion, openings are available for the following part-time and full-time positions:

- Registered Nurses
- Registered Practical Nurses
- Health Care Aides/Personal Support Workers
- Cooks

Interested applicants may send resumes to:

Parkwood Mennonite Home
75 Cardinal Crescent South
Waterloo, ON N2J 2E6
Fax: (519) 885-6720

Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg is seeking a

HALF-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR

The Associate Pastor will serve in a leadership team under the direction of the senior pastor to help facilitate Junior and Senior Youth programs. Ministries include fostering intergenerational/family relationships and events, equipping and guiding sponsors, coordinating program planning, working with worship teams to involve junior and senior youth in worship services, outreach, and some preaching and worship leading. Experience required.

Home Street Mennonite Church is a vibrant urban congregation with a typical Sunday attendance of 250. Anabaptist convictions are important to the congregation. Home Street is a member of Mennonite Church Canada.

Interested persons are encouraged to submit a covering letter and resume by June 21st to:

Pastoral Search Team
Home Street Mennonite Church
318 Home Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 1X4
E-mail: hsmc@mts.net
Fax: (204) 783-1721

Announcement

"Seeking the Welfare of the City: Public Peace, Justice and Order"

A conference sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee exploring how Anabaptist peace theology applies in today's world. For those involved where social work, medical professions, education, law and faith meet. Held **Aug. 1 to 4** in Akron, Pa.

For more information see www.mcc.org/peacetheology or call (717) 859-1151, ext. 210.

For rent

Cottage for Rent: \$700/week, 4 bedrooms, 3 hours north of Toronto. Great for young children. Shallow water with sandy bottom for 100 yards before dropping off. 150 feet of shoreline on Lake Bernard near Sundridge. Call John (519) 742-0538.

Coming up...

June 28

Mental health

July 12

**CM summer cycle:
issues every 3 weeks**

Movie in Winnipeg

The Big White, a comedy recently filmed in Winnipeg, features big-name stars such as Robin Williams, Holly Hunter and Woody Harrelson. But of more interest to the locals might be the name of the scriptwriter, Collin Friesen, who grew up in the Charleswood Mennonite Church. The story concerns a hapless travel agent who finds a corpse in a dumpster behind his office. He cooks up an elaborate scheme to collect insurance from the death. Friesen is located in Los Angeles and wrote the script while at the American Film Institute. Mid-May filming in Winnipeg wouldn't have needed the fake snow made for the set, as the real white stuff was coming down.—From reports

Seminary certificate offered in Manitoba

Winnipeg, Man.—The Evangelical Anabaptist Seminary Program here has linked up with Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary (MBBS) and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) to offer a Certificate of Christian Ministry. The certificate is a 30-unit program to provide basic training in Bible, theology and pastoral ministry from an evangelical Anabaptist perspective.

Courses, which can be transferred into programs at other seminaries, are taught at Canadian Mennonite University.

The Evangelical Anabaptist Seminary Program is a cooperative venture of five Mennonite conferences in Manitoba and four Mennonite schools. Since it began in 2002, it has served 97 credit students and 33 auditors from 5 Mennonite groups and over 10 other denominations.

Currently, MBBS is assessing the feasibility of offering a full degree in Winnipeg, in partnership with other seminaries.

For more information, contact Pierre Gilbert, phone (204) 487-3300, e-mail: E-mail: pgilbert@cmu.ca, or visit the web site at www.ambs.edu/easp/.

Conference to focus on 'boat people'

Winnipeg, Man.—A conference in October 2005 is inviting presenters and storytellers involved in the settlement of Asian "boat people" in Canada. In 1979, a crisis in Vietnam set in motion a massive migration of refugees that transformed Mennonite churches in Canada.

The conference will address the legacy of that time. Congregational representa-

tives, individuals and academics are encouraged to participate. The event, supported by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada and Mennonite Central Committee Canada, will be hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg.

For further information, contact Royden Loewen, e-mail: r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca or Ken Reddig at MCC Canada.—From release

New resources for churches

Several new resources will be available to Mennonite Church Canada congregations this summer.

Weddings is a new 80-page guide for pastors that provides theological perspective,



reflections on current issues and practical ideas on preparing for weddings. Writer Karen Martens Zimmerly, pastor at Grace Mennonite Church in Regina, compiled contribu-

tions from pastors and others for the booklet. It addresses topics such as co-habitation, second marriages, non-Christian couples who want a church wedding, appropriate music and giving children a place in the ceremony. It also contains a list of further resources.

A new MC Canada prayer directory and prayer poster for 2004-05 is also being prepared. A brochure, *What makes a Mennonite?*, is a tool for congregations to hand to visitors. It explains the basics

of Anabaptist/Mennonite beliefs and dispels some common stereotypes. *Unsettled Weather: How do we forgive?* by Wilma L. Derksen is a seven-session series that helps people work through the process of forgiveness.

These resources can be picked up by delegates at the MC Canada assembly in July.—From MC Canada release

Kreider joins AMBS faculty

Elkhart, Ind.—Alan Kreider, longtime mission worker in England, has been appointed associate professor of church history and mission at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. He begins July 1. Kreider, with his wife Eleanor, spent 26 years in England, with the London Mennonite Centre and at Regent's Park College, Oxford University. He helped found the Anabaptist Network in England. For the past four years, the Kreiders have been mission educators for Mennonite Mission Network. "We are very fortunate to bring to our faculty someone with Alan's extensive knowledge of church history, ecumenical relations and international experience, combined with his passion for the church and for communicating the gospel in today's culture," said Loren Johns, AMBS academic dean. Kreider has a doctorate from Harvard University.—From AMBS release

Driving golf balls to Ukraine

Winnipeg, Man.—Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba's annual golf tournament will be held on July 21 at Quarry Oaks Golf Course near Steinbach.

This year's golfers will be "driving golf balls to the

Ukraine" in support of MCC's economic development project there. The project provides small business loans to impoverished people. Last year's tournament raised \$20,000.

In addition to golf there will be a variety of novelty holes and activities, and a banquet. To register or to make a donation to the Ukraine project, call Richard Dyck at MCC Manitoba, (204)-261-6381.—From release

Calendar

British Columbia

July 14-18: MCC Family Camping Trip to Vancouver Island. Contact Darryl Klassen or Elsie Wiebe Klingler at (604) 850-6639.

August 20-22: 50th Anniversary Homecoming at First Mennonite Church, Burns Lake. Contact Rob Wiebe, e-mail: rcwiebe@futurenet.bc.ca, fax: (250) 698-7363.

August 23-30: MCC Quilt Show at Clearbrook Public Library. Call (604) 850-6639 or visit www.mcc.org/bc.

September 17-18: MCC Festival at the Tradex, Abbotsford. Call (604) 850-6639 or visit www.mcc.org/bc.

September 19: MCC Festival of Praise at Central Heights Mennonite Brethren Church, 2:30 p.m.

September 25: MCC Fall Fair at Civic Centre, Prince George.

October 4-6: Pastor/spouse retreat.

October 15-17: Women's retreat on "Prayer," with speaker Karen Heidebrecht-Thiessen.

November 6: MCC B.C. annual general meeting.

Alberta

October 15, 16, 17, 18: Community Justice Ministries celebrations with speaker Wayne Northey (M2W2 in B.C.), in Edmonton (15), Calgary (16), Rosemary (17), Didsbury (18).

Saskatchewan

June 24-27: Rosthern Junior College musical and graduation (27).
June 29: MC Saskatchewan Camping Commission comedy and dessert night at Youth Farm Bible Camp, Rosthern.
July 2-4: Shekinah 25th anniversary celebrations.
July 7: MEDA breakfast at Grainfields Restaurant, Saskatoon, 7:30 a.m.
August 4: MEDA breakfast at Grainfields Restaurant, Saskatoon, 7:30 a.m.
August 7-8: 75th anniversary of Carrot River Mennonite Church at Carrot River Community Hall.
September 10-12: Junior high retreat.
September 30-October 2: Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly at Shekinah.
October 15-16: Saskatchewan Women in Mission retreat.
October 20-23: Christian Peacemaker Team meeting at Shekinah.
October 28-29: Missional church workshop for lay leaders at Camp Elim.
November 5-6: MCC Saskatchewan annual meeting.
November 5-7: Quilting and scrapbooking retreat at Shekinah.
November 13-14: Musical, "Pull of the land," at Rosthern Junior College. Fundraiser for Mennonite Heritage Museum.

Manitoba

June 22: Eden Foundation fundraiser with speaker Edward Schreyer and music by "Barta," at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, 7:00 p.m. Phone (204) 325-5355.
June 22: Canadian Mennonite University President's Golf Tournament at Kingswood, Winnipeg. Phone (204) 487-

3300 or e-mail: cwarkentin@cmu.ca.
June 26: Camp Koinonia Golf Tournament at Winkler Golf Course.
June 26-27: MCC Bike the Whiteshell cyclathon.
June 27: Mennonite Collegiate Institute graduation at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, 2:30 p.m.
June 27: Celebration of 50 years in ministry for Jake F. Pauls at Morden Mennonite Church, 3:00 p.m.
June 28: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate graduation at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.
July 3: MCC Cycle Clear Lake cyclathon (formerly Spruce Woods).
July 7-11: Mennonite Church Canada annual delegate assembly in Winkler.
July 7: Mennonite Disaster Service alumni gathering, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, after evening session of assembly.
July 15: Ironman golf marathon for Eden Foundation at Winkler Golf Course, 1:30 p.m. Call (204) 325-5355.
July 17-18: 75th anniversary celebration at Schoenfelder Mennonite Church, Pigeon Lake. Call (204) 864-2285, e-mail: schoenfelder75@hotmail.com.
July 21: MCC Manitoba golf tournament for Ukraine, at Quarry Oaks golf course in Steinbach.
July 19-23: Course on worship with John Bell of Iona Community, Scotland, at Canadian Mennonite University.
September 11: Cyclathon in Pembina Hills for Eden Health Care Services. Phone (204) 325-5355, e-mail: edenfdn@valleycable.com.
October 2: MC Manitoba Equipping Conference at Canadian Mennonite University.
October 15-16: 24-hour women's retreat at Camp Assiniboia, with speaker Kathy Koop on "Faithful women: then and now."
October 23: Manitoba Women for MCC conference at First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 10:00 a.m. Bring bag lunch

and bar of soap.

Ontario

June 17: Fundraiser for Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre with speaker Tom Harpur, at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m.
June 19: Graduation at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.
June 20: United Mennonite Educational Institute (UMEI) graduation, Leamington, 2:30 p.m.
June 25-27: Family Camping at Hidden Acres Camp. Details at (519) 625-8602, e-mail: info@hiddenacres.ca.
June 26: Aylmer Auction for Relief.
July 18: UMEI Pancake

Breakfast, 8:00 a.m. Service 10:00 a.m.
July 19: UMEI Watermelon Open.
August 13-15: Ontario Mennonite Bible School reunion at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.
August 19: Peach social at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington.
September 10-12: Building Community Retreat for persons with disabilities, at Hidden Acres Camp. Speaker: Irma Janzen. Call (519) 578-2608.
September 18: Relief sale at Black Creek Pioneer Village.

Subscriber services Mennonite

How to subscribe:

- Individuals who are part of Mennonite Church Canada or one of its five area conferences can ask to be placed on their congregation's group subscription list. The subscription is paid by the conferences.
- Others who wish to order a subscription can use this form. See contact information below.
 Rates: \$32.50 for one year (includes \$2.13 GST); \$52.50 (Can.) to U.S.; \$73.00 (Can.) for overseas.

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	Subscription number	Expiry date
Sample label	A999999	00/00/00
	Kathy Mennonite	
	999 Menno St.	
	WINNIPEG MB X0X 0X0	

- Subscription changes are not considered Transitions notices. (Please send Transitions to the editor.)
- Changes will be made immediately but may take 4-6 weeks to take effect because of printing schedules.**

Contact information:

Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6H7
 Phone: (519) 884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 ext.221
 Fax: (519) 884-3331 E-mail: office@canadianmennonite.org



“Altered shapes” was the name of a recent exhibit of fibre art at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg. Featuring works by artists from across Canada, the popular exhibit drew hundreds of new people to the gallery. The exhibit closed on June 10.

