

C A N A D I A N
Mennonite

November 15, 2004
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Advent music

page 6

Journey to Ethiopia

page 15



Worship changes life

The theme for this issue is music. I was struck while reading through our Faith&Life articles by how our actions in worship equip us for acts of righteousness and justice in the world around us.

Len Enns, in his article on page 9, sheds light on the integration between music and Mennonite theology. "Singing is a witness to a profound truth—it 'preaches' a message simply by being a participatory action.... Music in worship, and also as worship, represents a claim that God loves us as we are, and that our relationship with God involves our whole being—rational, physical and spiritual."

This leads to one aspect of integration: Congregational singing is a way of involving more of the whole person in worship. It's also a way of reflecting our theology of the priesthood of all believers. Congregational song is, for many, the only regular time when everyone present can "speak."

Worship needs to be transformative and music has special power to do this. Worship is a way of practising together on Sunday morning how we wish to live our lives the rest of the week. Worship is a means to better living. It is a time to lean in hungrily and taste, see and hear what kingdom living is.

For me, experiences in song (in church choirs particularly, since you have such an opportunity to enter into the music) have been some of the most profound worship experiences in my life. The choir is part of the congregation, and its offering is, before anything else, to God. Music as performance harms what worship should be. Making music both for God and together for each other is a rich gift for us.

Marlene Kropf and Marilyn Houser Hamm take us on a second step in integration, from being a whole people to having a whole faith. As they write on page 8, "the tender babe will also grow up to become a fearless prophet proclaiming God's vision for justice and righteousness in the

world." This is what Jesus said he would do, in his first public sermon in Luke 4. Their article explores how Advent music can also call us to these things.

Last month, I was privileged to join Steinmann Mennonite Church and receive a blessing for my work at *Canadian Mennonite* (see page 32). In preparation, I reflected on why I want to be a member of a Mennonite church.

My reason is that Jesus is my, and our, model for living—a Jesus that called for repentance *and* acted to bring good news to the poor *and* fed the hungry *and* followed the path to the cross. The Mennonite tradition seeks the unity of all these better than other traditions I know. That's what being a Mennonite means to me—always seeking to be and act more like all that Christ was. The church is part of God's gift to us to help us do that.

'Making sure Mennonites marry other Mennonites'

I've received a number of public and private letters disagreeing with the above words in my Oct. 18 editorial. Thanks for your responses. The comment was a bit tongue-in-cheek: I wasn't advocating arranged marriages or trying to put down marriages not between Mennonites. I apologize for any offence.

This comment is based on Reginald Bibby's data, as were the other items listed. Specifically, he writes in *Restless Gods* that "Smaller religious groups typically lose far more people to larger groups than they gain through intermarriage." A better call is that, as a small religious group, the Mennonite church needs to be a very good place for all married couples and families, and that we need to work at being especially welcoming to those who might come into Mennonite churches through marriage because typical demographic trends act to draw people elsewhere.

It was, however, an unexpectedly good way to get some letters to the editor!—**Timothy Dyck**

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November 15, 2004
Volume 8, Number 22



Page 5

4 **UpClose**
Mission worker in France **4**
Dutch leader dies **5**

6 **Faith&Life**
Advent and missional church **6**
Music in the church **8**

10 **Arts&Culture**
Quilt show in France **10**
Poet explores heritage **11**

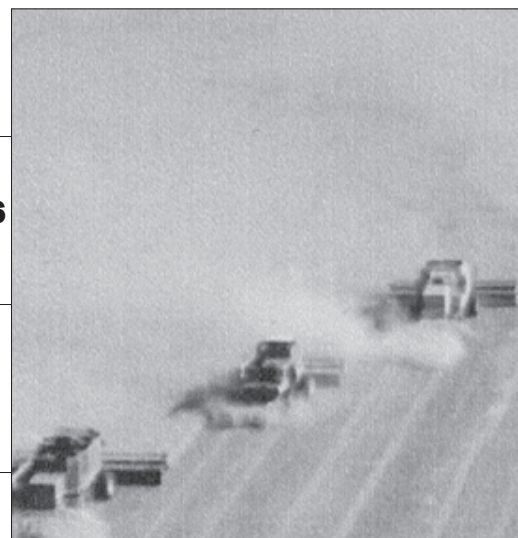
12 **InConversation**
Letters **12**

13 **WiderChurch**
Journey to Ethiopia **15**
Focus on Music **19**
Celebration in Ukraine **23**
Ecumenical springtime **25**

30 **LocalChurch**
Toews tradition **30**
Cafe for community **31**
Transitions **34**

35 **TheChurches**

38 **ToMorrow**



Page 30

Web site preview

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

Selections are posted on our web site at

www.canadianmennonite.org on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the November 29 issue by November 25.

Cover: Shobita Rani Das of Bangladesh carries handmade paper made with MCC help. See page 32.



Page 23

Paris, France

Mission worker discovers God's 'blind' guidance

In her mother's diary, mission worker Linda Oyer found confirmation of God's purpose for her life, fulfilled over generations.

"After my mother died three years ago, I was going through all her things," said Oyer, who comes from Illinois. "I found out that her grandfather came from the French Mennonite Church in Montbéliard, a church I have preached in." Searching further, she found her father's ancestral roots—also in France.

But it wasn't until her mother's friend disclosed the story about her birth that the words her spiritual director, a Carmelite nun, had spoken a year before became clear to her: "God guides blindly."

Oyer's mother married later in life and her attempts to have children were unsuccessful. Like Hannah of the Old Testament, she asked God for a child, specifically, a girl.

"She never told me that she had asked God for a girl, saying if she had a girl she would give her over to his service forever," Oyer said in amazement.

As she looks back over her life, she wonders at God's work. A church split when Oyer was a child left her frustrated with religion. In college she travelled to France to buy drugs, but instead became a Christian and returned as a mission worker.

"That's why God guides blindly—without even knowing that I had French Mennonite roots I was led to return to minister in the church there," she said. "What amazes me is seeing God's hand and long-term activity... not just over one generation, but over several generations."

The first woman in the French Mennonite world to receive a doctorate in theology, Oyer serves on the pastoral team at the Lamorlaye Mennonite Church, teaches at the Vaux Evangelical Seminary and is developing the curriculum for a French-speaking



Photo by David Fisher-Fast

Linda Oyer has made startling discoveries of how God's unseen hand has guided her life.

program in Anabaptist theology.

Along with these duties, she accompanies women in leadership on their spiritual journeys, helping them find rest and reconnect with their faith, while making way for younger women to step into leadership roles. She speaks at many women's retreats. Her work is supported in part by Mennonite Church Canada Witness in partnership with Mennonite Mission Network.

"I'm seeing more and more the need to accompany people who are in leadership and who just don't have other resources or people to turn to," she said. "Often people ask to be accompanied when they are in a total crisis, ready to give up everything. You walk with them, listen and cry with them, pray with them and for them. Then slowly restoration and healing come about and they are ready to continue...."

Oyer says that the behind-the-scenes work of many of these women is never

recognized, but, "to be able to encourage them, walk beside them and open doors for them is a real privilege."

Following a women's retreat a participant wrote to Oyer, "I was blessed, enriched and strengthened.... It was exactly what I needed to hear at that precise moment, and it surely didn't happen by chance."

For Oyer, it is refreshing to hear that God is still guiding.—From MC Canada report by **Bethany Keener**

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Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Dutch church leader dies in accident

A leading theologian in the Dutch Mennonite church, Sjouke Voolstra, died on October 12 in a sailing accident. He was 62 years old.

Voolstra was a retired professor of the Mennonite seminary here, and a prominent figure in the Mennonite conference. He served on many boards, being particularly active in the Mennonite Historical Society, which he helped set up in 1974.

After serving as a minister in several congregations, he joined the seminary staff in 1981 as instructor of Mennonite faith and practice. He also taught Mennonite history. In 1984 he was appointed professor at the seminary and the University of Amsterdam theological faculty. From 1990-95 he served as rector of the seminary as well. He retired in 2002.

In *Actueel*, a newsletter sent to

congregations, the conference office referred to Voolstra as one of the people who shaped the Mennonite community in the Netherlands. His lectures and writings contributed greatly to Mennonite theology and historical research.



Voolstra

Menno Simons, whose writings inspired his vision. In Voolstra's view, Christian faith can only thrive in the context of congregational life.

A major concern for him was the lack of a common confession of faith in the present Dutch Mennonite confer-

ence. He felt that such a confession was needed if Mennonites wanted to be in conversation with other churches and the society in which they live. His active promotion of such a confession—among other things—often made him a controversial figure, but his dedication to the gospel of Jesus Christ and his love for the Mennonite community were never in dispute.

Voolstra's funeral was held in Akkrum (Friesland), the congregation of his youth. It was preceded the evening before by a prayer service in the Mennonite church in Den IJp (near Amsterdam) where he was a member.—**Lydia Penner**

The writer, who grew up in Manitoba, has been a pastor in the Netherlands for many years, most recently in Den Haag (The Hague).

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Darryl Neustaedter Barg and Kim Thiessen are raising funds for MCC's AIDS work with their two recordings: "The Light Shines: Songs and Carols for the Christmas Season" and "To Such as These: Songs and Lullabies for Children of the World." The two CDs have raised more than \$250,000 for AIDS work in Africa and Asia. Nearly 18,000 copies of the CDs have been sold. Order the CDs from MCC Alberta or visit www.mcc.org/alberta.—From MCC release

Photo provided by Kim Thiessen

Advent and the missional church

Advent music is vitally connected with the church's mission in the world, say two specialists on worship. Below they link Christmas carols with the Advent message, a message that includes the good news of liberation from oppression, the reign of peace and justice, and the blessings of communion. In the second article, Leonard Enns explores the significance of music in worship.

What's the connection between Advent and a missional church? a colleague asked. "How can you justify focusing worship on such an irrelevant ancient tradition?"

Good questions. One of the difficulties of the Advent-Christmas season is a temptation to revert to sentimental images of a sweet baby in a manger who has little to do with the real world of refugees, taxes, and foreign occupation. We get caught up in the lush sounds of highly-polished choirs and orchestras and forget how politically potent was the angel's song of "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace" (Luke 2:14).

And because the season often centres on children (the more angelic-looking, the better), we fail to remember that the Babe of Bethlehem was "destined for the falling and

rising of many in Israel" (Luke 2:34).

Advent is not a season for soft-minded sentimentalists. It is tough, unflinchingly relevant, and vitally connected with the church's mission in the world.

Perhaps the character of Advent shines most clearly in the music. Look, for example, at the chant that traditionally ushers in the season in many congregations, "O come, O come, Immanuel" (*Hymnal: A Worship Book*, 172). The opening unison lines may lull us into nostalgia—but only if we aren't paying attention.

The text pleads for captive people to be delivered from their slavery—as missional a goal as one could find. The urgency of the cry is emphasized by a powerful melody that builds and explodes in an ecstatic refrain anticipating the liberation of God's people: "Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel."

What if a song leader invited the congregation to imagine singing this cry for liberation alongside oppressed people in Zimbabwe or in a drug-infested neighbourhood? Would it make a difference?

Or take another Advent hymn, "Hark! The glad sound!" (*HWB* 184). Written as a commentary on Luke 4:18-19, Jesus' inaugural sermon at Nazareth, this hymn spells out Jesus' clear understanding of God's mission in the world—releasing prisoners from bondage, enriching the humble poor, remitting the debts of all who cannot pay.

Mary Oyer, esteemed Mennonite song leader, describes this American folk tune as having "rustic exuber-



Boys in Fallujah, Iraq, carry water cans for their families.

APN photo.

ance" (*Exploring the Mennonite Hymnal: Handbook*). With its repetitions and driving energy, the tune creates momentum for joining God's liberating, healing work in the world. What if a song leader introduced this song as a battle cry for freedom?

"Hail to the Lord's anointed" (*HWB* 185) begins with similar images of military conquest by the Messiah but moves quickly to earthy, pastoral images. The Lord's coming is compared to showers falling upon the fruitful earth, and hope is described as springing to birth like flowers in the path of the Anointed One.

Oyer notes that the author of this text was deeply interested in missions and that the song is "a fine mission hymn" proclaiming God's reign of righteousness and peace. Might worshippers get the connection between Advent and God's mission if Advent hymns were sung on other Sundays that proclaim the church's call to witness and peacemaking?

Perhaps no song speaks more

Might worshippers get the connection between Advent and God's mission if Advent hymns were sung on other Sundays that proclaim the church's call to witness and peacemaking?

powerfully of the mighty missional themes of Advent than Mary's revolutionary song of praise, "The Magnificat" (Luke 1:46-55). Described as "the most muscular song of celebration in all of ancient literature" (Thomas Cahill, *Desire of the Everlasting Hills*), this text may be too familiar for us to perceive the strength of Mary's prophetic cry for justice.

Because Mary is often portrayed as a meek, gentle maiden, we may not hear the radical liberation theology embedded in her song. This girl-singer trusts a God who intervenes in history, raising up a mighty saviour, breaking the bonds of oppression, giving sight to the blind, and ridding the world of injustices, such as people-profiling and

ethnic cleansing.

What if the congregation spent a whole worship service during Advent singing Mary's song? And what if they reflected together on how their images of God's mission were expanded by this rich feast of song?

Because Mary's Song has been set to music by so many composers, music leaders can choose from a lavish array of possibilities. Among those to be found in our Mennonite music collections are the following:

- "My soul proclaims with wonder" (*HWB* 181), an engaging setting by Mennonite composer J. Harold Moyer, emphasizes the rich abundance of God's dreams for the world.
- "Sing we a song of high revolt" (*Hymnal Subscription Service* 901) uses contemporary words paired with a vigorous 15th century tune to portray a God "at war with human wrong" and to call God's people to "seek for what is just and right, to sing and live Magnificat."
- A setting of "Magnificat" from the Taize Community (*HSS* 902) expands from a simple unison melody to 14 or more richly harmonic

parts, all building momentum to proclaim the glory of God's gift of salvation.

- A traditional Irish tune, "Wild Mountain Thyme," arranged by J. David Haas, offers a tender version in the lyrical setting, "My soul is filled with joy" (*HSS* 1054).

Perhaps one of the best ways for worshippers to hear the mission messages of Advent is to sing Christmas carols in the context of a communion service. As Christmas approaches, plan to include communion as a response to a sermon. Invite worshippers to come forward to receive the bread and cup as they sing an amazingly fitting text such as "O little town of Bethlehem" (*HWB* 191):

*How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the
heav'ns.*

*No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ
enters in.*

Continued on page 8



Photo by Matthew Lester.

Two graduates from the AIDS care program in Ethiopia discuss their struggles with HIV.



In Bangladesh, Rokeya Begum receives emergency food.

MCC photo.

Advent From page 7

The West Indian carol, “The virgin Mary had a baby boy” (*HWB* 202), offers an entirely different sound and rhythm for a joyful communion procession. As worshippers sing, “Oh, yes! believer! He comes from the glory, he comes from the glorious kingdom,” the music itself strengthens their commitment to Jesus’ reign.

So what is the connection between the Advent-Christmas season and a missional church? In the gift of Jesus, God has made the ultimate “missional” gesture toward humankind. A babe wrapped in swaddling clothes is God’s tender and tough response to the aching needs of our world.

The tender babe will grow up to become a gentle, compassionate Saviour; the

tender babe will also grow up to become a fearless prophet proclaiming God’s vision for justice and righteousness in the world.

The glorious gift of music during this season offers a fresh revelation of God’s purposes for the world. Singing with passion and power, worshippers are filled with wonder as they receive God’s gracious gift. Then, in concert with the heavenly hosts whose praise filled earth and sky, the church is energized to join with God’s loving, healing and restoring work in the world.—**Marilyn Houser Hamm** and **Marlene Kropf**

Marilyn Houser Hamm, a worship leader and musician, teaches music in Manitoba. Marlene Kropf, staff member of Congregational and Ministerial Leadership for Mennonite Church USA, teaches at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Indiana.

Through the song the church goes on

To discuss the importance of music in worship seems similar to discussing the role of breath in our lives. I know, of course, that music is not of ultimate necessity, and that those who cannot hear, or who are not moved by music, may have spiritual lives that are as rich as any other. Still, for me, music in worship is as obvious as breathing.

The relationship between wind and breath and spirit and song is a wonderfully messy one. We read that the spirit of God moved over the waters, that the Holy Spirit comes as wind and fire, that God is Word but also mystery, breath and spirit.

When we read these profound claims, I believe we can begin to understand the central place that music may have—both in worship and as worship. Music can be the breath of our souls: “As a deer longs for the flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.”

Our souls long for a vibrant connec-

tion with their source. Theology and church doctrine are about defining paths by which we find that source, and are nurtured by it. But church structures and theological systems are inadequate in quenching the deepest thirst of the soul. Both the longings and the celebrations of the soul have a dimension which is beyond conventional language and debate.

The cries and groans of childbirth, the cheers and laughter of children at play, the gentle moans of pain and loss—all are expressions that are not translatable into ordinary speech. They are another level of communication, another way of expressing our human condition. And music is a formalization of these non-verbal expressions. One of the most refined languages of the soul is often a melody.

Music speaks in a less precise, but also a less limiting way, than words. The nuance and particularity of words may create a screen between the worshipper and God. Music, when appropriately written and placed in

worship, is often the most direct path to the Holy.

When Paul in Romans speaks of creation groaning to be freed, we are very close to a musical expression of the soul as it seeks its source. It is interesting that groans and laments are the seeds of the deeply-felt blues and spirituals sung by our Afro-American sisters and brothers.

Paul would attribute these groans to the Spirit: we do not know how to pray as we ought but the Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. The formalized sighs are what some music is. Such music has the potential to communicate between the soul and its source, creature to creator.

A hymn which affirms this language of the soul is “Through our fragmentary prayers” (*Hymnal: A Worship Book*, 347):

*Through our fragmentary prayers
and our silent, heart-hid sighs,
wordlessly the Spirit bears
our profoundest needs and cries.*

The affirmation lies here particularly in the extended “chorus” which consists

simply of a textless humming at the end of each verse.

Music as gesture

Music is also like a gesture, like a hug or a handshake. However, a hug accompanied by “Great to see you!” has a different meaning from a hug accompanied by “I’m so sorry to hear that you are ill.” A hug at a time of bereavement needs no words at all, as sometimes our souls are nurtured by textless music.

Often though, music in worship is effective because the text clarifies the meaning of the gesture—most typically in the hymns we sing. Melodies and harmonies wedded with a text can deepen the meaning of both music and text. Musical gestures (both melodic shapes and rhythms) help us to understand a text in a certain way.

Sometimes, a musical gesture, the garb or coat of a hymn, wears out or is no longer appropriate. This is so because the church is a living reality, existing in time and changing with time, existing in space and changing from location to location. New hymns arise. Both old music and hymn texts, and new music and new texts are needed to express and enrich the life of the church. Through the song the church goes on.

Singing as parable

Many voices joined in song are a metaphor about discipleship, community and Christian calling. Singing in communal worship is a lesson about our place as individuals in the larger Christian community; group singing is also an act of commitment to this community. Both unison and part singing have their symbolisms when we consider raised voices as parables of the Christian community.

In my worship experience, music (congregational singing in particular) has functioned as a tangible (aural/sensual) assurance that I am part of a body of believers. Congregational



singing is an ever-present sermon about our understanding of the church, perhaps like stained glass windows were for medieval worshippers.

The windows tell a story, while enhancing the story with colour, light, rhythm, and shape—with beauty. They are a constant reminder of the ever-present light and life of God.

Our hymns tell a story, and the act of singing them is part of the Christian story. Through the song the church goes on. Singing is a witness to a profound truth—it “preaches” a message simply by being a participatory action, one in which various literal bodies are audibly incorporated into the body of Christ.

Whether we sing well or badly, whether we sing the melody or harmonizing part, it is the participation in the body of believers, or in some cases, of seekers and even doubters, which

constitutes the profound symbolism of corporate hymn singing.

Further, music “preaches” not only by its participatory nature but by its very medium. Music symbolizes the mysterious, non-rational part of our spiritual quest. Music in worship, and also as worship, represents a claim that God loves us as we are, and that our relationship with God involves our whole being—rational, physical and spiritual.

So let your singing, and the music you hear in worship, be an expression of your soul, a gesture which enriches the words, and an act of conviction and commitment—a symbol of the living community of faith.—**Leonard Enns**

The above is from a sermon at Pioneer Park Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ontario, in August 1998. The writer teaches music at Conrad Grebel University College in Ontario.

Sainte-marie-aux-mines, France

Europeans drawn to Amish quilts in France

Ten years ago, a quilt festival began in a small village in France's Vosges Mountains. This year, the September 16-19 exhibit hosted more than 18,000 visitors from all over Europe.

Though most come to see the handiwork of artists from around the world, a display of Amish and Mennonite quilts, furniture and clothes piqued the curiosity of many. Many attended lectures about the religious beliefs of the artists.

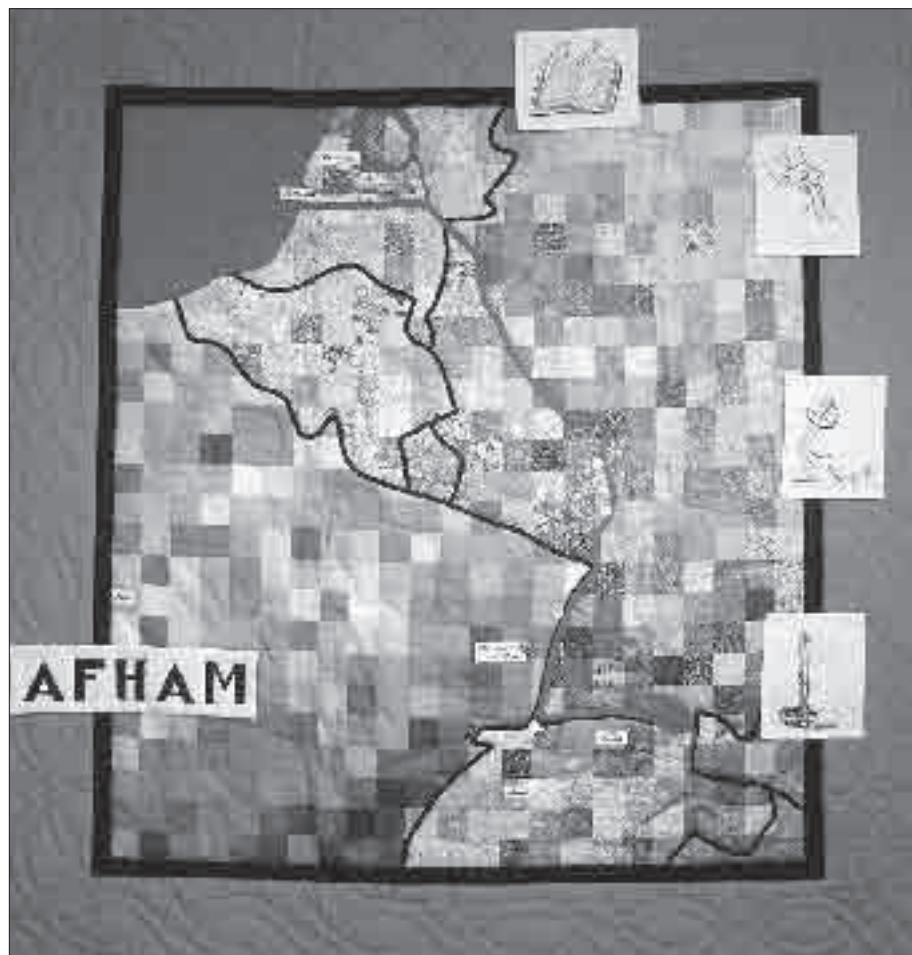
Neal Blough, a mission worker and teacher in Paris, explained how the split between the Amish and Mennonites took place in 1693 while Anabaptist leader Jacob Amman lived in this town in what was then Alsace. In 1993, the French Mennonite Historical Society sponsored a colloquium on the history of the split.

Through the colloquium, townspeople learned of their historic ties to Anabaptists and launched the quilt festival to attract tourists. Today it is the largest exhibit of its kind in Europe, with displays from five continents and over 400 textile vendors.

The show has spread to three other towns with a total of 18 separate exhibits. This year, in celebration of the event's 10th anniversary, the French Anabaptist and Mennonite Historical Association was given a place of honour.

"The French Mennonites had a wonderful opportunity to explain who they are and what they believe," Blough said. He and his wife Janie, from the U.S., have spent 30 years working with Mennonites in France. They are partially supported by Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

The historical society sponsored a large book display at this event and answered questions. Along with the Bienenberg Theological Seminary (Switzerland), the Paris Mennonite Centre has helped produce a series of books on Anabaptist history and



This quilt, contributed by the French Mennonite historical association (AFHAM), shows symbols of Anabaptist theology and practice on a map of historical Mennonite towns in Europe.

theology.

Finished just in time for the event, a French translation of Donald B. Kraybill's *The Riddle of Amish Culture* was of special interest to visitors. The author was on hand to sign his book and all 200 copies were sold.

"I was astonished at the size of the event that is now just 10 years old," Kraybill said. A senior fellow at the Young Center for Anabaptists and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania, Kraybill spoke in crowded lecture halls on "Cultural clashes between the Amish

and the state," and "Are Amish women happy?"

Blough, who also teaches at the seminary in Bienenberg, spoke about Amish and technology in the context of Jacques Ellul's understanding of our technical society.

Other lecturers included French Mennonite historian Robert Baecher and Jacques Légeret, Swiss journalist and author of books about the Amish.—From MC Canada release by **Bethany Keener**

Photo by Thierry Huckel

Abbotsford, B.C.

Poet explores his heritage

Several dozen people attended a reading at the Clearbrook Public Library by Douglas Isaac in October. The Vancouver writer read from his poetry and latest book, *Past, Present: Tense*, a poetic novel about, among other things, his Mennonite heritage and the influence of his grandfather, “Peter P.”

Peter P. “promised God that he’d spread the word for a one-way ticket out of the hell Mother Russia had

become,” according to Isaac, who added that his grandfather’s gaze “could boil *Vereniki* at a hundred yards.”

Isaac’s poems explore both his personal history and the history of Mennonites. “Squatting” focuses on the Mennonite migration from Russia to China and wonders about the physical characteristics in his family line that



Isaac

are distinctly Asian.

The poem “1524” admires the willingness of Anabaptist martyrs to suffer for their faith, to remain silent under torture. “These brave souls are my blood, but I’ll tell you anything,” says Isaac, musing on the absence of the same strength in himself.

In an interview in the *Abbotsford Times*, Isaac said that his family travelled throughout his childhood and he grew up without a sense of his personal story. It wasn’t until he began to record his grandmother’s stories that he realized that he had a rich and diverse history. In his novel, he refers to “Oma” as his muse and she begins the book saying, “If this is our history, then it is yours.”

Most of Isaac’s work is not an easy read. It is rich in imagery and references to history and culture, making it demanding for readers.

“Mr. Isaac’s work is multi-layered and rich with references to not only Mennonite history, past and present, but also references to classic litera-

ture,” observed Mary Bergen, an audience member. Hearing Isaac’s poetry made her want to read it more thoroughly.

The audience seemed to be appreciative of the reading, murmuring, laughing and applauding throughout. Several lined up to speak with Isaac afterwards.

Past Present: Tense is published by BuschekBooks and is available at Chapters/Indigo and other book stores.—**Angelika Dawson**

Satiric spin on Mennonite story

Born in Edmonton in 1946, Douglas Isaac has lived in many places and worked at a great variety of jobs, from miner to government consultant to filmmaker and photographer. He spent three decades in Montreal, but has also lived in China, Europe, New York and Ontario.

Isaac has degrees in fine arts and creative writing from Concordia University. He has made a television documentary on Palestine, and is now a writer living in B.C.

“As a lapsed Mennonite, Douglas Isaac has shed many of the moral, heavy-duty concerns of others from that milieu,” states his biography on the web site of Arsenal Pulp Press, the publisher of his book *Altered Biography* (1999). “He has retained the sense of humour of one of his infamous ancestors, Jakob Hoepfner, who purportedly took a bribe from Catherine the Great to lead the first 88 families from Danzig to...Russia in 1788.”

Isaac describes his current work, *Past, Present: Tense*, as a satirical, sometimes tragic, epic narrative. In it, a contemporary man “is snatched by the spirit of his dead Russian Mennonite grandfather” and whisked back to the Anabaptist reformation in Muenster in 1534. From there, the two visit other significant moments in history, including the move to Russia, Claasz Epp’s mad quest to meet the Messiah in the East, and the emigration to Canada.

Isaac “views his Mennonite heritage through post-modern eyes,” observes one reviewer.—Compiled by **Margaret Loewen Reimer**

Publishing notes

New Dutch Bible

On October 27, the Dutch and Flemish Bible societies launched a new translation of the Bible. It was a cooperative effort by Protestants and Roman Catholics, and the translation team included Jewish scholars. The project took nearly 11 years. The translation team wanted to provide a text in contemporary Dutch while being true to the original languages. While some theologians feel that the poetry and symbolic language have been sacrificed for the sake of clarity, the translation is being recommended for Bible study. The new translation will not be used in the Roman Catholic liturgy; the Protestant Church of the Netherlands has not yet decided whether to use it in worship. In the Mennonite churches, the congregation is free to decide which translations are used.

—From report by **Lydia Penner**

Children’s stories

A Mennonite Church Canada pilot project is providing children’s stories for worship that follow the lectionary gospel text. These stories appear on the Mennonite Church Canada web site at www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources/family/. Elsie Rempel, director of Christian education and nurture for MC Canada, recruited story writers for the first season up to Advent. Advent resources for children are available in *Leader* magazine, but after Epiphany the children’s story feature will be back online, says Rempel. Those who would like to write or can refer gifted storytellers are invited to contact Rempel, phone toll free 866-888-6785, e-mail: erempel@mennonitechurch.ca.

—From MC Canada release

Letters

Why should Mennonites marry Mennonites?

I was interested in reading the editorial regarding Reginald Bibby's new book *Restless Churches* (Oct. 18, p. 2). Timothy Dyck notes that Bibby's research indicating a rise in church attendance in Canada is good news, but suggests there is more work for churches to do in reaching out to those who don't attend but who express a receptiveness to becoming involved. Dyck writes, "For the Mennonite Church, the basics involve reaching out to inactive Mennonites, caring for our youth, keeping track of members after they move and making sure Mennonites marry other Mennonites." Why the latter?

There is a growing need for understanding other faiths, and Christian churches are attempting to build ecumenical bridges. Why are we told to restrict ourselves to marrying only those of Mennonite background? As someone who has been happily married to a Catholic for more than 20 years, I find this suggestion disturbing and absurd. How does Dyck propose we "make sure" Mennonites marry only each other? Is he suggesting we have arranged marriages? My two daughters would certainly take umbrage with that notion.—**Martha Wiebe, Ottawa, Ont.**

A call to help Canadian farmers

The following letter was printed in the October 19 issue of The Mennonite, the publication for Mennonite Church USA. We reprint it here to share with Canadian farmers.—Editor

Mennonites of many flavors have a long-standing history of reaching out to those who are hurting or in need. Currently, farmers who raise cattle in the United States are experiencing record high prices. They and the businesses where they will spend this

year's windfall are simply receiving the economic benefit of our government's policy of blocking cattle imports from Canada.

While we in the church have not initiated this policy and are seemingly powerless to effect any change, we must be aware that we have Mennonite brothers and sisters in Canada who are experiencing a long and devastating depression of cattle prices. While many cattle farmers in the United States are smiling all the way to the bank, our Canadian siblings are suffering immense losses due to prices being a mere fraction of the costs of production.

I extend to the church—both grassroots and institutional—an urgent call to reach out to our neighbors in need. Collectively we have the economic power to really make a difference. Do we have the spiritual power to bring it to fruition?—**Marty Wenger, International Falls, Minn.**

The future of Christianity

Besides reading Reginald Bibby's *Restless Churches*, I recommend that you also read *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* by Philip Jenkins to gain an outlook of the future of Christianity around the world.

An interesting study by Monika Bossung-Winkler, *Gottes Geist im Armenviertel* (Peter Lang Verlag), ties in with churches in South America but paints a clear picture for us why people need a church of compassion.

The last study by Dirk Duetemeyer (*Dem Kirchengaustritt begegnen: Ein kirchenorientiertes Marketingkonzept*) deals with marketing. This book explains that Germans are leaving their mainline churches not only because of the church tax imposed on them, but also for reasons of political and social concerns for which the church hierarchy do not give clear guidance.

From my own experiences as a Christian under Nazi-Communist and Capitalist-Democratic rule, as a church worker since 1946, and as a 50-year Baptist member and now 7 years as a member of the Eden Mennonite Church, I would recommend that you not stress intermarriage between Mennonites as a constructive idea for the future (Oct. 18 editorial).

I agree that we should search out lost souls and build relevant programs for children and youth, but the Gospel comes first, whether you call it "Anabaptist" or not.

An elitist system of inclusion or exclusion has done a lot of damage in the past. Saving the soul means that I am acceptable as a child of God into his church, through the grace of God. This is my greatest joy and strength.—**Horst Rath, Chilliwack, B.C.**

Good to laugh at ourselves

A few comments about Marion Toews's book, *A Complicated Kindness*. John G. Diefenbaker, referring to the role of his departed wife, Olive, in his political endeavours, said, "No one will ever know what she has done."

Toews joins the ranks of humorous commentators like Armin Wiebe and Rudy Wiebe who hold up a mirror that is not always flattering. Writer and broadcaster Bill Richardson said he never knew Mennonites could be "so damn funny."

You don't stop laughing because you grow old—you grow old because you stop laughing. And it never hurts to laugh at ourselves once in a while.

To Marion Toews I say, "Well done."—**Paul Klassen, Winnipeg, Man.**

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.

Abbotsford, B.C.

B.C. churches talk and learn about homosexuality

More than 100 people gathered at Emmanuel Mennonite Church here at the end of October to begin a journey of learning, listening and getting to understand each other better on the subject of homosexuality.

“Walking in Grace” was the first of two conferences set up by a Mennonite Church B.C. committee intended to bring people together to minister to one another “as we strive for greater biblical understanding of homosexuality.”

Participants were assigned to tables where they shared what they hoped to gain from the weekend. Some expressed ambivalence and impatience with the process, while others hoped the weekend would lead to greater understanding.

The conference included testimonies from Neil Klassen and Toni Dolfo-Smith from Living Waters, an organization that deals with “relational and sexual brokenness.” Both men were in

same-sex relationships in the past; Klassen is now celibate while Dolfo-Smith is married with children.

Dolfo-Smith emphasized what the church should not do.



Swartley

“Do not pretend that sexual problems don’t exist in the church...stop attacking the integrity of homosexuals...don’t confuse gay extremists with all homosexuals...don’t use clichés or subtle jokes,” he said. “Don’t say ‘love the sinner but hate the sin’ because for most of us, we don’t really love the sinner.”

What the church can do, he said, is speak from facts rather than rhetoric, admit the mistakes that the church has made, be clear in its beliefs, be honest about limitations.

“What does work is when we exhibit the compassion of Christ and walk with people in their journey,” he said.



Photo by Timothy Dyck

Table groups offer a prayer following their discussions at the B.C. conference.

Willard Swartley from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, author of *Homosexuality: Biblical Interpretation and Moral Discernment*, led several sessions on biblical interpretation, culture and discernment.

“How our church confronts this issue in today’s society is important,” he said, adding that God calls us to be his ambassadors but also to welcome all people.

The story-telling and teaching were interspersed with time for questions and discussion. Participants were asked how they would respond if their best friend revealed that he or she was homosexual. Some confessed that they would feel a great deal of discomfort.

“I don’t personally know anyone who is gay,” one participant said, “but I hope that I would be able to stay friends with someone who shared this with me.”

One table reported, “We said that we wouldn’t make sexuality the main identifier of who we are and would find a way to affirm our relationship, show kindness, grace and mercy without condoning the practice of

homosexuality.”

After Swartley’s discussion on discernment, one participant responded with great emotion. “It feels like we’re talking more about sin than about grace,” he said. “In light of the fact that there is so much we don’t know; we do know that we need to recognize that we are all sinners and sin is not just a matter of action. We are redeemed by grace.”

Swartley responded by saying that the church shouldn’t avoid the confession of sin. “We must each confess our sin, but we do not have an excuse to continue in it,” he said.

As the day came to a close, four “listeners” reported what they had heard. They heard that the discussion should not focus on homosexuality but on sexuality and the whole range of human brokenness. They reported a need for

‘We must each confess our sin, but we do not have an excuse to continue in it.’

balance and a willingness to be transparent and to change.

Sven Eriksson, denominational minister for Mennonite Church Canada and one of the listeners, appreciated the level of vulnerability and trust that he experienced. Instead of division, he saw honest efforts to listen and learn.

“This is an event that has generated more light than heat,” he said. “Praise be to God.—**Angelika Dawson**

Akron, Pa.

Network aids conscientious objectors in uniform

Conscientious objector” is a term familiar to Christians who refuse to go to war, but it is sometimes a new concept for men and women in the military who are struggling with a conviction that war is wrong.

The Military Counseling Network, a German Mennonite initiative supported by Mennonite Central Committee, provides information on conscientious objection to the U.S. armed forces stationed in Germany and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

More than 100 U.S. military personnel have contacted the Counseling Network since it was formed by the German Mennonite Peace Committee in March 2003. Two staff counsellors and a team of volunteers work in Heidelberg, the headquarters of some 116,000 U.S. troops. MCC is supporting the network with \$15,200 in grants over two years.

Soldiers often contact Military Counseling Network about the hardships of military service and their stress or family trouble as they face deployment to a war zone. Counsellors provide emotional support and information on their rights, including the right to apply for a conscientious objection discharge.

“We’re often struck by how grateful people are that we’re just there [as] somebody that’s not part of the army culture,” says Dave Stutzman, a counsellor supported by Mennonite Mission Network.

One soldier became convinced it was wrong to fight in Iraq and attempted to injure himself in order to be unfit for duty, says Reuben Miller, the other staff counsellor. When he contacted the network for help, the counsellor asked if he was a conscientious objector. “Is that what you call it?” asked the soldier.

The soldiers are “so glad to find a legitimate way to go about this,” Miller says.

In addition to supporting this network in Germany, an MCC staff member works with a GI Rights Hotline which serves military personnel in the United States. Usually military personnel contact the network through its web site (www.mc-network.de) and counsellors stay in touch with them by phone or in person.

About a dozen military personnel have applied for a conscientious objection discharge or for non-combatant service. Only one individual in contact with the network has obtained a conscientious objection discharge so

far. Although military policy states that genuine conscientious objectors should be discharged, most applicants being deployed to a war zone are ignored or rejected, Miller says.

According to Miller, the soldier who learned the term “conscientious objection” was soon deployed to Iraq, and his superiors denied him any information about his application for a discharge. When he wrote to his senator for help, his commanding officer demanded that he never contact a senator again.

When conscientious objectors are denied discharges, they are often reassigned to noncombatant duties.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

Abbotsford, B.C.

College dedicates new student centre

There was an atmosphere of celebration as people gathered at Columbia Bible College (CBC) to dedicate the new student centre on October 28.

Students and food services staff prepared fancy hors d’oeuvres and dessert, and guests had the opportunity to tour the new building before the ribbon-cutting.

Paul Wartman, CBC president, introduced the many people who helped finance and build the centre.

Speakers included Ron Martens (architect), Fred Stromsky (CBC Development Society) and Ed Fast (Abbotsford City Council). Each one offered blessings to the students and affirmed the ministry of the college.

“Our prayer is that this school will continue to serve many for many years to come,” said Martens.

The ceremony concluded with a ribbon-cutting by Brian Friesen, CBC board chair, and Kim Best, student president. Prayers were offered by conference ministers Steve Baerg (Mennonite Brethren) and Henry Kliever (Mennonite Church B.C.).

Then Wartman offered everyone a coupon for a meal in the cafeteria and for a Bearcats game.

“We want you to come back!” he said.—**Angelika Dawson**



The new building at Columbia Bible College is reflected in the celebratory cake.

Photo by Angelika Dawson.

Correction

The Pandora Press e-mail address was incorrectly listed in the November 1 issue (page 13). The correct address is info@pandorapress.com.

Reflections on a journey to Ethiopia

The son of Mennonite missionaries, Byron Rempel-Burkholder spent his childhood in Ethiopia. The following is from reports of a recent visit.

This summer, our family of four detached itself from its middle class existence in Winnipeg and set up house in Addis Ababa, capital of Ethiopia.

Our trip had several purposes. After seven years of work with Mennonite Publishing Network, I was ready for a break. Melita and our children, Hannah (12) and Joel (11), would see where I lived as a missionary kid. We would do some teaching and other work at the Mennonite-affiliated Meserete Kristos College.

An overarching purpose, however, was to learn about life and faith in the southern hemisphere. By economic statistics, Ethiopia is the third poorest country in the world, but it's one of the richest in cultural and religious heritage. We wanted to see what God is doing in the Meserete Kristos Church (MKC), the fifth largest denomination in the Mennonite World Conference.

The MKC was in its infancy in the 1950s and 60s when my parents served with Eastern Mennonite Missions in eastern Ethiopia. Today, with about 250,000 worshippers on a given Sunday, the MKC is the fourth largest Protestant denomination in the country. In the 1960s, worship reflected the gentle piety of the missionaries; today, the energetic music, emotional prayers, and earnest preaching display a home-grown movement of the Spirit.

The main motifs of what we saw were evangelistic fervour, charismatic gifts, rigorous discipleship, and intense prayer. The way these are lived out in the MKC is not perfect, as leaders willingly admit. It will take some time for me to figure out how the energy and vision of the MKC might be applied to my life and church in Canada. Nevertheless, I found myself inspired and renewed by what I saw.

Rapid growth

We had lunch one day with acting general secretary Kena Dula and evangelism director Tefera Bekere. Melita and I expressed admiration for MKC's growth statistics: 10.6 percent during 2002-2003.

We were startled by Tefera's response: "We are embarrassed by that.... A few years ago it was close to 30 percent." We knew about the rapid growth during the persecution of the Marxist era (1974-1991), but 10.6 percent still seemed strong to us, compared to growth of the church in North America.

Today, the number of baptized members is 120,667, plus another 42,000 in baptismal instruction, and 81,000 children. They worship in 335 churches and about 700 church plants.

It is a given in the MKC that evangelism is the central task of the church. Congregations appoint lay people to their "great commission" committees. The annual assemblies in the MKC's 16 regions spend chunks of time in examining growth statistics and how to reach more people.

Tefera's office is responsible to support evangelists in areas that are beyond the reach of local congregations. Today there are 93 such missionaries on the border of Sudan, and in neighbouring Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia.

Charismatic Anabaptists

Possibly the hardest thing for us to get used to was the loud and emotional



The Rempel-Burkholder family in Ethiopia.

worship. A typical Sunday service begins with a long prayer time in which worshippers raise hands and pray out loud—often crying out, sometimes in tongues. Some hand motions dramatize the repelling of the forces of evil.

Preaching, like the song-leading, is heavily miked and animated. "Signs and wonders" are also part of the church culture. We saw a preacher order demons out of two women, who fled screaming out of the sanctuary, with deacons following.

Congregational singing is led by robed choirs or music teams, and accompanied by a synthesizer with canned percussion and occasionally drums—all cranked up to a formidable volume. Sung in the pentatonic scale, the songs are quite moving, mainly

Continued on page 16

Origins of the Meserete Kristos Church

Ethiopia's Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) has its roots in the work of Mennonite Central Committee and Eastern Mennonite Missions (Lancaster Conference, Pennsylvania), beginning in 1948.

Through clinics, schools, two hospitals and the Nazareth Bible Academy, a network of believers came into being. Many of these had been nominal members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church; a few had been Muslim. (Orthodox comprise 40 percent of the Ethiopian population, Muslims 35 percent.)

The Meserete Kristos (Christ the Foundation) Church was incorporated in 1959.

In the 1960s, a grassroots movement named *Semay Berhan* (Heavenly Sunshine) sprang up in Nazareth, with members experiencing dramatic manifestations of the Spirit—healings, exorcisms, speaking in tongues and a zeal to share the gospel. Many members joined the MKC, planting seeds for the charismatic theology and worship style that is now standard.

Despite the Marxist revolution in 1974 and growing restrictions, the church continued to grow. Then came the era of persecution. In 1982, worried by the large crowds that the church in Addis Ababa was attracting, the government closed the MKC and imprisoned six of its top leaders.

The church met secretly in house



Mulugeta Zewdie was elected in August as General Secretary of the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia.

groups, trained leaders and published teaching materials. Some missionaries stayed on as workers in government or other organizations.

When the regime fell in 1991 and the churches were re-opened, the MKC had grown tenfold—from 5,000 to 50,000 baptized members. The dramatic story of the MKC is told in *Beyond Our Prayers* by Nathan Hege (Herald Press, 1998).

Today, the MKC continues to welcome support from the global Mennonite

church. Eastern Mennonite Missions and MCC channel funds and some staff through the Mennonite Mission in Ethiopia, managed by John and Holly Yoder Blosser.

Carl and Vera Hansen of EMM do teaching and fundraising for the MKC College. Other North Americans also occasionally teach there.—From report by **Byron Rempel-Burkholder**

Ethiopia From page 15

because of the heartfelt emotion of the singers.

It's a far cry from the services I knew on the mission station 40 years ago. Then we sang Amharic translations of gospel songs, such as "Amazing grace." The only song I recognized this summer was an adaptation of "I have decided to follow Jesus."

MKC worship takes the Holy Spirit seriously and expects displays of God's power. Its charismatic theology took root in the late 1960s out of the "Heavenly Sunshine" renewal movement. The energy of that movement during the Marxist years caused the government to close the church in 1982. The educational and medical institutions the mission had established were nationalized, including the hospital at Deder where my parents worked.

Despite continued partnership with Eastern Mennonite Missions and Mennonite Central Committee, the early missionary era today is a respected but increasingly remote memory in the MKC. Church plants are supported by local funds and a variety of foreign groups, including German Mennonites and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

Mulugeta Zewdie, newly-elected general secretary of the MKC, believes that when religious values come to be considered "matters of opinion, personal preference or subjective choice rather than objective [reality]" the church loses its evangelistic power. This is a danger in the Ethiopian church as its society is influenced by Western culture.

For Mulugeta, the church must stay rooted in the example of the early

church whose strong community life, devotion to the Bible, Christ-like character and demonstrations of God's power all worked together to spread the gospel.

"Today, missionaries in the younger churches of Africa and Asia are convinced of the reality of exorcism and the power of healing in the name of Jesus," says Mulugeta.

Mulugeta also recognizes that MKC may be called to a greater "biblical balance" in which salvation is understood to include "justice, and the liberation of the forgotten and the poor—a response to misery, chaos, fear and the brutality of community life."

Drop in at the MKC college on a Friday and you will find no classes, because this is a day of prayer and fasting. The chapel is a buzz of students kneeling on cushions and

praying out loud. They stay for hours.

Even so, leaders complain that the level of spiritual energy is not what it should be. Hailu Chernet, dean of the college, remembers the intense fasting and exorcisms that were so common during the Marxist era.

Today, he prays for persecution to return so that the church can recover the intensity of the Spirit's movement.

Growth pains and training

Perhaps fuelling the sense of "cooling" in the church has been some recent growth pains. At the national level, the church has just come through a conflict over division of authority in church programs.

Congregations are questioning leadership structures that served well during the time of persecution but may not work so well today. Part of that struggle revolves around how much authority elders, pastors and evangelists should have in the congregation.

According to Zewdie, the key to keeping the spiritual fires alive is leadership training. "In order to evangelize and attain sustainable church growth, MKC needs an effective strategy in the area of leadership training. Members are expected to be rooted in the word of God and

equipped for ministry."

Fortunately, the MKC has assets to meet this challenge. Probably the greatest legacy the missionaries bestowed was the empowerment of Ethiopian leaders.

Within five years of legal incorporation in 1959, missionaries handed over the top positions to Ethiopian Christians. The Nazareth Bible Academy trained leaders locally and many were sponsored to attend American colleges.

According to Bedru Hussein, past vice-president of Mennonite World Conference and currently an administrator at the MKC College, the foresight of Eastern Mennonite Missions "has given leaders the authority to lead today. That did not happen with other denominations."

Training happens on two tracks. Teaching seminars organized by the MKC head office are held semi-annually in each of the MKC's 17 regions. The pastors and teachers who attend then teach their congregations. Curriculum ranges from Bible study to issues in church and society.

The MKC College, begun in 1994, has three diploma and degree tracks, with an enrolment this year of 105 students. The curriculum has been expanding from a strictly theological and biblical focus to include subjects

Abraham's prayer

While we were in Ethiopia this summer, I came down with a stomach sickness. Abraham Geleta, a student at Meserte Kristos College, came to our apartment. He laid his hands on me, and prayed in Amharic that the sickness would go out of me. Sometimes he would vibrate his hands, probably a way of feeling the sickness go out. I got better a few hours later. God must have done this work.

Abraham said that whenever one of his daughters gets sick, he prays for them. If the sickness doesn't get better, then they go to the hospital. That made me realize that if we get sick, we usually go to a doctor first, instead of praying for God to heal us.

I was glad Abraham came to pray for me. I'm almost glad I got sick!

—Hannah Burkholder

that will enable students to work and witness in the world of business.

A quarter of the college's students come from other denominations. Last year the school graduated 55 students. Its biggest project is a \$3.5 million campus in Debre Zeit, just east of

Continued on page 18



Photos by Byron Rempel-Burkholder

Worship at the Bole Airport congregation in Addis Ababa. In 1982, the Marxist government, worried about the large crowds one congregation in this city was attracting, shut down the Meserete Kristos Church and imprisoned six of its leaders. When the MKC re-opened eight years later, it had grown ten-fold.

Ethiopia *From page 17*

Addis Ababa. Construction began last summer, even though half of the money had yet to be raised.

A smaller training institute is being built in western Ethiopia—the Wollega Bible College.

The MKC is also involved in development work, such as AIDS orphans' education and prison ministry, but always in connection with evangelistic outreach. The prison ministry has established congregations in 33 prisons during the last three years.

Ministry cannot be "holistic" unless people hear the word of God and join the church, says Kibatu Retta, education coordinator for MKC's Relief and Development Association. For example, when church workers delivered MCC food and reforestation aid in the Boricha region two years ago, they preached in their off hours. Since then, almost 800 people have been baptized.—**Byron Rempel-Burkholder**

The writer, from Winnipeg, is an editor with Faith & Life Resources, a division of Mennonite Publishing Network.

Church reaches into Ethiopia's prisons

Four years ago, inhabitants of Alaba Kulito threw stones a bus whose driver was playing Christian music. The incident marked the beginning of violence toward Christians in the "Muslim belt" of southern Ethiopia, where an extreme form of

Islam is making inroads.

Solomon Gebreyes was therefore discreet when he approached the authorities of the prison there two years later, seeking to start a ministry to inmates, some of whom had been involved in the violence. Gebreyes is coordinator of the Meserete Kristos Church's dynamic prison ministry which has established a presence in 33 of Ethiopia's prisons.

In Alaba Kulito prison, Gebreyes began by helping to build a better water system. With better water and medical services, the health of the prisoners improved dramatically. He also began literacy training.

"Now," says Gebreyes, "they began to sit down and hear the gospel.... They were no longer hostile." Christians now number 30, and one notorious robber who had been involved in violence against the church returned to his community and built a church.

The prison ministry works with government and other organizations to provide nine kinds of ministry, including material aid, education and counselling to inmates' children.—From report by **Byron Rempel-Burkholder**



Solomon Gebreyes befriends Getasew, a boy whose father is doing a life term for murder.

New friends

The Meserete Kristos College lets four poor boys come inside the walls to clean shoes of the staff and students for 50 cents. The college gives them leftover food.

Except when they are cleaning shoes or going to school, they spend all day playing, doing homework, learning about the Bible from the college guards, or talking under a grove of trees in the compound.

They were my friends last summer. The first day in Ethiopia I was looking around the college and I saw one of the boys, who looked about my age. His name was Bukalu and he was 11. Later, I met his brother, Adisu, who was 12 years old. I also met their friends Yared and Yonas.

We played soccer with my ball, the size of a tennis ball. With that ball we also bowled, and played basketball and monkey in the middle. Another thing we enjoyed doing was to sing to each other. We started when they said, "You sing song." Then I'd sing a song, and maybe dance silly. They'd sing Amharic songs to me.

On my birthday, I invited them to my house. I was very happy the boys were there, because I had people to play with. I also think they were happy I came, because I helped them improve their English.

—**Joel Burkholder**



Joel and his friend Bukalu.

FOCUS Music.....

Music calendar

November 20: Concert by DaCapo Chamber Choir, directed by Leonard Enns, at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener, Ont., 8:00 p.m.

November 26, 27: Christmas concert featuring Calvin Dyck, violin, Betty Suderman and Mel Bowker, piano, and orchestra, at Sardis Community Church, B.C. (26) and Bakerview MB Church (27), 7:30 p.m. Sponsored by MCC B.C. Supportive Care Services.

Continued on page 20



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Calendar From page 19

November 28: Opening concert at new Performing Arts Centre, Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, Man.

December 1: "Oratorio for AIDS" fundraising concert for MCC AIDS work, at First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver, 7:30 p.m. Phone (604) 910-2907 for details.

December 3, 4: Menno Singers/Mass Choir performs "Messiah" at Centre in the Square, Kitchener, Ont., 7:30 p.m.

December 4: Christmas concert at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, 7:00 p.m.

December 4, 5: Christmas concert by Pax Christi Chorale at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto, 8:00 p.m. (Sat.), 3:00 p.m. (Sun.). Call (416) 494-7889 for details.



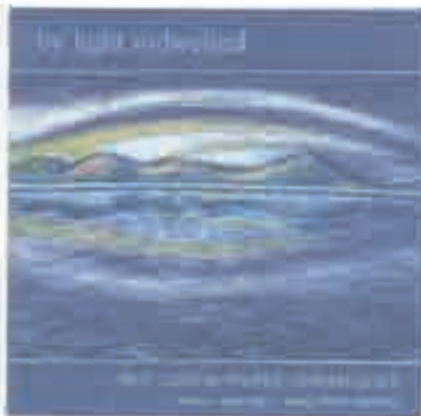
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December 4, 5: Abendmusik Advent Vespers at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford, B.C. (4), Knox United Church, Vancouver (5), 8:00 p.m.

December 9: Musical "Angels Aware" at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary, 7:00 p.m.

December 9, 16: Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School Christmas programs, 7:00 p.m. Aggasiz at Bethel Mennonite Church (9); Bedson at Immanuel Pentecostal (16).

December 11: Advent concert by NKMC Quartet at North Kildonan Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 7:00 p.m.

December 12: Advent concert by Faith and Life Male Choir and Women's Chorus, at First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg (3:00 p.m.), Springfield Heights Mennonite, 7:30 p.m.

December 12: Concert by Lifted Voices at First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., 7:30 p.m.

December 12, 17: Buncha' Guys concert, at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, 2:00 p.m. (12); Timberlodge at Shekinah, 7:30 p.m. (17).

Continued on page 22



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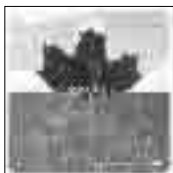
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Calendar From page 21

December 13: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, 7:00 p.m.

December 16: Christmas concert at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont., 7:30 p.m.

December 16, 17: Christmas program at Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, Man., 7:30 p.m. (16), 1:30 p.m. (17).

December 18: Kitchener-Waterloo Philharmonic Choir performs Bach's Christmas Oratorio, Centre in the Square, Kitchener, 7:30p.m.

December 22: Christmas concert at Rosthern Junior College, Sask., 7:00 p.m.

Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Bluegrass groups join in fundraiser

A fundraising concert at Niagara United Mennonite Church on September 26 raised a total of almost \$4,500 for the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC) and the Mennonite Centre Ukraine.

Over 300 people attended the two-hour concert which featured three Mennonite Bluegrass groups: Five-on-the-Floor, Peach Pickers and Sweetwater. The three groups presented a delightful combination of vocal and instrumental talent, along with a sense of humour, evoking both laughter and applause from the audience.

Speakers were Harold Neufeld, board member of Mennonite Centre Ukraine, and Henry Paetkau, president of Conrad Grebel University College.

Neufeld summarized the purposes and needs of the Ukraine community of Molochansk (formerly Halbstadt). The centre administers funds for medical supplies and medicines, a food assistance program, day camps, and computer instruction. Further information can be found on the centre's web site at www.mennonitecentre.com.

Paetkau emphasized the importance of TMTC in developing theological leadership for the church. TMTC is a graduate teaching and research centre of Conrad Grebel University College, affiliated with the Toronto School of Theology. For information visit www.grebel.uwaterloo.ca/tmtc

After the concert, all were invited to stay for *faspa* (lunch) prepared by the women of the church. CDs and tapes were available. The Peach Pickers' second CD contains a new song, entitled "Mennonites in Ukraine," written by John Harder. To contact the group, phone John Harder at (905) 468-3770, e-mail: johnaharder@yahoo.ca.

Five-on-the-Floor, whose project is TMTC, can be contacted through Fred W. Martin, phone (519) 885-0220, ext. 381, e-mail: fwmartin@uwaterloo.ca. Contact for Sweetwater is Bill Koop, phone (905) 386-6551, e-mail: ekoop@brocku.ca.—Linda (Dyck) Friesen



Photo by Vic Goertzen

The Peach Pickers, Five-on-the-Floor and Sweetwater, along with emcee Linda Friesen, join in a final song at the fundraising concert.

Tokmak, Ukraine

Service celebrates Ukrainian-Mennonite experience

A new choral work by a Canadian composer and a Ukrainian choir singing music from the Orthodox tradition were both part of the Molochna Bicentennial Thanksgiving Service here on October 10.

The service commemorated “200 years of partnership between Mennonites and Ukrainians in the Molochna River Region.” Speaking to the theme, “Joint heirs with Christ,” were novelist Rudy Wiebe from Edmonton and historian Paul Toews from California.

About 550 people attended the service, including 191 passengers on the Mennonite Heritage Cruise. Also participating was a group of Russian emigrants now living in Germany (*Aussiedler*), and members of four local congregations.

This was the largest gathering of Mennonites in Ukraine since 1943, according to Walter Unger, co-director of the heritage cruise and an initiator of the celebration.

The service opened with a new work by Larry Nickel of British Columbia, “Molochna Thanksgiving,” for choir, baritone solo, instruments and congregation. The work included “new realizations” of German hymns such as *Ich bete an die Macht der Liebe* and



Photos from Rudy Friesen

The Orloff Mennonite Church, built in 1839 and modified around 1880, was erected on the foundations of the first church in the Molochna Colony. The first church was built in 1809, with funds from Tsar Alexander I.

So lange Jesus bleibt der Herr.

Diana Wiens of Edmonton conducted the work; her husband, Harold Wiens, was the baritone soloist. Instrumentalists included Calvin Dyck, violin, and Betty Suderman, piano, both from British Columbia.

Local Mennonite congregations gave presentations in words and music.

In his presentation, “Reflections on

the past: Look to the Rock,” Rudy Wiebe walked through Mennonite history, from sixteenth century Europe to the diaspora of Russian Mennonites in the twentieth century.

“But today we can meet,” he said. “We can come together and tell each other our stories, however sad or happy or amazingly miraculous they may be. That is the most beautiful thing we human beings can do...not yell at each other, or quarrel about land, or kill one another because of an idea, or—worse—kill because of God. No!...

“We tell each other stories, as, by his gentle example, Jesus himself taught us. Our past gives us the stories by which we can live our present.” Wiebe ended with his own story—his parents were the only members of their families to get out of Russia in the dramatic “Flight over Moscow” in 1929.

In his “Thoughts about the future,” Paul Toews reflected on how things have changed since he first visited the Soviet Union in 1989. Acknowledging the difficulties that continue, Toews focused on the hope of the present.

“Today there are four Mennonite congregations in Ukraine—

Continued on page 24



Larry Nickel's composition, “Molochna Thanksgiving,” was premiered at the bicentennial worship service in Ukraine, on October 10. Nickel has taught music at Mennonite Educational Institute in B.C. for many years and in 1993 won an international award for his “outstanding service to jazz education.” He is co-founder of the West Coast Mennonite Chamber Choir which has recorded many of his compositions. See back for more on music in Ukraine.

Ukraine *From page 23*

Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Kutuzovka and Balkova. Today Ukrainians and people from various countries are working together in effective partnerships in the work of the Mennonite Centre in Molochansk, in the work of the Mennonite Family Centre in Zaporizhzhia, in the work of Mennonite Central Committee, in the



Jakob Tiessen, pastor of the Kutuzovka/Petershagen Mennonite Church and leader of the new Mennonite conference in Ukraine, speaks at the Molochna anniversary. At right is Kate Ostapenko, assistant director of the Mennonite Centre in Ukraine.

work of the Baptist Union....

"Today we meet with a sense of hope, with a sense that a Mennonite presence and witness in Ukraine is growing and is making a difference."

Toews referred to the monuments that were unveiled in spring to commemorate the 200-year history of Mennonites in the region and quoted the Ukrainian mayor's comments at that event: "We want to carry into the future the values that you [Mennonites] taught us, the legacy that you left to us.... We thank you for helping us to recover it. With your help we want it to shape our future."

The benediction to the anniversary service was spoken by Alan Peters from the USA and Zoya Gerasimenko of Zaporizhzhia.

In the afternoon, many enjoyed a program of music and other events in Halbstadt/Molochansk. Some attended the opening of a memorial to agricultural innovator and leader Johann Cornies in Juschanlee (now Kirovo).

—Compiled by **Margaret Loewen Reimer**

WCC leader addresses Canada

The new general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Samuel Kobia, visited Canada September 30 to October 4 to meet with church leaders in several centres. A minister in the Methodist Church in Kenya, Kobia took up his WCC post in January.

In Winnipeg, he gave a public lecture at the University of Winnipeg, and met with First Nations leaders. His lecture topic was "New visions and challenges to ecumenism in the 21st century."

"He spoke in the context of Jesus' prayer for unity found in John 17," observed Henry Krause, Mennonite Church Canada

moderator, who attended the lecture. "He spoke passionately about the need for ongoing conversations within the Christian churches in order to continue to build the witness of the church in the world. He also spoke about the reality we face in a continually growing multi-faith context."



Kobia

Conversations with other faiths help us articulate our own faith, as well as helping to "break down the barriers of fear and suspicion that we have of others who are different from us," observed Krause.

Dan Nighswander, MC Canada general secretary who also attended the lecture, noted that while few Mennonite bodies are members of the WCC, Mennonites have made a significant impact on "this most comprehensive of all Christian organi-

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'Ecumenical springtime' for Mennonite church

Helmut Harder represented Mennonite Church Canada at an October meeting of the Commission on Faith and Witness of the Canadian Council of Churches. The following is from Harder's report to a forum on inter-church dialogue held at that meeting.

The current state of ecumenicity has sometimes been depicted as caught in a "season of winter." Be that as it may, one can suggest that Mennonite ecumenical relations were wintry for about 450 years, ever since the time of persecution in the sixteenth century. Only recently, beginning about the mid-1930s, have Mennonites begun to pay some attention to inter-church relations.

zations." For example, Mennonites helped initiate the current "Decade to Overcome Violence" promoted by the WCC.

In Ottawa, Kobia spoke at an ecumenical service and took part in an all-day forum on dialogue organized by the Canadian Council of Churches.

Kobia's topic was "The vision of cosmic peace," based on Isaiah 11:6-9. We live in a jungle of violence, he said, and our challenge is to transform it into a garden of peace. For this, two conditions are required: to judge in righteousness and to bring equity.

"Indifference to poverty is equivalent to wielding weapons of mass destruction," he said.

Ecumenism has changed in the last decades, said Kobia. It is characterized by fewer multilateral structures, the shift of Christianity from North to South, and a growing hunger for spirituality.

"Greater awareness of religious plurality invited a new approach.... It has questioned some of our theological categories and language and put to the test the commitment of Christians to the common good of their societies," he said.

Kobia concluded: "Let us join together with all people of good faith, including Jews, Hindus, etc., who work for peace."—From WCC and other reports

Several signs of a Mennonite ecumenical springtime bear mentioning. 1) There have been international dialogues between Mennonite World Conference and the global church bodies of the Baptists, the Reformed and the Catholics. A Mennonite-Lutheran international dialogue will begin in 2005. 2) In recent years, Mennonites have revisited their martyr history through discussions in inter-church contexts. 3) Mennonite leaders hold significant positions in the World Council of Churches (WCC). Fernando Enns, a Mennonite from Germany, is a member of the WCC Executive Board, and Hansuli Gerber, a Swiss Mennonite, currently directs the WCC's program, "Decade to Overcome Violence." Larry Miller, executive director of Mennonite World Conference, was recently appointed chair of the Secretaries of World Communion. 4) Mennonite Church Canada decided this past summer to apply for full membership in both the Canadian Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

I want to draw attention to a report published in 2003 as a result of five years of international Catholic-Mennonite dialogue. Sponsored by Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the international group comprised seven Catholics and seven Mennonites meeting under the theme, "Toward a healing of memories." The final report was entitled "Called together to be peacemakers."

The dialogue was characterized by frankness and respect. We prayed together morning and evening; we worshipped in each other's churches; we toured each other's holy and historical sites. We grew in respect and appreciation for each other's traditions.

Over the five years the group focused on four themes: the church, baptism, the Eucharist/Lord's Supper, and peace theology. Allow me to identify six "surprises" (in my view):

1) Mennonites and Catholics come closer to one another in an understanding of baptism than one might expect, judging from 16th century

disputations. The Catholic Rite of Adult Initiation and the broadened understanding of baptism as applicable to the whole of faith and life prepared the way for significant points of convergence.

2) The historic schism over sacraments does not have the same divisive edge in our time. Mennonite theologians are saying that the term "sacrament" applies in a significant sense to Mennonite ordinances. There is significant agreement among Catholic and Mennonite theologians that the starting point is Jesus Christ and the body of Christ, the faithful church. Also, Mennonites are able to admit that their practices carry sacramental overtones as well.

3) Mennonites and Catholics have a mutual appreciation for each other's concept of the church—beginning with the three-fold structure of "people of God," "body of Christ," and "temple/community of the Holy Spirit."

4) Mennonites and Catholics have a common understanding of grace as including not only divine forgiveness, but also God's gracious presence through the medium of human works.

5) Mennonites with their characterization of themselves as a "peace church" and the Catholic Church's depiction of itself as a "peacemaking church" have the potential for getting on "the same page," seeing that Catholics are engaging in a critical assessment of their "just war" theology and that Mennonites are engaging in a critical assessment of their absolutist position on such aspects as policing.

6) The Catholic delegates readily stated that there was no theological justification for the persecution of the Anabaptists, and that they deeply regretted the violence done against Anabaptist-Mennonites in the 16th century and beyond.

Mennonite churches in several countries are being asked to study the report from the point of view of their own contexts and convictions. At its next meeting in 2006, the MWC General Council will receive reports from member churches, and decide what further action should be taken.

Winnipeg, Man.

Mennonite historians address the state of their art

The writers of an upcoming one-volume history of Mennonites in North America asked for—and got—plenty of advice at a “State of the art of North American Mennonite history” conference here October 1-2.

An array of historians evaluated trends and presented new research in fields such as Mennonite theology, literature, economics, class, church life and peace and justice.

Co-authors Steve Nolt, who teaches history at Goshen College in Indiana, and Royden Loewen, Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, also heard plenty of commiseration for their “very difficult” undertaking—to tell the story of Mennonites on this continent in all their diversity in one book of some 300 pages.

The book will be part of the five-volume Global Mennonite History project, initiated by Mennonite World Conference in 1997.

The “framing question” of previous histories of Mennonites in North America, Nolt said, could be stated as, “What difference did it make that these North Americans are Mennonites?” Theirs, however, will be, “What difference does it make that these Mennonites are North Americans?”

The history project was the focus of the keynote address by general editor John Lapp and respondent Barbara Nkala, an author of the first volume on Africa. Nkala described the challenge of writing church history in Africa where the archives have been oral rather than written.

In the first half of the 20th century, Europeans were “custodians” of Mennonite identity, said Lapp. North America then took over. In 1994, for the first time, there were more Mennonites and Brethren in Christ in the global south than in the north.

This shift in the “centre of gravity,” said Lapp, represents “a massive redefinition of Mennonite identity.”

Several of the more than 25 presentations signalled significant shifts in how the Mennonite story of North America is being told. Presentations on evangelicalism (Bruce Guenther of Trinity Western University in B.C.),

Anabaptism (Karl Koop of Canadian Mennonite University) and fundamentalism (Nate Yoder of Eastern Mennonite University) proposed new ways of talking about these movements.

Every Mennonite group in North America has been touched by evangelicalism, Guenther said, either by adoption or resistance. While Mennonite historians have been adept at telling “the differences” between Anabaptists and evangelicals, he suggested looking at their “natural compatibilities.”

Koop spoke of “unhelpful caricatures” in drawing distinctions. Spirituality and piety are currently getting more attention in Anabaptist scholar-

ship, he said.

Yoder advised authors Nolt and Loewen to see Mennonites as “actors,” not “acted upon.”

A panel on “Race, missions and



Barbara Nkala speaks with John Lapp after their presentations.

Photos by Leona Dueck Penner

Heard at the history conference

What does it mean for us to read about Mennonites of all cultures and thereby gain an understanding about what being Mennonite means? asked Malinda Berry, who is African-American, at the conference on North American Mennonite history.

“Would Patrick Friesen [a poet mentioned in the Mennonite literature session] recognize me as a Mennonite on the streets of New York?” she asked. What about the segregation of races during footwashing and communion—have those rifts been repaired? “We still need to transform our history,” she concluded.

Others added their observations about the complexities of writing a North American Mennonite history.

Donovan Jacobs, who works with native ministries in Manitoba, wondered why there are only two small “associated” native Mennonite churches in Mennonite

Church Canada after 45 years of mission work. “My concern is not with the missionaries who walked with the people...but with the many who did not. How do we work at relationships?”

What is Latino Mennonite identity, given that the mission strategy was acculturation? asked Juan Martinez from California.

“Much remains to be done,” noted John Lapp in his keynote address. “Just as we historians need to develop and accommodate to new perspectives, so does the entire church. We are beginning to see church agencies talk about ‘repositioning’ themselves for the new situation.... How will priorities change? How will resources be reallocated?... Can our definitions of evangelism be reformulated?...”

“If we as historians of the church have a ministry it will be to highlight this new church history and to help our congregations and conferences, mission



The panel on race and ethnicity included, from left, Malinda Berry of Union Theological Seminary in New York, Donovan Jacobs of MCC Manitoba, Juan Martinez of Fuller Theological Seminary in California, and Stephanie Phetsamay Stobbe of Menno Simons College in Winnipeg.

inter-ethnicity” not only critiqued what Malinda Berry called the “Mennonite capacity for racism” but urged that relationships between ethnicities in the North American Mennonite story be told.

“We come in theologically,” said Juan Martinez, speaking as a Latino Mennonite, “not ethnically.” Hans Werner, University of Winnipeg, suggested that this history book might

“shape a new ethnic identity.”

Various voices kept drawing participants back to the wider context of the North American history. “We don’t want a trunk history,” Royden Loewen said, “but one that is informed by a global perspective.”

In a global perspective, said Walter Sawatzky, who provided a summary of the conference, “Mennonites and money is a theme of near ultimate authority.”

Ted Regehr said globalization for North American Mennonites means missions, international aid, the peace witness and international organizations like Mennonite World Conference. The book must link to “broader internationalization.”

With this last word of advice, the co-authors were left to their complex assignment.—**Dora Dueck**

The writer is associate editor of The Mennonite Brethren Herald.

and service agencies, colleges, seminaries and even retirement communities think about their work in new ways.”

One conference attendee was struck by how the younger generation is pushing the boundaries, especially in

‘What difference does it make that we are “Canadian” Mennonites? This conference pointed us in the direction of looking for some answers to that.’

the Peace and Justice session. A highlight for her were presentations by Rachel Waltner Goossen, Washburn University in Kansas, and, Janis Thiessen, University of New Brunswick.

Waltner Goossen spoke about the broadening of Mennonite peacemaking

from objection to military service to daily life. The women’s movement helped to raise issues of domestic violence and sexual abuse. The increased focus on conflict transformation is being incorporated into art, music and literature, noted this participant.

Thiessen shared her conclusions from studying Mennonite labour history and class.

Although we

have discussed power and authority in the church, little has been done with labour-management issues, she said.

“I found the conference stimulating as a whole,” said Dan Nighswander, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada.

“What difference does it make that we

are ‘Canadian’ Mennonites? This conference pointed us in the direction of looking for some answers to that.”

Henry Krause, moderator of MC Canada, also found himself challenged for his work in the church. One issue is our connection to the global Mennonite church, he said. He wondered what we as Canadians can contribute and what we can learn from our history and the history of Mennonites on other continents.

Another challenge is thinking about identity in a Canadian context, and “the connection between ethnicity and being a missional church.” The variety of topics “stretched my own thinking about what we are about as Mennonite Church Canada and the tensions that we wrestle with as a church in this time,” said Krause.

Many of the presentations will be published in the *Journal of Mennonite Studies*.—From report by **Leona Dueck Penner**

North American diversity challenges historians

The conference on North American Mennonite history at the University of Winnipeg in October demonstrated that the diversity of influences, experiences and theological directions within the North American Mennonite community will be difficult to capture in a single volume.

The diversity is at two levels—within Mennonite groups, and between Mennonite groups in the U.S. and Canada.

Within groups such as Mennonite Church Canada, diversity is reflected in theological influences (evangelicalism, Benderian Anabaptism, activist Anabaptism, liturgical renewal), Christian expression (emphasis on community relationships or on correct doctrine), worship styles (praise music, worship bands, hymnal-only, choirs), ethnic/cultural/immigration/language background (European, Indigenous,

Asian), economic status, environmental context (urban, suburban, small town, rural), congregational size, and more.

Even within smaller groups, conference participants heard of startling diversity—the Old Colony Mennonites in Manitoba divided only last year over keeping the German language in worship.

Few presentations attempted a comparison between Mennonites in the U.S. and Canada, but helpful insights did emerge. Except for the Amish, U.S. Mennonites have not been labelled as an “ethnic” group for many years. This contrasts with Canadian multiculturalism that has encouraged an ethnic-religious self-understanding.

This self-understanding has influenced the way Canadian Mennonites relate to new Mennonites from non-European cultural streams, and reflects why Canadian Mennonite literary works sometimes reflect an ethnic, but

not religious, ethos, in contrast to most “Mennonite” writers in the U.S.

This diversity between the national churches certainly warrants greater study, given the shift of the largest denominations (Mennonite Church and Mennonite Brethren) into national structures.

Nonetheless, the time for a new North American Mennonite survey history is here. Both the *Mennonites in Canada* series and the *Mennonite Experience in America* series did not extend much beyond 1970.

The impact of recent gender and family analysis requires greater integration into Mennonite self-understanding, as does the emergence of many non-European voices within the North American Mennonite world that seek to integrate their faith with their cultural context.—**Sam Steiner**

The writer is librarian and archivist at Conrad Grebel University College in Ontario.

Online church directory ready to go

Visitors to Mennonite Church Canada’s web site can now easily locate a congregation in their area using the Church Finder tool on the home page. In addition, congregations now have access to their congregational profile via the web.

In addition, congregations can keep current information such as names of congregational leaders, attendance and membership, and a description of their congregation. Only the church name and contact information will be displayed to the public. Other data can be viewed and updated by authorized representatives of the congregation or Mennonite Church Canada.

User identification numbers, passwords, and a guide are being sent to all congregations. Office administrators and pastors should watch for information in the November mailing of *Equipping*.

The project is a joint effort of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and Mennonite Church Canada. Mennonite Foundation of Canada provided some funding.—MC Canada release

Answers: (1) There are five area conferences and all have a web site; (2) Mennonite Church Eastern Canada; (3) Settlers arrived in the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada area in 1900; (4) Manitoba; (5) Saskatchewan; (6) Manitoba; (7) Saskatchewan; (8) Eastern Canada.

Area conference web site quiz

Test your knowledge about Mennonite Church Canada area conferences with the following questions (compiled by Leona Dueck Penner):

1. What are the area conferences and which have their own web sites?
2. Which area conference organized an ecumenical event on November 11 and posted a liturgy on its web site?
3. When did the first Mennonite homesteaders arrive in Alberta and where did they settle?
4. Which area conference posts new music and videos made by congregants?
5. Which conference is promoting *From Anabaptist Seed* for a church-wide study this year?
6. Which conferences host discussion forums?
7. Which conference has 37 churches and 4,200 members?
8. Which conference promotes a photo gallery?

Check out the answers at the following web sites which offer a wealth of information and resources.

MC Alberta: mennonitechurch.ab.ca

MC British Columbia: www.mcbbc.ca

MC Eastern Canada: www.mcec.on.ca

MC Manitoba: mennochurch.mb.ca

MC Saskatchewan: mcsask.ca

School notes

New facilities for Steinbach schools

Steinbach, Man.—About 600 people attended the opening celebration of Steinbach Christian Schools on October 3. With two phases of the construction project complete, students of both Steinbach Bible College and Steinbach Christian High School are studying in their new facilities.

Phase one saw the addition of new classrooms and labs for the high school, as well as renovations to the gym and chapel shared by both schools. Phase two included reconstruction of the college classrooms and offices, and a facelift to the library. The next few years will see a new dining hall and kitchen.

Steinbach Bible College, which dates back to 1936, is currently operated by three Manitoba-based Mennonite groups: Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference and Chortitzer Mennonite Conference. Abe Bergen is president of the college.

The high school, which has board representation from the Free Church as well, offers grades 7 through 12. It is a member of the Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools. Randy Dueck is principal of the school. —From reports by supporting conferences

Schools directory



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Linden, Alta.

Foodgrains project continues Toews tradition

Twelve combines and twenty trucks converged on the C. C. Toews farm here on October 6 to harvest 310 acres of wheat for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. With a yield of 18,600 bushels, the entire field was harvested and trucked in two hours and 45 minutes.

The Foodgrains Bank is operated by 13 church organizations, including Mennonite Central Committee Canada. Because the Canadian International Development Agency matches the amount at 4:1, the 18,600 will become 93,000 bushels for people suffering hunger around the world today.

However, this harvest story begins in 1929. That year, C. C. and Anna Toews, recent immigrants from Russia, and C. W. Toews (no relation), a bachelor from Church of God in Christ Mennonite background, entered into a partnership. The Toews farm became known for its generosity and Christian hospitality. Whether it was for church support, community projects, MCC, education, missions or mutual aid, the Toewses could always be counted on.

Anna Toews, whose parents and siblings could not get out of Russia, “adopted” a large, extended family in Canada. For many years, she prepared meals for up to 20 people—a family of 12 plus students, missionaries or other people needing a home. C.C. and C. W. Toews always had their senses attuned to others’ needs. Stories abound



Twelve combines harvest a crop for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank near Linden, Alberta.

of a Model A Ford used for church purposes, grain given, gardens shared and gas pumped. It was in this spirit that the descendants decided to make the land available for this Foodgrains Bank project.

Shortly before he died, C.C. Toews said, “After losing everything in Russia, we decided never to hoard

material goods or be motivated by getting wealthy. Having seen famine, I always felt guilt walking by a wheat-full granary while there were hungry people in the world.”

One wishes the Toewses could have seen this project! Their spirit was extended to numerous church denominations, businesses, truckers, combine operators, donors and organizers who worked together. Said one participant, “It is so good to have a project where we can all work for a Christian cause.”

When the harvest was completed, Elroh Koch of Three Hills pulled up with his PetroCanada fuel truck, lined up all the combines and gave each 100 litres of diesel fuel. The event ended with a barbecue provided by the Church of God in Christ Mennonites in Swalwell.—From report by **Jack Dueck**

Pontius' Puddle



Altona, Man.

New cafe reaches out to community

At Sol Cafe, which celebrated its opening here October 15 and 16, there are no prices on the menu. The specialty coffees, juices and desserts are offered free to customers.

The cafe is a ministry of Seeds of Life Community Church. Run by volunteers, this non-profit cafe offers only Fair Trade coffee, and the desserts are purchased from a local tea room.

The cafe “offers a gift and a gateway to our community by providing good conversation and good coffee,” said Ted Enns Dyck, who co-pastors Seeds of Life church together with his wife, Darlene.

“To make Jesus real” has been the mission of this church since its inception five years ago. Since then, several dreams have become reality.

About a year ago, the church moved out of the high school into a renovated 10,000-square-foot former factory on Main Street.

“This building is not the church,” said Enns Dyck. “It is just a building with the potential for community ministry.” The congregation meets for worship here, but it needed a different name to “express the heart of what we wanted to happen and not to be too churchy sounding.”

The “eXchange,” as it is called, is where exchanges happen “between God and us and between people,” explained Enns Dyck. It is a place where people gather for worship, for meetings, for children’s ministry, and now for coffee.

This corner of the eXchange, with its warm adobe colours, offers an inviting place for people to come on Friday and Saturday evenings. “Sol” is from the first letters of the congregation’s name as well as a play on the word “soul” and a reference to the Latin American word for “sun.”

“We invite people to make donations to cover the costs,” said Enns Dyck. “We’ve had people here who would not have come if they would have had to pay. Some people are very generous.”

Everything raised beyond expenses goes towards a project. Build a Village,



Ted Enns Dyck (left) and Donovan Bergman serve coffee at the Sol Cafe.

a community-based project that works with Mennonite Central Committee to rebuild homes in El Salvador, was the project for July to October; \$500 was raised through Sol Cafe.

Sol Cafe is managed by a team of four—Candice Letkeman, Robin Klassen, Sandra Doell and Enns Dyck, with over 20 volunteers.

“We try to follow an apostolic leadership structure at Seeds of Life,” explained Enns Dyck. There are three paid staff which includes Ted and Darlene. A team of eight people offer leadership in various church activities.

“We have no offices,” said Enns Dyck. “If there isn’t someone gifted, called and passionate, the job isn’t going to get done. Our desire is to get people who are passionate about a ministry. We need to be willing to let some things not happen.”

Member Donovan Bergman left his job as a customer service representative for a less demanding job in order to follow a calling into mission in the church.

“This community of people will help you discern,” he said. “When there are 150 people behind you and praying for you, it helps to overcome the times of doubts and fears.”

Robin Klassen said she has experienced a wellness here that she has not experienced anywhere else. The church assisted her financially at a time when she was in need.

“The church releases you to your giftedness. It releases me to use my gifts for other people.”

One member who has used her artistic gifts and interest in restoring discarded things for the cafe and the church has been encouraged by the church to use her gifts in a “Junk to Joy” ministry with marginalized youth.

Bergman appreciates the church because “It allows you to come as you are. It is a really welcoming atmosphere.”—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Baden, Ont.

Editor receives blessing for his new role

On October 24, Steinmann Mennonite Church here welcomed Timothy Dyck into membership, and had a ceremony of blessing for his role as editor and publisher of *Canadian Mennonite*.

Tim was introduced to the children by Ilene Bergen, Christian Formation pastor at Steinmann. She asked Tim why he wanted to become a member, and he responded, "I want to become a member because I love Jesus and I want to be like Jesus.... And when we are at church that's the way we can learn how Jesus was."

Tim also answered questions about his job at *Canadian Mennonite*. His excitement was evident as he talked about his new responsibility. This magazine "tells stories of how God loves us and how we love each other," he said. When asked what he likes best about his job, Tim stated, "The best thing is hearing stories of how God works in our churches. That's very exciting."

What is not as much fun? He replied that it is when "many people want you to do a lot of things, and that's tricky."

The membership transfer was completed with a reading that began with "Welcome! We receive you with joy." Tim's easy laugh and twinkling eyes made the welcoming fun for the children as well as the rest of the congregation.

Tim had asked to be dedicated for this important ministry. Several people

participated in the blessing and prayer for Tim, including his fiancée, Myrna Miller, the Christian Community pastor at Steinmann. Susan Seyler, chair of the Vision Focus Team of Steinmann, asked Tim to affirm his faithfulness to his calling, with God's help.

Dan Nighswander, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, affirmed Tim's calling, and Brian Bauman, Minister of Missions for

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada wished him God's blessing. Larry Cornies, a member of the board of *Canadian Mennonite*, promised to work with Tim, "calling on God to allow *Canadian Mennonite* to be a blessing in the church."

The congregation responded with a hymn of blessing: "The Lord lift you up, the Lord take your hand...."

—From report by **Joy Wagler**



Photo by Maurice Martin

Ilene Bergen introduces Tim Dyck to the children at Steinmann Mennonite Church.



Photo by Julie Kauffman

Ten-year-old Akey sits beside her mother, who crafts stars for an MCC project in Bangladesh. In October, MCC Bangladesh celebrated 30 years of providing employment for women. MCC helps more than 900 rural women to feed their families, send their children to school and have more of a voice in the community. One of these women is Shobita Rani Das (see cover). Many of the crafts are sold through Ten Thousand Villages. Akey and her brother, Showpaw, are featured in a new MCC video, "Child's View: Bangladesh." To order, call 888-622-6337.

—From MCC release

Water Valley, Alta.

Meditation Trail dedicated at Valaqua

A Meditation Trail was dedicated at Camp Valaqua during the fall workday on October 16. The trail goes through trees and meadows, with benches placed at intervals beside plaques with meditations on faith. Each meditation includes a Bible passage and a quote from an early Anabaptist.

Tanya Dyck Steinmann, camp co-director, prepared the meditations from the book, *Praying with the Anabaptists*, by Marlene Kropf and Eddy Hall.

When the Alberta Home for the Aged, located in Coaldale,

Trail meditation

The following is from one of the meditations along the new trail at Camp Valaqua.

Making our home in Christ (John 15:1-4, Psalm 84)

We each desire to feel at home, to be in a place where we feel safe, accepted, secure, and comfortable. Yet ours is a generation that feels less and less at home. A sense of "inner homelessness" may prompt us to move in and out of relationships, change jobs, go back to school, switch churches, or move across the country. Continual uprooting can leave us feeling that it's far less painful to avoid putting down roots at all. To us, Jesus announces good news. He wants to be our home.

Nowhere does Jesus invite us to intimacy with him more vividly than in the parable of the vine and the branches. What does Jesus mean by this image of abiding? When a branch is grafted onto a vine, the branch sends out little roots and fibres that grow into the stem. The stem also grows up into the branch until the wood of the vine and the wood of the branch become one. At the same time, the sap of the vine enters the branch and flows through it to produce new shoots and leaves and fruit. This organic union is the picture of the relationship to which Jesus invites us.

How are you being called to receive the life of Jesus, the true Vine? What "sap" are you receiving? What fruit is growing? Give thanks for God's tender care and life-giving presence.

This prayer is adapted from a quote attributed to Pilgram Marpeck, an Anabaptist in the 1500s: Gardener God, you have planted and protected us by your faithful hand. Send us the sap of your grace from Christ, the true Vine, and make us

blossom and bear the fruit of love as a sign of your life in us. Let the sweet fragrance of the shoots you have planted give you praise forever and ever Amen.

The above is used by permission from Praying with the Anabaptists by Marlene Kropf and Eddy Hall (Faith & Life Press, 1994). The prayer is from The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck, trans. by William Klassen and Walter Klaassen (Herald Press, 1978).



Linden Willms, moderator of Mennonite Church Alberta, cuts the ribbon to open the Meditation Trail at Camp Valaqua.

closed some years ago, funds were donated to Camp Valaqua and this trail recognizes that contribution. Lois Epp, co-chair of the camp committee, noted that this is a gift from older generations to those using the camp today.

Jeff Schellenberg, camp manager, led the walk along the Mediation Trail. The setting encourages people to take time to reflect and consider their Christian walk.—From Camp Valaqua report



Photo by Anna Marie Boyes

Trinity Mennonite Church broke ground for its new building on a snowy field south of Calgary on October 24. Holding the shovel is the building committee, back row from left: Doug Janzen, Susanne Baergen (chair), Hans Van der Wall, Leonard Dyck; front: Rose Krahn and Doug Boyes. "Dreams do come true," said Jim Shantz, Mennonite Church Alberta conference pastor. "Despite all the obstacles—rejections, delays, land issues—God has truly led you here to this beautiful meadow.... The right people entered into the story at the right time." About 60 people attended the ceremony, including recently retired pastors Hugo and Doreen Neufeld and architect Charles Olfert.—From report by Doris Daley Haysom



Introduced at the opening of the Korea Anabaptist Center's new offices are MC Canada Witness workers, from left: Cheryl Woelk of Swift Current, Saskatchewan; Gina Loewen of Winnipeg; Rachel Vermeer of Lethbridge, Alberta; Allison Pauls of Winkler, Manitoba; Jeremy Martens, Steinbach, Man. At right is Jae-young Lee, vice president of Connexus.

Korea centre finds new home

After moving six times since 2001, the Korea Anabaptist Center has finally found stability. On October 16, about 75 supporters of the centre gathered for the dedication service of their new office and English language institute, Connexus.

In Seoul, space is at a premium and very expensive. Income to fund the centre's growing programs has also been a concern.

One Sunday morning, as prayer was again requested for the centre during worship at Jesus Village Church in Chun Cheon, an entrepreneur in the congregation felt the Spirit prodding him to respond. Ahn Dong-min had some space in his office building and offered it to the centre. An English language institute could generate income and extend the centre's ministry.

However, a zoning by-law would not permit the school in Ahn's building. Ahn and a partner found a suitable new space a few blocks away. The partners invested heavily to acquire enough space for an office and library, a meeting room, a kitchen and five spacious classrooms.

The hope is that income from the institute will repay the investment and generate a steady income.—From report by **Erwin Wiens**



AMBS photo

Canadians at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Indiana sing together at a recent convocation. From left: students Kevin and Rochelle Drudge from Winkler, Manitoba; student Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel and development associate Harold Hildebrand Schlegel from St. Jacobs, Ontario; Bruce Balmer of Kitchener, Ontario, a participant in the AMBS pastor sabbatical program; and John Rempel, theology professor.—AMBS release

Transitions

Births/adoptions

Buhr—to Carie (Voth) and Lorne, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Xander Lee, Sept. 3.

Dueck—to Norinne and Wes, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a son, Mason Jared, Oct. 7.

Gole—to Jennifer and David, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., a son, Ryan William Joseph, Oct. 25.

Hargraves—to Lisa and Peter of Montreal, Springstein Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Dorothy Jean, Oct. 14.

Harms—to Teri-Lynn (Heinrichs) and Ashley, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Austin Trent, Oct. 10.

Koop—to Jennifer and Leonard, Pleasant Point Mennonite, Clavet, Sask., a son, Jason Leonard, Sept. 14.

Toews—to Esther and Darryl, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a daughter, Anika, Sept. 26.

Wagler—to Ruth and Alvin, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., a son, Tyler Wade, Oct. 19.

Zinter—to Monica and Brian of Calgary, Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, a son, Max Brian, Oct. 23.

Marriages

Bergman-Hogue—Dustin (Seeds of Life Community Church) and Julia (Springstein Mennonite) at Springstein Mennonite, Man., Oct. 2.

Crowley-Bender—Jim (Roman Catholic) and Stephanie, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 23.

Driedger-Tiessen—Gregory and Maida, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 3.

Giesbrecht-Wall—Robert Martin and Lisa Marie, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C., Oct. 9.

Motz-Goerzen—Arlen and Heidi, Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta., Oct. 9.

Pankratz-Fast—Richard and Lauren, Niagara United

Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 2.

Regehr-Pulley—Thomas and Krista, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 2.

Rennie-Gerber—Jonathan and Andrea (Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.), in Cambridge, Ont., Sept. 18.

Roth-Holliday—Bradley (Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.) and Jennifer, Sept. 25.

Deaths

Brubacher—Myra, 83, Floradale Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 6.

Buhr—Mary, 82, First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., Oct. 23.

Burnett—James Percival, 89, Preston Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 8.

Fehr—Jacob, 90, Blumenort Mennonite, Man., Oct. 16.

Nickel—Maria, 94, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, Oct. 14.

Peters—Mary, 89, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Sept. 30.

Phoxay—Boapan (Phonexay), 56, Grace Lao Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., Oct. 5.

Ramseyer—Gladys, 96, Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Nov. 1.

Sawatzky—Katie, 70, Morden Mennonite, Man., Oct. 7.

Schmidt—Mary, 71, Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta., Oct. 4.

Toews—Margarete, 85, Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, Oct. 29.

Wall—Bob, 50, Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta., Sept. 28.

Wismer—Henry Harold, 94, Preston Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 14.

Baptisms

Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.—Adam Hildebrandt, Tara Sawatzky, Oct. 10.

Grace Lao Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.—Chat Douankham, Khem Douankham, Luan Douankham, Oct. 24.

Mennonite Church Canada

Canada, USA renew covenant for mission

Mission representatives of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA unanimously renewed a covenant October 23 to continue shared international ministry in more than 25 countries.

Meeting at the Rosemary Heights Retreat Centre in Surrey, B.C., the Christian Witness Council of MC Canada and the board of Mennonite Mission Network (MC USA) signed the second such covenant since their creation in 2001.

The covenant, and a more detailed joint operating agreement, outline principles for mission collaboration.

"It's clear on our intention to keep being very close and very good partners together," said Willard M. Metzger of Drayton, Ontario, chair of MC Canada's Witness Council.

"It's so great to be reminded again that this border is strictly political, and it's not a spiritual border," said Alice Ruth Ramseyer, Mission Network board member from Bluffton, Ohio.

While most of the covenant remains the same, the new covenant will be reviewed every two years instead of three, and the Witness Council and Mission Network board will meet at least every other year instead of annually.

In the joint operating agreement, one of the most significant changes results from a new coalition of congregations in Canada that have hosted Mennonite Voluntary Service or Service Adventure units. That group is working to revive a national structure for Christian service options after financial constraints resulted in MC



Photo by Tom Price

Mission leaders sign a covenant for shared ministry. From left: Jack Suderman, executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness; Willard Metzger, chair of the Christian Witness Council; Lee Schmucker, chair of the Mennonite Mission Network board; and Stanley W. Green, executive director of the Mission Network.

Canada ending its funding for Christian Service Ministry. The Mission Network will need to work out protocols for binational relationships with that group.—From joint release by **Tom Price**

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Pastors ordained and licensed

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada is experiencing considerable movement of pastors this fall. A number of persons have been credentialled for ministry in congregations and in the wider church.

Jason Martin was ordained in August at Community Church in Drayton, Ontario, for his work of church planting and evangelism in Bari, Italy. His assignment is with Mennonite Church Canada Witness, and with Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions.

Troy Watson was ordained at Bethany Mennonite Church in Virgil, Ontario, on September 18. On September 25, Matthew and Hendrike Isert Bender were ordained for their joint ministry at Nith Valley

Mennonite Church. Hendrike was pleased that her parents were able to come from Germany for that milestone event.

Tim Doherty was licensed at Zurich Mennonite in Ontario as associate pastor working with youth. On October 3, Myrna Miller from Kansas was licensed at Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden, Ontario, where she is Pastor of Christian Community.

Tim Dyck was commissioned at Steinman Mennonite on October 24 for his work as editor/publisher of *Canadian Mennonite* (see page 32).

Lori Reesor was licensed toward ordination in October for her ministry at Mississauga Mennonite Fellowship. Heather Gallian was licensed for her half-time work as Youth Ministry Pastor with the Markham area Mennonite youth. She continues half-time as MCEC Minister of Youth Ministries.

Ardith Frey will be licensed toward ordination on November 14 for her work as Interim Minister at Hamilton Mennonite Church.

Orientation for new pastors

There are approximately 20 pastors who are new to MCEC or returning after several years elsewhere. Ten of them met at MCEC offices this fall for an orientation session. The purpose was to meet each other, to meet the staff, and to learn what staff offer them in support of their ministries.

One participant, from a different denomination, said that he had never been at an event like this and found it very helpful. It gives him a sense of what the area church office offers.

Muriel Bechtel, Minister of Pastoral Services, comments that this is an important event, especially for people from other traditions, other areas of the Mennonite Church, or other experiences.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Campers continue community experience

In the dead of winter, car-pooling to university, Andrea Wiebe (Springstein Mennonite) and Sara Jane Friesen (Altona Bergthaler and Charleswood Mennonite) began to dream. They had both been summer program directors within Camps with Meaning.

They dreamed about inviting campers and staff to worship times throughout the year as an extension of the camp community.

On May 16, the first Camper Worship Event took place. Invited were all who had been at Camps Assiniboia, Moose Lake and Koinonia in the summer of 2003: staff and campers from grades 7-12, as well as youth from Manitoba churches. They met at Bethel Mennonite Church to sing, hear scripture and a short message by staff Dale Friesen

(Altona Bergthaler) who spoke about the meaning of community. Fellowship around food concluded the evening.

In summer we sent invitations to campers in the form of fridge magnets to be part of "Gather 'Round Fall 2004!" We planned four events.

September 18, in the soupy baseball diamond at Canadian Mennonite University, over 100 campers and staff slid through a great round of Prisoner's Base. After playing together, they went inside to sing, listen to Scripture and hear a message about "newness," appropriate for the start of a new school year. Discussion was guided by Laura Thiessen (Altona Mennonite).

I am hooked, and looking forward to the next time we "Gather 'Round!"—Sandy W. Plett, director of Summer Camp/Youth Ministries for MC Manitoba

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Farmers suffering from early frost

Farmers in Glenbush, about two hours northwest of Saskatoon, felt deeply the bite of the early frost on August 20. Of the three small Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregations in that area, only a handful of members are not directly tied to the agricultural industry.

"About ninety percent of our people are farmers," said Don Unger, pastor of the three-parish Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church (Glenbush, Mayfair and Rabbit Lake).

Before the frost hit, farmers were feeling optimistic about the high yields that signified a possible bumper crop. After three years of drought-like conditions, extensive rainfall had produced an abundance of good quality grain. After the early frost, the quality of the grain was severely downgraded.

"Basically it meant that most grain is coming off as seed," explained Unger. An

early snowfall has meant difficulty in getting the grain off and baling straw for bedding. Most of the farmers raise livestock in addition to their grain farming.

In the past, noted Unger, there was always the hope that if one area didn't do well, another would. This year, the hope of increased financial opportunity through diversification wasn't borne out.

"With poor cattle prices due to BSE, both industries were hit hard at the same time," said Unger. Prayer for the farmers is needed.

Pray "that God would give people a sense of hope in the midst of difficult economic times," said Unger.

Mennonite Church Alberta

Pastors plan covenant in Alberta

Despite winter's first snowfall, approximately 20 pastors gathered at Camp Valaqua on October 18-20 for a meeting of the Pastor's Council. While previous meetings focused on relationships and sharing faith journeys, this was clearly a working session.

At their last meeting in June, pastors were reminded that the Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church's five-year period of voluntary withdrawal from Mennonite Church Alberta is coming to an end. This was an important item for this meeting.

Willard Swartley's book, *Homosexuality: Biblical Interpretation and Moral Discernment*, was a useful starting point for discussion. The atmosphere was congenial and caring as pastors shared responses to the book and their own experiences. Led by conference pastor Jim Shantz, the group began work on a "pastor's covenant" for themselves.

Such a covenant may eventually serve as a unifying guide for MCA pastors as they seek to provide sound pastoral care in their congregations and



Pastors Roy Hewko (Rosemary) and Bob Crosland (Tofield) enjoy a shuffle board game during a break in the Pastor's Council meeting in Alberta.

advise the MCA executive. The meetings helped to show the need for clarity and good communication regarding Calgary Inter-Mennonite's current status in the conference.

Pastors noted that the commitment to pray for each other as congregations, made at a gathering in November 2000, likely has not been adequately attended to. The group encouraged prayer for congregations and the conference, and committed itself to work with Calgary Inter-Mennonite and offer pastoral care.

Throughout the meetings, frank, and respectful dialogue occurred. Even though the pastor's covenant was left as a "work in progress," participants went home feeling that good work had been done.

The Pastor's Council meets at least twice annually to foster relationships, provide resources for pastors, and to discuss issues of importance to the spiritual health of the conference. While not a decision-making body, the council serves as an important advisory body to the MCA executive.

Happy Birthday to Chinese church

On October 22, the Edmonton Chinese Mennonite Church celebrated its 15th birthday! Friends from the three supporting congregations joined members at a restaurant to fellowship and give thanks for God's blessings.

The Chinese church began as a vision of the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers in 1989 under the leadership of Timothy Ngo. Lendrum Mennonite Brethren, First Mennonite, and Holyrood churches have supported the Chinese church. The four churches have annual joint worship services—the Chinese children's worship dance group, with their vibrant costumes and red fans, is always a highlight.

The congregation, with 35 members, purchased its own building in 1998 and paid off its debt in five years. The congregation has been developing programs and conference involvements.

Ken Tse is the current pastor. In 2003, grant money from MC Canada's City on a Hill program was used to begin a Mandarin ministry.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Youth pastors installed at Yarrow

Yarrow United Mennonite Church welcomed Keith and Jennifer St. Jean to its pastoral staff with an installation service in October. Keith has been working at the church since July as youth pastor. The installation service was officiated by Henry Kliever, conference minister for MC British Columbia, and was followed by a communion service and thanksgiving meal.

The youth started off their fall program with a community Beach Party on the church parking lot that included "beach" volleyball and a barbecue. More than 70 young people from the community attended.

Employment opportunities

The Altona EMMC, a congregation of 650 people, is looking for a full-time

PASTOR OF YOUTH AND EDUCATION

This individual will have the responsibility of setting direction and vision for our youth programs. Other involvement will include resourcing Education. Submit resume and applications or questions to:

Karl Dreger, c/o Altona EMMC
Box 907 Altona, MB R0G 0B0
E-mail: karldreger@hotmail.com
Phone: (204) 324-8223

MCC Manitoba is seeking a full-time

PROGRAM TEAM LEADER.

Functioning as a member of the MCCM Management Team, this person will support the work of individual Program Staff and coordinate overall goals and objectives of the MCCM Program Team. Please respond to

Janelle Siemens: jms@mennonitecc.ca
Sol Janzen: sjj@mennonitecc.ca
Phone: (204) 261-6381 for more information.

Application deadline is December 10, 2004. Women and members of visible minorities are encouraged to apply.

All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith and discipleship, active church membership and non-violent peacemaking

PASTOR

Faith Mennonite Church, in Leamington, ON has an opening for a full time pastoral position. The position will be available in early summer 2005. Experience would definitely be considered an asset. Faith Mennonite is a church of about 200 members with many young families. We are located about 35 minutes from Windsor.

Any interested person/persons may ask for a church profile and/or apply at:

Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada
4489 King St. E
Kitchener, P
ON N2P 2G2
Attn: Muriel Bechtel

Hamilton Mennonite Church invites applications for a

FULL TIME PASTOR

This dynamic urban congregation of about 100 members is located in the McMaster University area of Hamilton. We just celebrated our 50th anniversary. We seek a warm, welcoming person with good interpersonal skills. Primary responsibilities are preaching, teaching and overall pastoral care. We would assume that candidates are committed to the values and visions of the Anabaptist Mennonite church.

For more information contact:

Muriel Bechtel, MCEC Pastoral Services
4489 King Street E., Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2
Phone (519) 650-3806; Fax (519) 650-3947
E-mail: muriel@mcec.on.ca



ASSISTANT DIRECTOR and HEAD COOK Silver Lake Mennonite Camp

Silver Lake Mennonite Camp invites applications for the positions of Assistant Director and Head Cook. As part of a leadership team of three directors, the Assistant Director will participate in hiring, leading and supporting a staff of approximately 40, giving overall direction to the children's summer camp program, and fulfilling administration duties. The position is part-time from December 1, 2004 to April 30, 2005 and becomes full-time from May 1 to Aug. 31, 2005.

The Head Cook is to oversee the preparation of all food and management of the kitchen at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp from the middle of June until the end of August. For more information on either job visit www.slmc.on.ca/jobs.php

Please send a letter of application, a resume and the names of two references to:

Ben Janzen, Director
c/o Silver Lake Mennonite Camp
50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1
E-mail: silverlake@sympatico.ca
Deadline: November 22, 2004

VOLUNTEER DIRECTORS Mennonite Centre in Ukraine

The Mennonite Centre, located in a restored former girls school in Halbstadt, Molochna, specializes in medical and educational programs and acts as a learning centre. We are forming an ongoing team of several retired or semi-retired volunteer couples, each spending 3 to 4 months a year in Ukraine. We are looking for men and women who can model professional leadership and management roles. Knowledge of German is very helpful, as is some familiarity with Russian. For more information contact:

Walter Unger
Phone: (416) 925-9461; E-mail: walterunger@ica.net

Advent resources

The November/December edition of Equipping Canada highlights Advent and Christmas resources, including a "worship at home" study and activities guide adapted by Elsie Rempel from Advent 2004 worship materials. It also includes a list of Christmas books and other resources available from the Resource Centre.

Equipping is available from the church office and online at www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources/equipping/current/. It also offers a peek at the Prayer Week 2005 study guide written by Dan Nighswander on the theme, "Praying over the broken body of Christ." This guide will be included in the January Equipping mailing.

There are also prayer requests, notes for bulletin covers and information on upcoming events, along with reflections from Mennonite Church Canada leaders.

Toews to report on Molochna anniversary

Waterloo, Ont.—The Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario and the Institute of Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies at Conrad Grebel University College present “A lens to the Russian Mennonite story: The Molochna bicentennial” with Paul Toews at the college on December 4 at 2:30 p.m.

Toews teaches history at Fresno Pacific University in California, and has just spent a year in Ukraine as a Fulbright Scholar. He was involved in the recent Molochna bicentennial celebrations, and coordinated the collection of 139 Molochna photographs from archives and private collections.

For more information, phone Sam Steiner at (519) 885-0220, ext. 238, or e-mail: steiner@uwaterloo.ca.

Speak out against Israeli wall

Winnipeg, Man.—Mennonite Central Committee Canada is encouraging people to join the “Bridges Not Walls” campaign in response to the building of the security wall in Israel.

Congregations and individuals are asked to write to lawmakers to put pressure on Israeli and Palestinian leaders, and then report to MCC Ottawa the number of letters they sent.

Israel says the barrier, a zone of fences and nine-metre-high walls, is necessary for security, but Palestinians see it as an attempt to take their land away from them.

For more information see www.mcc.org/canada/ottawa.

For resources, including material for children, go to www.mcc.org/us/bridges.

—From MCC release

Calendar

British Columbia

November 26, 27: Christmas concert featuring Calvin Dyck, Betty Suderman, Mel Bowker and orchestra at Sardis Community Church (26) and Bakerview MB Church (27), 7:30 p.m. Sponsored by MCC B.C. Supportive Care Services.

November 29: MC Canada financial information meeting, Eben Ezer Mennonite, Abbotsford, 7:30 p.m.

December 1: “Oratorio for AIDS” fundraising concert for MCC AIDS work, at First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver, 7:30 p.m. Phone (604) 910-2907 for details.

December 3-11: Ten Thousand Villages Christmas sale at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

December 4, 5: Abendmusik Advent Vespers at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (4), Knox United Church, Vancouver (5), 8:00 p.m.

February 11, 12, 18, 19: MCC B.C. fundraising banquets. Details to come.

February 12-20: MCC Arts and Peace Festival.

February 25: MC British Columbia LEAD Conference at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver.

February 26: Mennonite Church British Columbia annual sessions at First Mennonite Church, Vancouver.

March 19, 20: Abendmusik Lenten Vespers at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (19), Knox United Church, Vancouver (20), 8:00 p.m.

Alberta

November 25: Meeting of youth sponsors and leaders at Parable Bookstore, Red Deer (Gasoline Alley). Contact Mary-Ann van Oeveren for details, phone (403) 335-8264, e-mail: atgmaster2@telus.net.

December 4: Opening ceremony for MCC building in Calgary.

December 9: Musical “Angels Aware” at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary, 7:00 p.m.

January 12: Sweet Interlude at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary.

January 21-23: Junior high Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua.

January 30: Skate-a-thon for Menno Simons Christian School at Olympic Oval, Calgary.

February 18-20: Senior high Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua.

February 25-26: Mennonite Church Alberta annual delegate session at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton.

February 25-27: Senior high Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua.

March 4: Second Fine Arts Festival for youth, sponsored



Photo by Anna Speicher

Writers for the new Sunday School curriculum, “Gather ‘Round: Hearing and Sharing God’s Good News,” enjoy a group activity during their meeting September 19-23 in Milford, Indiana. The curriculum is being developed by Mennonite Publishing Network for Mennonite Church Canada, MC USA, and Church of the Brethren (U.S.). From left: Rebecca Seiling (MC Canada), Susan Fuentes (Brethren), Elsie Rempel (MC Canada), Sarah Pinnell (MC Canada), Eleanor Snyder (MPN), Frank Ramirez (Brethren), Wendy McFadden (Brethren), Gwen Gustafson-Zook (MC USA).—From MC Canada release

by MCC Alberta, at Rocky Mountain Bible College, Calgary.

July 15-16: MCC Alberta Relief Sale in Sherwood Park, Edmonton.

Saskatchewan

December 3-4: Christmas Dinner Theatre at Rosthern Junior College: "It's a wonderful life."

December 12, 17: Buncha' Guys concert, at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, 2:00 p.m. (12); Timberlodge at Shekinah, 7:30 p.m. (17).

December 22: Christmas concert at Rosthern Junior College, 7:00 p.m.

February 25-26: Mennonite Church Saskatchewan annual sessions at Rosthern Junior College.

June 25-26: Camp Elim 60th anniversary celebrations.

July 23-24: 50th anniversary celebrations at Grace Mennonite Church, Regina.

Manitoba

November 23, 25: MC Canada financial information meeting at Grace Mennonite, Steinbach (23); Home St., Winnipeg (25), 7:30 p.m.

November 24: Evening with the Arts at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg, 7:30 p.m.

November 28: Opening concert at Performing Arts Centre, Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna.

December 4: Christmas concert at Canadian Mennonite University, 7:00 p.m.

December 9, 16: Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School Christmas programs, 7:00 p.m. Aggasiz at Bethel Mennonite Church (9); Bedson at Immanuel Pentecostal (16).

December 11: Advent concert by NKMC Quartet at North Kildonan Mennonite Church, 7:00 p.m.

December 12: Advent concert by Faith and Life Male Choir and Women's Chorus, at First Mennonite, Winnipeg (3:00 p.m.), Springfield Heights Mennonite, 7:30 p.m.

December 13: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, 7:00 p.m.

December 16, 17: Christmas program at Mennonite Collegiate Institute, 7:30 p.m. (16), 1:30 p.m. (17).

January 20-22: Refreshing Winds, conference on worship and music at Canadian Mennonite University. Visit www.cmu.ca for details.

January 23: Alumni concert at Performing Arts Centre, Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna.

February 4: CMU choirs and Winnipeg Symphony premiere Patrick Carrabré's "In the Beginning" at New Music Festival, Centennial Concert Hall.

March 6: Choral Connections concert at CMU, 7:30 p.m.

March 11-13: Peace-It-Together youth conference at Canadian Mennonite University.

April 23-24: Graduation weekend at Canadian Mennonite University: Spring concert (23), convocation (24).

Ontario

November 20: Fundraiser evening of music and storytelling for the Visitor Centre, at St. Jacobs Mennonite, 7:30 p.m.

November 20: Concert by DaCapo Chamber Choir, directed by Leonard Enns, at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener, 8:00 p.m.

November 21: MC Canada financial information meeting, St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m.

November 21: Junior Youth Breakaway at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, 10:00 a.m.

November 21: Menno Valley Sound meat canning fundraiser at First Mennonite, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m.

November 23-27: Ten Thousand Villages Sale, Old Town Hall, Aylmer. Call (519) 765-3020.

November 26-28: Ten Thousand Villages Mennonite

Christmas Festival at Harbourfront Centre, Toronto.

November 27: Faith and Law seminar at Conrad Grebel University College.

December 3, 4: Menno Singers/Mass Choir performs "Messiah" at Centre in the Square, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m.

December 4, 5: Christmas concert by Pax Christi Chorale at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto, 8:00 p.m. (Sat.), 3:00 p.m. (Sun.). Call (416) 494-7889.

December 12: Concert by Lifted Voices at First Mennonite, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m.

December 16: Christmas concert at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

December 18: Kitchener-Waterloo Philharmonic Choir performs Bach's Christmas Oratorio at Centre in the Square, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m.

February 15-17: School for Ministers and Chaplains at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

United States

January 24-27: Pastors' Week at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

July 4-9: Charlotte 2005, Mennonite Church Canada and MC USA Assembly and Youth Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina.

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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

Tokmak, Ukraine

Canadian musicians make music in Ukraine

British Columbia musicians Calvin Dyck and Betty Suderman provided musical resources for the Mennonite Heritage Cruise to Ukraine this fall for the second time, and performed for Ukrainian audiences in several places.

They gave their theme recital, "Golden violin," at Melitopol, Tokmak and Zaporizhzhie. The recital, with costumes and historical anecdotes, traces the history of Dyck's violin, crafted in 1807 by Johannes Cuypers of the

Netherlands. Suderman is a pianist.

Dyck and Suderman also gave master classes and performed with the student orchestra at the Zaporizhzhie College of Music. They presented *Kernlieder* (core Mennonite hymns) at Melitopol Pedagogical University and performed at the Tokmak College of Music (near Halbstadt in the former Molochna settlement).

Their major concert for the cruise passengers was held in Sevastopol, Crimea in the hall of the Black Sea Fleet Ensemble.—From report by **Walter Unger**

Calvin Dyck and Betty Suderman perform for Ukrainian audiences.

