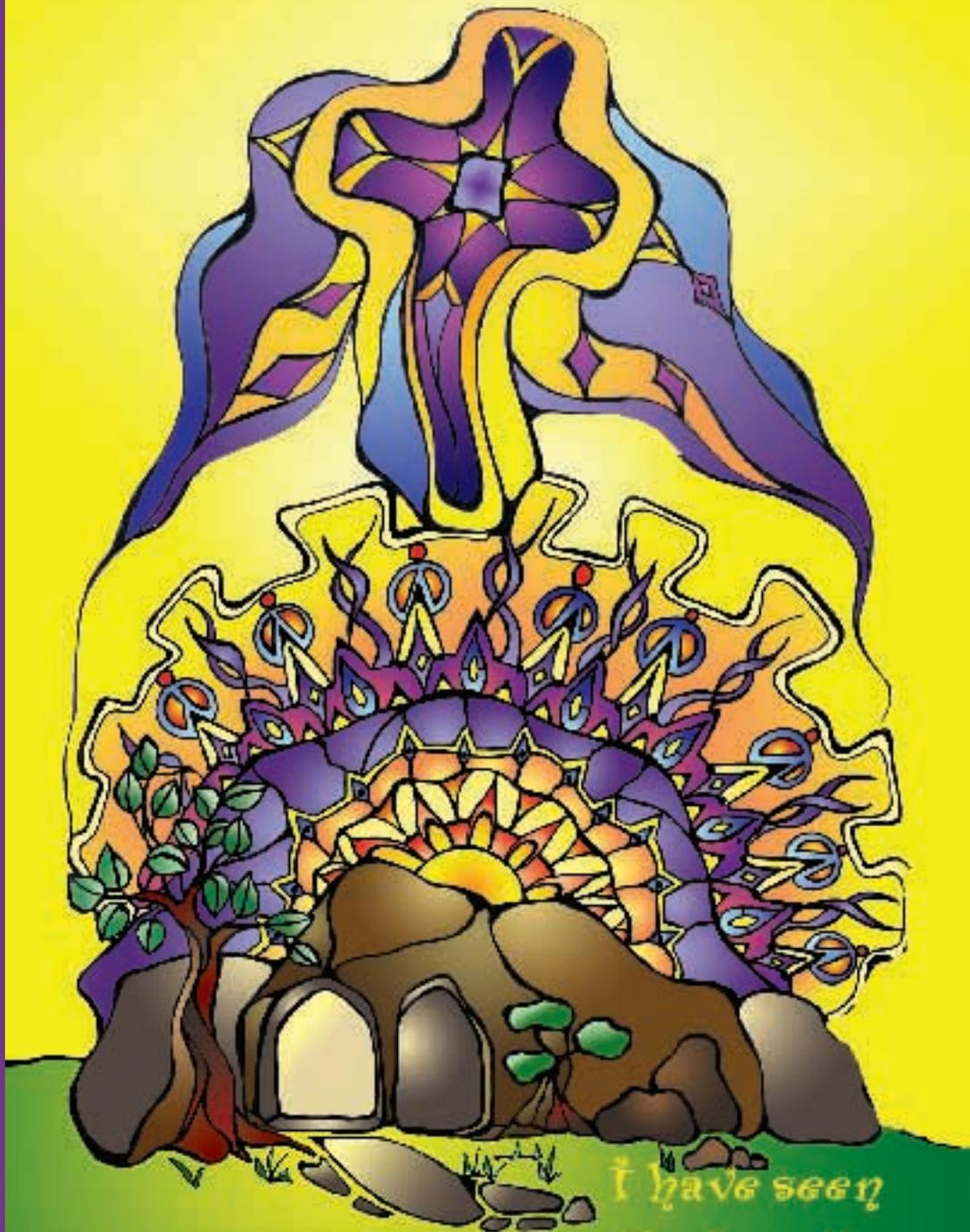


CANADIAN Mennonite

March 21, 2005
Volume 9, Number 6



*I have seen
the Lord!*

July 2010

In the middle of a miracle

Both the resurrection of Lazarus and Jesus are mighty examples of God being God: A God whose entire creation is subject to its creator, a God who renders death no barrier to future plans and no ending of current dreams.

But these stories are not just about God. They are examples of God moving among us as we are, living as we do in a broken world. As we read in John 11, Jesus loved Lazarus but still waited to come, knowing he was deathly ill. Lazarus was raised from the dead, but he suffered and died first. When Jesus came, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said, "Unbind him and let him go."

That's a humbling picture of us in God's plan. We are a raised people. Jesus has given us life beyond what we deserve or can expect. Yet sometimes we still end up shuffling about with our hands and feet tied and no clear vision of what lies ahead, all while in the middle of a miracle.

Sometimes God doesn't meet us when or where we ask. Jesus pleaded with his Father that the suffering of the cross be taken from him. Yet all of this was for God's glory.

Jesus asked Martha a very important question. "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world" (John 11:25-27).

Jesus has come into the world. Death had no final power over him. As with Lazarus, he commands that we be unbound from the things that hinder us. He asks that we declare our trust in his purposes even when these might not match our plans. In saying, "Yes, Lord," we experience new life as a result.

Correction: My Feb. 7 editorial on peacemaking misstated the number of Mennonite conscientious objectors in Canada. The editorial should have read, "In Canada, about 4,500 ethnic Mennonites either volunteered to fight or entered the military through the draft in WWII. That's about half the number that claimed conscientious objector (CO) status." My source was p. 58-59 of T.D. Regehr's *Mennonites in Canada: 1939-1970*, where he states, "More than 12,000 persons of Mennonite ethnic background left their homes for active military or alternative service during the Second World War... The 7,543 who claimed CO status also responded to changes wrought by the war."

Thanks and welcome: With this issue, we extend our thanks to Tammy Sawatzky, who has been *Canadian Mennonite's* Art Director for the past two years, and we welcome a new staffperson on board. By amazing coincidence, his name is Tim Dyck as well (of Durham, Ontario). Tim R. Dyck worked as designer here in the late 1990s and we are glad to have him back.

Guest Editorials: On April 2, I will have the great privilege and pleasure of marrying Myrna Miller of Arlington, Kan. We met while students at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. After graduating last summer, she was called to be one of the pastors at Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden, Ont. I am truly blessed to have a woman such as her becoming my wife! Our prayer is that we seek to follow God faithfully so that together we may serve God and others. To take time for the wedding and honeymoon, I will be out of the office for the weeks surrounding the wedding. The April 4 and April 18 editorials will be written by Bernie Wiebe of Winnipeg. Bernie is a former editor of *The Mennonite* and, since February, he has been chair of *Canadian Mennonite's* board. I leave you in good hands. Christ is risen!

—Timothy Dyck

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Web site preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted on our web site at www.canadianmennonite.org on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the April 4 issue by March 31.

Cover: The artwork was created by Lynette Wiebe, from a series of bulletin covers she designed.

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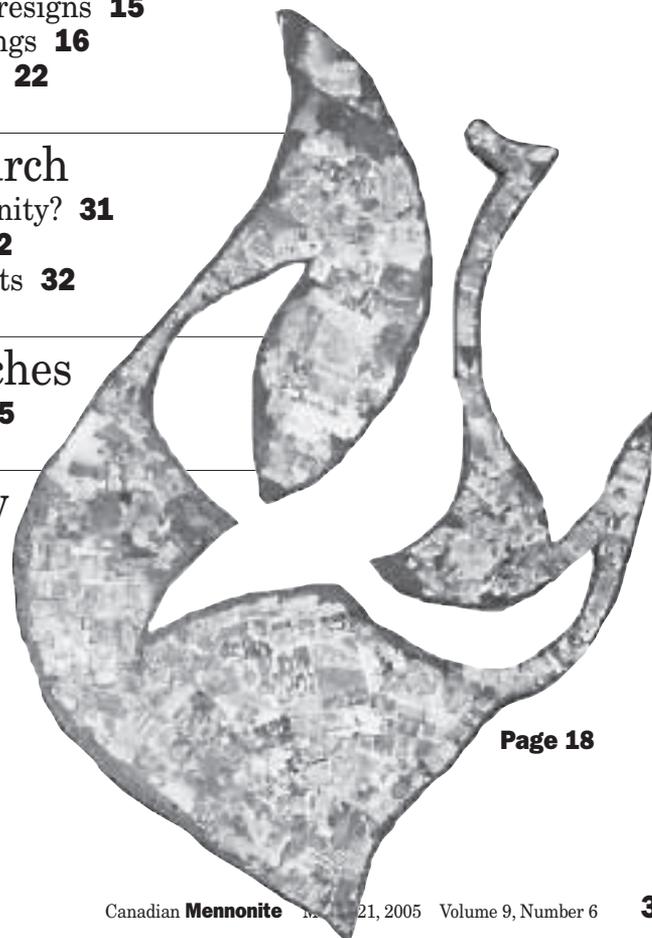
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Ottawa

University students grapple with faith, public policy issues

My respect for politicians has gone through the roof as a result of this experience," said Nikki Enns of Calgary at the closing session of a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) seminar for university students held in Canada's capital in early February.

Enns was referring to a newfound appreciation for elected officials who speak out of a Christian perspective, but who also value the pluralist nature of Canada and the separation of church and state in the Canadian political system.

Enns, a student at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg,

was one of 26 students who participated in the seminar. Participants travelled from as far away as Abbotsford, B.C., and Moncton, N.B. They included two Iranian Muslim scholars studying in Toronto, as well as five African-Canadians residing in Québec and studying at École de théologie évangélique de Montréal.

The seminar was intended to introduce participants to

people, issues and processes in Canadian government, and to explore the intersection of Christian faith and public policy. The program included presentations by MPs, senior civil servants, and representatives of non-government advocacy groups, as well



MCC Canada photo

MCC seminar participants and facilitators gathered beneath the Peace Tower at the Parliament buildings in Ottawa last month during their time spent discussing faith and public policy issues.

Student confident government is listening

In reading the works of many Anabaptist reformers, one finds that there are conflicting views on how Christians should relate to the world. In fact, the issue of faith and politics has been present in the Christian church since the beginning. Jesus was asked questions about paying taxes and how to interpret the laws of secular leaders that conflict with the Law of Moses.

After Jesus' death, the early church struggled with whether to allow members to be involved in government or the military. It seems to be a constant tension for Christians: How do we share our faith on the public stage?

In multicultural Canada, this question can seem even more difficult. So it was encouraging to hear the faith perspectives that each speaker brought to the

positions they hold. These are people who are strongly rooted in, and motivated by, their faith, while respecting the beliefs and practices of those with differing views.

Being part of a multicultural society does not have to mean that we all water down our beliefs until we agree.

Multiculturalism means recognizing difference, and finding common ground within these frameworks. It is a difficult balance to strike, but each speaker seemed to approach the issue with sensitivity, honesty and an open heart.

After hearing the stories of our speakers, and reflecting on the experience with the other students at the seminar, I feel much more confident about the people in

'Being part of a multicultural society does not have to mean that we all water down our beliefs until we agree.'

positions of power in this country. I realize that these people do listen to their constituents and this gives Canadians a valuable opportunity to communicate with those in government.

We are not all called to public office, but we can all express support and concern to our Members of Parliament on issues of peace and justice. And after the encounters I had in Ottawa, I am more confident that when we raise our voices they will be heard.

—Suzanne Bender

The writer is a young adult attending Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

as a tour of the Parliament buildings and observation of Question Period in the House of Commons.

Many students resonated with MP Bill Blaikie's assertion that because "God so loved the world," Christians need to be "present, engaged and prophetic" on the social and public policy issues of the day. Others noted the words of MP Jason Kenney, who said that "political activity is a necessary form of charity."

Political activity is a necessary form of charity.

One afternoon was devoted to a simulation of a parliamentary committee hearing on the First Nations Governance Act. The simulation was based on testimony given during actual hearings in 2003. Several students expressed appreciation for this "hands-on" way to learn about how bills become law. Others noted how the process itself was discriminatory towards aboriginal people.

A related activity called the "blanket exercise" was a challenging and difficult experience for some participants. Through the activity, participants learned experientially how the aboriginal people of Canada were dispossessed of their land through treaties, forcible movement and broken promises.

Jean-Calvin Kitata, formerly of Congo and now a Mennonite Brethren pastor and MCC peace worker in Montréal, shared that the exercise was a painful reminder of how colonial powers stole the land and resources of native Africans, contributing to wars and violence which continue today.

Besides the discussion of issues relating to aboriginal peoples, seminar presenters and participants grappled with refugee issues, ballistic missile defence, same-sex marriage, and Canadian aid policy.

MCC holds similar seminars in Washington and New York (at the United Nations) on an annual basis. This year's event was the first time it was held in Canada.

—MCC Canada release
by **Esther Epp-Tiessen**

Edmonton

Rocks and pies a family affair

The Mennonite Men's Curling Bonspiel has long been an anticipated annual event for Alberta Mennonites.

"Without looking it up, I don't know exactly when it all started, or even when I started [organizing]," commented Herman Epp, member of the Bergthol congregation. "The pictures we had up on the wall [in the curling rink] started in 1984, so that's about when I began."

Since that time, the Epp family has been an integral part of the annual fun. Epp's wife, Irene, and daughters Kim and Kelly organize and run the kitchen, supplying hungry players and their families with convenient, hot meals throughout the day on Saturday. Sons-in-law Troy Kubersky and Randy

Klassen help with the organization and also curl together on the rink skipped by Epp.

This year, even the grandkids got involved, with Karis and Scott working in the kitchen and Kristen helping parents to entertain and supervise a number of excited children who came to eat pie, swim in the Didsbury pool, and watch their dads and grandfathers curl.

The pies, made by women from the Bergthol congregation, are a featured attraction at the bonspiel, causing many participants to wonder if the exercise they get is simply an excuse to have another slice.

Winners of the 2005 Alberta Mennonite Men's Bonspiel, held on Feb. 12, are:

- A pool: Dave Jones, John Dyck, Wally Kanwischer, Emil Look
- B pool: Ron Neufeldt, Byron Koop, Graham Neumann, Bill Neumann
- C pool: Ron Hildebrandt, Larry Hildebrandt, Alan Hildebrandt, Brian Hildebrandt
- D pool: Richard Goerzen, Gerry Neumiller, Isaac Wiebe, Virgil Bergen

A hearty Alberta thank you to the Epp family and all the other volunteers who host the bonspiel and bake the pies each year!

—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**



Herman Epp has been organizing the Alberta Mennonite Men's Bonspiel for two decades.



Cheryl Thiessen, Jacob Wiebe-Neufeld (in her arms), and Noah Thiessen check out the famous pie selection at the 2005 Alberta Mennonite Men's Bonspiel.

Photos by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

I have overcome the world!

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. (John 16:7-11 NIV)

At the very hour that American bombs began to fall on Baghdad in March 2003, I was staring up at a Giant Sitka spruce tree with a girth of 30 feet. Eight hundred years ago, this seedling took root and began to grow—through the Crusades, the Hundred Year’s War, the French and American revolutions, the atomic explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the terror attacks on New York in 2001.

I didn’t know yet of this new war, but within the green grandeur of the old growth forest, I was conscious of God’s sustaining provision over all those turbulent years of human history. But back in the “real world,” I find it hard to concentrate. I know that God sits enthroned above the earth. I know that one day the earth will be restored as he promised. But then I listen to the news and think, “Where are you in this, God? How does this make sense?”

I hear of how many of my countrymen are supporting the war and I hear Jesus’ words in my ear from John 16: “You will weep and mourn while the world rejoices.” Jesus’ speaks these words to his closest friends on the night he is betrayed. What does Jesus mean about going to the Father? Sending another comforter?

Jesus says, “It is for your good that I am going away.... You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.... Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. The Father himself loves you. Take heart! I have overcome the world.”

The next day, he was dead.

I wonder what it was like for Jesus’ friends. Only one or two stuck around to see their Lord whipped, bleeding and nailed to the cross, condemned to die for blasphemy and

insurrection like a criminal, a terrorist. How could this man claim that he had overcome the world? What kind of empty hope had he held out to them?

But Jesus revealed himself through his actions as well as his teachings. And his last and greatest action was his own death on the cross and his bodily resurrection to new life. At that point, God the Father could make this particularized revelation of himself available to all people and nations through the work of the Holy Spirit.

With that in mind, on to the work of the Spirit. I want to warn that this passage is not easy to hear. It is not

politically correct within our pluralistic Canadian society. It involves a very clear sense that there is right and wrong, absolute truth and falsehood.

We begin with the problematic word “convicts.” In verse 8, “the Spirit convicts the world of guilt.” This is actually a very complex word with a wide range of meanings, including “to expose” and “to convince.” Apparently, the Spirit’s work is to demonstrate to the world that it is wrong about certain things.... This convicting work of the Spirit is our chance to be saved.

And so first, in verse 9, the Spirit helps the world to see the true nature of sin. Jesus speaks of the fundamental sin: “men do not believe in me.” Whoa. Sin is that men do not believe in Jesus. Let’s examine this further.

Basically, when our faith is in anything besides God, we are fundamentally insecure and need to protect ourselves against others. This self-protection and self-absorption is the first step towards sin. It leads us to

Righteousness didn’t look like religious and political conservatism, or like radical militant revolution.

embrace the values of the world, basic common sense kinds of things: eat or be eaten; survival of the fittest; look out for No. 1. Self-preservation is righteousness.

Let's return to the passage. In verse 10, the Spirit convicts the world "in regard to righteousness...."

Can you see it here again? It's amazing counter-intuitive logic. Jesus Christ turns the world's ideas of right and wrong upside down.

The world, represented by the Jews and Romans of Jesus' day, convicted Jesus of crimes against the temple and the state. The Jewish religious authorities accused Jesus of blasphemy. Furthermore, he was dangerous to the nation of Israel, violating the *Pax Romana*, raising the danger of riots and inviting bloody Roman intervention. He wasn't what they were hoping for, so they all rejected Jesus and condemned him.

The Romans recognized that Jesus was asking for allegiance that undermined the power of Caesar. They agreed to condemn and kill him.

And so, in the eyes of the world, Jesus was punished for opposing the values of the world. He died on the cross, and for three days it seemed that the world was correct in condemning him. But in his resurrection, he was vindicated before the world. This was the proof that his claims were true. Now there was a new standard of righteousness. Righteousness didn't look like religious and political conservatism, or like radical militant revolution. Instead, righteousness looked like God himself, dying willingly and painfully.

Finally, in verse 11, the Holy Spirit convicts the world of "judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned." To me, this is the most powerful statement of reversal I can imagine. It takes my breath away. I hope I can communicate to you why.

In our world, judgment is a grim, horrible thing. Judgment is frightening punishment by one who is stronger of one who is weaker. Our conception of Judgment Day invokes gruesome images from the front wall of the Sistine chapel or Rodin's The Gates of Hell—sinners writhing in pain and rejection and horror at the wrath of God against them. When I place the

words "God" and "judgment" together in a sentence, I squirm.

But do you know what God's judgment really looks like? It looks like Jesus Christ, the man of sorrows, hanging on the cross. It looks like God himself dying to pay for all the evil this world has ever seen. Jesus died for each one of us, for the ways in which evil lives in us, for the ways in which we are implicated in injustice, war and suffering.

And so we should be punished—but our punishment looks like Jesus himself dying. And this is the only hope we have: Jesus is the only person outside "the system" who can truly judge and redeem us. There is nothing in the bloody history of the world, no evil this globe has ever seen, that has not been paid for in that one humiliating death of the son of God. The powers of the prince of this world—fear, violence, hatred—are judged and condemned. Evil is defeated. The Lamb that was slain is victorious. And so I feel like exclaiming with all the angels and the saints in heaven: "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ!"

People, this is the real reality that we live in as Christians. We may not see it with our eyes all the time, but because of the resurrection we must trust that what Jesus said is true: "The prince of this world now stands condemned."

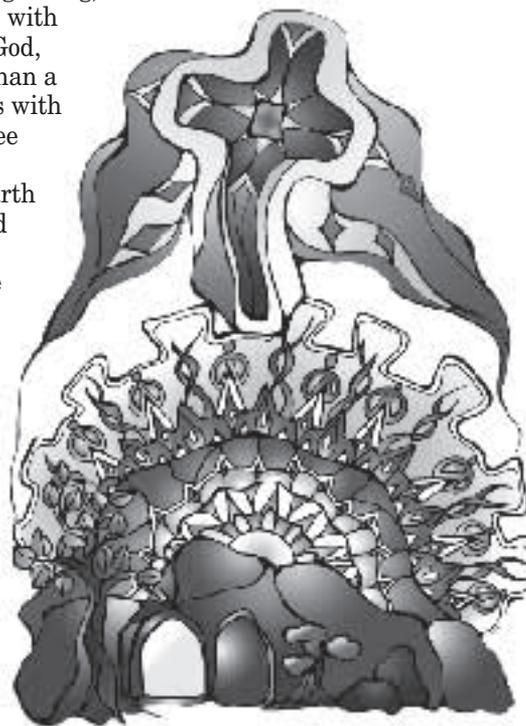
And how do we deal with the contradictions that we now live in? When we ask him, "Where are you, God?" we trust that the Spirit will reveal Jesus and his kingdom in our day.

And so we wait, in the pain of childbirth. The kingdom of God is so slow in coming! And often it seems like one of those Sitka spruce, 800 years in the growing, cut down in minutes by a couple of guys with chainsaws. But no, the Kingdom of God, though slow, is much more certain than a mighty tree. The Spirit empowers us with supernatural hope, so that we can see that the God of all the universe is acting. He is bringing his beloved earth to restoration through the death and life of his risen Son.

And he is working through us, the body of Christ on earth. And so we pray and act, led by the Spirit and standing firm on the promise of the living Lord. "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

—**Rebecca Sack**

The writer, a former MCC volunteer in Botswana, attended Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship while completing her M. Div. at Regent College in Vancouver. She preached this sermon in March 2003.



The risen Lord is the heart of the gospel

It dawned on me one day in my personal devotions that there are a few more verses in the book of Romans than there are days in the calendar year. Consequently, I began writing a page each day in devotional journaling. In reading Romans as the story of the gospel of God, one can soon discover the beauty of Paul's conversation about the gospel in the context in which he worked.

The story presenting the gospel is rooted in history: the account of how God met the children of Abraham in the past, the full expression of this gospel in the death and resurrection of Christ, the way in which God has extended this word to reach out to all peoples, and the meaning of this gospel in our lives.

As we move through the epistle, remembering that it has overlapping stories, there are general themes which follow in the book. We find salvation in chapters 1–3, justification in chapters 4–5, sanctification in chapters 6–8, reconciliation in chapters 9–11, consecration in chapters 12–15, and salutations in chapter 16.... The path of "salvation history" has clearly been shown in God's people of grace, Israel.

January 4

Resurrection Proof

"And was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord" Romans 1:4.

That he is risen, that he is Lord, is the heart of the gospel! Jesus is the Christ, our Messiah, the Redeemer, sent by God, the eternal Word. The earliest creed of the Christian church was simply, "Jesus is Lord!" The confession of his disciples,

even in the face of emperor worship in the Roman world, which declared that Caesar is lord, in contrast and at the risk of their lives, declared "Jesus is Lord!"

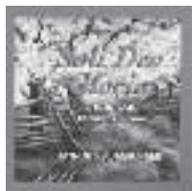
That Christ is the Son of God is not an affirmation based on philosophical conclusions, nor even on stories of his miraculous birth (as true as they are), but the evidence of his deity is his resurrection from the dead. Only God can raise the dead! The fact of his resurrection is God's guarantee that Jesus was who he claimed to be, the one who came from the Father. He is no imposter. God certified his claims by resurrection.

Paul's Trinitarian theology is expressed here by his reference to the Spirit of holiness: God's presence acting in the world. The Holy Spirit is God's other name, God's other radiance. An authentic faith acknowledges God as Father, as Redeemer expressed in his Son and by the presence of the Holy Spirit "whom God has given to those who obey him" (Acts 5:32). We do not mean three Gods, but the "threeness" of one God, the community of love expressed as Father, Son, and Spirit.

To live in a world where Jesus Christ is risen means that he is Lord, he is our contemporary, he is accessible, and he is inescapable. As E. Stanley Jones has said, "I don't have religion, I have him." And Lesslie Newbigin has said, "resurrection fits no other worldview." We do not simply have immortal souls that will live on, we will live on as persons of history, sharing life with God. Jesus said, "God is not the God of the dead but of the living." "They will come from the east and the west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the Father."

*Thank you, Father,
for sharing yourself
and your life with me.
I commit myself to walk with you
in my daily life,
my service and my love. Amen.*

Excerpts from Soli Deo Gloria: A Daily Walk Through Romans by Myron S. Augsberger, Herald Press, 2004.



More than conquerors with Christ

"No, in all of these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" Romans 8:37.

The victory of Christ becomes our victory. He has conquered the depth of evil, its attack to the death. He carried our sins in his own body on the cross, he has conquered death in his resurrection from the dead. His victory is total, Satan is defeated, evil is overcome, and we can walk with him in his victory!

Paul exclaims, "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us," and we not only conquer, but we also walk on in the freedom of the new life with new dimensions of love and joy in the fellowship of Christ. This is a freedom as we pray and worship. We live in a fallen world, but also in a world where there is redemption. We live in a world in which the victory of

Christ is a reality, enabling us to live in victory. This perspective is realistic, for it recognizes the problems, but stands with him in his superior power.

Victorious living,

we are over-comers.

*He enables us to walk faithfully,
even though we do not walk perfectly.*

*Victorious living means
we are honest about the problems,
we confess our failures,
but we affirm our faithfulness to him.*

*Victorious living means
he has overcome the evil one and we can
resist, saying no having said yes.*

*Victorious living means recognizing the
problems, it means drawing on our
resources to cope.*

*Those resources are the
riches of his grace.*

*From Earth Trek: Celebrating
and Sustaining God's Creation
by Joanne Moyer, Herald
Press, 2004.*



Sing 'alleluia' from now 'til Pentecost

The 50 days from Easter to Pentecost are often referred to as the Alleluia season: a time when, contrasting with the sombre and penitent Lenten season, we may joyously (and frequently) proclaim: Alleluia! Christ is risen! The hymns listed contain "alleluia" or "hallelujah" at least once in every verse.

Hymnal: A Worship Book

(Mennonite Publishing House, 1992)

- 44 When in our music God is glorified
 48 All creatures of our God and King (Pentecost)
 50 Praise the Lord, sing hallelujah
 51 Let the whole creation cry
 55 Cantemos al Señor
 58 This is the day
 63 Praise, my soul, the God of heaven
 67 Sing hallelujah, praise the Lord
 76 Praise, I will praise you, Lord
 77 God of many names
 99 We praise thee, O God
 101 Alleluia (verses in Accomp. Bk.)
 103 Jubilate deo
 114 In thee is gladness
 118 Praise God from whom
 124 O worship the Lord
 262 At the Lamb's high feast
 263 The strife is o'er
 267 Christ has arisen
 268 See the splendor of the morning
 270 Who are these—(baptism)
 271 Christ is arisen
 273 Low is the grave he lay
 274 O sons and daughters, let us sing!
 277 I know that my Redeemer lives
 280 Christ the Lord is risen today
 282 Proclaim the tidings near and far
 297 Jesus came - the heavens adoring
 443 We know that Christ is raised
 470 Christ Jesus lay
 475 Become to us the living bread— (Easter 2)
 476 This is the feast of victory

Hymnal Subscription Service

- 928 Alleluia (South Africa)
 943 Celtic alleluia
 944 Alleluia (Taize)
 985 Heleluyan

Sing & Rejoice

- 3 Alleluia No. 1

The list is reprinted from Leader's online resource website.

Redemption

Last year at Easter,
 as jubilant hallelujahs
 hurried heavenwards and
 bell-shaped alabaster lilies
 bloomed upon green stems
 a brightly-coloured cross
 (in almost human form)
 began to dance above the image
 of an open empty tomb:

slowly at first—
 bowing downwards
 towards the cool and fecund earth
 then reaching upwards
 towards the warming sun

picking up the pace
 until the simple windows
 of the sanctuary shimmered
 and glistened with golden
 showers of new-born light

which soon shook loose
 the lingering shadows
 of another Easter

when several thousand mourners
 moved slowly through the streets
 of Durban following the cross-
 shaped beams of a burnt-
 out house from a war-
 torn township (where
 a few brave women
 wept and prayed
 and died
 for peace)

then came at last
 to the steps of city hall
 where the cross was raised
 and dancing children wove bright
 flowers of hope into the charred and
 broken wood as choirs sang soft
 "allelujahs"
 while we wept.

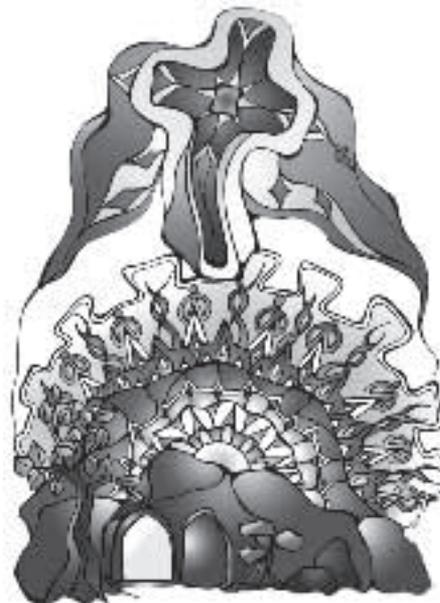
—**Leona Dueck Penner**

The poem—inspired by artwork by Lynette Wiebe of MC Canada—originally appeared in the Charleswood Mennonite Church newsletter.

Easter Sunday Prayer of thanks

Dear God and father
 of our living Lord Jesus Christ,
 we praise you for the power
 of your forgiving, life-giving love.
 We thank you for raising Jesus from
 the dead.
 We thank you for the wonderful gifts
 of forgiveness and salvation.
 We thank you for the Bible,
 which has helped us see
 how God's love transformed the lives
 of Jesus' first followers.
 We thank you for inviting us
 to follow you, too, and for the way
 your love transforms
 our own lives and communities.
 Thank you for continuing to live
 in and around us.
 Thank you that your love
 is stronger than death.
 Amen
 —**Elsie Rempel**

*The prayer is reprinted from the 2005 Mennonite Church Canada Lenten resource booklet
 Marvelous in our Eyes by Elsie Rempel.*



Used Tombstone - Cheap!

The following Easter script is the work of Tym Elias, Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. It was written for puppets but could be done in a variety of ways.

Derek: (comes on and off stage, hanging out various signs reading, "For Sale," "Used Tombstone," "Cheap." Then he comes on stage grunting and groaning as he carries a big tombstone.) There. (Clears his throat and

begins shouting as if he was at a baseball game.) Tombstone! Tombstone here! Get your used tombstone here. It's goin' cheap. Get your tombstone!

Kellie: Ex—excuse me.

Derek: Yes, my lady.

Kellie: What are you selling?

Derek: A tombstone.

Kellie: A tombstone?

Derek: Well, not just any tombstone, this here's a used tombstone.

Kellie: A used tombstone? What's a used tombstone?

Derek: This is a used tombstone. The guy said he wouldn't need it anymore.

Kellie: But who doesn't need a tombstone anymore? Like, once you're dead, you're dead. Put 'em in the tomb and mark the place with the tombstone and that's that. Game's over. Lights out.

Derek: Yep. That's usually the way it

Winnipeg, Man.

New hymns sampled in preparation for assembly

Providing a communal worship resource for Mennonite churches in North America is important, according to Marilyn Houser Hamm of Neuberghthal, Man., especially "at a time when individual prayer expression is being defined as worship."

Hamm has been touring Canada and the United States recently, introducing the first of two new supplements for Hymnal: A Worship Book. In January, as one of the Canadian representatives on the Canada-U.S. music committee that has developed the supplement, Hamm presented some of the new material at the Refreshing Winds Music and Worship Leaders Conference in Winnipeg and the Mennonite Church U.S.A. music and worship leaders' weekend in Mount Pleasant, Pa. In February, she spoke and led the music at the MC Alberta conference.

In recommending *Sing the Journey* to those at the conferences she attends, and to the Mennonite Church as a whole, Hamm believes the hymns in the supplement will "nurture the worship and life of the Anabaptist community of faith in the first decade of the 21st century."

The hymns from the

new supplement—*Sing the Journey*—will be used as the primary resource at the joint MC Canada-MC USA assembly in Charlotte, N.C., in July.

"*Sing the Journey* is created with the understanding of the church as a sent people by God to proclaim healing and hope in Christ through the Spirit," Hamm says. "It is designed to nurture the global faith family and the diversity in which God delights to form us into one body."

The hymns in *Sing the Journey* explore the part of the church year between Pentecost and Advent, explains Ken Nafziger, a member of the Hymnal supplement committee and a music professor at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. "It assumes that the work of the Holy Spirit continues in the present, and that the life of the church, though changing, is not

'Sing the Journey is created with the understanding of the church as a sent people by God to proclaim healing and hope in Christ through the Spirit.'



Marilyn Houser Hamm, third from left, is one of the Canadian representatives on *Sing the Journey*, a supplement for *Hymnal: A Worship Book*.

ever fully known or ever entirely complete," he writes in the new supplement's introduction. The second part of the supplement will focus on the life of Christ during the period from Advent to Easter.

Hamm notes that the new hymns "give the church the voice that is its own in worship: to praise, to confess, to proclaim, to pray and to lament, to witness, and to celebrate God's presence in all of life."

In addition to her role as one of the Canadian representatives on the Hymnal supplement committee, Hamm is an instructor of music and worship at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg and the former director of Worship and Spirituality for Mennonite Church Canada.

—**Ross W. Muir**

goes. So are you interested in a used tombstone?

Kellie: You've got to be kidding?

Derek: Nope. Take a look. This here's a good solid tombstone. Like new! Used only three days.

Kellie: There's a catch. Tell me there's a catch!

Derek: Well...o.k. there's a catch. The name's already chiselled into the rock.

Kellie: The guy's name is already chiselled into the tombstone?

Derek: Of course! It's used.

Kellie: This is ridiculous.

Derek: By the way, do you know anyone by the name of Jesus?

Kellie: You mean, Jesus of Nazareth?

Derek: Yeah! That's it. You know anyone by that name? I've got this here tombstone with his name on it.

Kellie: Now I get it. You made a tombstone for Jesus of Nazareth?

Derek: Sure did. I thought, that guy's so famous—why, people from all over would want to come round and see where he was buried.

Kellie: So you made him a tombstone.

Derek: Yup. But then, on Sunday morning—Sunday morning!—this guy shows up. Right there in front of me...right where you are standing! And he said, "Thanks, Derek, but I don't think I'll be needing this." Never! I asked. "Never EVER!" he said.

Kellie: Wow! You talked to the risen Christ?

Derek: That was the risen Christ? D'ohhh! (He bangs his head down.)

Kellie: What's wrong?

Derek: Here I thought he was the gardener.

Kellie: Yeah, me too.

Derek: (major surprise) You—you—too?

Kellie: Yeah, I ran into Jesus this morning. I didn't recognize him then either.

Derek: I didn't expect Jesus Christ to rise from the dead.

Kellie: Neither did I.

Derek: Wow.

Kellie: Yeah, wow indeed!

Derek: You know this changes things!

Kellie: You got that right.

Derek: No more tombstones for me! Christ is risen from the dead!

Kellie: He is risen indeed!

Reprinted from MC Canada "Resources" web page.

Elkhart, Ind.

Technology, affluence affect pastoral ministry

Will this help me love God and love my neighbour better? That is the central question Christians should ask when evaluating everything from worship practices to the use of e-mail, speaker Marva Dawn told participants at the annual Pastors Week, Jan. 24-27, at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS).

Dawn, a teaching fellow in spiritual theology at Regent College in Vancouver, B.C. who also works with Christians Equipped for Ministry of Vancouver, Wash., focused on the theme, "Pastoring in a culture of affluence and technology." She advocated that we should choose how we use technology in our worship, congregational life and personal lives according to what is most important to us as Christians, what she called our "focal concerns."

"Technology and affluence both are used to exert power over other people," Dawn said in her final presentation.

"I want to talk about giving up our power and reloading ourselves with God's power, which is the power of vulnerability and self donation.

"I don't believe we can deal with the affluence and technology of our society unless we die to it, really die to the need to possess wealth and the need for technology to give us quick fixes," Dawn continued.

While emphasizing that she is not against technology, that her life has depended on technology, she said, "That quick-fix attitude and that money-can-solve-everything attitude are destroying our society and destroying the world. North America uses a

disproportionate amount of the world's goods and we are destroying the rest of the world as a result. There has to be a death to that if we want to rise again into the new life of God's way of being."

Concluding her lectures, Dawn said, "Christ is the victor over the powers of money and technology.... If we expose the fallacy of money and the lies of technology, people start to realize they want a new kingdom. That kingdom is

right here. I don't need to defeat the powers; I just have to expose them, and the more of us there are exposing the way these powers work, the more people can have the courage to resist them."

During the discussion sessions, one pastor emphasized e-mail as a wonderful gift for pastoring, and gave the example of communicating easily and efficiently with the church treasurer. A

seminary student shared how she believes she is serving as a pastor as she communicates online in a support group for families with children who share the same illness as her sons.

Others expressed concerns and cautions about e-mail because it leaves out those who do not have computers or e-mail access, and because it removes the face-to-face dimension of communication.

Another pastor said that, in her affluent congregation, the challenge is to teach members how to rely on God and what it means to know that God will provide.

—AMBS release

'I don't believe we can deal with the affluence and technology of our society unless we die to it...'



Photo by Mary E. Klassen

AMBS Pastors Week presenter Marva Dawn, left, talks with Martha Turner, AMBS student from South Bend, Ind.

Letters

I've been getting much feedback on how Canadian Mennonite can best handle letters as I've been meeting with churches and church leaders across the country. (In general, we publish most letters we receive.) One consistent response was a desire not to have the section regularly dominated by letters on sexuality.

The same-sex marriage legislation, Bill C-38, is currently before Parliament and we reported on the position our church has taken opposing this legislation in our last issue. It's an important issue in society and we are receiving a larger-than-normal number of letters on the subject. However, there are many other things also important for our church.

In an effort to strike a balance between listening to one another on this subject and focusing on the larger work of the church elsewhere, over the next three issues we will publish a representative group of letters received and then hold further letters on same-sex marriage until we feel it is appropriate for the church and the magazine to address the topic again.

—**Tim Dyck, Editor**

Reconciliation, marginalization are not compatible

Having just read Sven Eriksson's letter to pastors and leaders of Mennonite Church Canada regarding same sex marriage legislation in the February 2005 issue of *Equipping*, I feel compelled to respond.

I want to respond to two things. The first is your call to "extend the love of Christ" through "sensitive caring ministry" to gay and lesbian people and their families. Too often, and for too long, "sensitive caring ministries" have neither been supportive nor Christ-like in their welcome to gay people and their families. In my experience, churches have been guided by fear of difference and insecurity in their approach to gay and lesbian people, and in pastoral care for family

This section is a forum for discussion and discernment. Letters express the opinion of the writer only, not necessarily the position of Canadian Mennonite, any of the five area churches or Mennonite Church Canada. Letters should address issues rather than criticizing individuals and include the writer's contact information. We will send copies of letters discussing other parties to the named individuals or organizations to provide the opportunity for a response. Letters can be sent to letters@canadianmennonite.org or to "Letter to the Editor," Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7.

members. As the daughter of a gay mother, my experience in church has often left me feeling marginalized.

When I have found myself part of a church community where I was not marginalized, it was not because everyone in the church agreed on a certain doctrine or statement, but rather because they were willing to take the risk to get to know me and my family as part of their chosen family of faith. While the Mennonite Confession of Faith does affirm marriage as between one man and one woman, it also affirms "the church as the society of believers from many nations, anointed for witness by the Holy Spirit. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, divisions between nations, races, classes and genders are being healed as persons from every human grouping are reconciled and united in the church" (Article 9). This reconciliation that we as a faith community affirm is not possible through ministries that continue to marginalize certain people and their families.

As a seminary student at a non-Mennonite seminary in the U.S., I am constantly reminded of the gifts my Mennonite heritage has given me, particularly in thinking about non-hierarchical church communities. It is here that I have reaffirmed my own connection to the Mennonite Church and to Mennonite Church Canada, and I long to see the church we claim to be. This church is "a foretaste of the kingdom that God will one day establish in full. The church is to be a spiritual, social and economic reality, demonstrating now the justice, righteousness, love, and peace of the age to come" (Article 24).

—**Lora Carter Nafziger, Chicago, Ill.**

Same-sex marriage law must be defeated

Ever since Canada's federal election last year, and prior to this by our former Liberal regime, a lot has been published and openly announced by Prime Minister Paul Martin and his Cabinet about getting constitutional legislation through parliament concerning altering the traditional definition of marriage.

When God created man he also created a woman to be his companion, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply" Genesis 1:28. They were called Adam and Eve (not Adam and George or Eve and Esther).

The problem I have with this announced legislation coming up before the House of Commons is the lack of response against this proposed action by our government led by our Prime Minister and his group.

Would our Christian church leaders and church members not do themselves well by contacting their Members of Parliament to protest strongly to them and ask that they vote against any such action?

Mennonite Church Canada must be very firm on this proposal getting defeated in parliament if we want our children to have the same marriage tradition carried forward as we now have. May God grant our elected leaders wisdom and courage to vote against any legislative changes even though they can expect losing votes for themselves or their political party.

We will continue to pray for our elected leaders.

For more information on this subject, please go visit the marriagecanada.ca website. This site was created by David Mainse of 100 Huntley Street.

—**John Sawatzky, St. Catharines, Ont.**

Churches must continue to define marriage

Is marriage primarily legally or faith-based? Does a marriage need to be legally recognized by a state for it to be a legitimate covenant? If a couple gets married, and only signs the papers a week later, when are they married? When they commit their lives to each other in front of their family, friends, community of believers, and their God? Or when they put pen to paper, and their relationship is recognized by their province as legal?

Marriage was a part of humanity long before there was any distinction between the legal and religious worlds. Today, this distinction exists, or is at least claimed, in the separation of

church and state. It creates some confusion, and perhaps it's a little unfortunate, that both the church and state (i.e., both the religious and civil/legal realms) use the same word "marriage."

Regardless of any legislation or what the courts decide, let faith communities continue to recognize the marriage covenants they deem appropriate.

—**Darren Kehler, Winkler, Man.**

Feds posturing on same-sex marriage

I recall the editorial in which you mentioned a certain weariness with the seemingly endless round of letters on the topic of homosexuality. I hope this letter will help to cut one part of

that topic shorter.

The media are making much these days about legalizing same-sex marriage. The fact is that same-sex marriages have been legal since the Charter of Rights became part of Canada's Constitution. It is true that this wasn't recognized until fairly recently, when our courts were asked to rule on this question. As we know, most of the provinces have already ruled that same-sex marriages are legal.

Our federal government is not in the process of legalizing same-sex marriages because they are already legal. The federal government is in the position where it has to spell out exactly what this means.

Wouldn't it be great if our politicians

Continued on page 14

No more Swedish chefs

Is it just me or are we having trouble being understood? In the contentious social debates of our day Christians are often portrayed like the Swedish Chef of Muppets' fame, who babbled away joyfully in his incomprehensible Swedish while hosting a cooking demonstration that always blew up in his big moustache and eyebrows—he was given his minute to shine, but was never understandable and always appeared out to lunch. Is this what has become of the Christian in Canadian culture?

The experiment in social redefinition we are beholding has highlighted the church's cultural position as a comical sideshow. We are dismissed with a "tsk, tsk," unless we join the secular spirit and jargon or we say things so tactlessly that it is embarrassing.

Newsflash: To join the cultural tide because it sounds warm and fuzzy is like giving in to your whining kids because they look cute when they pout. And when people don't accept Biblical authority, using the Bible to put them in their place is like opening a French bookstore in rural Alberta and then wondering why business is slow.

The challenges of the day call for Christians to fall back on the only speech that has been proven to communicate with clarity the transforming power of Christ.

First, the disclaimers:

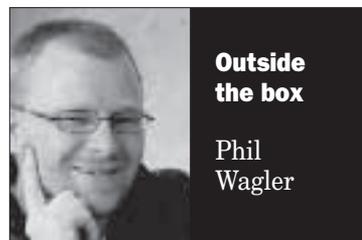
- Not everyone is going to get what we

have to say, even if we can communicate clearly.

- Not everyone wants to get what we have to say, even if we are thoroughly convincing.

Now to the point: The speech that will clearly communicate the transforming power of Christ is your life!

Your life and mine, and our life in Christ together, is the reality show by which others read, see, hear, feel and inhale the uncommon beauty of the grace of Jesus in a world of bombastic rhetoric and self-centred rights. This is the heart of the Anabaptist understanding of the Scriptures; it is the essence of kingdom living in



Outside the box

Phil Wagler

the footsteps of Jesus.

Somehow, somewhere, the church in Canada became a sideshow of Swedish chefs that provides fodder for pundits and sitcoms. According to a 2003 Ipsos-Reid survey, only 19 percent of Canadians attend church weekly and 26 percent say it is "very important to encourage non-Christians to become Christians."

There appears to be plenty of room for more of the grace and truth of Jesus in our coffee shops, workplaces, schools, arenas and family reunions, or am I speaking

Swedish? This unfolding of hope happens in remarkable power as even just one life, salvaged and transformed by God's grace and mercy, is lived in vulnerable clarity with those we share postal codes and oxygen with.

Irenaeus, second century bishop of Lyons, living in a day feverishly opposed to the good news of Jesus, said, "The glory of God is a person fully alive."

Jatte bra! (That's what Swedes say if something is "really good!")

Give glory to God, be fully alive in Christ, and you will be the irrefutable declaration of the renewing and refreshing power of God. Perhaps we have not been heard because we have not been seen as fully alive? Should not the Christ-follower who is a farmer, coach, labourer, homemaker, parent, retiree, athlete, pastor, professional, or student, be more fully alive than those who are dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1-10)?

Should we not exude love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in peculiar quantities (Galatians 5:22)? Should not the empty tomb infect our every breath? Should not our gatherings be fresh air? We are little-Christians, not Swedish chefs! To be fully alive may actually invite more opposition, but at least then we'd be heard—even after they cut out our tongues.

The writer, after having his dream of a professional hockey career ended by reality, has gone outside his box to serve Christ in student development, conference leadership, and pastoral ministry. He is currently leading servant (pastor) of Zurich Mennonite Church, Ont.

Posturing *From page 13*

were honest about this? Wouldn't honesty be much better than fear-mongering and trying to score political points based on this media-induced fear?

Let's hope that most of your readers will recognize what the realities are, and not be taken in by the posturing of political leaders.

—**Jim Suderman, Winnipeg**

Sin must not compromise unity

In discussions leading up to the vote on whether Rosemary Mennonite Church should leave MC Canada, our church leaders expressed their displeasure over how MC Canada leadership, who—when pressed on a certain contentious issue—seemed to want to skip over that issue and latch onto more general principles such as unity and love in order to pacify our church. (Who could argue with unity and love?) And after reading Dan Nighswander's article (Jan. 10, 2005, page 6), I understand a little of what our church representatives went through.

In one of his beginning statements, Nighswander writes that theological issues may be named as reasons for disunity, but it is non-theological, unspiritual forces that cause disunity. He then goes on to mention the pitfalls of pride, boasting and arrogance several times before getting to this statement, "we must be humble about ourselves and our views." What could it possibly mean to be humble about my view? Should I speak it softly—in nice tones? Perhaps my view should exist peacefully along side other people's views and not create a ruckus?

There are problems here: First of all,

theological and ethical issues can and do cause disunity in some cases. Has the devil stopped trying to lead us astray? It's up to us to make a stand and not follow whoever is going astray. And while the Bible certainly teaches that we should be humble, it is quite a different story to say that our views should be humble. I think the Bible shows that our views should be confident and strong. Built on a rock, if you will. Ready to share with the world.

The Mennonite Church was built on issues like the ones we are dealing with and if these theologies are pulled out of the foundation, the church is obviously going to weaken, no matter how much we call for unity and love. In his last paragraph, Nighswander writes "In light of that final goal and hope, we choose now to set aside those things that divide us...." Now I'm not exactly sure what "those things" are, but if they happen to be sin, we would do better to clarify them and deal with them.

—**Lawrence Wiebe, Rosemary, Alta.**

The law reveals the gospel

I was excited to read about discussion on contemporary and Biblical law ("Lawyers talk..." Dec. 20, 2004, page 28) and applaud this attempt to move beyond a "law/gospel" dualism.

I, for one, have found elements and implications of the gospel through Old Testament law which prove scarce elsewhere in the Bible, addressing issues from business ethics to ecology. I commend the participants and Conrad Grebel University College for considering this under-utilized biblical resource—a task for which lawyers may be particularly valuable. I hope the conversation continues and trust

that we will hear about "Lawyers III" and beyond.

I was also struck by a couple of things. Despite the helpful comment that "law is never abstract," many of the questions being discussed (at least as reported) were quite abstract. Once the "particulars" were discussed, it seems that New Testament contexts were most prominent. Though important, I would be even more interested to hear how modern lawyers would describe the similarities and differences between actual Old Testament law and how law is currently practised. Engaging the particulars in such a way would inform and enrich consequent discussion on the New Testament.

For instance, I believe this would underscore that many arguments between Jesus and Jewish leaders are competing interpretations of the law, rather than "legalism" versus love.

I look forward to the day when such discussions no longer start with "if" law and gospel are related, but "how" the law reveals the gospel—then we may be motivated to struggle with it and hear its important witness for our time.

—**Derek Suderman, Stouffville, Ont.**

We need to reclaim our evangelical roots

I have received *Canadian Mennonite* and the *Mennonite Brethren Herald* for many years, and have appreciated them all very much.

Over the years, I have kept track of the number of people that were added to the various churches in each issue. In *Canadian Mennonite*, the average total is around three, whereas in the *Herald* the number ranges well over a hundred, usually with photos included.

This puzzles me: Why the difference?

The only explanation I can come up with is that the Mennonite Brethren churches have been more successful in "reclaiming our evangelical roots" than we have.

If this is the reason for the difference, then we need to earnestly pray that the Lord will work this transformation in our Mennonite churches.

—**Werner Zacharias, Fiske, Sask.**

Pontius Puddle

Winnipeg

Nighswander announces resignation

Dan Nighswander, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, has announced his resignation, effective May 31, 2006.

Although his current term ends in August of this year, conversations between Nighswander and the General Board led to an agreement to extend his term until the end of May 2006. This extension will include a six-month sabbatical beginning Dec. 1, 2005, during which he will work on writing the Believers Church Bible Commentary on 1 Corinthians. Nighswander began his service as conference minister with the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, a predecessor to Mennonite Church Canada, in 1997. In 1999, he was appointed general secretary.

In his resignation letter Nighswander wrote, "I have been richly blessed through these years of service to the church in this capacity. The opportunity to see up close what God is doing in our ministries, and the opportunity to help shape those ministries, is a privilege beyond what I can express. I have learned more than I can name and have been enriched by experiences, personal growth, and relationships with many wonderful people across Canada and beyond."

"Dan has served well during a



Photo by Dan Dyck

Colleagues, council and board members surround Dan Nighswander in a circle of prayer support at Mennonite Church Canada's Leadership Assembly in Winnipeg (March 3-5). Nighswander has chosen to resign from his role as general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada to more actively pursue "gifts which in this position I have had limited opportunity to exercise."

challenging shift from three bodies into one, and has a good handle on where energies need to be focused in the next little while," said Henry Krause, MC Canada moderator, referring to the integration process of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church into Mennonite Church Canada.

Added Krause, "We continue to have confidence in Dan's leadership and we anticipate a productive and creative time of service. We thank him for providing an enlarged window of opportunity for doing our envisioning work carefully."

Nighswander said that he, together with his wife, Yvonne Snider Nighswander, wants to explore other possibilities for the next phase of his life, career and ministry. "The schedule is somewhat flexible. There are ideas about where to direct my energy in the future, and gifts which in this position I have had limited opportunity to exercise. I remain subject to the Spirit's leading as Yvonne and I discern where God will need that energy next."

Nighswander will spend the next eight months continuing with his usual work and collaborating with the General Board on clarifying next steps for Mennonite Church Canada.

A search committee has been struck and a leadership search will begin immediately.

—Dan Dyck

News brief

Martyr's Mirror stories set to rap music

Rapper Cruz Cordero takes revered tales of early Anabaptists from the Martyr's Mirror and stirs in stories of modern peacemakers for a fresh take on Anabaptist peace traditions. Cordero's is one of many voices on a new MCC DVD about peacemaking—Thermostat: How Can We Turn Toward Peace in a Time of Fear? The title comes from the rap, in which Cordero suggests peacemakers must not only reflect the temperature or

situation around them, but work to change or regulate their environment. A 100-page study guide organizes the three hours of video clips into 33 different study units on themes such as peacemaking, imagination, allegiance, security, military recruitment and nonviolence. It is designed for both youth and adults, and targeted to aid churches in bringing different age groups together to talk about peace. To borrow or purchase, contact your nearest MCC office.

—MCC release

Annual meetings

Over the past few weeks, the four western regional church conferences met for their annual delegate sessions. While the issues discussed may have differed from province to province—everything from church finances to congregations coming and going, readers of the following reports will sense that God's presence was evident in both the conversations and the decisions the delegates prayerfully arrived at. Watch upcoming issues of Canadian Mennonite for reports on the MC Canada and MC Eastern Canada annual meetings.



Winnipeg

MC Manitoba annual meeting: Conference seeks to reach beyond the centre

Drums beat rhythmically as more than 200 delegates participated in communion on the opening night of the Mennonite Church Manitoba annual delegate session (ADS), held at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. Beginnings and endings of lives were remembered, baptisms celebrated and the stories of a church closure heard.

Over the two days (Feb. 18 and 19), delegates from 44 of the 48 churches learned of various ways MC Manitoba is striving to be “Rooted in the Centre—Living on the Edge,” the theme that permeated the weekend's worship and discussion. The drums called for a response to God's invitation and to prepare for the work that lay ahead that weekend.

Jim Loepp Thiessen, keynote speaker, urged the delegates to reach beyond the centre. Paraphrasing Isaiah 49:1-7, he said, “It's too small a thing that I have called you to be a church for the Mennonites. You are to be a light to the nations.” He encouraged churches to change and to be more inviting places for those on the outside whom God is longing to bring in. “People belong before they be-

lieve.... The church needs to be a safe place for people to explore and connect.”

Loepp Thiessen also used the story of Paul in Romans to show how the local culture can be a point of contact. “Paul quotes to them from their own pagan poets.... He argues from their worldview to one that is new. Paul makes connections between their world and the God of the New Testament.” Loepp Thiessen encouraged risking inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness.

The “microcosm of the world is the context where, every day, students process what's going on in their lives, and struggle with what it means to talk about our faith in the world,” noted Mark von Kampen, chaplain at the inter-Mennonite campus chaplaincy office at the University of Manitoba.

Delegates learned that congregational donations were down 2 percent from last year. In presenting the 2005

budget, Edgar Rempel, Executive Director, said, “We are asking congregations to increase giving over last year by 3 percent, but then asked delegates, “Is it realistic to expect 3 percent increase over the 2004 budget?”

The congregational donation budget was reduced from earlier projections because of decreased giving. The revised budget of \$726,550 was passed; \$21,000 of this is budgeted for new program areas for 2006—namely leadership training and restoration of previous cuts to *Canadian Mennonite*, if the money is received.

Delegates reflected on some sobering statistics presented during the session. “From 1980 to 2004, MC Manitoba experienced a net gain of 28 members,” reported Norm Voth, director of Evangelism and Service. “We don't know the mean age of MC Manitoba membership. The people paying the bills are moving through in a demographic bulge.” MC

‘It's too small a thing that I have called you to be a church for the Mennonites. You are to be a light to the nations.’

Church needs to ‘engage’ society, youth

It is not merely a question anymore of whether Mennonite children will have faith, but whether Mennonite faith will have children, Norm Voth, director of Evangelism and Service Ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba, told pastors at the annual ministers conference, held Feb. 18, at Fort Garry Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

Using the annual delegate session theme “Rooted in the Centre, Living at the Edge” as his focus, Voth defined the work of the church as twofold:

- Pastors have a calling to help the church articulate what or who is the centre of the life it seeks to live and profess.
- Pastors are called to build bridges to connect the church with those who are not part of our faith.

Voth said the church must be about “engagement,” a word that avoids some of the clichés and assumptions loaded in the word “mission.” To “engage” means to make a pledge, an action indicating relationship, and also involves an element of personal cost.

Using Psalm 137 and passages from Jeremiah as examples, Voth said the church today grieves over a culture that is becoming increasingly secular—mourning the

Photo by Darryl Neustaedter Barg



Norm Voth, director of Evangelism and Service Ministries for MC Manitoba, addressed the annual pastors conference on Feb. 18.

loss of prayer in schools, conflict around definitions of marriage, and the loss of the “good old days.” How can Mennonites follow God, be faithful and alive in our faith, in this “wasteland”?

Voth said that in Jeremiah the church finds a command to deal with the world as it is and live faithfully within it, recognizing that God’s chief purpose is not to preserve Mennonites—and a certain Mennonite way of life—but to redeem the world. It becomes a challenge and opportunity to find God’s leading in the most

Worship...is where the church centres itself, reminding it of the reason it exists—to be followers of Jesus Christ and seek to be his image in the world.

unexpected places, to leave the “perfection” of culturally approved faith to be in the rough places where there are hard hearts and hurting people.

Worship, on the other hand, is where the church centres itself, reminding it of the reason it exists—to be followers of Jesus Christ and seek to be his image in the world. Worship needs to be distinct enough from the dominant culture so that it can speak truth to it, but be as indigenous as possible—reflecting local culture—if people are to understand it and be included. Worship also needs to be participatory. In a Mennonite context this is addressed chiefly through music, Voth said, adding that congregations are “growing our edges a little” through use of drama, liturgy, silence, and visual arts.

The sessions began with a reading from Hebrews 10:23-25 and a welcome to those pastors who had entered new ministry positions in MC Manitoba congregations within the past year.

—Erin Morash

Manitoba’s current membership stands at 10,251, up 100 from 2003. MC Manitoba’s recent history has not been marked by significant growth. “We have some homework to do as congregations and as a conference,” Voth said.

The MC Manitoba board sought the advice of delegates on revisions to the rental policy of the camps. Reminding delegates that the Bible instructs us to be “rooted in the centre” while “living on the edge,” MC Manitoba guest group rentals are a witness through the ministry of hospitality, said Bob Wiebe, director of Education Ministries. Delegates decided to move in the

direction of leaving the final decision to groups whether they will attend or not after camp administration has thoroughly explained and requested respect for MC Manitoba values, vision and mission.

The Riverton Fellowship Circle reported on its needs and dreams for leadership and pastoral care; over the next year, it hopes to explore full MC Manitoba membership. Cross Lake’s plans for a new church building were

shared and delegates’ offering went toward this project. These and other northern first nation communities are partnering with other MC Manitoba congregations to be a resource to each other

and to learn from each other.

“Rooted in the Centre—Living on the Edge” is also the title of a new resource, a six-unit study course designed for Sunday school classes or small groups to help discern vision and mission in the larger cultural context. Copies are available at \$5 each from MCM offices at 204-896-1616.

—Evelyn Rempel Petkau

Rosthern, Sask.

MC Saskatchewan: Re-covenanting service primary for delegates

MC Sask churches from across the province joined together on Feb. 25 and 26 to sign a covenant with each other and take part in a re-covenanting service. A record high 240 guests and delegates registered to take part in the annual delegate sessions, which also focused on approving a vision for the future and voting on an updated credentialing policy for pastors.

Prepared over a period of three years with Ken Bechtel, conference minister, and a five-member Envisioning Team, the covenant outlined a process by which Saskatchewan churches can live and work together under a renewed commitment to the Anabaptist faith and each other.

Although the decision to have a re-covenanting service was made three years ago, the work wasn't begun until 2003 when an Envisioning Team was assembled.

"That was to give time to continue the conversation around those issues," explained Armin Krahn, former moderator of MC Sask.

Contributions to the covenant

A wall hanging in the Rosthern Junior College gymnasium, where the delegate sessions took place, depicts an upside down dove signifying the upside down kingdom of God. The dove is surrounded by images of war. The wall hanging was created by RJC students.

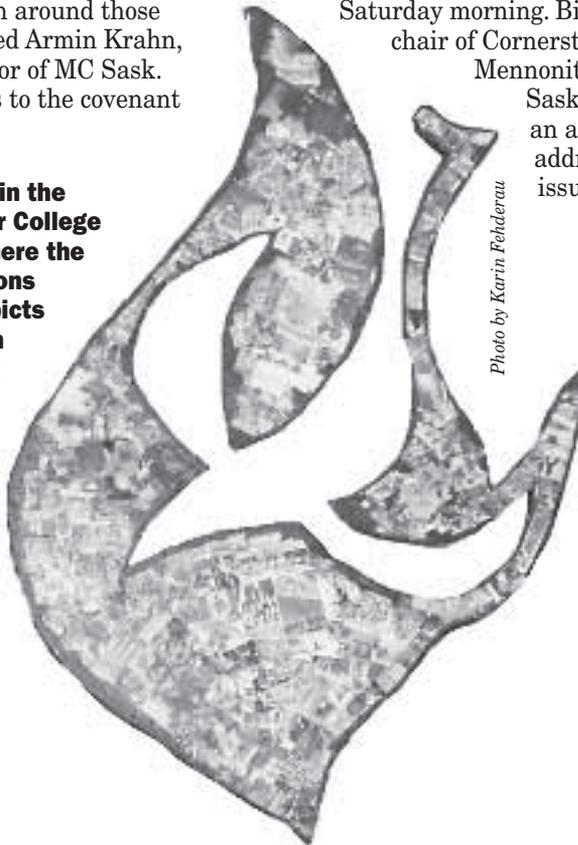


Photo by Karin Fehderau



annual meetings

were sought from all quarters and after a draft document was drawn up for the 2004 sessions, editorial suggestions were still accepted. The final edited document was sent to MC Sask churches in the fall of 2004. Churches were encouraged to discuss the covenant and let the conference know of any needed changes.

After all the checking and re-checking, there were still concerns expressed by some delegates prior to the acceptance of the covenant on

Saturday morning. Bill Ziebart, chair of Cornerstone Mennonite in

Saskatoon, moved an amendment addressing the issue of signing

the covenant at this assembly.

"This covenant is to be ratified only after the 'Season of Discernment' in regards to the role of people in same-sex covenanted relationships in our Congregations and Conference," Ziebart stated.

According to the taskforce recommendations, the conference had agreed to a four-year process of prayer and discernment regarding this issue. The Season of Discernment will be finished in 2006. Delegates had originally agreed to table the issue until this time of discernment was over. Some people believed the issue should be dealt with before the covenant was signed. Others wanted to commit to the covenant before tackling the issue.

"The amendment says [that] we won't covenant together to be a church until we all agree," said Ray Friesen, pastor of Zion Mennonite. "Let's first say we're related to each other and then work at things."

"We can't effect change on each other when we don't stay in relationship," agreed Ken Quiring, pastor of Northstar Mennonite in Drake.

Eighty percent of delegates voted against the amendment.

Continued on page 20



Carissa Feick, representative of Hague Mennonite Church, signs the covenant on behalf of her congregation.

Photo by Jake Nichel

Edmonton

MC Alberta: Calgary Inter-Mennonite decision deferred

Can't Keep Quiet" was the theme at Mennonite Church Alberta's annual delegate sessions held at Edmonton's First Mennonite Church on Feb. 25-26. Speaker and musician Marilyn Houser Hamm, embraced the theme, emphasizing the church's astounding wealth of reasons to offer praise to God and its need to look to Jesus for inspiration and guidance in the issues and joys of everyday life.

Business Sessions

Conference participants attended a variety of workshops offered on Saturday morning. Items emerging from the discussions included:

- Congregational Leadership focused on the area of leadership development, noting the many empty pulpits across the country. The Mennonite Church is thinking about how it identifies, calls, and empowers those leaders it needs now and into the future.
- The Congregational Life Committee continues to further develop its website, fostering communication and sharing of resources within and between congregations. The website is an excellent source of information and use of it is growing. The committee is exploring the possibility of using the site as an outreach tool.
- The persecution of Christians in Vietnam and native outreach ministries in Edmonton were two of the main topics for Missions and Service workshops. The Voluntary Service unit in Lethbridge was also of special note, as it is currently inviting young adults to apply for a term.
- The Camp Valaqua board and director Don Dyck Steinmann reviewed a successful 2004 season, outlined themes and plans for summer 2005, and discussed camp needs. Of particular note is the leaky main lodge roof. A new roof, estimated to cost \$40,000 above budget, is urgently needed. Fundraising ideas are in process.
- The Finance Committee recommended a 2005 budget approximately 6 percent above the actual 2004



figures. This increase was approved by delegates, with no discussion outside of the finance workshop.

Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church

In 2000, the Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church (CIM) voluntarily withdrew from active participation in MC Alberta for a period of five years. This was to allow for a break from intense discussion, as well as time for congregations and the conference to consider the position CIM had taken regarding the issue of homosexuality. A decision regarding CIM's membership in MC Alberta would not be made until 2005.

Ed Enns, a member of CIM, read a letter from his congregation to the conference. The letter briefly outlined

the congregation's journey, and spoke of a desire for connection to the wider Mennonite church. In an appendix to the 2005 report book, and from the front, moderator Linden Willms outlined some of the conversations that have taken place between CIM and conference representatives that led to the development of a resolution for the 2005 annual sessions.

The resolution put forward stated, "That the MCA executive formally ask CIM church to reconsider its position regarding the practice of homosexuality. If a positive reply is not forthcoming by June 11, 2005, that the executive request a formal withdrawal letter prior to the 2006 annual delegate sessions, and that the MCA executive maintain an informal relationship with CIM church. This may include their continued welcome to participate in the camp program, continued communication on the executive level as well as pastoral care as needed, that if CIM church provides MCA with a letter of withdrawal that we continue to work at reconciliation."

A lengthy discussion ensued, with 17 speakers expressing opinions for and against excluding CIM from

Continued on page 20

March 1, 2005

To Mennonite Church Alberta Congregations—Moderators and Pastors

A resolution presented by the executive at this year's Annual Delegate Session was tabled until the 2006 Sessions. The resolution was aimed at a separation of the Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church (CIM) and Mennonite Church Alberta (MCA) on grounds that our views on the acceptance of homosexual practice were incompatible. The resolution also allowed for continued relationship that would allow for reconciliation in the future. For some, more time to resolve the issue was important; for others, the

urgency to resolve this issue was equally important.

As an executive, we would like to remind our member congregations of an important point. Two years ago, our present constitution was accepted almost unanimously. The constitution clearly states our position as MCA regarding the institution of marriage, that being between man and woman. That remains our position.

We appeal for patience and prayer from all as we continue in the days ahead to work at this issue. We will be in conversation with all of you in the next week.

Marguerite Jack
Mennonite Church Alberta

Saskatchewan *From page 18*

The re-covenanting ceremony was held on Saturday after 90 percent of delegates voted to accept the covenant. Thirty-one churches agreed to sign on and representatives from each participating congregation were invited to the front of the gymnasium by Brent Guenther, a member of the Envisioning Team. Three congregations did not sign at this time and three others were not in a position to sign for various reasons. Bechtel stressed that signing the covenant was not a requirement for continued conference membership, but an attempt to deepen relationships.

"This afternoon we recognize that there are some who do not as yet feel ready to enter into this covenant, and to them we want to say very clearly that we value our connections and we continue to invite a deepening of our relationships," he stated.

Throughout the signing, an air of solemnity and reverence was maintained as a violin and piano duet quietly played *Be Thou my Vision*.

Proposed vision accepted

In addition to the covenant, significant round table discussion time was devoted to the proposed vision statement. Delegates were asked to consider what they would add to or subtract from the vision. Comments were directed back to the main delegate body after an hour.

"We need to keep the vision Scripture based," offered one participant.

"Are we willing to put hands and feet to this vision?" asked another.

Amy Hollands from Carrot River Mennonite Church wondered how the conference would know when the goals of the vision had been met. "There are no visible markers to help us measure success," she said.

Most of the comments that emerged focused on the importance of building up local congregations and strengthening the ministry to surrounding local communities.

The vision was accepted in principle by delegates during Saturday sessions. Conference donations increased over \$20,000 from 2003 and the budget was passed as presented.

—**Karin Fehderau**



Photo by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

Four members of the Spanish-speaking Word of Life congregation in Calgary are pictured being accepted into full membership with MC Alberta. Pictured from left to right are: Elwin Garland (behind pulpit, chair of Congregational Life Committee), Elias Miranda (pastor), Juan Gonzalez, Francisco Melgar and Edwin Corado.

Alberta *From page 19*

formal membership with MCA. In spite of a wide variety of opinions, the discussion proceeded carefully, and an atmosphere of love and respect remained intact on the floor. When it became obvious no satisfactory answer was reachable, a motion was made to table the resolution until the next annual session. The motion passed by a vote of 43 to 36. However, the MC Alberta Executive is planning to address the issue prior to the next assembly. As part of this, church moderator Marguerite Jack sent a letter to all Alberta churches following the assembly (see page 19).

Congregational Transitions

A high point of the weekend was the formal acceptance of the Word of Life congregation into full membership with MC Alberta. This Spanish congregation, accepted as an emerging church at the 2004 sessions, currently has approximately 20 regular members and meets at Calgary First Mennonite Church. Elwin Garland,

chair of the Congregational Leadership Committee, presented Pastor Elias Miranda with a crystal sculpture of a parent and child as a symbol of God's care for the new church. Conference pastor Jim Shantz spoke strongly in favour of accepting the Word of Life congregation, affirming its vibrant faith and its valuable presence in MCA.

A high point of the weekend was the formal acceptance of the Word of Life congregation into full membership with MC Alberta.

Another congregational transition was received on a more sombre note. Hillcrest Mennonite Church of Grande Prairie has formally withdrawn its membership from MC Alberta, citing geographical distance and diverging theological

paths. Three members of the Hillcrest congregation were present for the Friday evening worship sessions, but not for Saturday's business. The Resolutions Committee spoke for the delegates, saying, "We recognize and respect the Hillcrest decision, will continue to pray for them and their ministry, and wish them well."

—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**

Richmond, B.C.

MC British Columbia: A weekend of diversity, decision-making and laughter

Walking Together” was the continuing theme of the Mennonite Church BC annual sessions held at Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond at the end of February. Using the Emmaus walk passage from Luke 24 as a framework, each of the four sessions began with singing, a dramatic reading of a portion of the Emmaus story, a skit that tied that story to the MCBC journey and prayer. Organizers also invited participation from many different churches, resulting in a weekend that highlighted the conference’s positive diversity.

Singing was led by a team from a different church for each session. Friday evening began with singing that was almost entirely in Spanish, led by the First United Spanish Mennonite Church. Leadership from the Vancouver Chinese and Grace Chinese churches also participated in skits or times of prayer, and the Saturday meal was a multicultural array of *zwieback*, *empanadas* and sushi.

The meetings were also punctuated with moments of laughter and anticipation as Doug Epp, moderator for MCBC, gave out door prizes—T-shirts, pens, water bottles and a few creative items like “dinner and a movie,” which turned out to be a box of Kraft Dinner, a movie rental and popcorn.

The meetings were structured in such a way that delegates had an opportunity to listen to talks on the history of MC Canada—led by Henry Paetkau, Mennonite historian and former MC Canada Denominational Minister, and on the structure of MC Canada and MCBC—led by Dan Nighswander and Doug Epp. After each talk, roundtable discussion questions focused on the strength and weaknesses of various leadership models, including the bishop model



annual meetings

that MC Canada was founded on and the congregational model that it has evolved into.

As delegates reflected on what it is that offers joy to local churches and in their relationships at the provincial and national levels, it was emphasized that priority of relationships, involvement and ownership were all strengths of a model that involves the local congregation in decision-making.

‘I see a conference walking together with Christ and I choose to walk with you, to motivate you to plant new churches.’

But a sense of frustration was evident as people questioned how to deal with difficult issues when churches differ so strongly across the country.

“We seem to experience more joy locally than nationally because we’re a ‘microwave generation,’” said Reece Friesen, associate pastor at Eben Ezer Mennonite Church. “We want immediate results and are impatient with the length of time [it takes to make decisions].”

Saturday afternoon was spent on committee reporting, nominations and budget reports. The Evangelism and Church Development Committee (ECDC) presented Edgar Rivera as the new part-time director for ECDC. Speaking with passion, Rivera voiced a desire to see churches grow and plant more churches.

“I see a conference walking together with Christ and I choose to walk with you, to motivate you to plant new churches,” he said.

The Ad Hoc Committee also presented the following resolution: “Be it resolved that the MCBC executive

pursue, with the appropriate bodies, a conversation regarding the possibility of making the ‘Provincially Active Only’ a permanent status.”

When MC Canada was formed, B.C. churches were offered the option of provincially active-only status for a five-year period ending in the summer of 2006. The Ad Hoc Committee found that several churches wanted to make this a permanent status, resulting in the resolution. Some delegates questioned the wording of the resolution, while others expressed a sense of loss when churches made this choice. In the end, the resolution passed overwhelmingly.

The day ended with a commissioning litany and prayer for those finishing terms of service and those beginning new terms.

—**Angelika Dawson**

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Revival Cuba!

Nearly a half-century after Cuba's communist revolution, the church in this Caribbean island nation is seeing a resurgence, thanks in part to Mennonite Church Canada. Its Witness and International Ministries programs have been assisting Cuba's Anabaptist church movement for much of the past decade, allowing it to now look beyond its own borders to help Mennonites in other countries, as the articles on the next three pages attest. An MC Canada Learning Tour earlier this year gave Mennonites from Manitoba and Ontario a personal glimpse into this thriving Cuban church.



Dan Dyck photos

Cuban Learning Tour participants Anne Winter, Alex Janzen, Nyle Martin, Marlene Ens, Jack Suderman and Werner Ens pray together with their Cuban brothers and sisters in Christ. MC Canada provides pastoral leadership training to the Evangelical Missionary Church of Cuba.

Church revolution comes 45 years after political one

At 60 years old, Pastor Andres Olivares was planning his retirement. Instead, he is following a call to shepherd a new, and as yet unregistered, church in Cuba.

A former Baptist minister and denominational leader, in recent years Olivares has found a new, spiritual bond in Anabaptist heritage—a bond he feels is already leading to an exciting new alternative for Christians in Cuba.

While his country began a political revolution in 1959 that has led to improved economic conditions for the masses, the church in Cuba is beginning its own revolution now.

In the emerging Evangelical Missionary Church of Cuba, of which Olivares is the current president, believers are encouraged to read and analyze scriptures for themselves—a significant shift from the Cuban Protestant tradition of having the gospel interpreted by key leaders from a pulpit.

At a gathering of the Rose of Sharon congregation at a member's home near town of Las Tunas, Pastor Madelin Ramos has the worshippers break up into small groups. She assigns a portion of scripture from Mark to each

group, and asks them to respond to a set of questions about the seed and the sower. Their responses will later be acted out in impromptu dramas.

This form of participatory worship and Bible study, "is pure revolution in itself" in Cuban church circles, says Jack Suderman, executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness. Suderman has been visiting Cuba regularly since 1988, and has presented annual teaching seminars to local leaders since 1994.

Combining worship and Bible teaching is in a large way driving the excitement and growth of the Evangelical Missionary Church in Cuba, a group that has decided to adopt as its own the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, and which encourages believers to delve into the meaning of the words on the page in a way few have engaged with scripture before.

The parallels between the vision of the political revolution, such as education and healthcare for all, and the vision of the gospels, are evident for Ramos and Olivares.

"Good works are very important," says Ramos, but are no substitute for



Trudy Federau, a member of the Cuban Learning Tour group from MC Canada, is greeted in the traditional Cuban manner by a member of the Evangelical Missionary Church in Baire.



Idelsy Olano, left, is considering a call to ministry in the Missionary Evangelical Church of Cuba. She is pictured with Andres Olivares, pastor and denominational president, centre, and Madelin Ramos, pastor and denominational vice-president.

the humility required for confession and repentance, “but the most important thing is to confess our sins and to repent.”

The Evangelical Missionary Church of Cuba is just 10 years old, and already has 23 pastors and 28 congregations—plus numerous new church plants. Since its inception it has doubled membership every year through a simple strategy: each member brings one person a year to the church.

With this growth comes a big need: leadership training. To address this, Suderman and others deliver week-long Anabaptist theology training workshops to a growing cadre of leaders each year.

“We would like you to talk to your congregations about how grateful we are for the way Mennonite Church Canada is helping us in the formation of our leaders,” says Olivares. “You should also cite 1 Corinthians 15:58 to your congregations, where it says that the work that you are doing, the ministry you are doing, is not in vain and will not be in vain.”

Meanwhile, the Evangelical Missionary Church of Cuba is pursuing the legal process of registering the church with the appropriate government authorities. If approved, official recognition of the church by authorities will make leadership and church development an easier task, and allow them to establish permanent meeting places outside of members’ homes.

—Dan Dyck

History lesson leads Cuban couple to stand up for Vietnamese Mennonites

A course on Mennonite history and the martyrs who died for their faith during the Protestant Reformation—delivered last fall by Janet Plenert, executive director of International Ministries of Mennonite Church Canada—has led a young Cuban pastoral couple to respond to the plight of Mennonite believers in Vietnam.

Alexander and Aisha Tamayo lead a small, young Evangelical Missionary Church congregation in Cuba’s third largest urban centre, Santiago de Cuba. Aisha, a former journalist for the Communist Party of Cuba, recently left her work to pursue church work with her husband. Out of a desire for the Evangelical Missionary Church of Cuba to embrace the suffering servant model of Jesus—and astutely aware that Cuba and Vietnam have good diplomatic relations—the couple has written a letter asking Cuban officials to investigate the Vietnamese claims of persecution.

The couple would like the imprisoned Pastor Quang (see Jan. 24, 2005, issue, page 23) to know that his



Aisha and Alexander Tamayo are leading a new church plant of the Evangelical Missionary Church in downtown, Santiago de Cuba. They are writing a letter of advocacy in response to the imprisonment of Vietnamese Mennonite Christians in Ho Chi Minh City.

brothers and sisters in Cuba are supporting him. “Even though he is behind bars and he may be in [close quarters] in a small room, the reason

Continued on page 24



A Mennonite Church Canada Learning Tour Delegation forms a prayer circle with members of the Santiago de Cuba Evangelical Missionary Church congregation in response to the persecution of Mennonite Christians in Vietnam. “The freedom of Christ is not kidnapped by prison bars,” says Pastor Alexander.

History from page 23

why it feels so tight is because the [Evangelical] Missionary Church of Cuba is there with him, and that he is not alone there," says Alexander through an interpreter.

Aisha lends her support as well. "Let him know that we are praying for him and that we know that his life is in the hands of Jesus Christ."

The Tamayos' action could also put them in a potentially risky position, given that Cuba and Vietnam are based on similar political ideologies,

according to Plenert, who is proud of her former students.

"Aisha was one of the first students to really dig deep within herself to ask what implications peace theology would have for her life and for the church in Cuba," Plenert says. "Her whole body expression demonstrated her struggle, questions and deep reflections. Alexander exhibited an unquenchable thirst for more information about Mennonite history. He was making connections that crossed time and geography, and gave him both roots and wings in the Anabaptist

faith community."

"It really was striking to us to understand that this kind of persecution is not something that is simply part of history," Alexander says. "It actually is present today in our world, and this motivated and inspired us to try to do something on behalf of the persecuted church."

"We recognize full well that this represents potentially a risk for us. We also strongly believe that God is in this and that things will work out," adds Aisha.

—Dan Dyck

Church Life in Cuba: An MC Canada Learning Tour

Learning Tours are becoming an increasingly popular way for Canadian Mennonites to connect with the ministries the Mennonite Church Canada Witness does on behalf of its area conferences and congregations.

According to Al Rempel, director of resource development for MC Canada, "To date, we have conducted and/or facilitated excursions to Colombia, Israel, and Cuba to meet with ministry workers and get a sense of the work and the impact these ministries are having. As the tours become more popular, they get sold out more quickly. The Cuba tour filled up fast."

The participants of the recent Cuba Learning Tour experienced Cuba in a way that no other tourist would, meeting with local Christians in homes, joining them for worship, and enjoying the hospitality of fellow Christians with few resources in out-of-the-way places. Few will forget the passionate singing and prayer, the Bible study, and in particular the keen interest shown by Cuban church leaders in Anabaptist theology, Rempel says.

The tour was guided by Jack and Irene Suderman, in collaboration with Cuban church leaders Andres Olivares and Madelin Ramos.

Upon their return, some of the Canadian participants struggled to rationalize the low standard of living (when compared to Canada) with Cuba's 98 percent literacy rate, free public health care system, and free university education. Other surprises for Cuba Learning Tour participants included a new awareness that the ministry in Cuba is just one small slice



From Jan. 28 to Feb. 4, 18 Mennonites from Manitoba and Ontario took a Learning Tour through eastern Cuba to find out more about the emerging Evangelical Missionary Church of Cuba (EMCC), which has adopted the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective as their own. Since 1994, Mennonite Church Canada has been assisting the church with leadership training.

of what Mennonite Church Canada Witness is doing on behalf of Canadian area conferences and congregations in 39 countries around the world.

Trudy Federau shared that her faith in God, and the church as God's instrument, have been restored. Beth Ann Lichti spoke of her prior cynicism about the need for international mission, and how her own thinking had been transformed. Anne Harms noted how the experience has helped her make the leap from the mission work of the former Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) to MC Canada Witness.

Guide Jack Suderman told participants that last year the ministry in Cuba cost \$6,000. "The dollar to peso exchange rate in Cuba means that we can do a lot with a little," he said. "The high impact is very evident in not only the growth of the Evangelical Missionary church here, but also in the call for leadership training, an indicator that these folks are committed to

leading and growing the church from within their own ranks." Limited Anabaptist training material in the Spanish language makes it difficult for local leaders to teach themselves.

With MC Canada Witness help, a little church is starting its own revolution of Christian restoration, looking at the Biblical message within the context of a 45-year-old political revolution, using new (to them) teaching methods, and reaching out to neighbours, families, and newcomers. May God bless Cuba, its people, and its church, all agreed.

The next Mennonite Church Canada learning Tour is being planned for the fall of 2005, departing for Asia. A limited number of openings are still available. Interested individuals should contact Al Rempel at arempel@mennonitechurch.ca.

—MC Canada release

Darfur, Sudan

MCC aid reaches camps in Darfur despite violence

Despite an apparent increase in violence against civilians in the western Darfur region of Sudan, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) relief projects are continuing to provide supplies and shelter to people who have been attacked and driven from their homes.

MCC's main partner in Darfur, the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), is constructing shelters and distributing survival supplies to people living in camps because of ethnic violence. Since November, the SCC has constructed 500 basic family dwellings, erected four school classrooms and distributed blankets, cooking pots, water basins, water cans, mosquito nets and soap to 3,349 families—all with MCC assistance.

With funding from MCC, the church council is modifying and delivering tents donated by the United Nations, to serve as school classrooms in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. The SCC is also providing school supplies and will soon provide furnishings, textbooks, school offices and latrines with MCC funding, and school kits donated by MCC constituents.

Blankets donated by MCC supporters and 3,000 metric tons of food purchased through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank will be distributed in the next several months.

The conflict in Darfur, a Sudanese region about the size of France, has resulted in tens of thousands of deaths and the displacement of about two million people since it began in 2003. Government forces and government-backed militias are fighting rebel groups for control of the region and are accused by the United Nations of widespread war crimes against civilians, particularly against certain ethnic groups.

Observers in Darfur report continuing attacks on villages, towns, aid workers and camps of people displaced by previous attacks. The SCC reports



Photo by Nils Carstensen, ACT/Caritas

Girls study at a school in an IDP camp in Zalingei, West Darfur, Sudan. In this war-torn region, the school is one of several receiving supplies and other support from MCC through its partner, the Sudan Council of Churches.

that violence often closes roads, delaying deliveries of aid. In a recent report, the United Nations blamed the Sudanese military and government-backed militias known as *Janjaweed* for war crimes in Darfur, including

killing civilians, destroying villages, torturing prisoners and rape. The report also found evidence that rebel groups may be responsible for war crimes on a smaller scale.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

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Andaman Islands, India

MCC helps train trauma counsellors on Indian islands

With \$13,000 in Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) funding, the West Bengal Volunteer Health Association has been doing health assessments and training trauma counsellors on the Andaman and Nicobar islands off the coast of India, hard hit by the Dec. 26 tsunami that killed more than a quarter-million people in south Asia.

Carolyn Holderread Heggen, a psychotherapist from Oregon, is helping train the counsellors there for two months.

While the islands have been described as “heavenly,” Heggen said her first view of the Andaman capital, Port Blair, from the air, made it seem anything but to her. “The sight of reddish brown rice paddies, temples, shrines, bridges and buildings askew and crumbled, boats smashed and deposited far from the water’s edge, quickly jolted me back to reality,” she said.

While she found the 18 camps set up around Port Blair—each housing from 300 to more than 1,000 survivors each in makeshift plastic tents, Heggen said that the immediate provision of MCC funds to ship medical supplies from the Indian mainland helped the camp clinic and a volunteer local doctor (secured by the West Bengal Volunteer Health Association) provide for the basic medical needs at the camps.

“Because of the pools of trapped and brackish water and the destruction of many latrines at Port Blair, there is an infestation of mosquitoes and large flies,” Heggen reported. “At camps people begged us for nets because they were unable to sleep at night or protect their young babies, the old and the sick during the day. We were able to place a call to [Calcutta] and thousands of brightly colored nets were put on the next ship. As we distributed the nets, people graciously thanked us,” she said.

While some semblance of normalcy now pervades the camps—though they remain “quite challenged” to meet basic physical needs—the psychological needs are immense, according to Heggen.



Photo by Hege Opseth, NCA/ACT International

Women burn what they can on Indian beaches following the devastating tsunami. People will need to recover from the shock, clear their coastline and find the strength to carry on with their lives.

“Most camp residents have a personal story of profound loss and nightmarish images trapped in their minds” she said. “Many children fight sleep and don’t want to close their eyes because when they do they see haunting ‘pictures.’” Distraught wives, who have lost their husbands in this very patriarchal society, wonder what will become of them and their children.

Heggen has been focusing her training efforts in the Andaman Islands on those who will help the child survivors. “I did separate training workshops with teachers at the elementary, middle school and secondary levels,” she said. “We focused particularly on ways of using art, stories, play and drama to help students externalize and resolve the internal terror they have experienced.”

She also met with nurses and the medical staff at the government hospital to conduct a workshop on healing responses to emotionally devastated patients.

“Sitting on the front row of the large lecture hall was a young nurse who frequently wiped tears from her eyes as I spoke,” Heggen said. “She later shared with me her personal story of tsunami terror and shared how hard it

is to help her patients and be compassionate with them when her own heart is so full of sadness.”

Relief workers, emergency response teams and community workers have been working 14- to 16-hour days for over a month now in hot, muggy, mosquito-infested tense situations. While capable and committed, they are exhausted, Heggen said.

“I was happy to have a chance to hold workshops with them on compassion fatigue and self-care,” she said. “They responded enthusiastically and emotionally to the invitation to set limits for themselves and to suggestions for ways they can help each other monitor and manage their workload and stress.”

These people are key for the rebuilding of tsunami-affected communities, according to Heggen. Support for them will be vital in the months ahead.

“My heart is full already of images of destruction and stories of despair,” she concluded. “But in the Andaman Islands I also saw enough expressions of human compassion, courage and generosity to renew my belief in the resilience of the human spirit and energize me for the work ahead.”

—**Ross W. Muir**

MCC photo by Emily Will



A total of 30 Indonesian participants—nurses, teachers, counsellors, relief workers, students and others—studied trauma counselling techniques with MCC's Karl and Evelyn Bartsch. The participants, like everyone else in Banda Aceh, were impacted by the devastating tsunami that killed a quarter-million people on Boxing Day. On the final day of training, the local group put their skills to the test. One of the participants, a university lecturer, had arranged to have his surviving students—45 out of 100—come for a trauma-incident debriefing. "All these devastated buildings we see here in Banda Aceh can be rebuilt," remarked Karl Bartsch. But for people to rebuild themselves they have to have the spirit to do it, the feeling of power of being able to act. At the beginning of this workshop I told the group that feelings of hopelessness and helplessness are symptoms of trauma. Many of them were experiencing these. But at the end of the workshop they said, 'Now we are not helpless.' That they established their own group to continue this work is a sign of this."

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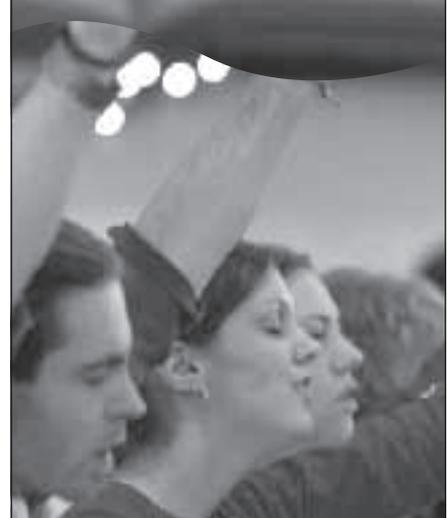
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 **Mennonite Mission Network**
 The mission agency of Mennonite Church USA

Pittsburgh, Pa.

Canadians observe U.S. church/school relationship

When the leaders of Mennonite schools met in Pittsburgh, Pa., February 18-20, there was fresh excitement about the possibility of a new relationship between the schools and Mennonite Church USA (MC USA). Although the administrators and board members of Mennonite secondary and elementary schools have a long history of meeting together, this was the first time that the colleges, universities and seminaries joined them.

The integration of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church raised the question of how Mennonite schools relate to the church. In 2001, MC USA created the Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) to provide a formal link. The agency planned this event, bringing together leaders of Mennonite schools from pre-school to seminary.

Jim Schrag, executive director of MC USA, assured the assembled education leaders that the schools are not merely church appendages, but that they are an integral part of the church. He declared that the schools are not a hat or a shirt, they are part of the body—perhaps even the brain. This theme of the need for an interconnected relationship between the church and the schools was repeated several times over the weekend.

Convention participants recognized the value of developing connections between schools so that each institution does not see itself in isolation, but as part of a larger whole. At the same time, some unease about the role of MEA surfaced during discussion time. Questions remain about how much influence this church agency will have over the schools.

There were several Canadians among the few hundred education leaders gathered in Pittsburgh. Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener and United Mennonite Education Institute in Leamington, Ont., have a long history of participation with American secondary schools. There were also representatives from Westgate Mennonite Collegiate and Mennonite Education Institute in

Manitoba. Conrad Grebel University College and Canadian Mennonite University each sent two administrators.

The Canadian participants encouraged Dave Bergen, executive secretary of the Christian Formation Council of Mennonite Church Canada, to dream big and to consider bringing together a similar group of people in Canada. Although Canada has far fewer schools and minimal staff devoted to the church/school relationship, the American model has appeal. Of course, things are more complicated in Canada, with some schools run jointly with the Mennonite Brethren denomination.

The speakers and workshops at this convention covered a variety of topics of interest to education leaders. Barth Hague, communications director for MC USA, reported on his *People in the Pew* study of 2003, in which he found a strong relationship between Mennonite identity and attendance at a Mennonite school. People who

attended Mennonite schools are more likely to identify themselves with the church; they tend to read church publications and use denominational Sunday School material. Some Canadian participants expressed the desire to have a similar study done in Canada.

Hague argued for a unified approach because there is a great deal of confusion among the people in the pews. People need to see the church as a tree with many branches rather than a forest of trees, he said.

Carlos Romero, executive director of MEA, declared that it was not helpful in the past when the task of the church and the school was divided. He pointed to his own experience, in which his Mennonite education shaped his view of the world, and declared that schools are missional centres for God's work. He concluded with the question, "What is God calling the Mennonite educational institutions to be?"

—Barb Draper



MCC photo by Dan Jantzi

Ibu Parmis, from Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia (GKMI), one of the three Mennonite conferences in Indonesia, packs towels for MCC relief kits. Some 8,000 towels went into the 2,000 relief kits assembled by Indonesian Mennonites for survivors in the tsunami areas. Leaders of the GKMI conference said they were touched by children of the Tanjungkarang congregation in Kudus, Central Java, who gave from their own pocket money. The kits, which are packed into buckets, contain soap, bath towels, toothpaste and toothbrushes, detergent and other items of personal hygiene. As of Feb. 25, more than 8,500 relief kits had left Canada and the U.S. for Indonesia. Thousands more have been collected, and kits continue to come in—each bringing MCC closer to its goal of providing 22,000 kits for tsunami survivors.

Altona, Man.

MCC visitors learn conflict resolution in Altona

More than 50 young adults brought the world to Altona earlier this year, taking part in a week-long mid-year conference. While in Altona, they took part in community events, shared of themselves, their countries and their forms of worship at a multicultural worship service.

The young adults are participants in a year-long International Visitor Exchange Program (IVEP), sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee and designed to increase practical vocational knowledge through work and observation, improve English language skills and build Christian fellowship. While in North America, they work in areas of social service, education, retail, business and various trades or in agriculture.

Allib Fuertes, from Surigao City in the Philippines, is dividing his time between working in a woodworking shop at Kitchener, Ont., and at a Ten Thousand Village warehouse at nearby New Hamburg. In the first half of the 10-month term he worked at the MCC offices in Kitchener. Fuertes hopes to check out engineering study prospects in Kitchener before he returns home.

Eva Sommer of Germany is working as an educational assistant at a school in Abbotsford, B.C. The employment was her first choice when she applied for the program and suits her fine since she wants to major in English to be a teacher.

Freddie Muhochi Mweka of Arusha Mennonite Church in Tanzania had to compete to participate in the visitor exchange. He was surprised to find people of Altona so friendly, and was impressed by Canadian health facilities.

We hoped they would experience the warmth of Altona, and we received wonderful co-operation from the



Photo by Elmer Heinrichs

IVEPers Allib Fuertes of the Philippines, left, Eva Sommer of Germany, Freddie Muhochi Mweka of Tanzania, and Wenders Giesbrecht of Paraguay enjoyed their time at the MCC-sponsored conference in Altona.

churches, and from businesses,” said organizer Pete Giesbrecht. “We have a cold environment but the visitors were received with warm hearts.”

Ray Hamm, another organizer, said the participants are chosen through local agencies in their home country, and competition is not unheard of because of the large numbers who wish to take part. Some are right out of high school, others already have their college degree, and many have some work experience.

This Altona conference marked the half-way point for the North America visitors, giving them an opportunity to reflect on their past six months on the continent.

While the Altona community takes things like snow and cold weather for granted in winter, these were surprises for some of the conference visitors and their enjoyment of the Altona winter festival dimmed when the weather turned colder and windy at the afternoon. But they were able to enjoy participating in igloo building, tobogganing, horse and sleigh rides, and a hot-dog lunch.

The event benefits Altona as well as the international participants. It was a chance for the community to realize the world is larger than southern

Manitoba.

The conference was structured around this year’s theme of “Peaceful action in conflict,” based on Isaiah 57. Facilitators Nina Kesel and Kim Thiessen, who developed the materials, shared and challenged people to consider their actions when confronted with conflict.

“They seemed to have experienced something profoundly moving. They bonded and shared tears and stories of their lives,” commented Canadian leader Isabella Sellar Voll, praising the Altona hosts. “We were welcomed in a way that we could scarce have dreamed for. We would hope that our presence in the community had the effect of having worked towards MCC’s goal and mission of peace building—of connecting people in order to create understanding and love between people from a variety of cultures.”

At the international worship festival, Altonans were able to see how God is worshipped in Asia, Africa, Europe and in Latin America, as groups from 22 different countries shared about life and worship on their continents.

—Elmer Heinrichs

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Another Vietnamese Mennonite leader released

Church leader Nguyen Van Phuong was released from prison on March 3. He appeared to be in fair health. His release came a day after the first anniversary of the March 2, 2004 incident which sparked his arrest and that of other Vietnamese Mennonite church leaders.

His wife, Phuong Trang, and one-year-old son were among family members and church friends who met him as he was released from the Bo La Prison, 80 kilometres north of Ho Chi Minh City. Phuong's son was only a month old at the time of his arrest.

Phuong, 38, had served various pastoral roles since his mid-20s. When several Mennonite communities formed the Vietnam Mennonite Church in 2003, he was chosen to serve on the administrative committee as a member for social ministries.

Brothers Nguyen Huu Nghia and Nguyen Thanh Nhan were released from Ho Chi Minh's Chi Hoa Prison after completing their nine-month sentences in early December. They are still recovering from mistreatment in prison.

Meanwhile, family and church friends continue their concern for Le Thi Hong Lien, who, like Phuong, was

also sentenced to one year of imprisonment. Her arrest, however, did not come until the end of June 2004. She is being held in Chi Hoa Prison in Ho Chi Minh City.

On Feb. 1 Nguyen Quang Du, Lien's father, sent a request to Vietnamese authorities, asking that she be medically treated because she was weak and mentally unstable. When he went to visit her a week later, he was informed that she was transferred to the Tong Le Chan prison in Binh Phuoc province, even further away from Ho Chi Minh City, where a prison doctor reportedly found Lien was not suffering from any health problems.

The appeal hearings for Nguyen Hong Quang, general secretary of the Vietnam Mennonite Church, and for Pham Ngoc Thach, announced for February 2, have been postponed, and no new date has yet been announced.

Church leaders are grateful for the advocacy on behalf of the imprisoned



Church leader Nguyen Van Phuong, left, was released from Bo La Prison north of Ho Chi Minh City on March 3. He is pictured with his wife, Phuong Trang, and one-year-old son, who were among family members and church friends to meet him.

leaders, and ask for continued prayer and support for them and their families.

—Vietnamese Ministries release

Vietnamese Ministries photo



MCC photo by Philip Geiser

Mohammad Fazlul Hoque of Baghboti, Bangladesh, walks with his son and daughter through a thriving field of mustard plants. Hoque was one of thousands of Bangladeshi farmers whose fields were devastated by floods that claimed more than 2,000 lives in the fall of 2004 in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. In addition to providing emergency assistance, MCC responded with a \$270,400 agricultural rehabilitation project in Bangladesh. Through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, MCC provided mustard, rice, wheat, potato, peanut, onion, garlic and corn seeds to some 8,500 farm families.

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Kenora, Ont.

A community safe for whom?

Travellers entering Kenora, Ont., on the Trans-Canada Highway will see signs announcing that the city is a “Designated Safe Community.” But Matt Schaaf of Winnipeg, a member of the Christian Peacemakers Team (CPT) in Kenora, wonders, “safe for whom?”

The question is a serious one for many aboriginal people living in the Kenora area. Some Anishinabe have claimed abuse at the hands of the Kenora police and many more are wary of perceived racism as they live and do business in the area. As CPTers talked with allies who work with Kenora’s Anishinabe Peace and Justice Coalition, they found out this was a poignant question.

The shadow of a scandal involving the Kenora Police Service lies over the city.

The shadow of a scandal involving the Kenora Police Service lies over the city. The courts are currently hearing a civil suit alleging that the police mismanaged the investigation into the still-unresolved October 2000 beating death of Max Kakegamic, a visiting aboriginal man.

In February, the CPT visiting delegation from Canada and the U.S. decided to hold a prayer vigil at the downtown site where Kakegamic’s body was found before installing the “safe for whom” sign on the Trans-Canada Highway. Local friends of CPT Kenora joined the team and delegates for the vigil and the sign installation. The group called for reconciliation and increased accountability from Kenora Police Services.

CPT delegate Karl Stutzman noted that activists in Kenora have lots of good ideas for improving relations between Anishinabe citizens and police, including imparting antiracism and de-escalation of violence skills in

local officials. “The police have a difficult job; they deserve to have these skills,” Stutzman said. Local citizens have also called for a trusted independent complaints process to address the concerns Anishinabe citizens have with police.

While Kenora activists expressed their appreciation for CPT’s role in raising awareness in Kenora, other community members are not very excited to see the new sign on the Trans-Canada. Kenora Mayor Dave Canfield told the *Winnipeg Free Press*

that CPT’s action was inflaming tempers in town. According to the *Free Press*, Canfield would rather focus on the recreational opportunities that draw wealthy Canadian and American tourists to Kenora each summer.

CPT Kenora team members include Stephani Sakanee (northwestern Ontario), Jerry Park (Washington, D.C.) and Schaaf. Members of the February delegation included Nathan Bender (Toronto), Maryann Harder (Mountain Lake, Minn.), Jerry Stein (Amarillo, Tex.), and Stutzman (Goshen, Ind.).

—From CPT release



As the newspaper reports and television broadcasts of the terrible devastation caused by the tsunami in the Indian Ocean on December 26, 2004, continued to pour in, people everywhere were moved to respond with generosity, including the ecumenical congregation at Nithview Home, a seniors’ complex in New Hamburg Ont. On Sunday, January 9, Nancy Mann, back right, pastor of this elderly congregation of less than 100, led the worshippers in a service focused on the recent events in southeast Asia. After a candle-lighting ritual and a time of prayer for the victims of the tsunami and those engaged in the relief efforts, the congregation received a free-will offering. Everyone was delighted to discover that they had raised over \$1,800 for the relief effort! The offering was divided equally between MCC and the Red Cross to assist with their relief programs. “It is important to us to still participate in an active, worshipping congregation,” said Marion Wideman, a regular participant at Nithview. “We can still make a difference.”

Water Valley, Alta.

Snow camp encourages closeness to God

Snow camp at Camp Valaqua is an opportunity to escape from routine, worship God and meet new people your own age. It's a taste of summer camp—in the winter. This year, we were lucky enough to have quite a bit of snow for both the junior high weekend, Feb. 18-20, and the senior high weekend, Feb. 25-27.

The snow camps are organized by Mary-Ann Van Oeveren, provincial youth worker, and the Youth Leadership Team. While some of us slept in the main building, the braver slept outside in the cabins—true Canadians!

The speaker for the junior high snow camp was Jerry Buhler from Pincher Creek, Alta. He invited us to recognize God's presence in our lives. With his song "Stop Button Blues" he encouraged us to push our stop buttons, take off our earphones, unplug our stereos, and listen to the voice of God that speaks in many ways. This thoughtful weekend left an impression on people so that they wanted to rekindle a relationship with God or create one.

He brought along his band Whole Wheat, who helped out with the songs. One of the neat experiences was on Saturday night. With all the lights out we watched as he created a cross of light with candles. He lit a candle for each suggestion we made about what we can do in response to God's love for us.

One of the youth, Matthew Veith, gave a presentation about Macau, which was a very inspiring experience.

When you go to Camp Valaqua, you just take for granted that you're going to play great games. We played capture the flags and four-way soccer with four teams, four goals and four soccer balls. We also played Mennonite Squish outdoors, where you have to run from one side of the field to the other without getting hugged (or tackled). Indoors, we played ping-pong, foosball, and shuffleboard. The foosball table was being used every break during the day.

Every Saturday night, we go outside

and brave the cold and play one of our favorite games—Mission Impossible! It has become a tradition at camp. At the junior high camp, everyone was looking forward to and talking about playing this late-night game.

At the end of the weekend, the youth had the opportunity to share amazing talents and abilities in a talent show.

At Camp Valaqua you get a sense that the land is holy ground. You can see all the wonderful nature God has created around you and think of the religious activities that have been going on there for years. There is also a mood of peacefulness that's just not there when you're in a city or town.

When the time came to depart we were disappointed, but we anticipated summer camp coming up soon and next year's snow camp. The only suggestion of how to make snow camp better is to make it longer than one weekend. It's a great opportunity to meet people from other Mennonite churches all across Alberta.

—From reports by **Lauren Hildebrandt, Maria Buhler and Nicholas Bergen**



Students from Willowgrove Primary School in Stouffville, Ont., got the opportunity to do something practical for the Asian tsunami survivors; on Jan. 26—exactly one month after the tsunami struck—volunteers Elsie McDowell and Ruth Reesor taught the students how to knot quilts, two of which became part of Mennonite Central Committee's tsunami relief effort. Teacher Julie Moyer Suderman commented that knotting quilts allows the students to feel part of the global response to the tsunami disaster in southeast Asia. Pieter Niemeyer, pastor of Rouge Valley Mennonite Church led the students, teachers and parents in a short reflection on using our God-given gifts to help others, while teacher Rebecca Seiling taught the students an Indonesian song that says, "In Jesus we are brothers and sisters."

You just take for granted that you're going to play great games.

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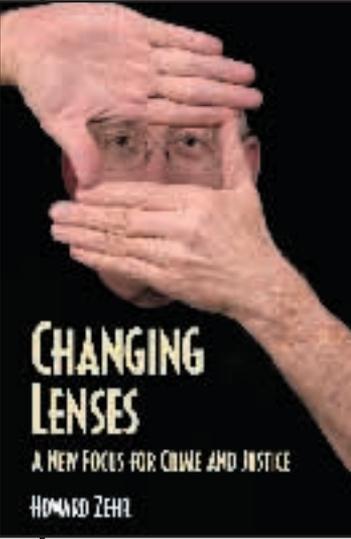


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Mennonite Church Canada

Prayer requests this Easter season

“Rejoice! Give thanks! Entreat! Intercede! These are what is needed,” writes Steve Plenert, guest editor for the March PrayerNet, as he highlights prayer requests for the ministries of Mennonite Church Canada:

- Rejoice with Tim and Cindy Buhler who, after a long and uncertain process, have received a one-year work visa for Macau. Meanwhile, continue to pray for potential ministry colleagues Chin and Bao Ng from Seattle, whose work visas have been denied. Pray also for new believers in the church who struggle with family opposition and rejection. May God’s spirit strengthen their faith and belonging in the church family.
- Pray for Mylène Melançon, a Witness intern from Joliette, Que., who is beginning a new position teaching English at Colegio Americano Menno in La Mesa, Colombia, this spring. Please pray that Mylène and her peers will have a strong witness for Christ among the students.
- Give thanks together with Nancy Frey and Bruce Yoder, Benin, for Paulin and Ester, a newly-married couple who have committed themselves to care for the Benin orphanage in the absence of the Castillo family. Pray for wisdom, strength and patience as this young couple enters this new work. Remember also Janessa Otto, a mission intern at the Bethesda Health Centre. Special prayers are requested for God’s intervention in the neighbouring countries of Togo and Ivory Coast, where political unrest threatens to bring civil war. The president recently offered to resign, but

the situation remains unstable.

- Intercede for Jason and Donna Martin as they continue their church planting work in Bari, Italy. They give thanks for positive responses in building relationships with neighbours through a creative outreach program. Pray that seed sown in ministry may grow into strong faith in Christ in the hearts of many. The Martins recently decided to conclude their service in Bari and to return to Canada due to their son’s health problems. Pray for their family as they deal with the stresses of this unanticipated transition.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Pastoral transitions

Stefan Cherry began serving as half-time youth pastor at Floradale Mennonite Church in January. He is also studying in the MTS program at Conrad Grebel University College. Before beginning his theological studies, Cherry had been serving with Mennonite Central Committee in Mozambique.

Dave Tiessen has begun a one-year term as interim pastor at Faith Mennonite Church in Leamington. He replaces Glenn Brubacher, who has retired. Thiessen completed eight years at Mannheim Mennonite Church in Kitchener in June 2004.

Gary Horst, former pastor at Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, is serving as interim pastor at Zion Mennonite Fellowship in Elmira, replacing Keith Meyers.

Israeli peacemaker visits Ontario

Abuna Elias Chacour, a man working for peace in Israel and Palestine, will be the guest of MCEC from May 28-June 2. Chacour, an Israeli citizen, was

born into a Palestinian Christian family and became a refugee in 1947, when his entire village was evicted by Israeli authorities. Appointed parish priest for the village of Ibillin in 1965, Chacour has developed an extensive educational system for Palestinian students. Over the years he has worked hard to foster understanding and reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis. He is well known for his book *Blood Brothers*.

Chacour will be accompanied by Glenn Witmer during his visit to MCEC, when he will speak to congregations and in public settings. Witmer works at education and bridgebuilding in Israel as part of Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

Five youth buses expected for Charlotte

The youth of MCEC are preparing for the upcoming Bible quizzing. Teams from several churches will meet at Listowel Mennonite Church on April 9 from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The top teams will move on to the quizzing finals, to be held April 23 at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate from 2 to 5 p.m., at the same time and location as the MCEC spring conference.

The number of youth attending the Peace-It-Together Conference at Canadian Mennonite University this year is lower than in previous years. One bus with 36 youth was to travel to Winnipeg on March 10 for the weekend conference. Meanwhile, Heather Gallian, minister of Youth Services, is planning for five buses of youth to travel to the bi-national youth convention, to be held in Charlotte, N.C., July 4-9.

—Barb Draper

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Summer camp program staff appointed

Many of the leaders for the summer Camps with Meaning program are in place, reports Sandy W. Plett, director of Camping Ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba.

Summer program director for Camp Assiniboia is Adrienna Joyce, who will be assisted by Kevin Kehler. The Bible instructor position will be shared by Tessa Suderman and Joel Peters Fransen.

Scott Warkentin has been hired as the summer program director at Camp Moose Lake and Alisa Wiebe as assistant summer program director. Dale Friesen and Chris Regehr will share the Bible instructor position.

At Camp Koinonia, Tammy Andrejowich will be the summer program director, assisted by Kira Friesen.

Leaders for the new Service Encounter program will be Jeremy Wiebe and Elizabeth Redekopp. This will be a service-based week at camp for youth completing grades 9-11. They will spend the first half of the week developing as a team at Camp Assiniboia and the second half experiencing life and ministry in the inner city of Winnipeg through Mennonite Central Committee’s Urban Plunge program.

The Bible theme for the summer camp program is “Finding the Way. Campers will learn to navigate the maze of life with God as compass, Scripture as a map, and Jesus and the Spirit as daily companion and guide. Laura Thiessen is leader of the Development Team as they create the curriculum that is camp-specific and user-friendly.

Plett is excited about the summer leadership team that is taking shape. "Pray for God's spirit to move in the hearts of campers, summer staff and year-round staff, as they prepare for the summer ministry," she requests.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Pastoral transitions

A startling number of pastors will be leaving positions or shifting areas of responsibility in the coming months in Saskatchewan.

Ken Quiring, pastor of Northstar Mennonite in Drake, is resigning in June.

Barb and Wilmer Froese, pastors at Laird Mennonite Church, will be leaving at the end of April, after leading the church for about 20 years.

Henry Block, conference moderator and pastor of Warman Mennonite, will be resigning in September from his position as pastor. He will continue on as moderator.

And Ray Friesen, pastor of Zion Mennonite in Swift Current, is helping to pastor the small church of Emmaus Mennonite in Wymark, Sask. He will be preaching there and his wife Sylvia will be helping in the area of pastoral care.

Mennonite Church Alberta

New sanctuary in the plans

In 1992, Tofield Mennonite Church built a beautiful, spacious fellowship hall just across the parking lot from the church building. The hall was the first phase of a more ambitious building project that would eventually be completed by the addition of a new sanctuary when sufficient start-up funds were in place.

For a few years the congregation continued to use the sanctuary in the old church—until it became more feasible to meet in the fellowship hall.

During this time, money was saved in a building fund for the second phase.

In June 2004, the 65-year-old original church building was demolished.

Currently, a building committee has formed and plans are being drawn up for the sanctuary addition. Ground breaking is anticipated for late summer or fall, but no dates are set at this time.

In the first three months of 2005, the congregation has held two building fundraisers. A potluck talent night raised \$8,000 and a Valentine's supper and silent auction raised \$6,500.

Trinity Mennonite building update

Trinity Mennonite held a dedication service for its 10-acre site on Hwy. 553 in October 2004. The site is now fully owned and debt-free. Plans for a church building have been finalized and site development is scheduled to begin on April 15. Kurt Janz of Calgary has volunteered to serve as the project manager.

The preliminary cost estimate for the facility is \$650,000. Trinity currently has \$235,000 on hand and another \$135,000 is promised by sister churches and Join Hands.

In an update to Alberta congregations, Trinity church has outlined its building and financial information, and invited financial and volunteer contributions.

The congregation extends a heartfelt thanks to all the congregations and individuals who have contributed, prayed, and volunteered—both time and talent—toward realizing the dream of a Trinity church building.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

New ECD director appointed for year

The delegates at the MCBC annual sessions, held at the end of February, welcomed

Edgar Rivera to his new role as part-time director of Evangelism and Church Development. Rivera is a member at Cedar Valley Mennonite Church in Mission, B.C., and has been on the ECD Committee for the past two years. He has a heart for evangelism, mentoring and sharing the vision of "churches planting churches," and is happy to be filling this one-year interim position. At the sessions, Rivera shared part of his personal story as well as the three things that he felt were the biggest area of need.

"Strengthening communications between churches and church planters, promoting

support for church planters, and having healthy churches planting churches are priorities," he said. "It wasn't an accident that God brought me to Canada; I want to be an evangelist for Christ."

Church leadership laid hands on Rivera and prayed for him as he began his new role.

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

Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Harms—to Lisa and Doug, Warman Mennonite, Sask., a son, Owen Joseph, Feb. 22.

Hedrick—to Janice Maust and Tim, Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont., a son, Willem Richard, Feb. 18.

Kampen—to Leanne and Len, Fiske Mennonite, Sask., a daughter, Calla Rae, Feb. 15.

Rempel—to Colleen and Chris, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a daughter, Brynn McKenna, Feb. 14.

Sawatsky—to Joanne and Reg, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, a son, Liam Robert, Jan. 14. (**Correction:** An incorrect date of birth was printed in an earlier issue.)

Thiessen—to Rebecca and Jeff, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a daughter, Chelsea Alexandra, Jan. 13.

Wiens—to Maria and Gerhard, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., a daughter, Elizabeth Grace, Feb. 28.

Marriages

Schmidt-Hemingway—Jonathan and Darlene, Brussels Mennonite, Ont., Feb. 26.

Deaths

Dyck—Justina (nee Buhr), 90, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, March 4.

Duncan—Don, 77, Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., Feb. 27.

Klassen—Frank J., 83, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, Jan. 30.

Rempel—Anna, 90, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., Feb. 18.

Rempel—Nick, 87, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Feb. 15.

Vandenberg—Johan (Han) Nicolaas, 80, Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta., Feb. 21.

Baptisms

Hope Mennonite, Winnipeg—John Koop Harder, Feb. 27.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Transitions announcements within four months of the event. Please e-mail Transitions announcements (identifying congregation name and location) to:

transitions@canadianmennonite.org.

Employment opportunities

Mennonite Central Committee is looking for a

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

based in Akron, PA. The director leads a 14-member department that carries out much of the human resource function of MCC, including recruitment, screening, placement, training and care of workers; compensation and benefits administration; personnel policy development; and maintenance of personnel data.

Qualifications include experience in personnel management and administration; knowledge of human resources policies, practices and tools; and solid skills in writing, problem-solving and negotiation. Cross-cultural experience and prior Christian service preferred. Candidates from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and /or bilingual (Spanish/English) candidates, and women are encouraged to apply.

For a copy of the job description contact:

Prem Dick
E-mail: psd@mcc.org

**SERVICE OPPORTUNITY
GUEST HOUSE MANAGER**

The Foundation for International Development has an opening for a manager at its guest house in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Wall's International Guest House accommodates up to 50 guests and provides short-term stays for missions groups, local missionaries, and international teams. Managerial responsibilities include supervision of staff, managing of reservations, and general maintenance. An ability to relate to an international clientele, computer skills, and basic accounting are essential. Some fluency in French would be helpful.

Call (519) 886-9520 for more information.

Camp Valaqua is seeking a summer camp

OUT-TRIP DIRECTOR

The position runs June 6 to August 26 and involves the planning and guiding of our week-long canoe, backpack and mountain bike trips. Qualifications include River Instructor certification, Wilderness First Aid, training and experience in wilderness trip leadership and a desire to work in camping ministry with children.

For more information contact the Camp Director at the number below. To apply send a cover letter and resume to:

Camp Director
Phone: (403) 637-2510
E-mail: valaqua@telusplanet.net
Camp Valaqua
Box 339
Water Valley, AB T0M 2E0

Advertising Due Dates

Tuesday April 5 for April 18 issue
Tuesday April 19 for May 2 issue
Tuesday May 3 for May 16 issue

Contact Barbara
Burkholder
1-800-316-4052
advert@canadianmennonite.org

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 Church Eastern Canada
4489 King St. E
Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2
Attn: Muriel Bechtel
E-mail: Muriel@mcec.on.ca

**ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT**



Canadian Mennonite is seeking a part-time (80% time) Administrative Assistant for the biweekly Mennonite periodical. A resume should be submitted by March 22, 2005. The position begins April 20, 2005.

Responsibilities include:

- managing subscriptions and circulation list;
- accounting and bookkeeping, payroll;
- office correspondence;
- general office tasks and overall administrative support.

Applicants should have a passion for the church and for *Canadian Mennonite's* ministry and mission; experience in bookkeeping (we use Simply Accounting); proficiency in database use, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel and e-mail; a good phone manner; good communication and listening skills; and willingness to work as part of a team.

This position is located at our head office in Waterloo, Ontario and includes a pension plan, health coverage and other benefits.

Direct inquiries and applications to:
Timothy Dyck, Editor/Publisher, *Canadian Mennonite*
490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
1-800-378-2524, x225

editor@canadianmennonite.org www.canadianmennonite.org

SENIOR MATH TEACHER

Westgate Mennonite Collegiate invites applications for a Mathematics teaching position for September 2005. This teacher will be responsible for teaching senior levels of Pre-Calculus and Advanced Placement Calculus. Qualified applicants will have strong relational skills and a commitment to Christian education from a Mennonite Anabaptist perspective.

Forward resumes:

c/o Principal
E-mail: westgate@westgate.mb.ca
Fax: (204) 786-1651
86 West Gate, Winnipeg, MB R3C 2E1

IDEAL SUMMER JOB in WORSHIP LEADING! Niagara United Mennonite Church, a large congregation in Niagara-on-the-Lake, is looking for a

SUMMER MUSIC WORSHIP LEADER

This paid position would include providing leadership for the praise and worship band and for children's worship, as well as participating in the choir (in early summer). The applicant should be willing to work with traditional and contemporary worship styles. We are looking for a devoted follower of Jesus with a passion for music in worship. The applicant should have experience in leading congregational worship.

This would be an ideal summer position for a student. Accommodation can be arranged if needed. Interested applicants, please contact:

Ruth Willms
1668 Concession #6, RR 2
Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0
E-mail: rmw1275@hotmail.com
Phone: (905) 984-2166

Niagara United Mennonite Church, a 600+ member congregation in Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON invites applications for a

FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR of YOUTH and EDUCATION

The applicant should be a devoted follower of Jesus with a passion for youth and young adults. The individual should be committed to anabaptist values and be willing to work as part of the ministry team. A minimum bachelor's degree is required. Relevant experience is preferred. The position is available in early summer 2005.

For additional information or to apply, please contact the chairperson of the search committee by May 15, 2005.

Fred Teichgraf
E-mail: fteichgraf@wurthcanada.com
Phone: (905) 468-4798

SHERBROOKE MENNONITE CHURCH of Vancouver, B.C. invites applications for the full-time position of

YOUTH PASTOR

Desired qualifications would include:

- Enthusiastic, mission focused, person with a long-term vision for reaching out to young people inside and outside the realm of the church.
- Ability to provide Christ centered, biblically based and Anabaptist oriented discipleship training/teaching.
- Vision for integrated youth ministry in a Multicultural setting.

Duties would include:

- Taking responsibility to integrate youth ministry into the overall life, worship and service of the congregation.
- Be accountable to the congregation through the senior Pastor and Church Council.

Preferred Starting Date: August 1st, 2005

Application Deadline: April 1st, 2005

Please send resume to:

Alfred Ens, Search Committee
E-mail: alfandkelly@dccnet.com
Sherbrooke Mennonite Church
7155 Sherbrooke St., Vancouver, BC V5X 4E3
Phone: (604) 327-3913; Fax: (604) 321-3933
E-mail: smcvan@telus.net

Columbia Bible College announces Two Faculty Openings

Columbia is seeking two faculty members for fall 2005. The desired areas of expertise are:

- DIRECTOR of EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
- PSYCHOLOGY/COUNSELLING PROFESSOR (3 year term appointment)

For a full list of qualifications and job description, please consult www.columbiabc.edu.

Please forward resume to the attention of Dr. Ron Penner by **March 31, 2005**. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed in the first instance to Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

Christian Alliance International School (CAIS) in Hong Kong requires the following full-time teachers:

- Grade 2 (1.0)
- Grade 5 (1.0)
- Secondary Mandarin (1.0)
- Teacher Librarian (1.0)
- Guidance/Career Counsellor (1.0)

Applicants should possess a minimum B.Ed. (or equivalent) with the relevant major. Further details about the positions and the application process may be found on the school web site at: <http://www.cais.edu.hk>.

Woodland Christian High School invites applications for

TWO TEACHING POSITIONS

for the 2005-2006 school year. Teachers who are qualified to teach a combination from the following are encouraged to apply:

- Mathematics
- Science/Biology
- Bible
- French
- Choral Music

Please address inquiries to:

Gary VanArragon, Principal
E-mail: principal@woodland.on.ca

Information about Woodland Christian High School is available on our website at www.woodland.on.ca

For rent

Room for rent in home with pets in West Toronto near TTC. \$375 monthly. For information please call (416) 252-2824.

Mennonite Voluntary Service Intentional Community in Toronto. Call (416) 422-2406 for details.

For sale

Caskets and urns handmade in Winnipeg. Call Rick at (204) 228-4741 or visit www.thevillagecasketmaker.com

Wanted

Laird Mennonite Church is looking to purchase new or used copies of "The Mennonite Hymnal." Any information please contact Greg Redekopp, Box 178, Laird, SK S0K 2H0. Phone or fax: (306) 223-4406 or e-mail ginesdoly@sasktel.net

Bus trip planned to Hutterite colonies

Viking, Alta.—On Saturday, April 16., the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta is planning a bus trip that will include visits to two Hutterite colonies in the Viking area.

Presentations will be given both on the bus and at the colonies on the history of the Hutterites, as well as their use of technology. The Iron Creek Colony has installed a biodigester, which converts hog manure into electricity.

The bus will depart from Edmonton First Mennonite Church, 3650 - 91 Street, at 8:30 a.m., returning about 4:30 p.m. Cost of the bus trip is \$40. This includes lunch.

To reserve a spot for the bus trip, call Dave at 403-328-0237.

—Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta release

Nutana Park church to celebrate 40th

Saskatoon—Nutana Park Mennonite is planning a “thanksgiving” in May. On May 13-15, the church invites former members and adherents to come back and enjoy a weekend of celebration in commemoration of 40 years of service and ministry in Saskatoon. Bring your voices and instruments and join in singing and reminiscing.

A committee is developing a comprehensive, informational time-line that will be posted in the church lounge to give time for reflection, discussion and remembering God’s leading throughout these years.

The weekend will begin Friday evening, May 13, with an informal gathering. Saturday kicks off with a pancake breakfast, followed by visiting, choir practice, children’s activities, lunch, directed intergenerational activities, supper, and an evening program that includes

a PowerPoint presentation of the church’s history, much singing and a choir participation.

The weekend will come to an end with a Sunday morning worship service, a challenge to ongoing faithfulness and a large potluck lunch.

To register, contact Bruno and Elsie Neufeldt at 306-374-1364 or by e-mail: h.b.neufeldt@sasktel.net.

Billeting is available if requested..

—**Jake Nickel**

‘Group of Seven’ at Bergthal art show

Didsbury, Alta.—A 50-year retrospective of paintings by Henry Goerzen and a *Vernissage* by Donald Stoesz are featured at the Bergthal and Community Art Show.

Paintings by Irene Goerzen-Crosland and Susan Isaac, cartoon caricatures by Dave Epp, petit point by Kathy Peters, and quilts by Lorelei Loewen will also be on display, along with other works of art by the Bergthal Group of Seven. Music will be performed by the Browns and Goerzen sisters.

The one-day event happens on Saturday, April 9, from 1-4 p.m., at Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury. For more information, call 403-224-2248.

Calendar

British Columbia

April 15: Columbia Bible College spring concert at Central Heights Mennonite Brethren Church, Abbotsford.

April 16: Columbia Bible College graduation and banquet.

May 3: Columbia Open 2005 at Chilliwack Golf & Country Club. Banquet and auction at Columbia Bible College.

May 15: Mennonite Concerto performed by Irmgard Baerg,

at Central Heights MB Church, 3 p.m. Sponsored by Mennonite Historical Society of B.C.

Alberta

April 15: Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta 2005 annual general meeting and spring seminar, Holyrood Mennonite Church, Edmonton. Registration begins at 7 p.m.

April 16: Bethany College concert of praise, on campus.

April 17: Bethany College commencement, on campus.

April 23: Alberta Rosthern Junior College fundraiser, Bears paw Community Centre, 7 p.m. Silent and live auctions, entertainment, refreshments. Call Howard Enns at 403-547-3130 for tickets or to donate items.

April 28, 29, 30: Musical at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary.

April 29-30: Alberta Women in Mission Enrichment Days at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton. Speakers: Tobia Veith, Susan Reynar. Topic: Living to make a difference. Call Evelyn Buhr at 780-439-3594.

May 7: Camp Valaqua work day. Contact Jeff Schellenberg at 403-637-2510.

May 28, 29: Songfest in Rosemary. Theme: “Can’t keep quiet.”

May 30-June 2: Theological Studies Week at Camp Valaqua. Lecturer John Neufeld on marriage and family.

June 5: MCC fundraiser “Glimmers of Hope.” An evening with Stephen Lewis, UN Secretary General’s special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa. 4 p.m. MacEwan Hall, University of Calgary. Call MCC at 403-275-6935 for more information.

June 10: Grade 9 graduation at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary.

Saskatchewan

April 8: Evening of Quartets at Cornerstone Church Mennonite, 7:30 p.m. MCC fundraiser.

April 8-9: Deeper Life meetings with Nelson Kraybill at Mount Royal Mennonite Church.

April 9-10: Deeper Life meetings with Nelson Kraybill at North Star Mennonite, Drake.

April 15: Open house at Rosthern Junior College.

April 16: “Touring Mission Fest” by MC Saskatchewan Ministries Commission.

April 16: MCC fundraiser coffee house at Wildwood Mennonite Church with cowboy poet Doris Daley, 7:30 p.m.

April 16: Bethany College spring concert, on campus.

April 17: Bethany College graduation celebration, on campus.

April 22: MC Saskatchewan youth Hungerfest.

May 1: CAMS concert of Mennonite school choirs at Bethany College, Hepburn.

May 2-6: AMBS seminary course in Saskatoon with Karl Koop.

May 14-15: 40th anniversary celebration at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon. RSVP by April 15 to 306-374-1364, e-mail: h.b.neufeldt@sasktel.net.

May 15: Spring concert at Rosthern Junior College.

May 25: Work day at Rosthern Junior College.

June 10-11: MCC relief sale in Saskatoon.

June 17-19: Youth Farm Bible Camp 40th anniversary celebrations.

June 23-25: Spring musical at Rosthern Junior College.

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

June 26: Graduation at RJC.

Manitoba

April 2: MDS spring banquet, Prairie Rose EMC Church,

Landmark, Man. Call 866-261-1274 to reserve.

April 14, 15, 16: Westgate Senior High musical—Oliver—at Tech Voc Collegiate, Winnipeg.

April 15, 16: Celebrating a Journey in Song, Eden Foundation-sponsored *Saengerfest*, at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church (15), Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg (16).

April 16: Graduation for CMU's Outtatown programs.

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

April 30: Benefit concert for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder branch of MCC Manitoba at Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 7 p.m. Featured artists: House of Doc. Call Andrea at 204-298-4359 for tickets.

May 20-22: Camp Moose Lake workathon.

May 24-28: Youth ministry course on sexuality with Roland Martinson at Canadian Mennonite University. Visit www.cmu.ca for details.

May 26: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Senior 2-4 spring concert, 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

May 27-29: Birding Retreat at Camp Moose Lake, with Adolf Ens.

May 28, 29: Benefit concert for Mennonite Heritage Village Museum by Manitoba's Faith and Life Male Choir and Women's Chorus, 7:30 p.m. MCI, Gretna (28), Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg (29).

May 30- June 1: Plus 55 Retreat at Camp Moose Lake with speaker Jim Brown.

June 1: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Grade 7-Senior 1 spring concert, 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

June 6-8: Plus 55 Retreat at Camp Koinonia with speaker Jake Neufeld.

June 6-10: Congregational Peacebuilding training with Nan Cressman and Dean Peachey at Canadian Mennonite University. Contact Shirley Plett at 204-487-3300.

June 12: Eden Foundation,

Big Brothers/Big Sisters charity golf tournament, Winkler.

June 17-18: MCC Festival and Relief Sale at Canadian Mennonite University campus.

June 25: Camp Koinonia golf tournament, Winkler Golf Club. Contact Matthew at 204-534-2504 for more information.

June 27: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Senior 4 graduation at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

Ontario

March 29: Mennonite Savings and Credit Union annual meeting, St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m. Speaker—Dr. Ronald J.R. Mathies, MCC executive director.

April 1, 2: Menno Singers and Guelph Chamber Choir perform at Benton St. Baptist Church, Kitchener (1) and River Run Centre, Guelph (2), 8 p.m.

April 1-3: Marriage Encounter weekend at Festival Inn, Stratford. For details, call Marjorie Roth at 519-669-8667.

April 15: MCC meat canner fundraising dinner, Hamilton Mennonite Church, 5-7 p.m. Music by Hope Rising. Call Edgar Rogalski at 905-387-3952 or the church office at 905-528-3607.

April 16: Women of MCEC Enrichment Day at East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock. Theme: God's calling. Speaker: Nancy Mathies. Call 519-356-2387 for more information.

April 17: Convocation at Conrad Grebel University College.

April 22-23: MCEC spring conference at Rockway Mennonite College, Kitchener.

April 23: MEDA banquet at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, with speakers Robert and Lisa Shuh.

April 25-29: MCC meat canning in Guelph. To volunteer call Earl J. Martin 519-664-2528.

April 29-30: Engaged Workshop at Living Water Fellowship, New Hamburg. Call Delmar and Mary Bender at

519-656-2256.

April 29-30: Women's retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp and Retreat Centre. Theme: "Remember who you are." Speaker: Wendy Janzen, St. Jacobs Mennonite. E-mail info@hiddenacres.ca for more information.

May 1: Inter-Mennonite Choir present "You Shall Have a Song" spring concert, Breslau Mennonite Church, 3 p.m. To reserve tickets, call 519-576-5804.

May 15: Menno Singers perform Bach's Mass in B Minor at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Kitchener, 3 p.m.

May 16, 17: Seniors spring retreat at Hidden Acres Camp. Topic: Mercy and do justice. (Same program each day.)

May 28: Ontario Mennonite relief sale, New Hamburg.

May 28-June 2: Father Elias Chacour, Palestinian peacemaker, priest and educator, is speaking in Kitchener-Waterloo, the GTA and St. Catharines areas. More details to follow.

May 29: Willowgrove Primary School, Stouffville, Ont., 10-year celebration and open house, 2-4 p.m.

June 10-12: Homecoming at Breslau Mennonite Church. Call 519-569-8637 or visit www.breslau.org/homecoming.

New:
Please send **Calendar** events by e-mail to:
calendar@canadianmennonite.org

Subscriber services

Mennonite

How to subscribe:

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

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Subscription changes:

- When submitting a change of address or cancellation, please use the subscription number:

Subscription number **Expiry date**

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Kathy Mennonite
999 Menno St.

WINNIPEG MB X0X 0X0

- Subscription changes are not considered Transitions notices. (Please send Transitions to the editor.)

3. Changes will be made immediately but may take 4-6 weeks to take effect because of printing schedules.

Contact information:

Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5,
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6H7

Phone: (519) 884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 ext.221

Fax: (519) 884-3331 E-mail: office@canadianmennonite.org

Imagine having only \$1,100 to pay rent and utilities, phone, special medications, bus fare, clothes, beer, cigarettes, school fees and groceries—notice that groceries is last on the list. Such a situation prompted my “visit” to the Welcome Inn food pantry in Hamilton, Ont. to get a 24-hour emergency supply of food to make supper for my two children.

This imaginary situation was just one of several interactive simulations that the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada young adults—from six different countries—experienced in Hamilton during a trip there in February.

- Two people were “homeless” and needed to search under snowy bridges for bottles and cans that could be turned in for refunds.

- A “mother” needed to go the New Horizons Thrift shop to buy clothes for her children.

- A recently pregnant refugee couple needed to find a family doctor when no one was accepting new patients.

The diets of many of Canada’s poor are restricted to that which comes out of a can, as Mennonite young adults from six countries discovered during their visit to Hamilton’s Welcome Inn.

We all ended up making supper from our food hamper, including the homeless duo who could only use a can opener. During the debriefing, many of us expressed that we felt alone and isolated, and experienced low self worth and depression—after only two hours!

Donna Jean Forster, director of Welcome Inn, and Marv Friesen, pastor of Welcome Inn Mennonite Church, did an excellent job of giving the young adults insight into the realities of poverty.

During a walking tour of Hamilton’s North End, the group was made aware of how government policy, health agencies, small and big business, industry, and community services all impact the lives of the poor. I was reminded that poverty is not black and

white; there are so many contributing factors that it seems an overwhelming issue to address.

In that light, Welcome Inn is to be commended for its efforts. The relationships that it builds with the people it serves, along with the worth-building programs that it offers, are life changing.

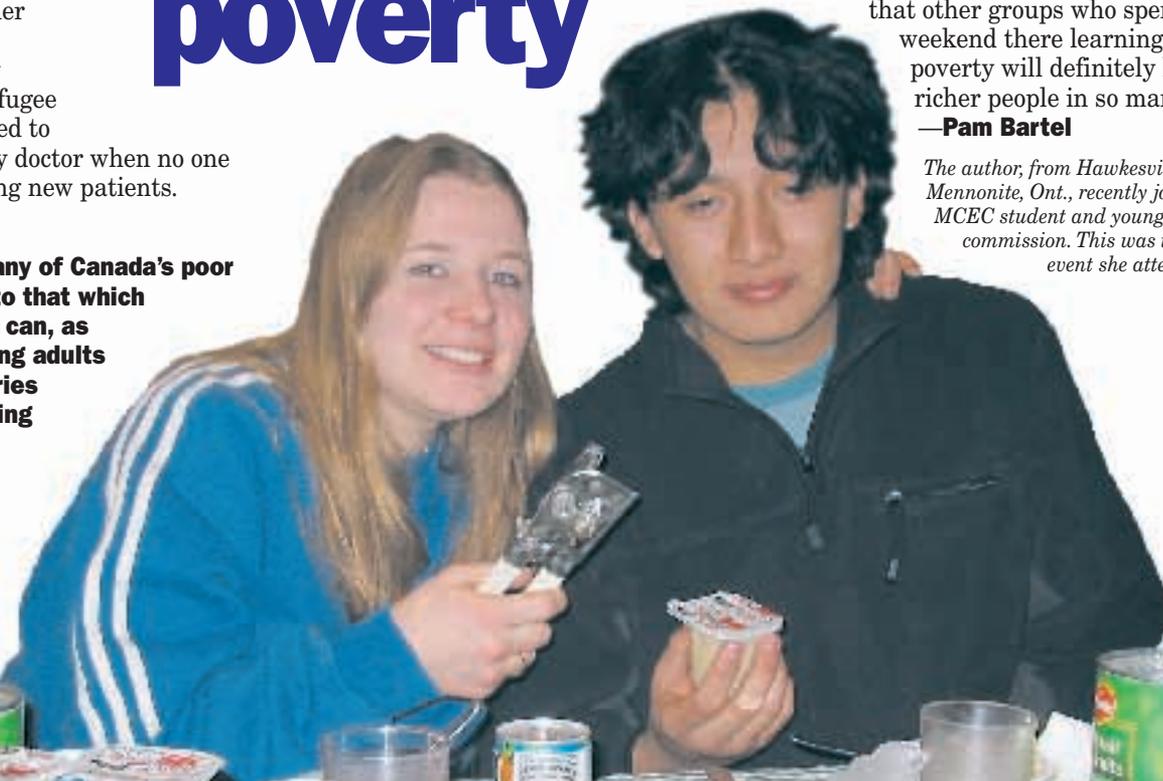
Even though Welcome Inn is at the “foot of the mountain” (the theme of our retreat), it is a city on a hill in its own right. It truly is a place where the words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount take real form in the lives of people.

In addition to meeting people in Hamilton’s North End, the MCEC young adults met each other in a significant way. There was a wonderful mix of language and culture, and these relationships were nurtured into the wee hours of the morning over games and storytelling. It was a joy to spend the weekend in Hamilton and I believe that other groups who spend a weekend there learning about poverty will definitely leave as richer people in so many ways.

—Pam Bartel

The author, from Hawkesville Mennonite, Ont., recently joined the MCEC student and young adult commission. This was the first event she attended.

a new take on poverty



MCEC photo