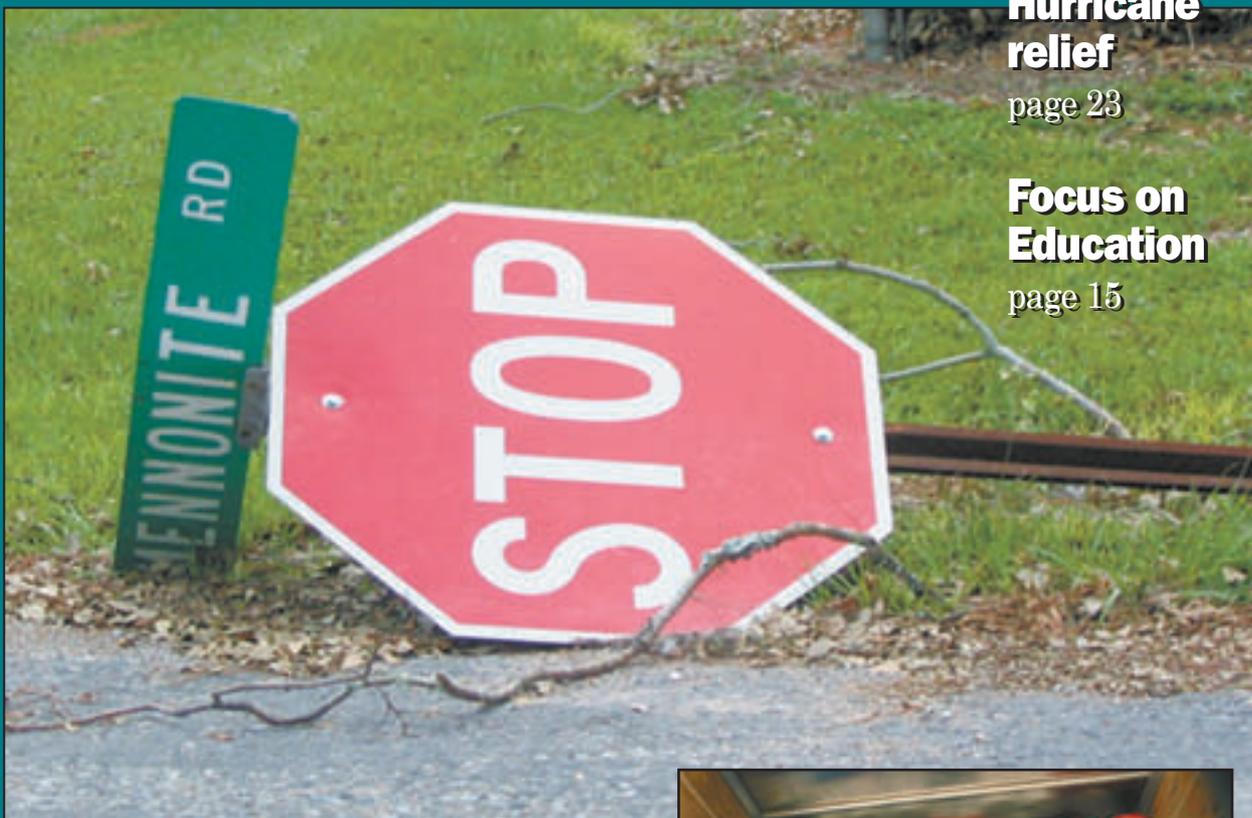


CANADIAN Mennonite

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Law and faith in conflict

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty's announcement earlier this month that his government will end support for faith-based arbitration was a hasty and ill-considered move.

This decision was made despite a contrary recommendation emerging from the Boyd review the government established to examine the issue, positive past experience and no proof of harm for the future.

This issue is not just about Muslim *shariah* law; faith- and community-based arbitration has a long history in many parts of Canada. Mennonites, in particular, have had a distinguished role in dispute resolution and victim-offender reconciliation, applying our experience and commitment to peacemaking in places where these have been needed.

McGuinty did not give any details of what the scope of the new legislation would be. Regardless of its contents, faith-based mediation of disputes certainly will continue. What will change is that mediation decisions will no longer have the power of the state enforcing them.

Under current law, both parties must voluntarily choose to participate in any alternative dispute resolution process, safeguards are in place to ensure the process is fair and equitable, and judgments must not conflict with existing legislation.

While investigating the issue, Ontario's former attorney general Marion Boyd heard from more than 200 individuals and groups. She concluded that current laws, including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, do not conflict with private arbitration, faith-based or otherwise.

Moreover, she found that arbitration provided considerable benefits over court proceedings. "A search of relevant case law corroborates the reports of these arbitrators and lawyers that these decisions, even when one of the parties

to them does not 'win,' seem to be accepted by both parties in most cases.... Those we spoke with suggested that this likely results from the clients feeling as if they have some control over the process, some say in who will judge the case, and some 'buy in' to the results," her report states.

Losing legal support for faith-based mediation is a loss to our community, and it should not disappear from the law of Ontario or other provinces.

However, the debate around faith-based arbitration also needs to be seen in light of the larger ongoing collision in Canadian society between secular beliefs and Christian faith.

The judicial process is not just about procedures. It expresses a set of values. Court proceedings are adversarial. They use the assignment of blame, the language of rights, and forced exchange of wealth or assignment of punishment as a tool for righting wrongs. One party's win is the other's loss.

This is vastly different than when the primary goal of those in conflict is the mutual exercise of forgiveness and the restoration of right relationship. "Believe in and rely on the solidarity of the Body of Christ and its commitment to peace and justice, rather than resort to the courts of law," says our 1995 church statement, "Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love," referring to I Corinthians 6:1-6.

The Boyd report correctly states, "Religious arbitration can allow the people in dispute to select a shared set of values and rules that may be different than Ontario law." We must remember that the real issue is that Mennonites do have values and rules that are not the same as the law.

What is more, we most definitely do not need the state to endorse or validate the beliefs and practices of the church for them to be right and true. The law and the courts, as important as they are, are not our final authorities.

—Tim Miller 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 October 3 issue by September 29.



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Cover: A wind-damaged stop sign near Gulfhaven Mennonite Church in Gulfport, Miss. Inset: Michelle Norman, MCC Great Lakes material resource coordinator, and Fred Berg, an MCC truck driver, unload relief supplies in Bayou La Batre, Ala., on Sept. 5. MDS photos



Page 4

Kitchener, Ont.

Trek 4 Kids across Ontario

After 39 days backpacking, Eric and Kevin Martin crossed Ontario hiking the Bruce Trail in one long push this summer.

The brothers, both young adults attending Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., wanted to accomplish a long-held goal to raise money for something they thought was important. They raised \$23,500 to send children from low-income families to camp, far beyond their goal of \$15,000.

“We wanted to hike the whole trail, end to end, all in one shot,” said Eric. “It’s 850 kilometres of trail. Our other objective was to raise funds for these kids to send them to camp.”

“It has always been a dream of Eric’s to hike the whole Bruce Trail,” said Kevin. “He approached me before Christmas. Initially, I turned him down. I told him he’s out of his mind, kind of. But then I just couldn’t stop thinking about it. One day I came to him and said, ‘I’m in.’”

The pair decided to raise money for a local charity, House of Friendship. It operates a summer camp sponsorship program that helps children from low-income families go to summer camp for a week. One of the main camps used by the program is Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, near New Hamburg, Ont.

“The camp sponsorship program fit perfectly,” said Kevin. “Eric and I, we’ve both been at Silver Lake [Mennonite Camp] our whole lives. We know how great the summer camp experience is in the development of children. It’s a great opportunity to create new friendships, test their limits and grow in their faith. We were camping to send kids to camp.” The cause gave the hike its name, “Trek 4 Kids.”

It would be a significant challenge to walk the length of the Niagara Escarpment in one trip. The Bruce Trail Association, the volunteer organization that maintains and promotes the trail, told *Canadian Mennonite* that just 2,000 of its members had completed the trail over their lifetimes.

With other summer plans (including being at camp and a summer job), the pair needed to average 25 kilometres a day to finish on schedule. They hiked



Photo submitted by Eric Martin

Eric and Kevin Martin of Kitchener, Ont., hiked the Bruce Trail this summer, raising more than \$25,000 for the House of Friendship’s summer camp sponsorship program. They are pictured in Tobermory, Ont., where a cairn marks the northern terminus of the 850-kilometre trail.

eight to 10 hours per day, carrying packs that were 50 to 60 pounds at the start of each week.

“In terms of the physical aspect, I had problems with my feet pretty much from the end of the first week,” said Eric. “The back of the boot was rubbing on my Achilles tendon and

so I was getting tendonitis. The day after the pain appeared, we were only making one-third of the mileage we normally make. For us, this was the part where we were worried we weren’t going to make it. I switched to sandals. I wore them for about a week and then luckily my dad was able to drive a pair of boots out to me.”

Besides shoes, getting enough food was another challenge during the hike. They mailed five caches of supplies to themselves for pick-up along the trail, planning on two pounds of food per person per day.

“We underestimated the amount of food we would need,” said Eric. “At the end of the first week, we had to hike into Hamilton to find a grocery store.... Pie was what kept us going. At one of our pick-ups, there was a general store that made pies. We each ate a pie, we were so hungry. After that, we looked for pies in the food drops. I ate more food than I ever imagined I could consume.”

The two celebrated the end of their trip with a peach pie bought for them at the Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale, very happy to have accomplished their goal.

“If Eric and I had gotten summer jobs for the same period, we wouldn’t have made as much donating what we would have made,” said Kevin. “It felt great to give kids the chance to be outdoors like we were outdoors.”

The money raised by the hike ended up being enough to cover the entire cost of the camp sponsorship program for 2005, according to Brian Hunsberger, development director at House of Friendship. “For several years, we have been looking for a way to raise the profile of this program and Trek 4 Kids has done that in spades!... House of Friendship is very grateful to Eric and Kevin for having the vision and commitment to make this happen,” he said.

—Tim Miller Dyck

How do we offer Christ to adults born after 1964?

Montgomery Ward pioneered mail-order catalogue retailing in 1872 and thrived for 100 years. A younger company began displacing that pioneer firm's market dominance after World War II. Sears added numerous retail outlets to its catalogue business, recognizing the automobile-driven shift in purchasing preferences. In 2000, Montgomery Ward entered bankruptcy.

Airline pioneers such as Delta, American and United feel the hot breath of competition from new carriers. Young Southwest Airlines in the U.S. built a network of short-haul flights on its reputation for cheap fares and on-time arrivals. Since the 9-11 terrorist attack, several major airlines are flirting with bankruptcy. Southwest remains profitable.

Why do these two vignettes so often illustrate the experiences of pioneer corporations? Because businesses tend to focus their creativity on what worked in the past.

Church history illustrates this same principle. After 1517, Martin Luther and other European theologians pioneered the Protestant Reformation and soon began fertilizing American soil with congregations. As American pioneers spilled into the West, still newer Protestant groups—such as Congregationalists, Baptists and Methodists—became more popular.

Another reformation began in 1954—one in which historic denominational labels mean little. This new thought-wave focused on more effective ways to offer a life-changing connection with Jesus Christ to the generation born after 1945.

The new reformation continues to flow forward like a volcanic lava stream. Congregations that more effectively communicate Christ to adults

born after 1964 eat more and more market share.

Due to their loss of communication ability among young adults, many mainline congregations began declining in membership, displaced by congregations that connect with larger numbers of adults born after 1964.

The following 15 thought-pattern shifts are part of that 1965 reformation. These shifts do not describe the thinking patterns of all young adults. However, these shifts happened in more than 75 percent of young adults born after 1964.

1. Young adults shifted their source of truths-to-live-by from solely print to a mixture of print and picture.

In about 1950, Americans began receiving information in visual format—through the TV's evening news, dramas and documentaries—rather than purely from linear print formats. By the mid-1960s, that visual format felt “normal” to young adult Americans. By the mid-1980s, most young adults saw visually transmitted truth as not just normal, but preferable and easier to understand.

2. Young adults shifted to obtaining a larger percentage of their truths-to-live-by from musical sources.

Elvis's springboard to stardom was not just through record albums, but with transistor radios. The Beatles began their American popularity on the Ed Sullivan Show on Feb. 9, 1964. But their fame grew via transistor radios. Recording artists successfully waged war against the unpopular Vietnam War with songs omnipresent through portable transistor radios.

3. Young adults shifted their source of truths-to-live-by from solely logic and reason to a greater reliance on personal experiences and feelings.

For example, many young adults report that their experiences in ministry teams produce far more spiritual growth than serving on committees and boards, which are primarily thinking groups.

4. Young adults shifted toward congregations whose primary purpose is helping people find personal fulfillment and spiritual growth.

The generations born after 1964 find little joy in blind loyalty to historic institutions, venerated older leaders and denominational institutions.

5. Young adults shifted toward congregations that develop effective ministries with each household segment—adults, children and youth.

Gone are the days when docile young adults conformed to social pressures that required pleasing the older adults who funded much of the

Continued on page 6

By the mid-1980s, most young adults saw visually transmitted truth as not just normal, but preferable and easier to understand.

1964 From page 5

church's operational budget. Present are the days when young adults expect equal respect for their own family and personal needs. When young adults do not receive that respect, they relocate to a church where "something is going on for the kids."

6. Young adults shifted toward congregations that innovate, rather than merely maintain 1950s traditions. Ministries that meet current needs attract more young adults.

7. Young adults shifted toward congregations that develop strong relationships among their people. Fifty percent of today's young adults grew up with broken marriages, dysfunctional families and parents in pain. These young adults seek in a congregation the close family relationships

they never knew growing up. They respond in larger numbers to congregations, projects, programs, gatherings and learning events that build relationships with other people.

8. Young adults shifted toward congregations whose sense of unity comes through participation in caring ministries among attendees and people outside the church.

Such unity differs greatly from the type of unity previous generations felt by agreeing on creeds, ideology and theological positions. Today's young adults are more caring-connected and service-connected.

9. Young adults shifted toward congregations with local control of theological identity. Young adults, at least partially due to higher levels of education, feel capable of defining truth, reality, right

and wrong. They feel disinclined to wait for votes at their denomination's national convention.

10. Young adults shifted toward congregations whose clergy exhibit qualities such as personal "realness." Young adults prefer leaders who openly admit their foibles, share their struggles and exhibit unpretentious attitudes.

11. Young adults shifted toward congregations whose preaching transmits truth from stories in the gospels and

the Old Testament, sprinkled with current illustrations. Previous generations, more oriented toward conceptual thinking, connected with sermons from Paul's epistles that transmit truth in propositional form.

12. Young adults shifted toward congregations that convey truths-to-live-by in drama and skits, rather than solely through sermons. Five-minute worship skits illustrate mistakes and successes in applying biblical principles to daily life.

13. Young adults shifted toward congregations whose preaching does not avoid contemporary "hot" topics. Young adults want to hear what the Bible says about how to live all of life—not just selected sections of life. They less often reject leaders with whose ideas they disagree on "hot" topics than leaders who lack the realness to admit "hot" topics exist.

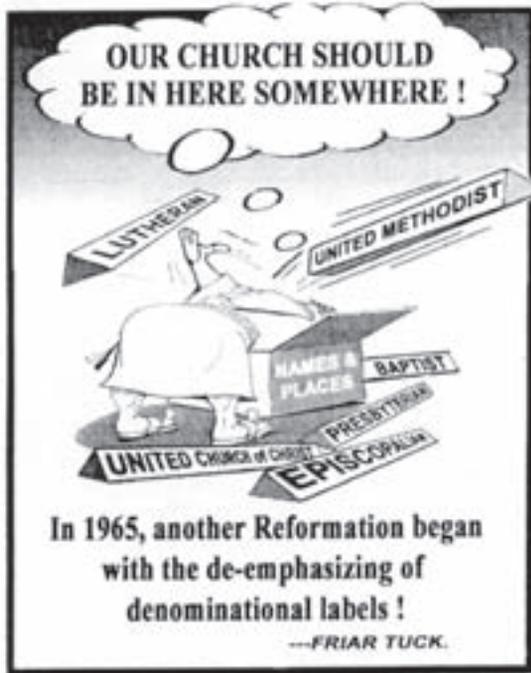
14. Young adults shifted toward congregations that sing some congregational hymns composed since 1980 every Sunday. A language you grew up hearing leaves fingerprints on your brain cells. Today's young adult worship music includes more celebrative hymns (contrasted with the slow, solemn, meditative hymns of the 1950s).

15. Young adults shifted toward congregations whose evangelistic outreach happens through small groups, friendships and conversations. Such methods contrast with the "proclamation" approach of previous generations from 1900-45. That manner of offering Christ came with the invitation to respond to a sermon. Today's young adults more often respond to a Christ they receive through some kind of Christian group.

The bottom line is: Which of these 15 shifts in thought influence your congregation's health either positively or negatively. Do any of these shifts suggest ways in which your congregation can become more effective in offering Christ to adults born after 1964?

—Herb Miller

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!Exploring God's call

!Explore is an Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary program for the young Esthers, Davids, Marys and Timothys in the church who have heard God's voice in their lives, as faint or bold as it may come, encouraging them to be leaders among God's people in the Mennonite Church. It is important to note that in many biblical call stories, God calls young people who are either personally unsure of their abilities or who are widely considered unlikely leadership candidates due to age, gender or some attribute that is perceived to be lacking. !Explore is designed for high school youths who are in Grade 11 or 12.

Read about four students who experienced !Explore this summer.

Rebekkah Hiebert

*Foothills Mennonite Church,
Calgary, Alta.*

I decided to apply for the !Explore program because both my pastor and my youth pastor encouraged me to, and thought it would be a good experience for me.

The thing I enjoyed most about the total program was meeting people from all over. There is so much diversity in the Mennonite Church, and it was nice to be surrounded by people from all different backgrounds, and see a much broader church than the one I'm usually exposed to.

One thing I took away from this whole experience was a feeling of encouragement and empowerment. We were all youth—17 or 18 years old—and we all had our own hopes and fears about being together and about life in general. We all had questions and while maybe we didn't walk away with answers in our hands, we had a safe place to be allowed to ask them, to discuss ideas, to argue theology, and to be able to come together to worship and serve God together.

Now that I'm back and working in my congregation, I know I'm going to face a whole different set of issues. People in my church have been very supportive, which is really helpful, although I'm still scared to get up and talk in front of them. Maybe the best way to sum up everything I've learned is in our theme from Charlotte this summer: Sometimes you just "can't keep quiet."

Amanda Zehr

Zurich Mennonite Church, Ont.

I learned a million things through !Explore. Well, not quite a million. The top two things would be serving cheerfully and God's love.

I learned about serving cheerfully from nuns in Miami, who know how to serve!

I was definitely changed by learning to reciprocate Jesus' love. At home again, I've been given a chance to really love people. Before !Explore I believed I loved everyone, but now I see it was a friendly tolerance and not "rush-to-the-roof-and-shout-about-Jesus love." Interacting with people now, there's less hesitancy and fear of judgment. My love is not perfect, but is more exhilarating and breathtaking.

I encourage high school students who feel called to ministry to apply for !Explore. At !Explore, ABBA songs are freely sung, Argentines really learn English, Burger King crowns are quite fashionable, spontaneous hymn singalongs happen in museums...and God takes you by the hand and says,

Continued on page 8



No rest for weary !Explore participants Scott Bergen, left, Tomy Jantzi, Amanda Zehr, Rebekkah Hiebert and Emily Derstine.

Photo submitted by Amanda Zehr

Exploring *From page 7*

“Come on, Mandy, let me show you what I’m up to, let me show you my love! I love you, Mandy, forever and ever.”

At my church, I planned and led a worship service, and gave what I like to call a “baby sermon” at the local rest home. I also planned and led a special Hawaii-themed party for my Mennonite Youth Fellowship, researched about fasting and postmodern witnessing, and looked at church leadership in-depth by attending a few elders meetings.

Scott Bergen

Sterling Mennonite Fellowship, Winnipeg

When I heard about the !Explore program, I thought that it would be perfect for me. I am eager to serve in the Mennonite Church in a leadership role, but am not entirely sure as to whether that is my calling or not.

It was very exciting getting to know 14 other youths from all across Canada and the United States who are passionate about Jesus Christ and his church. I appreciated the discussions I had both with !Explore participants and leaders about current church issues such as communion, spiritual growth, stages of churches and church discipline. I grew greatly in my faith through worship, prayer, struggle, joy and learning.

Spending time on the !Explore program really diversified my view and understanding of the church. From asking

questions of a Methodist pastor in Miami, to hearing the testimony and wisdom of an ex-drug addict who is now a committed Christian, to learning about service from a Mennonite church in Ohio, I saw a church that is much more broad than what I often get a chance to see in my daily life.

I have greatly valued my time spent working at my home congregation. I have enjoyed being able to experience what it takes to put together a sermon, and how, exactly, to lead a congregation in worship.

I will to continue to listen for my calling as I attend my first year at Canadian Mennonite University this fall, where I will focus on biblical and theological studies, as well as music.

Stephanie Yantzi

East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock, Ont.

The !Explore program was introduced to me through my youth sponsors and pastors. My motivation for becoming involved was to understand what it means to be “called” by God. I also wanted to get to know God better and really make my faith my own—not my church’s, or my parents’ or my friends’.

I learned so much this past summer and it’s difficult to pinpoint it all. Something I did learn is that God is a “must” in my life, that it isn’t good enough to be lukewarm. Constant conversation and communication with God is a must. I learned this through my spiritual discipline, *Lectio Divina*.

I also really enjoyed doing pastoral visiting because I was able to reach out to people in a new way by reading Scripture and praying with them. I learned so much from the people who I visited; I will always carry their stories and faith with me.

Before this experience I always pushed thoughts of being a pastor out of my head; now I know it’s possible and that I could handle it. I know that if God called me into ministry, I would go.

!Explore was an awesome way to get involved in the church and to see areas that I had never discovered before. The group experience was super fun and challenging. !Explore was an all around positive experience and I’ll never forget anything!



AMBS photo

!Explore 2005 participants included, from left to right, back row: Dominique Smith, Tomy Jantzi, Scott Bergen, Mark Horst and Michael Voth; middle row: Kelsey Shue, Emily Derstine, Amanda Zehr, Ericka Hoajaca, Stephanie Yantzi, Rebekah Hiebert, Hillary Watson and Jonathan Sieber; and front row: Oliver Davis III and Justus Zimmerly.

!Explore 2004: A year later

Canadian Mennonite *also asked Canadian high school students who went to the !Explore church ministry development program a year ago to reflect on their experiences a year later and share their current plans. Some of this group met at Charlotte, N.C. during the Mennonite Church Canada/Mennonite Church USA delegate assemblies for a reunion.*

Thomas Epp

Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg

After a year at Canadian Mennonite University [CMU], I worked this summer at various jobs. I also worked at Camp Moose Lake [a Mennonite Church Manitoba camp] for six weeks. Working at camp has been a big part of past summers, and this summer especially I often had to pinch myself and realize how lucky I was to work with, and for, such great people. It was a real blessing to be there.

This fall I will be moving to South Bend, Ind., for the year to take part in Service Adventure, a volunteer service program through Mennonite Church USA. My first year at CMU was enjoyable, but I felt a need to step back from studying for a year, and to get away from home for a little while.

Vocationally, my decisions have not changed a whole lot since this time last year. I am still trying to discern my calling in terms of my career, but I don't feel rushed at all. It's a tough thing for me to decide because I have so many interests with a wide range of what they are. Lately I have been entertaining the thought of starting a coffee shop/live music venue somewhere in Winnipeg, but I think that dream is a few years down the road for me.

My internship last summer at my home church gave me a pretty good look at what it would be like to work as a congregational minister or a youth pastor. If anything, !Explore has made my decision-making process more difficult. I'm not sure if either ministry is exactly for me, but I have certainly been made aware that it is important to be involved in the church, whether or not you are officially titled as a pastor. !Explore has certainly given me the tools to try to be very involved in my home congregation. To

make a long story short, I have no idea what my main vocation will be once I grow up. I'm still trying to figure out how to grow up.

At the !Explore reunion, it was reassuring to hear the others' stories, in that many of us don't necessarily feel a certain calling right now in one direction or another. The feedback from the group leaders was also helpful in realizing that it is okay to still be figuring things out, as I have been attempting to do since my high school graduation.

Jeff Metcalfe

Community Mennonite Fellowship, Drayton, Ont.

A year after !Explore I am getting ready to move to Winnipeg to start attending Canadian Mennonite University. !Explore has helped me in deciding my future plans, in that it has confirmed my call to ministry—a call that even after !Explore I am still exploring!

Gabrielle Plenert

Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg

This year I am planning on attending Canadian Mennonite University to major in international development and political studies. It was a hard choice for me because after being on !Explore I felt I had a lot of gifts to offer, and none of them fit into one specific program.

During the program, we had talked a lot about not knowing what we were going to do for the rest of our lives, simply knowing what we were going to do next. As I became more and more stressed out trying to pick a career and vocation, it was that advice that kept coming back to me. Right now I don't feel as though I have decided what I want to do for the rest of my life, I simply have found what seems to be the right thing to do in the present.

The !Explore reunion was wonderful. Although it was way too short for my liking, it was an extremely helpful and reassuring experience. While at the reunion we shared our personal faith stories from the last year. Some of them were not pretty, and did not recount an easy year, but they were, without a doubt, honest. The reunion was a place of spiritual renewal and reawakening. I was challenged more than I had been in the last year, and the level of conversation and sharing that happened convinced me again that this truly was a wonderful group who would go on to do great things.

Churches should continue to encourage their youths to go on programs like !Explore, and when they do, they should make sure to continue to support and encourage them once they come back.

'I have certainly been made aware that it is important to be involved in the church, whether or not you are officially titled as a pastor.'

Winnipeg

Geez offers alternative Christian message

When Aiden Enns, a member of Winnipeg's Home Street Mennonite Church, saw how some Christians believed the war in Iraq was part of God's plan for the end of the world, he said: "Geez—I can't believe it!"

And when he heard that a new version of the Bible was being packaged as a fashion magazine for teenage girls, he said: "Geez—I can't believe it!"

He said that so many times that he finally decided to start a magazine to critique, satirize and counter the direction that religion in North America is taking. Naturally, he called it *Geez*.

"The prominence and rise of the religious right is creating a massive void and hunger for alternative Christian messages," says Enns, who serves as the magazine's publisher. "There are very few left-leaning publications that are spiritual. But many social activists are spiritually motivated. I see it in Jesuits who resist the invasion of Wal-Mart, in evangelicals squatting with homeless people, or in activists staging a 'die-in' against the latest war."

Working with editor Will Braun, also of Winnipeg, and designer Darryl Brown, who lives in Oregon, Enns wants to provide a "cheeky" magazine that will "set up camp on the fringes of faith" and "integrate spiritual adventure and social change." At the same time, he says, it will defy the "unholy alliance between church, state, market and military" while celebrating the "spiritual *dimEnnsions* of biking, energy efficiency and canning pickles."

As for a target audience, Enns says that it is for people of "restless faith and blessed instinct, over-churched folks, re-activated activists, rebels from the '60s, closet Christians, curious non-Christians and good souls on the front lines of social justice."

Enns is especially interested in getting Americans to subscribe. "I'm upset at the direction our culture is

taking towards consumerism, greed and fear," he says. "The chief exporter of those things is the U.S. I want to engage that audience with a counter-cultural message."

But, he adds, he does not want *Geez* to just be a place for people to air their complaints. "I'm looking for people who are putting their rhetoric into action—not just condemning the things they see as wrong, but doing something about it."

For Enns, a Vancouver native, Winnipeg is the perfect place to launch a magazine like *Geez*. "Winnipeg is on the demographic fringe of the continent," he says. "In a world obsessed by celebrity, people who live in a humble place like Winnipeg—which hardly registers on the mental maps of people in most of North America—know what it's like to live on the fringe. We often feel left out. Well, this is the way most of the world lives. My goal is to show solidarity with those who are suffering. That's easier to do that when you live

on the fringe."

The first issue of the quarterly, 96-page publication is due out in fall. Enns says it will feature articles about the dynamics of conversion—"from getting saved to saving the earth"—as well as offering a lighter look at asceticism. "We'll look at what evangelistic appeals have in common with sales techniques, and look at stories of conversion to alternative ways of living," he says.

"I tend to be too serious and earnest," says Enns, the founder of Buy Nothing Christmas. "My hope is just to have some fun with this. I hope *Geez* can offer people a message of gentle resistance, elegant simplicity and a faith that inspires generosity."

More information about *Geez* can be found at www.geezmagazine.org.

—John Longhurst

The article was originally published in the Winnipeg Free Press. Aiden Enns and Will Braun are responsible for the New Order Voice column in Canadian Mennonite. Enns is also a member of Canadian Mennonite's board.



Mennonite identity not an 'invented tradition'

Rodney Sawatsky, *History and Ideology: American Mennonite Identity Definition Through History*, Pandora Press, 2005.

Professional historians are plagued by the question, "Why would the average person want to read my work?" Why might a reader, with no particular need to know the Hershbergers from the Krehbiels from the Kraybills, want to tackle the late Rodney Sawatsky's *History and Ideology: American Mennonite Identity Definition Through History*?

The answer has to do with understanding family. As Sawatsky points out, we make choices about what aspects of our family history to emphasize in our self-identity. Family resemblance is about more than whose eyes or nose one has; it includes attitudes and beliefs. He aims to show how different members of the extended Mennonite family used the writing of history to figure out their place in the American society into which they had migrated.

According to Sawatsky, early Anabaptist settlers brought from Europe their self-understanding as

called by God to suffer. The calm times experienced in America caused them problems. How could one avoid the “cultural amnesia” resulting from buying into the “average” American’s outlook on life?

The response by 19th century Mennonites included shifting emphasis to another traditional tenet—separation from the world. For some, it meant wearing uniformly plain clothing. For most, it included living physically apart from general society and speaking German. More problematic, he suggests, was how Mennonites should react to such mainstream movements as revivalism.

By the First World War, pacifism was the battleground. While “Old” Mennonite members fairly consistently rejected alternative service, some General Conference men accepted the draft. The issue was complicated by the importation of the broader Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy—a problem experienced by non-Mennonite denominations not part of the religious mainstream.

Despite this, almost all Mennonites cooperated in the 1920 founding of the Mennonite Central Committee. Controversy roiled, instead, in denominational schools, where disagreements on foundational theological issues threatened the existence of some institutions.

Sawatsky chronicles the progress of the collective identity crisis as played out in denominational publications. The influence of their editors was enhanced, some functioning as virtual bishops. H.S. Bender emerged as a central definer of Mennonite identity. From his pen flowed the idea that the pitched battle between Fundamentalists and Modernists re-enacted the historical fight between Anabaptists and Zwingli, with Anabaptism embodying commitment to Scripture’s letter.

“War” continued as a key problem in Mennonites’ relationship with their American neighbours. Sawatsky unpacks the controversy surrounding “biblical nonresistance.” Fundamentalists argued that opti-

mism concerning peace was modernist heresy, while Social Gospel advocates urged cooperating with anyone aiming to eradicate war.

Dispensational beliefs transformed the pacifism of many Mennonites into a two-pronged ethic—one for the Christian as individual and another for the Christian as citizen—that Sawatsky argues is more Lutheran than Mennonite. Several varieties of pacifism emerged, along with a gap between “Old” Mennonites and the General Conference, the latter being far more willing to accept being drafted into the military.

The final chapter of *History and Ideology* treats the emergence of an “Anabaptist vision” as an ideology to provide an identity for this American minority. The “Goshen School” was formally launched in 1924 when the Mennonite Historical Society formed.

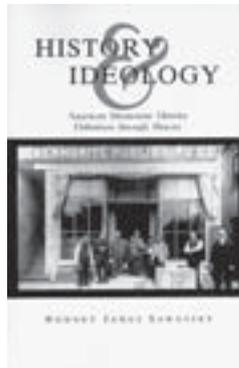
A central Goshen assertion claimed

Zurich as the movement’s birthplace, allowing it to portray the peaceful Anabaptists as the consistent culmination of the Reformation and, by extension, the originators of several notions basic to American democracy. Mennonites could thus claim to be part of America’s mainstream, rather than on its periphery, even in wartime.

In conclusion, Sawatsky draws together threads that run throughout the book, clarifying that the divergent views of history were not what other scholars call “invented tradition.” Both conservative and liberal Mennonites were quick to accuse the other of importing foreign ideas into Mennonite circles, while refusing to acknowledge their own assimilation to the dominant culture and its way of thinking. Sawatsky implies that there is much room for redefinition in current Mennonite settings.

—Mark Steinacher

The author is the historian of the Congregational-Christian Churches in Canada and on the faculty of Tyndale Seminary, Toronto.





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Having come from a Roman Catholic background, the inner call from God began in me a crisis of faith, and caused me to earnestly pray, read and study, and to re-examine my understanding of the role of women, God and pastoral leadership. Our congregation was in need, and I was available and willing. I felt that by God's grace, I was "able," but it had never occurred to me that I "could."

I prayed to God from every angle of this issue as the possibility dawned. I asked him, "If you don't want a woman as pastoral leader, why did you give me these gifts?" "If you don't want a woman as pastoral leader, why am I the only one willing?" "If you don't want a woman as pastoral leader, why am I the only one available?" "If you don't want a woman as pastoral leader, then why do I feel you've been preparing me all these years for 'such a time as this'?" "If you don't want a woman as a pastoral leader, Lord, please, raise up a man to be our pastor!"

The inner call grew stronger, and external affirmations became more frequent and more timely.

Let me jump ahead to what God did for me a few months ago, around Mother's Day.

After almost three years serving in a pastoral role, a spirit of uncertainty and doubt still occasionally plagued me. Although she had never given me any hint of disapproval, I became concerned that our youngest daughter—who attended a church of a different denomination—might be taught that women have no place in pastoral leadership. I dreaded the day that she may confront me on the issue.

My three answers from God

Again, I asked God to let me hear his voice, and his voice only, definitively and finally, one way or the other.

After a half-hour of silence, I gathered my books and notes, and headed to Sunday worship with a heavy, but expectant, heart. I was keenly aware that in the congregation that morning would be a beloved former pastor who had left the area shortly before I became involved with the church. He had been instrumental in reaching my family and me through his Vacation Bible School outreach. Although I didn't know him personally, I knew and respected his reputation.

God's voice spoke to me in three unmistakable ways over the next 24 hours. As I entered the foyer of the church, I was welcomed with a huge and joyful "Good morning, pastor!" and I received a warm handshake and a hug from this "legendary" man. Following the service, as I came from the pulpit, he and his wife met me with encouraging words. Taking my hand, he said, "I can tell that you have been gifted by God, and that you are using those gifts to serve him. I want to tell you, don't stop." And more intentionally, he added, "Don't give up." I thanked him, and in my heart I thanked God for allowing me to hear his voice.

The following morning, as I was ending a round of pastoral visitation

at the hospital, I heard a sister from another denomination calling after me in the main hallway.

Catching me in the reception area, she said, "I wanted to tell you something. Last evening I was with someone who was at your worship service yesterday, and he said that you had had an awesome sermon, and that you haven't reached your peak yet. You've only just begun." That was all she had to say, but it seemed necessary for her to say it. I thanked her, and in my heart, with a touch of elation, I thanked God for his second word. Still, I was troubled in regards to my daughter.

I left the hospital and walked toward the parking lot where my husband sat waiting after having picked up the day's mail. Still pondering God's second word in my heart, I thumbed through the mail and found an envelope addressed in this same daughter's familiar handwriting. I opened it, expecting her typically humorous Mother's Day greeting. Instead, I found what I believe to be the first serious card she has ever sent to me. The printed message read in part:

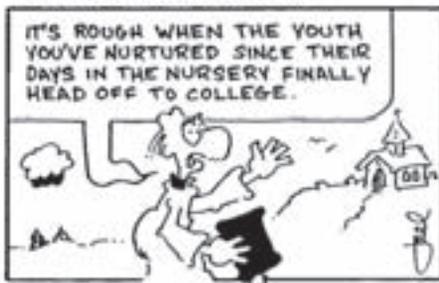
"You're a blessing, Mom. You do so much for everyone in your life—for your family and friends, your church and community. You spread Christ's love in the best way there is, with a gentle spirit and a generous heart. You're an amazing woman and a wonderful mother and you're loved so very much." And in her own hand, she had written, "I don't have much else to add, it pretty much sums it all up! You are the best Momma and such a wonderful woman. I think you are doing an amazing job with the church and holding it [and all of us, for that matter] together. You go, Momma!"

I thanked God in my heart and with my lips for his third, and definitive, word, and the matter is settled once and for all in my mind. In my conscience I am free to serve, and if I boast, I boast in the Lord, and to him be the glory. Amen!

—**Polly Johnson**

The author is pastor of Hunta Mennonite Church, Ont.

Pontius' Puddle



Letters

Cooperation needed in hurricane's wake

This past summer some minority voices asked what the value was for Canadian and American Mennonites to meet together, as they did at Charlotte. In a variety of private conversations I advocated for a continuing and vital interchange based on our common history and, as yet unknown, opportunities for ministry.

In 1922, the Mennonite Church was faced with an unprecedented disaster in the Ukraine. Visionary MC, MB and OM leaders turned that famine and civil war into an amazing opportunity for ministry. Some 21,000 souls were saved and moved to Canada. It was a miracle. It changed our church for

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.

good!

As I walked the halls of Charlotte, I was filled with a sense of gratitude for the life I have now with my wife and the girls because of the gifts given some 80 years ago by the North American Mennonite Church. I live in safety and opportunity because of the mutual aid of others.

At the convention I advocated for strong relations because I said then, and believe now, that there would be events that would overwhelm one

assembly, but together would be a remarkable challenge that could be overcome together. I do not know why Hurricane Katrina took place, but I believe this is the opportunity of the decade for the North American Mennonite Church to minister in the way it does: service, rebuilding, hands-on ministry. We can be an embodied Christianity in a time of useless words.

This is an unprecedented opportunity for the Mennonite Church in North

Continued on page 14

Leaving Normal

Australian David Winton's novel *Cloudstreet* is the story of a woman who gets so fed up with her family that she moves into a backyard tent. The character is based on Winton's grandmother who lived just that way in her own backyard as a child. A little peculiar, perhaps, but, says Winton, "that was just grandma." He muses that our culture "has squeezed all the eccentricity out of life. Everyone just wants to be normal."

I am struck by the sadness and accuracy of those words. Everyone is so afraid of not being what we're told we should be that we're not who we ought to be. We're happy to be individually and congregationally normal! Whatever became of the eccentrics?

Normal is a desert wasteland. Normal is a week-to-week life that lacks authenticity and purpose, but appears successful, nice, inoffensive and, well, normal. Normal is week-to-week church programming that sees no transformational life impact. Normal is routine thoughtlessness and habitual whatever. Normal is average. Normal is flipping between CNN and TSN each and every night while never doing anything to make the news nor get in shape. Normal likes its entertainment lightly battered in reality. Normal is copasetic, acceptable and fine. Normal is not determined by income, intelligence or intestinal fortitude, for there is Normal in all stations along the way.

Normal is the apathetic surrender to peer pressure, cultural pressure, economic pressure, advertising pressure and religious pressure. Normal is our culture in this technological age, where we can all be unique yet find ourselves strangely resembling everyone else we meet. Normal is an attitude of the heart and it despises the eccentrics who pitch their tents somewhere else. Normal is death and death is Normal—it is resurrection that is abnormal and eccentric!



Have you known any eccentrics? I don't mean someone determined to ride out a hurricane or streak at a hockey game. I mean someone whose way of life, whose vision of life, whose passion for life, was so different from Normal that it both bothered and attracted you?

I must say that most of my life I've been told that Christians and the church should be Normal. Is this truly a biblical vision of the Body of Christ? Does that sound anything like Paul's grand vision of the church as the avenue by which God's rich and varied wisdom is made known to unseen rulers and

authorities in mysterious heavenly places (Ephesians 3:10)? That sounds very fanciful to those who have settled for Normal. We've settled for driving the same circle as the world without Christ and should have turned off that roundabout a long time ago.

We should be eccentrics! Do we truly have the same centre as the world? The right answer is no! Our centre is Christ, a stumbling block and foolishness in this Normal world. Our centre is not the world's centre, so we, by very definition, are eccentric ("not having the same centre"), yet we seem content with Normal.

We need some eccentrics who will challenge our Normal and pitch their tent in a different place and let it be known that the City of God is built there. We need some eccentric churches that realize Normal is killing us and are so zeroed in on Christ that they will attempt what seems outrageous for that outrageous ideal Jesus once declared as the Kingdom of Heaven. We need that eccentric Holy Spirit to give us hearts of flesh, tongues of fire, backs of steel, feet of peace, hands of compassion, shields of faith, and a double-edged sword in our hearts and hands.

And now, back to Normal. Are you sure you want to go there?

Phil Wagler, after having his dream of a professional hockey career ended by reality, has gone outside his box to serve Christ, now labouring as the leading servant (pastor) of Zurich Mennonite Church, Ont.

Katrina *From page 13*

America—through Mennonite Disaster Service—to step forward and pour out our faith, our generosity, our service and mutual aid. This is the moment that will test and prove the value of our North American partnership.

—**Walter Bergen, Abbotsford, B.C.**

Mennonite ‘accountability’ akin to papal authority

I found the report on the Resolutions Committee of the 2005 Charlotte conference disturbing (“Rosemary resolution followed up at Charlotte,” Aug. 22, page 17). Once again it appears congregations that differ with the official Confession of Faith will face the threat of “accountability” for their variance.

It is clear the issue of homosexuality has not been laid to rest in this country. In the eyes of the law the gay community is now equal in their rights with every other Canadian in the land.

Except in our churches! There, discrimination against gays and their supporters is free to continue and no one will be held accountable before the law!

I look forward to seeing what the Mennonite *shariah* laws of our church will look like. I do not envy the Resolutions Committee and the other committees their work.

Sometimes I shake my head at my church as it stumbles along and seems not to be able to learn the lessons even of its own history. Our ancestors were hounded into the caves of the forest because of their variant beliefs about the equality of all and the primacy of the love ethic. Today we, the church, are doing the hounding of those at variance with our Confession and driving our sons and daughters, many of our ministers and some of our congregations into their closets for fear of the “accountability” facing them should they publicly declare their convictions.

I have little doubt that the next chapter of the *Martyr’s Mirror* is being

written today.

How is it possible that our beloved church, born in the fire of its own martyrs, could lose its way so dramatically. I fear MC Canada is being set up to assume a papal mantle as it is given the authority and the tools to hold those accountable who dare to deviate from our fallible Confession.

Many of us in the minority position on this issue take hope and courage from our maligned minority government, which dared to stand like Daniel when it seemed every religious voice in the land was screaming at it. To those of us who are privileged to have gay and lesbian sons and daughters, the answer seems so simple. God’s children are called to love, not to judge, each other. Even when we don’t see eye-to-eye.

The privilege of accountability should be left to God, who is the only one among us not handicapped by the fact that we all see through a glass darkly.

—**Victor Fast, London, Ont.**

Grace between charismatics and peacemakers

Ecumenism is a nice idea. As an individual, I enjoy discussions with friends from different streams of the Christian faith. But on a broader, institutional level, I never gave it much thought.

Then I joined the planning committee for the Nidus Festival, a conference for younger Christians in Canada (Aug. 4 to 6, 2006, in Kitchener, Ont.). And now, with the event sponsored by the Canadian Council of Churches, I’m at the heart of things ecumenical. All of a sudden I no longer just speak for Suzanne, I have become the voice for the whole Mennonite contingent.

Every meeting I’m surprised by the issues that come up, such as:

- Can we celebrate the Eucharist on Sunday? and,
- What Bible translation do we use?

But the shocker for me was the debate over the word “justice” on our posters. We listed the word as one focus of the festival.

It seemed obvious to me—social justice work is central to my personal faith. I associate the word “justice” with acting out Jesus’ gospel message of caring for

the poor, hungry and lonely. But to some in other denominations, this word is too often associated with leftist politics and views that make them feel uneasy. They were not opposed to the idea of justice for oppressed people, just to the connotations of the word.

This made me wonder how much of my personal conviction must I give up for the sake of Christian unity.

One of our goals with the festival is to celebrate the different streams of the Christian faith as outlined by Quaker

New Order Voice

Suzanne Bender



author Richard Foster: contemplative, holiness, charismatic, social justice, evangelical and incarnational.

Having grown up with the values associated with the “justice” stream, it is hard to see how others might feel uncomfortable talking about justice and peace. But then I would feel uncomfortable in a charismatic service with people speaking in tongues. This isn’t to be

disrespectful. Any interaction with those beyond our tradition brings us out of our comfort zones. And this requires not only patience and acceptance, but grace.

As members of the global family of faith, we all have our imperfections. The only perfection we know is in the love and grace of God, demonstrated in Jesus, alive through the Spirit. It is in this Spirit that we must live and work.

In the end, we decided to keep the controversial word. We also committed ourselves to address the concerns of all parties, and make clear that, while we seek to be respectful of the views of all involved in this festival, we cannot compromise our own convictions. We will continue to work as a committee to demonstrate God’s grace to all we encounter, and attempt to make this festival belong to all involved.

As Mennonites, we often emphasize the importance of community. For me, this means we need to expand our notion of community to include other streams of faith. As in any family, we all bring our unique voices to the table, and no meal is complete without all who have been invited. We have been invited to come to the table and commune with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us respond with grace.

Suzanne Bender is a young adult from Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden, Ont.

FOCUS

Education



Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra principal percussionist Frederick Liessens shows Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School Grade 4 students his tools of the trade.

Bill Peters photo

New league for CMU Blazers

Athletes attending Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg will soon have a chance to compete against schools from across North America, now that CMU has joined the Association of Christian College Athletics (ACCA).

“Joining the ACCA will be a wonderful opportunity for our student athletes to be challenged athletically, to interact with athletes from other Christian schools, and to compete for national championships,” says CMU director of athletics Curt Warkentin.



Thirty Christian schools in Canada and the U.S. belong to the ACCA, which offers national tournaments in men's soccer, women's volleyball, men's and women's basketball, and men's golf.

According to Warkentin, both the men's and women's CMU basketball teams plan to participate in the ACCA Nationals in Oklahoma City in March 2006. By 2006-07 CMU hopes to send all of its teams—basketball, soccer and volleyball—to the ACCA Nationals.

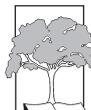
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Photo by Helen Annie (Braun) Pauls

MCC facing rising demand for school kits

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) needs help to meet this year's demand for school kits.

In 2004, MCC sent 90,000 kits to various countries around the world. This year, in addition to filling requests from countries like Russia and Nicaragua, MCC's partners in Sudan and Iraq have requested 37,000 extra kits. This means that MCC is looking for nearly 140,000 school kits.

In honour of Henry Braun's 80th birthday, his family decided to provide 80 school kits for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). The family purchased the necessary supplies, daughter Helen Ann Pauls sewed the bags and the Quilting Plus group at Edmonton First Mennonite Church inserted the ties. During the family celebration at the Braun home in Chilliwack, B.C., the family members assembled the kits. Braun grew up in the Ukraine, and because of the political and economic instability of the time, his educational opportunities were very limited. "This is a fitting tribute for my father, who is passing on an educational opportunity to 80 others," says Pauls, who adds that her father always encouraged her and her siblings to pursue a good education.

The demand for school kits is higher this year in part because of the peace agreement that was signed in Sudan in January. MCC is sending 13,000 school kits to Sudan as part of a \$990,000 aid package. An estimated four million refugees will be returning to southern Sudan, and school kits are a desperately needed item, as most of the area's infrastructure, including schools, has

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been destroyed in the past two decades of violence.

MCC has just sent 24,000 school kits to Iraq as part of its work supplying aid to people displaced by continuing violence and insecurity. These kits, in addition to another 10,000 that have been requested, will go to children in low income areas of Baghdad.

School kits are MCC's most requested material resource.

—MCC release

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Maple Scholars write and star in new play

For three Goshen (Ind.) College students, finishing one another's sentences is just one result of spending a summer in collaboration. Lindsay Nance of Winnipeg, Cassie Greer of South Bend, Ind., and Nicole Miazgowicz of Temperance, Mich., spent nearly three months gathering stories from women of various cultures and walks of life to create a three-woman theatrical production as part of Goshen College's Maple Scholars program. All three are theatre majors.

"We [want] to get across that everyone has a story to tell, no matter the subject matter or how old they are," says Miazgowicz. "We interviewed people of all different class, racial and ethnic backgrounds... showing that everyone can have a voice, no matter who they are."



Jodi H. Beyeler photo

Goshen College students Nicole Miazgowicz of Temperance, Mich., left, Lindsay Nance of Winnipeg, and Cassie Greer of South Bend, Ind., spent nearly three months gathering stories from women of various cultures and walks of life to create a three-woman theatrical production as part of the college's Maple Scholars program.

Adds Nance, "We found that being asked to tell their stories is a really

empowering thing for the women we spoke with."

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Providing the time and support for their project, the Maple Scholars program is an eight-week summer research opportunity for students to work side-by-side with Goshen College professors. The program has traditionally consisted of projects in the areas of sciences, such as biology, chemistry and physics, but as the first theatre project, the group is helping to expand the cross-disciplinary focus that the program is trying to achieve.

Doug Liechty Caskey, professor of theatre and communication, is acting as the group's faculty adviser. "The Maple Scholars program is enabling these three students to work at cutting edge theatre, while still being supported in the context of their own theatre education," says Caskey.

The idea for the project came out of the three students' involvement in *Torba*, the main stage play at Goshen in the spring of 2004, which was based on stories the playwright had heard. The three had already decided that they wanted to do a show together, particularly their senior

recital, and the idea grew from their experiences with this unique style of theatre and their individual experiences.

The trio began meeting together at the end of May to share their life stories, develop questions and brainstorm about who to interview and how to eventually present their findings. The project included interviews with 13 girls and women from various walks of life, ranging from age 10 to 82, including several homeless women and women from places such as China, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire and Switzerland.

The students recorded and then transcribed each woman's narrative. To develop the scene for each story, the students decided on a format—dialogue, monologue, dance or interpretive movement—and then each came up with her own version. The three then worked together to determine which presentation would best suit the particular scene, using one or a combination of their ideas.

"It was kind of painful, because you get attached to your own ideas, but sometimes you need to let your idea go," says Nance. "The end result is always better anyways."

Interviewing a diverse cross-section of women afforded each of the students experiences that opened their eyes in different ways.

"Our base human emotions are the same," says Nance. "Even though we may have different backgrounds, the feelings we know and experience are the same. I found that we are more similar than different."

Nance, Greer and Miazgowicz premiered their finished project at Goshen on Sept. 10. They also performed at New World Center, a small theatre in Goshen, on Sept. 16, 17 and 18.

—Goshen College release
by **Jennifer Rupp**



Photo by Mary E. Klassen

At the beginning of a new school year, AMBS students, faculty and staff participated in a blessing walk, surrounding the people and places on the campus with prayers for the year ahead. From left, participants included Rosalie Thiessen Grove, AMBS administrative assistant; Sandra Sinnaeve and Ryan Siemens from Lethbridge, Alta.; Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president, at back; Charleen and Kendall Jongejan Harder from Toronto, Ont.; and Janeen Bertsche Johnson, AMBS campus pastor.



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Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Pastor Quang released from Vietnamese prison

Nguyen Hong Quang, the Mennonite pastor imprisoned in Vietnam since his arrest on June 8, 2004, was released on Aug. 30.

Quang called his wife, Le Thi Phu Dung, to tell her of his release at 5:30 p.m. By 7 p.m., he was reunited with his family and with the church in District 2, Ho Chi Minh City.

Evangelist Pham Ngoc Thach is now the only one of six Vietnamese Mennonite Church leaders arrested since March 2004 still being held in prison.

At a November 2004 trial by the People's Court on charges relating to resisting officers of law, the six were given sentences ranging from a few months to three years. Le Thi Hong Lien, a children's teacher and the only woman in the group, was released in April after serving 10 months of her one-year sentence. Three others had been released earlier.

In April, the Supreme People's Court dismissed the appeals of both



Released pastor Nguyen Hong Quang is greeted by his family upon his release from a Vietnamese prison.

Quang and Thach, and upheld their original sentences of three and two years, respectively.

During the past 14 months, Quang

Continued on page 21

Winnipeg

MCC video offers unique perspective on FASD

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada has released a new video called *Can't, Not Won't* to help families and communities living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

The video follows the very personal journey of two families, highlighting both the difficulties and joys of living with FASD. In addition to telling their stories, the video includes interviews with congregations and specialists.

Can't, Not Won't encourages congregations to learn more about FASD in order to adapt to the needs of individuals and families living with it. The understanding it promotes can be used to provide individuals and families affected by FASD with a supportive network of friends. A supportive faith community can, in turn, provide parents with a sense of peace, knowing that their child will not be left alone or completely vulnerable after their death.

Marc Whitehead, pastor at Winnipeg's North Kildonan United Church, says communities can learn a lot about God from people with FASD. "God seeks out the most marginalized, the most vulnerable, the humble, the poor and the disadvantaged—to act as both the recipients of grace, and the instruments of grace."

The video, designed as a Christian response to FASD, uses basic Christian principles to encourage discussion about the disorder. The study guide is intended for use with small groups, such as adult Sunday school classes. It draws on the video, a series of discussion questions and stories to promote conversations about FASD.

Can't, Not Won't is available in both DVD and VHS formats. It can be borrowed from MCC offices and is available for purchase through MCC's online catalogue at www.mcc.org/catalog.

—MCC release by **Tara Tharayil**

Vic Thiessen, Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker and director of the London (England) Mennonite Centre, passionately shared how the LMC's ministry is touching the United Kingdom with a relevant Christian-Anabaptist witness. Thiessen was one of 10 MC Canada Witness International Ministry workers from eight countries who came to Winnipeg to tell stories and invite guests to participate in God's mission and Jesus' ministry of healing and hope in the world. More than 100 people came out to sample tantalizing appetizers and bear witness to the work of God around the world. Organizers were delighted with the exceptional attendance and response on a hot July evening. Participants gave \$7,050 to Witness ministry projects in Thailand and China.



MC Canada photo by Dan Dyck

Quang *From page 20*

has been moved between five different prisons. His health was seriously affected by harsh conditions, hard labour and beatings by criminals in the prisons. His Bible was confiscated; he was forbidden to pray for other prisoners and disciplined for preaching to them.

Mennonites in Vietnam believe that Quang's early release is the result of the great concern expressed by many governments, human rights agencies, international press coverage and evangelical believers both within and beyond Mennonite circles.

The Mennonite Church calls on the Vietnamese government to release Thach also and to respect the church's freedom to exercise their religious faith.

Quang's family expresses their deep appreciation to all who supported them in prayer and to those who supported Quang and the brothers and sisters in the Vietnam Mennonite Church who have persevered in their faith.

—MWC release
from a Vietnam Ministries report

Strasbourg, France

Prayers for Zimbabwe circle the globe

On July 24, Anabaptist-related churches around the world joined forces in prayer for Zimbabwe. Church leaders there had called for a Day of Prayer in the wake of continued and increasing devastation as hundreds of thousands of citizens have been forced from their simple homes (see "Church leader calls global faith family to remember Zimbabwe," Canadian Mennonite, June 27, page 20).

Now many of the displaced persons have also been forcibly removed from the churches that gave them shelter. Without knowing of the most recent crackdown, Christians in congregations in Australia, Indonesia, Tanzania, South Africa, Europe, and North, Central and South America prayed for their suffering brothers and sisters.

"It was encouraging to know that people from all corners of the globe were praying for us," noted Danisa



MWC photo

Danisa Ndlovu, MWC vice-president and Brethren in Christ bishop of Zimbabwe, left, receives prayer letters from MWC president Nancy Heisey from the United States.

Ndlovu, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) vice-president and Brethren in Christ bishop of Zimbabwe, who had received many e-mails confirming plans for prayers of intercession.

Within Zimbabwe, the Day of Prayer was observed by some churches, but quite a large cross-section of the church was not aware of it. However, churches there have generally included special prayer in their services, "since the country was plunged into this hell," said Doris Dube, a Mennonite Central Committee Zimbabwe country representative living in Bulawayo. (See sidebar story at left.)

Church leaders in Bulawayo have issued a statement strongly denouncing the police raids, the government's reneging on agreements reached with churches and other stakeholders on sheltering displaced persons, and on its disregard for the rule of law. The statement describes the government's actions as "inhuman, brutal and insensitive, and in total disregard of human rights and dignity. It seems the crime they committed is that they are poor." The signatories want the government and its officials "to abide by the law and not to be above it. The rule of law must be restored."

The release was sent to the minister of social welfare and numerous Christian organizations, along with the *Sunday News* newspaper. As the government controls the media, the *Sunday News* did not run the statement.

—MWC release by **Ferne Burkhardt**

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Blanket distribution hampered by government

Distribution of blankets funded by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) began in late July, but is being hampered by the Zimbabwean government's eviction of displaced people from churches where they were being sheltered.

MCC has provided \$75,710 to purchase 5,000 blankets for some of the thousands of families left homeless by a "clean-up" operation the government describes as targeting illegal settlements and informal traders. United Nations officials say the operation has done a "catastrophic injustice" to up to 700,000 of Zimbabwe's poorest residents.

So far, at least 546 blankets have been distributed to families being assisted by Bulawayo churches. Additional attempts

at distribution were disrupted when government officials raided churches to move displaced people to transit camps and into the countryside.

Church leaders are working to determine how to best trace people and meet their emergency needs as the situation changes.

MCC is continuing to monitor the situation to determine how to respond to the needs of the people who have lost their homes, and MCC Zimbabwe country representatives Jethro and Doris Dube report that some of the funding for blankets may need to be used for food and agricultural items for families resettled into the countryside in the wake of an impending drought, almost no harvest and a collapsed economy. The plight of displaced families moved to outlying areas will be dire, according to the Dubes.

Doris Dube asks for prayer from supporters in the worldwide church community. "Let your love flow to us," she pleads. "That's what we need the most."
—MCC release by **Marla Pierson Lester**

Waterloo, Ont.

Churches under duress concern MWC

A year ago, the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Executive Committee decided to hold the next global assembly in Paraguay in 2009. This year, meeting at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo in August, committee members tended to the ongoing work of MWC, listening to proposals for priorities and changes in structure, reports on projects, offering counsel, and approving budgets. They also spent much time in prayer as the agenda brought to attention member churches in distress in Colombia, Congo, Kenya, Vietnam and Zimbabwe.

Ranking more than 60 current MWC activities and offering counsel on top priorities for the next four years posed a challenge for committee members. Along with planning the 2009 assembly, one of their high priorities was the same as that of executive secretary Larry Miller. In his report, Miller said: "Appeals for solidarity with churches under duress suggest to me that top

priority for MWC programs in the next period should be establishing 'real presence' with these churches as well as between these churches and other MWC members."

A major issue that emerged at various points throughout the week was fundraising and the related issue of the cost of translation and distribution to the global community of print materials, including books, the quarterly magazine and news releases. News is released to about 220 addresses around the world and posted on the website in English only. The magazine is issued in English (*Courier*), French (*Courrier*) and Spanish (*Correo*), which is costly, as is distribution.

The vision of the Global Mennonite History Project is to have each volume published in the MWC languages—English, French and Spanish—with translations in additional languages sponsored by local groups. The French translation of the first volume, on Africa, released in English in 2003, is



MWC photo

Participating in the MWC tree planting ceremony are, from left to right, Larry Miller (MWC staff, France), Eddy Sujtipto (EC member from Indonesia) and Markus Rediger (EC member from Switzerland).

nearly complete and the Spanish edition is in process.

Projected dates for the completion of the remaining volumes are: Latin America, November 2005; Asia, March 2006; Europe, May 2006; and North America, sometime in 2007. The high cost of translation, however, will require major new money.

The Travel Fund is a recurring challenge, particularly for the General Council meeting that falls between assemblies, noted Miller, adding that the challenge will continue since membership in the global South is growing.

The MWC executive continued its tree-planting custom, this year planting two trees. A native red maple was planted at Conrad Grebel University College, site of the 2005 meetings. It was placed between an oak tree grown from an acorn from the famous oak tree of the Russian Mennonite Kortitza Colony in the Ukraine, and a black walnut, a tree that attracted Swiss Mennonite settlers from Pennsylvania to the area.

The second tree, a white pine that symbolizes peace for First Nation people in Ontario, was planted at the Kitchener MCC Ontario office where MWC has its Canadian headquarters.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held in conjunction with the General Council meeting in March 2006, in Pasadena, Calif.

—MWC release by **Ferne Burkhardt**

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New Orleans, La.

Canadian couple loses home in New Orleans

When Denis and Jan Janz heard the call to evacuate their home in New Orleans on Aug. 26, they didn't take it too seriously. After all, they had lived through several hurricanes during their 26 years in that Gulf Coast city.

But the call to leave seemed increasingly urgent, and on Sunday morning, Aug. 28, the couple and their two sons, Christopher and David, left the city, taking only a few photographs, some clothes and a computer. A few days later, in a Mississippi motel, they saw their neighbourhood on TV, flooded to the rooftops. They knew they had lost everything.

Denis, raised in the Mennonite church in Steinbach, Man., teaches religious studies at Loyola University in New Orleans. Jan, also from Steinbach, works in the special education department at the University of New Orleans.

The Janzes made it to Meridian, Miss., the first night, but when the power went out at their motel because of the hurricane, they headed further north to Amory. While most of their friends are accounted for, one person they fear for is an elderly neighbour who apparently stayed at home. Jan spoke to the woman by phone as the storm raged, urging her to go to higher ground. But the phone went dead and they don't know what happened to her.

The couple are trying to be philosophical about their loss. "In a way, it gives us a chance to start over," said Denis in an Aug. 31 telephone conversation, "maybe in a different direction."

He admitted, however, that seeing the devastation on television brings their emotions to the surface. One of the most painful aspects is seeing the looting and violence that has erupted in New Orleans.

The Janzes face an uncertain future. They have no idea when they will be able to go back home, and don't antici-



MDS photo

Damage across the southern U.S. Gulf Coast was extensive in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

pate returning to their jobs this year.

Meanwhile, the family has contacted Mennonite Disaster Service to offer

their help in rebuilding New Orleans this fall.

—Margaret Loewen Reimer

MDS responds to Katrina

Before the fury of Hurricane Katrina had ended, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) was already planning how to respond. As soon as the winds died down, MDS staff were in contact with members who live in Alabama and Mississippi.

When he had arranged permission to fly over this restricted zone, Kevin King, the executive coordinator of MDS, surveyed some of the devastated area. "For the first 10 blocks from the ocean, it looks like a steamroller went through," said King about the city of Gulfport, Miss.

"We could tell when we were approaching a town because of the miles-long lines of cars looking for distribution centres for ice, water and food," King added.

By Sept. 5, the first MDS volunteers from Pennsylvania began cleaning up in Mobile, Ala. Another group began a chainsaw clean-up in Meridian, Miss.

Gulfhaven Mennonite Church in Gulfport, which received some minor damage, will become a staging area for future work teams as MDS begins the long process of helping to rebuild homes for those who need shelter.

Because of the extent of the damage, MDS has requested help from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to provide food and supplies. On Sept. 5, four truckloads of material aid left Ephrata, Pa., for Bayou La Batre, a town of 20,000

on the coast of Alabama. The shipment included 19,200 cans of turkey, 10,000 blankets, 5,000 school kits, 5,000 health kits and more than 2,000 relief kits. King requested material aid for this town because of the devastation to its homes and fishing boats.

MCC also shipped 1,375 health kits, 250 pounds of soap, 62 newborn kits, six bales of blankets and more than 1,000 pounds of clothing to San Antonio, Tex. The Mennonite church there is coordinating the transfer of supplies to shelters in San Antonio and Houston that are serving hurricane evacuees.

Lynn Roth, executive director of MCC East Coast, will shift roles for the next four months to coordinate MCC's ongoing response to Hurricane Katrina. MCC is accepting financial donations as it works in partnership with MDS to help affected communities recover and rebuild. Donations should be designated "Hurricane Katrina response."

On Sept. 5, some MDS volunteers joined members of the Way of Life Mennonite Church in Mobile, Ala., to search through the debris for items of sentimental value lost by Jim Barnett during the hurricane. Barnett, a long-term member of the church, escaped the rising water by climbing onto his table with his two dogs.

Although only a few personal items were recovered, Barnett was philosophical about it. "That's not what it's all about," he said. "My life was spared." —From MDS and MCC releases

Kitchener, Ont.

MennoHomes provides refugee house

Creative partnerships emerge out of good conversations. In November 2004, Scott Albrecht of First Mennonite Church in Kitchener called Martin Buhr, chair of MennoHomes board, to say that Community Justice Initiatives was vacating 39 Stirling Ave., a house owned by First Mennonite. Would MennoHomes wish to buy the house at a discounted price?

Meanwhile, the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support had been encouraging MennoHomes—a non-profit charitable organization with a charter to provide affordable housing to persons or households of low and modest income—to create rental housing that is a good fit, both in size and cost, for the significant needs of refugee families entering the Kitchener-Waterloo area.

The upshot of the conversations was that MennoHomes purchased the four-bedroom house from First Mennonite at \$30,000 below the appraised market value, for use as refugee housing, in partnership with First Mennonite.

The Steering Committee for the joint project consists of John Reimer (First Mennonite), Martin Buhr (MennoHomes), and Deb Simpson (Mennonite Central Committee Ontario), and other volunteers from each group.

The 39 Stirling partnership model names MennoHomes as the owner/landlord and First Mennonite as the support service provider for the refugee family. The federal government will provide a financial allowance to the family for up to two years. First Mennonite has signed an agreement to provide in-kind support for the same two-year period. MennoHomes community worker Dorene Rudy-Snyder will also be available to offer friendship and support.

The partnership plan is to have a succession of refugee families use 39 Stirling—each family for up to two



Trevor Metzger helped convert a house owned by First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., into a home for refugee families. The church has entered into an agreement with MennoHomes to operate the facility.

years—while they are government-sponsored refugees.

The first refugee family tenants of 39 Stirling Ave. were expected to arrive from Pakistan on or about Sept. 1. They will live at Reception House, a federally funded facility, for several weeks before moving into their new home. They were originally from Afghanistan, but have spent the past seven years in refugee camps. Because they are Muslim, they will also receive considerable support from the local Sunni community.

Rudy-Snyder sees this as a pilot project, the beginning of more like it. “Let’s test it and see how it works out,” she says. She feels this co-operative venture between First Mennonite and MennoHomes is one that other churches may want to explore.

Anyone thinking of forming a similar partnership is invited to contact John Reimer, chair of First Mennonite’s Refugee Committee, at 519-744-6574 for more information about the arrangement.

—**Maurice Martin**

Edmonton

Fast raises \$1,000 for MCC Relief Sale

During spring break, children at the Edmonton Chinese Mennonite Church fasted for 25 hours to raise money for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Our first fast last year was only 20 hours long. This year, we reached the goal of 25 hours. We hope to beat this record in the future.

The 25-hour fast took place at Pastor Ken’s house over the Easter weekend. After a big meal of lasagna at dinner, we only drank water and juice. Thank goodness for juice. We were all glad we survived the first day, although some of us felt homesick. We watched a very funny movie, *Shark Tale*, and laughed our heads off. After that fun-filled movie, we played a suspenseful game, Hide and Seek, in the dark. We have lots of good hiders!

On the second day, we started to get hungry, but keeping our minds off it really helped. Baking was a lot of fun. Some of the delicious things we baked were cookies, brownies, muffins and apple crisp. Too bad we couldn’t eat the baking until the fast was over! We went to the MCC thrift store, and a volunteer took us on a tour. We also went to West Edmonton Mall. Temptations grew as we walked by the food court. We couldn’t wait until supper was ready.

While participating in the fast, we realized how blessed we are to have food everyday and a warm home to live in. We know that in other countries, lots of poor people and children go days without food, starving. Even though we do not have a lot of money, we want to do our part and try our best to raise funds for MCC to help the less fortunate.

We are proud to have raised \$1,000 this year for MCC Alberta for their Relief Sale. May this money go where it is needed.

—**Emily Tran, 9, and Johanna Tse, 12**

Ayr, Ont.

'Shred the rad' at Calvary Church

Calvary Church has discovered a unique way to minister to its community. Following the erection of a skateboard park in the back of their property last month, more than 20 children and youths on any given night can now be seen skateboarding, rollerblading or biking in the 80-foot-square fenced park.

The ministry began when one member of the church put up \$500 to secure more than \$70,000 worth of skateboarding equipment from a facility that had gone out of business.

"It was a step of faith," says Anthony Hiebert, one of the church's youth sponsors. "I'd been participating in community meetings about setting up a skateboarding facility in Ayr, and when I heard about this equipment I couldn't resist. Within days we got trucks and men together and travelled to Pickering [Ont.] to pick up the equipment. Then we waited and prayed."

This spring Calvary's congregation voted to set up the park on their property. After crossing a few hurdles, such as ensuring they had proper insurance coverage, getting the back of the parking lot paved, and hiring and training a supervisor, the activity began. People from the church and the surrounding community pitched in to put together the equipment and get everything up and running—all in five days!

The skateboard park opened on Aug.



Calvary Church photo

The new skateboarding park at Calvary Church, Ayr, has turned into a popular community outreach.

9 and is open Monday to Saturday from 2 p.m. until dusk. Waiver forms and a safety helmet are required to use the fully supervised park. Registration for the 2005 season costs \$10.

Calvary Church is looking for corporate sponsors and is also ac-

cepting donations to help pay for the fencing, installation and equipment maintenance. Cheques can be made out to Calvary Church, with the words "Community Youth Outreach" in the memo line. Charitable receipts are provided. For more information, e-mail: info@ayrskateboarding.org.

News brief

MCC supports Nigerian AIDS prevention project

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is supporting an AIDS prevention project in *Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria* (EYN), a Christian denomination in northeastern Nigeria. With about \$4,400 in funding from MCC, a partner organization is training 40 women, youths and pastors in EYN churches to educate their congregations and communities about AIDS.



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Saskatoon

Church re-establishes link to refugees

It's been a long time since First Mennonite Church has looked at working with displaced people. But two years ago, when the church's effort to reach into the community sparked a meeting with a former Congolese teacher, renewed interest began to build around the issues that force people—in particular, this individual and his family—from their homes.

Having been separated from his loved ones during a time of political upheaval in Congo, Patrice Okita eventually made it to Canada. But he longed to have family join him. In December 2004, after many delays and disappointments, he welcomed his niece and nephew, both orphaned, to Saskatoon. Two intensely shy, quiet teens sat down in the pews of First Mennonite that Sunday on a cold prairie morning and began their new lives as Canadians.

About six months later, the high school where Patrice Jr. and Shela were now taking courses—in an attempt to learn English—held a barbecue to raise money to bring Shela's three siblings to Saskatoon. First Mennonite had, by this time, formed a refugee committee and had begun to plan for a future that might include an eventual family of five Congolese teens and their uncle.

Like many Mennonite congregations across Canada, First Mennonite has a history of working with refugees. In the late 1970s, when the Vietnamese boat people were seeking shelter, the congregation agreed to sponsor a family of six to settle in Saskatoon.

Throughout the 1980s, members of the church continued their involvement in providing support for new Canadians. English classes were held in the church for newly arrived Chinese people. By the mid-'80s, an Hispanic group was using First's building for regular worship. And in the late '80s, a group of Chinese Mennonites also borrowed space at First Mennonite until they found a home of their own in 1988, with people from the church helping to renovate and prepare a suitable church home.

Now, 17 years later, the church is

planning a dessert and theatre night to raise money for a refugee fund that could help yet another displaced family—this time from the Congo. But in brainstorming about the upcoming event, the refugee committee talked about why this would be good for the health of the church. Varied facets of the answer pushed them to realize this one event had many possible spiritual spin-offs. The committee sailed off in different directions with the same conclusion being reached each time: To join in God's purpose of healing and hope.

One possible result of having a dessert and theatre night is to “help create interconnectedness” in the local body which, in turn, “builds confidence

and a sense of belonging in the church community,” suggested committee member Melody Neufeld-Rocheleau. Other hoped-for results included helping church members learn more about needs in the world, increasing awareness of Mennonite Central Committee's work, and encouraging a larger vision of the work done by the provincial church community and beyond.

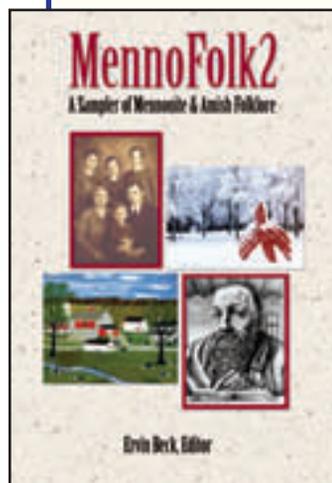
In looking ahead to the future, Neufeld-Rocheleau knows why establishing a refugee fund is important. “After things become normalized, we want a concern for others to stay front and centre, to be part of our consciousness and to stay in our prayers,” she explained.

The dessert and theatre night will be held Oct. 28

and 29 at First Mennonite Church. For further information, visit: fmcdinth.sasktelwebsite.net.

—Karin Fehderau

‘After things become normalized, we want a concern for others to stay front and centre, to be part of our consciousness and to stay in our prayers.’



MennoFolk2: A Sampler of Mennonite and Amish Folklore

Ervin Beck follows his popular and critically welcomed *MennoFolk* with this collection of folklore studies from Amish and Mennonite communities across North America. Here you will find a wide range of age groups, geographic locations, religious subgroups, and folklore genres. Includes Allen White's Bedtime Stories, Arthur Emmert's Horse-Trading Stories, Nicknames in the Lockport Church, all of which makes interesting, revealing reading.

“Beck and his students explore the informal history, culture, and traditions of Mennonite and Amish communities. As this volume attests, they deserve to be studied, documented, and preserved.”—*From the Foreword by Catherine Hiebert Kerst, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress*

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People&Events

Whistler, B.C.—One of North America's leading ski resorts—site of the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games—is home to this year's Business as a Calling convention, Nov. 3-6. The theme will be "Create a better world," with emphasis on the role that work, economics and excellence play in providing hope and opportunity to others. The annual convention is the most visible public activity of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), which has 2,500 members in North America and operates economic development programs in 10 countries. There will be plenty of exposure to MEDA's work, as well as its annual general meeting. Four key events and more than 20 seminars are planned for professional development and personal enrichment. For more information, call 1-800-665-7026 or visit www.businessasacalling.org. —MEDA News Service release

Winnipeg—The Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches has appointed Laura Kalmar as editor of the *MB Herald*, effective September 2005. Kalmar fills the vacancy left by Susan Brandt's upcoming retirement. Most recently Kalmar served as associate pastor in children's ministry at Bakerview MB Church, Abbotsford, B.C. For the past five years, she has provided oversight for the children's programs, leading teams of volunteers, writing and developing curriculum, as well as planning and leading worship services and preaching during Sunday worship services. She is known as an excellent communicator, both orally and in writing. Her writing includes articles for the *MB Herald* and *Direction*, and curriculum for Kindred Productions. Kalmar brings a passion for the church to her new role. "I find myself strongly influenced by the

Anabaptist distinctives central to the Mennonite Brethren faith," she says. "The church is to be a herald of God's kingdom, displaying a visible counterculture and seeking to transform the world through Christ's love, wisdom, justice and salvation.... I feel called to help people navigate their lives as Christians, to become growing disciples, and to develop a deep, life-giving relationship with Jesus!"

—**Cam Rowland**, MB Discipleship Ministries

Vancouver—Vange Willms Thiessen will be on assignment in Nairobi, Kenya, for the fall 2005 semester. Thiessen, clinical director of the master of counselling program at ACTS Seminaries in Langley, B.C., will be teaching counselling and family therapy at Pan Africa Christian College. The college regularly draws students from Kenya and the surrounding countries. Thiessen will also offer a clinical supervision course at Amani Counselling Centre in Nairobi. Participants represent cultural and professional diversity, including graduate counselors, therapists, supervisors and educators. "This is an opportunity for collaborative exchange and mutual learning. I expect this will truly be an experiential, participatory and relational learning opportunity," says Thiessen. Steve and Vange Thiessen are members of Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Church in Vancouver.

Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Doerksen—to Mariane and Johan, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., a son, Kevin, Aug. 23.
Driedger—to Kim and James, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a son, Tristan Riley, Aug. 23.
Fast—to Marnie Gerster and Paul, Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., a daughter, Molly Ruth, May 24.
Godfrey—to Charissa

and Mike, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Lexa Allie, June 22.
Isaak—to Alanna and Nathan, Jubilee Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Talia Grace, Aug. 26.
Janzen—to Lucy and Andrew, Bergthaler Mennonite, Plum Coulee, Man., a son, Liam Isaiah Andrew, June 18.
Liu—to Iris Qi and Sheng Liu, Grace Mennonite, Regina, a son, Josiah Liu, Aug. 3.
Nickel—to Stephanie and Jeff, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., a son, Nathaniel Jeffrey, Aug. 18.
Stucky—to Tricia and Josh, Steinbach Mennonite, Manitoba, Aug. 28.
Voogt—to Wendy and Jason, Carman Mennonite, Man., a son, Caleb Henry, Aug. 12.
Voth—to Barb Nickel and Bevan Voth, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., a son, William Lucas, Aug. 23.
Znidaric—to Vicki and Mark, Grace Mennonite, Regina, a daughter, Kasie, July 22.

Marriages

Clemmer-Bender—Jeff (Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.) and Sarah (Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.), near Tavistock, July 30.
Cruikshank-Siemens—Don and Crystal, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Aug. 26.
Day-Dyck—Jerediah (J. R.) and Ellie, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, July 1.
Durksen-Fust—Doug and Anita, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, July 30.
Ell-Boldt—Gordon and Tawndra, Grace Mennonite, Regina, Aug. 27.
Kroeker-Murphy—Andrew (of Springstein Mennonite, Man.) and Jacqui, in Croft, England.
Peters-Davidson—Clint and Nicole, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., in Colorado, July 22.
Peters-Plesko—James and Jennie, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., in Pincher Creek, Alta., Sept. 3.
Salatino-Van Alstine—

Bradley and Erin Hazel, Hunta Mennonite, Cochrane, Ont., Sept. 3.

Siemens-Thiessen—Kenny and Sheri, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., June 18.

Wiebe-Scott—John and Shelly, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Aug. 20.

Deaths

Berg—Susanna (Susan), 90, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Aug. 17.

Dyck—George, 79, Trinity Mennonite, Mather, Man., Aug. 17.

Dyck—Mary, 82, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Aug. 9.

Koethler—Mary, 91, Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., Aug. 7.

Lepp—Helena (Lena), 93 (b. April 14, 1912), Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Aug. 19.

Loewen—MaryAnn, 63, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, July 31.

Schultz—Elroy, 84 (b. December 5, 1920), Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont., Aug. 25.

Baptisms

Carman Mennonite, Man.—Travis Enns, Aug. 28.

Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.—Michael Woelk, Aug. 21.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Transitions announcements within four months of the event. Please send all Transitions announcements by e-mail to transitions@canadianmennonite.org, including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please include birth date and last name at birth if available.

Advertising information

Contact:
Barbara Burkholder

1-800-316-4052
advert@
canadianmennonite.org

Mennonite Church Canada

Prayer and praise items

Remember to pray for:

- People around the world who have been, and continue to be, displaced from their homes, including those who live in the wake of Hurricane Katrina (www.mds.mennonite.net); refugees fleeing into the Darfur region in Sudan; and the forced removal of Palestinians from their homes.
- The Pauingassi community in northern Manitoba, which is struggling with isolation, disunity, poverty and substance abuse.
- Give thanks for the recent release from prison of Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang, general secretary of the Mennonite Church in Vietnam. (See story on page 20.)

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Pastoral transitions

This late summer and fall a number of pastors are in transition in congregations across Ontario.

Ruth Boehm began serving as pastor at Faith Mennonite Church in Leamington on Sept. 5. She has just returned from a Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Nigeria.

Virginia Gerbrandt, a graduate of Canadian Mennonite Bible College and Canadian Mennonite University, comes to North Leamington United Mennonite Church as youth pastor starting Oct. 4.

Sarah Pinnell has been hired as youth pastor in her home congregation, First Mennonite Church in Kitchener. She is a student in the master of theological studies program at Conrad Grebel University College.

Also new to the pastoral

team at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, is Catharine Hunsberger, who arrived in August. She was pastor at Rainham Mennonite Church in Selkirk, Ont., for eight years.

Stephen Cox was hired as associate pastor of youth and education at Niagara United Mennonite Church in August. He is a graduate of the master of divinity program at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto.

Gary Horst began serving as pastor at the Wilmot Mennonite Church near New Hamburg on Sept. 5. He has most recently been interim pastor at Zion Mennonite Fellowship in Elmira.

Ken and Dawne Driedger began a joint pastoral assignment at Zion Mennonite Fellowship on Sept. 16. They come from Edinboro, Penn.

Jonathan Slater and Maureen Louth began assignments as pastors for youth ministries at Toronto United Mennonite Church in September. They come from the Associated Gospel Church tradition.

Bryan Klassen began in September as assistant pastor working primarily with youth at Vineland United Mennonite Church. He has worked with youth in a number of denominations.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Education ministries undergoing review

An Operational Review Panel has been put in place to guide a review of Education Ministries.

"I believe Education Ministries is being called to grow and change.... We do many things, and involve many people in ministry," writes Bob Wiebe, director of Education Ministries.

The review process will begin this fall and plans

are to have it completed by early 2006. The Operational Review Panel will process survey results as well as ask its own questions concerning the Camps with Meaning programs and the congregational ministries of Education Ministries.

The need for a review arose because new ministry opportunities are calling for resources at the same time that human resources are being stretched to the max and beyond.

The review will involve pastoral cluster groups, congregations, summer staff, MC Manitoba staff, the Facilities Committee and the Education Reference Group.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Camp Shekinah bids farewell to Carl Wiens

After 15 years of service as administrator of Camp Shekinah and the Shekinah Retreat Centre, Carl Wiens is moving on. A farewell for Wiens was scheduled for Sept. 18 at the camp's Timber Lodge.

During his tenure, Wiens was known as a man full of passion and excitement for the camp.

"He has always been a real visionary," says Verna Olfert. "As board members, we feared the day he would leave. He was always coming to meetings with ideas [to implement]."

It was Wiens' idea to build the beautiful and well-used Timber Lodge that is in demand for work-related conferences, church leadership, youth and women's retreats, as well as a picturesque setting for weddings.

"He wanted to carry on dual programming," says board chair Bernie Wiens, explaining how Wiens saw the potential for other uses besides church camp at the site.

Upcoming conference to look at rural issues

A national conference on rural revitalization is scheduled for Oct. 13 to 16 at St. Peter's Abbey in Muenster, Sask.

The four-day event is being planned by the Canadian Rural Church Network. Various denominations, including Mennonites, will be represented among the presenters during the conference. Workshops will centre on, among other things, the theme of developing better economic choices in rural areas. Arts and media issues within the rural framework will also be addressed.

More information can be obtained by visiting www.ruralchurchcanada.net or by contacting Eric Olfert at 306-249-4844.

Mennonite Church Alberta

New Trinity church takes shape

The new Trinity Mennonite Church building is taking shape! The foundation and main floor are complete and volunteers are working hard to set up the walls.

Tentatively, the congregation hopes to move into their new building in early spring. Until then, the congregation will continue to meet in the Menno Simons School facilities on Sunday mornings.

Pastor Erwin Wiens began his ministry with the congregation in August.

Pastoral sabbaticals come to an end

Two Alberta pastors experienced sabbatical leaves this summer. Roy Hewko of Rosemary Mennonite Church has just returned from Africa. Doug Klassen of Foothills Mennonite in Calgary has just completed a sabbatical in clinical pastoral counselling.

**Mennonite Church
British Columbia**

Eben-Ezer Mennonite rededicates sanctuary

Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church of Abbotsford began the new church year with a rededication service for its sanctuary on Sept. 11. The combined English-German service, with special music by a joint choir, celebrated the return to the sanctuary for worship following remodeling work.

Renovations to the 42-year-old building included removing asbestos tiles, redoing the sanctuary floor and foyer, and installing a new sound system. Removal of the pews during renovations necessitated worship services moving to the church gym for the summer months.

Rollkuchen lunch attracts neighbours

Lunch at First United Mennonite Church (FUMC) in Vancouver on Aug. 28 was truly multi-ethnic. Chinese, Indo-Canadian and aboriginal residents who live near the church were invited to a traditional watermelon and *Rollkuchen* feast. The church cooks—of German, Iranian, Colombian and Chinese origin—fried more than 1,000 of the Russian Mennonite fritters. A local grocery store donated 22 watermelons.

For the past four years, the FUMC Outreach and Service Committee had held a community barbecue, but this year decided to try something different. They handed out flyers inviting neighbourhood residents to join them for morning worship and lunch, or only the lunch if they preferred. About



FUMC Pastor Ingrid Shultz (in the watermelon apron) chatted with visitors and church members at the first annual *Rollkuchen* and watermelon lunch.

40 came to the lunch, which was served outdoors.

All the guests and everyone in the church ate lots of watermelon and *Rollkuchen*. In true biblical style, there were still 12 baskets left, which the church saw as “a sign of God’s...abundant generosity.”

Several people who had not

attended the service asked for a tour of the sanctuary.

“A young boy from Iran who visited the church that day asked why we have ‘Peace be with you’ at the front of the church in German and English,” said Pastor Ingrid Schultz. “That was a good opportunity to share with him and his mom about Jesus’ way of peace and how important it is for us as a church.”

The watermelon and *Rollkuchen* lunch was so successful that the church is considering hosting it again next year.

Unless otherwise credited, the articles in The Churches pages were written by: Leona Dueck Penner (MC Canada), Maurice Martin (Eastern Canada), Evelyn Rempel Petkau (Manitoba), Karin Fehderau (Saskatchewan), Donita Wiebe-Neufeld (Alberta) and Amy Dueckman (British Columbia). See page 2 for contact information.

Sharing our stories with one another

I was not able to attend the Charlotte conference this year, but I have had the opportunity to listen to stories regarding that experience. *Canadian Mennonite* has kept us up-to-date and the website for Mennonite Church Canada kept us informed on a daily basis. I have listened to some of the speakers on CD, including the always inspirational Michele Hershberger and the incredibly effective presentation by Ray Aldred. By all accounts, this gathering was a wonderful time of meeting new people, sharing perspectives and listening for God’s voice—even though the theme was “Can’t keep quiet!”

The connection between our congregations and their provincial conference—converging as one via Mennonite Church Canada—and the connection with MC USA are life-changing experiences for many. The sharing of our ideas, cultures, perspectives, worship styles and songs is so very important for all of us. The 2003 gathering at Bulawayo reminded us even more concretely of our international interconnectedness and forced us to think about our larger church family.

Many of you are familiar with *Sharing Gifts in the Global Family of*

Faith. The authors present God’s model as global sharing, rather than giving.

“Sharing creates abundance because there is no alienation involved.” Nearing the end of the book the authors use the example of “Paul speaking to the church in Corinth regarding the Macedonian churches’ responses to the needs of the believers in Jerusalem”:

“...the troubles they have been through have tried them hard, yet in all this they have been so exuberantly happy that from the depths of their poverty they have shown themselves lavishly open-handed. Going to the limit of their resources, as I can testify, and even beyond that limit, they begged us most insistently, and on their own initiative, to be allowed to share in this generous service to their fellow Christians”
II Corinthians 8:2-4.

The authors say, “Perhaps the Macedonian churches perceived, because of their poverty, the great value of being in relationship, in communion with others. This is an example of the abundant life that God promises. When Jesus in the book of John speaks of having life abundantly, he refers to becoming a part of God’s purpose and God’s life through sharing. Sharing the abundant gifts we have received...is the way we can join in God’s purpose.”

From our leaders

Too often we do not see the bigger picture. We do not share our resources with each other,

our dreams and vision for the church within our Mennonite congregations, our Mennonite conferences and within Mennonite World Conference. Sharing with each other more regularly would make us a strong church. Here in the North or West we are gifted with money, but seriously lack what only our sister churches in Colombia, Vietnam, China and Ethiopia could share with us. Closer to home, we can begin making those connections by communing with the First Nation and ethnic churches within our conferences.

Are we sharing our resources? Are we willing to let non-Caucasians share their stories, points of view, culture and understanding of the biblical stories with us? Is there a will within our congregations and conferences to listen to each other, to “beg most insistently” for each other’s resources—the gifts we must share to have abundant life? We desperately need each other. Let us not be complacent in our own little corners.

Marguerite Jack is the moderator of MC Alberta and an executive board member of MC Canada.



Calendar

British Columbia

Oct. 13, 14, 16: Mennonite Disaster Service B.C. dessert information evenings: Willingdon MB Church, Burnaby (13); Eben Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford (14); Yarrow MB Church (16); all meetings at 7 p.m. Kevin King, guest speaker.

Oct. 15: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. banquet at CBC, 6 p.m. Speaker: John Ruth. Topic: "From America with love." Tickets at MHS office, 604-853-6177.

Oct. 20: CBC annual meeting in the chapel.

Oct. 21-23: B.C. Women in Mission annual retreat at Camp Squeah.

Nov. 5-6: Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, 25th anniversary celebration.

Nov. 18-20: Senior Youth IMPACT Retreat at Camp Squeah.

Alberta

Oct. 21: Mennonite Disaster Service dessert/information evening, 7 p.m., Dalhousie Community Church. Speaker: Gerald Klassen. Everyone welcome.

Nov. 5-6: Rosemary Mennonite Church 75th anniversary celebrations.

Saskatchewan

Oct. 2: Eyebrow Mennonite Church Thanksgiving and 50th Anniversary celebration. Morning worship service and lunch followed by informal afternoon program and faspas. For more information, or to register, call 306-759-2185.

Oct. 4: Annual fall supper at Youth Farm Bible Camp, Rosthern.

Oct. 14-15: Women in Mission retreat at Shekinah.

Oct. 23, 30, Nov. 6, 13: "Stories Jesus told: A look

at the parables," with Vern Ratzlaff, Nutana Park Mennonite Church.

Oct. 28-29: First Mennonite dessert and theatre refugee fundraiser, at 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 29: Equipping conference at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

Nov. 4-5: MCC annual meeting in Yorkton.

Nov. 4-6: RJC visioning meeting with Jeff Steckley.

Nov. 4-6: Quilting retreat at Shekinah.

Nov. 7-8: "Personal financial management for families" workshop with Jim Brown of Mennonite Foundation, Osler Mennonite Church.

Dec. 11: RJC Christmas concert.

Jan. 13-15: Refreshing Winds retreat at Shekinah. Theme: "Worshipping through music," with a focus on the new *Hymnal* supplement.

Manitoba

Sept. 30-Oct. 2: Camp Moose Lake workathon.

Oct. 1: Equipping the Congregation conference at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Oct. 14-15: Manitoba Women in Mission retreat at Camp Assiniboia. Theme: "Prayer—just do it" with Pam Driedger and Marilyn Houser Hamm. Arrive 5 to 6 p.m. with supper at 6:15 p.m. All women welcome.

Oct. 18-19: J. J. Thiessen Lectures at Canadian Mennonite University with Paul J. Griffiths, professor of Catholic studies, U. of Illinois, speaking on "Curiosity: Towards a theology of intellectual appetite."

Oct. 22: Manitoba Women for MCC annual conference at Rosenort EMC. Registration at 9:30 a.m.; session begins at 10 a.m. Bring a brown bag lunch, bar of soap, and a new or used article to be sold.

Oct. 22: Annual MMYO volleyball tournament, Winkler, Man. Register by Oct. 14 by calling 204-896-1616 or by e-mail at office@mennochurch.mb.ca.

Oct. 27: MC Manitoba fall delegate session at Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 7 to 9:30 p.m.

Oct. 31: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual general meeting, 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 28-30: Manitoba Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter weekend in Winnipeg. For more information, call Peter and Rose Dick at 204-757-4705.

Oct. 29: Camps with Meaning celebration banquet at Whitewater Mennonite Church, Boissevain.

Nov. 5: Camps with Meaning Celebration Banquet at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Nov. 6: Camps with Meaning Celebration Banquet at Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

Nov. 4-6: Quilting retreat at Camp Koinonia. Call 895-2267 or e-mail camps@mennochurch.mb.ca to register.

Nov. 4-6: Quilting retreat at Camp Moose Lake. To register, call 895-2267 or e-mail camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.

Nov. 11-13: Quilting retreat at Camp Moose Lake. To register, call 895-2267 or e-mail camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.

Jan. 13-15: Young adult retreat at Camp Koinonia: "Get engaged!...With the church!"

Jan. 20-22: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Feb. 3-5: MMYO senior youth retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Feb. 10-12: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

Feb. 24: Leadership seminar at Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Feb. 24-25: Annual delegate session at Mennonite Collegiate Institute, hosted by Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Ontario

Sept. 24: *Sing the Journey* workshop at Conrad Grebel, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.grebel.uwaterloo.ca and follow the "worship planners" link.

Sept. 30-Oct. 2: Young Adult Fellowship annual retreat at Hidden Acres Camp. Theme: "Morality: Learning at the mountain." For more information, e-mail: bwiebe@mennochurch.mb.ca or markrachel@golden.net.

Oct. 7-9: Weekend Celebrating Bethany Mennonite's 40 years of ministry. Share thanksgiving to God for Bethany as a faith community "...growing God's goodness..." in Niagara. Guest Speaker: Walter Bergen of Abbotsford, B.C. (former MCC Director in Moscow).

Oct. 14-15: MCEC weekend with Tony and Peggy Campolo. Theme: "Is the homosexual my neighbour?" For more information go to www.mcec.ca/WhatsNew or call 1-800-206-9356.

Oct. 16: Christian Steinman(n) reunion at Shakespeare Optimist Hall. Potluck at 1 p.m.

Oct. 22: Launch of the second *Hope Rising* CD, with music written and performed by Rick Pauw, at Hamilton Mennonite Church, 7 p.m. Proceeds to MCC Ontario's Circles of Support and Accountability Program.

Oct. 25-29: Ten Thousand Villages Festival Sale, a sale of traditional and contemporary international handicrafts to benefit artisans from developing countries. Aylmer Old Town Hall (upper floor), 38 John Street South, Aylmer, Ont.

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

Employment opportunities



Canadian Mennonite University seeks to hire a full-time

ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT

Duties: Responsible for the recording of day-to-day financial transactions.

Qualifications: A combination of education and experience as well as competency in the use of accounting software applications. Applicants are expected to have a commitment to the church and the mission of CMU. For more information, please visit www.cmu.ca.

Send resume and covering letter by September 30, 2005, to:

Susan Warkentin, Director of Human Resources
E-mail: swarkentin@cmu.ca or:
Canadian Mennonite University
Attn: S. Warkentin
500 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R3P 2N2

FULL-TIME SENIOR PASTOR

Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, is seeking a full-time senior pastor. The tentative starting date is January 1, 2006.

We are members of Mennonite Church Alberta and Mennonite Church Canada. Average attendance is 80-100 in a congregation diverse in cultures, ages and walks of life. See www.holyroodmennonite.ca for further information about the congregation. Interested applicants, please contact:

Chair of Pastoral Committee, Guenther Toews
Phone: 780-458-9358
3 Oakview Crescent
St. Albert, AB T8N 6H8
Alberta Conference Minister, Jim Shantz
Phone: 780-485-2518

For rent

For rent October 1, upper floor of house. One bedroom and study. Private entrance, parking, 2 appliances, balcony. Non-smoker, no pets. Pandora and King St. area in Kitchener. Phone 519-578-3761.

Four-bedroom house for rent in Wolseley area of Winnipeg. Available January 1, 2006. Phone 204-779-6559.

Newly renovated office space for sub-lease with the Christian Labour Association of Canada #2-396 Assiniboine Ave. Winnipeg, MB. 2 offices; shared common area; downtown Winnipeg; riverfront location. Contact us at: 204-989-0198.

Announcement

40th Wedding Anniversary - Wilmer and Janet Martin

Family and friends are invited to celebrate with them in worship at St. Agatha Mennonite Church on Sunday, October 2, 2005, at 10 a.m. The worship service will be followed by an Open House in the Atrium at Conrad Grebel College (140 Westmount Rd. N., Waterloo) from 2 - 4 p.m. Please join their children in celebrating this special day. Best wishes only please!

Mennonite Church Canada invites applications for the positions of

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY FOR MC CANADA WITNESS (1.0 FTE), and MISSION PARTNERSHIP FACILITATOR FOR AFRICA (.4 FTE) and EUROPE (.3 FTE)

Mennonite Church Canada is a dynamic and exciting place to work and serve, where the team players are enthusiastic, energetic, and strive to put their faith into practice. These positions, based in Winnipeg, Man., participate in the Christian Witness Council's mandate to lead, mobilize and resource the church to participate in holistic witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in a broken world. Both positions require considerable travel within and outside of Canada. Duties would commence in fall of 2005.

All staff are expected to exhibit a personal faith commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord, uphold the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, and the vision of Mennonite Church Canada as a missional church. For a list of qualifications and responsibility areas for each position, see the job descriptions posted at www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved/jobs/.

A letter of intent and a resume, or any inquiries or nominations, can be directed to the following people:

For the Executive Secretary position:

Dan Nighswander, General Secretary
E-mail: dnighswander@mennonitechurch.ca

For the Africa and Europe positions:

Jack Suderman, Executive Secretary, Witness
E-mail: rjsuderman@mennonitechurch.ca

Both may also be reached at:

Mennonite Church Canada
600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4
Phone: 204-888-6781; toll-free: 866-888-6785

Application processing will begin October 11th.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan (MC Sask) is seeking a full-time

CONFERENCE MINISTER

The Conference Minister gives overall leadership and direction to the mission, ministry and well-being of MC Sask., with particular focus for pastors and congregations.

Qualifications include an understanding of and commitment to Mennonite/Anabaptist theology and a preference for education and training in a Mennonite/Anabaptist institution, significant pastoral experience within the Mennonite Church, well developed listening and communication skills, ability to relate to theological diversity, and demonstrated administration and organizing skills. The successful candidate will exemplify boldness and creativity in implementing and building on the vision set by the Conference. Willingness to travel throughout the province is a necessity. A detailed job description is available on the website www.mcsask.ca. For more information and to apply, contact:

Henry Block, Search Committee
3214 Milton Street Saskatoon SK S7L 3X4
Phone: 306-933-4660 (day), 306-683-0524 (evening)
E-mail: h.gblock@sasktel.net

The appointment will commence mid-February 2006. Applications will be considered until September 30, 2005.



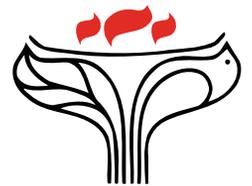
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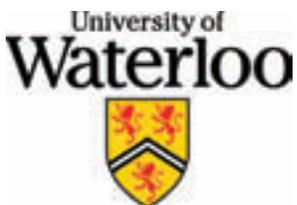
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