

CANADIAN
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Beyond facile answers

If you're getting weary about the seemingly endless and repetitious arguments for or against war with Iraq, you're not alone. But now is not the time to tune out a debate that can help prod us beyond facile answers to the age-old question of what makes for peace.

In mid-January, our media focused on the thousands across North America and elsewhere holding anti-war protests. Placards carried provocative slogans such as "blood and oil don't mix" or "regime change starts at home."

When given microphones, protesters denounced the imperialist designs of the United States. They expressed worries about war feeding already strong anti-American sentiments, about waves of terrorist retaliation, about the inevitable civilian casualties in a country which has already suffered much from 10 years of economic sanctions.

In support of the protesters, media commentators said that the policy of containment has worked for a decade, so why not continue it. They expressed scepticism about the will and the limited capacity of the U.S. to help rebuild Iraq after it has been defeated, which it surely would be by the superior military might of the U.S.

Points well taken. A post-Taliban Afghanistan is far from rebuilt.

Predictably, the counter arguments emerged quickly. "What do Iraqis fear more than a war? More Saddam" was the headline of a prominent column soon after the protests. Against the portrait of the U.S. as an imperialist aggressor, this columnist held out the portrait of the U.S. as a liberator.

The column quotes from the report of a Brussels-based independent research group which conducted secret interviews with Iraqis who looked to foreign intervention as "the surest and most dependable way to end the war against them."

"The central question for them is not if there will be a war.

The question is when their own war will finally end," wrote this commentator.

Points well taken. The brutal policies and imperialist designs of the Iraqi leader are a matter of public record.

So where does that leave us? Do we have no alternative but to become worn out by the pro and con? What, in fact, are the things that will make for peace? Our own tradition suggests several directions.

First, we as Mennonites have a long tradition of resisting de-personalization of the so-called "enemy"—who is also created in the image of God. That's why we placed a person in Baghdad nearly a year ago in order to help us keep a face on this conflict and not let it deteriorate into a war of ideologies. See "Baghdad diaries" on the MCC web site: www.mcc.org.

That's why we keep sending short-term Christian Peacemaker Team delegations into this volatile area, even amidst the risks. That's why we promote campaigns such as a women's fast for peace (page 38) as well as ongoing material and humanitarian aid.

Second, we have a long history of believing that "war isn't the only solution"—which is the headline given to a column by Ernie Regehr of Project Ploughshares in *The Record*, January 21 (Kitchener-Waterloo daily).

"It is possible to win the war only to lose the peace," he wrote. He suggested there is no "quick fix" to the problem of Iraq and called for a rejection of both a "destructive war and a destructive status quo." The peace effort must include not only weapons inspectors, he wrote, but "genuine progress toward accountable governance...and toward the establishment of the Middle East as a region free of all weapons of mass destruction."

He called on the international community "to accompany Iraqis down that difficult road to durable peace, not with more bombs and cruise missiles, but with moral, political and material support."—**Ron Rempel, editor**

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Website preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted on our web site (www.canadianmennonite.org) on the Thursday before the date of the issue. This means you can check out the Feb. 10 issue by Feb. 6.

Cover: Boris Bobrinskoy, Russian Orthodox priest and descendent of Catherine the Great, meets with Helmut Harder during recent ecumenical talks. See page 6.

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Youth minister balances local and national concerns

When Anne Campion and her family moved to Stratford, Ontario, 13 years ago, they didn't find a church right away. Little did she know that her new church home would eventually lead her to become youth ministry director with Mennonite Church Canada.

After considerable scouting around, an unchurched acquaintance suggested Avon Mennonite Church. "My neighbour is the pastor there," said the friend. "I don't attend church, but if I did, I would go to that church."

Although Campion had never dreamed of visiting a Mennonite church ("What I knew of Mennonites was the stereotype horse and buggy and country back roads"), her first visit to Avon turned out to be positive.

Alone with a two-year-old and an infant, Anne was assisted by young adult Dan Lebold with taking off jackets and finding a seat. When the children began to fuss, Lebold's mother, Audrey, leaned over and whispered, "Don't worry about the noise. We love children here."

This inviting atmosphere encouraged Campion to return to Avon. She also found the people there supportive of her gifts.

Gary Horst, pastor at Avon, noticed Anne's passion for youth early on. "Anne is great at seeing or imagining what could be, and challenges others to consider new possibilities," says Horst.

Raised in a Baptist church with urban missionaries for parents, Campion says she grew up "learning the importance of joining personal acceptance of Christ as saviour to living out my relationship with Christ in discipleship." Coming to Avon was "not foreign but an ongoing joining of Christ as lord and saviour. What was added was the peace theology, which is

significant, which I already had within me without having been taught it."

The congregation invited Campion to become a youth sponsor in 1991.

In 1995, she felt a personal call to pastoral ministry "which I fought," she says. But the support of fellow members affirmed her efforts with youth.

"I believe that the church is God's people and that youth are to be a part of the church," says Campion. In September 1999, the church invited her to be associate pastor.

Larissa Friesen, a Canadian Mennonite University student, experienced Campion's gifts during a youth pastor practicum assignment. "Anne was a mentor to me, much more than just a supervisor," says Friesen.

In February 2002, Campion was asked to be director of youth ministry for Mennonite Church Canada Forma-

tion. This half-time position allows her to continue her work at Avon. Much of her MC Canada role revolves around planning national youth events such as the upcoming assembly in St. Catharines (July 9-13), and resourcing youth leaders. She will also put significant effort into shaping an ongoing vision for youth ministry.

Justina Heese, executive secretary of MC Canada Formation, sees Anne using her enthusiasm to get youth excited about what God can accomplish in their lives. "She is alive with energy," says Heese.

While Campion's local youth group offers an eye into issues the national church needs to consider, the broader viewpoint she gains from her national position challenges the youth at Avon. Maintaining a balance between denominational and local ministries is important to Campion.

"We have to work together to figure it out," she says.— MC Canada release by **Allison Peters**

The writer is a student at Canadian Mennonite University.



Campion

Akron, Pa.

Jamaica volunteer goes out with a bang

Roger Neill didn't have a lot of time for goodbyes during his final week as a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker in Jamaica. Instead, he was a guest on four radio talk shows, one television program and a public forum that resulted in a front-page story in the November 2 *Jamaican Observer*.

It was a fitting finale to Neill's seven years as an advocate for mentally ill people in Jamaica, most recently as a psychiatric social worker in the country's notorious prisons. Working with local human rights groups, he has repeatedly accused the Jamaican government of using prisons as warehouses for the mentally ill, some of whom languish without trial for decades following crimes such as vandalism or loitering.

In March 2001, Neill helped secure the release of Ivan Barrows, a schizophrenic man imprisoned 29 years for

breaking a window.

"Next to coming to the Lord, that was the most exciting event of my life," Neill remembers.

The story of Barrows' release and his reunion with his family a year later captured the interest of the Jamaican press, but interest had flagged in recent months. In July Neill wrote and distributed "Without a soul: The Jamaican government response to the long-term incarcerated 'Unfit to plead,'" a press document describing abuse of mentally ill prisoners and pleading for a coordinated approach to treatment.

"Without a soul" laments that "the discovery of hundreds of mental patients in the prisons, in rags, abused by other inmates and warders, used as slaves to do the dirty work...elicits no moral outrage" among government officials.

Abbotsford, B.C.

Pastor remembered for building bridges

Henry Born loved softball and golfing. He collected stamps and watched birds. He enjoyed woodwork and crafted doll cribs and fire trucks for his daughters. He passed on his love of music to his grandchildren. He loved the word of God and he loved serving the church.

And when Born passed away in November, hundreds of people came to pay their respects to a man whose love for life had touched them as well.

Born's life spanned 80 years and 3 continents. He grew up in Manitoba where he met his wife, Esther. He studied at Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg and Tabor College in Kansas, and received a masters degree in education at Emporia State Teacher's College, also in Kansas. He later received a Master of Christian Studies at Regent College and did doctoral studies at Fuller Seminary in California.

Born was a conscientious objector during World War II, spending time in prison for his convictions. During his incarceration he decided to dedicate his life to mission and service. His passion for teaching and preaching

took him and his family to Paraguay, Brazil, Ecuador and Austria.

In British Columbia, Born was president of Columbia Bible College for five years, taught at Trinity Western University and pastored churches in both the General Conference (Mennonite Church Canada) and the Mennonite Brethren conference, something unusual at the time. An MB, he began his ministry as interim pastor of the Olivet Mennonite Church in Abbotsford.

In his autobiography, *In the Company of God*, he noted: "To be an interim minister was considered to be somewhat unique at that time (1975), but more

unusual was the fact that I was serving a church from a different Mennonite denomination. Our experiences in Quito, Ecuador, surfaced to remind us that the kingdom of God is broader than any one denomination.



Henry Born enjoys a book with grandson Nathaniel Janzen.

"Reaching across denominational parameters in this way was a pioneering step that triggered questions in the community. In later years, such exchanges would become more commonplace. This was an opportunity to pursue something that I felt needed emphasis, namely, to bring about a stronger sense of kinship between evangelical denominations."

This desire to foster kinship continued during his "retirement" as he chaired the Abbotsford Ministerial for six years. At his memorial service, one pastor recalled Born's dedication to building relationships between denominations. During his time as chair, Abbotsford churches participated in a nation-wide prayer crusade as well as hosting the World Evangelical Fellowship general assembly.

As cancer slowly claimed his life, Born had to relinquish the responsibilities that he cherished. But his love for God continued to touch people. His youngest brother said of his last visit with Born: "As I left, I turned around to look at Henry. He was sitting with his head in his hands and he seemed to be deep in prayer. That is how I will remember him."—**Angelika Dawson**

The document was ignored during the build-up to national elections in October. But shortly before Neill's term was to end, the media picked up on it, due in part to a public forum hosted by MCC partner organization, Jamaicans for Justice. Neill spoke at the forum along with representatives from the Independent Jamaica Council for Human Rights.



Neill

The timing was typical of what Neill described as seven years of "divine connections." A Mennonite Brethren from Sardis, B.C., Neill began his MCC Jamaica work with the Committee for the Upliftment of the Mentally Ill (CUMI).

"Most Third World countries are not

looking for psychiatric social workers," Neill notes. After three years with CUMI, he joined the government medical team serving Jamaica's toughest prisons.

The work was fulfilling, but it took its toll. A few days after leaving Jamaica, he was hospitalized in Akron on the verge of renal failure. He expects to undergo surgery in the early new year and hopes to begin an MCC storytelling tour after recovering.

The work he initiated will continue. In the wake of the publicity flurry, three organizations will vigorously petition the government on behalf of mentally ill prisoners. The church Neill attended in Jamaica now provides Christmas meals and parties in all three maximum-security prisons. The prison chaplaincy and medical team will continue activities for the prisoners.

Neill produced 11 manuals and reports as resources for those carrying on the work.—MCC report by **Rachel Miller Moreland**

The Holy Spirit and Christian unity

Last October, Helmut Harder represented Mennonites at an inter-church conference in northern Italy on “The Holy Spirit and ecumenism.” In this article he reflects on what he heard.

The 20 scholars gathered at the Ecumenical Monastery of Bose in Italy came from Europe, North America and South Africa. They represented a cross section of Christian communions—Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist, Pentecostal, Quaker and Mennonite.

Bose is a community of 75 men and women from various churches, Catholic and Protestant. Members are devoted to prayer, poverty, celibacy and obedience to the Gospel. We worshiped and ate with the community, and enjoyed interaction with them.

Pastors in Christian churches often dismiss congregations with the benediction from 2 Corinthians 13:13: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.” What does it mean for Christians to lay claim to “the communion of the Holy Spirit” and to pray, each in their own setting, that “the Holy Spirit be with all of you?”

Walter Kasper’s opening address on “The Holy Spirit and the unity of Christians” flagged the issue. The cardinal identified the 1000-year old division between the Catholics in the West and the Orthodox in the East as a major tragedy of Christendom. All the more because the schism was brought on by a difference of opinion on the Holy Spirit, the very person of the Trinity that gives the gift of unity.

Kasper concluded that only a renewed trust in the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit could overcome the scandal of this massive division. But this calls for an intensification of the Christian’s experience of the Holy Spirit and a radical commitment to Christian unity.

This point was taken a step further by Belgian theologian Joseph Femeree. In his view, the challenge before the churches is to bring Christians of diverse traditions together in a deeper way than heretofore. This would require a shift from doctrinal and structural unity to “a dialogue of love in the Holy Spirit.”

For this to happen, said Femeree, it would be necessary for Christians of each church to recognize the full churchly status of the other as they heed the stirrings of the Holy Spirit in ecumenical contexts.

Spirit within Trinity

Throughout the conference, the discussion focused on the Holy Spirit in the context of the Trinity. Lorelei Fuchs of the Graymoor Institute in New York pointed to the interrelation of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as the theological and confes-

sional basis for the identity of the church as *koinonia*. The Trinitarian fellowship of the Godhead is foundational for an ecumenical understanding of church unity.

The Spirit has a role different from the Father and the Son. For example, it is the Holy Spirit that urges the gift of inter-church fellowship upon the churches.

Boris Bobrinskoy, a Russian Orthodox priest from Paris, concluded on the basis of biblical study that Christians should foster a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit by praying directly to the Spirit, not only to the Father and the Son. Similarly, Geoffrey Wainwright, a U.S. Methodist theologian, extended the discussion to include the Spirit’s role in worship. His study of Romans 8 and 15 led him to observe that early Christians addressed the Spirit specifically in their worship. One does not always have to link the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son, he said.

Ralph Del Colle, a U.S. Catholic, said that “the church exists in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is not only the power that started the church (Acts 1-2), but also the very substance that forms and reforms the Church from age to age. As such, the Spirit is the sign of the church’s continual posture before God, and the locus of her life and theology. It is the Holy Spirit that makes known the things of Christ, said Del Colle.

Mennonites tend to begin with Christ, who makes known the things of the Spirit. This is our way of controlling “far-out” claims about the work of the Holy Spirit. But in doing so we run the risk of quenching the Spirit with a narrow interpretation of Christ.

Jesus promised his followers more than he was able to teach them in three years. He said he would send his advocate, the Spirit, who will “guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). The Ephesian writer prays that we, the believers, may be “strengthened in our

inner being with power through his Spirit” (3:16) so that God “is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine” (3:20).

These texts suggest that the Spirit has the specific task of expanding what we have learned about Jesus. At the least, we should allow the Son and the Spirit equal authority in their Trinitarian roles, and not subject the Spirit to the Son.

Passion for unity

Should a passion for unity be of primary concern to Christian churches? Alan Sell, a Reformed theologian from England, argued that if Christians around the world claim union with Christ, we have no choice but to seek unity with one another as churches. To stand in the way of Christian unity is sectarian.

Sectarianism can show itself in restrictions we make due to life-style, in opposing biblical interpretation and doctrines, in judging one another’s liturgical practices, or in denying access to the Lord’s table. God’s free Spirit must hold greater sway than any particular conception of the church. Sell maintained that faithfulness to the Gospel requires Christian churches to be ecumenical in spirit.

Others supported Sell’s point. Michael Fahey, a U.S. Jesuit theologian, also saw the ecumenical movement as a movement of the Holy Spirit. As such it should receive high priority by clergy and theologians alike. Regrettably, according to Fahey, the Catholic Church’s initial vision and enthusiasm, sparked by the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, appears to be waning. Surely this grieves the Holy Spirit, said Fahey.

A number of speakers drew attention to the unbounded activity of the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth Hastings, a charismatic Anglican from South Africa, proposed that the manifestation of the Spirit across a multitude of ecclesial traditions calls into question our notions of how and where the Holy Spirit is at work.

Hastings asked: Might the Holy Spirit have the mission of breaking open our confining institutional boundaries and their sometimes narrow articles of faith?

Several scholars drew attention to

the renewal movements that have permeated global Christianity. A recent statistic claims that Pentecostals, Charismatics and Neo-charismatics make up 27 percent of the 2 billion Christians in the world. And they come from all directions—Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant. Adelbert Denaux, a Catholic scholar from Belgium, suggested that if the renewal movements are the work of the Holy Spirit, this presents challenging agenda for the established denominations and for inter-church relations.

Cecil Roebeck, a U.S. Pentecostal churchman, criticized the mainline churches for not giving due recognition to the work of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal and charismatic circles. What might these movements be saying to the ancient churches and the churches of the Reformation?

Mennonites and the Holy Spirit

In my paper, I began by noting that Mennonite theology is orthodox in that it has held to the historic Trinitarian view and has respected the person of the Holy Spirit in its doctrine of God. However Mennonites have not entered the debate about the internal (imminent, eternal) workings of the Trinity. They have given their attention to practical Christianity more than to doctrinal exactions.

On the whole this has been a good thing. It is more important to show that “God is love” than to be distracted by endless debate about the inner mysteries of God. At the same time, practical Christianity, which is all too prone to becoming human-centred, needs to be nurtured by a Trinitarian approach to worship, confession and theology.

In the beginning, the Anabaptists had a vital theology of the Holy Spirit that served them well in evangelism and mission and interpreting Scripture. They took account of the

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Part of the ecumenical conference group in Italy, against the Swiss Alps.

Holy Spirit *From page 7*

Spirit in their understanding of baptism, their examination of Scripture, and in decision-making in the church.

Later, particularly in the twentieth century, Mennonites concentrated their attention on Christology. It is time that we recapture the place of the Holy Spirit in the life and thought of communal and personal faith. Biblical texts, as well as Trinitarian theology, would suggest that Father, Son and Holy Spirit should be studied in harmony, rather than in isolation from one another. This process holds the promise of a renewed movement of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

The ecumenical fervour of the Anabaptists was remarkable. They were passionate about identifying the will of God for the whole church. How else could one explain their missionary zeal and their willingness to die for their faith? They were willing to engage in debate with anyone. And while the Anabaptists' convictions resulted in a major rupture in the universal church of the day, this was not their original intention.

Had the Anabaptist movement been accepted as a renewal movement within the church, those who find themselves in the Mennonite Church today may have remained a part of the one Catholic Church. Unfortunately, persecution and martyrdom spelled the end of this ecumenical vision.

Now, 475 years later, Mennonites have a new opportunity and responsibility to participate in the pursuit of Christian unity. What is the Spirit saying to the Mennonite churches concerning this challenge? Perhaps our greatest gift to the churches is the attitude of peace and hospitality toward all God's creation, including the Christian churches. This in itself would be a contribution of great significance to the ecumenical movement.

But to offer the legacy of peace and hospitality to all, and to gain what the Spirit has in store for us in return, we need to be in dialogue with Christians of all denominations.

Renewed attention to the rich theology of the Holy Spirit is a good place to start the ecumenical journey.—**Helmut Harder**

The writer is former general secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and taught theology at Canadian Mennonite Bible College.

Canadian churches have a lot in common

Coming to delegates this summer is a recommendation that Mennonite Church Canada become a full member of both the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and Canadian Council of Churches, with "the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective as the framework for our participation." Following is a report from recent meetings of both groups.

Ecumenism is an exciting part of church life today, according to Dan Nighswander, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, who attended two inter-church meetings in Ontario last fall. The first was "President's Day" organized by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), and the second was the board meeting of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC).

"What impressed me most about these meetings," said Nighswander, "is how much we have in common—
theologically, ethically,
experientially...and how much our

church life intersects with that of other churches. Our structures, our experiences, our economics, our concerns, our leadership issues, and educational interests—all intersect."

He was also struck by the significant impact that Mennonite groups have, and can have, on the wider church community. "Our presence seems much appreciated."

For example, the theme of the EFC meeting was reconciliation. "That's something with which Mennonites feel very comfortable (as do other Christians), though how one

develops this, or how we carry it out, may be different."

Also familiar and inspiring were the "extensive" times of worship and Bible study which highlighted the CCC meetings, along with their emphasis on peace and justice, and "respectful" discussions on controversial issues such as same-sex marriage.

In both settings, hallway conversations with people from a variety of backgrounds reinforced the feeling of welcome and commonality.

Evangelical Fellowship

The one-day EFC meeting, held in Burlington in late October, was attended by about 100 representatives of denominations, ministry groups and schools, as well as individuals, ranging from Anglican and United Church to Jews for Jesus and World Vision.

"It was 'a new style' of meeting," said Nighswander. In the past, EFC was governed by a General Council of



about 125 representatives from each participating group. Now EFC is governed by a smaller board with two-thirds of the board members nominated by the General Council. The constituency gathering has been replaced by an annual meeting of denominational/ministry presidents.

The meeting featured a staff report (EFC has 7 executive and 12 support staff) and three speakers. Miroslav Volf, author and theologian from Yale University (of Croatian background), gave the opening address.

“He said a lot of really great things,” noted Nighswander. For example, “we can choose to define ourselves by what distinguishes us from others or by what we have in common.” Boundaries are important, but they must be permeable. “The heart of Christian faith is not only to live with people but to embrace them.... If I’m crushed by the embrace, it is no longer an embrace but an act of aggression.”

The second speaker, Michael Cassidy (writer and director of Africa Enterprise), shared stories of church involvement during the changeover in South Africa.

John McKay, Liberal Member of Parliament for Scarborough East, spoke at the evening banquet. He noted that the religious faith communities continue to be important factors in democracy.

“But,” he continued, “evangelical Christians should be more involved in shaping public policy. You’re always there for issues such as homosexuality, abortion, but we need you to be there for ongoing work which occupies most of our time: health care, environment, infrastructure issues, etc.”

Canadian Council of Churches

The CCC meeting was a three-day event in late November, attended by 35 church representatives from Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox traditions. Present at both EFC and CCC meetings were Baptists, Salvation Army, Christian Reformed and Mennonites.

The CCC operates as a “forum,” similar to Mennonite World Conference, said Nighswander. “The focus...is on providing a space for the Christian community to come together for

discussion of issues, program reporting and times of shared worship.” Bible studies were led by Karen Hamilton, General Secretary of the CCC, and by a representative from the Canadian Bible Society. Like Mennonite World Conference, the CCC does not speak on behalf of member churches, but on points of action, churches sign individually.

The CCC, with the equivalent of three full-time staff, has two program commissions. The Faith and Witness Commission recently sponsored a forum on ecumenical dialogue, at which Helmut Harder presented a paper. The commission is preparing a pamphlet on theology and anthropology.

Three groups work on interfaith issues—one plans the Week of Prayer and Christian Unity. An upcoming initiative is to develop strategies for responding to spiritual needs after disasters.

The Justice and Peace Commission focuses on five areas: globalization, the war on terrorism, racism, health, biotechnology. A sub-committee sent delegates to China recently to talk about religious freedom. Next February, a delegation will be coming from China to Canada. Project Ploughshares, directed by Ernie Regehr, is also a program of CCC.

The meeting included a two-hour discussion on same-sex marriage, with reports on “official positions” of three member churches.

“Discussion was lively, respectful, with a large amount of common ground,” commented Nighswander. All agreed that the government has a legitimate interest in regulating marriage relationships, but that the church should not be bound by government regulations. Except for the United Church and the Quakers, member churches are not willing to recognize same-sex unions as “marriages.”

In the coming year, the CCC wants to invite the EFC and other faith groups to discuss the relationship between the legal and religious aspects of marriage. The churches want to present their views to government, especially because Ontario and Quebec courts are forcing government to clarify legal definitions of marriage.

It was “interesting to note the differences in how these three churches approached the marriage topic in their reports,” said Nighswander. The United Church spoke from a peace and justice and ethics stance, the Christian Reformed from a doctrinal basis, the Orthodox church via iconography (what the image of God says about marriage).

“The discussion was fairly free because we didn’t have to take action, have consensus, or share communion with each other afterwards!” noted Nighswander.

Common ground

When asked where EFC and CCC agendas intersect, Nighswander highlighted their joint application against patenting the “Harvard mouse” in Canada. They made “a



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David Toews was a 'Mennonite Moses'

Helmut Harder, *David Toews Was Here: 1870-1947*. CMBC, 2002.

It is true. David Toews was "here." He risked signing the contract that allowed my newly-married parents to come to Canada in 1924. With the help of the General Conference Home Mission Board, of which Toews was a member for 27 years, he "called" my grandfather, Franz F. Enns, who arrived in 1926, to itinerant ministry among the immigrants from Russia.

The book provides a more detailed account than I have seen anywhere of the disastrous December 13, 1926 fire in which my grandfather jumped from the upstairs window of the Toews house. There are many fascinating episodes in this book and readers will find their own connections to the story.

The book is basically chronological, with the first seven chapters following Toews to the places he lived: to Lysanderhöhe in Samara, Russia, and

to Turkestan; to Kansas, Gretna and Winnipeg, and then to Tiefengrund, Eigenheim and Rosthern.

Rosthern became Toews' home base for 41 years, well over half of his years of public ministry. This leadership in hitherto unknown contexts becomes the focus of the remaining chapters.



David Toews

While Toews is seen as an "educator, religious leader, organizer, colonizer," the most compelling image the author presents is of Toews as a "Mennonite Moses." This representation follows Toews not only as chair of the Board of Immigration and Colonization, but also as chair of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, mem-

ber on the GC Home Mission Board, at Mennonite World Conference, working at settlement and relief, and relating to government.

As an educator and church leader himself, the author is well qualified to interpret the meaning of the leadership given by David Toews. There is ample content for reflection and discussion. Accomplishments and failures, disappointments and rewards are sensitively laid bare.

The author repeatedly gives credit to those without whom Toews could never have accomplished all he did, especially his wife Margarete and family.

The value of this warm and engaging story outweighs any suggestions for improvement there may be (such as an index). Through this book, David Toews, a deeply humble and committed man, faithful servant of his people, continues to be "here."—**Anna Ens**

The reviewer, from Winnipeg, is the author of a history of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba.

Canadian churches *From page 9*

strong moral case together against patenting life forms and were successful," he said.

"However, the CCC and EFC tend to go to government about different things," he added. For example, the CCC is not too concerned about Bill C-250 on hate propaganda since it feels there is enough protection for the church, whereas the EFC has more concern about religious liberty in Canada. Also, the CCC recently sponsored a letter to government on Iraq which MC Canada signed, whereas the Iraq situation was not on the EFC agenda even though the theme was reconciliation.

Hallway conversations revealed many other commonalities and desire for further dialogue. People from the Baptist church "welcomed my presence as a Mennonite and appreciated someone with similar assumptions," said Nighswander. The Salvation

Army rep "thoroughly welcomed us" to the CCC.

"We need to talk about our history," said a Christian Reformed person, "particularly since Mennonites are still in referred to as 'Anabaptist heretics' in their confession of faith." The Christian Reformed church is "locked into a prison" of history, similar to Mennonites, observed Nighswander. We can help each other "unlock that prison."

Nighswander also noted historical connections with a Ukrainian Orthodox leader and common interests in Ethiopia. He and a Catholic bishop from Ontario spoke about the Mennonite cemetery near Reesor.

"There were so many connections everywhere, threads intertwining.... All of us are working on the same things."

Differences

The CCC meeting seemed "hands on," oriented to conversation and

discussion with agenda shaped by participants, said Nighswander, while the EFC had a set program with guest speakers and less opportunity for discussion. This was largely due to the nature of the organizations.

"The churches affiliated with EFC do not have board responsibility/accountability," he said, "so the program is set...by staff, whereas the CCC is a board meeting. Also, the CCC meets twice a year and the EFC once. The EFC has just begun separate meeting of church heads; CCC has had them for a number of years.

Another difference: "There were more women at the CCC meeting, except for the Orthodox reps who were male!"

Nighswander felt at home in both meetings. "In each I had a good deal in common.... I felt particularly in the CCC an opportunity for people to express interest in perspectives I bring as a Mennonite."—**Leona Dueck Penner**

Arts notes

Visual arts collective

"The Mennonite Artists" is a collective of four young artists in Ontario who hope to raise the profile of contemporary Mennonite visual arts. The group includes Karim Awad, Paul Janzen, David Lobe and Matthew Tiessen. Their impetus is the sense that visual artists have few outlets within "aurally-centred" Mennonite communities. Based in Waterloo Region, they are also aware that Mennonites are regarded as "horse-and-buggy riders" rather than painters and photographers. The group wants to create an outlet for visual expression as well as for discussions about what it means to be Mennonite in today's cultural landscape. The four are currently



'The Mennonite Artists' collective, from left: Paul Janzen, Matthew Tiessen, David Lobe and Karim Awad.

exhibiting their work at the Kuntz House Art Gallery in Waterloo and are scheduled for an exhibition in March at the Walper Terrace Hotel in Kitchener. A website is in the works at www.themennoniteartists.com. For more information, e-mail: matthewtiessen@yahoo.ca.

Publishing notes

Mary Christner Borntrager, author of the popular Ellie's People series of Amish fiction published by Herald Press, died on December 9 in Ohio. Since 1988 she had written 10 titles in the Ellie series; 593,000 copies of her books are now in print. Raised in the Amish tradition, Borntrager left her community to attend teacher training at Eastern Mennonite College. She taught for seven years and raised four children before starting to write. She was a member of Hartville Mennonite Church. In recent years a granddaughter transcribed her handwriting into a word processor.—Herald Press release

Walfried Goossen took a wry look at his "new voice" in a December 3 article in the *Hamilton Spectator*. In July, Goossen had surgery to remove his cancerous larynx and he now speaks with an electronic voice box. "I have always been known to talk too much. Imagine the astonishment of my wife and friends when they found I still do.

However...my chances of singing with Pavarotti are down my tube. I now shower in golden silence." Goossen mentioned the healing service that a group from Hamilton Mennonite Church held for him in the hospital. "I want to stand by that," he concluded. Goossen is a freelance writer and member of the Hamilton church.



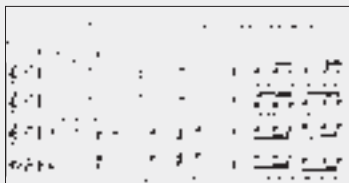
This sketch by Joanna Pinkerton is from a one-woman drama about Mary and Martha that was created in response to *Builder* magazine's call for new worship materials. The November and December issues of *Builder* feature "Portraits of faith" submitted by artists, writers and composers. "Sketches," created by The Genesis Resource Group at Hope Mennonite Church in Wichita, Kansas, portrays Martha's discovery of six sketches by Mary tracing her encounter with Jesus. The drama is also available on video and CD. Contact *Builder* at (724) 887-5929 or e-mail: builder@zoominternet.net.

Great is the company...

Sometimes I get tired of Handel's *Messiah*, but it's a Christmas tradition in my family, and every performance offers something new. This year, the unexpected came from a comment about the text.

My son, who performed the work with the Kitchener-Waterloo Philharmonic Choir in December, came home from rehearsal one day with the information that the familiar chorus: "The Lord gave the word: Great was the company of the preachers," should really read, "Great was the company of the women." I checked it out.

The text is Psalm 68:11. Some



versions of the Bible note the variant reading in a footnote while others indeed have women proclaiming the good news of the Lord's coming. The American Standard Version says: "The Lord gives the command; the women who proclaim the good tidings are a great host." The New Living Translation states: "The Lord announced victory, and throngs of women shout the happy news." (The New English Bible has the awkward wording: "The sovereign master speaks, many, many women spread the good news.")

Even if the gender of the messengers is just a grammatical judgment call (feminine noun in the Hebrew), having women herald God's coming places this text within

Signs & symbols

the rich biblical tradition of women who celebrate God's mighty acts: Miriam in Exodus 15, Hannah in I Samuel 2, and Mary in Luke 1, as well as the women who first announce Christ's resurrection.

The familiar themes of these women's songs—how God will vanquish the enemy and turn the established order upside down—also appear in Psalm 68: "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered.... Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. God gives the desolate a home to dwell in; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity..."

God puts down the powerful and raises up the lowly; God sends away the privileged and fills the hungry with good things—that's what Mary said.—

Margaret Loewen Reimer

Responding to bill on hate propaganda

Some members of Mennonite Church Canada have expressed concern about Bill C-250, which protects groups from hate propaganda. The following is a guide for those who wish to write to the Justice Committee and their member of parliament.

Bill C-250 would amend section 318(4) of the Criminal Code that protects groups defined by colour, race, religion, and ethnic origin from hate propaganda. The amendment expands the list to include any “section of the public distinguished by sexual orientation.”

Several Christian organizations, including the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), have expressed concerns. (The Canadian Council of Churches has not offered public comment.) Some fear that the effects of the bill may be broader than stated. The Bill might enable a court to rule that religious teachings against particular sexual activities is “hate propaganda.”

Mennonite Church Canada urges those thinking of writing letters to government officials to keep the following in mind:

1. *Christians should be concerned about all expressions of hatred on any grounds.* It is a shame against the Church of Jesus Christ that some people, claiming to speak as Christians, have said hateful things about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, and even committed violent acts against them. Our communications on this bill should be make clear our opposition to such behaviour.

2. *Some people wonder whether the bill is necessary since we already have laws prohibiting slander, libel and assault.* Those who have been verbally and physically attacked because of their sexual orientation or practices do not believe they receive adequate protection under current laws. One week before this Bill was introduced, on November 22, 2001, Aaron Webster, a gay man, was clubbed to death in

Vancouver. This bill might not have prevented that but protection is a concern.

3. *It is impossible to predict what unintended effects this Bill may have.* Will it be used against Christians who voice a conviction that sexual relations outside marriage are immoral? Will it

be used to prosecute groups that have such statements in their confessions of faith? Could the Bible be construed as “hate literature?” (Could the scriptures of other religions?)

The EFC elaborates: “Literature becomes hate propaganda if it is used by someone to promote hatred

against an identifiable group. Leviticus 20:13 states, ‘If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.’ If this text is used by someone to promote hatred, will the Bible itself be considered hate literature? And if this passage is read in a church, would it be considered ‘public incitement of hatred?’”

The EFC does not say that this is likely to happen. Dani Shaw, an evangelical lawyer writing in *ChristianWeek* (September 17, 2002) said this is “a little farfetched.” Ultimately, the effects depend on court rulings.

4. *While we want our society to allow religious groups to follow their faith and to witness in public, there are limits to how our laws can reflect particular moral teachings.* Further, we believe God has called Christians to ministries of reconciliation and compassion. We must not lose sight of the real life struggles of individuals. Let us use Scripture and our testimony of faith to incite understanding

and compassion. Let us orient our perspective so that our minds are anchored in the Kingdom of God.

5. *We can commit ourselves to a ministry of prayer:*

- for those in leadership in our courts and parliament that they will rule with integrity;
- for those who represent the Christian perspective in the public square, that they will have divine wisdom and will represent Christ well;
- for those who have distorted God’s word to justify hatred;
- for those who have been victims of hatred because of their sexual orientation, that God will bring into their lives the message of healing and hope in Christ;
- for those who have opportunity to teach reconciliation, that they will grasp the extent of God’s love for all creation.

6. *In addition to a ministry of prayer, individuals can write to the MPs who serve on the Justice Committee as well as to their own member of parliament.* We suggest that letters include the following points:

- a. We believe promoting hatred against anyone is wrong and we are not asking that the law allow people to do that;
- b. We also believe that, in matters of sexual behaviour, religious and other groups should have the right to address what they see as morally right and wrong;
- c. We hope the bill will not become law unless there are firm assurances that b (point above) is protected;
- d. Our understanding is that currently there is doubt as to such protection.

MC Canada release, with Bill Janzen, Mennonite Central Committee Ottawa office. Resources from Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches. Find more at www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/social/initiatives.asp; and www.baptist-atlantic.ca/c415.html.

Will the Bible itself be considered hate literature?

Letters

**Figurative language
a red herring**

It is interesting that quite a few contributors feel the need to lecture those of us who interpret the Bible literally. They seem to think we are too ignorant to understand figurative language.

A friend of mine was once told that if you take the Bible literally, you must believe that God is a mother hen (Luke 13:34).

The real issue is whether we believe that events and places described as historical are actually historical. It is whether we believe that doctrinal teaching is valid for today.

For example, I believe that Jesus was born of a virgin. I believe that Jesus actually was resurrected in a physical body after he was crucified. I also believe that there actually was an exodus as described in the Old Testament. I believe literally what Jesus said when he said that no one comes to the father except through me (John 14:6).

These are examples of the real issue

of taking a literal approach to the Bible. The issue of figurative language is, to use a figure of speech, a red herring.

When I was young I was told that Mennonites took the Bible literally, while other denominations did not. I was told that we took the beatitudes literally, while others said they would apply to a future time when the kingdom had come.

So, for all who do not take the Bible literally, why do you place so much emphasis on one of Jesus' sayings, "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9), and ignore so many others?—**James Wagler, Milverton, Ont.**

**Bashing government
not helpful either**

Walter Bergen has written a challenging response (Dec. 2) to Aiden Schlichting Enns' letter on capitalism. Bergen calls for "insightful reflection" and "informed debate" rather than "bashing" ideas such as capitalism.

I was surprised, therefore, to find in his letter statements like, "Governments never create wealth. They consume it" and "This government

taxes working people unmercifully: modern-day serfdom." Such clipped statements make effective drama. They hardly contribute to "informed debate."

Isn't government largely responsible for the country's infrastructure which is essential to creating wealth? Before universal medicare, many people were bankrupted by illness. Isn't the prevention of bankruptcy and its accompanying emotional trauma far more than "consumption?"

I've been led to believe that the opposite of government is anarchy. Some of my "working people" friends from Somalia, now living in Winnipeg, much prefer the "modern-day serfdom" here to what they left behind in Somalia.

Yes, I have my gripes about decisions made by my local, provincial and federal governments, but I fear that in countering what he calls "bashing" of church and capitalism, Bergen is playing the popular government-bashing game. More dialogue is required on the relative merits and dangers of capitalism and government.—**Jake Letkemann, Winnipeg, Man.**

Santa's little helpers

Christmas has come and gone, but the season's gifts have left us a legacy that words just can't describe. Since I'm paid by the word, however, I will make the attempt and tell you about my first—and most funnest—Christmas gift. (I've yet to receive any bonus dollars for good grammar.)

The making of my first Christmas gift started, as I discovered later from its creators, when I took a day off from school for some Mennonite R and R. (In other words, I did some work for Mennonite Church Manitoba.)

When I returned to my classroom, I noticed someone sitting at my desk.

"Who's been sitting in MY chair?" I asked, in my best papa bear voice.

There was no response.

With the razor sharp logistical awareness so characteristic of English teachers, I realized why the figure was silent. It wasn't real!

Proud of my deductive skills, I took a closer look. The figure was wearing a

tweed cap that looked very much like one I'd lost several months earlier. The vest also looked familiar. The coffee cup the Mennonite mannequin held in its gloved hand was emblazoned with a "Timothy's"



logo, and the glasses perched on its cottony nose reminded me of my most recent pair.

I was beginning to put two and, um—what's the other number? Oh, right! Two!—together.

My suspicions were further affirmed (swearing the oath being foreign to my Mennonite sensibilities) when I noticed that the Anabaptist effigy held a pen in

the other hand, an instrument of peace poised over one of my just-purchased, el-cheapo journals. (I'm convinced that Mennonite heaven will feature street after street of "Buck or Two" stores.)

The final clues came in the *Martyr's Mirror*, which was opened to a suitably grisly passage, and *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, opened to "What is this place?" I couldn't have phrased the question better if I'd tried. Clearly, some staff members had been working hard to "share their faith." What choice did I have save to make a joyful noise?

Right there, at 8:00 a.m. on a weary Friday, I began to laugh—deeply and refreshingly—until the tears came.

It took another two weeks for the guilty parties to 'fess up, but they did so in the form of an exquisitely well-written short story, with such grace and *joie de vivre* that I shed a few more tears—this time because of the "we-know-you-but-love-you-anyway" acceptance richly recognizable between the lines.

Discernment process needs time limit

I suspect that large numbers of readers are sympathetic to one or the other of the views expressed by Hans Schemann and Gord Willms in the letters of the December 23 issue.

I agree with Schemann that we need closure on the homosexuality debate. No one issue should occupy so much time and energy. It is not, however, the role of the leadership to end this debate.

It is the responsibility of each congregation to discern what the Holy Spirit is saying. It is, I think, the role of provincial and national organizations to facilitate discussion between congregations, but each congregation needs to come to its own understanding before those discussions can take place. Some have done so.

Some congregations believe God accepts people with homosexual orientation and people with heterosexual orientation into congregations equally. Some congregations believe it is not possible to be a faithful Christian and a non-celibate homosexual. I am willing to accept that both views result from study and prayer. I am willing to accept both views are defensible from Scripture and from the lives of Christian disciples.

When all congregations finish their discernment on this issue, then our provincial and national bodies can provide a place to discuss differences. If the differences cannot be resolved, we need to decide if we can continue to be part of one organization.

Schemann wants to stop the debate now by declaring one side right and the other wrong. Willms wants us to be tolerant of each other's views until a resolution comes about, whenever that might happen. I support Willms' call for tolerance as well as Schemann's call for closure. We need to know there will be an end to this debate. Would it be reasonable for our conferences to ask congregations to do their part by the end of 2004?

Once congregations finish their discernment process, they would transmit their understandings and desires to regional clusters and then to provincial conferences for further discernment. If we are diligent in our

work and tolerant of our differences we might be able to come to some consensus within four or five years.—

Robert Boardman, Scarborough, Ont.

Para-church groups are wake-up call for church

We have just passed through the December phase of increasing financial appeals from para-church organizations. Most come with legitimate concerns. I have been pondering the waste of material resources, paper, stamps and time that goes into these appeals.

Should not the churches be addressing these needs—ministering to students and advocating for Christian martyrs, the homeless, the pre-born, prisoners, and the environment? The para-church is clearly called into existence largely because of an unfaithful church.

Congregational leaders say we have to look after our own needs first, maintaining local budget needs and program. Paul reminds us to look after the needs of others first (I Corinthians 10:24). This admonition is not only personal; it is surely also a word to selfish congregations.

When the faithful see this kind of deviance from what the good news is really about, they are more apt to support a para-church group where there appears to be greater accountability. Para-church employees are paid significantly less than clergy and rely heavily on volunteers.

The security of pastoral contracts, with their fringe benefits, can lead to cynicism among parishioners ("he/she is earning more than I") and withholding of resources from the church. Individuals develop loyalties to para-church organizations and do not look to their congregational leaders for guidance on stewardship matters.

A further problem is the reticence of the local prophet/pastor to preach what scriptures have to say about the "touchy" subject of finances. Double incomes, even for pastoral couples, are increasingly common. The prophetic voice is silenced or at best muffled in a church culture which is becoming increasingly narcissistic.

One leader recently reminded us

that the scriptures contain 4,000 references to the character of God and 2,000 references to stewardship. I have yet to be a member of a church where preaching on stewardship is even a close second. Stewardship is a very important theme in God's economy and significantly overlooked in worship. See 2 Corinthians 9:13: "You will be glorifying God through your generous gifts."

Parishioners, too, must take responsibility, becoming biblically literate and encouraging the preaching of the whole Word. Ultimately each individual will have to account for himself before God (Hebrews 4:13).

Maybe there is something prophetic about para-church ministries—a wake-up call for congregations to see the harvest.—**George H Epp, Chilliwack, B.C.**

Arts centres are inappropriate witness

Congratulations to Bill Block for his letter on performing arts centres (Nov. 4) at Mennonite educational institutions. I also feel it is an important topic.

A recent *Canadian Mennonite* article talked about Mennonite Educational Institute's plans for a 1,500-seat arts centre. I shudder to think of the millions of dollars it would cost. Rockway Mennonite Collegiate is also making plans for a performing arts centre.

It appears that increasingly Mennonites mimic broader society in the sense that if we can afford something, we do it. Does spending millions of dollars so privileged Mennonite kids have the finest educational facilities reflect the radical discipleship and humility that Christ's life taught us?

While our Mennonite brothers and sisters (and others) in Colombia receive death threats for their courageous stance on peace and justice, Mennonites in North America continue to consume resources at an alarming rate simply because we can. U.S. military aid, over one billion dollars annually, is being pumped to the Colombian government to maintain access, in my opinion, to that country's petroleum resources.

I suggest an alternative to spending millions on arts centres. Let's use that money for energy and resource conservation. If every Mennonite institution had solar panels and wind turbines producing energy, how many barrels of imported oil could we replace? It would reduce operating costs of these facilities and at the same time point us in a direction that Christians should be leading society.

An arts centre, while pleasing to the eye and ear, is not an example of appropriate Christmas witness to our children or to society, in my opinion. It elevates form at the cost of substance.—**Larry Bender, Tavistock, Ont.**

Do we understand the gospel?

I have resisted weighing into the homosexuality debate that seems to be going nowhere. However, some things are being taken for granted that are not necessarily so. I have had numerous homosexual clients and have observed some things.

For the people I know, homosexuality was not a choice, any more than I would choose to be heterosexual. They

Menno books

Yvonne Snider-Nighswander of Winnipeg enjoyed the list of "Menno movies" in the May 20, 2002 issue but noticed the "Russo-menno" emphasis. So she assembled a list of "Swiss-menno" book titles:

Charlotte's Weber
The Gingrich Who Stole Christmas
Grapes of Roth
My Fair Lichti
Pied Piper of Hallman
Temptation of Big Baer
War and Peachy
Waiting for Gascho
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolner

To reflect the current reality of the Mennonite church, she also compiled a more ethnically-balanced list from Mennonites of her acquaintance:
Brave Nguyen World
A Farewell to Armstrong
For Ho the Bell Tolls
The Importance of Being Ernst
Lord of the Ringers
Pritchard III
Romero and Juliet

would all love to be "normal" if only they could. Consider the price they pay. If peers find them out, they are ostracized. If their communities find out, they risk, yes, death. If they tell their families, they often are rejected. If their church finds out, the doors are slammed.

No one in their right mind would choose that road. Some have tried therapy, which is useless. You cannot change your orientation.

Did you know that one-third of teenage suicides are due to the awareness of the huge rejection they will face if they "come out?" Come on, folks, we can do better than hurl texts and the label of "sinner" at a part of God's creation.

Tony Compolo, a professor of sociology at a Pennsylvania university, one day asked his class how various religions would treat a prostitute. After a while he asked how Jesus would treat such a person. A Jewish man responded that Jesus never saw a prostitute. Tony said, of course he did.

The man responded that when he looked into the eyes of Mary Magdalen, Jesus saw a daughter, not a prostitute. Tony felt that this Jewish man understood the gospel far better than he did.

I detect a notable misunderstanding of the gospel among many Christians. We would do well to enjoy the gifts they bring, rather than shunning them.—**Milt Schwartztruber, Owen Sound, Ont.**

Lutherans subscribe to 'consubstantiation'

I would like to point out what seems a slight discrepancy in Vic Doerksen's letter (Dec. 23) when he lumps Lutherans and Catholics together with the concept of "transubstantiation."

This doctrine is subscribed to by the Roman Catholic Church, "where the bread and wine consecrated in the Eucharist becomes the actual body and blood of Christ, although the appearance of bread and wine remains." The Lutherans, according to my professor, C. H. Wedel, at Bethel College (1951), subscribe to the concept of "consubstantiation, or the substantial union of the body and blood of Christ with the eucharistic

elements after consecration."

A small difference for some, a big one for others. We as Mennonites take the Eucharist "in remembrance" (Luke 22:20, I Corinthians 11:23-26), with the mandate to proclaim the Lord's death, until he returns.—**Jake Friesen, Abbotsford, B.C.**

Where is the fear of God today?

Feelings have become more important than the fear of God. It matters whether something makes us happy or if it feels good. Until the fear of God returns to the church, we will have ongoing debates about whether it's right to do this or wrong to do that.

In every situation we first need to ask, "What does God say about this?" Every question has an answer that can be found in the Holy Word. And, of course, through prayer, God also reveals his answers to our questions.

In the controversy on homosexuality, feelings have gotten in the way again, because the last time I checked, God's word was still the same on that subject (Leviticus 18:22, Genesis 19, Romans 1:18-32). What makes us think that God is excusing us from this sin when he destroyed Sodom and Gemorrah because of their ongoing sin? The Bible says that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

God is merciful, loving and patient, but he's also a holy God who is going to judge his church. I Peter 1:15-16 says, "Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do...." That doesn't mean that we will never sin again, but as born-again Christians we need to be set apart from the world.

My prayer for the church of Jesus Christ is that we will be set free from everything that entangles us, and live the Spirit-filled life to the fullest.—

Alvina Martens, Morden, Man.

Letters in this section express the opinion of the writer, not necessarily those of Canadian Mennonite or the church. We publish as many as space permits, unless they attack individuals or become unnecessarily repetitious. Letters are edited for length and style. InConversation is meant to provide opportunity for discussion and discernment.

Winnipeg, Man.

MC Manitoba plans leaner, more effective ministry

Jake F. Pauls, who is preparing for his first delegate session as executive director of Mennonite Church Manitoba in February, says it's not an easy time to be at the helm. While exciting initiatives are happening, some programs with a devoted following are being discontinued.

It is not just the financial deficit that necessitates changes to Faith and Life programming and chaplaincy, said Pauls, but a reshaped vision and changing needs. (See story on proposed cuts in Jan. 13 issue, page 39.)

"The chaplaincy program is a luxury," said Pauls. "It is not some-

thing we should do for the churches."

"I think some haven't understood the vision: not to do ministry for the churches but ministry through the churches," said Pauls. MC Manitoba seeks to be a resource to enable churches to do their work better. The chaplaincy program had a full-time staff person and many volunteers who provided a ministry in city hospitals on behalf of rural churches.

"Faith and Life has served us well but it can't go on financially and structurally," said Pauls. Low German radio programming is being dropped. The churches have not met their

financial commitments.

"Even though our expenses are way below budget I don't know if we will meet them," said Pauls. He is surprised by the devotion of some to the programs being dropped. "When over 90 percent voted in favour of adopting proposed changes they didn't see the implications," said Pauls.

Instead of "doing for" the churches, ministry directors are carefully discerning how they can best enable churches. The representatives meeting that has become an annual October event and the reference groups are very important to the ministry directors, said Pauls.

MC Manitoba is planning to bring the Equipping Conference into the churches. "With the five regions we want to do more things at a regional level," said Pauls, "something like an Elim Bible Institute without walls, a portable Equipping Conference."

The Leadership Ministry is looking for ways to provide more education for lay and professional ministry. Media ministries are hoping to provide more provocative and helpful resources beyond radio church services.

Congregations are looking for help in church planting.

"Seven congregations are in conversation with Norm Voth (director of Evangelism and Service Ministries) about not just building larger congregations, but new congregations," said Pauls. "In the past we haven't known how to build new congregations. Usually splits result from disgruntlement rather than willful reaching out."

Whether because of being too large or because of seeing a need to reach out, churches are responding with interest.

Pauls sees the new programming building a stronger network of congregations and stronger churches.

"We are working towards a leaner ministry in terms of cost but more effective in terms of what it does. The camping ministry is different, but other things could be done better through the churches."—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**



Photo by Audrey Hess

Rosario Sara, left, shares her quesadilla recipe with Vilma Perez during a women's tour in El Salvador last September. Both these women operate bakeries. Mennonite Central Committee sponsored the two-day opportunity for 17 rural women in Morazán state to visit women's groups in other parts of the country. Blanca Nieves Vijil, one of the participants, got up at 1:00 a.m. to make two days worth of tortillas for her family and then walked two hours to meet the bus. The women visited the capital city and rural communities, meeting with crafts groups, a financial program for women and the women's rights organization, Las Dignas. On each visit, the Morazán women presented the booklet *Tomamos La Palabra (We Speak Out)*, a collection of their own stories created with MCC support, as well as products of their own skills.—From MCC release

Winnipeg, Man.

New name for joint publishing ministry

A new name has been approved for the publishing ministry of Mennonite Church Canada and USA. Mennonite Publishing House will become Mennonite Publishing Network on February 1.

In early December, the interim MPH board approved the new name and the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) ratified the decision. In doing so, they heeded the transformation plan submitted by a joint denominational task force in October that incorporated feedback from constituents, including business, ministry and education.

Constituents want the publishing network to provide materials that equip the church to share the gospel from an Anabaptist perspective in collaborative projects, said Jim Harder, secretary-treasurer of the interim MPH board and JEC member from Bluffton, Ohio.

"In making this shift from the word 'house' to 'network,' we hope to move from less of an agency mentality to more of a collaborative mode," said Harder. "This shift sees constituents not only as users and customers, but also as co-creators and advocates when appropriate."

It is hoped that the name shift will be completed by the time a new board is in place in the summer. Current names in use by MPH—Herald Press, Faith and Life Resources and Provident Bookstores—will be maintained.

The name shift brings a shift in

philosophy and strategy that can strengthen relationships across the church.

"I am very supportive of this new direction, which I believe will really put the publishing ministry in touch with people in the pews and in area conferences," said Ervin Stutzman, interim board vice chair and moderator of MC USA.

Henry Krause, MC Canada moderator and JEC member of Langley, B.C., said, "Whether it be in publishing, missions or education, we need to work together between Canada and the United States. We need to learn to collaborate in using our gifts, because we can't afford to do things on our own."

Networking can also build bridges to other denominations and Anabaptist publishers, Harder said, such as the Brethren in Christ and Church of the Brethren. "We also hope to be in conversation with some smaller independent printing and publishing operations that have connections to the church."

These changes also signify a shift to more positive days for the troubled publishing ministry, JEC members believe. MPH is seeking to retire a \$5.1 million debt through fundraising and cost reductions, including cutting 57 positions. MPH closed its printing press division in Scottdale, Pennsylvania, at the end of November.

"There is good reason to believe that MPH has turned the corner finan-

cially," said Phil Bontrager, interim CEO. "With two months remaining in its current fiscal year, MPH is about \$698,000 in net revenue ahead of where it was last year and will likely be able to end the year with an operating surplus."

The interim board and the Debt Reduction Committee said they are gratified by the congregational response to a "Barn Raising" appeal but a significant challenge remains. In the last year, MPH has received \$520,000 in donations. The fund-raising appeal will continue into the spring.

"It has felt like some of the connection between publishing and the church has been lost over the years, and we hope some of that can be re-established," said Ron Sawatsky, interim MPH board chair. "It's my dream, too, that becoming more connected in this area will help with trust-building and connectedness in other areas of the church."—Joint MC Canada and MC USA release by

Laurie L. Oswald



Kowki, a widow who recently returned to Afghanistan after fleeing the war six years ago, gets advice on how to treat her tuberculosis from nurse Abdul Hy at a treatment centre in Kabul. The centre is run by Medair, an international aid agency supported by Mennonite Central Committee. TB is on the rise as refugees return to Afghanistan from overcrowded camps where the disease could spread. Medair provides free antibiotics and food provided by MCC through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.—From MCC release

Director for publishing network sought

A search committee is seeking candidates for the first executive director of Mennonite Publishing Network.

"The key quality for this new person will be their capacity to create a connectedness and to network appropriately and sufficiently with the rest of the church to deliver what the church needs," said Ron Sawatsky, committee chair and interim chair of Mennonite Publishing House.

"We need to make sure that the new Mennonite Publishing Network stays fiscally sound. But we also need

someone who can convey a warm personal interest in people," said Sawatsky. "One of the things most needed today in Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA is trust-building."

Members of the search committee are: Jim Harder of Bluffton, Ohio; Susan Gingerich of Goshen, Indiana; Joy Kroeger of Hanley, Saskatchewan; Byron Rempel-Burkholder of Winnipeg, representing MPH staff; and ex officio members Dan Nighswander of MC Canada and Jim Schrag of MC USA's Executive Board.

Winnipeg, Man.

Peace conversation offers suggestions for churches

With the threatening clouds of war gathering, a group of Mennonites met on November 19 at First Mennonite Church here for a peace conversation.

"It's highly important for the church to look at peace," said Larry Kehler, one of those who attended. "We're at a crossroads in our world right now," said Kehler, who was in Iraq with other Christian Peacemaker Team supporters from December 26 to January 10.

"All Mennonite conferences have a peace position in their affirmation of faith," said Victor Kliewer, interim pastor at First Mennonite. "Some of us are struggling with what that means."

Kliewer sent invitations to all Mennonite churches in Winnipeg to join the conversation. Nearly 30 people attended. Gathering around a burning peace lamp, they shared what was happening in their congregations and their hopes and frustrations about peacemaking.

Peace and justice groups are active in many churches, raising awareness, writing letters, "adopting a peacemaker." Yet these committees are often not part of the church's organizational

structure. Participants asked: How are these groups sustained? How do we prevent them from being perceived as merely interest groups?

"Peace is not at the edges of our faith," said Dorie Zerbe Cornelson, pastor at Hope Mennonite Church. "It needs to be at the centre of our worship and teaching. It belongs in the life of the church."

Several noted that the Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba Peace and Social Concerns Committee disbanded because it lacked support.

"Over the years it has been like a burr under the saddle," said Peter Peters, former director of MCC Manitoba. "It identified those issues that needed further exploration by MCC.... This might be an opportune time for the churches to come to MCC saying this is what we need."

Participants noted the importance of working collectively. They suggested that as congregations gain clarity, they will provide an agenda for MCC.

The Mennonite Church is a historic peace church but how do we manifest that today? asked participants. "As a peace church we really don't talk much about peace," noted one.

Brian Petkau, member of the Carman Mennonite Church, reported on an initiative in his region. A group calling itself "The Isaiah Project" sent letters to the 13 Mennonite Church Canada congregations in the Portage-Lisgar federal riding, inviting them to discuss how to respond to the escalating threat of war against Iraq. The group met twice with Brian Pallister, their member of parliament, to share their concerns about Canada's role in the "war against terrorism."

At their second meeting in October, Pallister asked the group to assist him in his role as the Canadian Alliance senior critic for Indian Affairs and Northern Development. They convened a meeting at which Pallister could discuss aboriginal concerns with representatives from MCC and MC Canada. "The Isaiah Project" is unique in the way congregations have organized themselves in a federal riding to address concerns of peace and justice.

Esther Epp-Tiessen, MCC Canada Peace Ministries Coordinator, described a new resource: "Second Mile: A peace journey for congregations." This curriculum is available from Faith and Life Resources (1-800-743-2484). MCC Canada also offers valuable resources (www.mcc.org/canada/peace).

Of interest to the group was the possibility of participating electronically in a peace discussion. To join this group, hosted by MCC, send a message to Epp-Tiessen at eet@mennonitecc.ca.
—Evelyn Rempel Petkau

Waterloo, Ont.

Alliance offers Mennonite investment across Canada

The Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC) and Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU) have renewed an alliance that enables Foundation constituents across Canada to invest their RRSP deposits within Mennonite organizations.

"There are a great many MFC clients across Canada, and even in Ontario, that are simply beyond the reach of our branches and Extended Area Services who would be effectively served by the Foundation," says Karl Braun, the credit union's member relations manager. "Since the credit union shares the same faith-based values held by Mennonite Foundation, especially around Christian stewardship and mutual aid, it makes good sense for our two organizations to work together."

Several years ago, MFC merged its RRSP program with the credit union on a trial basis. Robert Veitch, general manager of MFC, states, "This renewed arrangement ensures that MFC clients will have a long-term, secure and competitive RRSP investment option within the Mennonite faith community." Credit Union management agrees that this alliance offers benefits for non-members. "The credit union would prefer that eligible investors first open a credit union membership but we realize that this is not always a realistic option," says Braun.

MSCU membership is open to Mennonites, Amish, and Brethren in Christ churches in Ontario, while Mennonite Foundation serves six Mennonite conferences, Brethren in Christ and Evangelical Missionary conferences across Canada.—From MSCU release

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Winnipeg, Man.

Learning language key to ministry in China

Jeanette and Todd Hanson, Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in China, see learning a new language as a vital part of their assignment.

Todd teaches English to high school and university students, and Jeanette is developing social welfare programs in partnership with Mennonite Central Committee's Global Family Program. They serve with China Educational Exchange (CEE).

"Learning Chinese is not preparation for witnessing; it is witnessing," said Todd. "Just wanting to learn about Chinese language and Chinese culture shows that you respect them, that you value what they value."

One Chinese pastor told them, "If you really want to do something in China, stay here for 10 years, get to know us and then maybe we can share with each other."

In the meantime they do what they can. Jeanette worked with Wang Hong, a government worker in rehabilitation for deaf and mute children. At first sceptical, Wang Hong has become a

believer in the program funded by MCC in partnership with CEE.

"At the beginning I didn't even believe this kind of thing was possible. But now I see progress in some of these children," said Hong. She has taken special interest in making learning materials relevant for country families, and works hard to convince parents that they can help their children learn to speak. She was also one of 100 people chosen from all of China to study speech therapy in Beijing.

Jeanette also helps arrange sponsorships for Chinese children to attend school, which is compulsory but also expensive.

Chen, an old man, lost all his family except two school-age granddaughters. Through CEE's student sponsorship program, the girls are now able to attend school, and have received MCC school kits.

"You have given us hope. You have given us something for the future," said Chen.

Todd uses a curriculum oriented toward peacemaking in his classroom.



Jeanette and Todd Hanson

Emphasizing clear communication, global citizenship, and treating others well opens some fruitful subjects. One was the September 11 attacks.

"It is either good news or bad news," wrote one student. "The attack will arouse the United States officials to behave themselves. Maybe the United States will be kind and equal to every country. On the other hand, the U.S. will use the attack as an excuse for arms expansion. At the same time, she will use force to conquer weak countries in the name of prey of attack...more and more people will lose their lives anyhow. Common people have no alternative but to wait and bear everything that happens."

Another wrote, "I know I felt a little happy. I still remember that the U.S. attacked our embassy in Yugoslavia on May 8, 1998.... But now, I can't think of it only from one angle. I love peace and hate war."

Language learning is building trust and communication both ways. One student commented: "As a language learner, I consider myself a peacemaker." Another grateful student told Todd: "You didn't just teach us English, you taught us to be human beings."— MC Canada release by **Daniel Rempel**



Children in China are excited to receive MCC school kits.

Akron, Pa.

Disaster hits twice in Columbus

Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers spent last summer rebuilding three homes destroyed by a windstorm in Columbus, Mississippi. On November 10, a new tornado ripped through town, narrowly missing the new homes. The storm destroyed the MDS



MDS photo

Abe Sawatsky of Winkler, Manitoba, clears debris during the demolition of Callie Griffen's home in Columbus, Mississippi.

warehouse and volunteer housing. Following are some responses.

Elsie Harper spent the night of the tornado in prayer, crouching in the house of a niece while the winds roared outside. She prayed that her new home, built by MDS volunteers, would be spared from the winds that destroyed her previous home in 2001.

Unfortunately, the destruction that greeted Harper on her morning drive home did not look like an answer to prayer. Downed trees obstructed the street and walls sat twisted on broken foundations. Entire rooftops were missing.

"I said, 'Lord Jesus, just look at this,'" recalled Harper.

When she rounded the corner and her home came into view, Harper breathed a sigh of relief. "Thank you Jesus, you left it standing." The only damage was a broken window.

Callie Griffen barely escaped her home. As the elderly woman sat in her front room, rain began coming in through the roof. She tried to get out, but the front door was jammed. The storm had already ripped the roof from

her home and the building was leaning to one side.

As Griffen moved around the room, a bolt of lightning struck her air conditioner and tiles began to fall from the ceiling. Blinded by darkness, she headed for the back door.

When she entered the kitchen where she had cooked for three generations of children, Griffen was knocked across the head by a plank. She crawled towards the door. Her family found her seated on a chair in the neighbour's carport.

"The Lord took care of me," said Griffen.

Lester and Louise Schrock, MDS volunteers from Mississippi, were returning home from three weeks of service in West Virginia when their cell phone rang. It was their son confirming that Columbus had been hit by a tornado and the damage was severe.

"Usually when we come home from a

project, I say that I'm not going to cook for a month. I'm going to sleep in," said Louise.

Louise did not sleep in on Monday morning. In fact, she fed over 50 people that day. While the Schrocks focused on the cleanup at the MDS property, other volunteers headed into town. Over 650 homes were damaged by the storm.

On December 7, Jerry Klassen of British Columbia and three Manitoba volunteers came to tear down Callie Griffen's home. She didn't stay to watch.

"I'm going to miss it," she said. MDS will begin building her a new house in the new year.

Jerry and Doreen Klassen travelled from British Columbia to provide the local MDS volunteers with a break from the endless emergency operations. As project directors, the Klassens turned the MDS response in Columbus into a long-term repair and rebuild project. Interested volunteers can call the Columbus project at (662) 241-5884.—From MDS release

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Violence against Christians continues in Ethiopia

On December 29, a Mennonite church in Mekele, Ethiopia, was looted and burned. All its property was destroyed and one member who was there was severely beaten.

Evangelical Christians continue to be targets of violent acts in a country where Muslims and Eastern Orthodox are dominant. Earlier last year, two church leaders were beaten in Abdurafi, one needing hospitalization for 13 days. In Moyale, a town on the Kenyan border, two elderly women suffered beatings. One, aged 65, sustains permanent disabilities.

In Maychew, violent demonstrations led to the burning of all Christian churches, including a Mennonite (Miserete Kristos) church. Its leader was imprisoned on false accusations, and is still in prison, according to reports.

Fikru Zeleke, Evangelism and Missions secretary of the Miserete Kristos Church (MKC), said that the hostility against Christians has escalated in the last year.

"Muslims in this country have targeted the evangelicals as number one enemy. The hostility is not limited to MKC," said Zeleke.

The Muslim religion is dominant in most parts of Ethiopia. In the Tigray region in the north, 96 percent of the people are Ethiopian Orthodox. According to Zeleke, these groups target evangelicals who are engaged in aggressive mission efforts. The MKC has 83 missionaries working within Ethiopia, as well as workers in three African countries.

The church, in partnership with

Eastern Mennonite Missions in the U.S., plans to send two workers to Asia and is in the process of accepting into membership a church of East African immigrants based in the Middle East.

The MKC is asking Anabaptists around the world to pray for its mission efforts, especially in this difficult time of opposition.—
Mennonite World Conference release



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Winnipeg, Man.

Christians determined to stem AIDS epidemic in South Africa

After suffering through colonialism, insurrection and apartheid, South Africa now faces an AIDS epidemic that is killing an average of 5,000 people each week. But if Christians band together in a ministry of education and prevention, the deadly tide can be slowed, says a Mennonite Church Canada Witness couple serving there.

Lynell Bergen and Brian Dyck work in Umtata, a town in the poorest region of South Africa. Here Christians are taking the lead in the fight against AIDS. According to three-year-old census data, one in five South African adults is infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. One out of

seven children will be an AIDS orphan by 2005.

"The government has not done well in the issues of AIDS in South Africa," Bergen says. "All the churches are beginning to see that this is a call for them to step forward...as people with some moral authority, as people who had an active voice in ending apartheid.... In less than a year, hundreds of people in the Umtata area have received training in AIDS care and prevention."

She adds, "It's very miraculous and wonderful that, in our region, it is the African independent churches that are really a step ahead of everyone else."

Patrick Ndlungwane, a co-worker,

says, "We want to try by all means to drastically reduce the incidence of AIDS in our community by 2005."

Bergen says the movement around Umtata won't stop the spread of AIDS, "but it's going to change the way that people interact with each other."

"When you talk about AIDS, you're talking about sexuality, you're talking about relationships between men and women, you're talking about how parents are raising their children...." People are being trained in AIDS prevention education, counselling, home-care issues and how best to deal with orphans.

"We do that very clearly from a Christian perspective," Bergen says. "We talk about issues like faithfulness in marriage and abstinence from sex outside of marriage. We're very clear about who we are."

Sex is a "recreational activity" for many young people in the Transkei region, a densely populated but rural area in Eastern Cape province, the poorest region of South Africa. Young people see little future for themselves and have lost hope, Bergen says. Christians are trying to provide menial jobs and recreational activities for the youth.

Dyck and Bergen, who were on leave in Canada recently, also are involved in Bible-teaching and developing church leadership. South Africa is about 80 percent Christian. Average life expectancy is about 45 years.

"If we leave, this Bible-teaching program doesn't continue," Dyck says. "We're trying to think of ways to get beyond that, to build a structure so that people can feel good about working together and taking instruction from other independent church leaders."

Meanwhile, local women are bucking tradition and are taking a more active role in the church, Bergen says.

In 1986, women from Cofimvaba formed the Umtata Women's Theology Group, which meets regularly to study the Bible, "to dig deeper into what scripture means to them, and not just what they were hearing from the men in the front [at church services]," says Bergen.

Mission assignment not hard, only different

International service "has been a real blessing in our lives, for us, for our kids." That's how Lynell Bergen responds to North American assumptions of hardship in their mission assignment in Umtata, South Africa.

Life in Umtata is just fine, says Bergen. They have a comfortable home, running water, electricity, computer and internet access. (Bergen and husband Brian Dyck have their own web site at <http://www.bergendyck.com>.) While the services may not compare to North American standards, the Manitoba couple say life is not harder in Umtata,

only different.

A recent project of Mennonite Church Manitoba camps had campers writing to Witness workers around the world. "We really got the impression that people think that mission workers have it hard, and...we're really suffering," said Bergen. "We don't feel that way that all."

"We try to communicate that as we travel around to churches," she added, referring to their current North American visit.

Challenges abound, however. They include the local perception that white North Americans are Bible experts and the dominance of North American religious programming on South African radio and television.

One bishop said he had been taught that he "shouldn't believe the Old Testament." After studying with Bergen and Dyck, he says, "Now I know that I can use both books, and both have credibility."—From MC Canada release by

Dan Dyck



Brian Dyck and Lynell Bergen with sons Samuel and Marcus are returning to South Africa this winter.

They have written 11 Bible-study booklets for women, which are being used all over the world, according to Bergen. A group of Canadian Mennonite women recently sent the group \$3,000, which may be used to translate the booklets into French for use in Benin, Congo and Ivory Coast. Topics include the role of women in the church, women in the Bible, sexuality, AIDS, marriage, parenting, singleness, divorce, aging, and dying.

Lynell Bergen and Brian Dyck serve with MC Canada Witness, Mennonite Mission Network and Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission. With sons, Samuel, 9, and Marcus, 7, they are returning to South Africa this winter.—From MC Canada release by **Charles T. Jones**



MC Canada photo

Students in the Bible teaching program led by Lynell Bergen and Brian Dyck. From left: Bishop Dubula, Bishop Thomas, Rev. Vuso and Bishop Mpotulo.

Kitchener, Ont.

MC Eastern Canada takes stock

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Executive Board, staff, commission chairs and ministry representatives met for their annual meeting at the Preston Mennonite Church on November 20. Participants formed small groups to discern common themes and vision:

- *Leadership* is an important theme, including developing, training, calling and supporting current and potential leaders. Increasingly, congregations are calling leaders with no related training, often with dynamic results. There is also a need for leadership training among youth.

- *Diversity* was noted in several ways. How do we respond to a changing world? A diversity of issues needs diverse approaches. There is also significant diversity in congregations, including the multicultural nature of MC Eastern Canada—how do we hold together in the midst of this diversity?

- *Less program focused, more relational* was a concern. There is a current shift of focus from structures and institutions to personal needs. There is a need for relevance and for relationships. Restructuring in this context might include more networking, instead of each commission working as an island.

- *Relation of MC Eastern Canada to congregations* was a theme. How does the work of the conference make an

impact on congregations? How do we provide leadership and support, given our geographical vastness? There is a sense of energy and commitment to the work of the commissions.

- *Stewardship* is an ongoing theme, not only money matters but also stewardship of the gospel. What would our faith community look like if we were truly missional and had a good understanding of scriptures? Opportunities versus available resources is always an issue. Each of the commissions asked for only small increases; there was a hesitation to ask for more.

The plenary group addressed the key issues facing MC Eastern Canada in the next five to 10 years:

- *Multiculturalism* in society and in the conference.

- *The need to be relevant*, as MC Eastern Canada makes links with congregations, and the need to determine measures of relevancy. This includes two-way communication between conference and congregations. There is a need to be clear about why we do what we do, to ask what is our underlying focus.

- *Diversity*, including worship styles and understandings. At what point does diversity become fragmentation? Would it be helpful to have all congregations working on the same theme at once? There is a dichotomy between relationship and belief. How do we lead our

people to read scriptures in relevant ways?

- *Leadership development*. Calling pastoral leaders and supporting the whole network of leaders go hand in hand. How we call leaders is a critical issue at this juncture in our church life.

The group also asked, What values should be central to our understanding of conference? Responses included:

- *Identity*. When family names no longer identify us, what supports our Christian Mennonite identity? Our faith statements have been central. How do we revise them? Our relationship with Christ and our ethical behaviour are perceived as two different ways of looking at what holds us together.

- *Community* is related to identity. Is emphasis on both community and doctrine a paradox? Purpose and identity are critical to authentic Christian community.

- *Fostering leadership development* in all ministries of MC Eastern Canada and aligning these ministries.

What changes might be called for in conference resources? The group called for more attention to worship and education about MC Eastern Canada for congregations. Perhaps a portion of the budget should be designated for leadership.

David Brubacher, minister to conference, reminded participants that they need to be mindful of how issues named in this meeting would be different than those named by our youth.—**Marie Burkholder and Maurice Martin**

FOCUS

Post Secondary Education

Winter at CMU

Activities at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg this winter range from a worship seminar to war protests.


A four-day worship seminar in January was led by John Bell, worship leader of the Iona Community in Scotland. About 160 people came for the event, along with students. The event was co-sponsored with Mennonite Church Canada and the Manitoba Mennonite Brethren Conference.

The annual Winter Lecture Series began January 26 with John Paul Lederach, mediator and professor of international peacebuilding at the University of Notre Dame. The topic was: "Peacebuilding and conflict transformation: Strategic challenges for the global family."

With war in Iraq looming, the Peace and Social Awareness Committee is trying to raise awareness. Students are organizing discussion groups and videos, as well as peace rallies with other organizations. They will also repeat last year's week-long diet of lentils and rice—some

of the only food Iraqi citizens have access to under the current sanctions.


"The Information Bomb: Exploding the myths of media violence" is the topic of CMU's annual Peace-It-Together conference March 7-9. Speaker will be Aiden Schlichting Enns, formerly with *Canadian Mennonite* and now working with *Adbusters* magazine in Vancouver. The semester also includes a fundraising banquet in Winkler on February 8, a faculty music recital on February 9 and musical called "Street Scene" on February 27-March 1.—CMU release



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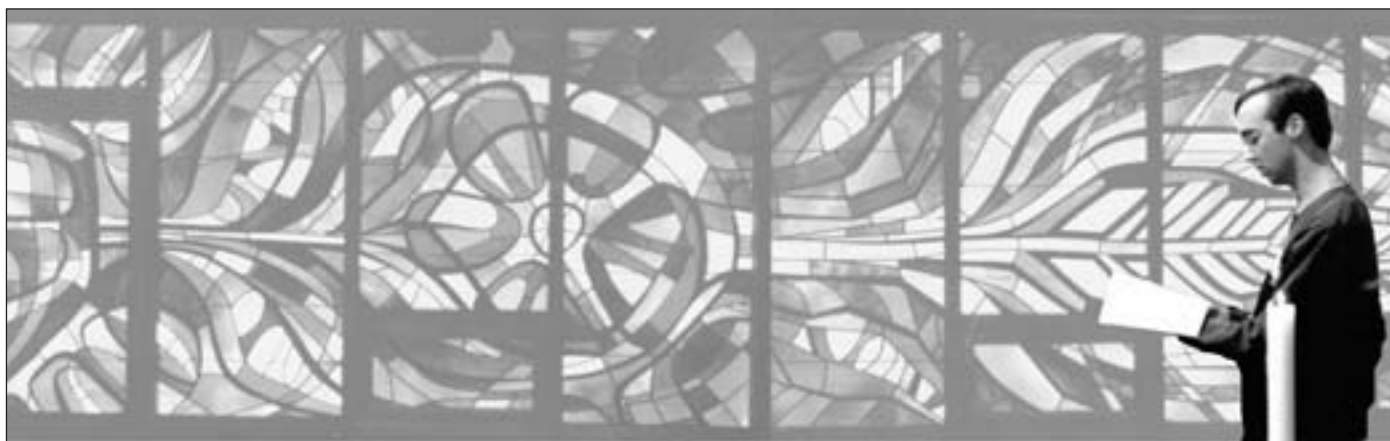
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Housing opened in poor Vancouver neighbourhood

I didn't think I had a chance to get in here because I wasn't close enough to God," said Phil, a resident in the newest project of the Social Housing Society of Mennonite Central Committee British Columbia. Phil had been living on the streets of Vancouver for nearly five months before he came to live in Candela Place, which celebrated its grand opening on December 8.

Candela Place is the first project that the MCC housing society has done with a partner, the Coast Foundation, which provides housing and services to people with mental illness. Twenty of the sixty units in the building are reserved for people with mental health issues.

Candela Place is also the first MCC housing project for homeless people in one of Vancouver's roughest neighbourhoods. (Three other projects provide housing to low-income families; the

society also runs the Supported Independent Living program for people with chronic mental illness.)

"Candela" means "candle" and it seems that Candela Place will truly be a light on Granville Street where porn shops, rundown hotels and panhandlers are the norm. Dignitaries praised MCC Social Housing for its commitment to providing quality housing and care for forgotten people. But it was the comments from tenants that showed what a special place Candela already has become.

"I feel truly blessed to live here," said Jeff. "MCC's motto is 'More than a roof' and they certainly have shown that to us."

Residents proudly showed guests their studio-style suites, each with a small kitchen and bathroom. The latter amenity was obviously a unique experience for many residents judging from the many comments they made.



Lorne Epp (left) and David Deocera, manager, participated in the grand opening for Candela Place in Vancouver.

Lorne Epp, executive director of the society, shared the organization's commitment to share faith in God through service. "It is a hallmark of our faith to serve our community—the poor in spirit are blessed and honoured in the sight of God. This building is our act of worship and we're grateful for the opportunity to serve God in this way."

Ingrid Schultz, pastor at First United Mennonite Church in Vancouver, closed the ceremonies with a prayer of blessing: "We remember, in this time of Advent, when you came to make your home among us." She asked God to make Candela Place a light in the darkness.

As for Phil, who thought he was too far from God to live in a place like Candela, the light has entered the darkness of his life. He has moved from homelessness and alcohol abuse to being alcohol-free.

"With God's help, my sponsor's encouragement and a lot of prayer, I've been alcohol free for nearly two years now," he said. "I've learned that generosity is God's love in action...from here on in I want to be known as a generous person."—

Angelika Dawson



Pimicikamak Cree residents and provincial government officials gathered at Cross Lake, Manitoba, on December 16 to turn sod for a new bridge. The bridge is part of a plan to implement aspects of the Northern Flood Agreement, signed 25 years ago. Mennonite Central Committee was represented at the event after decades of involvement with Cross Lake. The plan is a vindication of the Crees' refusal to sign a buy-out in 1997. Benefits will include jobs, environmental cleanup around the hydro dam and other initiatives. MCC has no plans to call off the "True Cost" campaign which supports implementation of the flood agreement, but "now the good stuff becomes part of the story," said Will Braun, former MCC coordinator and now a Pimicikamak staff member.—From MCC Canada release

Las Pozas, Honduras

Honduran church reaches out to neighbours

In water-starved southern Honduras, one isolated village is getting assistance from a nearby Brethren in Christ church.

Some 40 families live in Las Pozas, along the steep sides of two mountain ridges. Between the ridges is a stream that flows only during the May to October rainy season. It takes village residents 45 minutes to hike down to the nearest road, in the village of Las Lomitas.

The Las Lomitas Brethren in Christ congregation began regular visits recently and conducts worship services in homes. Eleven residents have publicly committed themselves to follow Christ, and many walk down the mountain each Sunday to attend services in Las Lomitas.

The church wanted to respond to other needs, including the lack of water. Last May, when Mennonite Central Committee worker Tony Sauder visited Las Lomitas, church members told him about the water



Photo by Tony Sauder

Two communities in Honduras work together to build a dam. In the foreground are Victorino (left) and Reyna, from Las Pozas. Behind them is Jose Leon, a member of the Las Lomitas Brethren in Christ church.

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situation in Las Pozas. Sauder, who is from Philadelphia, was beginning his assignment as a water and community development worker in Honduras.

Sauder and local residents decided to build several concrete dams which would hold several months' worth of water for washing and bathing. MCC contributed 80 percent of cement costs and technical guidance from Sauder, while volunteers from Las Pozas have done the masonry and other labour. Las Lomitas residents provided food for volunteers and are continuing regular visits.

A celebration on December 14 marked the completion of three dams. Some of the water is being used to mix concrete for a new classroom.—MCC release

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Secretary is front-line church worker

Ruth Friesen is clear about the central role of a church secretary: "I am a front line worker, the first person that individuals connect with on the phone or when they walk in the door. Their perception of the church is very much coloured by how I receive them.... The secretary gives a public face to the institution."

Friesen, a member of First Mennonite Church in Edmonton, began as part-time administrative assistant for the Dayspring Presbyterian Church in 1989. Currently, she is paid for 22 hours per week. Friesen grew up in a Presbyterian church and

her parents attend Dayspring.

"When I first took the job," she recalls, "I don't know that I would have described it as a calling.... As I've seen how important the job can be in determining the effectiveness of how the church office reaches out to the congregation and community, I see it more as a ministry. It is a service to the church."

The role of church secretary is often misunderstood as simply answering the phone and producing a bulletin. An effective secretary possesses good communication and organizational skills, is able to work amidst frequent

interruption, is an effective diplomat, can work with computers and photocopiers, and has a heart for and



Friesen

understanding of the mission of the church. The variety of situations a secretary faces can be endless, from sorting through mail to fielding complaints to dealing with

requests by people off the street.

When Friesen began her job, the Dayspring congregation gave her the title of administrative assistant, helping people develop a new perception of the position.

"I've appreciated being called administrative assistant," she says. "It allows me to think beyond the traditional secretary notion and it brings the congregation along, allowing them to see the job as more than someone who produces the bulletin."

She adds, "When I was hired, it was clear that my primary role was to assist the minister, not to be secretary to the whole congregation."

Ruth has found that working for a congregation other than her own is full of positives.

"I highly recommend it," she states enthusiastically.

"I can go to worship on Sunday and be free of my work. I can also be dealt with as an employee separate from my membership, which is a pro for both parties. I am not involved in the politics and the congregation can deal with me in a more objective way. If I messed up they can tell me without pussy-footing around. I can also have real conversation about what's not working."

Friesen ends with a gentle challenge to congregations: "The United Church has a secretaries' association and benefit plan. I'd like to challenge other denominations to seriously address this idea. It says something about how we value the position and sets parameters for treatment and pay."—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**

Outstanding secretary fills many roles

Darlene Gingerich has served as secretary at Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden, Ontario, for 14 years. When she began, she found it the perfect job for a mom with a one-year-old and five-year-old twins. One-quarter time with flexible hours gave her the opportunity to keep up her work skills and her family responsibilities.

"This was the perfect job," said Gingerich. "Being available to my family was my top priority." She worked out of her home and was responsible for the weekly bulletin, annual meeting report and extra jobs given by the

pastor.

As the responsibilities increased, Gingerich moved her "office" to the church. It was perfect timing again, because her youngest child had just begun school. To make room for Gingerich in the church building,



Gingerich

the trustees turned part of a classroom into an office for her, the same space that she works in today.

Gingerich has been a constant source of encouragement and information to many pastors. She is the resident expert on the workings of the church structure, whom to call for different problems, and a connoisseur of coffee.

She always has time to help with a problem, from how to get into a locked cupboard to how the church will host six committee meetings in one evening.

She is very organized, thorough and creative. She has a quick smile and an easy laugh, putting people at ease immediately. Gingerich spends many extra hours "finishing up" reports that have been handed in late, and adjusting her schedule to last-minute meetings or responsibilities.

Being a secretary really means making the church part of your family.

Gingerich is on call day or night when problems arise. Her sense of humour shines through when machines break down, and she is trying to convince a repairman that, "no, this machine has never made this noise before; I know something is wrong."

In January, Gingerich began working full-time as an administrative assistant. She looks forward to the extra day a week to "catch up" on extra work. Above all, she truly enjoys her job. This is evident in the way she has carried out her evolving responsibilities, and her care for all who enter the church building.

Former pastors, at farewell services, have mentioned the wonderful support and encouragement Gingerich provided. Our church reaps tremendous benefits from having her in this job.—**Joy Wagler**

*Practical
ministry
portraits*

A visit to the Middle East

Steve Drudge, an Ontario pastor, and Gordon Janzen, a mission partnership facilitator for Mennonite Church Canada, recently spent time in Israel/Palestine. The following is from their reports.

I had dreamed of visiting Israel someday, and the one-month Bat Kol program seemed a good fit. Thanks to a scholarship and the strong support of my family and church [Rouge Valley Mennonite] I was able to go.

The Bat Kol Institute in Jerusalem lets Christians study the Bible within its Jewish milieu, with Christian and Jewish professors. [Glenn Witmer, MC Canada Witness worker, is Bat Kol's registrar and director of program development.] This year's theme was "Excavating Exodus." We travelled to Sinai, the Dead Sea region, Bethlehem and Galilee, and took walking tours in Jerusalem.

I gained a fresh appreciation for the rich nuances of the Hebrew text. In Exodus 34:6, God's first self-description as "compassionate" (NIV) trans-

lates literally from Hebrew as "mother's womb." One rabbi likens reading the Bible through a translation to kissing through a towel.

In contrast to Sunday School images of "Moses and the Burning Bush," actually seeing a knee-high, dry thorn bush gave me a new appreciation for God's humility in lowering himself to enter the suffering of the enslaved people.

We participated in synagogue services and Sabbath meals in homes. I was dismayed to learn about anti-Jewish attitudes in the early church. I feel ashamed that Christian Crusaders butchered Jews in Eastern Europe on their march east to massacre Muslims in the Holy Land, a memory that is but "yesterday" to Jews and Muslims.

We spoke with Israelis who live with the constant fear of suicide attacks and the grief of having lost loved ones.

We also experienced warm hospitality in Palestinian homes. We witnessed the crippling effects of the illegal Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza: 60 percent or higher

unemployment, curfews in which entire cities of Palestinians are imprisoned in their own homes, interrupted schooling and commerce, houses shelled, sometimes with the occupants inside, crops bulldozed...the list goes on and on.

I spent a day in Hebron with Christian Peacemaker Teams and another in Gaza with Mennonite Central Committee personnel, and saw the destruction and suffering caused by the conflict fuelled by the Israeli occupation.—MC Canada release by **Steve Drudge**

A visit to Nazareth

About 22 years ago, while travelling through the Holy Land, I visited Nazareth. My friend and I saw the grand Church of the Annunciation there. However, since we had seen a dozen other "holy sites" that week, our interest quickly waned, and we took the next bus out of town.

I returned to this town recently to visit Nazareth Village, a holy site unlike any other I have seen. It's a place to experience the sights, sounds

Toronto, Ont.

Witmer commissioned for Middle East role

On January 12, Danforth Mennonite Church commissioned Glenn Edward Witmer for his ministry in Israel. Witmer was licensed by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada on behalf of Mennonite Church Canada Witness, and Mennonite

Mission Network (USA).

Witmer has lived in Jerusalem since 1999, first as a masters student at Bat Kol Institute and now as administrator and director of program development and publication for Bat Kol. His responsibilities include "teaching in the biblical literacy program in the land of the Bible."

In April 2002, he became Mennonite Church representative in Israel, replacing Calvin and Marie Shenk.

In her words of commendation, Muriel Bechtel, MC Eastern Canada minister of pastoral services, spoke about Witmer's work with homeless children in Argentina, and his current work of being teacher and messenger for peace in the Middle East.

In response, the Danforth congregation acknowledged the challenges Witmer faces in "ministering and living in a very

troubled part of the world, where devout people of many faiths call on God to defend them, but where the message that God is also a God of peace and justice is desperately needed."

Steve Drudge, pastor at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church who recently studied at Bat Kol, read an e-mail of congratulations from the Sisters of Zion in Jerusalem.

Witmer delivered an inspiring sermon on the boat journeys taken by Jonah and Jesus. Jesus went "to the other side" to make contact with "the other." This was his mission—stepping outside the boundaries, working in an inclusive way. Jonah was not prepared to act that way until he, too, had taken his "boat ride."

Witmer's reading of scripture and preaching were bracketed by the singing of the *Shema*: "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

Witmer's newsletter, "MennoLetter from Jerusalem," can be read on the MC Canada web site, or by visiting www.torontoareamennonites.ca/danforth.—**Bill Bryson**



Photo by Bill Bryson

Glenn Witmer, left, listens to greetings from Steve Drudge, while Shirly Redekop, director of Christian Service Ministry for MC Canada Witness, looks on.



Steve Drudge, left, and Gordon Janzen in Israel/Palestine last fall.

and people as Jesus would have experienced them 2000 years ago.

We met a farmer ploughing a field with a team of donkeys. We talked with children picking olives. We met Samir who was building an olive press. And of course we found a man and his son working in a carpentry shop.

In the middle of the village homes is the synagogue where we were reminded of Jesus' inaugural sermon. All the buildings were constructed

according to the best archaeological understanding of first-century building practices.

But the village is not only about seeing the ancient Jesus. It is also a place to encounter the message of the living Christ. Director Michael Hostetler, a worker with MC Canada Witness and MC USA Mission Network, described the village as a place of inter-religious encounter.

As a result of fewer tourists because of the current conflict, Nazareth Village has become a place for local people to visit. School children, both Muslim and Christian, come almost every day; local Christians are proud to bring their Muslim neighbours.

One Christian woman invited her Muslim neighbour, who brought her Jewish friend to Nazareth Village to hear about Jesus.—MC Canada release by **Gordon Janzen**

Gordon Janzen is Mennonite Church Canada's Mission Partnership Facilitator for Asia and Middle East. He visited Israel in November with colleagues from Mennonite Mission Network (MC USA). Glenn Witmer of Bat Kol edits "MennoLetter from Jerusalem," a newsletter to build awareness of Middle East issues. It can be read online at www.mennonitechurch.ca/news/

Kampala, Uganda

AIDS day in Uganda

Despite struggling with AIDS for the past two years, Rehema Nakiwala has continued to care for ill members in her community and take courses in health care. Now bedridden, she received a special certificate in December for completing the two-year health care program funded by Mennonite Central Committee and the Canadian International Development Agency.

The course is taught by staff from Mengo Hospital in Uganda's capital. On December 12, Mengo Hospital joined communities in Nakiwala's rural area to celebrate World AIDS Day. The district has limited medical facilities. Lameka Ssentumbwe, chair of the parish health committee, took courses while caring for 18 orphans, most of whose parents were lost to AIDS.

MCC donated 25 bicycles for selected graduates; CIDA will buy more.

The World AIDS Day event drew supporters from Protestant, Catholic and Muslim faiths. Speakers emphasized that the fight against AIDS must



Photo by Dave Klassen

Nurse Christine Nabulya visits a young patient at Mengo Hospital, an Anglican facility in Kampala supported by MCC. Many of her patients have AIDS. A children's club at the hospital provides play, singing and Bible stories while parents learn about hygiene and nutrition and how to talk with their children about their illness. About 7 percent of Uganda's population has HIV/AIDS, and about 10 percent of infections are spread from mother to infant.—From MCC release

extend across religious and social divisions and must be carried out in a spirit of unity.—From MCC release by **Shelene Poetker**

Mystery Christmas Gift

"Jesus was the gift that keeps on giving," my father said,
As he closed the book and sent us to bed.
That was the night when we stood 'round our tree,
And I contemplated what Christmas means to me....

Who was this Jesus guy anyway?
Why was he laid in a manger of hay?
Why weren't his parents a little more able,
To see that their son wasn't born in a stable?

Who were these wise men and what did they bring?
How could they tell that tiny baby was a King?
What did it mean to come from "afar?"
How could they get there by following a star?

It seemed the answers weren't very clear.
The clock was ticking and midnight drew near.

There was a small thump from the end of my bed.

I turned too quickly and bumped my head.

Standing there all white like snow,
Stood a man I seemed to know.
He held in his hand a book that was mine.
"Holy Bible" it said on the spine.

"I come," he said, "because you wanted to know
So I pulled out this book to tell you so
Flip to the back and find Matthew 18.
That is the story of how my life has been...."

Now I understand about wise men and such,
The real reason is that God loves us very much.
Instead of a king to put on a throne,
He sent us his son to make him our own.

In the morning there were presents piled high,
But I no longer wondered why.
The night Jesus visited me,
He opened my eyes and made me see

That the world is a beautiful place,
Far too good for the human race.
He came that night to send all he could give,
So that by his death we all might live.

From a poem by Bethany Kaster, 18, which she read at Tavistock Mennonite Church on Christmas Eve.

Mennonite Church Canada

February Equipping packet on its way

The February "Equipping Canada" package from Mennonite Church Canada includes: an update from the general secretary, Dan Nighswander, for the church bulletin board and for leaders; a report to congregations for use at congregational annual meetings; prayer requests for use in church bulletins; information on revised clergy residence deduction (for treasurers); sample copy of 2003 at home Lent resource, "God's love is always following you"; Second Mile brochure and sample lesson; poster promoting the CD "God's Love is for Everyone"; "Your invitation to become Witness partners" (for your mission or congregational meeting); information about Evangelism and Church Planting Sunday; resources from beyond MC Canada (for example: Spring Jubilee update; communion worship resources for four seasons; Vacation Bible School 2003).

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Volunteer chaplains honoured

The volunteers of Mennonite Church Manitoba Chaplaincy Program were recognized at a Christmas banquet in Winnipeg on December 13.

"Twice a year we host a gathering as a way of saying thank you for their generosity and service," said John Klassen, director of Leadership Ministries. Willy Guenther, director of chaplaincy, together with seven volunteers, regularly visits Mennonite patients in the Winnipeg hospitals.

Linda Wiebe, a retired nurse from Homewood, has been visiting patients in the Health Sciences Centre every week for seven years. She is disappointed that MC Manitoba is discontinuing this program because of budget cuts. She enjoyed the opportunity for ministry and the support of the conference in this work.

"With the hospitals tightening confidentiality, they have become much more stringent in releasing patients' names.

At many of the hospitals we can see only those who specifically request visits. Without conference support it will be impossible," said Wiebe. "Hospital staff are disappointed we won't be able to come. They have said: 'Don't stop, just keep coming.'"

Although the chaplaincy program will be discontinued, Klassen said, "We are in the process of making arrangements so that the volunteers who are interested in continuing will have new avenues to serve in this ministry."

First bird count at Assiniboia

The first Camp Assiniboia Christmas Bird Count was held December 30. The event was organized by Bob Wiebe and led by Adolf Ens. Thirteen people took part. The participants were divided into five parties, each assigned to a portion of the 160 acres of the camp.

The parties identified 8 species and over 100 individual birds in approximately three hours. The numbers of birds which could be located was affected by the wind, which made birds "lie low" and

hard to hear above the sounds made by the wind.

The bird count concluded with bag lunches and Christmas baking in the Camp Lodge. It is hoped that the Christmas Bird Count will become an annual event.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

New project to focus on rural churches

Recently approved funding for a new project means the Mennonite Church Saskatchewan Ministries Commission will have more resources to help with long-standing concerns of rural churches.

The Vibrant Rural Churches Project will, according to commission chair Florence Driedger, focus on "vibrancy, awareness and support of people." There has been some discussion about what defines the word "rural." Is it the size of the congregation or the location? Some rural churches, like Fiske Mennonite, are growing; others are not.

Naomi Unger and Eric Olfert have been hired for a one-year term to manage and

Not really Ralph's kingdom!

Alberta is a vast province of much geographical, political and cultural diversity. Being a conference minister provides a special vantage point from which to observe it.

The beauty of the province's geography, from its northern boreal forests to its Aspen parklands and bald southern prairies bordered by the majestic Rockies to the west, provide breathing space for the soul. What the political landscape lacks in variety is made up for in its colourful characters and strong (extreme?) opinions.

Alberta's culture, once dominated by the rugged frontier mentality of the rancher, is now being tempered by the settlement in urban centres of visible

minorities of Sikh, Muslim and Hindu religions. Southeast Edmonton, where I live, has become a microcosm of what Canada is increasingly becoming.

Among these dichotomies sits Mennonite Church Alberta, a small grouping of 16 or so churches and 1,700 members. Each church with its own unique history and culture also reflects the Alberta culture. What is MC Alberta's kingdom niche in this bigger picture?

Three months into the job is not a lot of time for accurate assessment, but some things are apparent. Controversies of the past continue to cast a shadow, suggesting restorative and rebuilding work while the shadows linger. Diligent foundational efforts have been made, providing

From our leaders

stepping stones for moving ahead. New optimism is evident, based somewhat on recent initiatives. The optimism is also based on hope for the future—that by thinking "missional" we can move beyond mere survival or maintenance toward seeing Christ's church grow and his kingdom expand.

We are optimistic through God's work already in progress and the promise of Christ to build his church that the kingdom of God in Alberta will increase. After all, this is not really Ralph's kingdom!

Jim Shantz, Mennonite Church Alberta conference minister, Edmonton, Alberta



give direction to the new venture. Unger has been a member of a rural church for about 20 years. Her husband Don pastors three small Hoffnungsfelder congregations in the Rabbit Lake, Mayfair and Glenbush areas. Olfert is a former instructor at Rosthern Junior College and is currently serving as missional formation and partnership facilitator within MC Saskatchewan.

The project will involve gathering information, sharing with rural churches what others have learned, and encouraging connections between rural and urban churches.

"God still has something for rural churches to do," said Unger, reflecting on why she accepted the role. "Even if

they're small, they can still shine for Christ."

Driedger made the point that much-needed resources continue to be moved away from rural communities as individuals, who have gained wealth from the land, relocate to urban centres. The project will, hopefully, bring fresh energy and encouragement to those areas with depleted resources.

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

Mennonite World Conference

Volunteer fund raiser for world conference

Tom Frank, a business developer and professor from West Simsbury, Connecticut, is volunteering his time to raise support for the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe next August. He will work half-time through 2003 in fund raising and advocacy, along with Werner Kroeker and Larry Miller. Frank recently described his life as "a journey from Multinational Corporation to Multinational Church." Since

becoming a Christian six years ago, he has developed a passion for the global Anabaptist-Mennonite church. His executive experience with companies such as Procter & Gamble and Kentucky Fried Chicken is in global marketing and business development. He and his wife Anneliese were baptized at Toledo Mennonite Church in 1996. Since becoming Mennonite, Tom has worked with Mennonite Disaster Service, lectured at Goshen and Hesston colleges; and preached in Mennonite churches. The Franks have five children and nine grandchildren.—From MWC release

Why I accepted God's call to ministry

The first pastor I recall was a short, fireball of a man whose passionate sermons and long pastoral prayers left a profound imprint on my life. I respected him deeply, even though he was a mystery to me.

My home church did not ooze enthusiasm for pastoral ministry. For many adults I knew, the role of pastor was a high calling bestowed upon those who had to carry the burden of shepherding a flock of ornery, unwilling sheep. It made me wonder why anyone would want to risk their sanity that way.

Ministry was shrouded in two mysteries: the holiness and passion for Christ I witnessed in that first pastor, and the question of why anyone would answer the call.

Then, at 23 years old, I took on my first role as shepherd. Sometimes I wonder: How did I get here? How is it that God called me to this mysterious place? And why did I accept this call?

The Mennonite church, along with other denominations, has a shortage of people willing to accept this mysterious call of God. As I look back, I recognize distinct contributors to my willingness to let God be God through me.

Mentors. My life has been profoundly influenced by godly people who taught me to see what God sees in me. Their honesty sharpened my character and my ability to hear God. Often their words of encouragement were precisely what I needed to hear, even when I didn't want to hear it. (A young man

hoping for a hockey career is not always pleased to be pointed toward the pastorate.) I am grateful for people who looked for leaders around them.

Testing. The opportunity to test my faith and spiritual gifts was influential in my willingness to respond to God. Short-term mission experiences, leading Bible studies, teaching Sunday School, going to Bible college, even involvement in community sports, allowed me to test and see. Though my home church made pastoral ministry look like a burden, I am indebted to that fellowship for providing opportunities to test out God's call on my life.

Family. When I was on staff at Emmanuel Bible College, I was astounded to see how many young people test out a call to ministry alone. Families were often unsupportive. My parent's willingness to let me go toward ministry, even though hesitantly, gave me the confidence to step out in faith. How can we produce not only sending churches but sending families?

Friends. A key contributor in my call was like-minded friends. Even my non-Christian friends moved me toward ministry without knowing it. Our deep talks and restlessness with the church and the world caused me to love the way God does. We often think that our youth push the boundaries out too far, but that might be exactly what they need to see the world the way God sees it. How can we help young people spur one another toward love and good deeds, and ministry?

Renewal. I recall agonizing over my baptism until I realized that this was a

first, not a final, step in my walk with Jesus. Significant moments of spiritual renewal have sensitized my heart to God's will for my life. Indeed, my call to ministry requires this renewal, else I begin to spiral into a ministry wasteland. I look back to times when the Scriptures were alive with the Spirit. I continue to feed on this bread of life. Perhaps more people will accept God's call to ministry not because of programmed initiatives but because of a focus on personal and corporate renewal.

Prayer. Without doubt, my call to ministry was the result of someone praying. Jesus commanded his disciples to pray for workers. I wonder how well we as a church do at this. Is the current shortage of leaders an indicator?

It is comforting that even the great people of faith in the Bible were amazed by the mysterious call of God on their lives. As the Apostle Paul declares, "To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God...so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:8-10).

Mystery for the sake of the mystery—I can live with that.—**Phil Wagler**

The writer, age 30, has served as pastor in Ontario and is now enjoying shepherding the flock at Edson Mennonite Church in Alberta, where he is also youth minister of the Northwest Mennonite Conference.

People & Events

St. Catharines, Ont.—Randy Dueck was installed as assistant pastor at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church on December 15. Ben Wiebe, lead pastor, and Andy Brubacher Kaethler, conference youth minister, officiated at the installation. Dueck's responsibilities include youth and young adult programs, and preaching. He has worked with youth since 1981 and served as associate pastor for youth and family ministries at Port Rowan Mennonite Brethren Church for five years. He studied at Canadian Bible College in Regina. He and his wife, Cheri, have two young adult children.—Congregational release

Winnipeg, Man.—Before Rattaya Nantasean left Thailand for Canada, her mother told her she had an uncle in this country somewhere. Nantasean came here



Rattaya Nantasean (right) and her Canadian uncle.

last August as an exchange visitor with Mennonite Central Committee and works with new immigrants at the Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. She told some Burmese immigrants about her uncle and one of them knew a man from her region in Thailand. It was her uncle and he lived in Calgary! She is enjoying her new relationship with her relatives and has taken several trips with them.—From MCC Canada release

Managua, Nicaragua—Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) has sold the Confia Bank which it began here in 1999. The bank was established to support the MEDA credit program that has been growing in this country. But too much success brings its own challenges and MEDA felt stretched beyond its resources. In November, MEDA sold its interest in the bank to International Project Consulting, a German company with a good reputation in development and efficient banking.—From MEDA release

Toronto, Ont.—Three Canadians will join a 14-member Christian Peacemaker Team delegation to Iraq February 1-15. They are Matthew Bailey-Dick of Waterloo, Ontario; Lisa Martens of Brandon, Manitoba; and Jane Pritchard of Toronto. The delegation will visit Baghdad and other cities to meet with Iraqis and learn about the 12 years of economic sanctions and bombings since the Gulf War. If war breaks out, delegates will help out in life-supporting places such as schools and hospitals.—From CPT release

Vineland, Ont.—Herman Abram Sawadsky died January 2 after celebrating his 102nd birthday on Christmas day. Born in Rosenhof, Ukraine, he was the only one of his family to emigrate to Canada. Of his eight siblings, only brother Kolja in Germany survives. He married Anna (Berg) in 1929 and after moving to Vineland in 1940, they developed a thriving fruit and vegetable farm. Surviving are Anna and children Hedy, Harold, Lillian, Helen and their families.—From report by **Hedy Sawadsky**

Winnipeg, Man.—Mennonite Central Committee Canada has hired Mary Friesen to coordinate its program for Low German Mennonites. Friesen, who was born in Menno Colony, Paraguay, has been an

instructor at the University of Winnipeg and spent 12 years as a teacher and vice-principal at Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute here. She recently completed a



Friesen

Doctor of Ministry degree at St. Stephen's College in Edmonton. Friesen, a member of River East Mennonite Brethren Church, recently helped develop a "hemispheric vision" for MCC's Low German program that streamlines services at regional, provincial, national and international levels. Her duties include the program in Mexico and promoting educational materials, as well as working with the *Mennonitische Post* newspaper.—MCC Canada release

Transitions

Births

Berg—to Andrea and Randy, Cornerstone Church Mennonite, Saskatoon, sons Max Austin, Dexter Calvin, Joshua Ivan, Dec. 11.
Berg—to Janice and Darrel, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Mark Samuel, Dec. 9.
Cahill—to Kara, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Stephanie Dawn, Nov. 26.
Dyck—to Suzy and Paul (in Belize), First Mennonite, Burns Lake, B.C., a daughter, Megan Catherina, Dec. 24.
Feddema—to Susanne and Bernie, Frist Mennonite, Calgary, twin daughters, Danaka Luise and Elise Marie, Dec. 31.
Peters—adopted by Maria and Ken, First Mennonite, Burns Lake, B.C., a son, Isaih David Sebestien (born Oct. 13, 2001 in Haiti), Dec. 23.
Riehl—to Teresa and Chris, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., a son, Keegan Andrew, Jan. 16.

Storey—to Connie and Kevin, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Owen Reece, Dec. 17.

Warkentin—to Diane and Travis, First Mennonite, Burns Lake, B.C., a daughter, Cherise Nicole, Jan. 11.

Marriages

Dow-Thiessen—Todd and Julie, Niagara United Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 19.

Harder-Martins—Quentin (Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Sask.) and Karen (Hepburn Mennonite Brethren, Sask.) in Laird, Sask., Nov. 2.

Maddigan-Sherk—Brad and Carolyn, Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 28.

Deaths

Bowman—Mary, 80, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., Jan. 10.

Bueckert—Dennis, 56, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Dec. 18.

Frey—Amsey, 70, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 4.

Froese—Helmuth, 79, First Mennonite, Burns Lake, B.C., Dec. 7.

Pauls—Victor, 54, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Dec. 11.

Plett—Sarah, 91, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Dec. 30.

Ruby—Irene (Fretz), 87, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., Dec. 31.

Sawadsky—Herman, 102, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 2.

Snyder—Myrtle, 87, Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 21.

Unrau—Katy, 43, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Dec. 26.

Baptisms

Agape Fellowship, London, Ont.—Sandra Wilding, Jan. 27 (2002), Donna Wilson, Nov. 24.

Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite, Glenbush, Sask.—Carolyn Epp.

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

Employment Opportunities

Salem Mennonite Church, Salem, Oregon, seeks full-time

PASTOR

Candidates will have a strong commitment to Anabaptist beliefs centered around Jesus Christ's life and teaching. Candidates need strong preaching skills and a leadership style that develops and draws upon the skills of the congregation.

Salem Mennonite Church is a 100+ member congregation located in Oregon's capital community. Salem is located in the beautiful Willamette Valley with the Pacific Coast mountains to the west and the majestic Cascade mountains to the east.

For information contact:

Jim McKinnell, Pastoral Search Committee Chair
Salem Mennonite Church, 1045 Candlewood Dr. NE,
Salem, OR 97303
(503) 540-7444; mckinnellj@attbi.com

Applicants should send a Ministerial Leadership Information Form to:

Larry Hauder, PNMC Conference Minister,
1520 N 20th St., Boise, ID 83702

Peace Mennonite Church Lead Pastor

Peace Mennonite Church, located in Richmond, B.C., invites applications for a full-time salaried position as Lead Pastor beginning September 1, 2003. Peace Mennonite Church is an urban congregation of 200 members. We are seeking an individual who will provide strong spiritual leadership in the areas of pastoral care, outreach ministry and family life. The successful candidate will relate well to all generations and be gifted in preaching and worship.

Our new pastor will have extensive theological training in a Mennonite/Anabaptist perspective and be guided by the Mennonite Confession of Faith.

Applications should be received by February 28, 2003. Interviews will begin in February and will continue until the position is successfully filled. Write or call for a Congregational Information Form. Send your letter of application, resume and three references to:

David McAlary
Peace Mennonite Church
11571 Daniels Rd.
Richmond, BC V6X 1M7
Phone: (604) 278-0111 Fax: (604) 273-2678

Bloomington Mennonite Church, located near Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, is seeking a

PASTOR

We are a small village church that serves a diverse geographical community. Our multi-generational congregation is searching for a pastor (negotiable 80%-100% FTE), beginning in the Summer or Fall of 2003. Interested candidates should relate well to all generations, with emphasis on nurturing the strong and active youth fellowship.

All interested candidates should submit their resume and direct any inquiries to:

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
c/o Muriel Bechtel
4489 King Street East, Kitchener, ON N2G 3W6
E-mail: Muriel@mcec.on.ca



MCC Canada has an immediate opening for a

MAJOR GIFTS/PLANNED GIVING COORDINATOR

(to be based in any provincial MCC office).

This position involves generating, and assisting others to generate, major gifts for the MCCs across Canada.

All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith and discipleship; active church membership; and nonviolent peacemaking.

For more information contact:

Marsha Jones
(204) 261-6381; prs@mennonitecc.ca
Visit www.mcc.org/serve for the complete job description

Mennonite Publishing House seeks an

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

to lead the transformed publishing program of the binational Mennonite Church. The person in this position will assume the key leadership role in the establishment and development of the new Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN). Key responsibilities include working closely with the new MPN Board and its constituencies and partners in Mennonite Church USA and Canada. The role includes oversight of implementation of the new vision for publishing. This will involve facilitation of the process of building a new collaborative network of relationships, which are designed to provide materials to equip the church, and help to shape the church's Mennonite Christian identity and mission.

Qualifications include Master's Degree or equivalent, a vision for and commitment to the new role of publishing within the Mennonite Church, sound financial acumen, excellent relational skills, outstanding written and oral communication skills, strong organizational and leadership behaviors, and a member in good standing in the Mennonite Church.

Please send a resume and a list of three references before February 3/03 to:

Ron Sawatsky
224 Harvard Ct., Souderton, PA 18964
E-mail: RonSawat@earthlink.net

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada invites applications for a position as

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

This person will provide administrative support to the Minister to Conference in the context of a larger ministry team. Experience with general office procedures is required.

The ideal candidate will:

- be knowledgeable in or be prepared to work with property, legal and insurance matters.
- be knowledgeable of WordPerfect, general word processing, office equipment and internet communication.
- be able to hold confidentiality, have a good telephone manner, an eye for detail, be well organized, able to set priorities.
- have a good knowledge of the MCEC constituency.

This is a full-time salaried position (37.5 hours) with attractive benefits, beginning May 1, 2003. Please direct applications (with resume and references), inquiries or nominations by February 15, 2003 to:

David Brubacher, Minister to Conference
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
4489 King St. E.,
Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2
Phone: (519) 650-3806
E-mail: david@mcec.on.ca



MCC Canada requires an

INTERNATIONAL GRANTS MANAGER

(start date: March 1, 2003)

whose primary responsibility will be to manage all aspects of MCCC's relationship with CIDA, and other funding agencies, including drafting proposals, monitoring use of funds and reporting on their use. Experience in International Development, an understanding of MCC's international programs and a willingness to travel abroad are required. This position may be based in Winnipeg or Ottawa.

All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith and discipleship; active church membership; and nonviolent peacemaking.

For more information contact:

Marsha Jones
(204) 261-6381; prs@mennonitecc.ca
 Visit www.mcc.org/serve for the complete job description

Mennonite Publishing Network (formerly Mennonite Publishing House) seeks a

DIRECTOR, FAITH & LIFE RESOURCES

to lead bi-national publishing program for congregational resources. Key responsibilities include conceiving and implementing congregational resource publishing initiatives in response to identified priorities, establishing effective and responsive networking relationships with congregations, area conferences, and denominational agencies in Canada and USA, and leading and coordinating outside resources and FLR staff to achieve publishing priorities. Qualifications include Master's Degree or equivalent, strong understanding of editing and publishing processes, demonstrated ability to develop congregational resources in response to identified needs, excellent written and oral communication skills, strong organizational, inter-personal, and leadership behaviors, and active membership in the Mennonite Church.

Please send a resume and a list of three references to

Phil Bontrager, Mennonite Publishing House
616 Walnut Avenue, Scottdale, PA 15683
E-mail: philB@mph.org

Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Douglas Mennonite Church is a congregation of approximately 425 baptized members and 200 children and youth. It presently has a staff of one part-time (.8) leading minister and a full-time youth minister.

We are seeking a part-time (.5 to .8) associate pastor whose primary responsibilities will include both the coordination of pastoral care (by deacons, lay ministers and others) and direct pastoral care. Our anticipated starting date is the summer of 2003. For further information or to submit a résumé please contact:

John P. Klassen, Director of Leadership Ministries
Mennonite Church Manitoba
200 - 600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB, R3P 2J1
Phone: (204) 888-6781
E-mail: jklassen@mennochurch.mb.ca

or

Shellie Sklepowich (Search Committee Chair)
58 Ranch Place, Winnipeg, MB R2G 3J5
Phone: (204) 667-2513
E-mail: psklepovitch@shaw.ca



Menno Simons College

Menno Simons, affiliated with the University of Winnipeg has two available positions (one continuing; one 2-year term) in

CONFLICT RESOLUTION STUDIES

Qualifications: PhD preferred, in conflict resolution studies or a related discipline, together with a commitment to excellence in teaching and research. General qualifications for the Canadian Mennonite University, which include a commitment to the Christian faith, and to the mission of CMU, will also be taken into consideration. Menno Simons College provides the opportunity to become part of an academic community with an interdisciplinary focus, and a commitment to peace, justice and service rooted in Anabaptist Mennonite belief and tradition. For further information contact Paul Redekop at (204) 786-9102 email<p.redekop@uwinnipeg.ca> or visit www.uwinnipeg.ca/~msc.

Submit applications to:

Paul Redekop
Acting Dean, Menno Simons College
380 Spence Street
Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9

Menno Simons College at the University of Winnipeg, College of the Canadian Mennonite University

Ministry positions available at Camps with Meaning:

MANAGER (1.0) and FOOD SERVICE COORDINATOR (.5)
 at Camp Moose Lake (Sprague, MB)

MANAGER (1.0) and FOOD SERVICE COORDINATOR (.5)
 at Camp Koinonia (Boissevain, MB)

Manager responsibilities include facility upkeep, financial administration, guest relations, volunteer supervision and support of summer program. Food Service Coordinator responsibilities include menu design, purchasing, and working with volunteers and casual staff.

Camps Koinonia and Moose Lake both operate Christian summer camp programs and year round guest services. Strong communication and organizational skills an asset. These are ideal positions for motivated couples with a Christian, Anabaptist faith commitment.

Contact:

Mennonite Church Manitoba
(204) 896-1616; camps@mennochurch.mb.ca

Announcement

Bergthal Mennonite Church
Celebration 2003

Bergthal Mennonite church of Didsbury Alberta will be celebrating it's 100th year of church life on July 26-27 of 2003. All friends and former members are welcome.

Bergthal is a rural congregation and the oldest General Conference Mennonite Church in this province.

Take highway #2 and turn east on Bergthal Road between Carstairs and Didsbury. R.V. parking on grounds.

To R.S.V.P. or for more information:

Bergthal Mennonite Church
RR 2 Didsbury, AB T0M 0W0
E-mail: bergthal@telusplanet.net
Phone: (403) 335-4451 or (403) 337-2223

Goshen College is accepting applications for the position of Plowshares

**PROFESSOR OF
PEACE, JUSTICE AND CONFLICT STUDIES**

beginning Fall 2003. Doctorate, with scholarly and/or practitioner work on issues of peace, conflict and justice. Demonstrated teaching competence. Support the Anabaptists and Peace Church traditions and commitment to nonviolence, peace and justice a must.

Responsibilities include: provide scholarly leadership in peace, justice and conflict studies in collaboration with two other schools (Earlham College and Manchester College). Teaching load is negotiable, research and/or practitioner experience in interdisciplinary field related to peace and conflict expected, with administrative duties. Funding for this full-time position is guaranteed for five years with the possibility of a permanent appointment thereafter.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College web page www.goshen.edu under employment. Goshen College is an AA/EEO employer; members of underrepresented groups are invited to apply.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada invites applications for the position

MINISTER OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

Job Function: Work as a minister with responsibilities for youth ministries on the MCEC Ministry Team.

Responsibilities: Nurture a vision for youth ministries in the congregations of MCEC; Relate to pastors and leaders working with youth in congregations; Relate to youth in leadership and exploring leadership options; Resource the Youth Ministries Commission.

Requirements: Congregational experience is essential. Please direct applications (with resume and references), inquiries or nominations by February 28, 2003 to:

David Brubacher, Minister to Conference
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
4489-4497 King St. E.,
Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2
Phone: (519) 650-3806
E-mail: david@mcec.on.ca



**LIVE-IN ASSISTANT
L'ARCHE HAMILTON**

L'Arche is a community founded by Jean Vanier and inspired by the Beatitudes. At the heart of these communities are people with a developmental disability and those who share their lives with them.

A role as a L'Arche assistant will be to share your life, energy, challenges and spiritual growth with others in a home setting. These vary widely from assisting with household tasks, accompanying someone to an appointment, sharing in community prayer and most of all building life-giving relationships. (We are called to do, not extraordinary things, but very ordinary things, with an extraordinary love that flows from the heart of God. Jean Vanier)

We are looking for people who have post secondary education or related experience, willingness to live-in, be open and create community.

**CHANGE ONE HEART AT A TIME, THE FIRST MAY BE
YOUR OWN!**

Please send your resume along with references to:

Karen Dennison, Assistant Co-ordinator
L'Arche Hamilton
862 Main St. E. Hamilton, ON L8M 1L9
Phone: (905) 312-0162 ext. 222
E-mail: office@larcheham.com

El'dad Ranch is seeking an
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

El'dad Ranch is located 5 kilometres north-east of Steinbach and houses two programs:

Residential Treatment Centre for adult men with mental disabilities who are in conflict with the law. El'dad endeavours to promote the treatment of the offender as a fellow human being by the Christian community -an individual of worth, created in the image of God, capable of responsible behaviour- realizing that regardless of action, the individual always remains a part of the whole.

Supported Living Program offering 24 hour residential care for two adult men with mental disabilities.

Under the guidance of the Advisory Committee and the Board of MCC Manitoba, the Executive Director is responsible for implementing El'dad's mission statement. This includes staff supervision, financial management, service delivery. Responsibilities also include working co-operatively with MCC, Family Service, Probation Services and other structures, and with the community in which the Ranch is situated.

This position is available by mid-March. Applications will be accepted until February 17th. Submit resumes or letters of interest to:

Human Resources
MCC Manitoba
134 Plaza Drive
Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9

*All applicants must be committed to a personal Christian faith and discipleship, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking.

Announcement



Prairie Performances
(Winnipeg)
presents:

"A Winter Valentine"

with
Donna Fletcher; soprano
David Smeltzer; tenor
Chris Ryan; Baritone
Michael Oike; piano

at the
Winnipeg Art Gallery
Auditorium
Thurs. & Fri. Feb 13 & 14
8:00 pm

Admission \$14.00
Seniors \$12.00
Students and children \$5.00

For tickets call 488-7733
or at box office.

For Rent

Apt for rent - 1BR single occupancy, in walk-out basement of house near Univ of Waterloo. Partially furnished. Private entrance but shared laundry room. Available Feb 2. Call (519) 885-4408.

House for rent in Guelph. Close to downtown and the University. Available now until August 31, 2003. For more info. please contact Pat. E-mail: lpwagler@cyg.net, or Phone: (519) 662-3827

**Advertising
Information**

**Please contact
Barbara Burkholder
at: 1-800-316-4052**

Women invited to fast for peace

Winnipeg, Man.—As the threat of war in Iraq escalates, Mennonite Central Committee invites women to fast for peace. Participants commit themselves to fasting for one day each week, devoting time to prayer, reflection and witness for peace.

The fast, which began on January 22, will continue at least until March 8, International Women's Day. Each week, MCC provides an online update with scripture and other materials. For information online, go to www.mcc.org/canada/peace/fast/index.html.

Kreiders to speak at Crosshill

Millbank, Ont.—Alan and Eleanor Kreider will be resource persons for a weekend on "Worship and mission for the peace church" at Crosshill Mennonite Church on February 22-23. They will speak on Saturday at 1:30 p.m. and on Sunday during morning worship at 9:45.

The Kreiders are mission educators with the Mennonite Mission Network and teachers at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Indiana. They were Anabaptist educators in England for many years. Eleanor has written extensively on worship, and Alan on the early church.—From Mission Network release

Connecting families retreat in April

Ligonier, Pa.—The Connecting Families event at Antiochian Village here April 25-27 will feature speaker Gloria Kropf Nafziger from Ontario. The event invites gay, lesbian, transgendered and bisexual people and their families to share stories and concerns. Phone (301) 864-6633, e-mail: larandsteph@aol.com.

AMBS event to focus on catechism

Elkhart, Ind.—A one-day conference on February 28 will explore catechism and church membership at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Participants, including pastors and youth leaders, will grapple with questions such as: How and when do we invite youth and new believers to baptism? Why? What truths must these baptismal candidates confess? What sacrifices should they expect to make when joining a Mennonite church?

Presenters are Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president; Mary Lehman Yoder from the pastoral team at Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen; and Dale Shenk, Bible teacher at Bethany Christian High School in Goshen.

The conference, titled "For the children's children: A conversation about catechism," will begin at 8 a.m. For more information, call (574) 296-6207, e-mail: bsawatzky@ambs.edu.—AMBS release

Heifer sale set for February

Kitchener, Ont.—The annual Heifer Sale will be held February 21 at Brubacher Sales in Guelph, beginning at 11:30 a.m. The sale is part of Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale Inc. which raises funds for Mennonite Central Committee. Everything is donated, including auction services, trucking, feed and vet services. Organizers expect 80-100 heifers to be donated for sale this year.

Donations over the years total 2,389 heifers selling for close to \$2.6 million. Last year, 84 heifers sold for \$210,200. More information is available from sale committee chair Clarence Diefenbacher at (519) 669-2164.—Sale release

Calendar

British Columbia

February 22: Mennonite Church B.C. all committee meeting. For details phone (604) 850-6658.

February 22: B.C. Mennonite Historical Society lecture on Russian Mennonite architecture by Rudy Friesen at Eben Ezer Mennonite, Abbotsford, 7:00 p.m.

February 28, March 1: MCC Relief Sale banquets at Bakerview Mennonite Brethren Church, Abbotsford (28), and South Langley MB Church (1). Speaker: Ken Sensenig of MCC Akron.

February 28-March 8: Arts and Peace Festival in Abbotsford. Contact Elsie Wiebe at (604) 850-6639 or 1-888-622-6337.

March 7, 8: MCC Relief Sale banquets at Broadway Mennonite Brethren Church, Chilliwack (7) and Peace Mennonite Church, Vancouver (8). Speaker: Ken Sensenig of MCC Akron.

March 29: Camp Squeah Fundraiser Coffeehouse at First Mennonite Church, Vancouver. Call Angelika Dawson at (604) 870-0494.

April 12, 13: Abendmusik Lenten Vespers at Emmanuel Reformed Church, Abbotsford (12), Knox United, Vancouver (13), 8:00 p.m.

April 18-20: Graduation weekend at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford.

April 26-27: Camp Squeah Paddle-a-thon. Call 1-800-380-2267.

April 27: B.C. Women in Mission Inspirational Day.

April 29: Columbia Open Golf Tournament.

June 6-7: LEAD conference and Mennonite Church British Columbia annual sessions at Cedar Valley Mennonite Church, Mission.

Alberta

February 8: Canadian Mennonite annual meeting (4:00 p.m.) and dinner (6:00 p.m.) at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton

February 8: Evening of worship, cowboy poetry and music at Trinity Mennonite Church, Calgary, 7:30 p.m.

February 21-23: Sr. High Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua.

February 28-March 1: Mennonite Church Alberta annual sessions at First Mennonite Church, Calgary. Speaker: Stanley Green: "Across the street and around the world."

March 7: Coffee house hosted by Edmonton Mennonite Young Adult group.

May 24-25: Songfest at Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury. Mass choir conductor: David Regier Sawatzky.

July 26-27: Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury, celebrates 100 years.

Saskatchewan

February 7-8: Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan annual meeting at Bethany Manor, Saskatoon.

February 9: Shekinah Fun Day for Youth.

February 28-March 1: Mennonite Church Saskatchewan annual meeting at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

March 3-5: Regional meeting of Mennonite Camping Association at Shekinah. Speaker: Vern Ratzlaff.

March 5: MEDA Breakfast at Circle Dr. Grainfields, Saskatoon, 7:30 a.m.

March 14, 15: Rosthern Junior College dinner theatre.

March 23: Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization worship at Osler Mennonite Church.

March 28: Open house at Rosthern Junior College.

April 2: MEDA Breakfast at Circle Dr. Grainfields, Saskatoon, 7:30 a.m.

April 11-12: Youth Hungerfest at Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon.

May 4: Spring concert at Rosthern Junior College.

May 7: MEDA Breakfast at Circle Dr. Grainfields, Saskatoon, 7:30 a.m.

May 31: Prairie Falcon Motorcycle Rally.

June 4: MEDA Breakfast at Circle Dr. Grainfields, Saskatoon, 7:30 a.m.

June 13-14: MCC Relief Sale in Saskatoon.

June 19-22: Musical (19-21) and graduation (22) at Rosthern Junior College.

July 4-6: Rosthern Mennonite Church centennial celebration.

Manitoba

February 10: Open house at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, 7-9:00 p.m.

February 14: Seminar for church leaders on baptism and Christology with Nelson Kraybill at Grace Mennonite, Winkler, 10:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

February 14-15: Mennonite Church Manitoba annual delegate session at Morden Berghthaler Mennonite Church.
February 14-16, March 7-9: Junior high retreats at Camp Moose Lake.

February 15, 16: Eden Foundation fund-raising concerts with Henriette Schellenberg and Faith and Life Women's Chorus, at Steinbach Mennonite Church (15), Westminster United, Winnipeg (16). Call (204) 325-5355 for tickets.

February 27-March 1: Musical "Street Scene" at Canadian Mennonite University.

March 1, 2: Concert for MCC Afghanistan at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg with Bison Men's Chorus, Faith and Life Male Choir and Winnipeg Male Choir, 7:30 p.m. Saturday, 3:00 p.m. Sunday.

March 7-9: Peace-It-Together at Canadian Mennonite University. Theme: "The information bomb: Exploding the myths of media violence" with speaker Aiden Schlichting Enns.

April 4-6: Manitoba Mennonite Marriage Encounter weekend in Winnipeg. Phone (204) 757-4705.

May 23, 30: Spring concerts of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate.

May 25: Celebration 2003 for MC Manitoba churches at Convention Centre, Winnipeg.

May 25: Concert with Faith and Life Male Choir and Women's Chorus at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 7:30 p.m.

Ontario

February 9: Installation of Henry Paetkau as president of Conrad Grebel University College, at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church.

February 14-16, 21, 22: Operetta "Brigadoon" at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington.

February 14-17: MCEC Young Adult trip to Ottawa: "I am Canadian. I am Mennonite." Call (519) 650-3806, e-mail: markdh@mceec.on.ca.

February 21: Heifer sale at Brubacher Sales, Guelph, 11:30 a.m.

February 22: Day of Quiet Prayer at Waterloo North Mennonite Church.

February 22: Hymn-a-thon at Toronto United Mennonite Church with Pax Christi Chorale, fund raiser for *St. John Passion* concert in April. Call (416) 484-9149.

February 22-23: Alan and Eleanor Kreider on worship and mission at Crosshill Mennonite Church, Millbank.

March 1: Menno Singers concert (Bach and Brahms motets) at St. John's Anglican Church, Kitchener, 8:00 p.m.

March 5: Family night at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington.

March 6-7: Bechtel Lectures at Conrad Grebel University College with Rudy Wiebe.

March 7-9: Marriage Encounter at Niagara Falls. Call (519) 743-5255.

March 10-11: Grandparent/Grandchild Retreat at Hidden Acres, New Hamburg. Call (519) 625-8606.

March 17-19: Regional meeting of Mennonite Camping Association at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp.

March 21-22: Engaged Workshop at Hawksville Mennonite. Call (519) 656-2256.

March 26: Day of Quiet Prayer at Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil.

March 30: Dedication of new addition at Erb St. Mennonite Church, Waterloo, 3:00 p.m.

April 7: Promotion dinner for Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale at Bingeman Park Lodge, Kitchener. Call MCC at (519) 745-8458.

April 16: Pax Christi Chorale performs Bach's *St. John Passion* at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto, 8:00 p.m.

April 25: Day of Quiet Prayer

at Tavistock Mennonite Church.

April 25-26: Engaged Workshop at Milverton Mennonite Fellowship. Call (519) 656-2256.

April 25, 26: Menno Singers and Mennonite Mass Choir perform Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at Benton St. Baptist Church, Kitchener, 8:00 p.m.

May 7, 8: Dinner theatre "James and the Giant Peach," at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington.

May 21: Day of Quiet Prayer at Blenheim Retreat Centre, New Dundee.

May 25: Spring concert at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington.

June 7: Mennonite Community Sale in Leamington.

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