

CANADIAN Mennonite

February 10, 2003
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Focus on Iraq

pages 12, 16-17

You've got e-mail

pages 6-9

Annual meeting time

It's annual meeting time—for congregations, conferences, and also for this publication. A time to review highlights of the past year, to assess current activities in light of the mission statement, to take stock of finances, to plan ahead.

I am writing this column several days before leaving for Edmonton, where the *Canadian Mennonite* board will hold its annual meeting February 7-8. Here are excerpts from my report. News from the meeting will be reported in a subsequent issue.

•**Editorial highlights.** When *Canadian Mennonite* was started in 1997, the founding partners agreed that the new magazine should: provide readers with practical spiritual help and information about their church; affirm all levels of church and help to develop unity; address current issues facing the church and provide a forum for grassroots exchange of ideas.

The Faith&Life section has received considerable attention this past year, with energy and impetus from an all-staff planning retreat in the spring. Some of the features grew out of program priorities of our conference partners; for example, "Calling pastors" (June 17), "Native ministry" (October 7), "Ecumenical journey" (January 27), "Missional church" (coming soon!). Others were prompted by broader issues requiring attention: "Health care" (November 18); "Money" (January 13). Some features attracted other articles and became a "cover story."

Several other series grew out of the retreat: "Practical ministry profiles" (of church janitors, secretaries, ushers, librarians, sound technicians) and "Young adults speak" (forum on variety of issues). The "Family Ties" column introduced this past year explores aspects of family life.

The largest sections of the magazine continue to be the Wider and LocalChurch sections. At times we get more articles than we have room for. And the Letters section

remains as popular as ever, with sometimes sharply divergent viewpoints. Such an exchange of views, suggests our mission statement, is not simply to be tolerated or held at arm's length, but is to be welcomed as an integral part of what it means to be the church.

•**Circulation and finances.** Since 1997, *Canadian Mennonite* has used a "community approach" to circulation, whereby conferences budget for subscriptions and actively commend the periodical to all member households. This approach is working well, with over 80 percent of households in most parts of the country receiving the magazine.

As conference finances are stretched, however, the circulation plan comes into question from time to time. A scheduled review of the funding formula in the coming months will be an opportunity to revisit the circulation plan vision as well as the editorial vision. The review could be a time for "covenant renewal" around the founding understandings and vision of this magazine.

While about 60 percent of the costs are covered by a subscription plan shared by Mennonite Church Canada and area conferences, the other 40 percent comes from advertising and fundraising. Both areas have held strong in the past year. Donations totalled around \$59,000 from some 980 donors across the country. Thanks for this interest and support!

•**50th anniversary.** While *Canadian Mennonite* is only in its sixth year, it stands in a longer tradition going back 50 years. On July 3, 1953, D.W. Friesen & Sons Ltd. of Altona, Manitoba, published a sample issue of *The Canadian Mennonite*. The first issue came out October 16, 1953. The paper folded in February 1971. Later that year, a new Ontario-based association launched a similar but new publication called *Mennonite Reporter*. That bi-weekly tabloid was in print until September 1997, when it was replaced by *Canadian Mennonite*.—**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 24 issue by Feb 20.

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Cover: Don and Mary Reimer unfurl the peace banner that is hanging outside the Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. See page 16. Photo by Les Loewen.



Arnaud, Man.

Bereaved pastor sustained by congregation's care

I'm very proud of my congregation," said Lynne Martin, four months after her husband Omar's unexpected death. "Arnaud has felt like home from the beginning.... Everyone has been praying. They haven't stopped and we can tell."

Martin, who shared pastoral duties at Arnaud Mennonite Church with her husband and worked part-time for the United Church, has been lovingly embraced by the pastoral care of her congregation.

She was in Winnipeg attending a Palliative Care Conference the evening of September 19. Omar had stayed home to help their 12-year-old daughter, Carol, move into her newly-renovated bedroom. After sitting down to watch a movie with her, Omar died suddenly of ventricular fibrillation.

Unaware of events at home, Lynne was being led through a grieving process at the Palliative Care Conference.

"It was very profound and very moving. It was like God saying you need to do this," said Martin.

When she arrived home, neighbours and church members were there to greet her. Deacons stayed with her through the night. Friends went to her son Sam, 19, in Winnipeg and picked up her daughter Suzie, 16, from Mennonite Collegiate Institute (MCI) in Gretna.

Omar's death at age 48 was completely unexpected. "He was so healthy. He didn't even have a medical record in Manitoba and we had been here more than three years," said Martin.

Church member Harold Penner contacted the conference offices the night of Omar's death. The next morning, as conference workers logged on to their computers, gasps of shock and dismay rippled through the office.

"Harold also made contacts about my life insurance policy and that was wonderful because there were things I didn't know about," said Martin. "The

church had an emergency council meeting in which they agreed to advance me the money to cover the funeral costs. Six weeks later they made it an outright gift."



Omar and Lynne Martin shared the pulpit at Arnaud Mennonite Church before Omar's unexpected death last September.

Other churches offered their facilities for the funeral and have helped fill the pulpit. MCI has provided programs for the church and supports for Suzie.

With Omar's death, Lynne lost her certainty about many things. She began to question her calling to be a pastor. The church has affirmed her calling and is encouraging her to continue the process toward ordination, begun before Omar's death.

"The affirmation is such a gift and saves me so much emotional energy," said Martin.

The church decided at its fall congregational meeting to raise her salary to 80 percent, retroactive to October 1, and instructed Martin to work only as much as she was able until the end of April.

"This felt really freeing to me," she said. This arrangement has now been

extended to the end of the year. Recently Martin tested her stamina by working full time for a week. "I was able to do it, so 80 percent will work well."

"The church was aware that Omar and I worked very closely together and recognized that this was important in our work," said Martin. "They asked Abe Neufeld, now retired and previously an interim pastor here, to be a mentor and a support to me. It has been a very good fit. My deacons have been so good about protecting me."

One member volunteers in the church office and another couple has helped by setting up a household bookkeeping system. Other members have looked after her vehicles ("one really good way to help widows," noted Martin). In this congregation of 92 members, "everyone wanted to do something. It was a way of working out their grief," she said.

Sustained by her church, Martin has thought about widows elsewhere: "How do they do all this?" A booklet she found helpful was: "When Your Spouse Has Died," written by a Grief Support Group at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. "This is something every pastor should know about," she said.

"How little we really know about our lives," concluded Martin. "Nobody could have predicted Omar's death. If he can die, anything can happen, but I am not afraid."—**Evelyn Rempel**

Petkau

Sign of a Mennonite

Based on the January 27 *Canadian Mennonite* cover, I pose the following: At an ecumenical gathering, how can you tell Mennonites from other Christians?

Answer: Other Christians wear a cross while Mennonites wear name tags. (The cover featured Helmut Harder with a Russian Orthodox priest.)—**Randy Klaassen**

Winnipeg, Man.

Outdoor baptism reflects inner transformation

For his baptism, Giles Ringer wanted more than a sprinkling of water. He wanted immersion.

"For 20 years of my life I wished I was dead, but now I have seen the light and I wanted something outward to express what I feel inwardly," he said. He was baptized on a cold and windy Thanksgiving weekend in the lake at Birds Hill Park in Manitoba.

Ringer, 24, grew up in a Christian home and attended church regularly. Looking back, he realizes that he suffered from an underlying depression for many years. Already in grade seven he was looking for ways to escape it.

Dating relationships followed a destructive pattern of quick intensity and then breaking up. By grade 10, Ringer was drinking heavily at school,

smoking marijuana and partying. His grades were failing.

Suicide always seemed like an option for me. One night I wrote my obituary.

"I would burn or cut my arms. Anytime I was by myself I became depressed. I was really happy

around other people but couldn't stand to be by myself."

Although Ringer saw a social worker in high school, the self-destructive behaviours worsened. "In grade 12 I took a chef's knife to school. I wanted to commit suicide and I didn't want to. I told my social worker. She called my dad and he came down."

During his high school years, Ringer had some positive experiences at Camps with Meaning. He loves the outdoors and working with children and had dreams of running his own camp. He applied to be a counsellor.

"I told them I had no theology background but I had a lot of life experiences. It was a great summer but when I came back at the end of summer, I slipped back into old ways. The experience had restored my faith but...I hadn't made that faith my own."

He went to Canadian Mennonite Bible College for one year, "but it wasn't for me."

He followed a girlfriend to Ontario and studied at Wilfrid Laurier University for two and a half years. When that relationship broke up, he stopped attending church, picked up a bartending job and got back into alcohol and cocaine. He took anti-depressants for awhile but soon quit.

When he realized he had a serious addiction, he decided to return to Winnipeg and pursue his dream of running a camp.

"I came back to Winnipeg clean this past summer. I was hired as assistant Counsellor-in-Training (CIT) director." The two-week CIT program was followed by a slower week and Ringer found himself slipping back into depression.

"Suicide always seemed like an option for me. One night I wrote my obituary. I wrote about my dreams of running a camp and having a family of my own and that sadly these dreams were never realized. All summer I carried that obituary with me."

Evening devotions with the cabin group became times of revelation and deepening faith.

"I started to realize that Jesus died for everyone's sins without them asking for it, knowing we're not perfect. When I realized that I didn't have to be perfect...it didn't seem so unattainable. God will always be there to pick me up."

As he worked with his campers, it became clearer to Ringer that he needed to give over to God those things that stood in the way of a relationship with him. Throughout the



Giles Ringer (second from left) is surrounded by family and friends at his outdoor baptism. Participating are his parents, David (left) and Carol (right), and his pastor, David Epp-Stobbe.

Photo by Jim Penner

weeks of camp, Ringer experienced God strengthening him.

As he shared his faith story one evening, he realized he still carried his obituary.

"I ripped it up and threw it into the fire. I was always looking for meaning in a relationship with someone else but now I was able to see what a great relationship I could have with a loving God."

Ringer decided he wanted to be baptized. "I wanted it outdoors because nature is important to me and because my friends would feel more comfortable in that setting." One friend said he "was honoured to come."

"The people in my church have been hugely accepting," says Ringer. He has been asked to help with the neighbourhood club and youth program at Bethel Mennonite Church.

"I don't regret my past," he says. "The emotional scars are what I have to deal with. The physical scars remind me of what I have given up and how good it is."—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

How e-mail affects relationships

aside old ways. They are changing us in ways we don't yet understand, much less agree with. If we aren't careful, it will be too late to do much about it.

The internet is hardly the first technology to affect the church. One of the earliest was text, which allowed oral stories to be recorded in writing. This likely contributed to a societal shift from wisdom to knowledge. We may now be witnessing a shift of similar magnitude, from knowledge to information. Being able to access information now seems more important than gaining knowledge.

Just another tool?

But isn't the computer just another tool? The nature of tools is that they magnify our work, increasing our ability to do good or evil. In many ways, the computer is only that—a tool which magnifies our work. However, there are some characteristics of the computer that distinguish it from other tools.

Computers are changing at a faster pace than many other tools. More significantly, they are used to help with thinking tasks, which have much more capacity for good or evil than physical tasks alone. We use computers to manipulate information and we even hand over to them the power to make decisions on our behalf.

It used to be that approval of a bank loan was made by a bank employee assessing the risk to the applicant. Now much of that assessment is done by a computer, programmed by experts. The rules are sophisticated and objective, and according to statistics they produce more profitable results by favouring low risk applications. However, individuals are not statistics, and to be treated as one by a computer is disrespectful of our humanity.

Parents are seduced to believe that filtering software can adequately protect their children from inappropri-

ate information on the internet. In effect, they hand over to the computer decision-making power which is best kept with a human parent.

Computers mediate reality

Perhaps the most significant way in which computers differ from other tools is that they mediate reality for us. That computers mediate fiction is evident to anyone who has seen recent movies with computer-generated special effects and animation. That computers mediate the reality of our lives may be less obvious, but it is much more significant.

There are many implications of this computer attribute, but let's explore one—how it affects our relationships with others.

The most important shift in computer use is the rise of networking, primarily through the internet. This is the revolution within the computer revolution that promises, and threatens, to change our lives much more than the personal computer did.

Networks have three primary components: hardware, software and people. The internet is successful because it connects individuals with each other, fostering relationships. If communication is the primary means of building relationships, and the medium is the message, as Marshall McLuhan said, then the computer medium surely impacts relationships.

When we communicate via e-mail or other forms of computer-aided communication, we tend to forget the limitations of the medium. We use patterns learned in face-to-face communication, not recognizing that the medium is flat and narrow and fails to transmit much of what we want to say.

Problems arise when our minds incorrectly fill in the missing pieces at the receiving end of the message. Whether we fill in the missing pieces correctly depends on how well we know the person at the other end of the wire.

Continued on page 8

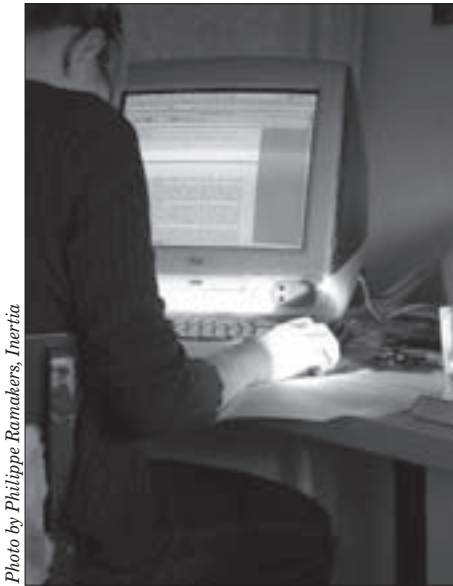


Photo by Philippe Ramakers, Inertia

I remember flipping through a magazine from the 1950s and seeing an advertisement for television. The ad predicted a future where we would view musical performances, theatre, public debates, educational lectures, and even the occasional sporting event or Hollywood movie—all from the comfort of our living rooms.

But Isaac Asimov said: "The important thing to forecast is not the automobile but the parking problem, not the television but the soap opera."

In the 1990s, there was widespread enthusiasm about the internet, similar to the rosy outlook for television, with only a few voices cautioning us of the potential dangers. Now, almost a decade into the internet revolution, these dangers are becoming evident.

Should the church be thinking about computers and the internet? Absolutely. Computers are moving into our lives and our relationships, pushing

Article

From: Stuart Williams
Date: Friday, January 31, 2003 1:16 PM
To: Ron Rempel
Subject: Article

How to use e-mail wisely

While e-mail offers wonderful ways of communicating, it's not always the best tool for the job. From 20 years of experience, here are a few traps to avoid.

**From: Tired-of-replying
To: Me-too
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re:**

While e-mail is often a great way to initiate a conversation with someone, it's rarely the best way to have dialogue. If you find yourself sending a second or third reply on the same topic, pick up the phone and save both of you time and frustration. You'll probably find that a 10-minute phone call is much quicker and more satisfying than spending 30 minutes writing e-mail messages. And in the 10 minutes you spend on the phone you'll probably cover lots of other interesting ground that builds your relationship.

**From: Glued-to-my-screen
To: Not-even-at-my-desk
Subject: Meet for coffee in 10 minutes?**

It's easy to assume when sending e-mails that the recipients will read them immediately, when in fact it may be hours or days before they check their e-mail. Demanding a quick reply won't help if the other person isn't checking e-mail regularly. If it really is urgent, go find them or use the phone.

**From: Mad-you-haven't-answered-yet
To: Out-spending-time-with-my-family
Subject: Don't you check your mail?**

Respect how others choose to use their time, perhaps with family instead of waiting online for your important e-mail. Consider from what your time online is taking you away. Developing online friendships can come at a cost to relationships closer to home.

Respect the deadlines others have. Our ability to send documents last minute via e-mail doesn't create extra time in the recipient's day to read them. Church secretaries waiting for bulletin announcements can tell you that e-mail is a blessing because they

can copy and paste instead of retyping, but e-mail too often arrives last minute—because it can be sent last minute.

**From: My-third-new-computer-in-3-years
To: I-still-don't-own-one
Subject: Join our virtual community!**

Don't assume that everyone has a computer and e-mail. Many people with whom we want to have communication and relationship don't own a computer and perhaps don't want to. A church will best serve people when it can handle all popular forms of communication—such as phone, fax and e-mail—but not require them from everyone.

**From: Power-user-with-latest-software
To: Novice-user-with-no-software
Subject: Here's a nifty new format.**

For recipients of an e-mail message to view an attachment, they need appropriate software—usually the same software that was used to create it. Just because you own the latest version of the most popular word processor on the market doesn't mean everyone to whom you're sending your document does.

If it's just the text that matters, cut and paste it from your word processor into an e-mail message. If formatting matters, work with the recipient to find a mutually agreeable format, or export your document to a standard format such as RTF or HTML that other software can handle.

**From: Assuming-you'll-treat-this-information-carefully
To: Assuming-information-sent-via-e-mail-is-public
Subject: Confidential information.**

E-mail is hard to erase and easy to forward. Don't send anything you wouldn't want repeated, verbatim, to anyone. There are at least two problems. First, we don't have a set of shared expectations for appropriate use of e-mail

messages. Second, we assume e-mail is more similar to other forms of communication such as telephone and written correspondence than it really is. Cut and paste with e-mail is easy, and the context of headers, dates, and recipients can be easily dropped by mistake.

I once sent an e-mail message as moderator of a local Mennonite church to a provincial conference committee. Several months later, while visiting another church, I was thanked for the letter I had written to their church. I later figured out that my e-mail had been forwarded several times, had lost its context of the original list of recipients, and had been photocopied as part of a packet for everyone in that church.

On one hand, I was angry that my words had been used out of their intended context. On the other hand, I learned the lesson that my expectations about e-mail, which include asking for permission before forwarding any e-mail, are not common to everyone.

**From: Trying-to-be-funny
To: Offended-because-I-didn't-know-you-were-joking
Subject: What?!?? ;> Oh NO :o)... Puhleeze!!! :-)**

While there are creative ways to add inflections to written words (including the sideways smile faces in the Subject line above), e-mail is still an extremely flat mode of communicating. Many e-mail users quickly abandon online attempts at sarcasm and other forms of humour because it is so easily misunderstood. If the sender is joking and the recipient doesn't realize it, serious misunderstandings can result. Understand the limits of the medium and either work within them or choose another medium that communicates more richly.—
Stuart Williams

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A helpful way to understand how we fill in these missing pieces is to consider the mental models we develop as we get acquainted with one another. Usually we develop these models in face-to-face interaction, relying significantly on non-verbal communication and shared experiences.

Once a model is in place, it influences every communication with that individual. Without realizing it, we refer to shared experiences to make ourselves understood, we avoid potentially touchy subjects to avoid offence, and we interpret words differently with that individual than we would with someone else.

Of course, our model of the other person is never perfect, and a frequent source of frustration is when a person has changed but the model has not. We experience this as young adults when our parents' models of us have not yet caught up with the changes that have occurred within us.

When we know someone well, e-mail can be a very effective means of communicating. We are able to fill in the missing pieces, such as nuances of emphasis, by using our mental model of the person.

Anyone who has maintained a long-distance friendship by letter or e-mail knows that writing is great for keeping in touch. In fact, it often provides fresh perspectives on the relationship and deepens it.

But what happens when we use e-

mail to develop a relationship? In the absence of a mental model, we may assume that progress is occurring faster than it really is. And we may fill in missing pieces from our desires and build a faulty model.

This is especially true if we have high hopes for a relationship, such as looking for romance online.

Internet romance

Developing a romance via correspondence can be very effective. Writing provides discipline and objectivity in striving to connect with another soul. However, in many cases the medium is less helpful than we think.

Imagine two persons who have never met but are corresponding to see if they might develop a romantic relationship. The man says he is handsome and the woman imagines Robert Redford. She says she likes the outdoors and he imagines a 10-day canoe trip in the wilderness.

Eventually they meet, only to realize that neither chat rooms nor e-mail transmit body odour, annoying habits or a bad temper. Too often, real life doesn't live up to what was imagined.

While internet romance demonstrates extremes of computer-mediated relationships, most of us have experienced misunderstandings in conversations. Awareness of the limits of e-mail and other computer-aided communication can help us in thinking about how we build the church.

Virtual committees

I'm often asked what I think about using e-mail to replace meetings of committees, especially when the members live far apart. Despite e-mail being a much slower form of communication than a telephone call or talking in person, it works well for communicating ideas to a large group without a meeting. Committee members can live half way around the world from each other and still have significant discussion on a topic over a period of days or weeks. By laying the groundwork ahead of time, face-to-face meetings

can run much more smoothly and quickly.

However, if committee members do not know each other well, they should not assume that e-mail is just as good as meeting in person.

Not only is e-mail much more time consuming than talking, there are other misunderstandings and frustration. The misunderstandings come from faulty models as described above. The frustration often comes from expectations about how fast communi-

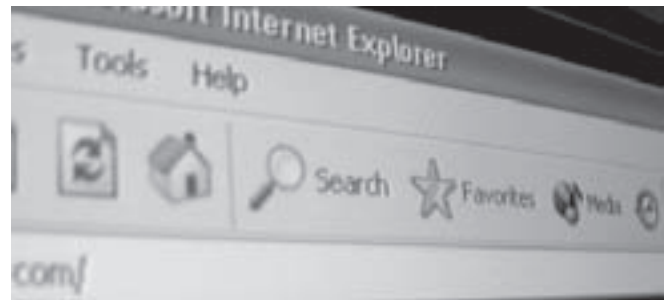


Photo by Vincus, Inertia

cation should work based on face-to-face meetings.

Suppose it takes 30 minutes of meeting time to resolve an issue, with half that time being the presentation and the other half dialogue. It is naive to think that the same 30 minutes spent composing e-mail messages will be as productive. We become frustrated with each other rather than seeing that the problem is the communication medium itself.

How we relate via e-mail is but one way computers are changing relationships. And how computers are changing our relationships is but one way in which they are changing our lives.

When God sought relationship with humanity, God did not write a letter or send e-mail; God sent Jesus. And Jesus was not just a messenger from God—he was God incarnate. If the message was so important, Jesus could have just written his own Gospel. Instead he built his church by building relationships, in person.

Our lives are filled with relationships. E-mail can sometimes foster relationships, but its usefulness is severely limited and sometimes misleading. Although the computer is an effective tool, its effect is not always what we wish.—**Stuart Williams**

The writer teaches Computer Science at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg.

More on computer communication

Church of England. *Cybernavts Awake: Ethical and Spiritual Implications of Computers, Information Technology, and the Internet*. Church House Publishing, 1999.

Kimberly S. Young. *Caught in the Net: How to Recognize the Signs of Internet Addiction and a Winning Strategy for Recovery*. John Wiley and Sons, 1998.

David J. Wood. "Changing the Rules of Engagement," in *Congregations* (from The Alban Institute), May/June 2001.

Monsma, Stephen V., ed. *Responsible Technology: A Christian Perspective*. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986.

What role computers play in my life

Canadian Mennonite asked young adults about their personal use of computers and electronic communication. This is the second in a series from young adults.

I have my own laptop and I don't know how I could function without it. My university offers free Internet access.

I don't stay on long, usually under 10 minutes, but I go on at least once a day to check my e-mail. E-mail, by far, dominates my computer time.

I don't play computer games unless I am horribly bored or procrastinating. I've been in one chat room and that was enough! I don't watch movies on my computer, though my roommates do. Sometimes we'll all be sitting on the couch with our computers on our laps, one watching a movie, the other e-mailing, the other writing an essay, listening to music, and none of us disturbing the other.

Laptops are a university necessity. If I'm concerned about an issue I can check it out without having to go to the library. Many of the things I look up I wouldn't even know where to begin searching for elsewhere. Because I don't subscribe to any newspapers, I use the Internet as my news source.

I think electronic communication is awesome, dangerous, convenient and scary all rolled together.

Sure, I've been sent disgusting e-mail forwards and I know people who have happened across perverse web sites, but as easy as it is to get into these sites, it's just as easy to get out of them. If people are looking for trouble they will find it with or without computers.

I think e-mail benefits relationships. For people like me who don't write letters or enjoy the phone, it's an excellent means of keeping in touch.—**Tamara Petkau, Carman, Man.**

I own my own computer, but I happened to buy [a used one] quite cheaply. I have Internet access which is collectively paid for by myself and the others I live with.

I use it 2-3 hours a week for personal use. I don't "surf the net" all that much, unless I am researching something. I mostly respond to e-mails. I don't use chat rooms at all.

I used to be on ICQ [chat network], but I found it addictive and distracting.

I think electronic communication is wonderful when it connects you to friends and family. However, I would say that it is dangerous, or tedious, because of the sites one is not interested in seeing (e.g. porn). Some links have misleading titles and if one makes the mistake of going to a porn site, one will be bombarded with all sorts of other sites, and it is difficult to get away from them without shutting down the computer entirely.

I would also say it's dangerous because of all the information available. We don't know how well protected our personal data is.—**Ana Fretz, Waterloo, Ont.**

I own my own computer. I want a better one but I don't like to waste money so I'll wait. I have a cable modem; it's quick and I can be permanently online.

It's hard to know how much personal time I spend online...every other day? Definitely every weekend day. I use my computer for e-mail. I use the web to find out what's on.

I use the web to solve any problems or curiosities I have. I use it to explore sociopolitical concepts I want to learn more about—for understanding, to change how I live. I use it for personal business. I play freecell once in a while but I'm not a games person.

Electronic communication is essential. I don't feel it discourages other communication. I still want face-to-face contact—body language is not easily e-transmittable. And I certainly want voice contact. Thank goodness for cheap long distance packages.

But I have a lot of e-mail groups. We keep everyone informed and in conversation. But if you don't know your e-mail correspondent very well, tone can be miscommunicated.—**Natasha Wiebe Dyck, Edmonton, Alta.**

I spend little time worrying about computers or the Internet. My apathy probably comes from hearing the questions too many times. Will the

Internet ruin relationships? (Will human cloning disprove the soul's existence? Will gay marriages ruin the family, the church?)

We spend excessive time debating issues that we cannot entirely control. The Internet exists (as does homosexuality). Our changing world flows down a current that cannot yet be fully damned (pun intended) or fathomed. Our role is to act like Christ: to remain relevant and loving, to trust that even when the rapids of God's river get out of control, we wear lifejackets that free us to dive right in.

I own a computer, a nice one with pentium-power, swirly screen savers, and all those bells and whistles that I neither understand nor need. That last sentence sounds like my grandfather. And therein lies one of the truths about electronic communication. Today's technology ages so rapidly that incomprehension and feelings of irrelevance can

threaten us at a young age.

At the age of 22, I can feel as overwhelmed about computers as a grandfather with a microwave and a wife on vacation. I can only imagine how I will feel when my children look to me for technological guidance. As society becomes increasingly dependent on a technology it cannot understand, and must remain "cutting edge" to use, I wonder how much wider the generation gap will get.

Will I be able to relate to the world my children live in? Will I be able to communicate my values in a relevant way? It's an interesting dilemma, but one that will be overcome. The basic Mennonite values—love, community, and "the priesthood of all believers"—have prevailed through centuries of change. I am confident that our children will not grow out of them. We will just have to accept that we may not understand the way they live them out.—**Peter Epp, Winnipeg, Man.**

Young adults speak

What do you think?

We welcome responses from young adults to the issues discussed in this column. Send your thoughts to managinged@canadianmennonite.org

The least of these

I hurried home to wash my hands
 he had after all touched them
 his fingers closing over mine
 as he grasped the precious, nearly
 worthless coin

he had seen me buying oranges
 from the woman with the wailing child
 and the horse-drawn wagon full
 of freshly-picked, juicy mandarin
 oranges,
 had asked for a coin,
 then for an orange as well,
 (when was the last time
 he'd had a whole ripe unblemished
 orange?)
 his soot-blackened, street-filthied
 fingers
 closed over mine
 he wished me God's blessing...
 and I hurried home to wash my hands

Did Jesus hurry home to wash his
 hands
 after healing the
 lepers/feeding
 the multitudes/
 raising the dead?
 Did he?

Helen Baergen



Rita Corbin

Cursed Is the Ground

Do we discourse
 of West Nile Virus
 Mad Cow Disease
 AIDS, the Ebola Virus
 Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Cancer

As our predecessors talked
 of Bubonic Plague
 Smallpox, Malaria
 Tuberculosis and Polio

As the Egyptians whispered
 of the seven plagues
 the death of firstborns
 and unnatural drownings

Are you keeping well?

last night
 my mother's voice
 at the other end,
 "Are you keeping well?"
 and I smell prairie attic dust & dill
 dried between layers of yellowing
 Saskatoon Star-Phoenix
 and stored in ancient Roger's Golden
 Syrup pails;
 "How is it going with your work?"
 and I hear memories in the sighing
 the old clock ticking
 echoes in a wind-swept, nearly-empty
 house,
 the creak of the third step
 on the stairs,
 the clink of the front door,
 (we never could sneak in).

today
 an old woman lies
 on a hard, broken-up sidewalk,

As Noah's descendants
 of the flood
 and Adam's race
 of weeds and childbirth

As Saint John
 of the great tribulation
 plagues of fire, smoke and sulphur
 the seven angels
 with the seven last plagues

As God in his heaven
 of keeping us challenged
 lest we think ourselves
 as gods?

Alvin Ens

her grey hair a matted mop on
 a garbage bag pillow,
 another garbage bag clutched in
 weathered, leathery hands,
 her feet wrapped, neatly,
 in layers of garbage bags,
 (someone must have taken time and
 care to do that),
 like everyone else in their smart-soled
 feet,
 I step over, around her,
 while she sleeps.

Is she someone's mother?
 Has she ever had the privilege of
 asking, "Are you keeping well?"
 (Has anyone ever asked her?)

Helen Baergen

*The poet is a Mennonite Church Canada Witness
 worker in Bogotá, Colombia.*

Woe to the shepherds

Woe to the shepherds of Israel
 who only take care of themselves!
 Should not shepherds take care of
 the flock?
 You eat the curds, clothe yourselves
 with the wool
 and slaughter the choice animals,
 but you do not take care of the flock.
 You have not strengthened the weak
 or healed the sick
 or bound up the injured.
 You have not brought back the
 strays
 or searched for the lost....
 The Sovereign Lord says:
 I myself will search for my sheep
 and look after them.
 I will tend them in a good pasture,
 I will search for the lost and bring
 back the strays.
 I will bind up the injured
 and strengthen the weak,
 But the sleek and the strong I will
 destroy.
 I will shepherd the flock with
 justice.

*From Ezekiel 34
 (New International Version)*

Publishing notes

Confronting the Horror: The Aftermath of Violence is a new book by Wilma Derksen, director of Victims' Voice for Mennonite Central Committee Canada. The book is being launched together with a re-release of *Have You Seen Candace*, a book Derksen wrote 18 years ago when her 13-year-old daughter was murdered. *Confronting the Horror* draws upon Derksen's reactions and those of other victims of violent crime that she has met over the years. It identifies 15 elements along the journey toward recovery. The book is available for \$27.75 from Kindred Productions, phone 1-800-669-7322. Also available from Kindred is *Getting Through the Maze* by Sue Simpson, a guidebook on the bureaucracy surrounding the murder of loved ones.—From MCC release

Herald Press has issued a gift edition of *Martyrs Mirror* with a premium bonded leather cover. The 1,158-page book contains accounts of more than 4,000 martyred Christians, with over 50 etchings by Dutch artist Jan Luyken, from the 1685 edition. The book was first published in 1660 and translated into English in 1837. The gift edition sells for \$140.49.—Herald Press release

The Mennonite conference in the Netherlands (*Algemene Doopsgezinde Sociëteit*) is experimenting with a new magazine. A sample of *Zijn* (Being), designed by Aapmedia, a communications company, was sent to all members last fall with a questionnaire for their response. The magazine introduces the new conference logo and is part of various changes that leaders are introducing to help arrest the slide in church membership and attract new readers. There has been no decision yet about the current periodical, *Algemeen Doopsgezind Weekblad*. A committee will look at communications options and report to the spring meeting of congregational representatives. The new magazine has generated a lively debate in the current paper.—From report by **Lydia Penner**

Pandora Press U.S. is changing its name to Cascadia Publishing House, primarily to signal its independence from Pandora Press in Canada. Head of Cascadia is Michael King, based in Telford, Pennsylvania. Cascadia will continue to cooperate with Pandora and Herald Press in publishing Anabaptist scholarship; it publishes creative, non-academic works under the name DreamSeeker Books. One of Cascadia's offerings is *DreamSeeker Magazine*, dedicated to personal, passionate writing on matters of faith. The magazine is entering its second year. To view an issue or subscribe, see

www.cascadiapublishinghouse.com/dsm/ or call (215) 723-9125.—From Pandora Press U.S. release

The Council on Church and Media (CCM) has begun an online newsletter, "e-Forum," that can be found at its new web site: www.churchandmedia.org. Editor is Cathleen Hockman-Wert. The council will no longer be circulating "Forum" in the mail. CCM is an association of Mennonites who work in media. CCM's 2003 conference will be held April 22-24 in Indianapolis.—From release

Arts notes

Lecture on Eby diaries

Paul Tiessen of Kitchener, Ontario, winner of the 2002 Edna Staebler Research Fellowship, will give a presentation on February 27 at 7:30 p.m. at the historic Joseph Schneider Haus in Kitchener. The title is: "The poetics of everyday life: Gordon Christian Eby's diary from pre-war Berlin to post-war Kitchener." Eby, a market-gardener, was a great-grandson of Mennonite bishop Benjamin Eby, a founder of Berlin (Kitchener). Tiessen teaches literature and film at Wilfrid Laurier University. Admission is free. Phone (519) 742-7752 to reserve seating.

Mennonite history drama

Mennonite: Faith or Tradition? is the title of a drama created by Dan and Eddy Rempel of the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church in Aylmer, Ontario. The idea began in Mennonite history class at Steinbach Bible College where Dan, now working in multi-media production, became enthusiastic about communicating Mennonite history. The drama project took shape with the help of his brother Eddy, an amateur historian. Over 80 people from 12 local churches participated in the production. Debbie Miller (Sommerfeld Mennonite) and Marylu Neufeld (Evangelical Mennonite Conference), directed the performance. To simplify and communicate to local

Low German Mennonites, Rempels followed the story of the Mexican Mennonites, focusing on: separation of church and state, Mennonite culture, and the balance between faith and tradition. The drama was launched in three performances last October. Videos of the production are available at: www.faithortradition.ca/video/.—From January *EMMC Recorder*

Benefit for seniors' home

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra and Chorus performed Handel's *Messiah* as a benefit concert at the Leamington United Mennonite Church in Ontario on December 22. The concert raised \$11,000 for the expansion project of the Leamington Mennonite Home. About 37 patrons from the community each paid \$200 to bring in the symphony. Soloists were Pablo Bustos, Steven Henrikson, Catherine McKeever and Melinda Enns. Conductor was Scott Speck. Project Home Rebuild plans to add 84 long-term beds to the seniors' home at a cost of \$7.6 million. The fundraising goal is \$1,344,000 over three years; \$556,757 of that has come in so far. The Ministry of Health is providing the rest of the funding in annual installments over 20 years.—From Mennonite Home release

MCC faces dilemma of sending aid

The response of Christian compassion must be quick and compelling. But what happens when the actions of the church come in conflict with the government?

A Presbyterian mission couple from the United States confronted an African member of parliament about his calls for revenge on “rebels.” As a result, the mission workers were pronounced “enemies” of the state and given 48 hours to leave the country. Citizens were warned that they would reap the full wrath of the law if they dared meet with these “traitors.” Nevertheless, hundreds of local Christians flocked to bid their tearful farewells in a spirit of solidarity, hospitality and compassion.

Similar dilemmas arise regularly for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers who walk with a hurting world.

Aid from Canada

It is doubtful that the Canadian government would prohibit Mennonite Central Committee from providing assistance in the event of an Iraq war. Since 1990, when the United Nations imposed sanctions against Iraq, Canadian officials have been quick to give MCC Canada clearance and to assist us in getting UN clearance.

Further, when we have sent goods from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, we have used CIDA [Canadian International Development Agency] matching funds. In the Spring of 2000, the Canadian government made a \$1 million grant for humanitarian needs in Iraq.

Throughout the 1980s, when American law restricted Americans from providing assistance to Cambodia, we were not restricted, except on using CIDA money. Thanks to member of parliament John Reimer and Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Clark, that issue was eventually resolved too.—MCC Ottawa Office release by Bill Janzen

At the request of the Middle East Council of Churches and the Islamic Relief Association, MCC has been providing medicines, food, blankets and other supplies for hospitals, seniors homes, orphanages, farms and schools of a war-torn, sanctions-devastated Iraq. Permission from the government has been received for shipments originating in the U.S. These requests always take several months.

At a recent meeting, the MCC Executive Committee posed the question: What if these permissions are delayed or denied? With many signs pointing toward war in Iraq, with leaked United Nations documents predicting massive civilian casualties, and with immense ongoing suffering caused by the UN sanctions, what should MCC do if a compassionate response is prohibited?

These questions go to the heart of our faith. Christ made it clear that when we care for the suffering, we are caring for him (Matthew 25). He told his followers to feed the hungry, and when they did, there was much left over (Matthew 14). Love your “enemy,” he said, as you love your neighbour (Matthew 5).

Paul tells us that if our enemies have needs we should assist them (Romans 12). The apostles declared that they must obey God rather than human authority (Acts 5). What is the meaning of Jesus’ invitation to “come follow me” in this current situation?

These questions penetrate to the core of our experience. Members of our community of faith who were helped by MCC in the Ukraine in the 1920s, in Europe in the 40s, in Ethiopia in the 80s, and currently in southern Africa, understand the necessity of overcoming governmental barriers to secure assistance.

These questions are not new. During

the Vietnam war MCC found alternative routes to send assistance to North Vietnam and Cambodia. During the apartheid years in South Africa, MCC provided assistance to fleeing refugees, support for political prisoners, and spiritual counsel to conscientious

objectors defying the law. All of these actions were taken to be faithful to Christ’s call.

What are the options? One would be to by-pass this dilemma by assisting others in need. Is this “walking by on the other side” (Luke 10)? Another could be to wait until we have all the necessary approvals, either during a

war or after a “regime change” (as already requested by a government agency). Is this putting human authority above God’s call (Acts 4-5)?

Still another option would be to respond to the cries of those in need regardless of hurdles put in the way. Does this issue warrant setting aside the directions of governing authorities (Romans 13)?

To send or not send assistance is a highly political matter. People in Iraq, like those in other countries, including our own, suffer because political leaders seem more concerned with power and control than with safeguarding the welfare of the “least of these.”

So what options are most faithful? Who decides? How best do we demonstrate Christ’s love to all?

The MCC Executive Committee has agreed to review the requirement of government approval, pending the outcomes of current requests and the threat of war.

Like the African Christians coming to say farewell to the expelled couple, the sense of the meeting focused on solidarity, hospitality and compassion for the suffering.—**Ron Mathies, MCC Executive Secretary**

One option would be to respond to the cries of those in need regardless of hurdles put in the way.

Letters

Church laws always under scrutiny

It is often proclaimed that the scriptures clearly express the will of God regarding homosexuality, end of story. Further, the current debate has been called “unholy” in this letters section, amid pleas for it to cease immediately.

Despite our commitment to nonviolent conflict resolution, we have brandished our arguments in evident anger, hurling scripture at one another across great distances, both physical and spiritual. This is war-waging, and we should cry out against it. But our cries should be for the spirit of the debate to change, not for the subject to be dropped.

We have deliberated over many issues affecting church law for as long as they have remained at issue, or until we, in weariness and frustration, have broken fellowship along lines of difference. But none of us can expect

the difficult and essential work of real dialogue, of face-to-face exchange with ears and hearts open, in good faith, to be done in an environment poisoned by self-righteous pontificating.

Throwing scriptural grenades at one another from the cover of our bunkers accomplishes nothing. Letter writers repeat continually that the Bible must be our guide. True, but the Bible is not a weapon.

Like every denomination, Mennonites over the centuries have contrived and changed their church laws through a process of careful selection and weighted reading of scripture, sometimes with painful results. These laws are imperfect and shift, and so are unsuitable as a lasting foundation for the church.

Since these laws only derive from scripture and are not themselves the Word, they are not holy, just as we have said the bread and wine of communion and the water of baptism are not holy.

These laws must not compete with

God for our ultimate allegiance. They are not self-justifying, and so will be tested and re-tested in light of the whole Bible. They will be challenged, altered or upheld by both leaders and laity, perpetually. The church that does not practise such self-appraisal is dead.—**Karl Kessler, Waterloo, Ont.**

Hospitality is not evangelism

Henry Neufeld (Jan. 13 letter) refers to Eugene Peterson’s suggestion that we use the word “hospitality” in place of “evangelism.” I find that line of thinking appalling.

Christ did not tell us to go into all the world and be hospitable. He told us to evangelize. I am very concerned by the apparent trend in today’s Mennonite churches. They seem eager to lay aside those very doctrines that Christ taught and Menno Simons was willing to die for.—**Ike Fehr, New Hamburg, Ont.**

Telling your stories, shaping your family

At a recent course on worship and mission, I was reminded of the essential nature of story-telling. As my professors, Alan and Eleanor Kreider, said, “We tell the Bible story to remember who we are. Telling our story shapes our identity.” When we neglect to tell the stories of how God has acted in the past and in our lives today, we forget that we are a chosen and blessed people. We forget who we are.

Which led me to how story-telling shapes family identity. I have a favourite story about my first family called “23 Cents.” In this story, a newlywed couple in Pennsylvania sets out for their honeymoon to Florida. They’re driving the groom’s father’s car because they don’t have a car. In fact, the groom is unemployed, having lost his carpentry job two weeks before the wedding.

Undaunted they tour around Florida celebrating the scenery and their young love. When they return home, the bride, my mom, is pregnant and they have 23 cents left.

I like this story because it conveys a sense of exuberance and risk, a

willingness to throw everything they have into the adventure of marriage and family, undeterred by realities like being teenagers with no income and a baby on the way. Sometimes when I’m stuck between a cautious, sober response and a spontaneous leap into the unknown, I remember these ancestors.

In the family I’m creating, I recall that



during a long period of grief, we lost the capacity to tell our stories. Our numb silence prevented us from reviewing our history; we were unable to claim how we had surmounted challenges in the past, or to draw strength from our comedies. Our inability to tell our stories separated us from our history and deadened our present. Our identity as a living, responsive and healthy family was diminished.

During this time, my husband Dean and I visited my grandfather shortly after he turned 90. While Pap’s storytelling tended to be short and wry, often punched with a closing quip, my husband invited Pap on this occasion to reflect on the secret of a long life. Pap’s eyes softened, partly I think because of the near fatal health crisis he’d recently endured.

“Mercy,” he said after a pause, bringing his gaze back to Dean. “Isn’t God’s mercy what it’s all about?”

We smiled in that moment of sharing family and faith history, bathed in the glow of such a thought, that the contours of our lives are shaped by God’s freely bestowed blessings.

Friends, tell your family stories to each other, the long ones and the short ones. Don’t leave out the sad ones, and laugh with your whole belly over the funny ones. Drop one into your teenager’s ear while ferrying to an activity. Make sure you hear the elders and those whose voices are soft and young. Stories shape identity.

Melissa Miller, a counsellor and author, operates Family Ties. She is a member of Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

Letters

Concern is consumerism, not capitalism

It is not really a question of whether capitalism is good or bad. Most of us in Canada have been served very well by it.

Perhaps it would be better to start at another point: with consumerism. The last two generations of us have made excessive consumerism the engine of our economic system to an unprecedented degree. The pundits who monitor our economic system get worried when we stop buying things and don't empty the shelves in our malls.

What makes us buy and consume so we can buy and consume again tomorrow? Remarkably successful advertising, no longer hidden persuasion that we need all these things, that we will not be successful or fulfilled unless we surround ourselves with goods which replace the still-serviceable goods of yesterday because what we bought yesterday is inferior to today's new and improved model.

All this has refashioned us from intelligent human beings made in the image of God into robotic units of consumption. As an advertising expert said cynically on CBC radio, we have become cockroaches who gobble up the roach bait of the advertisers. That is how we are viewed, as units of consumption by economic planners, and by the advertising industry as insects who can be lured by tasty bait.

By this blind consumerism we contribute to the crying injustices elsewhere in the world. We demand to be protected from competition; we enjoy coffee and bananas at low prices because the producers are forced to sell for less than the cost of production.

Thus growing consumption of products, most of which we don't need, drives our economy. It is capitalist insofar as it is profit-driven, but that does not justify us in condemning it. I can visualize a capitalist system which is regulated, in which there is thoughtful economic planning, in which excess is not necessary.

It does not need to be regulation by

government. We who buy, and thereby reward the drive for profit, can be the regulators. If a million Christians in Canada could commit themselves to spend only on what they truly need—food, transportation, adequate shelter, and an allowance for music and theatre and community sports—we could help create conditions under which the whole system would respond to a lower level of consumer expectation.

We are free to buy locally whatever fresh products are in season, instead of insisting on lettuce and strawberries from California and tomatoes from Mexico. We are also entirely free to buy Canadian, supporting our own producers of food. It is not right when a major food chain will not sell potatoes grown in Canada.

It is easy to condemn capitalism. To live by the standards of kingdom of God justice and sufficiency is a call to every person who claims the name of Christ, and that is never easy. We can do something about our economy, even a capitalist one. We simply have to want to do it.—**Walter and Ruth Klaassen, Saskatoon, Sask.**

Money not the real issue

The impact of "Mennonites, money and morality" (Jan. 13, page 6) is reduced by lumping together three distinct concepts: income, wealth and money. While we tend to measure our wealth with money, they are not money.

The author notes a tendency to define capitalists as those who focus on making money. Only the Bank of Canada, the Treasury Board and commercial banks have the legal power to create money. We can hardly define being a capitalist in terms of these institutions.

Striving for more income, whether in business or as an employee, may become a problem for some, but it is a normal activity for most of us. The corporation, as a form of organizing business, permits a small number of business leaders to exercise enormous power. The vast majority of business persons, farmers and self-employed persons do not have such power. Their ability to shape capitalism is similar to the rest of us when we act as

consumers or when we invest for our retirement.

It is the exercise of power by large corporations that generates much of the debate on capitalism.

The distinction between church organizations and business firms is also somewhat artificial. Yes, we need conversations within our churches. But a willingness to be open and transparent needs to flow in both directions. It is my observation that church organizations tend to be more open to talk about how they operate than are business leaders.

Finally, if receiving a subsidy is a sign of lacking business acumen we are indeed in deep trouble. In Canada, the value of subsidies to large corporations and farmers exceeds by a considerable margin subsidies received by church organizations.—**Henry Rempel, Winnipeg, Man.**

Keep church deficit in perspective

The consternation over Mennonite Church Canada's bookkeeping error of 10 percent has gone on long enough. I believe we have a competent board to look after the business of our church. Consequently, the cost-saving measures suggested should be placed on hold.

To place the shortfall into perspective, one doctor (and we have many in our constituency) often earns that much in a single year. And, as pointed out in recent issues of *Canadian Mennonite*, many other church members live fairly comfortably as well. I tip my hat to Aiden Schlichting Enns for initiating an excellent discussion and hope that he will send in a rejoinder soon.

If there were 499 Mennonites who would be willing to show love in action and join me in sending in \$1000 to our MC Canada office, we could go on to more pressing matters facing the church. For example, how do we go about loving each other in the church in fact?

I believe we are fairly well versed in areas of peace and justice and fairly sophisticated in our disobedience in matters of the heart when it comes to the brother in the church.—**Walter Quiring, Surrey, B.C.**

Akron, Pa.

Young volunteers killed by flood in Indonesia

Two Mennonite Central Committee workers in Indonesia were killed in a flash flood on January 22 in the mountains outside Salatiga, Java.

Alana Fife, 21, of Winnipeg was found dead the next day 10 kilometres from where flood waters washed her away. The body of Hannah Showaker, 24, of Newville, Pennsylvania, was found the day of the flood. The women had been hiking with another MCC worker and an Indonesian friend.



Fife

Fife and Showaker were in a one-year MCC Serving and Learning

Together (SALT) program. They had been in Indonesia since August.

Fife was a student at the University of Winnipeg and a member of Calvary Temple. In Indonesia she was teaching English in Solo, Java. Showaker was a 2002 graduate of Messiah College in Grantham, Pa. She was a member of the Brethren in Christ Church.

“The entire MCC family and supporting faith community are deeply shocked at the tragedy that has befallen these two families,” said Ron Mathies, MCC executive director. “Both Hannah Showaker and Alana Fife have been described as young women of grace and strong character who were making an impact on children in their communities in Indonesia.

According to MCC Indonesia, Daniel

Warren, also with the SALT program, was taking a photograph of Showaker and Fife as they stood in ankle-deep water at the Sekar Langit Falls. Without warning, a wall of water rushed over the falls and swept the two women away. The two young men managed to escape the flood.



Showaker

Local people responded immediately to Warren’s call for help, including worshipers at a local mosque. More than 100 people joined the search for Showaker and Fife.—MCC release

Lancaster, Pa.

MEDA to help administer U.S. Compassion Fund

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) has received \$1 million from the United States government to strengthen community and faith-based groups engaged in economic development.

MEDA is one of 21 agencies receiving funding from the new Compassion Capital Fund of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The funds will enable MEDA’s North American Business Development Department, based in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to work with economic development services in six locations: Chicago, Peoria, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, Miami and Los Angeles.

The funding represents a new form of outreach; none of the money will go to MEDA’s current programs. Since 1993, MEDA has been training aspiring entrepreneurs through its ASSETS program, which now operates in 10 North American cities.

“That work has given us an understanding of the challenges facing small community-based organizations,” says

Howard Good, MEDA’s vice-president of North American Services. “We are now drawing on that experience to assist a wider circle of faith-based and community-based organizations.”

The goal is to help these organizations in planning, managing finances, board relationships, tracking performance, expanding services and increasing support through grant writing and fundraising.

Good expects the funding to continue and perhaps increase for a second and third year. About a third of the grant will be passed on to other agencies.

The \$30 million Compassion Fund is part of the U.S. government’s strategy to empower grassroots development groups.

“For too long, government has made it difficult, if not impossible, for small charities and faith-based organizations to provide federally-funded services,” noted one official. The fund is “key” to helping these charities “expand their services to needy Americans.”—From MEDA release

MEDA award

Edvy Durandice, who rides a mule to visit his clients, recently received the Credit Officer of the Year award from Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) for his work in



Durandice

Haiti. In Haiti’s volatile economy, Durandice’s portfolio of clients and community banks continues to grow—he manages the highest number of community banks of all MEDA credit officers. When MEDA recently offered to buy Durandice a motorcycle, he declined. He prefers a mule because it is more reliable in the hilly terrain he travels and is easier to maintain. “Two other credit officers in the region are now thinking of turning in their motos for mules,” noted Pam Fehr, MEDA program manager.—MEDA release

Report from Iraq

Larry Kehler of Winnipeg joined a Christian Peacemaker Team delegation in Iraq from December 26 to January 9. The following is from his report.

The 11-day visit I made to Iraq was one of the most memorable trips of my life.

Why did I go? As the war rhetoric grew louder during the past year, I became increasingly distressed by the reluctance of the USA and its allies to consider any nonviolent ways to resolve the situation. As I searched for words and ways of peace on the Internet I came across Voices in the Wilderness. This organization had been sending delegations—Iraq Peace Teams—since 1996 to assure the people in that country that not everyone in North America favours war.

Soon thereafter, Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) announced that it would be sending delegations to Iraq under the Voices in the Wilderness umbrella. My wife, Jessie, was supportive of my going. Our church's Peace and Justice group was also a

strong factor. My congregation, Charleswood Mennonite Church, had a commissioning prayer for me on the Sunday before I left.

I followed the preparation guidelines, including immunizations. Although I had no premonition of special danger, I checked my will and left information about insurance policies and bank accounts with Jessie.

Our delegation was a wonderful mix: 3 Canadians and 14 Americans, 8 females and 9 males, and an age range from the mid-20s to the high 70s. It had persons from Catholic, Church of the Brethren, Lutheran, Mennonite, Presbyterian and Quaker backgrounds. We had worship and prayer each day.

Our experience is indelibly etched in my memory for several reasons: a) the death of team member George Weber in an accident during our visit; b) the opportunity to see the faces of Iraqi people who may well die in the coming weeks because of the sanctions and a possible invasion, c) the hospitality shown to us wherever we went; d) the commitment of health care workers to

their patients in spite of the lack of medications and equipment; e) the amicable relations we observed between Christians and Muslims; and f) the inspiration I received from delegation members.

On my return home, I was deeply moved by the growing opposition among Canadians to an invasion of Iraq.

Did we make a difference? I think we did. Iraqis told us they felt encouraged by our presence, and they wanted us to communicate their deep desire for peace to people in Canada and the USA. But as so often happens, not only did our being there strengthen them, they were a source of inspiration.

Another blessing was to become acquainted with George Weber. I appreciated his sense of humour and his commitment to the cause of peace and justice. His death was a major trauma for me and the other members of the delegation. One of his last gifts to the cause of peace was the fact that his death resulted in a lot of media attention in North America. I have received many calls for interviews which gave me the opportunity to talk about the purpose of our visit.—Larry Kehler

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Congregation's peace witness goes public

The Peace and Justice group from Charleswood Mennonite Church recently went public with its witness for peace. On January 19, members dedicated a banner reading "Pray for Peace; Act for Peace" and then hung it on the outside of the church (see cover).

One member commented that this banner will also be useful for the church to carry during peace walks in the future.

Given the escalating tensions in the Middle East and other parts of the world, Charleswood saw this as one way of engaging its neighbours with a message of peace. Members had seen similar banners being promoted by Mennonite Church USA, and during their November meeting agreed that this was something worth pursuing. The banner was made locally for \$300.—Charleswood release

Winnipeg, Man.

Students voice concerns for Iraq

With a war in Iraq looming, students at Canadian Mennonite University are trying to raise awareness of a peaceful alternative.

“The basic reason is that we feel compelled as Christians to work for peace,” says Jason Hinds, co-chair of the Peace and Social Awareness Committee. “We want to call people past awareness into progressive action.”

Students are organizing a number of events including discussions, videos and peace rallies with other organizations. In an act of solidarity with Iraqis, about 80 students repeated last year’s initiative of a week-long diet of lentils and rice—some of the only food Iraqi citizens have under the international sanctions imposed on them.

Students divided into nine “families” to share provisions. Each student was allowed one cup of rice, half a cup of lentils, three pieces of bread and three bags of tea. Each family was encouraged to share information about the conflict and to pray for peace and for those affected by the sanctions.

Those efforts drew media attention, such as CBC’s *The National*, which was documenting grassroots opposition to the war. Students are also collecting donations for MCC relief kits for Iraq.

Some students took advantage of CMU’s location on Grant Avenue—a busy four-lane highway—to reach a wider audience. “No War in Iraq” appeared on at least two buildings facing the street. The peace committee also established an area in a student lounge called “The Axis of Information,” stocked with information from sources such as MCC, UNICEF and Christian Peacemaker Teams. Students also organized a letter-writing campaign to federal government representatives.

On January 25, CMU’s Mennonite Oratorio Choir performed two calls for peace at Winnipeg’s New Music Festival. One was *Agnes Dei* (Lamb of God) by Polish composer Krzysztof



Photo by Lynette Wiebe

A student peruses the “Axis of Information” wall at CMU.

Penderecki. The other was a call on God to protect us from war by Estonian composer Veljo Tormis. Both

works made a profound impact on the choir and audience.—From CMU releases

Tributes to George Weber

About 300 people attended the funeral for George Weber in Chesley, Ontario, on January 13, including 21 Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) partners. Weber, 73, was killed in a car accident in Iraq on January 6 while travelling with a CPT delegation (see Jan. 13, page 16).

He was buried in the simple casket he had travelled in from Iraq, wearing the suit he had ordered in Baghdad. After the service, CPT members donned their red hats and formed one side of an honour guard for the procession through the snowstorm to the funeral home. Weber’s Rotary Club colleagues formed the other side. (Burial had to wait till the roads were clear.)

Weber exemplified the spirit of service and peacemaking. From 1965-68 he taught in Nigeria and Ghana with Mennonite Board of Missions. He was on the Peace, Justice and Social Concerns Committee of the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada from 1994-98. After retiring from teaching, he joined CPT in 1999, spending two weeks in Chiapas, Mexico in 2000, followed by six weeks in Hebron in 2001 and again in 2002.

Mennonite friends in Toronto have

prepared a web page in his honour: www.torontoareamennonites.ca/weber.htm.

CPTer Greg Rollins remembers a morning in Hebron when he and Weber accompanied a Palestinian woman and her children to school. Israeli police wouldn’t let them go beyond their street.

Weber turned to a Jewish settler watching the scene and said, “Don’t you just hate it when they don’t let the children go to school?”

“I don’t talk to Nazis,” said the settler.

“Yeah, but don’t you just hate it when they don’t let the children go to school?” repeated Weber.

“I don’t talk to Nazis,” said the settler.

“Sure, but don’t you just hate it....” and so the conversation continued until the children were allowed to pass.

In Iraq, what touched Weber the most was the children suffering from radiation-related cancers and the lack of medication because of the United Nations sanctions. He had decided to join the CPT delegation as a way of suffering with the Iraqis as war looms again.

“I just can’t sit back and do nothing,” he had told his wife, Lena. “What would I say to my grandchildren?”—From releases

Kitchener, Ont.

Witmer's life journey led to Jerusalem

It's a long way from New Dundee, Ontario, to Jerusalem. Yet what Glenn Witmer learned as a young person in the Mannheim Mennonite Church has gone with him along the circuitous path to his current ministry. Witmer taught elementary school

his Bible study class. Witmer began to evaluate his life and goals. The evaluation continued as he travelled extensively in Europe and Asia.

"There was an increasing conflict between my lifestyle and the poverty I saw in some of these places," he said. He enjoyed learning about ancient cultures and religions.

As he increasingly embraced the church, Witmer had a growing sense that he was "on the wrong track" in his career. He resigned from CBC and registered at Ontario Bible College (now Tyndale) in the missiology program. He named the United Church as his denomination because "I felt I had abandoned the Mennonites."

When he transferred two years later to Wycliffe College (Evangelical Anglican) at the Toronto School of Theology, he registered as a Mennonite.

"I kept bumping into Mennonite stuff; this Anabaptist stuff kept bumping into me. Not that I had ever rejected it..." He graduated from Wycliffe in 1989 with a Master of Divinity degree.

That year, Witmer

went to Argentina under Mennonite Board of Missions. His assignment in Eldorado was to work with street kids. The Lutherans and Catholics operated children's homes for orphans but the women who ran the homes felt they could not manage older boys. Witmer was asked to create a family situation for boys who suffered abuse and abandonment.

He became legal guardian for up to 20 boys at a time in his *Logar las Palmas* (house of palms). In nine years, Witmer worked with about 65

boys. The program was turned over to local people in 1998.

Witmer had done some Jewish studies at St. Michael's College (Toronto School of Theology) in conjunction with the Bat Kol Institute in Jerusalem. In 1999, he received a scholarship from Bat Kol and earned a Master of Theology degree there in 2001. While working on his thesis, he helped develop a program at Bat Kol for people on leave from ministry, service or Bible teaching roles.

Witmer stayed on at Bat Kol as a teacher. The institute, founded in 1983 by a former professor at St. Michael's College, is an independent Christian institute. Its courses focus on the Pentateuch (first five books of the Old Testament), using rabbinic methodology. Indeed, half the faculty consists of Jewish rabbis. This adds an interesting perspective to Christian interpretation, Witmer noted. "After all, Jesus was Jewish!"

The purpose of the program is to do Bible study in the land of the Bible. The one-month courses are taught in July and November. Witmer also serves as registrar and prepares Bible commentaries.

In addition, Witmer has been appointed by Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network (USA) to replace Calvin and Marie Shenk, longtime Mennonite workers in the region. He was commissioned on January 11 at the Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto for this ministry (see Jan. 27, page 30).

"It's a bit different from the usual assignment," said Witmer. "I work for the North American Mennonite churches...in the Middle East." He writes a monthly newsletter, *MennoLetter from Jerusalem*, "to add more voices to issues going on in the region, with a bias toward peace and justice, essential Anabaptist perspectives." (His e-mail address: office@mennojerusalem.org.)

Besides inviting pastors and other North American leaders to study at Bat Kol, Witmer is developing summer internships for college students,



Glenn Witmer, right, visits Nazareth Village together with Levi Weiman-Kelman, a rabbi. The young people at left are Eastern Mennonite University students Tara Kreider (on donkey), granddaughter of long-time mission workers Roy and Florence Kreider, and Todd Yoder.

for five years before beginning his 20-year career in publishing, first with McClelland and Stewart, then with CBC television, adapting broadcast materials for print. He notes wryly that as a rural boy in the big city he was so caught up in his career that he left the church for about 15 years.

"I was just too taken up with other things," he said.

In the early 1980s, Witmer was invited by friends to visit Bloor Street United Church. He appreciated Clifford Elliot's preaching and joined

inviting them to live with Jews and Palestinians, hear the political debates, and get to know the land out of which the Bible comes. He also conducts study tours, helping Christians understand the Jewish roots of their faith. He has plans for a three-week tour for this spring.

Mennonites are engaged in five ways in the region: 1) Christian Peacemaker Teams are present in the West Bank; 2) Mennonite Central Committee works in Gaza and the West Bank; 3) Gary and Ruth Denlinger work with the Messianic-Jewish movement (80 congregations); 4) the Nazareth Village project is directed by Michael Hostetter; 5) the study program and tours are conducted by Witmer.

"So what is your message?" I asked Witmer.

"Getting on the fence," he quickly responded. "It's not quite to be neutral. Rather, it is to be in 'the between' where you get hit from both sides, and are not trusted entirely by either side, because you listen to the other side too!"

He added, "You need to keep the bridges there, even if you may be on one side on a given issue." It is easy to take sides; it is much more difficult to be "in between."

All too often there is a clear divide. Christian fundamentalists are clearly on the side of Israel. Mainline churches tend to side with the Palestinians. But there are "rabbis for human rights" working with Christian

Peacemaker Teams to protect farmers as they venture into forbidden zones to pick their olives or to stand in the way of Israeli bulldozers as they remove Palestinian houses. Contrary to popular opinion, the line is not between Israelis and Palestinians but between those who want nonviolent resolutions and those who do not.

The extremes are the loudest; they catch the media attention. There is a broad band in between, both Israelis and Palestinians, who don't advocate violence. There are attempts to live together. *Neve Shalom* (oasis of peace)

is a group of intentional communities in which Jews and Muslims live together. A number of schools have a deliberate Jewish/Muslim mix to help children build bridges of understanding. Many other intercultural/interfaith programs are trying to break down walls between people.

Currently, the majority has opted for force as a solution to the problems of the region. But even in this political reality, Witmer continues to promote "another way" as he stands in that risky place "in between."—**Maurice Martin**

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Lessons from my Muslim neighbour

Just five days ago we had sat together on the floor, drinking tea and discussing religion, politics and life. Now Mr. Yazdani, our friend and neighbour in Qom, Iran, was dead of an apparent heart attack. We joined grieving family. His elderly mother was seated on the floor crying, "God, where are you?" His wife and six young children are left without a husband and father.

Yazdani taught us much about how Christians and Muslims can live peaceably together and share their faith with each other.

•*Don't let this turban scare you.*

The first time we met Yazdani he wore his usual clerical clothing—a black robe and a white turban. I felt a bit intimidated but he quickly said with his usual humour, "Don't let this robe and turban scare you. It is just our dress here, you know."

How often we do allow clothing, skin colour, nationality or position to determine who our friends will be?

Such external things may keep us from initiating friendships.

•*Offer a hand of friendship.*

Where we live in Iran, most men do not shake hands with women. I was instructed not to offer my hand unless a man first offers his. Yazdani was one of three men who have offered me their hands. The first time he did so, tears came to my eyes from this sign of acceptance. I thanked him for this.

He replied that one needs to think carefully about what is cultural and what is basic to one's faith, especially when relating to people of other cultures.

•*Disagreements need not interfere with friendship.*

We disagreed with Yazdani about such things as the necessity of war, women's roles and who Jesus is. These disagreements never kept Yazdani

away. He regularly stopped by to talk and see how we were doing. Differences in belief and practice must be shared honestly, and listening is critical. Underneath lies a commitment to each other deeper than the differences we express.

•*Don't be afraid of your passion for your faith.*

Yazdani was passionate about his faith in God and would frequently, in the midst of a discussion, walk over to our bookshelf, pull off the Quran and read to us a verse.

Our faith expressions must arise from the passion of our love for God.

May God the compassionate continually show us how to live peaceably together and how to share the meaning of our faith with others.—**Evelyn Shellenberger**

The writer, from Indiana, is part of a Mennonite Central Committee exchange program with Iran.



Shellenberger

Arabic assumes God's presence

The other night, while driving to our home in Khirbet Qanafar, Lebanon, I picked up a man who was walking along the road. As he entered the car he said, "Yatiik il-afiya" (God give you the strength). After a half kilometre he said, "Islamu ideek" (God bless your hands).

I was struck by how important God is in the Arabic mind: it is God alone who can give me the strength to drive my car, God who blesses my hands after doing this "good deed."

The Arabic language includes countless expressions of God's presence in the world. It seems that every little thing one does connects with God, the ultimate being, the supreme purpose of life.

Christians in North America are less likely to call on the name of God in daily life. Sure, in our churches or with other Christians we feel comfortable talking about God, but outside of those confines we often feel tentative. It seems we do not want to offend those who do not believe, so we avoid

bringing God into the conversation.

We could argue that we still believe in God's presence in the world. However, to separate thought and language in such a surgical way does not recognize the intimate connection between the two.



Friesen

My daughter Kate is just learning to say "thank you." She still has no idea what it means; she is simply learning when it is appropriate to use the phrase. As she continues to use it, she will learn what it means to be thankful and will be able to think about thankfulness, God willing. Similarly, by giving vocal thanks to God we can learn to understand the blessings God has given us.

Listening to the reality of God in the Arabic language, and to my daughter, has shown me that we need to recover

God-laden language in common affairs if we hope to see the centrality of God in human life. Through confidently expressing our belief in God we can better imagine God at work in our world.

When we return to Canada we won't have the same daily reminders of God: the public calls to prayer, the common phrases that invoke God's presence. However, we hope that God continues to jolt us out of our routine and turn up the volume when we fail to listen.

An Arabic proverb says: "Everything is habit, even the worship of God." I hope that our stay in the Middle East has given us habits that allow God more easily to enter into our lives. Middle Eastern culture has been a wonderful stranger who has enriched our understanding of what it means to live in the presence of our creator.—**James Friesen**

The writer, a member of Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, is a Mennonite Central Committee teacher at an orphanage in Lebanon.

Strasbourg, France

Colombians plan to expand sister church program

Colombian Mennonites have two Sister Church programs linking its congregations with churches in North America. Now they are talking about developing "south-to-south" relationships, possibly in collaboration with Mennonite World Conference's Gift Sharing Program.

The Sister Peace Church Program is an ecumenical initiative of Justapaz, the peace and justice arm of the Colombia Mennonite Church. It has 11 Colombian churches paired with churches in the U.S. and Canada.

The second program, the International Sister Church Program, has four Colombia-North American partners. It aims to strengthen Anabaptist identity by building relationships with churches in other countries. These programs emerged from the understanding that Christ calls the church to respond to suffering people, specifically Colombians who have endured more than 50 years of violence and civil conflict.

Ricardo Esquivia, director of Justapaz, sees value in extending the program to relationships between congregations in the southern hemisphere who are in similar political and economic situations.

"It would be an opportunity," he says, "to stand in solidarity with one another" and to "provide leadership" for southern churches and their societies. Colombian Mennonites currently sponsor a wide range of activities, including conflict mediation, counseling victims of violence, and walking with ex-combatants.

Through their Sister Church programs, Colombians encourage North Americans to lobby their governments and to raise awareness of the Colombian situation. Churches interested in the programs can e-mail either the Colombian Mennonite Church at iglh@uolpremium.net.co or Justapaz at justapaz@colnodo.apc.org.
—From MWC report

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Solo, Java, Indonesia

Indonesian faith groups join in call for peace

About 2,500 people met for an inter-religious peace rally at the Sultan's Palace here on January 12. Dressed in matching T-shirts, they declared 2003 as the year of the "Peoplehood of Peace."

This city has seen many tensions—inter-religious, inter-ethnic and economic. In recent years, 12 outbreaks of violence have left people scared. Paulus Hartono, a local Mennonite pastor (GKMI conference), took the initiative to call religious leaders together to work for peace.

In addition to Christians, the planning forum included members of the Muslim, Confucian, Hindu and Buddhist faiths, university students and the palace of Surakarta.

As the date of the rally approached, the threat of violence grew. Organizers responded by inviting an ever-widening circle to join in sponsoring the event. They invited the Solo chief of

police to offer a welcome and to participate in the peace declaration.

At the rally, enthusiastic applause greeted a peace oration by Mesach Krisetya, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) president. A fundamentalist Muslim leader urged all levels of society to remain united, to avoid spreading false messages and to reject all acts of violence. Mennonite lay people, Muslim teens, Chinese business people and Catholic nuns then joined hands to declare 2003 as the year of the Peoplehood of Peace.

The T-shirts, provided by the Mennonite community with assistance from Mennonite Central Committee, became a uniting symbol but also had potential for conflict. Some were ready to withdraw because the shirts named the "Mennonite Community" as the sponsor. The solution was to print the names of all the "communities"—Muslim, Hindu, Catholic, and Confucian—on the T-shirts.—From MWC release by **Dan and Jeanne Jantzi**



Leaders of the peace rally included Mesach Krisetya, centre, wearing the T-shirt created by MCC. Canadian Alana Fife, the volunteer who later died (see page 15), was also at the peace rally.

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News briefs

CPT provides nonviolent model

Christian Peacemaker Teams get a nod in Deborah Campbell's new book, *This Heated Place: Encounters in the Promised Land* (Douglas & McIntyre). Campbell, a young Canadian journalist, tried to remain non-judgmental as she recorded her encounters with people in Israel/Palestine. Reviewer Bronwyn Drainie (Nov. 23 *Globe and Mail*) noted that Campbell is typical of visitors to the Middle East, displaying "initial sympathy for the embattled Israelis which slowly dissipates as she confronts the endless misery of the Palestinians." According to Drainie, Campbell describes "quite humorously, how members of the Mennonite Christian Peacemaker Team based in Hebron practise nonviolent resistance in their dealings with the Israeli military." Drainie comments about CPT: "One can't help thinking that this really is a tactic the Palestinians ought to have tried."

New Mohawk translation

Five Mohawks have translated the books of II Corinthians, Jonah and Ruth into their language, with support from the Canadian Bible Society. Mavis Etienne, an addictions counselor and negotiator during the Oka crisis, began the project. Looking for Mohawk scriptures to read on her radio program, she discovered that the New Testament was translated in the early 1800s, but the language needed updating. One of the translators is the great-grandson of one of the original translators.—Bible Society release

Church embroiled in legal issues

The United Church of Canada will be spending a lot of time this year in "trying to reconcile its own beliefs with society's laws," observed editor Muriel Duncan in the January 2003 issue of the church's magazine. She pointed to five areas in which her denomination is weighing the law against the church's requirements of faithfulness: 1) providing sanctuary for a refugee

family from Algeria, 2) protesting a war with Iraq which could involve civil disobedience, 3) intervening in court cases on ethical issues, such as the Harvard mouse patent last year, 4) settling abuse claims from native schools, 5) legal issues around disciplining church leaders. We need to respect the law, said Duncan. "But we must not turn to lawyers for our ethical instructions. The demands of our faith require our first attention...."—From January *United Church Observer*



Photo by Kathi Zellweger

Food for Koreans

Children at an orphanage in Pyongsong City, North Korea, have received food and clothing from Mennonite Central Committee. In February, MCC is sending over 11,000 newborn kits and 10,000 children's comforters to North Korea. Groups across North America assembled the kits, which include clothing, diapers, soap and a receiving blanket. The shipments are leaving from Seattle, Washington and Vancouver. The famine that North Korea faced in the mid-1990s has reached a "fragile recovery," says Kathi Zellweger, a Caritas worker who oversees distribution of MCC aid. Yet many are still in dire straits. "There are no supermarkets or shops where you can buy the supplies you need for your baby," she says. MCC has also been urging the U.S. government to negotiate with North Korea.—From MCC release

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CBC films Shekinah for kids' show

What's your favourite place in the whole country? asked a recent CBC Television contest for kids. For Stephanie Siemens, a 13-year-old from Warman, Saskatchewan, the answer was easy: "It's Shekinah Retreat Centre. I love it there!"

Siemens designed a poster showing all the things she loves about the Mennonite camp and sent it to CBC Television. And then she got a phone call asking if she would co-host some TV segments from Shekinah because her poster won the contest!

On December 13, a five-person film crew arrived at Shekinah, along with about 60 junior high students from Martensville and Waldheim. Joining Siemens as host was Anthony McLean, host of InfomatriX, the kids program that sponsored the contest.

The show had received over 1,000 entries to the contest. A panel of judges picked the best entry from each province. The final 13 were presented on the show and kids were asked to vote for their favourite.

The crew spent the day filming various winter activities. Student

participants were chosen from schools that have supported Shekinah over the years.

Diane Beaulé, Grade 7 teacher in Martensville, has been bringing her students to Shekinah for 10 years. "We come for a three-day, two-night camping trip every spring—we wouldn't miss it," said Beaulé.

Just by chance, the Hermitage was booked that day for an old-fashioned Christmas celebration by a grade 3 class from Hepburn, so they were also caught on camera as



Anthony McLean, InfomatriX host, learns the secret of making homemade butter from Tracy Lynn Willems, Dakota Gagne and Chantal Reddekopp.

they chopped wood for the fire and prepared food for their lunch (see page 25 and back cover).

The activities filmed that day included skating, tubing and the popular "Flying Fox," with Stephanie and Anthony introducing and participating in all of them. They had a wiener roast for lunch, with the high-energy Anthony sitting by the fire for awhile so that the excited kids could have their photo taken with him.

"Each scene was shot up to five times," said Stephanie. "It was a bit exhausting, but a great experience. I learned a lot of great stuff." The best part of the day, she said, was talking to Anthony off camera and watching the television crew go on the Flying Fox. The segments aired on InfomatriX on January 8 and 9.

The students all "had a fabulous time," said Caroline Klassen, Waldheim School's grade 6 teacher. "Some of them were sure that it had been the best day of their lives!"—
From report by **Mavis Nystrom**



Anthony McLean and co-host Stephanie Siemens check out the tubing hill at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Waldheim, Sask.

Old-fashioned Christmas at Shekinah

Lydia Wiens brought her grade three class to Shekinah Retreat Centre on December 12 to experience what Christmas was like in the early 1900s. The Hermitage, a primitive building, is the ideal spot for this program.

"We spend the morning getting ready for Christmas Eve," said Wiens, a teacher at the Hepburn school. "We bake cookies, we prepare food, we chop wood to keep the fires going, we make decorations and put them on the tree." The students get help from two sets of "grandparents" that Wiens brings along.

Bruno and Elsie Neufeldt of Saskatoon have been helping Wiens with this program for three years. Bruno teaches the students to saw wood while Elsie is in charge of the kitchen. As well as making homemade butter, she helps the children make peppernuts, filling the Hermitage with the wonderful smell of baking in a wood stove oven. She also bakes the best bread there is for the noon meal.

"We enjoy the day immensely," said Elsie. "This year the class was just such an attentive, loving group—it was great."

"It was cool baking in the old wood stove with Gramma Neufeldt. She really knew what she was doing," said eight-year-old Shantal Reddekopp.

The other set of grandparents, Ethel Quiring and Hugh Savage, came to Wiens' classroom prior to the day at Shekinah. They told the story of Ethel's grandparents who homesteaded on the Shekinah hills. The day at Shekinah included a hike up Quill Hill to see the actual site.

"Life was very hard for her [Quiring's grandmother] and sometimes she went to a stone to cry. We got to act out the story," said Katelyn Bushman, sharing her best memory of the day.

The idea for a Pioneer Christmas is part of a suggested unit in the grade three curriculum, said Wiens. "We work on the unit for three weeks prior to the event—the students are encouraged to talk to their grandparents about Christmas traditions in their families."—**Mavis Nystrom**



Shantal Reddekopp, Linda Bus and Tracy Lynn Willems prepare a batch of peppernuts for the oven.

School note

Grebel marks Toews' retirement

Waterloo, Ont.—The Conrad Grebel University College community marked John E. Toews' retirement with a reception on December 18. As president from 1996-2002, Toews brought vision and stability to the college, speakers noted. Most notably, his fund-raising prowess brought the college out of debt and into a position to expand. "Twenty-five years ago, the board of the day had intended that the administration building would be linked to the residence building...until now the linkage has been only a dream. John made that dream come true," commented Carolyn Sherck, board chair. A four-storey glass atrium to link the buildings will be named the "John E. Toews Atrium." A residence addition is also under construction. Toews has returned to California where he will continue research in New Testament, including a commentary on Romans for the Believers Church Bible Commentary Series.—From Grebel release



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Getting to know cousin Viola

The following is from the "Faith Matters" column by John A. Esau in the January 6 *Mennonite Weekly Review*.

We have never met Viola Beck. But for the last year and a half she has become part of our lives.

In April 2001, we received a letter from Viola, claiming that we were related. My wife, Bernice, went to her genealogy program on the computer and sure enough—back in Russia in the late 18th century our lines came together. Viola calls us cousins, even with the connection six generations back.

Viola lives in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. Her husband Richard, of Metis background, is a four-time Canadian and six-time world champion sled dog racer. Her son, John, is the 2002 Canadian champion. Viola served as city alderman in 1995-97 but did not win her race for mayor of Yellowknife in 1997.

During the summer of 2001, Viola made a trip to northern Russia, repre-

senting the women of the Northwest Territories. There she led workshops on economic issues, alcoholism, abuse and family life.

Viola was the eldest of three daughters born to Jacob (Jack) Hiebert and Anna Banman, both from Swift Current, Saskatchewan. Jack took his young family to Yellowknife where he worked as a welding mechanic. But alcoholism took its toll, and in 1964 Anna and her daughters fled back to Swift Current.

Blaming herself for the family breakup, 15-year-old Viola returned to Yellowknife in 1968, believing that she could restore relationships with her father. Instead he landed in jail. By age 17, Viola was pregnant; five years later she married Richard.

Viola found work at the local newspaper and worked her way up from a typesetter to advertising manager. In 1980, she started her own publishing and graphic arts business.

She writes: "You don't have to have a lot of education...you don't have to have had a perfect childhood...but if you decide you really want to achieve your goals, you can. I believe God opens many

doors for us and we choose which ones to go through."

After returning from Russia in 2001, Viola learned that at the age of 48 she had adrenal cancer, causing the rare Cushing's Syndrome. We have followed, through Viola's e-mail reports to her worldwide network, accounts of her surgery and treatments and a trip to a Mexican clinic. She writes with candor and even humour.

We have come to know the indomitable spirit of Viola Beck. She writes: "Today was another wonderful day. I had tons of visitors that made me feel special again.... I feel so blessed!"

She resolved to face the prospect of death with openness: "I've also made major decisions on how I will be looked after during that process.... I am not afraid; I am comfortable with meeting the Lord my God if this is His will.... In some ways I am looking forward to it, even though I am too young and have far too much to do."

Our lives have been enriched through knowing Viola Beck. She died on December 29, two days after a visit from her three-hour-old granddaughter, Taren Elaine Beck.—**John A. Esau**

Kitchener, Ont.

Peace Troupe trains Ontario churches in nonviolence

With zest for their mission, Sarah Cardey of Kitchener and Brian Burch of Toronto train congregations how to live out biblical nonviolence.

As the Peace Troupe commissioned by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's Peace, Justice and Social Concerns Commission, they seek to be agents of the missional church as they "reach out to the neighbours across the street and around the world."

Brian and Sarah bring experience and training to their work. Brian has education and divinity degrees and has taught high school for 10 years. He has worked with the Alliance for Non-Violent Action and other groups.

Sarah has been active in social justice issues and has worked with Theatre for the Oppressed and Thea-

tre for Community Development. She is currently working on her Master of Science in Rural Extension at the University of Guelph.

The two mesh their skills in presenting workshops on such things as bullying, domestic violence, sexual harassment, racism, community action and global issues. They lead worship and are developing resources for action.

Brian appreciates the opportunity to share across cultures and communities (which he says is exemplified in his recipe collection). He has been welcomed into homes across Ontario and challenged to use his skills within the faith community.

Sarah notes that each community brings new lessons and gifts to the



Peace Troupe members Sarah Cardey and Brian Burch lead a workshop.

team. She appreciates the chance to put faith into action.

To make arrangements for the Peace Troupe to come to your congregation, contact Lisa at the MC Eastern Canada office, phone (519) 650-3806. For more information, check the web site at www.mceec.on.ca/missional/article5.php3. Peace Troupe is available for weekend or day-long workshops, retreats and worship.—From report by **Marg Warren**

Abbotsford, B.C.

Ninth thrift shop opens in B.C.

Mennonite Central Committee B.C. opened its ninth thrift shop on January 18. This is the third store in Abbotsford.

Mayor Mary Reeves, who is of Mennonite background, praised MCC for its commitment to the community and to the needy in the world. Frank

Martens, a pastor at Northview Community Church, spoke of MCC's commitment to vision, volunteerism and the value of caring for others.

MCC B.C. thrift shops "raised over \$1.5 million for ministry worldwide last year alone!" he said, adding that the organization also cares for those close to home.

Martens told the story of a woman who arrived at their church with two children, having travelled from St. John's. MCC helped furnish a home and supplied household goods for her.

Wendy McClelland, MCC B.C. thrift shop

coordinator, is excited about this new store not only because of the opportunity to raise more funds for MCC, but because it is a prototype for new ways of running the stores.

"We have lots of young volunteers and youth groups come in the evenings to sort, or sweep floors, or wash windows or do whatever is needed," she said. "We are also working on a trial program of Restorative Justice to deal with shoplifters." This will be the first MCC thrift shop to have such a program. "We hope it will become a model for others to follow," said McClelland.

Because of fewer volunteers, the managers have had to streamline the way they sort and price items and are trying to be more selective in the items they accept for sale. Volunteers and managers all receive training in customer service and crime prevention, as well as learn about MCC.

Managers Marie Reimer and Lori-Anne LaRoche were thrilled with the turnout at the grand opening and talked excitedly about their work.

"I love my job!" LaRoche said. "I'm so excited about what we do here."

The new store is located at 6-34150 South Fraser Way.—MCC B.C. release



Mary Reeves (centre), mayor of Abbotsford, speaks at the opening of the new MCC thrift shop. Also participating are, from left: Norma Bergen, B.C. auxiliary chair; Frank Martens, pastor; John Van Dongen, MLA; and Marie Reimer, shop manager.

Winnipeg, Man.

Debate of bill raises fears for religious freedom

The effect of Svend Robinson's private member's bill C-250 "is to crush all criticism of homosexuality by unleashing criminal sanctions on its critics," declared Alliance member of parliament Vic Toews to a packed sanctuary at North Kildonan Mennonite Church here on January 20.

Toews placed his remarks in a context where "homosexual activists are using the power of the state to intimidate and attack Christians and Christian institutions." Toews is a member of the Justice Committee that will be dealing with the bill in February. (See Jan. 27, page 12 for Mennonite Church Canada response.)

While the aim of Bill C-250 is to criminalize expression of hatred against homosexuals, Toews warned that the bill could be used to increase legal attacks on religious groups that are critical of homosexuality.

"One of the main problems of the

bill is that it does not distinguish between homosexuals as people and homosexual conduct," stated Toews. The current wording would criminalize passages of the Bible, he said, because Leviticus passages against homosexuality would be defined as "hate literature." Toews hopes to "kill" the bill before it hits the floor of Parliament.

Toews was invited to North Kildonan church by its men's club. Leader Werner Peters mentioned a recent human rights charge against Camp Arnes, a Mennonite Brethren facility, as a catalyst for the Toews invitation. By refusing to rent its facilities to a gay/lesbian choir because of Arnes' code of conduct against homosexual activities, the camp faces a charge before the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, as well as a loss of revenue from an ensuing decision by Winnipeg's largest school division to cancel all bookings at Arnes.

The men's club had also heard that a Christian printer in Ontario was fined \$5000 for refusing to print promotional material of a gay rights group. Peters said he is afraid of what may happen to people who, like himself, believe homosexuality is wrong. He was pleased with the large turnout to the meeting, which included Baptist and Alliance church members.

Questions from the floor tried to gauge the seriousness of threats to religious freedom. Retired judge John Enns, commending Toews for his review of gay rights legislation, suggested that Christians may not be taking seriously enough the unintended consequences of laws like Bill C-250.



Vic Toews, right, fields questions about Bill C-250 at the North Kildonan church.

One of the few young attendees said he felt that Toews' concerns were based on "fear and insecurity," and asked what dialogue Toews had had with the gay community over this issue.

Cornelius Buller, a counsellor who works with people seeking to leave a homosexual lifestyle, suggested looking for positive ways to redress the historical persecution of homosexuals rather than focusing only on defeating Bill C-250. Buller has heard from ex-gay clients of an intent within the gay community to destroy Christian institutions, so he takes Toews' warnings seriously. But he sees the threat in context.

"The church has been guilty of promoting gay hatred or at least being silent about it," he said. As the social power scales shift between churches and the gay community, Buller is concerned that Christians not demonize those who threaten us. "Building relationship, loving and serving people, not self-protection, should be our values, even when we disagree strongly."—**Marcus Rempel**

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Theological studies week examines early church

I was standing at the Canada-USA border, trying to convince officials that I should be allowed to cross, even though I had inadvertently left my ID in the checked baggage. I told them I was a Canadian citizen, but that I was also a citizen of Jesus' kingdom. They just weren't buying it."

Ruth Braun shared her dream during Theological Studies Week at Camp Valaqua in January. Pastors and lay people eagerly gathered around lecturer Nelson Kraybill to learn about what the early church believed, how it lived, and how it grew in the first centuries.

Bell brings fresh ideas on worship to CMU

Winnipeg, Man.—John Bell, a well-known worship leader from the Iona community in Scotland, spent four days at Canadian Mennonite University in January, inviting 170 church leaders and students into a radical



Bell

practice of worship. While we tend toward comfortably egocentric worship, biblical worship pulls us out of ourselves and into communion with God and with the global church, said Bell. He brought stories from around the world. His approach to music from the developing world was particularly helpful, showing how it can bring us into solidarity with those who produced it. Rather than praying only those Psalms that express what we feel, we should pray the entire Psalter so that we can know how others feel. Worship services and workshops helped root the sessions in real practice. Some workshops focused on arts in worship, including drumming and reading of scripture as art. Others addressed the structure and theology of worship. Participation was lively and coffee breaks focused on how this might change people's thinking about worship.—From CMU release by **Paul Dyck**

Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, used contemporary stories, early Christian documents, and Bible study to bring the early church to life for the 40 participants.

"There was no golden age in the church when everything worked perfectly," he emphasized. "And this will always be the case." We can, however, look at the early church to gain a better understanding of what made it stand out from the rest of society and made it successful.

The early church strongly emphasized the importance of living the faith, paying as much attention to behaviour as to theology. Members rejected violence, abortion and infanticide. They valued women and those of lower classes as equal moral agents. They practised charity, hospitality and honesty.

The early church respected the government, yet refused to worship the Roman emperor. Finally, members endured bloody persecutions, providing a strong witness to their faith through courageous martyrdom.

A poignant moment came when Chau Dang, pastor of the Calgary Vietnamese Mennonite Church,



Nelson Kraybill responds to questions after a lecture at Camp Valaqua in January.

shared a story about new Christians in Vietnam that was parallel to the early church. Many tribal people have come to Christ through Christian radio broadcasts. The government views new Christian groups as threatening, however, and they have been accused of espionage.

The government ordered Christians to recant, promising money if they do and prison if they do not. Two Laotian pastors, concerned about their families, recanted and returned to their villages. Later however, their consciences bothering them, they returned to the prison with the full support of their families. Prison officials were astounded. According to last reports, these pastors are still in jail.

The Theological Studies Week is an annual January event at Camp Valaqua for anyone interested.—

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld



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- Alan Kreider, *Worship and Evangelism in Pre-Christendom* and *The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom*
- Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*
- Bart Ehrman, *After the New Testament: A Reader in Early Christianity*

Winnipeg, Man.

Ukraine workers see hopeful signs amid despair

It is easy to feel discouraged working in the Ukraine.

"Hearts...have been hardening for 80 years," says Cliff Dueck, Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker there. The failure of both Soviet-imposed atheism and promises of a free-market economy is making people less open to evangelism. Adding to hardened hearts are the social realities of unemployment, alcoholism, and a rising HIV infection rate (currently at two percent of the population).

Old habits die hard, and many teachers who spent decades singling out Christian children for ridicule continue that practice, even though it is no longer government policy.

But Cliff and Natasha feel more enthusiastic the longer they stay, this at a time when "no one in the Ukraine wants to be there." The couple work with the young Evangelical Mennonite Church of Kherson in Mis. The group acquired its own building last summer; previously they were meeting in an unheated cultural centre. The cold compelled them to keep winter services to one song, one prayer and a 10-minute sermon.

Last summer also brought the second Summer Bible Camp. Natasha went with the children and Sunday school teachers to the camp and Cliff stayed home with the church. Cliff

made a deep connection with the faith of a church member, while Natasha was moved by the faith she saw developing in the children at camp.

When they saw each other again, both had renewed passion for their work. "We have to stay," they said to each other.

"It's so amazing to witness the change from death to life," said Dueck. One bright child had seemed troubled lately; they learned he had become involved in summoning spirits, a common practice in Ukraine. At camp he decided to leave that behind, and became a happier person.

"You really thrive on watching those personal relationships develop and grow," said Dueck.

The church has its own Sunday school teachers, which Dueck says is unusual for a three-year-old church. Cliff and Natasha are grateful to those



Photo by Cliff Dueck

A lively Sunday school class in the Kherson Mennonite church.

who sent letters, care packages and prayers.

"You that pray are the source of God's blessings," said Dueck.

The couple is in Canada for several months. Their first child, Margareta Mary, was born here on December 28.—MC Canada release by **Daniel Rempel**

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Photo by Dan Dyck

Ken Neil reviews his "package deals" at Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. Neil put together a creative sales scheme to sell health and school kits for Mennonite Central Committee in December. Church folks could buy the "lay leader's package" of 3 kits for \$19, the \$25 combo of 4 kits, or the \$50 jubilee special with 8 kits. Final sales totalled 160 kits, up from the 100 sold in 2001. Every Advent, the people of Home Street purchase kits and place them under the Christmas tree during a worship service. Next year, Neil hopes to increase sales to 250. That will keep Dorothy Wiebe busy—she sews all the kit bags.—From report by Brenda Suderman

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People & Events

Elkhart, Ind.—John D. Duerksen, director of development at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, died unexpectedly on January 3 at the age of 59. Duerksen came to AMBS in 1992 from Henderson, Nebraska, where he had been director of Grace Children's Home for 13 years. Before that, he was



Duerksen

on staff at Craigwood, a residence for boys in Ailsa Craig, Ontario. He had a master of social work degree from Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario. "For John, fund raising was not primarily about dollars," noted Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president. "It was about relationships and vision for the church." Duerksen is survived by his wife, Belle, and two children and their families.—From AMBS release

Harrisonburg, Va.—Eastern Mennonite University has named Loren E. Swartzendruber as its next president. Currently president of Hesston College in Kansas, Swartzendruber graduated from Eastern Mennonite Seminary in 1979, and has a doctor of ministry degree from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary. He became president of Hesston College in 1994 after serving 10 years with the Mennonite Board of Education. He was ordained in 1975 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church in Iowa. Swartzendruber succeeds Joseph L. Lapp who is leaving June 30 after a 16-year tenure.



Swartzendruber

Lapp has taken a position as investment advisor with Mennonite Mutual Aid.—From EMU releases

Strasbourg, France—What does the large Harrisonburg Mennonite Church in Virginia have in common with the small Santa Rosa Brethren in Christ Church in Managua, Nicaragua? That's what some members were wondering when Mennonite Central Committee paired them as sister churches two years ago. Since then they have exchanged visits, gifts and information. When Harrisonburg members visited, they left their three guitars with the Santa Rosa youth. Santa Rosa gave the Harrisonburg church hand-crafted wooden cups and plates which they will use for communion. The Harrisonburg youth are selling necklaces and bracelets made by the Santa Rosa youth to raise money for a Santa Rosa puppet ministry. So far, sales have generated \$500 (US). The Harrisonburg church hopes to help pastors from both churches attend Mennonite World Conference in Zimbabwe in August and to report on the assembly afterward.—From MWC release

Campeche, Mexico—Victims of Hurricane Isadore in southern Mexico will receive \$44,500 in aid from Mennonite Central Committee. Funds will be split among eight Low German Mennonite colonies and surrounding indigenous communities in Campeche state. Assisting in the project are Mexico City Mennonites, Low German Mennonites from northern Mexico, and Mexico Mennonite Aid, a Beachy Amish centre in Campeche. The latter two provided initial emergency food and are collecting clothing and furniture. Mexico City churches are raising money to purchase corn and work with the indigenous communities.—From MCC release

Transitions

Births

Bearinger—to Rebecca and Derek, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., a son, Austin Michael, Nov. 9.

Brown—to Michelle and Rick, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Kyra Marie, Dec. 24.

Flaming—to Cara and Brandon, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Brent Lucas, Dec. 11.

Funk—to Shauna and Lloyd, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., a son, Logan Conner, Jan. 17.

Gray—to Tamara and Peter, Cedar Valley Mennonite, Mission, B.C., a son, Jeremy Donald, Jan. 14.

Hill—to Carol and Sheldon, Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man., a daughter, Emily Kate, Jan. 3.

Kuepfer—to Claudia and Dale, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., a daughter, Jessica Christine, Dec. 23.

Lebold—to Anita and Randy, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., a son, Cameron Randal, Nov. 30.

Loepky—to Natasha Penner and Daryl of Selkirk, Man., Springstein Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Mia Karyn, Jan. 25.

Martin—to Denise and Peter, Zion Mennonite, Elmira, Ont., a son, Timothy Peter, Oct. 14.

Martin—to Julia and Jay, Zion Mennonite, Elmira, Ont., a son, Mackenzy, Dec. 23.

Morton Ninomiya—to Melody and Scott, in St. John's, Nfld., St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., a son, Aidan, Jan. 25.

Pauls—to Denise and Andrew, Winkler Berghaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Gypsy Wade, Dec. 14.

Schlorff—to Roxanne and Fred, Arnaud Mennonite, Man., a son, Austin Tyler, Dec. 31.

Voth—to Heather and David, Schoenfelder Mennonite, St. Francois Xavier, Man., a daughter, Naomi Marie, Jan. 19.

Marriages

Bergen-Zacharias—Alan and Jennifer, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., Jan. 25.

Doerksen-Riggins—Mark and Gayle, Cedar Valley Mennonite, Mission, B.C., Nov. 22.

Deaths

Balzer—Margaret, 88, Cedar Valley Mennonite, Mission, B.C., Dec. 12.

Bowman—Jean, 73, Wilmet Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., Dec. 22.

Brubacher—Minerva, 84, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 20.

Dyck—Cody James, 7, Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain, Man., Jan. 27.

Dyck—Jacob P., 90, Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain, Man., Dec. 4.

Kroeger—Margaret Wonda, 57, Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, Feb. 1.

Martin—Delton, 92, Floradale Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 15.

Neufeld—Abram Henry, 59, Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain, Man., Dec. 3.

Neufeld—John P., 92, Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain, Man., Jan. 17.

Neufeld—Marian (Mary), 82, Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain, Man., Jan. 19.

Schrag—Fannie, 94, Stirling Ave. Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., Jan. 9.

Shantz—Jadia Ruby (stillborn daughter of Lara and Jim), Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., Jan. 10.

Unruh—Wilmer, 38, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 21.

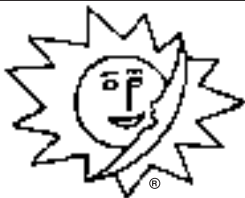
Walton—Fred, 65, Cedar Valley Mennonite, Mission, B.C., Dec. 19.

Weber—Lovina, 83, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 30.

Yutzi—Mary, 85, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., Jan. 18.

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

Employment Opportunities



MUSIC for YOUNG CHILDREN®

TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

This acclaimed Canadian music programme for children ages 3 and up is training new teachers for several areas in Southwestern Ontario.

Contact: Sandra Poolton
Southern Ontario Coordinator
1-866-884-3080
other areas across Canada
Contact: MYC 1-800-561-1692

Minimum Requirements:

**GRADE VIII PIANO • GRADE II THEORY
EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

Steinbach Evangelical Mennonite Church in Steinbach, Manitoba is seeking a

FULL-TIME LEAD PASTOR

to provide leadership to a team that includes an Associate Pastor and a Youth Pastor.

Other responsibilities will include the following:

- Preaching and teaching
- Visitation
- Counselling
- Evangelism
- Provide vision to the Church

The Applicant must have previous Pastoral experience.

Please forward Resume to:

Henry Klassen
Box 996, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0
Phone: (204) 326-6068
E-mail: henryk2@mts.net

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, Scottsdale, PA 15683
E-mail: philB@mph.org

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

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.

LEAD PASTOR

Milverton Mennonite Fellowship is a rural congregation on the edge of Milverton, about 20 minutes north of Stratford, ON.

Join our team ministry as team leader in leading our congregation of varying ages. Ministry focus places high value on: worship, being spirit led, prayer, prophecy, equipping and releasing lay persons, missions. Opportunity for an experienced pastor with team leadership abilities.

Information available upon request, e-mail: milvmenn@perth.net
Reply in confidence to:

Pastoral Search Committee
Milverton Mennonite Fellowship
Box 323 Milverton, ON N0K 1M0

Employment Opportunities

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a full-time

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Qualifications include commitment to Jesus Christ and the Mennonite Church; experience in development or marketing; supervisory and organizational skills; availability to travel up to half time; good communication and relationship skills; ability to work on a team.

Send resume and letter of application by March 15, 2003 to:

Mark Weidner
AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave.,
Elkhart, IN 46517
E-mail: mweidner@ambs.edu

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

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)

These positions are ideal for motivated couples with a Christian, Anabaptist faith commitment.

Contact:

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

Is God calling you to use your leadership abilities, management skills and two or more years of cross-cultural experience to serve others through MCC?

This year MCC needs people to provide leadership to MCC programs in Europe and West Africa and to programs in Congo, Sudan, Somalia, Angola and Rwanda/Burundi. In 2004, MCC will need leaders in Nicaragua, Uganda, Lebanon, Kenya, Russia/Ukraine, the Philippines and Washington, DC. Also in 2004, MCC will need a director for its Visitor Exchange Program.

Plan ahead. Apply now. Contact:

Charmayne Brubaker, Human Resources,
(717) 859-1151, cdb@mcc.org

or your nearest MCC office for job descriptions and more information about these upcoming MCC leadership openings. Application review begins March 2003.

PART TIME PASTOR

Westhills Fellowship invites applications for a half time pastor effective immediately. We are a dynamic, diverse congregation of about 40 members located in the town of Lisbon, Ontario (Wellesley). The successful candidate will have a strong commitment to the anabaptist faith and theology! Their primary role will be to assume pastoral responsibilities including preaching, worship leading, teaching, visitation, and spiritual leadership in conjunction with two other lay leaders. Candidate will be encouraged to participate in community and church agency activities while keeping in mind the church's mission statement. Permanent position will be offered in January 2004. Resume review will begin February 14/2003.

Send resumes to:

E-mail: mcnith@aol.com or
Pastoral Search Committee
474 Fairview St., New Hamburg, ON N3A 1M7



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

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.

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

Menno-Hof is accepting applications for

Volunteer Host/Hostess
 (plus light housekeeping)

Opportunity to share your faith in the Anabaptist tradition with people from around the world! Menno-Hof provides a lovely completely furnished apartment, with all expenses paid plus a monthly stipend. Position available May 6, 2003. For more information contact:

Joseph Yoder
Box 701 Shipshewana, IN 46565
(260) 768-4117; mennohof@tln.net

Housing

Furn. character house for rent, July 2003 – July 2004 on Spruce St. in Winnipeg's west end. 2 bdrms on mn flr. 1 bdrm in bsmnt. Garage, deck. \$800/mnth plus utilities. Non-smokers, no pets. Call Larry 204-774-8510.

Secure Seniors Bld., 1260 sq. ft., 2 bedrm. 8th floor condo in Kitchener, many amenities. \$164 000, pls. call Trish Brown, Sales Rep. 519-745-7000 (MLS311241)

Advertising

For Advertising Information

Contact Barbara Burkholder
at: 1-800-316-4052

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.

Announcement

Former members and friends are invited to celebrate

Rosthern Mennonite Church
Centennial Home Coming, July 4th - July 6th 2003
Worship-Stories-Activities-Food

Phone: (306) 232-5577; FAX: (306) 232-5484
 (RSVP by May 15th)

For further info e-mail: rud.fro@sk.sympatico.ca

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: psklepowich@shaw.ca

Goshen College Biology Department is seeking a

BIOLOGIST

for a two-year appointment, which has the possibility of becoming tenure track. This full time position will be divided, approximately half teaching and half as the "Lindsey Fellow". Responsibilities of the Lindsey Fellow include being the Director of the Environmental Studies Program, supervising field research at the Merry Lea Environmental Center, and coordinating collegiate program development at Merry Lea. The teaching responsibilities will include three courses per year, out of the following possibilities: a non-majors biology course, Introduction to Environmental Studies, Zoology, Botany, Marine Biology and Ecology. Ph.D. required, and teaching experience is preferred.

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. Goshen College is affiliated with the Mennonite Church.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

**Spread the word...
 about the list**

Do you have new people in your congregation?
 Make sure they are on the
Canadian Mennonite subscription list.

All members and adherents in your congregation are eligible to get the magazine through the conference plan. There is no better way to connect people of like faith across the country.

**Make sure everyone in your congregation
 is signed up!**

Contact Canadian Mennonite
 by phone: **1-800-378-2524, ext. 221**
 e-mail: circul@canadianmennonite.org

Mennonite Church Canada

Responses to budget problem

Mennonite Church Canada leaders and staff have received counsel, criticism and encouragement about the recent budgetary difficulties and the resulting plans to reduce MC Canada's capacity for ministry. (See Jan. 13 issue, page 21 and Dec. 23, page 24.)

One message encouraged leaders to seek counsel from congregations; MC Canada leadership is discussing the possibility of a Canada-wide phone consultation with congregational leaders. In the meantime, here are some of the responses from individuals:

- The recent notice of the 'error' in financial recording is disturbing and a grave concern. After all the years...of 'transition,' when will it ever be completed? With prayers for peace.... (British Columbia)

- I have never been so excited about the direction in which the Mennonite church is heading.... I believe the vision of the missional church is a strong one that has inspired

and motivated people. Financial errors are unavoidable since we have never been to this place before regarding transformation.... My prayers will be with you...as you discern God's direction at this time. (Ontario)

- The news of the shortfall, or planning oversight...is bothersome.... It must be frustrating to have been so closely involved in the process... and now to be frustrated by the normal means of fulfilling the vision. It is my prayer that through the gift of administration, through creative out-of-the-box thinking, and through down-right shrewd cunning, God will continue to work in and through you, the staff and the many, many people who have the capacity to see a broad vision of the missional church. (Manitoba)

- What a tough situation for you and really all of us.... Regardless, we will pray with you and for you, that the 'jar of oil and the jar of flour' will have what is needed for our daily bread. God is trustworthy in all things. While we may need to suffer some consequences (lean times), in the end, God will bring us

through." (Ontario)

- I'm wondering about some of the 'less than visible' aspects of this story...yet I am not interested in the blame element so much as to understand the what, why, and how of these kinds of stories.... May the Lord grant you wisdom, strength, courage, dreams and visions (Joel/Acts 2) and the power of love in truth, as you engage this process. (British Columbia)

- I was devastated [to learn]...that MC Canada is experiencing a significant financial shortfall.... I trust that if staff lay-offs must be made you will also consider assessing the abilities of the leadership. (Manitoba)

- Sometimes the troubles that were thought to have been addressed do come back and bite from another direction! My prayers will be with you, staff and elected leadership as you wrestle this one to the ground. (USA)

- Thank-you for candidly sharing the MC Canada financial and programming situation with us. I believe you did the right thing by quickly and forthrightly informing the churches. I regret that you, other staff and elected persons

now must make difficult decisions and live with the stress that inevitably ensues. Please be assured that our thoughts and prayers are with you. Also, I want to remind you that I and many persons in our church are very supportive of you and the work you and others at MC Canada are doing, and we identify well with the conference and the vision we have together. God bless you richly.... (Manitoba)—MC Canada release

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Young adults invited on journey

"Only God can own the land" is the theme for this year's Northern Exposure. Student and Young Adult Ministries and Mennonite Central Committee Ontario North jointly invite young adults to go on an environmental journey that will have them listen to the past and look into the future. Northern Exposure will happen April 28 to May 4.

The group will visit two First Nation communities in northeastern Ontario to listen to stories from elders who have

Our stories as part of God's story

This Christmas I created an album of family pictures as a gift for our daughter's fiancé. Our whole family crowded around to look at the book. Family stories surfaced and conversation flowed. The stories invited everyone to participate. Our grandsons responded with questions and humour.

Even though there were some variations in the stories that were told, we felt a strong sense of family and belonging.

Reflecting on this sense of belonging, I recalled Eugene H. Peterson's comment: "Story is the most natural way of enlarging and deepening our sense of reality" (From *Christ Plays in*

Ten Thousand Places, CMBC Publications). The album captured the imagination and participation of our family. Telling stories about the photographs encouraged all to place themselves within the context and reality of this family.

Peterson adds to his description of story when he states that "God is the larger context and plot in which our stories find themselves." As I added this thought to my reflections about my family experience, I wondered about additional ways in which I could increase the sense of our family story being a part of "God's larger context and plot."

It occurred to me that wisdom, discernment and experience about the

From our leaders

relationship between our stories and the story of God reside within our church communities.

Without much planning, I had created an opportunity for our family to feel connected and real. I continue to look for ways to interpret the reality that God is the larger context and plot within which our family's story has its being. I invite you to recall moments when you experienced your story and God's story as one.

I invite you to e-mail your stories to me at jheese@mennonitechurch.ca.

Justina Heese, executive secretary, Christian Formation Council, Mennonite Church Canada



spent a good deal of their lives on the land. They will visit lumber companies and learn about northern resource extraction and involvement with First Nation communities. They will also visit the Timmins District office of the Ministry of Natural Resources to discuss provincial policy.

For more information phone Mark Diller Harder at (519) 650-3806, or e-mail: markdh@mcec.on.ca.

Deadline for VBS Troupe

The Christian Education and Nurture Commission is preparing for its 13th Vacation Bible School Troupe. The troupe of five young adults will travel to nine congregations offering leadership for a five-day Bible school program for children from kindergarten to grade 8.

March 10 is the application deadline for young adults who wish to join the troupe; it is a paid position. For many troupe members, this is an opportunity to test a calling to teaching or ministry. March 10 is also the application deadline for congregations who wish to have the troupe in their church.

Contact Ilene Bergen or Lisa Schell at (519) 650-3806, e-mail: ileneb@mcec.on.ca; lisa@mcec.on.ca.

Meeting to explore church vocations

"A dinner for inquiring minds" is being held on February 28 at Conrad Grebel University College from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. The evening includes dinner in the cafeteria and continuing conversations in the chapel. This meeting (no cost) is for persons who are interested in exploring a vocational calling in church leadership areas such as: ministry with youth and young adults; chaplaincy; pastoral ministry in congregations; ministry in other countries.

Many church leaders say it was "the tap on the shoulder" by a pastor or congregational

leader that prompted them to consider a career in Christian ministry. The commissions of MC Eastern Canada and the college are sponsors of this exploration meeting. They ask congregations to identify and encourage young people to attend this event.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Leadership seminar for more than pastors

The annual Ministers Conference has been renamed. With its new title, Leadership Seminar, it hopes to draw not only pastors, but deacons, church leaders and spouses. The seminar will take place just prior to the annual delegate sessions, February 14, from 10:30 to 3:30 at the Grace Mennonite Church in Winkler.

Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, will speak on "Spirit, water, blood: What must Mennonites believe to be baptized?"

As the Mennonite Church becomes culturally diverse, we deal with the increasing complexity about what is central to church membership. This seminar will draw on biblical sources, early church practice, Anabaptism and contemporary writers to address what it means today to say, "Jesus is Lord."

Pre-registration is necessary. Contact Mennonite Church Manitoba by phone at (204) 896-1616 or e-mail: office@mennochurch.mb.ca.

Suggestions for song book welcome

Camps with Meaning is preparing a book of worship songs for distribution this spring. This book will include songs sung at camp in recent years, complete with guitar chords and lyrics. The camp office is open to suggestions for making this a helpful resource for worship. Phone (204) 896-1616 or e-mail: camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Need for more prison visitors

Person2Person prison ministry, based in Prince Albert, has started a new visitation program in the maximum security facility there. According to P2P director, Dale Schiele, a new group of volunteers from Superb, Saskatchewan, will be driving up each week to relieve lonely inmates.

The need for volunteers continues to grow. In Saskatoon, a women's facility in the Regional Psychiatric Center was recently enlarged to accommodate offenders being moved from Prince Albert where the women's facility was closed down. Schiele believes the best volunteers for this facility are women. These female prisoners "have had negative experience with men," he pointed out. "They find it hard to trust."

This MC Saskatchewan program with limited means is overwhelmed with requests from Social Services. Schiele and his small staff focus on prison visits and the Circles of Support, and are also work at dispelling fears as ex-offenders are reintegrated into society.

There are Circles of Support in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert. Helmut Isaac works in the Saskatoon office of Person2Person.

Mennonite Church Alberta

Holyrood to join MC Alberta

On January 12, Holyrood Mennonite Church of Edmonton met to vote on its future conference affiliation. It belongs to the Northwest Mennonite Conference which recently decided to leave Mennonite Church Canada.

After much prayerful discussion, members voted on two questions, each requiring a

75 percent majority. In the first vote, 78 percent of the congregation voted to withdraw from membership in the Northwest Conference. In the second, 85 percent voted to pursue membership in MC Canada through MC Alberta.

The decision to sever ties with the Northwest Conference was painful. However, congregational leaders intend to work toward maintaining good relationships with family and friends affected by the decision. Florence Duley, congregational chair, says, "We intend to walk a healing path so those who are wounded don't remain so forever."

Prayers for the Holyrood congregation, the Northwest Conference and MC Alberta will be appreciated.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Volleyball tournament

The B.C. Mennonite Youth Organization is hosting its annual volleyball tournament April 5-6 at Mennonite Educational Institute Elementary School gym in Abbotsford. There will be two divisions: youth and young adult. The registration deadline is March 25. Teams can be registered by calling Gerry Grunau at (604) 853-4242 or e-mailing: jane.gerry.grunau@shaw.ca.

Planning retreat

Mennonite Church B.C. is holding its annual all-committee planning retreat on February 22 at Olivet Mennonite Church in Abbotsford from 8:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Those interested in attending should contact Jeanette at the MC B.C. office, phone (604) 850-6658.

Unless otherwise credited, the articles in The Churches 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.

Arts and Peace Festival opens March 1

Abbotsford, B.C.—While nations are planning for war, people have an opportunity to celebrate active peacemaking at the Arts and Peace Festival March 1-8.

“Art has the ability to...stretch our imaginations to explore peacemaking at a time when the drums of war beat loudly,” says Elsie Wiebe Klingler, Peace Education coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee B.C. The theme this year is “A celebration of active peacemaking.”

An art exhibit at the University College of the Fraser Valley (UCFV) will feature renowned artist Gathie Falk, as well as works by Gerry Thompson. The exhibit opens February 24, with opening ceremonies on March 1 at 7:00 p.m. The event will be followed by a coffeehouse, featuring jazz by the Jakob Trio, and poetry readings by Patrick Friesen, Ron Dart and Robin Matthews.

Events during the week include workshops on racism and fair trade and a screening of the film “Safe Haven: The Underground Railroad During the Vietnam War,” including discussion with director Michael Sider.

The festival ends on International Women’s Day, a day celebrating women artists. An evening event will include dance by Celeste Snowber, readings by Luci Shaw and Gail Friesen, edible art by Esther Heinrichs, and music by the Sabir Sisters.

The Arts and Peace Festival is sponsored by Project Ploughshares, MCC, the Political Science department of UCFV, and Langley Mennonite Fellowship. For a complete list of events, check the website at www.mcc.org/bc/peace or call Elsie Wiebe Klingler at (604) 850-6639 or toll free at 1-888-622-6337.—MCC B.C. 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 22: Sale to benefit Refugee Foodbank at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, 10:00 a.m. Call (604) 327-3913.

February 28, March 1, 7, 8: MCC Relief Sale banquets at Bakerview Mennonite Brethren Church, Abbotsford (28), South Langley MB (1), Broadway MB, Chilliwack (7), Peace Mennonite, Vancouver (8). Speaker: Ken Sensenig.

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: Youth Workers Conference at Columbia Bible College with Mark Driscoll. Call (604) 853-3567, ext. 323.

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 Bible College golf tournament.

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

Alberta

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 at Lendrum MB Church, Edmonton, 8:00 p.m., featuring Dale Nikkel and others. Call (780) 439-8792.

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

March 3, 6, 7, 8: MCC Saskatchewan Building Project meetings, 7:00 p.m. at Bridgeway Community Church, Swift Current (3), First Mennonite, Saskatoon (6), Rosthern Mennonite (7), Hope Mennonite, North Battleford (8th at 2:00 p.m.)

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

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

March 8: Alumni gala at Rosthern Junior College.

March 14, 15: Rosthern Junior College dinner theatre.

March 21: MCC Saskatchewan special delegate meeting in MCC Warehouse (45th St., Saskatoon), 7:00 p.m.

March 23: Youth worship (SMYO) 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 4-5: Songfest at First Mennonite, Saskatoon. Concert Saturday, 7:00 p.m.

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

April 12: Women in Mission Enrichment Day at First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

May 2: Fundraising banquet for Rosthern Junior College and Canadian Mennonite University.

May 4: Spring concert at Rosthern Junior College.

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

May 11: Spring concert at Rosthern Junior College, 2:30 p.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: Rosthern Junior College musical (19-21) and graduation (22).

July 4-6: Rosthern Mennonite Church centennial celebration.

Manitoba

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

February 28-March 2: Retreat for families with mentally challenged member. Speaker: Bruce Day.

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.
June 23: Graduation of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate.

Ontario

February 21: Heifer sale at Brubacher Sales, Guelph, 11:30 a.m.
February 21: MCC meat canning fundraiser dinner at Hamilton Mennonite Church. Call (905) 387-3952, e-mail: edjess@hwcn.org.
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: Auction Extravaganza at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.
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 8: DaCapo Chamber Choir concert at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener, 8:00 p.m., featuring works by Leonard Enns, Samuel Barber and Bach.
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 Church. Call (519) 656-2256.
March 22: Menno Singers all-day hymn sing fundraiser at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
March 25: Mennonite Savings and Credit Union annual meeting at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m.
March 26: Day of Quiet Prayer at Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil.
March 28, 29: Grade 7-9 drama at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate: "Macbeth: A Cautionary Kids' Tale...."
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. Call (416) 494-7889.
April 25: Day of Quiet Prayer at Tavistock Mennonite Church.
April 25: Envirathon/Servathon at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.
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 2, 3: All-school drama at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.
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 6: Spring concert at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.
June 7: Mennonite Community Sale in Leamington.
June 15: Jubilee homecoming at North Leamington United Mennonite Church.
June 21: Day of Quiet Prayer at Valleyview Mennonite Church, London.
June 21: Graduation at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington.
June 21: Graduation at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

United States

March 6-9: Mennonite Health Assembly, Greenville, South Carolina. Call Mim Shirk at (574) 534-9689.
March 18-20: Eastern regional meeting of Mennonite Camping Association at Highland Retreat, Virginia.
April 25-27: Connecting Families Weekend at Antiochian Village, Ligonier, Pa. Speaker: Gloria Kropf Nafziger. Call (301) 864-6633, e-mail: larandsteph@aol.com.

Other countries

August 11-17: Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

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**‘Listen, my child, to what your father teaches you.
Don’t neglect your mother’s teaching. What you
learn from them will crown you with grace and
clothe you with honour.’**

Proverbs 1:8-9, New Living Translation



Grandpa Bruno Neufeldt helps Taylor Ludba, Dakota Fehr and Kristen Andres learn to saw wood during the Pioneer Christmas celebration at Shekinah Retreat Centre. See page 25. Photo by Mavis Nystrom