

CANADIAN Mennonite

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abundant living**
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A defeat for peace?

As we complete this issue and send it to the press, we're in the 48-hour window that United States president George Bush declared in his speech on Monday, March 17—his call for Iraqi leaders to leave their country within 48 hours or be routed in a military invasion. By the time you read this, the invasion will likely have started. It may already be over, given the overwhelming military superiority of the United States.

What more is there to say about this international drama which has been playing out in our media ad nauseum for the past months? For the U.S. and a small number of other countries, the logic of unleashing their formidable military force has won the day...as has the logic of the Iraqi regime in refusing to comply with the repeated disarmament calls from the international community.

All the counter-arguments, whether issued by peace groups or governments, have failed to stop this war. It seems as though further discussion is futile. But is it? I don't think so. I've been struck in the past months at the range of voices—not only the established peace groups—that are having second thoughts about how the U.S. is exercising its role as the world's most powerful country. It seems as though the range is broader than 12 years ago when the U.S. was able to assemble a coalition of Gulf War fighting partners much more quickly.

Even the mainstream U.S. media aren't as uncritically supportive of the push to war as they were 12 years ago. Editorials include concern that the U.S. may be violating some of its own deeply held values and principles in the way it is wielding its power internationally.

And the Canadian government...I could hardly believe what I was hearing when our prime minister, Jean Chrétien, announced on March 17 that Canada would not be joining the war effort. The response was far less qualified 12 years ago

when Canada joined in the Gulf War.

Canada's decision not to support the invasion of Iraq this time, say some commentators, is the first time Canada has taken such a stance since it welcomed U.S. draft dodgers after deciding not to join the U.S. in the Vietnam War. So even though the impulse to wage war and terror is alive and well, so is the conscience that insists that there has to be a better way. For us as Christians, that conscience is informed by scripture and by the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. We have many partners interested in the quest to seek a more sustainable method of relating to people around the world than through war.

Now is not the time to be defeatist about the peace position. There's more work than ever to do in the cause of peace amidst the shifting power balance of our world.—**Ron Rempel, editor**

Shock of budget cuts

Along with the staff and board of Mennonite Church Canada, we're still in shock at the financial crisis which has eliminated close to 20 staff positions and closed programs such as Mennonite Voluntary Service (see pages 12-15).

The crisis didn't emerge suddenly. It evolved over the past year or more. And the final blow after a series of planning errors was the \$1 million shortfall in revenue for the fiscal year ending January 31.

It seems that the General Board had little choice but to rein in spending and bring it into line with actual income. This issue reports some of the facts about the cutbacks, as well as some of the immediate impact. (See also the lament on the back cover.)

The ongoing story of how our Canada-wide church re-groups around its vision and of how the congregations respond remains to be told.

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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 April 7 issue by April 3.

Cover: A desolate and beautiful place in the California desert. See Lenten reflection on page 6. Photo by Leona Dueck Penner.

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Winnipeg, Man.

Multi-generational family shares household

When Lynette Wiebe is asked, “How can you live with your parents?” she replies, “How can you live without yours?”

Wiebe shares a home with her husband, their three children and a son-in-law, her parents, and previously her grandfather. The banter, the laughter and the respect shown around the dinner table are evidence that this lifestyle works well for the Schroeder-Wiebe-Harder household.

David and Mildred Schroeder, approaching 80 years of age, have shared their Charleswood home with older and younger generations for over 40 years. In 1960, Hugo Bartel, Mildred’s widowed father, moved in with their young family of three children. He lived with Shroeders till shortly before his death in the early 1980s. By then, their daughter and her family, Lynette and Ernie Wiebe, had also taken up residence in the Schroeder home. By-laws prevented another residence from being built on the three-quarter acre lot, so the Schroeders and Wiebes expanded the walls upwards and deeper into the backyard. The new addition became the Wiebe home. “We moved in to look after them,” said



Sharing a meal in the inter-generational household are, from left: David Schroeder, Daniel Wiebe, Andrea Loewen, David Wiebe, Lynette Wiebe, Mildred Schroeder, Ernie Wiebe, Rebecca Harder and Matthew Harder.

Ernie, “but the irony was they ended up looking after us.” “Mom and Dad were having more and more trouble with the big yard and keeping that up. They were also providing child care for us,” said Lynette. A little over a year ago, Ernie, a teacher for 26 years, suffered a stroke. He will be on disability for another year and a half. “It was such a life saver to have Mom and Dad home and the kids in and out. I never had to worry when I was at

work,” said Lynette. The Wiebe’s sons, David and Daniel, both university students, live in this home that vibrates with energy and music. Wiebe’s daughter Rebecca and her husband, Matthew Harder, moved into the basement suite two years ago. They were coming to the house frequently anyway. Matthew was using the backyard workshop where he could indulge his interest in woodworking. They would end up staying for dinner and even for the night.

“It began to make more sense to live here, to pull our weight and not sleep on the floor,” said Matthew. So with a commitment to stay at least two years, the families set about making a **Multi-generational** From page 4

Continued on page 5

Recipe for combining generations

Commitment:

- You’re in it for the good times and the bad times.
- You do what’s necessary to make it work.

Tolerance:

- Grandma and Grandpa have to be really tolerant of people coming in late, leaving the lights on by accident or forgetting to close the garage doors.
- Children have to be tolerant of people walking through their space.
- You have to give and take, with more giving.

Aware of other’s need for privacy:

- You have to be very intentional about finding time to yourself.
- You have to work harder at getting out on your own.

Laughter:

- You have to learn to laugh a lot and handle merciless teasing.
- Share your resources:**
- You can clean the whole house in 20 minutes when you work together.
 - You can do the jobs you love and leave the ones you hate. (One loves to mow the lawn and hates painting while another hates mowing and would rather paint.)
 - You’re environmentally friendly with one lawnmower and one washer and dryer for three family units.
 - The lifestyle is more relaxed than those struggling with mortgage payments and house maintenance. You have more time to work on relationships.

New recording

Four children from the Schroeder/Wiebe household make music together as the “House of Doc” (nickname of grandfather David Schroeder). The group has a new CD called “Sacred Blue,” a mix of gospel, bluegrass, spirituals and blues. The musicians are Rebecca (Wiebe) and Matthew Harder, David Wiebe and Daniel Wiebe. For more information, see their web site at www.houseofdoc.com.

Vancouver, B.C.

Faith, fuel and fast food

Pumping gas and selling donuts is a form of ministry,” says Barj Dhahan, 46-year-old owner of seven fuel and fast-food outlets in British Columbia, ranging from car washes to restaurants. Together they employ 175 people, and will exceed \$30 million in sales this year.

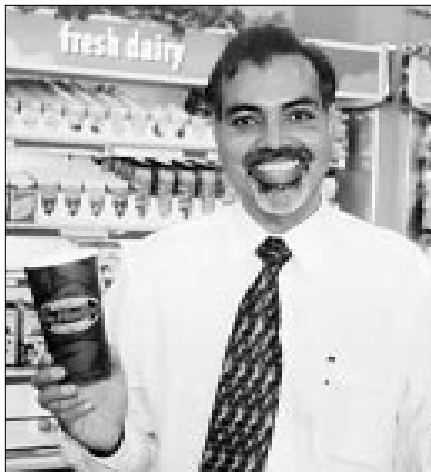
Dhahan is gregarious and buoyant. Although not a Mennonite, he has been a supporter of Mennonite Economic Development Associates for many years.

Born in India of Sikh parents, he came to B.C. in his youth. He became a Christian during university days and attributes his choice of business as a career to the grace of God. He married young, and got a job as an assistant manager for a small gas retailer while going to university.

In the early 1980s, he seized an opportunity to lease his own gas outlet. It did extremely well.

“In the mid-80s I made a conscious, deliberate decision to grow in this business,” he recalls.

His partners are three brothers-in-law, but Dhahan retains the majority share. In his view, however, he has many partners. “I see my staff as part-



Dhahan enjoys his business ministry.

ners, not employees.”

Dhahan continued studies at Regent College, a school with a reputation for integrating faith with daily work.

“Some of us need to serve in the church as pastors and leaders and so on but for the vast majority of us...the authentic expression of our daily faith is really in the marketplace,” he says. “Business is a place to express God-given talents and abilities.”

Through business he learned that he

“Most people think it’s insane living with your in-laws. I don’t often bother to argue with them but I have no regrets. It’s terrific.”

Each family unit has its own kitchen and living space but the evening meal is always eaten together. “Anyone can invite anyone. We still eat together even if we have company. You have to like all of us to like any of us,” they banter.

Grandparents, parents and children all agree this is the best arrangement for parenting. “The more there are to raise the children, the easier the task. The pressure of parenting is so much less,” said Ernie.

David Schroeder explained, “With three generations you don’t have ‘us against them’ arguments.” So many tense situations are diffused because there is a buffer generation.—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

had a gift to motivate people. This gift has been especially helpful in the retail service industry, which attracts young people, immigrants, or others who do not have extensive education. Many of the people he hires are just entering the work force.

“How they are treated, how they are trained and encouraged, can make a lasting, life-long impression on them,” he says. “So we treat them with respect, dignity and care.”

In a sense, Dhahan’s company is a marketplace prep school. He provides assistance for students to continue their education.

“I look at each of our locations as mini-communities, and a healthy community is where each member is respected, affirmed and given the opportunity to express what is on their heart—ideas for how we can improve our service.” Monthly meetings explore company values.

Dhahan pays well above minimum wage, then adds some incentives. “We provide bonuses, a rare thing in this industry, and health benefits,” he says. “We’re now in the process of implementing a savings plan.”

These efforts give Dhahan’s company a much lower turnover rate than similar establishments.

While one of the joys of his business has been getting to know people in companies like Petro-Canada, he has on occasion raised his voice in negotiations with the “big powers back east.” “I’ve had my share of verbal battles,” he says. “Corporate decisions tend to be driven exclusively by bottom line returns, shareholder values, and profitability instead of what’s best for communities and for people.”

Being in the petrochemical business, he also lives with some environmental angst. For his part, “we have upgraded all of our facilities so they’re tight and the chance of slow leaks is eliminated.” Meanwhile, he feels confident that his choice of ministry was the right one. He is active in his church, and involved with a variety of efforts in his native India.

“Filling up tanks, washing cars—that’s not just what we’re doing,” he says. “We’re serving people.”—MEDA release by **Wally Kroeker**

basement suite.

“As soon as you start pooling your money you have access to a standard of living you wouldn’t afford otherwise,” said Matthew. He and Rebecca enjoy the benefits of the workshop, a hot tub and an upstairs music studio. “If we were to look for a place on our own, we’d have none of this.”

David Schroeder, fondly known as Doc Schroeder by former Canadian Mennonite Bible College students, is the bookkeeper. Each of the three family units pays into a capital expenditure account and a maintenance account. By shopping and eating together they are able to have a low food budget and at the same time do a lot of entertaining.

Ernie and son-in-law Matthew acknowledge that giving up privacy is one of the biggest adjustments.

“It’s a lot to get used to,” said Matthew.

Simply abundant living: A Lenten reflection

I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly.
(John 10:10)

God made man simple, man's complex problems are his own
devising. (Ecclesiastes 7:29, Jerusalem Bible)

Since this is the season of Lent when we're invited to clear out the clutter of the sins that beset our lives, let me begin with confession at several levels.

As a writer, I confess that focusing on the theme of simply abundant living when the world is on the brink of a war feels a little like fiddling while Rome burns. And yet, it's in the face of death and destruction that life—abundant life—becomes most precious and needs to be nurtured.

Second, as an educated, wealthy Westerner, I acknowledge that “choosing” to live simply and being able to do so abundantly is a middle-class luxury which the poor of the world cannot afford. As a Bolivian friend told me, even trying to keep the Sabbath holy is beyond the reach of the desperately poor because, after working for the rich from dawn to dusk all week, Sunday is the only day they can do their own work.

And yet, it's exactly because of this vast, ever-widening disparity of resources that talking about simplifying our lives becomes a necessity. Third, I confess that living the abundant life simply does not come easily to me. Frequently, in spite of my best efforts to “simplify! simplify!” as Thoreau urged in Walden Pond, my life becomes overly complex—verging on out of control as I rush about trying to fit one more good thing into an already packed schedule.

For example, in the early 1990s while on our last Mennonite Central Committee assignment in South Africa, our youngest son (then 21) came to visit and observed that my husband and I were overly immersed in our work and in the political tensions around us. He told us that we should stop carrying the weight of the world on our shoulders. “It isn't all up to you,” he said. “You're not God!”

His words struck home. And we tried hard to pull back and spend more time on spiritual retreats and personal nurture. But by the time we returned to Canada a few years later, I was so deeply burnt-out that I took a leave from church-related work in order to find healing and renewal. That Sabbath-time lasted for several years. And healing came.

However, now I'm back working part-time in a church-related setting and there's an endless amount of good stuff

I could do. So, I'm again struggling for balance as I try not to over-function while juggling work and family responsibilities with my need for rest and reflection. And sometimes I fail. Recently, after a 10-day “holiday” which took us to Alberta and California, I came home feeling stressed. Small wonder, perhaps, given that the holiday included: a one-day walk in the Rocky Mountains with friends, a niece's wedding, and a week of reading and writing on this theme while my sabbatical-happy husband researched a course on “mathematics in many cultures” at a local college. This was the kind of holiday, suggested a friend, from which one might need a holiday!

Everything went beautifully, however, until the return journey when we had one of those “bad air days” involving flight cancellations, being re-routed, computerized ticket malfunctions, waiting on standby for hours and then finally being told there was no room in the plane for us after all. By the time we got home a day late, deadlines and responsibilities were looming, along with a plethora of urgent messages.

“Your mother is almost out of some of her medication,” said the voice of a Home Care worker. A friend in Swaziland inquired plaintively: “R U still there?... I haven't heard from you for what seems like a year.”

So, in no time at all, I was back in the fray of high-speed 21st century living, the benefits of our holiday rapidly disappearing as my “normally irregular” heartbeat upped its rhythm once again!

Signs of a besetting sin

That isn't so bad, you may say. It happens to all of us. But having lived with myself for almost 60 years, I recognize the signs of a besetting sin when I see it—a sin as old as Adam and Eve in the garden. It's an over-reaching sin which sets me up for failure, hems me in and blocks the flow towards truly

**Tis the gift to be simple,
Tis the gift to be free,
Tis the gift to come down
where you ought to be,
and when we find ourselves
in the place just right,
Twill be in the valley of love
and delight.**

**When true simplicity is gained,
to bow and to bend
we shan't be ashamed.
To turn, turn will be our delight
Till by turning, turning,
we come round right.
(Old Shaker hymn)**

abundant living.

We all have variations of this sin.

Many of them have a common root in a kind of greed, not necessarily linked to accumulating things. It may be greed for good experiences, or for being the one who always gives and rarely receives, or for perfection, or even the greed for too much “more with less living” in which the focus is on doing more without enough time for rest. And yet, in the midst of our “greedy” lives within a hyperactive society, we all yearn for the gifts of simplicity and freedom which the Old Shaker hymn promises. We yearn to come down to that “place just right” so that we can respond to life “with love and delight.” For we know deep in our hearts that such a place exists. Not only because we’ve experienced it now and then when we’ve deliberately and perhaps painfully set our inner and outer houses in order, but because we believe it is part of the abundant life that Jesus lived as he travelled the dusty roads of Palestine.

Checklist from Jesus’ life

What did abundant life mean for Jesus? A quick review of the Gospels results in the following abundant living checklist:

- Jesus’ life was centred on blessing, beginning at his conception when Mary found “favour” with God. At his baptism that voice from heaven said: “You are my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased,” followed by his first sermon which was a litany of blessings—blessings which embraced what it means to be fully human: “Blessed are the poor in spirit...blessed are they that mourn...blessed are the meek....”
- He delighted in and drew insights from the abundance of nature, where lilies and birds are watched over and cared for lavishly by a generous, loving God. God cares for us too, he says, and understands our need for food, shelter and clothing. So we don’t need to be anxious or store up treasures for tomorrow.
- He cared for the “least of these” in his society: women, children, the sick, the poor, the imprisoned, as well as “sinners” such as prostitutes and publicans—people who knew their need of God. His best friends were a seemingly simple-minded crew who were at-

tracted by power and fame, and deserted him in his hour of deepest need. They were people in need of transformation.

- He loved celebrations and was generous to a fault (his first miracle resulted in an extraordinary amount of wine at the end of a party!) and he encouraged generosity in others when he multiplied those bits of bread and fish shared by a child. He praised the woman who anointed his feet with precious ointment for having abundant love. He even encouraged selling all that you have and giving your stuff to the poor so that “pearls” and new life can be found.
- He told wonderful stories of forgiveness and the lost being found, stories of fathers who welcomed home errant children with lavish parties and forgave them without any strings attached
- He interrupted his busy preaching and teaching schedules to heal those who touched the hem of his garment, and he travelled to “unclean” out-of-the-way places with strangers to heal children who lay dying.
- He took time out for prayer and silence in quiet places, including a trek to the desert when he sought for “career” direction.
- He occasionally lost his cool at injustice and cleaned the temple of clutter so new winds could blow through.
- He promoted the “greatest” commandment: “Love God, your neighbour (including our planet!) as yourself.” It finally led him to a place where he really didn’t want to go—Gethsemane and the cross. But his death was followed by resurrection.

As for what abundant life was not, he said strongly:

- Don’t judge others for the speck in their eyes when you may have a log in your own.
- Whatever you do, don’t pretend to be what you’re not. You may end up with a public dressing down!

What does it mean for us?

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet, I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.... But seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be yours as well.—Jesus



Photo by Leona Dueck Penner

Joshua trees in the desert reminded early Mormon settlers of the raised arms of Joshua, hence the name.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to confront only the essential facts of life, and see if I would not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover I had not lived.—Henry David Thoreau, *Walden Pond*

So what does simply abundant living mean for us? It's quite simple really. Having made our confession, having revisited the life of Jesus for new direction, and having accepted the blessing of "God with us" and the challenge to live by the rule of love—forgiving, compassionate and generous love—we have it in our hands already.

All we have to do is take hold of it since, according to the the Shaker hymn, it's part of the journey itself. On this journey there'll be lots of opportunity to "bow and to bend" as we make mistakes, repent, and find redirection, without feeling judged or ashamed. It's a joy-filled, dance-happy place where, "To turn and turn will be our delight / Till by turning, turning, we come round right."

Theologian Sally McFague, in *Life Abundant*, suggests that abundant living involves "re-imagining the good life in a just and sustainable way...for this planet earth." It is a life which requires "limitation and sacrifice" since it's "a radically different view of abundance." She encourages us to look at the lives of people who "like Jesus are walking parables," middle class people like Dorothy Day (Roman Catholic) and John Woolman (Quaker). "For them, Christianity was a 'wild space,' a place to stand in order to see the world differently, and having seen differently, they acted on it."

More "ordinary saints," people like you and me, can show us the way as well, people who in their journeys do "insane things," like three generations living together in one household (see page 4). We can look to people who celebrate life with joy and draw strength from each other and those mo-

ments of "rightness," especially when things go wrong.

For me, simply abundant living means returning to that over-planned, stressful holiday, and remembering the outpouring of "blessing upon blessing" we experienced: smelling that tropical air and delighting in an abundance of flowering plants and graceful palm trees which reminded us of Africa; exchanging glances in a little chapel with a stained-glass "favoured" Madonna and child.

Those cats beside the pathways impressed me with their quiet dignity, conveying that they knew their place in life. And my normally staid brother-in-law dancing with abandon at his daughter's wedding. Best of all was that trip to the Joshua Tree Desert where, as the brochure suggested, we "let the desert take hold of us" and found "freedom from everyday routines, space for self-discovery, and refuge for the human spirit." Here we stood in awe of One who sought direction in a similar desolate but beautiful place. And found it.—**Leona Dueck Penner**

The discipline of simplicity

The Christian discipline of simplicity is an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle. We deceive ourselves if we believe we can possess the inward reality without its having a profound effect on how we live. To attempt to arrange an outward lifestyle of simplicity without the inward reality leads to deadly legalism.

Simplicity begins in inward focus and unity. It means to live out of what Thomas Kelly calls "The Divine Centre." Kierkegaard captured the nucleus of Christian simplicity well in the profound title of this book, *Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing*.

The lust for affluence in contemporary society is psychotic. It is psychotic because it has completely lost touch with reality. We crave things we neither need nor enjoy. We are made to feel ashamed to wear clothes or drive cars until they are worn out. The mass media have convinced us that to be out of step with

fashion is to be out of step with reality. It is time we awaken to the fact that conformity to a sick society is to be sick. This psychosis permeates even our mythology. The modern hero is the poor boy who purposefully becomes rich rather than the rich boy who voluntarily becomes poor. Covetousness we call ambition. Hoarding we call prudence. Greed we call industry.

The modern counterculture is hardly an improvement. It is a superficial change in lifestyle without dealing seriously with the root problems of consumer society. Courageously, we need to articulate new, more human ways to live. The spiritual discipline of simplicity is not a lost dream, but a recurrent vision throughout history. It can be recaptured today. It must be.

We try to believe that Jesus did not address himself to practical economic questions. No serious reading of scripture can

substantiate such a view. The biblical injunctions against exploitation of the poor and the accumulation of wealth are clear and straightforward. The Bible challenges nearly every economic value of contemporary society. Forced poverty is evil and should be renounced. Nor does the Bible condone an extreme asceticism. Simplicity itself becomes idolatry when it takes precedence over seeking the kingdom. The sheer fact that a person is living without things is no guarantee that he or she is living in simplicity. Love of money is the root of all evil...often those who have it the least love it the most.—From *The Discipline of Simplicity* by **Richard Foster**

For more readings on simply abundant living see bibliography on next page.

Arts note

Musicians on tour

A group of young musicians is bringing their blend of praise and social justice music to Mennonite groups across the continent. In partnership with Mennonite Central Committee and



Photo by Wayne Gehman

Radiant Sonchild, from left: Rafael Barahona, Jonathan Reuel, Anita Barahona Oliver and David Oliver.

Mennonite Mission Network (USA), the bands Radiant and Sonchild will be touring in Alberta and British Columbia this summer, and in Manitoba September 23-25. Radiant is composed of Anita Barahona Oliver, born in Canada to Chilean parents and now an MCC Great Lakes staff member; David Oliver, formerly from Puerto Rico, who works with MCC in disabilities; and Rafael Barahona, who has been in Mennonite Voluntary Service. They describe their Latin-influenced music as “a fusion of traditional and modern styles.” Sonchild features the folk-rock music of Jonathan Reuel from Virginia. “We complement each

other, since my emphasis tends to be spiritual side of things—the vertical relationship with God—while Radiant’s is more on horizontal relationships,” says Reuel. The musicians are available to lead seminars on the creative process, peace and justice issues, and service opportunities. The tour began February 26 with a coffeehouse at Eastern Mennonite University. Their web site is www.radiantsonchild.com. For booking, e-mail: booking@radiantsonchild.com or call (574) 370-0100.

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Stabat Mater Dolorosa

Among those who came to watch Jesus die on the cross at “the place of a skull” (Golgotha) were several women who had been his followers. The Synoptic Gospels describe these women as “looking on from afar,” presumably held back by the Roman soldiers.

The Gospel of John paints a far more intimate scene, showing Jesus’ mother, her sister and Mary Magdalene standing by the cross. Jesus speaks to his mother as he is dying (John 19:25-27). This poignant scene has captured the imagination of painters, poets and musicians. A famous text arising from this vigil at the cross is the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* (“Stood the mournful mother”). This 13th century poem meditates on Mary’s anguish as she looks on her beloved son and identifies with his suffering: “At the cross her station keeping, / stood the mournful mother weeping, / close to Jesus to the last....”

This Latin poem, attributed to the Franciscan monk, Jacopone da Todi, found its way into the Roman Catholic liturgy in 1727. It is included in the “Feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary” on the Friday before Palm Sunday, and in the September 15 focus on “Our

Lady’s Sorrows.”

The poem has been set to music by many composers, including Palestrina, Haydn, and Poulenc, and appears in jazz settings and even as a ballet. Its appeal is its great empathy and intensity of feeling. Antonin Dvorak composed his *Stabat Mater* in the 1870s after he lost three of his young children in two years.—**Margaret Loewen Reimer**



From Stabat Mater

Is there one who would not weep,
Whelm’d in miseries so deep
Christ’s dear Mother to behold?
Can the human heart refrain
From partaking in her pain....
Holy Mother! pierce me through;
In my heart each wound renew
Of my Saviour crucified.
Let me share with thee His pain,
Who for all my sins was slain....
Christ, when Thou shalt call me hence,
Be Thy Mother my defence,
Be Thy cross my victory.
While my body here decays,
May my soul Thy goodness praise,
Safe in Paradise with Thee.

Signs & symbols

Letters

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

Our taxes support war and hatred

We at the Canadian Peace Foundation (CPF) applaud the front page of the February 10 Canadian Mennonite. We agree that we should “Pray for Peace” and “Act for Peace” as the banner at Charleswood Mennonite exhorts us to do.

CPF is an inter-Mennonite group from the Holyrood, Lendrum and First Mennonite churches in Edmonton. We have been working on a book, *Canada@Peace: Coactive Security*, which addresses a question many conscientious objectors faced during World War II: “If everyone was like you and refused to enlist, how would a tyrant like Hitler (or Saddam Hussein) be stopped?”

We believe the gospel provides realistic alternatives for every aspect of human existence, including violence and warfare. *Canada@Peace* elaborates on these alternatives with historical examples.

We commend the Charleswood church for its exhortation, and suggest some practical ways to act. Last year, Mennonites in Canada donated about \$18 million to Mennonite Central Committee in the name of Christ. But last year we also paid about \$50 million in taxes to support Canada’s military.

We are told that the purpose of the military is to ensure our security. However, MCC’s peace work to alleviate hunger, and provide health care, education and economic development, did far more to build international security than all the efforts of Canada’s 10

If Canada participates in a war against Iraq, we will be helping fan the flames of enmity in the Muslim world. How this will enhance Canada’s security is something we should all ask.

There is another question this \$50 million raises. A year ago, Canada basked in the glory of our Olympic hockey stars. In 1993, Canadian soldiers murdered three men in Somalia. If we want to bask in the glory of our hockey players, we must also accept the guilt of the murders committed by our soldiers.

While watching a peace rally in Washington, General Alexander Haig, soldier and former U.S. Secretary of State, remarked, “Let them march as much as they want, just as long as they keep paying their taxes.” Our taxes are helping drive the violence, hatred and insanity of war. If we are serious about renouncing the devil and all his works, how can we justify this?

If we pray for peace and act for peace, we may have to think seriously about what our taxes are doing.—**Dave Hubert, Edmonton, Alta.**

Novel true to reality of many

In the review of David Bergen’s novel (Feb. 24, page 10), Christina Reimer struggles with Lena’s experience. The novel was difficult, and I share a feeling of distress regarding the circumstances in the story, as I suspect Bergen planned for the reader.

However, Reimer’s rejection of Bergen’s “analysis” of organized religion as unable to provide adequate answers does not connect for me. Despite organized religion, lives of lost hope are everywhere.

Reimer appears bothered by the fact that the organized church is portrayed as an impotent player in the lives of the characters. This defence of the church is not necessary. Organized religion can stand scrutiny and acknowledge failings where these occur. Lena will not be the first or the last to

be disappointed with what the church is able to offer.

The church is an organization of redemptive possibilities, but sometimes has difficulty recognizing its limitations. To reject the “analysis” in this story seems to be a rejection of Lena’s experience, and that of others who have felt such lost hope.

Perhaps Reimer would have preferred a redemptive solution to Lena’s dilemma. While that would have made for a more pleasant read, it is not the way life necessarily happens. To live in hope requires faith, and faith is an experience defined by infinite resignation, according to Kierkegaard. The leap we take, or not, will take a form unique to each of us.

Preferring a different experience and outcome for Lena seems to deny the creative merit of telling a story of real life. Bergen has done a wonderful job, and the fact that it disturbs only adds to the significance of the novel.—**Roger Groening, Winnipeg, Man.**

Not-lively worship also nurtures the soul

Dothan Moyo was quoted in the December 23 issue as saying with regards to worship in North American churches, “Most of the singing is out of the hymnal and it’s not very lively. There’s not much beat to the music. Your worship services...leave little room for flexibility and changes to the format.”

While I respect this African church leader’s evaluation and would love to worship in his church sometime, comments like these seem to belittle a style of worship that many of us cherish. They insinuate that harmony singing, well-ordered services, prayers spoken by one but prayed by many, are somehow not good enough to spread the gospel or to worship God.

Surely being part of a global Mennonite community doesn’t mean that I have to give up enjoying borsch and have only peanut soup from now on!

My love for the church grew out of

a conservative Old Colony Mennonite background where instruments were frowned on and lively singing unheard of, but I learned at an early age a reverence for God and God's people, and knew myself to be part of that people.

As a mission worker in Bolivia, I came to appreciate the music and worship of my brothers and sisters in the South. However, I left Latin America in 1990 starved for exactly the "not lively, somewhat inflexible" worship that brother Moyo finds inadequate. Back in Canada, I felt my faith strengthened by thought-through prayers, prepared sermons, and singing from the hymnal with my community in the faith.

Marlene Kropf and Ken Nafziger emphasize in their marvellous little book, *Singing: The Mennonite Voice*, how singing together builds and binds community. Without those years of feeling supported and empowered by that community I wouldn't have had the courage to come to Colombia.

Have we not felt the Spirit of God moving throughout the 500 years of often not-lively, not hip-moving Mennonite worship? And has that worship not led to deeply committed people proclaiming the good news to the poor

and setting the captives free?

I have learned to make peanut soup, a wonderful, nutritious meal, but I would like to know that borsch is also available at our global Mennonite table.—**Helen Baergen, Bogota, Colombia**

Congregational bylaws need to be appropriate

Two events prompted me to make these comments. At the annual delegate session of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, the first portion of Friday afternoon was entitled "Celebrating hope in a parched land." It focused our attention on members of rural churches who are hurting because of the drought. In addition, the churches are shrinking as seniors retire to urban centres and youth go elsewhere in search of career opportunities.

The other event came earlier. A member of a rural church which was about to hold its annual meeting asked for advice. The congregation is

no longer able to function under its existing bylaws and was seeking ways to circumvent them. A better solution is for the congregation to amend its bylaws so it can work within them.

My task was to present to the delegates a major revision to the bylaws of MC Saskatchewan. While interacting with delegates, I learned that many shudder at the thought of revising bylaws. It seems like such an onerous task. At the same time, some of these same people recognized that their bylaws no longer serve their congregation to best advantage. So, it may be that bylaws are one more issue that rural churches need to face.

I want to encourage all congregations to ensure that their bylaws are appropriate for them. Bylaws should be a servant of the congregation's wishes, not its master. It's a matter of determining how much the congregation can do, given its human resources, and then modifying its organizational structure and procedures to assist it in doing those things.—**Ernie Baergen, Saskatoon, Sask.**

The Anabaptist shopper's survival guide

Menno Simons had a rough time of it. He spent 25 years on the run—pastoring parishes across northern Europe and penning the words that have stood the test of time. (Check out amazon.com and you'll see that Menno's "Complete Works" has cracked the 1 million ranking and is only 700,000 slots from being number one. Look out, John Grisham!)

Menno suffered much, but he was spared one trial which afflicts many an Anabaptist soul: shopping. I have recently taken on full-time shopping chores in our home. I've come to appreciate the intensity of inquisition to which one can be subjected for, let's say, buying baking powder instead of baking soda, purchasing one green onion instead of two, or bringing home cat litter that doesn't clump.

I offer a quick survival guide for all Menno women and men who, by pushing carts down laden aisles, walk where angels fear to tread. (Apparently, these

celestial types have their own food.)

1. Follow the list. Do not deviate to the left or the right. Remember that she (or he) who endures to the end shall be saved.



2. Always phone for advice. Do not ad lib. Your spouse will thank you for your thoughtfulness.

3. Ask for help. People in stores have been known to guide confused seekers to the right item at the right time.

4. Try to ignore the advice given in statement #1 by purchasing something

nice for your beloved. Cake is always nice.

5. When your spouse thanks you for aforementioned indulgence, say something modest like, "Well, it was the least I could do." Do not, under any circumstances, indicate terror or self-preservation as motives for your generosity.

6. Have a back-up plan for any failure to follow statement #1 to a tee. Anabaptist theology is often helpful here. "I picked up some of that peace and justice coffee from Ten Thousand Villages. I know it costs more, but I feel so good helping others."

7. Justify any and all no-name brand purchases by stating, "Well, now we can give more to the church."

With these seven handy hints, you can have your own "shopping confession" at the ready. For a brief while, you'll also be able to join that angelic throng by having your own cake (or your spouse's) and eating it, too.

Winnipeg, Man.

Budget crisis prompts major cuts

During the Leadership Assembly in March, Mennonite Church Canada General Board and Councils cut \$2 million from the current budget.

Pages 12-15, 26 give details of the cuts and reasons for the crisis.

There seemed to be more praying than usual at the Leadership Assembly here March 5-8. The General Board and Councils of Mennonite Church Canada knew they had to make drastic cutbacks in program and staff because of the severe financial crisis.

“Lord, don’t you care that we’re sinking?” prayed one leader at an opening chapel. “You have promised to rescue us,” prayed another. “Thank you that you are a God of second chances.” The General Board met first to set guidelines and dollar figures for the reductions in each program area, as recommended by the Financial Policy and Audit Committee. Then the three councils—Witness, Formation and Support Services—spent several intense days bringing their programs into line. Knowing what they had to do, they carried out their tasks with remarkable fortitude, trying hard to transform “crisis” into “opportunity.” Helping the General Board with the financial restructuring was Phil Bontrager, a U.S. business consultant who helped to complete the restructuring of Mennonite Publishing House (now Network). He brought some valuable objectivity to the painful process. “Mennonites have been protected from having to learn the discipline of the market,” said Bontrager in a conversation. As stewards of a \$6 million budget, MC Canada is facing the hard facts of that discipline.

“It feels like we just created a new structure and now we have to dismantle it,” said one General Board member. Henry Krause, elected as moderator at last summer’s assembly, could never have imagined the crisis he would be overseeing within a year. He guided these meetings with a quiet

and steady hand.

At the end of it, most of the \$2 million cut had been made. (See details in accompanying reports.) But there was some remaining frustration that numbers still weren’t definite from the fiscal year that ended January 31. (Auditors will be working to finalize numbers in coming weeks.)

Although budget cuts got most of the attention, there was also more cheerful agenda at this Leadership Assembly. The Canadian Women in Mission executive shared reports from each province and planned for the coming

year, comfortably meeting their budget of \$50,000.

Moderators and secretaries of the area conferences, free from the business of having to make decisions, spent two days in useful discussion about issues facing the church (report will appear in next issue).

The Leadership Assembly was also updated on plans for the annual assembly and youth convention at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, in July.—**Margaret Loewen Reimer**

\$2 million cut to balance budget

Mennonite Church Canada’s 2003-04 expense budget of \$7.5 million is being cut by \$2 million to balance the budget this year. The \$7.5 million is the projected gross budget of revenue from all sources. The net budget of \$6.2 million, as reported to delegates at the Saskatoon 2002 assembly, reflects congregations’ investment in ministries.

MC Canada received \$4 million in donations last year—off from projections of \$5 million. With additional income from sales, grants and partnership subsidies, total income for 2002-03 was \$5.5 million.

Lower than forecasted expenses plus draws on reserve funds were reported to the General Board in a February 5 meeting, reducing the unaudited deficit to just over \$600,000 for 2002-03.

Boards and Councils addressed last year’s shortfall, this year’s outlook, and their combined effect on ministries during the annual MC Canada Leadership Assembly on March 5-8. They passed the following recommendations from the Financial Policy and Audit Committee:

- Eliminate the 2002-03 deficit by fur-

ther transfers from reserves.

- Create a 2003-04 budget projecting donation income equivalent to 2002-03 actual income of \$5.5 million.
- Create a special opportunity to encourage donations from individuals and congregations wanting to help the financial situation.
- Eliminate cost of living salary allowances for all staff in 2003-04.

In discussion, a few voices encouraged leaders to build a step of faith into the conservative budget recommendation. Others urged that the financial health of MC Canada must be a strong priority at these early stages in the life of its new national structure.

Representatives from partners, such as Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) and Canadian Mennonite, also made presentations in recognition of the impact budget reductions would have on grants to them. CMU faces a grant reduction of \$231,000, while Canadian Mennonite funding will be re-negotiated in April. Other partners are also being consulted.—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

Programs drastically reduced

Realigning the budget to match last year's revenues means Mennonite Church Canada's programs are drastically reduced. Some reductions were achieved by foregoing projected increases in staff and program. In addition, 21 staff were released and several reassigned for a total reduction of 18.75 full-time-equivalent positions (about a third of total staff). Most of the changes will take effect on April 10.

While the Resource Centre, Christian Education and Nurture, Multicultural Ministries, regional Mission Partnership Facilitators and the Mennonite Heritage Centre continue with modest changes,



Photo by Margaret L. Reimer

Leading the moderators and secretaries in serious discussion are, from left: assistant moderator Joy Kroeger, moderator Henry Krause and general secretary Dan Nighswander.

other programs face major cuts. Eliminated entirely is Christian Service Ministries (Mennonite Voluntary Service Canada, Service Adventure, and other short-term service). Also eliminated are the staff positions in Worship and Spirituality, Congregational Leadership Development, Peace and Justice, and Outreach and Church Planting. Congregational Partnerships staff is reduced.

Remaining Native Ministries staff will focus on leadership development and constituency education.

The Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery and Der Bote, the German newspaper, are self-sustaining.

International ministries, though less hard hit, will see a reduction of five couples in international work: the terms of three couples will not be renewed, one new application was terminated, and one couple will move to a self-supporting classification.

Administrative costs have also been reduced; additional program reductions may yet be made. Reductions in Human Resources, Communications, Resource Development and costs such as office rent and telecommunications complete the round of cuts.

MC Canada moderator Henry Krause said that executive staff positions will be reviewed at a General Board meeting April 24-26. Meanwhile, staff will be added to the finance department to provide support until stability in finance staff and in the accounting system is achieved.

Leadership acknowledged that mistakes were made along the way. While these cuts are now needed to help create a budget that reflects income, the door has not been closed for future reconfiguration, should funding become available.

In a meeting announcing reductions, staff expressed concern for the recipients of ministries that will end. Anger and bitterness also surfaced.

Krause acknowledged the hurt, and spoke of the agony that board and council members experienced in making the cuts. He said that Councils and the General Board approached the task from the perspective of maintaining those ministries that would be most difficult for area conferences or individual congregations to deliver.—MC Canada release

Staff positions eliminated in budget cuts

Below is a list of the staff positions eliminated in the budget cuts. Positions reduced but not eliminated entirely are noted. Executive staff positions will be reviewed by the General Board in April.

Formation

- director of Worship and Spirituality/director of Congregational Partnerships (Witness position)—Marilyn Houser Hamm
- director of Christian Education and Nurture—Elsie Rempel, reduced by 0.2 FTE*
- director of Congregational Leadership Development—Maurice Martin
- director of Peace and Justice—currently vacant
- director of Youth Ministries—Anne Campion, reduced to 0.25 FTE (youth assembly planning continues by contract)

Christian Service Ministries

- director of Christian Service Ministries—Shirley Redekop
- director of Mennonite Voluntary Service and Service Adventure—Brad Reimer
- coordinator of Short-Term Voluntary Service Program—Raul Bogoya
- administrative assistant—Monika Selluski

Native Ministries

- director—Walter Franz, reduced by 0.5 FTE
- pastoral team, Manigotagan—Vic and Norma Funk
- pastoral team, Riverton—Neill and Edith Von Gunten

- Itinerant Ministries staff—John and Pat Pankratz
- chaplain—Willie Guenther

Congregational Partnerships

- B.C. Mission Partnership facilitator—Gerd Bartel, reduced by 0.5 FTE but remains western director of Resource Development
- Constituency Connections coordinator—Steve Plenert
- Manitoba Mission Partnership facilitator—Norm Voth
- administrative assistant—Vicki Friesen

Outreach and Church Planting

- director—Jean Jacques Goulet

International Ministries

- Asia and the Middle East field administrator—Sheldon Sawatzky
- administrative assistant—Flora Umurisa

Support Services

- receptionist—Debbie Loewen
- Human Resources coordinator—Adam Robinson, assigned to Christian Service Ministries
- news writer—Daniel Rempel, reduced by 0.2 FTE, remains as webmaster
- director of Human Resources—Kirsten Schroeder, reduced by 0.2 FTE

*FTE: Full-Time-Equivalent

Winnipeg, Man.

Staff responds to massive cuts

On March 10, immediately following the Mennonite Church Canada Leadership Assembly where \$2 million was cut from the budget, about 60 MC Canada staff, along with several General Board and Council members crowded into the board room to hear how the cuts were made.

About a third of the staff present had been informed that morning that they had lost all or part of their jobs and, in some cases, entire programs for which they had worked, some for many years. The pain in the room was intense, masked in some instances by black humor and nervous laughter. Many eyes were red. Boxes of tissue circulated round the room as General Secretary Dan Nighswander and Moderator Henry Krause led them through a "Statement to Staff" which reviewed the reductions, some background on financial realities and the decision-making process.

Then questions came thick and fast. Why did the decisions have to be made

so quickly? How did you decide what to cut? What do you say to area conferences?

"We were hired for a vision; a promise of church support," noted one person.

"What went wrong that we hired this room full of people?... This is not a ripple but a devastation."

"How will we build bridges with native communities without people in the middle?" asked another. "What do I say when they come to me and plead?"

"All our national ministries have been gutted, including our peace gospel. Wiping out the 'across the street' part of our vision—doesn't that make church partnering at the national/local level impossible?" asked someone else. Staff also registered concerns about the future. How will remaining staff deal with the added workload? "Already we're really straining," they noted.

There were no easy answers. Only that the cuts had to be made...quickly. "Every month, we're another \$100,000 into debt. We couldn't afford not to

make these decisions," came the answer. The process started with a blank page: What is essential at the national level. What can area conferences and local churches do? Are there other ways we could resource them?

"Out of that it became clear that the largest program [Witness] would have to absorb much of the cost."

Board and Council members acknowledged the errors that had been made and the pain they shared.

Said one, "Everything we had to do cut us to the quick. Not one part was not crucial."

And another, "There's nothing I can say to alleviate your pain. Decisions were absolutely grueling for us.... But the guiding principle was that the national body would do what the local congregations and area conferences could not.... Meanwhile, we know we're not treating our partners with the respect they deserve. We know it's a violation of trust."

"The vision was not wrong," said one of executive staff. "We were wrong.... We planned for far more than we could do.... We can't go back and undo this." "We are documenting the decisions

What went wrong?

Executive leaders of Mennonite Church Canada admit there were errors from the General Board on down, and said that the budget crisis resulted from a convergence of several factors:

- Not enough money and staff time were applied to planning the financial aspects of the transition from a bi-national church to a national church.
- There were several unanticipated staff changes in the finance department that reduced knowledge of previous financial patterns.
- Projections for future years' budgets were being made simultaneously with the implementation of new accounting software and a complete restructuring of the denomination's chart of accounts and financial reporting systems.
- There was a lack of financial history to rely on when forecasting the revenue that could be expected for newly merged programs. Planners had to rely on best estimates when predicting how income would transfer from former programs of the General Conference Mennonite

Church and the Mennonite Church to the new structures of Mennonite Church Canada.

Further, donations in January—from both individuals and congregations—did not follow patterns from previous years. MC Canada typically receives 25 percent of donation income just prior to fiscal year-end on January 31.

Possible contributing factors suggest: increases in designated giving beyond MC Canada; economic conditions relating to drought in western Canada; broad acceptance of the missional vision may have channelled some funds to local congregation initiatives; contributions to charitable organizations are generally trending downward.

These factors all combined to result in inaccurate revenue forecasting.

"We have less money than we thought we did for doing what we hoped to do. Now we know different," said MC Canada moderator Henry Krause, adding that "we now have a full year of experience operating as Mennonite Church Canada."—MC Canada release

Study Tour Africa 2003: Mission and Peace July 30–August 16

Explore issues of mission and peace with Mennonites in Ethiopia and Congo, and Brethren in Christ in Zimbabwe.

Tour leaders: Walter Sawatsky and Ted Koontz, AMES professors.

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made," said the moderator. "There wasn't one big mistake, but six to eight steps along the way in the last two years when mistakes were made. We haven't given up the vision. We have less money than we thought; we have to work with that."

In the midst of all the tears and frustration, there were also expressions of thankfulness for having been part of the work of MC Canada. Some also said they appreciated hearing leaders say they had made mistakes.

Concluded the moderator: "As a board we want to care for you. We don't want that over-work to continue, nor the stress.... We want to pray for you. And we want you to pray for us."

The next day, Witness, Formation and Support Services staff met to debrief and plan the future. The day closed with a healing service, led by Marilyn Houser Hamm and Jean-Jacques Goulet.

The service was a deeply moving time of lament, confession and blessing, including anointing and communion. Released staff initiated a mutual blessing in which they shared cups of water, symbolizing the water of life. The service closed with a reading from Habbakuk 3: "Though the fig tree do not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines... yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."—**Leona**

Dueck Penner

Winnipeg, Man.

Survey gives Mennonite Foundation high marks

Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC) gets high marks for its stewardship work, according to a national survey of participating conferences. Satisfaction with MFC's services was a major finding of the first independent survey of its constituency since the foundation began 30 years ago.

Students at Wilfrid Laurier University's School of Business conducted the survey during the spring of 2002. About 450 people (out of 2,000 randomly selected from across Canada) completed mail or phone surveys. Eighty-six percent of respondents indicated that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with MFC services. MFC is also viewed as being closely related to its participating conferences, according to 89 percent of respondents. More than half of respondents (53 percent) classified the foundation as a stewardship agency, compared with one-third who view it as an investment agency.

"That's good news for us," remarked Robert Veitch, general manager. "We have worked hard at being the stewardship arm of our conferences. We take very seriously our mandate to provide stewardship education and service from an Anabaptist perspec-

tive."

The foundation is not universally understood within its constituency. Awareness of MFC and its services varies significantly by region and by conference.

Stewardship resources (speakers), will and estate planning, charitable gift planning, personal budgeting, tax planning and investment planning were the MFC services most cited by respondents who are familiar with the foundation.

Even in this age of high-tech communication, 71 percent of respondents prefer contacting MFC by phone. E-mail communication is a distant second at 28 percent, despite the fact that 54 percent of respondents said they use the internet. MFC provides a web site and toll-free phone numbers, fax, and e-mail access to its four offices across Canada.

MFC plans to use the information gleaned from this study in planning its marketing and product development.—MFC release

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Saskatoon, Sask.

Saskatchewan delegates celebrate

The theme of the 2003 Mennonite Church Saskatchewan annual sessions, "Celebrating hope in a parched land," was an opportunity for Saskatchewan Mennonites to look on the bright side of a difficult economic situation. Delegates met at Nutana Park Mennonite Church on February 28-March 1.

Using music, humour and stories, the opening session worked with two themes: When times get tough, it helps to laugh at the situation, and let's not forget to count our blessings. Things were so bad one year "that even the grasshoppers had calluses on their knees," deadpanned Lorne Epp, pastor of Tiefengrund Mennonite church. Rosthern Junior College students, under the direction of Cameron Nicolle, evoked side-splitting laughter from even the most stoic of farmers as they read the 'Letters from Wingfield Farm' and acted out Walter Wingfield's hilarious attempts to move from city to country life.

The Carleton Quack Grass Band sang the struggles of farm life and Rudy Froese walked his poems across the stage. Interspersed with the comedy acts were inspiring stories of small communities pulling together. "Small towns can do big things if we all work together," said Claire Ewert-

Fisher as she gave heart-warming accounts of life in the Herschel-Fiske-Rosetown areas. She cited two successful attempts to keep industries vital to rural stability.

At a pre-conference session, the Ministries Commission presented their newest venture: the Vibrant Rural Churches Project. It will be coordinated by Eric Olfert and Naomi Unger who have been hired for a year.

Described as an "attempt to work with the fact that many rural churches are hurting from drought and depopulation," the project has the following objectives: to hold up what rural churches are doing to maintain vitality; to help them articulate their dreams for the future; to find ways of returning resources to rural churches.

"Hearing what works for one church might encourage others," said Unger. The project will begin with visits to rural churches.

Sven Erickson, the new Denominational Minister for Mennonite Church Canada, gave several devotionals on refocusing in the Christian walk. Using Isaiah as his text, he underscored the importance of watching to see what God is doing. "Behold I am doing a new thing" (Isaiah 43:19) was posted at the front of the church as a reminder to delegates.

"How is God speaking to this group of people at this time?" wondered Erickson. He continued Saturday afternoon with the focus of whose we are versus what we do as Christians. Speaking slowly and deliberately, he offered a threefold approach. "We must believe from our hearts, look with expectation, then move out and bring others to Jesus." During the business



Ernie Epp gives announcements to delegates while wearing "many different hats." This pink beauty was a thrift shop special.

sessions, delegates worked on several bylaw amendments. A resolution from the Nutana delegates attempted to deal with financial concerns. They felt that the conference could plan better if it knew what church is giving what amount.

Using words like "individual church member contributions" brought reactions from delegates.

"The resolution...causes us to think about what we spend our money on," said Wendy Harder, youth pastor at Nutana. "If it encourages accountability, then it's good."

Others, like Don Unger of Rabbit Lake, cautioned delegates to "be careful with this one." After some discussion, Harry Funk of Warman Mennonite suggested amending the resolution to make it less personal.

The amended version stated that each annual financial statement submitted to delegates "include a statement of the donations/contributions made to MC Saskatchewan by its member congregations based on the average range of individual church member contributions indicating the number of churches and their aggregate membership."

One of the Nutana delegates pointed out that the resolution is "an issue of our commitment to the conference." In the end, however, the resolution was referred to the executive for further study.—**Karin Fehderau**



The Carleton Quack Grass Band performs songs about the struggles of farm life.

Calgary, Alta.

Alberta delegates look to future

Mennonite Church Alberta is blessed with three very good recent documents: the Confession of Faith, the constitution and the Covenant of Renewal, noted Jim Shantz, conference minister, at the annual MC Alberta sessions on February 28-March 1.

"These have renewed our promises to work together. However, the small dilemma of how to apply them lingers. One comment I heard was that if these documents fail, we always have the Sermon on the Mount for back up." Shantz added, "There is truth in that tongue-in-cheek comment. We are working to return to our roots in Jesus, and become Christ focused." Conflicts of the past linger and healing is ongoing. The process is full of challenges because of a great theological, social and ethnic diversity among Alberta congregations. The process is also full of possibilities as churches engage in serious thinking about becoming missional in focus. Shantz concluded: "We cannot afford an attitude of maintenance because

this means to shrink and die. We must think about kingdom building and understanding the times we live in."

Highlights of the assembly, held at First Mennonite Church here, included commissioning Shantz as conference minister, Matt Love as youth activities co-ordinator, and Marv Baergen as missions facilitator. John and Ina Schellenberg

received a standing ovation for their service during John's years as moderator. John has led the conference through difficult years of restructuring.

With Mennonite Church Canada's budgetary struggles on everyone's mind, delegates agreed to donate \$5,000 to MC Canada as a show of support from MC Alberta. Other resolutions encouraged the group to pray

for the Holyrood congregation as it becomes a member of MC Alberta and thanked Stanley Green for inspirational presentations encouraging the dawning of a missional church in our conference.

One resolution acknowledged the service of Alberta committee members and staff, especially moderator John Schellenberg, over the past years. The conference will continue to be in conversation with the Northwest Mennonite Conference which has ended its move toward integration with MC Alberta.

New General Council members include: Moderator Linden Willms; vice-moderator Marguerite Jack; Camp Valaqua: Lois Epp, Joyce Hewko and Lyle Brown; Congregational leadership: Elwin Garland; Congregational Life: Coreen Froese; Missions and Service: Dan Poovong, John Schmidt and Ruth Preston-Schilk; Personnel: Herman Epp; Songfest: Deanna Willms; Nominations: Anna Marie Boese.—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**



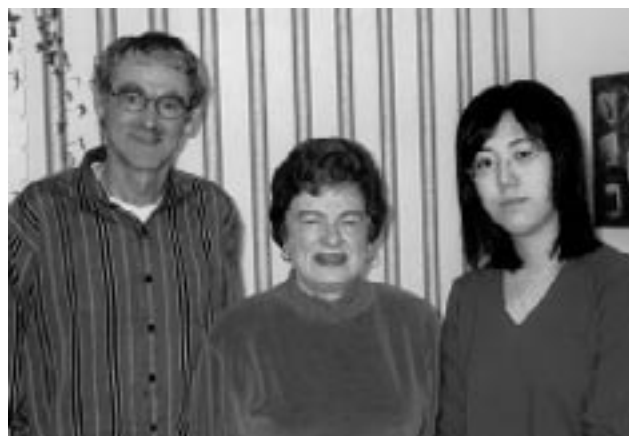
Linden Willms, new moderator of MC Alberta.

Neighbours around the world

At a Mennonite Church Alberta assembly with the theme, "Across the street and around the world," it was fitting to see a young Korean woman singing in the choir. The story of how Esther Koo came to be here is a story of people from around the world becoming neighbours to each other. In April 2002, Trinity Mennonite Church pastors Hugo and Doreen Neufeld were on a flight from Calgary to Japan when they struck up a conversation with a Korean man, Jeremiah Baie. Baie is a pastor and professor. He was living in Japan when the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and the conversation turned to his experiences and matters of war and peace. When the flight ended, they exchanged business cards.

Some time later, Baie called the Neufelds to ask about Mennonite beliefs, so Neufelds sent him a copy of the

Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. Baie liked what he read, and asked the Neufelds if they knew of a Mennonite boarding school where his step children might attend when their family moved to North America. Neufelds gave him the number at Rosthern Junior College. Esther Koo and her brother started school there last September. When the RJC women's choir sang at the MC Alberta assembly, Esther stayed at the Neufeld's home in Calgary. Their mother, Young Lee, is also a pastor.



Esther Koo from Japan (right) is hosted by Hugo and Doreen Neufeld in Calgary.

She and Jeremiah Baie are currently living in Virginia.—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**

Winnipeg, Man.

Mennonite Brethren call for women pastors

The Mennonite Brethren (MB) Church of Manitoba is calling on the MB church to encourage women in all leadership roles in the church.

At their annual sessions in March, Manitoba delegates passed a resolution affirming this position, referring it to the Canadian Conference Board of Faith and Life for action.

"We call our people in the Spirit of Christ to relate to one another in mutual respect as sisters and brothers in Christ," says the resolution. "We invite men and women to exercise leadership on Conference boards, in pastoral staff positions and in our congregations, institutions and agencies." The resolution, which passed by a 79 percent majority, also calls for the church "to be increasingly alert to the gifts of women and men, and to become more active in calling and blessing them to minister in all areas of church life."

The MB church currently does not recognize women in lead pastoral positions, a stance that has raised much controversy over the years. "Some questions will not go away until they're answered right," noted one delegate. Several people noted that gifted and called women have left the conference because there was no place for them. Some spoke against the resolution.

The resolution places the issue firmly on the agenda of the Board of Faith and Life.

In another action, delegates heartily approved participation in the Evangelical Anabaptist Seminary program in Manitoba. The program is a remarkable venture in inter-Mennonite cooperation. It brings together five conferences: Mennonite Brethren, Mennonite Church Manitoba, Chortitzer, Evangelical Mennonite and Evangelical Mennonite Mission conferences. It will be implemented through Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Canadian Mennonite University and Steinbach Bible College.—From reports

Jerusalem, West Bank

Jerusalem churches pray for peace

Mennonite Central Committee workers recently joined churches here to pray for a stop to war preparations against Iraq and an end to Israel's military occupation of Palestinian territory.

"The churches in Jerusalem, with their ancient and sometimes bitter divisions, are often representative of the brokenness of Christ's body," said Alain Epp Weaver, MCC co-director in the West Bank and Gaza. But on February 19, Jerusalem's Christians came together with prayers for peace.

The Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre, an MCC partner, helped plan the service, which was held at St. Stephen's (Dominican) Church. Leading representatives from all of Jerusalem's churches offered prayers against the death and destruction wrought by war and occupation. In a joint statement, the worshippers affirmed their belief "that God is a

God of love and peace." Representatives from Palestinian churches and international organizations stressed that "war should never be an option, no matter what the justification." This stance, they observed, was born out of the failure of war in Palestine/Israel. "Wars have failed dismally to bring about a just and equitable solution to the illegal occupation of Palestine. On the contrary, the Israeli occupation continues to dispossess the Palestinian people of their land, deny them of their rights and aggravate their suffering and oppression," the joint statement reads.

"The churches in Jerusalem proclaimed the gospel of peace," said Epp Weaver. "In a city, a country and a region where the clouds of war are gathering, the light of the Jerusalem churches shone brightly."—From MCC release

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Zaporozhye, Ukraine

Seminar examines restorative justice for Ukraine

Outside a Moscow movie theatre last year, 15-year-old Andrei was bullied into handing over his cell phone to 17-year-old Vadim. The older boy made a phone call, then put the phone in his pocket and walked away, trailed by a powerless Andrei.

When this common incident found its way into the Moscow court system, it was handled in an uncommon way. The investigating deputy referred the case to the Moscow Public Centre for Legal and Judicial Reform for mediation. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has worked with this organization since 1997 to develop restorative justice in Russia.

“Through mediation, the offender was given a chance to say what he wanted to say,” says Mikhail Fliamer, who directs the centre and mediated this case. “Vadim needed a chance to say ‘I’m sorry—I’m not a bad person.’ And Andrei found answers to questions facing many victims, namely, ‘Why did you do this to me?’”

From February 27 to March 1, about 25 people met here to explore ways of promoting this alternative legal procedure in Ukraine. Participants in this MCC-sponsored seminar included corrections officers, lawyers, professors and agency representatives from Ukraine and Russia.

“This opportunity to exchange ideas, names and addresses is so important,” says Otto Driedger from Saskatchewan, who attended the seminar. “It is a recognition that people are not alone in their city or in this work.” Driedger, professor emeritus at University of Regina’s School of Human Justice, spoke to the group about Canadian experiences with restorative justice.

Since the breakdown of the Soviet system, Ukraine and Russia have experienced a dramatic increase in crime. The seminar focused on introducing restorative justice thinking into a regimented criminal justice system.

An important outcome, according to seminar organizer Andrei Zolotarev, was that “key people in this area came together to think and to give words to these thoughts. We now have some


ideas about the future—not big steps, but joint ones.”

These include a conference to bring restorative justice to the attention of the legal community. A publishing house specializing in legal materials intends to publish restorative justice materials. There will also be information-sharing via the internet, staff training, and other cooperation among various non-governmental organizations.

MCC will continue to support coordinated restorative justice efforts in the former Soviet Union, a role made possible by MCC’s perceived neutral

status.

“Previously some of the groups at the seminar had ceased working and talking together,” says Steve Hochstetler Shirk, co-representative for MCC in the former Soviet Union. “Several participants noted that sitting in the same room for three days helped people begin looking beyond old antagonisms and toward shared goals.”—MCC release by **Elisabeth T. Harder**




When it comes to helping poor people, MEDA means business!

It is estimated that the developing world needs to create over 100,000 new jobs each day to meet the needs of its growing population. Many of those jobs will be created by poor people. But it's hard for them to start a business—they can't get a loan, and training is expensive. That's where Mennonite Economic Development Associates comes in, providing affordable loans, training and other assistance.

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Missional Church:

Gifted and Called

Leadership is essential in times of change. As the Mennonite Church embraces a missional paradigm of "being" church, well grounded leadership is key. How will we think of pastoral and lay leadership? How do we call people into emerging leadership roles? The spring delegate session of MCEC will gather for worship and discernment under the theme *Gifted and Called*. Identifying and empowering a new generation of leaders for the church and society is critical.

David Brubacher, Minister to Conference

Living Out Our Christian Vocation

Maurice Martin, keynote speaker for the spring delegate sessions of MCEC (April 11-12, 2003), will address raising up leaders for the missional church from across the street to around the world.

A biblical understanding of "ministry" affirms that all Christians are "ministers" of the Good News:

Paul says: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the *ministry* of reconciliation." (2 Cor. 5:18).

- The primary ministry of reconciliation belongs in people's daily lives. A secondary ministry belongs in the church and confirms the Good News through worship and proclamation.

The faith we profess in church on Sunday must be lived out in daily life on Monday.

Anabaptists refused to draw hard lines of distinction between clergy and laity.

- They declared that ministers are God's people, living in faithful discipleship *gifted and called*. Some are called to be pastors, to lead a gifted people, to encourage and give spiritual direction. There is a continuum of gifted people, pastor and people, working together, confirmed and guided by the Spirit to do the work to which each has been called.

The term "ministry" is used variously.

- We speak of those who are ordained for ministry as members of the clergy. Sometimes we broaden the term "ministry" to speak of those who serve in a volunteer capacity within the church, (i.e. teaching Sunday School, serving on committees, etc.) or we may ordain "lay ministers." Ministry occurs both in the church and in people's day to day lives.



**Baptism at First Mennonite
– Raising up leaders for the missional
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For complete text see www.mcec.on.ca/missional/



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Reflecting upon leadership and their sense of call is built into this exciting pilot project.

Calling All Leaders

In recent years, much research has gone into understanding why fewer young people are choosing pastoral ministry as a vocation and much energy has gone into nurturing a "culture of encouragement" in our churches. In MCEC, a group of pastors and staff from camps and schools, self named "The Call," have been planning a pilot project to give twelve youth between the ages of 15 and 17 the opportunity to develop leadership skills in their congregations. Built into this model is the support of a mentor in the local congregation and regular meetings with peers from other churches for reflection and learning about leadership, their relationship with God, sense of call and what the church might become. If you are interested in knowing more about how you or your congregation can participate, contact: Reynold Friesen reynoldfriesen@canada.com or Murel Bechtel murel@mccc.on.ca.



"I'm not sure where this experience will lead, but I'm feeling like this is what I'm supposed to be doing . . ."

A delightful example of home, congregation, college and conference working together forming relationships and developing potential to benefit the whole. Doing together what we cannot do alone!

Walking an Unexpected Path

"I'm starting to realize that I've been walking a path I never expected to take," Beth Ann Lichti tells her home congregation, Hillcrest Mennonite Church. About being a member of the Vacation Bible School Troupe of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada she says, "I loved working with the grade 6, 7 and 8 students and God seemed to be asking, 'How does working with these youth feel? Would you like to do some more?'"

She let the idea settle for a year and now is participating in the Ministry Inquiry Program sponsored by Conrad Grebel University College, Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and her home congregation. "As a result I've been working with the youth at Hillcrest and I am thoroughly enjoying it. I'm not sure where this experience will lead, but I'm feeling like this is what I'm supposed to be doing, at least for right now!"

which is in you." 2 Timothy 1:6

MCEC 16th Annual Session
April 11 and 12, 2005
Reynold Mennonite College
Kitchener, Ontario

You don't want to miss this!!

Altona, Man.

Altona team builds house in Jordan

Anyone could have mixed the cement for the floor, or transplanted the rosemary and lavender that would become a garden, but the villagers of El Himmeh and Adasiyyeh in Jordan wanted 13 Altona-area residents to do it. “What was important was the relationships we were able to build while we were there,” said Ray Loewen, a mem-

ber of a team that travelled to Jordan in January. “When we arrived, we were welcomed like long-lost friends.” In El Himmeh, Loewen and 12 other Manitobans spent two and a half weeks working on projects connected with Mennonite Central Committee, including one sponsored by Habitat for Humanity.

“On the outside it doesn’t seem like much, but when you look at the big picture we can say ‘yes, we did make a difference,’” said Loewen.

Habitat has been working in countries like Egypt for 10 years, but its work in Jordan began in 2001. It has been partnering with MCC to build trust. “MCC has been taking an active role in Jordan for decades,” says Deborah Fast, MCC Jordan co-representative.

“Just like anywhere else, it takes time for people to get to know someone new and to build assurances and understanding.”

Since 2001, those assurances have opened the doors that have helped Habitat build over 60 homes.

The Altona team spent six days working on a 256-square-foot home for a local family (a 25-year-old woman, her 60-year-old mother and her 3-year-old niece). With locally-purchased supplies and plenty of Jordanian volunteers, the Canadian workers were able to complete much of the new residence during their short stay.

“The house that the family had been



Ray Loewen organizes his team as they build a house in El Himmeh, Jordan.

living in was inadequate,” said Loewen. “The roof was leaky and the walls were infested with insects. Their new home, which was built using concrete and bricks, will do more than protect them from the elements. It will last them for the next several generations.”

Since their return to Manitoba, two more groups of volunteers—one from New York City and another from Texas—are considering trips to Jordan.—MCC Canada release by **Jonathan Tiessen**

Adasiyyeh, Jordan

New garden for girls’ school

While in Jordan, the work team from Altona, Manitoba, planted flowers and shrubs at the Adasiyyeh Girls School here. In a few years, the revived landscape, funded through Mennonite Central Committee’s Global Family program, will provide students with pleasant surroundings in which to study.

“This kind of support plays an important role and will continue to be an encouragement to teachers, students and their families,” says Deborah Fast, MCC Jordan co-representative. MCC helps fund various educational and development initiatives in the community through the Global Family program. MCC partnered with local organizations to surface the school’s playing field.

Approximately 350 students attend the Adasiyyeh Girls School in this village of 2,500. Most come from poor families who have little to provide in terms of supplies or school fees. Many of the parents rely on income from farm labour, which varies according to the season. Many children drop out of school by grade five or six.

In addition to assistance through Global Family, MCC Jordan provides a micro-credit revolving loan fund. Five young women from Adasiyyeh recently purchased sewing machines after completing a nine-month training course.—MCC Canada release

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Elkhart, Ind.

Conference explores meaning of baptism and catechism

Baptism in early centuries of the Christian era meant costly change in all areas of life,”

Nelson Kraybill, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary president, said at a conference on catechism on February 28. He proposed that the Mennonite Church reclaim this radical nature of baptism.

The conference, coordinated by the AMBS Church Leadership Center and Institute of Mennonite Studies, brought together 113 participants. The event explored how and when the church invites people to membership and what baptismal candidates should be asked to confess.

“Early Christians saw baptism as switching sides in a cosmic, spiritual struggle that had political, economic and social dimensions,” said Kraybill. Do we ask baptismal candidates today to declare this kind of allegiance to God?

After reviewing the history of baptismal practice, Kraybill concluded with several expectations we should have for candidates for baptism, such as knowledge of the salvation story throughout the Scriptures, acceptance of the classic creeds of the early church, ability to place themselves into the Christian narrative which sees Jesus as victorious over sin and evil, and knowledge of God’s faithful acts in the congregation and denomination. “Renewal of baptism and renewal of catechesis leading up to baptism may be a powerful means by which the spirit of God will renew the life and witness of our church,” he concluded. Mary Lehman Yoder, a pastor at Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana, led the group through the four stages of faith development outlined by John Westerhof in *Will our Children Have Faith?* In each stage, she explored what baptism might mean.

“What confession of faith we expect from our baptismal candidates varies with their age and stage of faith development,” Yoder said.

“We need to tell pre-adolescent baptis-

mal candidates, ‘We’re expecting that you are on the verge of some major questions. We are grateful for the affirmation you are making.... We commit to doing our part to receive your questions, struggles and doubts as an honest part of your faith journey.’”

In the searching-exploring stage of faith, we must tell youth they should not expect all their questions to be answered in order to proceed to baptism, Yoder said. If youth are searching for answers within the body of Christ, if they trust the Bible as an authority for their life, and if they sense God’s spirit drawing them, then baptism can be an authentic expression of searching faith, Yoder explained.

Dale Shenk, Bible instructor at Bethany Christian High School in Goshen, explored questions that new believers should address as they prepare for baptism.

“When young people begin to discover

the depth and authenticity in the ways Jesus Christ answers the deepest questions of their lives, they are truly ready to begin the journey with the act of baptism.”

The three basic questions Shenk proposed for young people are: Where are you going? How are you getting there? Who are you going with? “These questions ultimately become encounters with God,” he said.

The presentations generated intense discussion among the participants, some of whom came from as far away as Manitoba.

A listening committee identified ongoing questions: the need for the church to work at the theology of baptism and the church—not just the details of when and how baptism is done, how the ritual of baptism can become a more meaningful symbol, and how we adequately acknowledge the work of God in the lives of the people we are inviting to faith.—From AMBS release

Rosemary, Alta.

Everyone wins at church hockey match

The cold winter conditions did not affect the warmth of the welcome that Foothills hockey players received here on February 9.

Several months ago, Roy Hewko, pastor of Rosemary Mennonite Church, and Doug Klassen, pastor of Foothills Mennonite, began to talk about the churches playing hockey against each other—just for fun.

In January, at Theological Studies Week, Hewko extended the invitation. So on February 9, players from Foothills drove through snow and poor highway conditions to Rosemary. Some of them brought their families and took part in public skating before going to the Rosemary church for a delicious Faspa.

Then, the game. Introductions and prayer at centre ice before the puck dropped set the tone for the game. It became what the organizers hoped it would—a good time of making new friends and building community.

The afternoon went so well that there is

talk of turning it into an annual event involving more people, a church-wide potluck/Faspa, and maybe even Rosemary’s version of “Coaches Corner.”

The fans seemed to enjoy the game as well. The play that drew the loudest cheers was Roy Hewko’s goal against Doug Klassen.—From Foothills report



Pastors Doug Klassen (left) and Roy Hewko lead their churches in a hockey match.

People & Events

Akron, Pa.—Three Ontario residents began overseas assignments with Mennonite Central Committee in January. Josh Bazuin of Mount Hope will work in Rwanda as a peace consultant for three years. June and Nick



Bazuin



Nick and June Kaethler

of Guelph are beginning a two-and-a-half year assignment in China as English teachers. June was a nurse and Nick was a music and drama teacher. They are members of a Presbyterian church in Guelph.—MCC release

Gap, Pa.—The Mennonite Central Committee East Coast board met on an Amish farm here February 21-22 to highlight increasing Amish

involvement with MCC. The 31-member group met in a farm building renovated to use for church services. (Amish members take turns hosting services.) While horses rested in the stable below, the board worked on the budget and program plans. The group also toured Amish-supported initiatives to aid MCC, such as a thrift store and meat canning site. While they tend to feel more comfortable providing material resources rather than serving away from home, Amish involvement in Mennonite Disaster Service projects has also increased.—MCC release

Altona, Man.—From its beginnings in 1957 in this small Mennonite community, Radio Southern Manitoba (CFAM) now controls 21 stations across western Canada, employing 300 people. Chief executive officer is Elmer Hildebrand, who has been with the station since its inception. Commercial-free religious programs run all day Sunday. Golden West stations also carry local church services live. "We feel the church is a large part of everyday family life," said Hildebrand. "Back to the Bible," a program from Nebraska, has been running every weekday for 45 years.—From March 3 Winnipeg Free Press

Beirut, Lebanon—Bob and Jill Burkholder, former Mennonite Central Committee workers in Lebanon, participated in 25th anniversary events here recently. Also attending were Greek Orthodox and Muslim leaders. MCC began work in Lebanon in 1977, primarily in agriculture. In 1986, the Burkholders were among the MCCers who left Lebanon when they were targeted by paramilitary forces. The MCC Lebanon office was re-opened in 1994 when the situation became more stable. The Happy Home Centre for young people with disabilities presented MCC with a wooden plaque for its "25 years of dedication."—From MCC release

Guelph, Ont.—The 22nd annual heifer sale, sponsored by Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale Inc., raised almost \$190,000 for Mennonite Central Committee work. Held at Brubacher Sales here on February 21, the sale included 88 heifers which averaged \$1,917 per head. The top selling heifer was purchased by Arend Flinkert for \$3,600. Flinkert re-donated the animal which was resold for \$2,900. Carson Farms Ltd. purchased 33 heifers. Proceeds were down slightly from last year's \$220,000. Over 22 years, the heifer sale has raised over \$3 million for MCC.—From MCC Ontario release

Heide—to Amanda and Richard, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Kate Elizabeth, Feb. 4.

Hiebert—to Cynthia and Derek, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a daughter, Emma Michelle, Jan. 30.

Klassen—to Kim and Randy, Emmanuel Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a daughter, Mia Rae, Feb. 24.

Petkau Petrie—to Arlene and Bill of Winnipeg, Morden Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Duncan Stuart, Dec. 21.

Wasilewski—to Sheri (Lohrenz) and Gary, First Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Kali Shaye, March 10.

Marriages

Dyck-Braun—Harry and Anne, Carman Mennonite, Man., March 1.

Labossiere-Enns—Wesley and Cindy, Carman Mennonite, Man., Feb. 1.

Deaths

Bergen—Hilde, 61, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Feb. 22.

Bergen—Jesse, 1 year (son of Nettie and Henry, not daughter as reported earlier), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 13.

Groening—Margaret, 80, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Feb. 28.

Hildebrand—Herb, 65, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Feb. 9.

Kope—Mary, 80, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Feb. 17.

Neufeld—Helen, 90, White-water Mennonite, Boissevain, Man., March 3.

Peters—Daniel, 75, Emmanuel Mennonite, Winkler, Man., Feb. 23.

Weber—Almeda, 84, Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont., March 7.

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

Transitions

Births

Braun—to Alison and Gary, First Mennonite, Calgary, a son, Lucas Francis, Feb. 1.

Enns—to Kelly and Greg, Emmanuel Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a son, Lucas Jacob, Jan. 9.

Ferron-Bouius—to Aimee Ferron and Derek Bouius, Ottawa Mennonite, Ont., a son, Gabriel Skye, March 2.

Godfrey—to Charissa and Mike, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, a son, Jackson Don, Feb. 14.



Ann Graber Hershberger and Lynn Roth carry on the business of the MCC East Coast board at an Amish farm.

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School note

Student receives award

Waterloo, Ont.—Norma Lelless, a Masters of Theological Studies student at Conrad Grebel University College, has been awarded the Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Theological Studies Award. The award is given annually to a female student interested in a church-related vocation. “Norma’s calling to chaplaincy represents one of the critically important locations of ministry, where ministry touches lives both in and outside the church community,” said Tom Yoder Neufeldt, director of Graduate Theological Studies. Lelless, who plans to graduate with an MTS degree this spring, is a member of the Mississauga Mennonite Fellowship. She has completed several units of Supervised Pastoral Education at Toronto hospitals.—College release

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Mennonite Church Canada

Children's planner needed for assembly

A children's program coordinator(s) is required to organize events and activities for children from nursery up to grade 8 at this year's



Local hosting committee chairs for the summer assembly. Back row, from left: Anne Hubert (registration and lodging); Wanda Amstutz (worship planning); Sigrid Wiens (registration and lodging). Middle row: George Janzen (transportation); Rita Epp (hospitality); Frieda Hildebrand (lead local hosting chair); Doug Amstutz (worship planning); Lorna Rogalski (food services). Front row: Henry Cornies (guest services); Brian Koop (treasurer); Adelaide Fransen and Mary Koop (adult activities); Peter Hubert (facilities). Not pictured: Elly Penner (tours).

Mennonite Church Canada assembly in St. Catharine's, Ontario. Volunteers should contact Karen Peters (toll free 1-866-885-6785, e-mail: kpeters@mennonitechurch.ca).

Meanwhile, the Niagara cluster of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada has rallied strongly to organize local hosting needs for the assembly (July 9-13).

What we learned from February survey

Mennonite Church Canada leaders were gratified by the nearly 350 responses to a short-notice survey that went out in late February, asking members and congregational leaders for input into the program cuts. Moderator Henry Krause said the responses were included in the discernment process General Board used to make decisions during March 5-8 Leadership Assembly. (See reports in the Wider Church section of this issue.)

"The ideas that surfaced were also identified by people in the General Board and Councils," said Krause. Responses included:

- Encouragement and offers of prayer during this difficult time, and trust in the judgment of the board;
- Lack of confidence in leadership, specifically around financial decision making and the need for more skills in working with the budget;
- Concerns about the survey itself, unclear questions and lack of time to respond;

- Lack of clear understanding about MC Canada programs and ministries;
- Encouragement to focus on work that only the national church can do;
- Encouragement for a renewed focus on fundraising/stewardship, including setting aside one day in 2003 for churches to make special donations;
- Suggestions to increase communication between MC Canada and congregations by connecting with frontline people in congregations, more use of Canadian Mennonite, and increased visits to congregations.—MC Canada release

Chance to respond to budget crisis

At the March 5-8 Leadership Assembly in Winnipeg, General Board and council members, and executive staff emphasized that a sustainable future is at the heart of the excruciating process of budget cuts.

They decided to create a special opportunity for donations from individuals and congregations.

A shift in the identity quest

From February 14-17, 30 Mennonite Church Eastern Canada young adults gathered in Ottawa on the theme "I am Canadian. I am Mennonite." The focus was on politics, identity and faith. The weekend helped me think about the meaning and shape of church for a new generation.

What does it mean to be both Canadian and Mennonite? In the past, Mennonites, as a separate people, brought a strong identity and shared community values to their life in society, often with suspicion and caution. They were Mennonites first and Canadians second.

The direction of the question is different today. Mennonite young adults are already immersed in Canadian culture. As Canadians, what does it mean to be Mennonite? Is church rel-

evant? Where does faith confront, test, accept, criticize and affirm the society we are already a part of? The challenge is integration—both personally and as a church.

How do young adults work at this question? Both content and format are important. In Ottawa, it meant interactive, creative, relational learning. Sessions mixed worship, personal stories, discussion, panel guests, and games. We asked tough questions. Hand cut puzzle pieces, representing the many parts of our identity, were scattered throughout Ottawa Mennonite's basement. The biblical characters of Daniel and Pilate's wife told their stories.

We marched on Parliament Hill, joining the February 15 worldwide protest to war in Iraq. There was time for skat-

From our leaders

ing the canal and late night games. People were given space to make their own connections between identity and faith in personal and creative ways.

In the end, the puzzle pieces were re-assembled, with a renewed claim to both a Canadian and Mennonite identity. My hope for the church is that it can provide those vibrant, flexible and holy places that allow for an honest and vigorous search for faith.

Mark Diller Harder, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada minister of student and young adult ministries



gations wanting to help the financial situation. The \$2 million in cuts, someone commented, would amount to about \$57 per person when spread over MC Canada's 35,000 members.

Notes of both criticism and encouragement have been received from concerned members, some with donations. Some correspondents expressed loss of hope, others dismay, while some are prepared to move ahead.

In a written statement that accompanied announcements of cuts to staff, leaders offered encouragement for the times ahead. "The vision [Healing and Hope] that has energized us and many across the church has not been diminished. It will continue to guide us in our reduced and re-shaped ministries."

Signs of hope included a Mennonite Church Alberta vote to give \$5,000 to MC Canada. A Saskatchewan farmer wrote to say he would respond with a \$1,000 cheque to take up the challenge of Walter Quiring (see letter, February 10 Canadian Mennonite).

An Ontario congregation pledged \$2,500 in additional support and committed itself to further fundraising for MC Canada. And a southern Manitoba congregation pledged \$10 in additional giving from each member, with a goal to broaden the drive into its cluster and then across Manitoba.

Leaders said gifts are welcome, and added that prayer support is critical in these financially challenging times. More information will be released as it becomes available.—MC Canada release

Mennonite Church
Eastern Canada

Staff transitions

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

staff transitions in the coming months.

James Watson will leave his position as administrative assistant on April 30, after

four years in the position. Ilene Bergen finishes her position as minister of Christian Education on August 31, after nine years in that role. Mary Mae Schwartztruber completes four years as Minister of Missions on September 6, and will not seek reappointment.

Conference grant

Lou Xiiong was awarded a financial aid grant by MC Eastern Canada for his studies at Emmanuel Bible College. He is a member of First Hmong Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ontario.

Mennonite Church
Saskatchewan

Camp fundraisers on horse and hike

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

fifth year raising money via a Ride-a-thon. Participants must have their own horse to ride.

"We usually have a wagon going along," said camp director Mark Wurtz, "for those who want to take part but don't have a horse."

The riders begin at the farm and ride to the river. A meal and separate event are planned for them. Then the riders return. They cover a total of 26 miles during the trek. About 55 people come out for the fundraiser.

Another Mennonite camp is also planning a fundraiser for that day but those raising money for Camp Shekinah will be riding bikes.

Four resignations, one ordination

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan will see four resignations and one ordination in the next six months.

Benno Klassen will be finished at Eigenheim Mennonite church in Rosthern this June. Joseph Kibwa will be leaving Eyebrow Mennonite Church. Mal Braun, the senior pastor of Cornerstone Church Mennonite in Saskatoon has

resigned effective this summer, and Vern Neufeld, youth pastor, is leaving North Star Mennonite in Drake.

At the end of June, youth pastor of Cornerstone, Russell Reid, will be ordained.

Mennonite Church
British Columbia

Church educators invited to workshop

Mennonite Church British Columbia

manuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford and is open for anyone to attend. Elsie Rempel, director of Christian Education and Nurture for Mennonite Church Canada, will lead the day's sessions.

The morning will be spent looking for fresh ideas and inspiration for lesson plans. Participants are encouraged to

bring their texts along in order to work out a dynamic lesson. The afternoon session will look at curriculum—what's working, what's not, and what's new. The workshop will run from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. For more information, contact Cyndi Brandt at (604) 852-9520 or e-mail: gcjasm@aol.com.

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

News notes

Low German Bible scheduled for this year

Kitchener, Ont.—The Canadian Bible Society is working with its partners and Kindred Productions of Winnipeg to publish a complete Plauditsch (Low German) Bible later this year, reports Hart Wiens, director of Scripture Translation for Canada. The society will also publish a Dogrib (aboriginal language) New Testament this year. The society has scriptures available in 23 aboriginal languages. It is currently involved in about a dozen projects. The Bible is not only the most published, bestselling book in history, it continues to be the most translated book. The number of languages in which the complete Bible can be read now totals 405, reported the United Bible Societies in February. This is up 13 from a year ago. Parts of the Bible can be read in 2,303 languages, compared with 2,287 a year ago.—From Bible Society report

High school contest winners

Washington D.C.—Nathan Klassen recently won \$500 for his speech lamenting restrictions on civil liberties in the U.S. following September 11. He placed first in the speech category of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office's annual Public Policy Contest for high school students. Klassen, the son of Victor and Sue Klassen, formerly of Kitchener, Ontario, is home-schooled in Webster, New York. First place in the essay category was Katie Meyer, a student at Central Christian High School in Kidron, Ohio. Her paper, entitled "Communicating Peace," discussed the adverse impact of the U.S.'s antagonistic attitude to Iran. The MCC U.S. Washington Office holds the contest every year as a way of encouraging youth to participate in the church's witness to governing authorities.—From MCC U.S. release

Employment Opportunities

Menno-Hof is accepting applications for

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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

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate anticipates full and part time

TEACHING POSITIONS

in Science, Chemistry, English, French and Physical Education for the 2003-2004 school year. Interested applicants should forward questions / resumes:

c/o The Principal, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate
110 Deon Road, Kitchener, ON N2G 3C8
E-mail: principal@rockway.on.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, edb@mcc.org

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

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is seeking qualified applicants for the full-time position of

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

in Washington DC. Start date: June 2003. Qualifications include college degree or equivalent life experience, ability to utilize a variety of leadership styles; easy adaptability to varying needs and personalities of workers, skilled at organizing and prioritizing work, able to administer and coordinate worker placements; lead unit activities; provide logistical support; facilitate growth in the spiritual life of unit and each worker; ability to model and promote an anti-racist identity with the unit as well as the local community. As all MCC personnel, this person also needs to be a Christian, active church member and committed to nonviolent peacemaking. Contact:

Charmayne Brubaker, MCC
Phone: (717) 859-1151; E-mail: edb@mcc.org

or your nearest MCC office for a copy of the job description and application form. Application review begins immediately.

ART DIRECTOR

Canadian Mennonite requires a half-time art director to provide creative support service. The position begins in April.

The responsibilities of the position include: design and layout of the magazine and of ads; oversight of photo and art selection; liaison with printer; updating website; other duties as assigned.

Applicants should have: an understanding of and interest in Canadian Mennonite's mission; experience and training in graphic design; ability to work in a Macintosh format, with knowledge of programs such as PageMaker, Quark XPress, Illustrator, Photoshop, Adobe Acrobat Distiller; knowledge of electronic pre-press; familiarity with the internet; knowledge of web design; willingness to work within existing design and to participate in ongoing design review; willingness to grow and learn and further develop skills; ability to handle pressure and meet tight deadlines; willingness to be a team player, self-motivated, and flexible.

Direct inquiries and applications to:

Ron Rempel, editor/manager, Canadian Mennonite
490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
Phone: (519)884-3810, ext 225
E-mail: editor@canadianmennonite.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 April 15th, 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

Woodland Christian High School invites applications for a

CHOIR DIRECTOR

for the 2003-2004 school year. The position includes choir directing, possibly as a separate contract or in conjunction with the teaching of other subjects.

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

Please direct application and inquiries to:

Diane Stronks, Principal
Woodland Christian High School
1058 Spitzig Road, RR 1 Breslau, ON N0B 1M0
Phone: (519) 648-2114; Fax: (519) 648-3402
E-mail: office@woodland.on.ca

FULL-TIME PASTOR

The First Mennonite Church invites applications for a full-time pastor beginning in the summer/fall of 2003. Located in Vineland, The First Mennonite Church is a congregation of about 60 members and an equal number of children and youth. We are a diverse group of urban and rural people drawn together to worship and experience God's community within the unique setting of our historic church.

Rich in worship and fellowship, the congregation seeks an enthusiastic individual to provide spiritual leadership and guidance and who is committed to an Anabaptist understanding of faith.

For more information please contact:

Darren Pries-Klassen, Search Committee Chair
(905) 688-6272 or
Muriel Bechtel, MCEC Minister of Pastoral Services
(519) 650-3806

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada invites applications for the position

MINISTER OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

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

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

Requirements: Congregational experience is essential.

This is a full-time position to begin in August 2003. Please direct applications (with resume and references), inquiries or nominations by March 31, 2003 to:

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

Catholic and Mennonite scholars to discuss Anabaptist martyrs

Mennonite and Catholic scholars will gather in Minnesota this summer to begin a study of 16th-century Anabaptist martyrs, many of whom were condemned to death by the Inquisition.

Entitled "The Anabaptist martyr in an ecumenical context," the conference is an outgrowth of the Mennonite-Catholic dialogue of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

This event will take place at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, on July 15-16. St. John's, the largest Benedictine monastery in the world, hosts the annual Bridgefolk summer conferences, which bring together Mennonites and Catholics for informal dialogue. Its abbot is John Klassen who recently discovered that his family in Europe had been Anabaptists.

Co-sponsors of the event are St. John's University School of Theology and Seminary, the Institute of Mennonite Studies (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary), the Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies of Conrad Grebel University College, and the Schwenkfelder Library in Pennsylvania.

"If substantial dialogue is to continue," says the statement of purpose, "these historical events will have to be dealt with

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Student Housing: Two bedrooms available in a residential area, near Wilfrid Laurier University or University of Waterloo. All utilities included. Available May 2003. Phone (519) 655-2141.

Retreat cottage for rent on the Little Mississippi River near Bancroft, Ontario. Wood stove, hydro, running hot and cold water, shower and flush toilet. Accessible year round. Ideal for fall or winter getaway. Call (519) 471-3309 or <kcdrudge@skynet.ca>

Ottawa 3 bedroom home for rent. Close to transit, both universities and downtown. Available July 2003-Jan. 2004. Enquire at (613) 737-9702 or toomeyslebert@aol.com

Housing wanted

Mennonite couple looking for 2 bedroom apt. or house preferably furnished - to rent in Chilliwack area starting June/July 2003. Email: meganandgreg@yahoo.com

Announcement

Former members and friends are invited to celebrate the
100th ANNIVERSARY of HAGUE MENNONITE CHURCH

Saturday August 9, 2003 Sunday August 10, 2003
5:00- Supper, Music, Memories 10:30-Worship, Fellowship

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S0K 1X0
E-mail: Dave.Duane@sk.sympatico.ca

Jacqueline Funk
Phone (306) 225-4550
Fax (306) 225-2042

in a way that is satisfactory to the successors of both those who were persecuted and those responsible for these martyr deaths."

Brad S. Gregory of Stanford University will give the keynote address. His book, *Salvation at Stake* (Harvard University Press, 1999) includes the first extended study of Anabaptist martyrs by a Catholic scholar.

Other speakers will be Neal Blough, a Mennonite historian from Paris, and Peter Nissen, a Dutch Catholic historian. John D. Roth, editor of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* and part of the Mennonite-Lutheran dialogue in the U.S., will discuss the way Protestant histories have treated Anabaptists. Canadian historian Walter Klaassen will also discuss this topic.

One session will bring together two Canadian theologians to discuss the contemporary context: Margaret O'Gara of the University of Toronto and A. James Reimer of Conrad Grebel. Peter Erb of Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario, a former Mennonite and now a Catholic, is chair of the conference's program committee. Ivan J. Kauffman of Washington, D.C., another former Mennonite, is also on the program.

This meeting will lay plans for a long-range effort. For details, see the Bridgefolk website at <http://bridgefolk.net/> martyrs.—From Mennonite World Conference release

EMU planning bioethics conference

Harrisonburg, Va.—A conference on issues surrounding new possibilities in biotechnology will be held November 13-15 at Eastern Mennonite University. "Ethics of biotechnology: Viewing new creations with Anabaptist eyes" is sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee and the Anabaptist Center for Health Care Ethics in Elkhart, Indiana.

The conference is designed for academics, health care professionals, researchers, agriculturalists, pastors and others interested in the issues.

Among the speakers will be LeRoy Walters from the Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Georgetown University, and Stanley Hauerwas, theologian from Duke Divinity School in North Carolina, as well as specialists in gynecology and physiology.

For more information or to register, phone (540) 432-4000 or visit the EMU web site at www.bioethics.emu.edu.—EMU release

Calendar

British Columbia

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 at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford. Speaker: Marilyn Houser Hamm on prayer.
April 29: Columbia Bible College golf tournament.
May 18: "Singing down life's road," Mennonite music for

special occasions at Central Heights Church, Abbotsford, 3:00 p.m. Tickets from Mennonite Historical Society of B.C.

May 24: 50th anniversary celebration of Menno Place (home/hospital) at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, 5:30 p.m.

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

Alberta

April 18: Edmonton Inter-Mennonite Good Friday service at Myer Horowitz Theatre, 10:30 a.m.

April 18: Calgary Inter-Mennonite Good Friday service at Foothills Alliance Church, 10:00 a.m. Contact Doug Klassen at (403) 289-7172.

April 26: Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta annual meeting at Mennonite Brethren Church, Gem, followed by fundraising banquet. Speakers: Jessie and Larry Kehler. Call (403) 378-4372, e-mail: mary@eidnet.org.

May 2-3: Alberta Women in Mission annual meeting in Lethbridge. Speaker: Kathy Fast on "The hats we wear—celebrating our diversity." Call (403) 327-0629.

May 3-4: Young adult retreat at Camp Valaqua. Call Pam Bartel (403) 381-7078, e-mail: brother_love72@hotmail.com.

May 10: Work day at Camp Valaqua. Call (403) 637-2510 for details.

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

June 7: Camp Valaqua Hike-a-thon. Call (403) 637-2510 for details.

June 14: Open house at Camp Valaqua. Call (403) 637-2510.

June 20-21: MCC Relief Sale in Didsbury.

June 28-29: Springridge Mennonite Church 75th anniversary,

Pincher Creek. Call (403) 627-4130, e-mail: ljanzen@telusplanet.net.

July 25-27: 100th anniversary celebrations of Northwest Mennonite Conference at West Zion Mennonite, Carstairs.

July 26-27: Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury, 100th anniversary. Call (403) 337-2223 or 335-9421.

Saskatchewan

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 11, 12: Rosthern Junior College Dinner Theatre.

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

May 2: Joint concert and fundraising banquet with Rosthern Junior College and Canadian Mennonite University, Osler Mennonite Church.

May 4: Station Singers spring concert at Station Arts Centre, Rosthern, 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

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

May 11: Spring concert and art show at Rosthern Junior College, 2:30 p.m.

May 31: Prairie Falcon Motorcycle Rally for MCC.

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

June 7: Youth Farm Ride-a-thon (horseback).

June 7: Shekinah Bike-a-thon.
June 8-10: Pastor's retreat at Shekinah with Ken Bechtel.

June 13-14: MCC Relief Sale in Saskatoon.

June 17-20: AMBS course at Central Pentecostal College with James Reimer.

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

July 4-6: Rosthern Mennonite Church centennial celebration.

July 26-27: 75th anniversary

of Hoffnungsfelder churches. Call (306) 824-2081.

August 9-10: 100th anniversary celebration at Hague Mennonite Church. Register at (306) 225-4550 or e-mail: dave.duane@sk.sympatico.ca.

Manitoba

April 3: Mennonite Church Manitoba Leadership Seminar at Charleswood Mennonite, 7:00 p.m. with Maurice Martin.

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

April 5: Retreat for persons with mental illness, "From loneliness to community," at First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. Contact MCC Manitoba Mental Health Concerns at (204) 261-6381.

April 13: North Kildonan Mennonite Church Quartet spring concert, 7:00 p.m.

May 1: Spring Concert of Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School Bedson at Westwood Community Church, 7:00 p.m.

May 3: "Enlarging the circle," interchurch conference on disabilities at Covenant Christian Reform Church, Winnipeg. Call (204) 261-6381.

May 8: Spring Concert of Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School Agassiz at Bethel Mennonite Church, 7:00 p.m.

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.

May 26-28: Plus 55 Retreat at Camp Moose Lake with speaker Peter Wiebe. Call (204) 896-1616.

May 30-June 1: Birding Retreat at Camp Moose Lake. Call (204) 896-1616.

June 2-4: Plus 55 Retreat at Camp Koinonia with speaker

Menno Janzen. Call (204) 896-1616.

June 23: Graduation of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate.

July 20: Memorial stone placement at Lena Mennonite Church site. Call (204) 885-2425.

Ontario

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

March 30: Five-on-the-Floor benefit for Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, at First Mennonite Church, Vineland, 2:00 p.m.

April 4: Fundraising dinner at Parkview Village, Stouffville, 6:00 p.m. Speaker: Ivan Harris, CBC Broadcast Museum. Call (905) 640-1940, ext. 21.

April 4-6: Spiritual quilting retreat at Camp Ganadaoweh, Ayr, with Marilyn Rudy-Froese. Call (519) 576-6719 by March 14.

April 5: Gospel Sing benefit for new Milverton-Rockway bus at First Baptist Church, Waterloo, 7:30 p.m.

April 5: Silver Lake Mennonite Camp Smorg at Grace Mennonite, St. Catharines, 4-8:00 p.m. Call (519) 747-0627.

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

April 7, 9: Mortgage seminars sponsored by Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, Crosshill Mennonite (7), Hillcrest Mennonite, (9) 7:30 p.m.. Call 1-888-672-6728.

April 11-12: Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Spring session at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

April 14-17: MCC meat canning in Leamington.

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 21-25: MCC meat canning at University of Guelph. Contact Earl Martin (519) 664-2528.

April 25: Day of Quiet Prayer at Tavistock Mennonite

Church.

April 25: Envirathon/Servathon at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

April 25: Banquet of K-W MEDA Chapter at Conrad Grebel University College, 7:00 p.m. with speaker Allan Sauder.

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

April 25-26: Women's retreat at Hidden Acres with Beth Gray. Phone (519) 625-8602.

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

April 26: Women of MCEC Enrichment Day at Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church, 10:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Speaker: Wanda Roth Amstutz.

May 1: Biblical literacy evening at Danforth Mennonite Church, Toronto, 7:00 p.m. Continues Thursdays to June 5. For details e-mail Robert Boardman: robert@stoneyard.net.

May 2, 3: All-school drama at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

May 4: Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir concert at Breslau Mennonite Church, 3:00 p.m.

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

May 10: Springfest at Niagara United Mennonite Church, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Bake sale, auction, music, food.

May 12 or 13: Seniors' retreat at Hidden Acres on "The changing faces of Mennonite ministry" with Werner Packull and Gerald Good.

May 15: MEDA breakfast at Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, with Steve Rannekleiv, 7:30 a.m.

May 16-19: Alumni Weekend at Fraser Lake Camp.

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

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

May 27-30: Quilts for the World at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

May 31: Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale, New Hamburg.

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 19: MEDA breakfast at Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, with David Brubacher, 7:30 a.m.

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.

June 28: Aylmer Auction for Relief at Aylmer Fairgrounds.

United States

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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Dry Bones

(Ezekiel 37)



Photo by Leona Dueck Penner

Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live. And you shall know that I am the Lord.

Lord, today we are dry bones,
Lying in the valley,
Bleached by sun,
Scoured by searing winds,
And polished with the sands of fiscal restraints.

We are smaller now,
And sadder,
Quietly sitting with individual pain
For a whole church
Which rattles with the shards
of shattered ministries.

Lord, can you hear us?
Can you take these bones
And cause them to come together,
bone to its bone?

Sinews and flesh, perhaps,
But breath?
The living and breathing
of our dreams and visions?
Lord, can you take these bones
And make them dance?

We weep and wail,
our hearts pounding in our heads;
We rage and rail
At the death-rattle of ideas
That are to us our life and breath.

We hurt O God...

Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And you shall know that I am the Lord. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live.

We are waiting in the valley..
God, raise these bones.
Breathe on us.
Teach us to dance.

Lynette Wiebe

The above was written in response to Mennonite Church Canada cutbacks (see pages 12-15).