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**St. Catharines
2003**

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Thanks and farewell

This issue marks the end of my editor/publisher tenure, one month short of 24 years. As I worked on this last column, I ran up against “writer’s block.” How could I possibly sum it all up? What else should I write as a sequel to the “defining moments” columns in the last two issues?

The first thing I put on the page were the two mug shots below. I guess they tell at least part of the story. The “greying” of an editor. The lowering of the ears. From unassisted to assisted sight.

After numerous aborted attempts at some words, I found myself going back to expand on a list of thank yous I gave at the recent Mennonite Church Canada Assembly after my board presented me with a commemorative plaque. I can think of no better way to end my work on this periodical than with a list of thanks and acknowledgements.

•Thanks for the opportunity I’ve had to test and develop my calling to ministry. I use the word “ministry” deliberately. I came to this position in the fall of 1979 having served six years in pastoral work. I quickly concluded, however, that journalism need not be outside the realm of ministry understood in a broad sense.

•Thanks to the staff with whom I have worked closely over the years. Each issue is a team effort. A special thanks to Margaret Loewen Reimer, a colleague since 1979, who will serve as interim editor/publisher for the next year.

•Thanks to the many board members who have given their time and wisdom to the paper. When I started, the board was mostly from Ontario. It was satisfying to see the cross-country representation grow as the board embraced and directed a broader vision.



1979



2003

•Thanks to the church for providing a continuous flow of interesting and instructive stories—stories of faithfulness and unfaithfulness, of unity and disunity, of engagement with broader societal issues, of theological and ethical discernment. And thanks to the sources who have entrusted stories to us as reporters and commentators.

•Thanks to conferences across the country who saw the value of a widely circulated periodical and who became partners in a circulation plan which made *Canadian Mennonite* available to a record number of households. Help to keep your conference budgets strong so that the circulation plan can continue. Your ongoing direct support through annual fund appeals will also be required.

•Thanks for your feedback, whether through formal surveys or informal notes, phone calls and e-mails. Thanks also for your forbearance in the face of shortcomings and for extending grace and forgiveness when I made mistakes or didn’t give you the platform you wanted.

•Thanks to my home congregation, Stirling Avenue Mennonite in Kitchener, Ontario, for providing a primary place of worship, learning and fellowship in the midst of “wider church” work.

•Thanks to my wife, Kaye, for support and encouragement in my bi-weekly deadlines and frequent travel—longside her own challenging work.

So it’s time to say farewell to my years of work with this periodical and its predecessor, *Mennonite Reporter*. I will continue in the field of church-related publishing, however, as I take up leadership of the Mennonite Publishing Network which produces resources and books for the Mennonite Church both in Canada and the U.S.

Blessings to the *Canadian Mennonite* staff and board as they carry forward this important ministry.—**Ron Rempel**

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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 August 25 issue by Aug. 21.

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Photo by Dan Dyck.**

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Winnipeg, Man.

Canadians honoured at Taiwan hospital celebration

At its 55th anniversary celebration in March, the Mennonite Christian Hospital in Hualien, Taiwan, honoured two Canadian medical missionaries—Carl Epp and Helen Willms Bergen—by naming a new library and a fountain after them.

Epp, a physician who served with the Commission on Overseas Mission in Taiwan from 1972-91, attended the celebration together with his wife, Madeleine Enns, who taught in Taiwan in the early 1970s. Epp's first wife, Hilda, died in 1995.

Willms Bergen, a nursing instructor and public health worker in Taiwan from 1957-91, died in January (see March 10 issue, page 4). There were posters of her on hospital walls and an evening of music in her memory, featuring songs and dances from aboriginal groups with whom she worked.

It was “a beautiful gesture, to be invited and to be honoured in this way for three days!” said Epp, reflect-



At the entrance to the Carl Epp Library are, from left: Peter Huang of the hospital, Weldon (Carl's son) and Christy Epp with Erin, Carl and Madeleine. The text on the plaque begins: “Dr. Carl Epp, a Canadian, dedicated himself as a missionary to the medical service at Mennonite Christian Hospital.” It mentions that Epp’s “courtesy and loving care” won the trust of his patients, and his “attentive teaching” had a lasting effect on “good medical service relationships.” In 1996, Epp received an award from the Taiwanese government for his contributions.



Jenny Hsu, hospital chaplain (front), stands in front of the Helen Willms Bergen poster.

ing on the event in his Winnipeg home. “Everything was looked after to the last detail.... The hosting was very impressive.”

“Yes,” laughed Madeleine. “There were videos and cameras everywhere, with posters of Carl naming him ‘Ai-Baba’ (Daddy Epp). Because of the posters everyone addressed him that way, even people he’d never met. We felt out of our league!”

Epp looked a little embarrassed as he interjected: “The Taiwanese people are very welcoming; they’re expert at hosting events like this. The award I was given tells just as much about them as it does about me who received it.”

Epp based his response on the theme of shalom or total peace: “peace with God, with self, with others, with the environment, with society. I knew they were already doing it.... I saw my role as affirming them in what they

were already doing.”

The staff at the hospital live out their faith not just in the hospital but in caring for the poor and the disabled. No person is ever refused treatment because they can’t pay.

Part of the caring is a day nursery which includes disabled children. The hospital has a strong chaplaincy program and puts an emphasis on spiritual development, not overt proselytizing.

The hospital, now operated by the Fellowship of Mennonite Churches in Taiwan, began as a mobile clinic for isolated villages by Mennonite Central Committee workers in the late 1940s who were invited by the Presbyterian church. There was no base hospital until 1948.

“Right from the start, they combined worship and evangelism with care,” said Epp. “Now there are nationals in all departments of the hospital and



MCC Canada photo

Summerbridge 2003 participants. Back: Lisette Laurin Genest (Quebec), Blandine Kapita Kama (Quebec), Belinda Kengadio (Quebec), Danielle Lajeunesse (Quebec), Ruth Ramirez (British Columbia). Front: Joshua Lake (Nova Scotia), Elizabeth Cabezas (Alberta), Marie-Claude Deneault (Quebec), Lucie Dastous (Quebec), Thai Nguyen (Alberta).

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Summerbridge member eager to serve

Joshua Lake isn't looking to improve his performance when he walks on stage with his guitar. What he really wants, both for himself and his audience, is an encounter with the Spirit of God.

It doesn't matter "whether we sing the same song for an hour or sit silent, there's no one way of

looking at it," says Lake, who is serving his community as a volunteer in Mennonite Central Committee's Summerbridge program. "I'd rather allow the Holy Spirit to do the work."

Summerbridge is a summer program that encourages participants of diverse cultural backgrounds to develop their leadership skills by serving their home community and church. Lake is one of 10 participants from 4 provinces this summer.

Lake is serving as a worship leader at Gateway Mennonite Brethren Community Church in Halifax. It isn't his first time on stage. Lake traces his church band involvement back to the age of 12 when he first began playing drums. But after seven years, he quit.

"It just became too routine," he says.

A three-week youth retreat in Winnipeg helped bring back his sense of purpose within the church and re-energized his spirit.

The sense of the Holy Spirit was so strong "that it overwhelmed me," says Lake. "I could never get enough."

When he got home, Lake decided to go back to his church worship team. It's no longer just about the music. The church has a network of people that pray for the worship team.

It helps to keep the band's focus on the one they're serving, not the ones they are playing to, says Lake.

As a Summerbridge participant, Lake will be serving not only in his home community. From July 25 to August 10 he expects to be touring with "La Danse Celebration," a group of 250 musicians and speakers traveling across Canada to worship and build relationships among youth.—
From MCC Canada release by
Jonathan Tiessen

Taiwan celebration

very capable administrators."

For example, a young man whose mother worked as household help for missionary nurses, and for Madeleine, is now an expert in financial management. While he and others have been able to get funding from local agencies and government, they've kept the model of MCC which is engraved on the cornerstone of the new building: "Serving in the name of Christ."

Currently, there are about 1,200 Mennonites in Taiwan, with 16 churches in 4 cities.

When asked why he went to Taiwan, Epp said that he went to medical school so he could "work in a place where there weren't enough doctors. I wanted to help in training national people so they could serve their own people.... I had no particular time frame in mind when I arrived in 1972. But by 1991, they had enough doctors to do the work themselves. It was time to go even though they wanted me to stay.

"To go back 12 years later was a

tremendous blessing of God. To see that they'd grown by leaps and bounds: from 90 beds and 4 doctors [to] 1,000 employees, 400 beds and 60 doctors. Yet they hadn't compromised their principles...."

How did his experience fit with the present "missional" focus of Mennonite Church Canada?

"It's not that much different from what we did in the past," said Epp. "When new workers go out, they go out understanding that God is present and at work there already. So you move from what the nationals already know about God into a deeper understanding. Forming friendships before you move further, sharing each others' faith stories, learning from each other. The Anabaptist 'total gospel' approach works in any country."

His hope is that his story will encourage "our youth to consider preparing themselves to work in needy countries."—**Leona Dueck Penner**

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What if...grace prevailed?

“What if...” was the theme of the 2003 assembly of Mennonite Church Canada in July. The following is from the opening sermon by moderator Henry Krause, based on Philippians 1:1-11.

In many ways, the last eight months have felt like a very ungracious time to be part of Mennonite Church Canada. The decisions that I and others have been part of have not always had the flavour of grace. They were painful decisions—loss of significant programs and people.

For some this has been a time of gracelessness in MC Canada, especially if your job was terminated, or you were involved in a program that was cut. You may be thinking: what if grace had prevailed, what would be different?

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians during very difficult times. He was locked in prison, trying to make contact with communities he loved. And yet, he continued to speak about the grace and joy of God whose love was being made manifest through Jesus Christ in many ways.

How can we—individuals, churches, area conferences, and our national church—continue to proclaim and live out the grace that God drenched Paul and his community with? What do we need to do to immerse ourselves in the grace and joy that God longs for us to have?

When Paul looked through the prison bars past the guards and chains, he saw the Spirit of God at work in those who had committed themselves to the risen Christ. When he remembered his friends on the outside, he was overwhelmed with joy at the grace of God coursing through them.

What if we were able to see as clearly as Paul, and to live in that grace? What if grace prevailed?

Philip Yancey in his book, *What's so Amazing about Grace*, tells of a young prostitute who in her desperation for drugs also prostitutes her two-year-old girl. She comes to Yancey's friend looking for food and

money. The friend asked her if she had ever thought of going to a church for help.

“Church!” she cried. “Why would I ever go there? I was already feeling terrible about myself. They'd just make me feel worse.”

What if grace prevailed? “What if” implies that we have not always done it right.

Tony Campolo at this year's Mission Fest in Vancouver challenged the evangelical church to look grace in the eye. He had recently been invited to lecture at Harvard or Yale—to tell them about evangelicals. When he met with the president before the lectures, Campolo asked: If we had three people sitting with us around the table—a black civil rights activist, a gay man and a radical feminist—how would they describe the church?

The president replied: They would say that the church is bigoted, hate-filled and homophobic, and doesn't believe in the equality of men and women. When Campolo asked the president how they would describe Jesus Christ, he said: inviting, forgiving, loving and gracious.

Why do people see the church as such a graceless place when they see Jesus as such a grace-filled person? Campolo urged us to radicalize our understanding of grace and to allow it to pour out into the world around us so that people will begin to see a reflection of Jesus Christ in the church.

When I started seminary, I stumbled across a book called *Telling the Truth—The gospel as tragedy, comedy and fairy tale*. In it Frederick Buechner writes that the Gospel begins as a tragedy. Sin happens; death is everywhere. The Scriptures are full of stories of those who just don't do it right.

But that's not the end. The gospel is also a comedy, not in the TV sitcom sense but in the best sense of comedy



Krause



where bizarre things happen that shouldn't logically happen. God loves sinners; grace abounds; people are saved in spite of themselves. It's a holy, joyful comedy where amazing things take place.

It is also fairy tale. Not that it is untrue, but rather that good wins out: "And they all lived happily ever after." There really is redemption, love triumphs and death is destroyed. Grace is ultimately the most powerful force. "What if..." becomes reality.

I go to a store near our home run by a Korean couple who are strong Christians. Invariably when I come into the store, he will say, "Hello Pastor," and proceed to ask me a question about my church, or theology or a translation issue.

A while back he wanted me to help him write a note. There are two telephone booths near his store that continue to be vandalized. Each time it costs about \$3,000 for the phone company to fix them so they are threatening to pull them out. The store owner wants to keep them. They are good for business and also keep people from using his phone.

He wanted to put a note in the phone booth that said something like, "Please don't break this because Jesus loves you." My immediate response was that guys who smash phone booths don't read notes like this and even if they did it wouldn't make any difference to them.

He insisted, so I finally wrote: "Please don't break this phone. God bless you." We will put this note up and the Spirit will use these words, said the store owner. I wasn't convinced.

As I left the store I thought, well that is a waste of time. But later I realized that he had much more faith than I did—faith not in the guys that would read the note but in the power of God's grace. What if...

It reminds me of the invitation that keeps being affirmed by our sisters and brothers in Zimbabwe as they prepare for Mennonite World Conference assembly. In spite of the worries we have over here about the difficulties there might be.

God is here and is faithful.

What Paul is telling his readers,

what Jesus calls us to, what has been demonstrated in the history of Israel and the Christian church is that "grace goes with the grain of the universe."

We are familiar with the notion of the "upside down kingdom." Jesus flipped everything around: "The first shall be last; the meek shall inherit the earth." Another part of it is that grace is at the heart of the cosmos. Grace goes with the grain of the universe. When we act graciously and lovingly, we are going with the flow of the created order, not against it.

Grace will abound because this is how God always acts in the world. Through the suffering love of Jesus, grace has a foothold in our lives and will continue to flourish and move us towards the ultimate goal of God—the recreation of all that is through the resurrection power of God's love and forgiving grace.

Our challenge is to live out what we can't always see. The reality that hits us between the eyes is that evil is winning, that greed and revenge and death are more powerful than God's grace.

But this is not the true picture.

How do you know that the sun does not revolve around the earth? If you walk outside at dawn you will clearly see the sun coming up in the east. At dusk, it will clearly go down in the west. Any fool can see that the sun is revolving around the earth.

And yet the amazing thing is that you don't believe that. Despite the data rendered by your eyes, you believe that the earth is revolving around the sun. That's an amazing epistemological conversion.

What if we had the same eyes for grace.... How can we help each other to see the truth behind what looks like the truth.

We need to continually remind ourselves that the grace of God abounds, that it washes over us. We are invited to see that grace is all around us, in the ordinary, everyday.

In her book, *Seeking God—The way of St Benedict*, Esther de Waal writes that "spirituality is grounded in the idea that God's presence is everywhere, that it is our job to seek it out," remembering that even our most ordinary work is to be a constant reminder of the reality of God's grace. To live in a

Continued on page 8



Leading the singing are Charlene Nafziger, Gerald Neufeld and Mark Diller Harder.



Grace *From page 7*

holistic manner, she says, is to do the ordinary and hum-drum things each day “with a loving openness that will allow them to become my own immediate way to God.”

When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman who was on her sixth relationship he was very specific in calling her to faith, extending grace and challenging her to deal with what had been happening in her life.

When Jesus spoke to Zacchaeus he talked about the specific people he had cheated and needed to pay back. And grace overflowed in Zachaeus’ life.

Jesus always spoke particular words, never meaningless generalities. What are the particular words that Jesus is saying to us today when he calls us to follow him, to walk in grace? What words is he saying to Mennonite Church Canada?

As Mennonites I think we are grace challenged! We have a fear of being too gracious because we don’t know where it will lead.

But what if... grace prevailed?

A woman comes to the pearly gates where St. Peter sits with a large book. Behind him are two elevators, one marked “up,” the other “down.” St. Peter looks her name up in his book, then reads off all her sins. Sorry, he says, I can’t let you in.

Just as she turns dejected, he reaches down under the desk and pulls out a red clown nose, puts it on and says,

“Just kidding—up you go.”

When she gets to the top and enters God’s promised land she meets a fellow citizen and says, “You know, I’m not really supposed to be here.” The other person replies, “Oh, neither am I!” What if...grace prevailed?

Some words I use in our communion service fill me with a sense of God’s grace whenever I say them. They are an invitation to come into the grace of God:

Come, not because you are strong,
but because you are weak.

Come, not because any goodness of
your own gives you a right to
come but because you need
mercy and help.

Come because you love the Lord a
little and would like to love more.
Come because Christ loved you and
gave himself for you.

—Henry Krause

The writer is pastor of the Langley Mennonite Fellowship in British Columbia and moderator of Mennonite Church Canada.

Litany in a time of distress

This litany was read during the closing session of St. Catharines 2003. It was drafted by the Resolutions and Listening Committees in response to requests for public expression of the distress resulting from cuts to the Mennonite Church Canada budget earlier this year.

We left Saskatoon
filled with enthusiasm
and anticipation for what we and God
would do together.

We came to St. Catharines
filled with questions,
aware of pain,
feeling sorrow,
troubled by anger,
needing to forgive and be forgiven.

To you who lost your jobs,
saw your dreams die,
felt your confidence in the church
diminish,
some of you after years of faithful and
tireless service of the church,

To (terminated): *Debbie Loewen, Adam
Robinson, Marilyn Houser Hamm,
Maurice Martin, Shirley Redekop, Brad
Reimer (extended to Jan. 04), Raul
Bogoya, Monica Selluski, Vic and Norma
Funk, Neill and Edith Von Gunten
(extended to Aug. 04), John and Pat*

*Pankrantz, Willie Guenther, Gerd Bartel,
Steve Plenert, Norm Voth, Vicki Friesen,
Jean Jacques Goulet, Sheldon Sawatsky,
Flora Umurisa, Gerald and Rie Neufeld,
Dorothy & Jake Unrau, James and
Henriette Schellenberg, Rudy and Elsie
Frose; (reduced): Daniel Rempel, Kirsten
Schroeder, Elsie Rempel, Anne Campion,
Walter Franz, Peter Rempel.*

We say, we are sorry.
We commit ourselves to care for you,
walk with you,
and listen to you as you speak of your
pain, grief and shattered dreams.

To the General Board, Councils and
administrative staff we say,
we recognize the difficult situation you
were in,
the commitment to responsibility and
justice you brought to your task,
and the openness and honesty with
which you tried to work.
Thank you.

By your own confession, you made
“errors of omission and commission,”
and that made us angry
and we questioned our confidence in
you.

We commit ourselves to work toward
forgiveness,
reconciliation,
and renewed trust.

Of our own complicity, we say,
we recognize we could have given
more generously
and prayed more faithfully.
We are sorry.

For all of us we ask that God might
forgive us,
whatever our involvement and
failings
and that God bring new courage and
hope for the future.

May God bless us and keep us.
May God look on us with favour and be
gracious unto us,
May God smile on us and give us peace.
Amen.

Open letter on same-sex marriage

Legalizing same-sex marriage presents a challenge to the church, says Sven Eriksson, Mennonite Church Canada denominational minister. The following is from an open letter he wrote to pastors in July.

Without doubt, as Canadians, we are entering a new phase of uncertainty and debate around the nature and meaning of marriage and family.

Extending the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples will significantly change the understanding and practice of marriage that have been held from ancient times. At the same time, we acknowledge that civil and religious understandings of marriage have been undergoing a lot of change for quite a few years.

As pastors and leaders, we will have many opportunities to respond to questions that will arise. Some of us may be approached to conduct same-sex marriages. Some have already been contacted by media personnel. Such initiatives will not only give opportunities to confess our beliefs, but also provide openings for us to provide gracious ministry to people for whom these concerns have deeply personal resonance.

As churches belonging to Mennonite Church Canada, we together hold a definition of marriage that is found in our "Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective." Article 19 states:

"We believe that God intends marriage to be a covenant between one man and one woman for life. Christian marriage is a mutual relationship in Christ, a covenant made in the context of the church. According to Scripture, right sexual union takes place only within the marriage relationship."

Therefore, it is clear that the conducting or blessing same-sex marriages is outside of our understanding and practice of marriage.

This position, which we share with almost every Christian denomination, may be increasingly challenged both by people within the church and also those outside as our government

distances itself from traditional practices.

So how should we as members of the Mennonite community of faith respond to the challenges of this situation?

First, we need to pray: for our government, for those who seek to offer leadership in this important concern, for those personally affected by the changing definitions, for those who feel threatened by the directions society is taking, and for wisdom in our own actions and reactions.

Then we need to discern together how we can be faithful to our confession, and wise and compassionate in our responses, especially to those who are anxious and vulnerable.

We will also continue to voice our

concerns and offer our counsel concerning the proposed changes.

Mennonite Church Canada has participated in the public hearings by the Justice Committee, including common presentations by the Canadian Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

We can contact our Members of Parliament to express our concerns and to seek assurance that our churches and religions will continue to have the freedom to exercise our beliefs.

My prayers are with you, that God will give you wisdom and great blessing as you serve Christ in challenging times.—**Sven Eriksson**

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.

B.C. does have mission statements

I appreciated Angelika Dawson's article on the Mennonite Church British Columbia meetings (June 30). She captured much of the struggle B.C. is working through as it re-envisions itself. However, it's important to clarify an insinuation regarding mission statements. B.C. does indeed have vision and mission documents.

Since the 1990s (and before) we have had a series of documents building on each other. Most recently,

from listening meetings in 1997-98, a draft "Picture of our preferred future" was accepted in principle by delegates. In 1999, that document was reaffirmed by the delegate body. Today, it appears in our report books and continues as the basis for much of our conference's work and program.

While it does not follow the current trend of one-liners that roll from the lips, the document paints a clear picture of the direction our members agreed to up to this point. One may make a case against that picture, or declare it is poorly written, but one cannot imply it is missing.

The question is not if we have clear statements. The question is whether those statements reflect our members' views sufficiently so they can own and embrace that future.—**Chris Arney, Evangelism and Church Development director, MC British Columbia**

Wrestling with each other and God

Many of you have watched from afar as we at Toronto United Mennonite Church wrestled with our response to homosexual Christians in our midst. I would like to give my personal reflection on what the church experienced in order to encourage other churches to begin this journey.

Like Jacob of the Bible, who was afraid to meet his brother across the river, we were afraid—and still are—to speak truthfully, directly and with vulnerability to each other. We feared those who had different convictions because we thought it was our job to defend God's truth and justice. In our lack of trust we said and did things that created great pain for everyone.

However, what many of us also discovered during this year was that our wrestling was not just with each other. Like Jacob, we ended up wrestling with God. We prayed as never before, listened to each other as never

before, and read the Bible as never before.

The very foundation of who we are as a church was laid bare. We began to realize that only God's loving compassion and grace can create "church" out of our diversity.

We came away limping and in pain—but more prepared to meet our brothers and sisters across the river! We may still be afraid but we are not alone—because we have wrestled with God and God is with us. Our concluding covenant with each other suggests that we are only beginning the journey, yet are ready to commit ourselves to each other because our unity is in Christ.

"We covenant to live and learn together as an integrated community under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves to work at the issues which remain before us, in conversation with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, confident that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide us

on our journey."

I pray that many others may join us so that together we may discern God's will and walk in God's way.—**Lydia Harder, Toronto, Ont.**

Dismayed over derailing of partnership

I attended the St. Louis '99 assembly with interest and excitement. This was to be the decision-making time after years of discussion and planning for integration of the Mennonite Church and General Conference.

While many feared what a division along the 49th parallel might do to us, the decision was made towards a "one church, two country" Mennonite Church—MC Canada and MC USA. The anxiety was alleviated in part by the strong affirmation that partnerships between the two country bodies would hold us together.

The document on "Canada/United

What if grace prevailed in our families?

This summer Winnipeg has offered grace-filled weather—generously long sun-kissed days under a prairie blue sky, regular soaking rains that keep the land green and growing, pleasant breezes and miraculously few mosquitoes. It's the kind of season that invites bone-chilled, winter-barricaded folk to throw open the windows to soak up the warmth and breathe out long-held tension.

Grace has a similar impact on us. A cousin to forgiveness, grace is described by the hymnists as amazing, marvellous and wonderful. It saves wretches, finds the lost and bestows sight on the blind. Perhaps that's why Henri Nouwen (in *The Way of the Heart*) teaches that "only in the context of grace can we face our sin."

John's gospel declares, "From Jesus' fullness, we have all received grace upon grace" (1:16). Like an endless summer, grace beckons us to lay aside our burdens and sink into acceptance and trust. When the gift of grace comes our way, it brings delight and joy, peace and an easing of aches.

What if grace prevailed in our families? I've seen such moments when...

Lois sings to her tired and crabby

children as she helps them prepare for bed; a much more pleasant alternative than scolding.

Dan wraps his mom in a firm, gentle hug and asks, "How are you today?"

Leah adds extra groceries to her cart each week to take to her elderly parents, knowing they'll likely count it their due



and omit a thank you.

Krista marvels at the joy and easy relationship she has with her daughter, a marked contrast from the one she had with her mother; "I didn't know it could be like this!" she exclaims.

John's dad softens the boundaries of his righteous and right religion to bestow on his son the blessing he seeks as he follows a different faith path.

Ted opens his heart to Angie's love again after her affair, while acknowledging how his emotional coldness drove her to

another.

George renovates his home to accommodate his father who is suffering from Alzheimer's, the same father who abused him as a child.

Anytime anyone anywhere picks up the phone or pens a note to make the first move, empowered by the waterfall of grace upon grace that drenches all of us who follow Christ.

Years ago Ruth lay in a hospital bed with a mysterious and what appeared to be life-threatening illness. While praying she experienced a powerful sense of our God of grace who clearly told her, "I deeply love you and all I want from you is your love. Let go of your worries and hard feelings towards yourself and let me bathe you in my love." Ruth's time with God transformed her, freeing her from a burden of guilt and low self-esteem she'd carried all her life.

What if grace prevailed in our families? It would be as lovely, welcome and healing as a perfect summer day.

The writer, counsellor and author, operates Family Ties in Winnipeg. This is the first of three columns on the Mennonite Church Canada theme, "What if...grace, peace and love prevailed?"

States Partnerships” approved by delegates as the guideline for ongoing work, worship and fellowship together indicated joint assemblies every four years—the first to be held in Canada. I left St. Louis excited about the future of a MC Canada/USA partnership and the ministry potential it represented.

I was dismayed, therefore, to read the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) update presented to delegates in St. Catharines (July 9-13). I understand the “variety of factors” which led the JEC to question “earlier assumptions and commitments” and thereby postpone, if not eliminate, future joint conventions.

How we will remain “one church” without meeting together is a mystery to me. I mourn what could have been. I worry about explaining to the youth why the adults have reneged on their commitment to meet together in 2005 for they will understand this as “they don’t care about us.”

The cost for Canadians to attend a convention in the United States is twice that of most U.S. participants, yet we have willingly come. That cost would be a major prohibiting factor for U.S. delegates coming here is therefore a huge disappointment. I guess not all partnerships are created equal.—**Craig Friesen, Rosthern, Sask.**

Worship today needs Anabaptist essence

I appreciated the recent articles on Mennonite worship by Maurice Martin (June 16 and 30). He raises the question whether borrowing from other traditions is a sign of growth or unfaithfulness.

My sense is that a large part of our traditional worship practice, especially the previous rejection of musical instruments, ongoing suspicion of images and generally horizontal, non-sacramental style, was born just as much in reaction to medieval abuses as it was to careful reflection. It was an understandable reaction at the time, but we need to keep it in proper perspective.

We do not have to retain “una-dorned” and “spontaneous” worship to remain faithful to our Anabaptist roots. The great insights of our fore-

bears were that the Spirit is accessible to all, and that the benchmark of spiritual manifestation is Christ-like behaviour in the world. Worship is not to be some esoteric escape from the world.

The question is how to encounter the spiritual power that enables us to live the way of Christ in our families, jobs and in society. How does our worship open us up to the presence of the Spirit in our lives? How does it take us beyond ourselves? How does it move us to confession and repentance? How does our worship form us into a counter-cultural community?

These are our questions, not necessarily those of the early Anabaptists. They came to worship more to share convictions than to engender them, even though the two are never completely separate. We can’t assume the same depth of spiritual commitment and fervour in those who come to our

services. The question is how we can help our people find it.

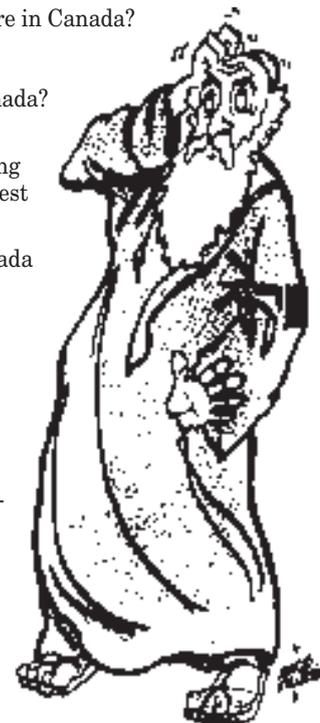
I find help through some of the things the Anabaptists rejected: instrumental music, images, historically structured liturgy and sacramental rituals. The plain, spontaneous service works well when everyone in the congregation is Spirit-filled and conversant with scripture. But when we are confused, diverse and weighed down with North American narcissism, it may be good to return to the structured forms that have stood the test of time.

Worship that engages the breadth of Christian history and all of the senses may not be in accord with our Mennonite tradition in one sense, but it may be what some of us need in order to be more deeply in touch with the essence of the tradition.—**Scott Brubaker-Zehr, Kitchener, Ont.**

A Mennonite Quiz

Here are some facts every Canadian Mennonite should want to know. See answers on page 30.

1. How many Mennonites (church members) are there in the world?
2. How many Mennonites (church members) are there in Canada?
3. When did Mennonites first come to Canada?
4. What is the oldest Mennonite congregation in Canada? When was it founded?
5. How many Mennonites does Canada have according to 2001 census figures? Which province has the highest number?
6. How many members does Mennonite Church Canada have? How many congregations?
7. Which MC Canada area conference has the most members?
8. What is the largest MC Canada congregation?
9. Which country sent out the first Mennonite missionaries? Where did they go?
10. Who were the first Canadian Mennonite missionaries to foreign lands?
11. What is the oldest Mennonite school in Canada?
12. How many languages are used for worship in MC Canada churches?



Mennonite cartoon by Charles Milbern



St. Catharines 2003 Annual Assembly of Mennonite Church Canada July 9 - 13, 2003

All assembly photos by Dan Dyck



Wanda and Doug Amstutz, pastors at Grace Mennonite Church, St. Catharines, lead worship.

St. Catharines, Ont.

Not 'business as usual' at MC Canada assembly

Mennonite Church Canada staff came prepared to explain finances to delegates at the annual assembly here July 9-13. Reports of the recent financial crisis and cutbacks made in March were thorough and precise.

But delegates also wanted to discuss the human consequences—the loss of trust in leaders, the pain over jobs lost. There didn't seem to be time to talk, to acknowledge "the grief process," as the Listening Committee observed. (Perhaps the least acknowledged grief was that of conference leaders who had to make the painful decisions and face the delegates.)

Delegate frustration boiled over on the last day.

"It shouldn't be business as usual," noted Gerald Gerbrandt of Winnipeg during the budget discussion. "We need more discussion with delegates about setting priorities for the conference." Delegates were asked to accept

the revised 2003-2004 budget, as well as projections to 2006.

Kerry Enns of Gretna, Manitoba, announced that he would vote against the budget because he wasn't convinced that things were being well managed. Even the new treasurer, Clare Schlegel, called for more time before the vote. But there was no more time.

Of the 273 ballots cast on the budget, 50 were negative. In this revised budget, revenue is set at \$5,112,747, about \$1.7 million less than the budget accepted in Saskatoon last year.

Expenses total \$5,168,747, about \$1.9 million less. The deficit, plus one-time costs of discontinued programs (\$207,765), will be covered by transfers from reserves.

Despite frustrations, there were also expressions of support for leaders and encouragement to move on. A resolution on the final day commended the General Board and MC Canada staff for their "courage, hard work, and transparency during this crisis," and assured them of "our ongoing commitment to working together..."

A further resolution called for "a plan for responding to crises...that will include consultation with area conferences and congregations so as to ensure as broad-based input as possible before decisions are made." A resolution to include a line in the budget for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, in addition to designated giving, was defeated.

Worship

The theme, "What if..." shaped morning and evening worship. Moderator Henry Krause opened the sessions with a message on "What if...grace prevailed?" (see page 6). Peter Stuckey of Colombia spoke on the 50-year upheaval in his country under the topic, "What if...peace prevailed?" Sunday morning worship focused on "What if...love prevailed?" with a sermon by April Yamasaki of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C.

Worship was led by Doug and Wanda Roth Amstutz, pastors of Grace Mennonite Church in St. Catharines. A talented group of musicians—Mark Diller Harder, Ann Weber Becker, Charlene Nafziger, Mike Erb, Renata Klaassen and Gerald Neufeld—led the congregation in a wide variety of songs, from plainsong chant to jazzed-up hymns and rounds.

The Multicultural Ministries

presentation showed the variety within newer churches. Leaders of Lao, Korean, Hispanic and French African background reported on their work, accompanied by a solo in Chinese from Magdalena Widjaja, pastor in Regina.

In contrast, Harry Yuen, a second-generation Chinese young adult who teaches high school in Vancouver, sounded thoroughly “Canadian.” Yuen described himself as a “banana” (yellow outside, white inside), while Nelson Huang, a youth assembly planner who came to Canada from China at age nine, said he was more like “scrambled eggs.”

Billie Chiew, youth pastor in Vancouver, compared the multi-cultural church to a rainbow: all the colours remain distinct but only by being together can they be a rainbow.

Resolutions

The crush of resolutions on the final afternoon left delegates unable to process things as carefully as they might have wished.

A task group working at restoring “options for service” after the cancellation of Service Ministries in March called on MC Canada to “reaffirm its commitment to an ethic of service...and to explore and implement ways of maintaining Christian service opportunities for congregationally based Christian service ministry in Canada.” The proposal also asked congregations to support existing service units and respond to local needs.

The resolution passed but some questions remained.

“Does it mean axing other programs? What are the budget implications?” asked Jack Suderman, executive secretary of Christian Witness. Others wondered whether people could designate donations for service ministry.

Time was running out. The proposal to join the Canadian Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada had to be postponed for another year while delegates quickly grappled with a poorly-worded resolution on same-sex marriage, presented by a group that wasn’t present.

The resolution called on the General Board to communicate to the federal

government MC Canada’s understanding of marriage (“one man and one woman in a life-long covenant of love”) and the concern that “whatever action the government should take to redefine marriage, all religious groups be guaranteed the freedom to practise and proclaim their understanding of what marriage is.”

Some delegates felt the resolution was unnecessary because religious freedom is not at stake (“we’re not being told who to marry”). Others noted that the wording leaves the door open to any kind of marriage practice, including polygamy. The resolution passed by one vote, concluding the business sessions on a divisive note.

The Listening Committee drew delegates together with a litany recognizing the emotional distress of the last few months (see page 8). Sunday morning worship closed the assembly on the theme, “What if...love prevailed?”

For more details on the assembly, see the MC Canada web site at www.mennonitechurch.ca. Next year’s assembly will be held in Winkler, Manitoba.—Margaret Loewen Reimer

Heard at assembly...

“We are surrounded by beautiful quilts [completed at the assembly]. As I think of what has happened in MC Canada this past year, it feels like we have been working on a quilt, but have run out of fabric, changed the colour of the thread, and have ripped out some pieces. Two questions come to mind: 1) As a Council member (Witness), do you still trust me? 2) As a young adult, what will I inherit in this church?”—Jeanette Unger, Ont.

“Abbotsford and Saskatoon assemblies were more celebrations of an emerging identity. Now we are more cautious, more realistic.... We need to ‘rescue’ the support of the constituency and gain their trust. I did witness, in our worship and in the seminars, that congregations still want to support and be engaged in the programs of MC Canada.”—Noo Gonzalia, Ont.

What the Listening Committee heard

Thursday afternoon:

- The financial reports were framed in a financial context. We’re also involved in a grief process. We didn’t hear the names or see the faces of people who were cut. The answers to the pain must be more than financial; we also need to talk about priorities, values, vision. Painful decisions have aborted some visions.

Saturday morning:

- We’re hearing a lot of “us” and “them” language. Where’s the “we?” Can these be “our” decisions? The passion to be “we” is being expressed in worship and music.
- So far there has been only 40 minutes of floor time for delegates. We need a better forum to develop a “we.”
- We’re hearing a passion for the gospel and a desire to be a missional church.
- There’s an unofficial voice out there [referring to representatives from the

Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns]. Some are not ready for further discussion; they fear it will divide us. Others say we need a forum to go beyond Stratford (1998) or Saskatoon (1986) to develop a sense of ownership in those past statements, not to reinvent them.

Saturday afternoon:

- How can we set goals and priorities, beyond business as usual? We need to share our commitments throughout the year so we can work together at assemblies.
- There’s confusion over missional language; for example, “across the street” and “around the world” are being seen as two ends of a continuum (congregational work and national church work). What about the challenge of working “across the tracks” where local churches aren’t responding?—Compiled by **Ron Rempel**

Workshops generate lots of debate

Delegates got a chance to tackle issues and programs at a wide variety of seminars. The General Board and Councils also hosted discussions of their programs.

In a General Board workshop on changes in MC Canada ministries, participants raised concerns about current directions, based on a November 2002 statement of "General Board Priorities."

Where is the focus on educating leaders? asked Kerry Enns from Manitoba. Several expressed concern about the end of the voluntary service program. Bob Pauls from Manitoba said it was unfortunate that cuts were made to programs that moved youth into other parts of the country.

How are we fashioning a Canadian church? asked Lucille Marr from Quebec. There is an emphasis on multicultural ministries, but what is MC Canada doing to link regions? The potential for witness within our post-Christian country is perhaps greater than the need for overseas mission.

What about congregational involvement in setting priorities? asked David Neufeld from Saskatchewan.

Dan Nighswander, executive secretary, noted that the General Board list of priorities will come to the delegates, but the planned process was interrupted by the budget crisis.

"It is terribly crucial that we give the General Board the power to lead us," emphasized Harry Huebner of Manitoba. He is alarmed at how many people are questioning the need for a national conference. He pleaded with leaders to "re-unite and re-convince us."

There seems to be a "dis-connect between denominationalism and missional talk," noted Clare Neufeld from B.C. Moderator Henry Krause stated it as a conflict between being a local community and a global community: "We're not quite sure where we're going. The old style doesn't connect."

Brice Balmer of Ontario, put the dilemma this way: "It's great for a congregation to go to Chile on a mission trip, but what if MC Canada doesn't get enough money to continue the program in Chile?"



Participants also offered support to the General Board and encouraged contact with congregations.

"Churches need to feel there is communication going on," said Gary Martens of Manitoba. Nighswander responded: "How do congregations communicate back?"—**Margaret**

Loewen Reimer

Other Christians in Canada

A workshop with staff from the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) generated a lot of discussion. There was stronger affirmation for CCC's "forum" model (members "own" the organization and choose which issues to support) than EFC's "affiliate member" model (doctrinal requirements, and ownership by board which speaks for members). Cost was also a concern (\$7,000 a year).

Bruce Clemenger of EFC explained that its statement of faith is "not a fence but a gathering point." Karen Hamilton of CCC noted that it doesn't have a statement of faith to sign but members "must be trinitarian. Jesus Christ is central for us." Both recognized differences even within their organizations, but noted how they are working more closely together.

"Differences can be understood negatively or positively," said Clemenger. With differences, there is "more dialogue to understand our distinctives."

The spectrum of belief in CCC and EFC is not different than it is within MC Canada, noted one person: "You are us." A person from Quebec observed that Mennonite participation in both CCC and EFC could help bridge

the gap between evangelicals and Catholics in Quebec.

Concerning the war in Iraq, CCC sent four letters urging the prime minister not to participate. (Jean Chretien later said that the voice of the churches was a strong influence.) Clemenger said that evangelicals were deeply divided. "We couldn't speak with integrity, so we issued a call to prayer."

Mennonites are learning to work with the theological diversity in their midst; now it is time to join our voices to the wider Canadian church, concluded a participant.—From reports



Answering questions about the wider church in Canada are Karen Hamilton of the Canadian Council of Churches, Dan Nighswander of MC Canada and Bruce Clemenger of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

Gays and lesbians in our churches

Two workshops at St. Catharines 2003 focused on homosexuality. In one, Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and Toronto United Mennonite Church described their discernment processes. The other workshop, led by Jim Reimer, focused on the concept of forbearance.

Esther Peters said Bethel's process was precipitated by letters to the congregational chair and the church newsletter.

For six months, the church heard from gay persons, counsellors and others. The congregation entered a time of discernment with four guidelines: 1) Sessions were not to be a debate but a discussion; 2) The process would not be rushed; 3) No motions would be entertained; 4) The steering committee was to shape the process,

not the outcome.

The first year was a time of study. The church heard from Bible scholars, counsellors and a representative from a “change ministry.” The second year focused on people.

Peters concluded: “We began the discussion with all our biases, and moved gradually toward understanding. We are more aware of the great pain we inflict on persons. We are still trying to bridge the ‘sides’....”

Toronto United Mennonite Church (TUMC) began its current process in 2002 when the associate pastor disclosed her same-sex orientation (see July 14 issue). The congregation went through three “seasons” (caring, education and discernment), seeking consensus.

TUMC concluded that a year and a half is not long enough. The best and worst of TUMC came to the fore; the congregation also became more intentional in its worship life. A Healing and Reconciliation Team is being put into place.

What are the signals that a congregation is not ready for such a process? asked a workshop participant. Dennis Giesbrecht, TUMC chair, replied: “Ask yourselves how you have worked on other contentious issues in the past. That may tell you how ready you are to work at this issue.”

Bethany Mennonite of Virgil, Ontario, was to report on its process but the pastor could not be present.

“Our assumption was to reconfirm the conference statements,” observed Bethany member Don Neufeld, adding that it seemed that TUMC and Bethel presumed an outcome. Others disagreed. Giesbrecht said that TUMC never asked “on which side are you?” but rather “can you give us good information?”

The workshop on forbearance demonstrated the diversity within MC Canada. A dramatic example was the exchange between a man who declared that the Bible clearly condemns homosexuality and a man who confessed that he had not found that clarity as a tortured teenager struggling with his homosexuality.

While some called the church to be more open, others wondered if the gay community is open to those among

them who want to change.

Reimer presented his notion of “forbearance” (patience in the face of disagreement) as more appropriate for the church than tolerance or exclusion (see Nov. 4, 2002 issue). He distinguished his theological position (heterosexual marriage as the norm) from his pastoral concern for individuals in the church.

For example, from the Bible one cannot argue for equal status of homosexual and heterosexual unions, he said, but the church can practise forbearance of gay members who confess Jesus as Lord while we wait for theological consensus. Another example: the church continues to hold that marriage is a life-time commitment but that doesn’t mean keeping divorced people out of the church.

Gay members of MC Canada were highly visible at the assembly. They wore blue T-shirts saying, “What if... all of God’s children were welcome.” At one point, they “put a face” to the issue by holding up photographs of MC Canada families with gay members.

The group’s visibility provoked some “intense anxiety” among delegates, according to one conference leader. It also resulted in poignant encounters.

Gloria Nafziger, director of the Supportive Congregations Network (churches who welcome gay members), was moved by a delegate who was seeking to understand his gay brother; he feared for his brother’s salvation and wanted a safe place to talk.

“We were grateful that we were visible enough to be found,” noted Nafziger, a member of Olive Branch Mennonite Church in Ontario.

General Board members met with families who have gay children, as well as with the Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (BMC), the group with the T-shirts. BMC Canada president is Dale Guenter, a teaching physician at McMaster University in Hamilton.

Not all supportive parents identify with BMC, noted a conference leader. These parents live with the tension between love for their gay children and their continuing commitment to the church’s stance on sexuality.—

Maurice Martin and Margaret Loewen Reimer



Young Jee Na, co-pastor at Valleyview Mennonite Church’s Korean congregation, takes in the assembly sessions.

Heard at assembly...

“People want to talk more, debate the issues. If there has been a consistent decline in giving, have we ever asked why? Has there ever been a plan to increase donations?”—Gord Peters, Sask.

“We cannot nibble away at everything, to ask why has this or that been cut. It still in my mind was the right way to go—to make major decisions rather than nickel and dime all the staff and programs. Are we on the same page regarding the meaning of ‘across the street’? Does that take national church money and initiative, or is that a congregational matter? We need the vision that engages the 17- and 18-year-olds among us.”—Renatta Klassen, Sask.

“Growing up in eastern Pennsylvania, it is unusual for me to see a Mennonite conference that includes a winery tour and square dancing.”—Nelson Kraybill, Elkhart, Ind.

Plans for joint convention on hold

Until March 2003, Mennonite Church Canada and USA were planning a joint convention for Toronto in 2005. In March, the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) of the two churches decided to end the planning.

Commitment to joint conventions emerged at St. Louis in 1999 when the former General Conference and

Mennonite Church merged and formed “separate and cooperating church bodies” in Canada and the USA.

Delegates approved a “Canada/U.S. Partnerships” document that projected joint assemblies every four years, the first to be held in 2003. Leaders subsequently agreed that the first joint assembly would be in Canada.

In August 2000, MC USA asked that the first joint gathering be delayed to 2005 so that the first meeting of the new U.S. delegate body in 2003 could be held in the U.S.—an important step in “initial MC USA identity development,” they argued.

By March 2003, the JEC identified a variety of factors which questioned earlier commitments: MC USA desire to hold youth and adult conventions in the same place; limited venues capable of hosting 10,000 or more participants in a joint youth-adult convention; higher costs for Canadian venues (Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal) than for U.S. venues in the summer season; separate agendas developing more rapidly than envisioned in 1999.

In March, the JEC decided with one dissenting vote to discontinue planning for a joint convention in 2005 and proposed a “joint non-delegate gathering in Canada in 2004 or 2005 for reflection, fellowship and discernment.”

The MC Canada General Board took issue with the JEC decision, insisting that a shared confession, vision and programs (seminary and publishing)

require regular joint conventions. The MC Canada board suggested that a joint convention be held in 2005 at a U.S. location, if MC USA could make a firm commitment to meeting in Canada in 2009.

The MC USA Executive Board welcomed Canadians to a joint convention in the U.S. in 2005 but said it

could not recommend a 2009 meeting in Canada because the issues identified at the March JEC meeting had not changed.

The MC Canada General Board subsequently withdrew its offer to participate in a 2005 joint convention in the U.S. The board stated that Canadian delegates would not incur the high costs of meeting in the U.S. without an agreement that the MC USA delegates

would come to Canada at a later date. Both boards suggested that the joint convention question go back to the JEC for further discussion. The JEC is scheduled to meet October 24-25 in Vancouver. On the agenda is the whole topic of Canada-U.S. partnership.

The Youth Ministry Council, consisting of youth workers from both countries, has voiced a strong commit-



Nelson Huang from B.C., a youth assembly planner, speaks at the multicultural session.



Thomas and Daniel Epp (Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg) entertain while waiting in registration line.

ment to joint meetings of youth every four years. At the St. Catharines assembly, Anne Campion, MC Canada youth ministry director, made a strong pitch for a joint youth convention in 2005.

“Our integrity as leaders is on the line,” she said. “We have promised the youth a 2005 convention.” She also asked whether the joint assembly has to be in the summer.—**Ron Rempel**, with JEC report



What if...500 youth got together?

What if...12 youth from the Leamington United Mennonite Church drove all the way to St. Catharines to join 500 other youth from places with intriguing names like Steinbach, Rosthern and Floradale. Well, we did just that.

Together we sang all sorts of songs and ate all sorts of food. Our speakers, Gareth Brandt and Kathy Giesbrecht, challenged us to try to understand love, to love as Jesus loved and to live out that love.

People our age need activities to help us burn all our energy, so we enjoyed activities such as coffee houses, a pool party, basketball games, ultimate frisbee, and we also crossed cultural boundaries by playing Bohnanza, a wonderful German game. But of course everything stopped at 1:30 a.m., our quiet time. We're very thankful that Tim Hortons is present everywhere in Ontario, even steps away from our residence.

Workshop topics included stewardship, Jesus' counter-cultural teachings, and Anabaptist stories. We proved that youth can learn things even when we're not in school. We also had the chance to serve others out of love. We quilted, we painted at a drop-in-centre, we built ramps for a skate park, and took care of little children.

On our day off, the 500 of us went to Niagara Falls. We all got wet while sailing on the beautiful "Maid of the Mist," and got to know the crazy Niagara highways. On our last evening we enjoyed a concert by "One Cross." We had a great time and we wish we were still there.—**Stephanie Dueck and Richard Langeman**

Time to connect

Here in Leamington, we live closer to Detroit than any major Canadian city. Our youth get hyped about the huge youth assemblies in the U.S. We decided it was time we got in touch with our Canadian Mennonite identity.

It was awesome to see our youth getting to know others from across Canada and loving the experience.

The committee who organized the assembly should be congratulated—we benefited from all their hard work.

Each youth signed up for a service project and two workshops, a good combination. The workshop leaders and worship speakers got the youth excited about the radical courage of the Anabaptists, the revolutionary teachings of Jesus, and the importance of stewardship.

The music was wonderful. The youth enjoyed the various styles and also the hymns that were sung alongside the worship songs. Amazing visuals were also part of worship, including clips from various Jesus films and images of love set to popular songs. There was a lot of space for games (more pool access would have been nice).

We are looking forward to the next assembly just as much as our youth are.—**Angelika Guenther Correa,**



Gareth Brandt talks to the youth about love.



Youth waiting during registration for Youth Assembly 2003.

Worship a highlight at youth assembly

An enthusiastic crowd of 495 youth and youth leaders participated in the St. Catharines Youth Assembly July 9-13. About 275 came from Ontario, 163 from Manitoba, 49 from Saskatchewan, 4 from Alberta and 4 from B.C.

The event was planned by Y_MAD (Youthful_Mennonite Assembly Designers), a group of seven youth and five adults from five provinces, coordinated by Anne Campion, MC Canada Youth Ministry director.

"I have read through all the our evaluations," said Campion a few days after the event, "and the highlight for most everyone was our worship times, including the singing led by the worship band.... Many spoke of encountering God in very real and meaningful ways. Many, many said they'll be back again!"

She added, "To see our dreams and

prayers come to reality, to worship together with youth and adults from across Canada was an awesome joy! To watch the Y_MAD team, which included seven young people, take leadership and be able to celebrate our hard work was exciting."

Working with Campion in Y_MAD were Billy Chiew and Nelson Huang from B.C.; Jennifer Loewen from Alberta; Denise Valle from Saskatchewan; Darryl Neustaedter-Barg and Lyndon Froese from Manitoba; Herb Sawatzky, Arielle Campion, Jana Schachowskoj, Darren Kropf and Eryn Smit from Ontario.

"We look forward to 2005 when the next youth assembly will take place," noted Campion, adding that hopefully it will be a joint assembly with Mennonite Church USA.—**Margaret Loewen Reimer**

St. Catharines, Ont.

Pastors' conference: Blame God for diversity

We should thank God for the diversity in our churches—it's like good cholesterol. And when that diversity creates problems, we should blame God, since our differences flow from the wideness of God's embrace.

So affirmed Tom Yoder Neufeld to 135 participants in the Mennonite Church Canada Pastors' Conference on July 9 at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church. Yoder Neufeld, New Testament professor at Conrad Grebel University College, gave two presentations on "Unity in diversity" based on Ephesians.

Diversity, he declared, is rooted in the fabric of creation, and our different backgrounds, temperaments, and convictions spring from "the creative inventiveness of God the creator."

Yet in the midst of diversity, believers find a deep unity in Christ. Like a landscape painting that opens our



Yoder Neufeld

eyes to the marvels of the natural world around us, so the sketch of the community of Jews and Gentiles in Ephesians 2 opens our imaginations to the grace of God bringing unity out of diversity.

Yoder Neufeld acknowledged that both unity and diversity can be problematic. Sometimes church unity has been rooted in something other than the gospel—such as ethnicity. Assimilating newcomers poses a



Noe Gonzalia, Otto Dirks, Kuaying Teng, Florence Driedger, Magdalena Widjaja in discussion at the Pastors' Conference.

challenge: "being a missional church is to invite headaches and ulcers." And today our unity is tested in our conflicting views on homosexuality, interpreting scripture, and accountability. Just as Christ gave himself for the church, so unity is a gift to be struggled for.

Likewise, diversity can be "bad cholesterol."

"God's embrace has arms that are attached to a foundation, and unity in our churches demands attending to the foundation and headstone of Christ," said Yoder Neufeld.

Following a theme in Ephesians 4-6, Yoder Neufeld likened the church to "a chain gang of peace." This chain gang "is walking toward God, but has its face toward the world in order to communicate God's grace." Admittedly, it is a gang that more often shuffles than runs, the chains scrape, and members sometimes have to carry each other.

"In the church, you don't get to choose who you're chained to."

Being chained together, we have an obligation to speak truth not "at" but "with" each other.

Yet the linking of broken and gifted, weak and strong, simple and wise in the church is a gift. "Blame it on the Holy Spirit that brings together the sinners, the marginal, the hostile."

In the discussion, one pastor noted that seeing another church member as a sister or brother can be put to the test when they hold opposing views on homosexuality. Another observed that congregations often have weak links and members leave when truth is spoken in love.

Four conference ministers reported on developments in their regions. Alberta is using a Pastors Council to work at spiritual unity and discernment. Saskatchewan is undertaking a "Vibrant Rural Churches" project. Eastern Canada will provide "coaching" for pastors in difficult personal and congregational situations. All conferences are grappling with vision.—**Phil Bender**

The writer is co-pastor at Hamilton Mennonite Church.



Wymark, Sask.

Rural churches ‘pushed’ to be missional

As Mennonite Church Saskatchewan listens to its small rural churches, it is becoming clear that these churches are being pushed, exactly because of their presence in shrinking communities, to become more missional. Like the early church, the pressures they face seem to make them dig deeper and work with more commitment.

One church visited in MC Saskatchewan’s Vibrant Rural Churches Project said that it was good to be small because it doesn’t have to tolerate “pew-sitters.” Everybody has to be actively involved. And out of that common commitment grows a new energy for reaching out, for being intergenerational and for responding to needs around them.

One person said, “I guess it’s work, but it sure feels like fun!” One example is providing Vacation Bible School for the community.

Mayfair Mennonite Church, in a depopulating northwestern community, has a “book” membership of 3, but 15 people make this their faith community. Most of these come from other denominations and don’t want to change their membership, but they enjoy worshipping together. Except for two or three young adults, all are of retirement age.

Last summer, one member talked about having a VBS program while her grandchildren were over. Since there are only a few children in the whole community, this presented a real challenge! The church got behind this idea, however, and enthusiastic grandparents invited their grandchildren from the city to spend the VBS week with them.

Some moms from the community brought their young children and stayed to help. Six grandmothers from the church helped with singing, telling Bible stories, providing snacks and playing games. Some 30 kids attended. VBS closed with a picnic for the

children and their families. The experience was a highlight for everyone, and it has motivated the church to try it again this summer. With more advance planning and resources, they expect to have children from near and far.

Emmaus Mennonite Church, a congregation of 35 in Wymark, has always done VBS. Attempts have been made to cooperate with three other Mennonite congregations, but when they felt that their wishes and theological bent were being ignored, the cooperation fell apart. Emmaus was back on its own.

Enrolment declined, but they felt the Spirit of God pushing them to try something else. Why not VBS for the community! Members became enthusi-

astic and the numbers of participants has grown from year to year, including visitors from other places. Average attendance is in the high 50s.

The program is planned by individuals from the congregation without pastoral involvement. All teachers are volunteers. Young people are drawn in as teacher aides and helpers in music, drama and crafts. The program runs for five days from 1:00-3:30 p.m. so children will not associate it with regular school.

The week ends with a barbecue to which the whole community is invited. The children show what they have learned and the drama troupe puts on the final skit. God gives encouragement and blessing.—**Fred Heese, Naomi Unger and Eric Olfert**

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Didsbury, Alta.

Alberta sale includes auction for children

In spite of recent drought and the mad cow scare, the 2003 Mennonite Central Committee Alberta relief sale June 20-21 was the most successful one in the Didsbury area to date, clearing \$114,000.

Three regions take turns hosting the Alberta sale: Coaldale, Tofield/Edmonton and Didsbury.

An onstage screen displaying the sale items and bids was a first for the event. The children's auction, held for the second time, involved about 25 children bidding for items by raising their numbers, attached to lollipops. Auction items, selected from MCC thrift stores, included teddy bears, balls and toys.

Before the sale started on Friday, a group participated in a 12-kilometre walk-a-thon. The walkers were ready for the beef-on-a-bun supper. About 50 items were auctioned that evening, just to whet the appetite. Auctioneer was Dwayne Sittler from Camrose.

On Saturday, after a breakfast of pancakes and sausages, the riders in the bike-a-thon were given a send-off. A brisk wind caused some hardship.

The quilts were displayed more openly for easier viewing this year. "With heart in hand," a quilt made by Bev Patkau featuring handprints of the MCC Alberta committee members, sold for \$850. The buyer was offered the opportunity to have each handprint autographed. A quilted wall-hanging called "Piano trio" sold for \$1,900.

The travelling Africa AIDS quilt was sold and resold several times, netting in total of \$17,320. The walk-a-thon brought in \$2,000 and the bike-a-thon \$6,000. The new Penny Power project raised \$2,300.

The usual crowd was augmented this year by workshop participants from across North America (see related story). Although bidding was brisk, items were not as plentiful as other years. It is evident that the crisis in the beef industry has affected this community.

A young busker from Rosemary, Josh Petkau, spent most of Saturday performing a variety of songs of folk

and Spanish songs. His sister, Laura, joined in on some of the singing. They raised over \$100 and helped provide a festive atmosphere for the event.—**Irene Klassen and Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**



A roomful of people took turns counting and rolling coins for the Penny Power project at the Alberta relief sale.

Water Valley, Alta.

Relief sale workers exchange ideas

Workers from 22 of 46 Mennonite Central Committee relief sales across North America attended the Relief Sale Board meeting and workshops held June 18-20 at Camp Valaqua.

The board includes a representative from each MCC region in the U.S. and province in Canada. The workshops, held biennially, are open to anyone involved with the relief sales. About 80 people attended this year, hosted by Hilton and Karen Mierau of Calgary.

Thirteen workshops presented a variety of topics. Since quilts are a major attraction for most relief sales, there were three workshops on quilting. Bev Patkau from Calgary stressed the importance of eye appeal, colour and uniqueness. Kathryn Snyder from Ontario presented tools for marketing, including brochures with photographs of special quilts, and local businesses to display quilts. Rose Haury of Kansas presented examples of sturdy, yet attractive, comforters made out of recycled materials.

Auctioneering tips were presented by three experienced auctioneers. They stressed the importance of cooperation

with "spotters" to run a smooth auction without misunderstanding. They also described how they have dealt with awkward situations when an item was sold to two buyers. They emphasized using what works in your community.

Harriet and Doug Berg, MCC relief sale coordinators, encouraged all relief sales to promote Penny Power and introduced a standardized approach. Penny Power has significantly increased funds at sales that promote it.

Dale Miller, from Kansas, presented tips on using a web site. Electronics can be used for accurate accounting and to display items and bids on a screen for the audience. Total sales at any time during the auction can also be displayed.

The North American Relief Sale Board business meeting was chaired by Cheryl

Heatwole from Virginia. Speakers included Dave Worth, MCC Resource Generation director in Akron; Abe Janzen, MCC Alberta director; and Doug Klassen, pastor of Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary.

At the conclusion of the workshops, most participants attended the Alberta relief sale in Didsbury.—From reports by **Irene Klassen** and MCC Alberta



Abe Janzen and Kim Thiessen of Calgary sing a selection from Thiessen's CD "To such as these," during the Board meeting.

Photo by Harriet Berg

Saskatoon, Sask.

Volunteer recognized for service to the community

Lorene Nickel, a nursing instructor and life-time volunteer, received the 2003 Sterling award at the Hadassah-Wizo Silver Spoon dinner here on April 28. The award is presented annually to a woman who makes outstanding contributions to the community.

Nickel is a nursing instructor by profession, a grandmother and the wife of medical doctor Arnold Nickel. While living in Rosthern, the family twice served with Mennonite



Nickel

Central Committee—in the Congo for about one and a half years (1963) and in Tanzania for a year (1975) where Nickel taught nursing.

When Nickel returned to Rosthern, she worked for homecare. She found herself spending much more time with her clients than the time allotted—she was volunteering as she was working. As she gained the confidence of clients they began talking about their lives.

Some disclosed sexual abuse they had never told anyone about, beginning their journey to healing. Nickel began taking counselling classes so she could better help people in distress.

In 1995, the Nickels moved to Saskatoon and Lorene began working and volunteering at the Sexual Assault Centre. Here she came in contact with Tamara's House, a safe house for women who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse. (It is named after Tamar, King David's daughter, who was the victim of sibling incest.) It offers programs, activities, counselling and temporary lodging for women, the only house of its kind in Canada.

Nickel is involved in education, presenting Tamara's House and sexual abuse issues to community

organizations and churches.

"We as Mennonites need to get involved in helping survivors of childhood sexual abuse," says Nickel. "It is important for all of society, but especially churches, to become knowledgeable about a subject that has for so long been shrouded in secrecy."

Nickel attends Nutana Park Mennonite Church and is involved in various aspects of church life. The

highlight of volunteering for her is when someone is helped by talking. The negative part is when sticking up for the underdog is misunderstood by others.

The Rosthern Hospital Auxiliary awarded Nickel a life membership when she moved to Saskatoon for her volunteer efforts there.—**Verna Nickel**

Rosthern, Sask.

Quilting across Canada for RJC

People have tried everything under the sun to bring attention to their cause. They have tried to walk across Canada, bike across Canada and even jog across Canada.

Here's a new one: Quilting across Canada. Starting next summer, the quilt commissioned for the Rosthern Junior College centennial celebrations in 2005 will be travelling across our nation to be stitched together by RJC alumni. People will be notified through church bulletins.

Designed by Alma Elias of Saskatoon, the quilt has three panels, reflecting the past, present and future of the Mennonite high school.

"Quilts tell stories," said Donna Driedger, a member of the committee to bring this venture to completion. This committee of four women looked for the right symbols to represent Christian education. Try quilting 100 years of history.

"It took some time to plan it out," recalled Driedger.

Elias is no stranger to the craft. After taking numerous classes, she has settled on her favourite style of quilting: watercolour. This method shines through with breathtaking beauty in her 2000-piece Easter quilt. After using it to enhance the worship at Nutana Park Mennonite Church this past April, she has it displayed in her dining room.

The theme is simple: an empty cross.

That cross appears again in the Centennial Quilt to symbolize the Christian education component of RJC. And there's even a picture of the original

RJC building, which is still being used. Although the watercolour technique is not used in this creation, Elias' love of



Photo by Karin Fehderau

Alma Elias with the first panel of the RJC centennial quilt.

colour is evident. Rich, vibrant shades invite the eyes to linger on this already lovely work-in-progress.

RJC is planning more for its centennial celebrations. A school history book is in the making and there are rumours of a Centennial Garden for the school grounds. Erwin Tiessen, principal, hopes the donations to the Leaving a Legacy campaign will continue as the event approaches.

"We're hoping to raise \$1 million by 2005," said Tiessen.

It takes someone with big dreams to run a school like this. But then, back in 1905, that's exactly what it took to begin. And so the legacy continues.—

Karin Fehderau

Rosthern, Sask.

Party honours retiring pastor

On June 29, the Eigenheim Mennonite Church held a farewell party for Benno and Frances Klassen. Benno was pastor at Eigenheim for seven years. His road to ministry began 24 years ago.

Benno was a middle-aged farmer and deacon in the Tiefengrund Mennonite Church when he was called to be pastor of the Zoar Mennonite Church in Waldheim, Saskatchewan. He had been wrestling with the concept of pastoral ministry for some time.

"Wait until a church calls you," said his father. At first the call to Zoar was part time. It was an easy drive from the farm to Waldheim. A year later the call became full-time. Benno and Frances built a house in Waldheim where they lived for 22 years.

"When Dad was elected as deacon in Tiefengrund in the late sixties, he left the church with tears in his eyes," noted his son, Reg Klassen. For Benno this had been a holy moment.

In 1979, Benno was elected chair of the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan, after three years as vice-chair. It was an exciting time and he enjoyed it.

After five three-year terms, Zoar decided that they needed a change. For Benno and Frances those were not easy days. Then Eigenheim called and a new relationship was established.

That new assignment came to be a highlight in their ministry. Erwin Tiessen, principal of Rosthern Junior College and member of the congregation, observed, "I appreciated most when, in the midst of his sermons, Benno would set aside the doctrine, the theology, the big words, the protocol and so on.

"For it was then that the 'real pastor' emerged.... Those were moments when wisdom and faith together, gleaned from the everyday experiences of life,



A farewell service for Benno and Frances Klassen was held at Eigenheim Mennonite Church on June 29.

taught the real lesson."

As the farewell party continued into the afternoon, the theme of relationships appeared again and again. Willingness to listen and patience to hear what was being said were hallmarks of Benno's ministry. When relationships failed, Benno worked at healing and restoration.

George Epp, the afternoon's emcee, spoke of the Klassens' time at Eigenheim as a time of contentment. Others affirmed Benno's absolute reliance on God as the answer to and resolver of problems.

The Klassens have moved to a new retirement condo in Rosthern.—**Jake Nickel**

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Montreal, Que.

Pastor to refugees in Montreal

When Jean Mbaitouloum Ndiriman landed in Montreal with his wife, Anne, in September 2001, he was returning to a city that he knew well. Thirty years earlier, he lived in Montreal while studying for his degree in public health.

This time, however, Jean was coming to Canada to seek refuge from political persecution in Chad. And as Canada received Jean, so now he helps other asylum seekers.

In September 2002, Jean began working as a pastor at the House of Friendship (Maison de l'amitié), a Mennonite program that offers shelter and assistance to refugees.

In collaboration with other agencies, including the United Church's Montreal City Mission, the House of Friendship provides temporary residence for up to 20 people and hosts language and computer classes. It also arranges community meals and outings that create a sense of belonging among residents. These activities help to break the isolation and heal the pain of lonely and disoriented asylum seekers.

As pastoral animator, Jean concerns himself with the spiritual well-being of the residents. Drawing on his many years as a development worker and a pastor, as well as his own experience of being a refugee, Jean helps individuals get established in their own communities of faith in Montreal.

An important part of Jean's work is to build relationships with leaders of different religious communities. He tries to make them aware of the particular needs and challenges that refugees face. He has begun organizing seminars for local religious leaders to help them integrate these new members into their communities.

Jean works in particular with those who have suffered violence and torture. He has observed that some

people are convinced by their terrible experiences that God does not exist. Many others, however, have found strength in their faith and feel blessed that God has led them to safety.

Jean's position at the House of Friendship was begun in response to requests from residents. Funding for this one-year position comes from the Beati Foundation, a Catholic organization that supports projects for marginalized groups. The House of Friendship is the first non-Catholic organization to be awarded this grant.

Jean is not new to the Mennonite community, having worked for Mennonite Central Committee in Chad. While in Africa, he also served with other Christian relief organizations, including World Vision and Bread for the World. He was the director of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students.

Jean is open to God's calling, wherever it may lead.—**Pierre Chetelat**



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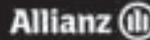
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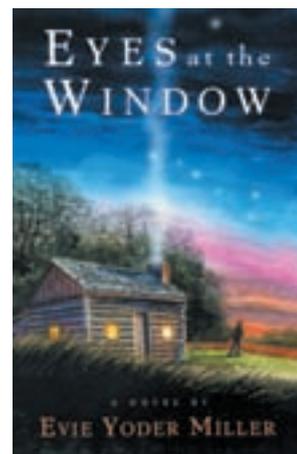
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People & Events

Drake, Sask.—North Star Mennonite Church held a farewell celebration for Vernon Neufeld at the local community centre on June 22. Neufeld has been associate pastor and youth worker at North Star for the past three years. The celebration included lots of music, a litany of sending, presentation of gifts and an "open mike" time. The youth expressed their appreciation for Neufeld's leadership by presenting him and his wife, Christina, with a baby quilt sporting 26 names.—
From report by **Dorothy Wolter**

Transitions

Births

Bauman—to Dana (Batchelor) and Steve, Floradale Mennonite, Ont., a son, Jay Owen, July 10.
Cui—to Bo Cui and Li Lin, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Kevin, June 10.
Dyck—to Lora and Abe, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Julia Annabeth, June 9.
Epp—adopted by Sheri and Mark, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Jaxen Sergei Hildebrandt, June 10 (born Oct. 14, 2002, in Russia).
Friesen—to Edith and Brad, Arnaud Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Alexiane Genitha, May 27.
Heidebrecht—to Carmen Brubacher and Paul, Elmira Mennonite, Ont., a son, Nathan Paul Brubacher, July 8.
Leclair—to Belinda and Trevor, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, a son, Elijah John, June 27.
Lepa—to Kathy and Richard, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, a son, Victor Jame, April 23.
Neustaedter—to Sandra and Kurt, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, twin sons, Mark James and Adam Jakob, June 24.
Penner—to Joanne and Rudy,

Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Kiana Raeleen, July 15.
Reimer—to Heidi and Randy, Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man., a daughter, Ella Katherine, July 1.
Sawatzky—to Dedra and Steve, First Mennonite, Greendale, B.C., a daughter, Grace Kay, June 25.
Snyder—to Pam and Barry, Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., a son, James William, July 13.
Steckley Leis—to Jill and Nathan, Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., a daughter, Abbie, July 17.
Toews—to Brunilda and Franklin, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., a son, Jordan Frank, July 18.
Wickstrom—to Cora Warkentin and Kurt, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Eve Justine, April 10.
Wiebe—to Malam Mehtar and Sheldon of Toronto, Grace Mennonite, Regina, a son, Dean, March 1.

Marriages

Funk-Jeske—Eldon and Susan, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Sask., June 22.
Kritzer-Mohr—Jeff (United Church) and Marsha (Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.), in Embro, Ont., July 5.
Kropf-Friesen—Aaron (Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.) and Larissa, Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., May 18.
Lichti-Leis—Duane and Julia, Crosshill Mennonite, Ont., May 31.
Sauve-Neufeldt—Quentin and Jocelyn, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, July 12.
Smucker-Wall—Noah and Ruth, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., June 28.
Stucky-Peters—Josh (Kansas) and Trish, Steinbach Mennonite, Man.
Unger-French—Kurtis and Carla, Glenlea Mennonite, Man., June 28.

Deaths

Boehr—Robert Jacob, 90, Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask., July 6.

Boldt—Catherine, 69, Grace Mennonite, Regina, July 5.
Bueckert—Stella, 82, Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask., July 11.
Dyck—Henry, 81, Grace Mennonite, St. Catharines, Ont., July 10.
Funk—John, 79, of Saskatoon, Grace Mennonite, Regina, June 29.
Good—Laverne S., 85, Breslau Mennonite, Ont., June 25.
Peters—Aganetha, 89, Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man., June 22.
Peters—Anna, 93, Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man., June 4.
Peters—Marge, 59, Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man., March 23.
Petkau—Erna, 87, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, July 2.
Read—John 65, Brussels Mennonite, Ont., July 18.
Rempel—Hope Emma (newborn daughter of Linda and Timothy), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., born and died July 4.
Schellenberg—Henry, 97, Grace Mennonite, St. Catharines, Ont., July 3.
Schroeder—Marie, 82, of Winnipeg, Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man., April 21.
Siemens—Katie, 74, Eben-Ezer Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., June 3.
Wiens—Peter, 89, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., July 6.
Wolfe—Peter, 80, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 7.

Baptisms

Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg—Jhonn and Angela Arango, Rene Mendez and Yumar Sansonetti, Steve Peters, John Strange, Sandra Sepulveda, June 15.
Blumenort Mennonite, Getna, Man.—Jaime Fehr, Jonathan Fehr, Mark

Giesbrecht, Michael Klassen, June 1.
Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.—Jennifer Hackbart, Leanne Ropp at Hidden Acres Camp, July 6.
First Mennonite, Calgary—Scott Bergen, Kristin Harms, Michael Harms, June 22.
Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man.—Michael Wiebe, David Paul Driedger, June 1.
Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.—Mallorely Derksen, Sandra Dueck, Stephanie Dueck, Darlana Dyck, Kerri Epp, Laura Epp, David Fehr, Sarah Kipping, Sara Leili, Barbara Rempel, Jerry Willms, Jessie Winter, June 8.
Springstein Mennonite, Man.—Matthew Wiebe, July 6.
Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Sask.—Christina (Regier) Janzen, Jay Janzen, Debbie Dueck, June 8.

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

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Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

New staff at MCEC

Brian Bauman of San Jose, California, has been appointed Minister of Missions of MC Eastern Canada. His passion is church planting and congregational development. He replaces Mary Mae Schwartztruber.



Bauman

Bauman's roots are in the Floradale Mennonite Church in Ontario and he began his ministry at Preston Mennonite Church. Since 1988 he and his wife Nancy have been pastors at First Mennonite Church in Reedley. Since 1999, Bauman has been conference minister in the Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference.

"To come back to a resource-filled and motivated place like MCEC is a wonderful opportunity and huge challenge," said Bauman. "I am enthused about building on the work of those mission ministers that have come before me and joyfully

anticipate the new things our Lord will have in store..."

Sandi Hannigan of Waterloo has been appointed Interim Minister of Christian Education for MC Eastern Canada, beginning September 1. She will serve one year at half time.

Hannigan will work with the Christian Education and Nurture Commission on projects such as Junior Youth Breakaway, the Vacation Bible School Troupe and consulting with congregations. She continues part time as Christian education coordinator at Erb St. Mennonite Church.

Hannigan has taught Christian education at Emmanuel Bible College, and worked in that area for the Brethren in Christ conference. She has a Masters of Theological Studies degree from Conrad Grebel University College.

Interim Minister of Youth Ministries is Heather Steckle of Markham, Ontario. A long-time employee at Willowgrove Camps, she has also worked with children and youth at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church. Since 1998 she has been youth sponsor in the Markham Mennonite Youth Fellowship.

After 15 years as accountant, Ester Neufeldt has been granted a two-month leave (September and October) for both 2003 and 2004. She will be volunteering at the alumni office at Canadian Mennonite University for part of that time.—From MC Eastern Canada

Mennonite Church Manitoba

News from Manitoba camps

Manager positions for both Camp Koinonia and Camp Moose Lake have been filled, according to Bob Wiebe, director of Education Ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba.

Matt and Heather Heide began as co-managers at Camp Koinonia in mid-April. The Heides have been involved with the camp in summer programs and year-round activities for many years. They are part of the Whitewater Mennonite Church in Boissevain.

Will and Alvi Martens will be co-managers at Camp Moose Lake, beginning in mid-August.

"All four of their children have been staff at our camps," said Wiebe. "Will and Alvi have also served in camp volunteer roles." They are part of the Steinbach Mennonite Church.

"We are grateful to Ron and Emmy Wiebe and members of the Camp Moose Lake Regional Committee," said Wiebe. "They assumed the hosting and maintenance roles at Camp Moose Lake during the spring. Ken and Mary Anne Doell are graciously serving as interim camp managers for July and August. We sense God's guidance and blessing in providing these willing workers and volunteers."

Wiebe reports a strong camper enrolment this summer, especially in the junior high group which has waiting lists.

New facilities at Camp Assiniboia include a ropes course and a picnic shelter.

"Come and see our 300-foot zip line of our 40-foot Burma Bride," said Wiebe. "It creates even more 'adrenalin flow' than the old rope course."

Welcome party for young adults

The Young Adult Council (YAC) of Mennonite Church Manitoba is planning a second Welcome Party for September 21 at Home Street Mennonite Church. One of the purposes of the event is to provide young adults who are moving into Winnipeg with connections to MC Manitoba congregations.

YAC is inviting young adults from beyond the Winnipeg perimeter to come and bring along their Winnipeg-bound or -based friends. Young adults within the perimeter are asked to send a representative who can say a few words about the young adult ministries and service opportunities their congregation provides.

Party-goers will meet at the church at 4:00 p.m. for a game of ultimate frisbee at nearby Vimy Ridge Park. This will be followed by a pizza supper, information sharing, a meditation by Karl Enns from Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, as well as musical entertainment.

YAC has established a Young Adult Ministry Network which provides e-mail information about young adult events and opportunities. To be added to this e-mail list contact Bob Wiebe, director of Education Ministries, at (204) 896-1616.



The Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Vacation Bible School Troupe is on the road for the summer. They will be visiting nine congregations. The troupe members (from left) are: Rachel Yantzi, Wellesley Mennonite; Mary Anne Cressman, Nith Valley Mennonite; Joel Steingart, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite; Katherine Shantz, Pioneer Park Christian Fellowship; Melissa Gingerich, Steinmann Mennonite.—MC Eastern Canada release

Quilting retreats this fall

Camp Moose Lake is again hosting two quilting retreats this fall. The October 31-November 2 weekend will feature a "Hidden chain" project.

"If you are a beginner, perhaps the first weekend is for you," said Val Pankratz, organizer. "We have a chosen a fairly simple project that will introduce the basics of quilting and will showcase a number of different techniques."

On November 7-9, Meg Suderman from Winkler will be teaching the "Quilt as you go, Log Cabin" project.

"Either retreat presents a great opportunity to enjoy a weekend full of new friends, new skills and invigorating quilting, whether you participate in the theme project or bring your own project." For more information call Pankratz at (204) 897-8028.

**Mennonite Church
Saskatchewan**

'Elopement prevention' at nursing home

The Mennonite Nursing Home in Herbert recently installed

an "Elopement Prevention System" to protect residents from wandering out the door by mistake.

"We're a stone's throw from the railway tracks," noted Gordon Milton, director, "We're concerned for their safety."

Residents at risk wear a transponder on their wrist. This device triggers the doors to lock whenever the resident in question walks near an entrance in the building.

"It's great," said Milton, "because it doesn't interfere with visitors coming or going." The system cost \$35,000. Fundraising efforts have so far netted \$29,000.

Deborah Unger has come on staff at the home as the Director of Care. She replaced Vivian Thiessen who retired this spring.

While MC Saskatchewan owns the building it does not financially support the home.

**Mennonite Church
Alberta**

Building news from congregations

Trinity Mennonite Church's hopes to begin building just south of Calgary city limits

this fall are still just hopes. After five months of waiting, the congregation received word from the municipality that a hearing date to address their application for a site-specific amendment will be scheduled for late September or early October.

This is the second application. The first was turned down because of resident concerns regarding increased traffic. In the meantime, Trinity has worked hard to inform future neighbours about the size of the church and the type of building they are anticipating.

The church is hopeful that the second application will be approved. Once approval is granted, the architect will finalize drawings and a building permit will be sought.

The Tofield Mennonite Church is planning a "decommissioning" service for its old building on August 17 at 2:00 pm. The congregation has moved to the newer building on the same lot. The old building will be torn down. The service will celebrate God's journey with the Tofield church through its history.

MVS unit closes in Edmonton

The Mennonite Voluntary Service unit sponsored by First Mennonite Church in Edmonton closed on July 1. Since 1999, the unit has provided service workers for the Welcome Home Community project. With the closure of the national office and priority reassessment by First Mennonite, it was decided to close the unit.

**Mennonite Church
British Columbia**

Looking for nominees

The MC British Columbia nominations committee is still looking for volunteers for the following positions: Treasurer, two people for finance, two people for nominations, and one person for the program committee.

Church members may volunteer or submit names and the nominations committee will contact them. For more information on the work of these committees, contact Peter Sawatzky, e-mail: phs@telus.net.

Investment equivalent of a peace rally

As a result of recent budget reductions, Mennonite Church Canada members are grieving the loss of the Peace and Justice office. The elected leaders and staff of MC Canada have committed themselves to integrating peace and justice work into all ministries.

MC Canada has long had policies requiring both MC Canada and its Pension Plan to screen investments according to socially responsible investment (SRI) criteria, sometimes called "ethical investments." This is a significant but often forgotten way in which MC Canada states its desire to bring peace and justice to this world.

MC Canada has approximately \$1.8 million in endowment and reserve funds managed by Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). The Pension Plan has approximately \$28 million in members' assets under the administration of Group

Retirement Services. The core option in the pension plan, in which almost all the members are invested, is the Socially Responsible Balanced Fund managed by Meritas Financial Inc.

Our missional vision calls us to align all that we do with what God is already doing in the world. Our investments should be no exception. Money talks, and both MFC and Meritas act on behalf of MC Canada to ensure that our money says what we want it to say.

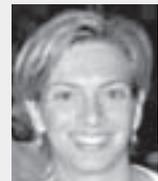
Positive screens pursue investment in companies which demonstrate behaviour we wish to encourage, such as providing fair and sustainable compensation for their employees. Negative screens avoid companies which demonstrate behaviour we wish to discourage, such as the production and sale of weapons or pornography.

Practising SRI is certainly not the only

road to bringing in God's kingdom of peace and justice. The \$30 million we are talking about here is a tiny fraction of the total funds invested across Canada, and screening investments does not always have the effects we hope for. This is the investment equivalent of a 500-person peace rally on Parliament Hill.

However, as we strive to align all of our resources and ministries with God's mission here on earth, our investments must not be excluded. I am grateful for the statement we are making together by how we have chosen to invest.

Pam Peters-Pries, executive secretary, Support Services, Mennonite Church Canada



From our leaders

Employment opportunities

MANAGER - THRIFT SHOP

Join our dynamic team of professionals!

Opportunities For Employment Inc. (OFE) is a private, faith-based, non-profit organization. Our mission is to assist individuals on Income Assistance to achieve self-sufficiency through full-time, long term employment. Mennonite Central Committee (MB) & MEDA(Wpg. Chapter) are corporation members.

OFE serves people with significant and often multiple barriers preventing them from achieving their employment goals. A major barrier is lack of work experience. The OFE Thrift Shop will provide these individuals with an opportunity to work and obtain employability skills preparing them for jobs in the Winnipeg business community.

The successful applicant will have significant involvement with a church community. The individual we are looking for is self-motivated with demonstrated leadership and management skills. This person will possess strong interpersonal skills and have successful working experience with people from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. Retail experience and volunteer program management are definite assets. Starting salary will depend on qualifications and experience. Excellent benefit package available.

Send resume to:

Opportunities For Employment
2nd Floor, 352 Donald Street
Winnipeg, MB R3B 2H8
Attention: Ted Klassen, General Manager
Phone: (204) 925-3491 Fax: (204) 925-3499
e-mail: tedk@ofe.ca OFE Website: www.ofe.ca

(We thank all who apply. Only those selected for interviews will be contacted.)

KITCHEN ASSISTANT and ASSISTANT WRANGLER

required at Camp Assiniboia, Headingley. Gain Christian ministry experience, develop employment skills, enjoy recreation. \$500/mth plus free room and board. One year term beginning Sept.

Phone: (204) 896-1616 or (204) 864-2159.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE ASSIGNMENTS

International Guest House, Washington, D.C., a mission project of Allegheny Mennonite Conference, has two openings for assignments, one immediately and one in August. Contact:

International Guest House
1441 Kennedy St. NW, Washington, DC 20011
Phone: (202) 726-5808; E-mail: igh-dc@juno.com

INTERIM MINISTER

Pastor/Teacher with 20 years experience seeks interim and Long-Term preaching assignments within 120 kilometers of Stratford, Ontario. I am experienced at providing long-term consistent caring and ministry to churches going through transitional times.

For more information, a resume, and references please contact:

Mark at (519) 272-1057;
E-mail: rgraves@sympatico.ca

Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg is seeking a

HALF-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR

The Associate Pastor will serve in a leadership team under the direction of the senior pastor to help facilitate Junior and Senior Youth programs. Ministries include fostering intergenerational/family relationships and events, equipping and guiding sponsors, coordinating program planning, working with worship teams to involve junior and senior youth in worship services, outreach, and some preaching and worship leading. Experience required.

Home Street Mennonite Church is a vibrant urban congregation with a typical Sunday attendance of 250. Anabaptist convictions are important to the congregation. Home Street is a member of Mennonite Church Canada.

Interested persons are encouraged to submit a covering letter and resume by August 15th to:

Pastoral Search Team
Home Street Mennonite Church
318 Home Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 1X4
E-mail: hsmc@mts.net
Fax: (204) 783-1721

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Winkler Grace Mennonite Church invites applications for the position of Associate Pastor. We are a congregation of 400 members located in a rapidly growing rural community in southern Manitoba. Primary responsibilities include visitation, care-group coordination and "Inreach/Outreach" ministry.

Please send letter of application, resume (including three references by August 22, 2003 to:

Steve Zacharias c/o Grace Mennonite Church
Box 1616 Winkler, MB R6W 4B5
Phone: (204) 325-7428; Fax: (204) 325-0091
E-mail: szacharias@rocketmail.com

For rent

Apt for rent - 1BR single occupancy, in house near Univ of Waterloo. Quiet neighborhood. Partially furnished. Private entrance but shared laundry room. Avail Sept 1. Call (519) 885-4408

For rent one bdrm apt. Approx 500 sq ft in private residence upper floor; Richmond, BC; near bus stop. \$550/mth, incl all amenities. Phone Fred or Betty (604) 274-5659; e-mail: friedbartel@aol.com

Student housing: One room available in a residential area, near Wilfrid Laurier University or University of Waterloo. All utilities included. Available September, 2003. Phone: (519) 655-2141

Canadian Mennonite

Summer Advertising Deadlines

Aug. 26 (for Sept. 8 issue)
Sept. 9 (for Sept 22 issue)



Advertising Information

Contact
Barbara
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advert@canadianmennonite.org

Barn talk fundraiser

Shakespeare, Ont.—"Barn talk" is a play about "politics, religion—and other subjects you can't talk about in the house," according to the producers. Written and directed by Kathleen Cleland Moyer, the play will be performed as a fundraiser for the work of Conflict Resolution Network Canada on August 27, 28, 29 at the barn of Rick and Louise Cober Bauman (turn left at stop light in Shakespeare, first farm on right).

Local musicians will provide a musical prelude at 7:30 p.m. The drama begins at 8:00 p.m.

For more information call (519) 885-0880 or visit www.crnetwork.ca.—From release

Young adult retreat to explore diversity

Kitchener, Ont.—The Mennonite Church Eastern Canada young adult fall retreat will focus on the theme, "Dancing with diversity: Claiming faith in the global church." It will be held September 19-21 at Crieff Hills.

The event will explore what the North American church can learn from the global Mennonite church. There will

be stories from around the world and from the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe. To register, contact Mark Diller Harder, phone (519) 650-3806, e-mail: markdh@mceec.on.ca.—From release

New address

Didsbury, Alta.—The Northwest Mennonite Conference has relocated its office from Edmonton to Didsbury. The new address is General Delivery, Didsbury, Alberta T0M 0W0. Telephone: (403) 335-9805; fax: (403) 335-9548; e-mail: nwconf@shaw.ca.—From NWC release

Calendar

British Columbia

August 14: One-woman show, "The women who stayed," at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, 7:00 p.m. Call (604) 854-3654.

September 12-13: MCC B.C. Festival and Relief Sale at Tradex, Abbotsford.

September 14: MCC B.C. Festival of Praise at Central Heights Mennonite Brethren Church, 2:30 p.m.

September 27: MCC B.C. Fall Fair at Civic Centre, Prince George.

October 6-8: Pastor/spouse retreat. Contact MC B.C. for details.

October 17-19: Women in Mission retreat at Camp Squeah with speakers Angelika Dawson and Benita Warkentin.

October 18: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. banquet with speaker John B. Toews. Call (604) 853-6177, e-mail: archives@mhsbc.com.

November 1: MCC B.C. annual meeting.

November 6-8: Mennonite Disaster Service informational evenings: First Mennonite, Kelowna (6), Greendale MB (7), Peace Mennonite, Richmond (8), 7:00 p.m. Reports from MDS volunteers.

November 7-9: Scrapbooking retreat at Camp Squeah. Contact Christa Lynn Nikkel, e-mail: nikkel@telus.net.

Alberta

August 17: Decommissioning service for Tofield Mennonite Church building, 2:00 p.m.

September 27: Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta meeting in LaCrete. For details and transportation, contact Dick at (403) 241-1819 or Irene (403) 275-9550.

Saskatchewan

September 3: MEDA break-

Answers to Mennonite quiz

1. Mennonite World Conference 2003 statistics show a world membership of 1,297,716 Mennonites.

2. Mennonites in Canada total 127,851 members, according to Mennonite World Conference statistics.

3. In 1786, Swiss-German Mennonites came to Ontario from Pennsylvania, the first Mennonite settlers in Canada.

4. The oldest Mennonite congregation in Canada is The First Mennonite Church in Vineland, Ontario (founded 1801).

5. According to 2001 census figures, Canada has 191,465

Mennonites. Ontario has the highest number (60,595 or .5% of the population), but Manitoba has the highest concentration (51,540 or 4.7% of the population).

6. Mennonite Church Canada has about 37,000 members in 250 congregations.

7. Mennonite Church Eastern Canada has 13,000 members, MC Manitoba 9,937, MC British Columbia 4,450, MC

Saskatchewan 4,287, MC Alberta 1,700.

8. The largest Mennonite Church Canada congregation is First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg (about 1,200 members).

9. Mennonites in the Netherlands sent out Pieter and Jacoba (Schmilau) Jansz as missionaries to Indonesia in 1851, marking the beginning of foreign missions for Mennonites.

10. The first missionaries from Canada were Amos and Edna (Litwiller) Schwartzentruber, Amish Mennonites from the Steinmann Mennonite Church in Ontario. They served in Argentina from 1924 to 1963. The first missionary from the General Conference Mennonite Church in Canada was Anne Penner from Manitoba who served in India from 1946 to 1981.

11. The oldest Mennonite school in Canada is Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, Manitoba, founded in 1889. (The original school, named Mennonite Educational Institute, moved to Altona in 1906 and the school in Gretna continued with the name Mennonite Collegiate Institute.) The German English Academy (now Rosthern Junior College) was founded in Saskatchewan in 1905.

12. MC Canada churches worship in 12 languages.



fast meeting at Grainfields, Saskatoon.
September 5-7: Junior High retreat.
September 14: Opening at Rosthern Junior College.
October 1: Pastors' gathering on theme: Learning while leading.
October 17-18: Women in Mission retreat.
October 25: Alumni Volleyball Tournament at Rosthern Junior College.
October 31-November 1: MCC Saskatchewan annual meeting.
November 14-15: MC Saskatchewan Bible Conference at Grace Mennonite Church, Regina.

Manitoba

September 13: "Head for the Hills" bike fundraiser for Eden Foundation. Call (204) 325-5355, e-mail: edenfdn@valleycable.com.
September 20: Morris MCC

Relief Sale.
September 21: Welcome Party for young adults moving to Winnipeg, at Home Street Mennonite Church, sponsored by MC Manitoba Young Adult Council.
September 26-27: Brandon MCC Relief Sale.
September 26-28: Canadian Mennonite University Homecoming. President's installation Sunday, Portage Ave. MB Church, 3:00 p.m. with speaker Stanley Hauerwas.
October 4: Equipping Conference with Ministers and Deacons Conference at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church.
October 11-12: 50th anniversary celebrations at Graysville Mennonite Church. Phone (204) 828-3359.
October 17-18: Women in Mission fall retreat at Camp Assiniboia. Speaker: Kathy Giesbrecht.
October 25: Preaching workshop at Springfield

Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.
October 31-November 2: Quilting retreat with Val Pankratz at Camp Moose Lake.
November 1, 8: Preaching workshops at Grace Mennonite Church, Brandon (1) and Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite Church (8).
November 7-9: Quilting retreat with Meg Suderman at Camp Moose Lake.

Ontario

August 10: Reesor Picnic at Backus Conservation Area, Port Rowan. Worship 11:00 a.m. Call (519) 586-2986.
August 10: Hunta Mennonite

Church tent service at Hunta museum, 10:30 a.m.
August 22-24: 40th Anniversary Reunion at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.
September 5-7: Building Community Retreat (for those with disabilities) at Hidden Acres Camp. Theme: Forgiveness, with speaker Tom Mayvaian. Call (519) 744-4137, e-mail: mdsteinman@golden.net.
November 9: Artists for Peace Concert at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, 7:00 p.m.



Photo by Ed Nyce

An Israeli peace organization called Zochrot marks the location of a Palestinian village destroyed by Israel in 1948, the year the State of Israel was established. Mennonite Central Committee supports the Israeli peace group's efforts to mark such sites. Some 70 people—including Israelis and former Palestinian residents—attended the July 11 ceremony. Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza are not permitted to visit this area near Mount Carmel, now a state park. Zochrot's work is controversial. Some signs are removed by locals just days after they're erected. But members believe that facing the past is an essential component of a lasting peace.

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How to subscribe:

- Individuals who are part of Mennonite Church Canada or one of its five area conferences can ask to be placed on their congregation's group subscription list. The subscription is paid by the conferences.
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 Rates: \$31.00 for one year (includes \$2.03 GST); \$50.00 (Can.) to U.S.; \$69.50 (Can.) for overseas.

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- Subscription changes are not considered Transitions notices. (Please send Transitions to the editor.)
- Changes will be made immediately but may take 4-6 weeks to take effect because of printing schedules.

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