

# CANADIAN Mennonite

August 25, 2003  
Volume 7, Number 16



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## Note the changes!

**T**his issue of Canadian Mennonite signals some significant changes here at the magazine. For one, the name at the end of this column will be Margaret Loewen Reimer for the next year. I have been named Interim Editor/Publisher as the search continues to fill the position vacated by Ron Rempel.

Having been Managing Editor of this magazine for many years, I move into this interim position with a touch of regret, knowing that I am giving up the “hands on” routines of editing and producing the magazine to become manager of the operation.

Taking over my editorial duties as Interim Associate Editor is Betti Erb, a person with lots of experience in journalism. Betti was communications coordinator at Conrad Grebel College from 1990-97. She also spent several years as editor for Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship and then the Canadian Council of Churches. Welcome to the staff, Betti!

With this issue, we are also changing the e-mail address at which you can contact us. Our main address is now: **office@canadianmennonite.org**. Please use this address for subscription changes, transition notices and other business. You can contact me directly about editorial matters at: **editor@canadianmennonite.org**. Check out the masthead below for all these changes. Our phone and fax numbers remain the same.

My new position, which began August 1, started off with a bang as Canada Post refused to mail our August 4 issue



Reimer



Erb

because of a misunderstanding over the MCC insert. It took two days to resolve that one, at considerable cost to us. (Lesson: Anything called “annual report” cannot be mailed second class!) This explains why the mailing was a little late.

Another jolt was the unprecedented power outage at 4:15 p.m. on August 14. Fortunately, we were able to resume work the next day, unlike many others in Ontario. See an environmentalist’s response to the blackout on page 12.

As this issue goes to press, we are beginning to receive reports from the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe. On page 9, Ray Dirks of Winnipeg provides an entertaining glimpse of life in Bulawayo. We’ll have coverage of the assembly in our September 8 issue.

### Troubling decision

This summer, we were disturbed to learn that Mennonite Church Manitoba leaders decided to opt out of the subscription agreement which brings *Canadian Mennonite* to their members (see page 15). In 1997, and again in 2000, Manitoba, along with the other area conferences and MC Canada, agreed to share subscription costs so this magazine could be sent to every home at a very reasonable cost.

Currently, the cost per member is \$10.00, with MC Canada and area conferences each paying half.

Our subscription plan is the envy of many church magazines, and we are convinced it is the best way to ensure communication and dialogue among MC Canada members across the country. This spring, MC Canada, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Eastern Canada re-affirmed their commitment to the plan.

We understand the financial dilemma that MC Manitoba is facing, but we are alarmed that, without delegate decision, Manitoba is jeopardizing this circulation plan.

We hope delegates at the October MC Manitoba meeting will give this matter careful thought.—**Margaret Loewen Reimer**

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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](http://www.canadianmennonite.org)) on the Thursday before the date of the issue. This means you can check out the September 8 issue by September 4.

**Cover: Mennonites in Vietnam, in their special caps and T-shirts, gather for the first Vietnam Mennonite Conference. See page 23**

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Winkler, Man.

## Native community says goodbye to doctor

Leaving on a jet plane, don't know when I'll be back again...." This song was broadcast on the Cross Lake radio station as a motorcade, including the fire truck, ambulance and band chief, escorted Walter Hoepfner to the airport in a moving farewell.

For six and half years, Hoepfner, a medical doctor, has spent a week of every month providing medical services in remote aboriginal communities in northern Manitoba.

It began in 1997 when he turned 50. That year, Walter and his wife Viola attended Mennonite World Conference in India and took the winter to tour that corner of the world. After 25 years of medical practice, Hoepfner was contemplating an early retirement so the couple could fulfill some of their dreams. But then Hoepfner received a call from Medical Services. Would he be willing to provide medical care to northern aboriginal communities? Hoepfner, a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church here, accepted the invitation.

Viola decided to go back to the university to upgrade her teaching degree and then taught English to immigrants in southern Manitoba.

Before this experience, Hoepfner said he shared the attitude of many in southern Manitoba.

"A lot of people have the same attitude I had before, that the aboriginal people get a lot of freebies and why should we help them anymore.... Now I don't have nearly all the answers. You really don't know until you have walked in their shoes."

Hoepfner says he came to know "really good people faced with horrendous problems." One of the most difficult health challenges aboriginal people face is the extremely high incidence of diabetes.

"Their diet has changed. Exactly why they are more vulnerable to diabetes we are not sure but there is evidence that it may be due to a 'thrif



Photo by Evelyn Rempel Petkau

**Walter Hoepfner with gifts he received at his farewell: a painting by Cross Lake artist Eric Blacksmith and a locally made vest.**

gene' which the aboriginal people carry that enables their bodies to store food for times of shortage," said Hoepfner. "In the 1930s tests showed no incidence of diabetes. Now 50 percent have diabetes."

The complications of diabetes are starting to show: blindness, renal failure, amputations, heart attacks and strokes. "The other thing we are starting to see is Type 2 diabetes occurring in 8-10 year-old children which we used to say didn't exist," said Hoepfner.

He made arrangements for patients to see specialists, and tried to offset complications through education, diet, exercise and medication. He also encouraged store managers to bring in more fresh vegetables and fruits and diet drinks, but food costs are a significant problem. He is encouraged to see that people returning from Winnipeg appointments are now bringing fresh produce back with them.

Violence, alcoholism, teen suicides and glue sniffing are especially rampant in the community of Shamattawa.

"Just when I think it's getting better

we have bouts again," said Hoepfner. In Cross Lake, a larger community of 5,500, "I see the community organizing things for their young people—minor hockey and baseball leagues, work projects that are useful. In Shamattawa the leadership isn't there."

The presence of Mennonite Church Canada workers in Cross Lake has had a large impact on the community, said Hoepfner. "They revitalized the church there and were a resource the community could look to."

Hoepfner met regularly with community elders. The high unemployment and a sense of powerlessness often leaves them frustrated.

"More extensive training has to be provided for the unique and overwhelming problems, otherwise the resource people feel inadequate and quit."

Housing is another problem. Recently Hoepfner treated a case of TB where 15 people were living in the same small house. There is so much need, said Hoepfner, reminding him of Christ's words: "The well don't need a doctor."

"In the beginning only a few kept their appointments," said Hoepfner. "They had a feeling of hopelessness—the doctors won't do anything, they don't care." But over the past years, Hoepfner has gained their confidence.

One elder said of Hoepfner, "He treats my people like real people."

Hoepfner says, "When you gain their confidence it's a relationship you want to keep."

The government is now replacing this medical service with a new program. In July, Cross Lake had a farewell for Hoepfner.

"Two things we want to say," said the spokesperson. "Let's keep praying for each other and keep the faith."

"It's been a unique journey," said Hoepfner. "I really got to appreciate the people. They are such genuine people."—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Calgary, Alta.

## Fond farewell to Rha Friesen

**R**ha Friesen was a stay-at-home mom until her three daughters were grown. Then she took some training in office and accounting skills and went to work in a local United Church.

In 1978, Bill Thiessen, director of Mennonite Central Committee Alberta, hired Rha (short for Rhama) to work for both MCC and the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta. When Choice Books became part of the office, she also did their accounts.

"That's all there is," says Rha. "The rest is history." Within that long history, however, as former co-workers and conference leaders testified at her retirement party in May, "Rha was always pleasant and accommodated every demand."

Every six years Rha had to get used to another "chair" on the CMA Board. What they did not know was that she had a background in psychiatric nursing, that she was psychoanalyzing each of them and that she is now planning to write a book about those 24 years.

On top of Rha's duties with MCC and CMA, she administered the Calgary Co-op Memorial Society during the years that her husband, Bruno, worked with the Calgary Co-op.

A toast to Rha by Verna Froese at the farewell summed up the fond memories of co-workers:

- Your laughter has been permanently archived in the walls of this building and in our ears and our hearts.
- Your challenge to "walk" at noon, even though it might be -23 C with a brisk wind!
- Your early morning swims before coming to work (we took your word on that).
- Your pre-dawn knit-a-thons, creating another Father Christmas to fill the shelf in your hospitable home.
- Your "lending library."
- Grapefruit—the only way is to peel it and eat it, most every lunch! Also zucchini with pasta sauce.
- Work hard! Play hard! You put in your time at the office before joining

friends on the golf course, family at the campground, climbing Kilimanjaro, hiking the West Coast Trail, or meeting the Chilkoot challenge!

- Energy to burn. You find creative ways to channel it: Pancake breakfasts at MCC relief sales, not to mention CMA annual conferences!

You are an inspiration to all of us!

Rha has probably been the best PR person MCC or CMA ever had!

We could say about Rha Friesen: "The true measure of our worth will depend, not on the inheritance that we leave, but on the spirit that we pass on to others."—**Laura Dyck**

### Kutuzovka, Ukraine

## Ukraine church women visit shut-in neighbours

**T**o help meet needs in their community, women from Kutuzovka Mennonite Church have organized a "mercy group." The 10-member group volunteers time each week to visit the elderly, sick or bedridden.

The mercy group is a "place where faith in Christ can be put into action,"

says Lyuba Chernyetz. "I never knew I could be fulfilled by helping other people." Chernyetz, 46, joined the church in 2000.

Rebecca Spurrier, a Mennonite Central Committee worker from Pennsylvania, helped the mercy group form last year. The women meet biweekly to discuss their activities. They keep a list of community members who could benefit from a visit or helping hand, and they make sure each person gets regular visits. Recently the group began visiting patients in a psychiatric nearby hospital.

On an afternoon in June, Chernyetz dropped in on 9-year-old Oleg, the grandson of a woman she used to visit. Oleg lived with his grandmother until she died last winter; then he was sent to a children's home. Recently his father returned to the area and the two now live together. Chernyetz invited Oleg to a church-run day camp.

She then visited Lida who has been partially paralyzed for four years and can rarely leave her third-floor apart-

ment.

Like the other mercy group members, Chernyetz does not own a car. She walks or hitchhikes to make her visits. She hopes to someday study at a Bible college.

Each Tuesday the mercy group goes to Dolina Home for the Elderly to chat,



**Lyuba Chernyetz, right, brings homemade cherry biscuits to 9-year-old Oleg and invites him to camp.**

MCC Photo by Matt Lester

sing and pray with residents.

Olga Lartina, an 80-year-old resident, says she always looks forward to the visits. "We sing a song—"In prayer I receive joy." That one about prayer is my favourite."

Dolina and Kutuzovka are located in the former Molochna Colony founded by Mennonites. Dolina was called Schoenau and Kutuzovka was Petershagen. Mennonites were forced to leave the colony during World War II.

The Kutuzovka Mennonite church was first built in 1892 but was later closed by Soviet authorities and used for grain storage. The building was restored in 1999.—MCC release by **Maria Linder-Hess**

# Let's make our peace with conflict

*We can practice peacemaking even in the midst of severe theological conflicts, says Matthew Bailey-Dick. The field of 'conflict transformation' offers insights to help us do that.*

**A**n old joke says that when two or three Mennonites get together to talk theology, four or five viewpoints come into conflict. While we might be able to joke about our theological disagreements, we know all too well how draining and painful they can be. What do we do when our differences seem to be unresolvable?

The field of conflict transformation offers a simple insight that can shed new light on our theological debates: Let's make our peace with conflict because conflict is here to stay.

This does not mean resigning ourselves to a life of quarrelling; it does not mean a simplistic "forgive and forget" mentality; it does not mean abandoning difficult truths to find the middle of the road. Instead, this is an encouragement to see how our peacemaking witness might be lived out within our conflicts as we find ways to turn frustrating debates into stepping stones for church growth and renewal.

Yes, this is easy to say and hard to do, and yet Christ assures us that "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Matthew 18:20). Indeed, perhaps Christ lives among us—or seeks to live among us—precisely in the midst of our most contentious debates!

Over the last two decades, we have seen a shift from talk about "conflict resolution" (attempting to end a conflict through negotiated agreement) to "conflict transformation" (finding ways of transforming conflict in a positive direction).

Conflict transformation has to do with confronting violence and injustice, and changing our relationships so that truth, justice, and understanding can grow within our conflicts. The idea is that conflict is an ever-present aspect of our lives—that conflict is actually a good thing—and

that a healthy way of living with our conflicts is to rework them to serve God's way of peace.

This makes conflict a prime location for the missional church: God never brings closure to the turbulent relationship with humanity, but rather consistently finds ways to transform the patterns of interaction. The Bible gives witness to God's way of making peace with conflict, and we have the opportunity and challenge to follow suit.

So how does conflict transformation speak to our deeply conflicted theological debates? When we have clashing viewpoints on important issues of faith, what are the prospects for healthy dialogue? When different sides seem to talk past one another, how can we follow God's lead and turn the conflict in a constructive direction?

## A test case

We might consider the current debate about sexuality as an example of a serious conflict in which transformation is greatly needed. Indeed, many individuals, churches, and conferences are experiencing stress and brokenness because of how this theological conflict is being "resolved."

One of the first things we might do is to step back and try to get a sense of how this issue is functioning within the whole system—whether the system is a church or a conference or a scholarly debate.

We might ask several questions: Why are churches so caught up in the issue of sexual orientation and practice? Does this conflict express deeper divisions, turn attention away from other matters, or provide a forum in which to discuss basic differences about biblical interpretation? If the



The Works of Mercy by Rita Corbin



issue of sexuality would somehow be resolved, would another debate rise to take its place?

We might never know the answers to these questions, but we would benefit from a closer look at how this conflict might be serving a deeper purpose within our churches and academic institutions, aside from the “purpose” of convincing the other side that they are wrong.

We might evaluate the extent to which basic conflict and communication tools are being used. Are we really listening to each other? Are we speaking respectfully and honestly, both in conversation with the Bible and with each other, and with the leading of the Holy Spirit? Are there power issues within the theological debate—that is, does one “side” set the agenda and decide the appropriate times to discuss the issue?

Even the language we use can create power imbalances. For example, if we identify “the issue” as homosexuality, we make people who are homosexual feel that they personally are the issue. We also do not acknowledge the issue of homophobia as it influences our biblical interpretations and theological understandings.

We could also discern the extent to which the debate features interest-based conversation rather than position-based argument. It is usually not an effective strategy to convince other people with unyielding positions such as, “The church needs to believe such-and-such, and that’s that!”

More productive dialogue results when participants work to identify the underlying interests they share and seek to maintain their relationship. This is not to say that conclusions will never be reached; rather, it is an acknowledgement that the way forward is one of collaboration rather than coercion.

A last area that might prove fruitful is to figure out how to make good use of surprise and confrontation. For Jesus to overthrow the tables of the moneychangers certainly confronted the issue of whether the temple should be used for commercial purposes. We

might ask ourselves if there are unexpected, transformative actions that can be taken in this theological debate—nonviolent initiatives that would confront the fears and misunderstandings from a different angle or that would transfer the debate to a different sphere where it can be better understood.

Transforming action takes us out of our comfort zones, yet that is where we have the greatest chance of moving forward in a constructive way. Jesus’ first disciples learned this lesson well.

### Beyond ‘win-win’

In an idyllic conflict mediation, the disputants leave the conflict with their underlying interests addressed and with a mutual sense of winning. It is good when everyone wins, yet the language of winning suggests that the conflict is over. Conflict transformation moves us beyond the idea of a “win-win” solution to a “transformation-transformation” solution.

We can apply this to the theological debate on sexuality. What outcome can we imagine for this conflict? Is there a win-win situation in which some churches can declare themselves to be fully welcoming to homosexual people and some churches can declare that homosexuality is sinful—and that these two can co-exist in a mutually-satisfying way? What if the ultimate goal is not so much a “win” as a transformation of all those involved in the conflict?

In some conversations, people end up saying to each other, “Well, it looks like we need to agree to disagree.” Some issues may never be resolved or transformed in a satisfying way—indeed, some theological debates continue after hundreds of years of deliberation. And yet, history shows how some issues that seem completely intractable can be resolved in a way that no one expected.

We can find examples of successful conflict transformation in other church debates. For example, in the “worship wars” (between contemporary and traditional styles of worship), some churches demonstrate what can happen when “winning” is set aside in favour of transforming the situation. These churches incorporate various styles of music in such a way that not only have the styles influenced each other, the whole worship experience has changed.

The conflict, while continuing, functions in a healthy way, with all involved becoming changed by each other and by the process.

Continued on page 8





**Conflict** *From page 7*

### Peace is the way

American peace advocate A.J. Muste once said, "There is no way to peace. Peace is the way." This is a good summary of what happens with conflict transformation. Like most of our interpersonal conflicts, our theological conflicts rarely come to neat conclusions. There are always lingering doubts, unanswered questions, areas that still need to be talked about.

The advantage of taking a conflict transformation perspective on our hot topics is that we can approach them with a renewed sense of optimism by saying, "Alright, we have a conflict here. What are some creative options? How can we listen to the word of God and to each other in new ways?"

Such a perspective will not only foster openness to others, it will create a space in which we can better hear the Holy Spirit leading us to a common place that we cannot even imagine at the moment. We will be able to recognize that the future lies not in determining who is right and who is wrong, but in how well we listen for the leading of the Spirit and observe how the Living Word is working among us. Clearly, our theological debates must be grounded in prayer.

What will be the end result? I have my own hope for a fully inclusive church, and yet I need to be chal-

lenged and I need to expect the unexpected. In the debate about sexuality, perhaps the "Saskatoon 1986 resolution" and the "Stratford 1998 resolution" will be followed by the "Winkler 2004 transformation" at the next assembly of Mennonite Church Canada.

The Bible makes it clear that we have been given the "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18), and that the gospel of peace is one that we take into all aspects of our lives. Indeed, living out the gospel of peace in our theological debates might be our greatest witness to the rest of the world!—**Matthew**

### Bailey-Dick

*The writer, a spring graduate of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, is a stay-at-home dad and a part-time instructor at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ontario.*



**Bailey-Dick**

## Singing at assembly

**S**inging to the Lord a new song" was the theme of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada convention this summer. Michael Rodgers used that theme as the "ground bass" of his report in the July/August *Canada Lutheran*. Following are a few strains that might strike a chord:

"We sang a new song to the Lord, and yet much of the tune was familiar.... We sang psalms and antiphons, choruses and descants...grand old hymns and fresh new tunes. We sang gospel songs, folk songs, even protest songs. We sang English and Irish songs, German, Swedish, and Swahili songs. We sang forte and pianissimo; we sang in harmony and occasionally discord. We sang in unison only when told to do so. Some of us sang out loud to thank God for the gift of a fine voice and a well-tuned ear; others perhaps not so

gifted, sang out loud to get even.

"Bishop Raymond led us in his fine baritone. Ray shared with us the song he is hearing these days in scripture and in prayer. It is not always the song he, or we, would wish to sing, but it is the song God seems to have given us for the present.

"In the business meetings, we again sang mostly in harmony, sometimes in discord, and virtually never in unison. Sometimes the agenda brought us simple melodies; sometimes the rhythms were difficult and complex. When it came to pensions and budgets, our songs grew a bit anxious and we were even at times tempted to sing the blues. But new leaders urged us to sing with new energy and new hope.



"Through it all, I believe, the Spirit breathed and blended and sighed. The Spirit hummed some new tunes and whispered some new lyrics, but gently reminded us that the music and the words are also timeless and unchanging. From time to time we caught snatches of melody. We will sing it as we hear more, and we will keep our ears open. We pray that the song may continue."



## Life in Bulawayo

*Ray Dirks of Winnipeg, who put together the art exhibit for the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe, shares some of his experiences in Bulawayo as the assembly gets underway.*

A large crowd turned out for the opening of “In God’s Image: A Global Anabaptist Family” at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe on July 17. Entertainment was by a professional dance group and the Bulawayo Brethren in Christ (BIC) choir. The gallery director, BIC bishop Danisa Ndlovu, and I all spoke. The evening really could not have gone better.

This is a confounding and amazing country. There is no fuel at service stations and no money in banks. Yet, Bulawayo is calm, polite, plenty of smiling faces and people always asking how you are doing. The assembly site is remarkable...far surpasses anything Winnipeg has available in one spot. Four halls can each seat several thousand people. Hopefully they’ll find the chairs.

The exhibit came together in a slightly chaotic way. When I arrived, my luggage hadn’t made it and two crates were stuck in customs in Harare and the third hadn’t arrived yet. My luggage included 48 photo panels...the crates included 41 artworks and the prayer garden quilt.

I was given a phone number. It did not work. Lizwe Moyo, my host, was having a horrendous toothache so didn’t look forward to a trip to the airport for nothing. He called Ken Langeman of MWC for a car. Ken said they first had to get fuel. Fortunately, he had some on his balcony at home.

We went into the bowels of the airport and there were my bags. Then we got word that one crate had arrived at the gallery and the other two would possibly show up by Wednesday morning—whenever they could be fit onto an Air Zimbabwe plane from Harare. They, too, had run out of fuel.

The crates arrived on Wednesday and the opening was on Thursday. The crowd was a mix of gallery regulars, a lot of young artists, and church people,

most of whom had never entered a gallery in their lives.

### End of July

People have begun to arrive for the assembly. I have helped ferry youth stewards and international choir members about the city. God is definitely confirming that Bulawayo is right for this assembly. All one needs for confirmation is to look in the faces of the Zimbabweans who are interacting with the guests.

After supper today, the choir sang a song. This got the youth stewards enthused and they did an impromptu song that turned into a dance about the dining hall. Zimbabweans began to ululate—that most delicious of African sounds that sends a shiver of joy up the spine. There were hugs all around.

My hosts, Lizwe and Su, live a middle class existence by Zimbabwean standards. But many things we take for granted, such as a vehicle and washing machine, they don’t have. Their home has three small bedrooms. I am in the smallest. The third bedroom currently has their two children, ages 2 and 9, two orphaned sisters, ages 15 and 21, a cousin recovering from surgery and Lizwe’s mother. Last weekend a cousin and an aunt also stayed there.

I suggested that I must be getting in the way. Lizwe grabbed my hand and said, “Ray, it would be terrible if you were not here.”

When I came home after a day of putting up the exhibition, I was summoned to a little side room. First I saw Su’s mother-in-law standing in the corner with a large, bloody knife. On the floor was a complete dead cow that she was hacking up. Su’s 9-year-old son, Lincoln, was playing solitaire on the computer, his chair positioned so the cow could fit around it.



**Ray Dirks’ host Lizwe (left) works with former street children in Bulawayo.**

I simply commented that I had never seen a dead cow and a computer in the same room before.

### August 13

The assembly finished its third day today. The first night’s supper was bedlam. For a citizenry used to queuing forever they seemed to forget about queuing that night and all simply pushed to the front. It was like a mad dash to the table by 7,000 people. However, the second night the food service was flawless. Not sure what they did but it worked.

We could hang everything as we wished at the gallery. At the assembly site it is a different story. Some of the walls to hang art on simply fell over the first day. I rounded up a crew, nailed all the walls together, and washed off the footprints.

The quilts have been a big hit. People have themselves photographed in front of them, touch them, grab them. The whole exhibition rings the centre of the global village. The quilts flank the entry panels to the exhibit and are the first things people see.

—Ray Dirks

## Letters from Russia tell grim story

John A. Harder, ed. and trans. *From Kleefeld with Love*. Pandora Press, 2003, \$21.96.

**T**his book of letters will occupy a place in the treasure trove of Russian Mennonite family histories. It can also claim a contribution to the literary art of epistolary narrative. Although the predominant letter writer, Mariechen Harder, didn't look on her writing as a "novel," she understood the writer's role in mediating life's realities for the reader.

The 34 letters in this book, written between 1925 and 1933, detail life in Kleefeld, Russia, for her brother and family who have moved to Canada. Sadly, return letters from Arnaud, Manitoba, are lost, but something is gained by the reader having to deal with the "silence" that filled much of the letter writers' lives.

John A. Harder, grandson of the couple that moved to Canada, heard of the letters' existence at a family reunion. Lucy B. Braun transcribed the German gothic into latinate script. Both implicit (word choice in translations) and explicit editing (preface, introductions and organization of

letters) enhance the reader's experience.

What kind of writers do we meet here? Sara Spent, in her eight letters, writes with immediacy and practicality. In contrast, Mariechen's 17 letters reflect the need to communicate, both for the sake of her brother Abram's family ("out of love for all of you—the pen presses itself into my hand") and for her own sake: "I want to engage you in a bit of conversation...when my heart overflows." She does it so family in Russia will not be forgotten.

"I am reminded that we are living in a land with extreme political views, where the possibilities for change have no limits. What would happen if we were also deprived of our freedom to write? And so I write again and again. There is no other way."

She writes of natural beauty around her—the texture of straw, with the horses rolling on the threshing floor to ease their itching backs! Even when reporting the pain of forced exile, she writes with ironic remove: "We had aimed to storm the West, but now our way is in an easterly direction."

The reader senses that Mariechen wishes to shield the Canadian rela-

tives from too much vicarious sorrow. Although she repeatedly begs for their help in emigration, she dwells more on their sustaining love.

In summary, here is a capable, compassionate woman who comments on the price of grain, the style of clothing, the intimacies of being "nanny" to her motherless nieces and nephews for five years. She honestly recounts the Mennonite community's dreadful life of upheaval. She directs hard questions to God, yet never relinquishes the stronger desire for faith.

These letters with so many losses and unfulfilled dreams could seem maudlin reading. Not so with Mariechen Harder, a spirited, self-conscious writer. The reader feels bereft of a companion in hearing of her death in 1939 through her sister Greta's letter, 16 years after we have heard from Mariechen herself.

A tragedy lies in the fact that these loved ones were not able to emigrate. Another tragedy would have been the loss of these significant letters.—From review by **Miriam Maust**

*The reviewer lives in Waterloo, Ont.*

### Publishing notes

The *International Songbook 2003* of Mennonite World Conference went to a printer in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, on July 7. About 5,000 copies are expected to be ready for the Global Youth Summit, beginning August 8, and Assembly Gathered, August 11-17. "When we sing together in worship, we meet God, and we meet one another," says Marilyn Houser Hamm, editor of the songbook. A section at the beginning of the book, "Gifts from Zimbabwe," includes three songs written for Africa 2003 and a set of songs from Zimbabwe. The book has 90 songs in about 20 languages, translated into English, French and Spanish. A committee with representatives from each of the continents compiled the book. Designer was Glenn Fretz from Ontario. Margaret Brubacher from MWC's Kitchener office and Jim Clemens provided assistance. North

Americans wanting to buy the book can contact the MWC Kitchener office at (519) 571-0060 after the assembly.—MWC release

*How to Teach Peace to Children* by Anne Meyer Byler (Herald Press, 2003) is a new edition of a booklet first published in 1981. In that first book, J. Lorne Peachey brought together practical suggestions to help parents, and the church, pass on peacemaking values. This edition adds current concerns and resources. Byler, who holds degrees in peace studies and library science, is a mother, peace activist and member of Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana. "This slim little book contains a real wealth of positive steps for families to consider as they strive to understand peace, family dynamics...our global village, and

partner with their congregations in nurturing the faith of their children," writes Elsie Rempel, Christian Education and Nurture staff for Mennonite Church Canada.

Barbara Smucker, well-known children's author, died July 29 in Bluffton, Ohio, at the age of 88. A librarian and former journalist, Smucker became known for her historical fiction. Her best-known work is *Underground to Canada*, an anti-slavery story that has remained in print for 25 years. Her Mennonite subjects include *Henry's Red Sea* (first printed by Herald Press in 1955), *Days of Terror* and *Amish Adventure*. A native of Kansas, Smucker and her husband Donovan (who died in 2001) lived in Waterloo, Ontario, from 1969-81 before moving back to the U.S. Smucker's funeral was held August 1 at First Mennonite Church in Bluffton.—From reports

Winnipeg, Man.

## Portraits of Afghanistan

A photography exhibit here featuring the people of northern Afghanistan is literally stopping people in their tracks. Bruce Hildebrand, a freelance photographer, took the photos while he was on assignment for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank in 2002.

“Being stopped in their tracks” is what happened to customers at the Bread and Circuses Bakery and Cafe the day the pictures went up, said manager Kirsten Godabout at the exhibit opening. “People would come in for their morning coffee. Then, when they saw the large black-bordered portraits displayed on bright yellow walls with sunlight streaming through the windows, they’d stop so abruptly that others smacked into them from behind! I’d never seen that kind of response to an exhibit before!”

The exhibit, called “Navigator,” includes 10 colour portraits of Afghan men and children (photographing women was not allowed) going about their daily lives. The pictures portray a people who have suffered much from war and hunger but who still have a “strong sense of self, of confidence in their own identity,” according to Hildebrand. “They’re so open.... They know who they are.”

This strength of character is reflected in their response to aid. “They refused to come for food aid until the aid agency created a food for work program. Then they came by the hundreds from as far away as 12 hours walking,” he said.

After years of occupation and war, the Afghans yearn for a better life.

“Hamid, my guide and interpreter, told me that ‘the war has taken so much from us,’” noted Hildebrand. “Now, they desperately want to rebuild their country but it’s a difficult road. The infrastructure destroyed by bombing. Having to deal with landmines. Even so, they are focusing on rebuilding schools and roads and on trying hard to make a living.”

The mounted portraits are for sale. E-mail: gbhildebrand@shaw.ca or phone: (204) 475-1618.—**Leona Dueck Penner**



**Zhiogol, a grade one student, holds up her picture of flowers with work-worn hands.**



**Ooslamious, an elderly cleric, pauses for the camera.**

Photos by Bruce Hildebrand

### Arts notes

#### Sing-along fundraiser

An unusual fundraiser for Mennonite Central Committee, billed as an “epicurean hootenanny,” will take place at the King Street Theatre Centre in Kitchener, Ontario, on September 13. The event, beginning at 7:00 p.m., will include a sing-along led by local musicians, a buffet catered by John Bergen of City Café Bakery, and wine tasting with Ron Giesbrecht, award-winning winemaker for Henry of Pelham in St. Catharines. (The wine-tasting is sponsored by Theatre & Company.) The singing will range from camp songs and blue grass gospel to show tunes, 60s girl groups and Gordon Lightfoot, ending with a sing-along rendition of “La Traviata.” (The idea grows out of the Saengerfest tradition, notes Bergen who says that he’s “tired of being performed to” and wants to sing.) Tickets are available at the City Café Bakery.

#### Cowboy poetry finalist

Cowboy poet Doris Daley from Calgary was one of five finalists in the Academy of Western Artists awards in July in Fort Worth, Texas. The awards celebrate the arts in cowboy culture. She was nominated for female poet of the year. (Ian Tyson was nominated for entertainer of the year.) Daley, who attends Trinity Mennonite Church in Calgary, couldn’t attend the ceremony because she was busy launching a book and a CD of her work. Her book is *Rhyme and Reason: The Poetry of Doris Daley*. The CD is “Poetry in Motion.” Cowboy poetry combines “two things I love,” says Daley, “word smithing and the outdoor, western way of life.” She can be contacted by phone at (403) 217-4340, or by e-mail: ddaley@telusplanet.net.—From report by **Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**

“The blessed uncertainty of language is the source of all its richness.”

~Jacque Ellul



## 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.

### Disappointed in church's decision

My partner, Harry Wiebe, and I and our two two-year-old children began attending Toronto United Mennonite Church (TUMC) almost a year ago. We attend because we would like to raise our children in the faith and cultural background which Harry grew up with in Steinbach, Manitoba.

We are disappointed that Shannon Neufeldt, our assistant pastor, was fired by TUMC recently because she was in a same-sex relationship. I believe that Shannon is loved and respected by many in our church. I was proud of the many caring families and leaders in our church who voiced their support for an inclusive church which supports gays, their relationships and their families.

I felt gays were offered only limited input in the TUMC discernment process, despite the profound effect the decision has on their lives. Exodus International, a "change ministry," was allowed to present its views. According to my understanding, Exodus' claims that gays can become heterosexual are at odds with the findings of the American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association and American Association of Social Workers.

I was deeply saddened when a friend told me how one church member pounded his fist and claimed, "We do not allow murderers in our congregation and we should not allow gays." Comments like "you can change," and "as a gay, you will raise your children to be gay" made me concerned that some members' votes were based on

disproven stereotypes.

Only members were allowed to vote. If the significant portion of adherents in this growing church had been allowed to vote, perhaps Shannon would still be with us.

The Confession of Faith was a basis for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's decision not to continue to license Shannon. MCEC was asked how it differentiated Shannon's situation from pastors who take positions contrary to the Confession on issues such as nonresistance and women in pastoral roles. I heard MCEC respond that homosexuality was a "hotter" issue for some congregations, implying that MCEC's decision was as much political as Bible-based.

MCEC did state that Shannon could be licensed for specific ministry at TUMC but only if she ended her relationship with her partner. This does not seem to affirm the church's goal of building healthy, life-giving relationships.

For many gay Mennonites in Canada, the only place where we now experience discrimination is in the church. We question whether this is a healthy spiritual and moral environment in which to raise our children.—

**William Burnfield, Toronto, Ont.**

### What if...

"What if" the St. Catharine's assembly 2003 ballot vote on the resolution stating our opposition to the Federal Government on same-sex marriage (131 in favour, 130 opposed, 16 spoiled ballots) reveals the lack of unity of Mennonite Church Canada?

"What if" the total MC Canada membership confessed its need for God, repented of its ungodly lifestyles, proclaimed God's truths, holiness, and judgements, and lived in faith, love and obedience?

"What if" God would heal our land, people would begin to tithe and support MC Canada and the financial crisis would be over?

"What if" instead of self-destructing (167 congregations have departed from MC USA in 16 months) we could be

used to further God's kingdom?

"What if" God would heal the world of HIV/AIDS?— **C. Neil Klassen, Rosemary, Alta.**

### TUMC vote had unfortunate outcome

Regarding "Toronto church makes decision" (July 14 issue), there is so much context behind this story that one hardly knows where to begin.

The simplest conclusion from the story is that a liberal, urban church tackled the question of homosexuality and decided that its only recourse was to dismiss its lesbian pastor. But such a hasty conclusion belies some underlying truths, and does a great disservice to gay and lesbian Mennonites who must feel demoralized by Toronto United Mennonite Church's decision.

The second motion before the congregation, which proposed to retain Shannon as a congregational worker, was supported by 63 percent of voters, three votes shy of the required two-thirds majority. When a congregation calls a pastor, it makes sense that such a call should be ratified by a two-thirds majority. However, Shannon had already been called and had been in our employ for four years. So the flip side of a decision to re-affirm her call was a decision to terminate her call, which is not normally the case when a congregation is calling a new pastor.

I'm not disputing that two-thirds was the correct threshold to use, I'm merely pointing out that Shannon was terminated despite the fact that most of us wanted to continue to work with her and didn't see her sexual orientation as a hindrance to her ministry.

The point is not that we decided to fire Shannon; in fact, that question was never directly put to the congregation. The point is that we were unable to decide to do anything else with sufficient majority, and so firing her was seen as the only way to bring the process to a close. Many of us remain deeply saddened by this outcome.

—**Brent Klassen, Toronto, Ont.**

## Kaufman's views tantalizing

Thank you for the item on Gordon Kaufman (July 14, page 32). It is not exactly a lungful of fresh air, more like a tantalizing whiff.

Kaufman is in good company when he says, "All knowledge of God comes to us through symbols, images, and analogies." He might have added "myth and metaphor." It seems more thinkers are recognizing this reality.

For example, Eugene Kennedy in *The Unhealed Wound* writes that "Religion, as Pope John XXIII understood, appeals first to the imagination and not, as Pope John II regularly insists, to the will." As we know, to appeal to the imagination, we have to use myth and metaphor far more than logical arguments.

Jo-Ann Brant's response to Kaufman, while intended as a refutation, seems to me a confirmation. She finds "God incarnate" in the "story" of Jesus. This suggests that the story appealed to her imagination and she developed an imaginative picture of God incarnate. With time and study she now expresses this picture in logical prose, feeling that this prose picture is somehow truer than the imaginative one.

She goes too far, it seems to me, in suggesting that myth, metaphor, images and symbols do not lead to "truth" claims. Didn't Jesus use the metaphors of a door, shepherd, vine and way to reveal "the truth?"

I encourage you to invite a series of articles from Kaufman on the way figurative language can lead to the truths of Christianity. By the way, the book by Kennedy should become a "must" read for all church leaders, especially businesslike leaders.—**Jim Suderman, Winnipeg, Man.**

## Misunderstandings around Resolution 6

This letter is to clarify and correct your report on Resolution 6 (same-sex marriage) that came to delegates at the Mennonite Church Canada assembly (Aug. 4 issue, page 13).

I sensed the need to allow delegates to speak and affirm our church's position concerning marriage, and to forward a resolution to the prime minister. I shared this with our local church and with conference leaders and was encouraged to approach the Resolutions Committee with my burden, based on the "tone" of Sven Ericksson's recent pastoral letter.

It was my intent to "test the waters" with the Resolutions Committee, not wanting this to be a personal motion. I asked the Resolutions Committee to proceed in a manner that they thought best.

The Resolutions Committee indicated that they were prepared to accept the challenge and would present a resolution to the delegates. I was encouraged that we together had sensed God's leading.

I did not "move" or "second" this resolution. It became the sole responsibility of the Resolutions Committee. To suggest that it was "presented by a group that wasn't present" is incorrect.

If the Executive and Resolutions Committees were aware that they were trying to squeeze too much into too few minutes, why did they not simply hold back certain resolutions? According to our delegate guidelines, the Resolutions Committee is to "exercise its judgment and is not obligated to recognize all resolutions."

Certainly "time was running out," as the report stated, but I sense that the "poorly-worded resolution on same-sex marriage" is being used as a scapegoat.

You cannot blame "a group that wasn't present" when, in fact, it was not the "group's" (my) wording. Let's at least "share the blame" rather than castigating one resolution as the culprit!

The resolution states that "all religious groups be guaranteed the freedom to practice and proclaim their understanding of what marriage is." This was not in my original proposal. Removed were my words: "Assurances have been given by the Prime Minister that the proposed bill will protect religious groups and organizations from endorsing and participating in such same sex marriages."

The *Canadian Mennonite* report suggests that the close vote communicated a "divisive note." I could not have imagined that a re-affirmation of our Statement of Faith on marriage and a public letter on it would invoke such division. For a host of reasons, this proved to be faulty thinking.

I am one who values counsel from a discerning community. This was my intent with the resolution. My support of our church leaders and *Canadian Mennonite* continues. I pray and give thanks to God for them regularly.—

**Paul Adams, Niverville Mennonite Church, Man.**

## Use of church logo not endorsed

At Mennonite Church Canada's assembly in St. Catharines in July, members of the Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (BMC) wore and made available for sale T-shirts that displayed the MC Canada logo.

This action prompted delegates and guests to ask if MC Canada had agreed to this use of the denominational logo. Many wondered whether this represented an endorsement of BMC and its actions at the assembly.

BMC did not ask for permission or advise church leadership of their intention to use the logo. While we desire to continue in dialogue with our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, BMC's use of the logo is not endorsed by MC Canada. It was misleading.

MC Canada has advised BMC of its disappointment over this unauthorized use of the logo, and has requested

## Pontius' Puddle



that this not happen again.—**Dan Dyck, Communications director, MC Canada**

### God's love involves repentance

I feel compelled to respond to John Klassen's letter "Church should accept all who love God" (July 14). I think we would agree that there is no biblical theme more sublime and more overwhelming than God's love for us. I have always rejoiced in being able to say to people, "God loves you."

But to emphasize one aspect of God's truth in Christ while ignoring another aspect of that truth is something the Deceiver has done from the beginning of human history. We all need to be on guard against such deception.

That the love of God in Christ Jesus is extended to all sinners is a basic truth of the Gospel. But to speak of "love for God" and "faith in Jesus" without referring to the basic biblical emphasis on the need to repent from sinful living is a clear departure from the message of salvation. According to the biblical message, Jesus breaks down the barriers between individuals and groups of people not by accepting and leaving them as they are, but by making a "new person" of all who come

to him in true repentance and faith.

To receive Jesus as our Saviour and Lord means to repent and forsake any "lifestyle" that is not in harmony with God's word.

Yes, let us reach out with love and compassion to all—heterosexual sinners and homosexual sinners—and invite them to repent and turn to Jesus for forgiveness and cleansing and a new life. To be true to our Lord, our message will always include "go and sin no more."

God's love is not a love that says, "Don't worry, you're okay as you are." It's a redeeming, transforming love! This is the love that is to motivate the church in all that we do.—**Peter Derksen, Abbotsford, B.C.**

### Isn't Mennonite church founded on Christ's love?

I was baptized a Mennonite in 2000. I grew up in the Catholic church and was drawn to the Mennonites because I saw the courageous way in which they lived out their belief in Christ's non-violent, all-inclusive love.

However, recently I have been profoundly perplexed by our unwillingness to welcome people in gay and lesbian relationships into our churches.

I believe that the biblical justification for this exclusion is shaky, to say the least. If Mennonite churches were to enforce other aspects of the Levitical codes of behaviour, few of us would be left in the pews. In addition, the Bible has been used by many to justify violence, ethnic hatred and the subjugation of women.

Throughout the centuries, Mennonites have rejected these misinterpretations in word and action because we are founded on the Rock of Christ. We view everything we do through the lens of Christ's love. Regardless of how others use the word of God to justify their acts of violence and hatred, Mennonites have held tenaciously to our mission to boldly proclaim love.

The Mennonite church was built by people who sacrificed everything to show the way of Christ's inclusive love in the world. Will our children say the same about us?—**Scott Morton Ninomiya, St John's, Nfld.**

## Memory Lane and Java Junction

Let's get one thing straight. I don't buy this malarkey about people over 40 being more forgetful. Scientific claims that those of us in early middle-age can't remember the last item in a list of four are simply wrong.

For example, I know for a fact that the participants in the first Mennonite baptism included Georg Blaurock, Conrad Grebel, Wilhelm Reublin and Felix What's-His-Name. I also know that a major Mennonite migration took place in 1874 and saw a group land in Manitoba at the junction of the Red and the \_\_\_ Rivers. (Rats! I thought I knew that one!)

Okay, so I'm losing a few marbles. But that doesn't mean I have to make any major lifestyle shifts. As a case in point, I give you the coffeemaker in my study. It's a lovely, black, carafe-style affair that I got for free after I'd bought two pounds of beans from a company. As soon as the beans arrived, I cancelled

my subscription, kept the coffeemaker, and told all my friends about the deal I'd gotten. (They were all overjoyed for me. Either that, or they were gritting their teeth.)



Anyway, the coffeemaker sits on my desk, which is basically a large door laid over two filing cabinets. Every morning, I enter my inner sanctum, flick on the coffeemaker. Then I putter around getting breakfast ready while my morning boost brews. And every once in a while, I return

to my study to note that the entire desktop is soaked with overflow liquid joe. The reason? I don't always empty the carafe after I'm done, so yesterday's coffee mingles with today's until my carafe runneth over.

Each time this happens, I dry out the affected books—it takes about a week for a drenched tome to be readable again—clean off the desktop, and vow that I'll never make that mistake again. My record, so far, is about one month between floods.

On the bright side, my books have that lived-in look, and the ones I use the most are now caffeine colour-coded. As well, since I'm using Ten Thousand Villages coffee, my misfortune (and the extra coffee I must use as a result) benefits those in the two-thirds world.

Finally, I can pretty much set my watch by my reduced-memory disasters and I can be reminded, each time, that time sure flies when you're having fun.



Winnipeg, Man.

## MC Manitoba continues changes

**M**ennonite Church Manitoba restructuring, which began in 1997, is by and large on track, says the new executive director, Edgar Rempel. He came to the position in May well-versed in the restructuring, having been moderator during those transitional years.



**Rempel**

“Since 1997 when we received the Review Report a lot of changes have taken place,” said Rempel in a recent interview. The years 1997-99 were “the revisioning and restructuring years.... What needed to happen after ’99 was the implementation of the vision.”

He added, “By and large developments have gone very well with how the ministries were picked up.”

Mennonite Church Canada’s recent cutbacks had a serious impact on Manitoba’s Evangelism and Service ministry: MC Canada ended its half-time share in this ministry. At a congregational representatives meeting on May 27, the MC Manitoba Board tested the 1998 vision for a full-time Evangelism and Service director.

While participants re-affirmed the vision, they cautioned that this be done within the present funding provided by congregations.

As of July 1, the director of Evangelism and Service position moved from half time to full time with the appointment of Norm Voth.

“This change meant that all other program aspects needed to be re-viewed,” said Rempel. Together with the ministry directors, Rempel has put together a three-and-a-half-year budget plan taking into account several significant factors.

“Congregational donations over the last three years...have been down. [They are projected to be \$60,000 lower than budgeted for 2003.] Another financial reality has to do with declining support for our radio program, The Abundant Life. The bequest fund that Faith and Life drew upon for its operations is nearly depleted.”

The budget plan also tries to address that part of the vision that has not yet been implemented—Interchurch Linkages.

“Our vision states that we want to be a community of congregations. We need to work hard at congregations relating to other congregations, as well as congregations working as a unit

through MC Manitoba,” said Rempel.

Together with the Ministry Directors and the Board, Rempel is trying to build this community-building emphasis into the structure.

He defines it as “an umbrella service to the ministries of MC Manitoba. It provides linkages, communicates with our congregations through newsletters, bulletin inserts and other media. We need to consolidate our communication efforts.... It includes *Canadian Mennonite* and promotional material. It includes providing media services...to congregations to share resources and to communicate with each other.”

“Our Faith and Life choirs...have served as a wonderful community building dimension within MC Manitoba,” said Rempel. “Our proposal is not to close the recording studio but to end the recording engineer position. We plan to utilize the studio for a variety of media possibilities.” The community building ministry will relate directly to the executive director.

Instead of the usual meeting of congregational representatives this fall, a delegate session is being planned for October 18. (See box for proposed changes.)

“What we are looking for is a decision-making body to test longer-range plans as well as to ratify the budget for the upcoming year,” said Rempel.—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

### Changes in MC Manitoba program

**T**he Mennonite Church Manitoba Board recently implemented the following program changes:

1. Evangelism and Service Ministry director position moved from half time to full time;
2. The treasurer’s position moved from 80 percent to full time;
3. The subscription payment to *Canadian Mennonite* was reduced by 50 percent for 2003;
4. The quarter-time Resource Development position ended July 31.

The proposals which congregations are asked to ratify at the October delegate meeting:

1. The new community building ministry that proposes to consolidate MC Manitoba’s communications, promotion and community building efforts with additional resources, beginning January 1, 2004;
2. The end of the recording engineer position, effective April 30, 2004;
3. Reduction of the subscription agreement with *Canadian Mennonite* by 50 percent in subsequent years.

### Mission leader dies

Hector Valencia, church leader in Colombia and the United States, died on July 9 in Bogotá, Colombia at the age of 83. From 1975-80, Valencia served as Secretary for Latin America for the Commission on Overseas Mission (General Conference Mennonite Church). He was the first non-North American staff member. He was executive secretary of the Mennonite Church of Colombia from 1981-84. He is survived by his wife, Mary, one of the first Mennonite missionaries from the U.S. to Colombia in 1945, and two children.

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

## New model but no name change for world body

**M**ennonite World Conference (MWC) confirmed a direction for the future when its General Council, meeting here August 7-8, adopted a new model for operations. Dubbed the “communion/community model,” the model calls for member churches to become mutually accountable to each other and grow in common identity. MWC is to facilitate this by helping churches develop a common set of core convictions and common ways of living them out.

In 2000, the MWC General Council had authorized an International Planning Commission to make recommendations for the future of the organization. Out of four options the commission offered, General Council chose the model which “confirms a direction that MWC has already been taking,” according to Larry Miller, MWC executive secretary.

Herman Bontrager, commission member from North America, says the model calls for MWC churches to act as a worldwide body, not

just as independent churches doing things together.

“It moves us from just encouraging mutual accountability to actually practising it,” says Bontrager. For example, churches will be encouraged to submit to the scrutiny of other MWC churches to learn how what they do affects other members.

But if General Council delegates could agree on a direction, they did not come to consensus on whether to change the name. The commission had proposed retaining the name but adding a subtitle: “a communion of Anabaptist-related churches.” However, some Council members preferred Mennonite World Communion, others Mennonite World Community. Others wanted to keep the current name.

“Why do we need to change?” asked Chizuko Katakabe from Japan. “Adding a line just complicates things for those of us who don’t speak European languages.”

The question of name change was to be resumed by the Council after the assembly.

Generating even more discussion than a name change was a report on Mennonite-Catholic dialogue in which MWC has participated over the past five years. While delegates did not yet have a final report, they did have a recommendation. Part of the recommendation calls for similar consultations, that MWC accept an invitation to visit the Pontifical Council in Rome.

The recommendation was especially troubling to the Latin American delegates, who spoke of intimidation and abuses by the Catholic Church in their countries.

“I believe dialogue with Catholics will weaken our identity as an Anabaptist church,” said Oscar Luis Peralta Aguero from Paraguay.

Juan Sieber from Argentina asked, “Is this a step toward looking for a common faith?” to which the answer was: no, the dialogue deals with hurts of the past, not unity in the future.

“The dialogue should continue,” said Nicholas Largaespada Alvarez from Nicaragua, a member of the MWC

executive committee. “But our representatives need to stand true to our interpretation of God’s word.”

In the end, the Latin American delegates joined in approving all parts of the recommendation.

General Council also heard pleas from African women theologians for more equality as leaders in the church. They told of preferential treatment for males in such things as educational scholarships and church positions, and asked MWC to make the treatment of women leaders a priority. The General Council agreed to do so.

Council members also received the first of a five-volume set produced by the MWC Global History Project, which aims to produce a history volume on each continent that has MWC churches. The first volume, appropriately, is the history of the African Anabaptist church.

Larry Miller was reappointed to another three-year term as executive secretary.

Council accepted 10 churches into membership (groups with more than 500 members) or associate membership (less than 500): Angola—Igreja Evangelica Menonitas em Angola; Ecuador—Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Ecuatoriana; India—Brethren in Christ Church, Orissa; Malawi—Brethren in Christ Church; Bolivia—La Ingelsia Evangelica Anabautista en Bolivia; Peru—Iglesia Evangélica de los Hermanos Menonitas del Perú and Iglesia Evangélica Menonita del Perú; Puerto Rico—Misión Evangélica Menonita de Caribe; South Korea—Jesus Village Church; Venezuela—Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Shalom; Eritrea—Meseretes Kristos Church.—Meetinghouse release



### Ten largest Mennonite groups

Mennonite Church USA	110,253
Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches in India	103,488
Meserete Kristos Church (Ethiopia)	98,025
Communaute Mennonite au Congo	86,600
Communaute des Eglises de Frerer Mennonites au Congo	85,648
Old & New Order Amish (U.S. and Canada)	83,504
Kanisa la Mennonite Tanzania	50,000
Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa (Indonesia)	43,000
Mennonite Church Canada	37,000
Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren	34,864

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Collegeville, Minn.

## Catholic-Mennonite dialogue focuses on 'violent times'

**A**lthough history seems to show that Mennonites and Catholics have little to say to each other, recent practice seems to prove otherwise.

Bridgefolk, a grassroots Catholic-Mennonite dialogue, convened July 17-20 at St. John's Abbey here to examine "Spiritual practices for violent times."

Bridgefolk goes back to August 1999, when 25 Catholics and Mennonites met in Pennsylvania to talk about why a growing number of adherents to both faiths were exploring each other's traditions—looking for ways to enrich one with the other.

A formal Mennonite-Catholic dialogue had begun one year earlier in Strasbourg, France, under the auspices of Mennonite World Conference and the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

Spiritual practices, said Marlene

Kropf at Bridgefolk 2003, are "things we Christians do together over time in light of and in response to God's active presence in the world."

Kropf, a staff person for Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board, continued, "We are called to discern the practices that will call us to peacemaking and shape us into peacemakers."

Bridgefolk gatherings emphasize storytelling. John Klassen, abbot of St. John's, described how the abbey is responding to revelations of sexual abuse by priests in Catholic institutions across the country—including St. John's.

"The only way through is to focus on the healing of survivors," he said, and "telling the truth publicly about what happened is essential to healing the damage of violence."

Marg and Weldon Nisly told about Seattle Mennonite Church's response to the war in Iraq. Weldon, the pastor of the congregation, joined a Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation that arrived in Baghdad just as the war broke out last March.

"Seattle Mennonite Church went to Iraq," he said. "I just happened to be the body [that was present in Baghdad]." The Nislys described the discernment processes they followed as a family, and with the congregation.

"The prayer room at the church was open every night Weldon was gone," Marg recalled.

Bridgefolk participants spent time in small groups identifying spiritual practices from these stories and their value beyond those directly involved. Several people also talked about their experience with Sant'Egidio, a lay community dedicated to prayer, service to the poor and dialogue for peacemaking.

"One thing that's troubled me about our [Mennonite] peacemaking is how we tend to focus on the big things," said Randy Krehbiel of Newton, Kansas. "What I'll take away is the story [told by Benedictine sister Janice Wedl] that asked: 'What do we do with the timid whose can only express themselves through anger?' These are

the day-to-day challenges of peacemaking."

Helmut Harder of Winnipeg, who has been part of the international Mennonite-Catholic dialogue since 1998, announced that the group's report will be presented to the General Council of Mennonite World Conference and to the Vatican this fall.

Peter Erb from Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario reported on the academic conference that had taken place here just before Bridgefolk. "The Anabaptist martyr in an ecumenical context."

The conference, sponsored by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Conrad Grebel University College, and the Schwenkfelder Library in Pennsylvania, along with St. John's, included Mennonite and Catholic scholars from the United States and Canada.

It was billed as "the first time for Catholics to publicly confront the stories of the martyrs and for Mennonites to look at the martyrs in an ecumenical setting." Organizers hope to make it an annual event.

—Melanie Zuercher

*Melanie Zuercher is a freelance writer from Hesston, Kansas.*

### Registration surpasses Calcutta

**B**y the end of July, international registrations to Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Zimbabwe numbered nearly 1,900, with total registrations between 6,500 and 7,000. Total for the Calcutta 1997 assembly was 4,550, with 1,544 international registrants.

Zimbabwe has the highest representation with 4,800. Neighbouring Zambia has 245 registered, Canada 247 and United States 706. Among the most recent registrants were five Mennonite Brethren from Namibia, one of the youngest Mennonite churches.

Youth (ages 16-24) are well represented, with 660 expected from Zimbabwe along with about 200 internationals. The first-ever Global Youth Summit was held August 8-10. Also meeting before the main assembly were the MWC Executive Committee, International Committee of Mennonite Brethren, MWC General Council and Global Mission Fellowship.

Watch for reports in next issue.  
—From MWC releases



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## B.C. questioning its ties to national body

**A**s a result of the Mennonite Church Canada assembly this summer, Mennonite Church British Columbia finds itself questioning its relationship with the national church.

One congregation has already submitted its decision to withdraw from MC British Columbia; another is considering the same if B.C. does not immediately begin a process to discern its relationship with the national body.

In a July 17 letter, Kelowna Gospel Fellowship said that members voted in principle to withdraw from MC British Columbia and seek affiliation with a conference “which holds similar values to ours.” The letter was clear that the church’s concerns were not with the provincial body but entirely with MC Canada.

“We do not wish to be a member of an organization which allows process to become dysfunctional and almost codependent in empowering dissident groups to misdirect our energies. We sincerely feel that this has happened and continues to happen in MC Canada,” wrote pastor Larry Schram, on behalf of the church board. The letter did express gratitude to MC Canada for officially responding to their questions, although Schram indicated that it had taken six years.

Cedar Valley Mennonite Church in Mission has sent a letter indicating its disfavour with MC Canada, specifically around Resolution 6 on MC Canada’s response to the government on same-sex marriage.

“The narrow acceptance of Resolution 6 [it passed by one vote] has revealed a move in MC Canada that we are uncomfortable with,” wrote pastor Dan Rempel and the Elder Board, explaining that the discussion of the resolution was more focused “on the sentence affirming our statement of faith than it was about the letter to be written.”

The church asks MC British Columbia to begin immediately to discern options for relating to MC Canada. “We will not continue the relationship with MC Canada as it is, and we believe that other congregations within MCBC will have the same thoughts.”

All of this comes on the heels of the provincial assembly in June at which delegates were asked whether they felt ownership in their mission/vision statements. The result was the postponement of budget approval, the launch of area listening meetings this fall, and plans for another meeting in November to make decisions.

As a result of these two letters, as well as informal discussions with pastors and churches, the executive committee has sent a letter to churches indicating a broader focus to the listening meetings in fall.

“It has become evident to the executive that the issue of MCBC’s relationship with MC Canada needs to be clearly resolved before we can move ahead in any effective way with questions of future vision and related budgets,” wrote Doug Epp, moderator.

In an interview, Epp said the issue doesn’t hinge entirely on the discussion around Resolution 6.

“It’s a broader issue,” he said. “It’s our understanding of the Confession of Faith—does that draw us as a centre, give us boundaries? It’s a difference in the understanding of process—for some it’s a short time, for others

process takes a long time. It’s a perception of lack of leadership on the issue. It’s our understanding of scripture—how we interpret it, use it.”

But Epp was also quick to indicate that churches in B.C. are not unified on these issues and more discussion is needed. An all-pastors meeting is planned for September as well as the listening meetings in October.

Epp’s letter to churches indicated some options to consider, including the possibility of becoming a totally separate regional entity. But he also included the implications of each option and asked churches to suggest others.

“We need to figure out where we’re at and what we can build on,” he said. “How do we keep MCBC intact? I want what’s best for MCBC as a whole and whatever I do, I want to do with integrity.”

Epp and the executive committee face a challenge in the days ahead and they have requested prayer. “Please also continue to support the work of MCBC and MC Canada with your prayers, finances and ministry during this time of discernment,” said Epp.

—Angelika Dawson



**In July, staff and volunteers from Mennonite Central Committee Canada and Manitoba packed a container with 15,000 blankets for northern Uganda. From left: Richard Dyck, Alfred Sawatzky, Dave Lepp, Paul Friesen and Darby Kilmer. Over the past months, thousands of Ugandans have fled their villages due to fighting between government forces and the Lord’s Resistance Army.—MCC Canada release**

Winnipeg, Man.

## Understanding the vote on Resolution 6

In a 131 to 130 ballot vote, delegates at the July assembly of Mennonite Church Canada passed a resolution asking the General Board to send a letter to the Canadian government reinforcing the church's position on marriage (16 ballots were spoiled).

Introduced at the end of the last day of assembly, with limited time for discussion, Resolution 6 drew a mixed response.

What does this vote mean? In conversations later, delegates identified the following reasons for voting against the resolution:

- 1) Frustration that those who brought the resolution were not present to clarify their intent;
- 2) There is no need for the resolution, given that the government has never forced us to perform marriages we don't want to perform;

### Resolution 6

The following resolution came to delegates at the Mennonite Church Canada assembly from the Resolutions Committee at the request of two delegates from Niverville Mennonite Church (Manitoba). The committee, in consultation with the initiators, presented this resolution:

*Since we believe that marriage is the joining of one man and one woman in a life-long covenant of love, and*

*Since the Prime Minister has indicated his intention to have the Federal Government redefine marriage in future legislation;*

*Be it resolved that the General Board communicate to the Federal Government Mennonite Church Canada's understanding of marriage and our encouragement that, whatever action the government should take to redefine marriage, all religious groups be guaranteed the freedom to practice and proclaim their understanding of what marriage is.*

Members of the Resolutions Committee were Ray Friesen, Zion Mennonite, Saskatchewan; Barb Draper, Floradale Mennonite, Ontario; Amy Peters, Bethel Mennonite, Manitoba; Garry Janzen, Sherbrooke Mennonite, B.C.

3) A conversation about church/state matters is needed before making representations to the government (i.e., should the church be in the marrying business at all, or might it be better for the state to do the legal act and churches to bless unions as we see fit);

4) The resolution wasn't clearly worded and people were unsure of its meaning;

5) The motion seemed to be a request to re-affirm something that the church is already clear about in its Confession of Faith and some resented being asked to do that;

6) The reference to "all religious groups" might include people who believe in polygamy, same-sex marriages, etc. and the resolution might unwittingly promote their freedom to do so;

7) Some people do not agree that our understanding of marriage cannot include same-sex couples.

A letter by an individual who spoiled his ballot illustrates the

confusion many experienced. "There was little time to review the implications of the motion.... This issue is complex and we need more time to process it," said the letter to MC Canada. "Are we being asked to make a negative statement about homosexual marriage?... Was this motion suggesting that our understanding of marriage was under attack from our federal government? Does this resolution support the government's proposed changes to the definition of marriage?"

Voting against the motion might look as if one opposed the definition of marriage given in the first sentence, or opposed the federal government's proposed legislation, or both, noted the letter. "If we planned to vote for the motion, we may be understood to be planning to change our own definition of marriage in the future or trying to protect our current definition. These are quite different interpretations of the motion."

It would be wise to do more thinking about the issue, suggested the letter. What part does the church or the state have in defining marriage? Is there confusion in using the word "marriage" in two distinct contexts—ecclesial and political? How does a missional church think this through?

The letter sent by MC Canada to government is consistent with representations made by other churches in the Canadian Council of Churches, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and Mennonite Central Committee. It is also consistent with a pastoral letter sent by denominational minister Sven Eriksson on June 27 (see *Canadian Mennonite*, Aug. 4).

For more see [www.mennonitechurch.ca/news/](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/news/)—From MC Canada release

*In response to Resolution 6, the following letter will be sent to Prime Minister Jean Chretien, with a copy to Minister of Justice Martin Cauchon.*

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Together with other religious groups in Canada, Mennonite Church Canada has followed with interest the public debates, the Justice Committee task force tour and the several provincial court cases regarding the changing legal definition of marriage.

The definition in our denominational Confession of Faith is that "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." Although we disagree with the direction it is taking, we understand that the societal and legal definition is changing. It is our intention to retain the practice of blessing and sanctifying marriages according to our convictions.

We are encouraged by the reported intention of the government to include in the legislation the protection of religious leaders who refuse to sanctify same-sex marriages. We believe this is a significant issue of religious liberty and urge you to be forceful in the wording of this protection in the legislation that will be presented to parliament.

Dan Nighswander, general secretary  
Mennonite Church Canada

Atlanta, Ga.

## Atlanta 2003 delegates come to the table

About 8,000 Mennonites gathered at the Georgia World Congress Center here July 3-8 for Atlanta 2003, the first assembly of Mennonite Church USA. The group included over 5,000 youth.

Everyone joined in opening worship to hear Jimmy Carter, former U.S. president and 2002 Nobel Peace Prize recipient. Carter applauded the merger of the two Mennonite bodies (Mennonite Church and General Conference) and noted that his work with the Carter Center—an organization that tackles disease, poverty and conflict around the world—brings him into contact with many Mennonites.

(Carter also reiterated his conviction that “if I ever stop being a Baptist, I want to be a Mennonite.”)

Providing music at the opening worship was Dan Gardner, winner of NBC Today Show’s “Today’s Superstar” talent search last November. Gardner, who finished first in a field of 4,100 entries, grew up in a Mennonite church in Goshen, Indiana, and studied music at Hesston College and Eastern Mennonite University.

The theme of the assembly, “God’s table, y’all come,” was made tangible with the presence of five actual tables for the adult, young adult, youth, junior youth and children’s sessions. A sixth table was built during the assembly in the exhibit area. Children met for activities around a large oak table. The young adult table was made of different types of wood native to Georgia. The junior youth table, made from an old door, reflected the stormy lives of teenagers—on the edges were the words “in the mess, there is God.”

### Assembly business

The 1,100 delegates gathered around 115 tables in the auditorium to consider statements on health care, immigration and abortion. A volunteer team offered “prayer coverage” during each session.

The abortion statement, which elicited the most debate, promotes the sacredness of life but calls for a compassionate response to those who face complex issues surrounding

abortion.

“When abortion appears to be the least bad choice among several undesirable options, we stress the need for discernment in the faith community,” says the statement. It discourages anti-abortion legislation because such legislation “disproportionately affects the poor, as those with means will find ways to obtain safe abortions. Further, legislation is using the government to force others to comply with our Christian standards, something our forebears clearly rejected.”



Photos by Laurie Oswald

**Jimmy Carter receives a peace pin from Cindy Snider, communications director for Mennonite Church USA Executive Board before his assembly address.**

An amendment to delete language that discourages anti-abortion legislation failed to pass. The statement passed with an 81 percent majority.

## Dress codes and Top Ten lists

Dress codes and curfews were two items that surfaced at the Youth Assembly of Mennonite Church USA, which drew over 5,000 young people to Atlanta in July.

The dress code stated simply: “Girls, don’t make the guys stumble, and guys, don’t make the girls throw up.” It included a ban on short shorts, halter tops and muscle shirts. A seminar focused on modesty of dress. Other popular seminar topics were “Sex, drugs, rock & roll” and marriage. Some youth groups wore matching T-shirts; one group sported shirts with the words: “Satan is a nerd.”

The curfew for the youth was 12:39 a.m. Why such a strange time? The answer: Some youth wanted a later curfew than the one at Nashville 2001 which was 12:37 so planners gave it to them.

On the more serious side, youth heard from a variety of speakers, including popular speakers and authors Mike Yaconelli and Tony Campolo. Musician Ken Medema was back to help lead

worship. The youth also participated in service projects, seminars, concerts and other activities.

The assembly newsletter, called *mPress*, solicited contributions to a Top Ten list each day. Some samples:

- If Atlanta 2003 were a carry-in church dinner, what would you NOT want to bring? Answers: Sour grapes, my youth group, and “five-bean casserole because we all get together later for worship.”

- Mennonite blues song titles: Nobody knows the Yoders I’ve seen; Ain’t no “missional” in my dictionary blues; I met a beautiful woman today but she’s my second cousin once removed blues; We miss the Canadians blues.

- Giant inflatable characters youth would like to see on stage at worship: Menno Mouse, Missional Man and Arnold Swartzentrubler.

- CNN headlines about the assembly: Atlanta Police Department reports its most boring weekend; Mennonites show signs of movement during worship! and “Y’all go home!”



Discussions on access to health care and immigration were less impassioned but equally serious. Some delegates felt that the criticism of U.S. immigration policy was too shrill and dismissive.

"We reject our country's mistreatment of immigrants, repent of our silence, and commit ourselves to act with and on behalf of our immigrant brothers and sisters, regardless of their legal status," says the document, which passed with a large majority.

The health care resolution calls for a process to develop a new churchwide statement and for acceptance of Access Initiative, a project to develop models for congregations to deal with problems around access to health care.

Delegates also heard reports from congregations, conferences and church agencies—Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Publishing Network, Mennonite Education Agency and Mennonite Mutual Aid—with a focus on churchwide priorities. Those priorities are developing the missional church, calling new leaders and strengthening global relationships.

Jim Schrag, executive director for MC USA, discussed how area conferences are dealing in various ways with membership issues. (There has been much debate in MC USA over membership criteria, especially with churches that had been expelled from area conferences over the issue of homosexuality.) The Membership

Guidelines, also adopted by MC Canada, have "proved beneficial in resolving the issues they were meant to address," said Schrag.

Many delegates said they feel the process for dealing with membership issues is working and they are pleased that the church is moving from membership concerns to missional excitement.

Worship speakers included Mark Vincent, leader in stewardship education; Joe Manickman from the Center for Anabaptist Leadership in California; Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Western District Conference minister; and Addie Banks, pastor in the Bronx, New York City.

"It's not enough to simply say the words of Jesus about coming to the table," said Banks in her Friday



**Jonathan Dueck leads about 1,500 Mennonites in singing at Centennial Park during Atlanta 2003. Many also participated in a Walk for Reconciliation which ended at the Martin Luther King Center. About 4,000 assembly participants volunteered at 40 projects across the city.**

morning sermon. "I still remember when it was 'Y'all get to the back of the bus, y'all stay in the kitchen.' Now God is saying at Atlanta, 'Y'all come to the table. This is my table.'"—From MC USA reports by **Laurie Oswald**

### Reminder to Congregations

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Francistown, Botswana

## New pastors' manual inspires AIC leaders

**T**his is exactly what we need—a pastor's manual helps us to organize and officiate services in an orderly way," said Benny Wabo, youth pastor of the Healing Church of Botswana at the launch of the new African Independent Church (AIC) manual. The worship manual is a joint effort of AIC leaders and African Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) workers.

The book launch celebration here in June was the culmination of a dream. Bishop Khuwe Masole often asked, "Why should we use the manual from the United Congregational Church all the time? We need our own book that includes services, prayers and blessing for the events that are important to the life of our churches."

With the help of Jonathan Larson, former Mennonite worker, the project got underway.

"This project created unity among congregations and individuals who otherwise might not have had an occasion to meet," said current AIMM worker Bryan Born. "Also, it puts another leadership tool written in Setswana into the hands of local



The "Faith Gospel After Christ" choir performs at the launch of the new pastors' manual.

pastors." Bryan, together with Rudy Dirks (MC Canada Witness), was instrumental in finishing the project.

Countless meetings determined topics, order of service and Scripture texts to be included. The end product

is a manual that satisfies churches leaders and incorporates ceremonies important to the AIC.

Counselor Vuni, representing the Francistown mayor, applauded the 60 AIC leaders gathered for the launch, encouraging them to take their place in leadership roles beside the mainline churches. Paul Mogomela gave a brief history of the Bible teaching program in Francistown and thanked all the Mennonite workers for their part in Bible training for AIC leaders.

"This manual," he said, "will give those pastors who have very little education the confidence and direction they need to perform their pastoral duties in a good way."

Activities during the day included choirs, a drama presentation and a meal prepared by the students currently in the two-year Bible study course. The new manual, together with Bibles and hymnbooks, were available for purchase.

"We can lift our heads with pride," said one pastor. "We now have a book to help and guide us in our duties just like the large mission churches. With my Bible and this manual, I am prepared for the work God has given me to do."—AIMM release by Tim Bertsche



**Mario Coc Bo (left) and Carlos Rodrigo Tzul Ca'al unload canned turkey provided by Mennonite Central Committee for the Bezaleel school in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. The school, run by the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church, is home to about 115 students. They were forced to cut out meat and fresh produce last summer due to rising food costs. The 33,600 pounds of turkey canned in Maryland and Pennsylvania arrived in Guatemala in March. With the food savings, school staff have begun raising their own poultry and rabbits.—From MCC release**

Photo by Rob Cahill

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

## Mennonites in Vietnam hold first conference

Some 20 representatives of Mennonite churches from several provinces in Vietnam gathered here on July 27-28 for fellowship and to establish a united Mennonite church (see cover). They affirmed a confession of faith and chose a provisional leadership group.

The conference was organized primarily by pastors in this city, Nguyen Quang Trung and Nguyen Hong Quang. Trung has been leader of a Mennonite church that was established in the 1960s. The church properties were confiscated after the 1975 revolution, but the church has recently rented a property where they are again meeting.

Quang, leading an independent house fellowship for many years, identified himself as a Mennonite in 1998.

There has been no body uniting the Mennonite congregational groups. Forming a united body will enable pastors to work together and facilitate church development. The church plans to prepare a constitution, register the Mennonite church with the authorities, and petition the government for the return of church properties. The church plans to request membership in the Mennonite World Conference.

A Vietnamese translation of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, adopted by Mennonite Church Canada and USA in the mid-1990s, has been a catalyst in church development in Vietnam. Trung shared this document with the church and with government officials. Visiting Vietnamese Mennonite pastors in 1998 gave the Confession to Quang, and he has also circulated it widely. Other church leaders and house fellowships have since declared their desire to be part of the Mennonite movement.

Trung was chosen president and Quang vice-president and general secretary of the new body. Trung declared, "There is now no pre-1975 church and a post-1975 Mennonite Church. There is one united Mennonite Church."

The Monday gathering took place in

a city park. Persons shared from their life experiences and discussed what it means to live as Mennonite Christians in Vietnam today.

Emphasizing both faith (*dao*) and life (*doi*), Pham Thi Kim Huong, leader of a church of mostly older widows in Dong Nai, summarized the Christian life as "worshiping the Lord and serving others."—MWC release



Photo by Nguyen Quang Hoanh

**Mennonite Central Committee workers and local staff inspect a new canal in Vietnam built with MCC help. Farmers are now able to plant an additional crop this year with the increased water supply.**

Akron, Pa.

## MCC aids war-torn Liberia

Hundreds of thousands of people have fled their homes in war-torn Liberia, leaving behind the farms on which they depend for food. Through partner organizations, Mennonite Central Committee is contributing canned meat and funds to help feed people at high risk of hunger, especially children and pregnant women.

MCC is contributing 3,000 cans of pork and 9,000 cans of beef to a Church World Service shipment that was to arrive in Sierra Leone on August 9. The shipment will then be sent by boat to Monrovia.

Some 4,300 cans of beef were airlifted directly into Monrovia in April. Those supplies helped nearly 3,600 pregnant and nursing mothers, children and elderly people in six camps for displaced people.

The April aid shipment was "like manna from heaven," said a staff member of Concerned Christian Community, the Liberian group distributing the aid.

Through the Canadian Foodgrains

Bank, MCC is also contributing \$50,000 toward a World Relief Canada project that will provide 505 metric tons of flour, lentils and oil. These emergency supplies will feed some 11,000 residents of four camps in Totota for four months.

Once home to some 75,000 inhabitants, the Totota area now hosts more than 165,500 people driven from their regions by the war. The project is being organized by the Association of Evangelicals of Liberia.

MCC has no personnel serving in Liberia. The MCC West Africa office in neighbouring Burkina Faso has worked with the Concerned Christian Community in the past to provide trauma counselling, medical support, food and income generation projects to displaced Liberian children and women, many of whom are rape survivors.

Civil war broke out in Liberia in 1989 and has continued off and on since then. War tactics include recruitment of child soldiers, amputations and eviction of civilians from their homes.—MCC release



Samogohiri, Burkina Faso

## Following Jesus a lonely path in Muslim village

**B**yema Traoré, one of the few Christians in his village, was recently robbed of his roofing grass; the village chief spurned his quest for its return. He'll have to wait a year to gather more grass.

Byema longs for the return of French Mennonite linguist Paul Solomiac to help him bolster his faith. He also misses Ali and Fabe, two villagers who became Christians as they translated the Bible from French to Samogho. They have moved to the city but plan to return.

Byema remains with his wife and two children. His tiny tailor shop is mostly empty, except on Sunday afternoons when he entertains non-Christian friends after church. The toll his faith has taken shows in his weary face.

"In a village setting, if you try to step out of the daily practices, it's like you're trying to go upstream in a very fast river. It's not easy," he says.

Byema and his brother farmed a small field to grow grain and yams to feed their families. But Byema's conversion to Christianity so incensed his brother that in 2001 he tried to kill Byema with a hoe and a machete. The brother declared that Byema's conversion displeased the spirit world so that their crops were suffering. He also said that Byema routinely cursed the food they ate. Byema said he was merely saying grace.

Villagers were scandalized by the incident, but Byema forgave his brother, and ceded him the fields they had shared.

Byema and other Christians in the area have observed the faith of Mennonite mission workers Loren and Donna Entz and their children. The Entzes serve with Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission in a nearby village.

Solomiac and his wife, Martine, lived in Samogohiri. With the Entzes and others, they have developed a library of audiocassettes that tell villagers the stories of the Bible in their own language.

"I saw in the teachings and practice of Paul Solomiac that being Christian



**Byema Traoré pauses in the local church building to reflect on the life of a Christian in rural Burkina Faso.**

was very much worthwhile, and I don't have any regrets with the choice I made in my life," Byema said. "Every

day is a challenge...but I have kept my faith."

The villagers say "Christians have too many laws...when they go to the market, they have to speak nicely to people, and respect them," observed Byema. Muslim men also like the option of having more than one wife. And turning away from sorcery in a society so wedded to the spirit world seems downright irresponsible to them, he said.

But, added Byema, "I know that I'm on the right path."

In Burkina Faso, Mennonite Church Canada Witness supports the work of Anne Garber Kamporé (Listowel Mennonite Church, Ontario), Lillian Haas (Bluesky Mennonite Church, Alberta), and Donna and Loren Entz (Saskatchewan and Kansas).—From MC Canada Witness/Mennonite Mission Network.



**A peace quilt, made by the Salford Mennonite Church in Pennsylvania, hangs in Baghdad behind Christian Peacemaker Team members Sue Gray, Le Anne Clausen and Bob Leonetti. Last December, the church made two quilts, planning to give one to George W. Bush and the other to Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi quilt was left behind with peace worker Kathy Kelly when CPTers had to leave Baghdad. During the war, she gave it to a distressed family she had learned to know. "It was an opportunity to say something from Americans besides bombs and tanks," said Kelly. The quilt for Bush was accepted by a National Security Council official but the church has received no acknowledgment.—From *Philiadelphia Inquirer*, July 12**

## Fruits of the Spirit in Iran

**W**e recently completed our second year in an exchange program coordinated by Mennonite Central Committee and the Imam Khomeini Institute in Iran. This program was designed to build bridges of friendship and understanding between Muslims and Christians.

Here in Iran, we have studied Islam, the Persian language, and the history and culture of Iran. We have pondered the words of our teachers. We have observed the lifestyles of our teachers, friends and neighbours. We have prayed daily for God's guidance as we open our hearts to learning about another faith.

In doing so, we have been amazed at the fruits of the Spirit lived out by people here.

During summertime in Iran, especially in the evening or early morning when the weather is cooler, the parks are crowded with families sitting on blankets enjoying nature and food together. One such morning we were enjoying a traditional Iranian break-

fast of bread, dates, walnuts, cheese and tea when some ants found their way to our food. A two-year-old boy eating with us began swatting at the ants. His father gently took his hand and recited to him a well-known Persian poem by the poet Sadi:

"Don't harm an ant carrying a piece of grain, because the ant has his own good life. Don't oppress the weak and powerless, for one day, like the ant, you will be the weaker one."

We all marvelled as we watched the ants at work. I marvelled too at this respect for the small members of creation, taught here early in life. "The fruits of the Spirit are love, kindness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22).

The weeks preceding the war with Iraq were tense times here. Iran and Iraq were at war for nearly eight years, and many Iranians consider Saddam Hussein an enemy.

In spite of this history, we heard no statements of support for the U.S.-led war. Having experienced the effects of

war, many Iranians feel deep empathy for Iraqis. We shared stories and actions of North Americans who were seeking peaceful means to solving the conflict, including the weekly fast started by Mennonite women in Canada. A Muslim professor shared this with her students and more than 25 of them joined the fast.

Such actions brought to mind more words of the Persian poet, Sadi: "Human beings are members one of another, They are all created from one substance.

When one member experiences pain, The other members cannot be at ease. For if the pain of another does not cause you dis-ease

You are not worthy to be called a human being."

Such actions also brought to mind the gifts of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.—

**Evie Shellenberger**

### News briefs

#### Coffee cop finds solution

Coffee has become indispensable to North American spirituality. When Maryetta Anschutz arrived as pastor at an Episcopal church in Westport, Connecticut, three years ago, she noticed a disturbing trend at coffee hour. "People were sneaking off to Starbucks down the street," she recalled. "Some would even return with their decaf mocha latte shamelessly in hand." Finally, after tiring of being a "coffee cop," she found the perfect solution: she got Starbucks to donate pots of regular and decaf each Sunday, and sold coffee to parishioners at \$3.00 a cup. The proceeds went to the high school outreach group she's taking to build homes in Jamaica this summer. In two months, she raised more than \$2,000 from coffee hour alone.—From RNS

#### World prayer day in September

The World Day of Prayer, an annual interfaith event held since 1994, will be held on September 11 this year. It is organized by Unity, a Missouri-based movement of prayer, education and publishing which distributes *Daily Word* magazine. The theme this year is "Let go and let God." A listing of centres that will host World Day of Prayer events can be found on the web site: [www.worlddayofprayer.org/opr](http://www.worlddayofprayer.org/opr). — From Religion News Service

#### Military recruitment increasing in U.S. schools

Some 150 people gathered in Philadelphia June 27-29 in response to increasingly aggressive military recruitment in U.S. schools. The event, organized by 11 organizations and held at a Quaker meetinghouse, was called "Stopping war where it begins: Organ-

izing against militarism in our schools." The 2002 education law, the "Leave No Child Behind Act," gives the military more access to student information "used for mass-mailing recruiting appeals and telephone solicitations," according to the July 5 *Chicago Tribune*. Parents can sign an "opt-out" form but this hasn't been well-publicized. Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp, a longstanding program for high school students, is also used for recruitment and drains school funds that could be used for other programs. Poor immigrant families and other people of colour are often targeted by recruiters with promises of a better life.—From MCC U.S. release

*"For the saving of the world I will trust confidently to the Maker of the world; and look a little to my own saving, which I am more competent to!"*

~Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes*

Leamington, Ont.

## North Leamington recalls 50 years

**T**he North Leamington United Mennonite Church gathered on June 15 to praise God for 50 years of blessing on our congregation. Many former members came to celebrate with us.

Paul Krueger presented Mika Neufeld, our oldest member, with a corsage and a copy of our new pictorial directory. Dan Epp Tiessen, Old Testament professor at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg and a native son of North Leamington, gave the message: "How shall we tell our story?"

After the service, we all proceeded across the road to United Mennonite Educational Institute for a potluck lunch. From 350 to 400 people enjoyed the feast. Music and reminiscing kept us enthralled.

Edgar Konrad told of members who left the farmwork to their families in order to work on church construction in the 1950s. Except for the chief carpenter, Dietrich Dick, the building was done with voluntary labour for a cost of \$45,000. Peter J. Enns watched many TV shows to get the design for the pulpit. He sketched it and Ben Konrad built it.

Rob Schmidt took us back to 1960s with its Mustangs, long hair and mini-skirts. The baby boom necessitated building an addition for Sunday School. In 1964 we helped build the Mennonite Home for the Aged. We had several large choirs with practice on Thursday nights. Church membership changed from a mostly rural group to urban professionals.

Jacob Neufeld was ordained in 1957 as *Aeltester* for both Oak St. and North churches. Lay ministers shared pulpit duties. German school was held Friday nights for elementary school children, but church services were mostly in English.

Agatha Neufeld recalled life in the 1970s. John P. Driedger and Cornie Driedger were ordained as ministers. Both North and Oak St. congregations



**Abe Konrad, a major player in building the original North Leamington church in 1953, receives a pictorial directory of the congregation from Paul Krueger.**

had their own church council but matters such as conference activity, missions, relief, and support of ministers were expenses of the central treasury.

Each church had its own register. J.C. Neufeld took particular pains in

recording each family's history on its own page, and kept the volume in a safe place in his house. The central council requested that this book be put in the Oak St. church for safekeeping. Vandals broke into the church and took this precious volume, but five days later the police brought it back.

After Neufeld's sudden death in 1974, Driedger served as leading minister for 16 years. In 1989 Victor Kliewer became minister. Marlene Regehr, the church secretary, continues to serve us.

Lindsey Brown gave a teenager's view. She said she appreciates the church's willingness to serve, and the four-part harmony singing. The Laotian members of our church began their own services during these years. Consuelo and Domingo Guzman came from El Salvador to take on custodial duties, keeping our church sparkling clean. We came away from this heartwarming testimony of the past 50 years feeling blessed and filled with new strength for the future.—From report by **Elizabeth Janzen Dick**

Abbotsford, B.C.

## H.T. Klassen dies at 91

**H**enry Theodore Klassen (known as H.T.) died on July 9 at the age of 91. Ordained in Rabbit Lake, Saskatchewan, in 1938, Klassen was a pastor, farmer, and teacher at the Rosthern Bible School from 1946 until it closed in 1957. He also hosted a weekly radio program, "Wings of the morning" for a time, which involved travelling to various congregations.

In 1951, he was elected secretary of the General Conference Mennonite Church Board of Education and was involved in developing new Sunday school curriculum. In 1957, he and Clara (Epp) and family moved to Winnipeg, where Klassen completed his degree at Canadian Mennonite Bible College and pastored at Sterling Avenue Mennonite Church.

For 15 years, he served as chaplain in 18 hospitals and institutions in the Winnipeg area. Upon his retirement in 1977, he and Clara moved to Abbotsford where he continued to pastor, with several stints in Mexico.

On his 91st birthday, he was preparing to attend a prayer meeting when he fell and broke his hip. He died as a result of complications from surgery.

Klassen's life motto was "Looking unto Jesus." His funeral was held in the Olivet Mennonite Church. He leaves his wife of 63 years, three daughters and a son and their families.—From obituary



**Klassen**



Markham, Ont.

## Rouge Valley says farewell to long-time pastor

This summer, the Rouge Valley Mennonite Church said farewell to its long-time pastor, Steve Drudge. The congregation included a farewell at its annual church picnic at Willowgrove on June 22, and incorporated a community-focused farewell into the worship service on July 6.

Drudge has led the congregation since its founding 17 years ago. He and his wife Lynelle and their four children are moving to the New Hamburg area where he will become lead pastor at the Steinmann Mennonite Church.

Drudge graduated from the Ontario Theological Seminary in Toronto in 1986 with a Master of Divinity degree. While at seminary, he frequently preached for his home congregation, Steeles Avenue Mennonite, which met in the historic Reesor church.

This congregation merged with the Cedar Grove Mennonite congregation in 1986 to form Rouge Valley Mennonite Church.

Upon graduation, Drudge accepted a call to serve this congregation.

The steady growth of this congregation, both numerically and in spiritual maturity, is largely due to Drudge's leadership. He has also served the broader church, helping several new congregations in the Toronto area become established and serving Mennonite Church Eastern Canada in various capacities.

His ministry of caring, his visiting in crisis situations and his thought-provoking sermons have been much appreciated.

Pieter Niemeyer, associate pastor, and the elders will provide leadership until an interim pastor is recruited.

At the congregational picnic, people reminisced about Drudge's younger years and his 17 years of leadership. There was also a skit and special music by a local youth ensemble. Gifts presented to the family included a quilt crafted by the women.

The July 6 service included litanies of gratitude and good wishes, as well as release and sending. Drudge



Photo by Gerhard Schroeter

**Hugh Laurence, an elder at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, presents Steve Drudge with a farewell gift during the church picnic on June 22.**

commended the congregation to the care of Jesus Christ, the leader and shepherd of the church.

This worship experience concluded with the Hebrew blessing, "The Lord bless you and keep you..." repeated first by Drudge to the congregation, then by an elder to Drudge and his family.—**Joe Nighswander**

Warman, Sask.

## Warman church leaders meet for retreat

Eighteen people attended the Warman Mennonite Church's second annual "Leaders retreat" held May 9-10 in the Cedar Lodge at Blackstrap Lake. Nestled on the banks of the lake, the peaceful surroundings contributed to a time of renewal and goal setting.

The retreat, for persons involved in the many leadership roles within the church, is a weekend to interact socially with fellow members of the church family and to brainstorm on God's purpose for the church at home and around the world.

After the opening supper and a social activity, the first session reviewed last year's retreat under the heading, "What is our purpose?" After devotions most of the participants took advantage of the pool before turning in for the night.

On Saturday, the second session asked, "What are we doing to fulfill God's purpose?" Smaller groups discussed



**The leaders of Warman Mennonite Church at the May retreat. Front row, from left: Bonnie Janzen, John Janzen, Belinda Reddekopp, Harry Funk, Marion Funk, Joyce Unger, Jackie Epp, Gladys Block. Back row: Jules Unger, Rosella Harms, Wayne Reddekopp, Ron Harms, Ken Bechtel (conference minister) and Henry Block (pastor).**

issues such as worship, caring and fellowship, and evangelization. The final session after lunch explored the topic, "What changes do we need to make to better fulfill God's purpose?"

A lot of positive ideas came out of the retreat and the goal now is to put them into practise in the home church and in the community at large.—**Joyce Unger**

Winnipegosis, Man.

## Isolated congregation runs thriving camp ministry

**N**ordheim Mennonite Church, hundreds of kilometres from any Mennonite Church Manitoba sister congregations, has a “pearl” of a ministry on the beach of Lake Winnipegosis.

Over 40 years ago, Jake Wiebe, a lay minister at Nordheim, and the church youth saw the need for a Bible camp in this northwestern community of Ukrainian, Icelandic, aboriginal and Mennonite people. They were encour-

Sagemace, an aboriginal word meaning “mosquito,” is held for two weeks each summer. Although Sagemace is an outreach of the church, up to 90 percent of the campers are non-Mennonite and many of the staff are from other churches.

For close to 20 years Wiebe, now in his 70s, directed the camp. Although he and his wife, Agnes, continue to be involved, the work is largely carried on by young people.

“We have a tremendous opportunity here to share our faith with the young people and the community,” said Wiebe.

“It’s all God’s doing,” said Diane, Wiebe’s daughter, as we walked through the camp. Each building had a story to tell. The roofs and ceilings of two of the cabins were part of the old Nordheim church building before the congregation moved to town in 1964. The floor of the old church is also part of those cabins. A staff cabin was formerly a cheese factory.

Donations of food from people in the community and volunteers of all ages keep the kitchen bustling.

“I am always amazed how people respond when you present a need,” said Wiebe. When the camp

began campers paid \$5. Today the fee

is \$40. The camp has started paying an honorarium to counsellors, but other workers continue to be volunteers.

Jon Buller, in his mid-twenties and a graduate of Bethany Bible College, has directed the camp for four years.

“I’ve worked at a lot of different camps and seen different approaches but I appreciate how this camp came to be and the people here. I was a camper here since grade 2,” said Buller. Kristina Janzen, an early childhood educator, was the assistant director this summer. She has been a camper here for many years and a kitchen helper for two years.

Morgan Pakulak, who has camped here for seven years, was packing up after her last week as a camper. “Next year I want to be a counsellor-in-training,” she said. Two nurses from Nordheim church stagger their hospital shifts during the two-week period so that one is always on duty at the camp.

The camp is in the process of purchasing five acres of adjacent land.

“It takes commitment,” said Wiebe. Every year it becomes more difficult to find enough volunteers, but they are encouraged by former campers who take ownership.

“At one closing program a couple from Edmonton was here,” Wiebe recalled. “The wife, who grew up in this area, said, ‘If I had not gone to camp, I hesitate to think where I would be now.’”—**Evelyn Rempel-Petkau**



Photos by Evelyn Rempel-Petkau

**Diane Wiebe, kitchen help at Sagemace Bible Camp, stands with camp founders Agnes and Jake Wiebe in front of a cabin made of wood from the old Nordheim Mennonite Church.**

aged by the senior ministers C.C. Janzen and Abram Bergen.

At that time, Winnipegosis was a busy fishing and lumber town. Today it has 700 people and is declining quickly. But Sagemace Bible Camp, now in its 42nd year, is still going strong.

In 1961, Wiebe and others organized a weekend camp for youth. The following year, when five acres of lakefront property became available, Wiebe approached the church about establishing a camp. Ever since then, said Wiebe, the church and the community have supported the camp one hundred percent.

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Dundurn, Sask.

## Dundurn church closes its doors

**H**idden behind a row of pine trees, the Dundurn Mennonite Church building has served its community since 1907. After years of dwindling numbers, the church saw its last service on June 29.

Built originally by the Methodists, this place of worship has arched windows on each side of the building. The white paint is peeling. And the sign, which announces the name of this former Nordheimer congregation, can barely be seen through the branches of a tall cedar tree. As you enter the quiet coolness of the sanctuary, eight short pews on each side of the aisle face the pulpit.

Almost four years ago, Henry Sawatzky retired as the last pastor of the Dundurn church. For nine years he had driven the 30 minutes from Saskatoon to lead this small fellowship.

"We struggled along for about six months," recalls Louise Falk, church organist and Dundurn member for 50 years. The church tried getting speakers to come but it was difficult. Finally, the remaining 15 people decided to choose another church. First Mennonite in Saskatoon seemed the best option.

Dundurn Mennonite began in 1925. After meeting in homes for about a

year, the eight families that made up the fellowship decided to rent the Seventh Day Adventist church in Dundurn for \$1 a Sunday. Three years later they bought the building for \$950.

Pastors over the years have included Henry Kroeger, Gerhard Warkentin and Wilhelm Wiens. Originally, the Dundurn congregation belonged to the Nordheimer group: Pleasant Point, Hanley and Dundurn began as one congregation that met in three locations. They eventually became individual congregations. Pleasant Point and Hanley are still open.

During the closing service, Gary Peters, co-pastor of Hanley, talked about the many times the groups had joined for picnics, communion services and funerals.

"We shared a common history and ministry," said Peters. "There won't be services here any longer. We share your sorrow in this."

Rudy Daniels, former pastor of Pleasant Point, admitted, "The bridge



Photos by Karin Fehderau

**Members of Dundurn Mennonite are moving on to other congregations.**

you're crossing is painful."

In his sermon, Henry Sawatzky spoke hopefully of the future. "This is not the end of the road," he noted, referring to Jeremiah 10:11. He reminded the congregation that their work in the community is not finished just because the church is now closed.

The good-byes are a little easier to bear because everyone has found new spiritual families to connect with.

"Yes, it's hard," admitted Falk, "but it would have been much harder if we had closed it right away [when Sawatzky retired]." It would have left people feeling rootless. It took time to decide what to do with the building.

Rather than let the church fall into decay, the congregation has decided to sell it to a trucking company to be used for office space.—**Karin Fehderau**



**Henry and Walter Falk, brothers and long-time Dundurn members, play a song during the closing service.**

### Take note!

Canadian Mennonite has a new e-mail address:

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- Congregational reports
- All other correspondence

**Canadian Mennonite**



Saskatoon, Sask.

## Worship services begin at Bethany Manor

Live Sunday morning worship at Bethany Manor in Saskatoon became a reality this year. Until then, First Mennonite Church provided piped-in services for those unable to attend church.

It was appropriate that First Mennonite led the first live service on Epiphany, January 5. Esther Patkau's message was on "The Wise Men." There were 128 people in attendance.

The intention is not to form a new church but to enhance worship for those unable to attend their own congregations. Residents are encouraged to keep ties with their congregations and to support them financially as well. The offering envelopes list the names of the 13 churches that sponsor Bethany Manor.

Nine of these churches have committed themselves to serving on Sunday mornings. First Mennonite and Cornerstone have the largest number of resident members and will each lead worship at least once a month. Churches most often bring a pianist and special music, sometimes even a

choir.

A number of residents are retired ministers and they continue to serve. Bethany houses more than 300 residents; an average of 135 attend the Sunday morning services in the spacious Fellowship Centre.

Wide aisles are a necessity. On one Sunday we counted 10 people in wheelchairs; 26 with walkers and numerous others who needed canes. Many of those would find it difficult to get to services elsewhere.

There are many expressions of appreciation for the traditional flavour of the worship. They enjoy singing the hymns they know and love.—**Justina Peters**



**A choir from Mount Royal Mennonite Church sings at Bethany Manor during a worship service on April 6.**

## Paraguayan president has Mennonite link

The new president of Paraguay, Nicanor Duarte Frutos, brings some interesting dynamics to his office. He is married to a Mennonite, was a journalist for 10 years, holds degrees in law and political science, and has taught ethics at the National University of Asuncion.

Maria Gloria Penayo, Frutos' wife, is a member of the Mennonite Brethren Church. This winter, the MB annual convention in Paraguay approved "Guidelines for participation in politics."

The document encourages members to influence the political process through Christian organizations. It warns against, though does not prohibit, party politics, according to *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 10.

Paraguay was a military regime until 1989. Currently it is struggling with a severe economic crisis and widespread corruption. Several Mennonites have been involved in politics. In the April election, David Sawatzky was elected governor of Boqueron Province. Heinz Ratzlaff, an MB pastor served in the House of Representatives from 1993-98.

—**Compiled by Margaret Loewen Reimer**



**This Mexican family with 11 children was among those who lost most of their belongings when Hurricane Isadore swept through southern Mexico in September 2002, wiping out farms and destroying nearly an entire harvest. Mennonite Central Committee and other Mennonite groups organized relief for eight Low German Mennonite colonies and nearby indigenous villages. When an MCC team recently visited the area, colony leaders expressed thanks for the aid. "If we had not received the beans and potatoes from MCC, I don't know what I would have given my children at meal time," said the mother of this family. She also expressed gratitude to the colonies in northern Mexico "who sent truckloads of material goods."—From MCC release. Photo by Mary Friesen**

Philadelphia, Pa.

## Conference explores 'Philadelphia stories'

**B**reaking down barriers, hearing stories and presentations, and celebrating unity across cultures were all part of an April 3-5 gathering here called "Philadelphia stories: Kingdom building in the city."

Held at the Vietnamese Mennonite Church, the event was planned by the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and the local churches. The city now has 22 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches, representing 12 ethnic groups.

Leonard Dow, senior pastor at the multiracial Oxford Circle Mennonite Church, challenged the 60 participants to examine whether racism lives in their hearts and to work toward reconciliation. He reported how a Caucasian Mennonite told him that nothing good has come out of the



**Cruz Cordero performs his rap about the Anabaptist martyrs at the Philadelphia conference. Cordero's family split up and he felt lost until he met a Mennonite girl at school who was listening to Christian rap. "I heard words and music that spoke my language, a God who spoke my language." Cordero became a Christian at Diamond Street Mennonite Church and is now part of the Cross Movement, a rap group that brings the gospel to streets across the U.S. and Jamaica. His dreams are go into full-time ministry.**

mission efforts in Philadelphia.

"This white brother told me that people in Philadelphia were lazy, that the streets were all dirty, that the city was not any place anyone would choose to be," Dow said. In response to Dow's speech, people were moved to share how racism had wounded them, to confess wrong attitudes and to pray together.

Since Mennonites first came to Philadelphia in 1683 and began Germantown Mennonite Church—the oldest Mennonite congregation in North America—the community has grown to include Spanish, African-American, Ethiopian, Filipino, Chinese, Palestinian, Asian Indian, Indonesia, Vietnamese and Cambodian Mennonite groups.

Women's stories were a significant part of the conference. Mattie Cooper Nikiema, an African-American who came from rural Georgia to Philadelphia in the late 1940s, began attending Diamond Street Mennonite Church when she was 12. There she donned the conservative dress of the Swiss Mennonite founders. The church provided mentors for her brothers who had no father at home.

Unfortunately, her mother was asked to leave the church because some thought she was having illicit relations with the boys' father who often came to visit. Rather than cause trouble, she quietly left and went to the Methodist church, while the children stayed at Diamond Street. Ten years ago, Mattie reopened the issue with former church leaders, who apologized to her mother.

Lily Lee, a mathematics teacher who



**Mattie Cooper Nikiema (right) told her story at the Philadelphia event. She and her brother Raymond Jackson (left) came to the Diamond Street Mennonite Church as children. Miriam Stoltzfus, centre, was a long-time Mennonite leader in the city with her husband, Luke.**

serves on the pastoral team at Abundant Life Chinese Mennonite Church, spoke on "Sister workers and center women build the church." A workshop explored how "center women," non-official leaders, held the church together and operated its ministries.

The group also heard reports from the "Mennonite Women of Colour Oral History Project" which is highlighting the contributions of 45 women across the United States.

The conference provided "an enriched pool of other-than-European stories to help shape our identity and our consciousness," said John Sharp, Historical Committee director. The committee plans to publish a book from the proceedings of the conference.

Kenyetta Aduma, director of MC USA's Office of Cross Cultural Relations, said the challenge now is to move forward.

"I am concerned about how we get these congregations more connected with their area conferences and that conferences work further on racial issues. I would like to see more urban-rural connections happen with the Philadelphia churches."—From reports by **Laurie L. Oswald**



Chicago, Ill.

## Chicago church cares for the neighbourhood

**W**hen Peggy Beazley moved into a former crack house here, she asked Living Water Community Church for a house blessing the next Sunday. The congregation is located in Rogers Park, the United State's most multicultural community, according to census figures.

"Sundays are always busy at this church," Beazley said. "First, with all the praising and sharing, you never know when the worship service will end. On this Sunday, there was also a baptism in the lake and then a potluck."

"Finally, late in the afternoon, 10 tired people showed up at my door.... I trembled before informing [them] that I had told other occupants of the building that they could have their rooms blessed, too."

The tired group just looked at each other and began the rounds of nearly a dozen other apartments.

"What I saw that day wasn't victorious Christian living. It was a great treasure in paper bags, the Lord working through exhausted people. That day, I learned that if you use all your strength just to show up, that's okay. God will do the rest."

Living Water began in 1995 when some members of Reba Place Church moved into the Rogers Park area, including Sally Schreiner and Karl McKinney, who became co-pastors of the new church.

"We're into hospitality," said Schriener. "We seek to be a Jesus-centred place where people's lives are transformed when they come into contact with the Holy Spirit." Half of the 140 regular attenders are youth.

"Prayer walking" is a significant part of Living Water's ministry. On Friday nights, a group from the congregation walks through the neighbourhood invoking God's presence in the trouble spots.

On one occasion, a Living Water team saw the manager of a drug-infested house sitting on her front steps. When asked if she wanted prayer, she said, "Yeah, I'm getting ready to kill somebody." People drinking nearby joined hands with the

church team and surrounded the manager in prayer.

"My spirit is quiet now," she said.

One of the houses on the "prayer beat" has been transformed into a housing co-op, and a former centre of drugs and prostitution is now a home for Russian immigrants.

"Dare we say it was because of our prayer?" Schreiner said, adding, "I don't know what I'm doing much of the time....

We meet such crazy situations that we really can't do

anything about, but we invite God into them.... Life here is a daily adventure."

Although many nations of the world are represented at Living Water, Schreiner, who was on the Mennonite



Photo by Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

**Living Water Community Church members pray for youth Ian Davenport and his family as he prepares to enter the military.**

Board of Missions board of directors for 10 years, encourages an awareness of global mission. The congregation has sent five missionaries overseas. —From Mission Network release

Chicago, Ill.

## Reba Place ministries

**R**eba Place Fellowship in Evanston, a suburb of Chicago, began in 1957 as an intentional community committed to economic sharing and to ministering within its neighbourhood.

"Geographic concentration is an important expression of our ministry," said Virgil Vogt, a founding member and one of the community's four pastors. "In order to call city people into fellowship, you need to first create community. Our community living sprinkled throughout the neighbourhood enhanced the life in this neighbourhood."

Reba Place Fellowship has given birth to many ministries. One is Reba Place Church, which became distinct from the fellowship in the early 1980s with the acknowledgement that not all people were called to be part of the intentional community.

The Reba Place congregation sent



Photo by Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

**Pam Sullivan and George E.A. Providence II are on the pastoral team of Reba Place Church in Chicago.**

church-planting groups to nearby Rogers Park (see accompanying article) and to Madison, Wisconsin.

"It is a wonderful way to plant a church," Vogt said. "We help them to start and hit the ground running, then we



## Globalization: Gorilla in our midst

*Globalization* "bulldozed its way into the vocabulary in the 1990s. While the term can mean anything "worldwide," it usually refers to the expansion of trade. Some see globalization as an economic saviour that will spread prosperity. Others, such as David Korten, author of *When Corporations Rule the World*, sees it as a "market tyranny" that is "extending its reach across the planet like a cancer." For Mennonites, who care about the poor and whose own history is steeped in the soil, globalization poses questions about biblical justice and the future of agriculture. Following is a Mennonite economist's assessment.

**G**lobalization presents new opportunities for farmers and consumers. It provides the pleasure of consuming coffee, mangoes, papaya and nutmeg. For farmers, it provides new markets, more income and a better way of life.

But the benefits of globalization are not distributed equally. Only higher-income groups can afford exotic foods. Small farmers, whether in North America or Africa, cannot afford to trade directly in far-off places. They depend on large corporations to process, store and market their produce.

The cost of delivering farm output to another country, in a form and at the time consumers prefer, is high. Even for "fair trade" goods, there is a large gap between the prices farmers receive and the prices consumers pay. Also, family farms have limited bargaining

release them."

Reba Place Development Corporation provides safe and affordable housing while preserving the racial and economic diversity of the community. The corporation works closely with the municipal government and has had success in transforming crack houses into houses of peace.

"Prayer undergirds all that we do at Reba Place," said Pamela Sullivan, pastor of ministries. Sullivan coordinates morning and evening daily intercessory prayer, days of prayer and fasting, women's prayer breakfasts, neighbourhood prayer walks, a program that assures that every person in the congregation is prayed for each day, and interdenominational prayers for the world's trouble spots.

Other ministries include a summer camp, a program for people with special needs, various publications, block parties, a second-hand shop and a home for people in transition.—From Mission Network release

power. Corporations will choose those farmers offering the best quality at the lowest price.

These forms of inequality are made worse by the ability of high-income countries to pay \$1 billion per day in subsidies to their farmers. Take cotton for example. In Mali, a farmer spends 14 days walking barefoot behind an ox-driven plow to till 6 hectares (15 acres) and plant cotton. The return for his efforts will be low as cotton prices have declined by 60 percent since 1995.

The reason is subsidized production in the United States. For example, Perthshire Farms in Mississippi is rewarded with \$750,000 in subsidies to operate 12 tractors to farm 4,000 hectares of cotton (*Asian Wall Street Journal*, June 27, 2002).

The World Trade Organization (WTO) was established to level the playing field. But it is another example of high-income countries making the rules of the game. The WTO has failed to deal with the problem of farm subsidies. Instead, it has defined a new form of protectionism by setting minimal health standards for the trade of all agriculture products.

High-income countries can meet these standards but it will take low-income countries time to develop a similar capacity. Until they do, high-income countries are using the rules to exclude imports from lower-income countries.

The most effective solution would be to end aid to farmers in higher-income countries. Becoming more competitive on the world stage would mean far more income to farmers from low-income countries than all the foreign aid they currently receive.

There is some cause for optimism here. The European Union is beginning to assist farmers in ways that are not linked to how much they produce. Also, China has entered the WTO and



will become a powerful ally with countries trying to get the WTO to phase out production-linked subsidies. The U.S. remains the main obstacle to creative change.

A second solution could be foreign aid that helps low-income countries meet the health standards for agricultural goods. This aid could help governments set appropriate standards and enforce them, and to offer such services to all farmers. It also could help small farmers produce better quality goods.

For family farms in North America, the biggest challenge of globalization is the fierce independence of each farmer. If a rural way of life, based on family farms, is to be maintained, farmers will need to pursue joint action. Wheat Pools and Credit Unions are models from the past that can inform the future.

The issues are different now and the joint actions need to be different. For example, an immediate challenge is to liberate land and water from being reduced to commodities bought and sold in the market. A failure here will mean that large corporations will eventually control these resources.

Then the prospect for farmers is that their labour, entrepreneurship, and their love of the land also will be reduced to a mere market commodity.—Meetinghouse release by **Henry Rempel**

*The writer recently retired from teaching economics at the University of Manitoba. He has worked in Botswana, Kenya and China and has published widely in the field of economic development. Meetinghouse is a group of Mennonite editors.*

Photo by Charles T. Jones



**Children lead the adults in a "silly dance" during the annual Mission Seminar, held July 15-21 in Pinawa, Manitoba. MC Canada Witness staff and about 60 mission workers gathered for renewal and recommitment, paying special attention to children of overseas workers who often lead the way across a cultural divide.**

## Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

### Pastoral transitions in Ontario

As fall approaches, there is again a flurry of pastoral transitions in MC Eastern Canada congregations.

Steve and Linda Brnjas are coming as pastors to Bethel Mennonite in Elora from the Brethren in Christ Church, starting September 1. Steve is leaving his career as a police officer and Linda has been Family Ministries coordinator at Pathway Community Church in Kitchener.

Cathrin van Sintern will begin as associate pastor at North Leamington Mennonite Church in October. She comes from Germany where she was part-time pastor of the Owingen Mennonite Church while completing her studies at the Mennonite seminary in Bienenberg, Switzerland.

Michael Strain will be pastor of Milverton Mennonite Fellowship, beginning September 1. He comes from the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec.

Harold Peters-Fransen is starting as interim pastor at The First Mennonite Church

in Vineland on September 1. He will be commuting from Winnipeg. Perry Bartel begins as pastor at Hawkesville on September 1. He comes from Lethridge, Alberta, where he served Lethbridge Mennonite Church during Ruth Preston-Schilk's leave.

Jean Lehn Epp and Lori Reesor will share a half-time pastoral position at Mississauga Mennonite Fellowship. Jean is in the Master of Theological Studies program at Conrad Grebel University College, and Lori works for World Vision.

Mauricio Morales is serving as pastor of the Toronto Mennonite New Life Church during Adolfo and Betty Puricelli's sabbatical. Som Phanpha is Interim Team Leader at the Grace Lao Mennonite Church in Kitchener.

Renee Sauder begins as interim pastor at Wilmot in September. She was pastor of Erb St. Mennonite Church. Glenn Zehr will begin as interim pastor at St. Jacobs in September. He is completing an interim assignment at Bloomingdale Mennonite Church.

## Mennonite Church Manitoba

### New chaplain at University of Manitoba

The Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Association (IMCA) has appointed Mark von Kampen as half-time Mennonite chaplain at the University of Manitoba. Von Kampen is well qualified for this position, both in terms of training and experience, said John Klassen, board chair of IMCA and director of Leadership Ministries for MC Manitoba.

"He has served as associate pastor at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg for the past 12 years, working primarily in the areas of youth and young adult ministries," said Klassen. Von Kampen will begin in September.



**von Kampen**

IMAC is a partnership of four Mennonite denominations which believe that a spiritual presence and ministry at the university is extremely important. The ministry is supported by the four groups and by congregational donations.

The denominations are Evangelical Mennonite Church, Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church, Mennonite Brethren and Mennonite Church Manitoba.

### Equipping 2003 planned for October

Excitement is building for the joint Equipping and Ministers and Deacons Seminar planned for October 4 at the Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church. Bob Wiebe, director of Education Ministries, and John Klassen of Leadership Ministries are working

together to plan a joint event this year.

Approximately 25 workshops are being planned for a wide variety of church workers, including education workers, church council and committee members, youth ministry workers, mission enthusiasts and worship leaders. Other topics are pastor evaluations, hospital visitation and singles in a married church. Wiebe and Klassen hope that every church will be well represented at this event that aims to inspire, educate and build connections.

### 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 chosen a fairly simple project that will introduce the basics of quilting and will showcase a number of different techniques. This project will easily be completed on the weekend."

On November 7-9, Meg Suderman from Winkler will be teaching the "Quilt as you go, Log Cabin" project. For more information call Pankratz at (204) 897-8028.

### Transition at Douglas

Ruth Bruinooge began work as youth minister at Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg at the beginning of August. She was previously a leader with Canadian Mennonite University's School of Discipleship. She was a member of First Mennonite Church in Vancouver.



### Mennonite Church Alberta

#### SCUBA week in Tofield

July 7-11 were busy days at the Tofield Mennonite Church when the Bardo Lutheran Church joined Tofield for a



#### Kids dive into SCUBA week at Tofield Mennonite Church.

week of Vacation Bible School fun for area kids. Seventy-five youngsters swam out to SCUBA (Super Cool Undersea Bible Adventure) to find out more about God's love. Oceans of support came from 25 teen and adult volunteers.

The children learned through music, worship, drama, crafts and games designed to help them see the difference God can make in their lives. The kids learned about helping others through a project called "Operation kid to kid" where they collected 47 pairs of new socks and 40 pairs of shoes for orphans around the globe.

Oceans of thanks to our "fantastic" volunteers who made our dive delightful.—From report by Gayleen Erickson

#### Camp remains safe from forest fires

Recent drought and high temperatures have combined to make for the worst fire season Alberta has seen in 50 years. A fire burning north-west of Cremona is being watched, but so far it has posed no danger to Camp

Valaqua where the summer programs continue.

The traditional evening campfire is still a highlight for campers, even though it is being held around an empty fire ring as a complete fire ban is in effect for much of the province.

The Crowsnest Pass area is

Columbia office at (604) 850 6658.

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

### People & Events

**Winnipeg, Man.**—Hijin Park of Toronto is the recipient of the Canadian Japanese-Mennonite Scholarship for 2003. She will use the \$1,500 award to complete her doctoral program at the University of Toronto. Her research will focus on the flow of people and capital between the Pacific Rim and Canada and how these movements are shaped by Canadian policies. The scholarship is jointly sponsored by MCC and the National Association of Japanese Canadians. It aims to reduce the potential for abuse of minority groups, such as was suffered by Japanese-Canadians during World War II.—From MCC Canada release



**Park**

**Kitchener, Ont.**—The 2003 grants from the Wilfred Schlegel Memorial Fund will go to Danforth Mennonite Church's new voluntary service unit and the J. Steckle Heritage Homestead in Kitchener which provides educational programs relating to regional history and agriculture. Danforth will receive \$5,000 while the Steckle Heritage Homestead will receive \$10,000. The Schlegel Fund was established in 1979 in memory of Wilfred Schlegel, a leader in the

Western Ontario Mennonite Conference, now part of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. The Fund is currently focusing on visionary initiatives and new programs. For the next nine years it will provide "venture capital" grants of up to \$15,000 annually until the fund is disbursed.—From Mennonite Foundation of Canada release

**Waterloo, Ont.**—The Peace Theology Project of Mennonite Central Committee is the 2003 recipient of the Frank H. Epp Memorial Fund Award. This two-year project is examining Mennonite peace theology in light of current realities. Duane K. Friesen, Lydia Harder and J. Robert Charles, coordinators, will consult with a wide spectrum of people to propose language for a peace theology that takes into account terrorism, military force as peacekeeping, and ways Mennonites are involved in shaping society. The Frank H. Epp award funds projects that were central to Epp's concerns as a Canadian churchman and scholar. (Epp died in 1986).—From Conrad Grebel University College release

**Winnipeg, Man.**—Jacob P. and Susana (Braun) Siemens, who became mission workers after retirement, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on June 28. Along with their seven children and families, guests from several countries came to celebrate. After taking early retirement from teaching in 1986, the couple served for three years in Bolivia with Mennonite Central Committee, founding a newspaper for Mennonite colonies. They also taught for a year in Seminole, Texas, where they helped establish *Das Blatt*, a paper for children. The couple has also served in Ukraine with Mennonite Brethren missions. Members of Sterling Mennonite Church, they now serve locally. "Retirement is a great blessing," says Jacob.—From report

### Mennonite Church British Columbia

#### Heidebrecht to speak at retreat

The Church Ministries Committee of MC British Columbia is planning its annual Pastor/Spouse Retreat for October 6-8 at Cedar Springs. The speaker this year is Harry Heidebrecht, pastor at Calgary Mennonite Brethren Church (and father to West Abbotsford pastor, Karen Heidebrecht-Thiessen).

His theme will be "Images of Jesus." Churches are encouraged to urge their pastors—and their spouses—to attend this time of rest and inspiration. For more information, contact the MC British



## People & Events

**Winnipeg, Man.**—Jim Coggins and the Board of Discipleship Ministries of the Canadian Mennonite Brethren conference “have mutually agreed that Jim complete his service as editor of the *Mennonite Brethren Herald*, effective June 30, 2003,” stated a mid-June release from the board. Coggins has been with the magazine for 19 years. The board has named Susan Brandt, current managing editor, as interim editor. Coggins worked out of an Abbotsford, B.C. office. Brandt is in the Winnipeg office.

## Transitions

### Births

**Cornies**—to Shannon McTaggart and Dave, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Madeline Elizabeth, July 30.  
**Driedger**—to Tammy and Jason, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Kelsey Marie Ruth, June 25.  
**Driedger**—adopted by Caroline and Len, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Zoe Anna (born March 6, 2002).  
**Dueck**—to Norinne and Wes, Sargent Mennonite, Winnipeg, a son, Eric Mitchell, July 14.  
**Dyck**—to Heidi and Daryl, Rosemary Mennonite, Alta., a daughter, Olivia Autumn, July 21.  
**Dyck**—to Laura and Alan, Rosemary Mennonite, Alta., a son, Blake Alan, July 25.  
**Engbrecht**—to Sonja and Steve, Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, a son, Dustin Lee, July 4.  
**Enns**—to Shelley and Steven, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Simon Jacob, July 22.  
**Friesen**—to Maria and Ken, Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man., a son, Marcus Kendal, July 4.

**Greenwood**—to Colleen and Jean-Paul, Brussels Mennonite, Ont., a son, Conor Patrick, July 22.  
**Holleman**—to Cindy and Rudy, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., a daughter, Abigail Grace, July 24.  
**Kampen**—to Leanne and Len, Fiske Mennonite, Sask., a daughter, Carys Shay, June 12.  
**Kaufmann**—to Stephanie (Woelk) and Brad of Chicago, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Kaleb Bradley, Aug. 4.  
**Martens**—to Krista and Darren, Fiske Mennonite, Sask., twin sons, Noah Brent and Markus Darren, July 10.  
**Reed**—to Angela and David, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Ashley Elena, July 21.  
**Wiebe**—to Patty and Chris, Herschel Ebenfeld Mennonite, Sask., a son, Daniel Joseph, June 5.

### Marriages

**Brown-Sichewski**—Aaron and Karen, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 7.  
**Dyck-Friesen**—Alf and Val, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., July 26.  
**Edmunds-Janzen**—Mark and Colleen, Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man., June 21.  
**Epp-Klassen**—Andy and Rochelle, Warman Mennonite, Sask., July 26.  
**Ewert-Poirer**—Ben and Shar, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., Aug. 2.  
**Friesen-Wishart**—James (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Andrea, in Portage la Prairie, Man., July 12.  
**Froese-Hiebert**—Jared and Kim, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., July 25.  
**Goerzen-Himmelspeck**—Curtis and Terra, Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta., June 7.  
**Hiebert-Reimer**—Jared and Dana, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., July 5.  
**Holden-Siemens**—Ryan and Joelle, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., July 19.  
**Kornelson-Schellenberg**—Ed and Leilla, Bethany Mennonite, Watrous, Sask., July 5.  
**Laluk-Klassen**—Laird and Jennifer, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., June 14.  
**Martin-Haroun**—Alan (Erb St. Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.) and Christiane, St. John’s Lutheran Church, Waterloo, Ont., May 3.  
**McMillan-Unger**—Jeff and Gina, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, July 4.  
**McNab-Kimmel**—Rob and Jessie, Rosemary Mennonite, Alta., at Lake Louise, June 14.  
**Pfohl-van Steelandt**—Jeff and Debbie (Catholic church), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., July 25.  
**Reinhardt-Loewen**—Jo and Jennifer, Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta., July 12.  
**Reynolds-Jantz**—Rob and Laurel, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., July 19.  
**Ringer-Bergman**—Giles (Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg) and Melissa (Springstein Mennonite, Man.) at Victoria Beach, Man., August 10.  
**Shantz-Joseph**—Scott and Lindsay, Wilnot Mennonite, Baden, Ont., July 26.  
**Snyder-Peters**—Kevin and Sharon, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., June 22.  
**Suderman-Brown**—Andrew (Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg) and Karen, Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta., July 5.  
**Toews-Williams**—Dwight and Cindy, Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta., July 19.  
**Tryon-Lenius**—Damian (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Lisa, in Winnipeg, July 11.  
**Wiebe-Rempel**—Curtis and Julie, Welcome Inn, Hamilton, Ont., May 17.

### Deaths

**Albrecht**—Emmanuel (Jake), 85, Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont., July 16.  
**Cornies**—Bill, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., July 26.  
**Franz**—Ella, 74, First Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 9.  
**Friesen**—Jacob, 87, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.,

July 6.  
**Froese**—Marieluise, 96, First Mennonite, Calgary, July 20.  
**Hemingway**—Eleanor, 91, Brussels Mennonite, Ont., July 23.  
**Isaak**—Peter, 65, Grace Mennonite, St. Catharines, Ont., July 27.  
**Jantzen**—Margaret, 67, Grace Mennonite, Regina, July 22.  
**Janzen**—Katharina, 92, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, July 23.  
**Peters**—Jacob L., Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask., July 29.  
**Plenert**—Cornelius, 95, First Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 1.  
**Regier**—Erwin Willy, 89, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., July 15.  
**Sawatzky**—Wade Andrew, 7, Herschel Ebenfeld Mennonite, Sask., July 19.  
**Schmidt**—William, 78, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., July 13.  
**Siemens**—Katherine, 64, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., June 1.  
**Schwartzentruber**—Earl C., Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Aug. 8.  
**Weber**—Nyle, 72, Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont., July 12.  
**Yantzi**—Ruth, 77, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Aug. 5.

### Baptisms

**Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.**—Brett Falk, Ryan Fast, Michael Friesen, Dan Heinrichs, Tracy Heinrichs, Michael Klassen, Joshua Sawatzky, Kristin Sawatzky, Conrad Voth, Vera Voth, Brian Voth, Cristin Voth, Andrea Zacharias, June 8.  
**Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.**—Joani Goerzen, July 20.  
**Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man.**—James Fehr, June 8.  
**Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.**—Gina Kennell, Aug. 3.

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

## Waiting for the light

*As soon as his electricity was restored on August 16, after a blackout of more than 41 hours, David Neufeld of Toronto went to his computer and wrote the following. Neufeld has worked in environmental policy for 18 years and is past chair of the Mennonite Environmental Task Force.*

**W**e have just experienced the worst blackout in North American history, and the crisis is not over. Electricity suppliers are warning of the likelihood of rolling outages in the weeks ahead.

This blackout demonstrated the cost and precariousness of our dependence on electricity, not to mention fossil fuels. Since the OPEC crisis of 1973, many have argued that we need alternative fuels. Twenty years ago a Harvard School of Business report concluded North Americans could reasonably cut electricity consumption by up to 40 percent by targeting electricity to where it was needed most, and investing in conservation, clean burning fuels, and renewable energy.

North American Mennonites are members of a society that consumes more energy, food and land resources than 80 percent of the globe's population. Our average household ecological footprint is the largest in the world. (Only Australians are on par with us.) According to a recent study by the Union of Concerned Scientists, our most harmful consumer activities include our use of cars and light trucks, home heating and cooling and appliances, and our steady diet of red meat and irrigated fruits and vegetables.

The Anabaptist tradition of "more with less" stewardship offers an alternative model. Here is a simple checklist of things that will make a big difference:

- live in a modest-size home with good insulation;
- install efficient appliances and lighting;
- ask for electricity from a renewal source;
- plant shade trees;
- choose a place to live that reduces the need to drive everywhere;
- choose a fuel efficient, low polluting car and avoid purchasing a second and third vehicle;
- walk, bike, and take transit more often;
- buy local fruits and vegetables that are in season;
- meet at least one-half of your protein needs by substituting red meat with grains, legumes and dairy.

Values such as moderation in all things, combined with self-sufficiency and a do-it yourself attitude, are a strong foundation for moving our communities in the direction of more sustainable living. Let us examine ourselves and make a new commitment to responsible living.—**David Neufeld**

**Coaldale Mennonite Church** invites former members and friends to celebrate with us our:

### 75th Anniversary of God's Faithfulness

Saturday, October 11- 7:00 pm program  
 Sunday, October 12 - 10:30 am worship service  
 Lunch to follow  
 2:00 pm afternoon service  
 Faspas to follow

Phone: (403) 345-3363; Fax: (403) 345-5303  
 E-mail: [cmchurch@telusplanet.net](mailto:cmchurch@telusplanet.net)  
**Coaldale Mennonite Church**  
 2316-17 Street  
 Coaldale, AB  
 T1M 1G3

## Employment opportunities

### 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](mailto:igh-dc@juno.com)

The Elmwood MB Church in Winnipeg invites applications for a full-time

### BILINGUAL ASSOCIATE PASTOR

who will provide leadership for the German language ministries as well as for the caregiving/visitation ministries of the English and German congregations.

Please direct inquiries and resumes to:

**Elmwood MB Church**  
**Pastoral Search Committee**  
 c/o Jacob Funk; Home Phone: (204) 669-0300  
 145 Henderson Hwy.,  
 Winnipeg, MB R2L 1L4  
 Phone: (204) 668-3244; (204) 667-8133  
 E-mail: [embc@mts.net](mailto:embc@mts.net)  
 Website: [www.mts/~embc](http://www.mts/~embc)



Ten Thousand Villages, a program of Mennonite Central Committee Canada, is accepting applications for the positions of:

### ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT

The Accounting Assistant will be part of the Finance and Administration Team, and work about 15 hours per week. The candidate's accounting experience should include, but not be limited to, accounts receivable and accounts payable. Resumes will be accepted until August 28, 2003.

### SALES MANAGER

Ten Thousand Villages Canada is looking for a Sales Manager with an entrepreneurial spirit, motivated by the Ten Thousand Villages mission and sales goals to lead the Ontario-based sales team. Key qualifications include experience in marketing, sales managing or similar background, and visual merchandising. A complete job description is available on our website or by request. Resumes will be accepted until September 30, 2003.

Ten Thousand Villages provides vital, fair income to artisans around the world by selling their handcrafted products. Visit our website: [www.tenthousandvillages.com](http://www.tenthousandvillages.com)

Please submit resumes to:

**Lucille Harms Toews**  
**Ten Thousand Villages Canada**  
 65 B Heritage Drive  
 New Hamburg, ON N3A 2J3  
 Fax: (519) 662-3755 Phone: (877) 289-3247  
 E-mail: [personnel@villages.ca](mailto:personnel@villages.ca)

### Advertising Deadlines

for Sept 22 issue (Sept 9)  
 for October 6 issue (Sept 23)

**Canadian Mennonite**

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

[advert@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:advert@canadianmennonite.org)

## More school kits for Iraqi children

**Akron, Pa.**—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is launching a drive for 40,000 school kits for Iraq to be shipped in late August and early September.

“As parents and children in North Americans shop for back-to-school items, it would be great if they could also buy some supplies for an MCC school kit,” says Kevin King, MCC’s material resources manager.

Years of international sanctions and the war have left Iraqi families with little money. The looting and destruction of government offices in post-war Iraq have made the situation worse. “This year’s schooling is highly dependent on the generosity of others,” reports MCC worker Dave Pankratz from Baghdad. Pankratz, from Winnipeg, is a consultant to MCC’s Iraq Crisis Response Fund.

While UNICEF plans to provide school supplies, MCC’s school kits will go to “any child who does not get one elsewhere,” according to Pankratz. For information about school kit contents contact any MCC office or check the web at [www.mcc.org/respond/rapid\\_respond/iraq/index.html](http://www.mcc.org/respond/rapid_respond/iraq/index.html).—From MCC release



**These Canadians are among 19 new Mennonite Central Committee workers. From left: Deanna and Douglas Hiebert, Cornerstone Community Church, Virgil, Ont., will serve in Burundi/Rwanda for three years as peace and development coordinators; Laurel Borisenko, Lendrum Mennonite Brethren, Edmonton, will be country representative in Burkina Faso for two years; Mary Friesen, River East Mennonite Brethren, Winnipeg, is serving a two-year term in Winnipeg as Low German program coordinator; Ionka Hristozova of Winnipeg is serving in Ukraine for four years.—From MCC release**

## School notes

### Seminary balances budget on time

**Elkhart, Ind.**—Sixty-eight gifts received in the mail on June 30 brought Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary to a balanced operations budget for the fiscal year ending that day. Total giving for the year was \$2,317,872 from 2,369 donors. Several

factors made this a difficult financial year for the seminary: the unexpected death of development director John Duerksen, decreased earnings from endowments, an economic recession and a decrease in contributions from congregations. In early June, AMBS still needed to receive about one fourth of the year’s contributions.—AMBS release

**Students Dana Evans and Kristen Bergen check out the new apartments at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ontario. The new building will house 32 senior students this fall. The building will allow senior students “a bit more independence” than the double-occupancy dormitory rooms of the main residence, according to Paul Penner, Grebel Operations Manager.—From Grebel release**

## Scholarship for research in Ukraine

**Fresno, Cal.**—Paul Toews, historian from Fresno Pacific University and director of the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to lecture and research in Ukraine. From September 1 to June 30 he will teach U.S. history at Zaporizhzhia State University and visit archives search of documents relating to Mennonite history. Since 1996, Toews has regularly travelled to Ukraine to identify and secure reproduction rights to documents for archives in Kansas, Winnipeg and British Columbia. He will also lead his tenth Mennonite Heritage Cruise.—FPU release

## Development director at AMBS

**Elkhart, Ind.**—Ron Ringenberg of Wheaton, Illinois, has been named director of development for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. He began his duties August 1. Most recently, Ringenberg was involved in a Clinical Pastoral Education program at Rush/Presbyterian Hospital in Chicago.



**Ringenberg**

Prior to this, he worked in sales and project management for Hyperion Solutions of Lisle, Illinois, and served on the local Ten Thousand Villages board. He holds an MBA in finance and an MS in computer information systems. He has also been an adjunct professor at Wheaton College. Ringenberg and his wife, Frances, are members of Lombard Mennonite Church. Ringenberg fills the position held by John D. Duerksen who died in January.—AMBS release



Photo by Jennifer Konkle



**Calendar**

**British Columbia**

**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 20:** MC British Columbia all-pastors' meeting.  
**September 27:** MCC B.C. Fall Fair at Civic Centre, Prince George.  
**October 6-8:** Pastor/spouse retreat. Contact MC British Columbia for details.  
**October 8, 14, 16, 18:** Mennonite Church British Columbia Listening Meetings, 7:00 p.m.: Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford (8); Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver (14); First Mennonite, Greendale (16). First Mennonite, Kelowna (18) at 10:00 a.m.  
**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: Vernon Mennonite (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.  
**November 29:** Mennonite Church British Columbia special delegate meeting at Bethel Mennonite, Aldergrove.

**Alberta**

**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 14:** Opening at Rosthern Junior College.  
**September 19:** MCC building renovation fundraiser, West Portal Mennonite Brethren Church, Saskatoon.  
**October 1:** Pastors' gathering on "Learning while leading."  
**October 17:** MCC Saskatchewan Support Circle workshop at Grace Mennonite Church, Regina, 7:00 p.m.  
**October 17-18:** Women in Mission retreat.  
**October 18:** MCC Saskatchewan Support Circle workshop at Rosthern Mennonite Church, 10:00 a.m.  
**October 19:** MCC Saskatchewan Support Circle workshop at Massey Place Community, Saskatoon, 2:00 p.m.  
**October 25:** Alumni Volleyball Tournament at Rosthern Junior College.  
**October 31-November 1:** MCC Saskatchewan annual meeting at Laird Mennonite Church.  
**November 14-15:** MC Saskatchewan Bible Conference with Harry Huebner 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. Faculty concert Friday evening. President's installation Sunday, Portage Ave. MB Church with speaker Stanley Hauerwas, 3:00 p.m.  
**October 4:** Equipping Conference with Ministers and Deacons Conference at Winkler Berghaler 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 18:** MC Manitoba special delegate meeting.  
**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 Berghaler (8).  
**November 7-9:** Quilting retreat with Meg Suderman at

Camp Moose Lake.

**Ontario**

**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.  
**September 14:** Celebration at Altona Mennonite Meeting-house near Stouffville, 3:30 p.m.  
**November 9:** Artists for Peace Concert at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, 7:00 p.m.

**United States**

**September 25-28:** Peacemaker Congress VII in Youngstown, Ohio. Phone (773) 277-0253.

**Subscriber services** 

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## **MDS: English 101**



**Three girls from Micronesia celebrate their graduation from an English course taught by Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers. The girls are wearing the traditional marmar (a wreath of fresh flowers on the head) together with graduation hats made from old newspapers. MDS volunteers from the United States and Canada have been working in Micronesia rebuilding homes destroyed by a typhoon in 2002. Informal English classes developed out of the girls' friendship with MDS workers. When it was time for the project directors, Dena and Ron Braun, to return home to Kansas in July, the girls dreamed up a graduation celebration, with songs and speeches in English. The girls received diplomas recognizing their successful completion of MDS English 101!**  
—From MDS release