

# CANADIAN Mennonite

January 9, 2006  
Volume 10, Number 1



Let there be  
on earth, and let  
begin with me.



By: Anna

Peace



Peace

I'm peace frog!



lovely pig!

Kumbha



Peace

## New ways to connect with us

It appears this publication has had a run-in with the Chinese government. Late last year, I heard from one of the Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in that country that *Canadian Mennonite's* website had been added to the list of censored websites, meaning our site is no longer accessible to anyone in China.

This move prompted us to move ahead more quickly than initially planned on a new initiative I think will be of interest to all our readers. We are launching a trial of electronic delivery of the magazine to your e-mail inbox. Unlike our online site (at [canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org)), which contains only a subset of what we publish, the electronic version is a complete copy of the print magazine, and will get to you days (sometimes weeks) before your paper copy arrives.

This is an experiment to see how much interest there is in this service. It provides another way to get the latest Mennonite thinking, news and views into your hands without having to wait for Canada Post delivery. Note that if you sign up for electronic delivery, you will still get your print issue as normal.

While we will create as small a file as possible, replicating a complete magazine in electronic format results in a fairly large file (typically about 5 MB in size). For those who have high-speed connections or are fine with the e-mail message taking a few minutes to retrieve, getting the whole issue sent to you is now one option we offer. For those who would like smaller e-mail messages, we also provide the option to get just a brief notification that the new issue has been posted, along with a link you can click on to view it online

(in either web or Adobe PDF formats).

To try it out, please go to our home page at [canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org) and click on the link to sign up for electronic delivery to your inbox. The service is free to all print subscribers. Please have your subscriber number ready when you sign up (it's on your print issue mailing label and starts with an "A" followed by six digits).

In addition to the online delivery feature, our website also has five years of partial story archives available for easy searching and our newly created article index for all our 2005 issues. If you are trying to find an article we've published in the past or research something we've covered, our website is the place to go.

**New communication policy:** Historically, my e-mail address has been *Canadian Mennonite's* only e-mail address. Given how many of the over 30,000 of you that are online now, this system doesn't really work any more. I receive about a thousand e-mail messages a month (in addition to postal mail) and I am just not able to respond in a timely way (or sometimes, at all) to this correspondence. I think all messages should get a reply and it's a big stress in my life. My apologies to those of you who have not gotten responses to your correspondence! I plan to do better in 2006.

As a way of providing improved service to our readers, could those of you sending in material to be considered for publication please use the contact procedures printed below in our masthead? We want to hear from you! Sending story submissions, letters for publication, Transition and Calendar announcements to the appropriate places means your messages will be seen sooner and by the right people. Thank you so much.

—**Tim Miller Dyck**

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## Web site preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted on our web site at [canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org) on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the Jan. 23 issue by Jan. 19.

**Cover: Peace symbols and other artistic expressions of "extending the peace of Jesus Christ" abounded on posters created by southern Ontario youths during "Peace Out," the 17th annual MC Eastern Canada Junior Youth Breakaway. For story and photo, see page 20.**

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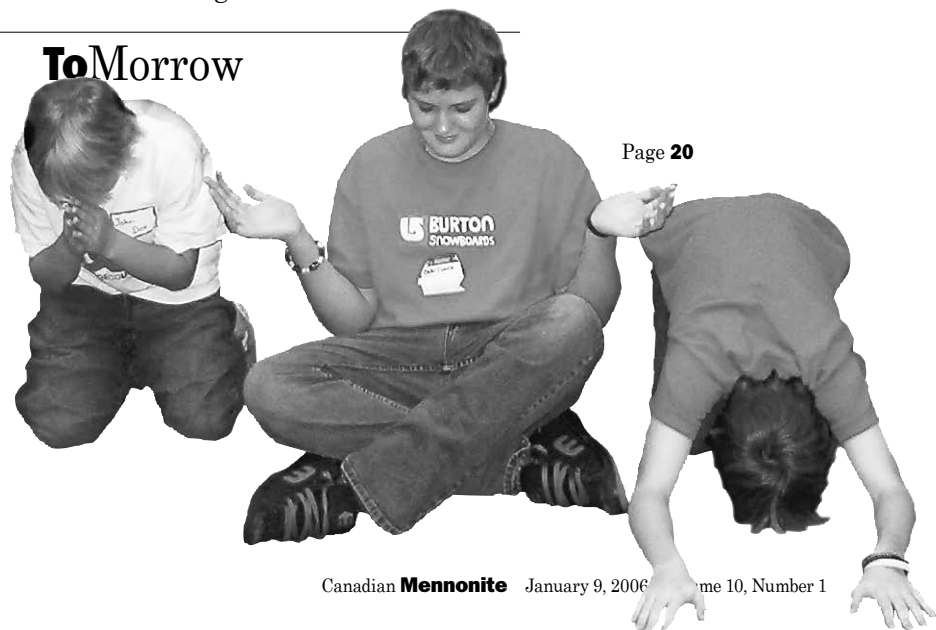
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Duck Lake, Sask.

## Church future is in the city says retiring rural pastor

**P**eople in Saskatchewan often say this province is beautiful. But when they do, they are not necessarily thinking only of the blue sky or the endless stretch of land. They are thinking also of the people they know, the communities they come from, and the hearts that welcome them home. For it's the people here who comprise the true beauty of the land.

Perhaps that is the reason Walter Jantzen has stayed in the town of Duck Lake all his life. And why, for more than 30 years, he has served as lay leader in the Horse Lake Mennonite Church a few miles out of town.

Jantzen is retiring this year. And the church is in the process of replacing him—with his son. That will make three generations of pastors in a row from the same family. Horse Lake Mennonite was begun in 1941 by Johannes Regier; Willie Jantzen helped with preaching duties from the context of the Laird and Tiefengrund churches. In 1943, he was elected as an evangelist for the Horse Lake church. Two years later, he was ordained as their minister.

Like his father before him, Jantzen has worked the family farm while serving at the church. He and his wife Esther carefully built up a herd of Holsteins over time, but sold the dairy in 1997. Now they manage range cattle. There are a lot of ranchers in the area now, he says, but hardly any grain farmers. Grain farms used to be more prominent, but people were having a hard time making ends meet. When the government decided to buy land for community pastures, many farmers seized the chance to get out. That also meant fewer people to attend church.

Jantzen took over from his father in 1972. He was initially coaxed into helping through a vote taken by the congregation. After his father passed



Photo submitted by Walter Jantzen

**Walter Jantzen, seen on the family farm with wife Esther, is retiring after more than 30 years of pastoral leadership with Horse Lake Mennonite Church, Duck Lake, Sask.**

away, a second vote was taken and Jantzen was elected to permanent lay leadership.

"I reluctantly took over," Jantzen admits.

He was 38 years old. The church had 17 members. At first, says the quiet, hesitant speaker, things went well. Most people in the area attended one of the local churches.

"At that time, if people were even a little bit interested in God, they came to church," he recalls.

In the ensuing years, the church was influenced first by the American Jesus People movement, which caused small pockets of vibrant faith to burst into flame, and later by a charismatic group of believers that ultimately caused a church split.

In reflecting back on the situation, Jantzen acknowledges he didn't handle it well. In spite of that, the membership rose to 26 by 1985.

Keeping spiritually healthy is one of a pastor's biggest challenges. Next to the many voices in the church and community calling for his attention, there comes the still small voice of God. How to find time for God is sometimes a perplexing matter. Over time,

Jantzen found comfort and inspiration from books. "I read books by Philip Yancey and Chuck Swindoll," he says. He also took time for Mennonite-sponsored conferences and those put on by other denominations.

Just off the highway close to town stands the Duck Lake Regional Interpretive Centre. Jantzen is on the centre's board that includes representatives from the white, Metis and First Nations communities. Gradually over the years, Jantzen has made the transition from being simply a lay leader to a community pastor, helping with both First Nations weddings and funerals.

Ed Olfert, pastor of Grace Mennonite in Prince Albert, Sask., met Jantzen through a pastoral peer group almost 10 years ago. "Walter is someone who loves his people and loves his Bible," says Olfert. "He has a warm and gentle and affirming style."

"He is loved and appreciated in the community for his consistency," agrees Naomi Unger of the Vibrant Rural Churches Project.

In thinking of the years ahead, Jantzen wonders aloud about the shrinking rural churches. He is pleased by the initiatives begun through the Vibrant Rural Churches Project, but believes the declining trend in smaller centres can't be reversed.

He points out a contradiction in people's thinking. Most of conference support in the past has come from rural churches and less from city congregations. And yet the obvious seems clear. "The future of the [Mennonite] church lies in the city," he says.

But in his heart, he believes, like his father before him, that God uses those who are willing. And what happens to the church is ultimately in God's hands. "I'm just waiting for that revival," he says, explaining his hope for the future.

—**Karin Fehderau**

# The wealthy in the land

**“S**top worrying about your money, your gold and silver,” the preacher thundered. “You can’t take it with you anyway, and even if you could, it would only melt.”

This story, possibly fictitious, makes a harsh point about money—that it is wicked and its owners are doomed.

That feeling has now softened in Mennonite circles. Increasingly, money is seen as a tool for potential good (as in the recent outpouring of donations to relieve hurricane suffering in the Gulf States).

There is also a growing sense that “wealth redistribution” is not the only way to handle excess, but that “wealth creation” is a useful way to produce economic opportunity.

Both approaches compete for the same donor dollars. People of means get plenty of attention from fundraisers who want to help them answer the question, “How shall I then give?” Should they donate their excess to the Mennonite high school’s new auditorium? To a college building fund? To a mission agency?

Or, in the case of a businessperson, “Should I re-invest it in my company to create more jobs and expand the community’s economic base?”

The questions suggest that Mennonites have become more comfortable with their rising prosperity, and that traditional Mennonite unease about investment may be changing.

Mennonites are no strangers to wealth. Perhaps they are predisposed to do well. Hard work, thrift and an aversion to luxury often have led to financial wellbeing.

For hundreds of years, Mennonites have had plenty of “practical, tangible wealth,” such as farmland, mills, factories and trucking firms, says Calvin Redekop, a sociologist with a

special interest in Mennonite economic behaviour. The rise of surplus—or “intangible paper wealth”—is more recent.

For generations, the church monitored this steadily increasing wealth. Confessions of faith warned against conspicuous consumption. But as Mennonites eased into modernity such pronouncements have faded.

How wealthy are Mennonites? “The predominating bulk are becoming affluent,” writes Redekop in *Anabaptist/Mennonite Faith and Economics*. He points to data in the 1975 demographic study by J. Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder (*Anabaptists Four Centuries Later*), which showed the income of Mennonites to be 12 percent above the North American average. A follow-up study a dozen years later showed Mennonites holding their own, with a median income of \$30,000 to \$40,000, compared to the U.S. median income of \$32,274.

Other Kauffman and Harder data further revealed that North American Mennonites’ proportion of business ownership and management was slightly higher than the general population.

There is little hard data on where Mennonites are today, but the general perception seems to be that they are gaining monetary vigour. They send their children to costly private schools and colleges. Parking lots at Mennonite churches glisten with the latest cars, SUVs and minivans. Churches in the citrus states bulge in winter with Mennonite “snow-birds” who can afford to travel.

Michael Yoder, a sociologist at the University of Iowa who has studied Mennonite occupations, says he suspects there are fewer Mennonites in the lower economic tier than the

**Continued on page 6**

**Parking lots at Mennonite churches glisten with the latest cars, SUVs and minivans.**



Illustration by Tim R. Dyck

**What ripples will your wealth make in the kingdom of God?**

**‘Mennonite population is reflecting the economist’s axiom that everyone lives at the top of their financial ability.’**

### **Wealthy** *From page 5*

general North American population, although perhaps more than in the past because of the growth in urban and minority congregations.

Yoder also allows that “we may now have more wealthy persons than we used to have,” although some of this increase may have been offset by the departure of some wealthy Mennonites who were made to feel uncomfortable and switched to other denominations.

Over the years, Mennonites have been known for their “economic witness.” Do they still have anything to teach North American culture on how to use discretionary wealth?

Some would contend that Mennonites are helping the Christian community develop a more mature view of wealth and investment. In 1980, Goshen College economist Carl Kreider’s landmark book, *The Christian Entrepreneur*, was the first public suggestion of the role capital and entrepreneurship might play in the modern economy. The rise of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and its pioneering of micro-credit illuminated for Mennonites, along with the larger development “industry,” the role of productive investment as an ongoing way to combat poverty.

The acceptance of this new view was symbolized by the 25th anniversary re-issue of Ron Sider’s *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, which had been a bible of wealth redistribution, but now also carries a ringing endorsement of wealth creation (such as through micro-enterprise assistance) as a legitimate way to make a dent in poverty.

A prominent voice in this unfolding awareness has been James Halteman, a Mennonite economist who teaches at Wheaton College. His writings have helped focus how gospel teachings on materialism can be understood today.

Halteman points out that the ancient world understood

three ways to use economic surplus: consumption in lavish living, hoarding for the future, and direct charity (wealth redistribution). The modern world has an additional use for surplus: productive investment (wealth creation). Halteman says accumulating resources as productive capital is a legitimate—even desirable—act of stewardship.

“This distinction between productive and [consumptive] wealth has not been made carefully enough in Christian circles,” he says, “and the result has been that businesspersons with large productive assets have often been misunderstood and unappreciated.”

An example is the “bigger barns” story in Luke 12, Halteman says. The barns are a way to guarantee the owner’s future consumption, not a vehicle for increased production that benefits others. “The contemporary farm, factory or office building may well function, not as a store of existing resources, but rather as a vehicle for the production of future resources in greater and greater quantities.”

While many Mennonites still do not allow their paper wealth to affect their lifestyle, Calvin Redekop fears that others are falling prey to a kind of consumptive competition that can be seen in the parking lots of some Mennonite churches: “You buy an SUV, I’ll buy a bigger one.”

“Mennonite population is reflecting the economist’s axiom that everyone lives at the top of their financial ability,” says Redekop. “You mortgage yourself to live at the highest consumptive level you can with the resources available.” Many affluent Mennonites are too easily choosing a lifestyle “that mimics our North American culture’s wasteful and unfair taste for luxury,” he says.

Perhaps the emerging view of productive investment—wealth creation for the poor—will catch the imagination of a new generation of Mennonites who can distinguish between conspicuous consumption and using wealth in a creative Anabaptist way.

—**Wally Kroeker**

*The author is editor of The Marketplace, the magazine of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).*

### **A converted—and baptized—wallet**

Martin Luther said Christians need three conversions: heart, mind and purse.

Mennonite history contains at least one example of taking this literally. It occurred in Russia, where many Mennonites had become stupendously rich, some with estates of 100,000 acres.

One estate owner who was reputed to be covetous and unwilling to share with the poor was called to account by church leaders. As related by J.B. Toews in *Pilgrimage of Faith*, a prayer circle was organized to pray for the man’s repentance.

After some months, their prayers were answered. The man publicly con-

fessed his greed and asked God and the church for forgiveness. He asked to be rebaptized.

“My father, John A. Toews of Alexanderthal, was selected to baptize the brother for the second time,” Toews recalls. “In the public prayer preceding the baptism the brother prayed for victory over the sin of covetousness. Before entering the water [for immersion baptism] he placed his wallet into his shirt pocket, for this too needed to be rebaptized. This was to symbolize the surrender of all his riches to the Lord and his service.”

From that point on, Toews writes, “many blessings went out from the estate of this man, one of the wealthiest Mennonites in Russia.”

## ‘Deeper magic’ to be found in Narnia

*The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Walt Disney Pictures/Walden Media, 2005, directed by Andrew Adamson. Rated PG for violent battle scenes and frightening moments.

This is a movie about how we learn to imagine, through the stories we tell, what it might mean to live by a “deeper magic,” by an alternative hopeful imagination in a dark and dangerous world.

The story, based on C. S. Lewis’s beloved children’s novel, begins during the bombing of London during World War II. The four Pevensie children—Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy—are evacuated to the country estate of an old professor. One day, while playing hide-and-seek, Lucy hides in a large wardrobe. As she makes her way through the coats, she accidentally steps into a world called Narnia. Lucy discovers that Narnia is in perpetual winter—with no Christmas—because it has been cursed by the evil White Witch (played perfectly by Tilda Swinton). As this wonderful story unfolds we discover both the insidious power of evil and all of creation’s powerful resistance to it.

The movie is marked by a delightful visual depiction of Narnia, splendid characterization (and casting), and believable computer-generated talking animals (from Cockney accented beavers to centaurs, wolves and, above all, Aslan the lion). Although Aslan is slightly less fearsome than we might have imagined, and the White Witch slightly less fearful, the movie is remarkably faithful to the book.

The only completely unbelievable moment in the movie is the jarring reply of Mr. Tumnus (a faun) to the White Witch’s question about why he has been captured: “I believe in a free Narnia.” Somehow this 21st century motif has crept into an otherwise magical movie about all times and all places.

Even so, this is not a simple allegory (see sidebar, page 8). Rather, it invites viewers to imagine Christ coming to a world of talking animals and becoming one of them. Inviting such pondering is the greatest strength of the movie. Rather than telling readers what characters are thinking and feeling, and rather than interpreting events through the voice of an omniscient narrator, the movie draws viewers

into an active process of pondering what’s going on. That’s why it is important not to focus simply on what the movie adds to or leaves out from the book.

For example, after the children meet Aslan for the first time the narrator in the book tells us, “People who have not been in Narnia sometimes think that a thing cannot be good and terrible at the same time.” Then, after Aslan

speaks to the children, the narrator tells us, “They now felt glad and quiet and it didn’t seem awkward to them to stand and say nothing.” These narrative interjections prove the point that, as film theorist Christian Metz wrote, “film will always be better at showing things, while books will always be better at saying them, and perhaps neither will ever break beyond this evenly matched contest.”

By showing us well, the movie encourages the viewer to sort out the

### Weapons inappropriate as Christmas gifts

Experiencing the story for the first time since my Anabaptist conversion eight years ago, I was disturbed by Father Christmas giving the four children weapons as gifts. Even little Lucy, who appears to be five years old, receives a dagger for her protection in the battle against the army of the White Witch.

Lewis fought in the trenches during World War I and developed [what has been called] a “muscular” Christianity. He brings that same militancy to his writings.

—Steve Carpenter

*Excerpted from a Third Way Cafe review (www.thirdway.com.).*



Walt Disney Pictures/Walden Media photo

most important questions. Stories that have the power to shape our lives engage our imaginations, and in doing so such classic tales function like many of the stories of Scripture. They invite reflection on the large worldview questions: Where are we? Who are we? What’s wrong? And can it be restored?

Through seeing the analogies between the movie world, the scriptural story and our world, viewers experience afresh the human struggle to come to terms with the conflict between good and evil, the hopeful anticipation that evil will not have the last word, and the affirmation that victory over evil may come in surprising ways.

As Aslan explains, sacrificial love—the “deeper magic”—happens when, upon the death of a “willing victim who had committed no treachery... death itself would start working backwards.”

—Gordon Matties

*The reviewer is associate professor of biblical and theological studies, Canadian Mennonite University, and keeper of the Movie Theology website (www.cmu.ca/library/faithfilm.html).*

## Sometimes Mr. Beaver is just a beaver: C.S. Lewis on writing for children

*The following excerpts by C.S. Lewis on writing for children were originally published after his death, in 1963, in *Of This and Other Worlds* by William Collins and Sons, as a series of essays on literary criticism. Among the passages, he debunks the myth that, with his Narnia tales, he was merely making the same arguments for Christianity he had been making in such adult non-fiction works as *Mere Christianity* palatable for children. One can only wonder—following the release of the first Narnia movie, and its attendant media attention—what Lewis would think of all the evangelical books flooding the market with such titles as *Finding God in the Land of Narnia*.*

“Some people seem to think that I began by asking myself how I could say something about Christianity to children; then fixed on the fairy tale as an instrument; then collected information about child-psychology and decided what age-group I’d write for; then drew up a list of basic Christian truths and hammered out ‘allegories’ to embody them. This is all pure moonshine....

“Everything began with images; a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, a magnificent lion. At first, there wasn’t anything Christian about them; that element pushed itself in of its own accord....

“I wrote fairy tales because the Fairy Story seemed the ideal Form for the stuff I had to say.”

“I hasten to add that it is almost impossible to make a story...of any kind, which the reader cannot turn into an allegory if he chooses. Everything in art and most things in Nature can be allegorized if you are determined to do it.... But I do not think that is how such stories were written nor how they ought to be read. The starting point is a supposal. ‘Suppose I found a country inhabited by dwarfs.’ ... Nothing less, but equally nothing more, is demanded.”

“I thought I saw how stories of this kind [*The Narnia Chronicles*] could steal past a certain inhibition which had paralyzed much of my own religion in childhood. Why did one find it so hard to feel as one was told one ought to feel about God or about the sufferings of Christ? I thought the chief reason was that one was told one ought to. An obligation can freeze feelings. And reverence itself did harm. The whole subject was associated with lowered voices; almost as if it were something medical. But supposing that by casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained-glass and



Lewis

Sunday school associations, one could make them for the first time appear in their real potency? Could one not steal past those watchful dragons? I thought one could.”

“[T]o enjoy reading about fairies—much more about giants and dragons—it is not necessary to believe in them. Belief is at best irrelevant; it may be a positive disadvantage.”

“No book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally [and often far more] worth reading at the age of fifty—except, of course, books of information.”  
—Compiled by **Ross W. Muir**

Atlanta, Ga.

## American Mennonite now a *Glamour* queen

**S**arah Thompson, the North American representative on Mennonite World Conference’s youth and young adult committee, AMIGOS, was named one of *Glamour* magazine’s “Top 10 College Women” in the U.S.

Besides being featured in the October issue of *Glamour*, Thompson won \$2,000 and a trip to New York City. The 21-year-old is a senior women’s studies and international studies major and student government president at Spelman College, a black liberal arts college for women in Atlanta. Known in the college community as an antiwar activist, she also recently interned at the U.S. Justice Department to, she said, “learn how to effect change from within the system.”

In the feature, Thompson, originally from Elkhart, Ind., said that “the act of forgiveness is essential to social change,” which reflects her Mennonite faith.

Thompson entered the contest on a whim at the urging of a friend. “I decided to apply for the *Glamour* contest because I wanted to affirm all women and men who are working for positive social change and doing anti-war work,” she said.



Thompson

“I didn’t think *Glamour* would want anything to do with a young activist Mennonite whose history taught her to question critically mainstream culture’s emphasis on physical appearance, make-up and fashion. I was surprised when I received the call,” she admitted.

Of her work serving the youth and young adults of North America through the AMIGOS committee, she said, “We are working to create a global network of young Anabaptists. If appearing in *Glamour* can help this cause, that’s great!”

—MWC release from media reports



**W**e have all seen the recent explosion of payday lenders like Money Mart popping up everywhere in our cities. But what are these places—including pawnshops and income tax refunders—all about? And what impact are they having on our communities?

They are sometimes called fringe banks. They will cash your cheques, give you an advance on your pay cheque, loan you some money if you leave your TV or stereo as collateral, or give you an advance on your income tax refund. But it will cost you. And while *Canadian Mennonite* readers likely access a line of credit for less than 7 percent, or pay 18 percent on a credit card, these places will charge you as much as 966 percent (annualized interest rate) on your loan from them.

While pawnshops have been around for centuries, the payday lenders are a new phenomenon. Well, actually not totally new, maybe just a dressed up version of something far more sinister. Years ago, Canadian legislators, in dealing with those who preyed on people in need of credit, made it illegal to charge more than 60 percent for loans. However, their targets then were loan sharks and organized crime. But today, that same law is being used to combat the fringe banks, accused of doing the same thing as the old Mafia. But the fringe banks are fighting the charges, saying they should be considered a legal and useful service.

On one hand, who can argue? People are flocking to them to get loans and cash cheques because fringe banks are open evenings and weekends, the people who work there don't ask as many questions, and because the customers feel they get treated with more respect at fringe banks.

But others use fringe banks because they do not have bank accounts or the necessary identification to cash cheques or open an account. As well, mainstream banks have abandoned their neighbourhoods and customers literally have no other option. In Winnipeg's North End, for example, bank branches fell from 20 to five, while fringe banks grew from one to 19.

## from Mafia to mainstream banking

The economic impact on a community like Winnipeg's North End is not small. Recent research found that, in 2003, Money Mart Canada remitted \$89 million in profit to its American parent, Dollar Financial Group. If that profit was earned evenly from its 300 Canadian outlets, it would amount to \$297,000 taken out of each community. The research also estimated that North End fringe bank consumers paid \$1.9 million for services that would have cost them \$216,992 at mainstream banks.

And the impact on individuals can be even more devastating! One customer in Winnipeg got a series of payday loans totalling \$1,500 and got swallowed by the "rollovers." Loan rollovers are when you can't pay the first loan plus interest come pay day, so you essentially take another loan for a new larger amount. If this happens a few times, the total skyrockets. In no time, with the high interest rates, this customer very quickly owed the company more than \$3,000, and was in a big heap of trouble.

Fringe banks are destructive to individuals, families, and the community as a whole. But if they are simply shut down, what financial services will people in these communities have left?

A coalition of community and faith

### Pontius' Puddle



groups—the North End Community Renewal Corporation, SEED Winnipeg, The Jubilee Fund and the Assiniboine Credit Union—is working with the Alternative Financial Services Coalition to create something that might help.

The idea is to create a place where people needing money can come and talk through their situation in a safe and comfortable setting, increase their comfort using electronic transactions with an onsite ATM machine, and also get an identity card. With a referral from one of many partnering community organizations, they can access small loans up to \$100. This system of character referencing will bypass the need for identification they don't have, credit checks and bank accounts, while still ensuring good character by relying on the word of the people who work daily in this community.

Will this solve the problem across the country, or even for all fringe bank clients in Winnipeg? No, not even close. But it will hopefully make a big difference for some people in this one community. The national impact will only be realized when public, political and legal pressure result in controlled rates at fringe banks or, better yet, relocation of mainstream banks or credit unions back into these abandoned communities.

It is simply unfair that those who have access to banks, computers, transportation and debit cards pay very little for their transactions, while those without those luxuries are forced to pay exorbitant fees.

—**Brendan Reimer**

*The author is the Prairies and Northern Territories regional coordinator for the Canadian Community Economic Development Network, based in Winnipeg.*

## Letters

## Being Mennonite not a cultural identity

Thank you for publishing Gerald Gerbrandt's article, "Who is a Mennonite?" as well as the inspiring stories in the Oct. 31 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*. I have thought about this question for years. My husband, Carlos Correa (a Colombian Mennonite), and I are youth pastors in Leamington, and one of our dreams is to open the eyes of our youths to the broader worldwide Mennonite Church.

My father is a Mennonite from Paraguay and my mother a Canadian Mennonite. Having grown up in Canada, as well as Lesotho, Bolivia and Chile, I like to think my eyes were

**This section is a forum for discussion and discernment. Letters express the opinion of the writer only, not necessarily the position of *Canadian Mennonite*, the five area churches or Mennonite Church Canada. Letters should address issues rather than criticizing individuals and include contact information. We will send copies of letters referring to other parties to them to provide an opportunity to respond in a future issue if their views have not already been printed in an earlier letter. Please send letters to be considered for publication to [letters@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:letters@canadianmennonite.org) or to Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON, N2L 6H7, "Attn: Letter to the Editor." Letters may be edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines.**

opened at a young age to the many faces of the Mennonite Church around the world.

My husband and I moved to Ontario in 2001, in order to begin working as youth pastors, and we have had some disappointing experiences at a variety of MC Eastern Canada events that can be traced back to this important question.

One experience took place at a youth event called "Leaders' Adventure." We have had wonderful experiences

at this annual event, but this particular year was different. A skit was performed on the question, "Who is a Mennonite?" I was expecting to take some ideas from the skit home, but was soon disappointed. The skit began with the all too familiar game of "What's your last name? Mine is Zehr." "No way, mine is Zehr too!"

I was sitting beside one of our youths from Rwanda, and my husband was also in the room. Both of these

MELISSA MILLER



Family Ties

**T**hey arrived bearing flowers, cards, chocolate, hugs and congratulations. "You make such a great couple," they said. They offered prayers of thanksgiving for our commitment and long union, and asked for God's blessing on our love. We were warmed, encouraged and strengthened by their well wishes. The afterglow was much like what we experienced at our wedding.

The occasion was our 29th wedding anniversary. Since it fell on the 29th of the month, we thought it merited a big celebration, the one we missed on our 25th because of a move halfway across the country. So we threw a party and invited lots of people. Some of our guests had known us for decades. Others were new friends whom we've known less than five years. We were overwhelmed by their kind words and affirmation.

Staying married can be difficult. The stresses of life have a way of derailing commitments and straining relationships. Popular culture promotes values of individualism and self-indulgence as preferable to fidelity and discipline. Our marriage too has experienced significant challenges. Sometimes I think it's survived these decades out of stubbornness as much as anything. After the party, I humbly offered grateful prayers for our enduring union and the community support we've known. What stayed with me was how much we gained from other people's affirmation of us, of our marriage. It's easier to stay married if you feel like others are behind you, rooting for you.

This turned my thinking to other people who might benefit from such a celebration. For example, what about those who have never married? When do they get the

## Sharing the love

**After the party, I humbly offered grateful prayers for our enduring union and the community support we've known.**

outpouring of support that couples do during anniversary parties? Maybe we should have an occasion to gather with those in our family and friendship circles and say, "Congratulations! You've lived 30 years as a single adult. I've witnessed the way in which you've risen to the challenges and savoured the pleasures of living as a single person. You've done it with grace and good will.

You're a joy to be with. I look to you for inspiration. I admire your strength and commitment. I celebrate you!"

What about widowed people? Certainly the message would need to be delivered with sensitivity because their marital status includes a significant loss. Reminders may touch tender heart strings. A party may be unwelcome. Silence, though, affords such individuals with little chance to recall their loved one, and the ups and downs of the marriage they knew. A word of appreciation and encouragement for how they are living as singles offers support, particularly helpful if they do live alone.

What about folks who are divorced? They can feel quite isolated and ashamed in church communities. Caring friends or family members may experience their own grief and distress at the end of the marriage, which needs to be respected. Divorced individuals, however, receive too few messages of compassionate, supportive affirmation for the strength and dignity they demonstrate in their post-married lives.

"If one member is honoured, all rejoice together..." (*I Corinthians 12:26b*). Might these encouraging words be applied in your setting?

*The author is a family life consultant, pastoral counsellor and author from Winnipeg.*

people are Mennonites, yet their last names are not Zehr or Brubacher or Thiessen.

I also attended a young adult exchange weekend in Toronto with some young adults from Leamington. Our group spent the weekend with a Muslim group of young adults. A Muslim imam gave a concise lecture on the history and core beliefs of Islam. Then came the disappointment. A Mennonite pastor began to ramble on about quilts, Mennonite “food,” and how the word “radish” has the same root as the word “radical.” The lecture was not only incoherent to us Mennonite young adults, but obviously to the Muslim young adults as well,

who a minute before had been asking us if we came to Toronto in horses and buggies.

Our group from Leamington was embarrassed by the way we had been represented. How could we, in this day and age, when most of the Mennonite world population lives in Africa, represent ourselves so poorly, using last names and foods to explain who we are? How could we explain our core beliefs and history so poorly to those who may never encounter Mennonites again?

As a result of these experiences, I appreciate the stories and article in *Canadian Mennonite*. We all urgently need to open our eyes and stop pretending that being Mennonite is a

cultural identity.

—Angelika Guenther Correa,  
Leamington, Ont.

## The land is the fifth gospel

I have to admit, travelling to Israel wasn't exactly on my radar screen. I had heard a few enthusiastic reports from friends who had travelled there, but having seen pictures I really felt like I'd “been there, done that...” and I didn't need the T-shirt!

However, the opportunity came to travel to Israel as the recipient of the Arnold Cressman Scholarship from

Continued on page 12

MATTHEW BAILEY DICK



Shoes for your feet

**D**on't deny that it happens to you. There you are, walking along the sidewalk in the middle of winter. Your winter wear—bulky coat, toque, homemade mitts—doesn't suggest that you are anything other than a regular pedestrian doing a regular errand.

Then something very irregular happens. Patches of ice tend to sneak up on you in the most unexpected ways. Most inconsiderate, that ice.

And so the flailing and flapping begin. First, your left foot shoots up into the air, and your right foot compensates in a most incomprehensible way by crashing into a nearby garbage can. Then your right arm jerks toward your mouth, which in turn emits a whooping “ayeeeeiii” that you're certain must be audible from at least three blocks away. All of this is accompanied by a massive arc created by the bag you are clutching in your left hand, which first bonks you on the head and then, in the latter moments of the feat, finds its way to your groin. Amazingly, your whole body then makes a complete 360-degree turn and comes to a stop about 10 feet from where you began. Your chest is heaving with a mixture of terror and exhilaration.

While we talk about “slipping on the ice” as an accident, what happens when you strap on a pair of ice skates and experience the same sort of incident in an arena with judges watching? We call it figure skating, provided that all the moves are done with elegance, rhythm and an unconquerable smile.

Is peacemaking more like slipping on the sidewalk or completing a well-rehearsed routine at the arena? Such analogies might seem ludicrous at first, but take a moment to consider the complex peace ministry “motions” you experience on an individual or congregational level: times of gliding with ease, chaotic sprawls, seemingly endless turning, flailing and grasping for sure footing,

## Sliding and skating for peace

Is peacemaking more like slipping on the sidewalk or completing a well-rehearsed routine at the arena?

and moments of grace when the Spirit carries you forward.

In the form of a sidewalk spill, the journey of peacemaking involves very unpredictable terrain: projects fizzle out, coalitions falter, or letters garner no response from the government. But the advantage is that snow banks cushion your fall when things don't go well: the Holy Spirit undergirds you, other peace-minded folks support you, or Scripture buoys your heart.

In the form of a figure skating routine, the justice journey sometimes involves being all alone with too-high expectations: the need to deal with overwhelming injustices or the loneliness of speaking for nonviolence in a culture of might-makes-right. But the advantage is that sharpened skates can take you incredibly far: the power of a well-organized peace witness or the effectiveness of e-mail communication.

Of course, the slipping and sliding always become clearer in retrospect. I was once on the planning committee for a peace conference, and when I think back to those planning meetings—our long and convoluted discussions, organizational mishaps, and seemingly accidental successes—the whole thing now seems like a colossal and stunning manoeuvre that really couldn't have happened.

Then I think of the mystery of God's presence as we proclaim peace and work for justice. Psalm 37:30-31 talks about how “*the mouths of the righteous utter wisdom, and their tongues speak justice. The law of their God is in their hearts; their steps do not slip.*” So that's where it all starts: a vision for justice in our hearts, a pair of skates, and the grace of God.

*The author is the husband of one, father of two, and half-time pastor of many at Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont.*

**Land** *From page 11*

TourMagination. Then the way opened up for my wife and I to travel there together, and I couldn't refuse the opportunity.

Having spent 10 days in Israel, here is why I've become a passionate advocate of travel to Israel. It was clarified in a quote from our tour guide a few minutes after arriving. He quoted Eusebius from the 4th century, who said "the land is the fifth gospel." I experienced the truth of that over and over again while on our brief pilgrimage. There are some things about our faith that are best understood when you travel the countryside, and put together the story in the land in which it was birthed.

So much comes together when you are there, like being on the Sea of Galilee and hearing how storms blow up without warning because of a valley on one side and a desert on the other. The disciples were caught more than once in a sudden outburst. Across the sea is the cliff where Jesus allowed the pigs to go when the demons had been exorcised from the Gadarene demoniac.

Or like travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho in the withering August heat, and seeing the harsh and barren countryside where the man travelling in Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan was beaten up. Our tour guide offered, in passing, that travelling alone wasn't done. God is concerned about us even when our poor choices get us into trouble. Good point.

Insight came in short bits as well. I found myself choking back tears when walking the *Via Dolorosa* in Jerusalem, the way of the cross that Jesus took in his last hours, and realizing that he carried the wooden beam uphill.

Listening to the stories of people who live out their faith in a land of such tension and violence was a huge learning experience in itself. We experienced a bit of that as security guards refused to let our van pass a checkpoint as we headed to the airport. Our guides put up with this hassle constantly because they are Palestinian.

Our conversation with Father Chacour, as he works at building bridges of peace between religious groups, was inspiring.

Reading how Christian Peacemaker Teams was understood in a local paper brought a renewed appreciation of the risks they take bringing peace.

If the land is the "fifth gospel," it brought me a deeper understanding of my faith and its context. I left renewed, grateful and profoundly enriched by my encounter.

—**Jim Loepp-Thiessen**

*The writer is pastor of The Gathering, an emerging MC Eastern Canada congregation in Kitchener, Ont.*

### **Focus on language helps clear perspective**

It appears to be important, if not necessary, to have a position on so many issues in our church. I must confess I have been ducking the ubiquitous issues that seem to flutter thick as leaves in an autumn gust of wind. I am, however, working diligently at reforming my language. Focusing on my language helps me direct the perspective I allow to influence my actions. The questions I relentlessly apply to my language choices include: "Is this expression blaming or learning?" and, "Is this a rigid, intolerant expression of my perspective [usually fear-based] or is it compassionate?"

This process doesn't appear to have a completion date. It isn't at all like landscaping where, even if the work takes a long time, at some point you decide it is essentially as you like it. For me, this process is much more like a journey in my kayak. Each day is so completely unique that the only connecting thread is a continual move toward a destination. One day, you have to overcome the weather; the next, it might be your equipment and your body, both of which you rely on. If not that, it might mean overcoming the inner journey through fear and loneliness to pure joy. Like the kayak journey, being intentional about language is a process of continually overcoming and learning.

The church, like us, is an organism, a living thing. It is not an institution with immovable anchor statements that require our continual, aggressive defence. Rather than focusing on a vigorous defence of the various positions we have chosen, I would recommend more of an ongoing evaluation of our

self-expression. How we choose to interact and communicate is the true reflection of our values, our statement of faith, if you will.

What does our self-expression sound like? Listen to the words we sing. Is the God of our songs a warrior God who invades and reigns supreme, or the God of compassion who chose me even before I had opportunity to choose? Is the God of our conversation a master delineator who clearly segregates between a life situation deemed acceptable and another that isn't, or the God who clarifies: "Love your neighbour as yourself"?

Simple axioms inform complex situations. Are we learning or blaming? Are we compassionate or intolerant? Let's sing "God is Love" one more time. Let's notice, there is no "Yes, but..." in any of the verses.

—**Rudy Kehler, Hope, B.C.**

### **'Shish kebab' to Geez**

Someone once told me that having a security alarm system in the church made it feel unwelcome. I said to myself "shish kebab."

One time I was collecting money in the foyer after the service for a church event. Someone reminded me of the story of Jesus in the temple. Again I said to myself "shish kebab."

Someone once said that you shouldn't buy anything for Christmas. Once again I said "shish kebab."

After reading the column, "Six more blasphemies, and counting," by Will Braun and Aiden Enns in the Nov. 14 *Canadian Mennonite*, all I could say was "shish kebab."

Now I am thinking maybe I should start a magazine and call it *Shish Kebab*. But who would read a magazine with that kind of name? Shish Kebab would be a name better suited for my new restaurant.

But really, guys, I say forge ahead in your endeavour with *Geez* magazine. But please remember the "shish kebab" factor. Will you be looking for blasphemies in your new magazine and expanding on that? Or will you find what is good and positive in the church and beyond, and make that the main focus? My point being: Look for it and you will find it, but then what?

—**Gerald Warkentin, Winnipeg**

Waterloo, Ont.

## Families of missing CPTers make media appeals

**M**ore than a month after their loved ones were kidnapped at gunpoint in Baghdad, Iraq, family members of the four Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) workers have appealed to the kidnappers for their release in the Iraqi media.

During Christmas week, the families of Canadians James Loney, 41, of Toronto, and Harmeet Singh Sooden, 32, formerly of Quebec, Briton Norman Kember, 74, and American Tom Fox, 54, made impassioned appeals in Arabic in several newspapers and on Iraqi radio. The appeals called on anyone with information regarding the hostages or their captors to contact a phone number or e-mail address. The messages were direct and heartfelt.

“A month has passed since our loved ones—Norman, James, Harmeet and Tom—were kidnapped in Iraq,” said one. “In this time, Iraq has held elections for a constitutionally elected government. This is a new start for Iraq and Iraqis to take control of their own destiny. It is a time for new starts.”

Another noted that the CPTers were “all working as activists for the sake of peace and to aid Iraqi people. A number of religious figures in the Arab and Islamic world have talked about the noble work which they are doing for the sake of Iraq and called for their immediate release. We also appeal for their safe return to us....”

As of press time on Jan. 3, there was no word of anyone making contact about the whereabouts or fate of the CPT workers.

The previously unknown Swords of Righteousness Brigade abducted the four on Nov. 26, and threatened to kill them if all 16,000 Iraqis being held by U.S. and British forces in Iraq were not released by Dec. 8. That deadline was then moved back to Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day. Since then, those holding the CPT workers have not been heard from.

—**Ross W. Muir**



CPTnet photo

**Harmeet Sooden Singh is pictured in this undated photo at a Palestine Human Rights Campaign rally in Auckland, New Zealand. Following time at McGill University in Montreal, Singh moved to New Zealand, where he was studying to be a teacher.**

Amman, Jordan

### CPT condemns continued American presence in Iraq

**M**embers of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) working in Iraq and Jordan reacted swiftly to U.S. President George W. Bush's Dec. 18 address about the war in Iraq, including his comments that more sacrifice could be expected, although the Iraqi election was “a landmark day in the history of liberty.”

Reached by telephone in the Iraqi team's Baghdad apartment, Maxine Nash noted how the war has affected the services on which Iraqis rely. “I tried to watch President Bush's speech,” she said, “but I couldn't; there was no electricity.”

Citing the failure to rebuild basic civilian infrastructure, the thousands of Iraqi detainees in U.S. detention centres, and tens of thousands of civilian casualties and injuries, CPT has asserted that the United States and coalition forces have failed to bring peace and true democracy to Iraq. Yet, in his address, the president insisted that the way to defeat what he calls terrorism and make way for democracy is to continue to go “on the offensive.”

Sheila Provencher, 33, who left Baghdad for Amman three weeks earlier,

said, “I noticed that the president framed his argument for the war almost entirely in terms of what he called the ‘global terrorist movement’ that will attack America wherever they can....”

“If he fails to understand the true nature and grievances of the nationalist insurgency—namely, that they perceive themselves as fighting for the freedom of their country—he will never understand that the very presence of U.S. troops exacerbates the violence,” Provencher concluded.

CPT has worked in Iraq for more than three years, focusing on the plight of Iraqi detainees and their families, the effects of U.S. and Iraqi offensives in civilian areas, and the development of Iraqi peace and human rights groups.

Instead of further offensives, which only increase the violence and chaos, CPTers currently living among ordinary Iraqis in Baghdad recommend the U.S. state its intention to withdraw all U.S. troops immediately (beginning with urban areas), stop U.S. bombings, and provide sufficient funds to the Iraqi people to rebuild basic infrastructure.

CPT further urges an end to illegal detentions and torture in U.S. facilities, and a fair and speedy judicial process for detainees. It also urges that the U.S. government employ diplomatic means to pressure the new Iraqi government to take corresponding actions regarding detainees held in Iraqi detention facilities. —CPT release

Himmeh, Jordan

# MCC, Habitat for Humanity bring hope to Jordan

**G**iacomo “Jack” Hijazin is something of a celebrity in the northern Jordanian town of Himmeh, which has received so much assistance from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) that a group of Christian journalists from the United States visiting the country last November began calling it “that Mennonite village.”

Hijazin is MCC’s program coordinator for Jordan, administering support for a girls school and school for the deaf; he works out of the Middle East office in Amman.

“I know that my work is raising a lot of questions [among Jordanian Muslims],” he says, “and they ask, ‘Why is he doing that?’ I am a real, live witness to Jesus without telling them, ‘You are wrong; I am right.’”

Himmeh is a poor valley

town of 2,500 slowly being transformed by MCC work. Several miles to the north, the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights rise like a fortress. On top of the hill just south of town is Gadara, the place where Jesus met two men

living in cemeteries and drove the demons out of them into a herd of pigs (Matthew 8:28-34). To the west lies the Sea of Galilee and the cliffs over which the demon-possessed pigs were driven.

But in early November residents of Himmeh were helping put up bracing for forms onto which concrete would be poured. The concrete pad will form the roof of a solid new house under construction. The house is much like the 99 others built by Habitat for Humanity and MCC in this town of curious and hospitable Muslims.

In addition to partnering with Habitat, MCC pays the salaries of several teachers in the village school and is helping renovate the building. Himmeh is also one of five Jordanian communities

in which MCC provides micro-credit loans totalling \$100,000.

With upwards of 20 percent of the town’s young adults unemployed, MCC—through its Global Family Program—has provided scholarships for some to attend Jordanian universities. All successfully completed their first year and are back for a second.

Himmeh residents who wish to receive MCC’s scholarships, new houses or micro-credit loans must first apply through the local benevolent society—what MCC calls a community-based organization.

The society’s president, who is elected to that position, works closely with Hijazin to decide which applicants should receive assistance.

“Because of the Crusades, it is important to restore good relations with Muslims,” Hijazin says. “I am Arab, but I can say, ‘I still love you.’ I’ve met a lot of people who would like to be Christian, but it is against the law and [if they became Christian] it would break up families. Some [who became Christian] have to leave the country for safety.”

—**Everett J. Thomas** for Meetinghouse



Photo by Everett J. Thomas

**In November, Merriam, left, a widow, and her son Issa hosted MCC’s “Jack” Hijazin and Christian journalists in her Habitat for Humanity-built home in Himmeh, Jordan. Merriam’s two young adult children (not pictured) receive university scholarships through MCC.**

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Ibillin, Galilee

## Standing together for the Prince of Peace

**W**hen King George II was in the Covent Garden audience of the first London performance of Handel's *Messiah* in 1743, a dramatic moment came at the close of Part II, which features the rousing "Hallelujah Chorus." When he heard the words from Revelation, "The kingdom of this world...is become the kingdom of our Lord," the king rose to his feet and remained standing until the end of the number.

On a Saturday morning in December, in Father Elias Chacour's Church of the Sermon on the Mount in Ibillin, the newly installed icons in the sanctuary echoed the melodic strains of this favourite oratorio by George Frideric Handel. On the bus from Jerusalem, our group of international Christian teachers wondered aloud what would happen when the choir approached the end of Part II. What about the tradition of standing for the musical proclamation from John's scriptural reference. Would an audience of Jews and Muslims also rise to their feet?

The 25 players in the HaKibbutzit HaKamerit, a small symphonic group of Jews from kibbutzes around Israel, accompanied the 45-voice Galil Elyon Choir of Northern Galilee—also all Jews. With an audience of 1,000 people comprised of local Palestinian Arabs (mostly Muslims) and other Israeli Jews from the region all sitting together (plus a few Christians that included our busload), the glorious story of the promised Messiah was performed.

It was the third time that Chacour had organized such an event, a musical attraction in a part of this ancient land that had never seen or heard such music. He crowded the space with Arabs and Jews, Druze (an Islamic sect) and Christians—as performers and patrons. It seemed to represent the whole philosophy of peacemaking that Chacour, a three-time Nobel peace prize nominee and tireless champion of peace and reconciliation between Jews and Palestinians, lives and works for with his thousands of students. "We don't

talk about peace," he so often reminds our visiting groups. "We try to live peace, every day."

As the conductor waved his two groups through the soaring musical passages so loved by audiences around the world, we were getting closer to the end of Part II, the "Hallelujah Chorus": "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." The audience gave rapt attention. Then came the passage, "The kingdom of this world..."

We watched, not wanting to be the first to stand.

"...is become the kingdom of our Lord."

No one moved.

The basses took up the line, "And he shall reign for ever and ever." And, fugue-like, the other voices followed. Still no one moved.

"King of kings, and Lord of lords..."

The audience did not stand. The passage came to an end, the conductor's baton dropped to his side. Suddenly the audience exploded into wild applause, shouts of "encore" rang out, and the performers grinned in

appreciation.

The "Hallelujah Chorus" turned out to be the encore selection performed at the end of the oratorio to calm the enthusiastic applause. The conductor turned and invited the audience to sing along—and they did, heartily, in this new Melkite Catholic church! Israeli Jews sang, "King of kings." Israeli Muslims sang, "Lord of lords." All were singing together, "Forever and ever. Hallelujah!"

The old custom initiated by King George II was almost certainly not known by most in attendance who had never seen such a performance before. But the impact of the Chacour experiment was working—Don't just talk peace. Live it. Together! Muslims and Jews and Christians and Druze. It is the message of the Prince of Peace.

Together! It's what they all stand for.

—Glenn Edward Witmer

*The author lives in Jerusalem and is affiliated with the Israel Ministries of Mennonite Church Canada Witness.*



Photo by Kay Youngblood

**Father Elias Chacour introduces a performance of Handel's *Messiah* at his newly opened Church of the Sermon on the Mount in Ibillin, Galilee, late last year.**

Mthatha, South Africa

## AIDS and Africa: What can two people do?

**T**hirty-one year-old Zolisa is thin, has little energy, and is gasping for every breath. She holds her two-year-old son close. Zolisa, her mother and a younger sister survive on about \$35 a month.

Zolisa is hesitant to talk to the volunteer AIDS counsellors that come to visit. They are strangers to her. At times Zolisa is in tears, but she does say this, "I met Mama Mawela [a locally trained volunteer AIDS counsellor]; she is helping me. I told her that I am sick, and she brought food parcels and medicines. Sometimes I tell her I am powerless [have no energy] and she brings me food boosters."

Two weeks later, Zolisa breathed her last and left her son in the care of his grandmother and aunt.

An estimated 38 million people worldwide live with it. Twenty-seven million—nearly the population of Canada—have died from it. In South Africa alone, 1.1 million children are orphans because of AIDS.

But the daunting statistics have not stopped Brian Dyck and Lynell Bergen from trying to help. The two Mennonite Church Canada Witness/Mennonite Mission Network-supported workers have ministered in and around the impoverished city of Mthatha since 1999. Trained as pastors, Bergen and Dyck have turned their gifts to teaching and simply walking the journey with those whose spirits need lifting while their bodies are failing.

Denial of the disease is prevalent, and the reluctance to talk about it is rampant. But refusal to disclose one's infection status eliminates the possibility of available, if meager, social assistance.

So Bergen and Dyck try to convince people to share their AIDS-HIV stories with others, both in local congregations of African Initiated Churches (AIC) and through home-based care groups. Begun by AIC, the care groups provide training for local volunteers in counselling and health care for people living with AIDS.

Nothobile Mboniswa is a volunteer with the Laphumilanga care group

in Dutywa. "When someone calls me, I start off by praying with them," she says. "I tell them that being HIV-positive is not the end of the world."

Such acknowledgment is a breakthrough. Just being able to talk to a safe person lightens the load for many sufferers. Helping people have healthy conversations about terminal illness is where Bergen and Dyck begin because once a person living with AIDS is exposed, they can quickly become a pariah in the community.

This is where the church has a responsibility, and also an advantage over the government. "The church," says Dyck, "can speak with a moral authority that no government can."



Photo by Lynell Bergen

**Nothobile Mboniswa (right) with a PWA (person with AIDS) who has decided to seek counselling.**

We can also speak about hope that goes beyond the present realities that government cannot really offer. The church also has a responsibility to speak in this situation. If the church is not speaking about AIDS in this context, then the church is not being the church."

But preaching about AIDS is still uncomfortable for preachers across all



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denominations. Many pastors feel they would be criticized, or even fired by their congregations, for speaking out about AIDS. "They need to, though," says Dyck, referring to an Actuarial Society of South Africa study that reveals 70 percent of deaths in the 15-49 age range are AIDS-related.

Of their work in Lesotho and South Africa, Dyck says, "I think it is important for us to support those who are doing the work of the church.... We can do small things like provide teaching resources.... We can provide encouragement to those who visit the sick and the dying, in the form of material support—a bit of food, a blanket or two to use for their family or to share with those who are lacking. We can pray for them as they carry out the work of the church."

—**Dan Dyck**, with reports from **Brian Dyck** and **Lynell Bergen**

*Brian Dyck and Lynell Bergen returned to Canada late last year for several months of North American ministry before they complete their term of service. They welcome invitations to visit churches and talk about their ministry in South Africa.*



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Kamuli, Uganda

## Teachers for a night

**O**n any given Saturday night, Margaret Taima and Stanley Wankona are likely to be two of the thousands huddled over radios in this poor rural area of Uganda. But this Saturday night, Taima and Wankona—both HIV-positive—have flicked the radios off and travelled to the Radio Empanga studio to give testimonies of their survival.

They are guests on the station's weekly AIDS-awareness broadcast sponsored and hosted by the local non-governmental organization AIDS Education Group for Youth (AEGY), whose only source of funding is Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). The 90-minute radio program is one of the few reliable sources of information on HIV/AIDS for many in the region, which has a population of at least three million and a high illiteracy rate. That might help explain why Leo Mmerewoma, AEGY's coordinator and the program's host, has become a bit of a local celebrity.

Mmerewoma and his co-host, George Nnaku, a clinical officer at a regional health clinic, present a new AIDS-related theme each week.

Wankona is 45 and has nine children. He says he tested positive in 1990, but didn't believe it until a second test recorded the same result.

His wife has tested negative, and they survive as peasant farmers.

Taima is 40 and has six children. She tested HIV-positive in 1994 and her AIDS-infected husband died in 2000. These days she toils in her garden and raises pigs, goats and cows.

Both cite difficulties in earning enough money for their children's school fees as a problem. Taima, though, is optimistic about her future; she speculates that she will live another 50 years.

Asked for their advice for those living with HIV/AIDS, they say: be strong, stay active, eat a balanced diet, keep your house clean, brush your teeth regularly, avoid alcohol and smoking, and pray to God.

Since 1993, AEGY has fought the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Busoga region of Uganda, and responded to the needs of people suffering from the disease's grip. A recent survey by Uganda's Ministry of Health estimates at least 800,000 adults are infected with HIV, representing a 7 percent national prevalence rate.

"I am always overwhelmed when people in these little villages have listened to the program," says Mmerewoma. "Many of them don't have phones or electricity, but they can hear the show on a friend's radio."

In 2004, the show was voted the best program by Radio Empanga listeners, proof of its popularity and effectiveness among the region's youth.

—**Justin Moresco**



**AEGY coordinator Leo Mmerewoma, left, helps his guests Margaret Taima and Stanley Wankona get comfortable during the weekly radio program in Kamuli, Uganda, dedicated to informing people about AIDS. Taima and Wankona were on the show to share their testimony of how they are dealing with AIDS.**

Photo by LaShunda Clark

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

## Mennonite evangelist still in prison

**M**ennonite and other agencies around the world are again seeking the release of the last of the imprisoned Vietnam Mennonite Church leaders dubbed the "Mennonite Six." Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite Church Canada and MC USA have contacted Vietnamese government leaders and various diplomatic personnel.

Pham Ngoc Thach, 34, will complete his two-year prison sentence in March, but supporters are hoping the government might release him before the Jan. 29 Tet New Year celebration, a time when Vietnam traditionally grants amnesty to prisoners. Observers say this would be an

opportunity for Vietnam to show its goodwill; they note that the government has taken concrete steps this past year in permitting greater religious expression.

Thach was arrested after an incident in

March 2004, when church personnel attempted to report undercover agents who had been harassing them. He and five others were convicted by a court of interfering with persons carrying out their official duties and sentenced to varying prison times.

Church leaders in Vietnam believe the prison terms were intended to punish the church leaders for some of their other activities. Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang had been documenting and publicizing police harassment of some house churches. Thach videotaped some of these activities.

The five already released from prison all have ongoing health problems, some of which are related to their incarceration. Brothers Nhan and Nghia, released in December 2004, are only able to do light work. Pastor Nguyen Van Phuong, released last March, is dealing with a fibroid

tumour on his head. The mental health of Li Thi Hong Lien has improved significantly, and she is again able to smile. Quang, who had health problems before this latest imprisonment, is seeking medical treatment; he again gives leadership to the house church in his home in Ho Chi Minh City's District Two and has travelled to central Vietnam to encourage the churches.

—MWC/Vietnamese Ministries release

Washington, D.C.

## Alternative service on the minds of U.S. Anabaptist leaders

**A**t its annual meeting last month, the Council of Moderators and General Secretaries of Anabaptist denominations continued discussions with members of the U.S. Congress and the Selective Service in Washington regarding alternative service. The meeting followed a consultation on alternative service sponsored by the council in March in Elgin, Ill.

Richard Flahavan and Cassandra Costley from the Selective Service System met with the group.

"When you read the signs, you can see there's really no secret plan to fire up the draft. You can all be confident it's not going to happen," Flahavan said.

However, Costley said she has had numerous meetings with various religious groups to work out guidelines for alternative service if a draft is implemented.

Not everyone is as certain a draft will not occur. "I think we have all the elements of a perfect storm, and all we need is a butterfly flutter," said J.E. McNeil, executive director of the Center on Conscience and War. McNeil said she believes President George W. Bush might implement a draft if he thought it would pass through Congress.

Theo Sither, lobbyist for the centre, added, "No one in the administration is talking about a draft, but people in the Pentagon are."

That is one reason why McNeil believes it is important to continue to

educate and provide alternatives for people faced with the possibility of a draft.

The council meeting included discussion on the development of a contingency plan for a military draft. Some of the issues raised were alternative service placements under church agencies and non-church agencies, support for registrants, staying in relationship with soldiers, relationship of the churches to the government and Selective Service, and collaboration with other historic peace churches and the Center on Conscience and War.

Council members also met with Richard Cizik, vice-president for governmental affairs for the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), who reviewed a publication outlining seven principles for Christian political engagement.

Many council members later reported prayer in the presence of political officials and their staff was very meaningful, as it brought new light to the cooperation between individuals and government who work together for change on many of the world's social justice concerns.

—MC U.S.A. release



**Thach**

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Waterloo, Ont.

## Global solidarity needed to address massive disasters

**R**on Mathies opened the inaugural Rodney and Lorna Sawatsky Visiting Scholar Lecture at Conrad Grebel University College on Dec. 7 with words of commendation for the late Rodney Sawatsky. “This is a celebration of Rod’s work, and a lament for his death,” Mathies said. “He was an astute and compassionate administrator and scholar, committed to the mission of the church, a visionary who has seen what others cannot see, and offering leadership to get there.”

Mathies—who served as Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) director for nine years, administering a budget of \$100 million and projects in 60 countries—spoke of two significant events over the past year: the tsunami that hit southern Asia on Dec. 26, 2004, and the peace accord signed in Sudan last spring.

Noting the unprecedented support from around the world for the victims of the tsunami, Mathies mused, “Does this represent a new solidarity, a new kind of global community?” He invited his listeners to make mental comparisons of the tsunami to the hurricanes in the United States last fall.

Before the tsunami disaster, the province of Aceh in Indonesia was just at or above the “development” line—one step above “poverty” and two above “survival” on a Quality of Life Index. After the tsunami, it took three months to rise above the “survival” line; it will take another 20 years to get back to where the region was before the tsunami struck, he predicted.

Mathies noted that the media coverage of the tsunami disaster was immense, but little was said of the ongoing civil war in Aceh. Ironically, the tsunami actually hastened the peace process, he said, suggesting that natural disasters and human conflict sometimes intersect in a volatile mix of interfaith—Muslim and Christian—issues, where there is fear and mistrust on both sides.

As for the civil war in Sudan, as is so often the case, oil figured largely in the conflict. It was all flowing north,

leaving the southern part of the country disenfranchised, impoverished and seeking independence. The peace accord brings huge optimism that something new has begun, Mathies said, but it will be six years before a vote on independence can take place. Still, with the development of a new parliament there is excitement about being able to start over, he said.

In his travels in the region, Mathies noted a Muslim motto on the wall: “God never sleeps, God never makes mistakes.” He also asked an Anglican bishop in Sudan whether his people don’t sometimes ask why they suffer? The bishop’s answer was simple, Mathies reported: “We don’t ask why we suffer; we only ask how long must we suffer.”

Reflecting on the intersection of war, disease and natural disasters when they occur on a massive scale, Mathies asked his audience to ponder three questions:

- Will a level of global solidarity develop to address the scandal of so much suffering?
- Can the civil, public and private sectors in society work more closely together, so that neither governments nor the military will take over the

### Sawatsky Visiting Scholar fast facts

- The Rodney and Lorna Sawatsky Visiting Scholar Lecture was established to honour Lorna’s involvement and Rod’s tenure at Conrad Grebel University College.
- Rodney Sawatsky came to Grebel in 1974, teaching history, religious studies, Mennonite studies, and peace and conflict studies courses. He was academic dean from 1974 to 1989 and president from 1989 to 1994.
- The Sawatsky Visiting Scholar is awarded to renowned scholars, practitioners and performers whose expertise in their field represents a wide range of interests to the Grebel community.
- Former Mennonite Central Committee director Ron Mathies is the inaugural Sawatsky Visiting Scholar.

humanitarian enterprise?

- What is the future of the humanitarian enterprise?

In conclusion, Mathies said, “The challenge is immense; the response is a moral imperative.”

—**Maurice Martin**

### News briefs

#### Ten Thousand Villages wins Green Business Award

Ten Thousand Villages, the oldest and largest fair trade home décor and gift retailer in the United States, received the first ever People’s Choice Award for Green Business of the Year from Coop America at the San Francisco Green Festival, Nov. 4. This award recognizes Ten Thousand Villages as a leader among businesses across the country committed to social and environmental responsibility. “We receive this award on behalf of the artisans who, within very difficult circumstances, create the beautiful handcrafted gifts and home décor our customers find at Ten Thousand Villages stores across the country,” said CEO Paul Myers. “We also re-

ceive this award on behalf of our many customers who expect us to provide gifts created in a healthy, green manner.” More than 70 green and fair trade companies that are members of Coop America’s Business Network were nominated for for the award. —MCC release

#### Former missionary to India dies

Former missionary to India Lois (Bartel) Dyck passed away on Dec. 8 in Bluffton, Ohio. Born in Nokomis, Sask., she married Paul Dyck and the two served in India from 1956 to 1968. She is survived by four children and 10 grandchildren.

—Bluffton First Mennonite Church release

Kitchener, Ont.

## ‘Peace Out!’ Youths extend the peace of Christ

Junior youths from 33 different southern Ontario Mennonite churches gathered at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, for an exciting time of worship, learning and fun on Nov. 13. This gathering was the 17th Junior Youth Breakaway, an annual event put on by MC Eastern Canada. Coordinated by Sandi Hannigan, the theme this year was “Peace Out: Extending the peace of Jesus Christ.”

Throughout the day, hundreds of youths in Grades 6, 7 and 8 explored the peace of Christ in a variety of ways along with their sponsors.

Everyone first joined together in worship. Jen Hoffman led singing, Heather Gallian staged an exciting bubble gum chewing competition, and the junior youths were introduced to the theme through Scripture reading by Adrienne Janzen and Matt Horlings. Matthew Bailey-Dick then spoke about “Salt, fire, and two Martins,” inspiring the group to get excited about being peacemakers.

Afterwards, the youths broke into smaller groups, taking turns playing games, performing music and drama, and making art. At each activity centre the youths looked at peace through a unique lens, in an effort to reach the active, musical, expressive and creative young people. The activity centre leaders (many of whom were former members of the MC Eastern Canada Vacation Bible School troupe) had tons of energy—almost enough to keep up with the junior youths—and a pizza lunch kept everybody going.

Everyone reconvened for a brief closing worship, during which more songs were sung and answers to an earlier scavenger hunt were given. MC Eastern Canada executive minister David Martin closed in prayer.

Erb Street Mennonite Church junior youths from Waterloo, Ont., demonstrate different prayer postures at “Peace Out,” the 17th annual Junior Youth Breakaway, held in November at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener, Ont.



Photo by Heather Mann

Then it was time for youths to say “peace out” until next year.

—Heather Mann

*The author is a young adult member of First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.*



MCC Manitoba photo by Allison Peters

**Members of the Grade 5 and 6 classes from Winnipeg Elementary Schools (WMES) Agassiz campus present a \$400 cheque to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba’s interim executive director, Ron Loeppky; the money—for MCC relief work along the U.S. Gulf Coast—was raised by students raking lawns of homes around the school. Students at the Bedson WMES campus raised \$4,000 for an MCC Giving Project in Vietnam; with their donation, the project can supply more than 50 calves to economically challenged families to raise in order to generate income.**

Toronto

## Church ministers amid gun violence

**O**n the first floor of a huge Toronto highrise, just off Finch Ave. and not far from Jane St., the small Black Creek Faith Community, an emerging multicultural congregation of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, meets for worship each week. The pastors, Amy and Clayton Kuepfer, also serve as community chaplains for MC Eastern Canada's Jane-Finch Ministry.

The Black Creek Faith Community sits right in that part of Toronto where gun violence has recently escalated. One shooting incident happened in the building where the congregation meets, which has increased the level of fear among residents.

While the gun violence has set racial tensions simmering in the broader community, Black Creek Faith Community remains very accepting of a wide variety of cultures. As such, it plays an important role as a symbol of hope in a difficult neighbourhood.

Black Creek probably has more cultural diversity in its congregants than any Mennonite church in Canada. For the past number of years, the congregation has been enriched by

participating in Mennonite Central Committee's International Visitor Exchange Program, and this year Ethel Ronquillo from the Philippines is the international visitor working in the congregation and in the Jane-Finch Ministry.

On Nov. 27, Black Creek hosted a group of visitors from Floradale Mennonite Church, Ont., part of the annual exchange between these two congregations. The evening worship service had to be moved from the small chapel to a larger room to accommodate all the visitors.

Music is obviously important to this congregation and the singing was enthusiastic. The worship team accompanied the songs with the familiar drums, guitar and keyboard, but was very much anchored by an instrument not usually found in Mennonite churches—a steel drum.

Black Creek has many young people who enjoy participating in the service. On the first Sunday of Advent, many of the children were involved in lighting the Advent candle, Scripture readings and special music.

—**Barb Draper**

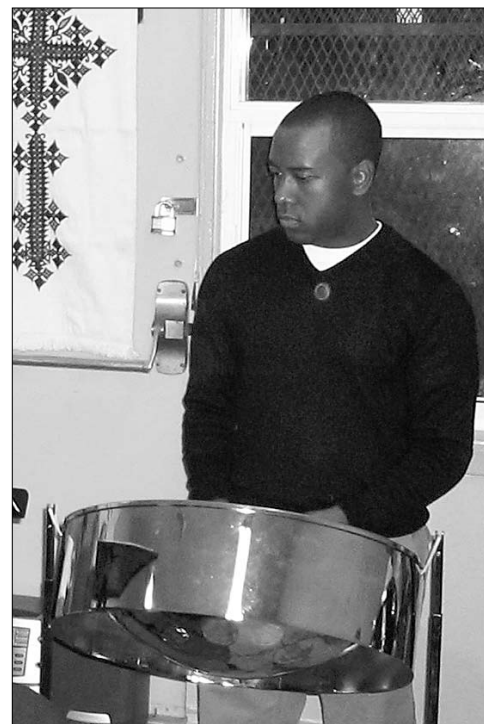


Photo by Roy Draper

**Black Creek Faith Community's Troy Fraser played the steel drum during the offering at the Nov. 27 Advent service that included a delegation from Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church. Black Creek is an emerging multicultural congregation of MC Eastern Canada in northwest Toronto.**



Photo by Karin Fehderau

**Henry Block, right, along with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) staff at the warehouse in Saskatoon, surrounded barrels of school kits in September before the kits were shipped to refugees in Sudan. More than 1,500 kits were donated by Saskatchewan residents and organizations.**



Photo by Jim Penner

**Erwin Warkentin, centre, was commissioned to serve as the new general manager of the Mennonite Foundation of Canada at a service last fall at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, where he is a member.**

## People&Events

**Winnipeg, Ont.**—Gerald Gerbrandt has been reappointed as president of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) for another five years. The new contract takes effect June 15. "Dr. Gerbrandt's reappointment provides excellent continuity in the passionate, visionary pursuit of CMU as a Christian university of the church for the world," says CMU board chair Abe Konrad. "We are delighted with his acceptance, and we invite the prayerful support of the CMU constituency during the ongoing development of CMU." Gerbrandt is a member of Winnipeg's Bethel Mennonite Church.

—CMU release

## Transitions

### Births/Adoptions

**Arias**—to Andrea Ladino and Giovanni Arias, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, a son, Adrian Camilo, Dec. 6.

**Bender**—to Jeanette and Todd, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., a daughter, Miryam Hope, Dec. 9.

**Bergen**—to Coral and Tim, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, a son, Anthony Paul Roger, Dec. 5.

**Brenneman**—to Kristy Schlegel and Dan, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., a daughter, Callie Lynn, Dec. 3.

**Brown**—to Donna and Stephen, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Megan Mae, Oct. 20.

**Dueck**—to Lee-Ann and Gene, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., twins, a daughter, Melody Noelle, and a son, Jeremy Jacob, Dec. 19.

**Epp**—adopted by Karen Dennison and Tim Epp, Welcome Inn, Hamilton, Ont., a daughter Jennifer Joanne (b. Aug. 16, 2002), Sept. 27.

**Friesen**—to Mary and David, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Madison, Dec. 13.

**Klassen**—to Kim and Randy, Emmanuel Mennonite,

Winkler, Man., a daughter, Echo Rowan, Dec. 13.

**Martens**—to Joanne and Myron, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, a son, Jonas Thiessen, Nov. 23.

**Patkau**—to Tori Rozon and Robyn, Hanley Mennonite, Sask., a daughter, Taylor Leanne, Oct. 14.

**Reid**—to Amy and Chris, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Anya Mae, Sept. 27.

**Tiessen**—to Cheryl and Chris, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Jack Christopher, Oct. 19.

**Tiessen**—to Jennifer and Dean, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., twin sons, Josh Michael and Cian James, Nov. 4.

**Toews**—to Tania and Jim, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Liam James, Oct. 2.

### Marriages

**Ladobruk-Skryba**—Tom and Patricia, Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man., Sept. 18.

**Wieler-Jensen**—Ernie and Deanna, First Mennonite, Edmonton, Nov. 26.

### Deaths

**Cressman**—Irvin, 79, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., Dec. 11.

**Dueck**—Mary, 93 (b. Oct. 9, 1912), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Dec. 7.

**Derksen**—Lynda Helen, 84, Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask., Dec. 8.

**Esau**—Helen, 92, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 18.

**Friesen**—Helen (nee Fast), 79, Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man., Nov. 2.

**Hildebrand**—Elizabeth, 95 (b. May 10, 1910), Steinbach Mennonite, Man., Dec. 7.

**Hoffman**—Ephraim, 90 (b. April 1, 1915), Breslau Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 10.

**Kehler**—Henry, 96 (b. Nov. 6, 1909), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Dec. 3.

**Klippenstein**—Laura, 71 (b. Jan. 30, 1934), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.,

Nov. 29.

**Linke**—Tom, 43, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 10.

**Martens**—Cornelius, 92, Hanley Mennonite, Sask, Oct. 31.

**Martin**—Gladys, 77, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 6.

**Neufeld**—Rita, 78, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 23.

**Rupp**—Amalie, 97 (b. Dec. 18, 1907), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Oct. 17.

**Shantz**—Lloyd E., 89 (b. April 23, 1916), Breslau Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 16.

**Taves**—John, 93, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 9.

**Stevanus**—Myron, 83, Bloomingdale Mennonite,

Ont., Nov. 29.

**Van der Weer**—Monica, 40, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 25.

### Baptisms

**Coaldale Mennonite, Alta.**—Steven Dyck, Dec. 4.

**Emmanuel Mennonite, Winkler, Man.**—Brent Froese, Nov. 20.

**Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.**—Erin Bender, Nov. 27.

*Canadian Mennonite welcomes Transitions announcements within four months of the event. Please send Transitions announcements by e-mail to [transitions@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:transitions@canadianmennonite.org), including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please include birth date and last name at birth if available.*

## Employment opportunities

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto

Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto (MNLCT) invites applicants for the position of Executive Director starting in spring 2006.

The MNLCT provides settlement services, support and language instruction to 7,000 clients of all races, nationalities and religions from over 70 countries annually. Our holistic approach and ongoing innovative new services have differentiated this non-profit centre during its 22-year history. Working with a staff of 12 and over 100 volunteers, the new director will provide visionary and fundraising leadership to settlement, adaptation and integration services.

The successful candidate, a committed Anabaptist, will have a passion for innovative settlement, adaptation and integration services; a good command of English and Spanish (Mandarin is an asset), a commitment to community chaplaincy; a good understanding of immigration issues; and the ability to work in a multicultural environment with a flexible schedule.

Please forward your resume by February 17, 2006, to:

**Search Committee  
Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto  
1774 Queen St. East, Toronto, ON M4L 1G7  
E-mail: [apuricelli@mnlct.org](mailto:apuricelli@mnlct.org)**

### For rent

Spacious 3 bedroom, 2nd/3rd floor apartment. Wolseley area of Winnipeg. Sunroom, all appliances incl. Near park, no pets/smoking. \$900 includes utilities. Available February 1, 2006. Ed or Carol at 204-772-3416.

### For sale

50th Anniversary Book "Celebrate The Journey." For sale by: Grace Mennonite Church of Regina. Cost: \$32.50 postage paid. Phone: 306-584-2555; Fax: 306-585-0115; E-mail: [grace.mennonite@sasktel.net](mailto:grace.mennonite@sasktel.net).

### MANAGING EDITOR for Leader

Leader is a quarterly magazine published by Mennonite Publishing Network for pastoral and lay leaders in Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. The managing editor would be expected to work with the senior editor and the editorial committee in choosing themes for each issue, solicit and edit articles for each issue and manage issues through to production, including working with a copy editor, proofreader and designer. The managing editor would also be expected to work within the budget and be available as a resource for the promotion of Leader.

Candidates for this position should have both editorial experience and congregational leadership experience (lay or pastoral), some awareness of Mennonite Church Canada or Mennonite Church USA, or both, and should be an active member in good standing of a Mennonite congregation in one of these two constituencies.

To apply, send a letter of application, with a resume and writing and/or editing samples, by February 3, 2006, to:

**Eleanor Snyder, Director, Faith & Life Resources**  
Mennonite Publishing Network  
490 Dutton Dr., Unit C7, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7  
E-mail: [esnyder@mph.org](mailto:esnyder@mph.org)

The letter of application should include a statement about why this position is of interest, and relevant gifts, skills and experiences one brings to it, as well as three references (with addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of references).

Steinbach Mennonite Church is an established congregation in a growing community, 45 minutes from Winnipeg. This eclectic multi-generational congregation of 400 worshipers, committed to an Anabaptist expression of faith, invites applications for:

#### .75 FTE PASTOR OF YOUNG FAMILIES

The Pastor of Young Families will work with the young families at SMC to develop groups which will facilitate connectedness and encourage growth in faith. This person will also help provide parenting resources, work at aspects of worship important to young families and others under 40, and build relationships with the "Twenty Thirty Something" group at SMC. This position requires excellent communication skills, the ability to encourage and draw people out, an interest in worship, and the ability to work as a team player.

#### .5 FTE WORSHIP & MUSIC COORDINATOR

The Worship and Music Coordinator will work with the pastoral team, worship and music planning groups and volunteers to help implement meaningful worship in our various services. This position requires a passion for worship and music, an appreciation for a broad range of musical and artistic stylings, excellent communication and organizational skills, appropriate training and background, and the ability to work as a team player.

Contact:

**Reg Toews, Personnel Chair**  
E-mail: [regtoews@mts.net](mailto:regtoews@mts.net); Phone: 204-377-4513, or  
**John Klassen, Conference Minister**  
E-mail: [jklassen@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:jklassen@mennochurch.mb.ca)  
Phone: 204-832-7804

A Congregational Information Form is available from John Klassen. Check our website at [www.steinbachmennonite.ca](http://www.steinbachmennonite.ca). Tentative start date is April to August 2006. Applications accepted until January 31, 2006.

North Star Mennonite Church, Drake, Sask., is seeking a

### PASTOR

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Interested persons, please contact the Conference Minister, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, prior to March 15, 2006 at:

**Phone: 306-249-4844; Email: [ken@mcsask.ca](mailto:ken@mcsask.ca)**

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Responsibilities include assisting in preparations, leading and directing worship and discussions, and being present with youth during this experience.

To apply, send resume and letter of application by January 31, 2006, to:

**Andy Brubacher Kaethler, !Explore Director**  
AMBS, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517  
E-mail: [andybk@ambs.edu](mailto:andybk@ambs.edu)

A complete job description is available on the AMBS web-site: [www.ambs.edu/!Explore](http://www.ambs.edu/!Explore).

MC Eastern Canada Peace and Justice Commission photo



About 60 people attended a candlelight vigil in downtown Kitchener, Ont., on the evening of Remembrance Day. The vigil was billed as a “public prayer vigil for justice and peace” and was organized by the Peace and Justice Commission of MC Eastern Canada. Participants included Mennonites, Catholics, Baptists, Lutherans and Quakers. After learning what the vigil was all about, one passerby said, “Finally, a protest that makes sense.”



Warman (Sask.) Mennonite Church went from one end of the age spectrum to the other when they sadly said goodbye to retiring pastor Henry Block one Sunday in October and happily welcomed their new pastor, Jay Hinds, the next. Hinds’ installation service was held during the morning worship service on Oct. 30. Hinds, who grew up in Altona, Man., and his wife Colleen, who hails from South Dakota, are both in their early 20s. Hinds has served at Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church in Glenbush, Sask., and for the past two years the couple has worked in Georgia with the Jubilee program, an interdenominational community whose main mission is to help the recently arrived immigrants integrate with their new country.

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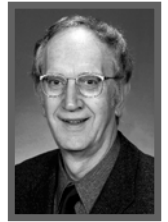
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# FOCUS

## Finances

### Being good stewards with loss prevention

Purchasing insurance to adequately protect your property is one way to be a good steward of the resources with which you are responsible.

According to Nelson Scheifele, director of Mutual Aid Ministries at MAX Canada Insurance Company, "Insurance is there for those events that occur after the best preventative measures have been taken. It is also there for the disastrous events for which we cannot prepare. If we all take seriously our stewardship responsibility in preventing claims from happening, the outcome for all is better."

Scheifele, who has worked in the industry for six years providing protection for homes, farms and churches, offers helpful tips to being a good steward by being aware of things you can do to prevent losses from ever occurring.

#### Home loss prevention tips

- Have smoke detectors on every level of your home and check the batteries twice a year; also have a fire extinguisher on every level of the house.
- Never leave candles unattended and use extension cords wisely without overloading.
- If you use a wood burning appliance, make sure that it is regularly inspected and the chimney is professionally cleaned and inspected once a year before using it.
- To avoid a flooded basement, inspect your sump pump to check that it is in good working order and consider using a high water alarm system to alert you when the sump is not working.

- Make sure the storm drain in your basement has a check valve installed to prevent water from entering the basement through the storm drain system.
- Keep storage boxes off the basement floor or put materials in waterproof plastic containers.

#### Farm loss prevention tips

- Keep fire extinguishers in all sheds, combines, tractors and farm trucks.
- To reduce the risk of a spreading fire, mow grass and weeds around buildings.
- Check wires for wear and tear, and never use extension cords as a permanent wiring solution.
- Inspect your buildings and repair loose sheet metal, damaged framing and bad shingles.

#### Church loss prevention tips

- Keep all entrances and hallways free of obstruction and mark exits with visible exit signs.
- Make sure that fire extinguishers are accessible and have them serviced annually by a professional.
- Make sure that flammable items are

stored away from heat sources and properly locked.

- Ensure that your church also has a "safe church" policy to minimize the dangers of sexual or physical abuse.

Using these tips to prevent losses not only protects your property and keeps you safe, but fewer losses help to keep premiums down. And for some companies like MAX Canada, the less paid to cover losses will allow more to be distributed to help others with mutual aid needs. Treating your property as a stewardship responsibility will not only benefit you, but many others as well. —MAX Canada release

### Income tax filing tips

The seasons of the year bring with them changing emphases in the area of personal finances. Many of the dos and don'ts on a financial checklist are ignored by most, but there is one deadline that we all face and cannot overlook. That is the April 30 deadline for filing an income tax return for the previous year. What follows are a few ideas to help you



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keep more of what you have earned.

• **Maximize your RRSP contributions:** According to last year's data from Statistics Canada, the total Canadian RRSP contribution of \$28.8 billion represented only about 8 per cent of the contribution room available to eligible tax filers. Check your 2004 Assessment Notice to find out if you have unused contribution room from past years.

If you do not have the funds to invest in an RRSP, consider an RRSP loan at prime. As a rule of thumb, you should only make use of this type of loan if you know you can repay it within a year. Remember, the tax refund generated by the RRSP deposit can be used to pay down the loan.

Another idea is to take non-registered money and move it into an RRSP. For example, a non-registered mutual fund can be transferred into an RRSP mutual fund to create a tax deduction.

• **Charitable donations:** Make sure you find all of your charitable donation receipts, not just the larger ones. Be sure to include all of those smaller donation receipts that were issued at your front door by someone canvassing the community for a charitable purpose. Consider combining the receipts of spouses and claiming them on one tax return to increase the tax credits.

At present, the federal tax credit is 16 percent on the first \$200 of donations and 29 percent on any amount in excess of \$200.

• **Building contribution room:** If you have children living at home over the age of 19 with little or no income, have them file a tax return. This will entitle them to the GST rebate and build up their RRSP contribution room.

• **Medical Expense:** The spouse with the lowest income should claim all medical expenses. This way, you get a larger tax credit.

These are just a few of the many tax saving ideas that may be applicable to your situation. To find out more about RRSP contributions at tax time, please contact a financial planning professional.

—MSCU release by **Glen Jantzi**



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## Mennonite Church Canada

### Praise God for new workers

Join MC Canada Witness in giving thanks to God for new ministry workers Dann and Joji Pantoja of Peace Mennonite, Richmond, B.C., who began a two-year assignment earlier this month in Mindanao, Philippines. They will develop a peacebuilding ministry and help mobilize peacebuilding teams in a region conflicted by religious differences.

Also thank God for Jeff and Tany Warkentin of Springridge Mennonite, Pincher Creek, Alta., who will be going to Burkina Faso to work in church planting and assist in a teaching assignment in Ougadougou. Praise God for new opportunities and workers, and pray for fruitful transitions for the Warkentins. Also pray for good connections and relationships as they build up local church leaders through these ministries.

### New Witness executive director appointed

Tim Froese has been appointed as the MC Canada Witness executive director of International Ministries and partnership facilitator for Latin America. He began his transition on Jan. 1, while simultaneously completing some commitments in the Korean ministry. Give thanks to God for the gifted leadership that Froese brings to this appointment as you continue to pray for him and the work of International Ministries. His passion for the church and a compelling understanding and articulation of the missional church is evident throughout his work.

Froese and his wife Karen have served as Witness workers in South Korea,

where he founded the Korea Anabaptist Center in Seoul. He also has ministry and mission experience in Panama, Brazil and Canada. He speaks English, Korean, Spanish and Portuguese, has been a church planter, and has worked alongside churches and ministry partners in a variety of settings. A gifted leader and administrator, Froese has experience in both secular and church environments.

## Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

### From commissions to councils

As MC Eastern Canada shifts from commissions to councils, a number of programs for youth and young adults that were previously handled by MC Eastern Canada staff will be contracted out or overseen by volunteers in 2006, although this may change in the future.

Congregational Ministries minister Jeff Steckley will recruit a person to do contract—or volunteer—work as coordinator of the Vacation Bible School troupe for the period from January to August. This person will recruit the troupe in winter, offer a week of training sessions in June, and provide supervision throughout the summer as the troupe travels to various congregations. A task group will assist in the interviews and act as a reference for the coordinator.

Likewise, a contract staff person or volunteer will be put into place to ensure that the annual winter youth retreat happens in the first half of February. Countryside Camp has already been booked, and some of the program plans, such as finding resource persons, are underway.

A Bible quizzing task group will be formed from congregations where quizzing has been

of strong interest. Volunteers have already worked at developing the quiz questions. MC Eastern Canada will offer administrative support, registration and promotion.

Pastors with responsibility for youths have been in conversation about how to work at connecting youths to national or bi-national events. Heather Gallian will work with this group as an extension of her present youth ministry assignment with the Markham area churches.

A resource advocate is being sought by MC Eastern Canada to work with Mennonite Publishing Network and Elsie Rempel of the MC Canada office in introducing the new Gather 'Round Sunday school curriculum. It is anticipated that regional volunteers will assist the resource advocate.

Mennonite supporters are being sought to mount the music festival in 2006.

Steckley describes this new strategy succinctly: "To enable others within MC Eastern Canada to give leadership to various programs; nurture relationships of interdependency, not 'off-loading';... to create partnerships, inviting congregations to work along with support we provide."

## Mennonite Church Manitoba

### Retreat season at Camps with Meaning

In November, three retreats offered fellowship and quilting opportunities to beginning and experienced quilters. Hedy Albrecht organized a warm and wonderful experience for 12 people who attended the first Camp Koinonia Quilting Retreat. Participants reported that there was something very special about this retreat, just as there was for the two Moose Lake quilting retreats organized by Val Pankratz. The events were described fondly:

"It was as if the comforting wings of a sheltering God gently covered the participants, who felt the warmth and security of their home in God, and were opened to God's presence in new ways."

Camp Koinonia will be hosting a senior youth retreat from Feb. 3 to 5. Camp Moose Lake will be hosting two junior youth retreats: Feb. 10 to 12 and March 10 to 12.

## Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

### Staff changes at Shekinah

Following the resignation of camp administrator Carl Wiens, Lil Friesen was hired to manage the camp in a one-year interim position. Friesen, who was the administrative assistant for Wiens, will not be living on-site. Instead, a new position of program director has been created to allow a staff member to be on the campgrounds year-round; Tobi Patkau has moved into this position after working for several summers as camp director.

### Conference minister completing term

MC Saskatchewan conference minister Ken Bechtel will be finishing his term at the end of February. A service of celebration will be held to honour Bechtel's work in Saskatchewan on Feb. 26 at Mount Royal Mennonite Church in Saskatoon.

Moving to Saskatoon to step into the now-vacant role is Jerry Buhler, who is currently the pastor at Springridge Mennonite Church in Pincher Creek, Alta. Buhler will begin as conference minister in mid-February.

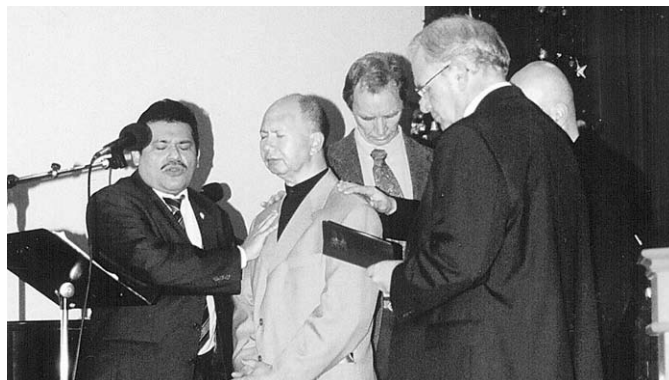
### RJC seeks new principal

In a notice sent to all

Saskatchewan and Alberta MC Canada churches, George Epp, chair of the Rosthern Junior College (RJC) Search Committee, has formally announced the retirement of current RJC principal Erwin Tiessen after 18 years at the school.

The search to find a suitable replacement has begun and churches are being asked to pray for this process.

“The selection of a principal is a very important task,” notes Epp, “and we welcome your prayers, suggestions and support as we seek the Lord’s leading in choosing leadership for our high school.”



### Mennonite Church Alberta

## Word of Life installs first pastor

On Dec. 11, Word of Life officially installed its first pastor, Elias Miranda.

Both Miranda and lay

leader Juan Gonzalez have been studying Anabaptist theology in the United States with Gilberto Florez, and are enthusiastic teachers in their congregation.

The installation service was an opportunity to give thanks to God for the growth and development of this new

**Elias Miranda, second from left, was installed as pastor of the Spanish-speaking Word of Life congregation on Dec. 11. Taking part were, from left to right, Manuel Moralez, MC Alberta Missional Formation and Partnership facilitator Marvin Baergen, MC Alberta conference pastor Jim Shantz, and lay leader Juan Gonzalez (partially hidden).**

congregation in Mennonite Church Alberta.

The Word of Life, a Spanish congregation, was accepted into MC Alberta as a full member at annual sessions last February.

The congregation, with just over 20 regular mem-

**Continued on page 31**

ROBERT J. SUDERMAN



From our leaders

**A**s I write, the future of our friends from Christian Peacemaker Teams in Iraq is still unknown. What is sure is that the world’s attention has been drawn closer to creative alternatives to violence based on commitment to the lordship of Jesus in our lives and for our world.

In Colombia, the accidental death of our friend Gloria recently led that country’s president and his wife to sit as regular parishioners in a Mennonite congregation, taking part in the funeral ceremony. Gloria had been killed by a motorcycle in the president’s entourage. Ironically, part of the ceremony included listening to Jon, Gloria’s son, who has been the director of the Conscientious Objection Coalition. It also included listening to Mennonite Church Colombia president Peter Stucky’s insistence that the church does not accept the popular concept that some violent deaths in Colombia can be justified while others cannot.

These are two examples of the compelling witness of the gospel to the condition of the world. What is most compelling, however, is that there are communities of disciples of Jesus that are trying hard to live what they preach. The mere presence of such communities offers hope to a world that is tired of the violence and evil that engulf us.

I am also writing during the Christmas season, when we celebrate the good news that the Prince of Peace has come. The announcement of the angels that glory will—or should—be given to God, and that peace will—or should—come to earth (Luke 2:14) is a ringing reminder of the importance of such communities of disciples. And

## Your God reigns

**God’s reign means that peace and salvation are assured.**

the purpose of such discipling communities is to make God’s alternative known by being communities that are “sent” to witness to what is already and to what is yet to come.

The Apostle Paul reminds us of our “sent” vocation: “*But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim*

*him unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news’*” (Romans 10:14-15—NRSV).

Paul’s reference to the “feet” that bring good news is an abbreviated reference to Isaiah: “*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns’*” (Isaiah 52:7—NRSV).

In Isaiah’s statement it is evident that bringing “good news” (gospel), announcing “peace,” and proclaiming “salvation” are all components of the same thing, namely “Your God reigns.” And this is the foundational message also of Jesus (Mark 1:15), and therefore of the church. God’s reign means that peace and salvation are assured. Our task is to start living out that assurance, thereby making visible what are mere utopian dreams for others.

May God guide, bless and protect us as we proclaim with our lives that “our God reigns.”

*Robert J. Suderman is general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada.*

## Seminar to highlight U.S. agriculture policy

**Washington, D.C.**—The Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office will hold its annual spring seminar in Washington, D.C., on March 5 to 7. This year's theme is "Voices around the table: Faith, food and U.S. farm policy," in light of the current global food and agriculture system having left rural communities desolate, farmers unemployed, people hungry, and soil and water depleted.

The seminar will examine U.S. farm policy through the eyes of family farmers and urban dwellers, as well as consider the impact of these policies internationally.

Workshop topics range from free trade agreements to genetically modified crops.

Participants will have an opportunity to discuss together what U.S. and global policies might result in a more just and sustainable food system, and what practical steps can bring this about.

The seminar is open to all. A limited number of scholarships are available in cases of financial need.

Visit [www.mcc.org/us/washington](http://www.mcc.org/us/washington) for more information. —MCC release

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Feb. 3,4,10,11:** MCC fundraising banquets with speakers from MCC India and Africa—Bakerview MC Church, Abbotsford (3); Bethel Mennonite Church, Aldergrove (4); Yarrow MB Church (10); Fraserview MB Church, Richmond (11).

**Feb. 6-13:** International Visitor Exchange Program (IVEP) mid-year conference, Abbotsford.

**Feb. 12:** International Celebration—an evening of worship at Bakerview MB Church, sponsored by MCC.

For more information, e-mail [stiessen@mccbc.com](mailto:stiessen@mccbc.com).

**Feb. 18:** Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. presents "The David Toews Story" lecture by Helmut Harder, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, 7 p.m.

**Feb. 20:** Bethel Mennonite Church 70th anniversary.

**Feb. 24-25:** MC B.C. annual general meeting, Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

**March 17-18:** Youth workers conference "Stumbling into church" with Renee Altson, at Columbia Bible College.

**April 8,9:** Lenten Vespers with Abendmusik Choir, 8 p.m. at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (8), and Knox United Church, Vancouver (9).

**April 21:** Columbia Bible College spring concert.

**April 28-30:** Jr. Youth IMPACT retreat at Camp Squeah.

**May 7:** B.C. Mennonite Women in Mission Inspirational Day, First Mennonite Church, Vancouver.

**May 26-27:** "Come to the table: A conference on the arts in worship" explores the theme of collaborative worship (dance, drama, visual arts, writing for worship, storytelling and more). Keynote speakers from AMBS: June Alliman Yoder, Marlene Kropf and Rebecca Slough.

For more information, e-mail Angelika Dawson at [music@emmanuelmennonite.com](mailto:music@emmanuelmennonite.com).

### Alberta

**Feb. 9-11:** Annual Mennonite Men's curling bonspiel in Didsbury. For more information, call Herman Epp at 413-335-3894.

**Feb. 24-26:** Sr. high snow camp at Camp Valaqua. Speaker: Don Stoesz.

**April 7-8:** Mennonite Church Alberta annual assembly, Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary.

**May 6-7:** Songfest hosted by Edmonton First Mennonite Church. Theme: "God's people

now." A choir from Canadian Mennonite University will be the featured guests.

**May 26-28:** Women in Mission annual retreat at Camp Valaqua. Theme: "Women in conversation: Celebrating women's lives."

**May 29-June 1:** Theological studies week at Camp Valaqua. Guest speaker: Dan Epp-Thiessen.

**June 2-4:** Foothills Mennonite Church 50th anniversary celebrations.

**July 5-9:** MC Canada annual assembly in Edmonton.

### Saskatchewan

**March 5:** MCC Evening of Quartets, Forest Grove Community Church, Saskatoon.

**June 3:** Prairie Falcon motorcycle rally fundraiser for MCC, Saskatoon.

### Manitoba

**Jan. 24:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate open house, 7 p.m.

**Feb. 3-5:** MMYO senior youth retreat at Camp Koinonia.

**Feb. 10-12:** MMYO jr. youth retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

**Feb. 24:** Opera workshop, Canadian Mennonite University.

**Feb. 24:** Leadership seminar at Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

**Feb. 24-25:** Annual delegate session at Mennonite Collegiate Institute, hosted by Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

**March 3-5:** Families, friends and persons with a disability retreat at Camp Assiniboia.

**March 5:** Canadian Mennonite University presents "Choral Connections," 7:30 p.m.

**March 10-12:** "Peace it together: Somebody better say something" youth and young adult conference at CMU, explores issues connected to peacemaking, with actress/playwright/social activist Brenda Matthews from Chicago.

**March 10-12:** MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

**April 6:** Canadian Mennonite University presents "Jazz at CMU," 7:30 p.m.

**April 22:** Annual spring concert, Canadian Mennonite University, 7:30 p.m.

**May 17:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate work day.

**May 25:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Senior 2 to 4 spring concert, at Bethel, 7:30 p.m.

**May 29-31:** Plus 55 retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

**June 1:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Grade 7 to Senior 1 spring concert, at Bethel, 7:30 p.m.

**June 5-7:** Plus 55 retreat at Camp Koinonia.

### Ontario

**Feb. 11:** Menno Singers present "Line by Line: The Art of Polyphony" at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Kitchener.

**March 3-4:** Engaged workshop, Riverdale Mennonite Church, Millbank. To register, call Delmar and Mary Bender at 519-656-2256.

**March 9-10:** Bechtel Lectures in Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies, Conrad Grebel University College. Topic: "Time and memory: Secular and sacred aspects of the world of Russian Mennonites." Speaker: Dr. James Urry from Victoria University, New Zealand.

**March 14:** Campus Day at Conrad Grebel University College. Guided campus tours and information about academic and residence programs available.

**March 25:** Sawatsky Visiting Scholar fundraising dinner and celebration of Rod Sawatsky, Conrad Grebel University College. For more information, e-mail Fred W. Martin: [fwmartin@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:fwmartin@uwaterloo.ca).

**April 28-29:** Engaged workshop at Living Water Fellowship, New Hamburg. To register, call Delmar and Mary Bender at 519-656-2256.

**May 13:** Menno Singers present "Psalms and Hymns" with

**TheChurches** *From page 29*

bers, meets in Calgary's First Mennonite Church building at 2:30 p.m. each Sunday for worship services.

**Annual sessions set for April 7 to 9**

The annual sessions of Mennonite Church Alberta are set to happen at Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary on April 7 to 8. The date was moved from the end of February or early March (as it has been in the past), to avoid conflicts with other events and the annual sessions in neighbouring provinces. This could

allow for greater national conference representation.

**Mennonite Church British Columbia**

**New beginnings at Olivet Mennonite**

A year after the fire that destroyed Abbotsford's Olivet Mennonite Church sanctuary and necessitated razing the entire structure, the church is looking forward to some new beginnings in 2006.

Randy Thompson of Abbotsford took over as the new senior pastor on Jan. 1. He has served as Bible teacher and counsellor at Mennonite

Educational Institute, youth pastor at South Abbotsford MB Church, and in missions work in Germany and the United States. His education includes a B.Sc. degree from Multnomah Bible College in Portland, Ore., and an MA from Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, Calif. Thompson and his wife Paula, who have three young children, have been worshipping at Olivet since last summer. A passing of the baton service was held at the Dec. 18 worship service, with Herb Neufeld completing his term as interim pastor.

Meanwhile, plans are progressing for starting Olivet's

new church building. As soon as all technical drawings are completed, plans will be submitted to the City of Abbotsford with the application for a building permit.

*Unless otherwise credited, the articles in TheChurches pages were written by: Leona Dueck Penner (MC Canada), Maurice Martin (Eastern Canada), Evelyn Rempel Peikau (Manitoba), Karin Fehderau (Saskatchewan), Donita Wiebe-Neufeld (Alberta) and Amy Dueckman (British Columbia). See page 2 for contact information.*

Marilyn Houser Hamm, Zion United Church, Kitchener, 8 p.m.

**U.S.A.**

**March 9-15:** MWC mini-assembly, U.S. Center for World Missions, Pasadena, Calif.

**June 1-3:** "Holding fast to our faith: Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective 10 years later" conference, AMBS,

Elkhart, Ind. **Oct. 26:** Mennonite/s Writing: Beyond Borders conference, Bluffton University, Ohio. Keynote speaker: Kathleen Norris. Submissions of Mennonite writing sought. For details, visit: [www.bluffton.edu/eng/conference/](http://www.bluffton.edu/eng/conference/).

*Please send Calendar events by e-mail to: [calendar@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org).*

Waterloo

**Conrad Grebel reappoints Paetkau**

Henry Paetkau has been reappointed to a four-year term as president of Conrad Grebel University College, beginning January 2007.

Paetkau has completed three years of an initial four-year term as president of Conrad Grebel, which began in January 2003. "The college community is blessed to have been guided by the solid leadership of president Paetkau over the past three years, and I am fully confident that Grebel can become an even stronger and more vital institution under Henry's continued leadership," said Dawn Regier, chair of Grebel's board of governors.

"It's a wonderful privilege to be part of what's happening at Grebel," said Paetkau. "The college is poised to build on the strengths of its unique programs, its outstanding faculty and staff, and its strong constituency support. I look forward to leading Grebel through its next phase of growth and development."

Fiscally, the college has balanced its operating budget for nine straight years and recently underwent a \$4.9 million capital expansion.

—Conrad Grebel release



**Paetkau**

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