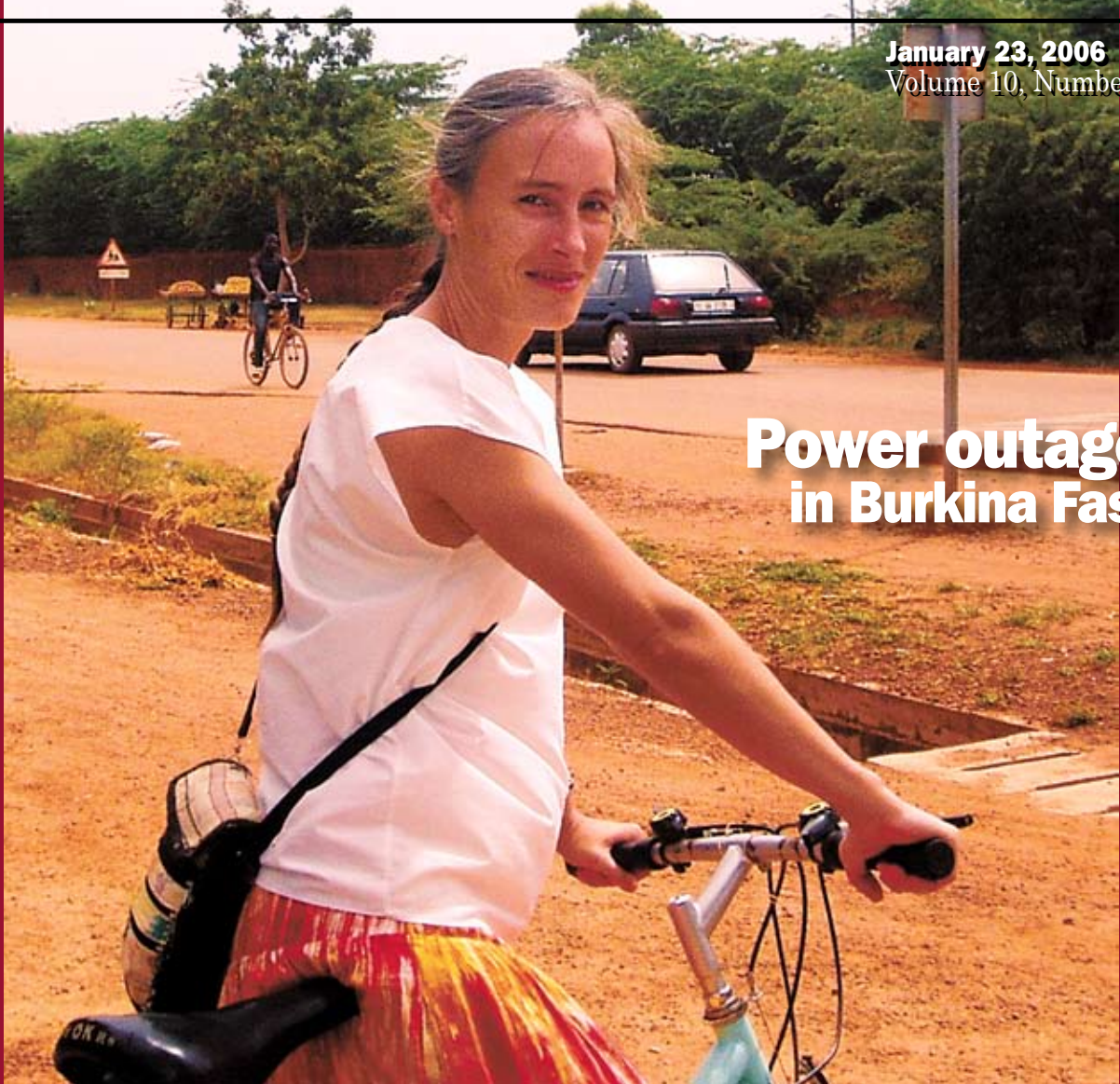


C A N A D I A N
Mennonite

January 23, 2006
Volume 10, Number 2



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in Burkina Faso**

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Engaging our new government

By the day after this issue's cover date, the federal political parties will have switched from speaking out on what bad alternatives their opponents make to how we all need to now work together for the good of the country.

Whichever party—or coalition—is in power will have to recover from two months of promises that now need to be pursued in the hard light of government responsibility.

We citizens also need to commit to our responsibility to engage our government on issues of importance to us as Christians. Of course, whether we voted for the governing party, for another party, or not at all, we are all affected by the decisions of the new government. But, more importantly, we have a calling from God to care for our world through all the means available to us.

"This is the society in which we live, in which God has placed us, where we are called to be faithful," Bill Janzen, director of Mennonite Central Committee's Ottawa Office, told me. "If one believes, as we surely must, that God does want the well-being of people, here and in the world at large, our political process can make a difference for the well-being of people here and in the world.

"Mennonite theology doesn't encourage vigorous affirmation of a country and we certainly shouldn't assume it is God's will for Canada to remain in its current form for ever and ever," he said. "But as human institutions go, it is a pretty valuable structure. We should try to nurture that structure even though we don't attach any sacredness to it. That includes not just national unity, but honesty in government, transparency, the political process itself. We still need that process for us to function in society and we want to do what we can to keep it healthy."

The Biblical paraphrase, *The Message*, translates John 3:17 this way: "God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again."

We have a role in that putting-right, both in sharing with others how Jesus is God's ultimate reconciliation between holiness and sin, and in being part of God's presence in our own families, neighbourhoods and, yes, our government.

Elections do highlight the problems in our political system. The political party structure emphasizes division. Political coverage in the media often focuses attention on differences, rather than ways of working together. Most of all, I wish we didn't have to squeeze all the ways we think God would respond to particular issues down to a choice for one political party or candidate. God is not a New Democrat, a Liberal or a Conservative.

God does not divinely appoint those who serve our society through public office but the people we elected aren't faceless reflections of policy papers either. They are people shaped by their own convictions and by the convictions of those who make the effort to talk to them.

That's why now, after the election, we need to continue to be active in our political structure to give flesh to those bare-bones statements at polling booths. Please pray for your elected representative and for our government. Write to them to let them know you are doing this. Thank them for their commitment to public life and its many demands. Tell them of the ways in which their decisions affect you. Ask them to act in ways consistent with your values. If they don't, explain why you think differently. Stay engaged. The more we give witness to God's values in government, the more present they can be.

—**Tim Miller Dyck**

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Web site preview

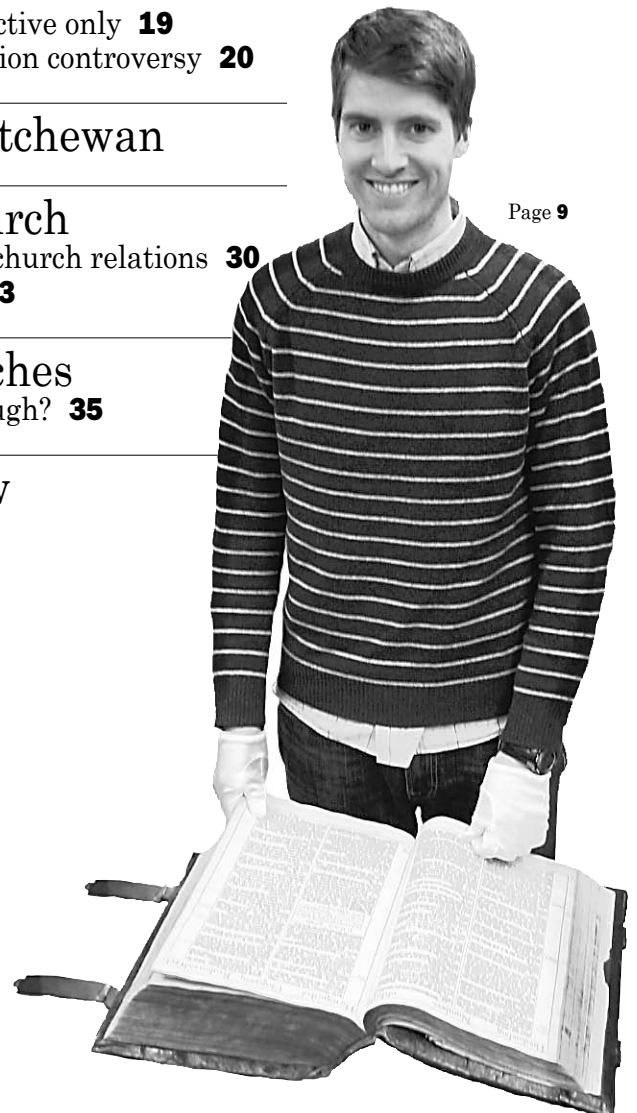
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Cover: Lillian Haas, MC Canada Witness worker in Burkina Faso, makes frequent trips to the city to use her computer since the solar panels that normally power her equipment were stolen last summer. See story on page 25. Photo by Peter Rempel

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Abbotsford, B.C.

Church secretaries offer each other mutual support

On any given day a church secretary might be called upon to be an administrator, social worker, writer, host, troubleshooter or computer expert. Yet many people aren't aware that she does much more than answer the phone and type up the weekly church bulletin.

Given such a unique set of responsibilities, only another church secretary can understand these daily challenges. That's why the secretaries/office administrators of Mennonite Church British Columbia (MC B.C.) get together several times a year to compare notes and offer mutual support.

Coordinated by Janette Thiessen, office administrator for MC B.C., the secretarial group discusses such topics as job descriptions, church rental policies, vandalism, computers and security issues.

"Church secretaries/administrators can help a lot with the relationship-building between congregations," says Thiessen. "By building bonds and relationships through this group, I feel they can relay the importance of conference relationships to their churches."

"It's a bond, a support system you're not going to find in your own church," says Cheryl Dyck, who works at Cedar Valley Mennonite in Mission.

Adds Lottie Epp of Peace Mennonite in Richmond, "If someone [of us] were in a stressed situation, this would be the place to go."

Elly Gatt, office administrator at Emmanuel Mennonite of Abbotsford, admits that at first she didn't fully appreciate the need for such a group, as she had worked in the business world for more than 20 years. But the isolated nature of a church office is different. "As a secretary in business, you always have a support system at work," she says. "It's taken me this long to realize that it [the church secretarial group] is probably really

necessary."

As with every type of employment, the job comes with its own inherent frustrations. For example, it is tempting for church members to try to get office business done while at church on Sunday if the secretary is a member of their congregation. Several shared that, while walking through the church foyer on a Sunday morning,

Photo by Trudy Gortzen



Mennonite Church B.C. secretaries have been meeting together for the past four years for mutual support and professional development. They are pictured together at a 2005 retreat at Camp Squeah.

they have often been approached by different people asking for something to be done for, or sent to, them.

Linda Hoock of Bethel Mennonite in Langley says she finally had to ask people, "Please, just send me an e-mail!"

Dyck says her church has solved the problem by having her keep office hours on Sunday morning as part of her job.

Other potential difficulties in a church setting are communication and scheduling. People often don't check with the church office for meeting rooms they want to use, assuming something is available when it's not, or don't clean up after themselves.

Another unique feature of working in a church office is feeling one has several hundred bosses.

Vicky Boschman of Sherbrooke Mennonite in Vancouver says, "There are so many different opinions. I might get two completely opposite opinions on the same thing!"

It can be frustrating to want to please everyone and not be able to do so.

With frequent requests for building rentals and churches having to comply with various government regulations—such as for child abuse prevention—a church office position is becoming increasingly complex.

Marlene Patterson of Langley Mennonite Fellowship notes that being a church secretary entails "a huge amount of work and responsibility, and [church members] don't understand. If you were working in a company, this would be an executive position."

Still, the opportunity to serve in a church is a special privilege.

Marlene Daku of Abbotsford's Wellspring Christian Fellowship feels her job offers her the "opportunity to exercise a servant heart" in a way that no other job could.

And Ingrid Krueger of Eben-Ezer Mennonite in Abbotsford says, "I am given the opportunity of learning so much from a biblical perspective of what it means to be part of a team and part of a church."

Hoock also notes that "ministry opportunities are great." Recently she found a stranded woman from a transition house sleeping beside the church building one morning, and felt personally rewarded when she was able to assist the woman in finding help.

With so much camaraderie in the group, and plenty of topics for future discussion, it appears the gatherings for church secretaries will continue to play an important role in their professional development.

"I believe it is an important part of my ministry as conference office administrator to ensure these gatherings continue because we receive affirmation and encouragement from each other," Thiessen says. "It helps us to continue in our positions with positive attitudes."

—Amy Dueckman

New Hamburg, Ont.

'Mrs. Weber, you rock!'

Wilmot Township residents of all ages think a lot of Marg Weber. One student at the local school where she volunteers as a reading and writing instructor summed it up in the popular language of youth, "Mrs. Weber, you rock!"

The mayor of Wilmot Township agrees. In presenting Weber with the Citizen of the Year Award (senior division) for her outstanding voluntary contributions to the community, the mayor noted that, during her daily walks, Weber carries a grocery bag to pick up any bits of trash she might find on local streets.

The Nith Valley Mennonite Church member is a woman who loves to make a difference—in the lives of students, in her community and around the world.

Her eyes light up when she shares about her time spent in the local public schools. "It's like a miracle watching these little Grade 1's who are afraid to put words on paper in September, but by June they are writing stories with beginnings and endings," she said.

Weber is one of those gifted persons who have one idea after another, and she can't wait to put her thoughts into action and make her dreams a reality. She is a woman full of insightful and creative ways to make use of items that other people would rather discard, and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Thrift Stores in Ontario have been benefiting now for a quarter-century.

"Why not recycle perennial plants?" was a question Weber asked nearly 20 years ago. Many people enjoy growing them in their gardens, but these plants need to be thinned regularly. It seemed to her like such a waste to just throw them onto the compost pile. Her idea took root, and she called a few friends to help.

Every May since 1988, gardeners have donated perennial clumps and extra plants from their gardens to the local MCC Thrift Store. Weber and her group of 35 dedicated volunteers trim and plant these into different containers and sell them to budding gardeners at prices ranging up to \$10.

One woman's creative idea to recycle perennial plants has helped to raise more than \$54,000 in the last five years alone.

How many of us have a dusty book pile in a corner of our home? Weber had an idea that books could be a wonderful source of funds for the Thrift Store if they were treasured and displayed creatively.

"It's not your ordinary thrift shop book corner," she proudly explained. Weber works alongside a group of 12 volunteers who sort, price, recycle and check books on the Internet. These donations make substantial revenue for the shop. "Hundreds of books are put on display weekly in the store," she noted.

There is no doubt Weber has touched many lives in her commu-



Photo submitted by Byron Weber Becker

Marg Weber of New Hamburg, Ont., has been named Wilmot Township's Citizen of the Year (senior division).

nity by her example. "Whenever I am given a job, I try to think of ways to include other people," she said. By including others, Weber has opened the door to volunteers who otherwise may not have had that little

extra encouragement needed to give their time and resources for others. "Volunteers are important, but what a volunteer gains from the experience is more important," she said.

Because much of her voluntary activities have been as part of a group, Weber said humbly of her award, "It's hard to be singled out when there are so many deserving volunteers in the group."

—Joy Wagler



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Pursuing coherence and conviction in Christian university education

A few years ago a student lamented to me that his post-secondary educational experience at a major Canadian university had not helped him find a cohesive view of life and the world. Rather than functioning as a university—providing a coherent centre around which he could find his bearings—it had acted as a “multiversity,” offering many views and perspectives without a framework within which to comprehend them. Instead of bringing things together, the educational smorgasbord had fragmented his view of life.

His experience is not unique. University education today offers students the ability to develop critical thinking skills, but seldom provides them with a way of relating one thing to another. The contemporary pluralistic environment that is the hallmark of contemporary university education does not allow for discernment of the web of meaning that draws all things together.

Drawing things together into a coherent framework of faith is the unique gift that a Christian university can offer students. We give them a toolbox for learning to think as Christians in a way that shapes and forms character, a way

that brings the various disciplines into conversation, and a way that calls them into a community that seeks a vision of health, wholeness, justice and peace for all creation.

At the same time, a Christian university education also stands firmly on the conviction that personal knowledge is part of the web of creation in which we live. If it is true that Christ is the still point amidst the multiplicity of ideas and ideologies that flow all around us, then it is possible to create a university in which students are invited to view all their learning as the work of discipleship. Theology, literature, psychology, business, biology—all have their centre in Christ. As separate disciplines, they are arenas in which to discover and experience the reconciling and transforming wonder of God’s presence. At the same time, each discipline also contributes to the whole.

As a professor, I am committed to giving my students a holistic spirituality of education that includes, at its centre, the discipleship of the mind. I also want to nourish a spirituality of the heart, so that students learn not only to love God, but also to love what they learn and learn what they love.

I assume that learning happens best when one embodies what one learns. As author and theologian Parker Palmer puts it in his book, *To Know as We are Known*, “To teach is to create a space in which obedience to the truth can be practised.” Christian university education is therefore an exploration that is not only about the mind, but also something that is constructive, both personally and relationally.

What about the Bible? A holistic approach to education recognizes the priority of Scripture for Christian formation, for shaping the identity and mission of the community of Jesus, and for reflecting theologically on life



Design Pics photo

in the world. But it also recognizes the interaction between what we do when we study the Bible, do theological reflection and study other academic disciplines. Biblical studies by itself cannot shape a worldview; we have to participate in the conversations with the other disciplines, such as English, math, psychology, music and others.

Fortunately, we are not on this journey of discovery alone; we have each other, and God is with us. Jewish philosopher Abraham Heschel said it well; we are not only in search of truth, but it is also in search of us.

A few years ago at a chapel service, I invited students to accept for themselves the following model of Christian university education: “Education in a Christian university setting will invite you to explore God’s world—to know its beauty, to wonder at its complexity, to feel its pain, and to long for and work toward its wholeness. A spirituality for education will include inviting God to shape your thinking, so that your character is formed in keeping with the character of Jesus, with your passion directed toward the healing and reconciling work of God in the world. This is a work you share as you are empowered by the Spirit in community, joyfully transformed for faithful obedience and reconciling service in the world.”

I believe this model works. I am convinced that Christian university education offers students an alternative both to the cynicism that pervades much of academic and other life today, and to the idolatries and ideologies of our time. I believe it can build integrity of character and provide skills, habits and vision for a lifetime of reflection and action that is intellectually coherent and works in every area of life. It is a way of life that is rooted in a community of hope, and that is rich with conviction and passion.

My view is summed up well by author Steven Garber in his book, *The Fabric of Faithfulness*. Like me, he is convinced that “the challenge for the contemporary college student...whose creedal commitments are rooted in the possibility and reality of truth—is to form a worldview that will be coherent across the whole of life because it addresses the whole of life.”

My particular contribution to that

enterprise is to nurture in my students a profound understanding of how Scripture functions in the life of the believing community and in the life of the individual. I want to help them find themselves in their church tradition, discover the strengths of that tradition, and also learn from other church traditions. I want them to inhabit the story of God’s redemptive work in Israel and through Jesus in such a way that their character is shaped and changed by the contours of the story.

I also want to help students develop a desire to embody an alternative vision of justice and peace, a vision that involves restoring and reconciling all relationships—with God, others and creation. And I want to help them engage critically and constructively with all of their studies, so they can—to use images from the Apostle Paul—allow their minds to be transformed as together we examine everything carefully, thereby discerning how all things cohere in Christ.

I am also committed to teaching them about the unity of all truth, which is rooted in God. I am committed to a process of personal and social transformation and creation-mending that is based on a vision of peace and justice, and that finds its centre in Jesus Christ, who serves as model, initiator and enabler of the new reality that God is bringing into being.

I am committed to the academic task of searching for the truth and doing the truth within an ongoing community of faith that is rooted in tradition and empowered by the Spirit. With my students, I want to discover more of what it means to be human, and to be God’s people in the world. And I am also committed to the task of mentoring and discipling. I see myself as a coach. I do not teach simply to transfer information, but to be an agent of transformation and reconciliation that occurs as an act of God’s grace.

Integrating all aspects of life into one meaningful whole. That was the goal I set for myself during my own undergraduate studies. I now want to offer a hospitable environment to students who are working at that same task—discovering ways in which the great diversity of life finds its centre in Jesus Christ, “*in whom all things hold together*” (*Colossians 1:17*).

The unique gift that Christian university education offers students is a toolbox for learning to think Christianly in a way that has integrity, that shapes and forms character, and that calls them into a community that lives toward a vision of health, wholeness, justice and peace for all creation.
—**Gordon Matties**

The author is associate professor of biblical studies and theology at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg.

‘To teach is to create a space in which obedience to the truth can be practised.’

Baghdad, Iraq

Conquering fear with laughter

As the days turned into weeks, and now the weeks into months, with no word about the fate of four Christian Peacemaker Teams members kidnapped in Iraq, teammate Greg Collins—a member of Langley Mennonite Fellowship, B.C.—reflects on how humour has helped him cope with the stress.

How do you laugh in the middle of something as serious as an abduction? How do you keep the enormity of it at bay? If you try to add humour to the situation you run the risk of looking inconsiderate, uncaring or thoughtless. At the same time, if you don't laugh you run the risk of drowning in severity. So what do you do?

We have a running joke on the team that those who took our colleagues must be men. We gave them our phone number, but they haven't called us.

Humour is a coping mechanism. It helps people process the suffering or fear they have experienced. It also helps people keep painful emotions at bay. A Palestinian once told CPT's Hebron team that if he didn't laugh about the torture he had endured in an Israeli prison, he would go crazy.

Our running joke continues. Someone else on the team thought the kidnappers aren't men, but must be women, women that CPT had wronged. That's why they are giving us the silent treatment.

It is human nature to laugh, just as it is human nature to be serious, but without laughter we cannot renew ourselves. You become emotionally burnt out. Fear and tragedy are also conquered through laughter.

Our running joke about the gender of the abductors goes even further. Another teammate concluded that the abductors have to be men. If they were women, they would have insisted on talk and open dialogue long ago.

The trick to staying emotionally healthy is to find a balance. You never



Photo by Jim Loney (before his abduction)

Rollins

want to hurt anyone by making foolish remarks for the sake of humour, but you never want to hurt or scare anyone because you are too sombre either.

The team's running joke ends with the conclusion that the abductors must be a mixture of men and women. The reason they have remained silent all this time is because men and women can't agree on anything.

At the moment, the team in Iraq has found room to laugh in the middle of this seriousness. Sometimes we can't help it. It just happens. If you pay attention, you can find humour in almost any situation. Mind you, sometimes humour has also appeared when those of us on the Iraq team are not paying close enough attention to what our teammates are saying.

"I'm sorry, but I fail to see how a Lebanese comedian is going to help us free our colleagues."

"I didn't say a Lebanese comedian, I said a Lebanese Canadian!"

Hymn of release dedicated to CPT hostages

As the world waits for news of the fate of four Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) members kidnapped in Iraq two months ago, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) student Adam Tice has written a new hymn to sing as Christians around the world keep vigil and pray for their release. The hymn can be sung to any number of CMD tunes, but AMBS president Nelson Kraybill suggests RESIGNATION (hymn 589 in *Hymnal: A Worship Book* and hymn 63 in *The Mennonite Hymnal*).

Tice asks anyone performing the song publicly, or wishing to publish it, to contact him at amltice@yahoo.com.

Come, Join in Mary's Prophet-Song

Come, join in Mary's prophet-song of justice for the earth,
for right outgrows the fiercest wrong,
revealing human worth—
bound not within the wealth we crave
or in the arms we bear,
but in the holy sign God gave—
the image that we share.

The "Peace on earth" which
shepherds heard
is not some fantasy.
The angels sang to greet the Word,
whose birth is victory.
The maiden Mary, not so mild,
bore into death's domain
true God, and yet an infant child,
who over death would reign.

Emmanuel, God-with-us here,
grows peace where we would dare
to act despite our tremb'ling fear
and bring God's holy care.
The image God made "Us" to be
is also borne on "Them."
Christ bids us join our enemy
to sing war's requiem.

© 2005 by AML Tice

Winnipeg

Family legacies and memories featured on new House of Doc CD

From the first House of Doc concert our family attended in 2003, we were hooked. So were our children. “Buy the CD,” they insisted. So *Sacred Blue*, the band’s debut recording, quickly became a favourite part of our family’s music collection. And we eagerly awaited the Winnipeg band’s second CD.

Prairiegrass, released late last year, did not disappoint. The CD has been nominated for three Canadian Folk Music Awards, and this has helped propel the group into a busy touring schedule. On *Prairiegrass*, the band sings of roots—family legacies and memories, prairie stories of immigration and homesteading, Canadian tales of the Depression and building the railroad.

“Gravestones in Namaka” beckons the listener to consider the places and stories of our ancestors. When our family unexpectedly passed the Namaka road sign in Alberta, we suddenly began singing the opening song on the CD, fondly remembering other cemeteries which hold the sacred stories of our loved ones.

“Legacy” is an endearing reflection of a grandmother’s difficult but faithful life.

Both musical narratives resonate warmly with our family’s memories of grandparents and their stories of faith and resilience.

At home, whether it’s accompanying the lively intricate instrumentation of “I Was Lonely” with playful dancing, singing loudly the refrain of the a cappella gospel tune “Wait In Line,” foot-stomping the blue grass rhythm of “House On Dusty Ground,” or listening reflectively to our family’s favourite, the ballad “Peace of Mind,” there’s variety in *Prairiegrass*



Winnipeg

CMU student finds rare first edition of King James Bible

A very rare first edition of the King James Bible has been found in the archives at the University of Manitoba—thanks to a Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) student.

The unique Bible, dating back to 1611, was discovered by Jason Peters, a fourth-year English major doing his practicum in the University of Manitoba archives.

The university knew the Bible was an early edition of the King James translation, but didn’t know how early until Peters took a close look at it. Through careful research, he was able to match more than 50 errors in the university’s Bible to those found in the first edition.

“Although the Bible was previously believed to date from 1611, there was some uncertainty as to whether it was a first or second edition,” Peters says. He noted that while it contains the famous mistake in Ruth 3:15—the first edition mistakenly has “he” instead of “she”—“that in itself doesn’t provide conclusive evidence, since there are later editions that repeat the first edition’s error.”

By referring to the extensive research published in David Norton’s *A Textual History of the King James Bible*, Peters was able to match up other errors. “It took a couple of day’s work, comparing the editions,” he says.

After doing his research, Peters called in CMU English professor Paul Dyck, who confirmed the Bible’s unique status.

A note attached to the Bible says it is believed to have once been the property of King James himself, but no one

knows who typed the note or why. Peters intends to do research into that mystery over the next few months.

In addition to being rare—there may be only one other first edition of the King James Bible in Canada—the Bible is very valuable. Original first editions have sold for more than \$400,000 US at recent auctions.

—CMU release by **John Longhurst**



CMU student Jason Peters is pictured with a first edition KJV Bible he discovered in the University of Manitoba archives.

knows who typed the note or why. Peters intends to do research into that mystery over the next few months.

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—CMU release by **John Longhurst**

with something for each of us, and a connection that is both musical and familial. With this CD, House of Doc has given us a reminder of our roots and the musical licence to fly.

Originally an a cappella group, the five-member House of Doc (three siblings and two in-laws), has combined their tightly-woven vocal harmonies with rich, eclectic instrumentation, including guitar,

bass, mandolin, banjo, harp, dobro, accordion, concertina, and more. The result is a creative and mature blend of folk, bluegrass and celtic tones, offering an innovative, engaging sound and unique perspective.

To order *Prairiegrass* or *Sacred Blue*, e-mail matthew@houseofdoc.ca.

—**Arlyn and Judith Friesen Epp**

The reviewers and their children—Allegra, nine; Bryn, six; and Caleb, one—attend Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

Analysis of overseas development stories weak

Richard A. Yoder, Calvin W. Redekop and Vernon E. Jantzi. *Development to a Different Drummer: Anabaptist/Mennonite Experiences and Perspectives*. Intercourse: Good Books, 2004.

The authors explore whether being Anabaptist/Mennonite shapes how we understand and do development. This exploration is in three parts: an overview of development literature, including a summary of the role of Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Economic Development Associates; nine “stories” of development practitioners; and analysis of ways in which an Anabaptist ethic shapes how development is promoted and carried out.

The strength of the book is the nine stories. They provide rich accounts of direct involvement in development. The role of returning missionaries in shaping early interest in overseas service is striking. The stories also highlight the importance of prior micro-level experience to enable effective involvement at more macro-levels.

The overview of development theory and practice is fairly general. “Modernization” receives more attention than it deserves. Economists recognized as early as 1970 that “traditional” was a logical system designed to minimize risks for households living in poverty.

The weak link in the book is the analysis in Part 3. First, a sample of nine is limiting. Second, the focus is primarily on creating categories. This does not lead to analysis of how an ethic shapes development.

This weakness occurs, in part, because the authors fail to define development explicitly. They fall into the same trap of many NGOs—development is whatever we are doing. As most people working overseas tend to be good at what they do, their “development” is successful.

The authors observe correctly that development workers are change agents. They fail, though, to develop effectively the idea that the essence of development is being a catalyst. A catalyst brings together the needs, aspirations and capabilities of people living in poverty with knowledge, expertise and possibly resources. When brought together, people are enabled to utilize their capabilities more effectively as means to realizing their aspirations. Where this must

occur at the grassroots level, it can be the product of, or facilitated by, a large development project. Also, without larger-scale initiatives to develop

infrastructure and promote the evolution of institutions within society, grassroots involvement will be little more than temporary poverty alleviation. This linkage between different levels of involvement is clearly there in the nine stories; unfortunately, it is not factored into the analysis of those diverse experiences.

Anabaptist/Mennonite development work is somewhat distinctive because of a willingness to live overseas, frequently under difficult conditions. Whether an “ethic” drives this willingness is not explored in depth.

The book is a good resource, though, for anyone who wants a broad understanding of the development enterprise and who seeks to know what would be involved if development was pursued as a career.

—Henry Rempel

The author is senior scholar, Department of Economics, University of Manitoba.



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Arts note

Westgate seeks CDs

Winnipeg’s Westgate Mennonite Collegiate is designating a corner of its library CD collection to celebrate the institution’s musical talent, both past and present. Westgate alumni who have ever recorded a CD for distribution are asked to donate a copy to this project. Groups do not have to be made up entirely of Westgate alumni to submit CDs to this collection. Send CDs to Vic Pankratz, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, 86 Westgate, Winnipeg, MB R3C 2E1.

—Westgate release

Publishing note

If restorative justice has been able to salvage lives within the world of criminal behaviour, why shouldn’t its principles be applied in school classrooms and cafeterias? Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, director of the MCC U.S. Office on Crime and Justice, and Judy H. Mullet address this question in a new book. *The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools* offers tools for classroom teachers, school officials, college students in education fields or anyone working with elementary age to high school youths in a group setting. The book—part of the 10-book series *The Little Books of Justice and Peacebuilding* published by Good Books—is available in bookstores throughout Canada and the U.S., as well as directly from the publisher at www.goodbks.com.

—MCC release

In responding to Ray Friesen's open letter to me ("The next step," Nov. 14, page 9), suggesting ways in which we can continue to strengthen the church, let me say I appreciate the challenge. It is, however, a challenge for the entire church, not just its leaders.

I agree that the four suggested "names" for the church—Missional, Anabaptist, Evangelical and Ecumenical—are important and critical ways to strengthen the identity and the vocation of our church. But it seems to me that the "surname," the one "shared with a large family of denominations" and which immediately connects us to all others, is not the name "Missional," but the name "Church." Ultimately, the common agenda before us all is the agenda of being the "Church."

New names are important because we are indeed forgetful people; as such, these new names often tell us more about our failures as a church than they do about our successes. New names are important because they are a reminder about where we need to be strengthened in order to be more faithful.

I do not believe that there is as yet a common desire to be "Missional" that engages and connects us with all mainline and evangelical denominations. Indeed, in so many unfortunate ways, this name does not yet even connect us sufficiently with ourselves. To a significant degree, Mennonites, along with many others denominations, have actually learned to be the church without being "Missional," as the result of centuries of Western cultural tradition commonly called "Christendom," a tradition that more recently has been influenced and shaped by our modernist, postmodernist, secular, individualistic and pluralistic contexts.

As a church, we actually forget that discipleship (learning the gospel) must include apostleship (being sent to engage the world with what we learn); and when we forget, we need a new name like "Missional" to remind us of

We must take the next step together

the "sent" nature of a disciplined church.

When I look at the essence of the three additional names—Anabaptist, Evangelical and Ecumenical—I see nothing there that is not already incorporated within the missional paradigm itself. Others might argue that the word "Anabaptist" also fully includes the other names if it is really true to itself. I would agree.

There are other "names" that also come to mind. For example, we are often described as a "Believer's Church" and a "Peace Church." We actually forget that the church—the body of Christ—is to be made of "believers" who have acknowledged the Lordship of Christ in their lives. And when we forget, it's good to use a new name, such as "Believer's Church." We actually forget that if Jesus is Lord, and if Jesus teaches love of enemy, then we should not kill our enemy. And when we forget, it's good to use a new "name," such as "Peace Church."

And then, of course, we are "Mennonite Church Canada." This name also lays before us the key components of the challenge we face—how to be:

- A faithful church
- With a Mennonite identity
- Immersed in, and relevant to, our Canadian setting.

We have come to assume that different names actually separate our understanding of what it means to be the church, rather than unite it. By doing so, we have learned to separate things that belong together. My hope is that we can all begin to see that these separations are not legitimate. These names belong together, and together

they help us understand more fully what it means to be the "Church."

We surely want to be a church that is:

- Faithful to the biblical witness upon which we stand;
- Nurtured by the Protestant and Anabaptist legacies and perspectives that root us;
- Constantly discerning our understanding of faithfulness and confessing what we believe and how we want to be;
- Immersed in our context and deeply rooted in Canada and profoundly connected and relevant to where we have been called to serve; and,
- Learning about our limitations and our need for growth through our intercultural, interfaith, evangelical, ecumenical and global relationships.

As to helping "loosen our ties to that [European] history," a history that

Ray called "a burden and a set of limits on us," I would suggest that we learn to use history as a resource.

The Bible constantly exhorts us to "remember" the history within which God's presence, activity and guidance can be discerned.

We need to understand

our histories as stages on which God has been active, and to discover how our memories—those of European Anabaptists along with those of other ethnic backgrounds—can be liberating for God's purposes.

I am committed to do what I can to lead the church in its desire to be more faithful. I also call on others in the church—our pastors, deacons, youths, young adults, mothers, fathers, worship leaders, teachers, and everyone else—to join together in this journey of discernment and faithfulness to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord. I trust we can move forward with the Holy Spirit of God guiding our path, and confident that the grace of God will nurture us in our limitations.

—**Robert J. Suderman**

The author is the general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada.

Letters

Church must listen to aboriginal voices

I read the “Searching hard for truth on Ipperwash” editorial (*Canadian Mennonite*, Dec. 19, page 2) with some fascination, only because it reminded me once again of how the church perceives itself as excluded from the type of power that it accuses the government of exhibiting, in this case on the Anishinabe people of Ontario. It is so often easy to find an excuse to blame others when the church still maintains these same abuses of power when it comes to working in an equal manner with First Nation communities.

I often take time to read *Canadian Mennonite*, although I no longer

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 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.

identify with the Mennonite people or their sense of mission, especially when it comes to their work with aboriginals. I say this not to criticize, but to offer an opening for the true work of the church to be done and come to fulfillment.

I have found the church, as well as some in native congregations who work with the church, have maintained a Eurocentric approach to their

work, which effectively eliminates any chance of a more pronounced approach to community involvement. It reminds me of the biblical teaching of how it is easy to love those who love us back, as anyone can do that. The hard part is to love those who do not show that love, or return it.

Too many times the church comes into our communities in the manner of “we are here to work with you, but you

AIDEN ENNS



New Order Voice

Hmm, I need to invent some theological rationale for picking through other people’s garbage.

The “new” black jeans I’m now wearing were dangling out of the dumpster beside our house. Lucky! The waist fits, the length is perfect, and they seem brand new and thick. These are going to last.

My favourite knitted cap came to me last winter from the middle of a city street, mashed up with salt and sand.

At a bin further down the lane, I found a two-inch, solid-maple chopping block for the kitchen. Karen took it to the workbench and sanded off the top layer of wood. Now it’s sitting beside the stainless steel breadbox we found.

The list goes on. There’s a new leather seat on the stool by the stove. The stool has thick chrome legs and two steps that pop out when you need to reach a top shelf. We tore off the old vinyl cover and stapled on some grey leather from an old coat. Similar deal with the stool by the fridge, only the seat is brown and round.

Once I got past wearing used clothes from thrift stores, about two decades ago, I’ve been on a steady descent down the commodity chain. Now it almost feels normal to have canned peaches in our fridge sitting in jars we found beside a telephone pole in Vancouver.

In a sense, I’m like any other shopper. While I no longer flip through flyers, I usually can’t resist scanning down the “aisles,” even when I’m on my way to church. And I often bring home stuff I don’t really need.

I’m a first-world hunter-gatherer. Something wild and primal rises in me as I seek the bounty among the city’s castaways. It’s an adventure, a treasure hunt. Ironically, it’s a luxury.

Back lane castaways bring hope

I’ve been on a steady descent down the commodity chain.

Picking through the underside of society, I have a sense of liberation. I’m identifying with the disaffected. This identification is largely symbolic. Maybe I’m deluded, simply enamoured with an elite attraction to vintage aesthetic, finding postmodern hope amidst urban decay.

Theologically, I’ve found a way to sanctify my back lane treasures. With my growing scavenger mentality, I’m moving feebly toward the outcasts of society. I share pop tins with the guy who pokes through the bags with his stick. I say hi to the guy going dumpster with a plastic milk crate strapped to the back of his bike.

I see the figure of Jesus and the light of God moving at the fringes of society. It’s an “upside-down kingdom,” where, dare I say, new stuff is suspect and reclaimed goods are better.

I used to gloss over the portions of Scripture that warn of the perils of wealth. Gradually, the admonitions to the rich are starting to make more sense. Mary sang, in anticipation of the birth of the Messiah, that God “has sent the rich away empty.” As a person of faith, and as a homeowner with graduate degrees and capital assets, I find this chilling.

The fixed-up junk around our house reminds me of a spiritual presence in what is commonly deemed garbage. I want to move towards the discarded and abandoned elements of society. I want to strip off convenience and comfort—the banal seductions of our consumer age—and discover the grace that moves in the back lanes.

Aiden Enns is publisher of Geez magazine (www.geezmagazine.org). He is a member of Hope Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, and on the board that publishes Canadian Mennonite.

must know several things”:

- We will tell you what is right and what is wrong.
- We will determine what is godly and what is not.
- The work will be done according to our denominational guidelines, beliefs and practices.
- You will work at becoming one of us and fulfilling our mandate.
- If you accept all of these “rules,” we will decide what ventures we will fund.

Is this not the same underlying abuse of power that Mike Harris reiterated when he chose to send in the police at Ipperwash? He wanted to get rid of the Indians. The church continues this same form of abuse of privilege and power.

I personally believe it is time the

church wakes up and really looks at why few native communities bother with it. There is much to be done, but it must be done with us working together as equal participants.

I believe Mennonites have a window of opportunity to work with our First Nation communities that few other denominations have, but not in the manner that work has been carried out in the past. It has been too patronizing, too racist, too much influenced by denominational and European cultural beliefs and practices.

If anything, the gospel has never been allowed to become indigenous. Our relationships with the church have seldom—if ever—allowed us to share the manners and ways God reveals himself to us as Aboriginal

Peoples of this land. We have much to say that the church has so far not been willing to hear.

—**Sakoieta’ Widrick, Winnipeg**

Christmas traditions deserve ‘rethinking’

Give me more “meaty” sermons like “Rethinking Christmas” in the Dec. 19 *Canadian Mennonite* (page 6). And the excellent ideas in “The three ways to revitalize Christmas and introduce Epiphany” (page 8) that accompanied the article are worth encouraging in our churches as an antidote to the exhausting consumption that imbues the other Christmas.

—**Gord Willms, Waterloo, Ont.**

PHIL WAGLER



Outside the box

I’m a landlubber who grew up in Waterloo County, Ont., where salt water is for gargling. So when I happened upon a real starfish left behind by the Pacific tide in the autumn sun, I assumed it was dead and decided this was the perfect souvenir for my boys. I took the creature back to my room and carefully sealed it in a Ziploc bag. I returned later to discover that the bag had moved. That purple starfish was very much alive and I had just body-bagged it!

Truth is—and I’ve since investigated the creatures more diligently—starfish are quite the predators, and this little guy had simply been resting until the tide of life swept him back into the crazy pace of predation in the depths of the Georgia Strait.

Why does the discipline of rest that leads to life look like death?

Our congregation has this month embarked on a year of Sabbath and Jubilee. Numerous realities and cultural forces led our Leadership Team to consider this ancient biblical discipline of corporate rest, restoration and renewal for our contemporary setting.

For a number of years, our Gift Discernment Committee was slowly becoming the Begging and Grovelling Committee, struggling to fill the numerous ministry slots with warm bodies.

Our numerical growth meant we no longer knew each other.

Disciple-making increasingly seemed reliant on programming, not relationships or the home.

Culturally, we saw too many Christians living no differently than their unbelieving neighbours, running themselves ragged in a rat race no rat can survive.

We believe God calls churches to multiply, but are we too busy to hear God’s voice or sense his expansive heart

A starfish Sabbath

So, here we are, a few weeks into this difficult discipline of rest that looks like death to some.

for our locale? Dare we ask if we’ve been doing the Lord’s work in the Lord’s way?

Two themes emerged: The Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

What would it mean to rest and sound the horn over our corporate existence so that these main things remain, or even return, to the centre?

That was no easy discussion, for the talons of legalism have a long reach and our identities can quickly be rooted in doing for, rather than being in, Christ. Yet we agreed that a restful emphasis on loving God and neighbour, and disciple-making can’t be all bad.

A three-fold emphasis for the year emerged. We will:

- Steep ourselves in Scripture by leading people into intense Bible reading;
- De-emphasize program and re-emphasize disciple-making relationships, so that home, friends and neighbours are paramount; and,

- Enjoy the celebration of worship together, where life stories, song and Scripture will focus us on the grace and mercy that has found us and the ensuing call to be the body of Christ for the world, which is at the heart of all this “missional” talk.

So, here we are, a few weeks into this difficult discipline of rest that looks like death to some. But the gift of Sabbath is the acknowledgement that the tide will sweep us away again into the currents of life. And unless we’ve percolated together in the light of God’s Son, who is our ultimate rest from striving and self-interest, we’ll probably forget who we are and what we’re about, and that could very well sink us.

Phil Wagler, who will not anytime soon be named oceanographer of the year, is discovering what it means to lead a people into renewing and restoring Sabbath and Jubilee at Zurich Mennonite Church, Ont. He can be reached at phil_wagler@yahoo.ca.

Intellectual or politicized Christmas not enough

Although it is positive to read about the Magnificat during Christmas (Dec. 19, page 9), to reduce it to political action reduces its all-encompassing power. And to focus on “the great exchange” also misses the central thrust of this gospel story.

The story being related in these first few chapters of the gospels is about God’s new work among humankind. The baby Jesus and the incarnation are a piece of this. But from the point of view of the authors—who knew how this story would end—the central theme is this new God movement which starts with an oppressed poverty-stricken couple who acknowledge, “*God has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty....*”

As John explains, God’s movement takes the mountains of the rich and fills the valleys of the poor so that there is a smooth way where everyone has enough. Those who join this movement renewed through Jesus, abandon their wealth, power and privilege by putting these in solidarity with the marginalized of the world, so all have enough. Political action is one component which flows from lived solidarity, in which riches, power and privilege have already been erased. Instead of a middle class “belief,” such lives incarnate the gospel by “proclaiming the year of the Lord’s favour” through daily interactions.

Our culture also understands that a gospel which undermines riches, privilege and power would threaten its very existence, and consequently works very hard to ensure that Christmas doesn’t celebrate the birth of a God movement in which personal riches, power and privilege are abandoned and given in service of the poor. And unfortunately, most churches also ensure that their theology and teachings don’t challenge the wealth, privilege and power of their members.

To avoid such challenges, our theological interpretations reduce these texts to calls for political action and intellectualize an incarnation that doesn’t have legs in this world.

—**John Brouwer, Waterloo, Ont.**

Christians should live by a different calendar

Allow me to congratulate you and Ross W. Muir for the splendid article, “Rethinking Christmas.” It addresses better than anything else I have read this season the importance of celebrating the incarnation during the whole Christmas season. Christians should not join in the general exhaustion from over-eating, over-drinking and over-shopping that tend to characterize the days after Dec. 25.

A further strength of the article was the linkage between the Christian festivals, all of which belong together and tell the story of our faith. Christians, if they are conscious, know that they live by a different calendar than that of the consumer society. We need altogether more of this kind of thoughtful, foundational Christian journalism.

—**Walter Klaassen, Saskatoon**

Blaming wars on belief in God is itself a cliché

Re: “Author wrestles with ‘Mennonite’ upbringing,” Dec. 19, page 10.

David Bergen asks *Canadian Mennonite’s* interviewer, Leona Dueck Penner, “Why do we still lean towards clichés in our churches?” From reading the interview, it seems to me that Bergen bends toward a few of them himself. Here is one: “[Organized religion is] the bane, the downfall of the world...one just has to look to wars fought past and present. Much of man’s excuse for killing comes out of a belief in God.”

Blaming religion and God for wars is not only an overused and trite commentary, I would argue it is also naïve. First, let’s take a look at “atheistic” wars; we certainly can’t blame

God for all of Stalin’s killings. And second, what about wars motivated by money and oil, such as Iraq? Third, does Bergen think that the unspeakable atrocities committed in Rwanda are anchored in organized religion? Ethnicity, maybe. Fourth, what about the former armed struggles in South Africa? Racism and apartheid, I would think.

Before I go on and on, I would agree that many wars have been fought in the name of religion and often because of religion, but please let’s put it in perspective. Our Mennonite (religious) upbringing may have done a lot of Mennonites some harm, but one thing it cannot be blamed for—promoting killing in the name of God.

It is unclear whether or not Bergen quit church because of the clichés he sometimes hears there—something he hints he himself does not fall prey to in his books—or because he believes killing is done in the name of organized religion. In any event, if we eliminated all the reasons for war, I’d bet him a few CMU scholarships for our children that humankind would swiftly find another reason for wars. Who knows, maybe we’d line up behind the different writing styles that exist among Mennonite authors and fight wars on that basis.

—**Chester Reimer, Ottawa**

Clarification

The dedication of the Men’s Mission and Rehabilitation Centre in London, Ont., pictured on page 19 of the Nov. 28 *Canadian Mennonite* neglected to mention that the ceremony was for the centre’s new extension. The caption accompanying the photograph did not make this clear. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the lack of clarity.

Pontius’ Puddle



FOCUS

Post-secondary Education

Bethany receives national TESOL accreditation

On Nov. 15, Bethany College became the third Christian college in Canada to receive national program recognition for its TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) certificate program.

This recognition provides Bethany with a unique combination of top quality, recognized training in a "small school environment," where supportive, face-to-face interaction between student and instructor can take place in a more intimate community environment, says academic dean Rick McCorkindale.

The accreditation process for national recognition by TESL Canada is long and involved.

"Over the course of the past three years, our program was designed and written to ensure excellence in teacher training, both in theory and skill development, while maintaining the college's mandate and focus on ministry," explains Jean Campbell, Bethany's TESOL director.

Maintaining a high standard of teacher education in Canada benefits everyone, from ESL learners to teachers, employers and programs. Today's employers are increasingly looking for graduates of recognized programs. As the numbers of refugees and immigrants into Canada increase, so does the need for skilled volunteers to assist in the transition to

Canadian culture and society.

"Having a teacher who is well-trained and able to adjust their teaching to student need is critical," says Campbell, who instructs a literacy class for immigrants.

National recognition not only provides Bethany's program wider acceptance across Canada, but also gives students pursuing international opportunities the credentials that can widen access across the globe.

"Students have found that TESOL training opens doors in both long- and short-term ministry, and many are being asked to teach a little bit of English as part of their work," says McCorkindale.

Located 30 minutes north of Saskatoon in the town of Hepburn, Sask., Bethany College is a biblical learning community that prepares students for volunteer and vocational ministries.

For more information, visit www.bethany.sk.ca.
—Bethany College release

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CMU photo by John Longhurst



Helmut Penner plays his recorder at an Oct. 20 recital in his honour at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), Winnipeg. Penner, a member of Winnipeg's Home Street Mennonite Church and long-time recorder player, was being thanked for donating the harpsichord (seen in the background) to the university. Playing the harpsichord is CMU music instructor Verna Wiebe.

CMU degrees now recognized by Ontario College of Teachers

When Winnipegger Tessa Callan began her teacher training program at the University of Windsor last fall, it not only marked a major career step for the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) graduate—it was also a significant milestone for CMU.

Callan, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in the spring, was able to pursue her dream of becoming a teacher because of a recent decision by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) to recognize degrees granted by CMU.

"It's a great thing for Tessa, and a great thing for CMU," says academic dean Gordon Zerbe.

Prior to the OCT decision, CMU graduates were unable to pursue education studies at Ontario universities. This was

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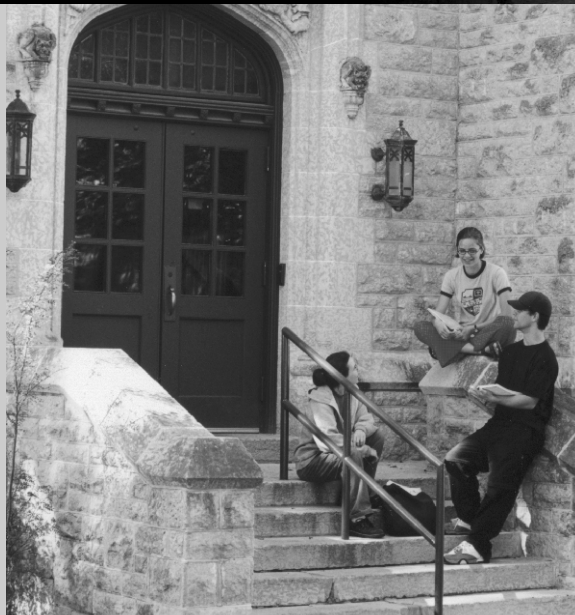
"I can't say enough about our recent campus visit at CMU. From the moment we arrived, we felt welcome. Staff and students alike were warm, and we very quickly felt like part of the community. We weren't stared at like visitors, but greeted as friends. **I have no hesitation whatsoever about sending my daughter to CMU!**"

Marilyn Dykxhoorn, Brownsville, ON

That note, from a parent, says it all—if you, or someone you know, are wondering where to go to university in September, consider CMU!

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due to the fact that Canada does not have a national system for recognizing institutional accreditation; rules governing the recognition of degrees and course credits vary from province to province. Zerbe says that more work still needs to be done with individual universities in Ontario, to make them aware of the decision and to encourage them to revise any internal policies that may still pose restrictions on CMU grads. "But there is movement in this direction," he says.

Other international institutions accepting CMU degrees include: Duke University Divinity School, which has accepted Joe Wiebe, who graduated in 2004 with his bachelor of theology degree, and the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music, which accepted 2004 bachelor of music arts graduate Dustin Wiebe into a graduate program.

—CMU release by **John Longhurst**

CBC student impacted by MEDA convention

Together with leading business men and women at the 2005 Mennonite Development Associates (MEDA) convention last November in Whistler B.C., 10 students and staff from Columbia Bible College struggled to understand the opportunities and challenges of initiating sustainable development in developing countries as a key means of alleviating poverty and inequality.

After Stephen Lewis, UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, addressed the convention, there was a quiet gravity in the air, as we all absorbed the reality of the tremendous pandemic that, in Lewis's words, is "turning countries into cemeteries."

Hearing of the extreme poverty that exists, our ignorance of the implications of our indulgent lifestyles, and the depth of pain and loss experienced in the lives

that are ravished by AIDS, we could not help but feel a sense of deep loss. This is not who we were created to be—people torn apart by sin and suffering, and separated by extremes of wealth and opportunity.

In this emotion of loss we remember the deep truth of our created humanity: we need our maker. We need a high king who seeks the prosperity and safety of the whole kingdom. Our ravaged and broken world needs the salve of its Saviour to mend what we cannot fix alone. We are lost without the voice of Jesus speaking life into our death and hope into our darkness.

MEDA is practically pursuing this call to redemption as an association in its commitment to addressing human needs around the world through business-oriented economic development programs.

Our time at the MEDA convention was powerful and profound. We left reminded of who we are called to be as followers and servants of our good king—pursuers of justice for the sake of his kingdom.

—CBC release by **Jessica Roarty**

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First Reimer Award recipient announced

The Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC) has named Jonathan Seiling as the first recipient of the A. James Reimer Award. This annual award was established in recognition of Reimer, founding director of TMTC, and his longstanding commitment to theological education at Conrad Grebel University College and the Toronto School of Theology (TST).

Seiling is currently pursuing a doctorate in theology, specializing in the area of modern church history. He is analyzing the influence of German idealist philosophy on Russian Orthodoxy in the 20th century, with a particular focus on the work of theologian Sergei Bulgakov. Prior to his arrival at TST in 2003, Seiling earned a master of theological studies degree from Conrad Grebel University College. His undergraduate degree is

an Honours B.A. in religious studies from the University of Waterloo, conferred in 1998.

Reimer is delighted that Seiling won the Reimer Award. "I've had him as a student for both undergraduate and graduate studies," Reimer notes. "Jonathan has a sharp intellect, is full of imaginative curiosity, has travelled widely, especially in Russia, and has a deep commitment to the Mennonite Church along with his ecumenical interests."

Reimer believes that "Christian theology in our time calls for a disciplined imagination—the daring exploration of new frontiers of intellectual space; a fidelity to the ancient truths of the Judeo-Christian tradition; an empathetic engagement with all Christians, all faiths, and all peoples; a high regard for nature, experience, and all forms of knowledge; and a resolute witness to peace, justice and reconciliation in a world of violence."

The award was established in 2002 by a gift from Conrad Grebel alumni Alan Armstrong ('94) and Marlys Neufeldt



Reimer

('95). Says Armstrong, "Jim helped me re-understand biblical texts and church dogma in ways that continue to inspire and strengthen me and my faith."

The award supports TST doctoral students of Mennonite identity who associate with TMTC—a graduate teaching and research centre of Conrad Grebel University College, affiliated with TST on the campus of the University of Toronto.

Letters of application for the award should be sent to: Jeremy Bergen, interim director, Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre 47 Queen's Park Cr. East, Toronto, ON M5S 2C3.

—Conrad Grebel release

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Winnipeg

Membership baggage, homosexuality fuel 'provincially active only' desires

The desire of some congregations across the country to be “provincially active only” has led MC Canada’s General Board to make this issue a top priority of its newly formed Faith and Life Committee. The group is working to have a recommendation available for delegates at Edmonton 2006—the next time representatives from congregations across Canada will meet.

The urgency was prompted, in part, by the expiry this year of a five-year agreement between Mennonite Church British Columbia and Mennonite Church Canada to offer provincially active only status on a trial basis. As well, the B.C. conference is into the second year of its own discernment process on the controversial matter.

Rudy Baergen, chair of the Faith and Life Committee, wants to apply theological rigour to the question. A significant part of the committee’s work will be studying and discerning what Scripture says about followers belonging to a wider discerning community of believers. There is much biblical evidence to support the notion of being one body and holding on to unity, if not official membership, he believes. Referring to Christ’s prayer for the church in John 17 and the Conference of Jerusalem in Acts 15, he says, “Unity has been an important issue from the very beginning.”

‘Membership’ baggage

One of the screens the committee will apply to its discernment process will be to identify parallels between congregational and wider church membership.

But even the word “membership” has baggage, says Lorin Bergen, pastor at Living Hope Fellowship in Surrey, B.C., a congregation that is predominantly under age 50. “With [our] demographic, we have clearly

seen a hesitancy to become a member ‘on paper’ of the church. There is a question of, ‘Why is membership important? I am coming here; I am putting myself under the authority and accountability of the church. I’m going to a small group regularly. I am ministering and using my gifts.’ We’ve got people who aren’t members who are more committed than members.”

George Hoepfner, pastor at First Mennonite Church Greendale, in Chilliwack, B.C., concurs with Bergen. He says that while some older members in his congregation lament the loss of being connected to a wider church body, “the younger generation is not tied to anything as far as denomination goes.”

But there are practical reasons for belonging to a wider church body at the denominational level: employment benefits for pastors and congregational staff, teaching resources, Sunday school curricula, and opportunities to engage in international ministries.

Rudy Baergen believes the discernment of a wider church body also offers individual congregations some comfort. “I’ve seen that in Colombia, [where] independent churches run into serious difficulties because they are drinking from so many different wells they get this total mixture of theological understandings within their congregation, and when they develop a problem or crisis, it’s really difficult to resolve because you’re just not unified in anything and you don’t have any common ground to stand on,” he says.

A deeper disillusionment

Lorin Bergen considers the homosexuality issue as symptomatic of a deeper disillusionment with the denomination and its polity. “I think there is an incredible lack of trust in leadership

and a real dissatisfaction with the polity that we have in MC Canada,” he says. “We find it fairly alarming that

our MC Canada leaders can’t approach a church...about a clear break in our Confession of Faith because that would be stepping on the toes of MC Eastern Canada....”

“We have structures, but nobody has any authority,” Hoepfner maintains. “And so the [advantage] of stepping out [of the denomination] is so that we could have more structured leadership.”



Baergen

Witness to the world

Last February, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan culminated a two-year season of discernment with a covenanting service at which the vast majority of area congregations agreed formally to be in communion with one another. The Faith and Life Committee will study what it means when congregations covenant together.

It is hard and sometimes painful work, whether churches leave the wider communion or commit to stay with a long view of working at disagreements. Finding respectful ways of dealing with both circumstances is another part of the challenge.

And then there is the concern over the church’s witness to the world when there is disagreement. “A major part of the good news is the theme of reconciliation,” says Rudy Baergen, adding, “It is the church’s challenge to witness to its ministry of reconciliation. Our task is to find ways of working with one another that transcend our disagreements, so that we can be a witness to the world.”

—Dan Dyck

Zaporozhya Region, Ukraine

Mennonite groups oppose land speculator

A speculative land deal in the works in the southern Ukraine is causing consternation among North American Mennonite groups with ties to the former Soviet state.

Paul Willms, formerly of Leamington, Ont., and now an American resident, is asking Mennonites on both sides of the border for \$1 million to begin the process of reclaiming a half-million acres of land in the Zaporozhya Region of the Ukraine that were once Mennonite farmland. If successful, Willms' Delaware-registered Caobo Company would establish a land trust and begin developing a variety of agribusinesses and real estate developments.

At this point, Willms has mailed more than 15,000 glossy proposal packages to Mennonites across Canada and the U.S., asking them to invest at least \$1,000 US each in his company in an effort to raise a million dollars in total. Those who invest must also sign a waiver giving up their own claim to any land the Ukrainian government might give the company.

The packages were mailed out to families with seven last names found in the historical records of the village of Kleefeld in the Molotschna Settlement: Dyck, Enns, Epp, Freisen, Janzen, Thiessen and Willms. But Willms told *Canadian Mennonite* that "all Mennonites are invited to participate in Caobo's restitution claim."

Willms is hoping that investment by Mennonites in his venture will not only give him the needed capital to move ahead with the first phase of the plan (in part to make the Caobo Company a publicly traded enterprise), but also give it some legitimacy with the Ukrainian government. Caobo has requested that the land—now owned in part by individual Ukrainians—be turned over to it in the name of those Mennonites it was expropriated from by the former Soviet government nearly a century

ago.

In the information package, Willms wrote: "In order to establish a credible claim to such lands, it is likely that the company will need to have a substantial number of equity holders who are among the descendants of the prior owners of such lands." According to Willms, though, the project already has the support of some high-level Ukrainian government officials.

Land restitution worries Mennonite agencies

It is this goal to have the land turned over to the Caobo Company as a way of restoring it to Mennonite ownership—even more than the speculative nature of the request for investment—that has Mennonite organizations upset and worried.

"Even if Caobo is able to sign up the thousand investors of Ukrainian

Mennonite descent that they are hoping for, I certainly don't think it's ethical for a private company to negotiate with the Ukrainian government for the return of 'Mennonite' lands to a small, and perhaps only nominally, Mennonite group, and then to claim that justice has been done to the Mennonites," said Pam Peters-Pries, Mennonite

Church Canada's Support Services executive secretary. "It should acquire land the same way any other private company has to—by buying it."

Willms' own Mennonite lineage has impacted him significantly. "My father, Henry Willms, instilled within me from childhood that I am Mennonite," he said, adding that his heritage "took on new meaning...when I visited the Ukraine this past summer and found the birthplace of my father, aunts and uncles. This experience precipitated deep reflections about what it means for me to be Mennonite."

Erwin Warkentin, the general manager of the Mennonite Foundation, shares Peters-Pries' views. "The main question that I have is the ethical question, 'Can this company claim to

speak for all Mennonites that have suffered loss as a result of leaving the Ukraine?' And secondly, 'Is this really the Mennonite way of looking at this, to claim restitution?'"

The charity Friends of the Mennonite Centre Ukraine (FOMCU) certainly doesn't think so.

David Suderman, a Friends' board member, told *Canadian Mennonite* that "FOMCU vigorously opposes large-scale land restitution to the Caobo Company on historical-moral grounds," noting that "the lands and property of other ethnic groups...along with those of the Crimean Tatars, were also unjustly seized under communism."

Will private development hurt humanitarian aid efforts?

What bothers FOMCU most, however, is the damage the Caobo Company plan might cause their humanitarian efforts, along with those of other organizations such as the Zaporozhye Family Centre (see "Respite centre expands to 12 beds," *Canadian Mennonite*, Dec. 19, page 27).

"My concern is that the work and reputation of Mennonite social agencies in the Ukraine...are potentially at risk," said Walter Unger of Toronto, Friends' board chair.

But Willms sees his company's efforts as being of benefit to impoverished Ukrainians. One of his goals is to "provide the opportunity of local residents having access to good jobs working for Caobo Company, in turn, improving their living conditions by helping them build new homes up to European or North American standards."

And he said that "this message is well-received" in such areas as Zaporozhye Oblast.

But Victor Penner, a Mennonite living in Zaporozhye, sees things differently. In an e-mail to Unger, who forwarded it to *Canadian Mennonite*, Penner wrote, "Once the information on Mr. Paul Willms and his project will penetrate into Ukrainian mass media, the attitude to foreigners in



Willms

former Mennonite areas will worsen substantially. Ukrainian communists and other pro-Russian political parties insist that [current president Viktor Yushchenko] came to power using 'American money'...and that 'Americans will come to Ukraine and buy everything here and we will turn [into] serfs.'"

Although Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) works on a variety of health care and social service initiatives in the Ukraine, it has chosen not to enter the debate. "MCC does not feel it's our arena to comment," said Rick Janzen, the co-director of MCC's Europe and Middle East Programs, commenting that other Mennonite organizations were already addressing the matter.

A good investment or not?

"If you go through [the information package], it does say this is a risky investment, but you have to look very carefully at it," Erwin Warkentin said, pointing out, "One industry he is targeting is a winery. Do we want to get involved with that?" He has no plans to invest. "I would not personally get involved," he said.

Likewise, David Suderman cautioned potential investors against assuming "that a \$1,000 subscription will serve a charitable purpose, that subscribers gain any rights to the lands of their ancestors, [or] that their investment will yield dividends." He noted that the fine print in the information package describes shares sold to Mennonites as "extremely speculative," and that the company has no plans to pay dividends to its subscribers in the near future.

The information package indicates that Willms (as CEO) and his partner will collectively own 73 percent of the company's 8.2 million offered shares if all million new shares are purchased by Mennonite investors. If that happens, the new investors will then collectively own about 12 percent of Caobo's outstanding stock.

Willms has chosen not to work with other Mennonite organizations in his

land claims effort. "The land in question is not church land," he said. "For this reason, the Caobo Company has intentionally gone directly to individuals, and not to any institution, religious or otherwise. As with any sound business endeavour, Caobo seeks to

connect directly with decision-makers," he said.

When asked by *Canadian Mennonite* what would happen to investors' money should the project be turned down by the Ukrainian authorities, Willms didn't answer directly. As for the legality of his stock offering in Canada and the U.S., Willms said the company's attorney fol-

lowed American Securities Exchange Commission guidelines that permit a company to sell up to \$1 million US in unregistered stock to the American market and that "registration is being processed for applicable jurisdictions."

With conflicting perspectives on the matter of redressing past injustices, how should Mennonites respond?

"Mennonites returning to Ukraine to provide humanitarian assistance is the best example anywhere of Mennonite reconciliation," said Paul Toews of Fresno, Calif., a Friends' supporter. "Going back to embrace the sons and daughters of those who participated in the fateful activity of the early Soviet Union...is a powerful witness and embodiment of the best of the Mennonite ethic."

Willms, on the other hand, hopes those who received his information package will consider it carefully; he is willing to talk with them directly if they have any questions. "Some might contend that giving 15,700 people my personal cell phone number and e-mail address is crazy," he said. "However, I feel it is important that people have direct access to me."

Willms said that of those who have already responded, "the majority... have been very supportive and enthusiastic. We are very pleased with how this project is progressing."

Victor Penner isn't, though. "I can only pray that Mr. Paul Willms' idea of 'Mennonite land restitution' will

'My concern is that the work and reputation of Mennonite social agencies in the Ukraine...are potentially at risk.'

die right where it was born—in North America."

—**Ross W. Muir** and **Tim Miller Dyck**

News brief

Food aid being sent to Malawi

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is providing \$23,000 to purchase flour and maize for families who are suffering from hunger in the southern African country of Malawi. The food will be distributed through the Brethren in Christ Church in Malawi. The United Nations World Food Program anticipates that nearly five million people in Malawi will need food assistance between now and April. According to the UN, increased maize prices, the worst dry spell since 1994, chronic poverty and a high rate of HIV/AIDS combined to make the country's malnutrition rates rise. In addition, flash floods in southern Malawi have displaced more than 40,000 people.

—MCC release

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Atmore, Ala.

A year-and-a-half after Ivan: A first-person account

I stood in morning sunshine that promised to warm the day, but the air was still cool in spite of the brilliant sun from a cloudless Alabama sky. We had knocked on the door of a decrepit house—a door so flimsy I thought it would fall in when I knocked. As we waited I surveyed the yard: a wrecked car; two rusted bicycles; an old transmission; an ancient lawnmower that must work, I surmised, as the lawn was neatly trimmed, even around the car parts.

I knocked again. A voice cried out from within in a heavy southern accent, “Who’s that?”

In my three visits to southern Alabama I have learned to identify myself by shouting through closed doors. “Glenn and Leanne [my daughter]. We’re with Mennonite Disaster Service and we’re checking to see if people need help repairing hurricane damage.”

“Ya’ll are ‘Mannynites?’” the voice asked. Before I could reply, the door flung open and a woman eyed us suspiciously, looking closely at our identification badges.

“Good morning,” I said. “We work with Mennonite Disaster Service helping the County Long-term Recovery Committee, and we wondered if you are having trouble repairing the damage from the hurricanes. Are you Paula?” [“Paula” is a pseudonym. *Ed.*]

“Yeah, I’m Paula, and I bin prayin’ that ya’ll ’ould come,” she said. “Ya’ll are answers to ma prayers. C’mon inside outta the cold.” She shivered and pulled her thin housecoat around her more securely.

We entered a darkened house lit only by the glow of a flame from a propane space heater. Closing the door behind me I noted it barely stayed on its hinges, the frame was so poor. The house was too small to store the objects needed for everyday living, so every available surface was covered.

While Hurricanes Katrina and Rita made headlines last fall, residents along the Florida panhandle and in southern Alabama are still reeling from hurricanes Ivan and Dennis.

Paula’s roof was damaged by Ivan



Photo by Sandra Gale

Glenn Buck, front row left, is pictured with an MDS team in Century, Fla.; his daughter Leanne is in the middle of the front row.

in September 2004; a tarp had been secured on the roof. Upon learning the house was uninsured, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had provided money for roof repair and a carpenter was contacted. Using FEMA funds, the carpenter had ordered supplies, which were delivered to the house. The carpenter had then loaded the bulk of the materials in his truck and left—never to return. Sheets of plywood for roof repair lay ruined in the yard from months of exposure to the elements.

Dennis then shredded the roof tarp and did more damage. The roof now leaked so badly the electrical circuits had to be disconnected. Only one circuit in the house was safe to use.

As we discussed the situation, one daughter emerged from the bedroom and stood shivering in front of the space heater, attempting to warm herself. In one corner of the kitchen a tiny tabletop Christmas tree stood atop a microwave—no presents under this tree, I thought. I looked around the tiny dwelling and wondered where repairs could even start.

The situation was typical of many people whose lives have been uprooted by the onslaught of hurricanes in the past two years. They had managed to eke out a sparse life that was “hand-to-mouth,” but they lacked the resources to enable them to perform even minimal repairs.

All too often we heard stories of schemers, frauds and charlatans who

preyed on these vulnerable people. I took Paula’s financial information and recorded it, along with a brief history and a walk-through assessment of the damage. Later, I would compose a one-page narrative to help convince the committee that her needs were desperate and immediate, and warranted intervention.

While the work in Mississippi and Louisiana cleaning up after hurricanes Katrina and Rita is still making the news, there remains much to do in Florida and Alabama nearly a year-and-a-half after Ivan. In this region, as in many others, the name of MDS is held in high regard because of the quality of the work and the commitment to keep on working long after other groups have left.

I have appreciated my opportunities to share in this work and the chance to share in the recovery of many households. Going back to a household after the work is completed, and seeing the pride the people take in their homes after repairs, always puts a lump in my throat. I thank God that I have been allowed to play my small part in this restoration, which I equate with Jubilee, “the year of the Lord’s favour.”

—Glenn Buck

The author attends Listowel Mennonite Church, Ont. He volunteered with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) in Century, Fla., and Atmore, Ala., three times last fall.

Houston, Tex.

Garífuna congregation reaches out to evacuees

When crowds of Hurricane Katrina evacuees arrived at the Houston Astrodome last fall, pastor Erick Suazo of Christian Church Garífuna Mercy of God came with a cardboard sign, seeking to gather those from New Orleans' Garífuna community or other Central American immigrants.

Suazo knew some of the evacuees would be Garífuna—descendants of Africans and the indigenous people of St. Vincent, a Caribbean island, who have moved from Central America to the U.S. seeking jobs.

Eventually, with the help of his sign, he found them. "Little by little people came to us," he recalls.

In the months after Hurricane

Katrina, Suazo has helped connect dozens of evacuees with apartments in south Houston and needed household goods, including furniture purchased by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

It is a ministry that reaches far beyond material goods. He and his wife Alicia visit daily with evacuees. They hold a weekly Bible study at the apartment complex where many evacuees are living, and lead youth gatherings focused on singing and drumming. They talk with evacuees and pray with them. They are available for late-night phone calls from those who still have nightmares about the hurricane or



MCC photo by Matthew Lester

Anacleto Loredo, left, who fled Hurricane Katrina, found housing in Houston through Pastor Erick Suazo, right, and Alicia Suazo, middle, of Christian Church Garífuna Mercy of God. She also received MCC-funded furniture through the church.

floodwaters.

But the hurdles that new evacuees to Houston face are tremendous. They have lost homes and jobs. Many struggle with lingering fears of the floodwaters or the storm.

Anacleto Loredo's daughter, who was five-months pregnant, miscarried after spending time in the floodwaters of New Orleans. Her two sons have gone from Houston to New Orleans looking for work, but returned when they could find nowhere to stay.

Yet even in the midst of tremendous loss, she is finding hope and consolation in God.

Loredo says that before the hurricanes, she did not believe in the same way she does now. "The Lord saved me," she says. "The Lord provided [for] me through the people. Now is the time to be stronger and stronger in the way of the Lord."

Voicing that hope is a crucial part of what the Suazos are doing. "We have to encourage them according to the word of the Lord," Suazo says. "People say it is hard. We say, 'You can do it.'"

—MCC release by
Marla Pierson Lester

Hesston, Kan.

Canadians prepare for MDS project leadership roles

Five Canadians joined 18 Americans at the semi-annual Mennonite Disaster Service leadership workshop, held Nov. 30 to Dec. 2 at Hesston College. The Canadians are Peter and Lydia Schroeder of Saskatoon; Peter and Ada Bunnett from New Brunswick; and John Goossen of Delta, B.C.

"These people are answering the call and plea for long-term MDS workers," said MDS executive coordinator Kevin King. "Finding and training project leaders is critical if we are going to meet our goal of keeping 10 to 11 projects operating full-time, year-round."

In addition to workshop attendees, Hesston College students enrolled in the Disaster Management program attended some of the sessions. The new program begun last fall is a cooperative effort between the college and Mennonite Disaster Service.

"This program is an additional way of garnering project leaders," King explained. "It's not an instant ticket, but it's one way to get people to project sites to serve as crew leaders, cooks, and office staff. Then as they serve for longer periods of time, the door is open for them to become project leaders."

King said the Federal Emergency Management Agency declared the 2005 hurricane season as a record-setting year. Damage from Hurricane Katrina is the most expensive one on record, with more than \$34 billion US in insured losses, replacing 1992's Hurricane Andrew. Katrina claimed 1,322 lives, the deadliest since 1928. A total of 26 storms, including Tropical Storm Epsilon, which formed Nov. 29, were named, breaking the record of 21 set in 1933. And the year included three top-scale Category-5 storms, the most since 1960.

In response to Gulf Coast hurricanes last fall, MDS has opened six project sites: Point Aux Chenes and Metairie, La.; Gulfport and Pass Christian, Miss.; Bayou Le Batre, Ala.; and Newton, Texas.

—Hesston (Kan.) College release

Winnipeg

Recovering a heritage: The Mennonite experience in Poland and Prussia

If you ask the average person of Russian Mennonite heritage if they knew their ancestors had quite probably resided in Poland for more than 200 years, most would say no—and a few might regard it as preposterous.

But as Peter Klassen showed at the annual John and Margaret Friesen Lectures at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), that is precisely the case for many North American Mennonite families.

Over two days last November, Klassen, professor emeritus of history at California State University, Fresno, provided new information on the sojourn of many Mennonites who had resided in Poland some two centuries or more ago.

In his first presentation, Klassen documented the heritage of Anabaptist Mennonites who emigrated from the Netherlands to Poland as early as the 1530s. In his subsequent talks, Klassen explored the life and impact of the Mennonites who long ago resided in the city of Gdansk (Danzig) and on the flood plain of the Vistula and Nogat rivers, telling how they fled from persecution in the Netherlands to regions under the Polish crown due to the significant promises of religious toleration. He also indicated that they were prized for their farming and engineering skills, building windmills and developing excellent drainage systems, and turning the unworkable and unprofitable marshy lowlands into an area that brought wealth and food security to the region. Some of the systems they built are still utilized today.

Although the Mennonites arriving from the Netherlands were initially tolerated by most authorities, they did face subsequent religious and work-related discrimination. Despite this, Mennonites played a significant role in industry in the area, with trade between Danzig and Amsterdam flourishing. One Mennonite is known to have owned more than 40 ships that regularly moved trade goods between

northern Baltic seaports.

The first partition of Poland, in 1772, resulted in changes to the toleration the Mennonites had enjoyed. But the biggest challenge for the community came between the Napoleonic wars of the 19th century and World War I. Initially, the promise of religious freedom had included exemption from military service, but shortly after Prussia seized portions of Poland the Mennonites had to pay to continue to exercise their military service exemption. They were also restricted from acquiring additional lands. As the restrictions increased, the option of moving to south Russia, at the invitation of Catherine II, became more attractive.

Eventually, the broad exemption was totally abolished; individual church members were required to

make their own choice, with churches giving members the option of whether or not to join the military. Over the years, regular military service became common among Mennonites, according to Klassen.

The John and Margaret Friesen Lectures in Anabaptist/Mennonite Studies are a lecture series begun at CMU in 2002, to allow scholars working in the field of Anabaptist studies to present their research and stimulate greater interest in the history and heritage of the Anabaptist tradition within the larger Mennonite community.

—Ken Reddig

The author is director of the Centre For Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg.

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Tin, Burkina Faso

Power to teach needed by Witness worker

The theft of Lillian Haas's solar panels has left her without the power she needs to teach. The panels were stolen from her home compound in Tin, leaving Haas and her neighbours without electricity.

The theft comes at a critical time, as Haas—a Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker from Bluesky, Alta.—prepares biblical teaching material for five new literacy centres set to open throughout Burkina Faso in 2006. The centres are the result of six years of tireless work in developing a writing system for the Siamou language, a formerly exclusively oral language.

The lost panels were used to power her household, including a computer, scanner and printer. Now she must travel to a larger centre to use a computer and communicate with the rest of the world. The loss of power has severely compromised the production of training materials for the new literacy centres.

The solar panels were stolen last summer, while Haas was attending a

grammar workshop in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. The panels were securely housed in a metal frame and perched atop a tall pipe cemented into the ground. Thieves used pipe-cutters to sever the three-inch pipe and then dragged the entire assembly to the nearby bush, where they salvaged the valuable panels.

Despite the disadvantage, Haas is pressing on in her work. The next challenge is to teach the written language to Siamou speakers using the new literacy centres. Two reading clubs are helping to identify and prepare potential teachers for the planned literacy centres. Club members also assist Haas by editing the stories she will publish.

A celebration of the new Siamou written language—planned and funded by the Siamou people—was scheduled for January. For Haas, the installation of new solar panels would be even more reason to rejoice.

Donations for the ministry of Lillian Haas and other Canadian work-

ers in Burkina Faso can be sent to Mennonite Church Canada Witness, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.

—MC Canada release by **Jeff Enns**

News briefs

Hurricane Wilma prompts MCC relief

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has responded to Hurricane Wilma by sending 160 health kits, 100 school kits, 960 cans of meat, 300 bags of groceries, more than 100 blankets, and other items to south Florida. Another 100 bags of groceries were to be distributed through the Brethren in Christ congregations Monte Calvario in Miami and Maranatha Church in Hialeah. High winds from the Oct. 24 storm devastated trailer parks and displaced hundreds of people in Belle Glade, South Bay and Pahokee, areas with many migrant farm workers. Some 600 people whose homes were damaged sought shelter in local schools. As the schools reopen, local churches are working to host and care for those who lost their homes. An assessment team of staff from MCC and Mennonite Disaster Service developed the response.

—MCC release

MCC canned meat welcomed in Gulf Coast

As part of a larger material aid response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) provided 1,600 cartons of canned meat to International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), which has distribution centres for hurricane-affected families in Houston, and Biloxi, Miss. Many families lacked refrigeration or resources to purchase meat on their own, and they praised the MCC meat as a welcome change from other canned goods, reported Frank Carlin, IOCC emergency field director. "Thank God for MCC and this unique program," he said.

—MCC release

Abbotsford, B.C.

New web portal helps B.C. businesses

Where does a company go when it wants to purchase products for the office? Where can a business advertise its products when advertising is expensive? Where can a business hire someone who has been pre-screened by an agency that has ensured they are job ready?

To the Fraser Valley Social Purchasing Portal, that's where. The portal—found on the Internet at www.sppfraservalley.org—is designed to connect business people in B.C.'s Fraser Valley with each other. By harnessing the purchasing power of businesses that use local goods and services, it directs that power towards companies that have made a commitment to helping people.

The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Employment and Community Development Department is embarking on this new opportunity to enable socially responsible businesses to interact with

each other while creating employment opportunities for local people.

Businesses visiting the Social Purchasing Portal find companies listed there—at no cost—that provide the products they need. Purchasers benefit because they know they are purchasing products that they would buy anyway from companies that are intentional about helping people in the community, companies that have made a commitment to hiring people through local employment agencies that ensure potential employees are pre-screened, skilled and job ready.

Suppliers benefit because free advertising on the Social Purchasing Portal allows them to expand their markets and also allows them access to potential employees who are ready to work.

The community benefits because job creation and economic activity is essential for any community to grow and stay healthy.

This service is made possible by a grant from Coast Capital; MCC is also contributing support in kind. The website officially launched on Nov. 7.

—MCC B.C. release

Pasadena, Calif.

Pentecostalism on 2006 MWC conference agenda

Members of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) councils from 55 countries will gather in Pasadena between March 7 and 15. These church leaders will do business, mingle with the diverse Anabaptist-related community in southern California and with guests from other North American churches.

A one-day consultation on service—the deacon role of the church—will begin on March 7, and conclude at noon the next day. Ronald J. Sider, acclaimed author, professor and lecturer from Pennsylvania, will be the featured speaker. The consultation, co-sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee and MWC, will study what it means to be in service within and outside of global Anabaptist-related churches. It will explore the biblical foundation of *diakonia*, share case studies, list principles and models to be tested by MWC member churches, and identify next steps.

The 100th anniversary of the Pentecostal movement in 2006 provides the impetus for a symposium on “Global Anabaptism and global Pentecostalism: Creating understandings.” Fuller Theological Seminary and MWC will jointly host the March 13 evening event at the seminary.

Paulus Widjaja and Alan and Eleanor Kreider will lead Peace Council meetings based on their recently released book, *The Culture of Peace: God's Vision for the Church*, the 2005 selection for MWC's Anabaptist Shelf of Literature.

Also meeting during the week in California is AMIGOS, the five-member youth committee that grew out of the Global Youth Summit in Zimbabwe in 2003 (see “Youth want a say in church's future, March 7, page 18). Activities with local youths, including an evening rally, are planned for March 11.

Inviting North American churches to send representatives to these meetings is a new way of offering the global faith family an opportunity to make connections at a kind of “mini-assembly.” Participants will meet Anabaptist leaders from around the world and also experience the diversity in local congregations from the three host conferences: Brethren in Christ, Mennonite Church USA and the US Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. The greater Los Angeles region has a large popula-

tion of Asians, Africans, Latinos and new immigrants; about 90 percent of MC USA members there are of non-European descent.

For more details on the gathering, visit www.mwc-cmm.org. Congregations or individuals interested in participating should contact the MWC Kitchener office by e-mail: kitchener@mwc-cmm.org. Hosting requests will be processed considering the travel time international delegates have available.

—MWC release by **Ferne Burkhardt**



MWC photo

Anabaptist-related churches around the world were able to experience solidarity in worship on World Fellowship Sunday—Jan. 22. Writers from Indonesia and India, including Eddy Sutjipto, left, and Joren Basumata, chose this year's theme, “Bringing peace in difficult times.” They prepared worship material that reflects the life and struggles of churches in Asia. Stories this year came from a new book, *The Culture of Peace: God's Vision for the Church*, by Paulus Widjaja from Indonesia and Alan and Eleanor Kreider. World Fellowship Sunday celebrates our common roots on the fourth Sunday of January, the Sunday closest to the date of our origins in Switzerland in 1525.

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Saskatchewan

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Saskatchewan
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News 'n' Notes



From the Conference Minister's Pen **Still Dreaming...**

Ken Bechtel

Designated members of the congregation gather around Ed and Alice Cornelson as Ed is installed as interim pastor of Carrot River Mennonite Church, Oct. 23, by Ken Bechtel, conference minister.

As my term as interim conference minister comes to an end, we are still dreaming!

Two years ago, I had the privilege of speaking to the delegate sessions. I said then that "dreams come in many forms. There are those that occur during pillow parties while we sleep and those that occur on starlit evenings or early afternoons when we see things in new ways. Dreams combine those things we already know with possibilities we can only imagine. By dreams, we mean those times when our quick glances into the rear-view mirror help keep us situated as we focus forward toward God's new world—the other side of the windshield. Dreams and visions are glimpses God gives us of a better future, God's own future."

We in Mennonite Church Saskatchewan are still dreaming. In those visions we have heard anew words from Jesus. We have caught new glimpses of our neighbours, opening ourselves to God's further Macedonian calls. We have reminded each other of the Gospel's high calling

for us as Christ's church, "the measure of the full stature of Christ." We have heard God calling us to be "Christ Centred and Sent..." Those are dreams! We have not yet fully grasped them, and when we awaken in the morning, many parts of that dream will require new attention. But we are convinced that these are God's dreams for us as Mennonite people here in Saskatchewan.

Translating those dreams into new realities will be the work for our tomorrows. I rejoice in those congregations and commissions that are taking deliberate steps to help themselves, and one another, reach toward that more Christ-like life and ministry. We yearn to be "Christ Centred and Sent..." as individuals, as churches, and in all our relationships.

It has been a privilege to dream with you these three years. Thank you. As I leave this particular role and join a local congregation in their vision quest, may we continue dreaming God's dreams.



Installation of Interim Pastor at Carrot River

Deb Bergen

On Oct. 23, Carrot River Mennonite Church celebrated the installation of Ed Cornelson as interim pastor. MC Saskatchewan conference minister Ken Bechtel officiated at the installation service, and gave the challenge to use the time together to "catch a further glimpse of an immeasurable God." Pastor Cornelson responded "with God's help" to fill the role of shepherd, servant and leader.

Ed and his wife, Alice, reside in Winnipeg, but

have spent the past several winters serving interim pastor roles. Since responding to the call of interim pastorship in 1993, the Cornelsons have served in Morden and Portage La Prairie, Man.; Saskatoon; Fresno, Calif.; and, most recently, at First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver.

"Being invited to a large place or a small place is really of little importance. The importance is in the ministry task that the invitation contains," says Ed.

The congregation of Carrot River Mennonite Church looks forward to the times of fellowship, worship and growth during the Cornelsons' six-month stay.

GROW & multiply



MC Saskatchewan youth minister Anna Rehan meets monthly with the youth pastors of MC Saskatchewan for fellowship and support. Pictured are: Brent Klassen, Neuanlage; Teresa Warkentin, Wildwood; Wendy Harder, Nutana Park; Jeff Siemens, Hague; Marco Funk, Ros-thern; and Anna Rehan. Missing from the picture are Joel Kroeker, Zion, Swift Current; Jeff and Dawn Martens-Koop, Mount Royal; and Andrew Waithe, Grace, Regina. Anna divides her time between MC Saskatchewan (3/5) and MC Canada (2/5). Approximately 150 youths participate in the Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization (SMYO).

Jr. High Retreat Review

September 9-11

Stephanie Siemens, SMYO Committee Member

How does one even begin to describe such an awesome weekend? Probably with all the youths who came. Fourteen youth groups came to Shekinah for a weekend of fun, learning and enjoyable fellowship. These groups were from everywhere from Regina to Eigenheim, and everyone arrived enthusiastic and ready for a great weekend. Unfortunately, the poor weather wasn't an accurate reflection of how the weekend went, but it didn't seem to dampen any spirits. Instead of playing Mission Impossible, we had an awesome game of Diamond Smugglers. Teresa Warkentin (youth leader at Wildwood Mennonite Church) did a wonderful job leading games Saturday afternoon, making do inside the Timber Lodge because of the rain outside. Thanks, Teresa! And also a big thank you to all who were involved in the singing and worship parts of the weekend. It was a blast!

Another great part of the weekend was the speaker! Arlyn Friesen Epp visited us from Winnipeg

to share the amazing message of who Jesus is to us and what he can do in our lives. What made this message especially real was the way in which he shared it. Arlyn used audio and visual recordings, along with his own sense of creativity, to share God's message. And whether hearing it for the first time, or being reminded of it for the 10th, Arlyn's way of showing us that God always wants us to follow him, and live our lives for his glory, was unique and unforgettable. At the end of the weekend, Arlyn left all of the youths with a tulip bulb to remind us that if we put our trust in God and do what he tells us (whether it be turning the other cheek or walking an extra mile), we will grow and multiply.

So overall it was a fantastic weekend! Memories were made during games, during sessions, during meals, and everywhere in between. And I pray that God was present there with everyone in a special way, and that he blessed each person with a weekend of growing as much as he blessed me. On behalf of the SMYO Committee, I hope that everyone plans on coming again next year!

God bless.

A Strikingly Missional Group

Ed Olfert

Editor's note: Ed is pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in Prince Albert; he wrote this in early December.

Last week I spent an evening at the provincial jail, covering for a chaplain friend.

It took some time to explain who I was, what a Mennonite was, and why I wasn't wearing more black clothes. The service I led was called "Care and share," and I asked the question, "How have you experienced God's faithfulness?"

The responses were varied and delightful: "At a round dance, an old woman came up to me and gave

me a hug. It reminded me of my grandma, reminded me that somebody loved me. Soon after that, I turned myself in, before my addiction hurt more people. I guess that's kinda like getting hugged by God."

The next question I asked was, "How do you offer faithfulness back to God?" A young man told me, "When I get out, I'm going back to my reserve and I'm going to go into the bush to build a cabin, instead of doing drugs. And maybe then somebody else will see what I'm doing and want to build a cabin too!"

A strikingly "missional" group!

Pastoral Changes in Saskatchewan

There are a number of pastoral changes happening in Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregations. Since our last issue of News 'n' Notes, the following changes have been announced.

Aberdeen Mennonite Church. Henry and Erna Funk will complete their interim term in April.

Bethany Manor Worshipping Community. Esther Patkau was installed as director of spiritual care in November.

Grace Mennonite Church (Regina). Samvong Chantharyvong was installed as pastor for Laotian ministries and Andrew Waithe as youth pastor last fall.

Hope Mennonite Fellowship (North Battleford). Henry Patkau will be retiring this summer.

Superb Mennonite Church. Grant Martens has resigned effective Feb. 28.

Zion Mennonite Church (Swift Current). Joel Kroeker was installed as youth pastor last fall. Ray and Sylvia Friesen have completed their pastoral assignment at Zion (and continue as pastors at Emmaus). Zion is seeking an intentional interim pastor.

MC Saskatchewan: An Overview of Finances

Doyle Wiebe - Chair of Finance

With a background in business and farm finances, I have come to appreciate the significant challenges there are in how a faith-based organization like MC Saskatchewan deals with financial issues. The challenges of increasing costs, inconsistent commitments to providing finances, and attempts to incorporate new initiatives to meet the needs of member churches, makes financial planning a unique endeavour.

Our member churches are the owners of the conference. There is no fee in order to be a member and contributions are always considered to be the decision of each church. As financial resources and the demand for them in individual churches change from year to year, so goes the ebb and flow of the conference resources required to carry out mission activities. When contributions to the conference fall short of expectations, difficult decisions must be made.

Although there are limited financial resources, MC Saskatchewan provides a large variety of services to its members and the community. The donations of the 37 member churches and 4,271 official members support the 2005 program budget of \$312,000 (based on the numbers for 2004).

This figure has varied considerably over the past few years. From a low of \$290,000 in 1999 to a high of \$343,000 only a year later, leadership has had a difficult time planning and initiating activities without stable funding. There are many shortcomings to the basic policy of only spending as much as was received in the previous year; at least one-third of the total is only received in December, as many churches

wait to see what they have available. Waiting until January to plan activities that should start in January is not a desirable situation.

The funds that are received during the year are not put into a reserve for the following year; they become the monetary source for that year's activities. In years where there is an increase in contributions, some of the surplus may go into a reserve for future shortfalls. Despite the occurrence of surpluses in the past, there has been a trend towards higher costs and lower budgets. Consequently, most of the reserves developed in more prosperous years have been used to cover shortfalls. The reserve well is almost dry.

MC Saskatchewan has a relatively high number of rural churches. When the gradual depopulation of many rural areas is combined with significant variations in yearly farm income, the conference becomes particularly vulnerable to corresponding shifts in received funds. This has been quite evident in the past two years. In 2004, conference contributions increased approximately \$20,000—the majority of which came from rural churches. This year, as the grain sector is experiencing many financial pressures, donations have decreased 10 percent to 12 percent in general. This could result in as much as a \$30,000 shortfall, which would require a reduction in program and/or staff in order to maintain a balanced budget.

By the time this article is read, many options will have been discussed and recommendations worked on for further development by the delegates at the 2006 annual session. It is my hope and prayer that we will be able to continue to serve our member churches as we strive together toward our vision of mission in our world.

'With a background in business and farm finances, I have come to appreciate the significant challenges there are in how a faith-based organization like MC Saskatchewan deals with financial issues.'

News 'n' Notes

Jake Nickel
Editor

Amanda Unrau
Assistant Editor

Lynda Derksen
Design

Mississauga, Ont.

Metzger new director of World Vision church relations

In Canada's postmodern and post-Christian society, many people have become cynical about the role of the church in the world, according to Willard Metzger, the newly appointed director of church relations for World Vision Canada.

"We in the church need to find our place of integrity in leading Christians to address issues of poverty and social justice," he says. "We need to regain a sense of sacrificial service. This is critical to a faithful expression of the gospel."

Metzger believes his appointment to the role fits his personal passion. He is a past-chair of the Mission and Service Commission of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, and is presently chair of the Witness Council of Mennonite Church Canada.

Since becoming associate pastor at Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church in 1989, and during the subsequent 14 years of ministry at Community Mennonite Church in Drayton, Ont., he has led many short-term mission teams of youths and young adults into more than 30 countries.

Metzger was also chair for five years of the Foundation for International Development Assistance, an agricultural coop in rural Haiti. His seven trips to that region gave him a sense of the need for development work.

It all began, he says, when he attended a wedding in Belize in 1986. Since then he has had a "fire in the belly" to mobilize the Canadian church to respond to opportunities and the challenges of meeting international concerns.

He sees his current appointment with World Vision as an opportunity to engage the full breadth of the Christian church in Canada. He hastens to add that he will remain involved with Mennonite Church Canada Witness, saying, "I am still excited about the missional church concept, what growth that will bring to

the Mennonite Church in Canada."

Both World Vision and the Witness Council see his dual involvements as being complementary.

Metzger is aware that he has big shoes to fill, following in the footsteps of former church relations director Don Posterski. His first major task will be to develop a way to enhance the work and visibility of World Vision across Canada. To do this, he desires to hear many voices from the various Canadian Christian churches in hopes that this will enhance the strategy.

He notes that Mennonite Central Committee is looking at developing a strong relationship with World Vision. They are similar, in that neither sees its primary role as evangelism, in the sense of making converts to



World Vision photo by Philip Maher

Mennonite Church Canada Witness council chair Willard Metzger, of Drayton, Ont., right, has been appointed the new World Vision Canada (WVC) director of church relations. He is pictured with WVC president Dave Toycen.

Christianity, but to do what they do in Jesus' name in a holistic manner.

And how does all the TV advertising for child sponsorship by World Vision fit with his Mennonite ethos of frugality? "It's all about marketing," he says. "If you aren't asking, through developing awareness, you will not get involvement. And money usually follows."

—Maurice Martin

Frank Redekopp holds up one of 22,100 cans of pork prepared by some 400 Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba volunteers late last year in Winkler. The staff at Winkler Meats butchered 185 donated sows for the volunteers to process and can. The final step was labelling the cans, "Food for Relief: In the name of Christ."



Elmer Heinrichs photo

Durham, Ont.

Messiah performances aid Somalia school plans

Ernie Martin's extended family enjoys singing together. To provide an opportunity to do so, he organized a family choir to perform Handel's *Messiah*. The final rehearsal, held at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate on Dec. 16, was open to the public, while the concert was held in a church near Martin's home in Durham on Dec. 18.

Fifty years ago, the Gems of Truth, a men's quartet from Elmira Mennonite Church, regularly sang on a Kitchener radio program. It consisted of three Martin brothers and Ezra Brubacher. Ernie remembers singing with his cousins as part of a choir that Brubacher organized for the children of the quartet members. The three Martin brothers have passed away, but their descendants still occasionally sing together as the Martin Family Singers.

The Martin Family Singers did an excellent job and received standing ovations at both the final rehearsal and the concert. In order to keep costs down, semi-professionals were invited to be soloists and orchestra members. The rest of the small orchestra was made up of professional musicians. Elaine Pearce, the soprano soloist, is a voice teacher and a member of the Martin family. Like the other soloists, she sang beautifully and effortlessly. Another one of Ernie's sisters sang beside her granddaughter—the fourth generation of the Martin Family Singers.

Ernie was very happy that this project raised approximately \$1,500 for a new school in Somalia. Many years ago, Ernie and his wife Edith hosted a young Somali student, Hassan Togani, when he attended Rockway Mennonite Collegiate. They also came to know Ahmed Jirreh, a Somali who studied at Goshen College. When Jirreh and Togani were young, they attended a Mennonite school in Somalia, which was closed down by the socialist regime in the early 1970s. Although parts of Somalia are in political disarray today, Jirreh and Togani plan to open a new Mennonite school in the

north, where there is greater political stability. The two Somalis want a Mennonite school in their home country so they can teach young Somalis about peace.

Looking back at the *Messiah* experience, Ernie recognizes that pulling off a family concert is a lot of work, but it fulfilled a dream to have the family sing together once again. It is also very satisfying for him to know that the proceeds are going to a good cause.
—Barb Draper



Photo by Barb Draper

Robert Shantz, a former choir director at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, conducted the Martin Family Singers' performance of Handel's *Messiah*. Shantz is part of the extended Martin family.

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Listowel, Ont.

Marketplace offered new perspective on Christ's birth

Visitors to Listowel Mennonite Church during the weekend of Dec. 16 to 18 were able to take a journey to the time and location of Christ's birth. This is the 10th time the congregation has worked together to put on its Marketplace event, as the entire church building again became a backdrop for a series of vignettes that tell the Christmas story.

The noisy, busy marketplace is one highlight of the journey. Visitors need to haggle with the tax collector before they are allowed in. As they negotiate prices with the vendors and watch artisans at work, they need to be careful not to step on a beggar. The Roman centurions keep everyone in order.

Nearly everyone in the Listowel congregation gets involved. As well as the many characters to play the roles, volunteers are needed to transform

the hallways and Sunday school rooms into a long-ago town in the Middle East.

As visitors wait in the dark to go into the stable to meet Mary and Joseph, they can hear crickets and see "stars" overhead. At the manger scene, the lambs in a little pen occasionally bleat, interrupting Mary and Joseph, who talk about their experiences. The lambs also provide genuine stable smells.

Listowel expected 1,500 people to participate in this Advent experience. Although it is a massive undertaking for the congregation, visitors were given the opportunity to step back from the hustle and scurry of the Christmas season to get a new perspective on Christ's birth.

—Barb Draper



Photos by Barb Draper

Ernie Reesor—as the beggar in Listowel (Ont.) Mennonite Church's Marketplace—asked for alms from the approximately 1,500 visitors seeking an opportunity to step back from the hustle and scurry of the Christmas season to get a new perspective on Christ's birth.



Photo submitted by Orlan Martin

Floyd and Anna Mae Steinman of Wellesley (Ont.) Mennonite Church donated a trailer to Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) to provide living quarters for long-term volunteers along the U.S. Gulf Coast. Orlan Martin, Ontario MDS chair, drove the trailer to Gulfport, Miss., where MDS is rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina. The trailer was fully stocked with household supplies, along with a donation of \$5,000 worth of new tools provided basically at cost by Millbank Country Hardware, Ont. Three other trailers have been donated by Canadians from B.C. and Manitoba.

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People&Events

Winnipeg—Helmut Harder, professor emeritus at Canadian Mennonite University and former general secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (now Mennonite Church Canada), was recently featured in an interview on *Interfaith Voices*, a radio program based in Hyattsville, Md. The interview focused on the Mennonite-Catholic dialogues of 1998 to 2003, of which Harder was the co-chair. The show can be heard at www.interfaithradio.org/shows2005.html. *Interfaith Voices* is broadcast on 44 radio stations in the USA and Canada.

—MC Canada release

Biera City, Mozambique—When Agness Lijero preached the first sermon ever by a woman at the Brethren in Christ (BIC) church in Beira City last fall, the weekly offerings jumped by 70 percent. At this historic event, Lijero preached that Christians should marry only other Christians, basing her counsel on God's order to the Israelites not to marry idol worshippers. Lijero spoke directly about sexual purity as an Anabaptist value that must be preserved, particularly since so many African children are dying of AIDS. She urged family planning and spoke against young people marrying at a very early age, a tendency, she said, that is spoiling their future. She called on her people not only to share the Word of God, but also to be examples by their deeds. After the sermon, Elizabeth Palibendipo noted that African women are the ones who spend the most time with the children as caregivers and counsellors, suggesting it is important that they help them grow spiritually and raise them in the church. Helena Zacarias, who led the offering, said that women must also give money to the church.

—MWC release

Winnipeg—The Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO) has been broadened with the addition of the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and the binational Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission as partners. The editorial committees of GAMEO represent a new international Anabaptist history initiative for the Internet. During their first meeting at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg in early December, the group initiated plans to put the entire five volumes of the current Mennonite Encyclopedia online, select writers to update existing articles and write new ones, and then edit the submissions. The GAMEO Internet site currently has about 2,500 articles, mostly carried over from the Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, plus about 125 confessions of faith and other denominational statements. Organizers hope GAMEO will eventually include articles from the Anabaptist family around the world and be available in multiple languages. At the start, however, it will focus on the United States and Canada, and be only in English. In addition to three Mennonite historical organizations, GAMEO is seeking to add more partners; the Winnipeg meeting included visits with Hutterite representatives to invite their participation.

—MC Canada release
by **John Sharp**

Salatiga, Central Java—A Mennonite has been appointed as the new rector of Satya Wacana University in this Indonesian city for the 2005-09 term. Kris Herawan Timotius, an advisor to Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia (GKMI), was inaugurated on Nov. 30. It is the first time that the university's rector comes from a Mennonite background although two of the three Mennonite conferences in Indonesia are among the university's founders. In his inaugural speech, Timotius

said that Satya Wacana must have the courage to make changes to satisfy the needs of Javan society. The university must create advantages in its teaching and academic facilities to be competitive with other universities, and it must produce graduates who are needed by the workforce, the church, the family and society, he said.

—MWC release

by **Ferne Burkhardt**

Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Braun—to Allison and Gary, First Mennonite, Calgary, a son, Matthew John, Dec. 2.

Choi—to Angela and Youngmo, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, a son, Maru, Dec. 28.

Gerling—to Kathryn and Jason, First Mennonite, Calgary, a daughter, Amy Tessa, Jan. 4.

Heidebrecht—to Carman Brubacher and Paul, Elmira Mennonite, Ont., a son, Jesse Ezra Brubacher, Dec. 12, in Wauwatosa, Wis.

Heinrichs—to Wendy and Kurt, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, a son, Tyler Anthony, Dec. 20.

Martin—to Vicky Roeder and Derek, Floradale Mennonite, Ont., a son, Lucan Roeder, Dec. 4.

Van Dyke—adopted by Stacey and Rob, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, a daughter, Carissa Zoe (b. Nov. 29, 2005).

Wiebe—to Kathi and Greg, Valleyview Mennonite, London, Ont., a son, Alexander Michael, Aug. 17.

Marriages

Bergen-McKnight—John and Laurhys, Schoenfelder Mennonite, St. Francois Xavier, Man., Dec. 10.

Bruins-Bergen—Gregory and Nicole, First Mennonite, Calgary, Dec. 9.

Meyer-Smith—Paul and Ruth, Nairn Mennonite, Ailsa Craig, Ont., Dec. 3.

Deaths

Bergen—Viktor, 79, Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 24.

Dyck—Heinz, 80, First Mennonite, Calgary, Dec. 21.

Fast—Anne, 69, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., Dec. 19.

Froese—Jacob, 81, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Sept. 30.

Funk—Helen, 92, Coaldale Mennonite, Alta., Dec. 14.

Funk—Mary, 88, Winkler Berghaler Mennonite, Man., Dec. 28.

Herrfort—Allan, 64, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., Jan. 3.

Hildebrandt—Frank, 84, Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man., Dec. 9.

Klassen—Henry B., 83, Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 19.

Klassen—Mary, 63, Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man., Dec. 4.

Klassen—Sara, 99, Coaldale Mennonite, Alta., Dec. 22.

Lichti—Elmon, 84, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 15.

Roth—Mahlon, 85, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 22.

Schroeder—Benno, 83, Winkler Berghaler Mennonite, Man., Dec. 18.

Baptisms

Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg—Amy Kasdorf,

Anthony Kasdorf, Chris Kasdorf, Julia Kasdorf, Wes Kasdorf, Andrew Loewen,

Jennifer Loewen, Kim Pottinger, Haley Thiessen,

Vicki Toews, Dec. 18.

Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver—James

Christopher Goertzen, Leigh-Ann Michelle Goertzen, Jessica Marie Harms, Jonathan Walter Janzen, Jordan James Klassen, Jennifer Michelle Nickel, Oct. 16.

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

Mennonite Church Canada

Looking back, looking ahead

When we reflect on activities of this past year, we realize there is much to be thankful for.

Give praise to God for:

- The solidarity churches in Canada have shown for the Vietnamese church and its leaders.
- The expanding church in Thailand and other places where MC Canada ministers.
- The growing partnerships between churches here and around the world, where we learn from each other how to be God's presence in the world. This includes the growing partnerships with native churches here in Canada.
- The spirit of generosity as people like you and your churches demonstrate a deep desire to help change the world through your financial support.
- Your willingness to hear about God's presence and activities in many places by inviting Witness workers and MC Canada staff to speak in your churches, and by providing them with support.

We also ask for your continued prayers as we face the year ahead. Pray for:

- The continued literacy work and Bible translation that is being done in Burkina Faso, as well as the new church planting ministry Jeff and Tany Warkentin will be involved with in this coming year.
- The Macau prayer walk and learning tour that will take place April 20 to May 2, facilitated by Samson Lo. Pray for a better understanding of the ministry in Macau and the ability to encourage and walk in solidarity as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- IMPaCT (International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together), where a number of pastors from Latin America

will come to Canada and be hosted by pastors in MC Manitoba this June.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Pastoral calling process continues

Over the last 18 months MC Eastern Canada has been developing some formal education and formation expectations for the ordination of pastors. This process provides an opportunity for the church to clarify what are essentials in a good leader in our faith tradition, and in training and preparing pastors and other leaders.

The plan is to have a proposed list of requirements to test with the constituency at the spring delegate sessions. Meanwhile, these expectations are being tested in various settings, including informal conversations with pastors of MC Eastern Canada.

The conference has a legacy of calling and credentialing pastors and leaders out of the congregation to serve alongside persons who have had formal theological and pastoral education. The intention is to honour the strong congregational polity in which congregations choose whom they believe is a good fit for them, while also ensuring that the core values of our faith and tradition remain alive and vital in our congregations.

Pastoral transitions

- Ken Gazley has been called to serve as lead pastor of St. Catharines United Mennonite Church. He was most recently a pastor in the Port Colborne Brethren in Christ church. He earned his master of biblical studies degree at Trinity College of the Bible and Theological Seminary in Indiana.
- Paul Adams will begin min-

istry at Tavistock Mennonite Church in August. He has been a pastor at Niverville Mennonite Church, Man. He has studied at Tyndale Seminary, Conrad Grebel University College and AMBS. Glenn Zehr is serving as interim supply pastor until Adams arrives.

- Gordon Scoville began as transition pastor at Valleyview Mennonite Church, London, last May. He received his M.Div. from AMBS.
- Ardith Frey has begun an interim supply assignment at Calvary Mennonite Church, Ayr, while they engage in a pastoral search process.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Annual delegate sessions next month

Mennonite Church Manitoba ministries and programs are preparing for the annual delegate sessions from Feb. 24 to 25. Continuing with the theme, "Rooted in the centre—Living on the edge," the meetings will focus on being "rooted in the centre" using Colossians 2:6,7.

On Friday evening, the time of worship will include stories of ministry and will culminate with communion.

Saturday will be a day of discernment. Two primary issues will be discussed:

- MC Manitoba will share information gathered from congregations this past fall for the study, "MC Manitoba: Our health and our future."
- The ordination expectation document was slightly revised following discussions at the fall delegates meeting and will be presented in its redrafted form.

"The budget was dealt with at the fall meeting, leaving us with more time to deal with the issues," said Edgar Rempel, executive director. "We are also planning some

workshops for Saturday," said Rempel. "A special effort is being made to invite and include young adults."

Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite Church is hosting the sessions at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute.

Staff changes at MC Manitoba

Diane Funk, whose friendly voice and helpful manner is well known to all those who called or visited MC Manitoba offices over the past 10 years, resigned at the end of December. She has moved with her husband and two children to Calgary.

Leonore Peters, who retired from MC Manitoba five years ago, is sharing the position on an interim basis with Gina Loewen, who works part-time in a similar position for MC Canada.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Touring Mission Fest set for April 29

The Ministries Commission of MC Saskatchewan is planning a second Touring Mission Fest. The tour will take place on April 29 and again involve separate trips that people can choose.

Although both tours will leave from Mount Royal Mennonite in Saskatoon, one will head out of the city to Superb, Fiske and Herschel, to learn about how these three congregations are doing God's work in their communities and around the world.

The second tour will drive southwest to hear from the churches in Swift Current, Emmaus and Camp Elim, the MC Saskatchewan camp a half-hour south of Regina.

"This year we're encouraging people, if they can't get to Saskatoon to leave from there, to join us on the tour where

they can,” explained Claire Ewert Fisher, chair of the Ministries Commission.

Another added feature will be a guest speaker on each bus tour to hopefully make the long drive a little more interesting. Ewert Fisher mentioned that the speakers will be local people who will share some historical facts about the area each group will be visiting.

Registration for the tours must be in by March 27. The cost for each person is \$55.

Mennonite Church Alberta

Exciting news for Camp Valaqua

Jon Olfert has accepted the camp director position at Camp Valaqua effective this

month.

Olfert has spent the last two years managing and providing outdoor education for a joint City of Edmonton/Edmonton Catholic School Board initiative. He also has experience as a summer program director at Camp Shekinah in Saskatchewan. Originally from Saskatoon, Olfert has a passion for Christian camps and the summer camp program.

When asked what excites him about the director position at Valaqua, he replied enthusiastically, “Working with the staff is always exciting for me. Seeing their energy and hearing their ideas, and just being at camp, is great. I get as much from it as they do.”

Olfert, his wife Nicole Wiens, and their two-year-old son Benjamin will be moving from Edmonton to Camp

Valaqua when Wiens, a teacher, completes her studies at the end of April.

Until then, Olfert will make a number of trips to the camp while he works out of their Edmonton home. He has already begun familiarizing himself with the camp program, going through files, and beginning the important task of staff recruitment and hiring.

Camp Valaqua summer staff application forms have arrived in Alberta churches. A variety of paid and volunteer positions are available for this summer. For more information, visit www.campvalaqua.com. Camper brochures will be available in churches sometime this month.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Seminary president to speak at AGM

“Renovations in progress,” based on I Peter 1, will be the theme for Mennonite Church British Columbia’s annual general meeting, Feb. 24 to 25.

Nelson Kraybill, president of AMBS in Elkhart, Ind., will be the featured speaker and resource person for the sessions that take place at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

A session for pastors on “Relationships with integrity” will begin Friday morning, Feb. 24, at 9 a.m. The annual general meeting—open to everyone—will officially begin at 2 p.m., with Kraybill leading

Continued on page 39

BRIAN BAUMAN



From our leaders

Henry was a generous man, at least that is what I believe. I never had the chance to interact with him or experience his generosity because he died before I was born. Henry was my grandfather. He was a farmer, husband, father and deacon in the local Mennonite church. My own father wasn’t the greatest storyteller, so I only have but a few snippets of my grandfather’s life.

Henry was not a famous man, but was well known in local circles. He gave of his time to church life. He shared his leadership skills to help start another church in a nearby village even as he remained an integral part of his own faith community.

Then there is the nearly unbelievable story of buying a neighbour’s cow to add to his own herd. The day after Henry’s new cow birthed a heifer calf—always a good thing on a small dairy farm—the neighbour showed up to claim the calf as being rightfully his. It was a brazen request. However, my grandfather sent the young calf home with the neighbour.

Generous, or perhaps it was just plain stupid. I can only imagine that Henry knew something about financial plight, which could drive a man to make such an outlandish demand. So yes, it was a little stupid, but being generous is often seen from the outside as foolishness, perhaps even poor stewardship.

Being generous with “my” things, “my” money, “my” retirement savings, “my” time, “my” church and “my” home is not a natural response for me. There have been

too many occasions when I’ve thought, “But others have more than me.” Or secretly prayed, “Lord, I won’t buy a lottery ticket, but if you arrange for someone to give me a winning ticket, I promise it will be used for kingdom purposes!” And then there is the ever-popular reflection, “But Lord, look how much time I give. Isn’t that enough?”

Slowly, ever so slowly, I am learning what my grandfather knew. His time and money belonged to God; his life belonged to Jesus Christ; the calf was only in his care. There is a deep-seated, inexplicable joy in

being generous. In kingdom living, being generous is the norm.

God calls out to us each and every day to share time, expertise, money, space and our faith with the people that move in and out of our lives. There will be those who see us as foolish, for the light on the hill always attracts a few moths. Yes, some of our own brothers and sisters in the church may look askance.

But when Henry suddenly died at the too-young age of 51, hundreds of people came from this tiny hamlet to pay their respects. It is one of the reasons I choose to believe Henry wasn’t so foolish after all. It is also why I am still striving to live generously with my family, my church and my neighbours.

Brian Bauman is Mennonite Church Eastern Canada’s mission minister.

Isn’t that enough?

In kingdom living, being
generous is the norm.

Peace churches look at hosting conference

Bali, Indonesia—An international group of Mennonites, Quakers and Brethren met in Bali in December to consider organizing an international peace consultation in Asia in 2007. The event would be the third in a series of international consultations organized by historic peace churches.

The consultations are a response to the World Council of Churches, which declared 2000 to 2010 a “decade to overcome violence,” and encouraged historic peace churches to share their insights on peacemaking with other Christians.

The two previous international peace consultations were held in Switzerland, in 2001, and Kenya, in 2004. Participants there shared about their conviction that “peace is at the heart of the Gospel—this is what we have to offer the world,” says Robert Herr, a co-director of the Peace Office of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

The organizing committee will post information on the 2007 peace consultation at www.peacetheology.org when it becomes available.

—MCC release by Tim Shenk

Calendar

British Columbia

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.

Alberta

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.

April 21-23: Strengthening Family Ties men’s retreat at Camp Valaqua. Guest speaker: Gordon Houser, associate editor of *The Mennonite*. For more information, call Marvin Baergen at 403-256-2894.

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

Feb. 24-25: MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions at Osler Mennonite Church.

Feb. 26: Service of celebration for Ken Bechtel at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

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

March 10-11: MC Saskatchewan songfest with adult and children’s choirs at First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

March 12: “Guys and Pies” evening featuring Buncha Guys at RJC, 7:30 p.m.

March 18: *Canadian Mennonite* annual meeting (4 p.m.) and fundraising banquet (6 p.m.), Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon. For tickets, call Karin Fehderau at 306-933-4209 or Bernie Thiessen at 306-232-5343.

March 24: RJC open house for prospective students.

April 1: Buncha Guys fundraiser for Shekinah at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

April 8: Women’s Enrichment Day.

April 22: MHSS retirement celebration for Dick Epp, editor of *The Historian*, at Bethany Manor.

April 29: Touring Mission Fest.

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

June 9-10: MCC relief sale and quilt auction in Saskatoon.

Manitoba

Feb. 10-12: MMYO junior 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: MC Manitoba annual delegate sessions 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 1: MDS awareness and fundraising banquet, Richmond Park Church, Brandon, 6 p.m. Guest speaker: Kevin King, MDS executive coordinator. Call 1-866-261-1274 for ticket information.

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.

Sept. 10: Covenant Mennonite Church, Winkler, 25th anniversary celebration. For further information, call 204-325-4374 or e-mail covenant@mts.net.

Ontario

Feb. 8: Evening for prospective student and parents, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, 7 p.m.
Feb. 11: Menno Singers present "Line by Line: The Art of Polyphony" at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Kitchener.
Feb. 18: *Sing the Journey* workshop with Jeff Taylor, Toronto United Mennonite Church, 2 p.m. All music and worship leaders welcome. Call Marie Penner at 416-241-3953 for more information.
Feb. 19: Rockway Mennonite Collegiate Choir concert at First Mennonite, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m. Fundraiser for Guelph meat canning project.
Feb. 25: Rockway Mennonite Collegiate 12th annual dinner and auction: 4:30 p.m., dinner; 6:30 p.m., auction.
March 3-4: Engaged workshop, Riverdale Mennonite Church, Millbank. To register, call Delmar and Mary Bender at 519-656-2256.
March 3-5: Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter weekend, Festival

Inn, Stratford. For more information or to register, call Marjorie Roth at 519-669-8667.
March 9-10: Bechtel Lectures in Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies, Conrad Grebel University College. Speaker: James Urry, Victoria University professor, New Zealand, author of *Time and memory: Secular and sacred aspects of the world of Russian Mennonites*.
March 11: Guelph meat canning project fundraising breakfast at Calvary United Church, St. Jacobs. Speaker: Paul Pereverzoff, MCC Akron. Advance tickets only; call MCC Ontario at 519-745-8548.
March 14: Campus Day at Conrad Grebel University College. Guided campus tours and information about academic and residence programs available.
March 18: Sawatsky Visiting Scholar fundraising dinner and tribute to the late Rod Sawatsky. For more information, e-mail fwmartin@uwaterloo.ca.
March 23: MEDA Waterloo

Chapter breakfast meeting at the Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, 7:30 a.m. Speaker: Richard Stevanus, Vandel Construction.
April 24-28: MCC meat canning at the University of Guelph.
April 28-29: Engaged workshop at Living Water Fellowship, New Hamburg. To register, call Delmar and Mary Bender at 519-656-2256.
April 28-29: MC Eastern Canada spring conference, St. Catharines.
May 13: Menno Singers present "Psalms and Hymns" with 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 8-10: "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/.
Please send Calendar events eight weeks in advance of the event date by e-mail to: calendar@canadianmennonite.org.

Winnipeg

MCC, Anabaptist leaders meet to discuss concerns

During the annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Anabaptist Leaders (CCAL) last November, a number of issues of common concern surfaced: governance models, women in ministry leadership, and funding challenges. There was uniform concern for such global needs as education, health and poverty.

A clear challenge to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to be based out of, and serve, the church through its work came from the conference groups. While this is historically implicit, it was pointed out that it needed to be stated more fundamentally in the mission and vision of MCC. For example, in Colombia the church needs to take responsibility for bringing peace into the country; MCC, as an agency working for peace there, should position itself in a way that is accountable to the churches.

CCAL affords an opportunity for the church to interact with MCC at a high level. This year, MCC reported on an "environmental scan" of its supporting constituency, as it seeks to focus its mission and priorities.

—CCAL release

Subscriber services



How to subscribe:

- Individuals who are part of Mennonite Church Canada or one of its five area conferences can ask to be placed on their congregation's group subscription list. The subscription is paid by the conferences.
- Others who wish to order a subscription can use this form. See contact information below.
 Rates: \$32.50 for one year (includes \$2.13 GST); \$52.50 (Can.) to U.S.; \$73.00 (Can.) for overseas.

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 Fax: (519) 884-3331 E-mail: office@canadianmennonite.org

Winnipeg

Refugees not safe in U.S., agencies to tell court

Late last year, the Canadian Council for Refugees, Amnesty International and the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) launched a legal challenge of the Safe Third Country Agreement, which went into force at the end of 2004 and which prevents refugees south of the border from making a claim for asylum in Canada.

The three organizations are arguing that the U.S. does not meet the criteria for a safe third country because it does not respect its obligations under the Convention Against Torture and the Refugee Convention, and that by returning refugee claimants to the U.S. for determination Canada is violating its international obligations towards refugees and their Charter rights to life, liberty and security of the person.

"This agreement is said to enhance the international protection of refugees. On the contrary, the agreement puts the lives of refugees at peril," says Gloria Nafziger, refugee coordinator at Amnesty International. "There have been ongoing concerns that the U.S. falls short of meeting its international obligations with respect to the protection of refugees, and since the agreement took effect one year ago new provisions in the United States have resulted in a continuing erosion of refugee rights."

"Canadian churches have long been active sponsors of refugees in Canada, and over the years the Canadian Council of Churches [of which Mennonite Church Canada is a member] has turned to the courts when the rights of refugees are threatened," says Karen Hamilton, general secretary of the CCC.

Mennonite Central Committee Canada supports their efforts to have the agreement abolished. Says Ed Wiebe, MCC Canada's National Refugee Program coordinator, "It's not in keeping with Canada's humanitarian tradition or its obligation to refugees." He acknowledges, though, that with smaller numbers of refugee claimants (down more than 4,000 during the first 11 months the agreement

has been in place), Canadian bureaucrats and politicians might see it as a success.

Wiebe says the Safe Third Country Agreement is particularly odious for Colombian refugees, Muslims, Arabs, and women suffering from gender persecution, because the United States tends to take a much tougher stance on such applicants. "Muslims and Arabs have a very hard time [in the U.S.]," he says, suggesting that their character and demeanour are open to "subjective" scrutiny by American immigration officers upon their arrival in the U.S.

Canada views Colombia as such an unsafe, volatile place that it allows Colombians to apply for refugee status at Canada's embassy in Bogota. "The Colombian Mennonite Church helps people apply [for refugee status]," Wiebe says. However, with the agreement in place, such refugee claimants can be turned back at the American border before ever reaching Canada, a

situation Wiebe calls "schizophrenic."

Wiebe believes that until the agreement is overturned, Mennonites from Canada to Central America need to revive the "overground railroad" that existed during the 1980s to help refugees trying to make it to Canada. "Mennonites documented, fed and housed refugees on their way through the Canadian system, while they were in the U.S. We need more of that if we're going to be effective," he says of the current situation.

Wiebe does not expect the Federal Court to resolve the matter. "The debate will probably take a long time, and end up at the Supreme Court," he predicts. "In the meantime, it will be more difficult to operate."

The Safe Third Country Agreement was introduced with the goal of ensuring that refugee claims to either country are handled fairly and efficiently, and that abuse of the system is reduced.

—**Ross W. Muir**

Strasbourg, France

Churches urged to broaden their fellowship

Despite great theological diversity, the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions expressed much similarity in mission and experience during meetings held near Geneva, Switzerland, last fall.

"The world would be surprised to see us sit around this table where we emphasize what we believe together," said the Salvation Army representative.

Samuel Kobia, the Kenyan Methodist General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, spoke of the shift of the centre of gravity among churches from the north to the south—a shift the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) has also noticed—and the need for denominations to broaden their fellowship.

MWC continues to address this agenda through its interchurch dialogues with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity of the Catholic Church

and the Lutheran World Federation.

A call not only for dialogue, but also for joint action on AIDS, came from the World Evangelical Alliance. International director Geoff Tunnicliffe said, "The issue is too large for any one group to handle.... [It] is one of the issues that will define 'church' for the next generation."

Conference participants also identified common challenges: difficulty in getting visas for African, Asian and Latin American leaders for meetings in other parts of the world; learning how to be a postmodern denomination; the need for developing new systems of theological education; divisiveness surrounding homosexuality; responding adequately to the needs of member churches; and the need to learn how to do less but do it better.

—MWC release
from a report by **Ron Byler**

The author, Mennonite Church USA associate executive director, is spending a three-month sabbatical in the Mennonite World Conference Strasbourg office.

TheChurches *From page 35*

sessions for those in church leadership positions.

Kraybill will again speak at the 7 p.m. worship service in the Eben-Ezer sanctuary. Everyone is encouraged to at-

tend the service, as it will set the tone for Saturday.

Saturday registration begins at 8:30 a.m. with roundtable discussions running from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the church gymnasium. The MC B.C. Steering Committee will present its new identity and vision statement to the delegates at the morning session, with executive business and budget discussions scheduled for the afternoon.

For more information, contact the MC B.C. office at 604-850-6658.

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

Advertising Dates

Issue	Copy Due
Feb. 20	Feb. 7
March 6	Feb. 21

(Focus on Summer Travel, Food and Events)

Contact
Barbara Burkholder:
1-800-316-4052 / advert@
canadianmennonite.org

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@mnict.org**

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.

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.

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

to lead our 100-year-old multi-generational congregation forward. Our average attendance is 100-120 people. We seek someone with a compatible faith commitment who is excited about rural life, communicates and relates well to all ages, and is gifted in preaching, teaching and pastoring in a rural community.

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

Phone: 306-249-4844; Email: ken@mcsask.ca

FULL-TIME LEAD PASTOR

Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church invites applications for a full-time Lead Pastor. We are a multi-generational congregation of about 700 members. The preferred starting date is September 2006.

The Lead Pastor is part of a Pastoral Team comprised of 5 Associate Pastors and Lay Ministers. Areas of responsibility include preaching, discipling, visitation and administration. An emphasis on evangelism, caring for and relating to people in both the congregation and the community is an asset. Previous pastoral experience and education in our Evangelical Mennonite Anabaptist faith is important.

Please forward your note of inquiry and/or resume to:

**Personnel Committee
c/o Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church
Box 1207, Winkler, MB R6W 4B2
OR
John P. Klassen
Director of Leadership Ministries
Mennonite Church Manitoba
200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R3P 2J1**

Mennonite Heritage Village (Canada Inc.) invites applications for the position of

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

for its museum located in Steinbach, Manitoba. Located on a 17-hectare site, the museum is a recognized leader in preserving and presenting Mennonite culture and heritage, welcoming over 70,000 visitors annually. (For more information about our organization, visit www.mennoniteheritagevillage.com.)

The successful applicant will report to a Board of Directors and ensure that a balance is maintained among the museum's priorities: collections and exhibits, visitor programs, fund raisers, personnel management, physical plant and promotion activities. The successful applicant will have a strong background in business administration, be adept at working with volunteers, and demonstrate an appreciation of our Anabaptist-Mennonite history and perspective. Museum or non-profit administrative experience would be a definite asset.

Applications should be submitted no later than February 10, 2006, marked "personal and confidential" to:

**Chairman of the Board,
Mennonite Heritage Village,
231 PTH, 12N, Steinbach, MB R5G 1T8**



Sayhay bok-mahnhe pahdusayoh

Photo by Jessie Kehler

Three Korean families at Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg celebrated New Year's Day worship in their traditional costumes—called *hanbok*, or new clothes. Pictured from left to right: Hun Lee and Joohyun Park, with their son Hyunjoon; Hailin Zhao and Meiyong Jin, with Xuanyu; and Seungkil Yang and Kyunghee Park, with their son Symo. The New Year's greeting in Korean is *Sayhay bok-mahnhe pahdusayoh*, which literally means, "Please receive many New Year's blessings." Koreans who wear the Korean traditional costumes celebrate New Year's Day remembering their ancestors, giving the first greeting to the elders and parents, and enjoying traditional food and games.