

C A N A D I A N  
**Mennonite**

**February 6, 2006**  
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## New government's agenda

**W**ith Stephen Harper now Prime Minister and the party he helped form as our new government, what's ahead for our country from a Mennonite faith perspective?

I was glad to see Harper expressing strong support for the role of faith and religious conviction in politics and society in a recent *Faith Today* interview. The separation of church and state “does not mean that faith has no place in public life or the public square,” he said.

Jesus made it clear that worship of God in heaven and seeking justice and righteousness here on earth were both part of what it meant to follow him. He spoke of things we would now consider public policy in the synagogue. *The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* includes commentary on the church's relationship to government that “Christians are responsible to witness to governments not only because of their citizenship in a particular country, but also in order to reflect Christ's compassion for all people and to proclaim Christ's lordship over all human institutions.”

In terms of specific policies, the major focus of the Conservative Party's official election platform on transparency and accountability will provide new enforcement mechanisms for good governance. The new Canadian government's continuing commitment to universal public healthcare reflects our church's support of caring for the sick and wounded regardless of their ability to pay.

The possibility of legislation defining marriage as between a man and woman also aligns with our church's position on marriage. In the *Faith Today* interview, Harper specifically addressed this issue: “Government must respect these convictions and not attempt to interfere in the free public

expression of religious belief.... A Conservative government will be vigilant to ensure that freedom of religion is protected in Canada.”

In this issue's Faith and Life section, we focus on how Paul's teaching in Romans challenges us to have a “righteous relationship with creation.” There is much less on this front in the Conservative platform. Amid stronger and stronger warnings from climate scientists about the dangers of rising levels of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere, the Conservatives do not support the international Kyoto Accord's mandatory reductions in emissions. Instead, they propose vague language about a new “made-in-Canada” plan without any mention of binding emission reductions.

Harper has specifically identified Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) as a religious institution doing good work. However, MCC Canada has made the Make Poverty History campaign a major focus and the Conservatives were the only major national party not to endorse this effort. (Make Poverty History calls for more and better aid, trade justice, debt cancellation and the ending of child poverty in Canada.) Forty individual Conservative MPs (just one-third of their caucus) did state their support, compared to 100 percent of elected Liberal and NDP MPs according to Make Poverty History statistics.

On foreign aid, Conservatives only committed to “move towards” the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) “average level.” OECD 2004 figures show Canada's foreign aid trailing—at 0.27 percent of Gross National Income (GNI)—substantially behind the OECD 22-country average giving rate of 0.42 percent of GNI. The 0.70 percent United Nations and Make Poverty History goal other countries have committed to remains far off.

—Tim Miller Dyck

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## Web site preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted on our web site at [www.canadianmennonite.org](http://www.canadianmennonite.org) on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the Feb. 20 issue by Feb. 16.

**Cover: Camping ministry happens year-round—even in the dead of winter. Blue sky breaks through the storm clouds for hikers from First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., during a January retreat at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp. Silver Lake's giant willow—visible from the ground and air—is a local landmark. —Photo by Ross W. Muir**



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Calgary

## Thai accountant has a taste for service

**F**or Rattthaya Nanthasen, a native of Thailand, crunching numbers just did not hold the same allure as direct interaction with people. After earning a degree in accounting she soon discovered it was a field she did not wish to pursue. Instead, she decided to concentrate on social work, an interest that had surfaced when she was a teenager.

For the past nine months, Nanthasen has served as an outreach worker for Calgary Lao Community Mennonite Church, visiting the Lao and Thai people in the area, reading them the Bible, offering counselling services and teaching Sunday school. She works hard at uniting the Lao people in the community, which can sometimes be difficult due to a lack of communication. “I come to the church and get to know the people,” she explains. “I try to help them to grow and come together.”

Nanthasen came to Canada in 2002 as part of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) International Visitor Exchange Program. She volunteered for one year with Calgary’s Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. It was during this time that she first visited Calgary Lao Mennonite Church and soon found herself attending services on a regular basis. She became an active member, assisting the worship team and helping with fundraising. After returning home to Thailand for a time, Nanthasen received an invitation to return to Calgary and help out full-time at Lao Mennonite Church, an invitation she happily accepted.

While in Canada, Nanthasen is aided by Doreen Neufeld, former copastor of Trinity Mennonite Church, Calgary, who serves as a personal

mentor to her, offering moral support and assisting with the gathering of Sunday school material.

Neufeld recognizes Nanthasen’s many gifts and abilities, along with her devotion to ministry. “I see her as conveying her deep faith to the people she works with, and seeking to be a bridge to lead them back to faith and to the church,” she says.

Nanthasen displayed some of her gifts and abilities at the “Taste of Mennonite Church Canada” event held at Calgary First Mennonite Church in October. The event was a culmination of the fall meetings of MC Canada’s Witness and Formation councils. The banquet consisted of exotic dishes provided by Lao Community Mennonite Church, followed by the sharing of mission stories by Witness and Formation members.

Along with helping organize the event, Nanthasen was assisted in preparing and serving the food. After the feast, she sang and performed a traditional Thai dance—an unexpected bonus to the 130 people present.

Perhaps the most noticeable contribution to the evening was her decorative fruit carvings. The elaborate display served as a visual centrepiece for the banquet and was later auctioned off.

Thanks to the efforts of Nanthasen and others involved, “Taste of MC Canada” gave staff and board members an opportunity to meet and get



Photo by Chau Dang

**Rattthaya Nanthasen, second from right, played a significant role in shaping last year’s “Taste of Mennonite Church Canada” event at Calgary First Mennonite Church. Nanthasen helped prepare food and produced beautiful fruit carvings for display—in addition to her work in outreach ministry with the Lao Community Mennonite Church. Also pictured, from left to right: Marvin Baergen, Congregational Partnership worker for MC Canada in Alberta; and Hugo and Doreen Neufeld.**

to know the community, while, at the same time, raising more than \$12,000 for MC Canada ministries.

Nanthasen’s work with Lao Mennonite Church came to an end in December. She is currently hoping to extend her visa, so she can stay in Canada for pastoral training and psychology studies before returning to Thailand to continue in church ministry.

Neufeld is hopeful that Nanthasen will be able to stay in Canada to complete her training. “I feel it is a privilege to know Rattthaya,” she says. “My prayer is that she will be able to realize her goals, so she can use her gifts in service to God.”

—Jeff Enns

Winnipeg

## Frightened by white faces

**W**hen Serge Kaptegain walked into a Mennonite church in Winnipeg one sunny summer morning, he turned to leave—frightened by all the white faces in the congregation.

It was his first church experience since arriving in Canada as a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo just two months earlier. Kaptegain recalls the two words from the pulpit that stopped him in his tracks: “merciful peace.” He sat down, suddenly eager to hear more.

Captured and held in eastern Congo for 18 months, and enduring “every humiliation you can imagine,” the 30-year-old French teacher confesses he had lost his faith in God.

Raised as a Baptist in a country torn apart by civil war, Kaptegain had grown disillusioned with a church unwilling to work for peace. Aligning with friends in a makeshift peace team, Kaptegain sought to bring rival rebels into dialogue with one another—a nearly unheard of venture in eastern Congo. It was during a trip to another village to arrange one such meeting that he fell into the wrong hands.

Sharing a hole in the ground with other captives and sometimes corpses, he somehow got a message out through a friend. A sympathetic priest bribed a guard, helped him escape, and spirited the soft-spoken village teacher out of the country.

There was not a lot of time to make decisions. The priest recommended Canada—and specifically, Winnipeg. The priest had visited Winnipeg once. “It is a nice-sized city for you,” Kaptegain recalls the priest saying.

Before he was able to get word to his wife and two young children, Kaptegain found himself on the doorstep of Welcome Place, a transition centre for newcomers in Winnipeg. A conversation with his settlement counsellor about local churches led him to Home Street Mennonite Church—and

his frightening encounter with an all-white congregation.

Kaptegain is a natural connector. His gentle spirit and compassion for others draw people in. Since arriving in Canada last April, he has found himself the humble and grateful recipient of much goodwill. He has an apartment and a job as a French teaching assistant at a Winnipeg high school. He has received some financial



**Kaptegain**

aid to help bring his wife and daughters—whom he located in temporary housing in Germany—to Canada. On Christmas Day alone he had five invitations to join with various colleagues and friends in celebrating

Jesus’ birth.

But his soul remains restless. “My country, my people, need this

Mennonite message of peace,” he says with a deeply rooted passion. “Where are the Mennonites in eastern Congo?” He has lost seven members of his family to the fighting, including his mother and sister. The conflict has consumed an additional four million Congolese lives.

“A businessman will not go into a country that is insecure,” he says. “But the church is not a business. The church, with its message of peace, needs to be exactly in the places that are not secure.”

He is grateful, to be sure, for his new home in Canada, and sees here the possibilities for what his people back home need most: empowerment and personal transformation. International mission projects are good at helping indigenous people build needed infrastructure such as hospitals, he says, but hastens to add, “Once my people have peace, we can build the hospital.”

Kaptegain is so committed to peacebuilding that he is changing his career. He has already become the coordinator of Hand in Hand for Peace in the Congo, a local Congolese group working to raise awareness of a conflict he feels the media has forgotten about. “I don’t understand why the media was so concerned with Michael Jackson issues. There is so much else, so many other stories to tell,” he told a *Winnipeg Free Press* writer.

He recently began part-time conflict resolution studies at Menno Simons College. An able and articulate presenter, he has received numerous invitations to speak at local events—events that have also billed the likes of University of Winnipeg president Lloyd Axworthy, MP Rey Pagtakhan and filmmaker Sacha Trudeau.

What Serge Kaptegain has all along felt in his heart—the gospel message of love, peace and reconciliation for all of humanity and creation—

has for him become deeply rooted in a place far from his home. His story has just begun.

Working with other church partners, Mennonite Church Canada contributes \$30,000 annually to ministry in the Congo. Ironically, Congo has the third-largest number of

Mennonites and Brethren in Christ members in the world (more than 194,000 according to Mennonite World Conference 2003 figures); the majority is located in the less-conflicted western region. [*Canadian Mennonite* featured “Congo: A forgotten emergency” in its Oct. 17 issue. *Ed.*]

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

**‘I don’t understand why the media was so concerned with Michael Jackson issues. There is so much else, so many other stories to tell.’**

# Caring for creation:

## Joyfully responding to God

**W**hen I began thinking about this sermon on creation, I assumed I would use the traditional text from Genesis 1. But if I use this text, my fear is that you won't hear anything. All you will hear is that creation is good, God made it, be nice, and you'll start thinking, "I know all that stuff. Why doesn't he stop talking, and just go away." So I decided to do just that. I want to "go away" from Genesis 1, to a text to which you are less immune.

I must warn you, though, that leaving Genesis 1 puts us into some really tough territory. Our best alternative is to go to Romans 8. This is still a tough text because Paul, for the most part, is very dense—and by that I don't mean dim-witted. In fact, Paul is so brilliant that his writing is packed solid, phrase by phrase, which makes it a little more difficult to unpack. Let's begin the tough stuff with Romans 8:1-4:

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

In these few densely packed verses, Paul articulates a theology of law and spirit. He begins by informing us that there is no condemnation, or judgment, for those who are "in Christ." For Paul, being "in Christ" is to belong to an entirely new order that is fully immersed in the life of the Spirit. It is a new order, governed by a new understanding—or law—that follows the way of Jesus and the way of the kingdom.

This new reign of the Spirit is found-

dational to understanding how Paul thinks. While the Old Testament law pointed the way to salvation and showed us a picture of what God wanted for humanity, Paul's critique is that it did not have the capacity to actually help us fulfill the vision.

Jesus, on the other hand, not only fulfilled that vision in his own person, but through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, has provided a way to accomplish in us what the Old Testament law could not. Paul believes that Christ had transferred the community of Pentecost believers from the realm of sin and death into the new community of the Spirit.

Christians, living now in the new way of Christ, are those *"who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."* In verses

5 to 8, Paul describes the worlds of “flesh” and “Spirit”:

*For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Here again, we encounter Paul’s shorthand of “flesh” versus “Spirit.” A mindset oriented to “flesh” is hostile to God and results in a diminished quality of life, resulting in death. On the other hand, a mind oriented to God and the way of Christ leads to an experience of life and peace. In verses 9 to 11 Paul leaves no doubt as to which realm Christians belong:

*But you are not*

*in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.*

For Paul, every Christian lives in the new age of the Spirit that was inaugurated at Pentecost. But this common dwelling place of the Spirit, this new domain in which Christians now live, is also a communal space. Paul uses the plural form of “you” in this text. It means you the church in Rome—or you the church at Stirling—are “in the Spirit.”

This being “in the Spirit” is the same as being “in Christ.” It is not some ecstatic state of spiritual high. It is the new way of Christians who are allowing the Spirit of Christ to renew and transform their lives and communities because of righteousness.

Righteousness—this is a key word for Paul and foundational to understanding him. When the word “righteous” is used in Scripture, it means being in right relationship with another. To worship God alone is an example of being in a right relationship to God. If I treat my neighbour honestly by telling the truth and being fair in our financial dealings, then I am in a right relationship with my neighbour. Righteousness is simply a biblical term for rightly or properly ordered relationships that maintain the health and well-being of our relationships with God and each other. In biblical parlance, the fruit of righteousness is justice. Justice is essentially a synonym for righteousness.

But what on earth does this have to do with caring for creation? Perhaps we can let Paul speak for himself in verses 18 to 23:

*I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.*

Paul suggests that creation is also in the realm of the Spirit; it too is “in Christ” and eagerly waiting to be freed from bondage and decay. Creation itself is part of the salvation plan! We

**Continued on page 8**

**Creation is not excluded from redemption. Humanity and creation are companions on the road to salvation.**

**Caring** *From page 7*

share the same space, the same realm, and together we are on the same path to renewal and salvation, both eagerly awaiting a new heaven and a new earth. Creation is not excluded from redemption. Humanity and creation are companions on the road to salvation.

The implications for us are huge! In the same way that we can ask, “Are we in right relationship with our sisters and brothers, or with our God?” we can also ask, “Are we in a rightly ordered relationship with creation?”

Here is where we can finally go back to the Genesis story. In Genesis, humanity is placed in the garden “*to till it and to keep it*”—to be caretakers of creation in a rightly ordered relationship with it. Similarly, in the realm of salvation, the rightly ordered relationship between humanity and creation is one of mutual caregiving. Creation’s fruitfulness sustains human life while human beings tend and care for the hand that feeds it. This is the just or righteous relationship between humanity and creation.

If you think Paul was tough, now comes the really tough part: What is a rightly ordered relationship with creation?

It might be simpler to say what it is not. Bill Moyer, an award-winning journalist, wrote an article, “On receiving the Harvard Medical School’s Global Environment Citizen Award.”

In it he recalled how James Watt, President Ronald Reagan’s first secretary of the interior, told the U.S. Congress that protecting natural resources was unimportant in light of the imminent return of Jesus Christ. In public testimony Watt said, “After the last tree is felled, Christ will come back.”

That, my friends, is unrighteousness! It is, in my opinion, blasphemous heresy. It is a total misunderstanding of which realm Christians belong to and a rejection of the divine command in Genesis to be caretakers of the earth. To be in a right relationship with God’s creation is to fight tooth and nail against this kind of twisted thinking and to prophetically call our world back to sanity and righteousness.

Stop and think for a moment. Given the global environmental devastation that confronts us today, if Mother Nature were a person, she would be on life support, her lungs blackened and shrivelling, her blood stream full of poisons and waste, her body bruised and maimed because of humanity’s thoughtlessness and greed. If we are to return to a proper relationship with Mother Nature, we must nurse her, care for her, be caretakers of her bounty, and do our part in helping her regain her health and strength.

Now this is where things may get really challenging for us. If we take this seriously, it means that we must examine our environmental footprint and ask how we can reduce the negative impact our lifestyle has on creation: How small can we make that footprint? How can we minimize our consumption of natural resources and lower the toxic side effects of human production?

It is our Christian responsibility to have a prophetic political

voice that invites our society and its leaders to be increasingly environmentally sensitive and aware. It means being willing and eager to pay higher taxes for a healthy environment.

On the personal front, we also need to challenge ourselves. Are you willing to be in a righteous relationship with creation:

- By paying more for a furnace that is 96 percent fuel efficient or energy-efficient appliances even if they may never pay for themselves?
- By buying the smallest, most fuel-efficient car that meets your needs?
- By taking a Sunday walk instead of a Sunday drive?
- By making diligent use of your blue box and composter?
- By sacrificing something from your own company’s bottom line because it is the environmentally right thing to do?

If you are, you are taking your salvation seriously.

Well, after all that tough stuff, I would like to end with something much easier. The easy part is where we find the motivation to do the tough stuff. The easy stuff is recognizing the wonderful gifts God has given us in creation and then joyfully responding to his bountiful generosity by being faithful caretakers of the trust that we have been given. The easy stuff is being grateful for the wonderful realm of salvation, for the incredible gift of being “in Christ” and “in the Spirit,” and then joyfully responding by striving to be in right relationship with God, our neighbour and creation. The easy stuff is recognizing that joyfully responding to God in righteousness and right relationships means our world will be enriched with loving-kindness, goodness, peace, justice and environmentally sustainable practices. These are fruits of righteousness.

Today, God is calling us into right relationship with Jesus Christ, with our neighbour, and with creation itself. How will you respond? I hope it is with joy and righteousness.

—**David Martin**

*Now MC Eastern Canada executive minister, David Martin preached this sermon on April 24, 2005, while he was still minister at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.*

**It is our Christian responsibility to have a prophetic political voice that invites our society and its leaders to be increasingly environmentally sensitive and aware.**



Winnipeg

# Food justice explored at ecumenical camp

**E**xpressions like “We have tasted food justice and it is delicious!” were heard at the conclusion of an ecumenical Food Justice Camp held in Winnipeg last summer.

The camp brought together 40 people, ranging in age from 19 to 89, from four Canadian provinces. They represented Mennonite, Anglican, United Church, Catholic and other Christian denominations. The event was spearheaded by the Anglican Church of Canada, with support from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada, Mennonite Church Canada, Canadian Foodgrains Bank and the United Church of Canada.

Why does hunger exist alongside abundance? Why do some agricultural communities die and others remain vibrant? What are the ecological issues of our food system? What are the biblical and spiritual values that undergird food choices? These were just some of the questions explored by camp participants through worship, Bible study, special presentations, group discussions and immersion experiences.

For the immersion experiences, campers fanned out to different parts of Manitoba for three days of hands-on learning about food issues.

One group went north to several communities along Lake Winnipeg, to learn about fishing. They were hosted by Neill and Edith Von Gunten, long-time Mennonite Church Canada workers in Riverton, Matheson Island, Pine Dock and other northern villages.

This group had the opportunity to “lift” some fish nets, visit a local fish station, and learn to fillet. The eight individuals also talked at length with



**Chris Hrykow, left, and Kenton Lobe, right, learn how to fillet fish from Ron Whiteway.**

local fishers about what it means to earn a livelihood through the commercial fishery.

Campers learned that the establishment of a quota system by the government in the 1970s improved life for fishers compared to the days when privately owned American fish companies dominated the scene.

At the same time, fishers don't have as much input into the decisions of the agency regulating the fishery as they would like. Some fishers are also concerned about the quality of water in Lake Winnipeg and what that means for the fishery. Agricultural run-off and poorly treated sewage have increased the nutrient levels in the lake. This could have a serious impact on fishing in the future.

Another Food Justice Camp group visited Dan and Wilma Wiens' organic

market garden farm at St. Adolphe. Here, all campers, including 89-year-old Olga, got their hands dirty by helping to harvest corn, beets, onions, carrots and lettuce to fill 67 boxes of produce for Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) members of the farm.

CSA is a movement Dan Wiens has spearheaded in Canada and which shortens the distance between farmers and consumers. Individual families

or groups buy a “share” in a farm; this entitles them to a weekly or bi-weekly supply of vegetables through the summer. With CSA, farmers receive better prices and a more reliable income; consumers receive fresher and higher quality food, and also share the burden of a bad year; and the natural environment is sustained because fewer chemicals

are being used to produce the food and less fuel is used to truck it to distant markets.

The other three immersion sites included a mixed farm, an area where industrial agriculture is practised, and the inner-city. The immersion experiences were the highlight of the week for almost all campers.

Back in Winnipeg, the campers shared stories of hope and struggle from their various immersion experiences, and brainstormed ways to build food justice. They agreed that where everyone has enough, where the earth and its waters are sustained, and where communities are healthy, there is food justice.

—**Esther Epp-Tiessen**

*The author is MCC Canada peace coordinator; she was one of the 40 Food Justice campers.*

# The parable of the sower retold

A family purchased a property that had been used for a variety of purposes, with areas that were productive and areas that suffered from neglect. These new landowners went out to sow seeds on their property. Their wish was that the property be ecologically sustainable and be able to provide food and shelter for the wide variety of wildlife that either were currently in the area or might be attracted to it. They went out with their seeds of wildflowers, trees, shrubs and grasses, and began to sow them along hill and vale.

As they were sowing, some of the seeds of native grasses fell on the path, where the birds of the air ate them.

Those that fell next to the path flourished, though, and sent out rhizomes under the hard-packed path. Slowly over the years, with the help of the earthworms and burrowing insects, soil bacteria and composted leaf litter, the hard-packed soil of the path

eventually became loosened and the ground was able to support growth.

Seeds that were now being produced from the original plants growing next to the path fell onto the now fertile soil of the path. Even though the birds came and ate some—in order to survive—those seeds that remained set down roots and flourished.

Portions of the property were rocky and sustained little growth. Some of the seeds fell in these shallow soil locations and grew quickly, but succumbed to the heat of the noon-day sun. Lichens and mosses soon covered the surface, sending their tendrils deep into the cracks and crevices of the rocks.

Over the years, more seeds from the surrounding area blew in, and grew and died as others before them had done. But each time they lived a bit longer, since the dead plant material was building up an organic layer on the rock. Winter freezing and thawing conditions, along with the growth of the lichens and mosses, were gradually breaking down small pieces of rock into sand that mixed with the humus to form ever-deepening pockets of soil.

Shallow root-ing plants that withstand periods of drought and the heat of the sun—like

harebell, maidenhair spleenwort and cedar—were carried in on the wind and began to grow in these pockets of earth. This was a long and gradual process and the conditions became suitable for the plants that had been sown there originally.

The seeds of the maple, Bebb's willow and black-eyed Susan that fell in the areas of poor soil sprang up, only to be choked out by thistles.

Those that survived were stunted and bore few seeds. Seasons came and went, and with the growth and death of the plants in this area, nourishment was brought to the soil, adding organic layer upon organic

layer. Those plants that had been crowded out and sickly derived energy from the replenished soil and soon were growing tall and strong. The tree branches and leaves began to shade out the thistle, eventually making it impossible for it to survive any longer.

The seeds that fell on the good soil grew and flourished from the advent of the first rains. They grew strong and tall, and provided food and enjoyment for animals and people from the beginning, and did not experience the struggle of competing with harsh environments.

Let those who have ears, eyes and the ability to see past the current poor soils, understand that cultivation and patience can bring growth, and that even poor soils can bear useable and sustaining fruit given time and nourishment.

—John Pries

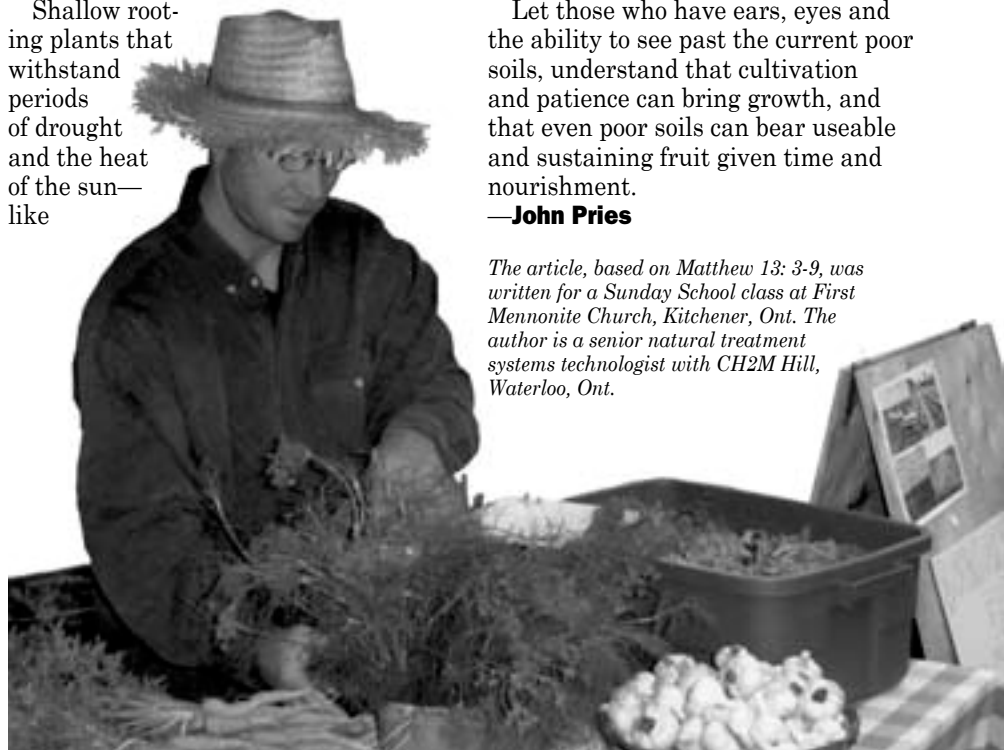
*The article, based on Matthew 13: 3-9, was written for a Sunday School class at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont. The author is a senior natural treatment systems technologist with CH2M Hill, Waterloo, Ont.*

**The seeds that fell on the good soil grew and flourished from the advent of the first rains.**

## Top 10 ways to support food justice

10. Explore biblical and faith foundations for food justice.
9. Plant seeds of gratitude, creativity and hope.
8. Build links between producers and consumers.
7. Support farmers' markets.
6. Buy locally grown food.
5. Engage children and youth in food production.
4. Support community kitchens and community gardens.
3. Develop a "food charter" for your church or denomination.
2. Advocate for, and with, struggling farmers.
1. Practise Sabbath rest.

—MCC release



## Letters

### Literacy classes an evangelistic tool

As former executive secretary of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (1994-2004), I was keenly interested in Lillian Haas' article, "I can read in my own language," in the Oct. 3 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, page 23.

After years of hard word and much perseverance, the strategy of bringing the gospel to the Siamou ethnic group in the Kenedougou province of Burkina Faso through linguistics and the development of an orthography is bearing fruit. Praise be to God for those who are learning to read and

**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.**

write for the very first time a language that, to date, had only been a spoken language (dialect).

Perhaps it's understood by your readers that reading and writing Siamou is not the ultimate purpose, though. AIMM translation and literacy workers are in Burkina Faso to put the spoken word into printed form through translation of the Bible,

so that people who read may come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The creation of orthography and literacy classes are important steps in that direction and purpose.

Thanks again for including in your publication this important article. Blessings on your ministry to the Mennonite Church.

—Garry L. Prieb, Elkhart, Ind.

MELISSA MILLER



### Making merry

**D**id you ever get in bed with six drunken men? That's the question my grandmother greeted her caregiver with one morning. The young woman laughingly said no, and then subsequently passed on the remark to my mom. Family members, hearing about it later, chuckled in part because it contrasted so vividly from Gram's life as a tee-totalling, pious churchgoer. We also chuckled because it helps us deal with the sadness we experience as we witness her confusion and bizarre comments. Humour is a gift that helps us carry loads that are too weighty to bear.

My sister Kathy works in the same nursing home where my grandmother lives. One day, she sat beside a woman whose frail health confined her to bed. Kathy listened empathically as the woman described her woes. A silence fell into the conversation. The woman finally broke it by asking, "And how's your love life, dearie?" A graying grandmother herself, Kathy took delight in the woman's curiosity, and laughed as she answered, "Well, no one's asked me that for awhile!" Humour can come from unexpected places and bring refreshing playfulness into the work of caregiving.

A friend's mother was known for her no-nonsense, irrepressible banter right to the end of life. Moments before she died, she looked at her loved ones and said, "Could we speed this up? It's taking a long time." Humour lights the valleys where the shadow of death rests.

Anytime there is a struggle with chronic physical or emotional illness, humour is cited as a necessary

**Humour is a gift that helps us carry loads that are too weighty to bear.**

survival tool. Those with loved ones who have Alzheimer's say that they use two things to cope: "We love a lot and we laugh a lot."

Family members who walk alongside someone with depression say humour is essential—finding little and big ways to lighten up the drain of persistent sadness. "A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance," declares the proverb, "but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken" *Proverbs 15:13*.

Humour is useful in other kinds of difficult situations. Some parents find humour to be the ingredient they need to transform stuck places they are in with their children. A joke, an exaggerated (but not sarcastic!) expression, or some well-stated hyperbole may cut through the tension and open up space for everybody to breathe easier and gain a more relaxed perspective.

Caring adults might also use humour to help their children see things differently. On one occasion, my dad tried to help me resolve a conflict with my older sister.

I railed about her offences, and Dad suggested that some of her actions might be in response to wrongs of my own. "Two wrongs don't make a right," I muttered. "No," Dad agreed, his eyes twinkling, "but two Wrights made an airplane."

Today I recall the memory with a smile. At the time, stubborn as only a teenager can be, I resisted the cheek he offered. Sometimes we're open to the possibilities that smiles and laughter can bring. Blessed are we at such times!

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

## Singing together a taste of God's kingdom

I was moved to tears by Glenn Witmer's story, "Standing together for the Prince of Peace," *Canadian Mennonite*, Jan. 9, page 15. The image of Israeli Jews singing "King of kings, and Lord of lords" together with Israeli Muslims was too much. Perhaps it is the image of what the kingdom of God could look like that overpowered me.

When a Muslim friend of mine from Mississauga called to tell me it was *Eid*, suddenly I realized that in the small town of Port Colborne there were two Muslim families who would be celebrating the holiday. It quickly became clear what I wanted to do. I went to Ten Thousand Villages in

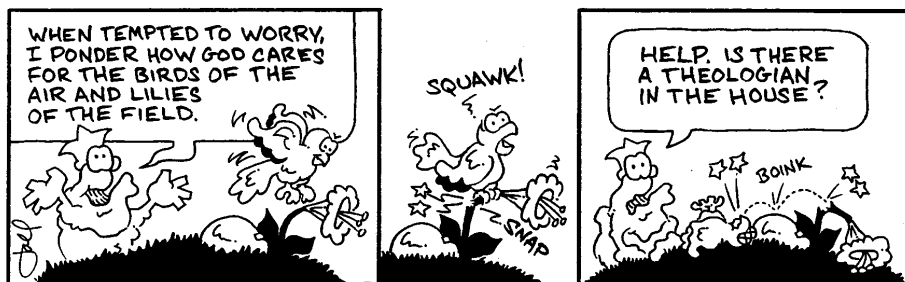
Port Colborne, picked out two gifts, wrapped them up, and then went first to the one family and smilingly held out my gift and said, "Happy Eid." The effect was instantaneous. My Muslim friend broke into smiles and handshakes and expressions of thanks. I carried on and went to the second fam-

ily where they, too, were astonished and delighted, and hugged me with faces full of smiles.

It was a heartwarming experience for all, especially for me. Reading Witmer's article made me realize that this was living peace.

—Jane Nigh, Port Colborne, Ont.

## Pontius' Puddle



MATTHEW BAILEY DICK



Shoes for your feet

**W**hat comes to mind when you think about a good pair of slippers? Perhaps you think of comfort and coziness, especially if they're the kind that are sort of fuzzy inside.

For me, slippers usually represent either enjoying a time of rest, or staying at home because I'm sick. Both of these modes provoke some helpful questions as we draw a connection with our peacemaking ministries. How does resting fit into the overall work of peace and justice work? Is it possible to proclaim something by doing nothing?

With our missional church language, we often talk about how God is always working in a situation before we even show up. For all the talk about partnering with God, a cynic might conclude that God is a workaholic!

Nevertheless, what if God sometimes takes a rest? A quick reading of Genesis 2:2-3 certainly provides a biblical basis for considering such an idea. Moreover, what if we are called to partner with God in taking time for rest and rejuvenation? The work of advocating for justice and agitating for a deeper peace commitment—these are tiring and seemingly never-ending tasks. Does God call us into any kind of Sabbath in relation to this work?

Whoa! How incredibly hard it is to pull on those slippers and flop down in the armchair for awhile, knowing that the violence and warfare continue, knowing that economic injustice goes unchecked, knowing that racism keeps on creating rifts between people.

Nevertheless, I believe that in the grand scheme of things, the Gospel most fully embodied includes times of Sabbath. On one level, it's all about preventing burn-out—for the long haul; we need those times of sitting and resting. More importantly, it's about nurturing a rhythm of life where the Holy Spirit can weave healing and hope into all aspects of our lives, rather than a situation where

our peacemaking work always emerges from an inner sense of emergency.

In addition to the Sabbath factor, wearing slippers can sometimes indicate being under the weather. I remember times when I stayed home from elementary school because I was sick, and I would loaf around the house all day in my slippers and pajamas. Such was the "official uniform" of one who was not obliged to do anything productive or useful (except getting well again, of course).

Sometimes we need to admit that we are seriously unwell and that we cannot engage the world of peacemaking and justice work. More often, though, I wonder if we have found a convenient excuse for not getting involved precisely because it would disrupt our comfortable lives as we lounge around the church in our proverbial slippers.

What if our inner health actually depends on interrupting our regular, comfy church schedule with active peace witnesses? I believe that letter-writing, prayer vigils, economic justice campaigns, the accompaniment of people living on the margins—in short, the risks of faith—are some of the ministries that will knit us together and heal us more than we even think.

Are we then left with a paradox? On the one hand, down time is an essential ingredient in peace and justice ministry. On the other hand, down time can become a pretext for chronic non-involvement. Might there be a "third way" option, in which we maintain a kind of "Sabbath stance" as we follow Jesus both to the overturning of money tables and to the retreating into prayer? May God show us the way.

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

## Is God a workaholic?

**A cynic might conclude that God is a workaholic!**

Winnipeg

## Building relationships important for aboriginal ministry

**U**nannounced, Neill and Edith von Gunten knocked on a door just as family birthday festivities for Grandma were about to begin. Sensitive to the awkward timing, the von Guntens indicated they would move on, but instead were invited to share some songs and Bible readings, and then warmly welcomed to stay for the celebration meal.

This was just one of many experiences the Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministries co-directors encountered on their recent cross-country learning tour of First Nation communities. The objective of the tour was to become more closely acquainted with what is already happening—and to discern an optimal course of direction for the future of Native Ministries.

Along the way, the von Guntens also visited MC Canada congregations, Aboriginal Neighbours staff of Mennonite Central Committee, and other aboriginal and non-aboriginal agencies, Christian organizations and denominational church offices, to learn more about how connections are built with First Nation peoples.

“Meeting each one face-to-face and feeling their willingness to work together was a real encouragement,” says Edith.

Despite the many church members who already connect with aboriginals in their professional jobs, the von Guntens observed that congregations



Photo by Dan Dyck

**Edith and Neill von Gunten, new co-directors of Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministries, recently visited dozens of First Nation communities, congregations, and other denominations and church-related bodies that minister to aboriginal people.**

**‘It was beautiful to realize how sharing Neill’s experience freed a native person in the group to share his story.’**

are slow to recognize the daily working lives of their members as “the church scattered.”

In one congregation the von Guntens met a teacher with many years of experience teaching aboriginal students. She expressed deep gratitude for all she had learned at a one-day seminar sponsored by local aboriginal leaders from an adjacent community. “But she hasn’t really shared much with others because there were no forums for doing so within her church,”

Edith says. “She is a valuable resource that is not being tapped.”

Two primary themes surfaced from the tour, say the von Guntens:

- Building relationships is the first,

and most vital, part of learning to know others; and,

- A need to be open and willing to learn from others.

At one church Neill shared his story of working in an African-American ghetto in Chicago as a young man. What he learned in those two years about life, another culture, and the prejudices and feelings he had himself, was transformative.

“It was beautiful to realize how sharing Neill’s experience freed a native person in the group to share his story,” says Edith.

**Continued on page 14**

### Mennonites aid with aboriginal translation

**T**he Canadian Bible Society (CBS) has been partnering for many years with Mennonite co-workers on the translation of the Scriptures for the Ojibwe-Saulteaux communities in northern Ontario and Manitoba. A di-script (Syllabic and Roman) New Testament was published in 1988, followed by a leather-bound Syllabic New Testament in 1994.

Since then, work has continued on portions of the Old Testament, with the goal of producing a Shorter Old Testament in Ojibwe. This project—to translate nearly half of the Old Testament—is nearing completion, with the anticipation it will be published later this year.

Such work follows in the footsteps of the translation of the New Testament into the Cree language for aboriginal communities along the James Bay coast of northern Quebec and into the indigenous language of the Tlicho community around Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories.

Their celebration of the Scriptures into Tlicho coincided with another major victory for their community: the historic land claim and self-government agreement in 2003. One of the Tlicho elders was heard to remark on seeing the historic Bible publication, “Wow, this is the real agreement! This one will not be broken.”

—From a CBS release

**Relationships** *From page 13*

A meeting with members in another church revealed how the congregation had been enriched and stretched by an aboriginal man who has become a member in recent years. He has come to feel at home in the church, and his sense of humour and honesty have enabled him to reach out to the non-native members of the congregation with love and frankness about what he sees and feels around him. His faith in God and his compassion for others in his community is evident, and he provides a relationship-building model of ministry.

“What excited us the most was the interest that a growing number of Mennonite people have in each province for learning about, and relating to, their aboriginal neighbours in some way,” says Neill.

—MC Canada release **by Dan Dyck**

North Newton, Kan.

## Costa Rican writing and making Mennonite history

**J**aime Prieto is making history in more ways than one. Prieto, professor of theology at Latin American Biblical University in San Jose, Costa Rica, is writing history. He is the author of the Latin American volume of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Global History Project, slated for release in the next year.

He is speaking history, too. Prieto gave the Menno Simons Lectures at Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., last fall, one of only two lecturers from outside of Europe or North America in the series' 54-year history.

With his lectures, Prieto symbolized the changing face of the global Mennonite Church, a “shift away from the north to the global south,” said Mark Jantzen, assistant professor of history at Bethel.

Prieto's Latin American history book will be a groundbreaking work, “the first comprehensive history of Mennonites in [Latin America] in any language,” said Jantzen.

In his lectures, Prieto said the Latin American Mennonite churches can be divided into three categories:

- Those started by missionaries from North America, such as the Mennonite Church in Argentina, dating from the 1920s;
- Those founded by immigrants, mostly from Europe, who brought the language of their country of origin, such as the Mennonites in Paraguay and parts of Mexico; and,
- Those indigenous to their country, though perhaps with some contact with North American missionaries, such as the Evangelical Mennonite congregations in El Salvador and the Kekchi Mennonite churches in Guatemala.

“We need to re-create the stories of the small miracles of faith in our communities, because that is where God is,” said Prieto. “We need to hear from people in their context.... It should be a dialogue. There is a lot to learn and a lot to teach.”

Prieto, the youngest in a large Costa Rican family, had an evangelical father and a Catholic mother, who died before he was old enough to remember her. At age 13, Prieto began attending a Mennonite church. In 1980, he enrolled in Latin American Biblical Seminary, then he went on to the University of Hamburg, Germany, where he studied Anabaptist history and earned a doctorate in 1992.

The churches of Latin America, Africa and Asia have much to say to their North American counterparts, Prieto said. “A significant contribution of Latin American theology is looking at the ecosystem and how human beings relate to the earth,” he noted.

Prieto believes Mennonites should be more explicit about the gospel message of peace. “It's been 60 years since World War II and we haven't made a lot of progress [in reducing militarism], even though we could have,” he said.

Prieto recently completed four years as president of Latin American Biblical University. On a mini-sabbatical, he spent several weeks in the U.S. doing research in historical libraries at church colleges.

—MWC release

## Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

### Students ponder upcoming elections

**O**ver lunch break, students and professors of the Christian University of Kinshasa gather to discuss upcoming multi-party elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the first in 45 years. As one could expect in a country recently torn by a brutal war, and where economic and state infrastructures are close to non-existent, the list of grievances was quite extensive: What is the international community doing about insecurity? Why are professors not being paid correctly? Why are there no jobs? Are the elections going to change anything?

The students wavered between hope and skepticism, anger and expectation, as they anticipate general elections to be held between March and June. Many don't know how they will end up paying for school fees. Most, if not all, struggle on a daily basis to make ends meet.

In such a situation, it is tempting to hope that the elections will revolutionize everything. It is also easy to think the elections won't change anything.

On the one hand, pessimistic students insist that the transition to democracy remains fragile. In addition to humanitarian and security issues throughout the country, political conditions are far from ideal. Moreover, pessimistic students fear the elections themselves might trigger local outbreaks of violence. Because of the lack of a strong democratic tradition and a real political base, many parties will campaign along ethnic or regional lines.

On the other hand, optimistic students point out that over 23 million Congolese—an estimated 75 percent of potential voters—have been registered to vote, despite huge logistical issues. Those students also insist on the fact that the support of the international community is unprecedented. While the Congolese government is covering 10 percent of the total cost of the elections, estimated to be \$498 million, the U.N. Mission in the Congo is provid-

ing \$119 million in logistical support. Individual donor countries are providing close to \$345 million. And considering the wars that erupted in 1996 and 1998, the fact that the transition process is on track is indeed a great source of hope.

However, it is clear that elections will not be a panacea for the Congo. The post-electoral period will be filled with challenges. Large amounts of funding are needed to meet humanitarian and infrastructure needs, as 25 percent of the Congo remains inaccessible and mortality rates are high in many areas.

For their part, Mennonite churches, along with support from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), are teaching their communities to participate peacefully in the elections. Protestant and Catholic organizations are distributing booklets and posters describing the voting process.

Working with several Congolese colleagues, Dennis Rempel, an MCC worker, teaches religious and community leaders to serve as election observers and conflict mediators throughout the election season. One of the methods Rempel uses in the training sessions is getting participants to imagine what they would like the Congo to look like in a perfect world, and how that influences the choice of leaders to bring positive change about. Training seminars have been held in Kinshasa, the capital, and in several eastern cities where conflicts have been more frequent and often more violent.

MCC is contributing \$107,000 to train conflict mediators, organize election observers and provide funding for civic education seminars that help prepare people for elections.

Rempel says that, despite the uncertainties surrounding the Congo's elections, it is exciting to work with Congolese people who are dreaming of a better future for their country.

—**David Blough**, with files from MCC

*The author served as interim director of MCC's U.N. Liaison Office through December 2005. He travelled to the Congo as part of his assignment.*

Waterloo, Ont.

## Gather 'Round gathering steam

**P**reparations for a new denominational Sunday school curriculum are bearing fruit as trainers are being selected and sample sessions are added to the website. Gather 'Round: Hearing and Sharing God's Good News is a curriculum for children, youths, and parents in Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Church USA, and Church of the Brethren.

Free sample sessions of teacher and student materials are now posted online at [www.gatherround.org](http://www.gatherround.org). The website also includes a price list, Bible outlines and other basic information. Customers without Internet access can call 1-800-245-7894 for assistance. Sample kits became available for purchase this month, and congregational use will begin in the fall.

In addition to quarterly teacher and student books, Gather 'Round will offer quarterly classroom packs that include such items as teaching pictures and posters. One resource, for example, is a memory verse poster with photographs of children depicting American Sign

Language words to represent the memory text, Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

A key emphasis in the curriculum is strengthening the connection between home and church. One way Gather 'Round works at this is through the quarterly "Talkabout," an item to use at the family dinner table. Talkabout will help families extend the Sunday school experience through short Scripture readings, prayers, and ideas for service and learning.

Gather 'Round offers materials for seven levels, from pre-school to adult.

A major training event is being held Feb. 10 to 12 at Gilmory Retreat Center near Pittsburgh, Pa. Each Mennonite area conference and Church of the Brethren district has been invited to send representatives to this event. Those trained in February will facilitate training in their own regions.

Gather 'Round follows Jubilee: God's Good News, which has been used in Mennonite and Brethren congregations since 1994.

—MPN release

**Two images from a Gather 'Round memory verse poster for use with Fall 2006 materials depict children signing the words for "heart," left, and "love." Children will learn American Sign Language words as they memorize Deuteronomy 6:4-9.**



Tavistock, Ont

# Retired farmer returns to Iraq to serve with CPT

**S**eventy-year-old Allan Slater left last month for Iraq to serve with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) following a commissioning service at Tavistock Mennonite Church on Jan. 16. The emotional and celebratory gathering for the retired Zorra Township farmer included more than 100 family members, friends, supporters and prayer partners.

Ignoring advice from the Canadian government—which has cautioned citizens from travelling to Iraq, in light of the kidnapping of four CPT team members (including two Canadians) last November—Slater has chosen to make a fourth trip to the war-torn country and rejoin his fellow CPT members there.

The commissioning service—in-



Stratford Beacon Herald photo

**Allan Slater, centre (in checked shirt), was commissioned to serve with Christian Peacemaker Teams at a service at Tavistock Mennonite Church.**

tended as a time of worship, encouragement, hope and celebration—was exactly that. Hearty singing of such hymns as “God of Grace and God of Glory,” “Guide My Feet,” and “O Healing River” was most inspiring.

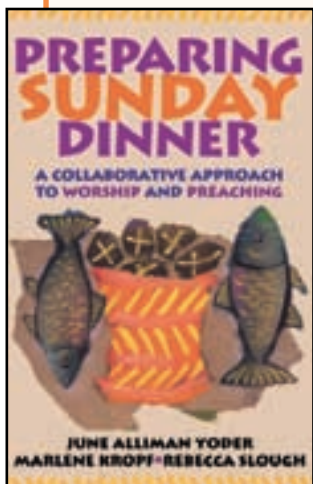
Slater was accompanied by his wife Bev, a daughter and son, and five young grandchildren.

His daughter Sarah offered her dad good wishes. “You make me very

proud, but, God, it’s going to be hard, and as much as I get it, I wish you didn’t have to do this,” she said. “A lot of people when they retire just go to Florida.”

Other well-wishers offered their blessings to Slater.

Anne-Marie Lappano of Stratford, Ont., presented Slater with “peace pillows” symbolizing Canadians’ care, concern and love for the Iraqis. The



## Preparing Sunday Dinner A Collaborative Approach to Worship and Preaching

June Alliman Yoder, Marlene Kropf, Rebecca Slough

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pillows, embroidered with a dove and olive branch, are to be distributed where Slater deems most appropriate.

In his address to those gathered, Slater mentioned that he had been asked recently if he was crazy. Replying that he didn't think so, he said, "War is crazy, I'm pretty sure of that. I'm pretty sure that the trauma and chaos of war drive people crazy. And I'm sure I'm not crazy enough to think I can change the whole world."

He added, "It's old men that start wars and send young men to fight wars. It's time that a few old men try and stop them. I see that as my role."

Slater implored those present to pray for him. "Pray for the people of Iraq. Pray for the four people who are missing. Pray for the soldiers who have been sent to Iraq and should be home with their families. And please pray for my family as well. I know they're finding it pretty tough."

**'It's old men that start wars and send young men to fight wars. It's time that a few old men try and stop them.'**

The commissioning service included a sending prayer—led by Slater's pastor, Rev. Richard Hryniw of East Nissouri Union Church—with many of the gathered supporters laying hands of blessing on their departing friend.

The mixed group of Catholics, Anglicans, United Church members, Muslims, Mennonites and others in attendance were uplifted by a local group of musicians called No Discernable Key, who especially caught the attention of Slater's grandchildren, prompting smiles from them.

The singing of the spiritual "Down to the River to Pray" provided a fitting ending to the service.

At the time of the commissioning service, the fate of Canadians James Loney and Harmeet Singh Sooden, along with Briton Norman Kember and American Tom Fox, who were taken hostage by on Nov. 26, was unknown.

—Gordon Bauman

## Late-breaking news

### Hope renewed for release of CPT hostages held in Iraq

Friends, family members and co-workers of the four members of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) abducted in Iraq more than two months ago now have renewed reason to hope for their freedom. A videotape—dated Jan. 21 and aired on the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera network a week later—shows the four CPTers standing against a wall, looking gaunt but in otherwise good health. The previously unknown Swords of Righteousness Brigade, which is holding the CPTers—Canadians (Harmeet Singh Sooden and Jim Loney), Briton Norman Kember and American Tom Fox—have reiterated their threat to kill the four if all Iraqi prisoners are not released; no deadline was announced. The tape is the first news of the hostages since Dec. 10. Vigils continue around the world calling for the release of the CPTers, who were abducted on Nov. 26.

—Ross W. Muir

## Secure on the Soil: Cultivating Wholeness

March 16-18, 2006

Ezekiel 34:27

A conference for women in ministry, Bluffton University, Bluffton Ohio

This three-day conference for women in ministry – pastors, chaplains, spiritual directors, students and others considering ministry will focus on personal renewal and tools for ministry. The themes for the days are:

Day 1: Secure on the Soil: *Breaking Ground*

Day 2: Secure on the Soil: *Rain in Season*

Day 3: Secure on the Soil: *Bearing Fruit*

The theme of the conference comes from Ezekiel 34:27, "The trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase. They shall be secure on their soil; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke, and save them from the hands of those who enslaved them."

This is one of a series of conferences for Mennonite Church women in ministry, but is open to women of all faith backgrounds.

Deadline for registration is March 1, 2006.

For registration information, please visit:

<http://staging.bluffton.edu/academiclife/pathways/securesoil/>

For questions contact:

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Winnipeg

## Historical society honours first president

**A**t the annual meeting of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada (MHSC), Dec. 2 in Winnipeg, Ted E. Friesen was given a special lifetime achievement award for his work with the organization. He was its first president and was especially instrumental in the publication of the *Mennonites in Canada* series.

Friesen reflected on the early days of the society. In 1966, he, Winfield Fretz and Frank Epp were together on a train to Saskatoon for the third annual meeting of Mennonite Central Committee Canada. Enroute they discussed the idea of a Canadian historical society.

After further conversations, the Ontario and Manitoba provincial historical societies agreed to co-sponsor a national Mennonite historical body. Three other provincial societies eventually joined to form the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. This past year, the fledgling Associ  t   historique Mennonite du Quebec also joined MHSC.

The first major project of the national society was the *Mennonites in Canada* series, with Frank H. Epp as editor and author. In 1974, the first volume—covering the years 1786 to 1920—was published. In 1982, the second volume—covering the period 1920 to 1940—was released. Ted D. Regehr finished the third volume that Frank Epp was working on when he passed away in 1986.

In other business, Sam Steiner reported on the status of the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO). It is hoped that this website will present Mennonites in a true light and give them due respect in the larger society. Steiner noted that, by the end of November, the Google search engine seemed to have found GAMEO, with its total of 2,726 articles. Some days, the GAMEO site is visited upwards of 28,000 times.

Such visits have resulted in a variety of questions and requests being



**Mennonite Historical Society of Canada president Ken Reddig, left, congratulates Ted E. Friesen upon his receipt of his lifetime achievement award at the society's annual meeting in Winnipeg.**

directed to the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada: "What's the closest Mennonite church?" "Describe Mennonite wedding customs." "Is there a website that plays Mennonite hymns?" "How can I live with the Amish?"

Royden Loewen reported on the

work of the Divergent Voices of Mennonites in Canada (DVCM) projects. The 2005 conference, "Mennonite hosts and refugee newcomers, 1979 to present," was held at the University of Winnipeg last fall. Selections of the presentations from more than 20 scholars, hosts, and newcomers will be published in the 2006 issue of the *Journal of Mennonite Studies*.

Future topics include: "Conscientious objection: A critical evaluation," "Mennonites and the environment," "Mennonites and money," and "History of Mennonite family relations and sexuality."

The meeting concluded with some brainstorming about prospective new projects, musing aloud about the possibility of a historical conference held in Siberia, or perhaps Poland-Prussia.

Officers for 2005-06 are: president Ken Reddig, vice-president Sam Steiner, secretary Lucille Marr, treasurer Richard Thiessen, and member-at-large Royden Loewen.

—**Maurice Martin**



## More than 20 offerings!

- Principles of Youth Ministry  
Andy Brubacher Kaethler, M.A.; May 26–June 2
- Anabaptist History and Theology  
Karl Koop, Ph.D.; May 30–June 16
- Seminar in Theology: Faith, Film, Fiction  
Gayle Gerber Koontz, Ph.D.; June 5–16
- Turnaround Strategies for the Local Church  
Art McPhee, Ph.D.; June 12–18
- Celebrating Christian Ritual in Worship  
Marlene Kropf, D.Min; June Alliman Yoder, D.Min; July 31–August 11
- Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations  
Jon Hoover, Ph.D.; and Jacqueline Hoover, M.A.; July 5–14
- Vision, Identity, and Task: Studies in Ephesians  
Tom Yoder Neufeld, Ph.D.; August 4–11

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# FOCUS

## Summer Camps

### Fraser Lake Camp celebrates half-century of service to youths

Last July 31 was a good day for a reunion. The sky was clear. The sun was shining. Not too hot, not too cool. It was, truth be told, a great day. A great day to gather with more than 200 former campers, staff and friends, to celebrate the ministry of God's work at



Fraser Lake Camp photo

**Fun in the water is just one of the many attractions for children and youths at Fraser Lake Camp each summer.**

Fraser Lake Camp over the last 50 years.

And standing there that bright sunny morning, surrounded by hundreds of years of collective Fraser Lake camp experience, it struck me that we were celebrating the faithful "planting and watering" that had been done by God's people over the last half-century and I was now looking at a small part of a great harvest. For some, changed lives. For others, faith in God. For many, a relationship with Jesus Christ.

I also realized that this harvest didn't happen because Fraser Lake Camp does something special, or because there were especially spiritual people here, or be-

cause camping ministry is better than other ministry.

As Paul wrote in a letter to some friends: "So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth" 1 Corinthians 3:7.

It was only by the grace of God himself that he blessed that work. His people planted seeds, and watered and nourished those seeds. And the Son shone down on that work. And the seeds germinated, took root, and burst forth from the darkness and into the light.

Because his people were faithful in their tasks—in the planting and the watering—in turn, God was faithful to them.

To sum up what happened at Fraser Lake in 2005: We planted. We watered. The Son shone down on us.

And we look forward to much more of the same in 2006!

—Eric Musselman

*The author is director of Fraser Lake Camp.*

### Summer camp staff do winter mission work

Campers at Youth Farm Bible Camp this summer may notice that camp staff have an expanded view of the world.

In February, four senior staff and seven junior staff from the Rosthern, Sask., camp—owned by Mennonite Church Saskatchewan and affiliated with the Shekinah Retreat Centre and Camp Elim—will take part in a short-term mission trip to Mexico. While there, we will serve the local church, while

creating cross-cultural understanding through direct exposure to the Mexican culture. We are not just building a house in a developing nation; we also are going to understand the conditions of poverty through immersion.

During the four days in Mexico, the Youth Farm Bible Camp staff will be building a 242-square-foot, two-room home with a slab floor, stucco-finished exterior, two windows and a door. It is a simple design, built according to the standards of the community.

The house will be built for a family on the outskirts of Tijuana, Mexico, where the roads are dirt, there is no running water, no electricity, no streetlights, no garbage collection, and no mail service.

In these communities, families purchase a lot from the government to live on, and then typically construct a house from used garage doors with a dirt floor. When it rains, the family ends up living in a house with a floor that turns to mud.

Menno Simons said, "True evangelical faith cannot lie dormant. It clothes the naked, it feeds the hungry, it comforts the sorrowful, it shelters the destitute, it serves those that harm it, it binds up that which is wounded, it becomes all things to all people."

We are excited about the opportunity to have an experience like this—building a house without the use of power tools. It will be a life-changing event.

—Mark Wurtz

*The author is executive director of Youth Farm Bible Camp.*



Camp Valaqua photo

**Girls just wanna have fun at Alberta's Camp Valaqua, as this picture indicates. However, on a more serious note, new camp director Jon Olfert reports that the camp's roof replacement project fundraiser was a success and the lodge now sports a new tin roof. He thanks all who have contributed to the project to this point, but notes that the camp is still raising funds to cover the balance of the project.**

Buhl, France

## French Mennonites fan African flames of mission

**D**uring a week when the rhetoric from French officials toward immigrants of African descent flared as explosively as the cars burning in the streets, Mennonites in the northeastern part of the country warmly welcomed delegations from Botswana, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, Canada and the United States.

On Nov. 11, Jean-Paul Pelsy—president of the Comité de Mission Mennonite Français (French Mennonite Mission Committee) and host for the gathering—opened the week of meetings during which the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) International Central Council met for the second time since the agency restructured its program two years ago. Pelsy greeted 25 representatives with words from Psalm 133: *“How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity.”*

In the course of the business sessions, the French Mennonite Mission Committee united with AIMM to become an official member of the Burkina Faso Partnership Council, joining four other agencies: the Église Évangélique Mennonite de Burkina Faso (Burkina Faso Mennonite Church), Mennonite Church Canada Witness, Mennonite Mission Network and the Evangelical Mennonite Conference in United States and Canada.

“It is truly exciting to see this small group of French Mennonites join the Burkina Faso Partnership Council,” said Janet Plenert, who represented MC Canada Witness at the meetings.

The four national AIMM partnership councils, in various stages of organization, also met to draft and refine their mission statements. This work continued a reconfiguration begun in June 2004, when African Mennonite

leaders and representatives of North American mission agencies that related to them met to transform the institution so more administrative



Photo by Janet Plenert

**Adolphe Komuesa and Siaka Traore were among 25 participants who met in northeastern France for Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission's annual meeting. Komuesa is the president of the Communauté Mennonite au Congo. Traore is vice-president of the Mennonite Church in Burkina Faso and president of AIMM's International Central Council.**

functions would reside in Africa.

The Burkina Faso Partnership Council, whose ministry has been primarily in villages, finalized plans for a venture into urban mission in the capital city, Ouagadougou. In addition to addressing the spiritual needs of urban non-Christians, Mennonite leaders

in Burkina Faso want to reach out to their own youths who move to the cities to attend high school and university. They believe the church is losing its successors to other denominations when there is no Mennonite church near these institutions of higher learning. Jeff and Tany Warkentin of Springridge Mennonite Church, Alta., are arriving this month to begin this ministry.

By the beginning of the 2007 school year, the Burkina Faso Partnership Council hopes to have a Mennonite dormitory and church in Bobo

Dioulasso, the country's second largest city.

“This way of working together feels right,” said Donna Entz of Fiske Mennonite Church, Sask., a mission worker through AIMM, MC Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network in Burkina Faso since 1978. “We are excited that mission is being developed by the church [in Burkina Faso] rather than being driven from North America. This is a first.”

The Congolese Partnership Council, dealing with a complex situation that brings together three Mennonite denominations, worked at forging a common vision.

“We live together and we must be open and willing to share with each other,” said Adolphe Komuesa, president of the Communauté Mennonite au Congo (Mennonite Community of Congo).

The embryonic partnership councils of Botswana and South Africa also discussed which institutions should be invited to become members.

“Although AIMM's new structure still has a lot of shortcomings, I see signs indicating that African leaders are being increasingly empowered to shape their own future,” said Rod Hollinger-Janzen, AIMM's executive coordinator. “They now have a stronger voice in decision-making.”

AIMM personnel worshipped, preached and built fraternal relationships in 10 local French Mennonite churches during their week in Buhl. They found that many of the congregations were working with African youths in their neighbourhoods. Although Africans in many French cities had rioted to protest racial injustice, there was no sign of violence in the Mennonite communities.

French Mennonite youths met with AIMM representatives to plan a mission trip this summer. They will help build a recording studio for a recently begun Christian radio ministry in local languages.

—Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

**“We live together and we must be open and willing to share with each other.”**

Abbotsford, B.C.

## ‘God with us’ the theme of Emmanuel’s anniversary

**D**uring their 25th anniversary weekend, Jan. 14 to 15, members of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, celebrated the presence of “God with us” through their history and looked to his continuing presence in the future.

Saturday night was a time for looking back to past years. The church was founded in 1980 when 34 people from the dual-language Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church committed themselves to starting an all-English daughter church in Abbotsford.

Today, some of those younger couples who started the church are retired and grandparents. The congregation has grown to 234 members and includes families of a number of ethnic backgrounds.

The evening began with a fair-type atmosphere in the church gym, modelled after an MCC Relief Sale, with several types of food available at various booths. Participants could roam around the gym looking at a slide show and photo albums, a display of newspaper clippings featuring Emmanuel members over the years, or a table honouring deceased members. Younger children found entertainment through stories at a storytelling tent, while older children were busy creating placemats for Sunday’s dinner.

The evening’s entertainment began with a humorous skit about the church’s origins presented by several youths and young adults. Interspersed between favourite music from each of the three decades, several members shared their memories of the past.

Sunday’s worship service looked to the future, focusing on the “new” and showcasing the gifts of current members. Commissioned and performed for the occasion were an original song by middle school pastor Tim Froese and poems by Gareth Brandt and Barbara Nickel. Quilted banners at the front of the church by Val Redekop, original artwork for the bulletin cover by

Brenda Lobe, and an oil painting by Linda Klippenstein added to the visual display. Pastor April Yamasaki composed a litany for the worship service.

Three former pastors—Gene Klassen, Ron Toews and David Ortis—who previously served the church were present either Saturday or Sunday.

Former youth pastor Carl Adrian also returned and performed several numbers on violin.

The celebration concluded with



Photo by Peter Bergen

**At the storytelling tent Vange Thiessen told stories to the younger children at Emmanuel Mennonite’s 25th anniversary celebration in January.**

a noontime fellowship meal in the church gymnasium.

—Amy Dueckman



Photo submitted by Evonne Komaromi

**Anne Baumann, a Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) worker, second from right, played Dutch Blitz at an MVS Toronto fundraiser with Rachel Stoltzfus, Andrea Siemens and Karl Reimer. The Dutch Blitz tournament, held at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, Markham, Ont., raised \$771 for MVS Toronto.**

Edmonton

## Men's retreat seeks to 'strengthen family ties'

For the second year in a row, Alberta's missional formation and partnership facilitator has spearheaded a men's retreat at Camp Valaqua. Marvin Baergen says that it is "a personal passion to get men more excited about and involved in the churches."

For this year's retreat (April 21 to 23), Gordon Houser, author of the 2004 "Strengthening Family Ties" booklet will lead five sessions at the retreat of the same name, to help men think about how they balance the competing demands of life and faith.

Houser is associate editor of *The Mennonite*, a publication of Mennonite Church USA. He believes there is a crucial need for a vital ministry to men in North America, where the culture leads young men and boys to search in many of the wrong places for direction about how to be loving and courageous as men. The goal of such a ministry is to provide opportunity for men to discuss the unique issues they face and to help create an awareness of how they can be comfortable with their identity, while offering their love and service to others without needing to dominate.

The sessions are planned with an intergenerational audience in mind.

Baergen says, "We need to get some of the younger guys involved. I think it's crucial that we have both fathers and sons involved in these discussions."

Eventually, he would like to see a significant number of men organize themselves as a group in Alberta and across Canada. Baergen is hoping for attendance of at least 36 men at the retreat, which will feature some outdoor recreation as well as time for indoor games and fellowship.

Retreat brochures and information are available at [www.mennonite-church.ab.ca](http://www.mennonite-church.ab.ca) or from Marvin Baergen at 403-256-2894. Participants are



RMC photo

**With their collection of 36,601 canned food items for the annual House of Friendship Christmas Food Hamper program, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate set a record for the largest high school food drive in Ontario, according to House of Friendship. Students from Grade 6 to 12 collected food items from their homes and neighbourhoods in support of this cause, while many students and families also supported the initiative with their financial contributions. An informal fun-filled class competition enlivened the process, the end of which was a celebration of the mountain of food collected in the school's foyer.**

encouraged to register early to receive study materials in advance.

The retreat is jointly sponsored by the Mennonite Church Alberta

Missions and Service Committee and Mennonite Church Canada Congregational Partnerships.

—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**

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Kitchener, Ont.

## Funding approved for seniors housing

**M**ennoHomes Inc. has been approved for \$2.1 million in funding under the Canada-Ontario "Strong Start" Affordable Housing Program to help build a 50-unit seniors apartment project in Kitchener.

Construction is expected to start this spring, with completion and occupancy by spring 2007. Planning, site work and drawings are well underway by Architecture Incorporated and Brian L. Shantz Ltd. Seniors 55 and older who may be in need of afford-

able rental housing are encouraged to contact MennoHomes at 519-578-5546. Income guidelines apply.

Preliminary estimates called for a capital budget of \$5.8 million. To qualify for government grants, MennoHomes agreed to contribute equity of nearly \$1.1 million in land and cash. To date, MennoHomes has received \$520,000 in gifts of land (from the former Eastwood Mennonite Community Homes Inc.), along with cash and pledges totalling \$330,000; this leaves \$245,000 to be raised by the end of 2007.

Other contributors include:

- Region of Waterloo grant in lieu of Development Charges—\$194,750; and,
- Mennonite Foundation of Canada mortgage—\$2.4 million.

Units will cost \$116,000 on average to build. To meet its cash contribution requirements, MennoHomes will need to raise \$11,500 per unit. Donations of any amount will be gratefully accepted.

MennoHomes retained the services of Enermodal Engineering Ltd. to make recommendations on how to achieve energy savings for its seniors apartment project. By spending an additional \$77,000 to improve the building's energy efficiency, it is estimated that the annual energy savings will be in the area of \$25,500, resulting in a three-year payback period.

Late last year MennoHomes established a Special Needs Fund with designated donations of \$4,600, to help keep families in housing operated by MennoHomes.

From time to time, MennoHomes receives applications from families who are short \$100 or so a month to meet the rent charged by MennoHomes because of an unexpected sudden decline or loss of income, or unforeseen household emergencies. With the establishment of the Special Needs Fund, MennoHomes is able to make up the difference.

Those wishing to donate should mark their cheques to MennoHomes as "Special Needs Fund."

—MennoHomes release

**Coaldale (Alta.) Mennonite Church held an appreciation night for Gerald and Linda Klassen late last year. He was ordained a lay minister on Jan. 29, 1978, and has served in the pulpit locally as well as in the former Taber (Alta.) church. She served as church secretary for a number of years. Both were acknowledged for their visitation ministry of providing comfort and encouragement to people in hospital or confined to their homes.**



Photo submitted by Olga Epp

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New Hamburg, Ont.

## Golf tournament to aid thrift shop expansion

A golf tournament is being planned for this spring in aid of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) thrift shop building project in New Hamburg.

Plans are moving ahead to build a one-stop thrift centre in 2006, the 25th anniversary year of an MCC thrift shop in the community, replacing the current Clothing & More and Furniture & More Thrift Shops in New Hamburg.

The local need for more space—as donations and sales increase—is urgent, according to board chair Vernon Brubacher.

“MCC Ontario has purchased the 3.1-acre property south of Ten Thousand Villages, off Heritage

Drive,” he explains. “The floor plan for the new 15,600-square-foot building is being finalized, in anticipation of beginning construction this spring.”

Responses to fundraising initiatives during the past year have been generous, with more than \$600,000 already raised toward the needed goal of \$1.75 million.

Donations and interest-bearing loans are welcome, and can be forwarded to Robert V. Bender, Chartered Accountant, 1015 Silver Springs Dr., Baden, ON N3A 3R6.

For more information about the golf tournament, call Larry Zehr at 519-662-3386.

—Gerald Schwartzentruber



**Waterloo-Kitchener United Church youth and family minister Chris Steingart, back row second from right, took his charges on a Mystery Trip to Toronto recently, including a stop at the Ontario Science Centre (pictured), where they saw an IMAX film. Other stops on the trip—in which the youths have no idea where they are going for the day—included the Air Canada Centre, where they visited the Hockey Night in Canada studio, and an IKEA store, where they took part in a scavenger hunt.**

Goshen, Ind.

## Canadians named to Goshen Dean's List

Two Mennonite Church Eastern Canada young adults were among 175 Goshen College students honoured for excellence in academics on the fall semester Dean's List.

Nicole O.C. Bauman, daughter of Rick and Louise Bauman of Shakespeare, Ont., is a junior studying peace, justice and conflict studies and interdisciplinary studies at Goshen. She graduated from Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in 2003 and attends Tavistock Mennonite Church.

David Yoder Neufeld, son of Tom and Rebecca Yoder Neufeld of Waterloo, Ont., is a first-year student

studying history. He graduated from Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in 2004 and attends First Mennonite Church, Kitchener.

The Dean's List, begun during the first semester of the 1999-00 school year, celebrates the achievement of students who have met high academic standards, and can serve as a motivation for students preparing for graduate studies, according to Anita Stalter, Goshen's academic dean, vice-president for academic affairs and professor of education.

—Goshen College release

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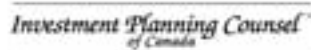
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## People&Events

**Strasbourg, France**—Willi Ferderer from Rahden, northern Germany, has been named interim staff person by the Global Mission Fellowship Planning Committee. He will serve through the September 2006 Gathering in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Ferderer replaces Canadian Peter Rempel, who resigned from the position to become executive director of Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba in Winnipeg. "This is a critical year when the actual Gathering planning will happen. For that reason, it seemed wise to have a European who can negotiate with other Europeans and those from Kazakhstan," said Janet Plenert, who represents North America on the planning committee. Ferderer is secretary of the German Mennonite Missions Committee and a member of the *Evangelische Freikirche Espelkamp*, part of an Anabaptist conference made up of an alliance of Mennonite Brethren, Brethren and Baptist churches in Germany.

—MWC release

by **Ferne Burkhardt**

**Winnipeg**—Abe Bergen, president of Steinbach Bible College, has been named the new director of development at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). Bergen, who has a master of divinity degree from Providence Seminary in Otterburne, Man., and a bachelor of religious education degree from Briercrest Bible College, has also served for 11 years as pastor of the Kleefeld (Man.) Evangelical Mennonite Church, where he and his family are members. For David Leis, CMU vice-president for advancement, Bergen's appointment will "allow us to reach out to many new people who can support CMU's unique vision to prepare students who will serve the church and the world." Bergen has also served as president of the Association of Canadian Bible Colleges and

is on the Council for Christian Higher Education Canada. He will begin his new assignment at CMU in July.  
—CMU release

## Transitions

### Births/Adoptions

**Bartlett**—to Donna and Jeremy, Cassel Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., a son, Keaton Henry, Jan. 3.

**Beech**—to Cindy Lebold and Scott, Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., a daughter, Laura Eileen Lebold, Jan. 9.

**Bergen**—to Charla and Dwain, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Cole Jackson, Jan. 15.

**Birch**—to Tara and Brett, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, a son, Campbell Patrick, Jan. 3.

**Hamilton**—to Krista Heidebrecht and Matthew, First Mennonite, Edmonton, a son, Kieran Jakob, Dec. 8.

**Kroeker**—to Roxanne and Jonathan, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, a daughter, Bailey McKenna, Dec. 23.

**Lichty**—to Tara and Kevin, Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont., a daughter, Emma Noelle, Jan. 3.

**Marsh-Lansard**—to Carmen and Marcel, Valleyview Mennonite, London, Ont., a son, Quinton Claudeus, Nov. 19.

**Penner**—to Marge and Mike, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Claire Olivia, Sept. 11.

**Spencer**—to Wendy and John, Valleyview Mennonite, London, Ont., a daughter, Zoe Diane, Dec. 17.

**Williams**—to Brenda and Paul, Valleyview Mennonite, London, Ont., a son, Evan Jonathon, Dec. 22.

### Marriages

**Cwir-Hildebrand**—Paul and Julie, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Dec. 30.

**Edwards-Blank**—Scott (First Mennonite, Edmonton) and Anne (Tofield Mennonite,

Alta.), at First Mennonite, Edmonton, Oct. 9.

**Gerber-Halliday**—Paul and Monique, Cassel Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., Dec. 31.

**Rempel-Kehler**—Mitch and Kristen, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Jan. 7.

**Toews-Latimer**—Gerhard (George) and Faith Louise, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, Jan. 14.

**Whitehouse-St. James**—Bruce and Heather, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Jan. 7.

### Deaths

**Funk**—Jacob, 92, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Nov. 24.

**Janzen**—Margaret (nee Friesen), 74, Arnaud Mennonite, Man., Jan. 5.

**Unrau**—Kevin, 39, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 28.

**Wieler**—Judith (nee Guenther), 89, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Jan. 4.

### Baptisms

**Mannheim Mennonite, Ont.**—Daniel Albrecht, Dec. 11

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

## News briefs

### New DVD explores poverty/AIDS link

A new DVD from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) explores the impact of poverty on the spread of HIV/AIDS and the impact of HIV/AIDS on the economic development of households and communities. *Making Ends Meet: AIDS and Poverty* also examines how the disease is straining the expanding economies of India and South Africa, where AIDS populations are the highest in the world. The DVD includes additional MCC videos and other resources on HIV/AIDS, and how the church is addressing the pandemic. To order, contact an MCC office or visit [www.mcc.org/catalog](http://www.mcc.org/catalog).  
—MCC release

### Zambia to get AIDS kits, blankets

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is sending 500 AIDS care kits, 2,200 school kits and 500 blankets to Choma, Zambia, this winter. In Zambia, MCC works through the Brethren In Christ (BIC) Church to promote awareness of HIV/AIDS and support church efforts to care for the ill. AIDS care kits will be distributed through BIC churches.  
—MCC release

## Advertising Dates

Issue	Copy Due
March 6 (Focus on Summer Travel, Food and Events)	Feb. 21
March 20	March 7
April 3 (Focus on Elementary/Secondary Education)	March 21
April 17	April 4
May 1 (Focus on Books and Resources)	April 18
May 15	May 2

Contact

**Barbara Burkholder**

1-800-316-4052 / [advert@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:advert@canadianmennonite.org)

## Mennonite Church Canada

### Prayer requests

Please pray for:

- Cindy Buhler and Tobia Veith, MC Canada Witness workers in Macau, who are working closely with a family from the Macau Mennonite Church whose 12 year-old daughter disappeared for several days in the third week of January.
- The increasing difficulty in obtaining religious visas for Cuba, in large part due to the many groups who have abused this visa in recent times.
- Jeff and Tany Warkentin, new appointees with Witness International Volunteers in Burkina Faso, who will be in language study in Ouagadougou for several months. Pray for their orientation and for a fruitful ministry in expanding God's church around the world.
- The upcoming MC Canada Leadership Assembly, March 1 to 4, in Winnipeg, where General Board, Council and staff will be meeting for discernment and discussion.

### New opportunities in February Equipping

The February *Equipping* packet, now available in church offices, highlights the joys and challenges of new possibilities and opportunities. It includes:

- A celebration story featuring "a mini learning tour" to South Korea organized by teenager Stefan Froese, son of former missionary parents, who invited two of his friends to accompany him on a return journey to Korea so that they could learn something about his "other home" and better understand each other.
- A poster announcing an upcoming "learning, sharing, praying" tour to Macau-Hong Kong, led by Samson Lo, MC Canada Multicultural

Ministries director, from April 20 to May 1.

- A Resource Centre update, which highlights new releases such as the new "compilation DVD" of MC Canada ministries in Canada around the world.
- The annual MC Canada report to congregations by Jack Suderman and Henry Krause, which "rejoices" in a "significant year of ministry" in areas ranging from an "unprecedented demand" for teaching peace theology in many areas around the world, to a thriving PrayerNet ministry.

## Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

### Retooling for a new season of ministry

A task group has just completed an inventory of the work currently done by MC Eastern Canada commissions, as well as new ministries that are envisioned, to help the newly formed councils develop an agenda for ministry. The Gift Discernment Committee welcomes volunteers or suggested names as it recruits persons for the five councils.

Staff job descriptions have been refined and modified to support the new ministry agenda. The staff are adjusting to significant shifts in their roles, in the "retooling" of MC Eastern Canada for this new season of ministry. Also new is the deployment of regional ministers in specific geographic areas; hiring of these persons will begin shortly.

### Ministering to busy families

"How shall we minister to families in a culture of busyness?" asked Sara Wenger Shenk in her address to the Pastors, Chaplains and Congregational Leaders Workshop, held Jan. 14 at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church.

According to her, God invites people to a different rhythm of living. The goal is not to suddenly just be different for difference's sake, but rather to create a new culture, one that is good, rich and attractive to children and adults both. Rebuild "cellular walls, which are more like a membrane that acts as a filter, allowing in the good and filtering out the bad," she said.

This can be done by turning off the TV, teaching discipline in the use of technology, and using it critically. Much busyness comes from too many options, Shenk said. "Let's live more simply. And let's celebrate, not with huge fanfare, just in a simply, joyful way."

In the frenzy of busy and often conflicting schedules, people often experience time as the enemy. Since rest and renewal are expansive good gifts of the Mennonite tradition, she encouraged Sabbath-keeping for families, listing many life-giving Sabbath practices: from worship and walks to hospitality and conversation.

## Mennonite Church Manitoba

### Retreats at Camps with Meaning

A dozen retreats are planned at Camps with Meaning facilities in 2006. These retreats are aimed at youth, seniors and persons in between.

Winter retreats for junior high students, senior high students and young adults take place January through March. These retreats are held at camps Koinonia and Moose Lake, and offer both stimulating topics and outdoor recreation. Well-known speaker and pastor Kathy Giesbrecht is the speaker at four junior high retreats.

A retreat for families, friends and persons with a disability will be held at Camp Assiniboia from March 3 to 5.

The focus will be on pursuing supports for these families.

In May and June retreats are offered for seniors, with Plus 55 Retreats on tap at Moose Lake in late May, and at Koinonia in early June. Henry and Elna Neufeld will speak at the Moose Lake Plus 55 Retreat on the theme, "Approaching another culture." Pam Driedger will speak at the Koinonia retreat on the theme, "Rooted in the centre, living on the edge."

The fifth annual birding retreat will be held at Koinonia from May 26 to 28. Quilting retreats are scheduled for November at both Koinonia and Moose Lake.

These retreats are part of Camps with Meaning's ministry of "inviting persons to life" by providing spiritual nurture in settings surrounded by God's creation.

Camps with Meaning operates Camp Assiniboia at Headingley, Camp Koinonia at Boissevain, and Camp Moose Lake at Sprague.

Further information about the retreats is available from the Camps with Meaning office at 895-CAMP. Camps with Meaning is a ministry of Mennonite Church Manitoba.

## Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

### Delegate sessions to implement new vision

Osler Mennonite Church is hosting the annual MC Saskatchewan delegate sessions from Feb. 24 to 25.

On the agenda will be a vote on the vision prepared by the Envisioning Team that was presented to the delegate body last year. Known as "Vision 2010," the plan covers in broad strokes the shift in thinking needed to move the conference body successfully into the future.

Continued on page 28

**The Churches** From page 27

Time will also be devoted to discussing changes to the Person to Person program, specifically relating to including other denominations.

**Herbert Nursing Home completes shift**

The Herbert Nursing Home is entering the final stages of its release from conference ownership, with a service at the Herbert High School to celebrate the 50-plus years of operation of the home and to mark the transfer of responsibility to the Cypress Regional Health Authority, scheduled for Feb. 7.

The transfer officially happened on Dec. 29, and the conference doesn't have any

more involvement in the home. The process is being termed an amalgamation of two organizations, which means that "the region takes on legal liability," explained board chair Pete Peters.

During a special delegate meeting at Nutana Park Mennonite in November, to decide the future of the nursing home, the board spoke of the spiritual care that was still needed at the home following the change of ownership. A spiritual care position will not be funded by the region and, like all other regional affiliated nursing homes, the need will be filled by pastors in the area.

**Foray into aboriginal community explored**

MC Saskatchewan Ministries

Commission has agreed to support a Metis church worker for a six-month, three-day-per-week contract period.

The agreement with Ray Dumais, who resides in Prince Albert and drives to Saskatoon several days each week, where he is hoping to begin a house church, is an attempt by the conference to establish some connections with aboriginal people there. To that end, Dumais will be speaking at the upcoming delegate sessions in Osler about his work.

**Mennonite Church Alberta**

**Congregational transitions**

• On Jan. 22, Edmonton's Holyrood Mennonite Church

voted on whether to extend a call to a pastoral candidate. Before the vote, the congregation agreed that they wanted at least an 85 percent approval before they would proceed with a call. There was a great feeling of rejoicing when Werner DeJong received a 98 percent affirmative vote and was called to be Holyrood's new senior pastor.

DeJong was pastor at Petitcodiac Mennonite Church in New Brunswick for the past eight years. He will begin his ministry at Holyrood in mid-June.

Hugo and Doreen Neufeld will remain in their interim position with the congregation until the end of March. Mike Perschon, Holyrood's associate

**Continued on page 30**

JANET PLENERT



**From our leaders**

**T**he leader at a recent pastoral installation service asked if it is better to set one's vision high or low. Setting lofty goals risks discouragement when you fail to measure up, while setting your sights low provides encouragement through small successes. Which is a better model?

For me, there is no choice. Dream big! But then anchor your feet on the ground, create a plan, and build a team that shares the vision.

Mennonite Church Canada Witness has a lofty vision: To lead, mobilize and offer resources for the church to participate in holistic witness to Jesus Christ in a broken world.

It is humbling to have been entrusted with the task of leading our team and our churches toward this vision. Along the way, we strive to align the being and the doing of the church with God's work. This is no small task—but our God is no small God! It is our job to participate in what God is doing. As we embrace the vision and plan for it, we hope that every congregation—and all parts of the church—will become fully engaged in God's mission, from across the street to around the world.

The first step in a big plan is inviting and inspiring a team that will share the dream. Like Nehemiah, who set out to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, I have been dedicating significant time to planning since three long-term staff members left their positions to pursue other ministry opportunities. (These individuals helped shape much of the MC Canada transformation process—another big dream.) The ripple effect left several vacancies in Witness, and

**A lofty vision**

**This is no small task—but our God is no small God.**

an opportunity to make some small but strategic adjustments to roles and responsibilities.

I am excited to call forth and prepare a team of skilled and inspired people to once again complete the Witness team:

• Tim Froese, former Witness worker in South Korea, is the new executive director of International Ministries (succeeding me). His discerning questions, understanding of the church, and ability to

network with people are already an inspiration.

• Hippolyto Tshimanga is the new Africa and Europe Mission Partnership facilitator (succeeding Peter Rempel). His sparkling personality charms all who meet him. Congolese by birth and not of Mennonite background, he brings astute insights and observations to the team.

• Nikki Marr will be our new Witness executive assistant (succeeding one of Kathy Fast's two half-time positions). She is young and passionate, and will help us stay relevant and in tune with the 20- and 30-somethings of the church.

I am extremely grateful for the strong and dynamic Witness team we have had in the formative years of MC Canada Witness. Now with several of us beginning new roles, I am confident that we have the right team in place to continue the work. I set high standards. I dream big dreams. And with the staff we have in place, we are well positioned to advance the vision.

*Janet Plenert is executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada's Christian Witness Council.*

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Feb. 24-25:** MC B.C. annual general meeting, Ebenezer 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 22:** Columbia Bible College graduation ceremony.

**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:** MCC's third annual fine arts festival, Master's Academy, Calgary. Theme: "What does peace look like to your neighbour?"

**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 28:** "Glimmers of Hope" with Brian Stewart and Anna Maria Tremonti, Boyce Theatre, Calgary. Fundraising/awareness-raising event for MCC AIDS projects.

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

### 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:** MDS information workshop at Bridgeway Community Church, Swift Current, 2 p.m. To register, call toll-free 1-866-261-1274.

**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:** Shekinah Retreat Centre fundraising banquet

and auction at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon. Special guests: Simply Superb.

**April 8:** Women's Enrichment Day.

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

**April 29:** Touring Mission Fest.

### Manitoba

**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.

**March 15-18:** CMU presents Scientific Americans, a play by award-winning Canadian playwright John Mighton.

**March 25:** CMU chamber choir and men's chorus at the Laudamus Auditorium, 7 p.m.

**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 2:** CMU fundraising faspalight supper and vespers at Mennonite Collegiate

Institute, Gretna. Supper at 5:30 p.m.; vespers at 7:30 p.m. For more information or reservations, call 877-231-4570.

**April 6:** Jazz at CMU, 7:30 p.m.

**April 22:** CMU annual spring concert, 7:30 p.m.

**April 28-30:** Manitoba Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter weekend, Winnipeg. For more information, call Peter and Rose Dick at 204-757-4705.

**April 30:** House of Doc fundraising concert for MCC Manitoba's FASD program, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, 7 p.m.

### Ontario

**Feb. 17:** 25th annual Heifer Relief Sale, David Carson Farms and Auction Services, Listowel. Proceeds to MCC relief and development work.

**Feb. 17-19, 24-26:** UMEI Alumni Players present *Beauty and the Beast*, 7:30 p.m. (17,18,24,25) and 2 p.m. (19,26).

**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. 18:** Fundraising concert in support of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, 8 p.m., Sheraton Hall at Wycliffe College.

**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

Continued on page 30

**Calendar** *From page 29*

Encounter weekend, Festival Inn, Stratford. For more information or to register, call Marjorie Roth at 519-669-8667.

**March 7:** MDS information workshop at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, 6 p.m. To register, call toll-free 1-866-261-1274.

**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 by 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.

**March 27:** MSCU annual general meeting, Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden. Registration: 6:30 p.m.; meeting: 7 p.m. Special music by Bryan Moyer Suderman.

*Please send Calendar events eight weeks in advance of the event date by e-mail to:*  
calendar@canadianmennonite.org.

**TheChurches** *From page 28*

pastor, will continue working three-quarter time until the end of 2006.

• Shami and Deanna Willms, who share a full-time position as associate pastors at Calgary's Foothills Mennonite Church, have resigned their position effective late spring. The Willms have been much appreciated and valued at Foothills, and within the Alberta conference, for their excellent work and strong relationships with young people.

Deanna will return to teaching and Shami will go back to doing the computer work that he enjoys. The couple looks forward to continuing to worship and serve in the Foothills congregation.

Foothills held its annual meeting on Jan. 31, at which a search committee was organized to fill the vacant ministry position.

• On the last weekend of January, Jerry and Cara Buhler and their family moved to Saskatoon from their long-time home in Pincher Creek. After many years as pastor at Springridge Mennonite Church, Jerry will begin work as conference pastor for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.

Harold Schilk has been hired as a six-month interim pastor for the Pincher Creek congregation. Schilk lives in Lethbridge with his wife, Ruth, who is the pastor of Lethbridge Mennonite Church.

**Mennonite Church  
British Columbia**

**Business meeting  
cancelled this year**

B.C. Mennonite Women in Mission (BCWM) has announced that the annual business sessions normally held in February will not take place this year.

According to president Veronica Thiessen, the executive had contacted churches asking what Saturday of the month would be most suitable, but no date could be found.

Instead, all business decisions will be made at the BCWM annual Inspirational Day, to be held this year on May 7 at First United Mennonite, Vancouver.

"We agonized over this at our executive meeting in December and this is what we came up with," says Thiessen. "We will compile the annual booklets early and mail them at least a month in advance of the Inspirational Day. We are asking the ladies to go over the reports and minutes, and discuss them so that we need only to move their acceptance as printed and circulated at the Inspirational Day."

*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.*

**Notice of 35th Annual Meeting of  
Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service**



Notice is hereby given that the 35th Annual Meeting of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (the non-profit association that publishes *Canadian Mennonite*) will be held on March 18, 2006, at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, 1701 Ruth St., Saskatoon, at 4 p.m. The meeting will include editorial, circulation and financial reports, elections, and reports from the Board. Anyone is welcome to attend. Voting will be limited to Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service members. These are individuals who contributed at least \$25 in the past year, and board members. (See names and nominating bodies below.) A fundraising banquet follows at 6 p.m. at the church.

Members who are unable to be present may complete the proxy form and mail it to: *Canadian Mennonite*, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6H7.

**Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Board:**

- British Columbia:* Henry Neufeld (Mennonite Church B.C.), John W. Goossen (Mennonite Church Canada)
- Alberta:* Jan Wilhelm (Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service), Brenda Tiessen-Wiens (Mennonite Church Alberta)
- Saskatchewan:* Bernie Thiessen (Mennonite Church Saskatchewan)
- Manitoba:* Bernie Wiebe (Mennonite Church Manitoba), Paul Krahn (Mennonite Church Canada), Aiden Enns (Mennonite Church Canada)
- Ontario:* Ester Neufeldt (Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service), Mary Lymburner (Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service), Brice Balmer (Mennonite Church Canada), Larry Cornies (Mennonite Church Eastern Canada)

**Proxy**

As a member of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, I hereby appoint

\_\_\_\_\_ as my proxy to attend, act and vote on my behalf at the Annual Meeting of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service on March 18, 2006.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Send me a copy of the Annual Meeting reports

## Employment opportunities



MCC CANADA seeks applications for the following salaried position in Winnipeg:

### INTERNATIONAL VISITOR EXCHANGE PROGRAM (IVEP) CANADA COORDINATOR

(Full-time, one-year maternity leave position beginning May 15, 2006.)

The Canada Coordinator administers IVEP in Canada. IVEP brings 65 international adults (ages 19-30) to North America for one year. Previous experience with young adults of different nationalities, and effective communication and administrative skills are required.

All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith and discipleship, active church membership, and nonviolent peacemaking.

Contact:

**Marsha Jones**  
Phone: 204-261-6381

E-mail: [mj@mennonitecc.ca](mailto:mj@mennonitecc.ca)

View job description on the web at: [www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org)

Applications will be accepted until March 20, 2006.

### 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

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](mailto:ken@mcsask.ca)

Springridge Mennonite Church invites applications for a full-time

### PASTOR

The applicant's duties will include preaching, teaching, visitation, community involvement, as well as wide Conference involvement, some administration and generally giving spiritual leadership to the congregation. A Mennonite/Anabaptist theological understanding is important.

Springridge Mennonite Church is a small, hospitable, rural, inter-generational congregation with an average attendance of about 50 people. The church is located 45 minutes from the Rocky Mountains and a half-hour from Pincher Creek. The starting date is **August 1, 2006**.

Contact:

**Abe Janzen**

Phone: 403-627-3991

E-mail: [aejanzen@telusplanet.net](mailto:aejanzen@telusplanet.net)

Web: <http://springridge.mennonitechurch.ab.ca/>

## Subscriber services

### How to subscribe:

- Individuals who attend churches that are part of Mennonite Church Canada or one of its five area churches can subscribe through our Every Home Plan (paid for by your church giving and CM's own fundraising). Please contact your church office to be added to the list.
- Personal subscriptions are also available to anyone. A one-year subscription (24 issues) is \$36.00 plus \$2.52 GST in Canada, \$53.50 (Can.) to the USA, and \$73.00 (Can.) for elsewhere. Two-year and group subscriptions are also available.

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### Subscription changes:

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- Subscription changes are not considered Transitions notices (these go to [transitions@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:transitions@canadianmennonite.org)).
- Changes will be made immediately but may take four to six weeks to take effect because of printing schedules.

### Contact information:

Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5,  
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 6H7

Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 221

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

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## **Alberta**

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## **Saskatchewan**

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**Mennonite Camping Association**  
[www.mennonitecamping.org](http://www.mennonitecamping.org)