

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

**February 20, 2006**  
Volume 10, Number 4

**How others  
see us**  
page 12

**Seeking peace  
in Colombia**  
pages 20-21

**Churches leaving**  
pages 34-35

Divine  
**intimacy**

## Write on our hearts

**M**ennonite congregations using the Lenten worship planning material prepared by the larger Mennonite Church will soon encounter Jeremiah 31:33: *“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”*

The verse is the central theme for worship during Lent, and Mary Schertz reflects beautifully on this intimacy between God and us in our Faith&Life section.

In the worship materials themselves, a suggested banner caught my attention as a worship planning group at my congregation prepared for upcoming Lenten services. On the banner, a circle—representing a heart—is pierced by a pen, causing drops of blood to fall below it.

It’s an uncomfortable image, but right for us to consider. The image is a lesson to me that having God’s law written on our hearts is often a painful process. We notice it and sometimes we resent and rebel against it. It is no small matter to ask God to write on our hearts. Like signing a newly purchased book, God wants to draw us inward and mark us as his own.

Ash Wednesday services are uncommon in the Anabaptist tradition, but I find the traditional church practice of marking foreheads with a cross of ash a powerful expression of this verse from Jeremiah. When else during the year are we so tangibly reminded of what our ultimate future is on earth, and of Jesus’ ultimate act of reconciliation on the cross for us? Death is the highest possible price to pay for living.

As we read in I Peter 2:24-25, *“He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live*

*for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.”*

During these darker Lenten times of the church year, let us renew that costly covenant between God and us.

- A few issues ago we launched electronic delivery of *Canadian Mennonite* and I’ve since had a few requests for *Canadian Mennonite* on tape. I would explore this option with readers. Please let me know if you would prefer an audio version of the magazine. Also, if you might consider ministering to the church by being a reader, I’d love to hear from you.
- Many use this magazine as a way of finding what new church-related job openings are available. In order to make this time-sensitive information faster to access, we have added a new section to our website that publishes each issue’s classified ads before they are seen in print format. Look for the new link now at [canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org).
- If you have not received your Jan. 23 issue, please contact us for a replacement—a number of issues were not delivered due to label glue not sticking well. Our apologies! We are investigating new label technologies to prevent this from happening in the future.
- A personal thank you for your support for my wife and me during her four-month convalescence following surgery. Her last tube was removed a week ago and she has now made a full recovery. Thanks be to God!
- I look forward to hearing feedback on *Canadian Mennonite* from as many of you as I can as I attend the upcoming MC B.C., MC Alberta and MC Eastern Canada annual delegate sessions, or at *Canadian Mennonite’s* annual general meeting in Saskatoon in mid-March.

—**Tim Miller Dyck**

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**February 20, 2006**  
Volume 10, Number 4



Page 18

## Web site preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted on our web site at [canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org) on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the March 6 issue by March 2.

**4** **UpClose**  
International practicum 4  
Nighswander obituary 4

**6** **Faith&Life**  
Divine intimacy 6  
Lenten reflection on darkness 8

**9** **Arts&Culture**  
'Into the forgotten heart' 9  
New CDs 10

**12** **InConversation**  
How others see us 12  
Letters 13  
High-efficiency worship 14  
Oprah's boo-boo 15

**16** **WiderChurch**  
Canadian government warning 16  
Seeking peace in Colombia 20

**29** **LocalChurch**  
Mount Royal retreat 29  
Winning speech 30  
Transitions 32

**33** **TheChurches**  
Camp ministry two-way street

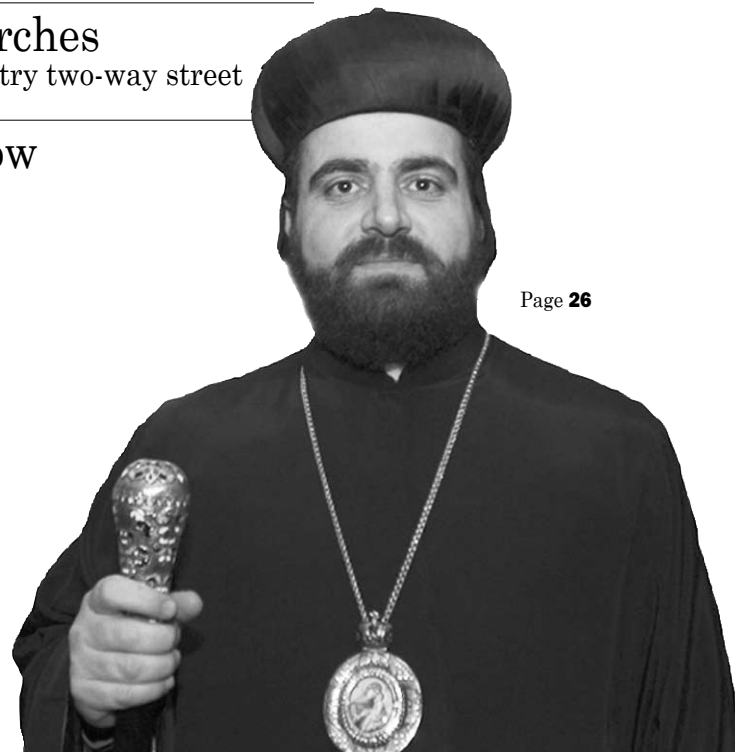
**36** **ToMorrow**



Page 4

**Cover: As the Lenten season approaches, many Christians seek out God's Word, as our main Faith&Life piece urges us to do. Others seek solace on a spiritual retreat, sometimes to such venerable spiritual sites as the Mission San Juan Capistrano in southern California, founded in the mid-18th century.**

**—Photo by Leona Dueck Penner**



Page 26

Winnipeg

## CMU student reflects on international practicum

Whatever it is you think you bring to people, what they remember most is the way in which it was delivered. This is the revelation I encountered while working at Venga tu Reino Church in Bogotá, Colombia, one of two placements during my joint Mennonite Church Canada-Canadian Mennonite University practicum. Through interaction with several members of the church, I came to see that they desired my friendship and companionship more than my skills and knowledge about conflict resolution.

My first task was to help ex-members of armed groups reintegrate into society through Venga tu Reino Church—a spiritual home for people displaced because of the war. Gathered here are both aggressors and victims. I learned how important it is to listen to the people you are serving.

My experience in Colombia led me to re-evaluate my interpretation of a favourite verse, I John 3:18: *“Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth.”* Before, I had understood these actions to be large and worldly, like a vast contribution of money or skills. But while these have their place, I learned in Colombia that actions are more meaningful if taken on a daily basis and rooted in the reality of the pain and joy of the very people you seek to serve.

For the second half of my practicum experience I was assigned to teach English at *Colegio Americano Menno*, a Mennonite school in La Mesa, rather ironic for a Canadian francophone.

Having worked as a teacher’s advisor in Canada, I was thrilled to work in the Colombian educational system. I feel so blessed for having been able to get to know my students in a more

intimate way than the typical teacher-student interaction. I had a chance to understand what a teacher really is and how they are most effective—not through periodic contact with the student, but through an ongoing



Photo submitted by Mylène Melançon

**Mylène Melançon taught her students the song “My God is so Big” in Spanish, French and English during her practicum experience in Colombia with Mennonite Church Canada and Canadian Mennonite University, where she is studying conflict resolution.**

interaction.

My time spent with the children again illustrated the importance of actions over words. The Colombian children taught me the truth of the quote, “People want to know how much you care before they care about how much you know.” They might not remember every single word of English I taught them, but I hope they will remember

how much I cared.

I found it extremely rewarding to work in Colombia and be immersed in a different culture. I gained an appreciation for being able to read my Bible in another language. Each language can give a different weight to the same word, changing the meaning of a verse or a biblical context. Certain passages touched me more deeply when I read them in the local Colombian tongue.

Through this practicum experience I am grateful to God for creating such diversity. I have come to see that God calls me to work in this diversity, to walk in companionship with my brothers and sisters wherever they may be in the world. Being in a different country pointed me back to the fact that God is the provider and knows what is needed.

I felt highly unprepared to do a practicum in conflict resolution, even after having studied it for three years. And I discovered that nine months is too short a time to translate theory into practice. It is a start, but all my life I will have to repeat the exercise. My practicum made me even more passionate about peace and justice issues and to live up to it everyday of my life.

—**Mylène Melançon**

Markham, Ont.

## Long-time Parkview Home administrator will be missed

Several hundred people gathered at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church in Markham on Jan. 11 to grieve the sudden death of Joe Nighswander and to celebrate a life well lived. He lived his span of 82 years fully engaged with his family,

church and broader community until he passed away in his sleep in the early hours of Jan. 7 at home with his wife Elsie.

Nighswander’s active involvement with others was reflected in the comments made by those attending his fu-

neral. Some had sung with him in the choir at Parkview Village the afternoon before his death, others recalled phone conversations and e-mail exchanges. Church members remembered his playful participation in the children's time during the last worship service he attended. Two granddaughters shared how he took such an interest in their education and careers, and provided a constant source of encouragement.

During the funeral service a passage from Romans 12 was read. Pastor Pieter Niemeyer spoke about how Nighswander exemplified the kind of life of faith—living God's kingdom in the here and now—that the Apostle Paul calls us to as Christians.

Niemeyer reflected that the people of Rouge Valley Mennonite Church will miss "his wisdom and insights.... Joe was a man of deep personal convictions and prophetic vision, yet he carried those aspects with deep humility and he valued community discernment."

A fellow church member commented that "Joe functioned as the conscience of our congregation, reminding us of the needs in the broader world and thoughtfully helping us wrestle with ways we could make a helpful contribution to addressing them."

Nighswander was well known in the Markham-Stouffville community as the administrator of Parkview Home for the Aged, and later Parkview Services for Seniors, over a 20-year period beginning in 1971. During that time, Parkview experienced significant expansion, with the purchase of additional property in Stouffville and the development of Parkview Village, offering independent living units for seniors on a non-profit basis. Parkview now provides long-term care and housing for about 380 seniors.

The decision to become the administrator at Parkview represented a major career change for Nighswander in mid-life after 22 years of farming, but he had prepared by furthering his education during the same period and had felt a clear calling from God at the

age of 43 to be more active in leadership in the church and community.

In 1964, the Nighswanders were part of a group of young families in the area that left the Waterloo-Markham Mennonite group (affiliated with the Wisler group in Ontario and the U.S.) and formed Steeles Avenue Mennonite Church. Nighswander was active in that process of discernment and later commented that the decision was made "without animosity."

In 1986, the couple became charter members of Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, a new Markham congregation that amalgamated the Cedar Grove and Steeles Avenue Mennonite churches.

Nighswander was active in the wider church, serving as moderator of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec from 1982 to 1984, and as president of the Mennonite Mission

Board of Ontario from 1977 to 1980.

David Martin, executive minister of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, spoke a few words at the funeral to recognize the "depth of his commitment" and the contribution that Joe Nighswander made to the work of the church.

During his retirement years, Nighswander spent considerable time writing. He authored *Parkview: Its People, Life and Times 1962-1994*; *A History of Rouge Valley Mennonite Church 1986-2004*; his autobiography, *My Life Story*; and many articles for newsletters, newspapers and magazines.

He was buried in the cemetery at the historic Altona Mennonite Church, a short distance from the farm where he had been born and raised, and only a mile or so from the home he shared with his wife.

—**Joanna Reesor-McDowell**

*The author and her husband Andrew live in Stouffville, Ont., and are active members of Hagerman Mennonite Church in Markham.*



**Nighswander**



**Mauricio Guayaret Vaca, left, David Pareds Rios and Oscar Cuellar Sanches show off crafts they made in a woodworking workshop at Stansberry Children's Home in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. The boys are three of the home's 30 residents, who range in age from infancy to early adulthood. Stansberry Children's Home provides an educational and supportive environment for the residents, all of whom were orphaned or abandoned by their families. The home is supported by Mennonite Central Committee's Global Family program.**

Photo provided by Solomon and Eunice Muangi

# Divine intimacy and the paradox of the cross

**A** friend recently took issue with something I had written about the Bible being the fullest expression of God's heart. He cited the Old Testament emphases on land and chosenness, and the wrenching implications these ideas have had in the Middle East. I agreed his points were good, but thought that the biblical text—despite, or perhaps even because of, such tensions and complexities—is nevertheless a richer witness to God's heart than any individual human experience can be.

As I reflected on that exchange I wondered if coming to the Bible to hear what God has to say for our lives, rather than simply to meet God, is part of our problem. Living into the text, pondering its thousands of expressions of God's heart, letting it be a companion on our journey through life, breathing it in, and praying it, certainly does encompass guidance for daily life—but also much more.

I am grateful for the emphasis on memorizing Scripture in this year's Lenten materials. The number of verses that we can recite will undoubtedly mean little when we meet God face to face. But if we live our lives with Scripture "written on our hearts," the face of God we see will be both familiar and much loved.

*For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God.  
1 PETER 3:18 NRSV*

The first Lenten memory text is a part of that difficult passage (1 Peter 3:18-22) referring to baptism through the metaphor of Noah's ark. But verse 18 proclaims reconciliation as the centre of Jesus' act of trust in God (2:23) as he went to the cross. The purpose of that act was to bring people to renewed intimacy with God. It is a costly reconciliation, demanding from us, as from Jesus, a commitment to the paradox of death-in-life/life-in-death, from which the energy of Christian faith flows.

*All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.*

*PSALM 22:27 NRSV*

The second text is from a lament psalm. It speaks out of the reality that our quest for intimacy with God sometimes takes place when God seems absent, far away or unheeding. Verses 14 and 15 are especially eloquent. The poet feels shrivelled, with bones disjointed, a heart of melted wax, mouth dried up, and tongue sticking to jaws. All is dust. But it is out of this disintegration of the self that the affirmation of verse 27 emerges. Authentic worship, which takes full measure of an honest relationship with God, is given voice, even from the dust.

*For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.  
1 CORINTHIANS 1:25 NRSV*

The third memory passage reminds us that intimacy with God has an undeniable oddity about it that is, in its own peculiar way, comforting. Intimacy with God calls us to the same reversal of values that Jesus

For Christ also  
suffered for sins  
once for all  
For God's foolishness is wiser than human

All the ends of the earth shall  
And just as

I will put my law within them



proclaimed as the kingdom of God. Here, Paul describes that reversal as the foolishness and weakness of God. The divine power to renounce violence and deviate from materialism sets us at odds with our society's usual norms. But that very oddity is a comfort because it also means that the only requirement for intimacy with God is our own open hearts. God rejoices when we show up, in whatever condition of poverty we present.

*And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.*

JOHN 3:14 NRSV

The fourth memory text is not even a full sentence. Perhaps it is assumed that we already have the familiar verses 15 and 16 memorized. John 3:14 sets the cross—God's passion for the world and Jesus' passion for the way of God—in the context of the story of Israel's wilderness wandering after their liberation from Egypt. As we enter into a biblical intimacy with God, salvation opens us to salvation history. We find we are not alone in the journey. We not only have the contemporary worldwide company of believers with us, but our companionship extends beyond our century, down through the ages.

*But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people.*

JEREMIAH 31:33 NRSV

The final text is the theme text chosen for this Lenten season. Jeremiah 31:33 is God's reminder that the covenant that bonds God with us is, after all, a matter of the heart. Intimacy with God involves not just stark obedience to the law, but living joyfully and abundantly in that obedience. Knowing God means understanding that to live in holiness is to partake of God in joyful abandon.

Intimacy with God in both testaments involves embracing the paradox of the cross—that life-in-death/death-

in-life mystery that is the essence of the covenant written on our hearts, as well as the heart of God.

—**Mary H. Schertz**

*The author is professor of New Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. The article and accompanying reflection questions are reprinted with permission from the Winter 2005-2006 issue of Leader, a magazine for lay leaders and pastors of Mennonite congregations.*



## Reflection Questions

### Lent 1: March 5

- To what part of the work of reconciliation am I being called in response to the radical trust modelled by Jesus?
- How is my resistance to that call, or my embrace of it, affecting my intimacy with God?

### Lent 2: March 12

- How have I experienced the absence of God—either in the past or the present? What are my laments?
- Does my praise flow out of honesty with God and others about how I experience God as both far and near?

### Lent 3: March 19

- Do I understand and accept the reality that intimacy with God means I am often out of step with my neighbours and my world? Or perhaps even my congregation?
- What does it mean for me personally to claim the “foolishness” and “weakness” of God as my wisdom and strength?

### Lent 4: March 26

- One of the resources of a biblical intimacy with God is the wealth of companions we have for the journey. Of these biblical sojourners, with whose experience of God do I resonate most closely? What can I learn from that story?
- How has my own experience of salvation deepened and seasoned as I have walked with God over the years?

### Lent 5: April 2

- Is living God's holy way a burden? Or do I embrace it as a blessing, a delight? How do I experience the covenant that binds God to us as something that is “written on my heart”?

### Lent 6: April 9

- Since there is no memory verse for Passion Sunday, take some time to reflect on your own spiritual journey through the Lenten season. Has this time helped me become better known to God? Has it helped me know God better? Am I more ready to arrive, to show up before God, in whatever poverty I find myself? Do I have a better sense that God is eager to meet me wherever and however I am?

# Lenten reflection on darkness

“Few have celebrated the darkness of our origins more beautifully than the poet Rainer Maria Rilke... his faith in nights, his love of the dark, is related to the cosmic womb of our origins, where all is drawn in, where we can celebrate our cosmic existence together.”

—Matthew Fox

*At a retreat in 1999, Peter Penner of Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg wrote the following Lenten prayer in response to Rilke's poem, "I Have Faith in Nights." Ed.*

## We Are Not Alone in the Dark

I am not ready to actually embrace  
the darkness, to sing praises to losses  
to the pain in the eyes of loved ones;

But God, do take away my fear of the dark  
allow me to step back from my  
so inadequate bonfire, from holding  
on to my Lord

So my eyes can again learn to see  
other shapes:  
beautiful moonflowers  
that blossom once in the night and die,  
stars, planets and constellations,  
animal and human shapes

The dark, I now find, includes innumerable  
little bonfires, scattered over the plains  
of my fearful imagination,

I hear:  
drums and singing voices,  
sense places of comfort and rest  
whichever way I turn.

We are not alone in the dark,  
for that I give thanks.

—**Peter Penner**



Winnipeg

## 'Into the forgotten heart'

The Democratic Republic of Congo dominates the centre—the heart—of Africa. The third-largest country on the continent, the Congo has long been a restless giant, a chaotic jumble of natural riches, unmatched human spirit, war, anarchy, despair and crumbling infrastructure. In the midst of all this, millions of unseen, forgotten, decent citizens toil diligently, doing the best they can for their families. In them hope seeks to be found.

Since 1991, the Congo has been in chaos more often than not. War and anarchy have ruled the day. Schools and medical facilities have deteriorated. More people have died due to war-related causes in the Congo in the last decade than in any other country in the world—an estimated four million. Yet people struggle on nobly in conditions most of us in Canada would never accept.

Opening on March 4 at Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery—located on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg—"Into the forgotten heart" is an opportunity to get acquainted or reacquainted with life in the Congo.

The exhibition, which runs until March 26, features art by Mennonite students in the massive, turbulent city of Kinshasa and recent photographs of ordinary Congolese people—including some of the young artists—by gallery curator Ray Dirks.

Dirks' work has been featured in *Canadian Mennonite* (see Oct. 17, issue 9-20) and has received international acclaim.

"Ray Dirks is a visual theologian," says Jaimie Lara of the Yale Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University in Connecticut.

Adds Ablade Glover of Artists Alliance in Ghana, "Africa has its hunger and wars, but Africa also has a tremendous side of the story—a

Continued on page 10

**Eleven-year-old Benedicte Mbuta-Leki, a Congolese student from Kinshasa, drew this picture of a soldier and his burning guns. It is featured in the new "Into the forgotten heart" exhibit at Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg.**



Photo by Ray Dirks

**Photos of life in the Democratic Republic of Congo—including this one of a student making art at the Complexe Scolaire Leopard school run by the Lonzo Mennonite Brethren Church—form part of the new "Into the forgotten heart" exhibit at Mennonite Heritage Centre Galley in Winnipeg. Children from Niverville Mennonite Church will be creating their own art on the theme of peace that will be returned to the students in Kinshasa.**



Herald Press photo

**Authors Marlene Kropf, Rebecca Slough and June Alliman Yoder introduced a collaborative approach to worship and preaching during a day-long leadership clinic on Jan. 23 at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. The session included a dedication of their new book, *Preparing Sunday Dinner*. The professors recognized two worship and preaching faculty mentors who both inspired and taught them—Mary Oyer, centre, and Erland Waltner.**

**Heart** From page 9

vibrant multifaceted continent with immense potential. Thank you [Ray] for telling that part of the story well.”

Dirks can lead tours at the gallery or come to local churches, community centres and schools with a multimedia presentation. These presentations include insights into the lives of ordinary Congolese people; video that is revealing, intimate, heartbreaking and inspiring; and images proclaiming the beauty and dignity of common people struggling to persevere.

To book a presentation or tour, contact Ray Dirks at [rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca) or call 204-888 6781.

—Heritage Centre Gallery release

Goshen, Ind.

## CDs feature new Goshen College pipe organ

Two new CDs featuring Goshen College's new Opus 41 pipe organ, played by Goshen alumnus Bradley Lehman, are now available.

*Joy Forever: Opus 41 at Goshen College* is a three-CD set of organ music recorded on Opus 41 and includes music by Bach, Brahms, Pachelbel, Sorge, Fischer, Erbach, Zachow, Böhm, Walther and others. It includes the complete “Ariadne musica” by JKF

Fischer, a set of 20 preludes and fugues plus five ricercars, a book that directly inspired Bach's composition of the “Well-Tempered

Clavier.” Listeners who purchase the CD can hear these pieces in a way that young Bach may have played through them for his own study.

The CD *Playing from Bach's Fancy* features both Opus 41 and the harpsichord. It includes Bach sinfonias,

preludes and fugues, and selections by other members of the Bach family. The harpsichord Lehman played for this recording is a Franco/Flemish double by Knight Vernon modelled on 17th century Ruckers instruments.

Both CDs were released in January and were co-produced by Lehman and Goshen College Central Recording. The recordings were made last March, soon after the tuning/voicing of the new organ was completed.

Opus 41 is based on 18th century North German organ-building principles. It features more than 1,600 pipes, and a case of carved solid white oak. The key and stop action are mechanical (tracker), with two manuals and a flat pedal-board. The temperament is Johann Sebastian Bach's preferred system, as specified on the title page of the “Well-Tempered Clavier” in 1722. This tuning method was re-discovered by Lehman in 2004 and published in the February and May 2005 issues of *Early Music* magazine. Opus 41 is the first organ since the 18th century to employ Bach's previously lost tuning in its construction.

*Joy Forever: Opus 41 at Goshen College* costs \$30 US, while *Playing from Bach's Fancy* is priced at \$15 US, plus shipping and handling. VISA or MasterCard orders can be e-mailed to [music@goshen.edu](mailto:music@goshen.edu).

—Goshen College release

Toronto

## Scripture the inspiration for new Bible Society CD

The Canadian Bible Society (CBS) has released a unique compilation CD of Canadian artists singing original songs inspired by Scripture. *Good News Celebration* features 15 Canadian Christian artists from coast to coast representing various musical styles and traditions. The deliberate use of Scripture is the common thread that weaves the selections together.

The artists range from the well-known to the about-to-be-discovered in this CD designed to help the Canadian Bible Society celebrate its 100th year

of ministry distributing, translating, publishing and encouraging the use of Scripture in Canada and around the world.

Winnipeg-based Steve Bell is a Juno award-winning singer and guitarist featured on the CD. “Coming at Scripture through the lens of art allows for nuances of understanding and insight,” says Bell. “So much of the lyrical content of my music is taken from the Scriptures; it just seemed pretty obvious I should happily lend a track to the Bible Society's festivities.”

Other musicians featured on the CD include B.C.-based Brian Doerksen, Tabitha

Lemaire from Quebec, and First Nations singer Cheryl Bear. Bear's featured song is “The Lord's Prayer” sung to an indigenous big drum, hand drums

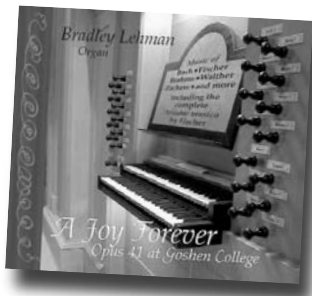
and a distinctive rhythm that Bear hopes will “bring a new emotion and emphasis to the Lord's Prayer.”

CBS represents different Christian traditions on the CD, as well as varied musical styles. “We have pieces that are very contemplative and one that is a hybrid between native music and rock. We have the Psalms softly spoken over a stirring bed of music,” says executive producer Peter Fleck. “There is everything from pop, folk and rock, to classically-oriented and country tunes.”

*Good News Celebration*, named after the theme given to the 2006 centennial year celebrations of the Canadian Bible Society, has selections in both official languages of Canada and “something for everyone. I also really like the fact that we have a mixture of both better-known artists as well as those waiting to be discovered,” says Fleck.

The CD is now available in Christian bookstores, Canadian Bible Society stores and through the CBS online bookstore at [www.biblescanada.com](http://www.biblescanada.com).

—CBS release



## Viewers richer for having seen *Millions*

For jaded adults, Jesus came out with some statements that would drive a literalist crazy. You must be born again. Unless you become as a little child, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter heaven.

For anyone who has ever puzzled over those statements, a new film by director Danny Boyle (now available on video/DVD) provides a funny and thought-provoking illustration of the message behind them. *Millions*, a British-made film distributed by Fox Searchlight, portrays the responses of two boys to their discovery of more than 265,000 British pounds (about \$500,000) that they must spend in the waning days before the United Kingdom converts to the Euro.

This delightful film is one of 2005's best films outright. Yet you don't have to be a child to appreciate *Millions*, a Frank Capra-esque tale, in which seven-year-old hero Damian Cunningham (Alexander Eitel) exposes us to saints,

miracles, visions and the everyday wisdom of children.

As the film begins, Damian is moving to a new suburban development on the outskirts of Liverpool with his nine-year-old brother, Andrew (Lewis McGibbon), and his father, Ronnie (James Nesbitt). The boys' mother, Maureen, has recently died. Perhaps because of this, Damian sees dead people (but only ones canonized by the Catholic Church). He deals with his grief through conversations with a host of saints, whom only he can see. He never fails to ask if any have seen a new saint, St. Maureen. While Damian talks in his cardboard clubhouse with a cigarette-smoking St. Claire of Assisi, "the patron saint of television," a sack of money seemingly falls from the sky into their midst.

At first, Damian thinks the money is part of his imagination. Yet his older brother quickly confirms its reality. From the outset, Damian has strong convictions about the money's origin and purpose. "I think it was from God," he reasons. "Who else would have that kind of money?"

Damian has internalized the prayer of St. Francis—"For it is in giving, that we receive"—and immediately sets out to find "the poor," who, he believes, are destined to receive it, often with hilarious results.

Only two years older, Andrew has far more practical ideas. He quickly hires an entourage at school and is talking with investors about real estate. Andrew's quick thinking prevents revelation of the boys' booty when Damian gives a wad of 1,000



pound notes to a charity visiting his school. "It's not suspicious," Damian responds to his brother's protestations. "It's unusual."

The boys eventually discover that the money had been destined to be destroyed before the Euro's introduction. But it was stolen and pitched from a passing train whose tracks pass Damian's clubhouse. And one of the thieves is after them.

*Millions* is rated PG for its mature themes, some strong language and suggested sexuality. Yet this is a film that all parents should see with their children, and that churches and schools should use to prompt discussions of the impact of money and its effect on us.

Although granted the kind of riches for which many wish, Damian discovers that "the money made it harder to sort out what's inside you," and that his deepest dreams ultimately cannot be purchased.

—Tom Price

*The review originally appeared on the Mennonite Mission Network website [www.mennonitemission.net](http://www.mennonitemission.net). Snubbed by the Oscars, Millions has been named by a number of film critics as one of the best movies of 2005. Check your local video/DVD store for availability.*

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## 'No, I'm not a Mennonite, but I greatly admire them'

**W**hat do you associate with the word "Mennonite?" Maybe the images that spring to mind include men with beards, women wearing homemade dresses and white caps, farmers' markets, no televisions. Do you also associate Mennonites with artisans in Third World countries? Adult baptism? Peace? The belief that Christian faith must be lived every day?

The perceptions many of us have barely scratch the surface of what it means to be a Mennonite, conservative or modern. In doing research about Mennonites in the Maritimes, I found myself surprised by how similar the Mennonite faith is to mine. Despite the fact that our faiths grew from the same moment in history, I knew very little about this denomination.

The Mennonites emerged in the 1500s from a group of Europeans who felt that Martin Luther's reforms didn't go far enough. The group insisted on the separation of church and state, including a refusal to serve the military. Baptism, they believed, should occur in adulthood.

We are most familiar with the conservatives who maintain the traditional way of living, but it turns out Mennonites are everywhere. Mennonite Church Canada, for example, which ministers to "modern" Mennonites, has more than 230 congregations across Canada.

During interviews with both conservative and modern Mennonites, I even wondered, "Am I a Mennonite at heart?" Not really, since Mennonites are quite literal in their interpretation of the Bible, whereas I am not. Their singular devotion to their beliefs, however, is both alarming and inspiring; their three founding and enduring principles gave me much to consider:



Jewell

## How others see us

- **Mennonites don't baptize babies.** They believe in baptizing teenagers and adults who have made a conscious decision. When I consider how meaningless my own confirmation experience at age 14 was, adult baptism makes sense.

- **Second, Mennonites believe profoundly that once a person is baptized, they should live out their Christian faith each and every day.** As Leroy Boese, a minister with the Church of God in Christ denomination near Tatamagouche, N.S., explains, "We believe the values of Jesus should influence our everyday life. We believe the Lord's blessings are for everyone and it would be selfish to hold them to ourselves." Perhaps this is why they are so welcoming.

- **Finally, the Mennonite peace position states that war is never the answer.** "To bring peace in the world, you have to fill bellies," says Joanne DeJong, a member of Mennonite Church Canada in Petitcodiac, N.B. DeJong is the Atlantic sales co-ordinator for Ten Thousand Villages. "Mennonites, whether they are Old Order or modern, live life in the name

of Christ," DeJong says. "I think if you're compassionate and hardworking and practical and you love God, great things can happen."

How exciting when misconceptions are corrected. Learning about the Mennonites has surprised me with an unexpected challenge to what I believe and how, and with the motivation to try and live my faith every day without worrying about what the rest of the world will think of me.

—Sarah Jewell

*The author of "No, I'm not a Mennonite, but I greatly admire them" is a journalist and writer from Cobourg, Ont. Originally published in the United Church Observer, October, 2005. Reprinted with permission.*

## Ambassador's tribute to Soviet Christians remembered

**N**ews about the death (in Moscow late last year) of Alexandre Yacovlev reminded me of one of my encounters with him. It was in the early 1980s, when he was the Soviet Union's ambassador to Canada. There were reports of a new wave of repression against Mennonites and other Christians resulting in, among other things, the imprisonment of many ministers. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) compiled a list of more than 30 imprisoned pastors, which it then asked me to present to the Soviet embassy in Ottawa with a request that the government in Moscow look into the cases.

My assistant and I went to the embassy at the appointed time and two

### Pontius' Puddle



officials received us. After 15 minutes, the ambassador appeared. He was short, somewhat heavy, with bushy hair, thick eyebrows, a stern face and a strong voice. He wasted no time in making his points, starting with the question: “Do you personally know the individuals on your list? Are you familiar with them? Do you know their personal lives?”

Of course I didn’t know them personally, but I argued that we were fully confident as to the accuracy of our list, we were not motivated by a desire to criticize his government, our organization was not on a crusade against communism, and that we just wanted the basic rights of these people respected.

“So,” he interrupted, “since you do not personally know these individuals, you have to admit that there is at least a small chance that they may be in prison, not for the reasons you say, but

because of some hooliganism.”

“Also,” he said, shaking his finger for emphasis, “you Christians in the West have a totally wrong view about how my government sees the Christians in our country. You think that we hate them. That is not true, absolutely not!

The Christians in our country are our best workers. They don’t steal from our factories. They don’t come to work drunk. When they say they will do something, they do it. They are reliable. They are our best workers.... We like the Christians in our country. It is high time that you Christians in the West understood that!”

I do not remember how I responded, but I will never forget the testimony that his words conveyed. Clearly, Christian people, by being faithful in “ordinary things,” had made a substantial impression at high levels of the Soviet government, despite all the restrictions and hardships under which they lived. It was a wonderful tribute both to their personal faith and integrity, and to God’s sustaining

grace.

A few years later, after Yacovlev was recalled to Moscow, newspaper stories referred to him as the architect of *Glasnost*, that is, the move toward greater freedom in the Soviet Union.

Those small groups of oppressed Christians had planted some of the seeds for that historic move.

—**Bill Janzen**

*The author is the Mennonite Central Committee Canada Ottawa Office director.*

**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.**

## Letters

### Larger economic picture can’t be overlooked

Both Will Braun—in “Buckets, blankets and the WTO” (Dec. 19, page 14) and Wally Kroeker, in “The wealthy in the land” (Jan. 9, page 5)—push the church to move beyond simple notions of “charity” or “wealth redistribution” when addressing issues of global poverty.

Yet Kroeker and organizations like Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) would benefit from Braun’s challenge: to more critically engage the broader issues of economic globalization and larger causes of global inequality. Although donations that support micro-credit loans through MEDA, or HIV/AIDS projects through MCC, are worthy of our generosity, we need greater leadership from both of these organizations to help us become better stewards of our incredible wealth.

Traditionally, MCC and MEDA’s strengths have been in practical local development—relief buckets, school kits, conflict resolution training and community economic development projects. They have not, however, strongly emphasized the need for innovative research and public engagement on larger issues, such as trade justice, environmental stewardship or our governments’ aid policies.

How does a micro-credit loan help a farmer who is faced with plummeting and unstable world commodity prices?

How does local peacebuilding stop our consumption of the goods that finance armed conflict? How do relief kits protect those who are faced with the effects of climate-change disasters? How does purchasing one package of fair-trade coffee at Ten Thousand Villages help all the other Third World producers behind the shelves of Costco?

As a past MCCer and MCC Manitoba board member, I am very proud of the excellent work that organizations like MCC and MEDA are doing in communities around the world. But as a student of international development, educated in our Mennonite schools, I don’t think we can continue to overlook the larger picture.

Addressing these broader issues will be complicated, political, and certainly not as easy to swallow as the scrumptious farmer’s sausage I have grown accustomed to at the MCC Saskatchewan Relief Sale, but it is in such wrestling that we may encounter God’s grace and redemption.

Thanks to Will Braun for nudging us toward such transformation.

—**Bruce Guenther, Brighton, U.K.**

### Compassion must go deeper than charity

Re: Will Braun’s opinion piece, “Buckets, blankets and the WTO,” (Dec. 19, page 14).

He calls for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to expend its energy critiquing economic globalization and the systems of oppression it spawns,

**Continued on page 14**

**‘[Y]ou Christians in the West have a totally wrong view about how my government sees the Christians in our country.’**

**Compassion** From page 13

rather than continuing to send blankets and buckets to areas of need.

I am thankful for Braun's critique. He is right in saying that MCC must do more to address the ways in which North Americans are part of the problem, rather than the solution, to global poverty.

A number of new MCC resources address the subject of economic globalization and invite faithful responses. These resources include videos, resource "toolkits" and the new cookbook, *Simply in Season*. As executive director of MCC Canada, I can say that all of them are being used well. In Canada, MCC's involvement in the

Make Poverty History campaign is another way of addressing more systemic causes of poverty.

Buckets and blankets are not the answer to global poverty. At the same time, they are a way of building a connection between people in need and people who have more than they need. There is something very spiritual that happens when children gather relief bucket supplies for tsunami victims and when seniors—and others—sew quilts and comforters week after week for earthquake survivors. Buckets and blankets teach us about compassion.

But our compassion must go deeper than charity. It must move us to seek justice. It must also move individuals and communities to make the changes

in our lives that prevent justice from unfolding. MCC needs to be much bolder in addressing the underlying causes, and not only the symptoms, of poverty, particularly when they implicate those of us who work for and support MCC. Thanks to Will Braun and others who are pushing us in this direction.

—Don Peters, Winnipeg

**'Buckets and blankets' comment degrades MCC**

I read with interest the article by Will Braun—"Buckets, blankets and the WTO"—in the Dec. 19 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*.

I fully agree with his concern to do

WILL BRAUN



New Order Voice

**W**hat if the cracks around our church windows are letting the Holy Spirit out as they let the winter cold in?

What if the energy-sucking light bulbs in our sanctuaries are casting an unholy glow on our otherwise holy Scriptures?

We are an energy-intensive church in a time of climate chaos. This invites a redemptive, spirited response—a low-emissions, candlelit, weather-stripped and Holy-Spirited response.

The earth may not have time for our hand-wringing guilt or ever-so-earnest dialogue. No time for SUV-maligning, Exxon-bashing self-righteousness either. We'll just have to roll up our sleeves and kick right into creative, constructive high gear. I propose we start not with theological imperatives or alarming scientific data, but with a new set of spiritual disciplines.

I go to an over-lit church. With full daylight streaming through large windows, we have banks of lights on. It directly affects the quality of our worship.

I used to live with the people at the other end of the transmission lines that deliver power to the lights in our sacred space. Those people—the remote Pimicikamak indigenous people—live daily with the consequences of a massive hydro-electric system that provides us electrical convenience while profoundly disrupting their lands and lives. The production of energy affects their souls, so the use of it must affect ours.

In our sanctuary, I hear the sermon with one ear and the painful stories of the elders with the other. Perhaps our Scriptures would read slightly differently under better light.

The same principle applies even if the energy source is different. People and the earth suffer as a result of our energy-hungry churches. Our worship would be richer if this were not so. And what about the spiritual impact of

**High-efficiency worship**

**'Perhaps our Scriptures would read slightly differently under better light.'**

the fossil fuels we use to transport ourselves to our places of worship?

This sort of enviro-spiritual impact assessment can be overwhelming. But what if we just skipped that stage—just short-circuited the guilt with grace and went right on to the actual tasks of making our sacred spaces more sacred. Our warming world needs all the sacredness it can get.

I recently became involved with Greening Sacred Spaces, an initiative of the national interfaith group Faith and the Common Good. This initiative draws a link between the spiritual vitality of a faith group and the ecological integrity of the sacred spaces in which they meet. It points us to a new set of spiritual disciplines.

Like prayer, church attendance, Bible study and fasting (for the more rigorous among us), activities such as caulking windows (at church or at home), installing high-efficiency lighting, ditching the air conditioner, and cycling or walking to church can be exercises of spiritual value. They can nourish us in the deepest ways, connect us to God and increase the amount of love in the world.

Instead of taking such steps just because they are "the right thing to do," they can be done as a prayer for those most impacted by climate change. They can be worked into the prayers and ceremonies of Sunday worship—blessing the new high-efficiency furnace, praying for the safety of those who bike, or a candle-lit and bulletin-free service as a celebration of cleaner futures. By ritualizing change, a new way of being takes deep root in us.

By being more energy-wise on Sunday mornings, we reduce spiritual leakage. In a single redemptive process, we retrofit our places of worship and our souls.

*Will Braun is editor of Geez magazine. He can be reached at will@geezmagazine.org. For more information on Greening Sacred Spaces, visit [www.faith-commongood.net](http://www.faith-commongood.net).*

one thing and not to neglect the other. But I felt he degraded Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) by referring to it as “buckets and blankets” work. We Mennonites who created and are supporting MCC are a relatively small group on this planet and it would be hard for us to carry the world on our shoulders. But I think we can make a dent in changing it—if we put our words and faith into action.

MCC was formed to help our brothers and sisters in need and that I think is still its main mandate. MCC has birthed several affiliate organizations, like Mennonite Economic Development Associates, Mennonite Disaster Service, Supportive Care Services and Mennonite non-profit housing societies (of which I am a director) to house the homeless, seniors and mentally challenged.

If MCC is to address the issue of globalization, what exactly is it we want them to do? If it is shifting its priorities from more hands-on projects to the area of politics, who is standing with refugees, prisoners, First Nations people and those with AIDS? Who is holding the banner for justice, reconciliation and peace? If we stretch our human resources too thin, can we do a good job of addressing all of our concerns?

Some of our constituents who are not too familiar with the complexities of globalization may feel that to get too far into politics is “ungodly,” and they may withdraw their support; these are often the best supporters financially and spiritually.

But perhaps the article “MCC addresses foreign policy parliamentary committee,” Dec. 19, page 23, about

the political involvement of the MCC’s Don Peters and Bill Janzen, is a better response than mine.

—**Helmut Lemke, Burnaby, B.C.**

## Corrections

Gordon Scoville begins as transition pastor at Valleyview Mennonite Church, London, Ont., in May. Incorrect information was published in TheChurches section of the Jan. 23 issue. An incorrect caption appeared with the “AIDS and Africa: What can two people do?” article on page 16 of the Jan. 9 issue; it should have read, “Teboho Molise, left, and Irene Molise meet to plan some one-day AIDS training classes in Lesotho.” *Canadian Mennonite* apologizes for the errors.

PHIL WAGLER



Outside the box

**O**prah can make you a star. Be named to her book club and her disciples will ride your bandwagon. But recently Oprah made a boo-boo and the bandwagon spilled its joy riders.

One of her most highly acclaimed book club choices was the supposed true-life memoir of James Frey—*A Million Little Pieces*. The story of an addict and criminal who turns his life around, it was, according to St. Oprah, a powerful story of redemption (albeit self-made redemption, but then that is the central thrust of the pop spirituality so many turn to Oprah for).

Alas, it turns out that *A Million Little Pieces* was a million little lies. Initially, Oprah ran to Frey’s defence, but later recanted, saying, “I made a mistake and I left the impression that the truth does not matter. I am deeply sorry, because that is not what I believe.”

Her words, coupled with the myriad of voices calling for Frey’s head on a platter, left me in a cultural conundrum. Our culture has been pontificating that truth is relative: You essentially make up what is true for you, which is exactly what Frey did. So why is he now being fried for doing what we say is the ideal?

Is it because a story with a good moral is not moral when it is a lie—especially when it addresses the depths of the human dilemma?

Have the followers of Jesus forgotten what we’ve experienced? Or that we are to be witnesses in this culture lost in the grip of lies, yet desperate for truth and redemption?

## Oprah’s boo-boo

**‘Alas, it turns out that *A Million Little Pieces* was a million little lies.’**

We all thirst to do away with the guilt of sin, the “yuck” of the soul, the guilt that pools below the surface of our well-manicured lives. We seek to be justified, to be made right, to be redeemed, to be whole—even if we can’t articulate it in those biblical terms. We who experience the freedom of Christ know redemption is a true reality that we can’t make up. We can’t save ourselves.

We’ve all pulled a James Frey to some degree. But grace has brought us the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life.

If we are to see the kingdom come in our communities, we must be unashamed of asserting the truth of the reality of sin, the guilty conscience’s irritating prodding we seek release from, and the hope of the power of God in the good news to save. Christians very often forget the improbable wonder of salvation and have long ago supplanted gospel with the religion of Oprah and haven’t even noticed.

Have we forgotten that the core human questions about truth and righteousness do not have human solutions? People are not made whole by reading the self-help book of the month. They are made whole by trusting the promised gift of the Word made flesh and crucified for all the million little pieces our souls have been reduced to, which not even Oprah can put back together again.

*Phil Wagler, the leading servant of Zurich Mennonite Church, Ont., is amazed by grace. You can reach him at phil\_wagler@yahoo.ca.*

Ottawa

## Canadian government issues Ukrainian 'land restitution' warning

The Canadian government has issued a warning to potential investors in the Caobo Company's land restitution efforts in the Ukraine (see "Mennonite groups oppose land speculator," *Canadian Mennonite*, Jan. 23, page 20).

The warning, posted on the Foreign Affairs Canada website, "strongly advises those interested in this or similar ventures to proceed with extreme caution." The warning also notes that "diplomatic enquiries at the Ukrainian Parliament have confirmed that no initiatives to consider such a demand for compensation are currently in place."

"The right of land ownership is a sensitive issue in [the] Ukraine," the warning points out, explaining that, "currently, foreign ownership of agricultural land by individuals or companies is prohibited under Ukrainian law. Ukraine's laws currently permit only recognized religious organizations to seek restitution of property confiscated by the Soviet regime."

Paul Willms, Caobo's CEO, says the warning contains "innuendo" about his company's efforts, and he plans to take up the matter with the new Conservative government in Ottawa as soon as possible.

He is particularly upset at the warning's statement that indicates Caobo's "plan involves demanding land from the Ukrainian government as restitution for losses suffered by Mennonites under former Soviet Union authorities."

"Caobo Company has never 'demanded' land from the Ukrainian government," Willms says. "We have suggested that, in order for Caobo Company to invest sizeable development funding, it would be necessary to connect that with legal ownership."

Countering the warning's statement that "no initiatives to consider

such a demand for compensation are currently in place," Willms says his company has "at least two members of parliament in support of our plan." According to him, one politician "is planning his re-election bid on supporting the Caobo Company initiative."

The North American-based charity Friends of the Mennonite Centre Ukraine is pleased with the Canadian warning and is pressing the U.S. State Department to take a stand on the matter, according to spokesperson David Sudermann of Northfield, Minn.

Reiterating the organization's stance that such a private land

development initiative would undercut Mennonite humanitarian efforts in the Ukraine, and its belief that "reclaiming Mennonite lands for North American owners is not morally justifiable," Sudermann says, "We, therefore, welcome the warning issued by the Canadian Government."

Sudermann believes the Canadian warning "directly undercuts the suggestion of [the] Caobo Company [information package] that serious negotiations with the Ukrainian Government for the restitution of the Mennonite lands' are underway, and hints at the political difficulties involved."

In conclusion, Sudermann suggests that "the [Foreign Affairs Canada] warning pulls the rug out from under the company's suggestion that the Verkhovna Rada [Ukrainian parliament] plans to consider a law of restitution."

—Ross W. Muir

Edmonton

## Assembly dates to shift ahead a day

Mennonite Church Canada assembly planners have decided to shift the assembly dates ahead by one day because a large meeting room had been inadvertently double-booked.

After considering several options, MC Canada planners deemed the best option would be to shift the entire event ahead one day.

Edmonton 2006 delegates will now register on July 4; opening worship will take place that evening. The ministers conference will also start on July 4 at Edmonton's First Mennonite Church. The assembly will close with a communion service on the evening of July 7. Delegates who wish to stay for the weekend and worship in a local church on July 9 are still invited to do so.

The 2006 assembly will be held at the Delta Edmonton South and the adjacent Coast Terrace hotel—the only affordable and adequately sized venues available in Edmonton for the assembly dates. Both hotels are offer-

ing room rates that are competitive with comparable accommodations in the city.

Updated information will be posted at [www.mennonitechurch.ca/events/edmonton/](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/events/edmonton/) as it becomes available.  
—MC Canada release by Dan Dyck



Winnipeg

## Listening to 'God's people now!'

Jack Suderman, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, is planning a listening tour of churches across Canada.

The listening tour shares the theme name of the upcoming annual assembly in Edmonton, and will begin in late March. Like the assembly, the tour's purpose is to build up God's people in MC Canada.



Mindanao, Philippines

## Pantojas begin 'honest' peace ministry to Muslims

In January, Dann Pantoja, a former Filipino Maoist revolutionary, and his wife Joji, a former financial planner and real estate sales administrator, began a peace ministry in Mindanao, Philippines, a conflicted Christian-Muslim region in his home country.

A partnership including their home congregation (Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, B.C.), Mennonite Church Canada Witness, and a community of family and friends will support the ministry.

The Pantojas are no strangers to ministry. He has been a church planter, pastor and international mission administrator. She grew up in a committed Christian home. Their marriage vows included a public, lifetime commitment to ministry.

"It is my dream and hope to visit every MC Canada congregation on their own turf to 'take the pulse' of how we are, what we are doing, and where the felt needs are," the new general secretary said, adding, "We want to seriously engage groups that want to be heard in our constituency, and nurture these important and good relationships."

Respondents to the constituency-wide survey conducted by MC Canada last year said that visits from MC Canada staff are one of the most valued ways of communicating.

The tour's planning team is consulting with leadership in each of the area conferences, seeking their blessing for the visits and inviting their participation in the tour.

The tour will take place in several phases, each one focusing on an area conference or region within an area conference. A preliminary schedule and invitation to participate will be sent to all MC Canada area conferences and congregations in late February. The tour is expected to conclude this fall.

—MC Canada release  
by **Pam Peters-Pries**

Pantoja has already funded a personal exploratory mission trip to Mindanao, and found a simple strategy to begin peace dialogues with local Muslims: *Honesty*.

Upon invitation, he explains his motives to Muslims in language that treads lightly on Christian baggage. He tells them, "I am doing this as a follower of *Isa Al-masih* [Arabic for "Jesus the Messiah"], because Jesus taught us to love our neighbours, give our life to our neighbours, and you are my neighbour, and I love you. Would you allow me, in the name of Jesus, as a Christian, to embrace you as a Muslim?"

Muslims recognize *Isa Al-masih* as the name of a prophet in the Quran, the Islamic scriptures. Pantoja says this approach has always found a warm welcome, and is indeed absolutely necessary in a context where Christianity has been historically used as an instrument of human conquest. Using *Isa Al-masih* releases him from the baggage of Christian colonization.

At the root of his strategy is a belief in what he calls a "cosmic" theology of peace: "Harmony with God, harmony with myself, harmony with others, and harmony with God's creation."

"We Mennonites have been entrusted—historically, theologically, culturally—with a theology of peace, a peace identity. In a world that says only through violence can you achieve peace, we say 'No!'"

"This gospel of shalom is what is needed, so do not give up on our peace theology," he counsels. "God entrusted this to us. Nourish it. Enhance it. Spread it. Practise it.... Peace is at the



Photo by Dan Dyck

**Dann and Joji Pantoja began a peacemaking ministry in Mindanao, Philippines, in early 2006.**

**He explains his motives to Muslims in language that treads lightly on Christian baggage.**

heart of our growth."

Even with all their passion and commitment, the Pantojas recognize that prayer support from the wider church is essential. With an expression of heartfelt gratitude, he asks for prayers for courage, humility, and the wise use of knowledge in their ministry.

He hopes his name is not still on some revolutionary hit list from his past, when the Communist Youth Movement sought to liquidate those who abandoned their revolutionary activities.

"I cannot live in fear. I just have to move on and live in God's hands,"

he says, fully cognizant of the risk in speaking out so publicly.

Support for the Pantojas' ministry can be sent to Mennonite Church Canada, marked "Pantoja." A documentary video of the Pantojas' story on DVD is expected to be available in March.

—MC Canada release  
by **Dan Dyck**

Nanchong, China

## Remnants of 19th century theology still prominent

For 17 days last October, 14 participants from Mennonite Church Canada congregations and an MC USA member came to China on a learning tour sponsored by China Educational Exchange (CEE).

During their travels through such exotic places as Beijing, Chongqing, Nanchong, Chengdu, Hong Kong and Macau, the tour group learned about the Protestant Church in China.

In discussions with one pastor, the group gained greater insight into the complexity of the church here. Rather than seeing the issue of whether a church registers with the Chinese government or not as the litmus test of Christian faithfulness, the pastor invited the group members to reflect on the need for all Christians—not just Chinese believers—to have more discussions on matters of faith. When Christians dialogue on matters of faith, they are better able to understand what God's will is, said the pastor.

Worshipping with Chinese Christians on a Sunday morning gave the tour group a chance to appreciate aspects of their worship, including

congregational singing, the Lord's Prayer, and Bible readings from the lectionary.

Taking part in their services helped to underline for group members how influential 19th century western missionary theology continues to be in the Chinese Protestant Church. One group member was disappointed with a sermon, suggesting that the point of it didn't fit well into the Chinese context.

Some group members liked hearing familiar hymns, which reminded them of their home congregations, while others were disappointed to hear western hymns sung in an eastern context.

Not only did the learning tour members catch a glimpse of the complexity of the Chinese Protestant Church, both in its faith and life, but they also gained insight into the differences that exist between urban and rural China. One of the realities in today's China



Photo by Rod Suderman

**Marie Dueck of Niverville (Man.) Mennonite Church shares a hug with a woman she met on the street in Chongqing, China, during a Learning Tour to China last fall.**

is phenomenal economic growth in parts of the country. Most of China's massive population lives in the vast countryside, where the economic boom has not been felt.

The incredible economic gap that exists between China's urban and rural areas also exists between China's urban and rural congregations. Group members were able to experience both

Saskatoon

## Fetal alcohol seminar draws large crowd

The meeting room at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Centre in Saskatoon was full, but people still continued to push in. Social workers, educators, mothers—they all wanted to learn about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD): What is it? How is it treated? And why doesn't the government give more money to programs that will support and help people with this disability?

To uncover the agony behind the acronym, the questions poured out of the participants at a brown bag lunch on a Friday afternoon in January, prompting Dr. Dolores Logan and Cheryl Charron from a clinic in Regina to come up with answers.

Sponsored by the MCC Saskatchewan Peace and Justice Constellation—which

includes MCC HealthLink, Aboriginal Neighbours, and Peace and Justice programs—the event was offered to help those who work and live with people affected by FASD in all its many forms.

"[FASD is] an umbrella term that covers several related disorders," explained Logan, who attends Grace Mennonite in Regina. "Partial FAS, Alcohol Related Neuro-Developmental Disorder and Alcohol-Related Birth Defects all fit into this category."

Most of Logan's patients are between the ages of 12 and 16, and are referred to her by the Saskatchewan justice system in an effort to discover why these teens are breaking the law. "About 50 percent of people in jail suffer from FASD," Logan said. "Another 25 percent struggle with Attention Deficit-Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). So you have 75 percent of the prison population diagnosed with learning disabilities."

Another disturbing fact, noted the doctor and mother of five, is that many of

her clients are First Nations people. Many have been in trouble with the law by the time they turn eight and many will probably re-offend," she said, noting, "I have a client who was released and four hours later was arrested again."

Diagnosing FASD requires assessments on several fronts. There is a physical assessment in which a patient's height and weight are measured against the national average, and other physical features are noted. A neurological examination is done. Crucial also to a correct diagnosis is complete knowledge of the patient's family history, noted Logan.

"The defining difference is prenatal exposure to alcohol," said the physician, who spends one day each week treating FASD patients before returning to her regular practice.

After FASD is determined, Logan meets with the family and tries to set up support systems and accountability measures to help the patient.

—Karin Fehderau

Toronto

## MEDA's Pakistan project wins gender equality achievement award

A project to help homebound women embroiderers access commercial markets in Pakistan has won a Canadian International Cooperation Award for Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

The award, in the Gender Equality Achievement category, was presented

the relative affluence of the urban church and the grinding poverty of the rural church.

Group members learned how difficult it is not to be able to communicate in English. One morning during breakfast, one person asked a waitress for some tea and was quickly served a shot glass filled with potent rice wine!

Difficulty with the Chinese language was not the only thing that proved difficult at times for the group members. Being used to ready access to a Tim Hortons or Starbucks, many were disappointed when coffee wasn't readily available at breakfast. For some, learning about China was a much more enjoyable experience after their morning caffeine "fix."

These difficulties were overshadowed by the overwhelming hospitality of the Chinese. On numerous occasions, group members were given opportunity to interact with Chinese university students both inside and outside the university classroom. Chinese students were genuinely interested in conversing with group members. Many stories were shared, along with family pictures and meals.

On top of meeting the three goals of the learning tour—encountering the Chinese church and believers, interacting with Chinese university students and teachers, and experiencing China firsthand through its food, arts, transportation, masses of people, markets and cultural differences—one of the great things about this learning tour was that everyone had a lot of fun too!

—Rod Suderman, from the Winter 2005 *CEE Update*

at a ceremony in Toronto late last year by an official of the Canadian International Development Agency.

The project aims to bring the outside market to more than 6,000 impoverished women in rural Pakistan who are confined to their homes by religious culture. The goal is to double their incomes by helping them with product design, quality control and commercial access, so they can target higher-value markets.

Project director Linda Jones points out that in North America gathering data on new clothing styles can be as simple as switching on the television or taking a stroll through a mall. For homebound women in rural Pakistan, however, it is not easy to connect with the industry or keep up with styles that command a good price.

The project works in three conservative rural areas where home confinement ranges from 50 percent to 95 percent. Most of the women are illiterate. All are very poor.

"Women in these areas are known for the high quality of their embroidery, but products are generally sold into low-value traditional markets through monopolistic buying chan-

nels," says Jones. "Since buyers are usually men, and transactions must therefore take place through a male family member, confined women do not have the knowledge or opportunity to develop products for alternative markets. Yet middle class urban Pakistani women are willing to pay a premium for quality hand-embroidered garments in contemporary styles."

The project uses 120 mobile women sales agents who serve as links between the embroiderers and retailers, exporters and exhibitions. Through face-to-face, woman-to-woman transactions, the homebound women earn more by participating directly in the value chain.

MEDA's partner in the project is the Entrepreneurship and Career Development Institute of Pakistan (ECDI), which has a wide network of contacts throughout the country.

The project was also recently cited by its major funder, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in testimony before the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives. "By mainstreaming these women into project activities, MEDA and ECDI have effectively reduced gender inequalities...while, at the same time, respecting and adapting to existing cultural norms," USAID said.

—MEDA News Service release



Project manager Linda Jones, left, and a client display a sample of fabric embroidered by homebound Pakistani women.

MEDA photo

## Church counsel sought on peaceful reintegration of illegal armed groups

**M**ennonite Church Canada has been asked to participate in an ecumenical consultation in Colombia regarding the peaceful reintegration of illegal armed groups and paramilitaries into society, known in the country as “reinsertion.”

Jack Suderman, general secretary, and MC Canada Witness executive secretary Janet Plenert are two of five internationals invited to a remote Caribbean island for the February gathering. The consultation was initiated as a result of Colombian government interest in seeking counsel from the country’s churches on the reinsertion process.

Both Suderman and Plenert have extensive experience working and teaching in Latin America. They point to three major challenges of the reinsertion process:

- Families, communities and em-

ployers often do not want to accept members of illegal armed groups and paramilitaries back into their folds, knowing that these individuals may have been responsible for every manner of violence;

- Societal restitution for the victims of violence; and,
- Punishment for the perpetrators.

It is rare for Colombian churches, which represent diverse biblical interpretations and theological traditions, to seek common ground. Colombia is 90 percent Catholic. The remaining 10 percent is comprised of a plethora of Protestant denominations, including Mennonites.

Coordinating the consultation is Ricardo Esquivia, a leader in the Colombian Mennonite Church. He represents the National Council for Peace, an initiative of the Evangelical Confederation of Colombia (CEDECOL).

On short notice, Suderman was asked to present a theological framework for what CEDECOL’s counsel to government could be. It is a daunting task.

“How to discern and apply the

Christian understandings of the serious nature of evil, the passion for justice, the will for peace, the importance of forgiveness, and the strategies for mediation and conflict resolution, is indeed complicated,” he admits. “To walk in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in their struggle to be faithful is the least we can do as a church.”

The invitation also provides an opportunity to put into action one of three priorities discerned by MC Canada delegates at their last annual meeting, which is for MC Canada to “become a global church.”

Suderman and Plenert request the prayers of the wider church as they discern their message, for their contribution to the process, and for the churches in Colombia.

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

## Funeral message transforms tragedy

**G**loria Lizcano, a humble 55-year-old Colombian mother and dedicated church volunteer, was able to accomplish a rare event in this civil-war embattled country: She got her country’s leader to visit her church.

President Álvaro Uribe Vélez sat in a pew, next to his wife, Lina Maria, in the Teusaquillo Mennonite Church in Bogotá last November. They listened to a sermon that condemned violence as a resolution to conflict, and pointed to a gospel way of restoring and reconciling relationships. In a highly unusual move, the president’s bodyguards waited outside in response to parishioners’ requests that there be no guns in the sanctuary.

Sadly, Lizcano was unable to witness the event—because her body lay

in a casket as Colombian Mennonite Church president Peter Stucky presented Gloria’s gift of life to the congregation—including Álvaro Uribe Vélez and Lina Maria.

Gloria Lizcano was a humble, simple servant of the Lord, said Stucky. A hard life did not stop her from patiently serving others and being an ever-ready eager helper.

Mennonite pastor Jairo Roa preached the funeral message, using Luke 22:24-30 as his text. Roa talked about the value of service to others, the first being last, and the rejection of violence. This was a risky and powerful witness, an open declaration of the church’s opposition to violence as a means to conflict resolution.

Stucky later wrote about the funeral: “Isn’t it ironic that the president came to the funeral of the mother of a conscientious objector. [Gloria’s son John has been the coordinator of the Cooperative for Conscientious Objection for a number of years.] Also, it is ironic that the president came to a

# Seeking in Colon

Mennonite church that has been critical of his political agenda. I think the presidential couple felt welcomed and sat with all the others, listening. No one applauded them. Only Gloria was applauded.”

Indeed, the whole event dripped with irony. Gloria was killed not by bullets, but accidentally by a motorcycle in the president’s motorcade.

It was a Saturday night. She had just picked up the church bulletins, as she had for eons of previ-

**In November 2004, Colombian Mennonites held a funeral peace march in honour of friend and Mennonite pastor Javier Segura Gonzales, who was killed by a bomb while waiting for a bus. Javier died exactly one year before Gloria Lizcano was struck down by a presidential motorcade.**



The whole town of La Mesa, Colombia, joined *Colegio Americano Menno* (CAM—American Mennonite School) during its 50th anniversary festivities in 2005, including a celebration of traditional dance. Three young Colombian Mennonites began the Anabaptist school in 1955, but it faced legal and theological opposition almost from the outset, and was in danger of closing many times. During the festivities, Robert Suderman, representing Mennonite Church Canada Witness, and Linda Shelly, Mennonite Mission Network's director for Latin America, received recognition for the role of "amigos" of the school, in acknowledgement of the support from the wider church and individuals in North America. North American Mennonites continue to support CAM through low-interest loans and donations, and by sending workers through Mennonite mission agencies.



Photo by Laura Kauffman

# Peace Colombia

ous Saturdays, and was on her way home—a short three blocks away—to fold them in preparation for the following day's worship service. As the motorcade rounded a corner, her path crossed that of a presidential motor-cycle. She died instantly.

Alvaro Uribe Vélez and Lina Maria expressed their sadness and grief over the tragedy. Characteristic of the Colombian Mennonite Church, the congregation seized the opportunity of a captive presidential audience to again say that Jesus has a better way.  
—Janet Plenert

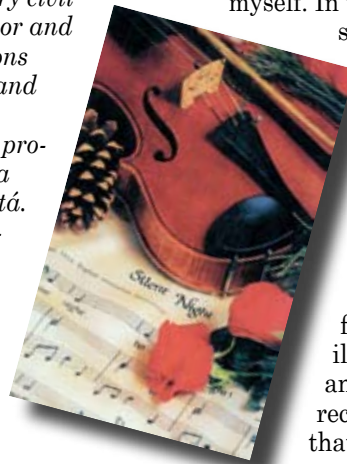
The author is the executive secretary of MC Canada's Christian Witness Council.



MC Canada photo

## Buying recycled cards helps displaced families

*Jacqui Schmucker of Toronto United Mennonite Church forwarded the following account of life for many of those displaced by the half-century civil war in Colombia. The author and many other displaced persons make their living creating and selling recycled Christmas cards they make through a program offered at Teusaquilla Mennonite Church in Bogotá. In Canada, Schmucker collects used Christmas (and other occasion) cards, and sends them to Colombia, and then resells the recycled cards across the country; to donate used cards, or purchase recycled ones, e-mail her at jacqui.schmucker@sympatico.ca.*



**M**y name is Edilma Doncello. I'm the mother of three small children. I'm a displaced person.

My husband and I had a small business, and when he refused to pay a "protection fee" to one of the armed

groups, he was killed. Even after his assassination, the threats continued, so I fled to the city.

There, I got married again, and we started another business delivering food to small towns. But my life was again turned upside down when we witnessed the murder of two women by one of the armed groups. When we talked to the police, the armed group gave us 24 hours to live. So we fled to the capital city, Bogotá.

There, with the little money we brought, we rented a place to live that had a storefront, and restarted our business. In the city we thought we were safe, but after six months my brother was killed in our business. I felt confused, scared.

We had to close our business because of continuing threats. Yet six months later my husband disappeared (kidnapped). I was alone with my three children and no money. I was scared.

Not knowing anything about my husband, we went to live in my mother-in-law's house. Shortly after, I received news that my husband had been killed.

Then, in 2004, I received a death threat by phone. I despaired. I returned to the capital with my children, feeling alone and scared for them and myself. In this despair, and with

so many money problems, I started looking for God. I found the Mennonite church, where I found strength to continue. It's only with God's strength and your support, and the support from my pastoral family, that I'm still alive and I can produce the recycled Christmas cards that give me and others our daily bread.

I want you to know that the recycled cards I produce are made with dedication and love. It's the love that God has given me in my heart, and day by day God gives me strength to carry on.

—Edilma Doncello

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**News brief**

**Thousands of students receive school supplies**

In Bangladesh, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) staff worked together to assemble school supplies for some 14,500 students. The notebooks, pencils, pens, erasers and rulers will

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be distributed to 90 different schools throughout the country. Ethel Shank, MCC Bangladesh representative, recalls meeting with recipients who showed her well used notebooks where they had written on both sides of each page. Requests for this assistance are constant, and the aid goes to rural schools where students' families have few resources.  
 —MCC release

New York

## Anabaptist bishop advocates for change in Zimbabwe

**D**uring recent meetings with Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch in New York, Danisa Ndlovu, Mennonite World Conference vice-president and Brethren in Christ bishop from Bulawayo, named corruption among Zimbabwe's leaders, lack of the rule of law, the government's seizure of land (mainly from white farmers) and its chaotic redistribution, laws passed to silence government critics, and the need for constitutional reform, as some of the governance crises in his country.

The country's economy is crumbling, according to Ndlovu. There is insufficient production of goods for local consumption, let alone for export to bring in foreign currency. Basic commodities, including food, are in short supply and priced out of the reach of ordinary citizens, and the government has been reluctant to allow non-gov-

ernmental organizations (NGOs) to distribute food aid.

Municipal governments have little or no power to deal with numerous social crises, explained Ndlovu. The *Murambatsvina* (Operation Drive Out Trash) of a few months ago affected at least 700,000 people, leaving most of them without shelter or livelihood. While Ndlovu expressed appreciation for international funds that have poured into his country, he added, "These efforts have not significantly changed the situation for the ordinary person."

In New York at the invitation of the International Crisis Group, Ndlovu suggested several "advocacy actions" that could help bring change in Zimbabwe:

- Involve civic groups, professionals, churches and individuals in a collective, united approach;

- Have peers review UN, African Union and Southern Africa Development Community treaties that the government of Zimbabwe has signed;
- Pray for Zimbabwe; and,
- Use the report of the UN's special envoy to Zimbabwe as an entry point for advocacy and lobbying.

—MWC release by **Ferne Burkhardt**

### News brief

#### New MCC brochure addresses abuse issues

A new brochure, available from Mennonite Central Committee offices, addresses abuse and provides indicators of healthy and unhealthy relationships. "Home shouldn't be a place that hurts" offers insights about what to do if you are being abused, if you may have acted in abusive ways, or if you know of abuse. To order, e-mail [resources@mennonitecc.ca](mailto:resources@mennonitecc.ca), call 204-261-6381, or visit the resource catalogue at [www.mcc.org/catalog](http://www.mcc.org/catalog). —MCC release



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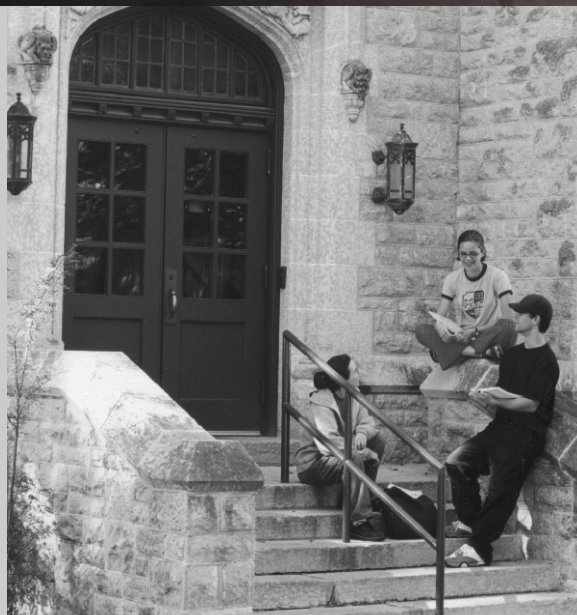
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*Marilyn Dykxhoorn, Brownsville, ON*

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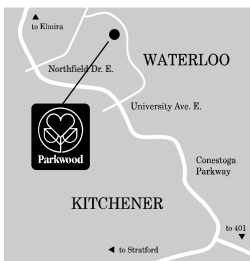
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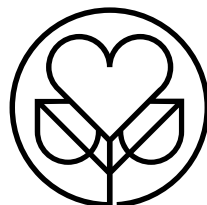
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Elkhart, Ind.

## Mission workers examine church memberships

From their home in the Himalayan region of South Asia, a pair of Mennonite workers see people leaving due to ongoing violence in their region. In the midst of what they describe as havoc, the couple sought to send a message to their friends and colleagues. After more than a decade of attendance, they officially joined their local fellowship in a summer ceremony.

It was a “clear statement to our sisters and brothers in the Lord,” said one of the workers, who cannot be identified due to security issues in the region. “It said, ‘We wish to be with you as you walk this difficult pathway in your country’s history.’”

Mission workers serving away from their country of origin can struggle with issues of membership. Some choose to retain official connections with churches in their home countries, either because of strong feelings for those supporting congregations or because of complications in their new homes. Others feel that their allegiance—and their membership—should be with the congregation they currently attend.

In Benin, Witness workers Nancy Frey and Bruce Yoder have avoided joining a single African congregation. They do not even attend a single church regularly. Both do maintain membership in their sending congregations, however, she at St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church and he at Martinsburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

“We work in an interdenominational setting,” Frey said. “We must not give the impression of favouring one denomination over the other.”

Some colleagues tried to regularly attend multiple congregations, but

Frey and Yoder relate to more than 50 churches around Cotonou and much of Yoder’s work is in neighbouring Ghana and Nigeria. Choosing a home congregation would leave others out, so when they are not preaching in a Beninese church, the couple and their two children gather with other expatriates in a coordinated Bible study that has become like a house church, complete with Sunday school for the children.

Mennonite workers in a Middle

After more than a decade of attendance, they officially joined their local fellowship in a summer ceremony.

but “like faith” in that model includes baptism by immersion.

One of the mission workers originally was baptized by pouring, which is leading to discussion on how to overcome this barrier to full fellowship. Neither the worker nor the Middle

Eastern pastors wants to negate the first baptism, nor compromise the local church’s beliefs and practices. The worker and pastors are discerning with the congregation on a process that will allow him to fully join the community.

“It is a story that is not finished,” the worker said.

Because membership can have an important symbolic and real-world meaning within a congregation and a ministry location, Witness workers are encouraged to participate in local congregations whenever contextually appropriate.

One of the workers in the Himalayan region said she is heartened. She has watched some mission workers outside of the Mennonite tradition distance themselves from locals in worship, often because of a lack of language skills or an unwillingness to sit through services that, by western standards, can be extremely long.

Based in part on advice nearly a century-old from a mission worker to India, who counselled mission workers to wait at least a decade before actively working on reform within a system, the couple waited to become members.

The workers said there is nothing magical about waiting a decade and, indeed, they have

retained dual membership with their churches of origin. But by becoming local members, they made sure that others now truly understand their commitment is long-term, something, she said, that is essential to their mission in the Himalayas.

—MC Canada release by **Ryan Miller**



Photo courtesy of Stanley W. Green

**Bruce Yoder, left, worships at the Ikot Eyo congregation in the Ubiom diocese of Mennonite Church Nigeria, one of the many congregations he relates to in West Africa.**

Eastern country regularly attend a believer’s church, but ran into baptismal barriers that prevent them from full participation in the community of believers. The church, which has welcomed the workers, recently opened communion to any person of like faith,

Sur, Lebanon

## Muslim foundation helps Lebanon's poor

**W**hen Fatima Sabra was six, her mother died and her father took her to an orphanage in this city because he couldn't raise her alone.

The Lebanese civil war was raging, as Israeli and Syrian armies and rival Lebanese militias fought for control of the country. Sabra's mother died of a heart condition that could not be treated because of the war. The orphanage her father took her to became her home for more than a decade, and the staff became her family.

Today, Sabra is 30, recently married, and working as a nurse in the orphanage where she grew up. The orphanage is part of the Imam Sadr Foundation, a Shiite Muslim organization that assists orphans, low-income women and other people in need in southern Lebanon regardless of their religion. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) supports the foundation by sponsoring management training for its staff.

"I appreciate the work of the foundation so much," she says. "If the foundation did not exist, what would happen to people like me?"

About 60 girls now live at the orphanage. Some were orphaned during the Lebanese civil war, which ended in 1990. Others are unable to live with their families because of poverty, domestic violence or other problems.

Mohamad Bassam, director of assessment at the Imam Sadr Foundation, says that the civil war and its aftermath are responsible for many problems in Lebanon today. "The main problem now is poverty," Bassam says.

The foundation was started in the 1960s by Imam Musa alSadr, a Shiite Muslim religious leader who was concerned about the widespread poverty of Lebanon's Shiite population. Before his death in 1978, alSadr also worked to make peace between Lebanon's Muslim and Christian communities, who often ended up on opposite sides of the civil war.

Shortly after starting the foundation, alSadr asked his sister, Rabab alSadr Sharafaldein, to manage it, and



Photo by Melissa Engle

**Fatima Sabra, right, talks with girls at the Imam Sadr Foundation orphanage, where she too was raised and where she now works as a nurse.**

she continues to serve as its president.

Sabra says that Sharafaldein became like a mother to her after she came to the orphanage. "I look at Rabab as a mother who took my hand when I was a child and made a plan

for my life," Sabra says. When Sabra and her husband got engaged, his family asked Sharafaldein for permission—a traditional request that is typically made to a bride's parents. —MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

Homs, Syria

## Former orphan now oversees orphanage

**W**hen he was 11 years old, Selwanos Butros al-Nameh was taken to a small orphanage run by the Syrian Orthodox Church in Homs, Syria's third-largest city.

His mother, paralyzed in childbirth, was unable to take care of him. His father, a poor and elderly farmer, could do little to help.

Now, nearly 30 years later, al-Nameh is a bishop in the Syrian Orthodox Church. He oversees about 30 congregations and several church programs, including Homs Orphanage, where he grew up.

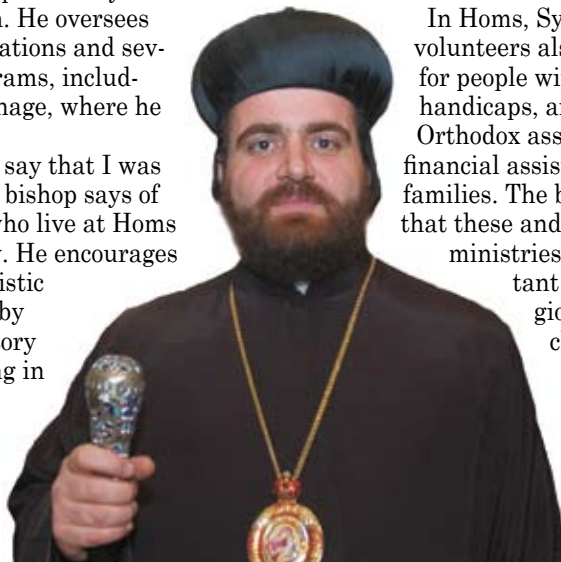
"I am happy to say that I was one of them," the bishop says of the 25 children who live at Homs Orphanage today. He encourages them to be optimistic about the future by telling his own story of finding a calling in

life—in his case, to be a priest—while living at the orphanage.

Running Homs Orphanage is one of many ways that the Syrian Orthodox Church is helping people in need in its communities. The orphanage is partly funded by the Global Family program of Mennonite Central Committee, although the majority of its funding comes from Syrian Orthodox churches in Homs and elsewhere.

In Homs, Syrian Orthodox volunteers also care for people with mental handicaps, and a Syrian Orthodox association gives financial assistance to poor families. The bishop says that these and other social ministries are important to the religious life of his churches.

"This is the essence



al-Nameh

of Christianity, to be involved in the community all the time,” al-Nameh says. “What are we going to do, sit around and pray and talk theology all the time? No. The church is to be involved in the community.”

Most Syrian Christians belong to Orthodox and Catholic denominations that trace their history in Syria to the first decades of Christianity. Celebrating this heritage, the Syrian Orthodox Church conducts its services in the ancient Syriac language, which is believed to be very similar to the language Jesus spoke.

Syria has nearly two million Christians, according to some estimates, although it is a predominantly Muslim country. Al-Nameh says that Syrian Christians are not persecuted, but there are some boundary lines between faiths. For example, social custom requires that Homs Orphanage only accept children from Christian families, while children from Muslim families go to a Muslim orphanage in the city.

However, al-Nameh says that some Muslims do benefit from his churches' work. During the Christmas season, the churches give financial assistance to poor families regardless of their faith. “Whether they're Muslim or Christian, we don't ask,” he says. “We give them what we have.”

—MCC release

Amman, Jordan

## MCC focus unchanged by Hamas victory

**T**he election of the Hamas militant group in Palestine is not expected to have any impact on the work of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Alain Epp Weaver, who heads up MCC's work in Palestine, Jordan and Iraq, said it is unlikely that MCC staff will face greater restrictions under the new government. Nor will the focus of MCC's work change.

Hamas won 76 of 132 seats in the Palestinian government in the Jan. 25 election, replacing the Fatah party, which had long dominated Palestinian politics. Since the election, North American media have focused on the links of Hamas to violence, its refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the state of Israel, and its potential to introduce stricter Islamic laws to Palestine.

But in an e-mail interview from Amman, Epp Weaver pointed out that it is the long-standing policies of Israel that will continue to harm MCC partners.

He is also sceptical about fears in some quarters that Hamas will intro-

### Hamas urged to use Jesus as its guide

The leaders of the major Christian denominations in the Holy Land have given their support to the results of the Palestinian elections in which Hamas won 60 percent of the legislature seats, but they have also urged the militant Islamic group to use the teachings of Jesus as a guide when it takes over the reins of the Palestinian Authority. And quoting from the gospels, the leaders urged Palestinians, worried at the Hamas victory in late January, to “*not let your hearts be troubled or afraid,*” and to “*be strong and stand firm.*”

—ENS release

duce strict Islamic laws.

And while Palestinians are concerned about international isolation, this is not a new worry. “Israel has been treating the Palestinian Authority as a ‘non-partner’ for many years now,” Epp Weaver said. “Now Hamas will be the ‘non-partner’ instead of Fatah.”

MCC's work in Palestine will continue to focus on two main areas: supporting the witness of local Palestinian churches, and working with Palestinian and Israeli groups pursuing justice and peace.

—**Carol Thiessen**

Winnipeg

## Pankratz to head new peacebuilding institute

**F**or David Pankratz, being named director of the new Institute for Community Peacebuilding at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) is a dream come true.

“Only in my wildest dreams did I think that I would find myself in this situation,” says Pankratz, who is well-known for his work with Mennonite Central Committee in Iraq, and for his leadership role in mobilizing public opposition to the U.S.-led invasion of that country. “My heart and mind are filled with anticipation and excitement at what can, and will, be done through the institute.”

The institute, which began operations

on Jan. 2, is the result of many years of dreaming on the part of CMU staff and supporters.

“Right from the beginning of CMU, there were proposals to found a peace institute,” says president Gerald Gerbrandt. “Given how central peace and justice is for CMU and its supporting churches, to finally be able to realize such an institute is only appropriate.”

The institute was made possible by a generous donation from John Dueck, a member of Winnipeg's Bethel Mennonite Church. “The institute is a climax to many years of becoming aware of what contributes to poverty and unrest in many parts of the world today, and what our response to it should be,” says Dueck, adding that he hopes his contribution will fund “those areas of studies that will truly help us move in the direction that will effectively witness to, and address, the disparities which lead to so much suffering, unrest and need in our world today.”

By its name, Dean Peachey, dean of Menno Simons College, CMU's campus at the University of Winnipeg, believes the institute will go “beyond conflict reduction” to promote “ongoing, active peace work” at home and abroad. According to Peachey, the institute will link faculty expertise in peacebuilding with community needs. It will also organize and sponsor a wide range of educational and research projects.

Of Pankratz, Peachey says, “His life is a tapestry of various themes related to peace. He personifies peacebuilding.”

“With the enthusiasm and support of CMU, a supportive constituency, a genuine desire for peace in so many communities, and by God's grace, it is my prayer and hope that we will, together with so many other people who are devoted to peace, make building peace one of Canada's most significant construction projects,” Pankratz says.

—CMU release by **John Longhurst**

New Orleans, La.

## Newlyweds find life altered by Katrina

It wasn't the getaway they had planned. The last weekend in August, as the fury of Hurricane Katrina bore down on the U.S. Gulf Coast, newlyweds Henry and Kenia Aragón, married exactly three weeks, were settling into their apartment, still anticipating the honeymoon they planned to take.

But as the storm approached their New Orleans suburb, they found themselves on a very different journey—one that is continuing to shape their life together and their faith.

It was Henry's heart that led him to New Orleans in the first place. Born in Honduras, he dreamed of creating a Hispanic orchestra that would play baroque, jazz and Latin American folk music. To that end, he was starting a master's program at Loyola University in the heart of New Orleans.

In August, their life together was truly beginning. They married Aug. 5. Henry and Kenia began the last weekend in August by working on their apartment as Katrina bore down on the Louisiana coast.

Before dawn on Aug. 28, the Aragóns joined the stream of evacuees fleeing toward Houston, wishing that their 1993 Toyota had air-conditioning as they travelled with only enough clothes, food and water for a couple of days. Henry left behind his most valuable possession, a viola, more concerned about how the instrument would fare in the heat and humidity on the highway than what might happen to it during the storm.

It was a week-and-a-half after the storm hit before the Aragóns were able to visit their apartment. The storm's high winds had torn into the roof of a third-floor unit above theirs. Water seeped down, causing the ceiling of their second-floor apartment to collapse.

The apartment was dank. Mould had spread. Kenia felt overwhelmed from the moment she saw the torn ceiling. Henry was calmer—until he opened the case holding his viola. The instrument, which belonged to a teacher and which he had been borrowing, had cracked in the humidity.

The Aragóns lost an antique or-



MCC photo by LaShinda Clark

**A victim of Hurricane Katrina, Henry Aragón, right, is pictured playing his viola in the home of Brenda Mackay, an MCC hurricane response worker who took him and his new wife, Kenia, in after they returned to New Orleans.**

gan, but were able to save a collection of sheet music, including South American arrangements for string quartet dating to the 19th century. They were able to salvage some wedding gifts and some clothes, but many were lost.

In the midst of loss, they found themselves unexpectedly blessed.

"Everywhere we went, everything we did, there was somebody to help us," Henry remembers of their stay in Houston. "We saw the hand of God."

They were able to find housing. A church in Houston connected Henry with a craftsman who repaired his viola, taking on the more than \$1,000 job for free. The shop even put in new strings and a new shoulder rest.

As many people struggled to find employment in and around New Orleans, Kenia, who looked after children for a New Orleans family, found her employer begging her to return. Blanca Mackay, a friend and church member who is serving as a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) hurricane response worker, invited the Aragóns and another couple to live with her.

In the Mackays' house, the lives of the Aragóns became intertwined with the Mackays and the Rodriguezes, another couple whose home was damaged. They prepared dinners together and shared household tasks. After dinner, Henry would often play the viola,

his thanks to the Mackays.

Another blessing was Kenia's congregation of Amor Viviente, whose name means "living love." During services, Henry says the pastor keeps turning members to the promises of God. "You know how contagious things can be," Henry says.

The Aragóns have had their struggles. Losing nearly the entire contents of an apartment can't help but breed stress, even in couples married for decades. Spending the first months of marriage in someone else's home is tough. But Henry and Kenia say the experience has changed their lives and opened their hearts. "Sometimes," Henry says, "we see people needing help and we just ignore it. When it happens to you, you realize the real value of help."

In December, the couple was able to get away for a brief honeymoon in Dallas. In January, they moved into their own apartment. Henry started classes at Loyola University.

"Sometimes I meditate and I think about what do I want to remember when this is all in the past. What do I want to tell my children?" he says. "I want my story to be different from everybody else. I want to share a testimony.... As a Christian, God is your priority. Enjoy life and try to be happy regardless of what's going on."

—MCC release

by **Marla Pierson Lester**

Waldheim, Sask.

## Spirit blesses Mount Royal retreat

**O**ur retreat committee agonized, stressed and lost sleep over this year's retreat. We only had 30 people actually signed up when we had said 35 would be an absolute minimum. But there was some additional interest from our Colombian refugee families, so we went for it.

And the Holy Spirit blessed the venture in ways we could never have foreseen. In the end, more than 30 Colombian refugees came to the Shekinah Retreat Centre for at least part of the weekend, bringing the total number of participants to more than 60, about 20 of whom spoke little or no English.

Harold Peters Fransen led us in reflecting on how Jesus was a friend to others and what we learn from him about being friends—to each other and to outsiders. A study of four stories from the gospels showed that friendship means being approachable, accepting, compassionate and non-judgmental. Friends move past society's barriers, notice what is needed, and bring words and actions together.

In his final exercise, Fransen divided us into four groups: young adults, Colombians, Africans and "older whites." Each group identified where Mount Royal Mennonite Church (Saskatoon) cultures clash. The young adults mentioned openness to their type of music and more activities geared for them. The Colombians identified greater expressions of love, communication and teaching children respect for others. The African group mentioned movement and spontaneity in worship. The older whites identified a number of issues where there is tension in the church, including punctuality versus flexibility, consistency versus spontaneity, and commitment versus freedom.

Outdoor activities provided some magic moments. Seven-year-old Diego became acquainted with a frozen pond

for the first time. "That's water?" he asked, touching and tapping his foot and hand on the ice. "How deep?" And little Edwine, five, squealed with glee all the way down the luge run, breathlessly exclaiming, "Wanna go again, wanna go again."

Vern Ratzlaff began the Sunday morning message with the thought that on Jan. 21, 1525—481 years ago to the day—the first Anabaptists were rebaptized into their new faith. How did they feel the next morning, as they had to begin the process of being church? How to do this is still a question for us today.

Ratzlaff led the group in a short study of church meetings in Acts. Out of these readings, he distilled his own 10 Commandments of Church business meetings:

- Membership is inclusive. All are listened to.
- The context is one of respect and warm hospitality.

- Agendas are simple and easy to understand.
- Specific stories are told to clarify any issues or problems.
- Biblical traditions are drawn on as illustrations, not as proof-texts.
- Beliefs and values shape decisions, and are shaped by them.
- Discernment of God's leading is sought in silence, in listening and (almost a holy flippancy) in casting lots.
- Leaders gifted in discernment propose actions. Confirmation is given by the body in consensus.
- Prayer, worship and praise characterize the time together.
- Specific steps are planned to implement decisions.

As the worship wrapped up, a spokesperson for the Colombian families communicated heartfelt thanks for the friendship that had been offered through the weekend. "The people are happy!" said another.

—Mount Royal Mennonite Church release

**While visiting their grandparents in Crystal City, Man., in late January, Alex Tiessen, left, from Trinity Mennonite Fellowship in Mather, Man., and Bo Wenger of Grace Mennonite Church, Brandon, Man., decided they would cross-country ski to church (Crystal City Mennonite). As it turned out, they beat their relatives who chose to drive to Sunday worship that morning.**



Photo by Brenda Tiessen-Wiens

Goshen, Ind.

## Winning speech calls for lifting up those with learning disabilities

**W**hat do Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Agatha Christie, Winston Churchill, Alexander Graham Bell, Walt Disney and Pablo Picasso have in common? They were all challenged to overcome learning disabilities—and succeeded.

In front of a crowd that filled Goshen College's Umble Center, junior Rebecca Fast, a social work and theatre major from Waterloo, Ont., helped her audience connect to the issue of learning disabilities, the effects it has on society, and what is needed for those affected to succeed. And after a 45-minute wait for the judges' verdict, she was named as the first-place winner in the 2006 C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest for her speech "Misunderstood minds: Wasted human potential."

From Fast's perspective, helping those with learning disabilities meet their potential is a significant peace and justice issue—one of the criteria for the competition—because of the



Goshen College photo

**Rebecca Fast of Waterloo, Ont., won the 2006 C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest at Goshen College.**

fundamental understanding that all humans are created in the image of God.

"Most learning disabilities are not apparent to the outside observ-

ers and they cannot be catalogued by race, gender or religion," Fast said. "Students with learning disabilities learn differently from their peers. Although they have average or even above-average intelligence, there is a discrepancy between their abilities and their actual achievement.... Sadly, people with learning disabilities that are not acknowledged, accommodated and taught properly, simply become invisible and disappear."

Citing nationally cultivated statistics, Fast pointed out the correlation between learning disabilities and depression, anxiety, substance abuse and suicide. The labels that are often placed on those with learning disabilities—stupid, lazy, lacking motivation—are part of the destructive process, according to Fast.

"They not only devastate their fragile self-esteem, but as the statistics have demonstrated, too often become self-fulfilling negative prophecies," she said. "I believe that our society must take responsibility for the failure to properly identify and accommodate people with learning disabilities in our educational system."

Fast concluded by calling on the audience to no longer "waste the human potential" of so many fellow human beings, and start to advocate for the understanding of people with learning disabilities.

Fast is the daughter of John and Esther Fast, is a 2003 graduate of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont., and attends Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont.

Participants competed for cash prizes and the top winner, Fast, may enter the U.S./Canada Mennonite Central Committee-sponsored C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest. The trust of C. Henry Smith, a Mennonite historian and professor at Goshen and Bluffton (Ohio) colleges, funds the contest, which gives students an opportunity to become involved with the peace cause while cultivating rhetorical skills.

—Goshen College release

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Richmond, B.C.

## Vancouver area Mennonites ponder 'being Anabaptist'

**D**espite the rain, around 100 people from Vancouver area Mennonite churches gathered at Peace Mennonite Church on Jan. 20 and 21 to explore various facets of "being Anabaptist."

Faculty for the weekend shared their stories and wisdom, and on the Sunday each spoke at one of the area churches.

Irma Fast Dueck and Marilyn Houser Hamm from Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) taught "The church in worship and song."

Delmar Epp of CMU challenged participants with new insights into how we might "Love all your neighbours."

Gordon Zerbe of CMU presented "Philippians and the challenges of Christian citizenship."

John H. (CMBS professor emeritus) and Anne Neufeld (retired teacher) reflected on how to "Say yes to the calendar: Aging and mortality."

Maurice Martin of Associated



Photo by Gerry Sportack

**Maurice Martin of AMBS (and Canadian Mennonite's MC Eastern Canada correspondent), right, discusses Anabaptist history and theology with participants from Vancouver area Mennonite churches at the "Being Anabaptist" seminar held at Peace Mennonite Church in January.**

Mennonite Biblical Seminary (and Canadian Mennonite's Eastern Canada correspondent) sketched an

outline of our faith heritage in his teaching on "Anabaptist history and theology."

This weekend of concentrated teaching planted many seeds and sparked renewed interest in participants to take their Anabaptist faith seriously and take time for personal spiritual growth. Observations connecting the truths of Scripture and the new learnings of the weekend were heard in comments like:

- "Maybe the reason the Bible so often says, 'Be not afraid,' is because fear is one of the main components of prejudice."
- "The order of worship seems to come out of the common sense we use in daily relationships."
- "I never understood how Mennonites fit into the Christian family; now I understand where they came from and why they have the traditions they do."

Many expressed hope that this weekend establishes a new tradition B.C. Mennonites can enjoy for years to come: a tradition of fine teaching, intergenerational learning, informed worship, and honest sharing of who we are and how we can meaningfully live as Anabaptist believers.

—**Laura Sportack**

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## People&Events

**North Newton, Kan.**—A year after J. Winfield Fretz died at age 94, the bulk of his and his wife Marguerite Fretz's estate—close to \$300,000—will go to Bethel College's endowment for the support of the Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (KIPCOR). Fretz was a professor of sociology at Bethel College from 1942-63 and served as Bethel's acting president in his last years at the college, before going on to be the founding president of Conrad Grebel College (now University College) in Waterloo, Ont. The Fretzes left Canada in 1979 and retired to North Newton, where they lived just behind where KIPCOR had its first office. KIPCOR got off to a rocky start; it began in 1985 on the promise of a half-million-dollar gift that never materialized. It managed to limp along for several years, and eventually developed into a viable

organization that trains and works with mediators on many levels. Says daughter Sara Fretz Goering of Silver Spring, Md., "Our hope is that our parents' gift to KIPCOR will help provide an ongoing endowment so that the institute has the flexibility and courage to take on new challenges as well as sustain the current programs." The Fretzes' estate gift will produce an annual income of \$15,000 for KIPCOR from interest earnings.

—Bethel College release

**Brazil**—Dr. Wilhelm Rakko, a physician who emigrated to Paraguay to help found a Mennonite colony, died Jan. 13 in Brazil at the age of 93. Born Feb. 23, 1912, in Waldheim, Ukraine, Rakko and his family, along with many other German-speaking Ukrainians, fled to Germany with the retreating German troops. In 1948, Rakko and his family emigrated to Neuland Colony in Paraguay at the request of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), which was helping resettle European Mennonite refugees there after World War II. The Rakkos worked in a hospital, he as a physician and his wife Anna as a midwife and director of nursing. In 1955, Rakko and his wife were both baptized in the Mennonite congregation of Neu Halbstadt. Rakko retired after 30 years as a physician in the colony, and the couple moved to Brazil. Rakko is survived by his second wife, Maria Luiza. He was predeceased by his first wife (1996) and his son Arnold (1989).

—MCC release

## Transitions

### Births/Adoptions

**Behnish**—to Lorri and Rick, Zurich Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Rachel Marie, Jan. 9.

**Bender**—to Rebecca and Rodrick, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Ada Rose, Jan. 10.

**Bergen**—adopted by Ruth Boehm and Barry, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont., a son, Matthew Allen, on Jan. 24.

**Epp**—to Kathy and Gerhard, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Markus Peter John, Dec. 20.

**Franco**—adopted by Carrie and Rob, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont., a daughter, Katie, on Aug. 23.

**Friesen**—to Elena and Dan, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Tiffany Kaitlyn, Jan. 3.

**Hamm**—to Jessica and Jeremy, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Nicholas Leigh, Nov. 11, in Winnipeg.

**Hessel**—to Heidi Martin and Tyler, Zurich Mennonite, Ont., a son, Hayden River, Jan. 24.

**Krahn**—to Jolinn and Wendell, Trinity Mennonite Fellowship, Mather, Man., a daughter, Alara Chloe, Jan. 21.

**Legault**—to Lisa Janzen and Blake, Schoenfelder Mennonite, St. Francois Xavier, Man., a daughter Annika Cheyenne, Dec. 25.

**Marontate**—to Beth Klassen and Shawn, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont., a son, Cale Andrew, Jan. 30.

**Philippsen**—to Maria and Jakob, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Eric, Jan. 16.

**Voth**—to Charmaine and Kevin, Schoenfelder Mennonite, St. Francois Xavier, Man., a daughter, Ella Jade, Jan. 25.

**Wagler**—to Ethel and Stan, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., a daughter, Rachele Nicole, Jan. 26.

**Watson**—to Cathi and James, River of Life Fellowship,

Kitchener, Ont., a son, Benjamin Norman William, Dec. 26.

**Williams**—to Cynthia and Steve, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, a daughter, Anna Jade, Jan. 28.

### Marriages

**Fehr-Hildebrand**—Emanuel and Marina, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., Jan. 27.

**Harder-Hamilton**—Dwayne (Hope Mennonite Fellowship, North Battleford, Sask.) and Jennifer, at Hanover, Ont., Dec. 30.

**Isaak-Unrau**—Helmut and Eve, First Mennonite, Kelowna, B.C., Jan. 7.

**Penner-Sekel**—Darin (Bergthaler Mennonite, Plum Coulee, Man.) and Tanya, at Fort Garry Mennonite Brethren Church, Winnipeg, Jan. 28.

**Warkentin-Cornelsen**—Emerson and Sarah, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, Jan. 21.

### Deaths

**Boschman**—Nancy, 43, of Ottawa, Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., Jan. 20.

**Boshart**—Lewis, 90, Zurich Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 5.

**Dyck**—Glen, 74, Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., Dec. 24.

**Enns**—Susan, 87, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 1.

**Epp**—Charlotte, 92, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 7.

**Gingrich**—Perceda, 87, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 22.

**Klassen**—John, 82, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 12.

**Neufeld**—Isaac J., 91, Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask., Jan. 17.

**Oesch**—Doreen, 81, Zurich Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 22.

**Schwartzentruber**—Don, 61, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 24.

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## Mennonite Church Canada

### Prayer requests

As the season of Lent begins, with its focus on personal reflection and renewal, remember also to pray and give thanks for Witness workers around the world:

- Bruce Yoder, Witness worker in Benin, who has spent the past two years nurturing the Bible college program of Mennonite Church Nigeria. It has grown into a regular one-week-per-month, two-year program for pastors. Praise God for recent graduates who are so grateful for the tools to delve deeper into the Word of God.
- The amazing growth of Connexus, the holistic education and cross-cultural English Language School of the Korea Anabaptist Center. In just 15

months, Connexus has gone from 16 students to 150, with more on the waiting list. Pray that young people and others will respond to the call for teachers to work with these eager students.

- Witness interns Jennifer Loewen, a CMU student from Didsbury, Alta., who left for China on Jan. 23 for a six-month teaching assignment at a local university, and for Laura Snyder, whose teaching and dormitory assistance work in a residential school in Umtata, South Africa, ends in May.

## Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

### Gather 'Round on the way

Christian educators in congregations of MC Eastern Canada can find out all about this new

Sunday School curriculum by attending one of the sessions of the Gather 'Round Learning Tour happening from Feb. 25 to March 4.

"A whole generation of kids has experienced Jubilee. We want the next generation to have material which is as current and contemporary as possible," says Eleanor Snyder, Mennonite Publishing Network staffer, of the reason for the new curriculum.

"The story has not changed; but the way we tell the story has changed," she says, noting that there is considerable effort to forge a strong home and church connection. There is a take-home "talk-about" piece that can be used with families at home to continue the conversation that was started in Sunday school.

The curriculum is designed for ages three to adults, with two new sections designed for parents/caregivers and youths. The first session begins, appropriately, "in the beginning" with Genesis 1.

Elsie Rempel, Formation staff person of Mennonite Church Canada; Lisa Carr-Pries of MC Eastern Canada; and, on occasion, Mennonite Publishing Network staff person Eleanor Snyder and others, will participate in the Learning Tour.

Events will occur at the following locations:

- Feb. 25: First Mennonite, Kitchener—9 a.m.
- Feb. 27: Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg—7 p.m.
- Feb. 28: Vineland United Mennonite—7.30 p.m.
- March 1: St. Jacobs Mennonite—7 p.m.
- March 2: Faith Mennonite, Leamington—7 p.m.
- March 4: Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham—9 a.m.

To register, contact Joan Schooley at joan@mcec.ca or 519-650-3806; or Lisa Carr-Pries at dcarr-pries@rogers.com or 519-888-1943.

## Mennonite Church Manitoba

### Pastoral search updates

- Blumenort Mennonite Church is entering a season of prayer before beginning their pastoral search. Peter Zacharias is retiring in June.
- Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church has begun a search for a new leading pastor following Peter Penner's announcement that he will not take another term when his present term ends this summer.
- Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Winkler has invited Larry Kehler to serve as an interim pastor until June.
- Niverville Mennonite Church is searching for a new leading pastor and an associate/youth pastor. Leading pastor Paul Adams will be moving to MC Eastern Canada this summer. Deanna Loeppky is presently filling the associate/youth pastor position on an interim basis.
- Hermann Dueck has resigned as associate pastor at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.
- Steinbach Mennonite Church has hired Isbrand Hiebert as half-time associate pastor for German ministries. Applications are being received for a three-quarter-time associate family ministries pastor and a half-time associate worship and music pastor.
- Shane Perkinson has resigned his half-time associate pastoral position at Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. The congregation will be discerning future steps.
- Crystal City Mennonite Church and Trinity Mennonite Fellowship in Mather are both continuing their searches for pastoral leadership.

Continued on page 34



Photo by Jake Harms

**MC Canada offers praise to God for the work of Kathy Fast, centre, departing MC Canada staffer who coordinated PrayerNet among her many other tasks; she is pictured with MC Canada general secretary Jack Suderman, left, and Witness executive secretary Janet Plenert. Fast has moved on to a new role as Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba's material resources and activity centre coordinator. To PrayerNet readers, she writes: "Your diligence in praying for and supporting [Witness] ministries around the world has strengthened my own prayer life. Your encouragement and responses have meant a lot to so many people who have felt your prayers and have experienced changes because of your prayers on their behalf." Please pray that a capable successor for this important ministry role will soon be found.**

**Mennonite Church Saskatchewan**

**Churches vote to quit conference**

Two of the largest MC Saskatchewan congregations have voted to leave the conference.

Cornerstone Mennonite in Saskatoon and Neuanlage Grace Mennonite just outside of Hague, both held meetings within the last three months.

Cornerstone, with a membership of 323, met on Nov. 20 and members voted on the motion on the following two Sundays.

“How to deal with sin was important, and as important was that our vision and how to get there was different than

the conference’s,” said Russell Reid, senior pastor.

Neuanlage Grace, with a membership of 301, held their vote during their annual business sessions on Jan. 20. Over 90 percent voted in favour of the motion to leave.

Neither congregation signed the covenant put forth at last year’s delegate meetings in Rosthern.

“We’ve found ourselves needing to express our values and conclusions in a different way,” explained Henry Janzen, pastor of Neuanlage, who admitted it has been a difficult decision for him personally because of the many friendships he has developed over the years.

“It is with deep sadness that we acknowledge this break in relationships,” said MC Saskatchewan moderator Henry Block. “Broken rela-

tionships always remind us that we are living in a broken world. Jesus came to bring peace and wholeness into relationships; clearly we have much to learn.”

Block noted that neither church had been a major financial or personnel supporter for the conference programs for some time, and said the provincial leadership “regrets not being invited to be more involved in the discussions in both these congregations.

“We pray for God’s blessing and peace on these churches, and on our conference, as we now go our separate ways.”

**Pleasant Point mounting new drama**

Pleasant Point Mennonite is putting on another prairie-themed version of a Bible story this year. Last winter, the

small country church, located nine miles south of Clavet, staged *Jonah and the Culvert*, which featured Ron Froese as Jonah stuck in a culvert with a bunch of smelly skunks.

“This year we’re working on the Daniel story,” said Pastor Harry Harder, who noted that the production is scheduled to take place March 31 and April 1, and is open to the community. The event acts as a fundraiser to help improve access to the church. In the last production, some of the money raised also went to MCC.

Pleasant Point took their theatrical cue from Superb Mennonite in using the winter months to plan a musical theatre event for their community. This year, Superb performed *The Wheatbelt Parables* at the town hall in Rosetown.

MARK WURTZ



From our leaders

From across our street to around the world. Jennifer lives across our street. Ed lives in a nearby town, and so does Colleen. Jack and Henry live 40 miles away. One of the things they have in common is coming to summer camp at Youth Farm Bible Camp for more than 20 years.

I remember in 1990 when I first became a counsellor-in-training. The camp director informed me that I would be working one week with the children campers and three weeks with adult special need campers. I was a little mortified. I had no experience. I was scared.

But that first year, I met Joe, Eugene and Peter. I helped Joe shower. I had a great time with Eugene, the comedian and all-round joker. And crusty old Peter gave me a hug at the end of the week. The next summer, I made sure I was at all of the adult special need camps that Youth Farm offered. I had overcome the first barrier in this ministry—I felt comfortable with the campers. I began to treat them as my neighbours.

It is amazing how quickly these campers see through insincere and unaccommodating staff. For much of their lives they have been treated like second-class citizens. We need to be different at camp; we need to be different as servants of Christ. Show them love. Show them respect. Show them integrity. Show them dignity. Through this they learn that the Christian faith is a

**Camp ministry two-way street**

**It is amazing how quickly these campers see through insincere and unaccommodating staff.**

powerful way to overcome all obstacles.

One of the most powerful outcomes of adult special need camp is what our staff learns from this group of interesting, dynamic and fun-loving campers. From the 16-year-old junior staffer to the volunteer pastors and cooks who come for a week—everyone appreciates their experience.

These campers show love unconditionally, they accept us for who we are, they seem to understand more about humanity than philosophers and theologians. They have fewer boundaries and are more open to speak their minds. They place a lot of importance on prayer and have a simple faith that serves them well. After a couple of weeks working with these campers, staff begin to realize how these campers end up being our teachers.

Over the years, many of our staff have gone on to serve in care-giving professions. They point to their experiences at adult special need camp for their desire to seek positions as nurses, care-givers and in other medical professions. They realize the impact of ministry when it encompasses meeting physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs within a two-way relationship. It is truly a ministry to those across the street.

Mark Wurtz is director of the MC Saskatchewan Youth Farm Bible Camp near Rosthern, Sask.

## Mennonite Church Alberta

### CIM, conference prepare to part ways

A lengthy process of discernment and discussion around the issue of homosexuality and the Calgary Inter-Mennonite (CIM) congregation's membership in MC Alberta is anticipated to come to some sense of closure at this year's annual delegate meeting at Foothills Mennonite Church in April.

In a package dated Jan. 12, the conference executive distributed draft versions of statements on the matter and a letter to CIM. Congregations are encouraged to discuss these drafts and provide feedback to the executive by mid-February. The executive will use the responses to write a more final statement, which it hopes can be accepted by all parties. The final statement will be included in the report book sent to congregations prior to the annual meeting.

In brief, MC Alberta and CIM have agreed that they do not agree on the issue of homosexuality and that, considering the difficulties of working together, it may be best for both parties to work separately. MC Alberta's draft letter to CIM expresses regret that they have chosen to break with the conference, as well as wishing them God's blessing in their future ministry.

The draft acknowledges the ministry CIM has had in ways that many other churches have been unable to achieve. Hope remains that CIM and MC Alberta will some day journey together again. Congregations are encouraged to nurture a common bond in Christ in spite of a lack of formal relationship.

In other MC Alberta news, the conference budget for 2005 has been met and exceeded. The surplus is due mainly to the fact that the position of camp director was vacant from mid-August to year-end. The position of quarter-time youth worker was also vacant for

much of the year. MC Alberta thanks congregations for their generous support. The financial statements for 2005 and budget for 2006 will be included in the annual report book.

## Mennonite Church British Columbia

### Vernon church leaving MC B.C.

Mennonite Church of Vernon has notified Mennonite Church British Columbia that they are withdrawing from the conference following a decade of discussions on the issue of homosexuality.

The Vernon congregation opposes allowing practising homosexuals into church membership and ministry, based on their understanding of Scripture and the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*.

It feels that neither the provincial conference nor the national church body have adequately addressed their concerns regarding Toronto United Mennonite Church (TUMC)—an MC Eastern Canada congregation that has stated that sexual intimacy should be reserved for covenanted monogamous relationships between two adults without specifying they be of opposite gender.

In 2000, the Vernon church withdrew its national membership over this issue but remained an MC B.C. member.

Following a meeting with the MC B.C. ad hoc committee and TUMC members last April, congregation chair Bruce Hildebrand said members of his church left feeling they had been told that homosexuality should not be an issue of concern in the church.

Vernon church delegates at an Oct. 1 MC B.C. special delegate session were also discouraged by the resolution that MC B.C. continue to be a full and active member of MC Canada with each B.C. church having the freedom to be involved at whatever church level they wish, which was

passed by MC B.C. delegates.

On Nov. 2, the 77 percent of Vernon Mennonite members who attended a church meeting unanimously endorsed a board recommendation to leave MC B.C.

The decision has caused a sense of grief and loss in the congregation and the larger conference. In a letter to the church on behalf of the MC B.C. Executive, moderator Doug Epp wrote, "While we are saddened by this decision, we understand it was preceded by a lengthy, difficult and thorough process." An acknowledgement and time of blessing

for the church is planned for the upcoming B.C. annual delegate session.

At this time, plans for the future of the Mennonite Church of Vernon are uncertain, although they may seek membership in another Mennonite body.

*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.*

## Winnipeg

### 'Leadership is about action'

When David Friesen googled the word "leadership," he found there were 512 million pages on the web about that topic, leading him to the realization that not only is a lot being said about the topic, but that "leadership can have a different meaning for different people."

However, for the president and CEO of Friesens Corporation in Altona, Man., the dictionary description is best: "Guiding or showing the way by going in front." Or, as he told students at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), "leadership is about action."

Friesen shared his thoughts about leadership on Jan. 18 at Leadership Jazz, a series of chapel presentations sponsored by CMU's Centre for Leadership and Management (CLM). Leadership, he said, "is oriented toward goals;...you have to take initiative. At Friesens, we say 'if it ain't broke, break it.'"

According to Friesen, qualities of good leaders include good communication skills, interpersonal sensitivity, the ability to provide good feedback, self-confidence, and a willingness to be accountable.

As for how to become a leader, he told students that "you first have to want to be one." After that, education and a willingness to learn throughout life are key.

The Centre for Leadership and Management is a new initiative by CMU, whose goal is to provide training, inspiration and encouragement to Christians involved in leadership in business, non-profit organizations, the arts, the church and church-related organizations.

—CMU release

## Advertising Dates

### Issue

March 20

April 3

April 17

### Copy Due

March 7

March 21

April 4

(Focus on Elementary/Secondary Education)

Contact: **Barbara Burkholder**

1-800-316-4052 / advert@canadianmennonite.org

## Urry to deliver 2006 Bechtel Lectures

**Waterloo, Ont.**—"Time and memory: Secular and sacred aspects of the world of the Russian Mennonites and their descendants" is the theme of the 2006

Bechtel Lectures in Anabaptist Mennonite Studies, to be delivered at Conrad Grebel

University College on March 9 and 10.

James Urry, professor of anthropology at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, will deliver the lectures. The March 9 lecture—"Time: The transcendent and the worldly"—will examine different forms of time in Russian Mennonite communities during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The March 10 lecture—"Memory: Monuments and the marking of pasts"—will consider how Mennonites in Europe and North America have constructed memorials in remembrance of past events, especially through marking pioneer achievements and various episodes of victimization and suffering.

Urry is well known for his pioneering research on Mennonite life in the Russian colonies. More recently, that interest has been expanded to include the Mennonite experience in Canada, particularly Manitoba. He has held research fellowships at the universities of Winnipeg and Calgary.

The Bechtel Lectures in Anabaptist Mennonite Studies were established in 2000 by Waterloo County businessman and farmer Lester Bechtel. The purpose of the lectureship is to foster interest in, and understanding of, Anabaptist/Mennonite faith by seeing it



Urry

projected through the eyes of experts from a range of disciplines.

—Conrad Grebel release

## Conference seeks to inspire youth leaders

**Harrisonburg, Va.**—Y-Lead, a conference for high school youth and youth workers, will be held July 27 to 30 on the campus of Eastern Mennonite University (EMU). The conference is designed to help young people and adults who work with youth assume stronger leadership roles in their local church settings.

The program will include speakers who work with young people, workshops on leadership themes, small group discussions, worship, music, recreation and other activities "to educate, empower and educate youth to become servant leaders," according to Eastern Mennonite Seminary resource coordinator Jill Landis.

"This conference...will help high school-age youth and youth workers to gain practical leadership skills and promote the 'culture of call' concept among young people for possible long-term ministry," Landis said.

The program theme will focus on risk-taking, spotlighting biblical characters who developed leadership abilities in the midst of struggles and what that means in today's context.

For more information on Y-Lead, e-mail: [ylead@emu.edu](mailto:ylead@emu.edu) or visit [www.emu.edu/seminary/ylead](http://www.emu.edu/seminary/ylead). —EMU release

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**March 13:** *Suor Angelica*, a one-act all-female cast Puccini opera at Bakerview MC Church, 8 p.m. Fundraising event for MCC domestic violence prevention programs.

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

**March 23, April 6:** CBC view days.

**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 2:** Columbia Bible College 2006 Open golf tournament.

**April 29-30:** Bethel Mennonite Church 70th anniversary.

### Alberta

**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.

### Saskatchewan

**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, 7:30 p.m. 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 22-23:** North Star Mennonite Church 100th anniversary weekend. To register for meals or billets, or for more information, call 306-363-2125 or e-mail [ld.balon@sasktel.net](mailto:ld.balon@sasktel.net).

**April 29:** Touring Mission Fest.

### Manitoba

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

**March 9-11:** MCI presents *The Music Man* at Buhler Hall, Gretna, 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 about a young couple whose ideals are challenged by their employment in the military industry.

**March 18:** Winnipeg MCC Relief Sale banquet.

**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 fasp/light 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 204-487-3300.  
**April 6:** Jazz at CMU, 7:30 p.m.  
**April 6,7:** MCI western Manitoba and Winnipeg fundraising banquets.  
**April 8:** MCI Gretna fundraising banquet and concert with Canzona.  
**April 14:** Sargent Ave. Mennonite Church Adult Choir, orchestra and soloists present *The Seven Last Words of Christ* on Good Friday, April 14, 10:30 a.m., at the church.  
**April 22:** CMU annual spring concert, 7:30 p.m.  
**April 28-29:** Manitoba Mennonite spring curling funspiel, Winnipeg. For more information, call Gerald Warkentin at 204-487-2972 or Dave Zacharias at 204-477-4714.  
**April 28-30:** Manitoba Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter weekend in Winnipeg. For more information, call Peter and Rose Dick at 204-757-4705.

**Ontario**

**Feb. 25:** Rockway Mennonite Collegiate 12th annual dinner and auction: 4:30 p.m., dinner; 6:30 p.m., auction.  
**March 1,2:** Celebrating Potential—a dessert evening celebrating International Women’s Day and MCC work geared to the unique needs of women around the world. Guest speaker: Cynthia Peacock. Tabor Manor, St. Catharines, 7 p.m. (1); Breslau Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m. (2).  
**March 3-4:** Engaged workshop, Riverdale Mennonite Church, Millbank. To register, call Delmar and Mary Bender at 519-656-2256.  
**March 3-5:** Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter weekend, Festival Inn, Stratford. For more information or to register, call Marjorie Roth at

519-669-8667.  
**March 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, 7:30 p.m. Speaker: James Urry, Victoria University professor, New Zealand. Theme: “Time and memory: Secular and sacred aspects of the world of Russian Mennonites and their descendants.”  
**March 11:** Guelph meat canning project fundraising breakfast at Calvary United Church, St. Jacobs. Speaker: Paul Pereverzoff, MCC Akron. Advance tickets only by calling 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 16-18:** Conrad Grebel student council presents *Footloose* in the Humanities Theatre, Hagey Hall, University of Waterloo. 8 p.m. each night; 2 p.m. matinee (18). For tickets, call 519-888-4908.  
**March 18:** Sawatsky Visiting Scholar fundraising dinner and tribute to the late Rod Sawatsky. Keynote address by Doug “Jake” Jacobsen. 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 25:** Mennonite Aid Union annual meeting at St. Jacobs Best Western Inn, 9:30 a.m. For more information, call 519-634-5267 ext. 202.  
**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.  
**April 2:** Conrad Grebel’s April Fool’s Café at the Church Theatre, St. Jacobs. 3 p.m. Featuring Rick Cober

Bauman, John Moyer and No Discernable Key. Proceeds to Grebel student aid and scholarships. For tickets, call 885-0220 ext. 381.  
**April 8:** Fraser Lake Camp 10th annual fundraising dinner and auction at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, 6:30 p.m. E-mail info@fraserlake-camp.com or call 905-642-2964 for more information.  
**April 21:** Guelph MCC meat canning fundraising ham dinner at Hamilton Mennonite Church, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Music by Hope Rising. For tickets, call 905-679-6506.  
**April 24-28:** MCC meat canning at the University of Guelph.  
**April 28-29:** Engaged

workshop at Living Water Fellowship, New Hamburg. To register, call Delmar and Mary Bender at 519-656-2256.  
**April 28-29:** MC Eastern Canada spring conference, St. Catharines.

**To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements EIGHT WEEKS in advance of the event date by e-mail to: calendar@canadianmennonite.org**

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3. 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

## Employment opportunities

### EDUCATION DIRECTOR – WILLOWGROVE

Willowgrove is a Christian organization with a wide programme offering which includes: Willowgrove Primary School, Willowgrove Outdoor Centre, Glenbrook Day Camp and Fraser Lake Camp. A self-sustaining, non-profit organization located in Stouffville, Willowgrove enjoys the enthusiastic volunteer and financial support of a large membership base and is affiliated with the Mennonite Church of Eastern Canada. Willowgrove is creating a new exciting full-time position to build on its past successes.

Education Director responsibilities:

- oversee and administrate Willowgrove Primary School.
- oversee and administrate the Willowgrove Outdoor Centre and Outdoor Education Program.
- direct and supervise the recruiting, training, hiring and developing of staff and volunteers.
- develop new programme curriculum for all of Willowgrove programs with an emphasis on environmental awareness and peace education.
- enhance existing team building and leadership programs.
- build and foster new partnerships.
- develop and execute effective marketing and public relation strategy.

The Education Director will report to the Executive Director. The successful candidate will have preferably worked in a Christian organization, be a university graduate, preferably with a Bachelor of Education or Outdoor Education, possess an understanding of Ontario curriculum and an Ontario Teaching Certificate. He/she will be well organized, enthusiastic, passionate, able to work in a small office environment, have excellent oral/written communication and presentation skills, and understand the value of high quality service. A strong Christian faith and an enjoyment of working with children is a must.

Applications will be accepted until March 31st.

Forward a resume to:

**Ron de Roo, Executive Director, Willowgrove**  
**E-mail: ron@willowgrove.ca**  
**11737 McCowan Rd., Stouffville, ON L4A 7X5**

### PASTORAL OPPORTUNITY (times two)

Two hospitable rural congregations (15 minutes apart) are searching for pastors:

**Crystal City Mennonite Church** is seeking a pastor.  
**Trinity Mennonite Fellowship (Mather)** is seeking a 0.5-0.7 FTE pastor.

We would consider having a single pastor or a pastoral couple serve both our congregations as a two-point charge. Both congregations are committed to an Anabaptist expression of Christian faith, to active lay involvement, and to being active within their community and the world.

We are searching for pastors who are strong preachers/teachers, who enjoy relating to people, and who are comfortable offering pastoral care in crisis situations.

Submit applications to:

**John P. Klassen**  
**Mennonite Church Manitoba**  
**E-mail: jklassen@mennochurch.mb.ca**

### STEINBACH BIBLE COLLEGE

invites applications for the position of

## PRESIDENT

Steinbach Bible College is an evangelical-anabaptist school drawing students from across North and Central America and overseas.

We are seeking a candidate who has a passion for equipping leaders for ministry and can help our institution move to the next level of excellence in post-secondary Christian education.

**The successful candidate will have a...**

- Demonstrated excellence in educational or ministry leadership
- Graduate degree in a relevant ministry, theological, or educational field
- Strong commitment to an evangelical-anabaptist understanding
- Mature faith and excellent spiritual character
- Exceptional communication and organizational skills
- Proven ability in effective teamwork

Position to begin prior to 2006-2007 school year.

Please send your résumé to:

**Presidential Search Committee**  
**c/o Steinbach Bible College**  
**50 PTH 12 N, Steinbach, Manitoba R5G 1T4**



more information on the SBC website: [www.sbccollege.ca](http://www.sbccollege.ca)

### MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE OPEN POSITIONS:

MDS is expanding its bi-national staff as a result of the increased need following the Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2005. MDS will interview and hire qualified candidates to head the following areas, each reporting directly to the Executive Director:

**COMMUNICATIONS** - Primary Responsibility: To develop and administer a comprehensive communications plan to share the MDS message with the constituency and stakeholder communities as well as the general public, interpreting MDS philosophy/vision and promoting strong support.

**FIELD OPERATIONS** - Primary Responsibility: To manage all field operations and to assure effective and efficient team effort in all field relationships and activities in serving MDS "customers/clients" within the philosophy and resource parameters of MDS.

**FINANCE & ACCOUNTING** - Primary Responsibility: To oversee the financial management, reporting and controller functions, assuring integrity in all financial aspects of MDS.

**HUMAN RESOURCES** - Primary Responsibility: To assure prompt provision of qualified staff for all leadership positions and long-term volunteer positions and program needs. To enhance effective teamwork throughout the organization.

Address inquiries to:

**MDS Human Resources, Attn: Arleta Martin**  
**1018 Main Street, Akron, PA 17501**  
**E-mail: jobs@mds.mennonite.net**  
**Phone: 717-859-2210; Fax: 717-859-4910**  
**[www.mds.mennonite.net](http://www.mds.mennonite.net)**

The Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal seeks a CHILDREN'S CHURCH RESOURCE PERSON to help plan, set up and run church activities for chil-

dren up to age 12 on Sunday mornings. Application deadline is March 3, 2006. For more information, please check the job posting at [www.mfmtl.ca/ad](http://www.mfmtl.ca/ad).

**RESIDENCE COORDINATOR/ADMINISTRATOR POSITION**  
Menno Simons Centre Student Residence

The Menno Simons Centre is a residence for 22 Christian students attending the University of British Columbia and Regent College. The Centre is seeking to employ a married couple, one of whom would work three-quarter time as Residence Coordinator for a minimum of two years. The couple, both of whom are important to the Centre's community and student life, would live in the one-bedroom suite in the residence. Preference will be given to applicants who have attended university and are familiar with the Anabaptist tradition (e.g. Mennonite, Baptist). The couple are expected to participate in the Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, which meets at the Centre. The coordinator oversees the room bookings, correspondence, bookkeeping, building maintenance, Residence Assistants, and weekly community meal. The coordinator is guided by the Menno Simons Centre Committee, which is responsible to the Society's Board of Directors. This position will be available starting July 1, 2006, but must begin no later than Sept. 1. Letters of application and résumés may be sent by e-mail or post to:

**E-mail: [kfriesen@stargate.ca](mailto:kfriesen@stargate.ca)**  
**The Menno Simons Centre**  
**4000 West 11th Ave., Vancouver, BC V6R 2L3**

Visit [www.mennosimonscentre.com](http://www.mennosimonscentre.com) for more information about the position, or contact **Kathryn and Kris Schmidt, Residence Coordinators (604-224-5202)** for a tour of the Centre. Applications will be reviewed in March and thereafter until the position is filled.

**FULL-TIME LEAD MINISTER**

Waterloo North Mennonite Church is a dynamic, urban, multi-generational congregation with an average attendance of 250. Responsibilities include leading a Ministry Team that includes the Associate Minister (staff) and three lay ministers. The successful candidate will have a Master of Divinity, a commitment to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology, pastoral leadership experience, and will be gifted in preaching, administration and pastoral care.

Apply by March 15 to:

**Waterloo North Mennonite Church**  
**c/o Muriel Bechtel, Conference Minister**  
**4489 King St. East**  
**Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2**  
**Phone: 519-650-3806; Email: [muriel@mcec.ca](mailto:muriel@mcec.ca)**

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)**

Columbia Bible College announces a faculty opening in

**COUNSELLING/PSYCHOLOGY**

Columbia is seeking a faculty member in the field of Counseling and Psychology for a 3-year term appointment to begin in Fall 2006. For a full list of qualifications and job description, please consult [www.columbiabc.edu](http://www.columbiabc.edu).

Please forward resume to the attention of **Dr. Ron Penner** by **March 31, 2006**. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed in the first instance to Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

**Notice of annual meeting**

**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

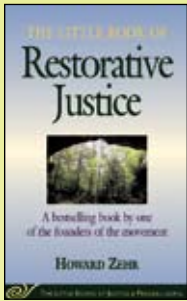
\_\_\_\_\_ as my proxy to attend, act and vote on my behalf at the Annual Meeting of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service on March 18, 2006.

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

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

Send me a copy of the Annual Meeting reports

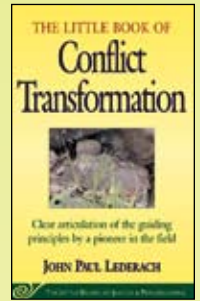
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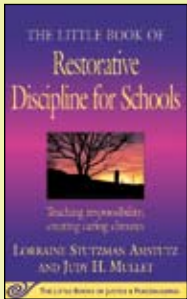
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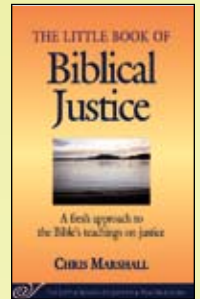


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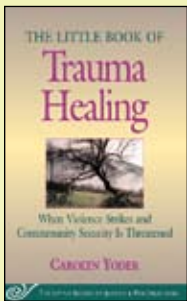
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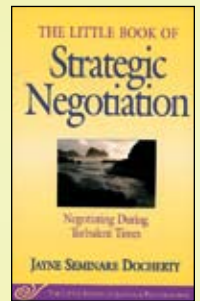
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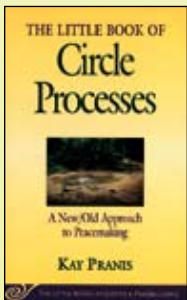
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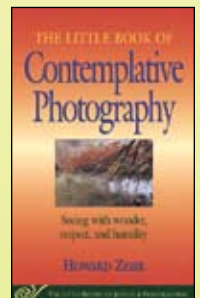


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