

C A N A D I A N
Mennonite

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reflections**

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**Honouring
women's ministry**

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In memoriam

And that in this work the second and the lower branch of charity unto thine even-Christian is verily and perfectly fulfilled, it seemeth by the proof. For why, in this work a perfect worker hath no special beholding unto any man by himself, whether that he be kin or stranger, friend or foe. For all men him thinks equally kin unto him, and no man stranger. All men him thinks be his friends, and none his foes. Insomuch, that him thinks all those that pain him and do him disease in this life, they be his full and his special friends: and him thinketh, that he is stirred to will them as much good, as he would to the homeliest friend that he hath.

A Christian monk wrote these words about 700 years ago in one of the church's earliest books on contemplative prayer, *The Cloud of Unknowing*. According to Sheila Provencher of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), it's a book that Tom Fox, the kidnapped and killed CPT Baghdad team member, read regularly in the early mornings as he prepared for his day. During the more than three months Fox was held captive, I wonder if the words above gave him strength for his suffering.

Fox lived out the Christian calling to have all be equally kin to him and none be his foes, even those that pained him—and ultimately killed him (see articles, pages 26-27). "Again, if I understand the message of God, how we take part in the creation of this [Peaceable Realm of God] is to love God with all our heart, our mind and our strength, and to love our neighbours and enemies as we love God and ourselves," Fox himself wrote the day before he was kidnapped.

Mennonites have a history of dying for what we believe,

but very few of us need to live with the risks that Fox or his three kidnapped colleagues (whose status is still unknown), or Langley Mennonite Fellowship's Greg Rollins face. (Greg came back to Canada in January and plans to return to Baghdad at the end of this month).

Shortly after Fox was taken, his daughter wrote, "My father made a choice to travel to Iraq and listen to those who are not heard. His belief that peaceful resolutions can be found to every conflict has been tested time and again, but he remains committed to that ideal, heart and soul. This is very difficult for my brother and me. We want to be with our dad again. I didn't want him to go to a country where his American citizenship could potentially overshadow his peaceful reasons for being there. But this is who my father is and I am strengthened by it. I write this with the utmost respect and agreement with what he stands for."

It does now appear that his earthly citizenship was a factor in his death. However, it was his heavenly citizenship that had a much bigger influence on how he lived his life and related to those around him. Sometimes, earthly liberation comes, such as in our rejoicing at the release of Pham Ngoc Thach in Vietnam earlier this month (see article, page 18). My heart breaks that this was not the case here.

Jesus explains the verse Fox quoted by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan. In that story, the Samaritan (the hated outsider) disregarded the political, religious and social barriers between Israelites and Samaritans to care for the wounded man he found. At the end of the parable, Jesus instructs his listener to "go and do likewise."

Tom Fox took that teaching and lived it out among the Samaritans of our time. Thank you for your example, Tom.

—Tim Miller Dyck

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Web site preview

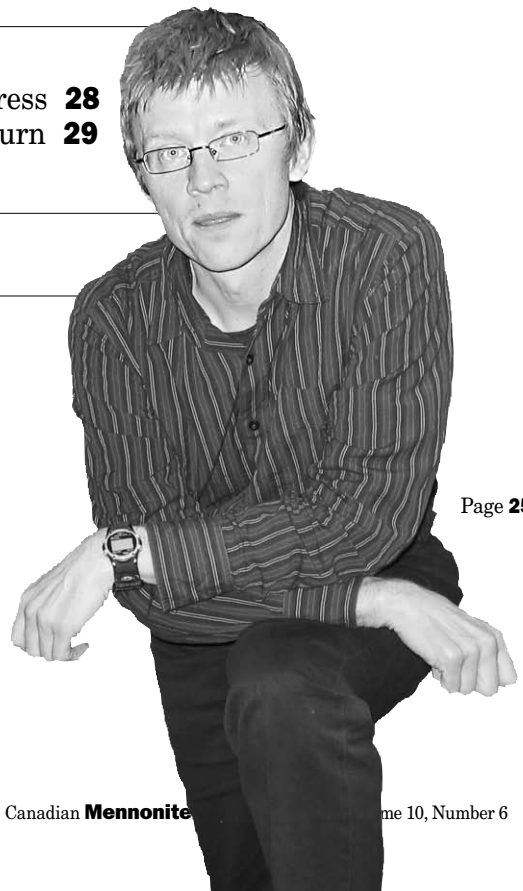
Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted on our web site at www.canadianmennonite.org on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the April 3 issue by March 30.

Cover: Mary Fontaine gives honour to Tshimshian artist Mike Dangeli, who painted the hummingbird drum she used in her Trinity Western University presentation.
—MCC B.C. photo

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Winnipeg

Klassen's gold will 'last forever'

Canada's 2005 female athlete of the year must be first in line for the award again this year. Winnipeg's Cindy Klassen—the pride of Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren on both sides of the 49th parallel—set a Canadian Olympic record in Turin, Italy, last month, bringing home five speed skating medals, one in each of the events she entered.

Klassen skated to long-track gold in the 1500-metre event, earned silver medals in the 1000m and as a member of Canada's team pursuit foursome, and brought home two bronze medals in the 3000m and 5000m long-distance races.

If that wasn't enough, a week after the Olympics, Klassen travelled to the Netherlands, where she set a 3000m track record, which allowed her to claim the World Cup title in that distance.

Klassen returned to Canada on March 6, where she and other members of Canada's speed skating team were met by adoring fans in Calgary. With her five medals around her neck, she told reporters, "It's awesome to be home," adding, "I just want to sleep in my own bed."

Even before her return to Canada, it was announced that Klassen had signed a promotional deal with Manitoba phone company MTS Allstream Inc. According to the *Winnipeg Free Press*, the five-year deal is worth \$1 million. A phone company release explains that the 26-year-old speed skating phenom "will represent MTS at various events and participate in upcoming marketing campaigns."

Of the announcement, Klassen said (on her website cindyklassen.com), "I am so very proud to be a Manitoban, and am thrilled to be able to partner with MTS." She later added, "I'm not going to have to get help from my parents anymore. I can just relax and focus on my training."

Klassen intends to continue skating until at least the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

Before heading to Turin, Klassen described herself as "very competitive, a fighter, and pretty determined." Yet, while winning is important to her, she knows there is more to life than skating. "As long as I'm doing God's will," she said, "it will be okay."

She went into the Olympics with the enthusiasm and encouragement of her family and community behind her, asking supporters to pray for good health to compete and that God would remain first in her life.

"Olympic competition is tougher mentally," she said. "There's more pressure, more media hype, more at stake. The whole world is watching."

As a young girl playing hockey in a boy's league, Klassen knew she would go to the Olympics one day. Her certainty that this was God's plan for her life was bolstered by the announcement that, for the first time, the 1998 Olympics would hold a women's hockey event. The timing couldn't have been better for Klassen, who graduated from high school in 1997. So it came as quite a shock when she didn't make the team.

She wasted little time on disappointment, however. She transferred her exceptional abilities to speed skating, where she discovered the lessons learned from tough hockey coaches—like "the drive to go really hard"—stood her in good stead as she stuck with the training and quickly

rose to a competitive level.

In 2001, Klassen was surprised to come fourth in a world championship. "I was pretty new to the sport, and still learning," she said of the experience. Her success there gave her confidence in the next race, and the next. A year later, Klassen arrived at the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, where she won a bronze medal.

Klassen truly loves what she does. "When I go out to skate, it hits me how fortunate I am," she said. "I'm thankful

for everything God has given me." When workouts are really hard, she remembers that "God has given me this gift to be able to skate and race, and he wants 100 percent of me."

Confidence in God's love for her transcends winning or losing. In times of peak performance as well as times of injury, Klassen claims the promises of Psalm 16:8: "I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken."

Klassen often listens to Steve Bell's recording of this psalm, "I Will

Not Be Shaken." It helps her focus before a race and reaffirms God's care for her. "When I go to the line and race, I don't have to worry about anything because it's all in his hands. God is on my side."

In her racing, as in her faith, Klassen takes comfort in I Corinthians 9:24-25: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."

—**Ross W. Muir**, with files from **Ingrid Koss** and **Barb Draper**



www.cindyklassen.com photo

Winnipeg's Cindy Klassen, a member of Mclvor Mennonite Brethren Church, is pictured with one of her five Olympic speed skating medals.

Winnipeg

The house that Ruth built

Ruth Rempel isn't just about teaching responsible living and caring about needy people—she wants to live it too.

"I want to live in a way that is consistent with what I teach and believe," says Rempel, who teaches international development studies at Menno Simons College, Canadian Mennonite University's downtown campus at the University of Winnipeg.

For Rempel, this means living within walking distance of work and church. It also means building one of Winnipeg's most energy-efficient and environmentally friendly houses.

The 1,500-square-foot house, which is still under construction, is located on a formerly vacant lot in the West Broadway section of the city's downtown area. The goal of the house—which is an experimental project supported by the City of Winnipeg, the province of Manitoba, the federal government and the West Broadway Development Corporation—is to show that it is possible to build affordable, energy-efficient housing.

"We want to give builders some ideas for how they can make new houses more energy efficient," she says. "The house is part of an effort to show that energy-efficient housing isn't only for the well-to-do."

Rempel, who has not yet lived in her house for a full winter, estimates that her heating bills will be about \$40 to \$50 per month. She will know the exact cost of winter heating in the spring, when the results of a study done by a local community college come in.

The heating bills are low for a number of reasons, including the fact that the house doesn't have a furnace. This may seem pretty crazy in a place like Winnipeg, where, as everyone knows, it gets really cold in winter. Rempel's heating system pumps hot water through coils underneath a ceramic tile floor. An open-concept design uses convection to allow the heat to flow throughout the house. In summer, the process is reversed; the floor stays cool, and windows beneath the roofline allow the hot air to escape at night.

"It's like the house is breathing," she says, noting that she doesn't need an air conditioner.

Other ways of keeping the house warm in winter are lots of energy-efficient triple-pane windows to let in sunlight, and cellulose insulation.

"It's basically recycled shredded paper," says Rempel of the insulation. "If it's installed correctly, it's a far better insulator than fiberglass."

Other environmentally friendly devices include a low-flush toilet that uses rainwater in summer; rainwater that runs off the home's metal roof is collected in a cistern near the bathroom, using gravity to fill the toilet tank. (In winter, Rempel's toilets connect to the city's water supply.)

In addition to being energy-efficient, the house is also healthy.

"Indoor air can be shockingly bad," she says.

To keep the air in her house as clean as possible, Rempel uses tiles and wood for flooring; there are only a few throw rugs here and there. She also uses steel-framed cupboards and cabinets made from strawboard.

"Many cupboards are made of materials that give off harmful gases," she says. "You might as well stick a bucket of formaldehyde in your kitchen if you use those."

In addition to building a house that shows her concern for the environment, Rempel has also used local manufacturers and products as much as possible. "That's been an important principle for me right from the beginning," she says. "I want to help create employment for local people."

For Rempel, all these things add up to a practical way of showing her faith. "I like the idea of living with a smaller ecological footprint, and contribut-



CMU professor Ruth Rempel is pictured in front of her new healthy, environmentally friendly house.

CMU photo by John Longhurst

ing to urban revitalization," she says, adding that the project has made an impression on her students. "Through this project they can see that faith is more than just going to church on Sunday. It's about how you live your life all through the week, and the choices you make about where you live and the house you live in."

In addition to being a testimony to her students, and an example of what new urban housing can look like, Rempel also wants to show others that living in an environmentally friendly way can also result in an esthetically pleasing house.

"Living in a way that shows concern for the environment isn't the equivalent of eating oatmeal with nothing on it," she says. "Living simply doesn't mean you have to live ugly."

—CMU release by **John Longhurst**

Kitchener, Ont.

Mennonite election officer happy in his role

Over the Christmas holiday season this year, Ken Frey was “making a list and checking it twice.” But unlike Santa, he was not checking “to see who was naughty or nice.”

As an Elections Canada officer, he could not comment on the alleged government scandals that consumed the electorate earlier this year. His mandate was simply to ensure that the election was a fair and neutral process.

A management consultant working with family-held companies, Frey first became a returning officer in Halton, Ont. in 1996, working on the federal elections of 1997 and 2000. Before the 2004 elections, Frey—a member of Kitchener’s Rockway Mennonite Church—was asked by Elections Canada to be a field liaison officer in charge of 12 electoral districts (more commonly known as “ridings”) from Oakville to Owen Sound, Ont. There is a significant turnover of returning officers, so his role is to coach and support them through the process to help them meet the deadlines.

The national register of electors (the list of voters) is routinely revised four times during the course of an election, a process that kicks into high gear the minute an election is called. A fact that is not commonly known is that people may vote immediately after the election is called, so the first task of a returning officer is to set up an office that is prepared to instantly accept people’s votes. “Snowbirds” often take advantage of this opportunity before they leave the country. Each office typically requires a staff of 20, mostly to run computers and do some spot check enumeration in high mobility areas.

Returning officers have the authority to accept nominations from the parties in their electoral district. They may hire up to 600 people for the actual polling stations, paid for

by Elections Canada. These people count the ballots by hand.

The returning officer finally decides the accuracy of the count and declares a winner—unless there is a difference of fewer than 500 votes, in which case a recount takes place under the supervision of a judge.

“It is always moving when I see that we have a system that is based on trust,” Frey said of Canada’s democratic electoral process. “People from other countries are shocked when they see this. You walk in, say who you are, and you are believed. You don’t have to show proof of citizenship.”

According to Frey, “There is no better place for a Mennonite than in the role of officiating a vote, because it is non-partisan. As a pacifist Mennonite, this really lines up wonderfully with my values. There is a place for every

‘When democracy works well, we have peace in our time. When it doesn’t work, we have two kingdoms, including the one to come.’



Frey

voice to be heard. That’s what our democracy provides.”

He added that being a Mennonite in his role with Elections Canada is far easier than being a Mennonite politician, in which one may feel the need to keep personal convictions and public policy in two

different pockets.

Concerning the “two kingdom theology” that has traditionally guided Anabaptist Mennonites with regard to political involvement, Frey reflected, “When democracy works well, we have peace in our time. When it doesn’t work, we have two kingdoms, including the one to come.”

According to Frey, what underlies democracy is Canadians’ respect for their institutions. For Canadians, democracy is a valued institution, he said, almost a “sacred space.”

—Maurice Martin

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April 21-23, 2006

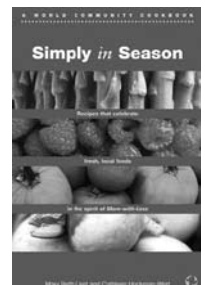
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Speaking what we have seen and heard

Ray Aldred presented this address at the joint Mennonite Church Canada/USA assembly in Charlotte on July 9, 2005. He is a member of the Cree Nation, serves as director of the First Nations Alliance Churches of Canada, and lives in Regina.

At the end of the book of Acts, Luke writes that the gospel has been sent to the Gentiles and they will listen. The nations are listening, but we must continue to speak because every 30 years the whole task of evangelism and discipleship must begin again. We never arrive until the final culmination of history in Christ's second coming, but until then we proclaim what we have seen and heard.

What if our picture is too small?

I am a product of western theological training, with a bachelor's degree from Canadian Bible College and a master's degree from Canadian Theological Seminary. But I found this level of theological discourse was not adequate. I came to believe that Jesus was bigger than my doctrinal statements. While pastoring an aboriginal church, the answers to too many of my questions could not be found in my training.

There were aspects of aboriginal Christianity that did not find a place in western evangelical theology. If theology is words describing God, then the western evangelical picture was not big enough to do justice to all of what God was doing in the aboriginal church. I found a bigger picture of Jesus by looking through the eyes of my ancestors—the Cree people of northern Alberta, the Cree people of the plains of Saskatchewan, the Mohawk people of the east. In a sense, I had lost touch with the gospel story, but I heard it again when I looked through aboriginal eyes and listened with aboriginal ears.

North American evangelicalism is

in need of a bigger picture of Jesus. If we want to proclaim the gospel, to share with boldness what we have seen and heard, then we need to encounter Jesus in and through God's Word. The Holy Spirit will teach us, bringing to mind all that Jesus has said. But what if we don't know what Jesus said—or what God said—because we do not read or listen or see or touch or smell the gospel story?

The West evaluates the gospel according to a scientific worldview and cannot evaluate its scientific worldview unless it hears the gospel told from other cultures. In order to tell what we have heard, we need to listen. But the West does not like to listen. We tend to think that we have arrived, just like the religious leaders thought they had figured it out. They had made relationship with God into a set of rules, but missed Jesus in the whole process.

Some people say, "If only God would send revival and make things like the way they used to be." But I am part of a group who were systematically persecuted in the name of Christ and the church. I don't want it to be the way it used to be.

Conservatism and liberalism never saved anyone

Two dominant movements in modern western theology are the fundamentalist movement and the liberal movement. As they attempted to make the gospel relevant to the cultural climate of their day, the gospel story was lost. It lost its authority in the evangelical church because Christianity has become synonymous with western culture; it no longer calls western culture to conversion.

The fundamentalist movement, believing in the whole rational process, thought it could state truth once and for all in the form of propositions. There is value in doing that, but it is not enough to contain all the truth of God. The centre of authority was moved away from the gospel story and into a set of propositions. This leads to ongoing reductions of the gospel story to a bumper sticker or a caption on a cartoon.

The other theological movement is liberalism. Wanting to show that Christianity was palatable to those who had given up the idea of God's transcendence, many tried to show how their experience was really what everyone had always felt. The call for conversion was lost because every-

Continued on page 8

'I am part of a group who were systematically persecuted in the name of Christ and the church. I don't want it to be the way it used to be.'

Speaking *From page 7*

one already had God present, working in his or her life; it was a personal kind of faith. Liberal theology could not call a culture's way of looking at things into question because it equated each culture as being good enough. If each culture is already good enough, there is no need for conversion and no need for the gospel story, or to proclaim what we have seen and heard. For, you see, the gospel story calls every culture to radical conversion.

Western evangelical Christianity has lost touch with the gospel story, either by replacing it with a set of fundamentalist propositions or by privatizing faith into some kind of Carl Rogers gospel message of "you're okay, I'm okay." Either Jesus and the gospel story are reduced to a set of pithy statements emblazoned upon a T-shirt or to an "ooshy" feeling. I am not against doctrinal statements on T-shirts or "ooshy" feelings, but neither is sufficient to call western culture, or other cultures, to a radical conversion.

**Relearning the gospel story:
Indigenous theology**

I was out there trying to bring people the gospel story, but I had lost touch with it. However, God used my aboriginal people to inform my theological training. One gift to me, and to the church in North America, was their understanding of communal identity. We can relearn the gospel by being in community with people who are different from us. Peter and John and the followers of Jesus were ordinary people who had been living the gospel story. If we are going to relearn the story, we need to listen to the story being told back to us from other peoples.

We know that the gospel has passed on to another group when we dislike what it looks like. But we need to listen, so we can talk about what we have seen and heard.

In storytelling, the teller of the story is never the individual autonomous author. The idea of copyright is a western idea. For example, I was taught that when you speak about wisdom, one should not say, "I know," because it conveys arrogance, that knowledge originated with me. Instead, one should say, "I understand." Knowledge and wisdom did not originate with me; I merely moved into a river of understanding that was flowing from the Creator and had flowed through many others before me.

Thinking about how stories work in aboriginal culture also showed me that my western theology had a bent toward arrogance. Western society says we have to be in control and we have been arrogant enough to believe that we are the first people to ever get this Christianity thing right. Since the time of the early church, every new denomination or every new church thinks they are the first ones who have gotten it right. We have forgotten, as missionary and theologian Lesslie Newbigin puts it, "that the church is a body of sinful men and women who falsely identify their grasp

of the truth with the truth itself." We in the modern western church have been trying to close the door on other cultures, contextualizing the gospel by reducing the gospel story to a set of platitudes or personal experience.

An effective storyteller is not in control of the story, but is controlled by the story. A story goes where it is supposed to go. The story is not mine to make it say whatever I want it to say; I must be faithful in the telling of the story as it has been told before.

At the same time, I can be creative; the story does not have to be exactly verbatim every time. One can embellish the story, use a little bit of poetic licence. Jesus used hyperbole, or at least we all believe he used extreme exaggeration, to make a point, or we would all be walking around with one eye and no right hand.

The writers of the gospels gave us four different stories. No, we have one story told by four different storytellers. The picture we have of Jesus is greater because we read all four. The differing details in the gospel story do not undermine the story, but serve to enhance it. The story controls the storyteller. Throughout Scripture, there are images repeated, always shaped by the authors or editors, but always controlled by the Spirit, and always we have the same story.

In almost any culture, stories have a certain integrity that is non-negotiable. Certain phrases can function as shorthand for the story. I believe that is what is going on when New Testament writers allude to a verse or phrase from the Old Testament. This is not the same as proof-texting. As I tell my homiletics students, if in your study of Scripture you arrive at an interpretation that no one else has ever arrived at, think about that. We are storytellers; we are called to be faithful, not original.

Liberalism came up with the idea that when you are telling the gospel, you don't have to use the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus just gets everyone upset, so instead of using "Jesus," use another word that is more comfortable for everyone. So we use "higher power," or "God," or another reasonable facsimile.

As I thought about how the gospel story works, and about being a story-



In almost any culture, stories have a certain integrity that is non-negotiable.

teller, I remembered something. When my children were little they used to sit and listen to books on tape. We would read the classics to them, the Three Little Pigs, Little Red Riding Hood, Wisakishak and the Ducks. The kids would want my dad, their grandfather, to read stories to them.

Well, my dad would start reading the Three Little Pigs, but he didn't like to read the words, so he would tell the story. "There was this wolf that wanted to eat these pigs, so he goes to B and E this one house. Since he couldn't get in, he says, 'Let me in, you crazy pigs!' The little pigs yelled back, 'No way are you gettin' in here!'" At this point, my kids would say, "That is not how it goes, Grandpa! The pigs say, 'Not by the hair on my chinny, chin, chin!'"

Even a little kid who knows the story of Jesus can turn to a liberal theologian who is saying "higher power" instead of "Jesus" and say, "That is not how the story goes. That is not how I heard it; that is not how we understand it."

Peter and John proclaimed what they had seen and heard and touched and smelled. They proclaimed the Old Testament mixed with their personal experience with Christ, and this produced the collection of books and letters that was canonized and became the Bible. As we take in the Bible, and as it takes us in, we proclaim what we have heard and seen. But we must place the gospel as the first thing—not our theology, not our individual experience—but the gospel story.

The gospel story is the first thing. It is the gospel story that I had lost in all my education. The need is to tell the gospel story and to let the story control us, not us control the story. You see, the story shapes us. God uses his spirit to shape us in the midst of the community of faith.

We have each been shaped by the story. If we want to proclaim that which we have seen and heard, then we need to listen, to see and hear the gospel story told and retold. That is what changes people. There are new things happening; the gospel is continuing to go out. People are being changed and encountering Jesus, as the story goes out.

—Ray Aldred

Langley, B.C.

Cree theologian explains cultural misunderstandings

About 20 students stand in a circle listening to a familiar song, sung in a different language, led by a small, soft-spoken woman wearing a fringed shawl, beating on a painted drum. The students are from Trinity Western University (TWU) taking part in a cultural communications class; the song, "Amazing Grace" is sung in Cree. The woman is Mary Fontaine, a Cree theologian with a vision.

Darryl Klassen, coordinator of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Aboriginal Neighbours program in British Columbia, puts the class into context when he explains the circular set-up. "In aboriginal communities, the circle is very important," he says. "In the circle, everyone is a teacher and everyone is a learner; all are equal."

To put the class in further perspective, he shares the story of standing in the middle of a clear-cut with an aboriginal elder who sang a song of lament and then said, "God was here before the white man came."

"We think of the biblical story as being focused in the Middle East alone, forgetting that God was in the whole world from the beginning," Klassen says. "In that sense, we can think of aboriginals as Old Testament people and ask them to 'tell us what you know about God.'"

Fontaine then introduces the class to some of the misunderstandings that come when different cultures meet. As

she shares her vision, Fontaine also shares her personal journey of growing up in a Cree Christian family that attended a Presbyterian church and practised as much of their culture as they were able. For years, aboriginal celebrations like the Sun Dance were outlawed, but her parents managed to keep their culture and language alive for their children. Fontaine accepted Jesus Christ as her personal saviour, and although she was "walking the walk and talking the talk, and experiencing joy," there was still something that was missing for her.

After working in Alberta and moving to B.C., Fontaine began Hummingbird Ministries, to bring ab-

original people and others together, and to overcome misunderstandings as they journey with the Creator God. The hummingbird symbolizes the "Legend of the Hummingbird and the Crane" given to Fontaine by Steve Greymorning, an Arapaho man. The legend affirms the need for people to help one another.

Sitting out on the "table of thanksgiving" are the symbols

of her life: a red and black button vest with a hummingbird on it, made by a Tshimshian First Nation family; the painted drum made for her by Tshimshian artist Mike Dangeli; a beaded buckskin vest given to her by her brother; beadwork; her Cree hymnal; an eagle feather; a burning candle; a glass with water; and an

'In the circle, everyone is a teacher and everyone is a learner; all are equal.'



Continued on page 10

Cree theologian *From page 9*

oyster shell bowl with a braid of sweet grass and prayer ties.

"In the circle, we understand that the Creator is at the centre," she explains. "The circle represents humility, equality and respect."

Another gift that aboriginal culture brings to Christianity is a focus on the visual. The smoke of burning sweetgrass creates a sensory symbol of human prayers: as the smoke rises, prayers rise up to God. "As we smell the smoke, we ask God to cleanse our minds so we can discern, our eyes so we can see the truth, our nose so we can sense the truth, our mouth so we can speak the truth, and finally our hearts so we can respond in love," she says.

As the eagle feather is passed around, each person in turn shares what he or she found significant.

"I appreciate the circle and that in it we are all equal," says John Butler, a graduate music student who is now in the TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) program. "I appreciate that about the Cree people. We could learn a lot from that."

Another student points out that in western society people sit in rows, focus more on their own strength and self, and are more private. "I like seeing faces, rather than the back of

heads," the student says.

An Asian man comments on the fact that the class has given him a new perspective. "I am Chinese and this experience has challenged me to see God within my own culture," he says.

Fontaine ends the class by singing a haunting prayer that reminds listeners of the need for balance in their lives, the need to slow down and find a quiet place.

—MCC B.C. release

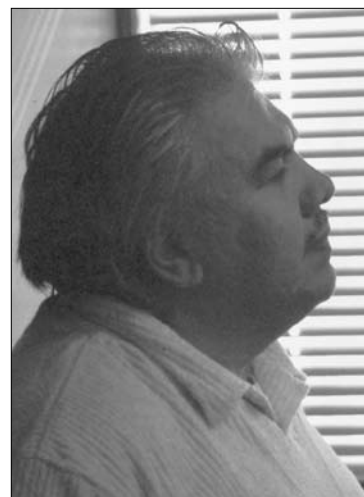
Osler, Sask.

New aboriginal minister shares his life story

In an effort to connect with the aboriginal community in Saskatoon, the Mennonite Church Saskatchewan Ministries Commission recently decided to hire Ray Dumais to begin a house fellowship in city.

During his six-month contract with the conference, Dumais works two to three days a week building friendships with the community of mostly Cree-speaking people whom, he says, do not trust white people easily.

At the MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions in Osler, Dumais shared his story with 25 workshop



Dumais

participants who came to hear him. Like many other aboriginals who have found their way to God, Dumais said his life took a few rough turns first. In fact, his life sort of happened without much thought. But along the way, to his relief, God intervened and set him on the path to healing.

Dumais was in his early teens when his family of 14 siblings broke apart. Being a child of mixed ancestry, he didn't fit in anywhere. With only one Cree parent, he didn't feel at home in his First Nation community.

In the city, it wasn't much better. "There, I was just an Indian," he said.

A life on the streets forced him to reach up and God began to answer. "That's when I said my first prayer from my heart," he recalled. "I prayed, 'God if there is another way, please show me what it is.'"

Dumais first became exposed to Mennonites when he met Reuben Block, a Mennonite Brethren pastor working in a drop-in centre in the inner city. Now, having overcome a host of barriers, the short, stocky Metis Christian can talk about his vision and the work he feels called to.

"I'd love to see an aboriginal faith community here," explained the father of seven. At the end of his talk, the soft-spoken Dumais said simply, "Now you know my story. I want to know yours."

That, he believes, is how strangers become neighbours.

—**Karin Fehderau**

Winnipeg

Native Ministry magazine strives for national audience

Intotemak, meaning "my friends," has been a staple in the outreach plan for Mennonite Church Canada's Native Ministry since 1972.

With a complete re-design and plans for increasing national exposure, Edith and Neill von Gunten, the new Native Ministry coordinators, now hope to reach more readers with a newsy approach to the *Intotemak* newsletter that also highlights a variety of available resources. Readers will also be able to browse back issues online.

our friends **Intotemak**

The quarterly newsletter seeks to reflect what is happening in communities, provinces, and on the national scene, as congregations and individuals interact with their aboriginal brothers and sisters.

The editors welcome articles and pictures about relationship-building, events of interest, and issues that help natives and non-natives learn more about each other as "friends." Comments and further suggestions are welcome.

To subscribe to *Intotemak*, contact the Native Ministry office at 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg,

MB R3P 0M4, or e-mail imiller@mennonitechurch.ca. The cost is \$12 for four issues per year.

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

Missions must be modelled on the biblical Jesus

Schertz, Mary H., and Ivan Friesen, eds. *Beautiful Upon the Mountains: Biblical Essays on Mission, Peace, and the Reign of God*. Elkhart, Ind.: Institute of Mennonite Studies, Co-published with Herald Press, 2003. 268 pages. Foreword by J. Nelson Kraybill.

After the crisis in western missions around 1970, churches and missiologists have had to relearn that Christian mission is God's mission. Therefore, it must revolve not around the church or western culture, but around the kingdom of God. And if it is God's mission, then it must be done God's way—as revealed and modelled by Jesus of Nazareth and illustrated in the Bible.

In *Beautiful upon the Mountains*, the writers seek to discern if the Bible has an overarching vision for mission and, if so, how this relates to peace and the kingdom of God. The book's title derives from Isaiah 52:7. The editors' preface rightly claims: "Isaiah's song about a messenger who announces peace and brings good news is not a lone voice in the biblical wilderness. Rather, from Genesis to Revelation, mission and peace are inseparable as the vision of God's reign."

This claim is borne out in the 14 penetrating exegetical essays by as many Mennonite biblical scholars. They give readers a guided tour through the Bible, touching down on all the key literary genres and time periods, probing for a central, unifying message.

We are shown that the "covenant relationship" of the rainbow (Genesis 9:1-17) "is a significant passage for mission and peacemaking...because it represents a new beginning between God and humanity."

The Psalms, Israel's worship resource, frequently proclaim God's

kinship over all peoples and creation. Gordon Matties asserts (with Walter Brueggemann): "[W]hen announcements about the reign of God are made in worship, Israel is engaging in 'the work of evangelism.'"

The prophets are also seen to presuppose the rule of God over both Israel and the nations (Isaiah 2, Micah 4)—a reign in which God leads them and in which armaments are converted to peaceful purposes.

In the gospels, Jesus predicates his life and teaching on the in-breaking reign of God, which he himself embodies (Matthew 11:25-27, Luke 4:18-21). Paradigmatic of Jesus' inter-ethnic peacemaking mission is his exchange with both the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28) and the Samaritans (John 4).

Here lies the foundation for Paul's insight that in Christ ethnic, gender and class distinctions have been relativized (Galatians 3:28). We are now God's ambassadors of peace, inviting everyone to become part of God's reign of peace (II Corinthians 5).

Finally, Revelation, for all its apparent violent scenes and imagery, is no less committed to the peaceable "war [and rule] of the Lamb," which, through martyrdom and resurrection, brings the kingdoms of the world into subjection to the rule of God (Revelation 5 and 11:15). This way of witnessing promises a reconciled humanity, gathered with all of creation and all of heaven's beings in joyous worship before the throne of God and the Lamb.

Beautiful upon the Mountains will prove valuable to biblical and mission scholars, adult study groups, and any readers interested in missions well beyond the historic peace churches. As a teacher of missiology, I had the chance to try out this book in a missions seminar; its essays proved to be

both accessible and engaging to the students.

—Titus F. Guenther

The reviewer is associate professor of theology and missions at Canadian Mennonite University, and book review editor of Mission Focus: Annual Review.

Guelph, Ont.

Conference to assist Christian writers

From June 15 to 17, the Guelph Bible Conference Centre will host writers, editors, speakers, agents and publishers from across North America at The Word Guild's fifth annual Write! Canada conference.

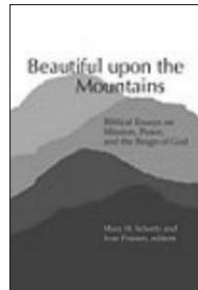
Nancy Lindquist, recent Leading Women Award winner and co-founder of The Word Guild, will focus her plenary messages on the theme, "Finding the courage to answer God's call."

Participants will choose from seven continuing classes that provide five hours of in-depth instruction, from beginner to professional level, as well as four shorter workshops and panels from among 28 topics. Subjects include writing suspense, romance and historical novels; covering Canadian politics from a Christian perspective; writing for children and teens; getting started as a freelancer; and how to write best-sellers, titles that sell and personal stories that inspire.

Other popular conference features include manuscript critiques, open mike reading sessions, worship times and a bookstore.

Complete details about Write! Canada 2006, including class descriptions and faculty biographies, will be available shortly at www.thewordguild.com.

—The Word Guild release



Woman, Your Role is Important

A poem dedicated to all Mennonite women in particular, and to all women in general.

Woman, your role is very important.
God acknowledged this when he said:
"It is not good that the man should be alone."

You were chosen as mother
to the Lord and Saviour of the world.
Your role is so important because:
It is you who accompanied
Jesus in his ministry, until his arrest;
it is you who followed him
to the cross and to death;
it is you who were a fearless
eyewitness to his resurrection.

Your role is very important.
In the home you are the counsellor;
you oversee the comings and goings.
You are the full-time nurturer and educator;
without you, the home is without warmth and cheer.
You are tireless until bedtime.
You are the carrier of life.
You are a creature
with a sixth sense, intuition,
and by your faithful and intuitive sight,
you discern and resolve problems.

Your role is very important.
You are devoted and active in the church
where your work is not done for reward.
You are a woman of prayer like Anna,
A woman of hospitality and standing like Lydia,
The Shunammite woman, the widow of Zarephath...
A woman of peace like Abigail, resolving disagree-
ments among men;
You are an evangelist like the Samaritan woman,
Mary Magdalene and others.
Are you not also a prophetess like Deborah,
Whose words often bring people to Jesus?

You walk in the footsteps of Dorcas, Mary, Suzanne,
Joanna and others;
you are able to lead and liberate like Esther, Ghandi,
and Joan of Arc;
Through your sensitivity, love and gentle spirit you
are a woman ready to listen.

Your role is very important.
When there are tears, it is "mother, mother!"
When there is singing, it is "O, O, mother!"
A child in danger always calls for mother,
and one who stumbles cries "mother, mother,"
rather than for father.

Your role is very important.
Even if men discredit you,
remember that Jesus loves you.
He has already redeemed you and considers you
very important.

Remember the woman who suffered
from hemorrhages for twelve years
and found healing.
It is a sign that you too will be restored
to your place in the church
for full-time service.

Remember: however long the night, the day always
comes.

Your role is very important.
So do not be like Jezebel.
Do not be disobedient like Eve.
Do not be like Athaliah.
Do not be like the wife of Job,
or the wife of Lot.

Your role is very important.

—**Sidonie Swana**, Kinshasa, Congo;
translated from the French by **Tim Lind**

The poet serves on the leadership committee of the African Women Theologians group and is president of the Association of Congo Protestant Women Theologians. An active member in the Congo Mennonite Church, Swana teaches religion and other subjects at the Christian University of Kinshasa. This poem was read at the 2003 Mennonite World Conference gathering in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.



The Scapegoat

One voice among many began
The cry
He is our escape
Two voices of many began
To call
He is our escape
And voices many began
To roar
He is our escape
They feared the open
Spaces

Outside their minds
The worn routine had
Tangled the chain linked
Path 'round shuffling feet
They could not stay but
They could not leave what
They knew and break
Life's discontented hum

Tentative fingers stretched
To find only empty air and
Clenched in vengeance against
The possibility of the unknown
And who to send out into

Spaces
Which they feared to open
He is our escape
Many voices roar
In protest
He is our escape
An echo back to the call
Of two voices
He is our escape
One is left by many
To cry

—**Kirsten Pries**

*The poet is a member of
Waterloo-Kitchener United
Mennonite Church.*

*The above poems,
written by or
about Mennonite
women, are
printed in honour
of International
Women's Day. Ed.*

What would you do if a disaster as catastrophic as Hurricane Katrina hit your community? Would people in my community of Kitchener-Waterloo become violent in their desperation, as they did in New Orleans? Would Mennonites in my community respond to a disaster here in a community-minded and peaceful way?

I'd like to believe we would, but we could respond in a much more useful and peace-nurturing way if we had a plan. As seen in New Orleans, peacemaking is essential in a time of desperation. We can nurture peace by planning ahead to minimize desperation and starvation, as well as by offering non-violent alternatives if the situation turns desperate and violent despite our best efforts.

We're well organized in responding to disasters overseas and elsewhere, but what if the disaster was here in our home communities? I'm not asking these questions to spread fear or worry. I'm asking them in the hope of sparking the desire to create a Mennonite Canadian Disaster Plan.

With our collective Mennonite Central Committee experience, our Mennonite Disaster Service efforts, our conflict-mediation work, and our history of surviving revolutions and displacement, we are well poised to be helpful in the midst of disaster and societal chaos. But will we be organized enough, and courageous enough, to really influence the difference between violent mayhem and cooperative sharing and problem-solving?

Mennonites are particularly well suited to respond helpfully to a crisis in the food system. Our food growing experience, and the knowledge of cooking from scratch and using what is available, will increase our chances of survival and adjusting to a different food system. Imagine that importing large quantities of food to Canada is suddenly no longer possible. Imagine that it's January and we have barely enough food to sustain the Canadian

Disaster planning for peace

population until June. Our mission is to figure out how to grow as much food as possible in the next growing season with limited fossil fuel.

In my community of Waterloo Region, urban Mennonites could work with rural Mennonites to move at least half of the urban dwellers onto farms, where everyone can put their minds and muscles into growing food.

If we planned ahead, we'd have a committee of farmers and planners who would have decided:

- How many people would go to each farm;
- How they would be housed there; and,
- How they would be taught to build greenhouses, tend livestock, start seedlings, prepare the soil with hand tools, plant the crops, discern weeds from food plants, weed the fields, control pests, harvest the produce, save seeds for next year, and preserve the produce.

The Mennonite Canadian Disaster Plan would include suggestions for organizing each farm into a village and a plan for how the farm villages could work together to meet peoples' needs while producing as much food as

possible.

Each farm could have a council that makes farming decisions and communicates with other farms and the cities. This group would have certain people designated to experiment with crops and technology to discover alternative ways of producing food with very few pesticides or herbicides available. The council on each farm would also organize other necessities for peaceful living, such as a sewage plan, childcare provision, schooling, conflict mediation, and much more.

Rather than avoiding thinking about this sobering possibility or wallowing in fear, I propose that we make a plan so that we can respond in the most useful way possible. This plan can be one form of our peacemaking.

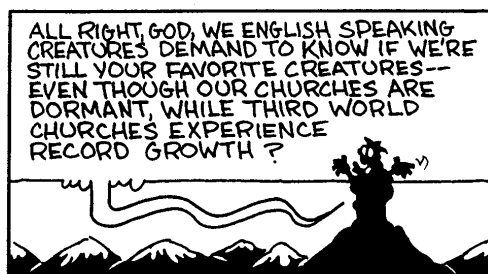
If our plan reduces fear and hunger in the midst of a disaster, we will be preventing violence before it begins. If we give people hope that they and their families will survive, and give them the tools to help feed their families, then they will be less apt to turn to violence in desperation.

Let's use our Mennonite connections and peacemaking experience to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the cold, heal the sick and calm those who are afraid in a time of disaster and social upheaval.

—Nina Bailey-Dick

The author is a public health planner for Waterloo (Ont.) Region currently on maternity leave with her five-month old daughter and three-year-old son. She welcomes e-mail conversation on the topic of disaster-planning at ninabd@gtto.net.

Pontius' Puddle



Letters

MEDA impact extends beyond local level

Re: "Larger economic picture can't be overlooked," *Canadian Mennonite*, Feb. 20, page 13).

I appreciated Bruce Guenther's thoughtful letter and his reiteration of Will Braun's challenge to more critically engage in broader issues of economic globalization. I agree that Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) has not traditionally emphasized research and public engagement on issues such as trade justice, environmental stewardship or our governments' aid policies. We have not seen that as our primary strength or mandate.

However, I would strongly argue that MEDA's work has impact that

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.

extends well beyond the local level, and, in many cases, contributes to better understanding of trade, environmental and aid policy issues. A couple examples from my experience include:

- Proving that "the poor are bankable." MEDA has been a pioneer for the past 25 years in creating the worldwide microfinance industry, which today provides savings and credit services to more than 50 million poor entrepreneurs and farmers who were previously regarded as unworthy of bank-

ing services.

- Participating in the donor peer review of the Canadian International Development Agency's microfinance strategy, and in the development of CIDA's private sector development focus.

Although the list could go on, we recognize there is much more to be done. Through our publications and annual conventions, we regularly engage the MEDA membership and others in some of these issues.

Could we do more? Undoubtedly.

PHIL WAGLER



Outside the box

It is harder to live your convictions in the trenches than to nod your head at the confessions in the pews.

Traditionally the expanse between our theological statements and our practice of the faith widens over the years, inevitably creating a hunger for reformation, revival or renewal—pick your revitalizing label. What is stated and what is lived effectively become two different realities, and someone somewhere concludes with the monks of yore who discovered the Gospels, long ignored in a monastery basement, "Either these are not the Gospels, or we are not Christians." I'm wondering out loud if perhaps our practice is betraying our convictions in regards to the good we do, and why.

Consider our propensity to fundraise, as an example. Is it not the tiniest bit troubling that we increasingly give only if we get something in return? We have meals, accept trinkets, and definitely expect that income tax receipt. In addition, and we especially do this with youth, we expect that they will do something—like feed us, sell chocolates or shovel drive-ways—to earn our generosity.

All this work to earn subtly models selfishness and teaches that you have to work to earn favour in the kingdom. And how does this shape their understanding of God and grace?

Secondarily, funds raised tend to be spent primarily on ourselves—programs for our kids, conference trips, or to replace that gaudy 1970s orange carpet (okay, maybe this last one has some merit). Is this the essence of service? We should be asking how kingdom-minded all this really is.

Two theological inconsistencies are at work here:

- We give to get; and,
- We expect what is given to be earned.

How does this reflect the nature of God, whose grace

For God's sake

and salvation are neither earned nor deserved?

A deep spiritual ailment has beset us. Having been wooed by the pleasures of 21st century ease, we are unwilling to part with our hard-earned cash without some earthly return. We revel in mammon rather than God, and only do good for our own sakes.

What has happened to doing good for God's sake?

Any truly God-centred good is selfless and if I expect something in return I either don't really believe it's worthwhile or I'm not truly doing good, but simply performing an act of covert selfishness. If it is worthwhile at all, it is because it is good for God's sake alone!

Sacrificial missionaries raising their own support are questioned by the godly in their new cars as to why they need so much. Youths rarely look toward voluntary service or ministry, or see all they have and are as mission, but are encouraged—even by parents—to grab as much of this world as they can.

We pump dollars into ourselves, and we're proud of our spires or of not having spires, while the world screams to "make poverty history," to solve the epidemic of AIDS, to heal racial divides, for an end to

terror, for something to fill the hole in their souls that all their excess has not satisfied. In other words, the world cries out for salvation.

Meanwhile, we, whose commodity ought to be grace, demand to receive in order to give. Is it just me, or does something smell like Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)? Our practice betrays our theology. Stop this heresy for God's sake.

Phil Wagler is learning to do good in the trenches of home, neighbourhood and world for God's sake. You can reach him at phil_wagler@yahoo.ca.

We expect what is given to be earned.

Would it be the best use of our limited resources, compared to doing “practical local development” programs that have the potential to shape future development directions? I am not sure.

I do not question that minor shifts in the global economy can have a more significant impact than the sum of all development programming. I think the question is how we as Christians should prepare ourselves for work in the global marketplace. These are complex issues and, as I stated in *Development to a Different Drummer*, they will require “a generation of highly trained and experienced managers...[who] will not shy away from taking positions within international businesses and organizations that interact with international businesses...[so that] we can take our faith and our people-centred development approach into this world.”

If MEDA can help in that process by sharing what we have learned, we are most willing.

—Allan Sauder, Waterloo, Ont.

The writer is MEDA's president.

‘The’ not part of Ukraine’s name

In the Feb. 20 article, “Canadian government issues Ukrainian land restitution warning,” concerning the Caobo land issue, *Canadian Mennonite* “corrected” something presented on the website of Foreign Affairs Canada as follows, “The right of land ownership is a sensitive issue in [the] Ukraine.” It was correct as originally presented by Foreign Affairs.

As a Canadian residing in Ukraine, I take exception to this correction, because the official name of this

country is “Ukraine.” It is only a legacy of Russian imperialism that we in the West so often revert to the former identification of this state as “the Ukraine.” This pre-independence practice is slowly fading.

While Russians still have enormous difficulty in accepting the concept of Ukraine’s sovereignty, Canadians should know that this unnecessary “the” is not a grammatical function of translation, but a politically incorrect, pejorative term applied by Russians to Ukraine’s independence.

Should you have cause in future to write again about the Caobo issue, or the work of Canada’s Mennonite community in Ukraine, I hope that your readers will find all references to Ukraine are made in a manner appreciated by Ukrainians.

—Don Banks, Ukraine

BRENT GUENTHER



New Order Voice

After I graduated from university, sure, I could have gone to work in London or Seoul. But how many people can say they’ve lived in Theodore, Saskatchewan?

Having lived large in Montreal, Winnipeg and Saskatoon, I knew I wanted to settle in a smaller community, like say, Theodore, a town of 300, where I now rent a two-bedroom house for \$200 a month, and live on the banks of the Whitesand River.

Walking down the rutted road to the river with a fishing rod in hand seemed so cliché it took me three attempts to actually get to Wolf’s Bridge and cast a line into the water. Now I can hardly wait for spring.

Theodore is a town with one of the worst declining populations in Canada. It was documented by CBC as a community struggling against private and public interests that are pulling their neighbours away.

When speaking of my new life in the “T-dot,” my urban-dwelling friends usually ask me, with predictable sarcasm, “So, is there anything to do in Theodore?”

If something “to do” means talking with like-minded friends in a pub, bashing Bush’s “war on terror” after the MennoFolk concert (or meeting at a coffee shop, praising Stephen Harper’s goal to “save Christian marriage,” after Tuesday’s praise and worship), then no, there isn’t much to do.

Urban Mennonites of my generation (and let’s face it, Anabaptism in North America has become much more urban than it used to be) have found great comfort in urban communities where we work, learn and worship alongside others of similar mind and experience. But I think there is a danger in retreating to our Christian/Mennonite enclaves in the city.

There is plenty of room for being an encouraging,

What’s to do in Theodore?

life-giving presence in these rural communities—these “dying” Prairie towns—that society tends to look down upon.

The best gift I received last Christmas

was a knitted scarf from one of my students. It is black and yellow, the official colours of the Theodore Buffaloes.

The “Buffs” are part of the Fishing Lake

Hockey League (we were champs in 2003 and 2004) and the pride and joy of the town. The social significance of black, yellow and attending senior men’s hockey games are among the many things I have had to learn since moving to this community to be one of its three teachers.

Nowadays, Christian denominational conversation has found its way onto the Theodore curling ice (a sport I have recently declared as my favourite). Between rocks, topics sometimes include: churches that have come and gone in this town, the Baptists from down the highway, and, of utmost importance, why they should stop referring to me as “the Hutterite.”

In addition to curling, cattle farming has begun to occupy much more of my time. I was recently given the responsibility of taking care of a runt Hereford from a nearby farm. For those in this and other rural communities, this venture may not come across as being of great significance.

For me, however, this has been another example of God’s love in this abandoned community. My only wish is that others would give this type of opportunity a chance—especially those with no experience with Herefords or senior hockey!

Brent Guenther is a member of Nutana Park Mennonite Church. He is one of three teachers at St. Theodore elementary school, and recently completed a term on Mennonite Church Saskatchewan’s envisioning team.

Ukrainian descendants oppose land restitution

After reading your article on “Mennonite groups oppose land speculator” (Jan. 23, page 20), we were very disgusted with Paul Willms’ proposal. Our hopes and prayers are that Mennonites in North America do not share his views and do not sponsor his land restitution claims that we see as a greedy money grab.

Many injustices happened in the past—the Jews under Hitler as well as millions of Soviets that were killed under Stalin’s rule, our grandfather included.

To take the present-day Ukrainians’ land (our homeland) from them would, in our opinion, bring back a very negative past which most present-day North American Mennonites only wish they could forget.

In 1943, our father, the oldest of four children, along with his mother and grandmother, made the trek from Ukraine to West Germany, and in 1948, with the help of Canadian Mennonites from Rosemary, Alta., continued on to Canada.

A year ago we booked a trip to our home in the Molotschna area this fall. We sure hope our trip is a learning experience that brings us closer in touch with our past, and does not leave us feeling guilty that we, as Mennonites—by the way of Paul Willms—have expelled present-day Ukrainians.

As Mennonites, let us band together as we have in the past and halt Willms’ venture as we believe the Lord would want us to do, who said in Matthew 7:12, “*In everything do to others as you would have them do to you....*”

—**Rick and Harold Unruh, Rosemary, Alta.**

Church members have helped Youth Farm

In the Saskatchewan section of the Feb. 20 *The Churches* column, “Churches vote to quit conference,” I said that neither Cornerstone Mennonite in Saskatoon nor Neuanlage Grace Mennonite had been a “a major financial or personnel supporter for the conference programs

for some time.” I should have added, though, that individual members of these churches have made significant personnel contributions to select projects, such as representation on the Youth Farm Complex board as well as to the Youth Farm Bible Camp staff.

—**Henry Block, Saskatoon**

The writer is MC Saskatchewan moderator.

Church must be wary of Conservative agenda

The Feb. 6 editorial (“New government’s agenda”) is “glad” for Stephen Harper’s apparent endorsement of “the role of faith and religious conviction in politics and society.” I feel ambivalent about, and at worst suspicious of, the implied fruits of such a role.

George Bush has always claimed deep Christian faith and conviction, and has effectively told us of his beliefs. He is, to use the words of the editorial, “seeking justice and righteousness here on earth.” But we know that speaking to power from the church pulpit is not the same thing as wielding power in the name of the church.

The editorial lists several points of agreement, and also of departure, between the positions of the Conservatives and those of the Mennonite Church, and also possible implications of Conservative policies for the Canadian public. The Conservative position on gay marriage, for example, is named as one in line with that of our church.

As a Mennonite, the first item that springs to mind when I think of Stephen Harper is his full endorsement of the invasion of Iraq, but that issue was not included in the editorial. What in Stephen Harper’s political career could be more significant to our church? Harper’s recent and more moderate tone on this matter has a long way to go from the standpoint of our official Mennonite position.

At different times in our history, we may or may not be able to see God at work in the work of government. This is also true of our church, and so I hope we don’t view government legislation that is similar to some official church position as a vindication of either.

Love was put to death under the law, survived the ordeal, and was vindicated. We have been duly told that love, and not law, is called greatest. Love is now, and love will be, the measure of us.

—**Karl Kessler, Waterloo, Ont.**

Is ‘Christian university’ an oxymoron?

Although I agree that a holistic spiritual perspective and ultimate faith in God is a desirable goal for Christian universities, Gordon Matties’ article “Pursuing coherence and conviction in Christian university education” (Jan. 23, page 6) begs the question, “What is a university?”

Does a university recognize only “the priority of Scripture...for shaping identity”? Should a university provide an “alternative to cynicism...to the idolatries and ideologies of our time”? Should universities instruct students that “the unity of all truth...is rooted in God”?

Or does a university require a sincere humility in regard to truth? Does it acknowledge that it neither possesses nor dispenses truth, but rather encourages both faculty and students to become seekers—to press on in search for truth wherever the quest may lead? Are faculty and students willing to undertake the potentially painful and often discomfiting quest? In order to further unbiased inquiry, does a true university require opposing viewpoints, and even some intellectual mauling among faculty, writers, researchers and students?

In light of these questions, is a “Christian university” an oxymoron?

—**Ruth Derksen**

The letter writer is an English professor at the University of British Columbia.

Correction

In the Feb. 20 obituary of Dr. Wilhelm Rakko (page 32), incorrect information indicated that the deceased was survived by a second wife. *Canadian Mennonite* apologizes for the error.

Winnipeg

Taking stock: Suderman's first three months in office

Jack Suderman became Mennonite Church Canada's new general secretary at the beginning of last December. Canadian Mennonite national correspondent Leona Dueck Penner interviewed him just before the annual Leadership Assembly in Winnipeg.

How does it feel three months into being MC Canada general secretary?

Suderman: Is it three months already? It feels very good so far! By now, I have a pretty clear picture of what the agenda is and how things are meant to be dealt with. No major mistakes as yet, though it is said that three years later you may notice where you took a wrong turn.

What have been the most exciting and most challenging experiences thus far?

Suderman: It's exciting to determine what General Board meant last April when they said that the general secretary should have "higher visibility" in the constituency.

Also, working together with them on the ingredients of what that might be, not only at home in MC Canada, but ecumenically, and in international circles. Standing in solidarity with the global church excites me.

Also, we're dealing with a good financial year. So there's the luxury of starting this work without financial cutbacks. And at the staffing level, things are taking shape. We're fully staffed now. New staff bring new life, energy and creativity.

As for challenges, it's been discouraging to have several congregations leave at this time after a long process. They've disaffiliated themselves from area conferences and from MC Canada. I realize there are motives behind this.

As I try to understand these motives or issues, I recognize that they shouldn't just be brushed away. These concerns are enormous, basic, legitimate, and present a big challenge—not a negative challenge.

Every generation in the church has to deal with different issues. Right now, the "area conference only mem-



bership" issue is under discussion. What should we be bringing to this perspective from MC Canada?

What about your approach to the role of our Confession of Faith on issues such as homosexuality?

Suderman: We are not a church of dogma. At best, we generate doctrinal understandings. The Spirit of God is continually active in our reading and understanding of Scripture and context. *The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*—while there always has to be this—needs to be an instrument of ongoing dialogue, discernment and understanding.

Ultimately the authority is not in the answers the church gives; rather, the authority of the answer lies in the integrity of the church that gives them.

This is key. How are we the church? How do we understand the mind of God? We have to keep working at that. It is ongoing, dynamic.

What do you see as the most significant challenges facing the church? And how do you see MC Canada addressing these?

Suderman: In my view, there has been a significant loss of understanding of the ecclesial role, the mandate of the church as part of God's agenda. A loss of understanding the very criti-

cal task that the church needs to be the church. As long as we don't really believe that, it's hard to be the church. So we put our eggs in other baskets: development, peace, justice, service—which are all important, assuming that there's a corporate peoplehood undergirding this work.

Other challenges have to do with demographics: an aging population; the baby boomers bursting into retirement, which has implications as part of that downward trend in financial giving.

What is it about MC Canada that you hope will inspire and engage individuals, congregations and area conferences?

Suderman: Maybe the question is, "What is there that happens at 600 Shaftesbury that should inspire?" I believe there continues to be a very important role for a national body to do something on behalf of others—congregations and area conferences. That should excite people.

Developing an identity, vision, purpose—as a people of God at every level—that's exciting. Defining faith and practice together as a national church—that's exciting. Doing ministry together when it doesn't make sense to do things alone—that's exciting.

What does your actual role as general secretary involve?

Suderman: I'm the chief staff person of the General Board, so my role is to carry out their mandate:

- To shape and guide the vision of the denomination;
- To carefully identify priorities;
- To put in place strategic plans;
- To implement priorities;
- To be legally/financially accountable for the denomination;
- To monitor and care for, and address the spiritual condition of our churches.

It's also about being the face of the national church in a visible way, at various levels.

—Leona Dueck Penner

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Last of 'Mennonite Six' released from prison

Evangelist Pham Ngoc Thach was released from prison in the early morning hours of March 3. He was the last of the "Mennonite Six" to gain his freedom.

An incident on March 2, 2004, involving Vietnamese undercover security agents led to the arrest of the six church workers at various times over the next several months. They were charged with "hindering officials from carrying out their duties." All six were convicted by a Ho Chi Minh City court in November 2004, and were sentenced to prison terms ranging from a few months to three years.

Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang was sentenced to three years, but was granted amnesty and was released last August. The other four were released earlier. All six consistently denied that they had violated Vietnamese laws.

Thach, 35, was Quang's assistant and served as head of the church's evangelism committee.

More than a dozen people from the Vietnam Mennonite Church led by Quang went to the Z30A Xuan Loc prison in Dong Nai province east of

Ho Chi Minh City to welcome Thach. His father, Pham Van Khanh, and an aunt accompanied them. Thach was overjoyed to meet his family and the church leaders.

Thach served out his full two-year sentence. He was mistreated during interrogations, and was often beaten by criminals in the prison. The other five who were imprisoned have experienced ongoing health problems since their release.

The Vietnamese Mennonite Church believes that the concerns expressed by other governments and by international organizations played a role in the release of all the imprisoned church leaders.

The administrative committee of the church expresses thanks to all who prayed for and supported the persons imprisoned.

—MWC release from a Vietnamese Ministries report



Vietnamese evangelist Pham Ngoc Thach, right, is embraced by his father, Pham Van Khanh, following Thach's release from prison on March 3.

San Andres Island, Colombia

Colombia peace summit promising

Canadian delegates to last month's Colombian Commission on Re-compensation and Reconciliation Summit were generally pleased with the progress that was made.

Mennonite Church Canada general secretary Jack Suderman and Witness executive secretary Janet Plenert attended the ecumenical peace summit on San Andres Island, just off the coast of Nicaragua, where they met with other international participants from Argentina, Finland, Sweden and the USA, as well as Colombian representatives.

The summit was the result of the Colombian government's openness to receiving counsel from the country's churches on the establishment of a process for the peaceful reintegration of persons from illegal armed groups (both guerrilla

and paramilitary) into society, known in the country as "reinsertion." Reinsertion will be difficult because of the heinous offences committed by these armed combatants who want to resume civil life and community relations.

Suderman and Plenert presented a theological framework for the church's response to the Colombian government. The document laid out a series of biblically based foundational beliefs and values that the pair felt all Colombian church groups could agree on—a significant challenge in a country that is 90 percent Catholic and 10 percent Protestant (with diverse theological perspectives).

By the end of the week, Suderman said the document, drafted by Colombian leaders at the summit for use within the church, and for presentation to government and other groups, "was really good. It was really quite a feat. I think people felt very good," he said.

The document was approved in principle, although at least one participant remained sceptical of its success. Carlos

Alonso, former leader of the M-19 revolutionary group and now peace negotiator for the Colombian government, pointed out, "In the last 40 years there have been 100 formal 'peace processes' in Colombia. All of them have failed."

However, Eduardo Galeano, a Latin American historian, summarized much of the attitude at the summit. "We have decided to postpone our pessimism until times get better," he said.

Suderman noted this sentiment is common in Latin American culture, where ideals are pursued even when conditions may not seem right.

"It was impressive to see the level of leadership provided by the Mennonites at a place like this," Suderman said of the Colombian Mennonite Church leaders who were instrumental in coordinating the summit as well as providing leadership to the process. "This kind of thing simply would not happen without the key leadership provided by them."

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

Metairie, La.

Homeowners get help negotiating insurance claims after Katrina

Owners of hurricane-damaged homes in the New Orleans area have more to sort through than the rubble left by floodwaters or high winds. Even six months after the storm, some homeowners are still dealing with homeowner's insurance and flood insurance claims, while trying to determine how much it will cost to repair their homes.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) local hurricane response workers in the New Orleans suburbs of Metairie and Harahan are helping.

At Amor Viviente in Metairie, MCC worker Blanca Mackay has compiled and faxed documents to companies as homeowners negotiate complex claims and has helped Spanish-speaking people fill out paperwork in English.

In Harahan, MCC worker Lawrence Velasquez, pastor of Comunidad Cristiana Internacional, draws on his experience in the construction business to work with homeowners, to ensure that the repairs can be done for the amount quoted by insurance companies.

"It's a back and forth thing, and it's very time-consuming," says Mackay of the negotiation process. Even with a dozen years experience at a life insurance company, she finds the process complex.

Mackay worked with Berta Lopez, a homeowner whose home was flooded by six feet of water. In addition, a branch fell on the house, breaking the gutter and damaging the roof. Like most of the homeowners Mackay has worked with, Lopez had both homeowner's insurance and flood insurance.

Flood insurance typically covers damage from the waterline down, while homeowner's insurance is typically for damage above the waterline. However, in this case, homeowner's insurance would not cover a crack in the ceiling. This insurance doesn't cover water damage, and the company said the water shifted the foundation of the house, causing the crack.

Many people, Mackay says, are not

receiving enough money to completely repair their homes. "It's a very sticky situation," she says, expressing gratitude for Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), which is working with people to help cut costs for repairs that aren't covered.

For some insurance companies, the amount of the deductible grows for claims from hurricane damage. And the process of getting money back can be time-consuming. Mackay says payments from flood insurance are paid through mortgage companies in some cases, and homeowners must issue receipts to the mortgage companies before getting reimbursed.

"People are really going through so much," says Mackay, who has lost fencing and a fridge herself. A crack now runs along about six feet of her ceiling. "My deductible ate most of the money I was going to receive," she says. "I ended up with almost nothing. It's not enough to repair the crack."

Mackay did receive enough to buy a new fridge, but her husband worked on the fence himself, spending close to \$500 in materials alone.

—MCC release

News brief

New storms batter tsunami-ravaged towns

Strong hurricane-like storms lashed the coastal area of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu last November and December, causing severe flooding in areas hit hard by the December 2004 tsunami. The floodwaters damaged homes, slowed progress on tsunami-related projects by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and once again traumatized families. In response, MCC is providing rice, tarpaulins and blankets to 645 families—more than 2,100 people. Like MCC's tsunami response in the area, this project will be carried out by a partner organization, Social Unit for Community Health and Improvement.

—MCC release

Akron, Pa.

MEDA to help get hurricane victims back to work

As Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) began the work of cleaning up and restoring housing for those affected by the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes, several things quickly became apparent. Not only was the amount of work for MDS nearly overwhelming, but there were parts of the disaster beyond the expertise of the organization. People had not only lost their homes, but their businesses and work equipment. The question was asked, "What good is it to help people rebuild their homes, if there are no jobs?"

Part of answering this question was a recently announced grant of \$450,000 US to Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). At the recent MDS board meeting, it was unanimously decided that MDS would provide a three-year grant for the MEDA "Back to Business" program in New Orleans and the surrounding areas. The grant will be used to help business owners struggling to restart their businesses. Business assistance clinics offering help with needed permits, strategic planning and market testing will be some of the first steps.

In addition, MEDA will have staff in New Orleans to help individuals access resources both locally and nationally. When specific needs are identified, MEDA members with expertise in that particular area will be drawn upon as consultants. Plans also include working with local lending institutions to ensure that businesses not meeting conventional lending requirements can still access the funds they need to get restarted.

All of this will be done in cooperation with local churches, agencies and organizations, to help MEDA and MDS understand the local situation.

"By working together with MEDA and other organizations, we can maintain our focus—providing volunteer labour to repair and rebuild housing damaged by the storms," said MDS executive director Kevin King.

—MDS release

San Salvador, El Salvador

‘Praise God for the day,’ AIDS sufferer exclaims

The nearly 29,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in El Salvador may seem insignificant and hardly worth mentioning in the face of the tens of millions of people living with AIDS in Africa and Asia.

Yet it takes the story of only one person with AIDS in El Salvador to bring home the sobering impact this deadly disease has on people’s lives everywhere, from the stigma of AIDS to the loss of family members, jobs, friends and dignity.

One woman living with HIV on the outskirts of San Salvador, the capital city, is taking a courageous approach to her plight with the support of the New Dawn Association, a

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Generations at Risk program partner based in San Salvador.

Lidia Lemus, a 30-year-old mother of four, began feeling sick eight years ago, at which time she tested positive for HIV. Her husband learned at the time he too was infected.

Lemus publicly acknowledges living with AIDS and talks openly to others about it, often speaking in churches and at a recent regional AIDS conference in San Salvador. She has been vocal when it comes to fighting for her rights to government-sponsored support services.

When her husband died of AIDS in 1999, Lemus feared losing the apartment they shared because the documentation was in his name. She spent months gathering paperwork and going from office to office in an attempt to save her home. In the end, the home was transferred to her children’s names, which means they will have a place to live when they are older.

Despite saving her home for her children, Lemus made the difficult decision 18 months ago to place them all in the care of an orphanage. She realized she did not have the means or the health to offer them the life she wished for them.

“I’m missing them a lot,” she admits. “I’m going to keep visiting them while I’m still healthy, because a mom’s love doesn’t end.”

Lemus’s boldness and openness do not mean she does not face the stigma that others face. She is shunned by her family members, especially by those living in rural areas where the disease is not well known or understood. “All I wish is that my family could tell me that they love me, but they don’t do that,” she says.

The New Dawn Association has proven to be a vital source of support for Lemus. She participates in the group’s monthly support meetings, where she spends time with others who are also living with HIV/AIDS.

“We share our joys and our struggles,” she says. “We have friendship.



MCC photo

The other women in the group are happy for me. They make me realize I have friends.”

Lemus is the first and only member of her support group who is able to take antiretroviral medication, which can prolong the lives of people with HIV. Although the medication sometimes makes her feel sick, she is thankful to have access to the drugs.

“I take the medication not because I like it or it makes me feel particularly good, but because it will keep me alive and let me see my children grow up,” Lemus says.

In El Salvador, grants from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and other sources are allowing the government to provide free medication to Lemus and some other patients in need.

Lemus says she draws strength from the words of Psalm 91:11-12: “For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

Lemus says, “Every morning, I kneel by my bedside and praise God for the day.”

—Sarah Adams

The author is MCC’s HIV/AIDS program coordinator.



Nazareth Village photo

On a recent visit to Nazareth Village in Galilee, former U.S. first lady Rosalynn Carter, second from right, was told by a shepherd, “This is one of the offspring of your sheep. A few years ago, after our flock had been stolen from the village, your donation for replacements helped us get started again.” Carter was delighted, having briefly forgotten about her earlier gift at a time of urgent need, when the Palestinian intifada had reduced international visitors to a trickle. Carter visited Nazareth Village in January while her husband, former president Jimmy Carter, was busy with the supervisory follow-up to the Palestinian election through his Carter Center. Nazareth Village is supported by individuals from around the world and by contributions from Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

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Elizabeth Lemus, a Salvadoran woman who has lived with HIV/AIDS for 15 years, tells the story of her struggle.

In honour of International Women's Day (March 8), Canadian Mennonite is highlighting the contributions of women around the world to their families, churches and communities.



Bernarda Mendez de Henriquez checks on a chicken house in La Linea, a squatter settlement near the city of San Martin, El Salvador. Mennonite churches in Altona, Man., contributed \$4,700 to build and stock the chicken house. Raising and selling the house's 800 chickens is providing employment for seven families. Mendez is president of the church council of Disciples of Christ Baptist Church, a congregation in La Linea that is administering the project. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) advises and supports the church in its social ministries, including building the chicken house and sheltering families displaced by recent mudslides.



MCC photo by Tim Shenk

Rift Valley, Kenya

Kenyan women make a living through Maasai tradition

Elizabeth Mboye used to think that, as a woman, she would never earn an income, but today she is paid for a job she loves to do.

Mboye works as a jewelry-maker for Namayiana, an association of women artisans in Kenya's rural Rift Valley. Mboye and her colleagues are Maasai, an ethnic group with a proud tradition of making and wearing colourful, beaded necklaces, earrings and other jewelry.

Several afternoons a week, Mboye sits with a dozen other Namayiana artisans in the shade of an acacia tree beside the group's storehouse. They chat and laugh together as they sew beads on leather bracelets and wire ornaments. Sometimes their voices rise in Maasai folksongs.

"I enjoy almost everything about Namayiana," says Mboye, a youthful mother of eight.

Namayiana sells some of its products to Ten Thousand Villages, which markets fairly traded international handicrafts in Canada and the United States. A handicraft designer serving with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Kenya is helping Namayiana develop some of its products.

Most of Namayiana's 100 members are from families that raise cattle for a living. Traditionally, men tend and sell the cattle, while women work almost exclusively on household chores. By earning money themselves—usually for the first time in their lives—the



Photo by Matthew Lester

women of Namayiana are raising their status in their families and communities.

"Instead of asking their husbands or sons to purchase everything, they can also provide," says Catherine Mututua, a local woman who is the manager of Namayiana.

Mututua says that the women chose the name Namayiana, which means "blessing" in the Maasai language, because they considered it a blessing for so many women to work together. In the past, some husbands have been suspicious of all-female gatherings. Instead of beating her, Mboye says that her husband now respects the fact she helps support the family.

Like most of the women of Namayiana, Mboye was not able to attend school as a girl. Her family's traditional lifestyle required moving from place to place throughout the year to find pasture for cattle.

Today, Mboye's income from Namayiana helps her family stay in one place throughout the year. Her younger children attend a primary school nearby, and she sends her older children to a boarding school.

Mboye recognizes that her children need to be prepared to live in a changing world, but she wants them to preserve their Maasai heritage too. She and her husband teach their children storytelling, caring for animals, singing folksongs and making beaded jewelry for themselves.

"Even the ones I have in boarding school, when they come home, we all sit on the ground to work on beadwork," she says.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

Elizabeth Mboye, right, works in a group of Maasai women who make and sell traditional bead jewelry to support their families.

Osler, Sask.

'We would see Jesus'

Those four words, taken from John 12, were used easily and often throughout the MC Saskatchewan delegate sessions in Osler, as more than 200 people met in late February to worship and focus on God and his church. Flowing in and out of reports, testimonies and interesting news items, the text helped to direct the minds and hearts of all who attended.

The sessions began on Friday afternoon with a worship service led by the hosting church, Osler Mennonite. On Friday evening, conference speaker Ray Aldred began his teaching. A member of Swan River Cree Nation in Alberta, and sporting a long black ponytail, Aldred seemed an unlikely candidate to speak to the largely homogeneous crowd. But speak he did. And he had a lot to offer.

Throughout his three talks, Aldred focused his comments on earnestly leaning toward the heart issues of the Christian walk. And his ability to see through the pretense of Christian churches forced people to think. Using the idea of a story, Aldred talked about how the narrative of Jesus didn't reach aboriginal people because the reality of what was taught wasn't seen in their lives.

"The people stayed poor when the church said that the poor will be rich if



Photo by Karin Fehderau

During a recent youth retreat at Shekinah, teens were encouraged to write out prayers on strips of cloth. The strips were woven together into a prayer blanket (held up for delegates to see). Although the number of youth delegates at the conference was low, conference youth minister Anna Rehan gave a very upbeat report. "I have seen Jesus in the lives of youth," she said.

see the spiritual depth in a Bible story was a skill he learned through his First Nations heritage.

In the John 12 account, Aldred said the religious leaders didn't want Jesus to change the status quo. Challenging the delegates on that uncomfortably true admission, Aldred claimed that the western church still thinks it is "at the centre" and that it still believes that a convert must look, act and talk like everyone else. "We have to lose the feeling of superiority," he cautioned.

Outreach to minority groups also took a hit. Having converts from marginalized groups has been treated by Christians as more of a museum exhibit than just sharing God's love with others, he said, giving as proof the following example. "I was speaking at a conference in B.C. once," he said, "and afterwards, a lady came up to me and said, 'I had no idea Indians were so intelligent.'" The comment was a painful one, he said, because it showed the extent of racism within the organized church.

A story gives identity to a group of people and it can transcend history. In an aboriginal

context, Aldred said that because his great-grandfather was present at the signing of a treaty, he was too.

Following each presentation by the candid Cree pastor, delegates delved into the business sessions, having their spirits "washed in the Word

and ready to focus their minds" on the business of the church, as MC Saskatchewan moderator Henry Block put it.

Five executive motions led delegates through various issues over the course of two days. The first motion spoke to the Season of Discernment and the difficult conversations that have come as a result.

Beginning with the words, "We encourage our congregations and conference to continue to grow as communities of discernment," and generating the most response, the motion was immediately challenged by Karen Martens-Zimmerly from Grace Mennonite in Regina.

"We need modelling, not just encouragement," she stated firmly. "We will be having lots of difficult conversations down the road."

The need to be intentional in dealing with these issues was clear, agreed Block, because very few churches in MC Saskatchewan had worked on honing these skills.

An amendment expressing clear-cut goals was then offered up, stating, "We encourage the executive to work with two or three congregations each year, to work at difficult conversations, partnering with congregations who have already worked at this process in order to help all of us grow."

The amendment addressed the first part of the five-point motion. The remainder of the motion dealt with making sure any future proposals on "matters of sexuality" would be addressed prayerfully and "in the spirit of the Jerusalem council."

Some confusion about the motion was expressed by other delegates.

"Is this [motion] about sexuality



Harold Regier, a member of Bethany Mennonite, reads from a prepared statement about the church's decision to close as conference moderator Henry Block and conference minister Ken Bechtel look on.

they come to Christ," said Aldred.

A story can't be reduced to bare facts, either, he insisted. It shuts people out and the meaning of the story is destroyed. A story has layered meanings, he continued. Reading between the lines and being able to



Henry Janzen, pastor of Neuanlage Grace Mennonite, shakes hands with Ken Bechtel following a statement by Janzen announcing the church's decision to leave the conference.

or difficult conversations?" asked Herman Wiebe, pastor of Zoar Mennonite in Langham.

In comparison, the next two motions dealt with the new vision and new structuring to help move the vision forward. Both were quickly and easily passed, as was the motion to agree to a well-thought-out action plan.

To get people thinking, and to save time, roundtable discussions were planned over coffee and cookies and around the separate topics of discernment and structuring. Delegates met to process experiences of discernment in their own churches and then to decipher what was wrong with MC Saskatchewan's structure and what could be improved.

Against the backdrop of moving forward with a new vision and new hope for the future, was also the painful reality that delegates must acknowledge people leaving, congregations separating and nursing homes closing.

Conference minister Ken Bechtel ended his three-year term with MC Saskatchewan to become a co-pastor with Anita Janz at Nutana Park Mennonite in Saskatoon. A commissioning service was held for him at the end of the conference.

Rosthern Junior College is losing long-time principal Erwin Tiessen. After almost 18 years at the MC Saskatchewan- and MC Alberta-supported school, Tiessen is retiring.

Continued on page 24

Abbotsford, B.C.

Congregations asked to discern conference Identity and Vision Statement

God's work among Mennonite Church British Columbia is not finished, participants at this year's annual delegate sessions were reminded. The theme for the Feb. 24-25 gathering, held at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, was "Renovations in progress," based on I Peter.

A visual depiction of the theme involved building blocks that various people assembled cooperatively to make an archway at the front of the worship and meeting areas.

The tone and format of the meetings exemplified how these annual business sessions have progressed over the years. Instead of spending the day sitting in church pews hearing committee reports and budgets, delegates gathered around tables to discuss issues and get acquainted with members of different congregations.

A main focus of the Saturday morning session was the report presented by the Steering Committee to review and renew the identity and vision of Mennonite Church B.C. At roundtable discussions, delegates were asked to consider, "What can I affirm in the Identity and Vision Statement, and what would enrich this statement?"

Following discussion and feedback from the various delegate tables, the following motion from the executive came to the floor: "Be it resolved that we receive the report of the Steering Committee and encourage their work to continue, with the next step being congregational discernment."

The motion was passed with only a few opposing.

Steering Committee chair Walter Bergen asked people to continue discussing the statement in their own churches. "I sense God's Spirit leading us for growth and change," he said.

The delegates also voted on a new partnership agreement with *Canadian Mennonite*. The motion presented by the MC B.C. Executive was, "That Mennonite Church British Columbia approves the *Canadian Mennonite* Partnership Agreement in principle and that MC B.C. include the



Photo by Tim Miller Dyck

Eleven-year-old Alvin Bergen, son of Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church pastor Artur Bergen, helps incoming moderator Gerd Bartel build an archway during MC B.C. annual delegate sessions at the Abbotsford church.

Canadian Mennonite as a budget line item based on those churches receiving the paper and that churches increase their giving to MC B.C. to cover their portion of the subscription. For this year that would be \$11 per subscription." It was acknowledged that not all congregations use the English language nor do all find the periodical speaks to them. There was no discussion from the floor on the motion and it was passed almost unanimously.

Keynote speaker J. Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., addressed the assembly several times throughout the weekend and based much of his talk on stories of Paul and the early church. When a show of hands at the Friday evening worship service indicated a number of people present were born in other countries, Kraybill reminded everyone that Christians are "resident aliens" in a postmodern world and that the

Continued on page 24

British Columbia *From page 23*

Mennonite immigration story illustrates this. “Our society as a whole is experiencing a new kind of rootlessness,” he said.

Kraybill’s address on Saturday morning looked at how Christians fit—or don’t fit—into the world around them, and how being part of the family of God gives Christians a new identity. The early church, like the church today, had many factions, but he said the questions about any church should be, “Do you base your teaching on Jesus Christ? Do you take Scriptures as authority for your lives and practice, even though we may differ? Do you base your teaching of discipleship on Scripture? Are you active in mission? Do you draw people to faith in Jesus Christ?” He added, “My role in the church is to point others to the foundation and make sure I’m grounded there.”

At the Saturday afternoon sessions a number of farewells took place. In response to Mennonite Church of Vernon’s decision to leave MC B.C., conference minister Henry Kliever gave affirmation to the congregation while acknowledging the pain this decision involves. “Separation can create new opportunities,” he said. “If it can create new life and new ministry, we want to affirm that.”

Vernon pastor Bob Cowan also said his church has been grateful for many MC B.C. connections and involvements over the years. “We want to part on good terms and part with blessing. We pray that God will continue to be with us,” he said.

A motion regarding the transfer of title and property to the Mennonite Church of Vernon was passed, pending final legal wording.

MC B.C. also said a formal farewell to Rudy Kehler, director of Camp Squeah for 18 years, who is leaving to pursue a home-based business.

Concluding the afternoon, outgoing MC B.C. moderator Doug Epp was affirmed for his leadership, and incoming moderator Gerd Bartel and new and continuing committee members were commissioned for their tasks in the year ahead.

—**Amy Dueckman**

Rosetown, Man.

Leaders urged to use their imagination

Mennonite Church Manitoba’s annual leadership seminar began with an inspiring meditation given by Peter Zacharias, lead pastor of Blumenort Mennonite Church. More than 85 pastors, deacons and church leaders listened as Zacharias challenged them to reclaim the mystery of imagination. Speaking from Ephesians 3:14-21, Zacharias suggested that it is often within “a dark night of the soul” that God shows people who they really are. In reclaiming the mystery of imagination, the church can again grab hold of how wide, long, high and deep is the love of Christ, he said.

Building on the meditation, keynote speaker Jack Suderman, general secretary of MC Canada, helped participants imagine the storms and trials that keep leaders from a continuous focus on the task of leadership. Drawing upon his extensive experience within the Canadian church and in Latin America, Suderman stressed the need for imagination in leadership. Church leaders were challenged that their imagination has become colonized in Canada, where leaders are shaped by their understanding of economics, security, and personal and social welfare. For this reason, Suderman suggested that awakening their imagination

is one of the most critical tasks facing leadership within the Mennonite Church in the Canadian context.

Suderman then took participants on a walk through Ephesians to explore a number of key themes:

- The mission of God;
- The vision, purpose and function of the church;
- The projected outcomes of the church’s presence; and,
- The strategies to be employed in reclaiming the mystery of imagination.

After lunch, Suderman shared extensively from his recent experience with the leadership of the Colombian church. Speaking of the need for leaders who have reclaimed the mystery of imagination, Suderman shared a Latin American proverb, “It is better to make one step with a thousand people than to make one thousand steps on your own.”

His second session focused on his recent paper, “Missional ecclesiology and leadership: Toward an understanding of the Emerging Church.”

Recognizing that leaders can often be distracted from the task of leading by the many storms and trials that obscure the way ahead, the seminar was a day of significant challenge for the conference and congregational leadership. It was also a day of hope and encouragement, as the church and its leaders were again invited to reclaim the mystery of God’s imagination for his purposes in the world for today and into the future.

—**Norm Dyck**

The author is pastor of Graysville Mennonite Church, Man.

Saskatchewan *From page 23*

Many families in Saskatchewan and Alberta have formed deeply held friendships with the respected educator, as he has worked to move the institution forward and improve the educational opportunities for their children.

Equally sad were statements read by representatives of two churches—Cornerstone Mennonite in Saskatoon and Neuanlage Grace Mennonite near Hague—leaving the conference, while a third, Bethany Mennonite in Watrous, is closing down.

Of the 10 members who are left at Bethany, who had been served for many years by visiting ministers, most will go to the Mennonite Brethren church in town, delegates were told.

Pastor Henry Janzen of Neuanlage Grace Mennonite looked subdued as he read a short statement about their decision.

Bechtel then led the assembly in a Litany of Separation, saying it was important to acknowledge the grieving process. “We will miss [youth pastor] Brent Klassen at our monthly meetings,” said Anna Rehan, conference youth minister.

Ending the relationship with the Herbert Nursing home was decided last June, but the delegate body had not met since then. During the business sessions, an executive motion asked for acceptance to use some funds from the sale of the building to balance the conference budget.

—**Karin Fehderau**

Tavistock, Ont.

Ministering to body and soul

According to Canadian Mennonite University assistant professor of theology and ethics Chris Huebner, Canadians “live in a world of experts, and of profound technological accomplishments. This brings all kinds of good,” he said, “but also a series of difficulties, as we attempt to make sense of our lives as individuals and as a community.”

Huebner’s address entitled “Curing the body of Christ” was part of a workshop presented by the Cassel Mennonite and St. Matthew’s Lutheran Health Ministry Team. Workshop topics included medical issues at the beginning and end of life, as seen through the eyes of a Christian ethicist.

“The medical profession, which is highly specialized and technical, tends to be sealed off from the rest of life, compartmentalized into a series of realms,” he said, adding, “It’s in the compartmentalization that things can go wrong. So let’s not assume the church is in the ‘soul’ business, and ‘body’ is left to others. The church builds the body of Christ.”

At the beginning and end of life, humans are faced with ethical dilemmas. The group gathered at Cassel Mennonite Church quickly named euthanasia, life support, abortion, access to treatment, genetic screening and test tube babies as biomedical issues posing difficult questions.

Huebner outlined two classic ethical stances:

- The utilitarian approach, whose goal is to find the greatest good for the greatest number of people.
- The deontological approach, especially typified by philosopher Emmanuel Kant, which focuses on duty governed by principles.

He suggested that both approaches, although seemingly opposite to each other, are in the same business of answering the question, “What should we do?”

Huebner suggested a different approach: “Ask rather, ‘How shall we live?’”

He said the Bible is not a “decision-making guide book.” Rather, it describes a way of life for the people of

God. According to Huebner, the Bible talks about holiness more than about right or wrong actions.

When Huebner explores biomedical ethical issues at the beginning or ending of life, he finds Anabaptist martyr theology and experience instructive. The martyrs understood that their lives were not ultimately their own, he said. On the other hand, “moderns” view their lives as their own, over which they try to exercise mastery by technological means, often taking “heroic measures” to save lives.

But for the Christian, Huebner said death is a natural conclusion of life, and the most profound experience of vulnerability and dependence upon God.

At the end of a person’s life, Huebner said it is important for caregivers to display the virtues of hospitality and presence. “Being there” for the sick and dying is a core value of good caregiving, and is at the heart of being the church, which needs to



Photo by Maurice Martin

Canadian Mennonite University assistant professor of theology and ethics Chris Huebner spoke about “curing the body of Christ” at a health workshop hosted by Cassel Mennonite Church, Tavistock, Ont., last month.

minister to both body and soul.
—Maurice Martin

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Baghdad, Iraq

American CPT worker confirmed dead

The body of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) member Tom Fox was found in an affluent section of Baghdad on March 9. He had been shot, and there were indications he had been beaten before his execution.

In a statement to the media, CPT said it mourned his loss. "Tom Fox... combined a lightness of spirit, a firm opposition to all oppression and the recognition of God in everyone," it said. Co-directors Doug Pritchard and Carol Rose appealed to people to "set aside inclinations to vilify or demonize others, no matter what they have done."

Fox's death followed by three days the release of a video showing the other three CPT members who were kidnapped Nov. 26 in Baghdad as alive and apparently well.

The men—Canadians Jim Loney and Harmeet Singh Sooden and Briton Norm Kember—entreated their governments and other Middle Eastern countries to work for their release, according to the al Jazeera network, which aired the tape dated Feb. 28.

CPT, an international violence reduction organization, called for events to mark the 100th day of captivity for the peace workers on March 4. Vigils were organized around the world, CPT said in a statement, that also remembered "the families of 14,600 Iraqis currently detained illegally by the multi-national forces in Iraq who likewise await the release of their loved ones."

Following the release of the video, CPT representatives from its headquarters in Chicago and Toronto, said they were glad to see Kember, 74, Loney, 41, and Sooden, 32, alive.

"We do not know what to make of Tom Fox's absence from this video," they said at the time. "However, we do know what motivated Tom and his colleagues to go to Iraq. Tom wrote on the day before he was taken, 'We are here to take part in the creation of the Peaceable Realm of God.... How we take part in the creation of this realm is to love God with all our heart, our mind and our strength, and to love our neighbours and enemies as we love God and ourselves.'"

The Swords of Righteousness Brigade, a previously unknown group, has claimed responsibility for holding the men, and has demanded the release of all prisoners in U.S.- and Iraqi-run detention centres in two previous tapes. No deadlines were ever given, but failure to release the prisoners would result in the deaths of the CPT workers, the kidnapers said.

CPT has had a presence in Iraq



Fox

since 2002, working with local partners to document detainee abuse and encourage the formation of a Muslim peacemakers group.



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At the same time as al Jazeera aired the tape of the three CPT hostages, a tape by members of Loney's family pleading for his release was also shown.

—**Celeste Kennel-Shank**, with files from **Ross W. Muir**

Celeste Kennel-Shank, editorial projects assistant for Sojourners, was a member of a CPT delegation to Colombia in July 2004.

Winnipeg

Peacemakers explain what motivates them

When Karen Ridd hears people in the media ask whether Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) should have sent workers to a dangerous country like Iraq, she gets angry.

"I want to shake a non-violent fist at the radio," she told people at a Feb. 23 forum in Winnipeg organized by the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) Institute for Community Peacebuilding. "Why is it okay for Iraqis to live in a dangerous country, but not okay for North Americans to go there to try to help? And why is this question only being asked of CPT, and not when a businessman is kidnapped? There isn't the same critique."

Ridd, a long-time Winnipeg peace activist who was jailed for her activities with Peace Brigades International in El Salvador in 1989, was one of two speakers at the forum. She was joined by Gene Stoltzfus, a founder and the first director of CPT.

For both Ridd and Stoltzfus, being willing to make the same sacrifices as those who are willing to go to war is key to the success of peacemaking. Said Ridd, "Unless we are prepared to go the distance, we won't be able to have a fair conversation" with those on the other side of the issue.

Stoltzfus recalled how, as a conscientious objector in Vietnam in the 1960s, his perspective was changed by seeing the dead bodies of soldiers killed in the fighting. Like those soldiers who were willing to put their lives on the line, going to dangerous places around the world "is our purpose, why we were



CMU photo by John Longhurst

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) founder Gene Stoltzfus, centre, makes a point at the Feb. 23 CMU-sponsored forum on the ethos and role of CPT in international peacemaking. He is pictured with Winnipeg peace activist Karen Ridd, left, and Dean Peachey, academic dean of Menno Simons College.

called into being—not to run away," he said.

The two also agreed that a determining factor in deciding whether or not to stay in a country was if the presence of foreigners made life more dangerous for local people. Otherwise, their presence "shines the light," as Ridd put it, and is a way of helping

people in these countries to feel "connected to the larger world."

Much of our work isn't very successful," Stoltzfus said of CPT's work on behalf of Iraqi detainees. But it is important for CPT to be there, he said, adding, "If you aren't at the plate, you can't score."

—CMU release by **John Longhurst**

Why are we here?

The reflection was written by American CPT worker Tom Fox the day before he was abducted last November. He was found dead on March 9 in Baghdad. Ed.

The Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Iraq team went through a discernment process, seeking to identify aspects of our work here in Iraq that are compelling enough to continue the project and comparing them with the costs (financial, psychological, physical). It was a healthy exercise, but it led me to a somewhat larger question: Why are we here?

If I understand the message of God, his response to that question is that we are to take part in the creation of the Peaceable Realm of God. Again, if I understand the message of God, how we take part in the creation of this realm is to love God with all our heart, our mind and our strength, and to love our neighbours and enemies as we love God and ourselves. In its essential form, different aspects of love bring about the creation of the realm.

The word in the Greek Bible that is translated as "love" is the word "agape." This word is best expressed as a profound respect for all human beings simply for the fact that they are all God's children. I would state that idea in a somewhat

different way: "Never thinking or doing anything that would dehumanize one of my fellow human beings."

As I survey the landscape here in Iraq, dehumanization seems to be the operative means of relating to each other. U.S. forces in their quest to hunt down and kill "terrorists" are, as a result of this dehumanizing word, not only killing "terrorists" but also killing innocent Iraqis—men, women and children in the various towns and villages.

It seems as if the first step down the road to violence is taken when I dehumanize a person. That violence might stay within my thoughts or find its way into the outer world and become expressed verbally, psychologically, structurally or physically. As soon as I rob a fellow human being of his or her humanity by sticking a dehumanizing label on them, I begin the process that can have, as an end result, torture, injury and death.

Why are we here? We are here to root out all aspects of dehumanization that exist within us. We are here to stand with those being dehumanized by oppressors and stand firm against that dehumanization. We are here to stop people, including ourselves, from dehumanizing any of God's children, no matter how much they dehumanize their own souls.

—**Tom Fox**

Steinbach, Man.

New church a 'workshop' in progress

The city of Steinbach is growing, but the churches in this community are not reflecting that same growth. This fact led Marv and Tanelle Wirzba, former co-pastors at Steinbach Mennonite Church (SMC), to call together a small group of church friends to consider ways of reaching out to those who were not finding a place in the established congregations of the community.

"We realized that doing outreach required doing some new things," said Marv. "Organized religion and large buildings can be fairly intimidating and we realized the need for moving outside the comfort of those buildings."

Last September, a core group of six families formed a new church—God's Workshop—and began meeting in an empty warehouse.

"We felt called to start a new church," said Lois Climenhaga, one of the core group members. "We were concerned about the people in Steinbach who don't feel comfortable in the large established churches, who fall through the cracks and are on the margins of society."

God's Workshop opened its door to those people moving into the community who do not have a church background. The small, simple, informal gathering of 20 to 30 people on Sunday morning has few pretensions. They bring their lawn chairs into the large open space for worship after having a simple breakfast together around picnic tables. There is a prayer room and upstairs space is used for Sunday

school. The fledgling church employs Marv Wirzba quarter-time.

Already the church has been a welcoming place for some families and individuals of different social, economic and ethnic classes.

"Seeing that this is a good fit for some people who weren't part of a church before has been a highlight," said Climenhaga. "Turning the old warehouse into sacred space is hard work, but tremendously rewarding."

"Finances is one of our struggles," she noted. "We are very much on a shoestring budget, but so far we have been able to come up with sufficient funds. We were able to end the year in the black. The Lord has provided amazingly. It is very exciting to see how the Lord works."

Daryl Climenhaga, another core member, recently delivered a sermon at SMC in which he expressed gratitude for the nurture this congregation has provided God's Workshop. He acknowledged that the moving out comes with some sadness. "Our task over the next several months is to work out our relationship with SMC," he noted.

Norm Voth, director of Evangelism and Service for Mennonite Church Manitoba, has been in conversation with the core group at God's Workshop. "We are just beginning to explore what the relationship with the larger church will look like in the future," he said.

—Evelyn Rempel Petkau



God's Workshop, a new church plant in Steinbach, Man., meets in a warehouse and ministers to those intimidated by more conventional churches and those on the margins of society.

Montréal

Peace makes progress over 25 kilometres

Following a successful Bike for Peace event last fall, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Québec is planning for an even bigger event this year.

"This first Bike for Peace was a success," said MCC director Jean-Victor Brosseau, predicting that "many will join us on the second annual Bike for Peace in September 2006."

Bike for Peace 2006 hopes for at least 100 participants, more than doubling the 40 who took part in last fall's inaugural event that brought together Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren church members to promote work for peace and justice.

More than \$1,600 was raised last Sept. 11 by members of Montréal Mennonite Fellowship (an MC Eastern Canada congregation) and several Québec Association of Mennonite Brethren Churches congregations to assist children displaced by the war in Colombia.

"September 11 is a date which will be etched in our collective memories forever, the events of which remind us of the value and importance of peace," said André Laplante, a member of the organizing committee. "The fact that Bike for Peace was held on Sept. 11 has a particular significance—working to promote peace in our own backyard as well as beyond our borders."

In addition to the generosity of the bikers' sponsors, Bike for Peace 2005 also received a financial contribution from the Verdun Salvation Army Community Church and an anonymous gift. Joshua Loughheed of the Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal was awarded a prize for raising the most money—\$360.

Those wishing to register for Bike for Peace 2006 should contact Mennonite Fellowship of Montréal's Luke Martin, who serves as director of the local House of Friendship, at 514-843-4356.

—From an MCC Québec report by Jean-Calvin Kitata

God's Workshop photo

Edmonton

Church helps African refugees mourn

In January, Alice Chokpellah heard the news that her older brother, Junior W. Macarthy, had died suddenly in Africa.

Hugo and Doreen Neufeld, pastors on temporary assignment at Holyrood Mennonite Church, suggested a special remembrance and prayer service in Chokpellah's home.

She picked up on the idea and remarked, "There are so many who have lost family members and friends in Africa. Why not do this in church for all those who have died in the past few years, as well as for those who are missing."

In the last year, upwards of 30 African refugees have become active participants at Holyrood. Most of them had spent time in refugee camps in Ghana or Sierra Leone after fleeing civil war in their home country of Liberia. In the turmoil and confusion, many families and friends became separated, and the whereabouts and fate of loved ones often remains unknown. Even when news of a death is received, there is often no time or place for loved ones to hold a funeral or memorial service, and grief remains open-ended and unanchored.

On Feb. 12, the Holyrood congregation set aside part of the morning worship time to remember those who had died or had been lost in Africa, and to ask for God's comfort and nearness in this difficult process of grief over time, distance and unknowing. Scripture readings from I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and Revelation 21:1-4 set the stage for a reading of the names of the lost loved ones related to the Africans in the congregation. More than 20 names of people ranging in age from four to 100 years were read from the pulpit.

Pastor Doreen Neufeld led in a prayer:

"O God, Lord of life and death, God of hope and comfort. This morning we stand, encircled by your loving arms. Thank you that as you are with us here this morning, you are present also in Africa, and throughout the world. We pray that you will comfort those of us who mourn the death of a

brother, sister, spouse, parent, child. We thank you that they are safe in your care, and yet we grieve their absence from us. Perhaps even more difficult is the absence of those whose whereabouts are unknown. We wonder how they are: Are they safe or are they in trouble? Are they alive or are they dead? We commit them to your care. If they are alive, O God, keep them safe and return them to our arms. If they are not, help us to hear, so we can know how to grieve. In you alone we trust, knowing that you understand our pain and our grief. Your son too, suffered and died. Jesus, too, wept at the death of a friend. Amen."

At a later date, the congregation hopes to have a service to remember all who have died in the past year.

—Donita Wiebe-Neufeld



Holyrood Mennonite Church photo

Amie Bumbeh from Liberia—one of about 30 African refugees worshipping at Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton, serves ice cream to young Rebecca Breen.

Toronto

Grebel alumni raise funds for TMTC

Conrad Grebel University College alumni Cate Falconer-Lichty and Jake Hiebert (known professionally as Big Rude Jake) performed a benefit concert for Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC) at Wycliffe College, Toronto, on Feb. 18. The audience enjoyed their mix of acoustic jazz and blues and entertaining banter, while raising \$1,000.

The two performers met at Conrad Grebel in Waterloo, Ont., when they were both students in the early 1980s. They reconnected musically in 2003 at the college anniversary celebrations and offered to do the concert as a way of showing their support for their alma mater.

Falconer-Lichty currently teaches elementary school in Maple, Ont., and attends Hagerman Mennonite Church in Markham. She credits Conrad Grebel with providing an environment that helped her grow socially, musically and spiritually, where she participated in the chapel choir and coffee houses.

Soon after graduating from Conrad Grebel in 1986, Hiebert began working full-time in the music industry as a per-



Cate Falconer-Lichty and Jake Hiebert

former, writer and producer. During the '90s, Big Rude Jake became well known in Toronto as a punk, blues and swing performer. He says it was at Conrad Grebel that he first began songwriting and became comfortable performing in front of an audience. Although he has taken a different path professionally and religiously, he still feels connected to his Conrad Grebel friends.

TMTC is an inter-Mennonite graduate teaching and research centre of Conrad Grebel affiliated with the ecumenical Toronto School of Theology; it seeks to develop well-trained theological leadership for the church.

—Joanna Reesor-McDowell

Morden, Man.

Finding ways to be welcoming

What does it take to be a welcoming church? Morden Mennonite Church is discovering the answer. In this community of 6,000 about 90 minutes from Winnipeg, Morden Mennonite is home to a growing number of new immigrants for whom the English language and Mennonite faith are not familiar.

When Irma Maier and her family came from Kazakhstan via Germany to Morden in 1998, they decided to go to the closest church down the street. It was not a Baptist church with which they would be familiar, but it was warm and welcoming.

"It had a very warm atmosphere and we felt at home," says Maier of Morden Mennonite. "It wasn't easy for us as we came to Canada. It was a new culture, a new system, new language. If you have no one here, it can be difficult."

To help others like her family, Maier established Pathfinders Canada, an immigration settlement service, in 1999, and many of the Russian immigrants that her agency has assisted can be seen Sunday mornings sitting in the balcony of Morden Mennonite listening as she offers simultaneous translation of the worship service.

"I offer to bring them to our church to get familiar with more people and to experience what we have experienced here," Maier says. "My church knows what I am doing. Those who know German try to speak German and even the older ones try out the Russian that they know."

"It's not easy to lay your destiny in somebody's hands whom you barely know. I know that," says Maier, who works hard to build a high level of trust in her business. "I believe establishing Pathfinders was God's leading and will. I like to work with people and, being an immigrant myself, I know it is hard."

The immigrants she has worked with come from Ukraine, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, India, Israel, the Philippines, Germany



Photo by Irma Maier

Members of Morden Mennonite's Russian Bible study include, from left to right, back row: Alexander Potapow, Alexander Maier, Jurij Mattner, Ludmilla Hladkikh, Herta Engbrecht and Peter Engbrecht; and front row: Jakob Busik, Emma Busik, Olga Mattner, Marina Wins and Maria Casianenco.

and other European countries. Some continue to come to church after their initial visit.

"About three or four years ago we started a Russian Bible study and we would meet in different homes," Maier says. "About a year ago we began to meet in the church."

This past year, Maier approached the church council with a request to purchase 12 headsets. The women's group provided funding for this. All the headsets are in use almost every Sunday, with Maier providing the translation.

Annemarie Wiebe, a retired qualified ESL teacher, offers conversational and English Bible study classes to

women at the church. "The women are thrilled," says Maier. "They like it better than the government-sponsored classes."

For Maier, her work is a form of ministry, "a tool in God's hands." The warm hospitality of the church not only made her adjustment easier, it has been a significant factor for many of her clients.

How does the church demonstrate this warmth and hospitality?

"They put our names and addresses in their telephone directory. They give us a church mailbox. They invite us to participate in church potlucks and help on serving groups," she says.

—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

On behalf of the congregation of St. Catharines United Mennonite Church, Peter Huebert, left, welcomed new lead pastor Ken Gazley on Feb. 12. Also pictured are Mieke Gazley and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada conference minister Muriel Bechtel (background). Before coming to St. Catharines, Gazley served as pastor of Port Colborne (Ont.) Brethren in Christ Church.



Photo by Ed Hildebrandt

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News brief

Teaching English helps agriculture students

English grammar and the science of sustainable agriculture seem worlds apart. But in Laos, professors and students at Bolikhamxay Agriculture and Forestry College say learning English opens doors to international conferences, books, web resources and other opportunities to study new techniques to enhance food production, sustain

the environment and support farmers. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker Ben MacBride-Smith is teaching English to professors and students at the college, enhancing the faculty's ability to communicate with peers internationally and boosting students' prospects to flourish in the international scientific and agricultural community.
 —MCC release

People & Events



Fred Schmidt is pictured with granddaughter Nadine Cressman shortly after he was diagnosed with cancer.

Goessel, Kan.—Following a four-year battle with lung cancer, Fred Schmidt of Goessel, passed away on Feb. 12. After marrying Jo-Ann Enns of Bethany Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., in 1968, the couple lived in Ontario from 1972-81, where they served as group home house-parents at Ausable Springs Ranch. Schmidt was director of the Niagara Region Group Home program and spent two years as director of residential life for Bethesda Home in Vineland, Ont. He remained a shareholder in the Meaford (Ont.) Nursing Home until his death. After returning to the U.S. in 1982, Schmidt served as board chair of Bethesda Home in Goessel; and was a deacon, Sunday school teacher and youth group sponsor at Tabor Mennonite Church. Schmidt is survived by his wife Jo-Ann and son Jeffrey of Newton, Kansas; daughter Rachel and husband James Cressman and children Nadine and Elliot of Toronto; and son Michael and wife Christina Reimer of Toronto.
—Margaret Loewen Reimer

Langley, B.C.—After 30 years as history professor at Trinity Western University (TWU), John Klassen is being formally recognized by students and

colleagues for establishing and nurturing TWU's history department. The alumni and history divisions have jointly announced the unveiling of the John Klassen Fellowship in honour of the professor who, while eligible for retirement, is as active in teaching and research as ever. As a tribute to Klassen's contribution to students, colleagues and the history department, the work-study scholarship is awarded yearly to a fourth year history student who demonstrates high interest and achievement in the field. Initially established by a generous history alumnus 10 years ago, the endowed work-study scholarship allows students to earn financial support while obtaining work experience and mentoring from a history faculty member, and the professor receives much needed assistance. "My teaching assistants have been of enormous help to me and I trust that the future students will be a benefit to my colleagues," says Klassen, calling the award "very humbling. I hope both the department and future students will be richly rewarded as a result."
—TWU release

Waterloo, Ont.—Campus pastors of Mennonite colleges, universities and seminaries from Canada and the U.S. met last month at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo. In their second annual meeting, the campus pastors shared issues, ideas, resources and support with each other. Topics of discussion included chapel structure and role, integrating campus ministries into various aspects of institutional life, working with student leaders and ministry teams, and planning themes to shape the campus ministry program. The group plans to meet next year at Eastern Mennonite University and Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va.
—Janeen Bertsche Johnson

Lancaster County, Pa.—At the Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) annual board and "all unit" meetings last month, more than 700 participants heard speakers share about the immense needs along the Gulf Coast for the next three to five years. While much disorganization still exists with government agencies, MDS is making good contacts, continues to be blessed with significant donations for this response, and has dispatched 325 Canadian volunteers to Gulf Coast projects to date, bringing the total number of Canadian volunteers for bi-national projects last year to more than 700. In response to post-Katrina realities, MDS is reorganizing its staff structure, and adding such new positions as a Canadian-based director to develop new programs and help strengthen regions and units on both sides of the border. Volunteer head cooks, construction forepersons, crew leaders and project directors who can commit two months of their time are still needed for this spring and summer. A leadership training workshop is being held from April 5 to 7 in Akron, Pa. Anyone available to fill these positions is asked to call Lois Nickel toll-free at 1-866-261-1274.
—MDS release

Winnipeg—Evangelical Anabaptist Seminary Program, a seminary-level education program in Winnipeg, changed its name to Winnipeg Centre for Ministry Studies (WCMS) effective Feb. 1. Program coordinator Pierre Gilbert is excited about the possibilities this change brings. "The name change indicates an emphasis not only on delivery of seminary courses, but a whole range of professional formation, including workshops, seminars and pastoral ministry roundtables," he says. The new name also provides a clearer picture of the centre's focus on professional training in

the Winnipeg area, and of its openness to serve the broader Christian community. WCMS started providing courses on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University in the fall of 2002. In the past three years, the number of courses offered has jumped from five per year to 10, with the opportunity for pastors and lay people to receive a certificate in Christian ministry. It is the hope and vision of the centre to offer a master of arts degree in Christian ministry in the next couple of years.
—WCMS release
by Megan E. Richard

Ottawa—Did you know that Canada's population topped 30 million for the first time in 2001? Or that the "average family" of three people had an income of more than \$76,000? You wouldn't if it wasn't for the Census of Canada that takes place every five years. The 2006 census is set to take place on May 16, on which day every Canadian household is expected to fill out the form that they will be receiving from Statistics Canada. Eighty percent of Canadian households will receive a short form containing only eight questions; the remainder will receive the long form that asks a total of 61 questions. "Since the census is a vital source of information about Canada and Canadians, it must be complete and accurate," stated Ivan Fellegi, chief statistician of Canada, in a letter to Mennonite Church Canada. "It is therefore imperative that Canadians fill in and return their questionnaires." Respondents to this year's census will—for the first time—have the ability to decide whether they want their personal census data released for historical and genealogical research after 92 years. Information gathered by the 2006 census will be released in 2007.
—From a Statistics Canada release

Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Becker—to Karla and Dwayne (of Windsor), Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., twin sons, Wyatt Edwin and Ethan Dwayne, Feb. 16.

Dasch—to Deanna Klassen and Chris Dasch, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Mia Rachel, Feb. 20.

Goodwin—to Lynne Dueck and Richard, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., a daughter, Elizabeth Anne, Dec. 23.

Harder: to Tammy and Jeremy, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son Kade Jett, Feb. 24.

Janzen—to Gina and Henry of Milton, Ont., Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Hansel Christo, Dec. 29.

LeClair—to Belinda and Trevor, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daugh-

ter, Grace Elizabeth, Feb. 9.

MacDonald—to Kerri Hallman-MacDonald and Derrick, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., a daughter, Rachel Lynn, Feb. 1.

Neufeld—to Lori and Cornie, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a daughter, Abigail Michelle, Jan. 7.

Peters—to Janet and Eric, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Jaelyn Hannah, Dec. 13.

Sawatzky—to Melanie and Eliot, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Alexia, Jan. 21.

Marriages

Colosimo-Stenson—Chico and Shauna, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 10.

Giesbrecht-Dueck—Warren and Jodi, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Feb. 11.

Hovius-Lebold—Jacob and Beth, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Feb. 17.

Deaths

Albrecht—Erven, 85, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., Jan. 20.

Albrecht—Jeffrey Ryan (Jeff), 18 (b. May 19, 1987), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Feb. 19.

Coffman—Dorothy, 61 (b. Nov. 3, 1942), of North Bay, Ont., First Mennonite, Vineland, Ont., Feb. 18.

Derksen—Peter I., 79, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Feb. 25.

Gingerich—Katie, 93, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., March 2.

Goerzen—Sue, 80, Harrow Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 14.

Hofstetter—Melinda, 91 (b. Nov. 19, 1914), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., March 2.

Koerber—Floyd, 73, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., Jan. 29.

Poetker—Elizabeth, 88, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Jan. 1.

Schwartzentruber—Omar, 76, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., Feb. 23.

Wiens—John Alfred, 72 (b. May 25, 1933), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., Feb. 16.

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

Advertising Dates

Issue Deadline

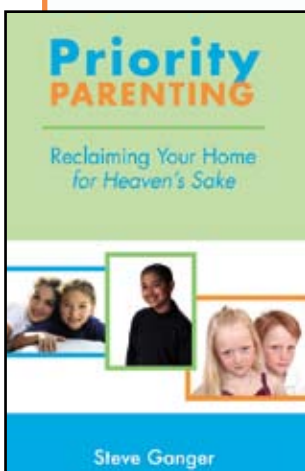
April 17	April 4
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May 15	May 2
May 29	May 16

Focus: *Seniors*

June 12	May 30
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Mennonite Church Canada

Be 'transformed' by March Equipping

The March Equipping packet, now available in church offices, shares stories, resources and letters from leaders that inspire and highlight both personal and corporate opportunities for transformation:

- A celebration story from "Connexus," a rapidly growing English language ministry of the Korea Anabaptist Center in Seoul, Korea, announcing the need for more teachers.
- A Resource Centre update introduces new Gather 'Round trainers and calendar of training events for the Mennonite Publishing Network's new Sunday school curriculum.
- Inspirational reflections from MC Canada leaders, which touch on themes such as growing more leaders for the church (Sven Eriksson); practising unity through generosity (Dave Bergen); and reflections on a recent peace-building trip to Colombia in the context of one of three new denominational priorities—to become a more global church (Jack Suderman).

Prayer and praise

During this Lenten season, as well as sacrificing chocolate and coffee, consider adding on the discipline of prayer in a more deliberate way as you pray through, with, and for the following praise and petition items:

- Celebrate the growing relationships between native and non-native churches, and pray for the Manitoba Partnership Circle. Pray also for relationships with aboriginal people in B.C. as MC Canada Native Ministry, MCC B.C. Aboriginal Neighbours and Columbia Bible College co-sponsor sessions with native theologians Terry LeBlanc and Ray Aldred

in Abbotsford on March 28 and 29.

- Give thanks for the peace-building progress as Colombian church leaders met together last month.
- Remember the Congo Partnership Council of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, which will be meeting in Elkhart, Ind., from March 27 to 29 with leaders from three Congolese Mennonite churches.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

'More than enough' room at assembly

"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but they all come from the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve the same Lord, and we can each do different things" I Corinthians 12:4-6 (The Promise).

With this Scripture MC Eastern Canada members are invited to enter the world of "enough" in conference sessions to be held at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church on April 28 and 29. "More than enough: Releasing God's gifts" is the theme for the delegate assembly hosted by the Niagara Peninsula Cluster.

The spring conference session is for everybody, not just delegates! MC Eastern Canada is not an address—4489 King St. E., Kitchener—but is 90 congregations representing 14,000 people who come together for worship, fellowship, sharing, reflecting and discerning in their walk with God and each other.

Come and celebrate the work of MC Eastern Canada as we look forward to the work of the five new councils that will pick up the torch and legacy of ministry from the eight commissions in the newly revised structural model.

Come and worship with

sisters and brothers from across the area church. Come and hear testimonies of God at work in local congregations. Come and be introduced to two new MC Eastern Canada emerging congregations. Come to discern how members and delegates might release God's gifts in their congregations and the conference.

Registration materials and delegate packets were mailed to congregations the first week of March. This as an event to which everyone in the congregation is invited. And pray for the host planners and those who plan the worship.

Website name has been changed

MC Eastern Canada has changed its web domain name; www.mcec.on.ca has expired. It has been replaced by www.mcec.ca. This affects both the website and any staff e-mail addresses. Individual staff can be reached by simply adding their first name in front of @mcec.ca.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Women in Mission Enrichment Day

Manitoba Women in Mission will be celebrating their annual Worship and Enrichment Day on May 6, at First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. This year's theme is "Stewardship of time." The day's activities include a singspiration, brief business meeting and a service of remembrance for those Women in Mission who passed away in the previous year. Melissa Miller is the guest speaker. Following a bag lunch, three speakers will share brief stories and examples of being "stewards of time."

Camps with Meaning updates

Lisa Martens of Hope Mennonite Church is compiling this year's Bible curriculum for summer camp. Based on Jeremy Bergen's curriculum "Click on radical," the new curriculum is entitled "The everlasting story." Staff and campers will explore the stories of communities and individuals of faith throughout history to learn how God worked through them.

This year, Camps with Meaning's goal is to reach 1,300 individuals, up 100 from last year. By increasing promotion to MC Manitoba churches and to community schools, as well as participating in such events as Parade of Camps, Camps with Meaning staff hope to achieve this goal.

Julia Thiessen has been hired as the 2006 summer program assistant. She brings with her numerous gifts and abilities, among which is her love of camp and children.

Several new physical improvements to the camps represent sacrificial gifts of time and resources:

- The fireplace at Camp Moose Lake has been completely renovated, making it a net "exporter" of heat, rather than a heat loss. A convenient cloakroom replaces the former porch of the main lodge, and significant repair and improvements have been made to the foundation.
- At Camp Koinonia, the former nature centre has been transformed into a gleaming new all-season cabin.
- A new coffee centre has been installed at Camp Assiniboia.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Pastoral openings in five churches

With the impending resignation of Marco Funk as

youth pastor at Rosthern Mennonite, a total of five MC Saskatchewan churches will be looking for leadership. The large church in the prairie town of 1,500 lost their lead pastor last fall. Now Funk, who has worked with the youth group, will be leaving to consider further studies.

In Swift Current, Ray and Sylvia Friesen have left Zion Mennonite Church, leaving an opening for a pastor in the congregation of almost 200 members.

Superb Mennonite, in the town of the same name, is also without a pastor. The 30-member church family is considering the option of worshipping with another group in the area.

Henry and Erna Funk have finished their interim position in the rural congregation of Aberdeen Mennonite, and have left a vacancy there as well.

And Hope Mennonite in North Battleford, with a membership of 21, will again be minus a shepherd when Henry Patkau retires this summer.

Mennonite Church Alberta

Rosemary pastor suffers heart attack

On March 3, Rosemary Mennonite Church pastor Roy Hewko was taken to Foothills

Hospital in Calgary, where doctors determined he had suffered a mild heart attack. Hewko was placed in intensive care for testing and treatment. Conference pastor Jim Shantz was able to visit on March 5, and said that Hewko's prognosis looks good, but a period of rest and recovery for about a month is likely. Please pray for Roy, his wife Joyce, and the Rosemary congregation, as they seek God's presence and healing touch during this stressful time.

'God's people now' songfest theme

"God's people now" is the theme of this year's Alberta Songfest celebration. Songfest 2006 promises to be a musical banquet, as the adult mass choir will be bolstered by special guest conductor Rudy Schellenberg and the Canadian Mennonite University Chamber Choir. Cheryl Thiessen will conduct the children's choir and Suzanne Gross will conduct the youth ensemble. All are welcome to come join the choir and the congregation at Edmonton's First Mennonite Church on May 6 and 7 in praise to God.



Photo by Lucia Eitzen

"A renewal of congregational singing" (Neubelebung des Gemeindegesangs) seminar took place at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, earlier this month.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Seminar introduces German hymnal

"A renewal of congregational singing" (*Neubelebung des Gemeindegesangs*) seminar took place at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, earlier this month, with special guests George and Esther Wiebe of Winnipeg. Worship leaders, song leaders, accompanists and church worship committee members were invited to the musical weekend, held in both German and English.

A highlight of the weekend was the introduction of a new German hymnal the Wiebes helped to produce. Workshop input included sessions on congregational singing, and leading and accompanying hymns. Participants also worked on putting together a worship service and rehearsed as a mass choir.

To conclude the weekend, approximately 400 attended a joint German-English worship service at Eben-Ezer on Sunday morning, at which the choir participated.

Said Lucia Eitzen, music promoter at Eben-Ezer, "George and Esther gave us great encouragement to make use of the powerful potential hymns and modern songs we have in worship services. Making congregational singing functional makes it more meaningful. The congregation was surprised how enjoyable and refreshing congregational singing can be. It was a rich worship experience."

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.

Marsabit, Kenya

MCC helps Kenyans save livestock during drought

A drought in much of eastern Africa is having a devastating effect on nomadic people who raise animals for a living.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is currently sending 12 truckloads of animal feed to members of one such group, the Gabra people of northern Kenya's Marsabit district.

The Gabra people raise cattle, goats and

other livestock as their primary source of food and income. When seasonal rains failed to materialize in 2005, the Gabra's herds began to die for lack of water and pasture.

MCC is providing about \$60,000 to a local Anglican organization to purchase 120 tons of animal feed in Nairobi, Kenya, and distribute it in Marsabit district. About 5,000 families will receive feed for their livestock.

David Adolph-LaRoche, a development coordinator for the Anglican Church of Kenya, reports that the Gabra people are rapidly losing their animals. "On a given day hundreds of carcasses can be found," he wrote in a project report. "Elders say

that they have never seen such a severe drought."

Adolph-LaRoche reports that young children, old people and new mothers among the Gabra community are beginning to show signs of malnutrition because milk and meat are unavailable. "Over and over we hear, 'Never mind about the maize [food assistance] for people; give us food for our animals so that as they survive we too can survive,'" he wrote.

The United Nations estimates that the current drought in eastern Africa threatens the food supplies of 11 million people. MCC is planning additional responses to this crisis.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

Churches urged to serve communities

Ottawa—The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) is convening Celebration 2006, a unique event in which churches across the country share their love for God by acts of kindness—all performed at the same time. From May 27 to June 11, participating churches will be using creative ways to get out into their community and make a difference.

Churches are encouraged to come up with their own projects, but the Celebration 2006 website (www.celebration2006.ca) highlights suggestions that were successful last year; churches can also register online.

Whether it's cleaning up the garbage in the local park, removing graffiti, washing windows or painting houses, Christians will be doing it for God and for the love of their community.

EFC president Bruce Clemenger said, "Last year's event provided many ways for Christians to demonstrate their love. Jesus told his followers to 'let your light shine.' Imagine what a positive impact we can have in our local communities if many new churches join in this year. Imagine the impact on our nation by working together like this."

—EFC release

Calendar

British Columbia

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 24-29: MEI spring musical *The Secret Garden*.

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.

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

May 26-27: "Come to the table: A conference on the arts in worship" explores the theme of collaborative worship (dance, drama, visual arts, writing for worship, storytelling and more). Keynote speakers from AMBS: June Alliman Yoder, Marlene Kropf and Rebecca Slough. For more information, e-mail Angelika Dawson at music@emmanuelmennonite.com.

June 1: MEI graduation ceremony.

Alberta

April 21: MCC's third annual fine arts festival, Master's Academy, Calgary. Theme: "What does peace look like to your neighbour?"

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

May 6-7: Songfest hosted by Edmonton First Mennonite Church. Theme: "God's people now." A choir from Canadian Mennonite University will be the featured guests.

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

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

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

June 2-4: Foothills Mennonite Church 50th anniversary

celebrations.

June 16-17: MCC Alberta Relief Sale and bikeathon, Didsbury.

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

Aug. 26-27: Bluesky Mennonite Church 50th anniversary celebrations.

Saskatchewan

April 8: Women's Enrichment Day.

April 18-20: Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth "Chalo" experience in Saskatoon and Regina.

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.

April 29: Ministries Commission second annual Touring Mission Fest.

May 6: RJC alumni golf tournament. To enter, visit www.rjc.sk.ca.

May 7: RJC spring concert.

May 15-18: Anabaptist spirituality continuing education course with Arnold Snyder at First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

May 27-28: Three-camp retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

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

June 4: Shekinah Retreat Centre triathlon.

June 9-10: MCC Relief Sale and quilt auction in Saskatoon.

Manitoba

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*, 10:30 a.m., at the church.

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

April 23: Spring concert Winnipeg's North Kildonan Mennonite Church, at the church, 3 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.

May 4-6: Institute for Leaders: Part 1, sponsored by CMU's Centre for Leadership and Management. For more information, visit www.cmu.ca.

May 6: Manitoba Women in Mission annual Worship and Enrichment Day at First Mennonite, Winnipeg. Registration at 8:30 a.m. Theme: "Stewardship in time." Guest speaker: Melissa Miller.

May 17: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate work day.

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

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

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

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

June 11: MCI *Saengerfest*. Worship, 10:30 a.m.; concert, 2 p.m.

June 15-17: Institute for Leaders: Part 2, sponsored by CMU's Centre for Leadership and Management. For more information, visit www.cmu.ca.

June 16-17: MCC Winnipeg Festival and Relief Sale at CMU.

June 20: CMU President's Golf Tournament, Kingswood Golf and Country Club, LaSalle. Visit www.cmu.ca for more information.

Aug. 21-25: CMU Blazers multi-sport overnight camp. For more information, visit www.cmu.ca.

Aug. 28-Sept. 1: CMU Blazers multi-sport day camp. For more information, visit www.cmu.ca

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

Sept. 16: Morris MCC Relief Sale.

Sept. 16-17: Brandon MCC Relief Sale.

Oct. 9: Morden Mennonite Church 75th anniversary celebration.

Oct. 15-16: CMU J.J. Thiessen Lectures with Ellen Davis, professor of Bible and practical theology, Duke Divinity School.

Nov. 17-18: MCC Manitoba annual general meeting, Winnipeg.

Jan. 18-20: CMU Refreshing Winds conference on worship and music. Keynote speaker: Marva Dawn, author of *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship For This Urgent Time*.

Feb. 20-21: CMU winter lectures with Robert Russell, professor of theology, Graduate Theological Union. Topic: "Science and theology."

Ontario

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 11: A reading by Rudy Wiebe from his new memoir *Of This Earth: A Mennonite Boyhood in the Boreal Forest*, Conrad Grebel college chapel, 7:30 p.m.

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: MCC Relief Sale promotion dinner at Niagara United Mennonite, 6 p.m. For tickets, call 905-934-4595.

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 9: St. Catharines United Mennonite Church Choir presents *From Darkness to Light: The Story of Holy Week* in music and Scripture, 7 p.m.

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 21: Menno Youth Singers coffee house at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener. Doors open at 7:30 p.m.

April 22: MEDA Waterloo chapter annual banquet at Conrad Grebel University College, 6:30 p.m. Speaker: Sarah Smith.

April 24-28: MCC meat canning at the University of Guelph.

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

April 28-29: MC Eastern Canada spring conference, St. Catharines.

May 5-7: Women's retreat at Hidden Acres Camp. Open to all MC Eastern Canada women and their friends.

May 13: Menno Singers present "Psalms and Hymns" with Marilyn Houser Hamm, Zion United Church, Kitchener, 8 p.m.

U.S.A.

June 8-10: "Holding fast to our faith: Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective 10 years later" conference, AMBS, Elkhart, Ind.

Oct. 26: Mennonite/s Writing: Beyond Borders conference, Bluffton University, Ohio. Keynote speaker: Kathleen Norris. Submissions of Mennonite writing sought. For details, visit: www.bluffton.edu/eng/conference/.

www.bluffton.edu/eng/conference/.

Nov. 2-5: MEDA convention—"Business as a calling: Set the pace." Tampa, Fla. For more information, visit www.businessasacalling.org.

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

News brief

Development, not aid, sought by North Korea

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) halted its aid to North

Korea at the beginning of this year. The North Korean government dissolved the organization that MCC and other humanitarian organizations were working through to provide relief and said it no longer needs foreign relief, but would like assistance in development work instead. MCC is exploring ways to assist in development work and education in North Korea. Over the past decade, MCC has provided North Korea with relief aid valued at more than \$16 million Cdn. —MCC release

Subscriber services

How to subscribe:

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

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

Contact information:

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

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

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

News briefs

Project seeks heart blocks for quilts, wall hangings

Show your heart for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and its work. This spring, MCC is seeking quilt squares with heart motifs. The "heart blocks," six- and nine-inch finished quilt squares, will be incorporated into quilts or wall hangings that will be sold at MCC relief sales. More than 200 blocks of varying colours and designs have been donated so far. "There are some with African fabrics, some with Japanese fabrics. They're just all kinds," says Marlys Wiens, co-editor of the *Love, Joy, Piece* quilting newsletter. To learn

more, contact Bev Patkau by e-mail at lpatkau@shaw.ca. —MCC release

Kenyan pastors split on carrying weapons

Following an increase in attacks on priests and churches by armed criminals, some church leaders in Kenya are considering petitioning the government to license them to carry firearms. At the same time, others are afraid that such action breaks ecclesiastical ethics in a country where owning a gun is a privilege and at a time when many religious leaders are joining a global campaign to rein in small arms.

—ENI release

Employment opportunities



Stewardship Consultant

Due to the pending retirement of Dave Kroeker, MFC is seeking a full-time stewardship consultant to work out of its Abbotsford, B.C. office. This person will provide charitable gift and estate planning services and promote biblical stewardship of financial resources in British Columbia.

The successful candidate will:

- Communicate effectively with individuals and have an aptitude for presenting in a variety of group settings
- Have a good understanding of charitable gift and estate planning
- Be creative, organized, and self-motivated
- Support and incorporate MFC's stewardship mission in personal life
- Be willing and able to contribute as part of an inter-dependent staff team.

The successful candidate must be a member of one of MFC's seven participating conferences.

Submit applications by April 18, 2006 to:
 Erwin Warkentin, General Manager
 112-1325 Markham Rd, Winnipeg, MB R3T 4J6
 1-800-772-3257 fax: 204-488-1986
 e-mail: ewarkentin@mennofoundation.ca
www.mennofoundation.ca

PRINCIPAL

Westgate Mennonite Collegiate is inviting applications for the position of Principal. Westgate is a Christian School grounded in the Anabaptist tradition. The vision of the school includes fostering excellence in education in the context of a nurturing faith community. The school has a student body of 320 students from grades 7-12.

We are seeking a candidate who has a passion and vision for Christian Education from an Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective. The principal, together with the board of directors, is responsible for long-term strategic planning for the school. The principal is responsible for creating a school climate conducive to learning and faith development. The successful candidate will have strong interpersonal and administrative skills, a valid teaching certificate, and teaching experience.

Salary will be commensurate with experience and qualifications. Westgate offers a comprehensive benefits package.

Deadline for applications is April 15, 2006. Applications should be submitted to:

Westgate Mennonite Collegiate
Attention: Principal Search Committee
 86 West Gate, Winnipeg, MB R3C 2E1
 Fax: (204) 786-1651

E-mail: principalsearchcommittee@westgate.mb.ca



Mennonite Church Eastern Canada invites applications for

REGIONAL MINISTERS

A team of three half-time Regional Ministers is required for ministry in different geographical areas within MCEC. Applicants will draw on their previous pastoral experience, their familiarity with congregational denominational resources, their depth of spiritual maturity, and their commitment to Anabaptist theology to be a resource for pastors and lay leaders for effective congregational ministry. Applicants will be excellent communicators and team-builders who are energized by working alongside the conference Leadership Team to realize MCEC's mission of "Extending the peace of Jesus Christ: Making Disciples, Growing Congregations, Forming Leaders." Application deadline is March 31, 2006. For more information, or to request a job description, please contact:

David Martin, MCEC Executive Minister
 Phone: 519-650-3806 / 1-800-206-9356
 E-mail: dmartin@mcec.ca
 Web: www.mcec.ca

For rent

Home away from home. One large room to rent, Sept. 1-indefinite. Close to Conrad Grebel College. Energy smart house. Phone 519-883-0252.

Sleepy Hollow Cottage. All season, 3-bedroom cottage/home in a peaceful wooded valley in the heart of the Niagara region. Excellent as a small retreat centre or for family holiday. Walk to the Bruce Trail. Minutes from other Niagara attractions. For further information and rental costs, phone 705-476-2319, e-mail: shcottage@sympatico.ca

EDUCATION DIRECTOR – WILLOWGROVE

Affiliated with the Mennonite Church, and based in Stouffville, Ontario, Willowgrove is searching for an Education Director. This newly created, exciting, full-time position will be responsible for overseeing Willowgrove's Primary School (JK-GR 3) and Outdoor Education Program. Other duties will include developing new curriculum with an emphasis on environmental awareness and peace education. For a more thorough job description, please visit our website at www.willowgrove.ca. Applications will be accepted until March 31st.

Please forward a resume to:

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

Connexus (Korea Anabaptist Center ministry) seeks
ENGLISH CONVERSATION TEACHERS

Opportunity for Christians with university degrees to learn, serve, teach, travel, earn and make friends! For more information, visit www.connexus.co.kr/english.

MCC URGENT OPENING in Akron, PA:

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Needed May 1, 2006. Leads selection and processing of applications for Latin America candidates and SALT positions. Strong communication skills required. Cross-cultural experience preferred.

Contact:

Lowell Detweiler
E-mail: lcd@mcc.org; Phone: 717-859-1151

MCC URGENT OPENING in Akron, PA:

RESOURCE GENERATION NETWORK COORDINATOR

Needed June 1, 2006. Coordinates resource generation network for MCC offices across Canada and the United States. Coordinates the establishment of standards in fundraising, setting goals, and building network capacities. Experience in non-profit fundraising preferred, with excellent skills in communication and management.

For job description and further information, contact:

Lowell Detweiler
E-mail: lcd@mcc.org; Phone: 717-859-1151

FUNDED SABBATICALS FOR PASTORS

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary invites pastors to apply for funded sabbaticals for up to nine weeks on the AMBS campus. Funding covers housing, provides a stipend and allows pastors to participate in campus events, meet with professors and receive spiritual direction. Participants pursue a writing project of choice during the time at AMBS. Applications for spring 2007 are due on April 28, 2006. Slots for fall 2006 are still available and applications are still being accepted.

Information and application forms are available online at www.ambse.edu; choose Church Leadership Center, then Engaging Pastors (the final web address will be http://www.ambse.edu/php/EngagingPastors/ep_sabbatical.php). Pastors may also phone for information, or mail applications to:

Phone: 574-296-6269
AMBS, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517
E-mail: hduock@ambse.edu

Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg is seeking a

HALF-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR

The Associate Pastor will serve in a leadership team under the direction of the senior pastor. Ministries include: fostering intergenerational/family relationships and events, equipping and guiding program sponsors, assisting in facilitating youth and young adult programs, coordinating program planning, working with worship teams to involve youth in worship services, community outreach, as well as occasional preaching and worship leading. Previous work experience in church ministry would be considered a definite asset.

Home Street Mennonite Church is a vibrant urban congregation with a typical Sunday attendance of 250. Anabaptist convictions are important to the congregation. Home Street is a member of Mennonite Church Canada.

Interested persons are encouraged to submit a covering letter and resume by April 18, 2006, to:

Pastoral Search Team
Home Street Mennonite Church
318 Home Street
Winnipeg, MB R3G 1X4
E-mail: hsmc@mts.net; Fax: 204-783-1721

SUMMER INTERIM PASTOR

Harrow Mennonite Church invites applications for a Summer Interim Pastor position while our pastor takes a sabbatical. Our average weekly attendance for worship is approx. 30-40 persons of diverse age and backgrounds, providing an excellent opportunity for someone to explore their gifts of ministry in worship and pastoral contexts. Primary responsibilities will revolve around planning and leading worship, preaching, and giving leadership in expanding our experience of music in worship.

Please send resume or inquiries to:

Harrow Mennonite Church
R.R. 2, 3167 Walker Rd., Harrow, ON N0R 1G0
Phone: 519-738-2148
E-mail: office@harrowmennonite.on.ca



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No small potatoes



Photo by Ross W. Muir

Spuddy, mascot of the House of Friendship's Potato Blitz in Kitchener, Ont., helped serve the more than 150 people who donated \$2,490 in cash at the Feb. 24 luncheon at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church. As of the luncheon date, House of Friendship had received more than 6,000 kilograms of potatoes and \$11,465 in cash. The cash donations represent 52,000 kilograms of potatoes from House of Friendship's local potato supplier, for a total of 59,000 kilograms, and organizers expect to exceed the 64,000-kilogram goal by the end of the blitz. The potatoes are used for House of Friendship's emergency food hamper program.