

# CANADIAN Mennonite

**April 17, 2006**  
Volume 10, Number 8

## 'Hiroshima Diary'



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new wine**  
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## Leadership and the Spirit

**B**eing relatively new to Mennonite faith and culture, I'm often asked my opinion of the state of the church. It happened again at a recent dinner party.

With the departure of four congregations at least partially as the result of the divisive issue of homosexuality, I expressed my concern for Mennonite Church Canada—especially in light of problems in the Anglican and United churches.

My hostess—a longtime Mennonite (also by choice rather than birth)—suggested that my area of concern was only a symptom of a deeper problem: The lack of a working (and workable) definition of church leadership. Since the 1960s, when society as a whole began to throw off the shackles of authoritarianism, the church has struggled right alongside it.

That the struggle continues to this day is evidenced in this issue of *Canadian Mennonite*. On page 22, Cree theologian Ray Aldred explains how aboriginal congregations understand leadership as a mantle bestowed by the community—and one that does not give them “the right to tell anyone what to do.” Five pages later, MC Alberta conference minister Jim Shantz talks of pastors who bemoan the fact their congregations let them do everything else in the church except that which they feel they should be doing—namely, leading.

This dichotomy can perhaps be summed up by a story that made the rounds of Tyndale Seminary when I was a student there. A young pastor delivers his first sermon to his new congregation. The rather halting effort is chalked up to nerves by the parishioners, expecting better the next Sunday. A week later, the pastor delivers a much more confident sermon; what bothers his congregation this time, though, is that it's the same sermon. When they get the

identical sermon for the third week in a row, the elders finally decide it's time for action. They confront the minister after church, but are taken aback by his response: “When I see you putting into practice what I've been telling you to do these past three weeks, we'll all get to hear a new sermon.”

Fortunately for us in the church, issues are never only “us and them,” the congregation and the preacher. The Holy Spirit both empowers those who are called to minister and those who do the calling, and mediates the life between them.

Theologian Stanley Hauerwas, in his book, *Christian Existence Today: Essays on Church, World and Living In Between*, states that the sermon is “the communal action whereby Christians are formed.... For it must be remembered that it is not the preacher who makes the sermon efficacious.... Rather, for the preached word to be God's word the Holy Spirit must make us a body of people capable of hearing that word rightly. Put differently, the preached word's power is its capacity to create a people receptive to be being formed by that word.”

As for Aldred's call on page 30 for “just telling...the [gospel] story,” Hauerwas would agree. Pastors need to be taught at seminary “the many stories of the congregations, past and present, that constitute the church of Jesus Christ....” Although Mennonite churches did away with their bishops by the 1970s, it is just such an office—despite its ties to authoritarianism—that Hauerwas says is essential to make it “possible for individual congregations to recognize the life they share is also shared by other congregations.”

To that end, all congregations and their leaders have a stake in the success of general secretary Jack Suderman's God's People Now! Listening Tour. May he find that our shared stories still resonate with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

—**Ross W. Muir**

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**Head office:** 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON, N2L 6H7  
**Phone:** 519-884-3810 **Toll-free:** 1-800-378-2524 **Fax:** 519-884-3331  
**Web site:** canadianmennonite.org

**Please send all material to be considered for publication as follows:**

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**Editorial Staff:** **Tim Miller Dyck**, Editor/Publisher, editor@canadianmennonite.org;

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**Ross W. Muir**, Managing Editor, managinged@canadianmennonite.org;  
**Barb Draper**, Editorial Assistant, edassist@canadianmennonite.org;

**Tim R. Dyck**, Graphic Designer, artdirector@canadianmennonite.org

**Correspondents:** **Leona Dueck Penner**, National Correspondent, dueck-penner@mennonitechurch.ca, 204-888-6781 x178;  
**Amy Dueckman**, B.C. Correspondent, bc@canadianmennonite.org, 604-854-3735; **Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**, Alberta Correspondent, timanddonita@attglobal.net, 780-436-3431; **Karin Fehderau**, Saskatchewan Correspondent, k.fehderau@sasktel.net, 306-933-4209;  
**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**, Manitoba Correspondent, erpetkau@cici.mb.ca, 204-745-2208; **Maurice Martin**, Eastern Canada Correspondent, mauricem@sympatico.ca, 519-662-1031

**Circulation/Finance:** **Lisa Jacky**, office@canadianmennonite.org  
**Advertising:** **Barbara Burkholder**, advert@canadianmennonite.org, toll-free: 1-800-316-4052, fax: 519-884-3331

**Board of Directors:** British Columbia: Henry Neufeld, John W. Goossen. Alberta: Brenda Tiessen-Wiens, Jan Wilhelm. Saskatchewan: Bernie Thiessen. Manitoba: Aiden S. Enns, Bernie Wiebe, Paul Krahn. Eastern Canada: Mary Lymburner, Brice Balmer, Ester Neufeldt, Larry Cornies.

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## Web site preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted on our web site at [www.canadianmennonite.org](http://www.canadianmennonite.org) on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the May 1 issue by April 27.

**Cover: Toki Orui, a Japanese-Canadian artist who lives in Winnipeg, wants the world to remember the devastation caused by the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945. See story on page 9.**

—Photo by Evelyn Rempel Petkau



Page 16

Langley, B.C.

## Recalling the hostages: CPTer tells congregation of his time in Iraq

**B**aghdad is a dangerous place to be these days. But Greg Rollins of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) feels his work there is not finished. After being back in Canada since January, he returned to CPT work in Iraq at the end of March.

Rollins addressed his home congregation—Langley Mennonite Fellowship—the evening of March 11, telling of his recent experiences with CPT. Coming less than 24 hours after the news broke about CPT hostage Tom Fox being found murdered in Baghdad, Rollins' talk took on a sobering connection with current events. *(On March 23, the other three CPT hostages—Canadians Jim Loney and Harmeet Singh Sooden, and Briton Norman Kember—were rescued by coalition forces in a Baghdad suburb. See coverage on pages 19 to 21 of the April 3 Canadian Mennonite. Ed.)*

"We were told to address the kidnapers as 'our brothers holding our colleagues.' It was surreal to call them 'brother,'" Rollins admitted.

In the days following the Nov. 26 kidnappings, Rollins said that he and the other CPT workers in Iraq at the time "began thinking about ourselves [for the first time] so we wouldn't burn out." Rollins dealt with the stress by reading a fantasy novel; others found different coping mechanisms.

The workers' lifestyles also changed somewhat. They "refused to dwell in fear," he said, although they rarely strayed far from their own mixed Muslim-Christian neighbourhood. Eventually they felt secure enough to go out in crowded streets, feeling that there was safety in numbers.

In January, the four hostages were shown on television, asking for the withdrawal of coalition troops from Iraq. Many might have assumed these



**Rollins**

statements were made under duress, but CPT felt differently, said Rollins. "Norman and Tom said on the tape for coalition forces to withdraw. We knew it wasn't just said, but believed."

In speaking of his friendship with Fox, Rollins recalled, "He always did things from his heart. A year before, he said that if he was ever kidnapped, he didn't want his kidnapers or killers to be demonized. He didn't want them to be killed or tortured.

"He had a very calming presence, a peaceful presence. I will miss him," Rollins said simply and sincerely.

Rollins also described the human rights and peace work that he and the other CPT workers have been trying to carry out through their presence in Iraq. Some of that includes increasing public awareness through the holding of prayer vigils, writing news releases and updates, and working with exist-

ing local groups as they become aware of human rights abuses. CPT staffers have some contact with journalists in Iraq, but he noted that western journalists only tend to cover big stories or those involving abductions of westerners, not the scores of stories involving ordinary Iraqi citizens who are also suffering.

CPT workers also provide help for non-English-speaking Iraqis detained by U.S. military personnel and they have helped to secure the release from jail of several innocent Iraqi citizens.

Rollins said the situation in Iraq is complicated, and there are no simple answers to the ongoing conflict. He believes that if coalition forces were to withdraw completely, there would be "chaos," as Iraqis do not have faith in their government yet. He would like to see the military personnel pull back to the borders and stop patrolling the streets.

Many say that Iraq in some ways is now worse off than under Saddam Hussein. Rollins believes that Iraq needs a "strong leader" now, but no one has emerged to replace the strong, yet corrupt, Hussein.

Rollins is planning to stay in Iraq for several months to continue his human rights work with CPT. He said he would reassess his future at that time, but feels he is still needed in Iraq.

He said that many Iraqis have told him and other CPTers, "Your work is important. Stay here."

—Amy Dueckman

**'A year before, he [Tom Fox] said that if he was ever kidnapped, he didn't want his kidnapers or killers to be demonized.'**

# Distilled as new wine:

## Worship in a congregation of refugees and immigrants

**H**ow can our ever-changing community of faith worship cross-culturally in a way that is faithful to our holy God of love? When our backgrounds—levels of formal education, life experiences, and political realities—are very diverse, can we find unity of purpose and spirit through our common worship?

### We gather as those whose lives have been crushed

Toronto Mennonite New Life Church is a small Spanish-speaking Anabaptist congregation that is part of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. On most Sundays, eight or 10 different nationalities are represented when we gather for worship. Most of us are Latin American refugees and immigrants. Civil wars and strife have raged across Central and South America, and the superpowers of the past and the empire of the present have ruled us with an iron grip. Some who have gotten caught up in, and been victims of, these struggles have come to Toronto seeking a new home in a land where they can start again.

Ours is a transient community of individuals and families torn by the tensions and paradoxes that are the aftermath of refugee experience as it confronts present realities of limitation and deprivation. Havoc exists at the heart of family life, and instability leaves people fragile and broken. Grief is part of daily life. Those in the older generation cannot let go of what they have lost, and youths want to forget where they came from and embrace the new culture, to fit in and belong somewhere—if only to a gang. Fragmentation and loss of identity make for fearful hearts and crushed spirits.

In the midst of this fear, in the face of a struggle with unknown powers

that are sucking people down into depression, or enticing them with supposed freedoms, we at New Life offer a variety of services. Through the church, people are invited into a space for exploring faith in God and God's call to become part of a new community. As the presence of God grows in our hearts, we become a fellowship, a new body of believers who are learning to listen to the Lord. This communion with God and our fellow pilgrims is what we read about in I Peter 2:10: *"Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."*

We believe and proclaim the gospel of peace and try to sow the seeds of life of the Prince of Peace in the hearts of those who are drawn near.

Every Sunday the congregation is different. We never know who will be able to attend. Newcomers have very little security. Permanent work is hard to find. Opportunities to earn money are sometimes available only on weekends. Some who have participated in our circle for several months or even years are deported to their countries of origin.

We are finding out that the experience of building community is like placing ourselves in a winepress; it contains our crushed lives and brings us close to one another as we go through the process of being transformed together into new wine. As we let go of our pain and brokenness, we are distilled so the essence of God's life in us can emerge.

### Scripture reveals to us a God of nomads and refugees

To address the needs of refugees and immigrants, we have developed two worship services, one on Sunday morning and the other on Wednesday evening. They are spaces in time, offering worship and pastoral care for a journey of

**Continued on page 6**



**New wine** *From page 5*

constant invitation to dwell in the security of the one our Scriptures reveal to be the God of pilgrims, desert nomads, refugees and outcasts.

The main difference between Sunday and Wednesday worship is in the use of Scripture. Sunday mornings we follow the Revised Common Lectionary. These ecumenically chosen readings provide a framework for worship and praise around a theme that is the basis for an exposition of the Word and for our communal prayer time. For people who have never participated in a church service, and for those who come from different traditions, discovering the basis of our faith is a unifying experience. Through the Scriptures, the Spirit continues to reveal to our hearts who God is and how God is at work in the world.

Our Wednesday worship is organized around systematic study of a book selected from the Bible.

The Old Testament uses the image of the vine as a metaphor for the people of God. In the New Testament, Jesus calls himself the vine, and his people are the branches that produce fruit if we abide in him. The metaphor is expanded into the trampling of the grapes in the winepress. Jesus endured being crushed for us. This image becomes a balm for us in our broken lives, as we identify with the experience of being crushed. Scripture draws us close when we discover that—from beginning to end—it illuminates and describes our experience of suffering. Here is the foundation for community building: the Spirit revealing God's nature and we seeing ourselves mirrored in this revelation.



de Puricelli

**We pour our grief into the cup of Christ's suffering**

In both services we offer the Eucharist (thanksgiving service) once a month and on special occasions. At present, we serve communion on the first Sunday of each month and the third Wednesday. The Eucharist is a proclamation of the basis of our faith, the pathway to God left to us by Christ himself. Evangelism at its best happens through this remembrance proclamation.

We partake of this meal of the living Christ himself as the supreme food from heaven for our earthly journey. Like God's people who were fed manna in the wilderness, we are invited into a nourishing relationship through eating the bread that is different from all foods, because it comes from above. The more we are fed by this experience of the mystery of God's presence as we partake, the more the presence of the eternal is revealed to us, so that our faith grows and unfolds in deeper communion and strength for the journey through the wilderness of unknowing.

As we are called to participate in this meal, our worship reaches into the timelessness of eternity. We are then set free to see God breaking through into the present. As we are drawn into God's eternal present, we become increasingly aware of God's intervention in the world of now, on our behalf. Before the foundations of the world were laid, God preordained that the Lamb of God would be slain for us, so

we could be clothed in the garments of Christ. God provides the robes of righteousness through the living Word of redemption, to replace our own garments of inadequate covering.

It is in participating in the Eucharist that we are united in a new bond, and become blood brothers and blood sisters. Through the body and blood of Christ, we become a worshipping community. We are no longer strangers, but family, with God as our father and Jesus as our brother.

As we are nurtured and filled, we desire to become channels of this new life for others. The experience of having been crushed makes us vulnerable and able to identify with other vulnerable ones. It is only when we pass on the blessing we have received that we continue to be filled. The Eucharist becomes the sustaining food and drink that brings true meaning to our past and present experience of being crushed grapes that are now becoming holy wine.

**Singing articulates our gratitude and longing to belong**

Our songs of praise and adoration are a visible, communal, musical expression of the gratitude in our hearts. The experience of singing together binds us in an offering of mutuality as we join in voicing the same words. The poetic forms carry a message about our intimate relationship to our Lord.

The whole of the worship team strives to prepare a meaningful sequence of hymns and songs that include children and adults in expressions of joy, reflection, adoration, praise and reverence. Sometimes we invite corporate dance with children and adults. The purpose is to guide us into a time of reflection and openness to the message of the Word. As we are caught up, our individual voices become one, and we find ourselves receptive and open.

One of the hymns from the Honduran Anabaptist community of faith that has become very meaningful to us is:

*You called me, Lord my God,  
my hands are ready now  
to build with you, O God,  
a fellowship of faith.*

*No angels can perform  
the task given to transform  
a world in pain and grief  
to wholeness, joy and peace.*

*But God chose human hands  
his mandate to fulfill.  
Lord, help me in this work,  
to do your holy will.*

*Blessed are the faithful ones,  
those who strive for love and peace,  
proclaiming to all justice  
while living liberty.*

This song recognizes our human condition, a personal call from God to be involved in building a new community with others, and a continued challenge to live in a new freedom. This liberty restores us to practise justice without ignoring the injustices, as we build a community of people of peace.

The refrain of another favourite hymn from the Paraguayan Anabaptist community affirms that “God is calling forth a people his true Israel to be. I belong to God’s own people by his power and grace to be.” God is the initiator and the enabler who desires to grant us what we covet: to be brought into a new community, to be the new wine of meaning and healing that embraces the past and transforms it.

### **In prayer we seek God**

The fourth and final element of our worship—communal prayer—incorporates abundant thanksgiving, petitions, intercession and praise. The methods of prayer are varied. Sometimes the leader responds to the requests or expressions of thanksgiving with the phrase, “For this we pray to the Lord,” which is followed by the congregational refrain, “Lord, hear our prayer.” Other times, people rise and pray spontaneously.

Sometimes someone may be asked to pray for another, perhaps because the intercessor has lived through a similar experience and can pray with great empathy for the one in need of prayer. On Wednesdays we often give opportunity for everyone who is present to pray aloud for the requests that are brought to the community.

Every two months we incorporate a healing service into our Wednesday

gathering. Prayers for healing of body, mind and spirit are followed by anointing with oil and communion. On these occasions each person who requests prayer is prayed for in private—one-on-one, with full confidentiality—by someone asked in advance to be available to offer such prayers. We have often held these services with Toronto United Mennonite Church and had people pray in different languages. A physician joins us for these services to pray for her patients in great need.

These services are deeply moving and are requested by the congregants. Occasionally we have also had prayer vigils for specific needs to seek God more intensely. This practice, combined with fasting, is especially needed when someone brings a request for a prayer of liberation.

Sometimes we receive people who do not speak Spanish, and several members of the congregation who are good at simultaneous translation into English can step in to translate during the service. We welcome these visits and the opportunity to interact with visitors and friends of the participants, who are themselves exploring faith. In God’s power and strength, we try to be faithful in what we do and say.

The greeting of peace is our final embrace with our brothers and sisters, as we face the mission that each of us returns to.

### **Sharing a meal strengthens us for the journey**

Every Sunday morning we eat a simple meal together. In a sense, our sharing bread is a continuation of our worship. Each Sunday a different family is responsible for preparing and serving the meal. On Wednesdays the communal meal is eaten as people come in from work before the service.

These times of sharing our food and having fellowship are community-building experiences through which we get to know one another better. Both physical and spiritual bread of life strengthen us for the daily journey.

We are slowly becoming “poured-out wine” for our God, as Oswald Chambers wrote. When I first read this phrase I had not experienced what Chambers meant. I could understand the concept in my head, but it was not in my experience. Now, in a closer walk with God, I am just beginning to understand how we arrive at the willingness to become poured-out wine. Daily we are crushed and yet not defeated. Daily we offer to God the blood of our lives that is being transformed into new wine: the best wine from the wine-press of trodden grapes!

—**Betty Kennedy de Puricelli**

*The author was born and raised in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She and husband Adolfo Puricelli direct a multi-service community centre for newcomers to Canada and serve as pastors of Toronto Mennonite New Life Church. Reprinted, by permission of the publisher, from Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology 6 (Fall 2005); [www.MennoVision.org](http://www.MennoVision.org).*

**Sometimes someone may be asked to pray for another, perhaps because the intercessor has lived through a similar experience and can pray with great empathy for the one in need of prayer.**

Waterloo, Ont.

## Monuments in time: Reflecting on Russian history

**T**hank you very much, Dr. Urry, I think,” said Conrad Grebel University College president Henry Paetkau wryly after James Urry’s second of two Bechtel Lectures on March 10. Urry, author of the recently released *Mennonites, Politics and Peoplehood: Europe-Russia-Canada 1525 to 1980* (see sidebar below), did not hold back over the two nights from a critical analysis of Russian Mennonite history and its accompanying monument-making.

In his March 9 lecture, “Time: The transcendent and the worldly,” Urry reflected on “the spirit of the times” from which Mennonites came. About the early Anabaptists he said, “Just as congregations were situated in the world, but were not of it, so they were also in time, but not of it. In a sense, the communities lived in a kind of timeless time.”

Profane matters involved “this worldly” aspect of everyday life. The sacred focused on transcendental issues associated ultimately with salva-

tion and “other-worldly” matters.

“The emphasis on the continuity of faith and practice, and a concern with transcendent time in a future life,” changed over time, Urry said. “[F]or younger Mennonites, the general idea about—and experience of—time was that they lived in an age of improvement and a world that was moving forward.”

With an emerging linear view of time, discontinuity between their past, present and future was created, he said. But the Russian Revolution and civil war ruptured time, and the hopes and prospects for a better future were destroyed. As refugees, they developed a strong sense of exile, which often resulted in an overemphasizing of past achievements, drawing sharp distinctions between then and now.

In his second lecture, Urry described the search for a suitable form in which memory could be memorialized—the marking out of time with monuments to their experience within time.

Urry is skeptical about erecting

monuments because they tend to “cast in stone” a certain way of understanding history, while not allowing for some of the revisionist thinking which he said needs to take place as time passes.

Dutch engravings from the early 19th century depict Menno Simons as one of the founders of Protestantism, surrounded by heavenly clouds and chubby cherubs. Although these never became monuments, by the middle of the century some Mennonites in Germany did propose to mark the 300th anniversary of Menno’s death (January 1861) with a monument. The idea met with opposition from the more conservative leaders in Germany and Russia, who reminded people it was Jesus—not Menno—who died on the cross.

In 1879, though, a stone obelisk was erected to Menno’s memory at Witmarsum in Friesland, but not without controversy. The editor of the American Mennonite newspaper, *Zur*

Winnipeg

### Book on Mennonites and politics launched

**A**nthropologist and Mennonite scholar James Urry of New Zealand launched his new book at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg on March 4 to a crowd of more than 150 people.

*Mennonites, Politics and Peoplehood: Europe-Russia-Canada 1525 to 1980* took Urry 10 years to write. The book follows the Dutch/Russian/Canadian Mennonites’ understanding of how to deal with involvement in civic politics starting with the 1527 Schleithem Confession.

The author traces the political views of Mennonites in Holland, Prussia and Russia, pointing out in his talk that Prussian Mennonites were wary of constitutions that enshrined rights into laws; instead, they sought to live where they

received privileges from autocratic leaders like the Russian Tzarina—the largest autocrat in the world at the time.

Urry was surprised to find Manitoba Mennonites involved in civic politics as early as the 1890s, with the race between Enoch Winkler and William Hespeler in the riding of Rosenfeld in 1899. In some Mennonite gatherings, Hespeler was called “our candidate,” he said, noting that people were encouraged to vote for him; he won by 17 votes.

He was also intrigued that politics landed two Mennonites in court. In 1973, Urry said that Conservative candidate Alfred Penner took lay minister George K. Epp to court, since ministers were not allowed to be returning officers.

The book also deals with changing dynamics in Mennonite communities as Mennonites from Russia continue to come to Canada, as well as the differences between urban and rural Mennonites.

—Conrad Stoesz

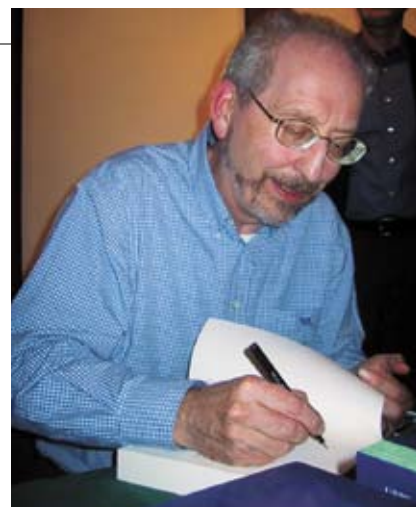


Photo by Tim Miller Dyck

**Author and anthropologist James Urry signed copies of his new book, *Mennonites, Politics and Peoplehood: Europe - Russia - Canada 1525 to 1980*, during the launch at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg last month.**



*Heimath*, called it an idol, Urry said.

Mennonites in Russia soon raised monuments of their own, beginning with an obelisk erected in the village of Khortitsa to mark the centenary of Mennonite settlement in Russia. Urry noted, however, that as life in the Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia developed, new schools, hospitals and other institutional structures marked the steady march of progress.

The destruction of the Mennonite Commonwealth following the Russian Revolution changed how Mennonites memorialized their experience. As refugees to Canada, the *Russländer* (emigrants who left Russia following the Russian Revolution) drew on older ideas of Mennonite suffering—but ones where the sacredness of suffering would combine with secular appeals to peoplehood and a sense of being victims of communism.

In the early 1970s, the idea of erecting a memorial to Mennonite “martyrs” involved different interpretations of past Mennonite suffering and again raised long-standing differences between various Mennonite immigrant groups about the nature of Soviet repression and their experience. The proposal met with opposition from some who thought the idea involved too much “self-glorification,” Urry said.

In 1984, a new committee under the auspices of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society agreed in principle that such a memorial should honour Mennonite victims of violence in the 20th century, “especially in Europe.” According to Urry, the committee decided the term “martyr” should be avoided, because it was a risky description of the violence suffered by a minority for various reasons and it wanted to avoid political overtones as much as possible.

In Ontario—during the 1986 bicentennial monument unveiling in Vineland and the recent planting of oak and walnut trees in the memorial garden at Conrad Grebel College—there has been an emphasis on Mennonite contributions to the new land and its prosperity. In these monuments, which hearken back to the good life in the Mennonite Commonwealth, Mennonites are cast not so much as refugees but as pioneers.

—Maurice Martin

Winnipeg

## Art exhibit recalls the horror of Hiroshima

**D**oes the world remember Hiroshima?

Toki Orui, a Japanese-Canadian artist who lives in Winnipeg, together with Project Peacemakers and Mayors for Peace, wants the world to remember. They have launched an art and education exhibit at the Millennium Library to remind the Winnipeg community of that horrific event and to ensure that it never happens again.

The exhibit, “Hiroshima Diary,” includes a series of Orui’s paintings of the Hiroshima Peace Dome, the sole remaining building from the 1945 atomic blast that led to the Japanese surrender and the end of World War II.

Kildonan East Collegiate art students also donated their artwork that was done in response to a presentation by Derrick Martens, a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker with Project Peacemakers, to the exhibition.

Martens hopes “Hiroshima Diary” will provide an opportunity to learn about rising nuclear proliferation and disarmament efforts. “There is a sense of urgency with the failure of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty,” he says. “We are expecting in the next five to 10 years a mass proliferation of nuclear weapons.”

The exhibit also includes a set of

**Derrick Martens, a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker with Project Peacemakers, holds the banner that Setsuko Thurlow contributed to the “Hiroshima Diary” exhibit. It contains the names of 351 students and teachers who died in the 1945 atomic blast.**



Photo by Evelyn Rempel Petkau

30 posters donated by Mayors for Peace, depicting art, photographs and educational materials concerning the atomic weapons that were used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Mayors for Peace—a United Nations-affiliated program to promote the solidarity of cities in working towards the abolition of nuclear weapons, that was founded in 1982 by Takeshi Araki, then mayor of Hiroshima—recognizes that in the event of a disaster, it is the mayor who is often the first on the ground at such disasters.

Last year marked the 60th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

“Araki strongly believed that the protection and survival of the citizens of cities is too vital a matter to be left to national governments, but municipal governments should also take responsibility in this regard,” says Setsuko Thurlow, an atomic bomb survivor living in Toronto, who is one of the exhibit’s speakers.

A yellow banner contributed by Thurlow contains the names of 351 students and teachers from her alma mater, Hiroshima Jogakuin, a school for girls, who died as a result of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. “This banner reminds us that each of these girls had a name and was loved by someone,” says Thurlow. “I remember many of them, how they looked, how they laughed.... Some were my close friends.”

Since its beginning in 1982, Mayors for Peace has grown to 1,306 member cities in more than 200 countries, including 21 cities in Canada. Winnipeg joined Mayors for Peace in 2003. Last year, Hiroshima mayor Tadatashi Akiba declared the 369 days from August 6, 2005, to August 9, 2006, as the Year of Inheritance, Awakening and Commitment.

“Hiroshima Diary” was launched on March 20 at the Millennium Library and will run until April 28.

—Evelyn Rempel Petkau

Pasadena, Calif.

## Book's authors call on the church to be 'a culture of peace'

**D**o visitors to Anabaptist churches realize they are entering a culture of peace? Is peace bad news? Is there a dichotomy between evangelism and peace? Can peace churches grow?

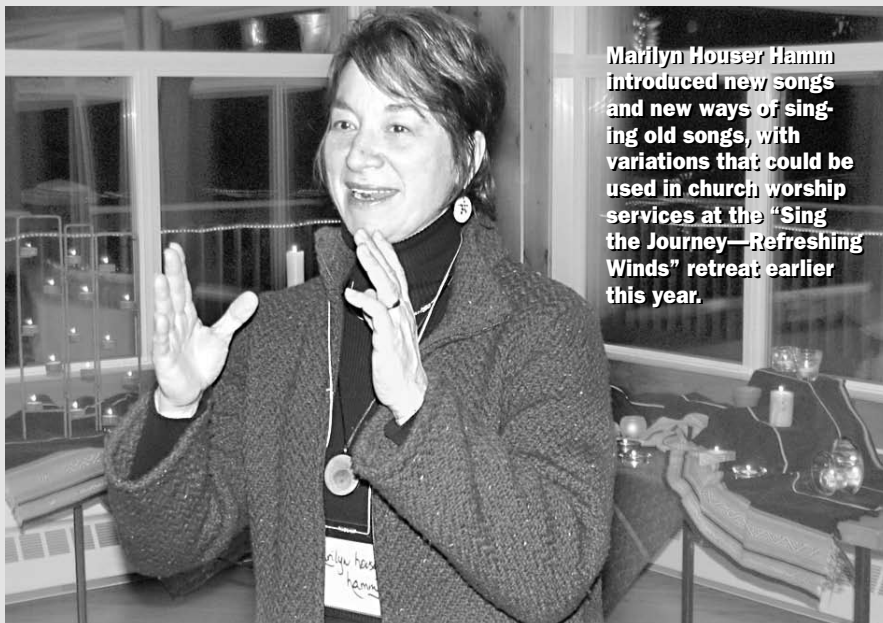
Delegates to the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) General Council, which met last month, confronted questions such as these in several sessions devoted to Peace Council agenda items.

A new book, *A Culture of Peace: God's Vision for the Church*, by Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider and Paulus Widjaja, formed the basis for worship and much of the discussion during the sessions. The book is MWC's Anabaptist/Mennonite Shelf of Literature selection for 2006.

The authors trace the notion of the church as a culture of peace from Justin, a second century Christian martyr, and even earlier to the founding of the church as recorded in Acts. They write, "Pentecost brought together Jews from many parts of the ancient world [Acts 2:9-11]...[and] transformed the linguistic chaos of Babel [Genesis 11: 1-9] into peace and harmony."

They draw on the amazing story of Peter, a Galilean Jew, and his dinner in the house of Cornelius, a Roman officer, in the pagan city of Caesarea, the headquarters of Roman power in Palestine, a dangerous city full of soldiers, violence and non-kosher food! There, Peter began to understand that God shows no partiality. This event was a breakthrough in the history of the church. It showed that God's reconciling love is not an addition to Christian faith, but is its very heart. Peace is a natural part of what it means to be Christian, as natural as a next breath.

In separate presentations, which were discussed in inter-continental caucus groups, the authors spoke about peace in worship, in the work-



Marilyn Hauser Hamm introduced new songs and new ways of singing old songs, with variations that could be used in church worship services at the "Sing the Journey—Refreshing Winds" retreat earlier this year.

Photo by Henry Harms

Waldheim, Sask.

## Retreat empowered worship leaders and worshippers

**S**hekinah Retreat Centre hosted the "Sing the Journey—Refreshing Winds" retreat this winter.

The resource persons for the weekend were Marilyn Hauser Hamm and Irma Fast Dueck. Hamm introduced new songs and new ways of singing old songs, with variations that could be used in church worship services. Her use of melody and accompaniment in a variety of ways fit them into various settings unobtrusively, making them unique and meaningful.

place and in wartime. Alan urged thinking about war in times of peace. Under the pressure of war, he said, it is hard to discern God's will, and Christians tend to think like everybody else. Christians need to sharpen their reflexes, he said, referring to the story of early Anabaptist Dirk Willems, who on impulse saved his pursuer who broke through thin ice. Willems was immediately captured by that same officer and later executed.

Among questions raised and discussed in groups was Widjaja's observation that the economically disadvantaged meld mission and peace together while the more advantaged see a dichotomy.

Dueck fittingly pulled one thread out of the large worship tapestry—grief and lament—something that is possibly not named enough in our churches. She dealt with the topic in a compassionate manner.

Various smaller workshops explored "The spirit of Orff," worshipful drumming, passionate song leading and singing, the use of drama in worship, prayer, and worship resources.

Each day began and ended with prayer. Claire Ewert Fisher led simple services modelled on Taize prayer and based on Celtic spiritual writings.

The retreat was sponsored by Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, Canadian Mennonite University and Shekinah Retreat Centre.

—**Lorene Nickel**

Stories from various countries demonstrated the importance of community in the church's becoming a culture of peace.

Other questions focused on domestic violence, the abuse of power, the role women are allowed to take in the church, how to protect "the least among us," and what impact responses to these issues have on the church as a culture of peace.

In its concluding session the Peace Council affirmed three commitments: to have MWC churches be "sanctuaries of peace"; to choose non-violence as non-negotiable; and to stand against all taking of human life.

—MWC release by **Ferne Burkhardt**

**R**ecent reports in various mainstream Canadian media have been critical of how the captured Christian Peacemakers Teams (CPT) members responded to their rescue—specifically, to their lack of gratitude.

It is interesting to ask why their gratitude matters. Equally, it is important to explore why there may have been at least a tinge of guardedness in their initial speech. Given their identity as Christian peacemakers, it should hardly come as a surprise that there would not be straightforward jubilation in being rescued by the military.

It is important to see CPTers for who they are—imperfect representatives of the Christian peace church. As such I do not think that it is fair to cast them as hypocritical, as did an editorial in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. And I think it patronizing to suggest that they “stay home,” as columnist Margaret Wente suggested in the *Globe and Mail*.

They are not reckless in their disregard for their own safety or that of others. Yet they may well be self-consciously naïve in what they do, at least in so far as they cannot narrate the precise connection between their presence in Iraq and the advent of peace in the region. But then such naïveté truthfully ought to be attributed to the military as well.

So why were some in the media so critical of CPT? It seems to me that this is the result of two very different views of the world. CPT operates under a very different set of assumptions than what the general public is used to.

First, it is deeply sceptical of the type of peacemaking strategy that begins with the assumption that enemies must be destroyed. Jesus taught that enemies should be loved—they merely take Jesus at his word. While there may well be some Christians who believe that Jesus’ words do not apply in places like Iraq, there are scholars and leaders in virtually every denomi-

## Understanding gratitude: A defence of CPT

nation that would insist that they do. By “putting themselves in the way,” as CPT likes to describe its actions, it is simply giving voice to an alternative way of making peace, a way that seems unusual to the world, but one that is an effort to take Jesus’ call seriously.

Second, the logic of a defenceless presence in a region of intense conflict appears strange to those who see peace as being accomplished through the coercive management of the clash of wills. But for Christians who believe that fundamental reality is peaceful, not violent—that violence is the distortion of God’s plan—a different peacemaking scenario is envisioned. In this view, cultivating peace is not an act of going against the stream of things, but rather it moves with the intent of the God-created universe.

Third, it is therefore quite consistent for CPT to say that it does not wish to rely upon the military for its members’ safety or their rescue. If, in fact, they are rescued, then so be it. They, too, love to live! They intend no disrespect and no ingratitude to their rescuers, but nor does this mean that they have suddenly come to realize that the way of the military is the only solution. They are not that fickle!

Hence, we should not expect them

suddenly to cozy up to the military. In all humility, they will continue giving expression to their convictions with deep roots in the incarnation of Jesus—being a peaceful presence in violent places and engaging in acts of reconciliation in the face of violence. And as it was with Jesus, the cross is not unexpected—but neither is it the last word.

Finally, did their captors do something wrong? Of course they did. Are they the product of foreign militarization in Iraq? Perhaps. But I wish that both sides would move beyond these issues. What is important is questioning the dominant myth that pervades our world today—the idea that violence and death make peace, and that violently recreating Iraq in the image of America will redeem it.

We know that peace has a different face. Unfortunately, it is hard for others—including the media—to see or understand it. The unquestioned acceptance of the language of violence has created such deafness in our culture that peace speech is too often not heard.

All of this does not mean that militaries can do no good, or churches do no wrong. Life is more complicated than that. But it does invite an open public debate on the value of alternative ways of peacemaking.

—Harry Huebner

*The author is a professor of philosophy and theology at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. He was a member of the first CPT delegation to Iraq in 1990.*

### Pontius’ Puddle



## Letters

## Thanks for spreading word about Gather 'Round

When I laid eyes upon *Canadian Mennonite's* March 6 cover page, I was delighted. And then, when I saw the back cover, I was even more impressed! Thank you for helping to get the good word and image about Gather 'Round, this new tool for nurturing faith, into our constituency.

Having just returned to Winnipeg from Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's Gather 'Round Learning Tour in southern Ontario, where the Talkabout feature was enthusiastically received in each of the six presentations, my heart was warmed by the thought that your cover page was

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

now introducing it into homes across Canada.

Flipping through the issue and finding the timely news release, "Sunday school leaders 'Gather 'Round,'" on page 19 and then the ad for new writers on page 22, deepened my joy.

Seeing all this coverage in one issue represented the different ways people in our denomination are combining their gifts to foster the process of nurturing faith in both our homes and

congregations. It reminded me that it takes all of us working together to share good news effectively and to pass on our faith in the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thanks for doing your part to help share the good news about this new tool for Christian formation.

—**Elsie Hannah Ruth Rempel, Winnipeg**

*The writer is MC Canada's Christian education and nurture director.*

PHIL WAGLER



Outside the box

**E**very congregation should ask this question: What are we about?

Are we about providing sanitized social gatherings where we engage in stimulating conversation about the weather and those who are surprisingly not present? Are we about preserving a distinct religious society that is neither Protestant nor Catholic in a smattering of Canadian communities where the term "Mennonite" is cloaked, quite literally, in postcard peculiarity? Are we about protecting some old or new worship style, about promoting a political ideal, about criticizing other political ideals, about ensuring the next generation will carry on our traditions? What are we about?

Having mustered the courage to ask the question, we should then seek to answer it honestly and biblically. For all our recent tendency to analyze ourselves to death and develop mission and vision statements through elaborate processes that generally result in lively banter, cool wall hangings, and little follow-through, the reality remains that what we are to be about as local bodies of believers has been outlined for us in Scripture. The issue is not developing another pithy slogan, but obedience to what is already clear.

So what are we about? Our answer often slips quickly to compassionate living, evangelism, justice, meaningful corporate worship, genuine fellowship, faithful stewardship and other proper Sunday school responses that entirely miss the point. Though all warm and fuzzy, these qualities are the fruit of the tree and not the tree itself.

Compassion for our neighbours, justice for the marginalized, dynamic worship and fellowship, and the care and sharing of God's good gifts are not natural to us; they

## What are we about?

**'Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.'**

are learned in the school of grace as we die to ourselves, are raised to new life with Christ by the power of the Spirit, and as we walk daily in the footsteps of Jesus. The tree that produces the fruit of righteous and godly living is discipleship—that obedient response to the invitation of Jesus to be his apprentice. Without it, the fruit simply will not be there.

Of all the things the authoritative risen Lord could have commanded us to be about as he left things teetering in our hands, it is striking that he chose to say, "Go and make disciples" (*Matthew 28:18-20*). Until the end of the age, the church of Jesus Christ is to be about disciple-making. We are ultimately about urging, leading and teaching people to obey Jesus—to live in Christ—because only he who is life can produce life in and through them.

If we are firstly about anything else, then we are not about what Jesus commanded us to be about. So let us beware of justice without life in Christ; let us shun evangelism without apprenticeship; let us shudder at Sunday worship at the feet of Jesus without Monday following in his footsteps. Dietrich Bonhoeffer powerfully drives home the point: "Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ."

Our making of disciples—of a people wholly sold to obeying Jesus' voice above every other cry begging for attention and allegiance—is the hinge upon which every community turns toward righteousness or wickedness, wholeness or chaos, life or death.

Yes, that is alarm bells you hear going off! So what are we about?

*Phil Wagler is an apprentice of Jesus and lead pastor of Zurich Mennonite Church in Ontario. You can reach him at [phil\\_wagler@yahoo.ca](mailto:phil_wagler@yahoo.ca).*

## Material success can dim spiritual witness in Ukraine

The Jan. 23 *Canadian Mennonite* article, “Mennonite groups oppose land speculator,” shocked me. And I can only applaud those who cannot sanction such a venture.

To me, this is quite contrary to the aspirations of our founding forefathers—the Anabaptist/Mennonite Christians—who sought first “*the kingdom of God and his righteousness*.” And this, even though in so many places and at so many times we have failed, still holds true.

Our sojourn in Ukraine-Russia accomplished some most commend-

able achievements. But it also left a sad, tarnished chapter. Economic and material success sidetracked so many from life in the Spirit of Christ. This, of course, dimmed our witness in that land. At times I wonder if we are not in danger of erring in that regard again. We need to very seriously heed Jesus’ warning, “*You cannot serve both God and mammon.*”

Too well I recall how, immediately after our mother’s funeral, we siblings had gathered with our father when he made this statement, “I’m so glad we lost everything.” He was referring to the possessions his siblings and grandfather had accumulated in Russia.

In time, possibly a year before our

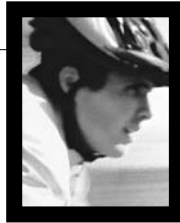
father himself died, he again said, “I’m so glad we lost everything.” “What might have happened had we continued?” he added, implying economic success in the “old country.” He was concerned that riches can so easily come between us and God. To me, this was wise insight.

This does not mean we are not to develop economically and use our benefits for the good of others.

May Paul Willms and his fellow investors realize the possibility of the very negative effects such a venture may have on our Christian witness in that part of the world.

—Peter A. Unger, Abbotsford, B.C.

WILL BRAUN



New Order Voice

In the fall of 2004 I joined an annual pilgrimage of urbanites heading to the sticks for a weekend taste of rural goodness.

For that one weekend of the Harvest Moon Festival, the backwater hicksville of Clearwater, Man., is the place to be.

A few hundred urbanites camp just down the tracks from where the grain elevator sits overlooking a scenic wooded valley. There’s live music, farm tours and locally raised beef burgers for lunch. Organic-granola-eating city sophisticates mingle with denim-clad farmers. The festival is not a religious event, but Mennos were well-represented both among the locals and the visitors.

Our Anabaptist history and identity is marked by the rural-urban dynamic. My own history, as a Menno farm boy who moved on to bigger and better things after high school, is certainly marked by the tension between the farm and the bright lights.

That Friday night in the Clearwater community hall it was easy to tell the out-of-towners from the locals. The Mountain Equipment Coop crowd stood out from those with farm company logos on their hats and jackets (and it wasn’t hard to spot the posers who had picked up a “farm hat” at the city thrift store). Though I had tried to dress rural, I sat there embarrassed to be on the city-slicker side of the divide.

The Harvest Moon Festival is an anomaly in an age of urbanization. In this world that generally looks down on life outside of city boundaries, there’s one weekend in Clearwater when it’s decidedly cooler to be a farmer than a downtown professional.

It gave me hope, because 15 years after leaving the farm I am itching to re-ruralize. Growing up, I always assumed I would be something “more” than a farmer. I had bought the line that the rural farm life is something to leave behind if possible. But my thinking has changed.

## Back to the Anabaptist boonies

Though it sounds crass to say, I think I could be a better Mennonite in the country.

The city might be bigger, but I don’t experience it as better. The concrete, noise, pace and attitude of superiority are too much. For me, the backwater boonies are the place to be.

Though it sounds crass to say, I think I could be a better Mennonite in the country. In my experience, community and simplicity—which I consider core Mennonite values—find more fertile soil beyond the individu-

alized, trendy rhythms of the city.

I see others around me who also gravitate to the agricultural life. And this is where the church comes in. Denominational families—like the Harvest Moon Festival—are a rare venue in which rural and urban meet. So I imagine a scenario in which Mennonite networks could facilitate the movement of restless urban Mennos to small town and, perhaps, agricultural life. I’m not predicting a mass Mennonite migration to the country, but maybe there is an opportunity for the church

to help match the needs of discontented city Mennos with the small town need for some revitalizing energy.

This task would require some creativity. I know that while I and others of like mind value agricultural life, some of our values would seem out of place in small town Canada—like the values

that would lead my wife and me to opt for small-scale, organic vegetable farming (mixed with telecommuting income), rather than conventional farming. Perhaps the church could help provide the common ground in which diversity could flourish, small towns could get a small but much-needed boost, and a few of us could become better Mennonites.

*Will Braun is editor of Geez magazine and a worker at the Wiens organic vegetable farm just outside Winnipeg. He can be reached at will@geezmagazine.org.*

**Writer now supports children through MCC**

I read Andre Pekovich's March 6 letter, "World Vision 'brand' not for Mennonites," on page 12. It was a great letter, in my opinion, and I agree with him. Years back I supported children using World Vision. But when I heard about Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) sponsoring children, I switched immediately.

—Harold Widrick, New Hamburg, Ont.

**Partnering with World Vision not desirable**

The question is being raised about World Vision joining with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in its operations ("Metzger new director of World Vision church relations," Jan. 23, page 30, and "World Vision 'brand' not for Mennonites," March 6, page 12).

To be involved with World Vision would not be desirable.

Personally, I know a number of individuals in World Vision. Their method

of operation is different than MCC. I consider World Vision to be more on the right politically, whereas MCC is slightly left of centre.

MCC has a solid reputation and we wish to guard it very carefully, so at this stage I would very much object to the involvement with World Vision and its program. It does bring awareness to what is happening in the world, but so does MCC. Let's keep these two lines of communication separate.

—C. Wilbert Loewen, Winnipeg

**Correction**

The Feb. 20, page 18 article, "Remnants of 19th century theology still prominent," by Rod Suderman, was written in Beijing, China, not Nanchong. *Canadian Mennonite* apologizes for the error.

**News brief**

**Thousands of school kits shipped to war-torn Afghanistan**

A 20-foot container bursting with school kits is being shipped to

Afghanistan from the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) warehouse in Plum Coulee. "It was full, there wasn't room for another box," said warehouse manager Wilf Unrau. He and 16 volunteers from southern Manitoba managed to squeeze 8,657 school kits into the container last month. Help the Afghan Children (HTAC)— a non-profit agency that focuses its efforts on providing quality education to Afghan girls and boys, and an MCC partner—will distribute the school kits upon arrival in Afghanistan. After spending all day packing the school kits into the container, Unrau and the volunteers joined hands in prayer to bless the shipment and send it on its way. Since 1996, MCC has provided more than \$7.8 million in assistance to the people of Afghanistan, including food, blankets, soap, school kits, clothing and MCC canned meat. The people of Afghanistan have endured more than two decades of conflict and instability that has wrecked the country's infrastructure and economy.

—MCC release

by Marla Pierson Lester

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Winnipeg

## Erosion of trust, effectiveness feared as military adopts humanitarian role

**H**aving the Canadian military combine military, diplomatic and humanitarian activities in Afghanistan could compromise the effectiveness of Canadian humanitarian agencies elsewhere, according to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada.

Humanitarian agencies working in conflict situations want to be perceived by local people as independent agencies that provide impartial assistance to all people affected by the conflict, says Willie Reimer, coordinator of MCC Canada Food Disaster Material Resource Department.

“Our agenda is determined by the needs of the people. At the heart of our assistance is our involvement with local people. We don’t independently implement programs. We work in partnership with local people, to assist them to get to a place where they can have a say in their future,” he explains.

“MCC’s commitment to peace arises out of our Christian commitment to the way of Jesus,” stresses Esther Epp-Tiessen, coordinator of MCC Canada’s peace and justice program. “We believe that Jesus lived and taught the way of nonviolent love. As Christians, we believe we are called to follow Jesus’ way of nonviolence.”

Working in collaboration with a number of non-governmental organizations in Afghanistan, MCC has provided \$7.9 million worth of assistance since 1996. This assistance includes shipments of wheat, beans, lentils, canned meat, blankets and school kits.

MCC assistance also includes working with local partners to rehabilitate underground water streams, helping widows find a source of income, and promoting health care.

Reimer says Canada’s military mission in Afghanistan is not only damaging the country’s international reputa-

tion as peacekeepers, it also affects the work of MCC and other Canadian humanitarian agencies.

“Combining humanitarian and military activities blurs the lines,” he says. “It changes how we are seen and how we are accepted, not only in Afghanistan, but also in the rest of the world.”

The challenge for MCC, he adds, is to maintain a clearly articulated identity as a faith-based agency that chooses to build long-term and trusting relationships with people living in communities experiencing war and social disruptions. “It is important to work with all people affected by conflict—those in areas controlled by the government and also those in areas controlled by non-government forces,” Reimer says.

“MCC’s own experience in working in conflict zones around the world is that violence usually contributes to more violence,” Epp-Tiessen adds. “The way you deal with terrorism is to take away the oxygen that fuels the fire—you address the grievances that make people angry.

“As much as we may find terrorist tactics illegitimate and abhorrent, Canada should expend energy in finding out what the legitimate concerns of the terrorists are and address those concerns. We have to address the root causes that push people to take up arms.”

Reimer’s experiences with wars in Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Rwanda help him appreciate the role that MCC and other international organizations can play in the peace process. “Those directly affected by the conflict must be allowed to participate in mitigating the conflict,” he says. According to him, the role of international development agencies is to support local organizations as “friends of the peace process,” but the “peace agenda should be driven by the countries in the region.”

Canada could strengthen its reputation as a peace-promoting nation by devoting more resources for training in the areas of conflict resolution, mediation and negotiation, human rights advocacy and other forms of peacebuilding, Epp-Tiessen believes.

Military forces have a political agenda that undermines the values of impartiality, Reimer says. “The military is trained to provide security—that’s their job, that’s their training.... The motives of a foreign military are clearly questioned when they get involved in humanitarian work,” Reimer concludes.

—MCC release by **Gladys Terichow**

### News brief

#### MCC calls on UN to address Ugandan crisis

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has joined nine other international aid organizations in calling on the United Nations and the Ugandan government to respond to the humanitarian crisis in northern Uganda. For 20 years, a rebel group called the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) has terrorized northern Uganda by abducting children and forcing them to become child soldiers in a regional war. An estimated 25,000 children have been abducted by the LRA and more than 1.7 million people have been driven into displacement camps by the conflict. The international aid organizations are calling for the UN Commission on Human Rights to appoint a special *rapporteur* to investigate human rights violations in Uganda and to adopt other measures in response to the conflict. The statement also calls for the government of Uganda to ensure that people in displacement camps have adequate protection, water, sanitation, health care and freedom of movement.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

## 'Shared convictions' statement approved

The first official summary of beliefs shared by Anabaptists around the world. An African woman's plea for equality with men. Setting a goal to do peace work with Catholics.

These were among the highlights when more than 200 Mennonites and Brethren in Christ from 50 countries gathered last month to nurture the global Anabaptist movement. They came to Pasadena for the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) General

Council, a meeting held once every three years to foster unity and cooperation among more than a million Anabaptist members worldwide.

In an historic action, the council approved a statement of shared convictions to give members around the world a clearer picture of beliefs they hold in common. The document's seven points describe basic beliefs shared with most Christians, such as salvation through the death and

resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as beliefs that Anabaptists especially emphasize, such as nonviolence. It is the first statement of beliefs adopted by leaders of the worldwide Anabaptist community.

"The idea is that as a community of churches we don't adopt a shared confession of faith, but this is something we can all say we share," said MWC president Nancy Heisey. "Groups are free to use it for theological conversations. Some churches don't have a confession of faith, and they would be free to use this as a basis if they found it helpful."

After a five-year dialogue between MWC representatives and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the General Council endorsed several new initiatives with the Catholic Church. One goal is to start joint peacemaking efforts.

Photo by Joanna Reesor-McDowell



### Interpreters bridge the gap of culture and language

Good communication can become a challenge in gatherings like the Mennonite World Conference global mini-assembly in Pasadena, where more than 200 Mennonites from 50 countries met to study, worship and set directions for the future.

Rebecca Yoder Neufeld took time from her work as a staff person with Mennonite Church Canada Witness to volunteer as coordinator of the 33 interpreters who assisted throughout the nine-day event. She honed her skills in the same role at Bulawayo, Zimbabwe in 2003.

Simultaneous interpretation equipment made it possible to offer earphones that provided the proceedings in Spanish, French and English at all large group meetings. There were also partial interpretation services into Portuguese and Vietnamese on a one-to-one basis.

During the orientation session for volunteer interpreters, Yoder Neufeld encouraged the group to think of their services as both a "high calling and humble ministry. Understanding one another as clearly as possible across the divides of culture and language is a holy privilege and task," she said.

Yoder Neufeld drew inspiration from the story of Pentecost, in which listeners were empowered by the Spirit to understand the gospel in their own tongue. She also observed that "without good interpretation, the fruits of all the careful and prayerful preparation, the investment in travel and equipment, are greatly diminished." Yet the task is a humble one, she said, for interpreters are "the vehicle, not the centre of attention."

—Joanna Reesor-McDowell

**Rebecca Yoder Neufeld, a Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker, left, coordinated the 33 volunteer interpreters at last month's MWC mini-assembly in Pasadena. She is pictured with volunteer interpreter Betty Kennedy de Puricelli, co-pastor of Toronto Mennonite New Life Church.**

## Nurturing global



Photo by Alex Miller

*Mennonite World Conference (MWC) General Conference in Pasadena, Calif., brought together a hundred members from 50 countries in five continental regions where MWC is located. Fifteen members were unable to attend because their visa applications were denied.*



If the Catholic Church is receptive to the idea, Anabaptists and Catholics would propose “a concrete plan of action for a specific situation of conflict that would demonstrate the existence of viable and practical alternatives to military action,” delegates were told. Preferably, this would happen in a place where violence affects both Anabaptists and Catholics, such as Congo or Colombia.

Among those who told of experiences in their home countries, Rebecca Osiro of Kenya gave a calmly stated but passionately worded call for the acceptance of women as equals with men in African churches. Representing the African Mennonite Women Theologians group, Osiro called for removing barriers that reserve pastoral roles for men and that prevent women from using all their gifts in ministry.

The 100-member General Council functions in two other forms, as the Peace Council and the Faith and Life Council. During Peace Council sessions, members discussed how to strengthen their churches’ peace witness and beliefs. Delegates approved designating the Sunday closest to Sept. 21 as Peace Sunday, to be observed in MWC member churches. Sept. 21 was selected because it is the United Nations’ World Day of Peace.

Paraguayan representatives encour-

aged council members to promote attendance at the next MWC assembly in Paraguay in July 2009. “The presence of the global Anabaptist family will have a favourable impact on the

country and also a positive influence on our churches,” said Alfred Neufeld Friesen of Paraguay.

—Paul Schrag and Tim Miller Dyck, for Meetinghouse



Photo by Alex Miller

**Mennonite World Conference General Council set up chairs to symbolically represent the 15 absent delegates who were not permitted entry into the United States to attend the triennial meetings in Pasadena, Calif.**

## Missing delegates frustrate MWC assembly

**M**ore than 10 percent of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) General Council delegates were missing when the council met in Pasadena from March 7 to 16.

The United States government denied entry visas for 15 delegates, wiping out the plans of these persons to attend. Grieving their absence, the MWC General Council released a statement condemning the government’s actions and calling on U.S. immigration authorities to explain their actions.

“We are greatly dismayed that 15 of our delegates from Congo, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and Venezuela were denied visas to enter the United States,” the statement declared.

“The General Council is a body of delegates from 95 member churches in 51 countries.... In order to fulfill

our mandate as a global Christian community, it is important that all of our delegates can come to the table. The absence of more than 10 percent of our delegates not only causes us great sadness, but also frustrates our continuing global Christian witness,” the statement continued.

In their absence, those in attendance prayed for each of the missing delegates daily, along with U.S. policy makers and immigration authorities, in the hope that they will act justly and not inhibit the functioning of global Christian faith communities.

*(Among those not permitted to enter the U.S. were Sidonie Swana of the Democratic Republic of Congo, who wrote the poem “Woman, Your Role is Important” in the March 20 issue of Canadian Mennonite [page 12]. Ed.)*  
—MWC release

# Anabaptism



*Council’s mini-assembly in members from 43 of the 51 MWC member churches are because the US govern-*

## Sider calls church to economic sharing

Anything less than dramatic, sweeping economic sharing in the worldwide body of Christ today is flatly unbiblical, scandalously disobedient and heretical, according to author and Eastern Baptist Seminary (Pennsylvania) professor Ron Sider.

With such claims, Sider captured the attention of some 250 delegates and guests at a service consultation sponsored by Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) that preceded the meeting of the MWC General Council triennial meetings last month.

Sider laid out six biblical and theological foundations for *diakonia* or service:

- God's love for us prompts us to love others, serving them by doing what is in their best interests.
- Every person is created in God's image and is precious.
- Persons are made up of body and soul; therefore, service must respond to both material and spiritual needs.
- Jesus' gospel is the good news of the kingdom in which all things, including social relationships, are being restored to what the Creator intended.
- The cross is the foundation of service, since Jesus' death was for the sins of everyone.
- We serve each other because we are the one body of Christ.

Sider cited examples of economic sharing from the Old and New Testaments, then he noted that MWC statistics indicate 25 percent of the world's Anabaptist Christians today own 88 percent of all Anabaptist wealth. What if those wealthy folks gave 20 percent of their income to the church and one fourth of that 20 percent to MWC, Sider mused, lamenting, though, "That will never happen unless there is massive revival."

"There is widespread economic disparity that dramatically impacts the life of the global church," echoed MC Canada Witness executive secretary Janet Plenert for the listening committee at the end of the consultation, "and the faithful living out of the gospel of Jesus Christ requires radical economic upheaval [jubilee]."

In more than a dozen small groups,

participants shared examples of service, from post-tsunami encounters between Muslims and a Christian doctor in Asia, to development of a business cooperative among indigenous people and German Mennonites in Paraguay.

The groups called for a holistic approach to the role of global deacons in serving the marginalized within the global Anabaptist family in the 21st century; better information sharing; speaking out against abuse, racism and the abuse of power; greater advocacy from North American and European Anabaptists on behalf of churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America, who struggle with unfair trade, armed conflicts, drug and immigration issues; and for the church to lament historic divisions created among Anabaptists of different traditions.

Some "next steps" suggested by the listening group included delegates sharing what they heard at the



**Ron Sider, left, converses with Albert Ndlovu, MWC General Council delegate from the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe.**

MWC photo by Markus Rediger

consultation with their congregations; developing a study guide on the biblical foundation of service from an Anabaptist perspective, along with an analysis of contemporary socio-economic structures; and holding regional service consultations.

MWC general secretary Larry Miller and MCC executive director Robb Davis exchanged their shoes, symbolizing their commitment to work together in leading responses to the challenges raised in the service consultation.

—MWC release by **Ferne Burkhardt**

## Anabaptists and Pentecostals can help each other

Anabaptist churches and conferences should "explore what is missing in our life as a community that makes people hungry for what they find in Pentecostal churches."

That was one conclusion of a findings group following a symposium on "Global Anabaptism and global Pentecostalism: Creating understandings," part of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) General Council gathering last month.

Speakers at the symposium were

two Fuller Theological Seminary professors: Juan Martinez, a Mennonite Brethren; and Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., a Pentecostal.

"Our [Anabaptist] spiritual forebears struggled with the relationship between Spirit and Word," Martinez said. "They strongly opted for Word within a couple of generations. Dialoguing with Pentecostals will likely invite us to reconsider...the Spirit's role in crucial Anabaptist distinctives, like our peace commitment, social justice, service alongside

At last month's mini-assembly in Pasadena, Calif., AMIGOS young adults loosened up Mennonite World Conference General Council members by having them spell out their acronym. AMIGOS is MWC's youth committee.



Photo by Everett J. Thomas, for Meetinghouse

## Canadians helped monitor Haitian elections

Two Canadians were among five Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers in Haiti who served as international observers of the country's Feb. 7 presidential election. Matt Van Geest and Esther deGroot, a couple from St. Catharines, Ont., wrote that some polling stations were busy from before dawn until after 10 p.m. on election day: "We really believe that the significant size of the turnout, and even some of the scenes of people forcing their way into election stations, are signs of hope. People wanted to vote. They needed to vote. We hope and pray that these elections will be another building block for this country." Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and has not had an elected president since the overthrow of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004. —MCC release

the poor, prophetic witness and similar issues."

Describing Pentecostalism as a movement that emphasizes the Holy Spirit's power to transform a believer's life, Robeck noted that Pentecostalism (which turns 100 years old this year) is beginning to experience what other, older groups—like Anabaptists—have already experienced, including the lack of youth interest. "While in a sense all Christians are Pentecostals," he said, "we need to ask how all of us tap into the power of the Holy Spirit today."

In discussions following these presentations, some noted that Pentecostalism has positively influenced global Anabaptist churches, while others said the impact was not always positive.

Elina Ciptadi of Indonesia said she likes to move and shout when she worships. "I have never seen in Mennonite teaching that we only worship a certain way," she said.

Matiku Thomas Nyitambe of Tanzania, however, noted that "a spirit of splitting up has entered our churches" as a result of Pentecostalism.

"We need to remember that the New Testament calls us to live in the path of Jesus as well as in the path of

the Holy Spirit," Martinez said at the conclusion. "I sometimes ask: What is more miraculous? To speak in tongues, or for the rich to give up their money?"

Recognizing that Pentecostalism and Anabaptism are both restorationist movements based on Acts 2, and considered radical alternatives to mainstream culture, both can benefit from each other, the findings group said.

—**J. Lorne Peachey**

*The author is editor of Courier/Correo/Courier.*

## News briefs

### South Asian church leaders seek to redefine Christianity

Christianity in south Asia needs to be redefined if it is to be relevant and responsive to issues of armed conflict and religion-based animosities, say church leaders from the region attending the World Council of Churches' ninth assembly. "Why are we not being recognized as Christians? Maybe we have failed to follow Christ. Maybe our churches have become worship-oriented rather than service-oriented," said Rev. Elia Pradeep Samuel of India's Methodist Church.

—ENI release

## Conflict Management for Faith Communities

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Belfast, Northern Ireland

## Wave of inspiration in Northern Ireland

The decades of violent conflict that dominated Northern Ireland in the late 20th century have become an obsession for Sherry Peters.

For 10 of the last 12 years she has invested her time and energy into investigating the root cause of the conflict, always eager to learn more. Last August, she moved to Belfast as a Mennonite Church Canada mission associate.

From the late 1960s to 1998, a period of intense conflict between the Catholics and Protestants of Northern Ireland came to be referred to by the Irish as “the Troubles.” Thousands of lives were lost and many more were traumatized. Although the 1998 Good Friday Agreement brought about a political resolution and an end to the violence, significant tension remains.

In Belfast, Peters works with WAVE (Women Against Violence Empowered), an organization that offers services and support to people affected by the conflict. Formed in 1991 as a support group for widows who had lost their spouses in the violence, it has since expanded its focus to include anyone bereaved, injured or intimidated as a direct result of “the Troubles.” Since its inception, it has received more than 3,600 referrals.

“[WAVE] provides a befriending service where outreach workers make first contact with people who have been victims, and provide them with support,” explains Peters. The organization targets those who have experienced trauma but may be overlooked by the government.

The ceasefire has led the government to announce funding cuts for WAVE and similar organizations, but Peters declares the need for their services is now greater than ever. “Now that the violence has ended, people have time to reflect on what has happened to them,” says Peters. “We are getting more referrals each week.”

In response to the need, she has been collecting paintings by a variety of artists, including celebrities like Bono and Joan Rivers, as part of an online fundraising art exhibit ([www.](http://www.)

[artwaveni.com](http://artwaveni.com)), in an effort to help ensure that WAVE’s work will continue.

A country divided by conflict is not typically a desirable tourist destination, but Peters felt a long-time call to be in Northern Ireland. “I couldn’t understand why I had such a passion for Northern Ireland, except to believe that God put that passion in my heart,” she says.

Her obsession with “the Troubles” began developing during her university studies of British and Irish history. The more she discovered about the conflict, the more her appetite grew. Several post-graduation trips to Northern Ireland confirmed that was where she wanted to be. After years of waiting, she jumped at the MC Canada Witness opportunity in Belfast.

In making the difficult transition to a country immersed in conflict, Peters has experienced no shortage of support, especially from her family. She also relies on the encouragement and support of friends, as well as her home church in Winnipeg, Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship.

In Belfast, Peters finds inspiration in both her WAVE co-workers and the members they serve. Through their resiliency, Peters is deepening her



**Peters**



**Actor James Nesbitt with Terry Bradley’s painting at the the launch of Art WAVE.**

understanding of community and how to cope with conflict.

—MC Canada release by **Jeff Enns**

Winnipeg

## Canadians taking leadership roles in Gulf Coast clean-up

Nineteen Canadian Mennonites signed up to serve with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) this spring in leadership positions along the U.S. Gulf Coast, hit last fall by a series of devastating hurricanes. Some have already returned from their tours of duty.

- Henry Rempel of Niverville, Man.—crew leader in Century, Fla., March 4 to April 15.
  - Nicole Enns of Winkler, Man.—cook assistant in Bayou La Batre, La., March 4 to June 3.
  - Bert and Doris Hamm of Edmonton—construction crew leaders in Newton, Tex., March 4 to April 15.
  - Fred and Sue Kathler of Abbotsford, B.C.—project director and head cook in Newton, Tex., Feb. 28 to May 5.
  - Ernie Wiens of Edmonton, Alta.—crew leader in Newton, Tex., March 4 to April 8.
  - Grace and John Kroeker of Westbank, B.C.—crew leaders in Bayou La Batre, Ala., March 15 to May 15.
  - Ivan and Marge Unger of Cambridge, Ont.—construction worker and office staffer in Bayou La Batre, Ala., April 1 to 30.
  - Cara Bergen of Edmonton, Alta.—crew member in New Iberia, La., May 7 to July 7.
  - Andrew and Candice Redekopp, Winnipeg—crew leaders in Bayou La Batre, Ala., July 1 to Dec. 15.
  - Shirley and Frank Ens of Carmen, Man.—cook assistant and crew member in Century, Fla., served in March.
  - Ed Harder of Arthur, Ont.—construction crew leader in Bayou La Batre, Ala., served in March.
  - Glenn Buck, Listowel, Ont.—case-worker in Point Aux Chenes, La., served Feb. 22 to March 3.
  - George Ediger of Kelowna, B.C.—project director in Buras, La., served March 6 to April 3.
- MDS release

Moshi, Tanzania

## Nursery school increases students' chances for education

Debt relief programs in the late 1990s allowed many African governments to invest more of their own resources in social service programs such as education and health care. In Tanzania, national debt cancellation made it possible for the country to offer free education to all children of primary school age.

Some 66 percent more children have been able to attend primary school. But universal primary education can also bring challenges, and in Tanzania's case one challenge is to find room for the many children now able to attend school.

One way to increase children's chances of securing a place in their local schools is to ensure they receive a quality nursery school education.

Aided by funding from the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Global Family Program, Newlands Nursery School is educating 120 children between the ages of two and six in Moshi. MCC funds help pay for teacher salaries, porridge for students, and supplies for the school.

Pastor Albinus Waynse, the director of the school, has seen firsthand the value of a preschool education. "Newlands Nursery School children are given first priority because the Standard One teachers know the children are well-trained and they won't have problems with them," he says.

Francisca Winifred, a mother of four, agrees. Her daughter has already completed nursery school at Newlands and is now a second-year student at the local primary school. "It's important when a child goes to primary school, that they've been to nursery school, so they've been exposed to a classroom setting and are used to it," she says.

Alex, Winifred's six-year-old son, is currently a student at Newlands. He often waits in the back of the line when the daily porridge meal is served to the children at school. This way, he can eat the extra porridge that remains after the other students have eaten and left.

Being able to attend nursery school

means the chances for Alex to be accepted at the local primary school are high. This would save his parents the expense of transporting him to a school in another town, ultimately increasing his chances of staying in school and eventually going on to secondary school.

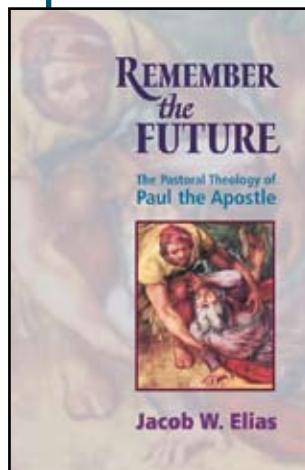
—Sarah Adams

*The author is MCC's HIV/AIDS coordinator.*

**Alex Winifred, six, writes his name on a small chalk pad in a classroom at Newlands Nursery School in Moshi, Tanzania.**



Photo by Melissa Engle



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Winnipeg

## Aboriginal, Mennonite partnerships no easy task

**R**ay Aldred takes you along a path at an easy amble, but all of a sudden you turn a corner and bang; you bump headlong into a new understanding or revelation, was how Norm Voth, director of Service and Evangelism Ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba, described two days of partnership circle meetings last month at Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

The 37 participants, already in-

the boy with him to observe the steps, Aldred explained. At the end, he allows his son to do the final step of covering the trap with snow. With each successive trip the son gets to do an additional step. In this way, by the time the son is doing all the steps, he has observed the process many times. Mennonites, on the other hand, tend to start teaching at the beginning, said Aldred, and in the end often end up doing it all themselves—because it is faster.

Aldred noted the withdrawal of financial support to aboriginal churches in almost every denomination across the country. When success is measured by church growth, aboriginal churches are not seen as a good investment, he said.

A Cree from northern Alberta working on his Ph.D. in theology, Aldred values the culture that has

shaped him and his people, and sees many biblical truths in how they live.

“We need to enable aboriginal leaders to embrace the gospel story as their own,” said Aldred. “In the aboriginal world, the people make you a leader. There is no such thing as a self-made leader. ‘Leadership’ is what your people give you.”

An aboriginal leader is a listener and reflects back to the community what everyone is saying, according to Aldred. “The aboriginal people practise an ethic of non-interference,” he explained. “Nobody has the right to tell anyone what to do. That is the rule and it is rude to do otherwise. Most Christians I’ve seen are pushy and demanding by comparison.”

Neill Von Gunten, Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry co-director, hopes that relationship-building through the partnership circles will help move the church to see beyond problems and without guilt. “We don’t have the baggage of residential schools, at least not to the same extent,” he said. “Being Anabaptist also gives us a connecting link with the many aboriginal groups who emphasize peace and restorative justice. We need to start building on these.”

—Evelyn Rempel Petkau

Listowel, Ont.

## 25th annual heifer sale raises funds for MCC

**T**he 25th annual heifer sale, sponsored by Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale Inc., raised more than \$144,000 for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Held on Feb. 20 at Carson Auction Facilities, Listowel, the sale had to be rescheduled from the original sale date because of inclement weather.

The 98 heifers sold for a total of \$76,675, giving them an average price of \$780, up \$200 from last year’s average. In total, all of the auctioned items (including the animals) brought in \$84,280, while cash donations of \$60,550 brought the grand total to \$144,830.

Topping the sale at \$5,200 was EBYHOLME S S BEVERLY; donated by Roy Snyder and Associates and Ebyholme Farms, the animal was purchased by Andy Alma, Smithville, Ont.

This was the 25th consecutive year the sale has been held. In total, the sales have raised more than \$3.3 million for MCC relief and development work around the world.

—MCC Ontario release



Photo by Evelyn Rempel Petkau

**At the recent partnership circle meeting Riverton Fellowship Circle received a plaque from Mennonite Church Canada acknowledging their joining the conference. Riverton Fellowship Circle members Barb Daniels, Emily Collins, Emily Sigurdson and Joyce Grimard are pictured with Walter and Hilda Franz and Neill and Edith Von Gunten of MC Canada.**

involved in north/south, urban/rural church partnerships, are well aware of the cultural, geographic and financial challenges that they face. Churches in Riverton, Manigotagan, Cross Lake, Matheson Island, Pine Dock and Pauingassi are finding partner congregations in Winnipeg and rural Manitoba with which they can share resources and do exchanges.

Pointing out with humour and candour why some things just don’t work when Mennonites try to transfer their way of doing things to a culture that is profoundly different, Aldred gave them an understanding of why the task of partnering is not an easy one.

When an aboriginal father wants to teach his son how to trap, he takes

Herschel, Sask.

## Church workers provide hurricane relief

In the wake of last fall's hurricanes along the American Gulf Coast, 13 people from Herschel Ebenfeld Mennonite Church helped with reconstruction of hurricane-damaged homes in Pointe Aux Chenes, La.

In February, the Herschel contingent travelled south in a 15-passenger van, complete with trailer, where we were met by Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) personnel and another volunteer group from Sterling Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

One of the young boys we met was nine-year-old Storm. His name served as a constant reminder of the dangers to life and occupation in this part of the world. Storm and his family are members of the aboriginal Chitimacha people.

Following closely behind Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Rita slammed into land west of New Orleans, where the Chitimacha people live, leaving serious damage from both wind and water. Their houses are built on stilts so that sea-level waters will not enter their homes when the levees are breached.

Living next to the bayous, water provides both a source of living and also a threat to their very lives, as many Chitimacha people are fishers, while others work as tugboat operators.

Four work crews were dispatched to various job sites. One crew worked all week on the New Beginnings Church, a non-denominational church being re-situated from a nearby island where it had been decimated by hurricane winds. The outer shell and the interior framing was completed, and wallboard was being put up, by the time we left.

Other jobs included roofing the homes of people unable to do the work themselves, repairing ceilings, installing screens and replacing buckled floorboards.

Not only were the physical needs of indigent families responded to, but many conversations and words of support were shared. Their stories of physical threat and personal suffering, as well as the ordinary stories of family life, will remain with us for a long time.

One evening we attended a Mardi



**Members of Herschel Ebenfeld Church helped rebuild New Beginnings Church.**

Gras parade in the nearby city of Houma. This was a time for chatting with the friendly locals. We came away with a taste of southern hospitality, not to mention the countless strings of Mardi Gras beads. A bluegrass concert in a local Lutheran church rounded out our evening.

We are grateful for the time we spent together, working to help improve life for others. Our lives will not be the same for having had the experience. Thanks be to God who led the way and accompanied us on this adventure.

—**Claire Ewert Fisher**

*The author is co-pastor of Herschel Ebenfeld Mennonite Church.*

Edmonton

## Book launch by departing pastors

Holyrood Mennonite Church said goodbye to pastoral advisors Hugo and Doreen Neufeld during a worship service and potluck on March 26. The Neufelds had been with the congregation on a half-time interim basis since January 2005.

The congregation and associate pastor Mike Perschon look forward to welcoming the new senior pastor, Werner DeJong, in mid June.

The Neufelds will be back at Holyrood on the evening of June 9 to celebrate the release of Hugo's book, *The North End Lives: A Journey Through Poverty Territory*, published by Herald Press. The book is a collection of true stories from the Neufelds' time as directors and pastors of Welcome Inn, a drop-in centre and church in a poor area of Hamilton, Ont.

—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**



*Photo courtesy of David Martin*

**When Mennonite Church Canada staffer Al Rempel showed up at the Friars' Briar in Regina to join the team of clergy curlers from Ontario, he was told he had been replaced by an import from Quebec! Guy Hemmings, second from right, was twice runner up in the Tim Horton's Briar and now works for the Canadian Curling Association promoting the sport at the grassroots level. He spoke briefly at the opening ceremonies of the Friars' Briar, a Canada-wide clergy curling event held each year parallel to the Brier. In his daily column in the *Regina Leader-Post* the following day, he commented, "My mother will be so pleased that I attended that event, in case some of the clergy goodness might rub off on me!" That pretty much set the tone for a week of good fun and occasionally good curling by the Ontario team of John Schultz, an imported Lutheran, left, Maurice Martin, and David Martin (along with Al Rempel, missing from photo). Karen Martens-Zimmerly, co-pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in Regina, was co-chair of the local Friars' Briar coordinating committee. Next year's Friars' Briar will be held in Hamilton, coordinated by the All Ontario Clergy Curling Association.**



**Floradale Mennonite Church held a date-stone ceremony on March 19. Building committee members Ron Metzger and Jeff Bauman steadied the stone while church historian Brent Bauman and children's Sunday school leader Jane Greenwood showed the**

**historical artifacts to go in the cavity behind the stone. This new building, which should be ready for use in May, replaces the present church built in 1936.**

Elkhart, Ind.

## Nighswander researching new commentary at AMBS

**F**ormer Mennonite Church Canada general secretary Dan Nighswander is one of three Mennonite pastors to receive grant funding for a sabbatical on the campus of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS).

Nighswander arrived at the Elkhart campus in early January and will remain until June. He is researching and outlining a commentary on I Corinthians. Along with his wife, Yvonne Snider-Nighswander, he is also preparing for a three-year assignment in South Africa with MC Canada Witness.

"The transition opportunity is really wonderful for the particular assignment Yvonne and I are going to," said Nighswander. "There are extensive resources here, including people at AMBS and in the wider community, as well as the material in the library. We looked into non-Mennonite schools for my sabbatical, but the people and library resources would not have

been as good for what I am working on."

Nighswander's commentary is being written for the Believers Church

Bible Commentary series, published co-operatively by several Anabaptist denominations whose aim is to make scholarship available to the broader church.

While on campus, Snider-Nighswander is taking seminary courses and preparing for her upcoming assignment working with the African Indigenous Churches.

Pastoral sabbaticals—funded through a recent grant from Lilly Endowment—provide opportunities for church leaders to live on the AMBS campus and participate in chapels, forums and spiritual direction, and to pursue a research project of their choice. This funding covers the costs of housing, lunches and a stipend for each pastor for up to nine weeks. Nighswander's sabbatical is also partially funded by Mennonite Church Canada.

—AMBS release by Hannah Dueck



**Yvonne Snider-Nighswander is taking courses at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., while her husband, former MC Canada general secretary Dan Nighswander, is on sabbatical there to research and write a commentary on I Corinthians for the Believers Church Bible Commentary series.**



Photo by Bruce Hildebrand



**Herb Buckwalter, a member of Warden Woods Mennonite Church, Toronto, lives on 75 percent of his paramedic's salary so every 18 months he can take six months paid leave, enabling him and his wife Ginny to do long-term volunteer work with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). As long-termers, the Buckwalters are placed in leadership positions with MDS. "Being a leader is a learning process," says Buckwalter. "I'm not needed as an expert builder. The challenge is to just stay organized." Buckwalter is currently leading a crew helping to build the New Beginnings Church in Point Aux Chenes, La. The congregation is mostly aboriginal Americans; the church is relocating from its traditional home near the seashore to higher ground after having been flooded each of the past five years.**

Photo courtesy Dottie Kauffmann



**Sharon Waltner, left, a registered nurse, member of the Mennonite Nurses Association (MNA) and moderator-elect of Mennonite Church USA, chats with Susan Kehler, an MNA member from British Columbia, at the MNA luncheon held recently in conjunction with the Mennonite Health Assembly in Sunset Beach, N.C. The theme of the luncheon was "Spirituality and the nursing shortage." Nurses were challenged to reflect on how spirituality, their values and the nursing shortage affect their nursing practice.**

## People&Events

**North Newton, Kan.**—The Awards Committee of the Bethel College Alumni Association has named Terrance Rempel of Bethlehem, West Bank, and Alain Epp Weaver and Sonia Weaver of Amman, Jordan, as the recipients of Young Alumnus Awards for 2006. Rempel, a native of Alberta, is one of the founders of the BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights in Bethlehem. From 1998-04, he was co-ordinator of research and information for BADIL, and from 2004-05, he was senior researcher with the organization. He is now an independent consultant for BADIL. Rempel graduated from Bethel College in 1990 with a history major. He also has an M.A. in Middle East politics from Exeter (United Kingdom) University and is a Ph.D. candidate in politics at Exeter. His dissertation is entitled "The politics of refugee participation: Palestinian refugees in comparative context." He has authored, co-authored and edited numerous articles and publications, including the forthcoming book, *The Refugees the World Forgot*, written with Susan M. Akram. Epp Weaver and Weaver became co-country representatives for Palestine, Jordan and Iraq for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in July 2004.  
—Bethel College release

## Advertising Due Dates

Issue	Copy Due
May 29	May 16
<i>(Focus on Seniors)</i>	
June 12	May 30
June 26	June 13
July 10	June 27
July 31	July 18

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

## Transitions

### Births/Adoptions

**Block**—to Dana and Glenn, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., a son, Griffin Jacob, March 28.  
**Leis**—to Lindsay and Scott, Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., a son, Dylan Michael, March 20.  
**Pauls**—to Helena and Jason, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, David Jacob, March 14.  
**Schroeder**—to Mary and Thomy, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Sophia Susann, March 23.  
**Trojek**—to Bernadette and Jamie, Breslau Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Esme Geertje Ava, March 8.  
**Watson**—to Tammy and Troy, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., a son, Elias Jude, March 27.

### Marriages

**Hildebrandt-Chuchman**—Adam (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite) and Andriana, at Vladimir and Olga Cathedral, Winnipeg, March 4.

### Deaths

**Dyck**—Marie, 92, Springridge Mennonite, Pincher Creek, Alta., March 27.  
**Kroeker**—Peter, 91, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Feb. 28.  
**Patrick**—Stefanie Hope, daughter of Cheri and Steven, First Mennonite, Edmonton, b. Feb. 7; died Feb. 7.  
**Schellenberg**—Edna (nee Thiessen), 92, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, April 2.  
**Schulz**—Olga, 95, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, March 24.  
**Thiessen**—Frank, 83, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., March 28.  
**Thiessen**—John J., 94 (b. Feb. 23, 1911), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Feb. 14.  
**Wall**—Gertrude, 90, Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask., March 8.

## Mennonite Church Canada

### Requests for prayer and praise

During the Easter season please give thanks and pray for:

- The God's People Now! Tour, which is taking general secretary Jack Suderman and other church staff across Canada as they seek to visit all MC Canada congregations within the next several months. Give thanks for the openness and hospitality shown by the 50-plus congregations already visited in Saskatchewan and Alberta during March and April. Pray also for travel safety and for God's presence in conversations and relationships as they continue their travels in B.C., Eastern Canada and Manitoba.
- The five Native Ministry circles in Manitoba, as they plan summer camps and Daily Vacation Bible School programs in five northern communities, and for Ray Dumais, a Cree church leader, who has a vision for starting an aboriginal Christian fellowship in the Saskatoon area in partnership with MC Saskatchewan.
- Marlow and Vicky Ramsey from Mongolia, as they are reunited with family and friends in Calgary; they will establish a home base there prior to beginning their North American ministry, which will take them to various locations on the continent. The Ramseys will be sharing stories of how God is bringing healing and hope to Mongolia as they give thanks to God for the growth and development of the Mongolian church. Remember the new Mongolian congregations that are working together to transform their communities.

## Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

### Emerging churches to be accepted

Two congregations will receive "Emerging Church" status at the MC Eastern Canada spring delegate assembly on April 29. An Emerging Church is a core group of committed believers who join in fellowship, have a regular time for worship, and are in essential agreement with Mennonite faith and practice as expressed by MC Eastern Canada and its broader Mennonite Church affiliates.

The Lao Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church, meeting for public worship since September 2004 at 3625 Weston Rd., Toronto, grew from Toronto United Lao Mennonite Church. They also meet Friday evenings in homes for Bible Study and prayer.

Their goal is to expand the Christian peace witness among the largely Buddhist Laotian community of 5,000 people in northwest Toronto, reaching out to neighbours to offer translation for government services, and helping three-generation immigrant families adjust to cultural changes.

Chinda Kommal, a bi-vocational church planter working as a tool and die maker, is their leader; he expresses a vision to see Anabaptist multicultural churches spring up across the Greater Toronto Area.

The Gathering Church—in formation for more than two years—meets at W.T. Townshend Public School, 245 Activa Ave., Kitchener, for Sunday morning worship. Outreach activities have included a neighbourhood party and a car wash. They have also distributed an invitational flyer in the local community.

The church is led by Pastor Jim Loepp Thiessen. Their mission statement is, "Making

Jesus real to people, inviting them to follow."

Emerging Church status provides a time of mutual discernment and testing for a long-term relationship between the congregation and MC Eastern Canada.

## Mennonite Church Manitoba

### Review recommends camper fee increase

The Education Ministries Review Panel has completed a review begun last fall.

In a report compiled by Krista Neustaedter Barg, Nathan Gerbrandt, Reynold Friesen, Harold Peters Fransen, Marg Rempel and Camille Roth, it was noted that the summer camp program is solidly focused on the campers and that it is a great training ground for developing leaders for the church. Camps with Meaning's unique way of presenting the message of Christ and inviting campers to faith is holistic and creative, they reported.

The report included the following recommendations:

- There is potential to increase ministry to seniors and people with disabilities.
- Hospitality needs to continue to be emphasized.
- A more responsible environmental attitude should be nurtured.
- The sense of unity among all camps, staff and stakeholders should be enhanced.
- Job positions should be restructured to create more focused task descriptions.
- A two-year leadership program, encompassing and expanding the current counselor-in-training program, was suggested.
- Creative partnerships with businesses, which can employ summer staff before camp, could be developed.
- Summer staff pay scale should be increased.

- Resources in the area of planned giving should be systematically developed.
- Camper fees should be increased.

## Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

### Eyebrow Mennonite hosts song festival

Eyebrow Mennonite, a rural MC Saskatchewan congregation with an average Sunday attendance of 35, recently held a Festival of Singing retreat at the church.

Percussionist Darryl Bueckert, who plays for the Saskatoon Symphony, and Duff Warkentin, a well-known area conductor, were called in as resource people to teach the congregation some fun ways to worship using bongos, shakers and tambourines.

"It was a chance to sing old songs and learn new ones," explained part-time pastor Sharon Schultz.

On Sunday morning, children in the church learned the African words to a new song and then sang it during the service.

The community was invited to the event on March 10 and 11.

## Mennonite Church Alberta

### Setback at new Trinity building site

A crack in the septic tank has caused a few problems at the construction site of Trinity Mennonite's new building. The tank must be dug up and replaced with a stronger one.

Even though the replacement process will take a number of weeks, building site supervisor Suzanne Baergen is not overly worried about the slow down. "We have a number of other finishing jobs to do that will also take time. This won't significantly delay our

getting into the building,” she says.

The congregation hopes to move into their new building in late May or early June.

## Heritage retreat cancelled this year

The annual heritage retreat for seniors, held in June at Camp Valaqua, has been cancelled for 2006.

Organizer Kurt Janz said that the main reason for cancelling this year is the busyness of the June calendar. Both Foothills Mennonite and Highland Mennonite Brethren congregations in Calgary will be celebrating 50th anniversaries in June, and Didsbury

Bergthal Mennonite Church is hosting the annual Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale.

Heritage retreat organizers felt that scheduling another event, no matter how good, during the month would simply be too much, and attendance would suffer. The Heritage retreat will resume in 2007.

### Mennonite Church British Columbia

## Bell ringer certified as record holder

It's official. Joe Defries, bell choir director at West Abbotsford Mennonite Church,



### Defries

is in the record books. Eight months after attempting to set a first-time record for solo marathon handbell ringing, Defries has received notification from the Guinness World Record organization that his feat has been officially recognized. He played handbells continuously for 28 hours 50 minutes 21 seconds on July 5 and 6, 2005, in Penticton, B.C.

## Listening Circle brings cultures together

Bannock and traditional German Mennonite *platz* were on the menu when Christians of both European and aboriginal origin gathered for a “two-evening listening circle with aboriginal people.” Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministries and Mennonite Central Committee B.C. Aboriginal Neighbours co-sponsored the March 28-29 event.

About 90 people formed a circle in the Emmanuel Mennonite Church gymna-

**Continued on page 30**

JIM SHANTZ



### From our leaders

**R**ecent events and readings have got me thinking about leadership in the church. Where churches are healthy you will usually find good leaders. There are, of course, exceptions.

I am grateful for a “climate of ferment” in our denomination that is causing us to take a good look at what it means for us to become transformational leaders for the times we are in.

At a 2004 North American ministers gathering, a paper encouraged us to rethink the office of oversight: to move from merely providing resources or support, to “minding the faith” issues such as “keeping core values focused, providing spiritual care and assisting congregations in spiritual discernment on theological issues...”

In a meeting not so long ago, Jack Suderman highlighted what seemed to be a felt frustration among some local congregational leaders. Suggesting that the leadership required to guide the church through the complex waters of our culture may have been sitting there in the room, the response was that there is no expectation that such leadership should come from pastors. Rather, leaders are expected to serve as functionaries—at church meetings, care for needs, write reports—but they are not expected to give direction.

Was this a fair assessment? The response at that meeting indicated clear frustration that seemed to be with a church culture that does not give leaders permission to lead. While there may be some historical or theological reasons for that, the answer may lie somewhere else. In reflecting on this at our recent pastors and spouses retreat in Alberta, the question was raised, “Does this

## Leadership: Reactive or proactive?

**I am grateful for a  
‘climate of ferment’ in  
our denomination....**

say more about leadership itself than about our congregational culture?”

Suderman’s recent paper, “Missional ecclesiology and leadership,” makes this cryptic statement: “Leadership is needed and leadership there will be. The question is whether the leadership will, in fact, move the church toward its missional vocation or not. Much leadership does not do so.”

Leadership usually makes one of several choices:

- Hearken to the past and its methods;
- Maintain the present; or,
- Move forward to the future.

Reverting to the past misses the fact that what once was successful may not be successful now. Maintaining the present is a natural inclination, but often sabotages efforts to move forward by dissipating energy on present problems. In Mennonite Church Canada, our future is the missional vision and it is starting to take hold.

How can the church better move forward in its God-given task? At the risk of oversimplification, let me make three suggestions for churches:

- Create accountability structures that focus on the spiritual growth of leaders.
- Create “growth space” for pastors by encouraging adequate Sabbath space or sabbaticals. (Many congregations

already do this.)

- Leaders need to keep viewing the big picture, the kingdom perspective that dares to imagine what things might look like if we could see a little more of heaven on earth. (The first two will greatly assist in this.)

*Jim Shantz is MC Alberta conference minister.*

## Retreat offers women the gift of time

**New Hamburg, Ont.**—Hidden Acres is hosting a women's retreat from May 5 to 7.

This year there is a departure from the usual format of providing a speaker who brings a wealth of information to share.

This weekend women are offered the gift of time:

- To nurture their souls.
- To play—with crafts, books, games, food, the outdoors, and more.
- To enjoy the gift of massage therapy, reflexology or foot massage from invited resource people.
- To reflect on their life journeys. Ardith Frey will be present as chaplain/spiritual director.

Take the time to bring someone old and meet someone new.

For more information or to register, contact Hidden Acres Camp at 519-625-8602. Registration deadline is April 28.

—**Pam Bartel**

## Calendar

### British Columbia

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

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

**May 13:** McClure Road Mennonite cemetery tour by Mennonite Historical Society of B.C., 2 p.m.; *faspa* at Bakerview Church. For tickets call 604-853-6177.

**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.

**June 3:** MC B.C. special delegate sessions. Location TBA.

### Alberta

**May 6-7:** Songfest hosted by Edmonton First Mennonite Church. Theme: "God's people now." CMU Chamber Choir will be the featured guests.

**May 7:** CMU Chamber Choir tour—Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church, Edmonton, 10 a.m.; First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, 2 p.m.

**May 12:** Youth night at Camp Valaqua. Call 403-637-2510 for more information.

**May 13:** Spring work day at Camp Valaqua. A camp contact meeting will be held in the afternoon. Call 403-637-2510 to register or for more information.

**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:** Camp Valaqua fellowship banquet fundraiser. RSVP by calling 403-637-2510 or e-mailing manager@campvalaqua.com.

**June 3:** Annual Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon to raise funds for a new lodge roof and a future staff residence. Hike the Nihahi Ridge near Elbow Falls. Call 403-637-2510 to register.

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

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

**June 9:** Book launch of *The*

*North End Lives: A Journey Through Poverty Territory* by Hugo Neufeld at Holyrood Mennonite Church, Edmonton, 7:30 p.m.

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

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

### Saskatchewan

**April 29:** Ministries Commission second annual Touring Mission Fest.

**May 6:** RJC alumni golf tournament. To enter, visit [www.rjc.sk.ca](http://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 4-6:** MC Saskatchewan pastor-spouse retreat at Camp Elim.

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

**June 17:** Ultimate Adventure seniors retreat, banquet and carnival at Youth Farm Bible Camp.

### Manitoba

**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 2:** Winnipeg Youth Orchestra presents "The Sounds of Spring Concert" at Winnipeg's Centennial Concert

Hall, 7 p.m.

**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 6:** Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society spring history workshop in Gretna, focusing on Bruce Wiebe's research on Mennonites who settled around Maple River in Cass County, N.D.

**May 6:** Work day at Camp Assiniboia.

**May 9:** "Conflict: A gift for the church" one-day workshop for pastors and church leaders sponsored by CMU's Institute for Community Peacebuilding. For more information, visit [www.cmu.ca](http://www.cmu.ca).

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

**May 19-21:** Workathon at Camp Moose Lake.

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

**May 26-28:** Birding retreat at Camp Koinonia.

**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 11:** Eden Foundation and Big Brothers/Big Sisters charity golf tournament, Winkler Golf Course, 1:30 p.m. tee-off. To register, call 204-325-5355 or e-mail [edenfdn@valleycable.com](mailto:edenfdn@valleycable.com).

**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](http://www.cmu.ca) for more information.

**Aug. 21-25:** CMU Blazers multi-sport overnight camp.

For more information, visit [www.cmu.ca](http://www.cmu.ca).  
**Aug. 28-Sept. 1:** CMU Blazers multi-sport day camp. For more information, visit [www.cmu.ca](http://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](mailto: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**

**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.  
**April 29:** The DaCapo Chamber Choir and TACTUS Vocal Ensemble perform "Rhapsody: Music of spring, love and celebration," at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener, 8 p.m.  
**May 3-7:** National MCC Thrift Shop Network conference, Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.  
**May 5-7:** Women's retreat at Hidden Acres Camp. Open to all MC Eastern Canada women and their friends.

**May 6:** Riverdale Mennonite Church 10th annual Goods and Service Auction at A.E.X. Petrol, Millbank, 4 to 7 p.m. All proceeds to mission outreach.  
**May 6:** Shalom Counselling Services fundraising breakfast and annual meeting, Kitchener MB Church, 8:30 a.m. Featured speaker: Elizabeth Huss. Topic: "Lasting marriage."  
**May 13:** Coffee house in support of Student Open Circles, 7:30 p.m., at Hamilton Mennonite Church. Performers include the African group One Voice and Hope Rising, among others.  
**May 13:** Menno Singers present "Psalms and Hymns" with Marilyn Houser Hamm, Zion United Church, Kitchener, 8 p.m.  
**May 13:** Springfest at Niagara United Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Auction, barbecue, baked goods, garden centre, family entertainment and more. Rain or shine.  
**May 15,16:** Annual seniors spring retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp. Choose to attend either day. Resource people: Randy and Anita Lebold, missionaries to Indonesia with Wycliffe Bible Translators. To register, e-mail [info@hiddenacres.ca](mailto:info@hiddenacres.ca).  
**May 20:** Hamilton Welcome Inn Community Centre garage/plant/bake sale and open house, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, call 905-525-5824.  
**June 11:** Peach Pickers concert at Zurich Mennonite Church, 2:30 p.m.  
**July 14-16:** Shantz family reunion in New Hamburg. Activities include local tours, storytelling, a pie and ice cream social, and a thanksgiving worship service. For more information, visit [www.christianrshantz.ca](http://www.christianrshantz.ca) or e-mail Ralph Shantz at [rdshantz@golden.net](mailto:rdshantz@golden.net).

**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/](http://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](http://www.businessasacalling.org).

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

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- Changes will be made immediately but may take four to six weeks to take effect because of printing schedules.

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Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5,  
 Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 6H7  
 Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 221  
 Fax: 519-884-3331 E-mail: [office@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:office@canadianmennonite.org)

**Listening** *From page 27*

sium in Abbotsford the first evening to hear Alberta Cree theologian Ray Aldred speak, after members of the Sto:lo Coqualeetza elders group of Chilliwack presented a special welcome with songs. Aldred spoke on the topic, "How can traditional spirituality and understanding be fulfilled in the gospel, or transformed by it, in the same way that European cultures interpreted the gospel into their context?"

"When the gospel is shared, it must be in the heart language of the people," he said. "Instead of telling [people] how to be Christian," he asked, "how about just telling them the story?"

Also sharing that night

was Mary Fontaine from the Mistawasis Cree Nation, who talked about various symbols in her culture that relate to faith and life.

On the second evening, carver Eric McPherson of the Gitksan First Nation near Hazelton showed some of his art and talked about the symbolism in it. "Being from an oral culture, there's no way to share stories without symbolism," he said.

*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.*

**For rent**

Ideal Winnipeg living this summer: Fully furnished one-bedroom apartments or room & board options are available at Canadian Mennonite University. Call Tim Rempel for info/rates at 204-487-3300.

Student housing in **Montreal**, located within walking distance of McGill and an easy commute to Concordia. Experience community living and social action in a Christian & Peace church context. [www.residencema.ca](http://www.residencema.ca); [experience@maisondelamitie.ca](mailto:experience@maisondelamitie.ca); 514-843-4356.

Bachelor apartment for rent. Includes private entrance, stove, fridge and private bath. Rexdale area. Available immediately. Phone 416-746-1730.

Furnished townhouse in Waterloo, Ont. available for adults for short-term occupancy from approximately May 15 to July 15. For terms, contact 519-575-8868 or [ejadueck@yahoo.ca](mailto:ejadueck@yahoo.ca).

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](mailto:shcottage@sympatico.ca)

**Announcements**

**MENNONITE TRUST LTD.** is pleased to announce that

**Mr. Gerald Willems** of the Saskatchewan Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches has been elected to the position of President on the Mennonite Trust Ltd. Board of Directors. **Mr. Lorne Grunau** of the Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches has been elected to the position of 1st Vice-President. **Mr. Bruno Klassen** of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan has been elected to the position of 2nd Vice-President. Continuing to serve on the Advisory Board are **Mr. Wayne Harms** of the Saskatchewan Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, **Mr. Alvin Schultz** of the Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches and **Mr. Harvey Braun** of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.

**Employment opportunities**

**THOMPSON UNITED MENNONITE CHURCH REUNION**

We'll be hosting a come-home weekend on July 1,2 and 3, 2006, in Thompson, Manitoba. We invite former members to attend. For info, contact:

**Dale Shantz**  
**Phone: 204-679-5210; E-mail: [shantz@mts.net](mailto:shantz@mts.net)**  
**E-mail: [wrana@mts.net](mailto:wrana@mts.net)**  
 We will e-mail you the agenda.

Rockway Mennonite Church invites applications for the position of

**PART-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**  
 (12 hours per week)

Duties will include producing the weekly bulletin and assisting the pastor with general administration. Strong organizational abilities, good word processing skills, and a friendly and flexible demeanor are important. Rockway is a dynamic congregation with a regular attendance of 100 located in downtown Kitchener. Résumés should be submitted by May 2, 2006. For more information, please e-mail or call:

**Pastor Scott Brubaker-Zehr**  
**Phone: 519-578-4900; E-mail: [rockway@bellnet.ca](mailto:rockway@bellnet.ca)**  
**32 Weber St. W., Kitchener, ON N2H 3Z2**

Rosthern Mennonite Church is excited that their current youth pastor has decided to pursue further ministry studies. We are seeking a new

**FULL-TIME YOUTH PASTOR**

to begin about the end of August, or at a time mutually agreed upon. We are a congregation of some 200 active members, with a large and active junior and senior youth program. To find out more about this position, please contact:

**Jim Epp, Search Committee Chair**  
**c/o Rosthern Mennonite Church**  
**Box 519, Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0**  
**Phone: 306-232-5577**  
**E-mail: [rosthermnc@sasktel.net](mailto:rosthermnc@sasktel.net)**

Applications will close May 15.

**CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY**

If you are looking to join a growing and dynamic team, have a passion and vision for Christian University education, and have the required qualifications, we invite you to apply for one of the following employment opportunities:

- Assistant Director of Enrolment
- Church & Alumni Relations Coordinator
- Student Advising Coordinator
- Student Life Program Coordinator

For more information on these positions, please visit our website at [www.cmu.ca](http://www.cmu.ca) or call Susan Warkentin at (204) 487-3300. (E-mail [swarkentin@cmu.ca](mailto:swarkentin@cmu.ca))



**CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY**  
 Attn: Susan Warkentin, Director of Human Resources  
 500 Shaftesbury Blvd. | Winnipeg, MB | R3P 2N2

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](http://www.connexus.co.kr/english).

**Mennonite Savings and Credit Union** is a progressive faith-based financial institution with six full-service branches serving members of Mennonite, Amish, and Brethren in Christ churches across Ontario. With a membership base of more than 15,500 individuals, farms, businesses, churches and organizations, the Credit Union manages assets now exceeding \$580 million. Plans are underway to open additional branches in the Niagara region and in Aylmer. Our **Member Relations Department** is currently seeking a

## MARKETING COORDINATOR

The Marketing Coordinator has primary responsibility to assist in the development and execution of all corporate communications, member relations, marketing, and brand development initiatives.

**This includes but is not restricted to:**

- Execution of outbound marketing initiatives including campaigns, advertising, and member communications
- Execution of inbound marketing initiatives including market and product research
- Writing and editing copy (and delegating of same) for advertising and member communications
- Database and mailing list administration
- Administration of corporate stewardship and community support initiatives
- Departmental administrative support
- Showing initiative, flexibility, and cooperative leadership within an interdependent team environment.

**The ideal candidate would have:**

- 3 years experience in a marketing/advertising/public relations role
- a related university or college degree
- strong computer skills
- excellent written and oral communication skills
- ability to be flexible and adaptable within a changing work environment
- detail-orientated work habits
- the ability to work as part of a team
- appreciation for the various Anabaptist church communities across Ontario
- a commitment to the philosophy and values of a faith-based financial cooperative.

**Interested persons should send their resume by  
Friday, April 28, 2006 to:**

Pam McCartney, Human Resources Manager  
Mennonite Savings and Credit Union  
1265 Strasburg Rd. • Kitchener, ON N2R 1S6  
(519) 772-5228 or 1-888-672-6728 • fax: (519) 746-1045  
e-mail: [pmccartney@mscu.com](mailto:pmccartney@mscu.com)



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Rosthern Mennonite Church in Rosthern, Sask., invites applications for the position of

### FULL-TIME LEAD PASTOR

We are an older established congregation of about 200 members. We are looking for someone who has gifts in preaching, administration, discipling and pastoral care. A commitment to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology is important to us.

Our pastor, together with the congregation, will seek ways in which we can engage the community and world in which we live with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ. Community involvement, visitation and participation in conference activities are desired. Preferred starting date is Sept 1/2006.

Contact:

**Ted Janzen**  
Phone: 306-232-5619; Email: [tjanzen@sasktel.net](mailto:tjanzen@sasktel.net)  
**Jerry Buhler**  
Phone: 306-249-4844; Email: [jerry@mcsask.ca](mailto:jerry@mcsask.ca)

### TEACHER: WILLOWGROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Willowgrove Primary School is a Christian-based school affiliated with the Mennonite Church. We offer a low student/teacher ratio, a caring atmosphere, and peace and environmental education for grades JK-Grade 3. We are currently looking for a full-time teacher with primary certification for August 2006. The successful candidate will be creative, resourceful and able to work independently as part of a small staff. He/she will possess a Bachelor of Education and demonstrate a strong Christian faith. More information about Willowgrove Primary School can be found at [www.willowgrove.ca](http://www.willowgrove.ca).

Applications will be accepted until April 21, 2006.

Forward a resume to :

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

### Half-time ASSOCIATE PASTOR

First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alberta, is looking for a half-time two-year term Associate Pastor to join a team of two co-pastors. We are a growing, multi-generational congregation of 200+ members and adherents. Our congregation is committed to Mennonite/Anabaptist faith beliefs, celebrates diversity and variety in worship, includes music as a significant aspect of worship life, and is committed to area and national conference affiliations. The successful candidate's duties will include service in the area of pastoral care or youth ministry. A minimum of a bachelor's degree in theology or related ministry experience is preferred.

For further information, or to apply for this position, please contact:

**Tim Wedler,**  
1612 Blackmore Court SW, Edmonton, AB T6W 1J2  
Phone: 780-475-7437  
E-mail: [tkwedler@telus.net](mailto:tkwedler@telus.net)

Elkhart, Ind.

Activity for the dedication of the new Chapel of the Word at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary began three days before the actual dedication service, as students, faculty and staff took turns reading the Bible from the chapel's pulpit.

The chapel, created by enlarging a classroom in the seminary's main administration building, is devoted to the teaching of preaching and worship leading. Because of this purpose, the name "Chapel of the Word" was chosen, and because of the name, the seminary community joined in reading "The Word" as a way to dedicate the space.

Beginning on Feb. 28, the Psalms were read, followed by the New Testament. Then there was still time before the worship service on March 3 to move to the beginning of the Bible and read through Genesis, Exodus and part of Leviticus.

"Proclamation of the Word is the heart of ministry and at the centre of the seminary," AMBS president Nelson Kraybill said.

The chapel is designed to be very different from a classroom, explained preaching and communication professor June Alliman Yoder. "We are taking teaching and learning into worship space, rather than taking worship into a classroom space."

The worship-like space and the small size make the Chapel of the Word ideal for classes in which students learn how to preach, lead worship and singing, and conduct rituals such as communion and baptism.

The signal that the room is different than a classroom begins with the entrance. Double doors display glass panels in which are etched "The Word" in more than 21 languages and alphabets.

The room is equipped with state-of-the-art technology to allow students to learn how to use the technology that

## AMBS dedicates 'Chapel of the Word'



Photo by Mary E. Klassen

many congregations are using, and to facilitate students' learning as they are recorded and view themselves in preaching and worship roles.

Funding for the creation of the Chapel of the Word came through the seminary's Next Generation Fund for Church Leadership. Major donors were Peter and Helen Redekop and Peter and Charlotte Wall of British Columbia. Their gifts were in recognition of the faithful witness of their parents and mentors, Jacob and Maria Redekop.

—AMBS release by **Mary E. Klassen**

**In the doors to the new AMBS Chapel of the Word are panels of glass in which are etched "The Word" in 21 languages and alphabets, representing the original languages of the Bible and the languages of students and faculty at AMBS in 2005. These include Navajo, Maasai, Amharic, French, Japanese, Korean and Slavic.**