

CANADIAN Mennonite

May 29, 2006
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Science gives glory to God

Science and Christianity is our focus in this issue's Faith&Life section. We bring you two articles, one by a molecular biologist and the other by a mathematician, on how they have connected the two in their respective fields, as well as reviews of three books on the subject.

Intelligent design has become the latest battleground between those who see science and faith in conflict. Intelligent design is an analysis that tries to prove the existence of an intelligent creator by arguing that certain parts of plants and animals are so complicated they need an intelligent, all-powerful someone to have created them that way in a single step. This is in contrast with what the theory of evolution argues, which is that complex biological systems develop through a process of many small, undirected changes over millions or billions of years.

This issue heated up this past fall when U.S. District Judge John Jones was asked to decide if teaching intelligent design violated the separation of church and state.

The intelligent design trial splashed the issue across the media for a number of months. Jones ruled in December that teaching intelligent design was teaching religion, not science, and therefore was unconstitutional. Earlier this month, *Time* magazine named Jones one of the 100 most influential people of the year.

The important issue is not what ninth graders at Dover High School should be taught in biology class, or whether or not intelligent design is a wholesale repackaging of creationism under a new name (which Jones found it clearly was). The case reminded many of the famous 1925 Tennessee Scopes "monkey trial," where the issue was whether evolution could be taught in the public classroom. Particularly

over the last century, it seems that an increasing number of people have come to see science and faith in mortal combat, with any gain by one a loss by the other.

But science and faith do not need to be enemies, nor should they be. In fact, many fundamental parts of scientific thought come from Christianity, including that nature is real, not an illusion or a god; that it is worth studying; and that the world is subject to fundamental guiding forces that are able to be understood. Using the minds God has given us to understand the world God created is our privilege and joy as beings created in the image of God.

Theologian John Haught (whose book *Purpose, Evolution and the Meaning of Life* is reviewed on page 8) testified in the intelligent design trial and presented a helpful image in understanding how faith and science can relate well to each other. He asked the court to consider what makes a kettle boil. One answer is the rapid vibration of heated water molecules. Another answer is because one's spouse switched on the stove. A third answer is, "Because I want a cup of tea." All of these answers are simultaneously true, even though they are all different from one another.

On the basis of what we learn from Genesis, the Mennonite Church teaches that God has created the heavens and the earth, and that the world has been created good because God is good. Whether the world we know today came about through this or that specific process does not change this fundamental statement of faith.

God has given us a good creation, one worthy of appreciation, examination and study. Science gives glory to God by allowing us to use our God-given faculties to peer ever more closely into God's handiwork. However we get there, glory to God!

—Tim Miller Dyck

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Web site preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted on our web site at www.canadianmennonite.org on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the June 12 issue by June 8.

Cover: A “River Jordan” spilled down over the floor of St. Catharines United Mennonite church as MC Eastern Canada delegates remembered what God had done for them. Our coverage of the MCEC Spring Conference is on pages 16 and 17. —Photo by Tim Miller Dyck.

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Winnipeg

Abiding in God

Meet Becca Thiessen. Christian, musician, student, daughter and friend. Oh, did I mention she's blind? Becca grew up just like the rest of us—huge imagination as a child, struggled with acceptance and finding herself in high school, and loves being a university student.

As she has coped with her lack of eyesight, her relationship with God has become remarkable. Becca, 21, doesn't believe that God made her blind, rather that God has been able to work through her lack of eyesight.

One of the main ways that Becca has found to express herself and minister to others is through her music. A talented musician, the pianist/guitarist recently recorded her first CD entitled *Bound for Joy*. [See lyrics to one of the CD's songs, page 5.]

Music has been a spiritual journey—one where Becca has found her self and her voice. She doesn't talk about her blindness in her music, and doesn't intend to. She uses visual language because that is what people can relate to.

Becca, who was born in Winnipeg and raised in New Brunswick, wants to find theology in places where it is not usually found, like art and music. She doesn't care if she makes a cent off it, as long as it is out there reaching people. Her aspiration is not to be famous; rather, her calling is to touch people through music. She says it's as if God is saying, "You go, girl. Now do something with it."

Becca is graduating from Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, with a theology degree, and when asked about her dreams for the future, she expresses her wish to work in a "normal, everyday, what other people usually consider boring" kind of job. She realizes that it isn't very exciting, but "Jesus was a carpenter, and a store can be building the kingdom." She



Photo by Dan Dyck

Gabrielle Plenert, left, looks up to her friend Becca Thiessen, who has placed her trust in God despite her blindness.

the young prophets

hopes that she can minister through small things, like coming in early to work, humming something and having a co-worker ask what it is. Those are all ways to reach people, she says.

Becca's motto has been "I can't but I will."

Her schooling, her music, even learning how to cook, are all tasks that she has thought she couldn't do but has tried anyway. She looks to characters in the Bible like Sampson and Gideon who have said, "I can't but I will—with God's help."

Becca believes that admitting doubt to God is showing true trust. When you trust someone, you share your insecurities and doubts. Not telling is not trusting. "We need to glorify God in everything, because God does make everything work out for good," she says. "There is nothing you can do but trust him about that. He's been trustworthy through the millenniums, so why not now?" Paraphrasing author Flannery O'Connor, she says, "If you look at life at its worst, you're doing no more than trusting God. I think that's true about my lack of vision. By accepting it, I'm

trusting God."

After talking to Becca I began to wonder what sorts of things I can't see. I know I'm not physically blind, but do my prejudices, lack of information and stereotypes get in the way of how I see people? As a Christian, what is it that people notice first? Is it what I can do, or what I can't?

We all have areas in our lives where we have disabilities. Some of us let those disabilities prevent us from doing what we are called to do. Others of us, like Becca, have been able to take what we were dealt and trust that God is going to work through it.

When asked what we need to do, Becca says, "Talk to God. Ask God, because God doesn't mind. Abide in him, and you will bear much fruit. I'm going to abide in God, so I will always bear fruit. That's what I want to do with my life. Bear fruit. If I do no less than abide in God, then that is plenty."

—**Gabrielle Plenert**

The 18-year-old author was born in Kinshasa, Congo, and now lives in Winnipeg. She just finished her first year at Canadian Mennonite University, where she is studying international development. She plans to be a midwife.

One Star

Looking up
To the midnight sky,
Feels like the clouds
Are gonna swallow me whole.
There's no moon, and the darkness
surrounds me
To the point where it just brings me
down.
I'm reminded of the worst of life
All the tragedies, depression and the
sorrow.
Memories of a haunted past over-
whelm my thoughts
'Til I'm frozen stiff with fear.
And when I think there couldn't be
anything worse,
I see a single star breaking through
the clouds.
And though it only lights a tiny dot
up in the sky
My whole being is filled with peace,
I know there's hope in the night.

(Chorus)

I know light in the most unlit place,
And the darkness does not overpower.
In a seemingly hopeless case I can
Ask for wisdom at any hour.
You're my light source;
My guiding force.
My worries are far;
You've calmed me with one star.

Now tonight
There are no clouds at all.
And all the stars are shining brightly
around me.
There's so many; it's too hard to count
them.
And I'm left in confusion once more.
The dipper is to the brim with choices.
Deadlines and decisions seem to pop
up by the minute.
My heart is racing, trying to name
them one by one,
'Til I cannot breathe in the panic.
And when I'm lying there, sick in my
distress,
I find the North Star shining brighter
than the rest.
And it penetrates my soul, as all my
concerns melt away,
And you're saying, "Come with me,
and we'll go sort this all out."

(Chorus)

And in the daylight,
When the cares of this world come
back again,
Would you still be my star,
So I know it's you on whom to depend.

—Becka Thiessen

On April 17, Orlando Schmidt of Abbotsford, B.C., realized a dream when he completed the Boston Marathon, running 42 kilometres in 3 hours 35 minutes—just five minutes shy of his goal. Having served with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Brazil for four years, it was a natural decision for him to raise funds for MCC's One Million Cisterns project there. Six classes at Auguston Elementary School in Abbotsford, where his sons attend, held a coin drive and raised more than \$1,000. His youngest son's Kindergarten class raised enough money for one cistern, bringing in \$365. As of press time, he had raised more than \$10,000 in total, nearly halfway to his goal of \$26,000.

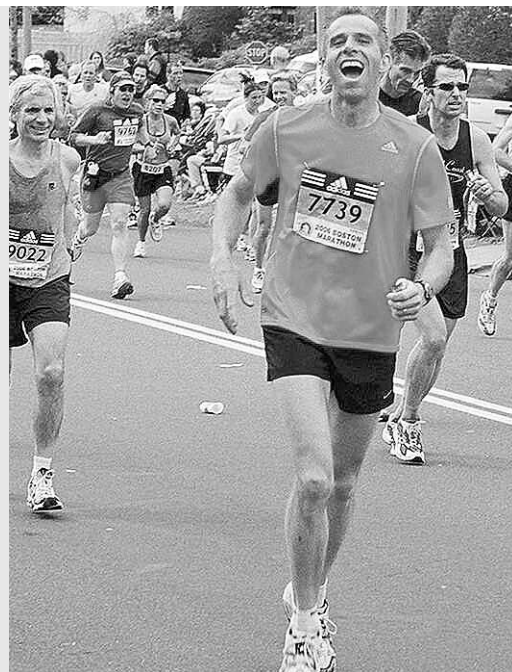


Photo courtesy of Orlando Schmidt

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Pointing us to a loving God: The paradox of natural selection

When we look at the DNA of plants and animals, what we see looks like a building site.

In *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*, author C.S. Lewis employs a lot of magic—but it is remarkably constrained magic. For example, Aslan could have rescued the traitor Edmund from the White Witch by some mighty act of power, but Lewis did not let him get away with that. The White Witch confronts Aslan without fear for her safety because she can make a good case for ownership of the boy according to the deep laws of Narnia. Aslan respects those laws and pays the price. There is no cheap magic here.

What is true for the stories of Narnia is true for the laws of nature as well, and for the character of God. God does not employ magic and miracles on a daily basis. God seems willing to abide by natural laws that govern creation, not intervening to fix things and resolve problems. And God seems to also want for us to discover how this marvellous created world works. Why else would God give us such incredible gifts of curiosity and skills in science?

All of which leads me to a topic that is very much current today: “intelligent design.” Since I am a Christian scientist (a molecular biologist), I am often asked what I think of intelligent design. Most people seem to assume that I support and welcome it, since one of the goals of intelligent design is to restore God’s role in creation—a role that science seems bent on eliminating altogether. People are usually surprised

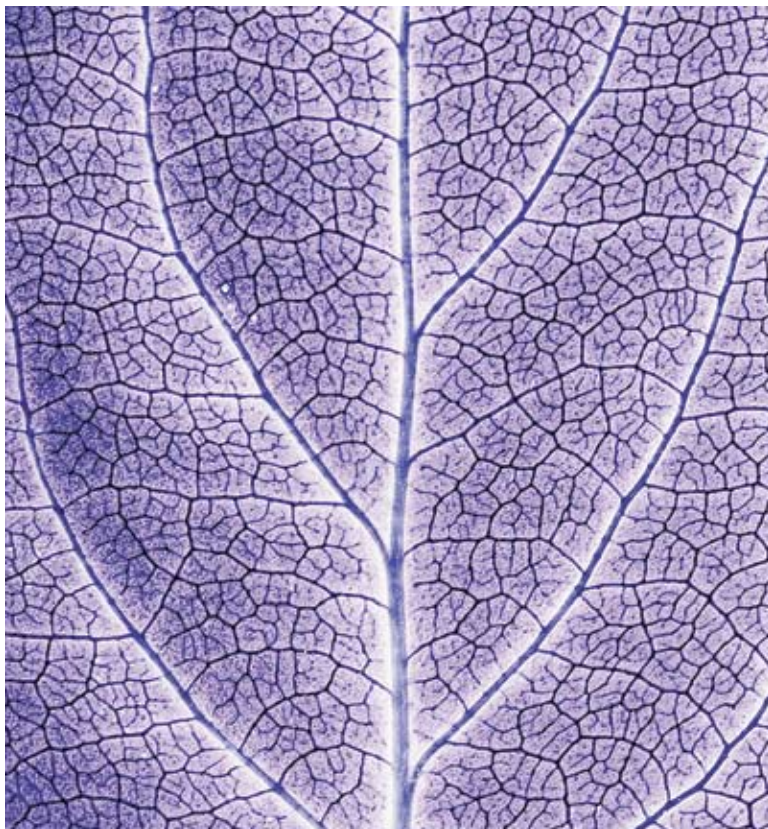
to discover I am not in favour of intelligent design as a guiding principle for science, nor are a number of other Christians involved in science. Let me tell you why.

Biologists not too thrilled

The main proponent of intelligent design is Michael Behe, author of *Darwin’s Black Box* (1996). The basic idea in Behe’s book, and in other intelligent design books by such authors as Phillip E. Johnson and William Dembski, is that there are things in nature that could not have been made by using the laws of nature alone. Just as an intelligent human is required to make an electric motor, an intelligent designer is required to account for objects in nature that are highly organized. This is particularly true of the living cell, which contains tiny motors, pumps, turbines and code readers. Biologists think that such structures were made by natural selection (Darwinism), but, according to intelligent design proponents, they are wrong. Whenever we find something that is highly organized, they say we should recognize it as specially created by an intelligent designer who works in such a way that there is no natural explanation for the result.

You can see why biologists, whether Christian or not, wouldn’t be too thrilled with this idea. Biology would cease to be an explanatory science and would just become a list and a descriptor of the many things the intelligent designer had done. There would be no point in asking how the designer had done the work.

I think, however, that Behe is wrong. There are clues in the cell about how it was made. When we look at the DNA of plants and animals, what we see looks like a building site. Working genes make up only a few percent of the total DNA. The rest of the DNA consists of dead genes, useless genetic material and huge piles of virus-like segments.



The genes are not arranged in an orderly way on the chromosomes; they may be facing backwards or forwards, they may be clustered or far apart, and the clusters can be bizarre mixtures of different kinds of genes. The genes themselves are made up of bits and pieces of other genes, with the bits separated by large tracts of genetic nonsense.

This makes me think that the DNA is the result of a long tortuous process of trial and error, mix and match, renovation and repair. It actually fits quite well with what would be expected from the Darwinian process of natural selection. What Behe says about the orderliness of the cell is fine, but he has told only half of the story.

A natural explanation

If things aren't so orderly in creation, what about "irreducible complexity"? This is another idea promoted by Behe. Through irreducible complexity, he seeks to show that everything in a cell is there for a purpose, and that each part depends on the other to function—there are complex machines in the cell that don't work until all of the parts are in place.

The favourite example is the motor found in some bacteria that drives the propeller (the flagellum). Evolution would put the parts together one after another in a long sequence, but this would be impossible because natural selection would always eliminate half-done machines before evolution could complete them. Half a motor is no good.

It would seem that irreducible complexity is fatal to the theory that natural selection is the source of design in nature. But I wouldn't write the obituary for Darwinism just yet. There are bacteria that don't have propellers, but still have many parts of the propeller motor! What are these motor parts doing in a cell that doesn't need a motor? They are incorporated into a pump. So here we have the rudiments of a Darwinian story: half a motor is okay if it works as a pump.

But even if there are structures with irreducible complexity—and I believe there are many in the cell—natural selection would not be precluded. Something that has irreducible complexity today need not have had it in the past. A stone arch will fall if only

one stone is removed; each stone is indispensable. But in the past there may have been a wooden scaffold underneath the stones. The removal of the scaffold makes the arch irreducibly complex when it was not irreducibly complex with the scaffold in place. Proteins in the bacterial motor that are indispensable today may not have been essential in the past.

So there may be natural explanations for living things after all. And why not? Why can't we say that God made the cell while at the same time understanding that the cell is the outworking of the laws of biology working in a process called natural selection or some other yet undiscovered principle of nature?

Doing science as a Christian

When I do science as a Christian, I do exactly the same experiments that would be done by non-theistic scientists. But while they may believe that the laws of nature are godless, impersonal and automatic governors of nature, I am free to believe that they are nothing less than the expression of the faithfulness of God. God is utterly consistent in everything he does. But intelligent design proponents want to put biology back into the realm of mystery and miracle. I think that this is premature. There is a good chance that we can see the faithfulness of God even in the evolution of the cell by natural selection.

I think there may be a serious problem with intelligent design that could affect our view of the nature of God. Intelligent design proponents believe the universe was created by the action of chance, natural selection and by the occasional intervention of the intelligent designer. When chance and natural selection are incapable of making an organized structure, the designer does something magical to resolve the problem.

According to William Dembski, chance and natural selection account for very little in the cell; most of it is made in a non-natural way. Yet when it comes to the world we live in from day to day, God seems to be content to allow the slow and wasteful processes of the world to run their course without intervening very often. It has taken about 15 billion years to create the universe as it is now. This is more consistent with a creator who patiently weaves a creation that is constantly constrained by the demands of internal consistency, than one who pays no attention to constraints.

Intelligent design proponents should be careful not to abandon naturalistic explanations too quickly because there is good reason to think that God wants the world to be intelligible to us.

Some have argued that it is this intelligibility of the world that tells us that God creates the world not just with power but also with love. It is paradoxical that understanding of a cruel and wasteful process such as natural selection could point us to the love of God.

—Glen R. Klassen

The author is adjunct professor of biology at Canadian Mennonite University.

And [God] seems to also want for us to discover how this marvellous world he created works.

Facing the 'big' issues in Goshen

John F. Haught, edited by Carl S. Helrich, *Purpose, Evolution and the Meaning of Life*, Pandora Press, 2005, 130 pages.

Purpose, *Evolution and the Meaning of Life* consists of three lectures given by theologian John Haught at the last annual Goshen Conference on Religion and Science, as well as a wonderful sermon entitled "God the gardener" by P. Douglas Kindsche, a mathematician.

Haught accepts evolution as a valid account of the origin of life on Earth, but argues strongly that such an acceptance should not lead to the kind of materialistic pessimism found in best-selling books by Jacques Monod, Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett, among others. These thinkers look in vain for meaning because they see nature only at its most basic level. Meaning and purpose emerge at higher levels of understanding.

A helpful analogy is that of a monkey looking at *Moby Dick* and seeing only black smudges, while a child recognizes some of the words and an adult understands the story. From the perspective of biblical faith, we see much more than just the basic dead material in living things. There are a number of layers of understanding possible when looking at the world. The popular atheistic writers are not wrong because they get their science wrong; they are wrong because they stay at the first simplistic layer—they can't go deeper than simplistic evolutionism.

What can we see in the long history of life on Earth that is coherent with our biblical understanding of the world? This is a difficult question because, whereas the Earth has been around for more than four billion years, the Bible is only a few thousand years old. How can they possibly tell the same story?

Haught finds resources for answering this question in the work of the Jesuit anthropologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and in the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. From Teilhard we get the courage to see the unfolding of Earth history as a great

story whose purposes are fulfilled in Christ. With Whitehead we dare to dream that the universe is not just matter and energy, but that it is a drama with an open future, not unlike the kingdom of God in the gospels or the "new creation" in Paul's writings.

Haught has not given us the final word on the meaning of life in the context of a very old and a very big universe. This frontier in theology is still very new and very scary, but it must be pursued. Some people may think that Teilhard and Whitehead are already old hat and do not represent the core of historic Christian theology, but I think Haught is justified in taking them seriously as pioneers. They are

pointing in the right direction.

The biggest challenge is to understand the difference between the Christian view of the ultimate future and that of the atheists. How does the "new creation" come into being from an evolutionary world? How can we be saved from either the "big freeze" or the "big crunch" at the end of the universe? These questions have huge implications for environmental ethics, but they are not yet being addressed by mainstream theology and they are not addressed in this book, except for some musings in the post-lecture discussion that forms the final part of the book. But it is heartening to hear of Mennonites beginning to face these issues.

—Glen R. Klassen

Primers on intelligent design

Denyse O'Leary, *By Design or by Chance: The Growing Controversy on the Origins of Life*, Augsburg Books, 2004, 337 pages.

William A. Dembski, editor, *Uncommon Dissent: Intellectuals Who Find Darwinism Unconvincing*, ISI Books, 2004, 366 pages.

When Denyse O'Leary subtitles her book, *The Growing Controversy on the Origins of the Universe*, the average lay reader might well raise an eyebrow just a tad. There may be "a growing controversy," but I'm hard-pressed to detect it in the normal course of my life.

That aside, *By Design or by Chance* makes a useful primer for those who wish to find out what's being said by the "intelligent design" people about the subjects of evolution, creationism and any other "ism" that concerns itself with the really big questions.

O'Leary is a journalist, whereas Dembski is a scientist and philosopher, but both are arguing for the intelligent design model of life on the planet. For those who are unfamiliar with the territory, intelligent design is not creationism.

O'Leary delineates the range of opinions on the origin of life: from young Earth creationism, that treats the Genesis account of the origins

of life as historical fact, to Christian evolutionism and atheistic Darwinism, as well as intelligent design.

Intelligent design theorists believe that, although natural selection and genetic mutation working together are evident in the universe, they cannot explain the irreducible complexity life forms exhibit. The human eye, for instance, is made up of many parts that have no function without the other parts. There is clear evidence that the universe has been consciously designed, intelligent design proponents insist.

On the whole, the book is good reading for those who want to know what the fuss is about but find it hard to slog through the academic essays in books like Dembski's.

Dembski appears to be one of the foremost spokespersons for the intelligent design viewpoint. *Uncommon Dissent* is a collection of essays by writers in the intelligent design school of thought. It can become tedious, especially when similar arguments regarding everything from irreducible complexity and gaps in the fossil record to the propeller on certain bacteria are constantly repeated.

Several essays are outstanding, however, because they focus on the meaning of the controversy in a way that should resonate with all people who have grown up with faith in a

creator but who have felt they had to modify the details of that faith in the face of the scientific evidence.

I would recommend particularly “Why I am not a Darwinist” by James Barham. For people like me, a Christian who was secularly educated after high school, Barham’s thoughtful retelling of his own voyage is helpful: “I had always been immersed in the humanities, but somehow I had managed to keep the part of my mind that was drawn to the exploration and expression of human feeling separate from the part that was preoccupied with rational understanding” (page 185).

If, as a faith community, were we to undertake a new dialogue on the subject of our biological origins, Dembski’s and O’Leary’s books would be worthwhile resources for that discussion.

—George Epp

Testimony of a math lover

During a recent “walking meditation” home from the University of Manitoba, where I teach mathematics, I reflected on how math and faith have intertwined and enriched my life, to the extent that separating one from the other would seriously damage both.

I first fell in love with mathematics at 15, when I discovered geometry in Grade 10. That same year I was baptized on confession of my faith in a small rural Mennonite church where higher education was discouraged at the time unless you were going to be a teacher or a missionary, and where math interests were thought to be amusing.

Despite this, my love affair with math grew and flourished. I was both exhilarated by the mental challenge of proving theorems, even as a teenager, and puzzled by how this science of imaginary objects—such as infinitely long lines of zero width—could have something relevant to say about our physical world.

I revelled in the power of calculus—invented by Isaac Newton and other mathematicians. I spent one summer slightly drunk with the power of it all, and I understood what inspired



Photo by Rosemarie Cunningham

The author is pictured on a “walking holiday” in England in 1997 when he was already a math prof at the University of Manitoba.

ment or peace and justice programs in southern Africa and Canada for several decades, we encouraged ourselves and other MCC volunteers to expect God to be present long before we entered the scene. We suggested it is not our role to insert abstract truth into foreign situations, but to search for truth in the context of community, continuity and wholeness, in the hope that those who search

Alexander Pope to write, “Nature and Nature’s Laws lay hid in night; God said let Newton be! And all was light.”

However, even then I understood that any mathematical description of reality is metaphorical, that physicists—and other scientists using mathematics to describe the universe—cannot claim ultimacy or to have explained the “why” of some event. And that despite the aura of absolute truth, mathematics is an imaginary world of make believe objects that only exist in the mind. This is a world in which “truth” is of a very different nature, a difficult-to-define concept possibly not that different from religious truth.

So even now when my mathematics students ask that age-old question, “What is truth?” I still don’t know where to begin, other than talking about continuity, harmony, beauty, wholeness and unity being grounded in community.

This notion of truth has become intertwined with that other love, the love of the one I committed to follow, also as a somewhat naïve 15-year-old. The one who, according to the Gospel of John, referred to himself as “*the way, the truth and the life.*” How does one follow such a one with authenticity, one whose way is a way of life and peace? Certainly not by using truth as a weapon.

When Leona [my wife] and I found ourselves administrating Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) develop-

will discover the truth that casts out fear.

So as I continued my recent walk home I pondered what it was that drove me to carry math journals and theology books with me over several decades. Or why I would sit poolside at MCC retreats working on research problems, oblivious to noisy games of water polo. Certainly it was therapeutic. But more than that, it awakened reverence and awe and pointed me through the suffering that surrounded us, to that sense of goodness we find in the first chapter of Genesis.

And while it was from our African sisters and brothers that we learned how to hope in the midst of seeming hopelessness, ever-present for me were my mathematical and theological interests. They did their part to keep hope alive by pointing to the underlying goodness of God and creation in the midst of the incredible suffering we saw, caused by both natural events like droughts and floods, and by the human savagery of war and generations of apartheid.

Human beings have been given the ability to detect, appreciate and play with patterns. This gift has made survival possible, and has provided the means by which we celebrate our universe. It has given rise to the sciences and the arts, and it is this gift of the Spirit that I now share with our future teachers and lovers of mathematics.

—Peter Penner

Brian McLaren on *The Da Vinci Code*

*In the days leading up to the May 19 release of the bestselling *The Da Vinci Code* on the big screen, pastor, writer and Sojourners board member Brian McLaren talked with Today's Christian Woman associate editor Lisa Ann Cockrel about why he thinks there is truth in the controversial book's fiction.*

What do you think the popularity of *The Da Vinci Code* reveals about pop culture attitudes toward Christianity and the church?

McLaren: I think a lot of people have read the book, not just as a popular page-turner, but also as an experience in shared frustration with status-quo, male-dominated, power-oriented, cover-up-prone organized Christian religion. We need to ask ourselves why the vision of Jesus hinted at in Dan Brown's book is more interesting, attractive and intriguing to these people than the standard vision of Jesus they hear about in church.

Why would so many people be disappointed to find that Brown's version of Jesus has been largely discredited as fanciful and inaccurate, leaving only the church's conventional version? Is it possible that, even though Brown's fictional version misleads in many ways, it at least serves to open up the possibility that the church's conventional version of Jesus may not do him justice?

So you think *The Da Vinci Code* taps into dissatisfaction with Jesus as we know him?

McLaren: For all the flaws of Brown's book, I think what he's doing is suggesting that the dominant religious institutions have created their own caricature of Jesus. And I think people have a sense that that's true.

I also think that the whole issue of male domination is huge and that Brown's suggestion that the real Jesus was not as misogynistic or anti-woman as the Christian religion often has been, is very attractive. Brown's book is about exposing hypocrisy and cover-

up in organized religion, and it is exposing organized religion's grasping for power. Again, there's something in that that people resonate with in the age of pedophilia scandals, televangelists and religious political alliances. As a follower of Jesus I resonate with their concerns as well.

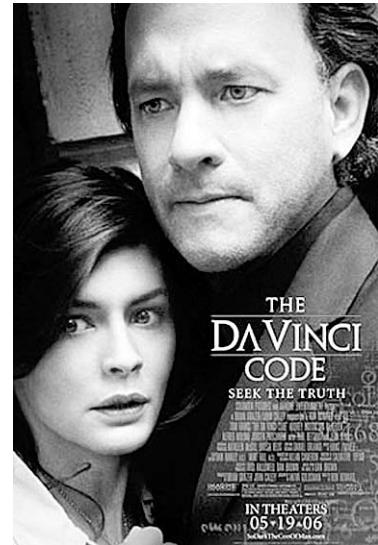
Do you think the book contains any significantly detrimental distortions of the Christian faith?

McLaren: The book is fiction and it's filled with a lot of fiction about a lot of things that a lot of people have already debunked. I don't think Brown really cares that much about theology. He just wanted to write a page-turner and he was very successful at that.

Should this book be a clarion call to the church to say, "Hey, we need to have a body of believers who are much more literate in church history"?

McLaren: Yes! You're exactly right. One of the problems is that the average Christian in the average church...has such an oversimplified understanding of both the Bible and of church history—it would be deeply disturbing for them to really learn about church history. I think the disturbing would do them good. But a lot of times education is disturbing for people. And so if *The Da Vinci Code* causes people to ask questions and Christians have to dig deeper, that's a great thing, a great opportunity for growth. And it does show a weakness in the church giving either no understanding of church history or a very stilted, one-sided, sugarcoated version.

On the other hand, it's important



for me to say I don't think anyone can learn good church history from Brown. There's been a lot of debunking of what he calls facts. But again, the guy's writing fiction, so nobody should be surprised about that. The sad thing is there's an awful lot of us who claim to be telling objective truth and we actually have our own propaganda and our own versions of history as well.

In light of *The Da Vinci Code* movie, how do you hope churches will engage this story?

McLaren: I would like to see churches teach their people how to have intelligent dialogue that doesn't degenerate into argument. We have to teach people that the Holy Spirit works in the middle of conversation. We see it time and time again—Jesus enters into dialogue with people; Paul and Peter and the apostles enter into dialogue with people. We tend to think that the Holy Spirit can only work in the middle of a monologue where we are doing the speaking.
— Excerpted from SojoMail (www.sojomail.net)

(Canadian Mennonite has commissioned a review of *The Da Vinci Code* movie from Vic Thiessen, director of the London Mennonite Centre, that will appear in a June issue. Ed.)

Letters

Mennonites called to help aboriginal protesters

I write at this time with very mixed emotions. When I look back at my history as a Mohawk I tend to view it differently than most would.

Today, we find our [First Nations] people embattled against the colonial powers of the United States and Canada, as both of these countries try to effectively eliminate our rights and sovereign status through continued lies, deceit, theft and willful mis-education, while at the same time calling on God to bless their efforts.

On the Six Nations of the Grand

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

River Territory in Ontario, we find ourselves in a face-off against these powers that have not been properly educated to understand the status of the Iroquois peoples who are speaking out against the inappropriate actions of Canada [regarding a subdivision development in the nearby town of Caledonia on land claimed by Six Nations as its own]. We find the level

of ignorance and racism displayed by the Canadian public to be disgraceful, not only to us but to the creator we all pray to.

How have the Mennonites chosen to respond? I have heard very little from them, yet they claim to be one of the major religious organizations concerned with issues of justice.

Continued on page 12

JIM BROWN



God, money and me

If someone at church asked you about your annual income or how you spend your money, would you tell them, "It's none of your business"?

This is a reply I often hear when I've posed this "what if" question myself. My usual response is, "And why isn't it their business?"

Many Christians assume an almost sacred right to privacy about their personal use of money. Yet if we believe that an important role for Christians is to encourage each other to greater faithfulness, this will undoubtedly include our stewardship of money.

Over a year ago I joined a small accountability group at church in which we consider how to faithfully manage our resources. We have related our personal financial autobiographies in order to foster understanding of how we develop our attitudes towards money. We have begun exploring how we each work at budgeting and monthly expenses. Our goal in talking about money and how it affects our lives and decisions is not to pry into each others' lives but to learn from, and to encourage, each other as Christians.

We have taken several steps to nurture trust among group members so that we can more openly give and receive counsel from each other. Once the group was established, we no longer took on new members. We committed ourselves to work together for about two years and practise confidentiality within the group. We begin with a devotional and personal reflections, and often con-

Talking about money

I wonder how much of our consumer culture is driven by people purchasing things in order to appear successful?

clude with a common meal. In the end, everyone is still responsible for making their own decisions. Yet we value the feedback and interaction with each other.

I am convinced if we could build more trust and openness with other Christians about our stewardship of money, we would gain a great deal. If you and I could freely talk about financial priorities and challenges, then I

wouldn't feel pressured to impress you or emulate you. And I wonder how much of our consumer culture is driven by people purchasing things in order to appear successful? Talking about money is then threatening because it would expose our deceit. If Christians could talk openly about their financial stewardship, there would be no need to mask reality with consumerism.

As I get to know individuals in the congregations I serve, I am impressed by the expertise and financial acumen present. If only we could build the trust and relationships needed to put that knowledge to use for the sake of each other. Then individuals or families could be open about financial difficulties and get support, instead of keeping it a secret until it becomes a crisis. In fact, most of us could learn from each other.

Being faithful in managing our money is a Christian responsibility. Keeping it a secret is not.

Jim Brown is a stewardship consultant at the Mennonite Foundation of Canada's Winnipeg office. For stewardship education, estate and charitable gift planning, visit www.mennofoundation.ca.

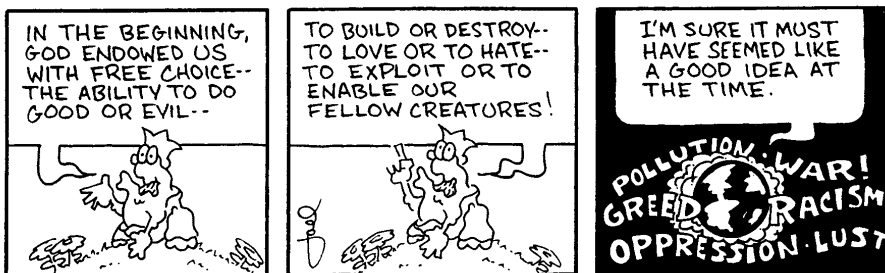
Protesters From page 11

As I write this I would ask for Mennonite people and others to get educated and then support the people of Six Nations in their efforts at receiving justice in this situation.

The Iroquois people played a major role in the formative years of Canada and the United States or they would not exist today. It is time for the Christian people of both these countries to now return the favour. We have seen far too many Christians side with the U.S. and Canada in these issues due to lack of knowledge or outright ignorance and racism.

Deuteronomy 27:17 states, “*Cursed is the man who moves his neighbour’s boundary stone.*’ And all the people

Pontius’ Puddle



shall say ‘Amen!’”

What do the Mennonites say?
—**Sakoieta Widrick, Winnipeg**

[See “MCC Ontario speaks out on land claim dispute,” page, 20, and “Pastors engage racism...,” page 21. Ed.]

Correction

The “Hiroshima Diary” photograph on the front cover of the April 17 issue was taken by Terumi Kuwada. An incorrect attribution appeared with the photograph on page 3 of the issue. *Canadian Mennonite* apologizes for the error.

MELISSA MILLER



Family Ties

Okay, so maybe it was a trick question on the test. “Sexual identity begins at adolescence as hormonal and physical changes occur in the body,” read the true-false question. About one-third of the students thought that it was true. The others remembered the teacher’s comments that sexual identity—one’s sense of being male or female and all that conveys—begins at birth or even before.

In the womb, male children have erections and fondle themselves, and every parent of a little boy knows the fondness he has for his unique appendage. It wasn’t intended as a trick question, but one that I, as the teacher, wanted to ensure the students remembered. We don’t become sexual when we become teenagers. We are sexual beings from birth.

How might our sexual understandings and practices be illumined by this concept? If we acknowledge that wee infants arrive as sexual beings, how might that shape our views and teachings of healthy sexuality?

Much of our concern about sexuality and Christian sexual ethics lies dormant until our children enter puberty. We wait to have conversations—about our deepest sexual values, the beauty of our bodies, the pleasure of sexual stimulation, the cautions and dangers of the gift of sexuality, and the means to set healthy protective boundaries around this sacred gift—until our children are awash in a turbulent sea of hormonal changes. On such occasions, we are understandably tongue-tied, and our youths are deliberately deaf to the precious truths we struggle to articulate.

Sexuality begins at birth

If we acknowledge that wee infants arrive as sexual beings, how might that shape our views and teachings of healthy sexuality?

functions of body parts and the scoop on “where babies come from.” (*The Bare Naked Book* by Kathy Stinson is a personal favourite treasured for its wholesome portrayal of all kinds of bodies.)

Let us refuse to armour our boy children by squelching their emotional expression and need for touch. Many males arrive at adolescence starving for physical touch, which is then often directed into premature and risky sexual behaviour. Let us offer touch generously and without pressure to our teenagers—shoulder squeezes, hugs and back rubs. Let us empower our girls with strength and discernment.

Finally, let us remember that our sexuality is present throughout our lifespan. May the prayers we offer for our children find a companion refrain as we age and care for our older loved ones. Such a prayer may include gratitude for the gift of sexuality, a petition for healing where we have been wounded or caused harm to others, and a willingness to follow yearning and desire into the heart of God. Such prayers will certainly be honoured by the Divine Lover.

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

*But you are a
chosen race, a
royal priesthood,
a holy nation,
God's own
people,
in order that
you may*

*proclaim the
mighty
acts of
God who called
you out of
darkness into his
marvelous
light.*

*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.*

I Peter 2: 9-10

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Edmonton, Alberta
July 4-7, 2006

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PEOPLE
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FOCUS Seniors.....

Seniors invited to tour the Holy Land

On TourMagination tours to Israel/Palestine, participants journey back in time in the land where Jesus walked 2,000 years ago, where they can better understand Jesus' life and teachings and the teachings of the prophets.

As we tour the old city of Jerusalem, Abraham's encounter with a faith-testing God is recalled. It is exciting to view the Holy City from the Mount of Olives, as Jesus would have approached it so many times.

We walk the Passion Route down from the Mount of Olives, where the crowds longed for a Messiah, the person who would finally free them from oppression. While on tour, we create a new understanding of the Jewishness of Jesus. This helps us understand both the settings of his teaching and the ways those around him heard his stories.

Bethlehem is central to the story of Jesus' birth. Our conversation with Mennonite Central Committee workers helps us understand this setting, which is today a disputed political area surrounded by the Wall. The theme of peacemaking and reconciliation is central to our faith. It takes on new meaning as we walk the streets alongside Christians who are committed to put these teachings into practice on a daily basis.

As we ride the boat across the Sea of

Galilee, we remember the time the disciples cried out, "Do you not care that we perish?" Our time of worship on the boat helps us remember Jesus' teaching in the Galilee area, not only on the boat, but on the mount of the Beatitudes.

Nazareth Village is a labour of love, with Christ at the centre. There is a deep desire on the part of those who come to Nazareth to see Jesus, but for centuries all they could see were dusty stones. Today, Nazareth Village, set in the heart of Nazareth, is a recreation of the ancient town that adjoins an authentic first century farm. We enjoy a "parable walk" as well as a first century meal in a Bedouin tent.

TourMagination invites seniors and others to join one of our tours to Israel/Palestine. We believe that the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, are needed in order to assist the world in finding peace, hope and salvation. Visiting the land where the Scriptures emerged is a life-changing experience.

Following a trip, tour members often say, "We never will be able to read the

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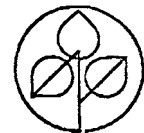
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Bible the same way. We now have new enlightenment.”

You are invited to join TourMagination's Lutheran Holy Land Tour from Oct. 11 to 21; Israel/Palestine with Glenn Edward Witmer from April 9 to 22, 2007; or Lands of the Bible, Sept. 26 to Oct. 8, 2007. For more information, or to book a tour, call 1-800-565-0451 or e-mail office@tourmagination.com.

—TourMagination release by Wilmer Martin

Dreading old age

I have always dreaded old age. I cannot imagine anything worse than being old. How awful it must be to have nothing to do all day long but stare at the walls or watch TV.

So when the president suggested we all celebrate Senior Citizen Week by cheering up a senior citizen, I decided to do just that.

I went to call on my new neighbour, an elderly retired gentleman, recently widowed, and who, I presumed, had moved in with his married daughter because he was too old to take care of himself. I baked a batch of cookies, and, without bothering to call—some old people cannot hear the phone—I went off to brighten this old guy's day.

When I rang the doorbell, this “old guy” came to the door dressed in tennis shorts and a polo shirt, looking about as ancient and decrepit as Donny Osmond.

“I'm sorry I can't invite you in,” he said when I introduced myself, “but I'm due at the racquet club at 2. I'm playing in the semi-finals today.”

“Oh, that's all right,” I said. “I baked you some cookies....”

“Great!” he interrupted, snatching the box. “Just what I need for bridge club tomorrow! Thanks so much!”

I continued “...and just thought we'd visit a while. But that's okay. I'll just trot across the street and call on Granny Grady.”

“Don't bother,” he said. “Gran's not home. I know. I just called to remind her of our date to go dancing tonight. She may be at the beauty shop. She mentioned at breakfast [at which house, I wondered] that she had an appointment for a tint job.”

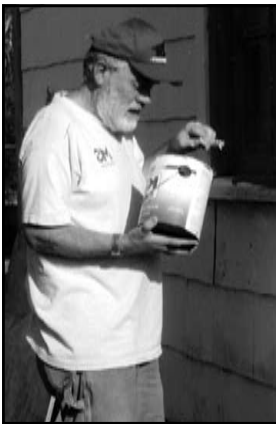
So I went home and called my mother's 83-year-old cousin; she was in the hospital—working in the gift shop.

I called my aunt, age 74. She was on vacation in China.

I called my husband's 79-year-old uncle. Then I remembered that he was on his honeymoon.

I still dread old age—now more than ever. I just don't think I'm up to it.

—Reprinted from the Mennonite Association of Retired Persons website



Service Opportunities for Older People (SOOP)

- open to individuals and groups
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- experience fellowship and learning while serving others
- time for reflection, relaxation and recreation

SOOP is administered by Mennonite Central Committee Canada, Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Association of Retired Persons.



For more information contact your provincial MCC office or SOOP coordinator Carolyn Nance at (204) 261-6381.

www.mcc.org/soop

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St. Catharines, Ont.

MC Eastern Canada finishes restructuring

By unanimous vote, delegates at the annual MC Eastern Canada spring conference sessions approved new bylaws for the organization, bringing to completion the area church's multi-year re-visioning and reorganization process.

In addition, delegates welcomed two new churches into membership—Lao Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church in Toronto and The Gathering in Kitchener; anointed three new regional ministers; and passed a budget 8 percent smaller than the year before, due to declines in congregational giving.

"We spent more than we received, but we did spend less than we had planned," said outgoing moderator Darrell Fast in a summary of the previous year's finances.

The delegate sessions, held on April 28 and 29 at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church, also included worship, Bible quizzing finals [see stories, pages 16, 17] and delegate training in the "asset mapping" approach to congregational church life [see story, page 17].

Executive minister David Martin compared the energy and uncertainty brought about by the transition process to that experienced by the nation of Israel when crossing the Jordan River in Joshua 4. "We are adopting a yet untested council structure, an entirely new model for ministry, in the hope of being even more effective in our response to God's call," he said.

Staff and organizational changes have pushed other items aside over the past year. Delegate Henry Dueck asked about a resolution—that pastors stop acting as marriage registrars—referred to the Executive Board last year. Leadership Council has not taken any action on the matter due to a focus on restructuring, according to outgoing chair (and incoming moderator) Leroy Shantz.

Delegates also voiced concerns about



Photo by Tim Miller Dyck

Maurice Martin, left, Marvin Friesen and Gordon Alton have been appointed as the new MC Eastern Canada regional ministers.

increased military recruitment among students in Leamington and a desire for greater support of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, expressed satisfaction at seeing the new MC Eastern Canada structure in

place, and requested a status update on MC Eastern Canada and MC B.C. discussions over homosexuality, and raised concern over reduced financial giving.

—Tim Miller Dyck

Peace questions from a violent book

Writing the team questions for quizzing on the Book of Joshua presented a unique opportunity to teach Mennonite Church Eastern Canada youths some of the important biblical themes of God's gracious provision for Israel, and to draw a line from that to our own history and experience as a Mennonite people.

It also presented some challenges! What do we, as a peace church, do with all the violence? Did God really expect the Israelite forces to wipe out entire cities, including women and children? Even in those chapters, the positive "spin" is a call to total obedience to the God of Israel.

Several important themes are addressed in this Old Testament book.

The first theme might be typified under the heading "God, land and people." The same God who brought Israel out of slavery in Egypt and led them safely on dry ground across the Red Sea also backed up the waters of the Jordan so they could cross and enter the Promised Land.

Quizzers were invited to ponder how

this theme of emigration and finding a new land is very familiar to us as Mennonites. The exit from Russia, the entry into Canada from Pennsylvania after crossing the Niagara River, the entry into Canada of the Vietnamese boat people, and the more recent coming to this country of refugees from Asia or Latin America, all remind us how God frees people from difficult situations and provides the gift of a new land.

A second theme is the "Call to faithfulness." Constantly the Israelites were reminded that they were to "throw away the gods from the other side of Jordan" and follow only the Lord God of Israel.

"Covenant and covenant renewal" is a theme which follows from the first two themes. In Joshua 4, as the people crossed the Jordan on dry land, representatives from the 12 tribes picked up large stones from the river bed and made a memorial cairn on the other side. The purpose was clearly two-fold. These were stones for remembering and stones for commitment, pointing

to both the past and a faithful future. For Mennonites, just such a memorial cairn stands in Vineland, 20 minutes from this year's annual delegate sessions at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church.

Chapter 24 describes a more specific covenant-making event. As the people come into this new land, they are tempted to serve the gods they discover among the peoples around them. Joshua reminds them that God has been faithful, and invites their faithful response and covenant renewal. In this chapter appear Joshua's famous words, *"But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."*

In Chapter 5 we see that a whole generation of those who had left Egypt had not yet been circumcised. This was remedied at Gilgal. The point of application is that baptism, like circumcision, is a sign of covenant and commitment. In this event, MC Eastern Canada youths are reminded that commitments need to be made anew by each generation. As Mennonites, we have always declared that we are called to be Christians by choice, not by birth.

—Maurice Martin

Congregations urged to 'map' their 'assets'

In two plenary workshops at last month's MC Eastern Canada annual delegates assembly, executive minister David Martin and Jeff Steckley, congregational ministries minister, explained how "asset mapping" can work for the congregations and the conference.

They said that too often congregations get into "a negative needs-based cycle." In simple terms, churches:

1. Identify a need.
2. Service the need.
3. Institutionalize the need, often by creating a staff or volunteer position that "needs to be filled."

However, if the position isn't filled, a church find itself in "a deficiency trap." And when the work of the church gets focused on deficiencies to be filled, Martin and Steckley said

Floradale downs Markham in quizzing final

Youth Bible quizzing had new dynamics this year as quiz teams from 12 Mennonite Church Eastern Canada congregations—four of them for the first time—met at Breslau Mennonite on April 22 for an all-day tournament.

There were first-time teams from Brussels, Kitchener First Mennonite, Maple View and Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, while Riverdale and Drayton Community Church were only involved for the second time. The other teams were from Breslau, Floradale, Listowel, Markham, Nith Valley and Steinmann.

The youths spent months studying details from the Book of Joshua. Some of the lists of obscure kings and complex geographical descriptions were omitted, but the quizzers had to know many details about the 12 tribes of Israel, who they conquered and where they settled in the Promised Land. One question asked for the names of the daughters of Zelophehad (Answer: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah). These young people will long remember such details as Joshua's challenge to the Israelites in their covenant renewal at Shechem.

Traditionally, quizzing had been planned by the MC Eastern Canada youth minister together with the youth council. Because of staffing changes in MC Eastern Canada, this year a quizzing task force did the planning and organizing.

Because there were so many teams involved, a second day was required for the finals. The top six teams—Floradale, First Mennonite, Markham, Breslau, Nith Valley and Waterloo-Kitchener—travelled to the Lao Christian Fellowship in St. Catharines on April 29, the same day as the MC Eastern Canada conference at St. Catharines United Mennonite. A few delegates slipped out of the conference sessions to support their teams. In the semi-final round, Markham was matched against Breslau, while Floradale and First Mennonite played off.

The final match was held during the lunch hour at the MC Eastern Canada conference. Many delegates didn't linger over lunch, but came to watch the match between Floradale and Markham. The score was close. Floradale had no substitutes and Liz Weber couldn't answer any more questions after her three errors, but they still managed to squeak through and win 135 to 125.

—Barb Draper

The Floradale Bible Quiz Team won the MC Eastern Canada championship for the first time in 30 years. Members of the winning team are, from left to right: coach Vernelda Weber, Julia Freeman, Nicole (Rosie) Martin, Caleb Redekop, coach Stefan Cherry, and Liz Weber. Amber McKay was absent from the final match against Markham.



Canadian Mennonite photo

there emerges “a scarcity mentality,” leading in many cases to the call, “We need a new pastor!”

Asset mapping, on the other hand, uses “a positive asset-based cycle.” In this case, churches:

1. Identify people’s gifts and the assets of the congregation.
2. Create growth from the bottom up.
3. Develop resource partnerships.
4. Discover new opportunities, which gather momentum as the pastor partners in ministry with the people, drawing out their gifts.

This results in “an abundance mentality,” according to the presenters.

“The difference is subtle, but significant,” Martin said. “You start with gifts, not the slate; you focus on service and ministry opportunities. The difference, too, is whether you perceive the bottle to be half-empty or half-full. Let’s start with what has been given to us,” he said, urging churches not to “commit the sin of comparison to other congregations.”

Steckley posed eight questions that help individuals to identify their gifts. When these are collected in the

congregation, they become assets that belong to the church. Multiplied by the number of people in the congregation, the assets number in the hundreds or thousands, he said.

Working in clusters, the delegates then began to see how these assets might be shared between congregations in their clusters, releasing God’s gifts in the conference and creating a spirit of abundance.

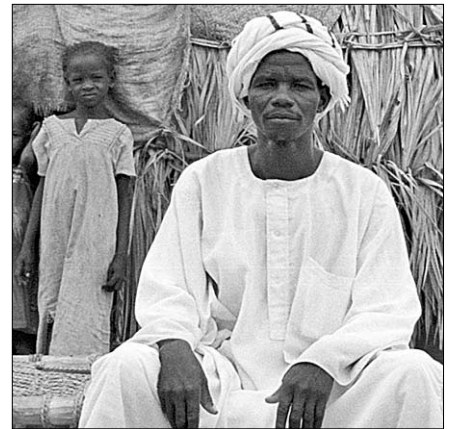
—Maurice Martin

Darfur, Sudan

MCC aid to Darfur tops \$6 million

Food and blankets continue to be provided by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to people displaced by a violent conflict in western Sudan’s Darfur region, as part of an aid response that has totalled more than \$6.1 million over the last two years.

Violence spiralled out of control in Darfur after a rebellion began three



MCC photo

Sadik Omar Abdaraman, 35, a farmer and cattle owner, is now living with his family in Kalma camp. On March 1, 2004, his farming village was attacked by the Sudanese Janjaweed militia. He ruefully recalls that some of his attackers belonged to a nearby Arab tribe, and he had known them since childhood.

years ago. Government forces and government-backed militia—Janjaweed—responded with a scorched-earth campaign that has led to several hundred thousand deaths and the displacement of more than 2 million people, according to most estimates.

Since 2004, MCC has:

- Coordinated the shipment of 3,000 tonnes each of yellow split peas and wheat to displacement camps in Darfur. Of this food, which was provided by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, about 1,200 tonnes of wheat remain to be distributed.
- Collected 81,755 blankets for displaced people in Darfur from constituents in Canada and the United States. Of these blankets, about 26,000 remain to be distributed.
- Financially supported the Sudan Council of Churches in distributing blankets and constructing eight schools and 500 shelters for families in displacement camps.
- Provided relief supplies and milk powder to camps for Darfur refugees in Chad.

MCC is considering another shipment of food to Darfur and to Sudan’s southern regions, where the need for humanitarian assistance is also great, due to a decades-long civil war that ended last year.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

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Zamboanga, Philippines

Climbing toward peace and understanding

Hiking up the slippery slopes of a mountain accompanied by armed government scout rangers, traipsing through mud and over rocks, and finally resting at a silent graveyard more than 2,000 feet above sea level—all in the name of peace.

These were the footsteps of Dann Pantoja, Mennonite Church Canada worker in the Philippines. He was invited by Mindanao Peaceweavers, a network of Filipino peace advocates, to join the indigenous Tausug people in commemorating the Bud Dahu Centennial.

March 2006 marked the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Mount Dahu, where a thousand Tausugs lost their lives in an act of defiance against colonialism. Among the victims were hundreds of woman and children, massacred at the crater of Mount Dahu, where a graveyard now sits in memorial.

“The Bud Dahu Centennial was an important event for me and Gordon [Janzen], as representatives from Mennonite Church Canada, to join hands with the peace movements in Mindanao,” says Pantoja.

Janzen, Mennonite Church Canada Mission Partnership facilitator for Asia, joined the commemoration ceremonies as part of a visit to workers and ministries in the region.

The three-day event paid tribute to the victims, survivors and descendants of the Bud Dahu massacre. It culminated in a peace pilgrimage to the summit of Mount Dahu, to remember those involved and to say “never again.” The Filipino government provided nearly 100 soldiers to accompany the pilgrimage because it passed through a dangerous “terrorist and bandit” area, although Pantoja says he felt uncomfortable with his M-16 armed personal protector.

“Personally, I felt embraced by the Tausug people as they allowed me to cry with them, to laugh with them,

to remember with them, to celebrate with them, to hope for justice with them, and to dream for a lasting peace with them,” recounts Pantoja.

The Tausug people had initially been described as “renegades” and “outlaws” by the American military to rationalize the Bud Dahu massacre. But on the quiet mountainside surrounded by the Tausugs praying for peace, a different mood was evident.

The ‘real’ story

During a prior visit to the city of Zamboanga, Pantoja and Janzen viewed a monument honouring those American and Filipino Christians who sacrificed their lives for Mindanao. A group of Tausug men approached the pair, suggesting that the real story of Zamboanga was not on that monument, but on a historical marker hidden beside the entrance to city hall.

Pantoja and Janzen found the marker concealed behind a palm plant with armed guards in front. The inscription recounted the oppression of the Tausug people under foreign powers, and their resistance against the military occupation and colonization of their land.

“Gordon and I believe that the Spirit of God led us to listen to them,”

explains Pantoja, “to go where their story was hidden, and to go back to them just to say, ‘Yes, we have heard your side of the story.’”

Returning to the group of Tausug men, Pantoja asked their forgiveness for blindly accepting the American account and expressed interest in hearing more about their story. The men opened up with joy and excitement.

“Those Tausug men have been longing to be heard,” says Pantoja. “Their story has been suppressed by both the Philippine government and the American government for more than a hundred years.”

When asked by the group who they were, Pantoja replied, “We’re Mennonites.” Unfamiliar with the name, the men expressed interest in learning about the Mennonite story. Janzen offered a short Anabaptist presentation to the men right in the streets of Zamboanga. Once heavily persecuted for their beliefs and portrayed in many history books as heretics, Mennonites also have a message to share that is not always heard.

Simply displaying a willingness to listen led to a conversation and mutual understanding.

—MC Canada release by **Jeff Enns**



Photo by Jon Rudy

A woman with a doctorate in education mourns the babies killed on this mountain 100 years ago. “When I heard her prayer, I felt as if I heard those mothers crying to God a century ago, who lost their babies in the hands of the American occupation soldiers,” says Dann Pantoja in his newsletter.

Winnipeg

MC Canada signs on to AIDS/HIV letter

Mennonite Church Canada has signed on to a joint letter from the Canadian Council of Churches urging the Canadian government to play a strong role in transforming “the structures that contribute to the spread of AIDS.”

The three-page letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper recommends six initiatives for the government to pursue, including debt relief for countries with “HIV rates above the world average of 1.1 percent of their adult population,” and “a timetable for increasing Canada’s Official Development Assistance to 0.7 percent of Gross National Income by 2015.”

The letter is signed by Mennonite Church Canada moderator Henry Krause and 19 other church leaders from denominations such as the Greek Orthodox, United Church, and the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec.

The letter cites three opportunities for the Canadian government to demonstrate global leadership in the HIV/AIDS crisis:

- The United Nations Review of Progress on the Implementation of the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (May 31 to June 2);
- G8 Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia (July 15 to 17); and,
- The 16th International AIDS Conference hosted by Canada in Toronto (Aug. 13 to 18).

The complete text of the letter to Harper can be found at mennonitechurch.ca, then follow the “News” link. —MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

Winnipeg

MC Canada survey summary online

A summary of the 2005 Mennonite Church Canada survey results is now available online. Visit mennonitechurch.ca and follow the “News” link.

Among the findings:

- 75 percent said they considered themselves Mennonite regardless of which congregation they attend.
- 61 percent of respondents said that average Sunday morning attendance at their church ranged from 101 to 300.
- 58 percent of respondents said they had participated in a Mennonite camp.
- 54 percent of respondents said they attend church services weekly.
- 53 percent agreed with the statement, “I feel I get good value for the funds I commit to the ministries and initiatives of Mennonite Church Canada.” Twenty percent were neutral.
- 36 percent reported having served as a church committee member.
- In five categories, *Canadian Mennonite* emerged as the top communication vehicle for MC Canada.
- Mennonites are modest consumers of Christian media outside of Mennonite-produced material. *Christian Week/Christian Current* received the top rating (33 percent) in a list of non-Mennonite media respondents “regularly pay attention to.”

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

Caledonia, Ont.

MCC Ontario speaks out on land claim dispute

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario is currently in dialogue with members of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory to understand more fully their land claim dispute over a subdivision under construction in the southwestern Ontario community of Caledonia. Through these discussions, MCC Ontario is discerning how best it can stand with the community.

“By listening to one another, meaningful resolutions can be achieved,” says Don Procter, MCC Ontario’s Aboriginal Neighbours coordinator for southwestern Ontario. “It is the hope of MCC Ontario that lasting peace will ensue out of an approach that holds dialogue at the core.”

“We found it disturbing to hear of police moving in and arresting native protesters at a peaceful occupation on disputed land at Caledonia while negotiations were still in process,” Procter says. “We understand that the police recognize that trust was shattered by the raid and is making efforts to rebuild trust. We encourage continued measures to build trust and de-escalate the tensions.”

MCC Ontario recognizes the significant historical losses experienced by First Nations peoples, including the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, and applauds the efforts to move toward a lasting, multi-party agreement that addresses not only the present crisis, but larger, long-standing land and governance issues.

“As followers of Jesus the peacemaker, we affirm the efforts of all who are collaborating to reach a just solution,” Procter says, adding, “It is significant that the confederacy council is being recognized and is represented at the table along with representatives of the elected band council and other levels of government.”

—MCC Ontario release

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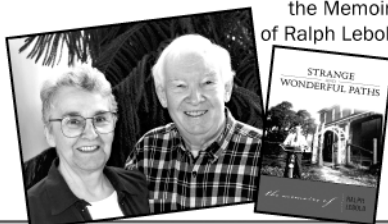
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Hanley, Sask.

Pastors engage racism in church and society

Racism exists in Saskatchewan. A recently released report by the City of Saskatoon discovered that two-thirds of the 500 people who were surveyed have “witnessed acts of racism toward others.”

Ray Friesen, currently pastor of Emmaus Mennonite, has witnessed it firsthand—in the church. “I’ve seen it operate in several congregations I’ve been in,” he said from his church office in Wymark, while also adding, “I’m not free of it.”

Monica Goulet knows firsthand what it’s like to encounter racism. And she knows how much it hurts. “I’ve been called a ‘dirty squaw,’” she told a gathering of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan pastors at Hanley Mennonite Church late last month. Goulet also said she has experienced pronounced job-related discrimination because of her colour and background. “I’ve been a victim before and I will never be one again,” the Saskatoon cultural diversity and race relations coordinator said.

The day-long session, attended by 18 pastors and conference staff, took a hard and sometimes emotional look at the face of racism. Racist attitudes that play out in jokes, comments and attitudes were recognized by most of the pastors present. Stereotypes that are subtly promoted by Mennonites include the idea that aboriginals don’t have to pay taxes and they are troublemakers, it was suggested.

Ignorance of the situation is also a problem. Barry Lessor, pastor of Zoar Mennonite Church in Waldheim, admitted his church has had no contact with First Nations people. “In our community there is no relationship to aboriginal people,” he said.

Goulet isn’t surprised. “The education system does not incorporate

aboriginal relationships,” she said, criticizing news reports that shape Canadian thinking about people groups and widen the gap between them.

A short video—portraying a racist incident that was based on real-

life—got to the heart of the issue for the pastors. It showed a single mother taking her daughter to school on a bus while being subjected to humiliation by some teenage boys. One boy, in particular, taunted her again and again with racist slurs while other people said nothing in her defence. It produced sombre reflection by the group.

Goulet initiated a sharing circle and gave participants a chance to respond. “I recognize wisps of myself in the story,” said Ed Olfert, pastor of Grace Mennonite in Prince Albert. “I wanted to punch him,” admitted Anna Rehan, conference youth minister.

The importance of setting the record straight comes with a sense of

Continued on page 22



MC Saskatchewan pastor Sharon Schultz, left, Claire Ewert Fisher and Rudy Froese took a break in the sun outside Hanley Mennonite Church after discussing the “dark” subject of racism in the church and society at a pastors retreat last month.

Photo by Karin Fehderau



Rockway Mennonite Collegiate's senior boys basketball team captured a silver medal at the Ontario Federation of Secondary Athletic Associations (OFSAA) provincial A championships held in Sturgeon Falls in March. The A-level competition is for Ontario schools with up to 500 students. Pictured from left to right, front row: Jon Minkarious, Ben Cressman, Darryl Good, Jon Kaufman, Simon Martin, Kevin Graf and Dan Kruger; and back row: Chris Wolf (coach), Felipe Gonzalia, Steven Tubb, Brandon Pace, Daniel Johnson, Mark Willms, Matt Burkhart and Mike Friedmann (coach).

Rockway photo

People&Events

New Orleans, La.—Efforts to help Gulf States businesses recover from last summer's hurricanes has moved forward with the hiring of a New Orleans staff person by Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). Adele London has been hired as business advisor to



London

lead MEDA's Back to Business program in partnership with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). She previously worked as an entrepreneurial training instructor with the Housing Authority of New Orleans Resident Loan Corporation, providing support to small business owners. London's first priority will be to help struggling business owners with a range of issues, including permits, strategic planning and market testing. She will work closely with two local organizations that are already providing services to businesses: Good Work Network, which provides training and support to disadvantaged entrepreneurs who are starting or rebuilding businesses; and the Renaissance Project, which focuses on revitalization of a six-neighbourhood section of New Orleans. Plans also include working with local lending institutions to ensure that businesses not meeting conventional lending requirements can access funds they need to get restarted. The venture will draw on the business experience of MEDA members for volunteer consulting. —MEDA release
by **Wally Kroeker**

Rottenburg, Germany—Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) is the recipient of the inaugural Michael Sattler Peace Award. In recognition of its 50th year of operation, the German Mennonite Peace Committee created the Michael Sattler Peace Award in memory of the reformation-era Anabaptist, Michael Sattler, who was burned at the stake on May 20, 1527, in Rottenburg. According to the organizers of the award ceremony, held on May 20, CPT received the 2006 Michael Sattler Peace Award because, "through their unarmed presence, CPT wishes to join in the unfolding of non-violent alternatives to armed conflict." The award is supported by the Evangelical Church of Rottenburg; the Catholic Peace organization, Pax Christi; and the City of Rottenburg. —German Mennonite Peace Committee release

Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Bartlett—to Lisa and Brett, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., a daughter, Maive Sophia, May 2.

Fransen—to Lori and Brian, Altona Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Jayda Renae, April 25.

Loewen—to Kareena and Nathan, Altona Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Bretlyn Aria, April 3.

Patterson—to Melissa and Derrick, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Jake Henry, April 27.

Schellenberg—to Rheina and Gerald, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Lauren Emily Dakota, April 4.

Tiessen—to Kim and Rob, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, a son, Eli Robert, May 7.

Wiebe—to Dorothy and James, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a son, Kaius Makael Laurie, March 29.

Zomer—to Patty and Riks, Tiefengrund Rosenort

Mennonite, Laird, Sask., a son, Hendrikus Owen, April 7.

Marriages

Fehr-Thiessen—Steven and Deanna, Winkler Mennonite, Man., April 22.

Fredlund-Bartel—Keith and Yvonne, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., April 8.

Froese-Voth—Clayton and Larissa, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., May 6.

Steckley-Kipfer—Nolan and Becky, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., May 13.

Deaths

Bowyer—Anne (Bender), 48 (b. Aug. 30, 1957), Cassel Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., May 5.

Brubacher—Eileen (Martin), 75, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., April 29.

Buboire—Dennis, 45, Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man., April 28.

Dick—Irene, 57, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., April 30.

Dyck—Jacob, 96 (b. Sept. 7, 1907), Carrot River Mennonite, Sask., April 29.

Epp—Margaret, 90 (b. June 16, 1915), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., March 9.

Frey—John, 62 (b. March 23, 1944), Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont., May 10.

Friesen—Hilda (nee Voth), 73, (b. Aug. 1, 1932), Altona

Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., April 29.

Heppner—Henry, 68 (b. Dec. 10, 1937), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., April 23.

Kehler—Hilda, 92 (b. June 17, 1913), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 8.

Martens—Ben, 77, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, March 7.

Schmidt—Ernest, 93 (b. Oct. 12, 1912), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., March 19.

Regier—Charlotte, 84, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., April 25.

Unrau—Walter, 85, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, May 9.

Baptisms

Altona Mennonite, Man.—Genevieve Krahn, April 30.

Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man.—Lisa Zacharias, Brent Thiessen, Natalie Rempel, Janessa Klassen, Christopher Klassen, Rachel Hildebrand, Christopher Giesbrecht, Alyssa Friesen, Andrew Ens, May 7.

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

Racism From page 21

urgency. Currently in Saskatchewan, 12 percent of the population is aboriginal, Goulet said, adding that in just five short years the aboriginal percentage of the province's population will quadruple.

Goulet took time to counter popular thinking that, she said, "works against the rising aboriginal population." Although more

than 2,000 Saskatchewan aboriginals have graduated from a variety of technical programs since 1999, she said many employers in the province still think there are no qualified First Nations workers or that they have a poor work ethic.

The Hanley event was organized by the MC Saskatchewan Pastoral Leadership Commission. —**Karin Fehderau**

Mennonite Church Canada

Prayer, praise requests

Please pray for:

- Witness Workers Phil and Julie Bender, who continue to teach English, visit and share their faith in China. They describe themselves as “seed-sowers,” and are thankful for the opportunities they have for conversation and sharing. Pray for encouragement for the Benders in their language studies, for continued faith conversations, and for the successful end to another academic year.

- Alvin Lepp, Witness volunteer, as he, together with other local volunteers, distributes Bibles to students at Siksika Nation in southern Alberta, as a means of addressing spiritual hunger there. Pray for Lepp and for the church at Siksika Nation, as they reach out to the people around them, where bullying in schools as well as other social issues, are a serious problem.

June Equipping now in churches

Mennonite Church Canada’s June *Equipping* packet presents a variety of resources for congregational use:

- A celebration story from the Philippines, “Learning through listening,” which celebrates how listening to others’ stories can lead from hostility to hospitality and provide opportunity to witness to the truth of the humble Prince of Peace.
- A sample sick leave policy for church administrators.
- Inspirational letters from MC Canada leaders, including a “God’s People Now! Listening Tour Update” by Jack Suderman, which reflects on what it means to be a “small song-bird and seed-bed church”; and thought-provoking reflections by Janet

Plenert on how escalating visa problems in Canada are beginning to hamper the work of the global church.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Calling all seniors

MC Eastern Canada is examining the way it communicates with congregations and individuals. Part of that process has seen the discontinuation of several newsletters, including the seniors newsletter, *Are We There Yet?* the last copy of which was distributed to congregations in April.

The Seniors Service Committee, now known as the Senior Resources Task Group, continues to find ways to redefine its approach to fulfill its mandate “connecting seniors across MC Eastern Canada.”

To keep on connecting, the task group will provide more information to the MC Eastern Canada website, as well as including items within the conference’s integrated communication packet. Aware that not all seniors have computers, the task group notes that there is free computer access in local libraries. Church administrators would also be able to download information and make it available to the seniors in their congregations.

The Senior Resources Task Group invites volunteers of any age with interest in, and knowledge of, seniors issues, to assist with ongoing communication to seniors, to determine what types of information to share across MC Eastern Canada, and to share gifts of writing articles or find knowledgeable people to do it.

Those interested in taking part, can write: Doreen Good, Chair, Senior Resources Task Group, 131 Riverside Dr., Exeter, ON N0M 1S3; e-mail dale.good@sympatico.ca; or call 519-235-0795.

New pastor coming to Ayr

Lloyd Oakey will begin as transformational pastor at Ayr Calvary Church on July 1. A seasoned pastor in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, he is completing his second stint of ministry at the Christian Centre in New Hamburg.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

CwM seeks more campership funds

Each year, 1,300 campers from all walks of life participate in the summer camp program.

However, “this year we have more campers applying for our campership program than we have funds to support,” reports Elisa Joy S. Barkman, director of Camping Ministry for Camps with Meaning.

Camps with Meaning camperships make it financially possible for some who could otherwise only dream of a summer camping experience. The campership program offers a wonderful opportunity for small groups, youth groups, young adult groups, Sunday school, and mission and service committees to share in the ministry of the camping program in an important way.

“It is our hope at Camps with Meaning that we won’t have to turn away any of these campers,” said Barkman.

“We request both prayer and financial support to enable us to welcome these children into our camps with open arms.”

For more information, call 204-896-1616 or e-mail camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.

Youths sought for summer adventure

Camps with Meaning offers some awesome and exciting options for youths each summer.

Both Camp Koinonia and

Moose Lake offer incredible youth camp experiences with exciting speakers and youth camp-only activities. Camp Assiniboia offers a different experience in its Service Encounter program exploring service and ministry both at camp and through participation in MCC’s Urban Plunge program.

Visit campswithmeaning.org or call 204-895-2267 for more information.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Carrot River still seeking pastor

Carrot River Mennonite Church continues to go through leadership changes while it waits for a permanent pastor. Ed Cornelson from Winnipeg agreed to serve as interim pastor from last October to this April. Cornelson, along with his wife Alice, will return to the community in the fall.

The congregation, however, continues to experience life and activity as others step in to fill the gap left by a departing pastoral staff. During March, the children’s club called “Seaside with the Saviour” was held at the church for both community and church children.

An upcoming family camp prompted the creation of a church cookbook to raise funds for families wishing to go to the Torch Trail Bible Camp in early June.

Carrot River Mennonite also has a strong tradition of outreach into the community and its commitment to share its faith has resulted in numerous events planned for the enjoyment of others. In April, a country music concert was staged, and another event in May, featuring Chester and Isolina Gaither, were both

Continued on page 26



Photo by Mary E. Klassen

Erland Waltner, AMBS president emeritus, assisted by Nelson Kraybill, president, plants a forsythia bush at the ground-blessing service for the seminary's new \$8.1 million, 2,230-square-metre library and campus centre. The seminary anticipates moving into the new facility in the fall of 2007.

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Carrot River *From page 23*

held at the community hall in Carrot River.

—**Leora Bergen**

**Mennonite Church
British Columbia**

**Ground broken
at Olivet Church**

A sod turning and dedication ceremony took place at Abbotsford's Olivet Mennonite Church property on May 14.

Architect Wes Friesen Jr., a member of the church, summarized the history of the church building project, necessitated by the old building being razed following two fires over a year ago.

Several attendees of the

congregation, including seniors, youths and a four-year-old child, turned over the first shovelfuls of dirt. Prayers were offered by pastor Randy Thompson, asking God's blessing on the project, and John Derksen, charter member who had been present at the ground-breaking for the original building in 1960.

Following the ceremony, the group, numbering about 100, enjoyed refreshments at the church ministry office.

Construction began on May 16 with concrete forming, and is expected to take about a year.

**Conference minister
to take sabbatical**

Henry Kliever, conference minister for Mennonite Church B.C., has been granted a four-month leave beginning June 4.

His time away will include study at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., the Summer Peacebuilding Institute at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Va., and at Tantur in Jerusalem, Israel, as well as taking some personal family travel time.

At AMBS, Kliever will take part in a study conference evaluating the joint confession of faith of Mennonite Church Canada and MC USA, 10 years after the forming of the

denominations.

At EMU, he will be taking a course entitled "Practices for transforming the peacebuilder" led by Ron Kraybill, that will explore the journey of self-care and personal transformation of peace workers.

His time in Israel will be spent at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute, for refreshment and spiritual growth. It will include exploration of the Holy Land and participation in a community of Christians from many different traditions.

During Kliever's absence, retired pastor Dave Friesen and members of the MC B.C. executive will assume his duties.

CLARE SCHLEGEL

From our leaders



As a farmer, it is easy to understand the concept of stewardship. On a daily basis we work with God's creation. We are continuously aware that factors beyond our daily control, such as the weather or animal diseases, affect not only our livelihoods but also the health and wellbeing of the soil and our animals. We care deeply. It is clear that we do not own creation or control the process of life.

However, our decisions do make a difference. We can farm in a way that minimizes soil erosion and builds the soil fertility. We can farm in a way that minimizes animal stress and decreases health challenges, reducing the incidence of disease.

An element of stewardship is generosity, being grateful for what has been entrusted to us, and the realization that all things are a gift from God. None of us are the originators of God's life-giving creative processes. We are here for only a short time, acting as stewards on God's behalf. This is the basis for the concept of tithing. A generous person is generally a thankful, positive person.

We are all encouraged to first give back to God what has been given to us before we take for ourselves. This is the concept of "first fruits giving." But who or what is God's bank account? What is expected of God's organization and organizers? How does God do his work?

All of us who give assume we are giving to God when we give our offerings. Therefore, those of us in church leadership at the congregational, area or national church levels are administering God's money and resources—that which all have given to God.

**Giving back
to God**

**We are all encouraged
to first give back to God
what has been given
to us before we take
for ourselves.**

What an awesome responsibility! What does it mean and what does it require of us? How would God act as a manager? What are our goals and objectives? I do not believe the Bible says much directly about this.

Some answers to these questions are obvious: good administration and planning, service to others and the world around us, the call to Jesus and a Christian lifestyle. But there are also a number of items that are less obvious. Are our organizations—that are administering God's money—also called to be generous or are they end users with the responsibility to run programs?

This was a question that Mennonite Church Canada leadership faced recently. Being back on solid financial and management ground, and having completed a year with a small surplus, should we pass on a small portion of the surplus? Or, having had years of cutbacks and tight-fisted management, should we keep the surplus to build a reserve for a potential rainy day in the future?

I think either response could be rationalized. To find out the answer, come to the assembly in Edmonton this summer. I would love to discuss it further. Needless to say, we are not all of one mind, and many different perspectives and feelings need to be considered.

The questions and challenges still remain. Within our organizations we expect and call leaders to manage God's money and programs. I can assure you the staff and board team at Mennonite Church Canada take this call seriously. Please pray for us.

Clare Schlegel is treasurer of the Mennonite Church Canada General Board.

**Mennonite Church
Alberta**



Photo by Henry Dick

After a long wait and much fundraising, on April 30 Tofield Mennonite Church turned the sod for a sanctuary addition to its building. Four people were specially chosen to wield the spades. At 92, Mary Rempel, left, is the oldest female charter member and represented the women of the church who, throughout the church's history, have made hundreds of quilts and other items for Mennonite Central Committee. Lindsey Thiessen helped Rempel with the digging and represented the younger generation. Ninety-five-year-old Peter Baergen, right, is the oldest charter member. Dallas Kroeker represented the youths of the congregation as well as people of the church who are not of Russian or Swiss heritage.

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.

Employment opportunities

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) is offering a full-time salaried Christian service opportunity for its Bi-national Extension Office in Winnipeg in response to growing needs.

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR

Responsibilities: to manage Region V and Bi-national Office in Canada, including:

- Accounting (Simply Accounting), database (MS Access), office systems management, and supervision of office staff.
- Recruitment, training, dispatching and support of long-term project leaders (approx. 50% of effort).
- Promotion and publicity of MDS work in Region V.
- Support of boards to help grow the MDS network within Canada.

Required: experience and training in above skills and attributes; active membership in and deep commitment to Anabaptist faith community and beliefs; moderate travel. Reporting to Director of Finance & Administration and Director of HR in Akron, Penn. office, this person works with MDS boards, constituent churches, and other bi-national staff.

Send resume by June 15, 2006 to the attention of:

**Lois Nickel, Director of Programs and Region Relations
306 - 2265 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5J3
E-mail: mdsen@mds.mennonite.net**

Position description available at www.mds.mennonite.net.

Employment opportunities

COME JOIN OUR TEAM!

MCC Supportive Care Services is seeking to fill two part-time (20 hr/wk) positions:

**DONOR RELATIONS COORDINATOR
and
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT**

These positions may be combined to create a full-time position for the right person. Work-related training or experience is a must. If you have a heart to serve others and enjoy working in a fast-paced environment, apply today. Job descriptions and an on-line application are available at www.mccscs.com/jobs.

For information or to apply, contact:

**Layne Bieber, HR Assistant
Email: layne@mccscs.com
Phone: 1-800-622-5455 ext. 338**



MCC SCS is a Christian organization that supports those who have disabilities and seniors in the community. MCC SCS hires on the basis of merit and is committed to employment equity. We encourage all qualified persons to apply; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

YOUR TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

MCC Supportive Care Services is looking to fill the following positions in its start-up of a program supporting aging adults who have a mental illness in Chilliwack, B.C.

- REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSE/REGISTERED NURSE - MANAGER OF CARE** (past nursing and management experience/training is preferred)
- REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSE/REGISTERED NURSE**
- LICENCED PRACTICAL NURSES**
- HEALTH CARE WORKERS**
- ACTIVITY WORKERS**

Full-time, part-time and casual positions are available. All applicants must be willing to work days, evenings, nights and weekends, and have current registration with the applicable organizations for their area of training. Familiarity with a Psychosocial Rehabilitation/Recovery philosophy is an asset. A sincere interest in supporting people who are aging is a must. If you are a high-energy individual and highly motivated, apply today at: www.mccscs.com/jobs or contact:

**Layne Bieber, HR Assistant
Email resume: hr@mccscs.com
Fax resume: 604-850-2634**



MCC SCS is a Christian organization that supports those who have disabilities and seniors in the community. MCC SCS hires on the basis of merit and is committed to employment equity. We encourage all qualified persons to apply; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man. is seeking the service of an

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

0.7 FTE, for a two-year term (some flexibility in assigned time may be considered). A major responsibility of this minister will be to work with our youth leaders and our church's young people. He/She will be working on a staff of four ministers.

The successful candidate will have a degree in Theology or will be working toward such or similar degree. He/She will be committed to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology and will be talented in providing Christian leadership and inspiration for our youth.

Start Date: September 2006

Salary: According to FMC Professional Staff Salary and Benefits Scale.

Application deadline: June 30, 2006

For a detailed position profile and/or church profile, please contact:

**John Klassen, Director of Leadership Ministries
Mennonite Church Manitoba**

E-mail: jklassen@mennochurch.mb.ca

Phone: 204-896-1616 or

George Wall, Chair, FMC Ministerial Search Committee

E-mail: gwall21@shaw.ca; Phone: 204-669-1061

First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man. is seeking a

LEAD MINISTER

to provide leadership to a pastoral staff of four and a membership of over 1000. The successful candidate will have a M.Div., be committed to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology, have pastoral leadership experience, and will be gifted in preaching and administration. It is hoped that the successful candidate could begin in the fall of 2006 or at least in the first half of 2007.

Please apply by June 30, 2006.

For a more detailed position profile please contact:

**John Klassen, Director of Leadership Ministries
E-mail: jklassen@mennochurch.mb.ca**

Phone: 204-896-1616 or

George Wall, Chair, FMC Ministerial Search Committee

E-mail: gwall21@shaw.ca; Phone: 204-669-1061



SOCIAL WORKER POSITION

We have an opening for a qualified Social Worker (approximately .8 FTE). Menno Home is a 196-bed complex care facility in Abbotsford, BC.

Come join our team!

**Contact: Hilde Wiebe, Director of Care
32910 Brundige Ave., Abbotsford, V2S 1N2
E-mail: h.wiebe@mennohome.org
Phone: 604-853-2411**

The Gather 'Round curriculum, a project of the Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, is accepting applications for three staff positions:

EDITOR

(full-time or shared)

to edit content of junior youth, youth, parent/caregiver, and preschool units;

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

(half-time)

to design and implement marketing strategies and to develop communications resources;

PROJECT ASSISTANT

(full-time)

to provide administrative support and marketing assistance, and to update website and e-commerce site.

Project may consider breaking out or combining pieces of job descriptions in different ways. Elgin, Illinois, location required for project assistant. Brethren or Mennonite preferred; denominational balance on project staff considered. Deadline for applications: July 15, or until positions are filled. Learn more about the curriculum at www.gatherround.org.

Mail cover letter and resume to:

**Anna Speicher, Director and Editor
Gather 'Round Curriculum
1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120, USA**

The Maison de l'amitié student residence and guest house is seeking a

HALF-TIME RESIDENCE COORDINATOR

The Maison de l'amitié/House of Friendship in Montreal will be operating a student residence for 10 students attending the University of McGill, Concordia University, Université du Québec à Montréal, Université de Montréal and l'École théologique évangélique de Montréal. The mission of the project is to provide lodging for students who wish to experience community living and social action in a Christian and Peace church context.

The Coordinator will be responsible for facilitating the community life of residents for organizing workshops and for publicizing opportunities for involvement in social welfare programs. The successful applicant will be in charge of room bookings and will assume responsibility for correspondence and promotion of the program. He or she will also supervise residence assistants. The applicant for the position must be fluent in French and English and have some training in conflict resolution. Preference will be given to university graduates who are familiar with the Anabaptist tradition and have had peace and conflict training.

The position will be available starting August 7, 2006. Letters of application and résumés may be sent to:

**Maison de l'amitié
120 Duluth est, Montréal, Québec, Canada, H2W 1H1.
luke.martin@maisondelamitie.ca**

For more information about the position and the project, visit www.residencema.ca or contact **Luke Martin** at 514-843-4356. Application deadline is June 9, 2006.

CANADIAN Mennonite

MCEC Regional Correspondent

If you want a front row seat on what God is doing in the Eastern Canada region, this is a great opportunity! Canadian Mennonite is seeking a part-time (20% time) MCEC Regional Correspondent for the bi-weekly Mennonite periodical. Ideally, the starting date is in July. Work is done from home with some travel to Eastern Canada locations required. Pay is salary plus expenses.

Responsibilities include filing bi-weekly reports and features on MCEC church and conference news; being our contact person for MCEC-based churches and Mennonite organizations; assigning stories to others; and developing and assisting other writers in Eastern Canada.

Applicants should have strong knowledge of, commitment to and a passion for the MCEC faith community and for Canadian Mennonite's ministry and mission; strong listening, interviewing, news writing and photography skills; and an ability to work independently and as part of our cross-Canada staff. Come and serve the wider church in this exciting way!

Direct inquiries and applications to:

Tim Miller Dyck, Editor and Publisher
Canadian Mennonite
490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
Phone: 1-800-378-2524, x225
E-mail: editor@canadianmennonite.org

Pasadena Mennonite Church (Pasadena, California) welcomes qualified candidates for the position of

TRANSITIONAL LEAD PASTOR

This position is for approximately one year and is scheduled to commence in Summer 2006. (See www.pmcweb.org.) To apply, please submit letter of inquiry and ministerial leadership information form to:

PSMC Conference Office
ATTN: Jeff Wright
Box CAL
1539 East Howard St.
Pasadena, CA 91104, USA

For rent

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; experience@maisondelamitie.ca; 514-843-4356.

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

the Bruce Trail. Minutes from other Niagara attractions. For further information and rental costs, phone 705-476-2319, e-mail: shcottage@sympatico.ca

Kitchener house for rent: Aug. 2006 to June 2007. Furnished or unfurnished, 3 bedrooms, gas fireplace, air conditioning, fenced yard, 3 parking spaces. Close to schools, bus and 15-minute drive to universities. \$1200/mo. + utilities. James and Cathi Watson, 519-742-3694, jcwatson@golden.net.

CANADIAN Mennonite

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE

Canadian Mennonite is seeking an approximately .4 FTE Advertising Representative for the bi-weekly magazine. Pay is a negotiable combination of commission and salary, plus expenses. The majority of work can be done from home if desired. Ideally, the starting date is June 28.

This person is responsible for managing, caring for and growing Canadian Mennonite's advertising base. Specific tasks include providing excellent service to advertisers; developing and carrying out ad marketing campaigns; responding to ad inquiries; organizing the production of ads from development through to print and/or online publication; growing our advertising base; and working with the publisher to develop our overall advertising business plan.

Applicants should be self-motivated idea people with strong sales and communication skills; the ability to understand customer needs and match our offerings to these; support Canadian Mennonite's ministry and mission; and be able to work independently. Come and serve the wider church in this exciting way!

Direct inquiries and applications to:

Tim Miller Dyck, Editor and Publisher
Canadian Mennonite
490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
Phone: 1-800-378-2524, x225
E-mail: editor@canadianmennonite.org

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES AT CAMPS WITH MEANING

Camps with Meaning, a ministry of Mennonite Church Manitoba, has an opening for a year-round

PROGRAM DEVELOPER

This exciting new .6 FTE position, based at Camp Assiniboia, will create new programs for both school and adult/family groups during the fall, winter and spring months. Emphases will include outdoor living, provincial curriculum, creation care and peace education. The successful applicant will have a degree/training in a field related to camp work and the ability to relate to a wide variety of people. The applicant will have initiative, persistence, a love of the outdoors and creativity. Housing and additional employment opportunities also available. Applications accepted until June 30.

Camp Assiniboia, Headingley, has openings for

1-2 VOLUNTARY SERVICE WORKERS

for a one-year term, beginning September 2006. Duties to include assistance with food preparation, caretaking of buildings and grounds, and/or program involvement with guest groups. Gain Christian ministry experience, develop employment skills, enjoy recreation. Housing, honorarium, some meals provided.

For either position, send resume or nominations to:

Bob Wiebe, Director of Education Ministries
Mennonite Church Manitoba
200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 2J1
E-mail: bwiebe@mennochurch.mb.ca
Phone: 204-895-CAMP

Conference to focus on CO experience

Winnipeg—On Oct. 21 and 22, the “War and Conscientious Objector History Conference” at the University of Winnipeg will highlight the experience of Canadian conscientious objectors during the Second World War, when about 60 percent of Mennonite men who were called to military service sought options for alternative service through a program negotiated by Mennonite leaders with the Canadian government.

The conference will take a critical look at the experiences of Canadian conscientious objectors and interpret them in today’s context, a time in which war is widely offered as a way to peace and democracy.

Conference planners have invited speakers from B.C. to Quebec, from various Mennonite denominations, as well as from Jehovah’s Witnesses, Doukhobors and Quakers. In addition, experts on pacifism in Canada, university students, peace activists and Second World War conscientious objectors will engage the topic.

The 65-year-old story of the Second World War conscientious objectors offers one model of dealing with war in today’s world and forces people to ask, “What is the right response today to war and violence?”

For more information on the conference, call Royden Loewen at 204-786-9391. —Mennonite Heritage Centre release by **Conrad Stoesz**

Nidus 2006 offers youths ‘living water’

Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont.—Young adults and youths from across Canada will descend on Kitchener-Waterloo this summer for Nidus 2006.

“Streams of living water” is the theme for the ecumenical festival of faith, arts, and

justice. The Aug. 4 to 6 event is being coordinated by the Canadian Council of Churches.

Suzanne Bender of Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont., represents Mennonite Church Canada on the planning committee, and is passionate about having young adults be involved in all levels of the church. In a presentation to delegates at Mennonite Church Canada’s annual assembly in Charlotte last year, Bender said, “We have something to say to the broader Christian community as Mennonites. Ecumenism isn’t just about papering over the cracks and differences. [It’s about] looking for common ground while learning about the diversity in tradition. The church has a message for the world, but infighting hinders the communication of that.”

Numerous artists, musicians, speakers and presenters have already been booked for the festival. For more information, visit nidus2006.ca.

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**



Bender

Calendar

British Columbia

Sept. 15-16: Central Fraser Valley MCC Relief Sale, Auction and Festival, Tradex Exhibition Centre, Abbotsford.
Sept. 30: Mennonite Fall Fair, Prince George Civic Centre.

Alberta

June 11: Ordination service for Donita and Tim Wiebe-Neufeld at Edmonton First Mennonite, 11:15 a.m. All are welcome.
June 16-17: MCC Alberta

Relief Sale and bikeathon, Didsbury.

July 4-7: MC Canada annual assembly in Edmonton.

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

Sept. 17: Trinity Mennonite new building dedication celebration, 10:30 a.m. Call 403-256-7157 for directions.

Saskatchewan

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

July 16-22: Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth work with MDS at Cross Lake, Man.

Manitoba

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.

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 cmu.ca for more information.

June 24: Camp Koinonia fundraising golf tournament at Winkler Golf Course.

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

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

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

Sept. 9: Morris MCC Relief Sale.

Sept. 16-17: Brandon MCC

Relief Sale.

Sept. 17: Westgate alumni and friends golf tournament at Bridges Golf Course, Starbuck.

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

Oct. 13-14: Manitoba Women in Mission annual 24-hour retreat, “Rooted in the Centre,” at Camp Assiniboia.

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

Oct. 20-21: “War and the Conscientious Objector” history conference, University of Winnipeg. Speakers will include Mennonites, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Doukhobors and Quakers from B.C. to Quebec.

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

June 11: Peach Pickers concert at Zurich Mennonite Church, 2:30 p.m.

June 13: Hidden Acres Camp annual chicken barbecue, 5:30 to 8 p.m. For advance tickets, call 519-625-8602.

June 13: UMEI strawberry social, Leamington.

June 22: MEDA Waterloo chapter breakfast meeting, 7:30 a.m., at the Stone Crock, St. Jacobs. Speaker: Ten Thousand Villages Canada CEO Marvin Frey.

June 30-July 2: Hidden Acres Camp family camping weekend. To book, e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca.

July 2: Truckers Sunday

with Transport for Christ at Milverton Mennonite Fellowship. Truck parade, worship services for all ages, and a barbecue lunch. Call 519-595-8762 for more information.

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 or e-mail Ralph Shantz at rdshantz@golden.net.

Aug. 18: MEDA Waterloo chapter summer barbecue, 6:30 p.m., at Strom's Sweet Corn Farm.

Sept. 29-30: Rockway Mennonite Collegiate alumni homecoming, Kitchener.

U.S.A.

June 10-11: Joseph and Anna (Schweitzer) Reschly reunion. Social time at Ramada Inn, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, 5 to 8 p.m. (10); "basket dinner" at Bethel Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa, 1 p.m. (11). To reserve

rooms, call 319-385-0571. For more information, call 319-256-3141.

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 and "search" for "mennonite/s writing."

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

Belgrade, Serbia

Flooded refugees to receive assistance

Thousands of people in communities along the Danube River and its tributaries in Serbia were forced out of their homes in April because of flooding.

A state of emergency was declared in about 10 municipalities, and in some areas water damaged houses, farmland and infrastructure, according to Amela Puljek-Shank, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) regional co-representative in Serbia.

MCC is working with a local partner, Bread of Life, to provide international support for flood relief efforts in Belgrade, the capital city in this country of 10.5 million people.

The assistance, which has not yet been finalized, is expected to include \$11,000 for the purchase of pumps to drain water from houses submerged in flood water as well as a container of blankets, canned meat and relief kits for underprivileged families evacuated from their homes or affected by the floods.

People receiving this support will include refugees from Kosovo, Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia, as well as the elderly, people with disabilities and the Roma population, explained Puljek-Shank.

Flooding risks from the Danube, which flows from Germany and Austria through the Balkans to the Black Sea, subsided in May, but the situation remains volatile because the river could breach dikes and other flood control structures weakened by prolonged water pressure.

—MCC release by **Gladys Terichow**

Advertising Dates



Issue	Copy Due
June 26	June 13
July 10	June 27
July 31	July 18
<i>(Three-week cycle)</i>	
Aug. 21	Aug. 8
<i>(Three-week cycle)</i>	
Sept. 4.	Aug. 22
Sept. 18	Sept. 5
<i>(Focus on Education)</i>	
Oct. 2	Sept. 19
Oct. 16	Oct. 3
<i>(Focus on Travel)</i>	

Contact:

Barbara Burkholder, advertising representative
1-800-316-4052 / advert@canadianmennonite.org

Subscriber services

How to subscribe:

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

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- When submitting a change of address or cancellation, please include your subscription number:

Subscription number **Expiry date**

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

Contact information:

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Songfest participants on 'holy ground'

Annora Proudfoot practises for the 2006 MC Alberta Songfest's youth ensemble in the field outside of Edmonton's First Mennonite Church.

Photo by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

Edmonton

A child exclaimed "Whoa!" a moment before the congregation at the Mennonite Church Alberta Songfest were on their feet. The unusual standing ovation occurred mid-program after a rousing rendition of "Ain't Got Time to Die" by the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) Chamber Choir and tenor soloist Marvin Marcial.

Aware of slowly dwindling interest in the annual songfest, committee members planned for 2006 with the future in mind, trying new ways to rejuvenate interest and excitement among Alberta Mennonites.

"We tried to find ways to get more people to come," said committee member Kim Wiens. "We thought of CMU, and when we contacted them they were immediately willing to come.

This would add to our core group and maybe tap into a different group of interested people."

As well as performing a few selections on their own, the 17-voice chamber choir also added a vibrant punch to the 80-plus voices of the mass choir. A children's choir, Saturday youth event and a youth ensemble were offered to give young people a chance to socialize and get involved.

Because Songfests held in Edmonton are historically smaller than those held further south, the committee decided to host the whole two-day event at First Mennonite Church, instead of renting a school gymnasium. The choice proved to be brilliant. The congregation was comfortable, the acoustics supported the musicians, and the atmosphere felt sacred.

Conference pastor Jim Shantz

summed up the sacred experience, saying, "This was impacting, moving. I felt we were on holy ground. It was done well, with spirit, in the context of God's people and was very powerful. God be praised."

Rudy Schellenberg, conductor of the CMU Chamber Choir and guest conductor for the mass choir, is optimistic about the future of Alberta's Songfest. "I am quite convinced there will be a revival of choirs," he said. "Music has a way of bringing people together. There is an aspect of sharing your voice with others that is special. We need these communal things."

Shantz echoed Schellenberg's optimism. "Songfest and its future are talked about in Alberta," he said. "It isn't dead yet. It has a future."

—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**