

CANADIAN Mennonite

June 26, 2006
Volume 10, Number 13



God's green Earth
pages 4-7

**Focus on
children's resources**
pages 24-25

Caring for creation

Last year was full of reminders to pay attention to the Earth. There were more Atlantic hurricanes in 2005 than any past year on record, including Katrina, the costliest hurricane to date. There are now higher levels of carbon dioxide and methane (gases that warm the planet) in the atmosphere than at any time in the last 650,000 years. Human activity—largely the industrialized West’s huge use of fossil fuels in energy production and transportation—is the cause. The results are rapidly rising temperatures and overall climate change.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment report, created by 1,300 researchers from 95 nations over four years, states that humans have radically altered our ecological environment in the last 50 years—for the worse—and our direction is to keep overdrawing from nature’s bank account. “When we look at the drivers of change affecting ecosystems, we see that, across the board, the drivers are either staying steady or increasing in severity—habitat change, climate change, invasive species, over-exploitation of resources; and pollution, such as nitrogen and phosphorus,” said William Reid, the director of the project.

Theologian John Stott contrasts the “have dominion over” and “subdue” language in Genesis 1 with the language of “to work it and take care of it” in Genesis 2 (see page 5). Christian theology has all too often served as an excuse in the past for our society to plunder God’s good creation.

Jesus often called himself a son of Adam, or literally, a son of the earth. He spent long periods camping and travelling through the wilderness. In his book, *Jesus and the Earth*, James Jones, the bishop of Liverpool, argues that Jesus did not only come to save us but to redeem creation

itself. In Genesis, human sin leaves the Earth itself cursed. But as Paul writes in Colossians 1: “*Through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.*” That was a new way of looking at it for me.

This is a deeply moral issue for Canadian Mennonites. Those who will be hurt the most by climate change and environmental damage are the poor. Our consumption is killing those who had no part in it. Jesus had much to say on the ethics of that.

Editorial Advisory Group members: I’ve been seeking editorial feedback over the past year from people across the country as particularly tricky subjects have arisen. I recently formalized that process into a larger group for editorial feedback. Here are those involved in the process at this point:

- **Eastern Canada:** Brice Balmer, Muriel Bechtel, Matthew Isert Bender, Larry Cornies, Mary Lymburner, Lucille Marr, Ester Neufeldt and Kevin Peters Unrau
- **Manitoba:** Dan Dyck, Aiden Enns, Peter Epp, Sven Eriksson, Paul Krahn, Paul Kroeker, Wally Kroeker and Bernie Wiebe
- **Saskatchewan:** Marco Funk, Ed Olfert and Bernie Thiessen
- **Alberta:** Marguerite Jack, Werner De Jong, Doug Klassen, Jim Shantz, Brenda Tiessen-Wiens and Jan Wilhelm
- **British Columbia:** Gerd Bartel, Angelika Dawson, John W. Goossen, Tim Kuepfer, Henry Neufeld, Samson Lo, Karen H. Thiessen and Phil Wheaton

My thanks to these people for helping us with this additional way to stay closely connected with the life and welfare of our church.

—**Tim Miller Dyck**

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June 26, 2006
Volume 10, Number 13



Page 32

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 July 10 issue by July 6. Look for daily news updates from the Edmonton MC Canada delegate assembly from July 4 to 7 on our website.

Cover: Manitoba pastors and their counterparts from Spain and Latin America hold up photos of missing pastors from Cuba, who were invited to join them at IMPaCT (International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together), a first ever international pastoral exchange initiated by Mennonite Church Canada. The Cuban pastors were twice denied entry visas by the Canadian government. —Photo by Dan Dyck

4 **Faith&Life**
Caring for God's green Earth **4**

8 **UpClose**
Hard to forget **8**
A gospel of social change **9**

10 **InConversation**
Good intentions **10**
Letters **11**
Going with the positive **11**
Credit card bondage **12**

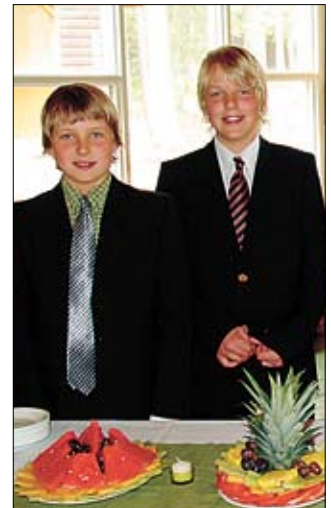
14 **Arts&Culture**
Ending a cycle of violence **14**
Church decodes *Da Vinci* **15**

16 **WiderChurch**
Congoese elections looming **16**
Quake relief intensifies **17**
Guatemalan Pentecost **18**

26 **LocalChurch**
'Standing under' Scripture **26**
Retiring principal honoured **27**
Transitions **34**

35 **TheChurches**
The life of the body **36**

37 **ToMorrow**



Page 30



Page 23

Caring for God's green Earth

Two issues ago (May 29), Canadian Mennonite dealt with the how of creation. In this issue, we look at why we need to care for God's creation as part of our God-given mandate, a mandate that also includes preaching the gospel and making disciples. For those interested in learning more about this important subject, Canadian Mennonite University is hosting "The Good Life on God's Green Earth" conference this fall; see page 7 for a brief description of the conference topics and speakers.



Why should Christians care for creation?

On what grounds should Christians be committed to care for God's creation? Scripture tells us that "the earth is the Lord's" (*Psalm 24:1*), and also that "the earth he has given to human beings" (*Psalm 115:16*). These assertions complement, rather than contradict, each other. The Earth belongs to God by creation, and to us by delegation. This does not mean that God has handed it over to us in such a way as to relinquish God's own rights over it, but rather that God has given us the responsibility to preserve and develop the Earth on God's behalf.

How, then, should we relate to the Earth? If we remember its creation by God and its delegation to us, we will avoid two opposite extremes and, instead, develop a third and better relationship to nature.

First, we will avoid the deification of nature. This is the mistake of pantheists, who identify the creator with his creation; of animists, who populate the natural world with spirits; and of the New Age's Gaia movement, which attributes to nature its own self-contained, self-regulating and self-perpetuating mechanisms. But all such confusions are derogatory to the creator.

The Christian desacralizing of nature—the recognition that it is creation, not creator—was an indispensable prelude to the whole scientific enterprise, and is essential to the development of the Earth's resources today. We respect nature because God made it; we do not reverence nature as if it were God and inviolable.

Second, we must avoid the opposite extreme, which is the exploitation of nature. Just as we must not treat nature obsequiously as if it were God, we must not behave towards it arrogantly as if we were God. Genesis 1 has been unjustly blamed for environmental irresponsibility. It is true that God commissioned the human race to "have dominion over" the Earth and to

"subdue it" (*Genesis 1:26-28, NRSV*), and these two Hebrew verbs are forceful. It would be absurd, however, to imagine that he who created the Earth then handed it over to us to destroy it. No, the dominion God has given us is a responsible stewardship, not a destructive domination.

The third and correct relationship between human beings and nature is that of co-operation with God. To be sure, we are ourselves a part of creation, just as dependent on the creator as are all his creatures. Yet at the same time God has deliberately humbled himself to make a divine-human partnership necessary. God created the Earth, but then told us to subdue it. God planted the garden, but then put Adam in it "to work it and take care of it" (*Genesis 2:15*).

This is often called the cultural mandate. For what God has given us is nature, whereas what we do with it is culture. We are not only to conserve the environment, but also to develop its resources for the common good.

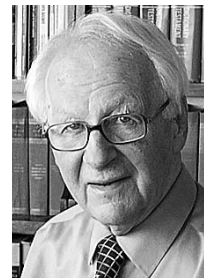
It is a noble calling to cooperate with God for the fulfilment of God's purposes, to transform the created order for the pleasure and profit of all. In this way, our work is to be an expression of our worship, since our care of the creation will reflect our love for the creator.

A final thought: It is possible to overstate this emphasis on human work in the conservation and transformation of the environment. In his excellent exposition of the first three chapters of Genesis, *In the Beginning*, Henri Blocher argues that the climax of Genesis 1 is not the creation of the human worker, but the institution of the Sabbath for the human worshipper; it is not our toil (subduing the Earth), but the laying aside of our toil on the Sabbath day. For the Sabbath relativizes the importance of work. It protects us from a total absorption in our work, as if it were the be-all and end-all of our existence. It is not.

We human beings find our humanness not only in relation to the Earth, which we are to transform, but in relation to God, whom we are to worship; not only in relation to the creation, but especially in relation to the creator. God intends our work to be an expression of our worship, and our care of the creation to reflect our love for the creator. Only then, whatever we do—in word or deed—shall we be able to do it to the glory of God.

—**John Stott**

The author is rector emeritus at All Souls Church, London, England, and an internationally renowned teacher, preacher and author. This article was adapted with permission from the foreword to The Care of Creation, edited by R.J. Berry (Inter-Varsity Press).



Stott

First, we will avoid the deification of nature.

The gospel and nature conservation



Harris

By coming to Earth as a human and through the resurrection of Jesus, God has committed himself to the future of creation.

For me, as for many other Christians, the authority of Scripture is not in question. So it may be hard for us to come to terms with the realization that we have fallen into deeply unbiblical ways of thinking about people, the world we live in and the gospel itself.

What am I referring to? *Care for creation*. When it comes to the environment, it seems that we want to force a choice between loving God and caring for what we call society, or even more so, the environment. Of course we want to see all the people we care about be able to accept that Jesus Christ is their Lord more than anything else we might wish for them. But does this mean we can't care for God's good creation, too?

Having a limited vision of what constitutes Christian mission is one of our more common evangelical heresies—namely, that we can show we love God only by a very restricted range of activities that we arbitrarily label “spiritual.” (Our lists all differ, but caring for the environment is clearly not included for many.) This view owes a lot to the ancient Greek philosopher Plato and subsequently to the Enlightenment, but little to Scripture. It suggests that only a narrow range of things are “spiritual,” while the rest of what we do in life has little to do with God, and even less to do with our expression of the gospel. That view is simply wrong.

Mission not just about preaching

Behind the false dichotomy between evangelism and caring for creation are some unreliable and unfounded assumptions about the nature of mission. Maybe it needs a modern C.S. Lewis to do justice to the logical flaws that infest them. They are roughly similar to an argument which might run: “You can get to London in a car. So unless you have a car, you can't get to London.” But just because you don't have a car doesn't mean you can't get to London; you could take a train, ride a bike or walk.

In other words, sometimes the love of God is explained and shown by preaching, but that doesn't have to be the only way. The explanation of Christ is essential. But, before that, how do you propose to get a hearing, and where will you be heard?

Near Arles, France, less than 2 percent of people now have anything to do with a Christian church. The *Église Réformée*, where A Rocha France, a Christian nature conservation organization, is involved, gets 20 people on a good Sunday, most of whom are pensioners. More than half those who live in nearby towns are Muslims, and those who aren't hold few particular organized beliefs. One they do seem to hold very firmly is that life and religion are to be firmly divided—economics, the arts, the environment, money and

family have nothing to do with belief, and so can safely be left aside.

This is a challenge, but also an opportunity for those involved in conserving creation at the A Rocha field study centre in the area. The environmental questions that the team are working on include not just the technical “how” and “what” of nature conservation, but the “why” questions too. What we are working on, and the way we work, at their best make clear the character of the creator. Inevitably, discussions follow.

As Pierre Berthoud, A Rocha France's national chairman, says: “A Rocha is here at the right time. Most French people are ‘spontaneously anti-Christian,’ but at the same time they are increasingly environment-conscious.”

God cares about more than souls

In Romans 12:1, Paul urges us to offer our bodies to God as a spiritual act of worship. But, sadly, we can easily fall into thinking that “spiritual” implies “non-material”—something advocated by Plato. But, by coming to Earth as a human and through the resurrection of Jesus, God has committed himself to the future of creation. If we fail to recognize this, we are in danger of consigning much of our human experience to a place outside of the lordship of Christ.

But nothing is outside the lordship of Christ—including creation. Earlier, in Romans 8, Paul says that the whole creation will share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. Rather than cutting out parts of our experience from the possibility of redemption, the challenge for Christians is to find creative ways of drawing it all in, and to use care for the environment as a way to show God's love and care for all of creation.

As author and theologian Eugene Peterson has rightly said, “Everything has to do with something else, and if you follow it far enough, it has to do with you and God.”

—Peter Harris

The author is the founder of A Rocha, a Christian nature conservation organization that focuses on science and research, practical conservation and environmental education.

Christ and creation: A testimony

Paul designates Jesus Christ as “the firstborn of all creation” (*Colossians 1:15*) and before he finishes his sentence twice makes him the subject of the verb “create.” Christ and creation are inseparable, indivisible. Creation is as much a part of the evangelical gospel as Christ is.

So why is it so common among us to separate Christ from creation, creation from Christ? There are plenty of exceptions, of course, but the creation people aren't conspicuous for showing up in church with the followers of Christ as they pray for their neighbours, learn the Scriptures and nurture their souls. And the Christ people are far outnumbered by the creation people who are out hiking mountain trails and taking in the exuberance of birds in flight.

I was fortunate to grow up in a part of Christ's creation that had everything, or so it seemed to me: mountains, rivers, glaciers, forests, grizzlies and moose, warblers and hawks. I revelled in all of it. I was also fortunate to be raised in the company of followers of Jesus who knew how to sing and pray, make the Scriptures alive and compelling, and live in bold witness in the world. And I loved it.

But I also ended up with two sets of friends, the creation people and the Christ people. I could never quite figure out why there was so little crossover among them.

When I first learned of A Rocha, a Christian nature conservation organization, I was delighted to find people who were as committed to creation as to Christ, as committed to Christ as to creation. I found myself completely at home in this evangelical company of people who were as at home in the creation of Christ as they are with the Christ who creates. It is a wonderful thing to join hearts and minds and muscles and money with companions in faith who refuse to “put asunder” the Christ and creation that God has joined together.

—**Eugene H. Peterson**

*The author is a long-time pastor and author, including of *The Message*, a popular paraphrase of the Bible.*



Photo by Tim R. Dyck

Winnipeg

Bringing healing to the Earth

Global warming. Species extinction. Water contamination. Oil spills. A brief survey of the news demonstrates how regular and commonplace these environmental issues are in the world. But is this the only word on the environment?

Not for Christians. The Bible shows that Christ came to bring healing and redemption to every corner of the Earth, and that all our relationships are made whole and complete in him. This includes our relationship to creation.

But what does it mean to bring healing and redemption to the Earth? How is our worship of the creator linked with how we treat God's creation?

These questions, and others, will be addressed at “The Good Life on God's Good Earth,” a conference at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg, Sept. 29 to 30, that will explore biblical resources that can help Christians to apply the transformative power of Christ to the environment.

Keynote speaker at the conference, which is sponsored by CMU, Providence College and A Rocha, a Christian nature conservation organization, is Steven Bouma-Prediger, author of *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*. Bouma-Prediger will speak on the following topics: “Is God green? The biblical case for Earthkeeping,” and “What then do we do? Living the good life on God's good Earth.”

Other speakers include August Konkel, president and professor of Old Testament at Providence College and Seminary, and Gordon Zerbe, associate professor of New Testament and academic dean at CMU.

In addition to the speakers, the conference will feature workshops and a field visit to a conservation study centre. For more information, call CMU at 204-487-3300, e-mail creationcare@cmu.ca or visit cmu.ca.

—CMU release by **John Longhurst**

Winnipeg

Hard to forget—after all those years

My grandmother, Anne Loewen, started playing piano and organ in her church at the age of 13. That was in 1927, 79 years ago.

When our family moved my grandparents into a seniors home last spring, we found—in her piano bench—two thick stacks of programs, one from weddings and one from funerals. My grandmother was the accompanist for all of them. They are the reminders of her 60-year career—from 1927 to 1987—as a music teacher and church accompanist.

Besides these special events, my grandmother also played piano and organ in many Sunday morning services for much of her life, in addition to teaching piano to a number of children for 25 cents a lesson, all the while raising four children of her own.

This might sound like a somewhat ordinary career. After all, this is what a trained musician does. But what makes my grandmother's situation remarkable is the era

in which she did it. She had a career as a professional musician at a time when it was common for women to abandon any thoughts of a profession upon getting married, even if they had completed training and had proven talented in their chosen field. This was a time when society frowned on wives and mothers working outside the home, although, technically, she did not leave the house to teach piano.

Not only was my grandmother a professional, but a large part of her time

was dedicated to voluntary service in the church. She “worked” for six decades in what is now commonly called “music ministry.” As a female, my grandmother was part of the ministry in a church

play from the hymnal. I would bring my violin when we visited, so we could play together when the conversation got too circular and repetitive.

In April, the unthinkable happened. When I sat my grandmother down at the piano, she placed her hands on the keys and produced not the usual beauty of four-part hymns, but clashing notes and musical gibberish. She could not recognize the well-known hymns, and it seemed her musical gift had finally been taken from her. What a terrible loss!

In May, when I visited again, I brought my violin, prepared to play for her, instead of with her. To my surprise, she hummed along to every hymn I played! So she did remember the familiar songs.

Soon she got restless, so I convinced her to come with me to the piano. Imagine my joy when she could play, not perfectly—and not the difficult hymns, but she could play! Her gift had not yet been taken!

As we continued

playing, she even improvised, adding richness to the chords of the hymns. I guess when a person does something for nearly 80 years, it isn't very easy to forget. Thank God.

—**Susanne Guenther**

The author is nearly finished a four-year bachelor of arts in biblical studies degree from Canadian Mennonite University with an English literature minor. This summer, she is doing a pastoral internship at Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto. Her future plans include the further study of theology, with the goal of becoming either a professor or pastor.

the young prophets



Although memory loss has affected her musical abilities, Anne Loewen still likes to accompany her granddaughter, Susanne Guenther, when she comes to visit.

that, as recently as the 1990s, rejected a pastor because she was female.

As her granddaughter, I greatly admire her dedication to the church despite its prejudices against her gender.

For the past decade or so, my grandmother has been losing her memory. It has been a gradual process, but still very difficult to deal with. The family found comfort in the fact that her musical abilities were nearly unaffected by memory loss; she could still

Conchali, Chile

Preaching a gospel of social change in Chile

Omar Cortes-Gaibur believes strongly that the church and the government in Chile need to work together to effect positive social change. And the International Ministry worker for Mennonite Church Canada Witness has evidence that this is possible. The 5&2 Multiplying for All organization, that began in 2000 as a church-sponsored shelter for abused women, morphed into the Prevention Center for Domestic Violence two years ago.

The transition of this church-based organization occurred in partnership with city hall and the national women's affairs ministry. It was recently recognized by the federal government as "one of the best teams" in the country.

But the challenges of social reform in Chile are many, so Cortes-Gaibur has little time to sit still. Last year, he helped establish "Sanctuaries of Peace," a neighbourhood abuse and domestic violence-prevention program that involves local churches.

Becoming a Sanctuary of Peace requires congregations to become part of a violence-prevention campaign in their neighbourhood. Churches commit themselves to respectful treatment of others and to be a place of support for victims of violence and abuse. Then local government joins with the community to proclaim the church as a Sanctuary of Peace.

Six churches are receiving training to deal with cases of abuse and domestic violence, while sending specific cases for professional treatment, reports Cortes-Gaibur. "People will recognize this as a place where young and old can find refuge from abuse or violence," he says.

Cortes-Gaibur hopes the program will eventually take root in other churches, cities and countries. Conchali mayor Carlos Sottoloccio, in the presence of 50 evangelical pastors, asked, "Can you imagine how we could change the face of our city if just 50



Omar Cortes-Gaibur, Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker in Chile since 2000, says of his ministry, "In the Anabaptist manner, authentic theological questions come out of the walk of following [Jesus]."

percent of your churches are part of this significant program?"

The program has caught the attention of UNICEF, which is now offering sponsorship and training. The significance of such affirmation is enormous. Since it began a year ago, more churches have expressed interest, in spite of obstacles.

"The main barrier in having churches adopt this program is that domestic violence exists within their communities also. They seek to avoid

the topic," Cortes-Gaibur says.

"It is impossible in Latin America to develop theological activity without having one's feet in the midst of people's problems," he adds. "It is tension-filled, it is difficult and tiring, but it is part of the cross in Latin America."

Although he teaches at a seminary, edits books on theology, and sits on a planning team for the fifth Latin American Evangelism Congress, Cortes-Gaibur is always working at ways to put the theological rubber on the road.

"My ministry [seeks] to create an ambiance of collaboration between churches, overcoming denominational differences in the common desire to serve the kingdom of God. Many churches of different denominations are interested in learning from the Anabaptist model and its peace theology," he says.

"They are very receptive if the message is presented effectively as an alternative, a third way. There is a sort of saturation with traditional evangelical discourse and it is lamentable that many Mennonite churches in Latin America do not go back to their roots and transmit the Anabaptist message in the midst of the urgent need that we have in our continent."

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**, with translation assistance by **Rebecca Yoder Neufeld**

The Good Life on God's Good Earth: A Creation Care Conference

Sept. 29-30 | Canadian Mennonite University | Winnipeg, MB

Sponsored by: CMU, Providence College, A Rocha.

Keynote speaker: Steven Bouma-Prediger, author of *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*.

Christ came to bring healing and redemption to every corner of the earth, including creation itself. But what does that mean? Come to **The Good Life on God's Good Earth** to explore biblical resources that address this question, and to find ways to apply the transformative power of Christ to this very important aspect of our lives.

For more information, visit www.cmu.ca or call **1.877.231.4570**

Registration: \$75 by Sept. 8 (\$45 for students)
\$90 after Sept. 8 (\$60 for students)

The support of the C. P. Loewen Family Foundation is gratefully acknowledged.

Forgive us, for we know not what we are doing.

With this statement, I opened my address to the executive committee of the East African Farmers Federation, a body representing the interests of 70 million individuals living on small-scale farms in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and the Congo. They had invited me to speak on the topic, “What are developing nations up against when they go to the World Trade Organization (WTO) to negotiate a fairer trade deal?”

After first making a personal apology, I apologized—rightly or wrongly—on behalf of Canada’s farming community and the Canadian public, who collectively support existing Canadian agricultural policies that utilize trade-distorting subsidized production and import tariff barriers.

I described both my farming experience in Canada, and those while living with farmers in rural Uganda. I went on to describe the lessons I learned about subsidized agriculture and international trade from my coffee-producing neighbours while living in Uganda. I further explained how I had recently left my farm in Canada and returned to East Africa at my own expense, to learn more about the challenges of East African farmers, so I would be better able to effectively lobby in Canada on their behalf.

In response to this statement, they spontaneously hooted and clapped in a manner typical of East Africans, a rousing chorus that has to be experienced to be understood. This was a very humbling but affirming experience, an emotional moment that I thank God for giving me.

After the clapping subsided, I went on to assure them that Canadian farmers are very nice people. I told them they have families and that many go to church and pray to God just like East Africans. I assured them that they carry no ill will towards Africans.

Further, I explained that most Canadian farmers—like their East African counterparts—are victims of

Killing African farmers softly with good intentions

developed world policies of subsidized agriculture that have created surplus production and depressed prices for foodstuffs.

When I told them that a Canadian dairy farmer must pay \$30,000 for a “licence” to keep one cow (100 years’ income for an average Kenyan), that an average dairy farm has 50 cows and quota valued at \$1.5 million, that some in the Canadian international non-governmental organization (NGO) community support these systems and the tariff protection they require, and that they believe East African farmers should set up similar systems, there were audible gasps of disbelief.

I concluded by explaining that Canada’s 20,000 supply managed farmers now have “licences” worth between \$30 billion and \$40 billion, giving them the motivation to vigorously defend their interests. I also pointed out that unprofitable cash crop farmers continue to demand from their government larger subsidies just to survive. Finally, I shared my

belief that Canadian politicians are generally afraid of farmers due to the disproportionate amount of political power they have.

At the end of my talk, the federation chair, who was leaving for the WTO meetings in Hong Kong the next day (they were held in December), thanked me repeatedly, and, while shaking his head back and forth, remarked, “We had no idea!”

I am not a political leader. I am one small voice in a sea of competing messages. I will not claim to speak for the East African farmers. Rather, I only convey the message they send. On departing, the chair offered one simple message: “Tell them to stop killing us with their agricultural policies that do not allow us to produce and trade fairly.”

When I wrote this, Canadian leaders were in Hong Kong negotiating a new WTO agreement. Canadian negotiators left for Hong Kong with a strong directive to defend the status quo. Canada’s NGO community supports the country’s right to defend supply management practices at the WTO, although it only views it as one possible solution to addressing low profitability and food security issues for developing world farmers.

Is this your will, though? Have you thought about these issues?

I hope that the experiences I have shared will stimulate discussion on this important issue and that the next time Canadian leaders go to a WTO negotiation, they will be reflecting the will of an informed Canadian public.

—Richard Reesor

The author is a former Stouffville (Ont.) area farmer now living in Nairobi, Kenya.

Pontius’ Puddle



Letters

Science leads to a distant God

I always get a little annoyed when someone tries to show there is no conflict between religion and science (“Pointing us to a loving God: The paradox of natural selection,” *Canadian Mennonite*, May 29, page 6). That is only true at a superficial level.

Fundamentally, they clash on the issue of God. One believes in a spiritual realm and owes its existence to this belief, and the other only looks for physical causes and material explanations.

The fact that science only deals with the physical and religion only with the spiritual seems, at first, to allow for a mutual respect between them. You

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.

don’t intrude on my space and I won’t intrude on yours. This is the route the late Steven J. Gould, a paleontologist and educator at Harvard University, advocated.

It seems to me, however, that very few on either side of the question are willing to do this, because we use scientific explanations in all areas of life. When we are sceptical of information someone is giving us, we try as best we can to judge its objectivity. The

more objective we determine it to be, the more validity it has for us.

But there is no objective knowledge one can get about God. By definition, God cannot be proved or disproved. Therefore, if someone wants to believe in God’s existence, one can, of course. Millions of people do.

It is, however, a choice made not on any objective evidence, but for subjective reasons. It is at this point many

Continued on page 12

MELISSA MILLER



Family Ties

There are a couple people in my family who drive me crazy. I suspect it’s reciprocal. You likely know how this goes. I want to play; she wants to work. I want conversation; he wants peaceful silence. I’m looking for encouragement and support; she’s offering “constructive criticism.” I’m low on energy and he’s ready to party.

Our inclinations seem to run in opposite directions, which often leads us to being in opposition. We clash. Those differences lead to frustration and irritation. Our focus becomes what we don’t like about the other person. Their inadequacies, shortcomings, character flaws. We exert effort on the other to change, to fit our expectations, to conform to our image of what we want them to be. At least, I confess, that’s often the path I go down.

By and large, it’s a futile path. Change in the other person doesn’t happen. Recently, I’ve explored a new direction. What about changing myself? Specifically, what about focusing on the positives the other person possesses, instead of those qualities that I find so annoying?

This has proven to be highly effective. I imagine it’s even written about in conflict resolution and communication skills manuals. (And I truly believe I’ve even counselled others in this regard. Sometimes I am amazed by what I know and don’t practise!)

My new approach has involved one simple step. Instead of making a critical, irritated comment, I voice an affirmation towards the other person. The results have borne fruit—both inside of me and in the overall climate between me and the other person. By choosing to focus on their endearing positive qualities, I see the other person

Going with the positive

What about focusing on the positives the other person possesses instead of those qualities which I find so annoying?

in a gentler, lovelier light. I am softened as I attend to their unique, precious characteristics. As my stance shifts, both verbally and nonverbally, the tone of our conversation lightens and is sprinkled with laughter and mutual pleasure. That is the power of grace.

A recent incident may illustrate this, though it is not to suggest that my mother is one who drives me crazy! One evening, as we left the church after my grandmother’s viewing, my mother said she needed to make a sausage casserole when she got home. It was nearing 10 o’clock, and I thought rest and bedtime were better pursuits. I was certainly weary and concerned that my mother was even more so. I began to protest and suggest alternatives, in effect, contradicting my desire to be supportive and helpful. Plus, I know that attempts to sway my mother from food preparation are doomed.

I backed off, and began to problem-solve with her about how to accomplish the task most efficiently. We arrived home and she began to assemble the necessary ingredients. As I washed my hands, my sister-in-law came alongside me. Though committed to helping, I still needed to grumble a bit to her. She waited until I finished, then said, “Well...this is what

makes her who she is. Do you want to change that?”

While I was mulling this over, my mother brought the recipe to me. I recognized the cookbook from my grandmother’s church immediately, and sure enough, the recipe was Gram’s. Of course, my mother needed to make the sausage casserole that night. Grace enabled me to get out of the way, and enter into the holy space with her.

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

Science *From page 11*

religious people get uncomfortable. They are not content with a pure faith position. They want there to be some objective evidence to lend credence to their position.

They do this either by way of intelligent design, trying to show where the scientists have gone wrong. (How do they attempt to show it? By scientific means, of course!) Or they accept the scientific explanations and move God further back in the process to where science has not yet gone and perhaps where science is unable to go.

This seems to me to be what Glen Klassen is doing in his article. If you want to move God back, that is fine. Perhaps science will one day intrude on that territory and then you can simply move God further back.

The problem is this. With each

step back, God gets further removed from any sort of action in the world. Ultimately, you end up in a deist position, where God at some point started the process but now lets everything happen naturally.

One can believe in such a God, but what is the point? Besides, if you are going to approach it scientifically, the next question after you get to God is: From where did God come?

—**David Wiebe, Winnipeg**

Low-tech toilets compromise dignity

I would like to congratulate Aiden Enns on his explicit description of his waste disposal method, and particularly *Canadian Mennonite* for finding the space to print this (“Low-tech for the soul,” May 15, page 8).

I have a better suggestion. Dig a

hole in your backyard, put a little house on it with a moon in the door, cut a hole in the seat—and you never have to flush again. Oh, by the way, cut two holes so he can go there with his buddy and have a little competition. One more thing—find an old Eaton’s catalogue and save the toilet tissue.

Mr. Enns, if you think you have invented something new, you have not. I have lived in a house with five families; the facilities were down the stairs, through a hallway, to the road, down the road for 100 metres, across a barnyard, to the loo, then you could stand in line as there were five families using it. I have also lived in a house with no electricity or running water. So to you, Mr. Enns and *Canadian Mennonite*, keep your suggestions and let me live like a human being in dignity and comfort.

—**Fred Bartel, Richmond, B.C.**

DARREN PRIES-KLASSEN



God, money and me

Credit card usage is proving to be more temptation than people can resist. The practice of “buy now, pay later” has resulted in a current outstanding balance of \$50 billion to VISA and MasterCard in Canada alone. If everyone paid their card balance in full each month, the problem would diminish considerably, but many consumers carry a balance and are subjected to exorbitant interest rates.

Credit cards may have started as a convenient alternative to carrying cash, but have become a pacifier for consumers and a cash cow for retailers. Many large retailers have admitted that a majority of their profits no longer come from the sale of retail goods found on their shelves, but from the interest collected on the charge cards they issue.

What makes credit card debt so bad is just that, it’s “bad” debt. Bad debt has two characteristics. First, it’s expensive. Most credit cards charge interest rates of 18 percent or more. Some are nearly 30 percent! They may begin with no interest or with a single digit interest rate, but read the fine print of the contract. If you miss a payment or neglect to pay the balance in full, the company reserves the right to increase the interest rate to nearly stratospheric levels.

Credit card debt is also bad debt when it has been used to purchase a “depreciating asset.” Anything that begins to lose value the moment you purchase it—such as clothing, furniture, electronics, and restaurant meals—are examples of depreciating assets.

For example, you find the mountain bike of your dreams on sale for \$999. You use your credit card to buy

it. Before you can even put the card back in your wallet, the bike begins to lose value. If you haven’t budgeted for it, and you can only pay the minimum monthly payment (2.5 percent of the balance owing or a minimum of \$10, whichever is more), it will take you nearly 13 years to pay off the bike!

Over the 13 years you will pay more than \$1,100 dollars in interest in addition to the purchase price. The final cost of the bike will be more than twice the sale price and you will still be paying the bill long after the bike has become worthless or sold at a garage sale. Still happy you bought that bike?

How do you avoid paying the outrageous interest costs on your credit card? Use your card only for planned purchases, and be sure to pay your balance in full and on time each month. If you can’t afford the full payment, stop using the card. Period! Cancel the account, cut up the card and start using good old-fashioned cash for all purchases. At most, you need one credit card. Keep the one with the lowest annual fee and cancel the rest. Remember, a credit card is a tool, not free money.

Proverbs 22:7 reminds us that the borrower is servant to the lender. If we use plastic foolishly, we become bound and trapped by our debt and the servants of the credit companies. Resist the trap. Be free to place your “interest” in things you most value, rather than worshipping the god of bad debt.

Darren Pries-Klassen is a Mennonite Foundation of Canada stewardship consultant. For stewardship education, estate and charitable gift planning, visit mennofoundation.ca.

Credit card bondage

If you can’t afford the full payment, stop using the card.

Government called to do more to relieve poverty

As a Canadian living in Kenya, I am watching yet another food crisis kidnap thousands of childhoods. Fourteen million people in isolated regions across East Africa are struggling to find food and water—again. Seasonal rains that normally last two weeks in northeast Kenya petered out after a miserable day-and-a-half. This current drought—the worst in four years—is yet another example of our incredible propensity to ignore the root causes of poverty that grip Africa.

While the world asks, “Why again?” I hear whispers of, “It’s Africa, get used to it,” and I cringe. The situation here is so serious that farmers are herding their livestock into Nairobi’s city parks to graze. They risk fines or even arrest as they desperately try to keep these animals alive.

A top United Nations official has warned that if we wait any longer to provide immediate food aid in East Africa, it will be “absolutely catastrophic.” Yet response from major donor countries has been lethargic at best. We wait as people continue to suffer. And as always, it is the most vulnerable who succumb first—children, pregnant mothers and the elderly. I refuse to get used to this.

Addressing the root causes of poverty is our only hope of transforming the lives of the poor.

As a Canadian, I am encouraged to see my country wrestling with international poverty. The debate has not been so public since the days of Lester B. Pearson, who envisioned 0.7 per cent of our gross domestic product going to overseas aid. Thousands of Canadians are demanding more and better aid, as evidenced by their support for the Make Poverty History campaign.

Are our politicians listening? Sadly, it seems not. Our government spending on foreign aid stands at an abysmal 0.3 per cent—an international disgrace.

Until we address poverty in Africa in a serious, long-term, holistic manner, we will continue to see drought after drought. We must commit to combat poverty through sustainable development. Either we support concrete change or we accept images of

starving children as normal. I, for one, refuse to get used to it.

—**Jim Carrie, Kenya, East Africa**

The writer is regional director for World Vision, based in Kenya, East Africa.

Thanking God for better discipline techniques

I read the articles from the May 15 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* regarding church discipline (“Understanding church discipline” and “Whatever happened to church discipline,” pages 11-15). I commend the efforts of the magazine in your attempt to touch on topics of this nature.

Similarly, these articles remind me so much of the way schools used to discipline their children in my day. I remember classmates having to sit in the waste basket or getting strapped with the ruler in front of the class. I wonder what those children actually learned from the public humiliation they were given. New and better methods of teaching and disciplining have surfaced—and I thank the Lord for it.

I am grateful that our church uses the “gentle guidance techniques of the pastors” to influence the congregation into a clearer understanding of the difference between “right or wrong” on various issues.

—**Jacqueline Lichty, Kitchener, Ont.**

Christian Churches Together an impressive gathering

I recently had the privilege of attending the annual meeting of Christian Churches Together (CCT) as an observer and representative of Mennonite Church USA. This is a truly remarkable movement, bringing together leaders from varied parts of the Christian Church who have often been at odds with one another, “to strengthen our Christian witness in the world.” The group includes leaders of large African-American denominations, moderators of evangelical and mainline Protestant churches, and Pentecostal, Catholic and Orthodox bishops. (See “MC USA considers Christian Churches Together, Canadian Mennonite, Aug. 22, 2005, page 17. Ed.)

At the gathering, in late March near Atlanta, Ga., representatives of 34

denominations and national organizations made the historic decision to formally organize as Christian Churches Together in the U.S. Eight additional churches considering participation were present as observers. MC USA leadership is continuing to gather information and counsel from our 21 area conferences as well as others about our participation in this movement.

The vision of CCT began with a diverse group of Christian leaders gathered in the fall of 2001, who expressed a longing for an expanded Christian conversation in the United States. They stated, “We lament that we are divided and that our divisions too often result in distrust, misunderstandings, fear and even hostility between us. We long for the broken body of Christ to be made whole, where unity can be celebrated in the midst of our diversity. We long for more common witness, vision and mission.”

The official formation of Christian Churches Together was delayed last year because of insufficient involvement of racial/ethnic churches. Many meetings and conversations have ensued, with the result that two of the very large black Baptist conventions are participants and the largest black Pentecostal denomination was present as an observer and anticipates becoming a full participant. CCT leadership is committed to ongoing efforts to broaden participation.

Significant attention was given to the issue of poverty. Time was spent in Bible study and hearing stories and testimonies from people who had experienced poverty. While some shared a concern that CCT not be perceived primarily as an issue-oriented group, those gathered came to consensus that addressing poverty is “central to the mission of the church and essential to our unity in Christ.”

I am encouraged and deeply moved by what God is doing in bringing the different parts of the body into relationship with each other. I continue to believe that participation in CCT by Mennonite Church USA would be a modest but significant step in that process.

—**André Gingrich Stoner, South Bend, Ind.**

The writer is the newly appointed director of Interchurch Relations for Mennonite Church USA.

Film portrays an end to one community's cycle of violence

End of the Spear, an Every Tribe Entertainment film, directed by Jim Hanon, 2005. Rated PG-13 for intense sequences of violence. Available at Wal-Mart and other video/DVD retailers.

The sacrificial love of Jesus Christ compels his people to go into all the world and love as he loved. This love often takes his people into dangerous regions where their message is either not understood or where other traditions have a longer-standing hold over the people.

This was true of the missionaries who went into the Ecuadorian jungles in 1956 and attempted to reach the Waodani people. Jim Hanon's *End of the Spear* is the cinematic presentation of both their sacrifice and the ultimate victory of God's love.

The Waodani were Amazon tribes that had created a culture of revenge and death. Like many cultures of the world, their lives were caught in a vicious cycle of vengeance, as each generation of warriors would avenge the deaths of their fathers or families by killing those who had speared them. With their vengeful and swift form of justice that demanded the immediate taking of human life, the Waodani had reached the point of near extinction. Fearing that they would completely destroy themselves, five young missionaries attempt to make contact and teach them of God's love as well as his teaching of forgiveness—but are killed upon first contact.

The ensemble cast of this film includes not only the five missionaries and their families, but also the Waodani and their families. It is a film that presents decades of their interactions and the effects these had on them, illustrating that the trans-

formation of a culture—as well as a life—takes time.

The central characters are the missionary pilot, Nate Saint (Chad Allen) and the tribal leader of the Waodani, Mincayani (Louie Leonardo). Central to the victory over the cycle of vengeance are the women of both the Waodani tribes and the missionary families.

Without being either preachy or obvious, the film takes the viewer through the sacrifice given by the missionary families and the effect it had upon the Waodani. The supernatural power of God is present in the moments of sacrifice as well as in the powerful transformation of this vengeful culture.

One of the most moving scenes in the film is when Mincayani confesses to Nate's son Steve (also played by Chad Allen) that he is the murderer of his father and offers himself to be killed. When Steve will not respond with violence, the use of the spear truly comes to an end.

While viewing the film, do not miss the final scenes during the closing credits when the real Mincayani and the real Steve Saint are talking. Their love for one another is obvious, and the point is made that for the first time in Waodani history there are now grandfathers in the tribe, as the cycle of violence has been replaced with the love of Christ.

It is our hope that this message will be communicated to the outwardly more-sophisticated cultures that nevertheless seek vengeance in an endless cycle of war.

—Hal Conklin and Denny Wayman

Cinema In Focus is an online social and spiritual movie commentary. For more reviews, visit cinemainfocus.com.



Book shows how Winkler 'lives between worlds'

Living Between Worlds: A History of Winkler, Man. by Hans Werner. Winkler Heritage Society, 2006, 226 pages, \$50.

The City of Winkler is marking its centennial and publicly launched its new history book, *Living Between Worlds*, on April 8. One hundred years and a day earlier—April 7, 1906—Winkler was officially incorporated as a village.

The Winkler Heritage Society has published a 226-page hardcover book, on which a collage of past and present photos frame the glossy dust jacket showing the community's growth and rich history from village to town to city.

Ken H. Loewen, chair of the Winkler Heritage Society, explains the book's title, saying, "Winkler began as a place on the field where the railroad and the water ran through. The people changed it from a simple, self-entertaining, subsistence endeavour to a thriving, complex, inter-dependent international city."

"For most of its history, Winkler was known as a Mennonite place," Loewen says, adding, "Winkler's merchants and businessmen had to find their way in between the commercial and industrial worlds of mainstream North America and the village worlds of their more separation-conscious customers and workers. The one-dimensional view held by many Manitobans of what it was to be a Mennonite and a Winklerite was, in fact, much more diverse and with many more shades."

Says Loewen of *Living Between Worlds*, "It's about a remarkable railroad town, a place that didn't fade away when the railway and agriculture were replaced in the prairie economy by oil and the automobile and truck."

—Elmer Heinrichs

Stratford, Ont.

Decoding The Code in a small-city church

Prayer and great thoughtfulness led Herb Sawatzky, pastor of the 170-member Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, to produce a four-week sermon series on *The Da Vinci Code*, the bestseller by Dan Brown that was turned into a blockbuster film by director Ron Howard with Tom Hanks as the star.

Sawatzky had planned for a community outreach series, fully supported by the pastoral care team, but was unsure of direction.

"I was still unsettled and then one Friday an e-mail came regarding the launch of *The Da Vinci Code* movie along with various pastoral resources. I prayed very hard that weekend whether that was what God wanted us to focus on and by Saturday night I was convinced it was," Sawatzky said.

He announced the series weeks in advance, encouraging members to invite others. Flyers were distributed throughout the city.

The first and last weeks centred on the gospel message of God's love through Jesus Christ. Sawatzky noted that people hunger for understanding of who Jesus was and who he is.

"*The Code* has been a great opportunity to share the gospel," Sawatzky said. "The tragedy is that much of the earlier church got Jesus wrong and people find other portraits [like the one found in *The Da Vinci Code*] more appealing."

The second week Sawatzky explored the "sacred feminine." He commented later that "everyone talks about sex, so must the church."

In the third service, Sawatzky described the development of the biblical canon and the fictional book's false assertion that Constantine dumped 80 gospels in the fourth century.

There were handouts each week and group discussions occurred after the services. The series was to engage existing congregants and encourage interest in new membership.

"Our mission is to connect people to

Vacation reading ideas

For good summer reading, the MC Canada Resource Centre suggests the following titles:

Blue Like Jazz: Religious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality by Donald Miller. For anyone wondering if the Christian faith is still relevant in a postmodern culture, this is a fresh and original perspective on life, love and redemption.

Coming of Age: Exploring the Identity and Spirituality of Younger Men by Roland D. Martinson, et al. A qualitative study that looks at the lives of 88 young men, their coming of age and their spirituality.

Companions of Christ: Ignatian Spirituality for Everyday Living by Margaret Silf. Contains practical teaching on Ignatian themes—imaginative scriptural mediation, spiritual discernment, and honest prayer, with spiritual exercises throughout.

Finding My Talk: How Fourteen Native Women Reclaimed Their Lives After Residential School by Agnes Grant. Fourteen Aboriginal women describe

their years in residential schools and how they overcame tremendous obstacles to become strong and independent members of aboriginal cultures.

Peacework: Prayer, Resistance, Community by Henri Nouwen. Offers a three-fold path for Christians to embrace Jesus' ethic of peacemaking: prayer, resistance and community.

Prayer for People Who Can't Sit Still by William Tenny-Brittian. The author—with ADHD—shares 10 types of kinesthetic prayer (prayer that involves the whole body and senses) that will appeal to even the most fidgety as they seek to connect with God.

Priority Parenting: Reclaiming Your Home for Heaven's Sake by Steve Ganger. Explores how some of the greatest gifts parents can give their children are a love of God and a healthy marriage.

Thank You for Asking: Conversations with Young Adults about the Future Church by Sara Wenger Shenk. A book of stories of young adults, who are working hard with imagination, longing and love, to weave a coherent faith and way of life.

—MC Canada release

the living God and we want to grow in the grace of Jesus," Sawatzky said.

Indeed, attendance jumped more than 10 per cent, with three families indicating a strong interest in joining the congregation.

Joanne Hunsberger, 73, is a church care group leader. Although not interested in the book, she cares deeply that those attracted to the book—especially youths—heard Sawatzky's series. In fact, several back rows were filled with young people.

"For the sake of the youth, I think it was worthwhile because they were listening to someone I approve of; I knew they were in safe territory," she said of Sawatzky's series.

"I am grateful Herb was courageous enough to present accurate historical information to us all," remarked Nicola Usher, Avon's youth leader.

Chris Thomas, 42, was invited to share his testimony during the last Sunday of the series. "There's nothing in the book that threatens my faith," he affirmed to those in attendance.

Sawatzky ended the series, com-

menting that *The Da Vinci Code* is certainly "a good mystery read! That's all."

—Diane Sims

The author is a member of Avon Mennonite Church, Stratford, and the author of three books. (This article ends Canadian Mennonite's coverage of the controversial book and movie. Ed.)

Arts note

Nickel book wins B.C. award

Hannah Waters and the Daughter of Johann Sebastian Bach (Penguin Canada, 2005) was awarded the Sheila A. Egoff Children's Literature Prize at the Lieutenant Governor's B.C. Book Prizes Gala in Vancouver on April 29. Author Barbara Nickel is a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C. (*Watch for a profile of the author in an upcoming issue of Canadian Mennonite. Ed.*)

—Amy Dueckman

Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

Mennonites running in Congolese elections

Congolese Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren are becoming engaged in the political process as their country prepares to hold its first democratic elections in 46 years this summer. Some are even running for office.

While Congolese Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren did not hold government positions under the rule of army commander Joseph Mobutu, who ousted former dictator Joseph Kasa Vubu and installed himself as dictator until his death in 1997, a few church members are now running for high offices.

“There will be Mennonites who will be senators, who will be deputies, and there is one who wants to be president,” says Pascal Kulungu, a Mennonite Brethren lay leader who is serving as chair of the interdenominational electoral effort.

Muyima Hosea, a Congolese Mennonite professor who lives in South Africa, is one of 33 registered presidential candidates. Kulungu says that Hosea does not have a significant chance of winning, but he may be appointed to a government position.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly known as Zaire, was devastated by decades of corrupt dictatorships and a civil war from 1998 to 2003. Fighting continues in Congo’s northeastern region and extreme poverty is widespread. Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren, with a combined membership of about 194,000, are encouraging their church members and fellow citizens to participate in this year’s elections as a way to revitalize their country.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is providing \$94,000 to fund a joint effort by these denominations to prepare their churches for the elec-

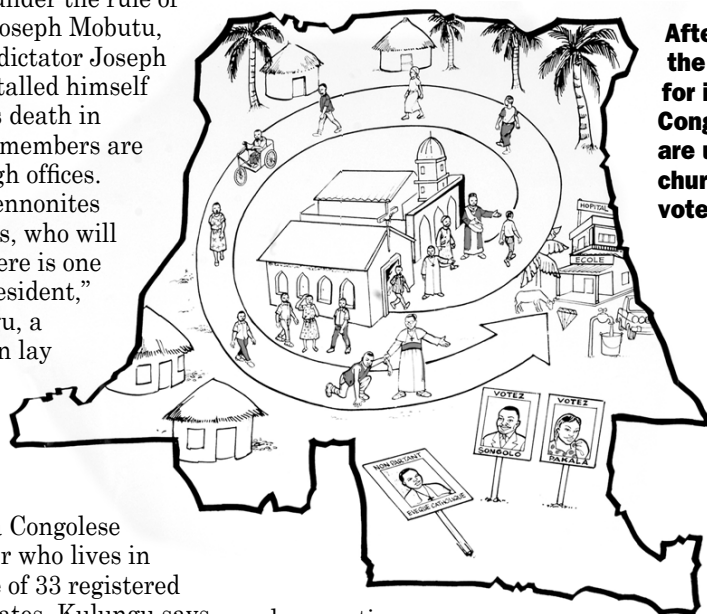
tions. Together, they are training several thousand of their members to serve as conflict mediators and election observers in their communities. They are also sending civic educators to teach churches and community groups about voting in a democracy.

MCC has also purchased posters that civic educators are using to teach

rebuilding the country and alleviating poverty.

“My hope is that after the election we will have a credible government,” Mukambu says. “The election will not be a magic way to say, ‘Okay, now we have a good Congo.’ It’s a first step.”

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**



After a civil war and decades of dictatorship, the Democratic Republic of Congo is preparing for its first democratic elections in 46 years. Congolese Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren are using educational posters to teach their churches and communities what it means to vote in a democracy.

MCC hosts first of 20 international election observers in Congo

John Hennings, an Anglican friar from Dorchester, England, visited the Democratic Republic of Congo for a week in late April as the first of 20 international election observers invited by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Hennings spent the week in Kinshasa and assisted in a project to organize Congolese people to serve as local election observers. He met with several church groups and preached at an Anglican church in the city.

Suzanne Lind, an MCC country representative in Kinshasa, says that the presence of international election observers is encouraging to Congolese Christians, many of whom are participating in the political process for the first time.

“They’re seeing that it’s a good thing to vote, it’s okay to be interested in the political process, and it’s important to look at your government with an expectation for honesty,” Lind says.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

democratic concepts to voters who may not know how to read. The posters depict the process of voting, warn against corrupt leaders, and illustrate ideas such as equal rights and economic development.

“The Mennonite vision is to rebuild the country with nonviolent methods,” says Kulungu.

Congo’s upcoming elections were originally scheduled for 2005, but logistical problems have caused numerous delays. The electoral commission recently announced that elections will be held on July 30.

Eric Mukambu, a Mennonite pastor who is teaching civic educators and conflict mediators in Kinshasa, Congo’s capital, hopes that the elections will begin the difficult process of

Pundong, Indonesia

Indonesian Mennonites and MCC respond to earthquake

Indonesian Mennonites and humanitarian organizations are assisting Indonesian earthquake survivors with support from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). MCC is appealing to its constituents for \$290,000 to support the relief and recovery work of partner organizations in Java.

A magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck the Indonesian island of Java on May 27, causing more than 5,800 deaths and leaving hundreds of thousands of people homeless, according to the Indonesian government.

A new Mennonite organization—Mennonite Diakonia Service—quickly established a command centre in Baran in the Pundong District of Bantul County, the area hit hardest by the quake. The service—a part of Muria Christian Church in Indonesia, a Mennonite conference known by its Indonesian acronym, GKMI—first identified “refugee cluster points,” providing medical treatment and distributing food staples, blankets, used clothing and personal care items.

A medical tent was set up at the command centre for patients able to come there. Severely injured victims unable to travel received treatment at the cluster points. Follow-up care is also being provided.

“The people in the village were glad to see us,” reports Victor Sensenig, an MCC worker

who helped transport the collected food, bottled water and clothing from six Indonesian Mennonite congregations. “Even though it was raining, there was a long line of people helping to pass the food from the trucks to our sister GKMI church, where it was stored. They said 14 people had died in their village, their homes collapsing on them while they slept.”

Since the earthquake, Indonesian Mennonite congregations have sent about 20 volunteers per day to Pundong, where they staff community kitchens, recover items from collapsed houses and set up tents for homeless families.

The new service is also offering trauma healing for adults at village gatherings and through such activities as debris cleanup drives. Traumatized children can come to two “happy tents,” safe havens where they can play for two hours each morning and afternoon.

Longer-term goals include reconstructing homes for 100 families and schools in Pundong destroyed by the quake and providing economic empowerment so that victims can re-establish a livelihood for their families. Mennonite Diakonia Service plans to buy coconuts and rice harvested by quake victims. The rice will be processed by manually operated machines and used in its food distribution program.

Although central Java is predominantly Muslim, the region is also

home to the majority of Indonesia’s Mennonites. Indonesia has three Mennonite conferences with a combined membership of more than 87,000, according to Mennonite World Conference.

“This is an important time to support the relief efforts of the churches to people of all faiths who live in the affected area,” says Jeanne Jantzi, an MCC country representative for Indonesia.

—From MCC and MWC releases

Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Personal stories from the quake

The village of Pundong has been totally damaged, reported Paulus Widjaja, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Peace Council secretary, four days after a deadly earthquake on the Indonesian island of Java in the early morning hours of May 27.

“So far we have identified six casualties among our congregation here: four adults and two children,” stated Widjaja, who lives in Yogyakarta. “Our pastor was brought to the hospital. He fell when trying to get out of the house and was hit by the roof of his house that collapsed. His house is flat on the ground.”

The pastor, Daniel Sobari, suffered a fractured leg. Injured victims crowded the hospitals in Yogyakarta, with thousands of people laid on the parking lots and alleys, Widjaja said.

Widjaja, who was giving conflict transformation training to Hezbollah soldiers about 110 kilometres away, was sleeping in his hotel room when the earthquake struck.

“I was awakened because everything in my room was shaking,” he said. “I ran out of my room, [thinking] it was due to the eruption of Merapi Mountain, that we had anticipated.”

Only later in the morning did he learn that a huge earthquake had hit his city. His wife Janti was able to call him to say that she and the children were fine, and that their home was standing, “despite some cracks here and there.”



Photo by Phalita Nari Wasitu

Hendro and Mugiym, a Mennonite couple in Pundong, Indonesia, fled their house as it collapsed in a May 27 earthquake.

Continued on page 18

Stories *From page 17*

Later that day, Mesach Krisetya, former MWC president, reported from Salatiga, that his university has set up a command post in Yogyakarta to respond to the disaster. “Pray for us,” he requested.

The JKI conference is mobilizing fundraising among its more than 100 congregations to help rebuild simple homes for earthquake victims. “This is our long-term goal,” he said.

—MWC release by **Ferne Burkhardt**

Panabaj, Guatemala

A Guatemalan Pentecost: Crossing languages and cultures

Perhaps the most well-known Bible story of the encounters of various cultures and languages in one place is the story of Pentecost in the Book of Acts, where the faithful, despite being foreigners, could understand each other by divine inspiration.

Here in Guatemala, we have experienced the remarkable joining of Mennonites to give aid to people impacted by the disaster caused by Tropical Storm Stan last October.

Canadians joined Low-German speaking Colony Mennonites from Belize to offer aid, as did K'ekchi from Guatemala and Belize, whose maternal language is K'ekchi and second language Spanish or English. There were volunteers whose maternal language is Ixil and volunteers who spoke Spanish.

In total, more than 150 volunteers worked together to reconstruct houses among communities where the main language is Tzutuhil. Mudslides wiped out houses, took many lives and destroyed entire villages in Pachichaj and Panabaj, which are northwest of Guatemala City on the shores of Lake Atitlan.

Nonetheless, they were able to

overcome cultural and language barriers, inspired by the Holy Spirit and speaking the language of love. Everyone shared their time, strength and knowledge to work together to bring comfort and hope to families that suffered the impact of the disaster.

More than half a year has passed since the storm. To date, 72 of 80 houses have been built for families that lost their homes during the tragedy.

A great deal of learning and many stories emerged from this work—from the construction of a house for an elderly alcoholic and his family who are transformed daily by the miracle of solidarity, to the construction of unity among Mennonite communities in different locations.

Isidro Xicay Coche is preparing to move his family back to Panabaj, where they will reside in one of the new houses. In the weeks following the Oct. 5 disaster, Coche and his family rented a room in the nearby town of Santiago Atitlán, but found it difficult to pay even the water and electricity bills. Working as a hired labourer cutting firewood and tending cornfields, Coche earned less than \$3.50 a day. Rebuilding his family's house seemed like a dream far out of reach.

But Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) provided \$52,000 to buy concrete blocks, cement, lime, lumber and metal roofing for 80 houses in the area, and to pay the expenses of volunteers.

For Coche, it was a chance to start again. Using the same stones and sand that had destroyed his previous house, he gathered materials for a new foundation. These days, Coche works on his own to plaster the inside of his simple one-room house with a mixture of lime and sand. He looks forward to bringing his family back to start their lives again in their new home.

“You people came and gave a lot of help,” Coche explains in Tzutujil, his native language. “For us to save



Photo courtesy of MCC Guatemala

Mennonites from different countries, with different cultures and languages, joined together to help rebuild in Panabaj Guatemala after Tropical Storm Stan.

enough to rebuild our own houses would take many years, but you have made it possible.”

The K'ekchi community is one of the largest indigenous communities in Guatemala and has also suffered marginalization and poverty. Nevertheless, despite their own situation, K'ekchi Mennonites answered the call to serve their Tzutuhil brothers and sisters.

On one occasion during the work, a community member from Panabaj asked José, a K'ekchi brother who was serving as a volunteer, what church he came from. José replied, “I am from the Mennonite Church.” The man from the community said, “Well, now I am going to pray together with my church for the Mennonite Church, because they are doing the will of God to help those in need.”

Many are the ties and cultural bridges that have been built through this experience, not only of language but also of culture and creed, resulting in a true Pentecost.

—**Antony and Irma Judith Sánchez Solano**, with files from **Mike Martin**

The Solanos are MCC Guatemala representatives, while Martin recently completed a two-month term with MCC in Guatemala.

Pasadena, Calif.

Diverse group begins plans for 2009 MWC assembly

Alfred Neufeld, the chair of the National Coordinating Committee for the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Assembly 15 in Paraguay and a faculty member at the Universidad Evangelica del Paraguay, spoke earlier this year with former MWC special projects coordinator Marcus Shantz.

Hosting a Mennonite World Conference assembly is a big undertaking. Why did the Paraguayan Mennonites offer to do this?

Neufeld: Well, they sure did it with mixed feelings, because as a matter of fact this is a very big project! But I guess it is out of gratitude.

The international Mennonite community has always been very supportive of Paraguay from the time that Mennonite refugees settled there. And since then, there has been a strong network of support from Mennonites around the world. So we do it out of gratitude, and we do it because we think it may have a positive impact on our churches and our public presence and witness.

How many different MWC member churches from Paraguay will be involved in hosting Assembly 15?

Neufeld: The Mennonite picture in Paraguay is very diverse. There are at least three major cultural groups that will be hosting the assembly.

Three of the MWC member churches belong to the First Nation peoples that started to join the Mennonite faith at the end of the 1940s. There are also three conferences of immigrant background that still speak German in their churches—the Mennonite Church, the Mennonite Brethren Church and the Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood. They all immigrated to Paraguay at the same time 75 years ago, and they have had a very fraternal working relationship.

There are also two member conferences from the majority Spanish-speaking culture. They are the Paraguayan Mennonite Church and the Paraguayan

Mennonite Brethren Church.

Finally, there are some other emerging groups that have been doing missionary and outreach work. They are not yet officially part of MWC. They will all be very supportive of the assembly.

Have Paraguayan Mennonites had the opportunity to cooperate to this extent in the past?

Neufeld: It's new and exciting for us to work as eight different conferences to host a major Mennonite event. But there has been a high level of inter-Mennonite cooperation in the history of Paraguay. And I would also say there has been a low amount of conflict or division in our history.

Nearly all of these groups emerged out of missionary work in specific ethnic communities or from immigration. As far as I know, none of our Mennonite groups have emerged from a split or a conflict in Paraguay. So we have to understand that Paraguay is a country of refuge for a very wide mosaic of different Mennonite groups. Service has helped to unite us and has provided a platform of encounter for us.

What are your biggest concerns in hosting the assembly?

Neufeld: My first concern is the essence of the assembly itself. Of course, it can be a wonderful family reunion and folk festival. But it needs to be more. I think that, to be meaningful, there must be content that brings us together and that provides us with a shared vision.

How much planning have you done so far?

Neufeld: We are just at the beginning of our planning. We have a national coordinating committee, which has met only twice. There has been an advertisement to hire a national co-ordinator.

Do you expect the government of Paraguay to be supportive of the assembly?

Strasbourg, France

MWC Assembly 15 dates announced

Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Assembly 15 will be held from July 13 to 19, 2009, in Asuncion, Paraguay. The National Coordinating Committee, in consultation with MWC officials, made the decision at a recent meeting in Paraguay.

“A 25-member national coordinating council is in place and we expect to name a national coordinator shortly,” Brubacher reports. “The committee has representatives from indigenous peoples [three conferences], German-speaking people of immigrant background [three conferences] and Spanish-speaking nationals [two conferences].”

MWC holds a global gathering about every six years. Assembly 14 was held in August 2003 in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

“There is a striking difference between Zimbabwe, where one Brethren in Christ conference with 30,000 members hosted the assembly, and Paraguay, where the eight host conferences together have 22,500 members of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds,” notes Brubacher. “This diversity is exciting and challenging. All participants are eager to make this collaboration successful and inspiring for themselves and the broader Paraguayan society.”

—MWC release by **Ferne Burkhardt**

Several Mennonite Church members in Paraguay hold high governmental office, especially in health and economics. The first lady is a member of one of our churches. However, we have to be clear that this is an independent invitation from Paraguayan churches; it is not intended to be a political gathering.

The public and the government will be very supportive. Paraguay is very hospitable, very visitor-friendly. The Paraguayan people are warm and there will be large positive support from the public. I am sure about that.

—MWC release

Winnipeg

Transforming the secret stigma of AIDS

During Brian Dyck and Lynell Bergen's six years of ministry to the people of Mthatha, South Africa, the country was ransacked by a potent and silent killer—AIDS. In 2004, an estimated 70 percent of adult deaths in South Africa were a result of the virus or related health complications from it.

So why aren't the locals talking about it? According to Bergen, AIDS in South Africa is thriving on deception and shame. "They call AIDS the American invention to destroy sex—a lie [local people use] to justify promiscuity," she says.

Bergen and Dyck, Mennonite Church Canada Witness/Mennonite Mission Network workers from Arnaud Mennonite Church, Man., have seen the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS in South Africa firsthand. Saturdays in South Africa—formerly the only available weekday that the couple could teach and minister—are now reserved for funerals as victims of AIDS continue to mount.

A significant challenge in the AIDS battle is that those who are best able to join the fight against it are affected the most. With death rates highest among 15- to 49-year-old adults, the most productive members of society are sidelined. And children are at risk of contracting the disease from their infected parents, while many more suffer when their HIV-positive parents die.

New ways of thinking about AIDS education are needed in this setting, where so much time and resources are devoted to the crisis, they believe. For healing to begin, people with AIDS must be willing to talk about the disease. AIDS is propagated when infected persons disguise—or refuse to acknowledge—the symptoms. While the topic of sexuality is taboo within the church, open discussion is essential for AIDS prevention.

"You have to get people to think about their lives and their world in a different way, and that's what the church is about," states Dyck. "That is why I think the church is better placed

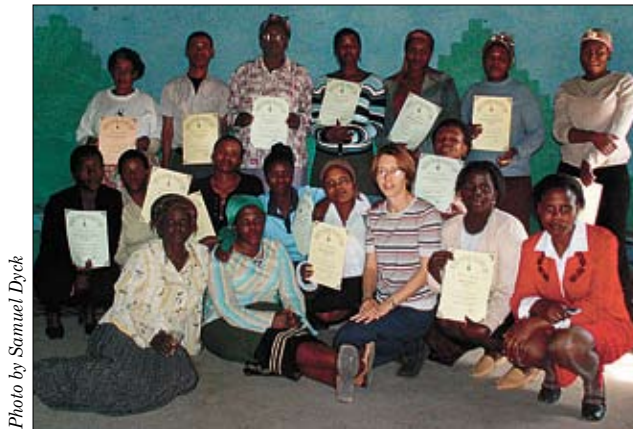


Photo by Samuel Dyck

Lynell Bergen, front row centre, poses with home-based AIDS care course graduates, who have been trained to help HIV-positive people overcome the secret stigma of the disease by encouraging them to talk openly and by offering guidance on how to treat symptoms and where to find additional help.

than anyone else to deal with this."

This rings especially true for the African Independent Churches (AIC), says Bergen, as they are deeply rooted in South African culture and place an emphasis on healing.

Bergen and Dyck work at dismantling the barriers in churches, as well as schools and communities. This is the biggest obstacle, say the couple, although money is often perceived as the biggest need in the fight against AIDS.

Before returning to Canada last fall, they sought to provide AIDS sufferers with hope and tools for dealing with the issues. There are ways to fight the virus, they say, but living in denial is not one of them.

"People know what they have to do, but they are not doing it," says Bergen, "and [they] are killing themselves in the process."

To those suffering with AIDS, Dyck advises, "You need to admit that you have this and you need to change the way you live."

Before leaving South Africa, the couple initiated local home-based care training sessions in collaboration with the AIC congregations, in order to teach people how to deal with AIDS and get them involved in a ministry of hope.

"When God calls you to something and you respond to that call, you become transformed," Bergen says. "Just like we have been transformed by being in Africa."

—MC Canada release by **Jeff Enns**

Chongqing, China

Bus ride leads to unexpected friendship

When travelling on a bus in rush hour, one does not expect to find the making of a friendship that touches and enriches lives. But this is exactly what Philip and Julie Bender, former co-pastors of Hamilton (Ont.) Mennonite Church, found during a bus ride last August in Chongqing.

The Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers were on their way to the Chongqing University of Medical Sciences, where they teach English, when they were surprised by a young Chinese woman beside them who rose



Photo courtesy of Philip and Julie Bender

and offered her seat to Julie. After several polite refusals, Julie accepted the offer on the kind insistence of the stranger. When the adjacent seat became available, the woman remained standing and insisted that Philip sit down.

The couple began chatting with this caring stranger. Through her broken English and their fractured Chinese, they learned that her name was Helen. As the Benders reached their stop, Helen remarked that perhaps they could all become friends. The couple gave Helen a contact card and requested she keep in touch.

A few weeks later they received an invitation to join Helen and her husband Huber for dinner. Though communication was a challenge, the two couples learned a great deal about each other. Helen and Huber talked about their work, and the Benders shared that they were English teachers in China with their church.

“So you are Christians,” Helen noted.

“Yes,” the Benders replied. “We are.”

During their conversation the Chinese couple revealed that they would soon be celebrating one year of marriage.

Soon after, an invitation to Helen and Huber’s wedding party arrived. On arriving at the hotel, they were greeted by Helen and Huber, fully gowned in red, and proceeded to the festive banquet room. Then came the surprise. The Benders learned that the event was not an anniversary celebration, but the actual wedding ceremony. Modern Chinese weddings



A chance meeting between strangers on a bus led to an invitation to a traditional Chinese wedding celebration for Philip and Julie Bender, MC Canada Witness workers in Chongqing, China.

often occur in two stages. First is the legal registration, which Helen and Huber acquired in 2004. The formal celebration comes later.

The ceremony was very traditional, and the Benders—the only Westerners in a room of 100 guests—were informed how lucky they were to see it.

“And that is how we felt,” says Philip. “Lucky and grateful, and amazed at how a chance meeting on a bus has led to friendship with Helen and Huber,” he says, adding, “Cross-cultural friendships can break down stereotypes and build trust between people divided by language and nation.

They can be the seed-bed for faith.”

It is a Chinese virtue to give up your seat on the bus to someone who is elderly or weak. Philip and Julie are neither of these, but Helen still insisted they take her place, proving virtue sometimes exceeds expectations.

“[Helen’s] kindness in giving up her seat is nudging us to be kinder to the strangers we meet,” says Philip. “And getting to know Helen and Huber makes us eager for other new friendships with our Chinese hosts that God’s Spirit might bring.”

—MC Canada release by **Jeff Enns**, from reports by **Philip Bender**

Pass Christian, Miss.

MDS purchases site for local headquarters

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) recently cut the ribbon on a new project site in Pass Christian, Miss. Pass Christian is one of the communities most devastated by Hurricane Katrina. The 30-foot storm surge killed 22 people, destroyed nearly all business property, and damaged or destroyed 90 percent of the town’s homes.

Because the storm damage was so extensive, there was little option for MDS other than to provide quarters for its workers and volunteers. MDS usually sets up camp on a churchyard or other temporarily available property, but in this case it has moved its trailers onto land that it has purchased. With this facility, MDS has girded itself for a solid three years of work in the Mississippi coastal area.

The site is a 0.6 hectare lot in a wooded area of the town, about a mile from the shoreline. MDS cleared the trees and milled them, using the lumber for fencing, a boardwalk and decking on the property. One double-wide trailer serving as kitchen, dining hall, office space and cook’s quarters, and two single-wide trailers serving as dormitories, were moved onto the property.

At the opening ceremonies, Jerry Klassen of B.C., who coordinates the MDS effort in the Gulf region, drew attention to the teamwork approach and wide network of support which the project represents. He called on local residents, government officials, volunteers and MDS staff to identify where they



MDS photo

Local residents, government officials, MDS volunteers and staff gather to celebrate the opening of the Pass Christian MDS project site in late April.

were from. Locations included British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Oregon, Washington, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Alabama and Mississippi.

For a distinctively MDS flavour, ribbon cutters used a series of alternative cutting devices—a chainsaw, reciprocating saw, circular saw, tin snips and even a butter knife—drawing a healthy chuckle from the 50 in attendance.

Over the past six months, MDS has worked cleaning up debris and fallen trees. Meanwhile, the community has rallied and, with the leadership of the Rotary Club, work has begun on four of the first five houses that MDS will rebuild.

Mike Barra, pastor of Good Shepherd Church, reflected, “This storm was humbling and overwhelming. Now, the response of so many churches and volunteers is humbling and overwhelming.”

MDS executive director Kevin King said, “We pray that the day comes soon when you as citizens of Pass Christian will be sending out teams to help others in need.”

—MDS release by **Bruce Hildebrand**

Winnipeg

Undocumented workers the focus of new MCC video

Angela and Geraldo are part of an invisible work force in Canada. Angela is a Caribbean domestic worker and Geraldo a Costa Rican construction worker. Both work in Canada as undocumented workers to provide a better life for their families living in their home countries.

Borderless, a newly released 22-minute video, highlights their dreams of being reunited with their families and their struggles to live in Canada without legal status. The video, produced by KAIROS with funding support from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada, was accepted for showing at the recent Winnipeg International Film Festival.

Angela and Geraldo are among thousands of migrant workers from developing countries vulnerable to labour exploitation in Canada, says Ed Wiebe, coordinator of the national refugee program for MCC Canada.

"It is precarious at home, but it is also very precarious here," he notes. "If they are sick, they can't go to a doctor or hospital, because they don't have a health card. If they are mistreated, they can't complain, because they do not have a work permit. If they are discovered, they are deported."

Undocumented workers are seen by many employers as a "cheap and compliant" labour force, Wiebe says. They often work for substandard wages and work long hours without adequate rest or overtime pay. In extreme cases, travel documents are withheld by employers.

An estimated 200,000 people work in Canada as undocumented workers. "Many people in Canada say that doesn't affect us," Wiebe says, adding he is hopeful the video will raise awareness that undocumented workers are contributing to the Canadian economy and that the basic human needs of all people, regardless of their legal status, need to be respected.

—MCC release by **Gladys Terichow**

Winnipeg

New tax rules increase benefit to charities

A recent Canadian federal budget decision is creating extra work for Al Rempel, Mennonite Church Canada's director of resource development. But it's work he's happy to do.

"It's hard to believe, but the latest federal budget is encouraging people's generosity at its own [the government's] expense," quips Rempel.

What the government hasn't done is widely publicize the change. The new budget decision allows for the donation of appreciated, publicly traded securities to registered charities, with no tax payable on the profit (also known as capital gains).

For example, securities originally purchased for \$200, that are later sold at market value for \$1,000, reaps the owner an \$800 profit—half of which is taxable at a marginal tax rate of 45 percent. The seller now owes the government \$180 in taxes, reducing the charitable gift to \$820.

Under the new rule, however, the owner can donate the securities directly

to the charity, foregoing the sale process and becoming exempt from the capital gains tax. The total value of the sale—\$1,000—goes to the charity.

What can an extra \$180 do?

"In Mennonite Church Canada's case, it's more than enough to support a Cuban or Chinese pastor for six months," says Rempel.

There are some conditions. The securities need to be:

- Publicly traded on a recognized stock exchange;
- Donated "in-kind" (not sold before the donation);
- Have appreciated in value; and,
- Donated to a registered charity.

"For persons wanting to make a donation to important ministry, donating securities may be the best route to take," says Rempel. "You are able to meet charitable goals, receive a charitable receipt which becomes a tax credit for your personal return, and pay no tax."

Rempel encourages donors considering a donation of securities to work through Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC).

"MFC is skilled and experienced at facilitating this kind of transaction," he says. "In addition, donors are able to split the funds generated from the transaction between a number of charities, such as church organizations and a favourite local charity in your community."

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

News briefs

Another record-setting meat canning season

The 2005-06 Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) meat canning season yielded a record 566,322 796-gram cans of meat. Between April 1, 2005, and March 31 of this year, MCC provided more than 450,000 kilograms of meat to people in 21 countries, including Canada and the United States. The largest amount—nearly 180,000 kilograms—was shipped to North Korea. —MCC release

Iran urged to stop enriching uranium

The executive committee of the World Council of Churches has called on Iran to implement a moratorium on its uranium enrichment program, recognize the State of Israel, and support international efforts to end

terrorism. Other countries should also contribute to global security, urged the executive of the world's largest grouping of denominations comprising 342 mainly Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant churches from more than 120 countries.

—ENI release

Malawi ministers to carry weapons

Malawi clerics have not been spared in an escalation of armed robberies and the situation is so severe the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian says it will allow some clerics to own at least one firearm for personal protection. Central Malawi Nkhoma Synod's Church and Society program director Allan Chipshiko, said, "There is nothing else we can do. This is just a matter of defence or self-protection. A pastor is also a person like anybody else; he feels pain."

—ENI release

Abbotsford, B.C.

Youths rally to serve on way to see new *Cars* flick

Koenraad Beugelink, youth leader at New Life Christian Reformed Church in Abbotsford, came up with a creative way to get his youth group to a movie theatre to see the new animated film, *Cars*—with a car rally! But not just an ordinary car rally; he turned it into a version of television's *Amazing Race*.

"Rather than just have a car rally, we thought we'd capitalize on the popularity of the TV show...and have the youths complete five tasks to get them to the theatre," Beugelink said. "We also thought we'd include tasks that were service-oriented, so that we're not just thinking about ourselves, but others as well."

Including a task at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) warehouse was a natural.

"We've had small groups and our youth group come to MCC before and they've had a good experience there," he said.

The race began with a search for a waterfall on Eagle Mountain, where the youths would receive the next clue—some Bible trivia, the answers to which they text messaged to Beugelink. If they got the answers right, they'd get the next clue, which would lead them to MCC.

At MCC, they had to cut up a certain number of jeans before they'd receive the next clue from Fred Kaarsemaker, the MCC warehouse manager. Cut jeans are sewn into long strips and woven into rugs, which are then sold at the warehouse and MCC Thrift Shops. Funds raised from the sale of these rugs supports the relief and development work of MCC worldwide.

Once the youths completed this service-oriented task, they headed off to the airport, where they received a Psalm that included a code. Decoding would lead them to their last and smelliest task: a trip to a farm where they retrieved a four-litre jug from a manure pit. The jug contained the last clue that would get them to the right theatre.

"We made sure to include hand sani-



MCC B.C. photo

The first girl's team arrived at the MCC warehouse as part of New Life Christian Reformed Church's *Amazing Race*-style car rally. Each team had to solve five clues and complete tasks in order to find out which theatre they would meet at to see the movie *Cars*. MCC was one of the stops along the way.

tizer at this station," Beugelink said, laughing.

In all, nearly 30 youths participated in the event and all made it to the movie theatre on time, even though one group needed a little help. —MCC B.C. release
by **Angelika Dawson**

Winnipeg

Now 24/7 online purchasing of resource materials

The Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre is expanding its services to congregations by adding an online purchase capacity for resources, and by offering resource centre staff to serve congregations in matters of faith and nurture.

The expansion is due in part to increased demand for materials—up 40 percent from 2004 to 2005—and a strong desire to better equip congregations and individuals for lives of faithful discipleship, according to

Dave Bergen, executive secretary of Christian Formation.

With the entire catalogue of titles now in an online database, the next step to offering online purchase of materials seemed natural, said Arlyn Friesen Epp, manager of the centre.

A partnership with denominational publisher Mennonite Publishing Network and Cascadia Publishing (formerly Pandora Press US) will enable online sales of a wide range of unique titles. Transactions will take place on a Canadian site, in Canadian dollars.

"One of the strengths of the resource centre is that you can find titles that you won't find at Amazon.ca or Chapters. We offer stuff that is uniquely grounded in Anabaptist and Mennonite theology, that is hard to find in the mainstream," said Friesen Epp.

In addition, Friesen Epp is taking the resource centre on the road, offering to visit churches for special events, workshops, retreats, seminars or preaching. Recent themes that have been brought to congregations include "Honouring Scripture in worship" and "Following Jesus: Stories of faith."
—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

FOCUS

Children's ... Books and Resources

Popsicle stick photo frame:

Items needed:

- 8 popsicle sticks
- Photo—about 7 cm x 8 cm (2.5"x3.5")
- Glue
- Paint
- Cardboard—8 cm x 9 cm
- Stickers (optional)
- Magnet (optional)

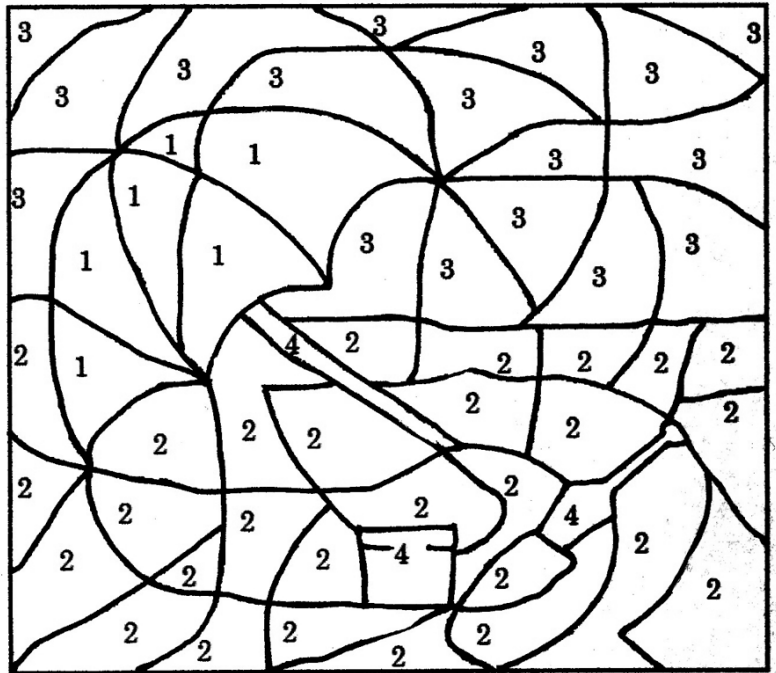
Lay the popsicle sticks over the picture (as shown) and mark the placement of the top and bottom sticks. Glue frame together; paint when dry. Glue the cardboard on the back to hold photo in place. Add magnet and stickers if desired.



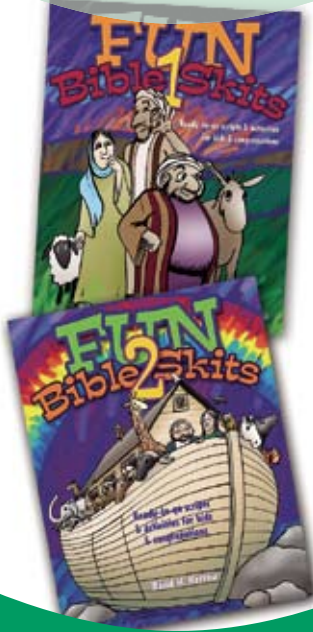
Mystery picture

Follow the colour code to discover a summery picture.

1. Red
2. Yellow
3. Blue
4. Green



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Kids resources at the MC Canada Resource Centre

The Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre in Winnipeg has a variety of resources that can be borrowed free of charge by MC Canada constituents. The following books are among the resources available:

10-Minute Life Lessons for Kids: 52 Fun and Simple Games and Activities to Teach your Children, by Jamie Miller.

Fun Bible Skits 1: Ready-to-go scripts and activities for kids and congregations, by David M. Morrow.

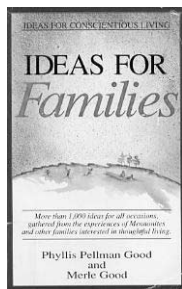
Gathered 'Round: Resources for Outdoor Ministry, by Kim McKellar.

Go With Peace: Enriching the Lives of Children through the Pursuit of Peace for All, by Kelly Guinan.



God's Great Outdoors: Faith Building Family Activities, by Wes Hamm.

Ideas for Families, by Phyllis Pellman Good.



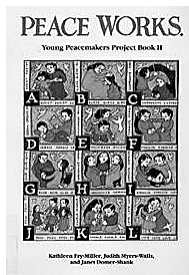
Just Family Nights: 60 Activities to Keep Your Family Together in a World Falling Apart, by Susan Vogt.

Keepers of the Earth: Native Stories and Environmental Activities for Children, by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac.

Nurturing Spirituality in Children: Simple Hands-On Activities, by Peggy J. Jenkins.

Peace Quest: Nurturing Peace within the Self, Relationships, Society and the Planet, by Kelly Guinan.

Peace Works: A Young Peacemakers Project Book II, by Kathleen Fry-Miller, Judith Myers-Walls and Janet Domer-Shenk.

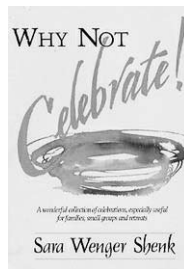


Raising Peaceful Children in a Violent World, by Nancy Lee Cecil.

Recipes for Art and Craft Materials, by Helen Roney Sattler.

Resolving Conflict: Activities for Children Ages 5-8, by Noreen Duffy Copeland and Faith Garfield.

Why Not Celebrate!, by Sara Wenger Shenk.



World Peas and Other Ways to Make a Difference, edited by Rebekah Chevalier.

To order, e-mail resources@mennonitechurch.ca, visit mennonitechurch.ca and follow the "Resources" link, or call toll-free 1-866-888-6785.
—Compiled by Arlyn Friesen Epp

Homemade Play-Dough

Mix in a bowl:

- 2 cups flour
- 2 tablespoons powdered alum.

Heat to boiling:

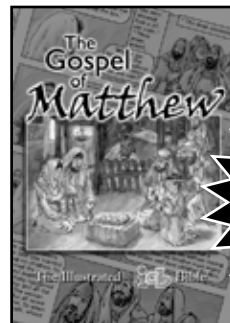
- 1.5 cups water
- 0.5 cup salt.

Add:

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- food colouring.

Pour hot water mixture into the flour and knead until smooth. If stored in a plastic bag or airtight container, it will keep for many days. (Look for powdered alum among the spices at your grocery store. The alum acts as a preservative; you can omit it, but the play dough won't keep as well.)

Kids Stuff!



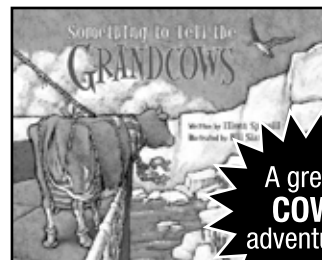
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Water Valley, Alta.

Pastors urged to ‘stand under’ Scripture

Jim Shantz, Mennonite Church Alberta conference pastor, will never read Genesis the same way again after participating in this year’s Theological Studies Week, May 29 to June 1, at Camp Valaqua. Guest speaker Dan Epp-Tiessen, assistant professor of Bible at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, presented lively in-depth sessions on the major stories in Genesis and how to interpret them, spicing them with illustrations from history, contemporary society, and anecdotes from his recent sojourn in the Middle East.

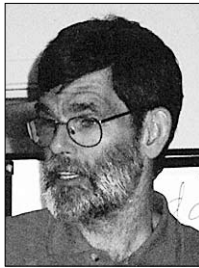
The 15 pastors and lay leaders who attended agreed it was an intellectually and spiritually renewing experience.

“We are hungry for that kind of feeding, we lap it up,” said Shantz. “It is such a feast—God’s Word, good food and God’s creation.”

Participants stressed the importance of setting time apart in their busy schedules for this kind of spiritual renewal, something that Epp-Tiessen reinforced.

“Because pastoral ministry is profoundly incarnation, and the Christian faith is profoundly incarnation,” he said, “spiritual renewal and nurturing your own walk with God is especially important for pastors.”

Besides spiritual renewal and hoping to spark some ideas and insights for preaching, Epp-Tiessen hoped the week would deepen the pastors’ knowledge and understanding of the Book of Genesis. He believes Christians do not study the Bible simply to understand information about the past, but to “stand under” the text by submitting themselves to it. In other words:



Epp-Tiessen

to fully understand the claims the biblical story makes, to be transformed, and to commit to the God who stands behind that story and to the community who worships that God.

This reverent approach to understanding the text by standing under it was reflected in Epp-Tiessen’s teaching style.

Bloomingtondale, Ont.

Congregation recreates 200-year-old house church worship service

When Mennonites Yoch and Maria Schneider came to Canada from Franklin County, Pa., in 1806, they settled near what is now Bloomingtondale, on the east side of the Grand River. Travelling with their eight children, nine horses, cattle and sheep, and several other families, the Schneiders hoped to find land enough to provide farms for their children and a government willing to respect their right to military exemption.

For the next 20 years, the Schneiders worked and prospered under the harsh conditions of frontier life, while proclaiming their faith in the steadfast love of God at weekly church services for family and friends in their home. They had two more children, and soon grandchildren began arriving. By 1826, the Schneider family had grown too large for house church to continue, and so a meeting-house was built on the site of today’s Bloomingtondale Mennonite Church large enough to seat 300 people.

Celebrating 200 years of worshipping and praising God in this place, the 2006 Bloomingtondale Mennonite congregation decided to have its own house church as a reminder of its heritage. Organized through cluster groups, the members met in individual homes on a windy, snowy February Sunday for worship and a simple

“As a teacher I am now passing on what I have received from others,” he said. “What the person says is important, but there’s so much more that comes through about who the person is. I am becoming more deliberate about sharing my faith and connecting people with God as I teach.”

—**Elizabeth Wall**

meal. Between 10 and 15 people met at each of five homes, making the modern house churches likely smaller than those that occurred at the Schneider home in the early years.

Worship was organized according to information on the early services, with hymn singing and a sermon from the time read by a local member. Others gave historical introductions. Unlike the original services, women were allowed to speak and even to wear slacks! Scripture was read first from the King James Version and then from the easier-to-understand NRSV. For prayers, kneeling was an old-fashioned and sometimes difficult thing to do, but all tried. Discussions followed the sermon, and all groups recognized a blessing in the sharing of thoughts in such a setting.

In keeping with an old custom, one group chose its sermon reader by drawing straws. This reader wore a jacket that had belonged to Pastor Stevanus, who served the Bloomingtondale congregation for nearly 40 years.

Tradition was followed in all the groups for the meal, with the women doing all the work. One group had a community soup; the hostess provided chicken and beef stock, and everyone else brought something to add to the pot. This time of fellowship was particularly rich and nourishing on various levels.

The men did not have to go out and check on the horses before lunch, and everyone recognized that modern horsepower is much more convenient on a snowy February day.

Bloomington Mennonite Church will be having its official bicentennial celebration on Thanksgiving weekend, Oct. 7 and 8. All are welcome to attend.
—Sally Warrington

Kitchener, Ont.

‘No longer strangers’

Were “no longer strangers” was the reason for celebration on April 30, as First Mennonite Church in Kitchener celebrated 20 years of Hispanic ministry and participation in its congregational life. Two decades have passed since Central American refugees first arrived, with recent new participants arriving primarily from Colombia. Alice Kehl recounted the history of those years.

The occasion brought together founding and more recent members, as well as three former pastors of the Hispanic community. Among them was Jack Suderman, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, who encouraged the congregation about the ways in which “strangers” have come nearer to one another at First. At the same time, he underlined the ongoing challenge of building strong relationships with the “stranger” near at hand.

The celebration was enriched by the visit and the music of Toronto Mennonite New Life Church (Comunidad Nueva Vida), with whom the Hispanic members at First have had a lengthy and much-appreciated relationship. Bryan Moyer Suderman contributed his musical gifts, as well as leading the children’s story. Current pastor Noé Gonzalía received their gift of a pitcher and basin as a blessing on the community’s service.

Members of First and New Life exchanged prayers and words of blessing and thanksgiving. Out of the common experience of war which so many Latin American members share,



Photo by Tom Yoder Neufeld

Silvia Garcia, Maciel Hernandez de Arias and Javier Oliva of Toronto Mennonite New Life Church present the Hispanic community at Kitchener (Ont.) First Mennonite a pitcher and basin, received by Hispanic pastor Noé Gonzalía, third from right. Also pictured, from left to right, are Irene and Jack Suderman, who were founding leaders of the Hispanic community at First Mennonite; Rebecca Yoder Neufeld; and New Life co-pastor Betty Kennedy de Puricelli.

one underlined a reason for celebration in the Mennonite peace tradition, that “every Christian baptized is one soldier less in the world.”

An anniversary cake, lively music, and a rich spread of tropical fruit concluded the time together.

One Salvadoran member who had been ill came to the celebration and suffered a fatal heart attack there. While this was a great shock and rea-

son for grief, his daughter spoke of the banquet to which God had invited him, which he attended at First and which now stretches way beyond the time of fellowship enjoyed that Sunday.

Members were encouraged to continue enjoying small “foretastes” of that time when all nations and languages will enjoy together the feast God has prepared.

—Rebecca Yoder Neufeld

Rosthern, Sask.

Rosthern Jr. College honours retiring principal

The latter part of May was spent by many in Saskatchewan and Alberta in honouring Erwin Tiessen, who is retiring after 33 years at Rosthern Junior College (RJC), the last 18 as principal.

On May 18, current and former students, parents and friends of the college gathered at Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, for an evening of coffee, desserts and tributes to Tiessen. Organized by RJC board member Bev Patkau and emceed by vice-principal Jim Epp, the evening was a time of celebration, laughter and thanks. Tributes were given by Arnold and Miriam Bezeau, parents of four RJC grads; board member Howard Enns; former students Jason Ritchie and Justin Enns; and former board chair

George Epp.

Just over a week later, 240 people came for a banquet and evening of entertainment and tributes at the college. Tributes were brought by Vern and Barb Harder, parents of four RJC grads; RJC board chair Karen Martens Zimmerly; Jim Brown of the Mennonite Foundation; and former students Jill Krikau, Brent Guenther, Dan Richert and Paul Comrie. Special tributes were made by Tiessen’s children Josh and Maida; Brad Nichol, speaking on behalf of the college staff;



Tiessen

Continued on page 28

Guelph, Ont.

MCC meat canners switch to turkey

The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario meat canning project, held at the University of Guelph in April, canned turkey instead of beef this year. Because local beef farmers are such strong supporters of this project, that was a difficult decision to make, but MCC specifically asked for poultry, as many countries are reluctant to import Canadian beef.

The canning committee thought it was all prepared for the switch to turkey, but on the Monday morning they ran into a snag—the university didn't have a permit to can poultry. It only took a few hours to negotiate the official paperwork, but the delay meant the day's canning wasn't finished until midnight and the clean-up crew worked until the wee hours of the morning.

Otherwise, the switch to canning turkey went smoothly. Once again, about 500 volunteers helped out. Turkey requires less cooking time before it is put into cans, but each full can needed to be weighed and cleaned before being put into the pressure canner. The turkey thighs came de-boned, but needed to be cut into chunks before going through the canning process.

Volunteers also prepared meals and snacks for those working in the canner. A few groups have developed a tradition of bringing the food and serving a meal each year. One of these is an Old Order Mennonite group from the Mount Forest area and another is a group of Sommerfelder Mennonites from the Aylmer area. The volunteers come from across the spectrum of the Mennonite family.

Although it appeared a year ago that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency might not allow MCC's mobile meat canner to operate beyond 2005, MCC was able to negotiate a special arrangement with the federal agency. This year,



Liz Weber cuts de-boned turkey thighs for the Guelph meat canning project.

40,000 pounds of turkey were processed into about 23,000 cans; a hundred cases of Guelph canned turkey have already been sent to Liberia.

Generous beef farmers are still very much part of the project. Funds were raised to pay for the turkey by selling donated steaks, roasts and hamburgers, as well as beef and turkey pepperettes.
—**Barb Draper**

Principal From page 27

and Menno Epp, who brought best wishes from Tiessen's church home in Leamington, Ont.

At both events, Tiessen spoke of the importance of Christian education and how fortunate he felt to have been called to this work. He expressed appreciation for the many colleagues with whom he worked, and especially for the students who gave him energy, purpose and hope for the future.

In appreciation for 18 years of leadership and service to RJC, Tiessen's current and former colleagues on staff and the board presented him with a travel voucher enabling him and his wife Ruth to fulfill a dream of traveling to Israel.

Both events were also fundraisers for the newly established Tiessen Family Bursary Fund, which will enable more students to attend RJC.

As part of Erwin Tiessen Week, the college held a series of events to pay

tribute to Tiessen. The triathlon, held on May 31, was a huge success, as students ran, skateboarded or roller-bladed 10 kilometres, swam 1 kilometre and biked 22 kilometres. Most

students participated in this event, many of them in costumes. Pledges collected for the triathlon went to the Tiessen Family Bursary Fund.
—RJC release



Photo by Jesse Enns

One of the many events celebrating the retirement of Rosthern Junior College principal Erwin Tiessen was a triathlon on May 31. Pictured, Megan Enns is pushing Lisa Isaak in a shopping cart while Darlene Bezeau runs alongside.

Drake, Sask.

North Star's light has shone for a century

On the wall of the North Star Mennonite Church sanctuary is a quilted wall hanging designed especially for the church's centennial celebration by Barb Gibney and Marlys Jantz. The stars and the tree symbolize the church's statement of purpose: "Like a tree planted by a life-giving stream, North Star Mennonite Church is rooted and growing in God's saving grace, ongoing healing and everlasting hope through Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves to living a Christ-centred faith that shapes who we are."

In the years when the church was first organized, the common mode of travel was by horse and wagon. In dark winter nights on unmarked trails, it was common for travellers to get their directions from the North Star. In seeking a name for the church, this thought was offered in the congregation's constitution, "If only the church could be a guide for man in his spiritual life as the North Star was for the traveller." Out of this was born the name North Star Mennonite Church."

Although the church was originally organized on Feb. 12, 1906, and the congregation held an "old-fashioned service" on Feb. 26 of this year, it seemed more appropriate to have a bigger celebration in April, so more people could attend. And guests came from all across Canada on April 22 and 23.

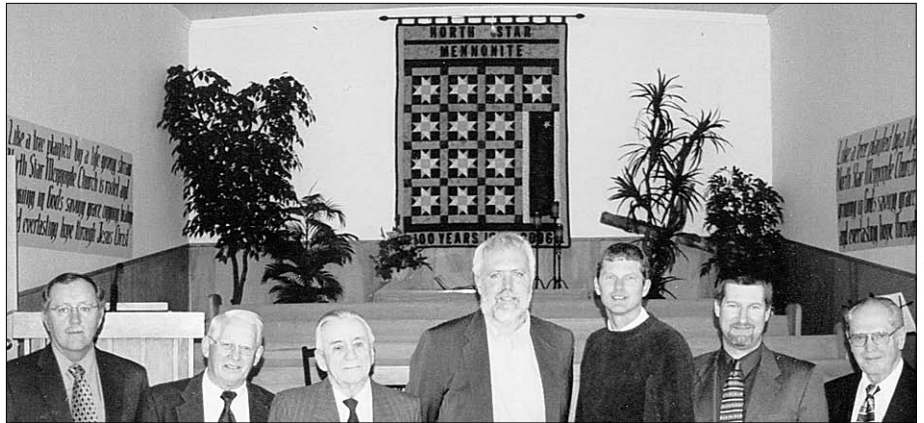


Photo by Yolanda Quiring

Attending the 100th anniversary celebrations at North Star Mennonite Church in Drake, Sask., on April 22 and 23, were former pastors, including associates and interim pastors, Herman Wiebe (1986 to 1998), left, John Bergen (1998 to 1999), Henry Funk (1971 to 1985), Harold Peters-Fransen (2005 to 2006), Ken Quiring (1998 to 2005), Vern Neufeld (2000 to 2003), and Bernie Retzlaff (1964 to 1967).

Saturday afternoon was a time for looking at displays at the community centre, meeting friends, sharing memories and a supper together, followed by a program, which included some sharing by all the former pastors present.

On Sunday morning, the worship service at the church featured an interview with 99-year-old Agnes Ewert. She told the children how it was long ago and challenged them to learn how to sing in harmony.

Perry Bartel and Jarrod Chamberlin, who grew up in North Star and are now serving as pastors in other

provinces, gave meditations on the foundation laid by the church and on its future.

More than 350 members and guests attended the service and shared in a fellowship lunch afterwards, nearly tripling the average Sunday attendance of 130.

Over the years, many members have gone forth to serve as pastors, missionaries, Mennonite Central Committee workers, camp helpers and in other volunteer capacities. Congregants past and present trust that their witness has contributed to the growth of God's kingdom, and that this local church has been a light to guide others to faith.

—Margaret Ewert



Photo by Jake Nickel

Six teens spent June 3 in orientation at Mennonite Church Saskatchewan offices in Saskatoon preparing for a summer of helping churches run Vacation Bible School programs. Pictured from left to right, front row: Michael Bueckert, Carisa Feick and Lenora Epp (team leader); and, back row: Ashley Wiebe, Joel Bueckert and Wendy Luitjens.

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Camp Valaqua photo

Camp Valaqua's first fundraising banquet and silent auction raised more than \$1,800 for the Mennonite Church Alberta camp on June 2, enough to pay off the remainder of the cost for the lodge roofing project, as well as pitch in for the future director's residence. Pictured from left to right are servers Sasha and Eli Schellenberg, CIT director Nicole Fehr, summer cook Joani Goerzen and office assistant Melissa Lesser. A hike-a-thon the next day along the Nahahi Ridge near Kananaskis netted more than \$6,300; hiker Ron Janzen of Pincher Creek, Alta., raised more than \$1,900 himself.

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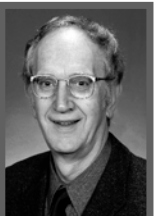
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Conestogo, Ont.

Silo singing a resounding experience

John A. Weber claims that “if you really want to blend your voices in song, do it in an empty silo!” Weber, along with Marcia B. Shantz, helped organize the fifth annual St. Jacobs Mennonite Church “silo sing.”

What is unique about the acoustics singing in a silo? “You have to experience it!” says Weber. “It really has an excellent sound, a blending of tone.”

He got the idea in 1999 when, as a retired farmer near Conestogo, Ont., he was recovering from knee replacement surgery. Some of their neighbouring Old Order Mennonite young people came to visit and sing for him. Then they spoke of going afterward to sing in an empty silo before the fall silo filling. Apparently, they do this each fall before corn harvest.

This started the wheels turning for Weber, who has been a singer all his life. He asked permission of their neighbours, Dave and Sue Eby, to use their empty silo.

Regarding the first silo singing five years ago, Shantz wrote in their church newsletter: “At the end of it all, what felt like half-an-hour was really an hour-and-a-half! A Sunday afternoon in October and an autumn breeze encircles a farmyard outside of Conestogo. Thirty people of all shapes and sizes, and even a few with prosthetic replacements, wedged their way through a small ground level opening into an empty concrete silo. Any a pensive mood soon dissipated as our voices joined in harmony in this acoustical wonderment for our first silo singing.”

While some people sit outside the silo on lawn chairs beneath umbrellas, other congregational folk from the St. Jacobs church shimmy their way into the silo, no small feat as the hole at the bottom is elevated. Weber arrives on his John Deere tractor, unloading a foam mattress covered with heavy plastic, which makes up the entrance “silo slide” to cushion their comings and goings. A bale of hay acts as the landing step inside.

One year, the Old Order Mennonite neighbour girls confessed after the event that they had hidden in the corn



The fifth annual St. Jacobs Mennonite Church silo sing took place in May on the farm of Dave and Sue Eby just outside of Conestogo, Ont.

growing around the silo to listen to the concert.

This year, it was decided to hold the event on May 28, to benefit from the warm spring weather.

As the wife of new pastor Mark Diller Harder, it was Rachel Diller Harder's first silo singing. “When in our music God is glorified—that is the music of our Christian faith that we sing about, our hopes, our joys and ardent laments, and the beauty of God's creation in the texts seem to come alive on such an afternoon.”

People simply shout out their requests, while song leader Laverne

Brubacher operates his pitch pipe and informally leads the group.

“Each year when the singing begins, the first few notes give you a chicken skin,” Sharon Bauman, a regular silo singer, says. “It is truly a musically exhilarating acoustical sound. A certain song might stir up a memory and people interject and say, ‘This reminds me of...’ There is laughter and there are tears on an afternoon such as this.”

The annual event concludes with a wiener roast back at the Weber farm, around the bend from the “silo singing.”
—Maurice Martin

Winnipeg

Graduates told to find joy in serving others

Approach your work with joy! That's what Louise Simbandumwe told graduates of the Menno Simons College (MSC) international development and peace and conflict resolution studies programs at their June 3 graduation celebration in Winnipeg.

Simbandumwe, a Winnipeg anti-poverty and human rights activist who spent the past year as a visiting lecturer at Menno Simons, told graduates that, for too long,

she responded to the world's needs out of “a sense of guilt. But in recent years I have come to see that guilt has not been healthy for me or the people around me.”

Instead, she said that the 54 graduates should approach the task of meeting the world's needs “with sensitivity to the pain and disappointment that we inevitably encounter,” yet to also be open to “experiencing joy, humour and delight that is also inherent in this work.”

Simbandumwe, who was born in Burundi and experienced life as a refugee before coming to Canada, went on to praise the graduates for “selecting such challenging areas of study. Instead of turning away from difficult issues that have devastated the lives of so many on this planet, you have sought to better understand the

People&Events

India—Samuel Stephen, a prominent leader of the General Conference Mennonite Church in India, died on April 30. In his last few hours, Stephen sang of a land called heaven and died with a distinct radiance of victory about him. During his lifetime, he was the long-time principal of the Mission's High School at Jagdeeshpur. After finishing high school at the Mennonite High School in Dhamtari, Stephen began serving in Mauhadih as a teacher in the Mission Middle School. In May 1945, the headmaster of the new school at Jagdeeshpur died suddenly and Stephen was chosen to succeed him. He served there until 1956, when he and his wife were sent to the United States for further study. In the meantime, the school was made a "higher secondary school," with Stephen chosen to be the new principal. On Oct. 31, 1966, the church conference ordained Stephen as an evangelist. During his lifetime, he was elected to various church conference committees, and also served as conference chair. In 1979, Stephen retired as principal. For three years afterwards, he was made manager of the Mission Schools in Champa, Janjgir and Korba.
—Compiled by **L. W. Jantzen**

Goshen, Ind.—Not one to exaggerate numbers, Goshen College economics professor Del Good says he has served the campus for 38.5 years. His colleagues keep saying he has worked at the college for 40. Technically, he is correct, with his meticulous eye for details and numbers, which one would expect from a "Good" economist. Although he is officially retiring at the end of the 2005-06 academic year, Good will actually continue to serve the business department half-time with some teaching and administrative responsibilities. Good started teaching at his alma mater during the second semester of the 1966-67 school year. He completed his doctoral dissertation in economics at the University of Illinois in 1970. Since 1988, he has held the college's Carl Kreider Chair of Economics.
—Goshen College release

Akron, Pa.—Paul Myers retired as chief executive officer (CEO) of Ten Thousand Villages, the oldest and largest fair trade retail organization in the United States, on June 1. Myers, who has extensive experience within the fair trade movement, served as Ten Thousand Villages executive director from 1989 through 2003; he was appointed CEO in September 2003. Under his leadership,

sales increased nearly 450 percent, from \$4.7 million in 1989 to more than \$20 million in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006. Prior to working with Ten Thousand Villages, Myers served with Mennonite Central Committee for 23 years in various positions at the bi-national headquarters in Akron, Pa., and as country director in Bangladesh.
—Ten Thousand Villages release

Toronto—Rev. James T. Christie has been elected president of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) for the 2006-09 triennium. Christie, currently the dean of the faculty of theology of the University of Winnipeg and dean of the university's Global College, is a United Church of Canada minister with a doctorate in inter-faith dialogue, and extensive and long-standing experience in ecumenism. He just completed a three-year term as a vice-president of CCC. Elected as vice-presidents of CCC were: Rev. Paul Johnson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada; Rev. Marion Pardy, past moderator of the United Church of Canada; and Rev. Pierre Voyer, an Anglican parish priest in Quebec City. Mennonite Church Canada has been a CCC member since 2004.
—CCC release

Winnipeg—Ed Neufeld has accepted the position of principal at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, beginning in August. Neufeld is an enthusiastic leader who has a passion for nurturing learning within a community environment. He is an alumnus of Canadian Mennonite Bible College and the universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba, and was most recently employed as vice-principal of Steinbach Regional Secondary School. Neufeld, his wife Jacquie, and their children Sam, Miriam, and Anne live in Steinbach and are members of Steinbach Mennonite Church.
—Westgate release



Neufeld

Waterloo, Ont.—Derek Suderman has been hired by Conrad Grebel University College to teach religious studies, specializing in the Old Testament, making him the only Old Testament professor currently at the University of Waterloo. No stranger to Grebel, Suderman studied there as an undergraduate (B.A. in history, 1996, with a peace and conflict studies option), as a master of theological studies student (2000), and as a

Continued on page 34

complex dynamics of poverty, insecurity and conflict," she told the grads. "Your passionate commitment to making a positive difference in our world has been inspiring and energizing."

Simbandumwe's address was preceded by sharing by Leah Bock, who graduated with a B.A. in international development studies. Bock said she was leaving Menno Simons with a "deeper understanding of the world and how it works," and that she was glad to have studied at a school that "prepares students to bring change to the world."

"These graduates are our success stories," said Dean Peachey, college vice-president and academic dean. "They will make a difference in the world," he predicted.
—Menno Simons release



Lea Bock heads a line of graduates at the June 3 Menno Simons College graduation celebration in Winnipeg.

Suderman *From page 33*

doctoral student at the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre. "We are delighted to welcome Derek to our faculty," says Jim Pankratz, Grebel's academic dean. "His enthusiasm for teaching the Old Testament and his wide experience in the university, the global church and the justice and peace-making systems of our world, make him an excellent addition to our academic program and the Grebel community." Suderman plans to graduate from St. Michael's University College at the University of Toronto this fall with a Ph.D. in Old Testament. Suderman has been published in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, *Canadian Mennonite* and the Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. Beyond his scholarly achievements, Suderman has been a mediation trainer for JustaPaz in Bogota, Colombia, a community service worker for the John Howard Society in Manitoba, a youth conflict resolution trainer in Waterloo, a peace evangelist for the Mennonite Church, and he currently serves on the editorial council of the Believer's Church Bible Commentary Series.

**Suderman**

—Conrad Grebel release

Transitions**Births/Adoptions**

Bergen—to Stephanie and Adam, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, a son, Maxwell Christopher, May 27.

Bruneau—to Cynthia and Vernon, Pleasant Point Mennonite, Clavet, Sask., a daughter, Reese Kathrina, May 29.

Day—to Peggy Zehr and Clark, Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Tessa Ann, April 4.

Klassen—to Brenda and Bert, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, a son, Thomas Franklin, Jan. 17.

Thiessen—to Sharon and Peter, Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont., twins (boy and girl), Sasha Loewen and Anara Loewen, May 6.

Vincent—to Brandi and Rudi, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., a son, James Edward Frederick, April 3.

Wall—to Tammy and Warren, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Cale Jacob, May 16.

Wiebe—to Anita Krause and Tom, Valleyview Mennonite, London, Ont., a son, Leo Thomas, April 9.

Wiebe—to Leanne and Ryan, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Ryan Nicolas, March 30.

Marriages

Brubacher-Gottwald—Jeremy and Wendy, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., May 6.

Derksen-Kehler—Dan and Tracy, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., April 29.

Hines-Nighswander—Jonathan and Kristen, Hawkesville Mennonite, Ont., May 20.

Janzen-Paetkau—Richard and Shari, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., May 13.

Kroeker-Block—Peter and Alvina, Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 3.

MacLaurin-Klassen—Ian and Rebecca, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, June 3.

Schlegel-Greenall—Tobin (East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.) and Erin, at Vineland, Ont., June 2.

Siemens-Rempel—Bob and Jessica, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., April 8.

Smith-Friesen—Dexter and Marianne, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., at CMU, Winnipeg, May 21.

Deaths

Burkhardt—Erlene (Cressman), 87, Erb Street Mennonite,

Waterloo, Ont., May 2.

Froese—Abram (Abe) J., 81 (b. April 19, 1924), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, April 18.

Harder—Henry, 91, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, April 14.

Heide—Jacob J., 87 (b. Oct. 31, 1918), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, March 22.

Hildebrand—Elizabeth, 91, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 12.

Martens—Cathleen Marie of Winnipeg, 28 (b. Nov. 24, 1977), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 22.

Martin—Elton, 90, Hawkesville Mennonite, Ont., May 23.

Rempel—Arthur, 81 (b. Jan. 15, 1925), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, Feb. 16.

Snider—Mabel, 95, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., May 22.

Suderman—David Edward, 75 (b. Nov. 19, 1930), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 2.

Suderman—Kay, 79 (b. Oct. 24, 1926), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, Jan. 11.

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

Baptisms**Altona Bergthaler**

Mennonite, Man.—Andrea Friesen, Mark Friesen, Stephanie Friesen, May 28.

Coaldale Mennonite, Alta.—Mark Willms, Aaron Janzen, June 4.

Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg—Leah Regehr, Nikita Klassen, Daniel Epp, June 4.

Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.—Aurelia Rusu, June 4.

Hope Mennonite, North Battleford, Sask.—Russell Bligh, June 4.

Laird Mennonite, Sask.—Lynsey Dawn Epp, June 4.

Low Farm Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.—Tina Giesbrecht, Nettie Giesbrecht, Terry Ginter, Heather Friesen, Geraldine Brown, Jeryn Peters, Jesse Sawatzky, Vicky Blatz, Dulanney Blatz, June 4.

Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon—Alina Balzer-

Peters, June 4.

Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.—Jason Braun, Kristin Braun, Derek Braun, June 4.

Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.—Trevor Janz, Stephanie Janz, Alana Paetkau, Chris Janz, June 4.

Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.—Dustin Dyck, Wendy Luitjens, June 11.

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.

News brief**Spain hosts European Mennonite conference**

On Ascension weekend, May 26 to 28, more than 400 Mennonites from 11 European countries and other continents met at the Mennonite European Regional Conference (MERK), which took place in Spain for the first time. MERK 2006 included 30 workshops on themes such as the renewal of the church community and land mine clearance. The main focus followed the common theme: "Freedom is/means difference—means grace—means commitment." In his sermon on the conference theme, Antonio Gonzales emphasized that the message of the Anabaptists is more relevant than ever in today's Spain. On the last evening, the first European Mennonite Festival reflected the joyful and festive lifestyle in Spain. MERK first met in 1975 in Switzerland. MERK's purpose is to create links between European Mennonites by strengthening their Christian faith and by seeking answers as Anabaptist communities to questions of concern today. The next MERK will take place in 2012 in Switzerland. —MWC release by **Markus Rediger**

Mennonite Church Canada

Prayer and praise

- Pray for the participants, workshops and leaders of the Mennonite Church Canada annual assembly in Edmonton, July 4 to 7, as all work to discern together how best to align with God's work in the world.
- Pray for a peaceful resolution to the conflict between the Six Nations community and their neighbours in Caledonia, Ont. Outstanding land issues have been ignored for many years, causing division and polarization among the people. Pray for God's intervention in this conflict, so that hatred and anger are transformed into energy for peaceful and constructive solutions.
- Pray for Witness Workers Rod and Kathi Suderman, who minister in China, and Tim and Cindy Buhler, who minister in Macau, as they arrive back in Canada at the beginning of July. Pray for them as they visit various locations in Canada and the U.S., for the time with people in their home context, and for their sharing and learning during their North American ministry.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Students praise conference support

Ministry has been a picnic for Charlene Jongejan Harder and her husband Kendal so far! At the time of this interview, they had just walked in their door on return from the annual picnic at Harrow Mennonite Church, where they are serving as a pastoral team this summer while pastor Greg Jantzi is on sabbatical.

They, of course, know that ministry will entail much more than church picnics, but so far in the three weeks at the Harrow church there have

been no surprises as yet. They value this practical ministry experience between seminary years.

Charlene explained her enthusiasm for seminary studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). "It is a place you take into account your whole person, not that you will come away from the place knowing everything you need to know for ministry, but you are enabled as a person to lead in the church," she said.

The couple has completed one year at AMBS and may finish next year, then look for a congregational ministry assignment in the fall, hopefully as a pastoral team.

In life prior to seminary, Charlene worked at the Yonge Street Mission in Toronto in a women and children's program, while Kendall taught English as a second language at the Toronto New Life Centre.

They are grateful for grants received from Mennonite Church Eastern Canada in support of their seminary studies. "This buoys us up a lot, to know that we have the support of the larger church in our studies and call to ministry," Charlene said.

MC Eastern Canada's Financial Aid Committee is providing \$32,000 in grant money to students continuing seminary education in 2006-07. Besides the Harders, aid is also going to Alissa Bender and Craig Neufeld (AMBS), Penny Driediger (Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.), and Anne Campion (Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.).

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Equipping 2006 set for Sept. 30

This year's Equipping the Congregation conference takes

on a new look, but is still clearly aimed at building up the local church.

Instead of a multi-workshop format, there will be two plenary sessions. The sessions will include opportunities for small group discussion and congregational stories.

Equipping 2006 will be about renewing passion for the gospel of Jesus Christ, transmitting it from one generation to the next and from church to the world, and opportunities and threats in this enterprise.

Arlyn Friesen Epp, manager of Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre, and Elsie Rempel, director of Christian education and nurture for Mennonite Church Canada, will be the speakers.

"Equipping 2006: Roots and fruits of passionate faith" will take place at Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg on Sept. 30.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Churches embrace Gather 'Round

MC Saskatchewan churches will be adopting a new Sunday School Curriculum this fall. To promote the new material, entitled Gather 'Round, the Education Commission hired Donna Schulz, a member of Eigenheim Mennonite Church, to travel to Pittsburgh, Pa., for training and then meet with MC Saskatchewan churches to discuss it. Between February and May, Schulz put on over 3,000 kilometres on her vehicle, visiting most of the conference churches.

While warmly received, Schulz noticed a number of recurring themes in the concerns that people raised, which were then reported back to the commission.

"Many of our churches share common issues of sporadic attendance in Sunday school, as well as a shortage of children,"

said Joanne Epp, commission chair, in a recent Education Commission report submitted to General Council.

Added to that, the commission was concerned that congregations might be deterred from ordering the new curriculum because of an increase in cost.

Their fears proved unfounded, however.

"We are happy to report that most MC Saskatchewan churches have embraced the new curriculum," noted Epp.

Schulz has also agreed to lead several Sunday school teacher training sessions for different churches starting in August.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Delegates affirm identity statement

Mennonite Church British Columbia delegates discussed and tweaked the MC B.C. identity and vision statement on June 3, before eventually affirming it by a vote of 106-4. The meeting took place at Bethel Mennonite Church of Langley, with delegates meeting around tables to allow for greater discussion, and mixing to ensure broad representation at each table.

A six-member steering committee had been working on the statement since the annual delegate sessions in February. In preparation for this meeting, the committee had asked MC B.C. congregations to respond to the proposed Vision and Identity Statement, as well as to give ideas for the implementation of this vision into the life of the conference.

The first half of the morning concentrated on presentation of the motion to accept the statement, with the second half devoted to discussion of the mission of MC B.C. Each table was assigned a different

Continued on page 36

TheChurches From page 35

portion of the mission to discuss, with group findings then presented to the whole group.

The statement can be found online at mcbc.ca.

Bible camp to mark 50 years

Ootsa Lake Bible Camp will have a celebration weekend for its first 50 years, Aug. 25 to 27.

Located on the northern shore of Ootsa Lake near the town of Burns Lake, the camp was purchased in the summer of 1956 by West Abbotsford Mennonite Church for the sum of \$1.

During the first years, West Abbotsford organized the camp and provided staff. Once each spring, the church organized

a work week to prepare the camp for summer. Over time, the northern churches were able to organize and prepare the workers for the summer.

Eventually, West Abbotsford sold the camp to the northern churches for \$1, although many West Abbotsford young people have continued to work there as counsellors.

To participate in the celebratory weekend at Ootsa Lake, call 250-698-7356 or e-mail littlec@telus.net.

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.

Mennonite Church Alberta



Photo by Doreen Neufeld

Tim and Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, centre, are pictured at their recent ordination service at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, surrounded by representatives of the congregation during a prayer of blessing.

ROBERT (JACK) SUDERMAN



From our leaders

I am visiting congregations. I am listening. I am reflecting on what I hear. I am wondering. I have visited 170 congregations so far. This is a very invigorating and energizing process. I am learning huge amounts from the folks who are taking the time to engage this opportunity. I am grateful.

I am hearing and experiencing a very wide range of opinions, preferences, theologies, languages and ministries. This experience has made me think a lot about questions of unity and diversity in the body of Christ. We are indeed diverse. Some in our church wonder whether women should be allowed to cut their hair, while others wonder whether belonging to our church can come before believing what we believe. We worship in 13 different languages on Sunday mornings.

Living with diversity is an everyday experience in our church. We are doing this rather well. These visits have shown me that, in spite of the diversity among us, we are confident there is enough common ground that unites us. This means that, while diversity is an important reality in our church, it is not the primary virtue. What makes folks nervous is when they begin to suspect there is nothing at the centre that unites the diversity among us. That suspicion generates “dis-ease.”

Our efforts in the recent past to “learn to live with diversity” and to “agree and disagree in love” make sense only if there is an identifiable core that unifies

Unity, diversity and the life of the body

There are high levels of patience with each other when folks sense a common platform.

us. Diversity, like change, is not a stand-alone virtue. It becomes a virtue only if “where we’re going is better than where we’ve been” (a quote from one participant in a recent meeting). Diversity becomes a virtue when it effectively promotes and edifies that which unites us.

There are high levels of patience with each other when folks sense a common platform. There is very little patience when this is deemed to be missing. It is again time to concentrate on common ground, so that we don’t need to fear that the diversity among us is eroding the common ground that unites us. It is not, but to some it feels that way.

I would call on everyone in our church, on our related ministries, and on all those who wish to participate in important discerning processes in the church, to lend each other a hand by assuring that our diverse passions and “pronouncements” are predicated on ground that is common among us. I believe that if we can do this, then we can continue to be the church.

The list in Ephesians 4 can serve as an excellent starting point: There is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God. The purpose of the diversity of gifts of the Spirit is to arrive at a “unity of faith” that is expressed in multiple ways.

Robert (Jack) Suderman is general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada. He will reflect further on the God’s People Now! Listening Tour in a series of articles coming this fall.

Calendar

British Columbia

July 10-21: Summer Drama Blast—an explosion of theatre and fun for children and youths aged six to 18, at MEI Middle School, Clearbrook. To register online, visit gallery7theatre.com.
Aug. 19: Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, pig roast fundraiser for MWC and church gym retirement fund.
Aug. 20-27: Ootsa Lake Bible Camp 50th anniversary celebration.
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.
Oct. 20-22: B.C. Women in Mission retreat at Camp Squeah.
Oct. 26: Retired pastors retreat in the CBC boardroom; 10 a.m.
Nov. 4: MC B.C. special delegates sessions. Location TBA.
Nov. 17-19: Senior youth Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

Advertising Dates

Issue:	Copy due:
July 31	July 18
<i>(Three-week cycle)</i>	
August 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:

Barb Burkholder,
Advertising
Representative
1-800 316-4052
advert@canadianmennonite.org

Nov. 18: MCC B.C. annual general meeting. Location TBA.

Alberta

Sept. 17: Trinity Mennonite new building dedication celebration, 10:30 a.m. Call 403-256-7157 for directions.
Sept. 18: MCC Alberta golf tournament at Fantasy North Golf Course, Fort Vermillion; 9 a.m. tee off.

Saskatchewan

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

Manitoba

July 19: MCC Manitoba golf tournament at The Links at Quarry Oaks, Steinbach; 12:30 p.m. tee off.
Aug. 10: MCC alumni barbecue at CMU.
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. 15-16: Brandon MCC Relief Sale.
Sept. 17: Westgate alumni and friends golf tournament at Bridges Golf Course, Starbuck.
Sept. 29-30: “The Good Life on God’s Good Earth: A Creation Care Conference,” sponsored by CMU, Providence College and A Rocha, at CMU. Visit cmu.ca for more information.
Sept. 30: Equipping the Congregation conference at Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship, Winnipeg. Theme: “Roots and fruits of passionate faith.” Speakers: Elsie Rempel and Arlyn Friesen Epp.

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. 17-18: J.J. Thiessen Lectures at CMU, with Joel J. Shuman, King’s College, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

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. 15-16: John and Margaret Friesen Lectures at CMU. Topic: “Mennonites and architecture.” Speakers: Rudy Friesen, Harold Funk and Roland Sawatzky.

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.”

March 4-7: “Sharing the Faith in a Pluralistic and Post-Christian Society” conference at CMU. Speaker: Joe Boot of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries Canada.

Ontario

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

July 16: UMEI pancake breakfast.

July 29: UMEI Watermelon Open golf tournament at Erie Shore Golf Course.

Aug. 4-6: Nidus 2006 Festival in Kitchener-Waterloo.

Sponsored by the Canadian Council of Churches, the festival brings together all streams of the Christian church in a united effort against AIDS. For more information, visit nidus2006.ca.

Aug. 17: UMEI peach social.

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.

Oct. 7-8: Bloomingdale Mennonite Church bicentennial celebration weekend.

U.S.A.

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

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

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How to subscribe:

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

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

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 Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 6H7
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Our church has a present membership of 100, and is located in Medicine Hat, Alta., with a population of about 60,000 people. For more information or to submit a resume, contact:

Douwe Smid, Chair, Pastoral Search Committee
 297 - 6 Ave., N.W.
 Medicine Hat, AB T1A 6T7
Email: desmid@shaw.ca; Phone: 403-528-9554

Shekinah Retreat Centre is accepting applications for the following position:

YEAR-ROUND PROGRAM DIRECTOR (Full-time)

starting as early as Aug. 21, 2006. Qualifications should include training/experience in working with children and school programming. Sensitivity to camping and retreating, summer camp marketing and promotion, and customer database; possess the ability to work well alongside other people; solid communication skills to ensure clear communication within the staff team, both year-round and summer; have an understanding of Shekinah's philosophy, aims and objectives.

Interested parties can contact Shekinah's main office at **306-945-4929** for a complete job description. Applications will be accepted until the position has been filled and should be addressed to:

Lill Friesen
c/o Shekinah Retreat Centre
Box 490, Waldheim, SK S0K 4R0

Woodland Christian High School is inviting applications for the position of

TEACHING PRINCIPAL

effective Aug. 1, 2007.

Woodland Christian High School is an interdenominational community of 200 students and 16 teachers, located in newly upgraded facilities in a beautiful rural setting just east of Kitchener, Ont., Canada. It is currently in its 30th year of operation. The principal is part of a dynamic administrative team within a very supportive and growing school community.

If you would like to learn more about Woodland Christian High School, you are invited to visit the website at:

www.woodland.on.ca

Applications and inquiries may be directed to:

Search Committee, Woodland Christian High School
 1058 Spitzig Road, Breslau, ON N0B 1M0
search@woodland.on.ca

Applications will be received until Sept. 30, 2006.

Our Mission: Equipping students for lives of Christian service.

Employment opportunities

First Mennonite Church Greendale invites applications for a full-time

YOUTH PASTOR

with some additional congregational responsibilities. Our church is located in rural Chilliwack with an average attendance of 145. Starting date is Sept. 1, 2006, or negotiable. Inquire or send resumes to:

Vic Ewert, Chair of Search Committee
 42369 South Sumas Road, Chilliwack, BC V2R 4W3
 Phone: 604-823-6931; Fax: 604-823-4486
 E-mail: fmcgreendale@shaw.ca

Could we be looking for you?

The Steinbach Evangelical Mennonite Church on Main St. in Steinbach, Man., is seeking a

LEAD PASTOR

Are you an energetic person and have a passion for the waking church? A person that easily relates to a multi-generational church family? Do you have a strong commitment to an Evangelical Anabaptist understanding and strong teaching, preaching and organizational skills? If you answer "YES" to these questions, we invite you to pray and consider this opportunity. Contact:

Henry Klassen
63 Donald Ave., Steinbach, MB R5G 2B5
Phone: 204-326-6068; E-mail: henryk2@mts.net



Mennonite Collegiate Institute invites interested persons to apply for the position of

Residence Life Coordinator (male)

MCI's residence team is staffed by 3 men and 3 women with key roles to play in the supervision, discipleship and mentorship of high school youth living on campus. Emphases on community, personal growth, Christian character and self-discipline are part of every day in the residence. If you would like to join a dynamic youthful team of Christian people and are gifted for youth ministry consider this opportunity. Priority will be given to applicants with post-secondary biblical study experience.

Send or email resume to:

Darryl Loewen
Mennonite Collegiate Institute
Box 250 Gretna, MB R0G 0V0
Email: principal@mciblues.net

For rent

Would you like to adopt a horse? Camp Assiniboia (Headingley) is offering its horses to caring homes for September to April each year, beginning this fall. These are well mannered horses, suitable for children and youths. Tack included. For more information or networking, contact Bob Wiebe, 204-885-2565 ext 254 or bwiebe@mennochurch.

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

Wanted: A Christian female to share a 2-bdrm, 2-bath South of the Border condo, at 3275 Pembina Hwy., Winnipeg. Central air, cable, parking and utilities included. Ensuite laundry. Available from July on for one-year lease. Please call 204-873-2529.

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND DEVELOPMENT

for Mennonite Publishing Network
the publishing ministry of Mennonite Church Canada
and Mennonite Church USA.

A full-time position to begin Sept. 1 or sooner based in Waterloo, Ont., or one of the other two operational centres (Scottsdale, PA or Newton, KS).

Responsibilities: three-quarter-time providing leadership in marketing and customer service, developing strategies and managing implementation for different market segments; one-quarter-time creating and implementing overall development strategy together with executive director.

Qualifications: training and experience in marketing and customer service management; previous experience in development desirable; excellent interpersonal and writing skills; ability to work as a team member; commitment to mission of Mennonite Publishing Network; member of a congregation in Mennonite Church Canada or Mennonite Church USA.

Contact:

Ron Rempel, Executive Director
Mennonite Publishing Network
E-mail: rrempe@mph.org; Phone: 519-496-9487

**Stewardship Consultant**

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

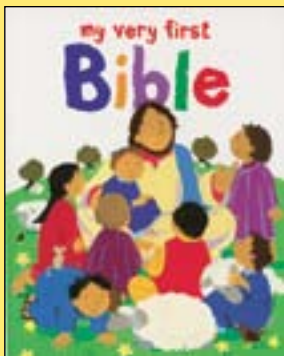
The successful candidate will:

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

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

Submit applications by July 28, 2006 to:
Erwin Warkentin, General Manager
12-1325 Markham Rd, Winnipeg, MB R3T 4J6
1-800-772-3257 fax: 204-488-1986
e-mail: ewarkentin@mennofoundation.ca
www.mennofoundation.ca

Inspirational Books for Children

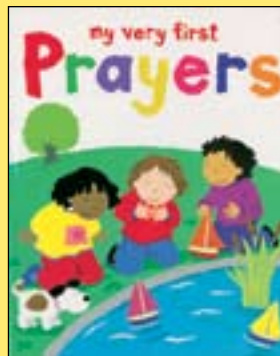


My Very First Bible

words by Lois Rock; pictures by Alex Ayliffe

Toddlers everywhere will be drawn to this colorful and friendly Bible. God's wondrous acts as told here will touch the tiniest of hearts. And the brilliant illustrations are irresistible.

256 p. \$26.95 (Can.) \$18.99 (U.S.), hardcover

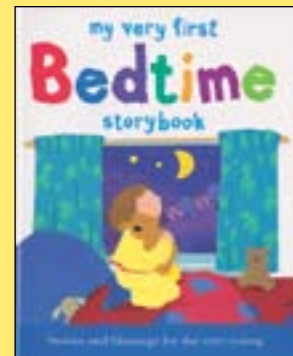


My Very First Prayers

words by Lois Rock; pictures by Alex Ayliffe

This book of prayers puts the holy and the earthly within reach of each other—with exuberance. The prayers are short in length, but not in feeling. Lively illustrations bring the spirit of children to each page.

158 p. \$19.95 (Can.) \$14.99 (U.S.), hardcover

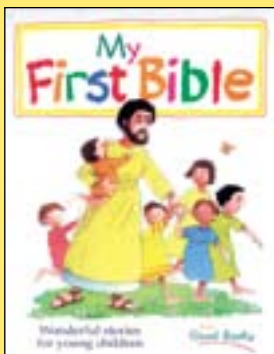


My Very First Bedtime Storybook

stories by Lois Rock; ill. by Alex Ayliffe

This collection of 10 stories and matching blessings is for very young children, especially at bedtime. Each story offers steady resolution and hope, each with bright and lively illustrations and language.

128 p. \$20.95 (Can.) \$14.99 (U.S.), hardcover

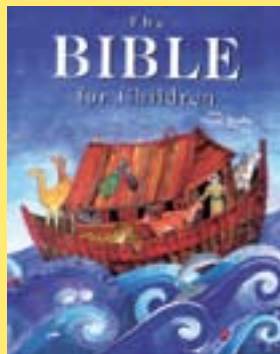


My First Bible

words by Pat Alexander; pictures by Leon Baxter

Here are more than 60 Bible stories, especially chosen for young children, a foundation on which to build a growing knowledge of the Bible. These stories are fun to read, to share, and to enjoy.

403 p. \$19.95 (Can.) \$14.99 (U.S.), hardcover

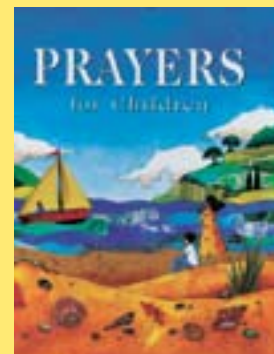


The Bible for Children

words by Murray Watts; ill. by Helen Cann

A classic treasure that vividly captures the eternal theme of God's unending love and the many people and occasions that fill the Old and New Testaments. This book, with more than 200 stories, is perfect for 7-12-year-olds.

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Prayers for Children

by Rebecca Winter; ill. by Helen Cann

A timeless treasure to gently remind children that God is interested in all aspects and occasions of their lives, and that prayer isn't something people do only in church.

160 p. \$20.95 (Can.) \$14.99 (U.S.), hardcover

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P.O. Box 419, Intercourse, PA 17534.
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Shipping/Handling, add 10% (\$3.00 minimum).
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