

C A N A D I A N

Mennonite

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God's people tomorrow

The question of who we are often comes up at assemblies. There was an illustration of this in the discussion at the Edmonton 2006 assembly on selecting a foundation scripture verse for the national church. [See pages 6 to 11.]

This question previously was considered by delegates two years ago at the Winkler assembly. At that time, delegates asked the General Board of the national church to choose "an appropriate scripture motto" for the church and bring it to delegates at the 2006 assembly. In 2004, there was some puzzlement and frustration as to why this issue had even arisen since I Corinthians 3:11 had been used as the foundation scripture for many years by the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC), two of predecessors of Mennonite Church Canada.

"When did we lose this as our scriptural passage?" one person asked in Winkler.

At Edmonton, the General Board proposed a rotating series of verses to be changed every two assemblies. This is different than what was passed in 2004, and a number of delegates quite rightly objected to this. Delegates eventually passed (for the second time) the resolution to have a single foundational verse, and, in addition, approved the idea of a rotating verse to be changed every two assemblies. But in the discussion on which verse to choose, Ontario delegate Fred Martin reminded the group that I Corinthians 3:11 is only an obvious choice for part of what is now Mennonite Church Canada. [See page 27 for more.]

"I speak against this motion," he said. "I think this verse represents one stream of our history very strongly, but I don't think it represents the total integrated reality that MC Canada is now. I think it would be a good exercise to go

the leadership assembly again and let them work with some of the suggestions that they were given for a single verse and come up with something new and fresh, and represents the integrated conference."

Two large groups of churches now part of MC Canada—the Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec, and the Western Ontario Mennonite Conference—were not part of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada until quite recently and had no tradition of a foundational verse. These two, along with the Conference of United Mennonite Churches in Ontario, joined in 1988 to form what is now MC Eastern Canada.

Now, I don't think many in MC Eastern Canada would object to I Corinthians 3:11 in principle. It's a central belief of Christianity and is a particularly important Mennonite verse. However, Martin's comment should be a reminder that MC Canada should not be seen as just CMC by another name. It's a new organization with a different make-up of churches.

That MC Canada is a new organization has been very evident in looking back over past assemblies. We've devoted a huge amount of time to structural adjustments and matching bylaw changes; weathered a financial crisis caused by accounting mistakes and a large drop in donations in 2001-03; developed an Identity and Purpose Statement; established a Faith and Life Committee; and voted to change membership rules to be more like the way it was for CMC.

The motion on a peace tax alternative in Edmonton was a refreshing and exciting change from the internal focus of so many recent assemblies. I dearly want the church to be engaging the wider world with the good news of Jesus Christ, in the many forms that takes. The theme for the Edmonton assembly was "God's People Now!" If we are going to be God's people for tomorrow, this is our task.

—Tim Miller Dyck

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Canada

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Web site preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted on our web site at www.canadianmennonite.org on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the Aug. 21 issue by Aug. 17.

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Cover: Assembly 2006 song leader Bruce Baergen—from Edmonton First Mennonite Church—elicited hearty singing from worshippers from across the country (top). The God's People Now! Assembly worship team included Heather Bergen, Jennifer Kirkaldy, Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, Carrie Friesen, Matt Pauls, Laura Pauls and Andrew Buhr (bottom). —Photos by Dan Dyck

Vancouver

Ernie Regehr given 2006 World Peace Award

Ernie Regehr, cofounder of Project Ploughshares, received the 2006 World Peace Award from the World Federalist Movement Canada at a ceremony in Vancouver recently. In addition to advising various international organizations, Regehr also teaches peace and conflict studies at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont.

Regehr was recognized for his work on peace and security issues. He served as an expert advisor on multilateral disarmament forums, is a member of the World Council of Churches' Commission on International Affairs, and is on the board of the Africa Peace Forum. Regehr was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2003.

The World Federalist Movement (WFM) is an international gathering of individuals and governments committed to a culture of peace and sustainability.

WFM Canada executive director Fergus Watt said of Regehr's choice for this year's award, "It's the high quality of his analysis, it's well researched. You can rely on him to have thought things through, whether it's on the issues of disarmament or weapons of mass destruction. He's an opinion leader in the peace community."

The award inscription summarizes Regehr's contribution: "With much gratitude and appreciation for many years of leadership and dedicated service to the cause of peace and the peace movement in Canada and around the world."

Watt also stressed Regehr's personal qualities. "People like working with him. He's modest, easy to get along with, accommodating and straight forward," Watt said.

Warren Allmand, former federal cabinet minister and current WFM Canada president, said, "I've known Ernie since 1965, when I was an MP and he was campaigning for nuclear

disarmament." Allmand noted that Regehr often appeared as a witness before parliamentary committees. "Regehr is very concerned about morality in politics; he's an idealist. He has a very pleasant, agreeable manner, including those with whom he disagrees," said Allmand.

Regehr, who arrived from a meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, just in time for the Vancouver event, was modest about receiving the award. "It puts one in the company of some pretty good people," he said. "It's a recognition of our mutual work efforts."

Previous Canadian award winners include retired lieutenant-general Romeo Dallaire, UN special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa Stephen Lewis, UN high commissioner for human rights Louise Arbour, and former minister of foreign affairs Lloyd Axworthy.

—Henry Neufeld



Photo by Donna Lindenberg

Fergus Watt, executive director of World Federalist Movement (WFM) Canada, left, presents Ernie Regehr, the cofounder of Project Ploughshares, with its World Peace Award during the WFM Canada national meeting in Vancouver in June.

Burns Lake, B.C.

Waving citizens encourage officer

For RCMP Constable Pierre Vezina, getting a friendly wave from local citizens when he drives by changed not only his attitude but that of many of the members of Burns Lake's police detachment in the B.C. interior.

Before leaving for a new posting on Vancouver Island with his wife and fellow officer, Kristi Marten, Vezina told his story to members of First Mennonite Church at a farewell luncheon.

Since Vezina and Marten, and another RCMP officer, Derrick Donovan, began attending First Mennonite, the people of the congregation have taken to waving at police cars, figuring it could be any of their fellow church members in the passing cruiser. Such friendly gestures are making the local officers happy in their work, according to Vezina.

About two years ago, Vezina was wondering whether he really wanted to

continue being a police officer. He just wasn't enjoying his work. Having grown up in a Catholic family, Vezina had basically stopped attending church in 1993.

It was Marten who brought him into the Mennonite Church. She had attended a Mennonite congregation in the Fraser Valley and felt comfortable and welcome there. So together they started attending First Mennonite in Burns Lake and it became a family for them.

And because of this, the waving started! A whole wave of the community is seeing the member in the police cruiser as someone they love.

Vezina credits this waving phenomenon and his return to church for helping him enjoy his work again. In two years he has moved from wanting to quit to looking forward to his next posting, knowing that he has a positive influence on the community.

The next time a police cruiser drives by, wave at the officers—send them a blessing. In II Corinthians 8:11 it says that "the heart regulates the hands" (The Message). Let this be your motivation.

—Lee Dyck

Winnipeg

Printmakers 'reconnect' at Heritage Gallery

Points of Connection, an exhibit of the art of Leonard Gerbrandt and Karen Cornelius at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery until Aug. 19, is a celebration of vibrant colour, layered meaning and technical mastery of the art of printmaking. It is also a celebration of relationships.

At the heart of the show is the mentor-mentee relationship between Gerbrandt and Cornelius. Gerbrandt, who Cornelius recalls as "a born teacher" at the Ottawa School of Art in the 1980s, became a mentor to Cornelius after he discovered in her a keen student who went beyond the bounds of instruction to make the art form her own.

Over the years, there were other points of connection between the two. Both of their families were drawn to service in Africa around the same time, Cornelius's in Eritrea and Gerbrandt's in Kenya.

There, the colours and images of Africa were imprinted on the work of both artists, and their bond with one another grew.

Gerbrandt recalls a near-meeting with Cornelius in Axum, Ethiopia, both families being drawn there to take in the Coptic celebration of Pentecost, a colour-drenched parade of richly brocaded priestly vestments and ornate golden crosses, that Gerbrandt

West Bank, Palestine

Pink Floyd founder urges Israelis to 'tear down the wall'

Pink Floyd founder Roger Waters, who inspired the rock band's iconic 1980 album *The Wall*, scrawled "Tear down the wall" on the concrete panels of Israel's West Bank barrier on his recent concert tour. The barrier was the first stop on a visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories for Waters.

"It's a horrific edifice, this thing," Waters said as he stood beside a section of the barrier in Bethlehem. "I've seen pictures of it, I've heard a lot about it, but without being here you can't imagine how extraordinarily oppressive it is and how sad it is to see these people coming through these little holes. It's craziness." Waters added to the graffiti with red spray paint and a marker pen.

Waters rejoined the other members of Pink Floyd, the British rock group famous for *The Wall* and *Dark Side of the Moon*, at last year's Live 8 concert in London, England.

Israel has built almost half the barrier, which has the stated aim of keeping suicide bombers out of its cities. Condemned by Palestinians as a land grab, the barrier has been branded illegal by the World Court because it cuts through occupied territory. Israel is rerouting some sections after a Supreme Court order to lessen Palestinian hardship.

Waters performed a concert at the Arab-Jewish village of Neve Shalom as part of his world tour. The concert was originally planned for a Tel Aviv sports stadium but, following criticism by fans in Britain, Waters changed the location to the peace village, where Israeli Jews and Arabs live in a joint community.

In 1990, Waters performed *The Wall* along the Berlin Wall that separated East and West Germany, to celebrate reunification.

He told reporters he hoped Israel's barrier would also be brought down one day. More than 90 percent of the barrier is razor-tipped fence, but towering concrete walls are used in built-up areas. "It may be a lot harder to get this one down, but eventually it must happen," Waters said.

—Jonathan Lis

Reprinted from July 2006 MennoLetter from Jerusalem.

wistfully recalls gleaming against the backdrop of an otherwise colourless and arid land. However, tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia flared, and the border was closed, and the meeting prevented. However, this near-meeting made the connection between the two even stronger. Gerbrandt compares it to the space between the outstretched hands of Adam and God in Michelangelo's famous Sistine Chapel painting. "There is a spark that leaps across the gap," said Gerbrandt at the

June 8 opening.

Both artists are committed to using their work to bridge gaps and cross borders to make a more interconnected human family.

For five years, Cornelius has been organizing the International Print Exchange, in which artists from all over the world send in two prints, one to trade with another artist from another part of the world, and one to be sold at the exhibit. She sees this "meeting one another as humans" across borders as crucial to human survival and peacemaking. As she sees other people in other countries coming up to demand the same kind of lifestyle that westerners have enjoyed, on an increasingly resource-stressed planet, she feels that face-to-face connections, mediated by the universal language of art and beauty, will help "keep us from killing each other."

—Marcus Rempel



Leonard Gerbrandt and Karen Cornelius' Points of Connection exhibit runs until Aug. 19 at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg. The artists—who are also mentor and mentee—are pictured at the show's June 8 opening.

Photo by Marcus Rempel

Membership, foundation verse occupy assembly delegates

At the national church's annual delegate sessions earlier this month, Mennonite Church Canada delegates voted to loosen membership requirements, backed two methods for rooting the church in Scripture, and started a process to petition the government for a peace tax alternative.

A total of 314 delegates—281 from congregations and 33 from area churches—attended the delegate sessions held in Edmonton from July 4 to 7. This was a 35 percent jump in delegate attendance over last year's assembly in Charlotte, N.C.

Delegates met for three morning and two afternoon discernment sessions (using the now established and appreciated roundtable discussion format), worshipped together each morning and evening, attended a number of seminars, and enjoyed the hospitality of Alberta Mennonite churches.

Area Conference Only Membership approved

After extensive back-and-forth discussion on the issue of local church membership, delegates voted by an 80 percent margin to loosen local church membership requirements.

This decision opens the way for any of the five area conferences to allow a local congregation to be a member of the area conference without being part of the national church as well. This was described as Area Conference Only Member (ACOM) status. Current MC Canada bylaws define any church that is a member of an area conference to also automatically be a member of the national church, leaving congregational membership decisions up to each area conference.

Currently, six congregations in British Columbia and one in Alberta have indicated they wish to remain part of their respective area churches but not the national church.



Photo by Dan Dyck

Delegates appreciated the roundtable format for discussions.

MC B.C. churches have had the option to be members of just the provincial level of the church for the past five years under a temporary arrangement that expires this summer. This decision by delegates provides a way to make that temporary membership option permanent, as well as extending it to the rest of the country.

The major reason B.C. churches want to leave the national church is due to congregations in other parts of Canada accepting practising gay and lesbian couples into membership, according to MC B.C. moderator Gerd Bartel. MC B.C. assistant moderator Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen said the issue was a broad one of congregations reluctant to be a part of MC Canada when the national church has little ability to determine whether a given local congregation is a member or not.

"The reality has been that area conferences tend to [determine membership criteria] in relative isolation," she said. "The more we can create a spirit of trust and unity between area conferences, the more relationships we can build, the more willingness and desire there is to work through differences and to have flexibility with one another, and to learn to trust and

love each other. I think that is what is lacking at this time."

Speakers lined up at each of the microphones to speak to the resolution and to the general issue of what membership should mean in the church. While the vote was strongly in favour of ACOM membership, speakers were more evenly split.

Doug Amstutz, pastor of Grace Mennonite Church, St.

Catharines, Ont., made the theological comparison to how, in Mennonite practice, baptism is not separated from church membership or commitment to the church.

"Are we saying it is okay to separate ourselves from the body to further certain principles?" he asked.

"We either pilgrim together or we don't," said Bill Kruger from Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

"We would speak against the resolution. We believe that it is planning for disunity, [rather] than planning for unity," said Dave Kroeker of Abbotsford (B.C.) Mennonite Fellowship.

Two repeated themes among those speaking for the resolution were that this was a pragmatic decision given difficult circumstances and that it was a pastoral way of extending grace to churches struggling with the national



church.

"This is the best way we can work at the sense of unity of Christ at a time when organizational unity isn't possible in every way. We do see it as second best, but we do affirm it," said Harold Peters-Fransen.

"Rather than seeing this as a way out for people, I see it as a way of keeping the door open for people, and for churches to be part of us again," said John Klassen, director of Leadership Ministries for MC Manitoba.

An amendment to add the option for local congregations to be members of the national church but not their area conference was voted down by delegates.

Delegates also later considered two further resolutions on the subject. These were requests to the area conferences and local congregations to not let the newly available ACOM option decrease their allegiance to the national church. Area conferences were also asked to establish clear conflict-of-interest guidelines. Local churches were asked to find ways to include MC Canada in new members' instruction and ceremonies to foster a commitment to local, area conference, national and international church levels, "with the rights, privileges, and responsibilities thereto."

Delegates did not vote on either of these resolutions, but there was strong support for them from the floor. "We have a general feeling that we need to be generous," said Tracy Brown Ewert, expressing hopes that churches choosing ACOM status might desire to re-covenant fully with the national church in the future.

Bartel expressed gratitude to delegates on behalf of the B.C. conference most affected by the ACOM option. "I would like to thank MC Canada for really being hospitable and practising grace in terms of this position," he said. "We would like to commend you for going the extra mile and extending your hand of welcome."

MC Canada bylaw changes will be needed to reflect what delegates decided in Edmonton. Two months' advance notice is needed for bylaw changes, so these are planned for next year's assembly.

Building the church's Scriptural foundations

Assembly 2006 delegates wrestled through a tabled resolution and then two follow-up resolutions, which resulted in an official scriptural foundation for the national church as well as a rotating focus on selected biblical texts.

One resolution selected a foundational scripture text—*I Corinthians 3:11*: "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ." This was a guiding verse for Menno Simons, the 16th century church reformer from whom Mennonites take their name.

The second resolution directed that the church choose additional key biblical texts for study and nourishment, to be changed every two years. Study resources on the passage are to be created and distributed to congregations to encourage a deeper understanding and application of the Scriptures in their lives.

The MC Canada General Board initially proposed the church only have the rotating scripture text. While there was general affirmation for study of a number of biblical texts, delegate discussion also affirmed a desire for a more permanent scripture foundation that "our children could grow up with."

Some also expressed disapproval about the rotating text resolution because it changed a decision that delegates had already made. Two years ago, at the Winkler, Man., assembly, delegates unanimously passed a resolution that a single scripture motto be chosen for the church in 2006. However, *I Corinthians 3:11* was voted down at that time as the choice for the verse.

Randy Klaassen of Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil, Ont., noted that, after the 2004 assembly, congregations had been invited into a congregational discernment process for selecting and nominating a scripture foundation passage. "We [Bethany Mennonite Church] did our homework at the request of MC Canada," he said, expressing some frustration at having to consider a rotating text approach.

The Resolutions Committee later returned with a two-part resolution

that backed both approaches simultaneously: first, that delegates choose a single scripture foundation verse; and second, that a rotating scripture foundation verse be used for two consecutive assemblies.

When this resolution passed with a large majority, a second resolution was moved that Mennonite Church Canada choose *I Corinthians 3:11* as its foundational scripture verse. This time, this resolution also passed easily.

Protesting military taxes

A resolution from the floor, put forward by Harold Peters-Fransen, addressed Canada's rapidly expanding military activity.

The resolution stated that, as the government was moving increasingly towards direct military intervention, was increasing military spending and forcing conscientious objectors to contribute to the military budget through taxation, that the General Board urge "the government to enact legislation which would allow conscientious objectors to direct the military portion of their taxes to activities of development and peace."

"Major changes are taking place," said David Neufeld of Herschel Ebenfeld Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan. "I believe it is time for us to speak and to request that some serious consideration be given to this resolution."

The resolution was passed almost unanimously.

Budget approved

Audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending January 2006 were presented showing the national church had a surplus of about \$114,000. Donations were up slightly, the first time they have gone up year-over-year since the 2002 financial restructuring.

Delegates passed the national church budget for 2006-07, with planned net spending of \$4.12 million, very slightly less than the previous year's budget. The budget expects a deficit of \$118,000, which will be covered with a transfer from reserves.

Continued on page 8

Delegates *From page 8*

Suderman tour appreciated

MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman presented a powerful presentation repeating what people have told him in his cross-country "God's People Now!" Listening Tour. *[The presentation is posted with Canadian Mennonite's July 6 online assembly coverage. A multi-part print report on the tour will come when it is complete. Ed.]*

A number of delegates expressed heartfelt appreciation for the visits to about 180 churches so far; about 40 churches are still to be visited. "I found it extremely encouraging and supportive," said Gary Peters of Hanley (Sask.) Mennonite Church.

Walter Hiebert, pastor of Rosenfeld (Man.) Bergthaler Mennonite Church, described how the church had a vote the year before he started there as pastor on whether to leave MC Canada or not. The vote was an exact tie and the church stayed in only due to the tie-breaker vote of the church chair. "Jack Suderman's visit to our church changed the spirit of our understanding of MC Canada," he said.

Next assembly in B.C.

Pam Peters-Pries, MC Canada's executive secretary of Support Services, informed delegates of a tentative proposal for a joint MC Canada/MC USA gathering in July 2008 in Winnipeg, for shared worship, study and fellowship. The event, if it takes place, will likely be held alongside an MC Canada delegate assembly but not an MC USA delegate assembly.

She also reported the planning group for next year's youth and adult assemblies had selected I Corinthians 3:11 as its theme verse. "No other theme could anyone choose than that which was already chosen, which was I Corinthians 3:11," she said with no small amount of pleasure.

The session closed with an invitation from MC B.C. to the assembly it is hosting next year and a service of thanksgiving and dedication for church workers.

—Tim Miller Dyck

Anabaptist spirituality explained to pastors

When Conrad Grebel University College history professor Arnold Snyder began his study of Anabaptist spirituality some time ago, he said the discovery of such a spirituality was "news to me.... There is a perception that our tradition is about ethics and discipleship, and it is assumed that it rejected spirituality," Snyder told a gathering of Mennonite Church Canada pastors at the opening of the God's People Now! Assembly in Edmonton on July 4.

Snyder explained, though, that spirituality was basic to early Anabaptist life. "It was the heart and soul of our church's heritage," he said, noting that ethics emphasize rules, while spirituality works at people doing what they believe.

He explained the Anabaptist Spiritual Path, understood by 16th century Anabaptists as their means to the new heart and being necessary for obedience. The path included repentance, trust, spiritual rebirth, baptism, mutual admonition, communion, foot washing, discipleship and the practice of spiritual disciplines.

Prayer, singing and living in Scripture were crucial disciplines

connecting one to God, according to Snyder, who recalled a frustration he had when trying to discover more about early Anabaptist thought. "I wanted to find out what Anabaptists were thinking, but all the writings were quotations of Scripture. Then it hit me. That's what they were thinking, they were thinking Scripture!" Early Anabaptists were immersed in Scripture, he told the pastors, allowing the Word of God to inform every element of their being and grow a vibrant, fruitful spirituality.

In a follow-up presentation, Sue Steiner, chair of the MC Canada Christian Formation Council, put legs to Snyder's words in a practical exploration of spirituality in the church.

A former pastor herself, Steiner challenged leaders to pay attention to their own spiritual health. "Churches need us to be spiritual leaders who care for the congregation out of our own connection to the vine," she said.

Steiner strongly maintains that the first responsibility for Christian leaders is to maintain their own connection to God. "Our own spiritual disciplines as leaders matter to our congregation. Over time the congregation will notice," she said.

Steiner illustrated practical ideas of how the use of Scripture is encouraged through the stories of a number of pastors. One pastor memorizes passages and presents them; another leads Bible studies to prepare his congregation for special services, as well as ensuring that Scripture is well presented in services.

—Donita Wiebe-Neufeld



Arnold Snyder, left, a history professor at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., and Sue Steiner, chair of the Mennonite Church Canada Christian Formation Council, explained the history and practical outworking of an Anabaptist spirituality steeped in Scripture to pastors at the opening session of the 2006 MC Canada God's People Now! Assembly in Edmonton.

Photo by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

Sharing more important than preaching to aboriginals

A seminar on building relationships with aboriginal neighbours was led by long-term Native Ministry workers Neill and Edith Von Gunten, who shared their personal story along with informational videos and background facts and figures.

Relationships have to be built before trust is gained, the Von Guntens said, making it important to “respond to invitations

such as ‘Come waste some time with us.’ If you’re consistently too busy to do this, people will say, ‘You’re so busy you don’t have time for anything.’”

Preaching is not high on the aboriginal agenda. The Von Guntens said that when they were asked to start a church in Riverton, Man., they were told, “We don’t want you to preach, but to share stories. We’ve been preached at enough.”

During their recent cross-Canada listening and learning tour, they heard lots of comments, such as “Come on, the residential school situations happened years ago. Get over it.” At the same time, they met with families who were still dealing with the devastating after-effects of that system.

The Von Guntens noted that gifted aboriginal leaders are often hired by outside agencies, leaving vacancies in First Nation communities.

They also suggested that urban aboriginal communities have created opportunities for aboriginal and non-native communities to form partner-

‘[Aboriginals] are counting on us as the larger church to help them find a voice in broader society, so that together we can become God’s people now!’

Three generations of Penners ‘assemble’ in Edmonton

Few people with busy lives anticipate beginning a vacation with meetings, but that’s just what three generations of Penners did in Edmonton from July 4 to 7. Grandfather Paul, his son John David (J.D.), and grandson Gabriel were thrilled to celebrate their part in the extended faith family that is Mennonite Church Canada.

For the Penners, the annual assembly is an important family event, eagerly awaited as a time to reconnect with others, God and each other. The family has been attending such gatherings for as long as they have been in Canada.

Grandfather Penner recalled, “In 1948 we came over from Russia and Germany to Canada, settling in the Chilliwack area. In 1949 or 1950, I attended conference as a youth. Ninety-nine percent of the people there were men in dark suits and ties.” Later, in Vancouver, he continued active involvement in youth groups, and the B.C. conference. As a young man, he was often a delegate to Canadian meetings.

For J.D., Edmonton 2006 was a first experience as a delegate, and he jumped in with both feet. “I saw an invitation in the *Canadian Mennonite* to put my name in, so I did,” he said. “I asked to be considered for the Witness council.”

Of the annual assembly, J.D. said, “It speaks to the importance of church in our lives and helps us to understand the Canadian context. We are a local church, but we belong to the larger body.”

J.D. brought his son, Gabriel, five,



Photo by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

J.D. Penner, left, his son Gabriel and father Paul all were active participants at the God’s People Now! Assembly in Edmonton.

to assembly with him because of the connections he could make. “We go to a small Mennonite church in a large urban centre,” notes J.D. “Gabriel has no other Mennonite children to interact with on a day-to-day basis at school. Here, he is engaged with other Mennonite children and engaged with Anabaptist principles. The children’s program should be highlighted as an ideal way to connect these kids. It’s a holiday for them too!”

Gabriel Penner enthusiastically participated in the children’s program. He particularly enjoyed running around a masking tape labyrinth with his new friends, as well as collecting change for a project to show care for others. “We got money for kids in Congo so they can have a roof on their school,” he gushed.

The Penners encourage other families to look at the annual assembly as a place to connect.

—Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

ships and relate to each other. But both are afraid, they said.

That fear was expressed by those in attendance at the Von Guntens’ seminar. “People in our congregations are afraid to get too close to ‘the untouchables,’” commented one person. Another said that people think that aboriginals don’t fit into traditional Mennonite Church communities.

On the other side, a delegate suggested that churches, including Mennonite ones, have been dysfunctional for generations in the way they



have evangelized and related to aboriginal people in their midst. “Maybe it’s time for a public apology;

then we can start over from there,” the delegate said.

“Our job is to walk alongside them,” concluded Neil. “We need to help them [aboriginals] make the connections, be the bridge, be a support. They are counting on us as the larger church to help them find a voice in broader society, so that together we can become God’s people now!”

—Leona Dueck Penner

Pennies and Prayer fund put to use

Fine food, a fabulous view of Edmonton from the Top of the Inn restaurant, door prizes and inspiring input all contributed to making the annual Canadian Women in Mission (CWM) luncheon at Assembly 2006 a memorable one for the 80 plus women who attended.

"Its like a dream come true to be in this beautiful room with you," exuded CWM president Erna Neufeldt.

Elsie Rempel, MC Canada education director, gave thanks for a \$5,000 gift from CWM. This money will encourage churches to purchase Gather 'Round Sunday school materials, she said.

As well, CWM will use the Pennies and Prayer fund to support women in mission, including Witness workers Cheryl Woelk in South Korea and Anne Garber Kompaore in Burkina Faso.

A special prayer of dedication for the fund, by Edmonton First Mennonite co-pastor Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, highlighted the "power of small things" given faithfully over many generations which "grow and spread [Gods'] light."



The MC Canada Women in Mission executive for 2006 are, from left to right, Ev Buhr, Alberta; Shirley Redekop, Eastern Canada; Ruth Jantzi, Ontario; Margaret Thiessen, Manitoba, who was filling in for Betty-Anne Hildebrand at Assembly 2006; Audrey Mierau Bechtel, Saskatchewan,; Veronica Thiessen, British Columbia; and Erna Neufeldt, Alberta.

Neufeldt and secretary treasurer, Ruth Jantzi, gave a positive report of the past year's activities and finances, noting that "women are very generous in supporting projects that are near and dear to them." This has resulted in a significant budget surplus this year. "But," she urged, "do continue sending money because this [surplus]

is a one-time experience."

Keynote speaker Cindy Buhler, who began by saying that she went to Macau "as a woman determined to follow the Lord, [confident] that the rest would come along later," said her work involving women and children there "isn't about creating more programs" or about many stories of "stunning transformation," but rather, slowly building relationships through simple things such as spending time flower-arranging, teaching Sunday school or nurturing kids with special needs.

"Its all about prayer," Buhler concluded, "learning to listen to the Spirit and to pray more accurately for each other in all situations."

The luncheon offering went to Witness work in Macau and Bridging the Gap Ministries in Alberta.

—**Leona Dueck Penner**

Discovering your real 'net worth'

Immediately following the Canadian Women in Mission (CWM) luncheon, a number of the women participated in the CWM seminar, "Your 'Net Worth,'" led by Audrey Mierau Bechtel. In this seminar, many shared painful stories of experiencing low self-esteem because of being marginalized due to not fitting the "local norms" in relation to looks, types of employment or lack of a job, or because they chose to be stay-at-home moms and "just volunteered."

Speaker Ev Buhr told the group about how devastated she'd been when, after several years of being a stay-at-home mom who worked part-time in the church, she was confronted by a former co-worker who told her bluntly that he was disappointed in her because she wasn't well-established in her profession as an interior designer. "I thought I'd let myself down," she said, still feeling the pain as she remembered. "But

I'd thought about all these things.... I wanted to watch my children grow and to have time for work in the church." Even so, it threw her. Fortunately, friends at church supported and understood her motivation, she said.

The seminar wrapped up with an inspirational address by Laurie Oswald Robinson, the new editor of *Timbrel*, who shared openly about her childhood experiences of being bullied for being fat by her "best friends" in gym class, and also about the still-more devastating after-effects of being sexually abused by a teacher and a brother. Now, after years of healing therapy, she draws strength from biblical stories such as that of Hagar, who in her distress, cried out to God as "a God of seeing."

"We continually need to experience God's grace," Robinson said in conclusion. "The [healing] process is generally slow. You're in it for the long haul, but those who desire it above all, are healed, and get to give a cup of cold water to others."

—**Leona Dueck Penner**

In addition to our print coverage on pages 6 to 11, readers can find complete news coverage, as well as browse through photo galleries, view presentations, listen to audio recordings of sermons and stories, and watch video clips presented at the delegate sessions, by visiting Canadian Mennonite's online assembly special report. Follow the link from canadianmennonite.org. Ed.

Children assist with communion and sending forth

Closing worship at Assembly 2006 included a communion service that was rich in story, sermon, song and symbol. But what stole the show was the participation of about 60 hospitable youngsters who distributed baskets of communion bread and grapes to the more than 400 congregants seated at “discernment tables,” that throughout the week had been centres for delegate discussions on such weighty issues as choosing foundational Scripture verses and Area Conference Only Membership.

As these boys and girls—carefully instructed on the etiquette of biblical service and hospitality by their Vacation Bible School leader, Elsie Rempel—circled the room carrying baskets laden high with various kinds of bread, the tables became hallowed eating places where partaking of the bread and wine reminded participants of their holy calling: to go out and share the good news of Jesus with neighbours and strangers.

Keynote speaker Jerry Buhler based his sermon on the story of Philip’s conversation with the Ethiopian “stranger” found in Acts 8:26-39. “Philip heard, Philip saw, Philip ran,” said Buhler. “He shared seats with a stranger...as together they began to re-draw lines along the borders that separated them. When the chariot stopped, they found that they had become God’s people.”

“How good are we at being sent?” Buhler asked. “As God’s people now, we are always in a ‘sent state,’” he emphasized, “sent to absorb the nearest cry, sent to respond to the nearest of the least of these....”

As sent people, he said MC Canada members are sent to the table—and from the table—into the world.

After blessing “many kinds of bread—Italian, Korean, Asian—as there are many kinds of us,” denominational minister Sven Eriksson advised participants to dip pieces of

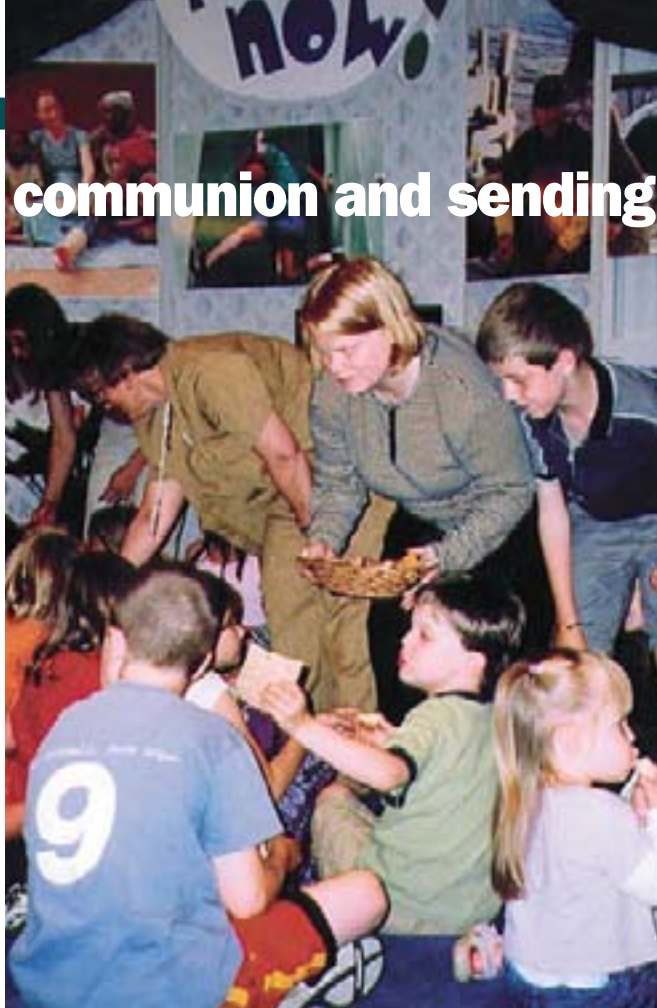


Photo by Leona Dueck Penner

While the adults were served communion during the final worship service on July 7, the children were given clusters of grapes.

bread into the cup with the words, “The body of Christ is given for you.” While the adults took communion, hungry children blessed earlier by Eriksson eagerly nibbled on clusters of grapes.

“Go now, as a sent people, a people of healing,” concluded worship leader Doug Klassen, as he spoke the benediction wishing the delegates joy for the journey.

—**Leona Dueck Penner**



In the spirit of Christian service, Randal Nickel, right, takes some dirty dishes from delegate John Klassen at the God’s People Now! Assembly in Edmonton. “I volunteered as an usher,” Nickel said, “but they didn’t have any work for me, so I came here [to the kitchen].”



Photo by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

The following reflection by Marie Moyer of Lethbridge (Alta.) Mennonite Church, who works with Mennonite Central Committee's Services for Low German Mennonites in Taber, Alta., was originally presented in a longer form as part of a panel discussion hosted by the Southern Alberta Council on Public Affairs late last year. The panelists addressed the question, "Have the churches retreated from seeking peace on earth?"

As a Mennonite, I have been brought up in a church culture that is defined by our peace stance. In this context, the question is not an easy one to answer from a Mennonite perspective. Simply refusing to participate in violence is not quite the same as actively trying to right injustices in the larger society, nor is it even bringing the good news that Jesus preached into a suffering world.

At times—if I look back critically on the history of my own church and my own people—I have to conclude that it has been a cop-out. Yet the powerful witness of a people who have willingly died rather than kill is impossible to discount. Mennonites throughout the centuries hope that their actions will speak louder to their neighbours than words ever could.

All of which brings us to modern Mennonites in present-day Canada. While it may be true that other denominations were more involved in peace activism in the 1960s than they are now, it is, as far as I can tell, certainly not true of Mennonites. In the '60s, although Mennonites were assimilating more and more into Canadian culture, Mennonite churches were still very much withdrawn from political and public affairs. So, although "peace" was a very Mennonite thing to be involved with, peace activism was not.

Sometime between that time and when I became conscious of what was happening around me, a number of Mennonite churches and conferences have emerged from this isolation and

Seeking peace on earth

connected or aligned themselves with some of the broader movements within the Christian Church. The first is an alignment with what we could term the evangelical movement.

A second path out of isolation is the path of social justice through which many Mennonites have begun to develop a political conscience. I would point to the activities of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) as the primary outlet through which many Mennonites put this kind of theology into action. What unites these Mennonites of various political stripes, though, is action—not activism.

While political affiliations do exist among Mennonites, many of us are still reluctant to publicly align ourselves with political parties, in part because of the tension it would create within organizations like MCC, and in part because getting involved in politics is simply just not Mennonite.

If there is a criticism that I would aim at my own church, it is that we have been plenty willing to put our theology into action, but we haven't been prophetic enough.

But let me tell you about some of the ways that Mennonites do actively seek peace and justice on earth:

- Prayer. German theologian Karl Barth wrote, "To clasp the hands in

prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world."

- Every year at Christmas MCC promotes living gift projects. At Ten Thousand Villages, for about \$30 you can buy a goat as a gift on behalf of someone on your Christmas list, to support these projects. Why go to a peace march when you could buy a goat for peace?

- Christian Peacemaker Teams. They are a modern embodiment of the most daring and courageous aspects of the Anabaptist peace tradition—willing to "get in the way" of violence as their motto suggests, even at great personal risk. And they are willing to take on issues that are fraught with politics and require extremely fine manoeuvring in order to maintain a nonviolent approach.

CPT was begun as a response to a challenge made by Ron Sider at the Mennonite World Conference assembly in France in 1984:

"Those who believed in peace through the sword have not hesitated to die. Proudly, courageously, they gave their lives...."

"Unless we...are ready to start to die by the thousands in dramatic, vigorous, new exploits for peace and justice, we should sadly confess that we never really meant what we said, and we dare never whisper another word about pacifism to our sisters and brothers in those desperate lands filled with injustice. Unless we are ready to die developing new nonviolent attempts to reduce conflict, we should confess that we never really meant that the cross was an alternative to the sword."

—Marie Moyer

Pontius' Puddle



Letters

Sharing properly done reduces church gossip

Re: "Thank you for sharing," *Canadian Mennonite*, April 3, page 10.

In his piece on the practice of congregational sharing in Mennonite churches, Paul Boers makes some helpful points. I particularly appreciate his final quotation by William Orr: "The life of the church is more important than the religious development or expression of a single person." At this point in history, this sentiment is countercultural and a timely reminder of the true nature of Christ's Church.

However, Mr. Boers makes some generalized statements regarding sharing that are not reflective of my experience. He writes, "Sharing is a non-native invader that distorts

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.

worship and becomes impossible to dislodge." Our church's sharing practice has been very much the opposite. Sharing has become an integral part of our worship as a community. Our sharing differs from Mr. Boers' description in almost every aspect.

First, the sharing is rarely embarrassing or private (although it is often profoundly moving), and at one time or another, almost everyone in our church has shared, although some feel more comfortable in front of the

microphone than others.

Additionally, far from creating an air of "gossip," one lifelong church member felt our sharing time was the reason our church gossiped so little. We were made aware of the struggles people were enduring by the people themselves.

We have had various discussions over the years as to how to keep the tone of sharing time worshipful, and in this way I appreciate Mr. Boers' cau-

Continued on page 14

DAVE KROEKER



God, money and me

Mutual aid is not just something quaint that is practised by the Amish and Old Order Mennonites. It is an integral part of what it means to be Jesus' followers. Our Scriptures tell us that it is sin for someone to know to do good and then not to do it.

Mutual aid became a lifestyle of choice and conviction for Anabaptist-Mennonites and their offspring communities long before government-sponsored social programs came into vogue. Taking their cue from the Bible, they and other followers of Jesus soon institutionalized this conviction to begin hospitals, orphanages and care facilities, among others, for the sick and unfortunate in society.

When the Russian Revolution and World War I left many of their compatriots in the Ukraine and elsewhere in dire straits, Mennonites in North America—knowing they were the privileged and that privilege brought with it an obligation—formed Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to gather and send food and other necessities to their kin, and to others, to help them survive.

This fledgling organization is still alive and well today, and has been the chief agency through which Mennonites and other communities have provided aid and development assistance around the world for nearly 90 years.

But mutual aid does not begin and end with MCC or other aid organizations. It begins with you and me, and with the conviction that those who have must help those who have needs we can meet. It really is not a choice for those who walk in Jesus' way. It is an integral part of the

Mutual aid is not an option

A mutual aid lifestyle begins with the recognition that all I call my own is merely a gift to me....

commitment we have made, the journey we are on.

A mutual aid lifestyle begins with the recognition that all I call my own is merely a gift to me—my abilities, my health, the knowledge and aptitudes I have gained, my time, and my financial resources—and that if I squander these simply to enhance my lifestyle and my comforts, rather than employ them to assist others, I have violated my testimony of walking on the road Jesus walked.

This is serious business; this is moral ground. Let us determine that our own lifestyle decisions and our convictions will meld into one grand whole, that gives testimony that we are serious about mutual aid and accountability in our own lives, in the life of the congregation of which we are part, and in the world beyond. And further, let us challenge each other to the faithful use of our gifts in building a world that is sustainable, where healing is provided to those who suffer, and where hope reigns for all.

As I conclude my work with Mennonite Foundation of Canada (as I near 67 I know it is time for others with greater energy to carry on this important work), my conviction about the positive value of the foundation's efforts to challenge its constituents to first fruits living (stewardship) remains as strong as ever. I trust that many more will catch the vision the foundation promotes.

Dave Kroeker is a Mennonite Foundation of Canada stewardship consultant. For stewardship education, estate and charitable gift planning, visit mennofoundation.ca for details.

Sharing *From page 13*

tions regarding the potential pitfalls of sharing time. I cannot, however, support his conclusion that sharing time is, in and of itself, a problem.

In our church, if sharing runs for 10 minutes, instead of just two, then church lasts 10 minutes longer. The essential components of worship are not compromised by our sharing; they are made full.

I believe that our sharing time is vital and worshipful because we see our church as a community and our faith journey as collective. With this in our minds and hearts, congregational sharing can be a fantastic and godly answer to the sense of alienation that pervades our contemporary world.

—**Lynda Loewen, Winnipeg**

The writer is chair of the music and worship committee at Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

Correction

Since 2002, when funding for the Mennonite Church Manitoba Volunteer Chaplaincy Program was cut, a volunteer program coordinator, who is selected by and reports to MC Manitoba, has been in place. MC Manitoba also provides \$5,000 a year to pay for workshops for volunteers, travel costs, parking, materials and other program expenses. The level of support by MC Manitoba for its volunteer chaplain program was incorrectly reported in the “Volunteer chaplain honoured for long service” article, June 12, page 4. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

Natural selection points away from God

In “Pointing us to a loving God: The paradox of natural selection” (May 29, page 6), Glen Klassen says of the intelligent design theorists, “Whenever we find something that is highly organized, they say we should recognize it as specially created by an intelligent designer who works in such a way that there is no natural explanation for the result.”

Klassen seems to have confused “irreducible complexity” with “special creation.” Irreducible complexity means that purposeful and intelligent input is essential for organizing an aspect of a life form—within the bounds of probability. Darwin himself said that his theory of unpurposeful and unintelligent design would stand or fall on a single instance of irreducible complexity.

MELISSA MILLER



Family Ties

As research for a Bible study on the subject of time, I read *In Praise of Slow* by Carl Honoré. The author covers the value of slow living with such topics as food, exercise and cities. He suggested that people purposefully choose to slow themselves down; for example, by going to the longest line at the grocery check-out. Such a counterintuitive act provides a little more space for our harried, rushed souls to step out of the fast lane, to breathe more deeply, to soothe our frenetic nerves.

I took him up on his offer. While I’m not always eager to join the longest queue, I consciously try to set aside my impatience and claim the possible benefit of waiting. I found the pause did refresh me, and make me more conscious of my own tension and edginess, and of the people around me. Gradually I took in the pleasantness of the staff, and the weariness I sometimes saw in their eyes. My interactions with them and the others waiting in line became more friendly. In a little way, I became more human, less self-absorbed.

The first small step led me to take another. Instead of checking the bus schedule ahead of time (and then fretting about whether I will make or miss the bus), I began to allow a window of suitable time, and then simply headed out the door within that window. (Note: This works best when it is not an extremely hot or cold day!)

My mood was the first change, as I gained a sense of calm acceptance. I also became aware that I had more

Timeless space

Our hurriedness often propels us past that which is most vital.

space to take in beauty through my senses: the scent of lilacs, the neighbours’ gardens, the cooling breeze and the play of light on the leaves. Prayers emerged in the waiting times—for my family and neighbours, for my community, for peace in the world. Stepping off of the hurry train does provide immediate benefits.

What does this have to do with our family relationships? In reply, I offer a quote from a poster I read many years ago: “Of course children get in the way, but where are you going?” Our hurriedness often propels us past that which is most vital. We need to ensure that we allow ourselves to be with each other, to connect in slow and lazy ways.

Last winter I travelled to Pennsylvania for my grandmother’s funeral. On the night before the funeral, I stretched out on the couch, settling in with a novel. Soon after, my mother sat down beside me, asking for feedback on the eulogy she planned to offer at the service. I turned from my book, and she began to read, her head close to mine, her words painting warm memories of her mother and family life. My spirit stirred with the blessing of being able to companion my mother as she recalled her life as a daughter, as she prepared to bury her mother. We were wrapped in intimate, sacred space. Timeless.

Melissa Miller is a family life consultant, pastoral counsellor and author from Winnipeg. Her Bible study, My Times Are in Your Hands, is now available from Canadian Women in Mission.

Klassen criticizes biochemist Michael Behe for believing in special creation. But Behe has told me explicitly that he believes the intelligent input needed for irreducible complexity was coded into the universe at the Big Bang. In that case, Behe is not a creationist unless, by “creationist,” Klassen means what many professed atheists in the sciences mean—anyone who believes that the universe shows evidence of purpose and design.

For that matter, what is a “natural explanation”? Klassen writes as if it must be an explanation that excludes purpose or design.

But then he seemingly misunderstands Behe’s argument. He writes, “But even if there are structures with irreducible complexity, and I believe there are many in the cell, natural selection would not be precluded. Something that has irreducible complexity today need not have had it in the past.”

No, no, no! If the structure could arise through random, unguided events trimmed by natural selection, it is not irreducibly complex by definition. Behe points to structures that can be assumed to arise by that process only if faith in Darwinism is our starting point, ignoring the probabilities. Klassen is clearly anxious that Darwin’s theory should stand: Even in cases of doubt, we are asked to believe it can work.

He also writes, “It is paradoxical that understanding of a cruel and wasteful process such as natural selection could point us to the love of God.”

I am delighted that it has affected him that way. But many people who accept Darwinism—while understanding clearly what it teaches—are affected in the opposite way. Given that Darwin’s theory has played a key role in promoting atheism worldwide, why should Christians defend it? When Darwinism falls, there will be other theories of evolution, most of them much more compatible with Christianity.

—**Denyse O’Leary, Toronto**

*The writer is author of *By Design or by Chance?* that was reviewed on page 8 of the May 29 issue of Canadian Mennonite.*

Israel should seek diplomatic solution

The following letter was sent by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada executive director Don Peters to Prime Minister Stephen Harper on July 5.

We write to you out of our deep concern for the serious situation unfolding in Gaza, Palestine, at this time.

Mennonite Central Committee has worked in the Middle East since the late 1940s. Currently our staff in the region work closely with Palestinian and Israeli partners, seeking a just and durable peace to the longstanding conflict. In Gaza, we support financially a Palestinian women’s health centre, a women’s food-processing organization and a children’s centre in the Khan Younis refugee camp.

MCC staff in the region have heard directly from partners about the crisis situation unfolding in Gaza. Power and water have been cut off in many areas due to Israel’s bombing of a major power station. Movement has been restricted because of the destruction of important bridges. Children and young people are terrorized by daily shelling and the sonic booms of fighter jets. There is fear of a major military onslaught.

We do not in any way condone the actions of Palestinian militants who killed two Israeli soldiers and captured a third. Yet we understand that such actions arise out of the desperation of a people whose cry for justice continues to go unheard by much of the world.

We urge you to use your influence to press for a diplomatic solution to the current crisis. A diplomatic solution will help to save the life of the captured Israeli soldier, as well as scores of Palestinians. A military response on Israel’s part will heighten the suffering for Palestinians in Gaza. It will also surely contribute to more extremist responses on the part of Palestinians and make long-term solutions so much more elusive.

Once again, we urge you to call on Israel to seek the way of diplomacy in the current crisis.

—**Donald Peters, Winnipeg**

Canada must respond to attacks on Gaza

As Jewish health professionals, we are gravely concerned by the extent of human devastation in Gaza. Almost as appalling is the lack of media reports and the silence of our government.

[See stories of the unfolding crisis in the Middle East on page 20 of this issue. Ed.]

According to reports from Dr. Mona El-Farra in Gaza, there are 112,000 patients there with chronic diseases who are dependent on refrigeration for medications. The 22 hospitals are currently running alternative electrical power, but even that is running out because of the total siege which is blocking fossil fuel deliveries. The lives of 250 renal dialysis patients are threatened because the supply of dialysis solution is running low. At least 30,000 children suffer from malnutrition and this number will increase as diarrhea spreads as a result of the extreme shortage of clean water. As well, premature babies on life-support machines are awaiting certain death.

This targeting of the civilian population is in total contravention of the Geneva Accords. All this adds up to a humanitarian disaster that is happening before our eyes and our response is near total silence.

What will it take for the decision-makers in Canada to bring our humanitarian instincts to this situation? It is not yet too late for Canada to stand up and say, “We will help!” If we do not, we will have a hand in allowing a humanitarian disaster to unfold.

—**Dr. Miriam Garfinkle, Judith Rosenthal Deutsch, Toronto**

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Borabur, Thailand

Doctor's visit helps bring healing

Dolores Logan examines a Buddhist monk during a medical clinic at Living Water Church in Borabur. The monk, the uncle of a church member, was one of more than 425 people to receive medical attention. Organizers also offered a gospel presentation and showed the *Jesus* film.

Logan is part of a family of Canadian Mennonites who wanted to learn more about mission. The Logans, members of Grace Mennonite Church in Regina, Sask., are friends of Pat and Rad Houmphan who needed a physician for the clinics held in 10 villages surrounding Borabur the two weeks before Easter.

A Regina-based doctor, Logan checked eyes, ears and vital signs while answering questions and testing for diabetes and other condi-

tions. Her husband, Murray, three of the Logans' five children, the Houmphans and other church leaders assisted.

The Logans paid their own travel costs as a way to connect with the Houmphans—mission workers with Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network—as well as reach out to unbelievers.

Pat said their visit is a partnership that helped bring healing to the Isaan people.

"They say in seminary that more people go through the door of a hospi-



Photo by David Fisher Fast

Dolores Logan examines a Buddhist monk during a medical clinic at Living Water Church in Borabur, Thailand.

tal than through the door of a church," said Murray, a prison chaplain who preached Easter Sunday at Living Water Church. "We have a great love for the people here."

After Thailand, the Logans left to help Witness/Mission Network workers George and Tobia Veith and Tim and Cindy Buhler with a clinic in Macau.

The Logans hope to continue visiting mission workers for their vacations, showing workers their support while learning about culture and helping others.

—MC Canada release by **Ryan Miller**



**MC Canada Witness
Houmphan baptizes
Houmphan and pastor
of Living Water Church**

Regina

Reflections on a short-term mission

Murray and Dolores Logan and their family travelled to Thailand and Macau earlier this year to visit Mennonite missionaries working in these two countries. Upon their return, Murray Logan reflected on what he had learned from their trip:

- In Thailand, as well as in Macau, I learned that Christianity is seen as a western religion. Because of the particularly North American emphasis on materialism, money and individualism, as well as the militaristic and violent spin which they see in our movies, advertisements and products, they may be interested in the good news of Christ but they don't want the North American baggage that comes with it. They want victory over sin, guilt, fear, the law, death, and evil and meaningless existence without attachments to the "cultural other."

- Many fears accompany daily living. Many are filled by the need to appease

spirits that plague them, working hard at a dead-end job to support families or buying unnecessary goods, in order to feel good and add meaning to life.

- In North America we seem to have taken the benefits of Jesus Christ so much for granted that the true meaning of Jesus Christ has become lost or buried in some sort of secular or apostate culture. We have found ourselves going the other way and embracing the very things they in Asia have sought to shed once they discover freedom from spiritual poverty and bondage.

- The Buddhist religious system suffers from the same attacks of apostate drift and indifference by the youth as Christianity does in North America.

- The social gospel—made manifest under the banner of the buzzword "peace," which pays only lip service to evangelism and the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the face of real evil and poverty under our noses—will not have much success in bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ through his divinity to anyone hurting in this world, because it pays only minimal attention to the glory of God.

—**Murray Logan**

Macau

Asian-Canadian Mennonites share the 'good news'

The first-ever delegation from three Mennonite Church Canada Asian congregations visited Mennonite ministry sites in Macau and Hong Kong as part of a spring learning tour.

Leading the tour was Samson Lo, director of Multicultural Ministries for MC Canada, who was born in Macau. Interaction with the local Macau congregation and the city-state's culture and history were key features of the learning tour.

Ken Tse, pastor of Edmonton Chinese Mennonite Church, led a session for the Macau church's discipleship groups on how to relate to non-believing family members regarding issues such as ancestor worship and praying before meals.

On the eighth day of the 10-day tour, the group set out with other Christians from Macau Mennonite Church on a prayer walk, a first for most.

"Just as the beautiful lotus flower rises up from the mud in the pond below, so in Macau, [in] such an environment [with its casinos and gambling culture], God will raise up a church, not only beautiful, but giving the fragrance of Christ," Tse prayed as he gazed up at the huge golden statue of the lotus flower, the official emblem of Macau.

Led by Truong Kinh Doung of Grace Chinese Mennonite Church in Vancouver, the three women on the tour taught a group of Macau mothers from the local Mennonite church's tutoring program how to make Vietnamese salad. During a break, tour participant Irene Chui shared with the women how losing her son two years ago has shown her in a deeper way what it cost God to send his only son, Jesus, to die for humanity.

Murray and Delores Logan, members of Grace Mennonite Church in Regina, along with three of their five children, joined the group for a few days. Murray, a prison chaplain, preached at a service in the Macau prison and also led an evening session at Macau Mennonite Church on "Reaching out to the mar-

ginalized." Delores, a family physician, volunteered time at the Baptist-run Hope Medical Clinic. Their daughter Faith helped out tutoring children in English and interacting with the youths.

The last day of the tour was a Sunday. At an inter-generational outreach barbecue at the beach, Paul Lee, an enthusiastic senior member of the tour group, shared his faith journey with the 70 people in attendance.

Lee joined Karen Chan, who ministers to Chinese seniors in Toronto, in singing gospel *yuet kuk*, a traditional style Cantonese opera.

Lo preached on "Jesus as the way, the truth and the life" in a compelling way that tied into his roots in Macau.

The learning tour visitors made an impression on the local Macau people.

"Their coming here really encouraged me because they were Chinese and some of them were my parents' age, so I could see that it is possible for Chinese people my parents' age to believe in Jesus and have their lives transformed," observed Sarah Ho.

For most of the learning tour participants it was their first visit to Macau. In reflecting on their experiences, David Tran, who had shared his faith journey during Sunday worship, said, "I've seen that I can have a part in sharing the good news."

—MC Canada release by **Tobia Veith**

Three women from the Macau Learning Tour group taught local mothers from the Macau church's tutoring program how to make Vietnamese salad.



Photo by Samson Lo

Borabur, Thailand

Baptism, water blessing part of contextualized worship

Easter celebrations at Living Water Church in Borabur began and ended with water. Between the baptisms that began the morning and the *songkran* water blessings that ended it, church members used their own traditions—and some borrowed from others—to honour the Saviour who is changing lives across Borabur.

Much of the work of the Living Water congregation involves placing Christianity into the Isaan culture, which makes up much of northeastern Thailand and Laos. Other than the oc-

casional hymn, most of the music uses traditional Isaan instrumentation and melodies.

Some Thais believe that Christians evangelize to spread western culture, not religion. Nukhan Latsaboon's husband, a Buddhist who has thus far vehemently resisted Christianity, is one of those sceptics, despite his wife's Easter baptism, which signified an end to her life of spirit possession and worship.

Presenting a saviour who feels

Continued on page 18



Photo by David Fisher Fast

ss/Mennonite Mission Network worker Pat s Nukhan Latsaboon on Easter Sunday. stor Samarn Senavong baptized three members urch in a lake near Borabur, Thailand.

Baptisms *From page 17*

at home in Thailand eliminates the contextual barriers that would apply to a western religion, according to Mennonite Church Canada Witness/Mennonite Mission Network mission worker Pat Houmpham. For Easter communion, the bread and wine of the gospels became balls of sticky rice and small cups of *kradjep* (rosella juice).

A Thai New Year tradition includes ceremonial washings of possessions and people to ritually remove the previous year's dirt. At the end of the Easter service, Living Water leaders used it to celebrate Christ washing away sins, simultaneously blessing the elders.

As older members sat in a row, church members filed past, said a few words of blessing and slowly poured flower petal-scented water over the elders' hands, head or shoulders.

Still, some western traditions blend into the Thai context. The Living Water children coloured eggs for an Easter egg hunt. The eggs then became part of a congregational fellowship meal following the service.

—MC Canada release by **Ryan Miller**

Edmonton

MC Canada Assembly delegates walk for justice

On July 6, Mennonite Church Canada assembly delegates joined Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Canada members and supporters to deliver a petition of 80 signatures to the office of Edmonton-Strathcona Member of Parliament Rahim Jaffer. The petition calls for an end to secret trials in Canada; as well, it wants those currently held in jail under “security certificates” to be released from custody or formally charged.

The government of Canada, using a secret trial security certificate under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, can declare any refugee or permanent resident inadmissible to Canada, have them arrested, held indefinitely without charge or bail, and refuse to allow either the detainees or their lawyers to see the evidence. Currently, five Muslim men are being detained in Canada on security certificates, having served between three and six years each without charge.

Delegate Judith Doell, pastor of Whitewater Mennonite Church in Boissevain, Man., admitted that she was not aware of this issue until she saw information at the assembly. What drew her to the walk was a passion for justice, an uneasiness with growing militarization in Canada, and the message of the assembly's ministers conference held two days before. “We talked about three spiritual disciplines of the Anabaptists—peacemaking, truth-telling and economic sharing. Speaking out against these secret trials is peacemaking and truth-telling in action.”

The walk began at the Delta Edmonton South Hotel and attracted representatives from the Edmonton Coalition Against War and Racism, the Raging Grannies and Women in Black. After walking more than three



Photo by Paula Kirman

Mennonite Church Canada assembly delegate Judith Doell of Whitewater Mennonite Church in Boissevain, Man., left, joined Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Canada co-director Doug Pritchard, centre, and Alf Redekopp, director of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg, right, who led a march from the assembly hotel to the office of Edmonton-Strathcona Member of Parliament Rahim Jaffer, to deliver a petition of 80 signatures that calls for an end to secret trials in Canada; as well, it wants those currently held in jail under “security certificates” to be released from custody or formally charged.

kilometres, the group of more than 20 arrived at the office of MP Rahim Jaffer. In his absence, the group presented the petition and background information to Jaffer's staff.

CPT co-director Doug Pritchard noted to those gathered that Jaffer, in attending Edmonton area vigils, had supported CPT during the four-month kidnapping crisis in Iraq, which took a CPT delegation of four hostage. “Now, we're urging Mr. Jaffer to consider a similarity and use his position as MP to call for the abolition of this unjust legislation,” he said, adding, “As former hostage James Loney wrote in an open letter to MPs, delivered last month during Supreme Court of Canada hearings on the constitutionality of security certificates legislation, ‘Insofar as these five men have not been charged, they are subject to an unjust deprivation of freedom just as I was.’”

—CPT release by **Rebecca Johnson**

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Janet Plenert reflects on challenges and opportunities in leadership

Janet Plenert, the first-ever female executive director of a Mennonite mission ministry, became Mennonite Church Canada's new Witness executive secretary in January. She was interviewed by Canadian Mennonite national correspondent Leona Dueck Penner just prior to participating in the God's People Now! Tour in B.C.

How does it feel almost a half-year into the work?

Plenert: It's good, exciting, challenging and invigorating to be able to enter into another part of the church system and to work with such good colleagues.

What does your role as Witness executive secretary involve?

Plenert: I am the lead staff person for Witness—the team leader of International Ministries, Multicultural Ministries, Native Ministries and Congregational Partnerships. I'm responsible for vision-setting, staffing and oversight relating to the work Witness is involved in. The mandate of Witness is to lead, motivate and [be a] resource [for] the church to be missional at every level and to carry out those mission programs best done by the national church.

What's been the most challenging for you?

Plenert: Given my experience with International Ministries, it's a challenge and an opportunity to both function and be seen as a national and international representative of Witness, and to learn more about Native Ministries, Multicultural Ministries, Congregational Partnerships.

What are the most significant challenges for Witness, at home and abroad?

Plenert: Overseas, one challenge is to ensure sound missiology. Society is pulling us to ministry choices which I don't think are always sound, sustainable or respectful. That always needs to be held in tension with a holistic approach.

For example, in our culture numbers and results seem to measure success. We want to pat ourselves on the back. We want good experiences for our kids and congregations. But if the purpose is to set things right in a broken world, if we believe God is calling us to that, and that God's primary tool for doing that is the church, then not all our energy can go into short-term, feel good things. But transforming



and building the body—investing our lives—fewer and fewer people are willing to do that.

We also face challenges of communicating the vision to the congregations in ways that are energizing. This requires more administration and time to do this, yet we want to keep overhead low.

I'm thinking, too, of the Witness mandate and the pressing peace issues that keep coming up. I'm aware more and more of the “across the street and around the world” dynamic. We have to walk together globally. For example, the AIDS crisis in Botswana. We need to educate the churches and motivate congregations to think of these issues beyond Canada. These issues are challenging for us since we don't have adequate staff time, yet

need to dedicate time to them.

We're focused on networking across Canada. This is very exciting. We have a significant history to draw on.

In Saskatchewan, churches are asking, “Help us relate to native neighbours.”

And multicultural congregations are in the middle of this. My hope is that we will see dramatic increases in multicultural congregations relating to our Anglo-Germanic congregations. As Witness works through Multicultural Ministries and Congregational Partnerships, we are seeking to increase the understanding that faith—not ethnicity—creates community.

What difference does it make that you're a youngish woman in a significant leadership position within MC Canada? What are the strengths and challenges of this?

Plenert: As for being a woman in this position, MC Canada is leading the way. Two out of three of our executive secretaries are female, which is remarkable. The gender issue is not a plus or a minus here, but interdenominationally and internationally, it is. So it can be very lonely.

I think it's good for the church to be aware of both negative and positive aspects. Quite often, there's an assumption that you're the wife or secretary. You take that with a grain of salt! That's what happens when you're pushing out stereotypes. My hope is that being a younger woman will be inspirational to other women, that stereotypes will fade.

When it came to applying for my first church administration position, I kept thinking I'm not old enough—I don't wear a suit. I couldn't see myself as a mission administrator. It took quite a bit of praying and God's grace to move in that direction. I've been blessed by MC Canada.

Also, my husband has kept affirming me. Without him and the sacrifices he has made, I couldn't do this work. Most women don't have that kind of support.

—**Leona Dueck Penner**

Gaza, Palestine

Palestinian group gets MCC aid following Israeli attacks

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is providing \$29,600 to a Palestinian women's organization to help families and children cope with the trauma of Israeli attacks in Gaza.

Recent Israeli attacks on Palestinian targets, including public utilities, have cut electricity and water supplies in much of the region. Local residents are traumatized by gunfire, bombing and the sonic booms of fighter jets.

Culture and Free Thought Association, a women's organization in Gaza's Khan Younis refugee camp, operates community centres for children, teenagers, women and cultural events. The association is using MCC's grant to hire five trauma counsellors and to purchase a generator and fuel to provide electricity at the centres.

The counsellors will work with a volunteer drama team from the association to help children deal with trauma

creatively by writing and performing skits about their experiences.

Recent Israeli attacks in Gaza began on June 28 in response to attacks on Israel by the Palestinian Hamas movement. Israel is demanding that Hamas release a captured Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, and halt rocket attacks on Israeli communities. Hamas is demanding the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

Alain Epp Weaver, an MCC representative for Palestine, Jordan and Iraq, says that the violence is contributing to a humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

"All of this comes on top of the fact that you have a very high poverty level in the Gaza Strip," he says. "Up to 80 percent of the population is living on well under \$2 a day."

Since the recent violence began, Israel has almost completely closed Gaza's borders, and food and fuel have grown scarce.

Epp Weaver says that MCC is working on plans with partner organizations to deliver humanitarian aid in Gaza.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

Beirut, Lebanon

MCC monitors worsening Lebanese situation

Thousands of Lebanese are fleeing southern Lebanon to find safety in other parts of the city and country.

Back in Winnipeg, Rick Janzen, director of MCC's Middle East programs, says MCC is responding as it can by providing funds for food, water, medical supplies and emergency shelter for some of these displaced people. MCC is working in partnership with three local Lebanese organizations to provide this assistance.

Lebanese civilians are bearing the brunt of the brutal conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, says Janzen. A city park situated close to the MCC office in West Beirut has become a makeshift refugee camp.

Damage to roads and bridges, along with ongoing safety and security concerns, creates enormous logistical challenges for local groups providing emergency aid, says Janzen.

Bassam Chamoun, a Lebanese citizen who has worked in the MCC office since 1985, is now coordinating MCC's relief efforts. Chamoun, along with his family, has moved to Beirut from their village in southern Lebanon, a region where many of the Israeli air strikes are taking place.

As of press time, MCC's North American workers, Ken and Kathryn Seitz were still in Beirut waiting to join the evacuation of U.S. citizens currently underway.

MCC continues to monitor the situation in Lebanon and is planning a more comprehensive emergency response when the conflict dies down, says Janzen.

People wishing to contribute to MCC's emergency response should mark their contribution "Middle East Emergency Assistance."

—MCC release

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Kitchener, Ont.

Land claim issues addressed

With 25 Mennonite churches within six miles of the Grand River that winds its way through southwestern Ontario, aboriginals “consider it our job to renew relationships with each and every one of them. It is time to rebuild those friendships,” Wes Elliott from the Six Nations of the Grand River told a gathering of 120 people at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., late last month.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario had invited Elliott, along with four other Six Nations members, to speak to all area Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches. But a special invitation was made to those 25 churches located in the Grand River Valley that Mr. Elliott referred to. This puts them inside the Haldimand Grant, which had been given to the Six Nations in 1784, before the first Mennonite settlers arrived in the area.

The June 28 meeting was a first step in having at least these churches begin to better understand the story of their neighbours who welcomed them. Throughout the evening, there were several stories of past friendships between Mennonites and Six Nations people, and a hope to rekindle that spirit, rather than see more of the conflict and tension that has emerged

in Caledonia. (*The southwestern Ontario community has been the scene of aboriginal and non-native blockades since the spring as the result of a planned subdivision on land the Six Nations claimed as its own. Ed.*)

Core to the presentation was a video production by a Grade 12 Six Nations student, which showed the passion and tension on all sides as the efforts to settle the land issues at the Caledonia site continue. While there was not a lot of history discussed, there was clearly a determination from each of the speakers to see the Caledonia dispute through to a just and lasting resolution.

During the discussion period, one Kitchener resident noted that the guest speakers were sitting beneath a Sunday school bulletin board entitled “Our Covenant.” “Our word, ‘covenant,’ is really the same word as ‘treaty,’ and I think it is important that we realize the power of those relationships that we have through covenants and treaties,” the man said.

It remains clear that there is a long journey for Six Nations people to reach a place of lasting resolution to long-held land concerns. The evening ended without any clear plan or commitment from Mennonite neighbours as to how they would be part of achieving such a resolution, but there was a strong

sense that neighbours who had not seen much of each other lately were ready to begin to renew relationships. —MCC Ontario release

by **Rick Cober Bauman**

Calgary

Albertans learn about ‘glimmers of hope’ in fight against HIV/AIDS

Four hundred people attended the second annual Glimmers of Hope fundraiser hosted by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta in Calgary on May 28. The event—to raise awareness and funds for MCC’s work with victims of AIDS—featured Brian Stewart, well known CBC radio and television broadcaster, and Olympic speed skating medalist Cindy Klassen.

Stewart began his presentation describing with statistics and stories the growing spread of AIDS and the desperation of countries who are losing their professional workers to AIDS. While he talked at length about the horrible toll AIDS is taking on so much of the world, and especially on countries and communities that are already economically marginalized, Stewart ended by emphasizing the need for optimism, citing evidence that progress is being made in countries like Brazil, Uganda, Nigeria and others.

But while governments in these countries have taken giant and creative steps in education, prevention and treatment, and are making significant progress in the fight against AIDS, he said it is the not-for-profit service-minded organizations and volunteers all over the world who are changing the world. He said that, as he covers disasters in different parts of the world, he sees the positive impact and leadership of agencies like MCC.

Ann Kaciulis of Thompson, Man., told her personal story of losing several family members to AIDS. Along with lawyer Pam Groening and others, Kaciulis is looking for ways to improve the response to AIDS in Canada by government, churches and other non-profit agencies such as MCC.

—Abe Janzen



MCC Ontario photo

Bill Stevenson, left, a former volunteer with Mennonite Central Committee with the Innu communities in Labrador, shares a smile with Lehman Gibson, a farmer and speaker from Six Nations, following a presentation by Six Nations members at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.

Winnipeg

More than 40 years of lay ministry honoured

A festive atmosphere greeted members of Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church as they gathered on June 9 to celebrate the services of Gerhard Ens and Ingrid Cornies on the occasion of their retirement from lay ministry in the church.

When Gerhard and Anni Ens began attending Sargent Avenue, the members recognized his ordination to the ministry in 1957 in the Blumenort congregation and invited him to share his preaching and teaching gifts with them in 1977.

Cornies grew up in the Sargent Avenue congregation, pursued her education—which eventually led to work as a chaplain to university students—and was called to lay ministry in 1992 and commissioned in 1993.

From the early 1950s to the present, the congregation has been enriched by the ministry of nine people who had been called to the ministry in other churches. Under the leadership of the leading pastor, lay ministers took their turns preaching, as well as teaching and giving counsel and pastoral care in the event of illness and death.

Margaret Pankratz, a long-time friend of Cornies, paid tribute to her, highlighting the qualities listed in Galatians 5:22—qualities which have been evident in Cornies' ministry.

Martin Friesen, a colleague in lay ministry, expressed appreciation for the 29 years Ens has enriched the life of the congregation as a preacher who made his sermons relevant, a teacher who developed a special bond with his Bible study students, and an historian who made the church's past come alive.

In an audio tribute, Menno Wiebe shared a part of Cornies' sermon in which she spoke of *einigung* (the church coming together through prayer), while Ens spoke of his experiences as a conscientious objector.

Pastor Edwin Epp led the congrega-

tion in a meditation, expressing appreciation for the collegiality he experienced with Ens and Cornies. In reference to wisdom in James 3, he observed that both displayed "reverent, yet gentle wisdom," which they "have lived and shared with us over the years."

Cornies shared her feeling that all church members were her colleagues. She expressed the difficulty of counselling people she knew while staying as neutral as possible.

Ens gave thanks for the opportunity to lead Sargent Avenue's Bible study for many years.



Photo by Margaret Neufeld

Gerhard Ens, left, and Ingrid Cornies were honoured for their many years of lay ministry at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg on June 9.

In turn, members of the congregation had some time to express appreciation to the guests of honour during an informal time of refreshments that brought the evening to a close.

—Margaret Neufeld

Abbotsford, B.C.

Menno Terrace East officially opened

Abbotsford residents now have another choice of housing in which to live. On June 10, Mennonite Benevolent Society (MBS) formally opened the 95-unit Menno Terrace East, which has both assisted living and supportive housing apartments.

Many members of the society, as well as officials from three levels of government and the health region, were there to participate in ceremonies to mark the occasion.

Most of the speakers emphasized two themes: that it takes a community effort to provide such facilities, and that there will be a continuing need for this type of housing.

Supportive housing residents enjoy a private apartment, a daily meal, social and recreational activities, periodic nurse visits and access to personal homecare services. Assisted living residents receive the same amenities as those in supportive housing, plus another meal and assis-

tance with such daily needs as bathing, dressing, housekeeping and medication.

Provincial politician John van Dongen said the new facility allows the elderly the option of being close to their family, their home and the community in which they have lived.

Ed Pankratz, benevolent society president and board chair, mentioned that the new building was completed without government funds, on time and budget, and with no major accidents.

MBS chief executive officer Gerald Neufeld noted that in the past 20 years the resident bed capacity had increased from 297 to 557, calling it a remarkable achievement. "This new development is an innovative and progressive model of housing and care, and MBS is pleased to partner with BC Housing and Fraser Health to provide quality housing and support, particularly to lower income seniors," he said.

Representing the Fraser Health Region was interim CEO Keith Anderson, who praised the "entrepreneurial spirit" of the Mennonite community.

—MBS release

Zurich, Ont.

Mission worker devoted her life to service

Long-time mission worker Carol Erb Gingerich of Zurich passed away on June 5 at South Huron Hospital, Exeter, Ont.

Carol Ann Erb and her twin sister Joy were born on a farm near Zurich on Oct. 23, 1939.

After graduation from high school and a 14-year stint with Gingerich's Sales and Service in Zurich, a sermon preached by pastor Ephraim Gingerich on service opportunities with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) placed a desire in her heart to serve.



Gingerich

In 1972, she began a three-year term with MCC in Afghanistan, then worked for International Assistance Mission (IAM) as assistant to the medical director of the Noor Eye Institute. She remained in Afghanistan with Christoffell-Blindenmission, the German head office of Christian Blind Mission International (CBMI), until 1982, when the murder of two workers forced the IAM team to leave the country.

She returned to Canada and married Cyril K. Gingerich, a pastor, in December 1983. The couple then spent seven years as CBMI representatives in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Upon his retirement in 1991, they returned to Canada, where she continued her association with CBMI as manager of their store, A World of Goods, in Exeter, and then moved with the store to Stouffville, Ont., where she also served as assistant manager of the mission's conference centre.

Following the death of her husband in 1999, Gingerich went to Peshawar, Pakistan, as office manager for IAM. Following 9/11, she was sent home, but returned again to Pakistan in early 2002. After the Taliban was removed from power in Afghanistan,

she returned to Kabul as administrative assistant to the project director at IAM University Eye Hospital until September 2004, when she moved back to her hometown in Canada for health reasons.

As cancer consumed her body she continued to share compassion and wisdom with family and friends. During the final stages of Carol's illness, she remained focused on her faith and longed for heaven. One of her favourite Scriptures was, "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8—NIV).

Her 66 years had a great impact on many people around the world, including the three Afghan families she helped come to Canada through Zurich, East Zorra, Tavistock and Cassel Mennonite churches. —From a eulogy by **Dianne Loerchner**

The author is leader of pastoral care at Zurich (Ont.) Mennonite Church, where the funeral took place on June 10.

Saskatoon

Rural church network offers website for isolated farmers

An inter-church organization to support farmers and small communities is gaining strength in Western Canada. Known as the Canadian Rural Church Network, the movement brings together farmers, pastors and other interested individuals from various church backgrounds to support and encourage those in society often ignored by governments and misunderstood by urban dwellers.

Since last fall's inaugural meeting, a network website (canadianrural-church.net) has been established to share ideas and show support for farmers. Defined as "an organization of persons—lay and clergy—who have a passion for enhancing the quality of life in rural communities," the net-

work uses its website to help dispel feelings of isolation among rural clergy and communities, propel people forward in their spiritual walk, and offer ideas to help each other.

And Saskatchewan Mennonites are joining in.

Eric Olfert, from Mount Royal Mennonite in Saskatoon, has been involved with the network right from its formative stages. Because of his role in the MC Saskatchewan-sponsored Vibrant Rural Churches Project, Olfert was exposed to many of the issues that farmers face. "It made us aware that farmers want recognition," he says.



Olfert

That experience gained Olfert an invitation to speak at last fall's initial meeting. Held in the tiny community of Muenster, Sask., the Harvest Conference sparked the creation of the Canadian Rural Church Network.

"At the conference, a meeting of interested persons was called to formalize the network," Olfert explains.

Other Mennonites in leadership also attended the Harvest Conference last October. Most of them, like Claire and Garth Ewert Fisher, Lorne Epp and Harry Harder, work in rural settings and see the conflicts played out on a daily basis.

Representatives from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta also came to Muenster, as well as a few from Ontario and British Columbia.

'It made us aware that farmers want recognition.'

Harry Harder, pastor of Pleasant Point Mennonite Church near Clavet, Sask., has attended several

of the international Rural Church Network conferences. "I always walk away a bit disappointed," he admits. "We end up nowhere closer to a solution to where we were before."

However, Harder acknowledges that the purpose of the network is to offer support to people, rather than solve problems or take on governments. "It's important to get people together and focus on the issues," he maintains.

—**Karin Fehderau**

Didsbury, Alta.

Cowboy preacher explains how training is more than teaching

It was a beautiful warm sunny morning, the perfect day to set out for church on horseback or by horse-drawn carriage.

Each summer the Bergthal Mennonite Church congregation invites the neighbouring Mountain View Missionary Church to join in celebration of the rural cowboy lifestyle in an outdoor worship service. This year some visitors returning from the MC Canada Assembly in Edmonton also joined in the service.

Everyone gathered in the shade of some trees on blankets and in lawn chairs near a hay wagon for a stage. Familiar old songs and hymns were sung, accompanied by guitar. Inspirational stories about the presence of God in nature were read.

This year's guest speakers, Marvin and Karen Engle, ministered by sharing God's word through story and song in authentic cowboy style.

Marvin is a working cowboy who

uses his roping and riding skills in everyday life—not just for entertainment and leisure. His life as a cowboy and horse trainer has given him special appreciation for *Proverbs 22:6: "Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray" (NRSV).*

He explained that training is far more than teaching or preaching. It involves practising and reinforcing behaviours and actions until that is the natural response, he said, noting that it is through the daily example that parents set for their children that they are trained.

Horses—even more so than children—do not learn from words. "If your actions do not mirror your intentions, you have lost ground in training," he said.

The service concluded with a potluck lunch.

—Diane Jonson



Photo by Diane Jonson

Marvin Engle, pictured, and his wife Karen were the guest speakers and singers at this year's "cowboy worship service" put on by Bergthal Mennonite Church near Didsbury, Alta. A good "roper," Engle works at local rodeos helping pick up riders after their performances.

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People&Events

Stouffville, Ont.—Willowgrove Primary School has hired three new staff for the 2006-07 school year. Julie Moyer-Suderman, who taught Grade 2/3 last year, replaces Rebecca Seiling as head teacher. Peggy Atkinson is the new Grade 1/2 teacher; she is a recent graduate of Trent University. Kamol Wangchanachitchon will be joining the organization for one year beginning on Aug. 19. He is taking part in Mennonite Central Committee's International Visitor Exchange Program.
—Willowgrove release

Bluffton, Ohio—James M. Harder has been named Bluffton University's ninth president, beginning with the 2006-07 academic year. He replaces Lee Snyder, who retired in July after 10 years of service. Harder has served as Bluffton's vice-president for institutional planning since 2003, and special assistant to the president, and professor of economics, since 2001. Prior to his positions at Bluffton, he was a professor of economics and business at Bethel College in Kansas for 11 years. During his four-and-a-half years at Bluffton, Harder has overseen the institution's strategic planning processes and led the integrated marketing team that developed a new approach for communicating Bluffton's distinctive qualities. Harder received bachelor's degrees in history and economics/business administration from Bethel College in 1978 and his master's and Ph.D. in economics from the University of Notre Dame in 1990.
—Bluffton University release

Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Albrecht—to Jeannette and Jonathan, Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont., twins Alexander and Elizabeth, July 9.

Caporiccio—to Vonnie and Jerry, Mississauga Mennonite Fellowship, Ont., a son, Jacob Alexander, Oct. 9.

Driedger—to Judith and Jonathan, Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man., a daughter, Sienna, April 6.

Driedger—to Justine and Jake, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., a daughter, Misha Rose, June 10.

Jarrett—to Judy and Doug, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., a son, Tyler James, March 27.

Reimer—to Catherine and Abe, Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont., a son, Cardigan Caleb, June 30.

Reimer—to Helga and Alwin, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, a daughter, Naomi, July 1.

Sawatzky—to Beth and James, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., a daughter, Ellery Ruth, July 8.

Sellar-Voll—to Isabella and Martin of Winnipeg, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Kinlay Lorne, June 7.

Thiessen—to Andrea and Kevin, Morden Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Jadyne Renae, July 1.

Wiebe—to Corissa and Jim, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Cole Liam, May 29.

Wiens—to Cara and Brennan, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, a son, Mitchell Abram, June 26.

Wright—to Leona and Carlisle of Winnipeg, Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain, Man., a son, Addison Russell Carter, May 27.

Marriages

Birch-Chapman—Oren and Christine, Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont., June 17.

Davis-Regehr—Kyle and Kaleigh, First Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 20.

Froese-Epp—Gerry (Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.) and Donna (Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.), at Niagara United Mennonite, May 5.

Hesom-Peters—Terence (Church of God, Morden, Man.) and Connie (Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man.), June 10.

Kroeker-Dyck—Daniel (Morden Mennonite, Man.) and Megan (Glenlea Mennonite, Man.), in Glenlea, July 1.

Janzen-Penner—Kevin (Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.) and Becky, at Niagara United Mennonite, June 3.

Klassen-Heinrichs—Justin and Martha, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., June 24.

Neufeld-McDonald—Garett (Jamie) and Tamara, First Mennonite, Calgary, July 8.

Redekopp-Ruhl—Andrew and Candice, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 17.

Reimer-Dueck—Wes (Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Ashley, in Winkler, Man., June 3.

Unger-Lawler—Michael and Michelle, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., June 30.

Deaths

Braun—Bill, 84, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, June 25.

Janz—Nick, 93, Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man., April 27.

Janzen—Erika, 88, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., April 9.

Klassen—Linda (Barg), 65 (b. Dec. 1, 1940), Coaldale Mennonite, Alta., June 16.

Krueger—Steven, 27, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., June 18.

Nighswander—Joseph Martin, 82 (b. Nov. 20, 1923), Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont., Jan. 7.

Pelser—Leonard, 87, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., June 8.

Penner—Hilda, 81 (b. March 27, 1925), Steinbach Mennonite, Man., July 9.

Rempel—Elmer, 72, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, July 2.

Rempel—Olga, 93, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 30.

Toews—Anna, 100 (b. Aug. 5, 1905), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., June 18.

Wiebe—Katherina (Tien), 88, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., June 6.
Wiens—Frank, 81, Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man., May 26.

Baptisms

Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man.—Carol Hill, Jake Spenst, Traci Warkentin, June 4.

Emmanuel Mennonite, Winkler, Man.—Bryce Loewen, Brock Klassen, Janis Schellenberg, Mike Suderman, Christina Tripp, June 4.

Grace Mennonite, Regina—Meghan Goudy, Lisa Goudy, Gabrielle Logan, Hao Huiwen, June 4.

Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg—Bryan Viallet, June 4.

Mississauga Mennonite Fellowship, Ont.—Vanessa Lelless Breton, June 4.

Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon—Donna Bousquet, Kaitlyn Wiebe, June 25.

Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.—Stephen Bergen,

Jonathan Bradnam, Mark Epp, Andrew Ferguson, Nicole Teichgraf, David Peters, Jennifer Hinz, David Wall, Maria Loewen, June 4.

North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg—Jessica Titterton, June 4. (The name was incorrectly printed in the July 10 issue.)

Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.—Cameron Amos, Millie Amos, Rachel Burkholder, Richard Ackerman, April 16.

Windsor Mennonite Fellowship, Ont.—Michael Trepanier, May 7.

Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.—Kelly Hildebrand, Martha Heinrichs, Justin Klassen, June 4.

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.

Mennonite Church Canada

Prayer requests

This summer, take time to pray for:

- The integration and involvement of youths and young adults in the life of the church throughout the country. Young adults met at the MC Canada assembly in Edmonton and discussed their passion for the church and their desire to help connect with other young adults who feel distanced from their congregations. Please pray that all might work together to decrease this feeling of distance through constructive dialogue and age-integrated events in congregations.
- Cliff and Natasha Dueck, Mennonite Church Canada Witness Workers, as they lead a camping ministry for youths and children in Ukraine until September. Please pray that the youths will grow in their faith in Jesus.

—**Hinke Loewen-Rudgers**

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Executive minister reports on assembly

Area Conference Only Membership (ACOM) was an important issue at the Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Edmonton, according to MC Eastern Canada executive minister David Martin. Several area churches had made requests to allow congregations to belong to only the area church, without belonging to MC Canada.

Martin said the sense of being fellow believers in round-table discussions encouraged collaboration and the motion to move toward ACOM passed with a large majority. His experience of congregations sharing their visions for local ministry in these sessions was a high point of the assembly.

“After restructuring in both MC Canada and MC Eastern Canada, people seemed ready for a turn outward,” he said.

While at the assembly, leaders from MC Eastern Canada and MC B.C. met to continue their ongoing dialogue about Ontario congregations that are accepting practising homosexuals. MC Eastern Canada “reaffirmed its previous decision to request congregations and pastors to respect the *Confession of Faith*,” said Martin, adding that the conference has extended its “season of discernment,” with the focus on learning to live with differences while affirming a common commitment to Christ.

Martin’s only “twinge of regret” came during the discussions and resultant vote on a Mennonite Church Canada motto verse. While the final choice of I Corinthians 3:11 is a good choice, it seemed to Martin that quickly moving to the old Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) motto suggested a lack of understanding for the history of the former Mennonite Church congregations in Eastern Canada. He noted that this lack of understanding is found even within former CMC congregations in MC Eastern Canada.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Staff transitions

John Klassen, director of Leadership Ministries, has resigned his position with Mennonite Church Manitoba, effective Sept. 30, to become the lead pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Winkler.

As a result of Klassen’s resignation, interim appointments have been made to fill the position until Sept. 30, 2007.

Harold Peters-Fransen has been appointed as full-time interim director of Leadership

Ministries, effective Sept. 25. He served as a pastor for many years and in the past five years as interim pastor in several settings. He comes with a wealth of experience in pastoral ministry and pastoral transitions. His responsibilities include transitions, credentialing, pastor-congregation relations, event planning, supervising the Chaplaincy Program, general administration, and relations with the Reference Group and Credential Committee. His work will involve developing systems and guidelines for calling pastors and congregation consultants.

Peter Zacharias has been appointed interim director of Pastor Care, effective mid-October. He is retiring after a lengthy career in pastoral ministry. He comes with strong pastoral gifts and will be responsible for pastor care and pastor cluster meetings. Zacharias is volunteering up to two days per week.

The administrative assistant position vacated by Diane Funk last December has been filled by Beverley Sawatzky, who has been appointed to serve MC Manitoba’s four ministry areas. For the past several years she has served as executive assistant to the dean at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Ind. She and her husband Erick will move to Winnipeg in mid-August. She begins work on Aug. 21.

—**Edgar Rempel**

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Plans for Bethany Manor unveiled

Bethany Manor in Saskatoon recently held meetings for the public and residents to present information about the new addition and long-range plans for the Mennonite housing complex.

The new building, which is attached to the Villa at the Bethany seniors housing complex, will be known as the enhanced living area.

“We have begun excavating for a 56-unit, four-storey building,” said administrator Dave Ratzlaff. A total of 46 units are life-lease and 10 can be rented. Each 65-square-metre apartment has two bedrooms.

The decision to build comes as the board recognizes the increasing needs of an aging population. The complex now offers 16 assisted living units that are barely able to contain the needs of the over 250 residents.

There is a long waiting list to gain access to the assisted living units and many people end up moving into private care homes. The other problem with the Villa, said Ratzlaff, is that seniors wanted more options to choose from to accommodate the varying needs that growing old brings.

“They can maintain their independence longer,” said Ratzlaff, pointing out that with the increased level of support, the residents don’t need to go into long-term care as soon, which also puts less strain on an already overloaded health-care system.

The concept is so popular and the need so great that 22 of the new units sold in a week and that was even before the digging started.

Although support services for people in the enhanced living units will need to be ordered, there is one service that comes without extra cost.

“Right from Day 1, there will be 24-hour supervision,” said Ratzlaff. The complex already has staff in place to check on residents once every hour for those in assisted living units. That same service will also be offered in the new building.

The building is to be finished in just over a year.

Continued on page 28

TheChurches From page 27

Mennonite Church Alberta

New pastor at Holyrood

Werner De Jong officially began working as pastor at Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton on June 19.

His wife Joanne will begin as co-manager of the Ten Thousand Villages store on Whyte Ave. in Edmonton on Aug. 1.

The De Jongs come to Alberta from Petitcodiac, N.B., where he was pastor at Petitcodiac Mennonite Church and she was Ten Thousand Village's director for festival sales in Atlantic Canada.

The De Jongs have three children ranging in age from

one to 16. They are living in the Mill Woods area of the city.

An installation service for De Jong is being planned for sometime in the fall.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Eden Mennonite group works in Mississippi

An intergenerational group from Eden Mennonite Church in Chilliwack spent a week in early July helping build houses through Mennonite Disaster Service in Pass Christian, Miss. The group included 10 youths and five youth sponsors, a family of four and an experienced construction foreman. They raised funds for the trip by doing a silent auction for a barbecue, a landscaping/spring cleaning fundraiser

and their own roofing project for one of the church member's barns. Youth pastor Rob Brown accompanied the group.

Two churches offering festive food and fun

• Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, invites everyone to a hog roast, corn on the cob, watermelon, *Rollkuchen* and other food and entertainment, Aug. 19. The event is a joint fundraiser for the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) travel fund and for retiring the church gym debt. Food will be served beginning at 4 p.m., along with a silent auction of crafts and services. At 7 p.m., there will be a concert featuring music from Paraguay, Kenya and El Salvador, and MWC associate general secretary Pakisa

Tshimika will speak. • Sherbrooke Mennonite Church of Vancouver plans a community fall festival, Sept. 23, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. This is a free event and will feature different ethnic foods, carnival games, crafts, a bike rodeo with the Vancouver Police Department, fire truck tours with local firefighters, and much more.

Unless otherwise credited, the articles in TheChurches pages were written by: Leona Dueck Penner (MC Canada), Dave Rogalsky (Eastern Canada), Evelyn Rempel Petkau (Manitoba), Karin Fehderau (Saskatchewan), Donita Wiebe-Neufeld (Alberta), and Amy Dueckman (British Columbia). See page 2 for contact information.

WILLARD METZGER



From our leaders

The rain stopped falling and a moist hot breeze replaced it. I wiped away the sweat forming on my forehead and drew my attention to my friend across the table. An important conversation was happening. As I listened, words that seemed foreign slipped from the quivering lips of someone I knew well.

As a pastor, you often see examples of what happens when God's people forget who they are. Lifestyle choices—while easily embraced when given over to the influence of the media—are not immediately accepted when aligned with God's principles of justice and charity. Behaviour accepted by an egocentric society looks very different from that aligned with a theocentric focus.

The theme for Mennonite Church Canada's 2006 assembly articulated this well. God's People Now!—a statement generated from I Peter 2:9-10—can be understood in a variety of ways. It could be seen from the perspective of a purpose statement, directing us to a response of immediate activity. It could also be seen from the perspective of an identity statement, prompting us to reflect on the quality of a character depicted by such an identity.

The thematic statement from I Peter 2:9-10 could also be understood from the perspective of a prophetic call that invites a response of immediate activity and also prompts us to reflect on quality of character.

It is a reminder of who we are, and what we are all

Being 'God's people now'

Sometimes all it takes is a friend to remind us what we already know.

about. It invites us to commitments of discipleship. It calls us to remain aligned with sacrificial giving. God's people do not live for themselves, but are, instead, aligned to a higher purpose, resulting in the joyful sacrifice of resources, energy, time and influence.

Such a prophetic call is a refreshing invitation to a people within Canadian society. In a context of consumption, what an invitation to freedom! In an atmosphere of greed, what a contrast! In a social framework of individualism, what a gift!

The theme could have propelled us to become God's people. Instead, it serves as a reminder to be God's people.

The words falling from the lips of my friend sounded foreign in light of what I knew my friend to be.

"But I know you," I finally blurted out. "You have a passion for God. You have a yearning to be God's vessel. What you are describing does not fit with who you are," I cried out in desperation.

It served as a turning point. Sometimes all it takes is a friend to remind us what we already know. Sometimes all it takes is to be reminded of what really compels us in life. A prophetic call is the voice of a friend reminding us who we are and what we are all about. We are God's people now!

Willard Metzger is chair of MC Canada's Witness Council and a General Board member.

Calendar

British Columbia

Aug. 17-27: Annual MCC quilt show and demonstrations at Clearbrook Public Library, Abbotsford. Quilts on display at the library will be auctioned at the Relief Sale on Sept. 15 to 16 at the Tradex in Abbotsford.

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. Friday from 5 to 9 p.m.;

Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sept. 17: MCC B.C. Festival of Praise with an African music group; 2:30 p.m. at South Abbotsford MB Church. Speaker: Dan Wiens from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

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. 4-12: MCC Arts and Peace Festival at CBC.

Nov. 16-18: MC Canada executive meetings at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

Nov. 17-19: Senior youth Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

Nov. 18: MCC B.C. annual general meeting. Willingdon MB Church, Burnaby.

Dec. 1: World AIDS Day benefit concert with the Vancouver Welshmen's Choir at Abbey Arts Centre, Abbotsford.

Alberta

Aug. 26-27: Bluesky Mennonite Church's 50th anniversary celebration. Meet and greet, 3 p.m.; picnic, 5:30 p.m., at Bluesky Park (26). Celebration continues on Aug. 27 at the church.

Sept. 9: MCC fundraising golf tournament at Nanton Golf Club. Tee off at 1:30 p.m. For registration and pledge forms, call 403-275-6935.

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

Sept. 22: MCC Alberta fundraising concert with House of Doc at King's University College, Edmonton. Venue and details TBA.

Oct. 26: MCC Alberta hosts Tony Campolo at Dalhousie Community Church, Calgary. For tickets, call 403-275-6935.

Oct. 27-28: MCC Alberta annual meeting at Rosemary Mennonite Church.

Manitoba

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. 10: MCC alumni barbecue at CMU.

Sept. 15-16: Brandon MCC Relief Sale at the Keystone Centre.

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

Sept. 21: Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg, multimedia awareness-building/fundraising event, 7 p.m., at the gallery. Curator Ray

Dirks will outline the vision of the gallery. Speaker: Margaret Fast. Music by Steve Bell. Call 204-888-6781 for an invitation. Attendance by invitation only.

Sept. 22-23: CMU homecoming weekend. Visit cmu.ca for more information.

Sept. 24: Camp Koinonia 40th anniversary, 11 a.m. Theme: "Bringing the Koinonia family together to celebrate God's work in this place where heaven and earth meet."

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

Continued on page 30

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ToMorrow From page 29

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

Aug. 4-6: Nidus 2006 Festival in Kitchener-Waterloo. Sponsored by the Canadian Council of Churches, the festi-

val brings together all streams of the Christian church in a united effort against AIDS. For more information, visit nidus2006.ca.

Aug. 13: Annual Reesor picnic at Backus Mill, Port Rowan. Worship service at 11 a.m. Everyone welcome.

Aug. 17: UMEI peach social.

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

Sept. 8-10: Building Community Retreat at Hidden Acres Camp for people with disabilities, their family, friends and caregivers. Speaker: Marti Hyhko. Theme: "Ways to healing." For more information, call 519-625-8602.

Sept. 10: George Albrecht family reunion at Khaki Club, Nafziger Road, Wellesley. Potluck meal at 1 p.m. For more information, call Ken Albrecht at 519-662-2927.

Sept. 23-24: Floradale Mennonite Church is hosting a homecoming and open house to celebrate its new building and to remember its 150 years of history.

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

Oct. 1: Mississauga Mennonite Fellowship 25th anniversary. Worship and communion at 10 a.m., followed by a potluck lunch, an afternoon program (including storytelling and visiting), and a vespers service at 5 p.m. To confirm your attendance, call 905-812-0452.

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

U.S.A.

Oct. 20-22: Young Adult Fellowship retreat focussing on young adult gifts in the church; Camp Ray Bird, South Bend, Ind. For more information, or to register, e-mail scotth@mennoniteusa.org.

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 businessasacalling.org.

ABNER MARTIN MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP

This annual scholarship is awarded by the Menno Singers to a student who is affiliated with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and is in a full-time program of music study, graduate or undergraduate.

Applications must be mailed by Sept. 15, 2006. For application documents or further information, contact:

Lewis Brubacher, 16 Euclid Avenue, Waterloo, ON N2L 6L9. Phone: 519-884-3072. E-mail: Lbrubacher@sympatico.ca.

For sale

West Zion Mennonite Church in Carstairs, Alta., has a Rogers 411 church organ for sale. Good condition, hardly

used. Was \$9,000 new, asking \$4,500 OBO. Phone 403-337-2020 if you are interested.

For rent

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

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.

Employment opportunities

Crestwood MB Church in Medicine Hat, Alta., is seeking a

FULL-TIME PASTOR

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

Wanted: Someone to provide child care 1 or 2 days per week for a one-year-old boy starting October 2006. Located near

Sherburn St., Winnipeg. Contact Karen: phone 204-957-5596 or e-mail kgrobinson@mts.net.

Advertising Dates

Issue	Copy Due
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>	
Oct. 30	Oct. 17
<i>(Focus on Books and Resources)</i>	

Contact:

Karen Suderman, Advertising Representative
1-800 316-4052 x224
advert@candianmennonite.org

Employment opportunities



Goshen College Department of Sociology/Anthropology and Social Work seeks applicants for a tenure-track position in Sociology, an internationally focused major. Ph.D. in sociology required by Fall 2007.

Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Women and minority persons are encouraged to apply.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College web page: www.goshen.edu/employment. Closing date for applications is Oct. 20, 2007.



Mennonite Central Committee Alberta invites applications for the position of

Area Manager-Community Justice Ministries (CJM)

This position manages programs that promote restorative justice and work with prisoners and ex-prisoners. Requirements include a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and non-violent peacemaking, and a demonstrated passion for restorative justice.

The Area Manager will participate in broader MCC Alberta leadership, and will give overall leadership to CJM programs in terms of staff and budget supervision, volunteer development, fundraising, management of contracts with Correctional Services Canada, constituency building, strategic planning, program development, and working with partner organizations. This is a full-time position beginning September 2006.

To inquire or submit resumes, contact: Heather Klassen, #210, 2946-32 St. NE, Calgary, AB T1Y 6J7. Phone 403-275-6935, E-mail heather@mccab.org.



**Mennonite Mutual Insurance
Insurance Underwriting Assistant**

Entry level, or experienced, full-time Underwriting Assistant. The candidate will have a strong desire to serve and be willing to be trained, both on the job and through recognized insurance industry instruction. Opportunities for advancement will follow training and experience.

Mennonite Mutual Insurance has grown from the origins of mutual aid that members of the Mennonite community have long provided for one another. The company is guided by a vision statement which is based on Galatians 6:2: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

MMI provides property and liability insurance for homes, farms and businesses. Resumes should be directed by e-mail to Sheri Wallace at swallace@mmiab.ca or by fax to 403-291-6733.

Special Farming Opportunity

Need a retired farmer to live in Ukraine and act as a representative of an established mission farming project. Farming project supplies operating capital to seminaries for meeting the Great Commission in former Soviet countries. Period of service is negotiable. Project will provide housing and airfares for husband and wife team. Tenure to begin at candidate's prerogative. References supplied upon request.

Contact Lee Grismore, Director, Paraclete Company, LLC.
E-mail: flagrismore@thewavz.com Phone: 419-634-2282.

A full-time home care worker is needed in Winnipeg, Man. Applicant must have a vehicle. Duties include one-on-one work with a visually impaired elderly gentleman, taking him to the YMCA for daily work-outs as well as going to any necessary appointments. Start date of Aug 1. Call Kay Loewen at (204) 775-3333 for details.

A Mennonite community in the Chaco of Paraguay is seeking full-time music teachers to teach piano, violin (preferably Suzuki method) and voice. Time contract: March until November 2007. Salary, round-trip and accommodations negotiable. Please contact Ed Toews. Phone 0981-365-745 or E-mail edwil@telesurf.com.py.



**CANADIAN MENTAL
HEALTH ASSOCIATION**
**ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
POUR LA SANTÉ MENTALE**

**Intensive Case Manager
Temporary Full-time Position
6-month Locum
East Elgin**

THE CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, ELGIN BRANCH is looking for an individual to provide client-centred community-based Intensive Case Management to seriously mentally ill individuals living in Elgin County. The position will include direct treatment, monitoring and support, individualized assessment and planning, systems advocacy and resource co-ordination with the Low German population in East Elgin County.

Candidates must have completed University with current registration within their professional discipline (Nursing, Social Work, O.T.) Preference to candidates with a minimum of 2 yrs. directly related experience. Candidates must have a working knowledge of the Low German culture and be able to communicate in Low German.

The ability to work flexible hours, valid Ontario driver's license, criminal reference check and means of transportation are required.

Please forward resume by Aug. 11, 2006, to:

Julie Lampman, Team Leader
c/o C.M.H.A., Elgin Branch
110 Centre Street
St. Thomas, ON
N5R 2Z9

Fax: (519) 631-8273. E-mail: admin@cmhaelgin.ca.

Kids 'assemble' too



Pockets and purses lost weight as the coffee crowd at Assembly 2006 couldn't resist enthusiastic preschool fundraisers, who collected approximately \$130 to support educational projects in Congo.

Jeremy Wiens enjoys "stepping stones" on giant checkers at Fort Edmonton Park.



Photos by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld



Jacob Wiebe-Neufeld thanks a restaurant worker after learning about the importance of caring at Assembly 2006. The children made cards and gave them to the staff they saw. A big highlight for the children was a tour of the hotel offered by some of the staff. "We got to see the big washing machines," Jacob enthused.



Kim Vos and her young charge enjoy the fish in the aquarium in the foyer of First Mennonite Church, Edmonton.