

C A N A D I A N  
**Mennonite**

**September 18, 2006**  
Volume 10, Number 18



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!**  
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## Facing up to our changing country

**T**he country around us is going through major changes in age, childbearing and immigration. Within the next decade Canada is going to become a country with fewer children, more seniors and a much larger percentage of immigrants from non-European backgrounds.

If it seems like there are fewer children up front at your congregation, one reason is there really are fewer children around, period—and there will be even less in future years if you aren't living in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver or in northern Canada. On the other hand, there are also a growing group of people in their 50s and 60s in our churches that are healthier, wealthier and more educated than their parents were a generation ago.

“By 2015, the number of elderly [65 or older] will outnumber the number of children [those under 15]. This is unprecedented in Canadian history,” said Hilda Hildebrand of Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at a seminar she presented on demographic trends at the recent MC Canada national assembly. “If we are not careful, we are on the way to being a seniors support centre.”

Overall, Canada's birth rate is now 1.5 children per woman, well below the 2.1 replacement rate to keep the population from shrinking. We have now been at less than the replacement rate for more than 30 years and birth rates are particularly low among families of European descent. About two-thirds of our total population growth is now due to immigration.

Further, without taking anything away from the importance of seeking to bring all those around us into our faith communities, the raising up of children within the church has a huge impact on who is there to carry on the work of the kingdom in the following generation. For example,

Canadian sociologist Reginald Bibby points out that most of the growth of non-Christian faiths in Canada is due to immigration and higher birth rates among those already of these faiths, not because of conversions.

A hard truth is that the number of Mennonites in Canada dropped from 208,000 in 1991 to 191,500 in 2001, a decrease of 16,500 (or 8 percent) in 10 years. I wasn't able to find any figures on the birth rate among Mennonites specifically, but our overall demographic makeup matches the parts of Canadian society that are dropping in numbers the fastest due to low birth rates. Urbanization is also having its effect on many Mennonite churches. At a basic level, our churches' ability to draw more people—whether from internal or external growth—into our faith communities depends on people being “there” in the first place.

Hildebrand stated that two tasks the church must succeed at in the future were unloosing the gifts and skills of its growing group of seniors and attracting immigrants.

As of 2001, just 2 percent of Canadian Mennonites were from a visible minority (for example, of Asian, African, Arab or Latin American origin). We need to understand the cultures of, and be effective in ministry to, Canadian newcomers, especially the largest current group that is from China. In the future, Chinese migration looks likely to slow, as India and Africa become the primary sources of immigration. Looking locally, aboriginal Canadians are also growing significantly in numbers. All other groups, despite regional differences, are decreasing in size due to birth rates.

Now, faithfulness to God is not defined by birth rates or numbers, and there is much more to be said about how to keep our churches healthy in coming generations. But demographic change is something we have to look at openly. —**Tim Miller Dyck**

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**Cover: Kyle Gossen and Hiba Khaled, foreground, enthusiastically welcome Conrad Grebel University College students to a new school year. They are followed by an equally eager team of frosh orientation leaders ready to embrace the fresh faces and promise of a new community. See pages 22 to 27 for our Fall 2006 Focus on Education section. —Photo by Jennifer Konkle**

## Parable of the Twinkies

The question, “How do I get these people to stop giving me Twinkies?” has kept me awake nights since I began my work as a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) teacher-trainer in Egypt. It’s not that I have any particular complaint about the Twinkies themselves. It’s true that the “creme” filling is suspiciously inorganic, but eating the golden outer cake in the heart of the Egyptian desert evokes images of Israelites eating manna. So the Twinkies are okay. My problem is more with the givers of the Twinkies.

My work with MCC is based on observation of individual primary school teachers in their classrooms. After each observation, I sit and discuss the lesson with the teacher. It is during these conferences that the Twinkies inevitably appear.

Egyptian teachers are sorely undervalued; their social standing is low, and their wages lower. For putting up with 50 seven-year-olds in a cramped classroom for six hours a day, a beginning teacher receives a little over seven Egyptian pounds (a bit less than \$1.50). An experienced teacher’s daily wage tops out at around \$3 a day. In either case, the cost of the Twinkie and its obligatory accompanying Coke represents a hefty proportion of the teacher’s meagre income.

So you can see my problem.

Here I am, an “expert” all the way from Canada. I am supposed to be giving to these teachers. Yet with blatant disregard for this distinction, they insist on treating me with relentless hospitality.

At first, I thought that maybe the problem was that they believed I was hungry; perhaps they worried that I had not learned how to acquire food in my new home. So one day I brought three Twinkies to work with me. At the end of the day, I came home with seven. It was like the parable of loaves and fishes gone wrong! (In fact, the longer I stay in Egypt, the more I won-

der whether what happened that day on the mountain was that the disciples passed the baskets to the Egyptians first!)

The generosity I have experienced here has not been limited to the teachers I work with. Virtually every Egyptian I have met has extended hospitality beyond my expectations—the seminary student who brought us to his village for a meat meal and paid for all our transportation; the doctor who works in the slums of Cairo, yet paid for my microbus fare home; the many friends we’ve made who prepare fancy meals when we visit them and bring gifts when they visit us; and, of course, the teachers with their Twinkies.

Aside from the potential implications to my waistline and dental health, the part of me that is most impacted by all of this is my pride. It is always humbling to be the recipient of a generous gift; it is beyond humbling to receive a generous gift when the giver can barely afford it—so humbling, in fact, that it makes me incredibly uncomfortable.

This brings me back to the question I asked at the beginning. I suspect that I should not be

asking, “How can I make them stop giving?” but rather, “How can I receive graciously?” But this, too, is a difficult question for which I have not found a simple answer. I think I must keep humbling myself to receive these gifts.

As I do this, I try to take strength from Jesus’ example. When Mary unexpectedly anoints him with valuable perfume, he does not object or shy away. Instead, he receives the gift graciously and, in so doing, honours the giver and the spirit of the gift.

Our North American culture’s focus on self-reliance and independence cultivates in us a desire to be self-sufficient—to be in the powerful position of being able to give and to be uncomfortable when on the receiving end of



Photo courtesy of Barrette W. Plett

**MCC service worker Barrette W. Plett struggles with the abundance of Twinkies he constantly receives from the Egyptian teachers he works with.**

charity. In a round-about way, I’ve been made aware of my own insignificance through this struggle. Our all-powerful God gladly accepts the gifts that each of us brings, however small. God cherishes even the widow’s offering. As Christians, we must be gracious in both giving and receiving.

So, regardless of how uncomfortable it makes me, I will keep accepting the Twinkies. I will honour the teachers’ desire to give to me, just as I want to give to them. I will try to learn the lessons God is teaching me about grace and generosity. And, don’t worry, mom. I will do an extra-thorough job of brushing my teeth.

—Barrette W. Plett

*The author is an elementary school teacher from Winnipeg. Members of Bethel Mennonite Church, he and his wife Sandy are finishing the first year of a three-year MCC term in Assiut, Egypt. You can contact the Pletts and read more about their Egyptian experience at [wiebeplett.net](http://wiebeplett.net) and click on the “Egypt” link.*

the young prophets

Winnipeg

## More than 100 young adults begin one-year MCC terms

**M**ark Epp-Tiessen and Kira Friesen of Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg are among 103 Canadian and American young adults who are beginning one-year assignments through the Mennonite Central Committee's Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program and its International Visitor Exchange Program (IVEP).

The two were feted with a send-off brunch in late July, hosted for them and their families by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Africa alumni Eric and Kathy Fast and Peter and Leona Dueck Penner.

Epp-Tiessen, who holds a degree in religious studies from the University of Winnipeg, will be teaching math, science and perhaps some commerce courses to high school students at the Frances Davidson Secondary School in Macha, Zambia, for a year under the MCC SALT program. The high school was established by the Brethren in Christ Church many years ago.

After a week of "very enjoyable" orientation at MCC headquarters in Akron, Pa., he left for southern Africa on Aug. 21, on a "high note," according to his father, Dan Epp-Tiessen.

Friesen, a Canadian Mennonite University student, left for Gaborone, Botswana, on Sept. 6. She is going as an intern with MC Canada Witness and will be helping out in the youth or children's programs at a church, among other duties.

Besides Africa, the 51 SALT volunteers are serving with MCC partner organizations in Latin America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Through IVEP, 52 young adults from countries in these regions are beginning volunteer positions in Canada and the United States.

For the first time in MCC history, participants in SALT and IVEP met for a joint orientation session from Aug. 14 to 18 in Akron. During the week, participants got to know each other, worshipped together and prepared to begin their assignments

around the world.

IVEP participants work in a variety of assignments, including with computers, children in day care centres and residents in retirement communities, as well as language assistants in colleges, teaching assistants in elementary schools, pastoral assistants in churches and as farm workers.

SALT participants work with children in day care centres, orphanages and shelters, teach English and other subjects, and serve in human rights and social service organizations.

IVEP participant Stephannie Dinalissa Maay, 21, came from Serue, a small town in Papua, Indonesia. Maay belongs to Christian Church of Indonesia in Papua and will work at a Lutheran family service centre in Philadelphia.

Maay has never travelled outside Indonesia before, and is looking forward to improving her English, learning about another culture and serving God through her assignment. "I never imagined that I would come here," Maay says.



Photo by Leona Dueck Penner

**Mark Epp-Tiessen and Kira Friesen of Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg are among 103 Canadian and American young adults who are beginning one-year assignments through the Mennonite Central Committee's Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program and its International Visitor Exchange Program (IVEP).**

During the orientation session, Maay met Andrea Shalay, a 27-year-old student of international politics from Kaministiquia, Ontario. Shalay will begin an assignment at a women's centre run by Maay's church in Papua, Indonesia, and she quizzed Maay about Papuan language and culture. —MCC release by **Tim Shenk**, with files from **Leona Dueck Penner**



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# Recovering silence

*“A loss of silence is as serious as a loss of memory and just as disorienting,” according to theologian Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. In the pages that follow, Ross W. Muir makes the case for the return of silence as an integral part of worship, while Marlene Kropf provides practical ideas to make it so.*

**P**hilosopher Blaise Pascal asserted that all human troubles stem from our inability to sit quietly with ourselves in an empty room for more than 20 minutes. A similar case could be made for the current troubles in many church worship services.

Silence was a part of biblical worship and was held in high esteem by the early church. However, the “sounds of silence” in worship were lost to a great extent during the Reformation, and the noise level of many church services has increased steadily until the present day.

Silence needs desperately to be recovered in our worship services if the words that are spoken and sung are to have any depth or ring of truth to them, in the same way that lament needs to be recovered in order to make our praises more honest and less hollow.

The loss of silence in worship is something that many churches today ignore at their own peril. Mennonite churches are not immune.

Silence needs to be recovered by many Mennonite churches, according to Marlene Kropf, who directs the Office of Congregational Life for Mennonite Church USA. “Most of us come to worship on Sunday morning expecting to experience a time of rest and renewal in God’s presence,” she writes in “Unhurried Worship,” a *Leader Online* article.

“But how often have our work-world habits come with us and intruded on our worship?” she asks. “Programmed for productivity, we design our Sunday morning gatherings accordingly,” she asserts. “We fill every moment with words and move through the actions of worship with assembly-line efficiency. How difficult it is to ‘be still and know that I am God’ (Psalm 46:8)! And yet this is what Sabbath-keeping calls us to do.”

## **Silence in biblical life and worship**

“There is a season for everything,” according to the writer of Ecclesiastes, “a time for keeping silent and a time for speaking.” This maxim is important for regulating human discourse. It is equally important for regulating the worship in spirit and truth—a dialogue with God, if you will—that God expects.

The Bible speaks often of silence as it pertains to worship and other awe-inspiring, reverential encounters with the holy, transcendent God of the universe. These encounters begin early on in the formation of the Israelites and continue until the culmination of history and beyond:

- Moses spent six days in silence on the mountain before “Yahweh called to Moses from inside the cloud” (Exodus 24:16—all references from *The Jerusalem Bible*);
- Job replied to God after his first speech, “My words have been frivolous: what can I reply? I had better lay my finger on my lips. I have spoken once...I will not speak again” (Job 40:4-5a); and,
- John was even more graphic in his description of encountering God in heaven: “When I saw him, I fell in a dead faint at his feet” (Revelation 1:17).

Humans are not the only ones to be quiet before their maker, though. Habakkuk calls all of creation to silence in a verse that foreshadows the Romans 8 passage, which speaks of creation groaning in travail. In this instance, Habakkuk declares, “Yahweh is in his holy Temple: let the whole earth be silent before him” (2:20). And heaven, if not silent now, will be at the



end of earth's history; in Revelation 8:1, John declares prophetically that when "the Lamb broke the seventh seal...there was silence in heaven for about half an hour."

Finally, silence was an appropriate response to Christ while he was on this Earth. Silence was called for at the Mount of Transfiguration, when God told Peter, James, and John from out of the cloud, "This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him."

### **Silence in the early, medieval church**

Being silent before God is important for human beings for three reasons, according to Andrew Hill, in his book *Enter His Gates With Praise*:

*First, theologically, silence heightens communication with God because it provides a framework for hearing his word. Second, spiritually, the silence of worship leads the Christian to maturity in Christ because in silence we learn obedience to God. And third, sociologically, the silence of worship teaches compassion for others because we are no longer attempting to devour people with our words.*

The early and medieval churches seem to have understood these concepts very well, for their worship and the lives of their members seem to have been permeated by a holy—if not completely aural—silence. What is interesting to note—some might say,

ironic—is that the liturgies of the medieval churches, both East and West, were verbose; many different people spoke many words throughout each service. But the effect was one of reverential quiet.

Richard Foster, in *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, quotes the desert father Ammonas on the effectiveness of silence:

*I have shown you the power of silence, how thoroughly it heals and how fully pleasing it is to God.... Know that it is by silence that the saints grew, that it was because of silence that the power of God dwelt in them, because of silence that the mysteries of God were known to them.*

It should not be surprising that since these saints valued silence in their own walk with God, they would encourage it in the lives and worship of their followers.

St. Benedict had much to say about silence in the life and worship of his monks, which is appropriate for Christians today in our "cell phone-palm pilot-57 channels but nothing on" society. One interesting rule was Benedict's insistence that complete silence follow evening worship: "On leaving Compline, no one will be permitted to speak further...."

This is a far cry from the conversations over coffee after many North American Sunday services!

What should be made clear at this point is that silence is not the opposite of speech; they are not antagonistic to each other. Both the Benedictines and the Eastern Orthodox Church agree on this point. States Father Thomas Hopko in *Speaking of Silence*, "It is...said that he who cannot keep silent should not speak. In the Eastern Church, the words coming out of the silence are traditionally called 'anointed words' or 'words proper to God.'"

While much of today's worship centres on the verbal, it was not always so. Worship renewal authority Robert Webber says, "Worship as an act of communication contains the ingredients of speech, symbol, dialogue, interaction and relationship." So when these other forms of communica-

**Continued on page 8**

**Silence** *From page 7*

tion are involved, the noise level of a worship service can decrease because the mouth ceases to be the only organ of communication; touching, smelling, seeing are, by their very definition, “quiet” senses.

The Quakers elevated silence before God to a place it had never before had in worship—although for different theological reasons; in worship, they wait in the immanent presence of the Holy Spirit. This is not silence for its own sake, though, Thomas Hodgkin wrote in 1915:

*Not at all, for as our worship consisteth not in the words, so neither in silence as silence, but in an holy dependence of the mind upon God, from which dependence silence necessarily follows in the first place until words can be brought forth which are from God's Spirit.*

Eleanor Kreider, a mission educator with Mennonite Mission Network, sees such possibilities in Mennonite worship. “Instead of rushing from one thing to the next, we can allow silence in our worship for listening to what the Spirit is saying,” she writes in *Music in Worship: A Mennonite Perspective*.

The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada (MHSC) website notes that “silent prayer is growing in prominence in many churches, in part as the result of increased contact with Quaker and contemplative spiritualities, but also reflecting earlier Anabaptist and Mennonite practice.”

**The rise of ‘talk worship’**

It is hard to say exactly how silence fell into disrepute and neglect in much of modern worship, but let me suggest two possibilities—one theological, the other ecclesiastical.

“Theology shifted from the God who acts to the God who spoke,” Webber states, as the spoken word became the primary means of communicating to the faithful and to those whom the evangelical churches hoped to bring into the fold.

Ecclesiastically, the Reformers tried to separate themselves in practice as much as possible from the Roman Catholic Church. Webber laments that, “when the Reformers attempted to rid the church of its bad devotional habits...they failed to retain other positive approaches to spirituality that had emerged in the early church.” Silence was one such casualty.

To paraphrase a modern slogan, it could be said that Reformation liturgies became “talk worship.” And talking became an even more important mode of worship communication during the ensuing enlightenment and revivalist periods, as people’s minds and hearts were bombarded with many words.

Webber describes the change succinctly:

*Protestantism, which can be characterized as a movement*

*of the Word, led the way in the shift from symbolic communication of the medieval era. Because words were regarded as higher and more significant vehicles of truth than symbols, images, poetry, gestures and the like, all forms of communication other than verbal became suspect.*

This has led us to the place, he says, where “we have locked ourselves into discursive speech as the preferable, if not the only, form of communication.”

*Endless invention, endless experiment,  
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;  
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;  
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word....*

T.S. Eliot did not know it at the time he wrote “Choruses from The Rock,” but he was describing to a tee the frenetic praise and worship, or celebration, type of worship that is all the rage today.

In radio parlance, the maxim is, “Two seconds of dead air and listeners will tune out.” Using that rationale, “worship” time has become upbeat and fast-paced. Silence is kept to a minimum, and then generally only during the prayer times, when congregants are given a few seconds to pray silently before the pastor prays audibly.

The MHSC website notes that “the impact of television evangelists...with their slick and highly choreographed services, is felt in many congregations.”

Cornelius Platinga, Jr., describes this malaise in a 1995 *Christianity Today* article. “[C]ontemporary worship...fills in silences with an emcee’s patter or with snappy Christian music from which all the rests have been removed,” he states, adding his own note of warning, “A loss of silence is as serious as a loss of memory and just as disorienting.”

As Marlene Kropf says, “Nothing destroys Sabbath peace as much as thoughtless or excessive wordiness.”

**The recovery of silence in missional worship**

“Rather than envisioning worship as a time to learn or accomplish something,” Kropf urges worship leaders



**[I]t would appear that the postmodern generation might be the most amenable to... a recovery [of silence]....**



and congregants to “think of it as a retreat. Call to mind the millions of Christians around the world who are pausing to revel in God’s mercy and love. Breathe deeply.”

Silence needs to be recovered by the church and it would appear that the postmodern generation might be the most amenable to such a recovery, as many of them yearn for the transcendent in life and worship, and show disenchantment with a First-World-only orientation.

In his 1987 article “Hear Him: How to listen to God’s voice,” David Bryant notes that “much of the Bible focuses specifically on God’s concern for, action toward and involvement with, the nations.... Hopefully, every time we become silent before Scripture [as we do in worship], we listen for its global concerns. Otherwise, we may misunderstand God’s message altogether.”

Admittedly, postmoderns listen for other marginalized voices better than do many moderns.

Worship has been compared to art or narrative—which require silence (the ability to keep quiet) and stillness (the ability to keep from moving)—to appreciate, two attributes that many moderns lack or denigrate. But not so for many postmoderns. It is to such people that worship as an art form speaks.

Says this anonymous author of such worship:

*It evokes mystery and brings us into wonder, awe and transcendence. This is what the next generation of worshippers is seeking. They are tired of entertainment, self-focused, chorus-driven worship. They want more. They want mystery, awe, wonder, transcendence. The rediscovery of worship as an art form that signifies the Christian reality of the relation between God, creation, history, incarnation and the ultimate re-creation of all that is, is a place where our new worship leader can begin.*

And where are postmodern worship leaders and congregations to begin looking? To the early church, perhaps!

Arthur Paul Boers, a former Mennonite Church Eastern Canada pastor who now teaches theology at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., writes in *Christianity Today* of the ancient offices of prayer being practised in such diverse Christian communities as Lindisfarne and Northumbria in England, Iona in Scotland, and Taizé in France. In total, they attract upwards of a half-million people each year, the majority of them postmodern youths who go to learn about prayer and worship in the early Christian tradition.

At Taizé, Boers describes the worship as consisting of “chants, short Bible readings...prayers and a prolonged silence of five to 10 minutes [no mean feat with thousands of youths]. This is a far cry from the beachball pyrotechnics at our denominational youth events. The emphasis is on simplicity...and evoking mystery and reverence.”

A far cry indeed!

—**Ross W. Muir**

*The author is managing editor of Canadian Mennonite and is a graduate of the master of theological studies program in worship and liturgical studies at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto.*



**‘This is a far cry from the beachball pyrotechnics at our denominational youth events.’**

## Creating ‘sounds of silence’ in worship

*T.S. Eliot poetically asked, “Where shall the word be found, where will the word resound? / Not here, there is not enough silence.” In order for that criticism not to be levelled at our churches, Marlene Kropf of Elkhart, Ind.—who directs the Office of Congregational Life for Mennonite Church USA—provides the following five suggestions. They are adapted from her article, “Unhurried worship,” that appears on Leader Online.*

**1. Begin on Saturday night.** In Jewish tradition, Sabbath begins the night before. Encourage families and individuals to deliberately slow down their pace of activity on Saturday evening. In quiet moments,

spend a few moments reflecting on the week just past and pray for those who will lead worship the next day.

**2. Plan the opening and closing moments.** If a musical prelude is the tradition in your congregation, include a line of poetry or a centring prayer in the bulletin for those who desire a focus for meditation during the prelude. Occasionally ask people to enter or leave the sanctuary in silence. Let them feel the spaciousness of being together in God’s presence without words to interfere.

**3. Slow down your Scripture readings.** Frame Scripture readings with silence. Let each word be spoken distinctly and lovingly. Once in a while, provide two or three minutes of silence for worshippers to reflect on God’s call to them through the text. Select musical responses to Scripture

readings that open a space for receiving the Word. Or choose a short refrain to sing after each portion of text is read, engaging the congregation in prayerful dialogue with the Scripture.

**4. Avoid clutter.** Pare down unnecessary words and actions. Try eliminating all words of transition and announcements of song numbers, relying instead on the bulletin or overhead. Such paring back may not only improve the sense of flow in your service, but also add more contemplative space in worship.

**5. Let your prayer time be contemplative.** Provide ample space for prayer. Instead of relying on many words, precede or follow the pastoral or intercessory prayers with silence, or include moments of silence within the prayer for people to offer their own petitions to God.

Saskatoon

## Mennonites featured in university exhibit

An exhibition about Mennonites and their impact on the Prairies is being shown at the Diefenbaker Centre at the University of Saskatchewan. The exhibit has brought together three Mennonite museums, a Mennonite historical society, an historical Manitoba village and an up-and-coming southern Manitoba artist.

The exhibit contains two parts: "Village Life: Neuberghal and the Art of Margruite Krahn," covering the history of Neuberghal Village in Manitoba; and "Mennonites in

"We realized the scope and we didn't want to limit it to summer," said Terresa-Ann Demong, office manager of the centre, adding that keeping an exhibit this long is a significant commitment for it.

"Five months is a huge chunk of our year," she explained.

The idea for the exhibit came when the acting director of the centre heard about the designated heritage site in Manitoba called Neuberghal Village. Artifacts from Neuberghal and the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach (including the artwork of Margruite Krahn) were secured for use in the displays.

In considering how this exhibit might impact the people of Saskatchewan, the local link seemed clear to the staff at the Diefenbaker Centre. They contacted Jake Buhler, president of the Mennonite Historical Society in Saskatchewan, who took them to three Mennonite museums showing them displays in Rosthern, Hague and Osler. Several artifacts from the small town museums were requested, including a showpiece black 1912 wedding dress and a large brown leather suitcase from the Rosthern Mennonite Heritage Museum.

The decision to develop the Mennonite theme was spurred on by several factors. The Diefenbaker Centre has a mandate to put on prairie-themed exhibits and to promote values held dear by the former prime minister. The staff had found a display about war brides and another involving Anne Frank were hugely popular.

"Diefenbaker is known for his emphasis on human rights and immigration," said Demong. A project built around early Mennonite settlers seemed to fit right in.

Adding to the richness of Krahn's paintings and floorcloths, and set against the backdrop of artifacts and replicas, comes the discovery of Diefenbaker's personal connection to the Mennonite community. This came

as a complete surprise to the staff at the Diefenbaker Centre.

A book by Paul Riegert on the Tiefengrund School lists John Diefenbaker and his brother Elmer as pupils of the school from 1903 to 1905. Their father also taught at the facility after moving his family into the area soon after the turn of the last century. Another book about the same area, *Three Score Years and Ten*, refers to Diefenbaker's father as conducting early choir practices in the school before the church was built.

The opening for the exhibit was well attended in spite of it being the eve of the local MCC Relief Sale. Over a hundred people came to look and enjoy *zwieback* at the centre. The staff was surprised and pleased by the high turnout.

"They had the largest attendance in the history of the centre," noted Buhler, predicting it "would be as popular as anything they've ever had."

So far, he has been right. Many people have come through over the summer, most of them from outside of the province.

—Karin Fehderau

### Arts note

#### Art works sought

The Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg is seeking works of art for its annual juried show, "Why Art?3." Like last year, artists are asked to submit up to five pieces in any medium for consideration along with a brief statement outlining why they create. Submissions can be the originals, digital images, slides or photographs. The deadline for submissions is Oct. 14. The exhibition will run from mid-November into early January. Send digital images to [rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca). Other submissions should be sent to: Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.

—MHC Gallery release



The Mennonite exhibit at the University of Saskatchewan has been well attended.

Saskatchewan: The Hague-Osler Reserve." Among the artifacts are a section of a barn wall where a farmer kept written accounts and a black-and-white backdrop cloth used in homes by early photographer P.G. Hamm from Manitoba.

Krahn's vividly coloured artwork demonstrates life in the Neuberghal village. A short video also shows present-day residents living and working in the historical village and carries on-camera interviews of various people. Running from June 9 to Oct. 31, the display is being held over into the fall session so that school children will have ample opportunity to view the exhibits.

I'm passing up the juicy, tasty Thanksgiving turkey this year. After reflecting on my experience as part of a summer Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) delegation to Kenora, Ont., it became apparent to me that what I have always seen as a celebration of thanksgiving for the bounty God has provided us is experienced very differently by our aboriginal neighbours.

I grew up with the Thanksgiving story of early European settlers who were cared for and kept alive by the generosity of North American aboriginal people for the first few winters. That story feels good to me—something to celebrate. Sadly, the story does not end with the first few winters. In return for generosity, we have systematically stolen land, culture and lives.

With an understanding that the land belongs to the Creator, aboriginal people made treaties with European settlers for the sharing of the land. Europeans, on the other hand, staked claims of ownership, denying common use of the land.

Under British law, people native to a colonized land were customarily given rights to land already used for agriculture. Being hunters and gatherers, the aboriginal population in Canada was not considered to have claim to the land that provided their livelihood. The written English version of Treaty 3, which applies to the region surrounding Kenora, recognizes aboriginal rights to small reserves of land to live on and guarantees traditional land use rights in surrounding land “until such time as the crown requires that land for development.” However, aboriginal leaders were told they were agreeing to use of the land “for as long as the rivers flow.” Meaning, one might reasonably conclude, forever.

We have not lived up to our bargain. We passed laws preventing aboriginal participation in certain economic activities, such as market gardening in the early 1900s. We placed aboriginal children in residential schools, depriving them of traditional knowledge and wisdom until the 1970s. We poisoned

## A call to fast this Thanksgiving

rivers with mercury, destroying self-sufficient aboriginal commercial fisheries and causing great illness.

It is tempting to play the distancing game that says, “This all happened so long ago, I’m not responsible.” But sadly we continue to take advantage of our aboriginal neighbours. Aboriginal trappers check their government-li-

cenced trap lines to find that government-licensed logging companies have clear-cut the whole area, destroying their livelihood.

The European occupation of North America has so deeply hurt the aboriginal people that it is no wonder some find Thanksgiving to be an occasion to fast and mourn. To stand in solidarity with our aboriginal friends, the members of the CPT delegation to Kenora have committed to share this Thanksgiving fast and use the occasion to reflect on our complicity in a system that perpetuates injustice and broken relationships. We invite all who feel called to this spiritual discipline to join us.

—**Andrew Cressman, Toronto**

### Letters

#### Graham not a suitable advocate of God's love

Thank you for raising the issue of the Central Canada Franklin Graham Festival in the July 10 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*. I hope we will have a productive dialogue on the pros and cons of Mennonite Church Manitoba participating in this event.

The article quotes Norman Voth as saying, “Franklin Graham’s support for war” is one of the reasons for some people to oppose MC Manitoba’s participation. I would like to elaborate on this point. Graham is not just a non-pacifist or an adherent of the just war theory; he advocates the use of weapons of mass destruction that threaten not only American military targets,

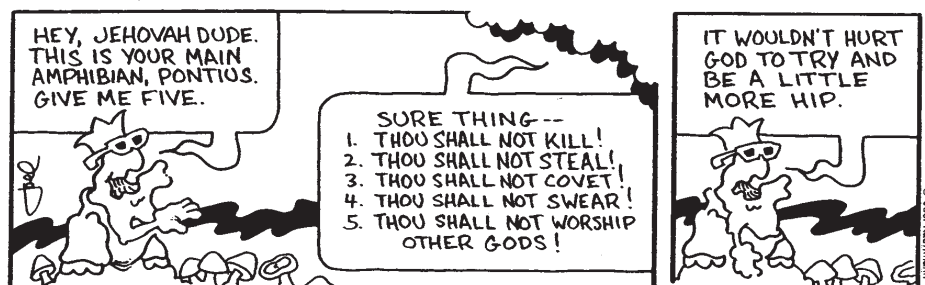
but the human race and our world as we know it. In a CNN interview on the American response to the threat of terror in the days following 9/11, Mr. Graham stated, “I think we are going to have to use every—and I hate to say it—hellish weapon in our inventory....”

As a pacifist, I ask, is violence ever the answer? But even a pragmatist might ask, was the American response to Pearl Harbour—the “hellish” devastation unleashed on Hiroshima and Nagasaki—justifiable in the eyes of the world? Half a century’s worth of developments in weapon’s technology later, Mr. Graham is asking the world to pay the price for America’s grief.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:27 that

**Continued on page 12**

### Pontius' Puddle



**Graham** *From page 11*

“anyone who looks at a women...commits adultery.” It’s the thought, not the deed, that is wrong. How can Graham advocate the use of such violence and remain a credible spokesperson for a God who loves all people?

I am not against evangelism or cooperating with other denominations that don’t share our peace stance. But in my understanding Mr. Graham has disqualified himself from being a credible spokesperson for the gospel of God’s love and peace.

—**Gerhard Neufeld, Winnipeg**

### Material explanation preferred over God

There are a number of things in Denyse O’Leary’s letter (“Natural

**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.**

selection points away from God,” July 31, page 14) with which I could take issue, but I will choose the idea of the “irreducibly complex.”

As far as I have been able to determine, no non-controversial irreducibly complex thing has ever been discovered. In physics, it was at one time thought that the atom was irreducibly complex, but then they discovered protons and neutrons within the nucleus. The protons and neutrons were then discovered to be composed of quarks,

and so on. Today, they talk about superstrings as the fundamental particle or entity.

In biology, the eye was once thought to be irreducibly complex. After all, how can a partial eye help you? Unless all the parts come together as one, it doesn’t work. That, however, is not exactly true. All you need is for certain skin cells to be somewhat light sensitive and you have something with which natural selection can work.

When people describe something

PHIL WAGLER



**Outside the box**

**A** couple years ago our congregation decided to reach out to the families of our community. We brought in a well-known speaker (at least to us), planned great music, creative dramas and took the show on the road to our local community centre. Safe, common ground thought we. Our friends and neighbours will happily flock to this non-churchy environment where the grey seating and institutional surroundings were sure to set them at ease and convince them this is not “church.”

The night arrived and the folk did flock. Unfortunately, it was not to hang with us. The local midget hockey team was in the provincial play-offs, and moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas, and boys and girls converged on the community centre, but entered the doors leading to the arena rather than the doors leading to our “outreach.”

The event was not an entire flop or waste of time. Lives were challenged by the good news and we had a decent response, although most of our “visitors” were actually sheep from other folds and pastures who wanted to be fed by our distinguished guest. We had planned the perfect event to preach to the choir, and while the choir needs to be returned from time to time, the dream of seeing families in our community transformed was not realized. Ironically, and almost laughably, those we longed to reach were separated from us by a mere 10 inches of cinder block, while we, the incarnational believers in Jesus, huddled together to save the world.

With the uncanny accuracy of hindsight I see now that

### Embrace— not outreach

**Those we longed to reach were separated from us by a mere 10 inches of cinder block.**

the people we wanted to reach that winter with the love of Christ were right where we thought they’d be. The problem was we wanted them to be with us on our terms, not theirs. Perhaps it was the church that should have been on the other side of that cinder block wall at the hockey game—cheering for our young people, getting to know our neighbours, encouraging moms and dads, and building relationships and friendships into which the seed of God’s love could be planted or watered or even brought to fruition. Instead, we separated ourselves by 10 inches of concrete and then wondered why people have no interest in Christ “these days.”

So how do we reach out?

The Gospel reveals a God who didn’t invite us to come to his side to watch a holy song and dance, but sent the Son over the wall to show us what grace and truth look like. He came and joined our game, cheered on our journey, shed tears for us and with us, bore our shame and

went to the wall in our place. That’s not outreach, that’s embrace. Jesus’ way is embrace on enemy turf enveloped in sacrificial love. Too often we have assumed we’ll either entertain or enlighten people into the kingdom and, while a relevant apologetic is not to be discarded, the church in this post-Christian era must grapple with whether our “outreach” is

more for us than those without Christ before we bang our heads against the brick wall one too many times.

*Phil Wagler is still icing his goose egg as lead pastor of Zurich Mennonite Church, Ontario. You can reach him at phil\_wagler@yahoo.ca and read his blog at theo-phil-us.blogspot.com.*

as irreducibly complex, they want to stop further investigation. That is one of the reasons, I believe, that people posit a God. Inquiry has to stop somewhere, doesn't it?

So, if you propose that something is irreducibly complex and that an intelligence was needed to create it, then it is like we have come to the end of our search. But for me the search is not done.

If an intelligence is needed to create

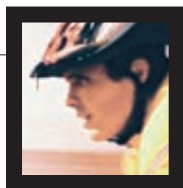
something irreducibly complex, then a second intelligence is needed to create the first intelligence, and so forth ad infinitum. So I look for natural material explanations, finding evermore marvellous and awe-inspiring natural phenomena while knowing that the end is unlikely ever to be reached. If I were to call something God, it would be infinity.

—David Wiebe, Winnipeg

## Correction

Jong-Sun Kim has been called as pastor of North Shore Japanese Church as of October. Takahiko Yoshiyuki currently pastors both Mennonite Japanese Christian Fellowship in Surrey and North Shore Japanese Church. Incorrect information appeared in the Aug. 21 story, "Pastoral change at Japanese church," on page 36. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the errors.

WILL BRAUN



New Order voice

It took 30,000 horsepower and \$20 million worth of farm equipment on a soggy wheat field near Winkler, Man., to raise \$80,000 (to date) for Children's Camps International and to break the world speed record for harvesting 162 acres of grain.

Although the largely Mennonite event was an inspiring display of good will and community spirit, the image of those 105 shiny combines on the cover of the last issue of *Canadian Mennonite* left my Mennonite sensibilities agitated.

Frankly, it feels scary to publicly question a Christian organization's activities—and doubly taboo since I am a Winkler-raised farm boy whose comments will land rather close to home. So I proceed with a healthy degree of trepidation and a prayer for graciousness.

There was plenty of goodness in the harvest event and plenty of godliness in those involved. Nonetheless, the project raises important, broader questions about how to do good in a complicated world.

In the photo of the combines roaring down the field, I see a grand, public display of wealth. This image is jarring because I feel drawn to the very opposite of what I see. I find the adventure of simple, inconspicuous living compelling, so the much-touted emphasis on setting a world record using very costly equipment seems too close to the realm of spectacle and elitism for me. Whatever happened to not letting the right hand—let alone the Guinness World Records people—know what the left hand is doing? And what about the operator of a modest-sized farm whose clunker combine would look ridiculous in the mix of \$250,000 machines? Does that farmer have to watch from the edge of the field, along with the widow and her mite?

I also see on the cover image the showcasing of industrial agri-business. This is jarring because I work on a small, non-traditional, largely non-mechanized vegetable farm. My farm involvement is a direct response to the industrial-scale, fossil-fuel guzzling, input-intensive food system that is failing the world's hungry people, polluting the atmosphere and pushing smaller farmers off their land, both here and abroad. On our farm we're experimenting with an agricultural model that requires no inputs from big, profit-driven agri-businesses.

## Full-throttle fundraising

**The image of those 105 shiny combines on the cover of the last issue... left my Mennonite sensibilities agitated.**

Writers like Vandana Shiva of India explain how companies such as Cargill and BASF—both of which sponsored the Winkler project (supplying fertilizer and pesticide inputs)—are devastating Indian farmers by cornering the market on seeds, inputs and transportation, and then driving up prices.

Or consider that John Deere, which dominated the Winkler field, includes on its board of directors Vance Coffman, the former head of Lockheed Martin—the world's largest arms manufacturer, and Richard Myers, President Bush's principal military advisor from 2001 to 2005.

The point is not that all these companies, projects or people are categorically bad, but rather that our efforts to do good can get tangled up in a problematic global agri-business system, and that the untangling requires awareness, honesty and creativity.

I spoke with Ray Wieler, the event organizer and head of Children's Camps International. In response to questions about possible contradictions between helping India by celebrating the power of the agri-business model linked to so much harm there, Wieler said concern about the current course of agriculture, both here and abroad, is a "huge issue." He also mentioned a successful organic farm project he visited in India, and stressed the importance of North Americans redistributing their wealth globally. But he emphasized that,

for him, the Winkler event was about "one thing and one thing only—to draw attention to who we as an organization are."

For me, it is about many things: the Indian women who are fighting Cargill, global warming, healthy dialogue within the Mennonite family, means that are as consistent as possible with ends, grace in a world of grey, and the hope that Mennonite farmers will make the news for finding creative alternatives to a bankrupt agricultural model, rather than for riding it full-throttle toward a rather complicated benevolence.

*Will Braun can be reached at will@geezmagazine.org. For more information, see [childrenscampsinternational.com](http://childrenscampsinternational.com), [deere.com](http://deere.com), [ifpri.org](http://ifpri.org), and [bread.org](http://bread.org).*

## Children must be seen as integral to worship

Re: "Children assist with communion and sending forth," July 31, page 11.

I had the honour of participating in the final worship service of this year's national assembly, and especially the children's item that introduced how we would share the communion elements. I agree with the article that this experience of watching the children reverently carry the baskets containing the four types of bread and grapes to each of the tables was indeed memorable and moving. I saw the look of pride in the eyes of some of the children I had gotten to know in the children's program, that they were given such an important role in celebrating one of the church's sacraments.

The phrase "stole the show" in the first paragraph jumped out at me as I read through the article. This got my thoughts percolating. What is our view when it comes to children and our worship? Are children active participants in worship, or is their activity at best entertainment and at worst a hindrance to our worship experience?

When I hear "stole the show," I think of events like a movie or concert, rather than a worship service. If the personal sharing, sermon or the singing had been the most memorable part of the service, would we say that that stole the show or would we say it was the most moving part of the service?

A few years ago, like many of my peers, I worked as a camp staffer at one of our conference camps. During this time I had many memorable worship experiences. Some of the questions campers asked challenged me more than those of my theology professors at CMU. During camp worship I felt closer to God than at any other point in my life. One factor that enriched the worship experience was the unpredictable and energetic nature of these children.

I love and value children highly and know that their insights can sometimes seem like divine messages from our Creator. Children are less bound



by the conventions of society and are freer to respond from their hearts to the world around them. If our view of children limits us to seeing their participation in congregational worship as entertainment, aren't we losing some of the richness possible when a diverse group joins together in the unifying experience of worship?

—**Miriam Rempel, Winnipeg**

## Leadership gifts not determined by gender

Will the church ever get anywhere?

In 1885, the first North American Mennonites ordained a woman to the preaching ministry. In 1910, the General Conference ordained its first woman to preaching ministry.

More than 70 years later, in the 1980s, we mostly became reconciled to having women throughout our North American churches at all levels of leadership (although I still remember the shocked response I received when I said from the pulpit in 1982 that this was a good thing). Twenty-five years after that, we are still looking on in wonder as a woman takes a significant leadership role in our conferences ("Janet Plenert reflects on challenges and opportunities in leadership," July 31, page 19).

Will we ever get to the point where women and men can simply work together without anyone asking questions about their gender? How long will it take until we Mennonites can simply look at a person's gifts and celebrate them without asking questions about the package embodying those gifts?

—**Bruce Hiebert, Abbotsford B.C.**

## Commendation

In response to "Anabaptist spirituality explained to pastors," (July 31, page 8), I would like to commend Arnold Snyder and Sue Steiner for their thoughts. God bless them.

—**Harold Widrick, New Hamburg, Ont.**

## 'Tough on crime' agenda not an effective option

I am left with an uneasy feeling by statements made by Vic Toews, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada ("Justice minister cracking down on crime in Canada," July 10, page 14).

His concept of "cracking down on crime" is one that has been on the landscape in the United States for the last few decades and has achieved considerable success in getting politicians elected, but is very expensive and not very effective. Toews wants to take us down a road that will have exactly the opposite effect that he is working so hard to attain.

Instead of getting "tough on crime," our goal should be to turn these people into contributors to our society who pay taxes, rather than those who use up our tax dollars. If it is so financially costly and socially ineffective, why would Toews not want to be a visionary and explore what might be effective?

I am also puzzled that Toews sees a place for restorative justice models in provincial and community-based programs, but not in federal legislation under his jurisdiction. We already know about the constructive work Mennonite Central Committee and the John Howard Society do. By naming these, Toews only acknowledges their existence and not that he actually believes in them, for if he did, then he would surely promote them.

By consistently promoting a "tough on crime" agenda divorced from restorative justice emphasizing responsibility, Toews is not only at variance with our Christian faith, but he is also promoting a model of criminal justice that is very expensive and, worst of all, the least effective.

—**Ernie Engbrecht, Lethbridge, Alta.**

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Witmarsum, Netherlands

## Dutch Mennonites plan international centre

The ancient writer of Ecclesiastes observed that there is “a time to be born and a time to die.” Dutch Mennonites know these cycles well. Dying Dutch Anabaptists birthed a new, living church in the 16th century. Today, a struggling Dutch church seeks new life by inviting global Anabaptists to join it in remembering the past and anticipating the future.

Nearly five centuries after Sicke Freerks testified of his faith in Christ and offered his neck to the executioner’s sword—an act that caught the attention of a Catholic priest named Menno Simons—the faith descendents of these martyrs in Friesland and elsewhere in the Netherlands dream of new life. A committee developing the International Menno Simons Center aims to tell the world this 500-year-old story. Planners hope to invite global Anabaptists and others to come and enrich each other by sharing their faith stories.

Initial plans describe a destination for global Anabaptists and other interested individuals featuring food, fellowship, inspiration and education. Planners identify Witmarsum as a preferred location for the centre. An 1878 marker on the outskirts of Witmarsum offers a starting point. The stone monument marks the location of a Mennonite meeting place, beginning in the 16th century. In addition to the marker, Witmarsum was also the birthplace of Menno Simons. Further, Menno Simons left the Catholic priesthood at the Witmarsum church to join the Anabaptists in 1536.

The precise nature of the centre remains in formation. One plan offers space for small groups of global Anabaptists to study, worship and collectively seek routes to a viable future. International volunteer teams, assembled through existing church organizations, could provide staff. A museum and archives, likely including a quilt display currently travelling in



Photo courtesy of Kenneth Sensenig

**Onijdes Sijtsma, a Dutch Mennonite historian, and Kenneth Sensenig discuss plans for the International Menno Simons Center at the 1878 marker denoting a Mennonite meeting place for 300 years.**

North America, would provide historical grounding. Early discussions include consideration of an electronic database for visual art collections

describing Mennonite life. Eventually, the Dutch hope to invite international financial support for this project.

This bold move by the Dutch Mennonites to blend together a deep, rich heritage with a contemporary and varied global Anabaptist witness prompts scepticism among some observers. Some wonder whether the church could use the financial resources needed by the centre in more beneficial ways. Others question the relevance of the 16th century experience for 21st century Christians.

Nonetheless, Dutch Mennonites, encouraged by international Anabaptist opinion, welcome the prospect of a new work. They anticipate a fresh look at the past and a lively hope for the future can revitalize Menno Simons’ teaching that “no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ” (I Corinthians 3:11 NRSV).

—Kenneth Sensenig

*The author serves as an MCC consultant for the International Menno Simons Center.*

Geneva, Switzerland

## Migration, ‘just peace’ theology foci of WCC global initiative

The main points of focus for the 2007 Decade to Overcome Violence initiative in Europe will be migration and working on a theology of a just peace, according to Rev. Fernando Enns, a World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee member from the Mennonite Church in Germany. Speaking during the Central Committee meeting in Geneva earlier this month, Enns said migration was a challenging issue for the world—a symptom of the problem of globalization and unjust trade.

A theology for just peace was necessary, Enns said, because the church

needs to be clear about why it was addressing these issues.

Referring to the “global war on terror,” he said, “If your only tool is a hammer, then every problem after a while looks like a nail.... We need to look at different ways of addressing violent situations.”

The motto for the Decade’s focus on Europe in 2007 will be “Make me a channel of your peace.” That was a sign, said Enns, that overcoming violence is a spiritual journey. He said it was significant that young people had chosen the motto, since youth and violence was one of the main manifestations of violence that needed to be addressed in Europe.

Enns also commented on perceived Christian naiveté, saying the church perspective was that “we overcome evil by doing good and we think ahead of time of the possibilities for this world.”

—WCC release

Toronto

## 'Time to deliver' on AIDS promises

**M**ore than 25,000 people gathered in Toronto last month for the 16th International AIDS Conference. The conference, held every two years, is the world's largest gathering of people working on HIV/AIDS issues.

During the week prior to the main conference, a two-day ecumenical pre-conference was held. Christians from around the world gathered to share ideas and encourage each other in the struggle against AIDS. Special speakers included Canon Gideon Byamugisha, the first African priest to openly share his HIV status; pastor Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Life*; and Peter Piot, executive director of UNAIDS.

As part of the ecumenical conference, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) presented a workshop on the

role of pastors and church leaders in the AIDS pandemic. Workshop participants from around the world shared stories about their struggles to involve pastors in the fight against AIDS and then shared strategies for addressing these challenges.

The official opening of the 16th International AIDS Conference included Canadian government officials, business leaders, actors and musicians. As the week began, workshops and plenary sessions included input from Bill Gates, Bill Clinton, Canadian Stephen Lewis, and *Pretty Woman* actor Richard Gere.

The theme for this year's conference was "Time to deliver." The time for the global community to deliver on its promises is now. The crisis requires action now. Lewis, the UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, put

it very simply, "Every minute lost in the struggle against the virus is a life lost." Actually, every minute lost is more than five lives lost and nine new lives infected. AIDS is an ongoing emergency, a chronic tragedy that continues to kill 8,500 people each day.

The conference included no lack of learning opportunities. The program of activities was 487 pages long. At any given time, there were 25 different sessions to choose from, as well as exhibitions, video showings and demonstrations.

While all are still under trial, there emerged three potential new means of reducing the spread of the virus.

The first is a microbicide, a vaginal gel or cream that a woman can apply to reduce HIV transmission during sexual intercourse. Even a woman who has been faithful in marriage and who fully understands the risk of HIV infection can lack the power to require her husband to use a condom. If the

### Why am I here? A reflection on the Toronto AIDS conference

*Lynell Bergen and her family returned to Winnipeg from South Africa last November, where they worked with African Independent Churches. Among other things, they assisted local church members to set up AIDS programs in their community (see "Transforming the secret stigma of AIDS," June 26, page 20). Following are her thoughts on the 16th International AIDS Conference held last month in Toronto; they are based on the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) blog of the event and other news items she read. Ed.*

**I**f I were to choose between being excited about the International AIDS Conference and being cynical about it, I confess I would likely lean toward the cynical. While I truly appreciate that "important" people such as former U.S. President Bill Clinton and billionaires Bill and Melinda Gates are giving of their time, money and connections to address the issue of AIDS, I wonder how much of a difference a conference such as this makes in the villages and homes of developing nations who are struggling

with HIV/AIDS.

However, I began reading the blogs written by MCC staff who were at the conference and was encouraged by their reporting, and by what they were learning and experiencing. An ecumenical pre-conference event gave churches the chance to work together on their approach to AIDS.

And then the powerful people and the media came.

I am generally impressed with the commitment and passion of the Gates, Clinton, and particularly Stephen Lewis. I don't always agree with their approaches, but they are working hard to save lives, to address root issues, and to bring the plight of thousands of poor and powerless to the world's attention. In particular, they have been focussing on the needs of women, and recognizing that the power imbalances which exist between men and women make solving the problem of AIDS much more difficult.

The consensus seems to be that the traditional approach to prevention of the spread of HIV—known as ABC (Abstain, Be faithful, Condomize)—disadvantages women, because even if they do all these things, it is only helpful if men do them as well. And the men, for the most part, don't. So new approaches are needed, approaches that give power to women to keep themselves safe. The Gates, in particular, focus on scientific advances

as an answer to this problem. While that approach can be helpful, it again fails to address the oppression of women and children. Nor are these advances easily made available in remote and under-resourced regions.

In the car, on my way home from work a few weeks ago, I heard the story of a child orphaned by AIDS. Tears came to my eyes, not so much because of the story itself, but because I found myself wondering what I was doing here in Canada when I could be in South Africa helping in the fight against AIDS.

But there is work to be done here, too. We all have a part to play—not only prayer and giving money, although these are important, but also paying attention to the needs of the poor and powerless around us, caring for the sick, the lonely, and those stigmatized by society for something they have done or are. And learning to live justly in an affluent society. Those are also the things that do not require a large international conference.

—Lynell Bergen

*Her reflections were originally published in a slightly altered form in her church e-letter, the Charleswood Mennonite Church Grapevine.*





## News briefs

**Hurricane relief for Honduras this summer**

In mid-November 2005, as the destruction from hurricanes Katrina and Rita continued to dominate the public's attention in Canada and the United States, Tropical Storm Gamma hovered off the coast of Honduras, bringing devastating flooding and mudslides. This summer, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) provided \$81,880 in aid, including technical assistance, to rehabilitate farmland, repair houses, replant trees and train local pastors to address the psychological effects of disasters. The project, administered by the Mennonite Social Action Committee and the Honduran Mennonite Evangelical Church, assisted 176 families in the states of Olancho and Colón. Through the project, seeds for corn, bean and coffee plants, and material such as fencing and fertilizer were distributed. Some 1,760 trees were also planted as part of the project.

—MCC release by **Marla Pierson Lester**

**Intelligent design critic replaced as astronomer**

Pope Benedict XVI has appointed the Rev. Jose Gabriel Funes to head the Vatican Observatory, replacing a long-serving Jesuit astronomer and a vocal opponent of intelligent design theory. It was unclear if the replacement of the Rev. George Coyne, who has served as the observatory's director since 1978, reflected a sense of disapproval within the Vatican over Coyne's opposition to intelligent design—the idea that the world is too complex to have been created by natural events alone. Coyne has frequently attacked proponents of the theory as a “religious movement” lacking scientific merit.

—RNS release



**Sarah Adams leads a workshop at the Ecumenical AIDS Pre-Conference in Toronto in August.**

development of microbicides proves successful, it will put the power of HIV protection in women's hands.

Another potential means of reducing HIV transmission is through male circumcision. Initial studies in South Africa and Kenya have shown significantly reduced rates of HIV infection among men who were circumcised.

Pre-exposure prophylaxes were a third idea introduced. For years, post-exposure prophylaxes have been used to successfully reduce HIV transmission in cases such as rape or exposure to the virus in a medical setting. New research is showing the potential for these types of drugs prior to exposure for people that may be at high risk of contracting HIV. The concept is similar to that of taking a malarial prophylactic while visiting a malarial zone.

Along with hopeful new research and solutions came a recognition of barriers that have stopped the world from successfully addressing the AIDS crisis. The role poverty plays in the global crisis was a common theme. All over the world, global economic systems force men to leave their families for months at a time and work as migrant labourers in areas far from home.

Women, dependent solely on men for their income and survival in many places, are forced into situations where their health and wellbeing are compromised.

Many people, especially those sick

because of AIDS, lack the ability to feed themselves properly. Food insecurity is a major reason AIDS continues to make people so sick, and without sufficient food even those on life-prolonging anti-retroviral medication are not able to receive the full benefit of the drugs.

Marginalized groups were also vocal about the often hidden epidemic in North America. The U.S.-based Black AIDS Institute hosted discussions and marches highlighting the need to do more to address HIV/AIDS in the black community in the United States. African-American women accounted for 67 percent of all new infections in the U.S. in 2004.

Aboriginal groups from Canada were also vocal about the AIDS crisis among First Nations people, where infection rates have increased by 500 percent over the last 20 years, while the national Canadian average has decreased by 24 percent in the same time period.

As the week came to a close, organizers and participants called on governments, drug companies, churches, foundations, research institutions and individuals to act immediately to prevent the further spread of the disease. Only through a timely, significant and coordinated effort will progress be realized in the fight against AIDS.

—MCC release by **Sarah Adams**

*The author is the MCC HIV/AIDS coordinator.*

Beirut, Lebanon

## Massive destruction greets MCC assessment team

**A** Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assessment team observed massive destruction in Beirut and southern Lebanon while visiting communities affected by the recent war between the Israeli army and Hezbollah militants.

The five-person team is planning MCC's ongoing aid response in Lebanon, where the war destroyed thousands of homes, displaced nearly a million people and caused about 1,300 deaths. MCC has already committed \$187,000, including \$45,600 to provide emergency assistance to people who were fleeing the fighting.

After arriving in Lebanon on Aug. 25, the team visited a southern area of Beirut that was devastated by Israeli air strikes. Ten-storey apartment buildings were reduced to piles of concrete rubble. Areas as large as half a city block were levelled. Many of the buildings that still stood were heavily

damaged.

Most residents fled southern Beirut during the war. Some left the city, stayed with relatives or rented an apartment in safer areas. Others filled Beirut's parks and schools by the thousands.

For Mary Mikhael, president of the Near East School of Theology, the crisis brought back painful memories of Lebanon's 17-year civil war, which ended in 1991. "It shocked me to the depths of my being," Mikhael said. "It brought it all back."

The theology school was used as a relief centre throughout the civil war, and during the recent war it became one again. Each day, volunteers packed about 1,000 boxes of food and 1,000 boxes of soap, candles and other basic items, and distributed them to displaced people.

The Middle East Council of Churches carried out this relief with a



Photo by Tim Shenk

**A young woman walks through a neighborhood devastated by Israeli air strikes in southern Beirut.**

grant of \$11,000 from MCC. Both are MCC partner organizations.

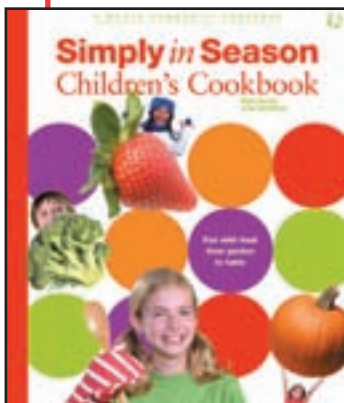
In the southern Lebanese city of Sidon, the assessment team met with Mayor Abdul Rahman Bizri and with staff members of the Development for People and Nature Association, a partner organization that provided food and other assistance to thousands of displaced people during the war.

Sidon, a city of about 250,000, received more than 110,000 displaced people during the war. Many stayed in schools and other public buildings.

Thuraya Al-Bouz, a relief worker with the Development for People and Nature Association, organized children's activities at a school building where displaced families were staying.

"The most important for me was the drawing, because the child can reflect what all is going on in his mind," Al-Bouz said.

Farther south, the assessment team visited Qlayleh, a village of 6,000 near the Mediterranean coast. Israeli air strikes destroyed about 200 houses in the village and severely damaged another 150. Eight people were killed and most fled north for the duration of



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—*Mary Beth Lind, Co-author of Simply in Season*

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## Helping Lebanese children avoid cluster bombs

**M**ennonite Central Committee (MCC) is funding an effort to warn Lebanese children about the danger of unexploded cluster bombs that Israel dropped on their communities during its recent war with Hezbollah.

An MCC partner organization, the Philanthropic Association for Disabled Care, is distributing educational board games to teach children how to recognize, report and avoid cluster bombs.

Cluster bombs are small explosives carried by a larger container or shell fired from artillery or rocket launchers, or dropped from planes. They often do not explode on contact and pose a great risk to civilians, particularly children and farmers, after a conflict has ended. Some cluster bombs are fist-sized, and others are as small as a size D battery or as long as a soda can.

The United Nations reports that Israeli attacks left as many as 100,000 unexploded cluster bombs in rural and residential areas of southern Lebanon.



Photo by Nada Ismail

**A cluster bomb in southern Lebanon: Many of the cluster bombs the Israeli army used in the summer war against Hezbollah militants were made in the U.S.**

Since the war ended, 13 people have been killed and another 46 injured by accidentally detonating cluster bombs in Lebanon, according to the United Nations. In most cases, the victims were children.

MCC is contributing at least \$24,300 to fund the educational project. The plans include workshops and educational materials for volunteers, who will raise awareness about cluster bombs and other unexploded ordnance in their communities.

According to Nada Ismail, the president of the Philanthropic Association for Disabled Care, volunteers and local residents should not attempt to disarm unexploded cluster bombs. Instead, they

should make sure everyone avoids the cluster bombs until professionals can safely destroy them.

“From what we see here in what’s happening to innocent children and civilians, we think there should be an international ban on all cluster bombs and land mines,” said Janet Janzen, an MCC co-director for Europe and the Middle East, who was part of an MCC team assessing the damage in Lebanon earlier this month.

MCC is appealing to its constituents for funds to help civilians avoid cluster bombs and to provide other aid to people affected by the war in Lebanon.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

the war.

Ahmad Sheble, a 74-year-old orange grower, fled Qlayleh with his wife, two adult children and 95-year-old mother on the second day of the conflict. They fled first to the nearby city of Tyre, then to Beirut—and when bombs fell too close to them in Beirut, they went into the mountains of eastern Lebanon. There, they rented an apartment at a rate of more than \$100 per day.

“Thank God the [UN] Security Council made the ceasefire happen that day,” Sheble said. “We couldn’t afford to stay for another day. We could barely afford to get back.”

Upon his return, Sheble found that bombs destroyed about a quarter of his orange trees and his irrigation system.

“I pray to God,” Sheble said. “This is what we want—to live in peace.”

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

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# Hurricane Katrina

U.S. Gulf Coast

From New Orleans west to Houston, and northeast to Meridian, Miss., Mennonite organizations continue their multi-million-dollar response to Hurricane Katrina.

On the first anniversary of the storm—which swept ashore on Aug. 29, 2005, causing unimaginable flooding in New Orleans and wreaking devastation throughout the U.S. Gulf Coast—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) hurricane response workers say needs remain strong even as new outreaches develop.

“People are hurting so much, it’s incredible,” said Blanca Mackay, a hurricane response worker serving with her Anabaptist congregation, Amor Viviente, in Metairie, La. “But every little thing that you can do, it helps. It brings relief to people. The most important thing, when people hear that people care, that makes a difference.”

More than a half-million dollars has been spent by MCC so far on immediate assistance after the storm, outreaches to evacuees and support of local workers in storm-affected areas. Over the next two to three years, MCC will support long-term projects to participate with evacuees in their recovery and to work in collaboration with local churches and organizations in affected areas.

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) and MCC continue as partners in this effort, with MDS providing teams to rebuild homes while MCC supports local projects and workers, provides case management and works at underlying injustices, such as poverty, inequality and racism, that the storm brought to the surface.

In addition to the more than \$2 million in donated funds, MCC has also provided nearly \$1 million worth of material aid.

29 August 2005

## Canadians volunteer with MDS

More than 4,000 volunteers, 783 of them from Canada, have served with MDS in the Gulf Coast over the past year. The first Canadian on the scene was Jerry Klassen, an experienced MDS project director who has worked in the aftermath of hurricanes in the past. Klassen was subsequently named as the MDS Gulf Coast coordinator, putting in place the infrastructure needed for successful work projects in areas affected by Katrina and the subsequent Hurricane Rita.

Eighty community projects have been opened in the Gulf Coast by MDS, totalling 919 individual jobs, mostly home cleanups and repairs.

In an unprecedented move, MDS purchased land in Pass Christian, Miss., and built a camp using mobile homes to accommodate up to 70 volunteers at a time.

MDS has started new programs to accommodate retired people with mobile homes. Under the new RV program, older participants are able to bring their own accommodations to the MDS Gulf Coast sites and work shorter hours.

Other recent developments include the purchase of a building in New Orleans, not far from the infamous Ninth Ward, which will be used to



MEDA photo

Adele London, a business advisor with the joint MEDA/MDS Back to Business program in New Orleans, is pictured in front of a business ravaged by Hurricane Katrina a year ago.

# a year later

29 August 2006

accommodate up to 40 volunteers at a time and serve as office space.

## MDS partners with MEDA

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and MDS are partnering in a new Back to Business initiative. The goal of Back to Business advisor Adele London is to revitalize the business core of six struggling neighbourhoods by helping existing business owners get back on their feet and assisting prospective entrepreneurs who are starting a business.

London recently held her first training classes for a dozen fledgling entrepreneurs, most of them African-American women who want to start home-based companies selling nutritional supplements or online hair care products.

## Personal stories

Some members of Amor Viviente are living in renovated housing but are still suffering the financial repercussions of evacuation and missed pay cheques. Others are still living in government-supplied trailers. Some are just beginning to rebuild.

In one instance, MDS was able to clear one member’s house and clean mould from it, protecting it from further deterioration. But rebuilding stalled for months as the homeowner, assisted by Mackay, sorted through insur-

ance, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and who would pay for further repairs.

This summer, Amor Viviente had four MCC U.S. Summer Service workers who organized a group of volunteers from Minnesota to do repairs for church members. MCC school kits are being given to students returning to school in Louisiana this fall.

The congregation continues to provide items, including MCC meat, to people in the community who are in need. “We have accomplished a lot,” Mackay said.

In Houston, where some 150,000 evacuees continue to live, a local hurricane response team has begun to do case management to help evacuees, many of them Spanish-speaking, to become self-sufficient again.

Many people are still emotionally distraught. Case manager Nancy González has noticed the transition seems particularly hard on youths aged nine to 15. “They want to be back in their own home with their own things,” she said. “They’re still doing without a lot of what they used to have in Louisiana.”

In working with one family who needed to complete FEMA paperwork, González learned their 14-year-old daughter had made the cheerleading squad and basketball team at her new school, but the family could not afford the physical exam required for her to participate in extracurricular activities. MCC paid for a physical and for shoes, while the school coach funded a cheerleading outfit.

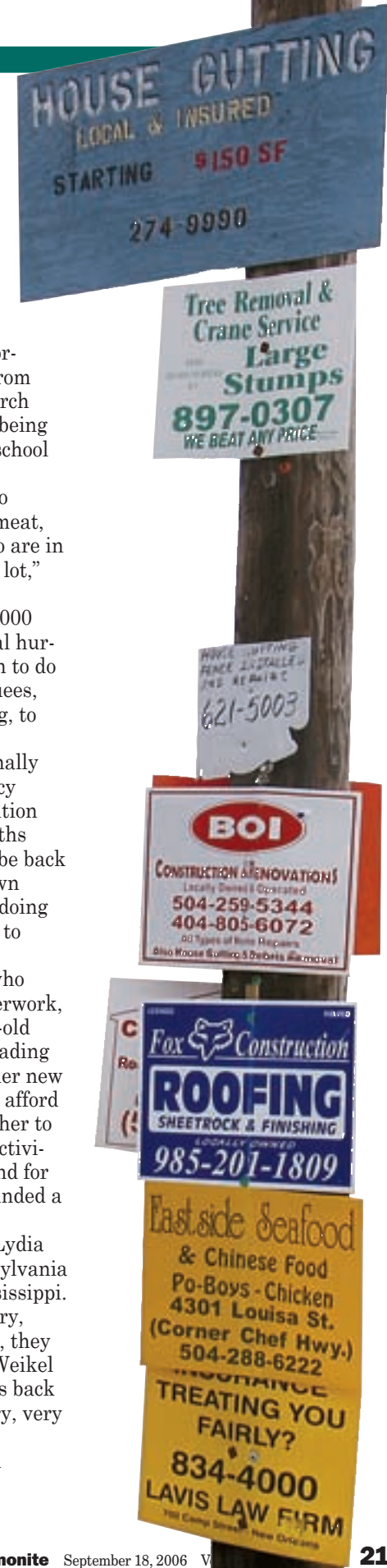
In Meridian, MCC supports Lydia Weikel, who moved from Pennsylvania to work with Rebuild East Mississippi. “The needs are really still so very, very great. I know in the North, they don’t hear so much anymore,” Weikel said. “They assume everything’s back to normal. And it’s really so very, very far from normal.”

—From MCC, MDS and MEDA releases



MCC photo

A meeting in the New Orleans area in August brought together members of Mennonite Central Committee’s hurricane response team and partners.



# FOCUS

## Education

### South African trip opens students' eyes

Thirteen music students from Conrad Grebel University College and the University of Waterloo spent much of May soaking up the culture and music of South Africa as part of a unique study tour.

The trip was "the first-of-a-kind for any Canadian or American university group, considering the location, musical/cultural experiences, and unique connection with University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN)," according to Grebel music professor Carol Ann Weaver, who led the trip with her musical partner, Rebecca Campbell.

Cross-cultural experiences included visits to the Juma Mosque, a Zulu Seventh-Day Adventist church, African jazz and western classical concerts, Afro-beat dance halls, the famed all-night Isicathimiya male choral competition (a living Zulu tradition), nature reserves, AIDS clinics, an African National Conference office, and a performance of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* by African students, and discussions with anti-apartheid activists.

During lectures at UKZN, the students learned about Zulu music and culture, including storytelling, praise singing and South African gospel styles. At the UKZN Centre for Jazz and Popular Music, the group heard music from Zulu, East Indian and white South African roots.

"Unbelievable," is how Grebel student Jennifer Wiebe described the Isicathimiya



**Thirteen music students from Conrad Grebel University College and the University of Waterloo spent much of May soaking up the culture and music of South Africa as part of a unique study tour. —Conrad Grebel photo**

competition. "It felt like we were part of something sacred! It felt as if we were tapping into a very 'real' South African cultural experience."

"For me, the trip succeeded in opening my eyes to things I'd never seen before and therefore didn't fully understand, said Grebel student Kristen Fox. "It strengthened in me the idea that the world really is small, and that we are all alike, no

matter what colour our skin or what country we're from, and that even though someone may have less money than you, or be 'less fortunate,' it does not make them poor."

"I'm still dreaming 'African' dreams," said Grebel master of theological studies student Michele Rizoli upon her return.

—Conrad Grebel release

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## MEI equips students 'for life and forever'

It would be fair to say that those of us who are involved in independent schools—and more specifically, Christian schools—believe that we offer a superior education to that of the public system. Having said that, and upon reflection on my brief experiences in the public system, I must say that on many fronts the public system offers as good, and many times a better, education than that of many independent schools.

What then distinguishes Christian schools from those in the public domain? Why should parents consider sending their children to our schools? The answer to these questions begs another question: "What can we offer that public schools cannot?"

Previous popular thought would have us believe that Christian education is a withdrawal from the prevailing culture. On the contrary, students in Christian schools are not only free—but encouraged—to investigate all issues from alternative worldviews because Christian education is committed to the discovery of truth. Unlike their peers in most public schools, students in Christian schools are not submerged in fragmented learning—learning the facts of history and laws of science,

but discouraged, if not prevented, from pursuing the "why" questions. Christian education actively explores the "why" as it relates to origin, morality and destiny—questions that are at the core of our being.

A fundamental purpose of our Christian schools is to graduate young men and women whose minds have been renewed in a way that makes them God-centred, rather than self-centred, in their decision-making.

In my 25 years at Mennonite Educational Institute (MEI), nothing has impressed this upon me more than my experiences with our Service-Learning Program. Over the last 10 years, hundreds of students have experienced short-term service opportunities, and the ways in which their lives have been changed, both at school and following graduation, convince me that a good education is much more than just the sum of those activities conducted inside the four walls of our classrooms.

Whether it is through service projects, team sports, performing arts opportunities or field trips, Christian teachers impact the lives of their students outside the classroom in ways that are not possible in public schools. They provide not only life skills but also opportunities for students to prepare for an eternal life. MEI's motto is: "Equipping students for life and for-



**Whether it is through service projects, team sports, performing arts opportunities or field trips, Christian teachers impact the lives of their students outside the classroom in ways that are not possible in public schools.**

—MEI photo

ever." This is what distinguishes Christian schools from those in the public domain.

—Dave Loewen

*The author is director of programs at MEI.*

## WMES welcomes new staff

Cindy Thiessen has been named senior principal of the Agassiz campus of Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools (WMES), while Doug Pankratz has been appointed as director of development. Other new staff at Agassiz include: Grade 3 teacher Wes Krahn, German teacher Verna Reitmeier, French teacher Elly Kampen, and Grade 4 to 6 music teacher Natalie Landgraff.

New staff at the Bedson campus of WMES include: resource teacher Corinna Ens, Grade 2 teacher Sherisse Penner, Grade 3 teacher Carla Hiebert, and Grade 4 teacher Francine Wiebe.

—WMES release

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## Students urged to find their 'voice'

Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) president Loren Swartzendruber challenged students at the Aug. 30 convocation service marking the beginning of the fall semester by citing Quaker educator/writer Parker Palmer in his book *Let Your Life Speak*, that the word "vocation" is rooted in the Latin word for "voice."

"My vocation, your vocation, is not a goal to pursue, nor is it a job. It is, instead, your calling," the president told the assembly. "If Jesus needed time, approximately 30 years, to prepare for his vocation, surely a few years of preparation for each of us isn't a waste of time," he added.

"Finding your voice, your calling, takes time, energy and discipline," the president suggested. "No one has invented a drive-through McVoice, a place where you drive up to the first window, look over a catalogue list of courses, place your order, drive up to the second window, pay the

bill, and find your voice, your calling.

"There are, of course, shortcuts available," Swartzendruber said, noting that he found a website called *Affordabledegrees.com* that grants degrees in just five days for \$199.

"Not only are there inappropriate shortcuts, but we have to acknowledge that there are many productive, happy folks in our world who have never been to college. And it doesn't always have to do with one's level of intelligence."

"We must also accept that much education takes place outside the walls of academia," he said. "Some things are better learned or understood in other settings, or with other experiences. As Mark Twain put it, 'If you hold a cat by the tail you learn things you cannot learn any other way.'"

"The purpose of an EMU education is primarily for the good of others, even as we benefit as individuals," Swartzendruber declared. "Ultimately, at least through the eyes



**Returning students, faculty and staff formed a "tunnel of welcome" to greet new members of the EMU campus community in Harrisonburg, Va., as they passed by during the Aug. 30 convocation service.**  
—Photo by Jim Bishop

of faith, an educated person always asks, 'How can I use my gifts and education in the service of others? What can I contribute to make the world a better place?'"

—EMU release by Jim Bishop

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## How would Maclean's rank CMU?

Every year, MacLean's magazine publishes a list of what it considers to be Canada's top universities. And every year there is the predictable criticism of the magazine's methodology, questions and conclusions, and of the fact that it doesn't include every school in its survey. Despite this, some people may wonder how Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) stacks up in the magazine's annual survey?

But before going there, it is important to note why we are even taking note of the survey. It is because we are a university. We are not a Bible college-plus—a Bible college that has added some arts and science courses. We offer university-level education, with a range of majors and degrees that prepares students for entering the workforce or continuing their education.

The quality of faculty is an important yardstick for any university. One way to measure that is the number of faculty with doctoral degrees. Of CMU's 49 faculty, 36 have achieved a doctoral degree and five are at the candidate level. The remainder hold masters degrees or equivalent.

But it is not just the high level of education that distinguishes our faculty; it is the way they interact with students that is also important.

Said one student of CMU profs, "They are directly in contact with the students



**CMU students unwind after class.**  
—Photo by John Longhurst

and are always available to discuss with or calm down bedraggled students when we get overloaded and confused."

Many universities claim to have small class sizes. But for some that means 50 students or fewer. At CMU, our average class size is 18.

One student said that the smaller class sizes "has allowed me to interact with professors, ask questions, and engage meaningfully in the material."

But CMU isn't just a place where you attend classes. It's a place where you can be part of a vibrant Christian community. It's a place where deep, long-lasting friendships are made. Time and again students say that community life is one of the things that drew them to CMU—and that keeps them here.

But there are areas that MacLean's doesn't measure—areas that we think

are pretty important. One of these areas is our unique faith perspective. CMU is a Christian university. In the context of our historic Mennonite-Anabaptist heritage, we invite students to examine their faith, to put it to the test and to make it their own. For students, our emphasis on faith is important, ranking high among the reasons why they chose CMU over other universities.

Something else MacLean's doesn't consider is emphasis on service. This starts with our faculty and staff, and extends to students, who are expected to do a service practicum assignment in order to graduate.

For these reasons, we think that CMU does pretty well by the measurements used by MacLean's. But why let that magazine have the final word? I am more interested in what students have to say about their experience here. In our recent survey of student satisfaction, students gave high marks to such areas as the quality of teaching; to their ability to grow in knowledge in their subject area, and to grow in their faith; to the availability of professors; for the facilities; for community life; and for the value of money for their studies.

And that, for me, is the best ranking of all.  
—CMU release by

**Gordon Zerbe**

*The author is academic dean at CMU.*





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## Notes from Bluffton University

On Aug. 28, 11 Bluffton (Ohio) University students left to spend their fall semester in Northern Ireland. This is the 12th year that Bluffton has participated in the cross-cultural program. This 15-week residential program seeks to increase visiting students' understanding of the complexities of the troubles in Northern Ireland so they can use the knowledge gained to analyze and increase understanding of conflict in their own and other societies. Students will take five classes during 10 weeks at Magee College at the University of Ulster while living with local families, both Catholic and Protestant. They will then be assigned to a five-week internship with organizations committed to non-violent means of resolving conflict. "Our Northern Ireland program stretches students in ways they cannot be stretched while staying on campus all four years," says Sally Weaver Sommer, Bluffton's associate dean of academic affairs. "In Northern Ireland, they immerse themselves in a culture different from their own, grow in their understanding of a

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conflict with long historical roots, and they test how they can live out their values in a global community.”

For the first time in Bluffton University's 106-year history, enrolment broke the 1,200 mark. The total enrolment of 1,211 students is an increase of 20 students from the previous year. A record number of 132 graduate students were included in the total, an increase of 44 from 2004-05. This is the fourth year in a row that Bluffton has achieved record enrollment numbers. Contributions to the Bluffton

Fund totalled just over \$1 million (figures in US dollars), marking the fifth straight year that alumni and friends contributed more than \$1 million in support for annual operations, including substantial support for student financial aid. For the 2006 fiscal year, the university received just over \$2 million in total gifts from more than 2,660 donors, including 150 Bluffton faculty and staff who supported the institution with gifts totalling \$127,705.

The 2007 *America's Best Colleges Guide* of *U.S. News & World Report* has

ranked Bluffton University in the top tier of comprehensive colleges in the Midwest. Bluffton has received this distinction nine of the last 10 years. The rankings, announced on Aug. 16, showed Bluffton at number 34 out of 107 “comprehensive colleges” ranked in the Midwest region of the U.S. and one of 54 colleges in the region to receive the top tier designation. “Bluffton continues to offer a quality educational experience, both in and out of the classroom, and this recognition from *U.S. News* is one more indicator that people are noticing,” said Eric Fulcomer, vice-president for enrolment management and student life. The annual college guide uses 15 indicators of quality, including peer assessment, student retention, faculty resources, student selectivity, financial resources and alumni giving. Bluffton's category—best comprehensive colleges—is for schools that focus on undergraduate education and offer a range of degree programs. More than half of the degrees granted by schools in this category are in professional fields such as education and business.

—Bluffton releases by **Jill A. Duling**



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**Doug Pankratz, director of development at Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools (WMES), gets a slobbery smooch from Bovina as daughter Lindsey looks on. The event marked the successful raising of more than \$4,000 to buy cows for a Mennonite Central Committee project in Vietnam by students at the Bedson WMES campus. Students were originally challenged by principal John Sawatzky to raise enough money so each of the 16 classes could buy one cow. In total, the school raised enough money to buy more than 50 cows.**  
—WMES photo

Waterloo, Ont.

## What makes a camp Mennonite and Christian?

**A**cross Mennonite Church Eastern Canada it was a busy summer for camping ministries. The four ‘nature’ camps are scattered across south-central Ontario: Silver Lake Mennonite Camp between Owen Sound and Lake Huron; Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp near New Hamburg; and Willowgrove with Fraser Lake Camp near Bancroft (250 kilometres north of Toronto), and Glenbrook Day Camp at Stouffville, northeast of Toronto.

Ben Janzen, director at Silver Lake, and Campbell Nisbet, director at Hidden Acres, had a remarkably similar list of what makes their camps Mennonite. They commented that their camps were founded by a Mennonite community and that they teach Mennonite theology as they foster spirituality and faith, build community among the staff, focus on service, teach peace and encourage it in relationships at all times.

Eric Musselman, director at Fraser Lake, and Jessica Reesor, peace instructor at Glenbrook, also list teaching peace as important parts of the spirituality at their camps. Both camps are part of Willowgrove, which includes an elementary school, and openly show their Christian roots and values; they include their membership in the Mennonite Camping Association on their websites.

All of the camps have roots in one of the founding conferences of MC Eastern Canada and to some extent continue to show their roots.

At Silver Lake there has been a renewed focus on spirituality over the past number of years and the position of spiritual life coordinator, held by Melanie Vandersluis, is relatively new. Her job, as one of the senior staff, is to aid the counsellors in their spiritual lives and in their work with campers.

Spirituality at Silver Lake—from the United Mennonite Conference—takes place at the fire circle at morn-



Photo by Dave Rogalsky

**Eric Musselman (centre) leads worship at Fraser Lake Camp near Bancroft, Ont.**

ing watch as well as in teaching peace and service to the staff and campers.

At Hidden Acres (from the Western Ont. or Amish Mennonite Conference) spirituality takes place at a worship service that happens each day before lunch and at evening prayers. All the camps report active meal prayer-songs as part of the pervasive spirituality.

Musselman, from Fraser Lake (from Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec), notes, “We try to incorporate faith into the daily fabric of camp life—so that it isn’t so much about ‘religious’ time and ‘non-religious’ time, but that it’s just part of the daily routine.” Even so, there are many “religious” events throughout the day at Fraser Lake, including morning watch, chapels, evening devotions and campfires. Musselman adds, “All of our spiritual activities are done with the hope that campers and staff develop an awareness of God around them, and to give them a safe place to question and seek and explore without judgment or condemnation.”

Glenbrook, with a younger camper

demographic and shorter day, finds it more difficult to instill Christian faith and values. The peace program, run by Reesor, includes a day on “peace heroes and Jesus as the ultimate peace hero,” and her sessions, taught from a Christian perspective, place an equal emphasis on peace at interpersonal, local and global levels. Sessions include hands-on demonstrations, art, visuals, drama and music.

Young adults preparing for baptism often note that camp was a formative experience in their spiritual lives. Some also report that they feel most “spiritual” when at camp, and often need a summer refresher to renew their faith.

Pastors sometimes wonder how to help campers and staff bring their “camp” faith into the city or town. How to move from Hidden Acres as “a natural place to meet God” to “walking with God on the pavement of life”?

Is camp spirituality affecting the staff and campers at home?

Vandersluis reported that she had grown into an understanding of

faith at camp. “My family didn’t go to church often,” she said. “It was at camp where I developed a relationship with God.”

She is now attending a congregation regularly. The discipline of journaling—writing letters to God—is something she learned at camp and now uses to strengthen her relationship with God through the year.

Jodi Poole, a counsellor at Hidden Acres, has taken the discipline of a modified consciousness exam home with her. Each evening counsellors at Hidden Acres ask their campers for two good things and one bad thing from the day and then pray with them. Poole has continued to do this for herself each evening at home in Wellesley, Ont.

Janzen told the story of three staff who decided to room together for the winter. It didn’t take long for the relationships to sour and serious differences to occur. But dipping into their training at camp, and using Matthew 18:15 (when you have something against a brother or sister, go and talk to your sister or brother), they worked at their differences in a Christian and edifying way, resolving them and saving the relationships.

An important outcome of spirituality at camp for both Vandersluis and Poole is a growing sense of self-worth. They both said that growing closer to God has given them a greater sense of their own gifts and that they can use these for God. They noted feeling comfortable with themselves and growing in patience with self, other staff and the campers.

Both Janzen and Gwen Dell’Anno, who began as new director at Silver Lake in early September, note the need to revisit their camp’s roots. Although the camps were founded by Mennonites, these roots need to be

renewed from time to time.

Another question the directors raised was that of outside resources. “Do we bring someone in from the outside to [assist] staff, taking the time to bring them up to steam, or do we do things ourselves?” was how Janzen put it.

Dell’Anno wondered if failing to bring in outside resources can lead to insularity.

Silver Lake brought in Ilene Bergen, pastor at Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden, Ont., to teach staff about Mennonites.

Could something similar be done for resource staff like Vandersluis in their

spiritual work?

As part of the Counsellors in Leadership Training (CILT) at Silver Lake, Janzen has been using Corinne Ware’s “Discover Your Spiritual Type” to help staff learn their own spirituality style.

What makes a camp Mennonite and Christian?

The Ontario camps are making sure that the camp leaders are trained and rooted in Christian spirituality in a Mennonite style, focussing on peace at the centre of the gospel.

—**Dave Rogalsky**, with a report from **Joanna Reesor-McDowell**

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Kitchener, Ont.

## Nidus Festival brings together Christian denominations

Should your taste in spirituality run to Orthodox icons or to drum-led, rapping prayer circles, or anywhere in between, Nidus (Latin for “nest”) was the place for you. This first-ever ecumenical weekend, held at Bingemans Event Centre in Kitchener from August 4 to 6 and sponsored by the Canadian Council of Churches, provided a space for people of all generations to express faith, celebrate the arts and seek justice.

Wandering through the presentations and displays, and listening to the many concerts and speakers, it seemed that except for conservative groups like the Amish, the whole broad spectrum of Christianity in Canada was represented. Mennonite-related organizations included Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), *Geez* magazine (see sidebar, page 31), and Mennonite Central Committee.

Mennonite young adults who attended appeared enthusiastic for many aspects of the festival; they

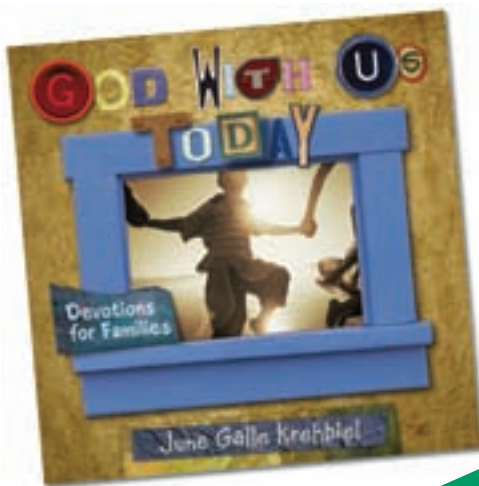


Photo courtesy of Alissa Bender

**Youths, adults and children flocked to the Nidus Festival, the first-ever ecumenical weekend held at Bingemans Event Centre in Kitchener, Ont., from August 4 to 6. Sponsored by the Canadian Council of Churches, the festival provided a space for people of all generations to express faith, celebrate the arts and seek justice.**

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pored over the full schedule, trying to fit in as much as possible.

For some, this experience in ecumenism was rather new. For others, it was part of a growing interest and passion. Dana Honderich of Wilmot Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont., was encouraged by conversations she heard. In other ecumenical dialogue she had seen a “no denominations kick” that hasn’t fit well with her, because she felt downplaying differences isn’t always the most genuine or helpful way to learn from each other. Honderich witnessed an inter-denominational panel responding to Bruxy Cavey’s words on the “end of religion,” where, instead of “yes, but...,” the comments to each other began with “yes, and this is how we talk about this question in our tradition.”

Jim Loney’s presence was a major draw to a Saturday afternoon workshop for CPT. Loney was one of four CPT hostages held in Iraq for nearly four months. Together with Scott Albrecht, he presented something of CPT’s work around the world.

When asked if CPT is “successful,”

## Internal combustion engines suffocate the soul

**W**ill Braun travelled from Winnipeg to the Nidus Festival in Kitchener, Ont., on his bicycle. Jennifer deGroot, his wife, arrived on the Greyhound. Both exhibit choices that Braun of *Geez* magazine, is calling “Demotorize your soul.”

“The way we get from place to place affects our soul,” claimed Braun before his seminar at Nidus. In contrast to the Platonic division between body and soul that has driven the Christian outlook toward nature and spirituality for more than 1,700 years, and the focus on the rational versus the passionate in the modern era, Braun suggested that there is a connection between what we do and our souls and spirits: “Our hyper-mobility has a debilitating spiritual effect.”

Having a father who built recumbent

bikes in the off-season from farming, and parents who were adventurous in faith and life “couldn’t help but influence” Braun. After living with the Lubicon Cree in the heart of Alberta’s oil patch and then as an environmentalist who spent all his time flying all over the place, Braun became convinced of his own duplicity.

“There are reasons to fly,” he quipped, “and those reasons are killing us.” Modern lifestyles are connected to others’ misery, he said.

But “the time for guilt is over,” announced Braun repeatedly, “This is the time for grace, the time to cut ourselves some slack.”

“Let’s see this as an adventure of faith,” he said. “Let’s try things, rather than having to be successful right away. Let’s, like Mahatma Gandhi suggested, do ‘experiments with truth.’”

The demotorize.org website has a digest which allows adventurers to post their attempts, successes, failures or ideas that



they are afraid to try. Robb Davis, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee, and his wife, Nancy, were among the first to post.

The website announces, “It’s time for the spiritual transition to a post-oil era. The internal combustion engine is suffocating our souls as it suffocates the planet. So give your soul a break from the gas-powered frenzy. Relax a bit, and join the spirited slow-down.”

The plenary session following his presentation showed that Braun’s words had an effect. One person commented that using only muscle power to get to church would affect people’s choice of congregation. They would have to choose a congregation that was near and put up with things like denominations, styles of worship, economic level of the congregants, theological differences and so on, rather than seeking the perfect church and then driving to it.

—**Dave Rogalsky**

Loney described places like Al-Tawani in Palestine, where CPT’s influence has helped the oppressed. Using himself as another example, he spoke of how his Iraqi captors had asked him, “If the U.S. came into your country and oppressed you, wouldn’t you pick up weapons to fight for freedom?”

“No,” he had replied, “*Issa Salem*, Jesus’ peace” would stop him from doing any violence. He also claimed that his captivity in Iraq has led to a new solidarity among Christian churches uniting against violence.

An open-table communion on Sunday morning was led by a minister of the United Church of Canada. She explored Jesus’ transfiguration during her homily, commenting on Peter’s declaration: “It is good for us to be here.” A “good place,” she suggested, is one where God’s revelation is experienced.

After the disciples came down from the mountain of transfiguration, they hardly knew what to do with what they had seen. Perhaps Nidus was a bit like that experience. Was it all just a fun weekend, or did it call the churches to come together to help discern where God is at work in the world?

Author Brian McLaren shared on Sunday morning that the church is

awake when it becomes compassionate, but it is dangerous when it becomes passionate for justice. Perhaps Nidus has made the church just a

little more dangerous.

Plans are underway for Nidus 2007.  
—From reports by **Dave Rogalsky** and **Alissa Bender**



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Mayfair, Sask.

## Church members help with tornado cleanup

On Aug. 12, a work crew from Glenbush, Prince Albert and Battleford, donned old clothes, rubber boots and heavy gloves to pick up tree branches and other debris from several fields on the farm of Michael and Teresa Toews, members of the local Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church.

The debris was from the “plough” winds and a tornado that went through the Mayfair area two weeks before. Trees were twisted and blown down, and roofs, farm buildings and equipment were damaged. In the village of Mayfair and the surrounding area, fallen trees and branches resembled boxes of spilled matches.



Photo by Naomi Unger

**Eldon Martens, left, Stephen Toews, Orville Andres and Wilbert Epp, the congregational contact person for Mennonite Disaster Service, helped clean up storm debris on a number of farms of members of the Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church in Mayfair, Sask.**

The crew included teenagers and seniors, farmers and city folk. Wilbert Epp of Glenbush, Sask., the congregational contact person for Mennonite Disaster Service, made the work arrangements. Rain on the weekend

kept the workers cold and wet as they walked the wheat and barley fields. But they did what they could to clean up so that, at harvest time, swathers and combines would not get damaged by the debris.

This was the second work day initiated by the neighbouring Mennonite community. Two days after the storm, approximately a dozen men from the Glenbush and Rabbit Lake congregations worked with chain saws to help clear away fallen trees from several farm yards.

Marian Toews, Michael's mother from Saskatoon, was impressed that people would come out twice to help her son. The help these workers gave was a real encouragement to the family, she said. Looking beyond the devastation now seemed possible for them.

—Naomi Unger

Water Valley, Alta.

## Women's life stages celebrated

Thirty-six women gathered at Camp Valaqua on the last weekend in May for the annual Alberta Women in Mission retreat. The theme of the event was “Women in conversation; celebrating women's lives.” They shared their stories of life in the following areas: new mom, career woman, empty nester and retiree.

Melissa Miller of Winnipeg brought words of wisdom with her own version of these stages: life bearer, called woman, transition/letting go, and wise woman. The theme verse was Philippians 3:14: “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.” Miller challenged participants to view each stage with the following questions in mind: Who am I? How am I travelling? What is my goal?

On Saturday morning, Marlene Wiebe of Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury, Alta., retold Ruth's story, while Jenny Felsmann of Calgary First Mennonite Church shared her story of how her walk with God has changed and become stronger in each new challenge, not the least of which is being a new mom.

The second story came from

Betty Janssen, also of Calgary First Mennonite, who shared how she became a career woman not so much by choice as by necessity.

AnnaMarie Boyce from Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, shared, “When I spoke to my son about the empty nest, he noted, ‘First of all, our identity is in God, then as a spouse, parent, homemaking and career. If one identity is reduced, you do not collapse, as your identity remains in God and in the remaining areas.’”

The fourth story was from Doris Boehr of Lethbridge (Alta.) Mennonite Church. She shared about her working life, and the challenges of being retired, especially once she and her husband had both retired.

Beth Moyer, also of Lethbridge Mennonite, began Sunday worship with words about worship and creation. Miller brought participants to the key goal of their journey—wisdom. In Hebrew thought, wisdom was given feminine attributes and seen as a companion of God.

The business session included a discussion on the closing of two member groups and the need to look for ways to encourage more women's groups to join Alberta Women in Mission.

—Ev Buhr

*The author is the president of Alberta Women in Mission.*

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November 13 <i>(Focus on Music)</i>	October 31

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Toronto

## Lazarus Rising walks with Toronto's marginalized

In the mid-1990s, residents of Toronto began to notice with concern the increased number of marginalized and homeless people on the streets of their city. Several members of Mennonite churches in Toronto felt a special burden to find a way to respond to this growing need. In 1995, a group of those individuals began meeting to determine what role they could play in reaching out. They named their group Lazarus Rising.

After spending many hours listening to marginalized people and those who worked with them through various agencies in the city, and conducting their research, group members reported to their fellow church members that "time after time, we've heard directly that, while people who are homeless know where to find food, shelter and clothing, they don't know

where to go to talk to someone they can trust." Lazarus Rising developed the vision that "Mennonites will be that listening ear, that friend, that hope, that love and understanding to the streets of Toronto, through a pastoral presence on the street."

A number of local congregations and individuals within the churches committed money to hire a street pastor. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario and Sanctuary Ministries of Toronto agreed to be partners in the work with Lazarus Rising.

With a spirit of thankfulness, Doug Johnson Hatlem was commissioned as the first street pastor at Toronto United Mennonite Church this spring. Hatlem grew up in a Baptist family in southern California, but was drawn to Christian pacifism during his young adult years.

"My journey with respect to non-violence led me finally to join a Mennonite church in North Carolina, where my wife, Jodie Boyer Hatlem, and I were finishing up our time at Duke Divinity School," he says. They now live with their two preschoolers in an intentional Christian community in Parkdale, a neighbourhood in the west end of downtown Toronto.

Hatlem has sensitivity to the issues of marginalization partly because he has a sibling who has spent a number of years "street involved." He says that the root cause is "almost certainly the abuse that wound up splitting my parents' marriage when I was 12 years old." Hatlem has an understanding of the complex and varied reasons that can contribute to people living on the streets. Although many of the people he works with have substance abuse or mental health problems, he has also met those who ended



Photo by Joanna Reesor-McDowell

**Lazarus Rising accompanies homeless and marginalized people in downtown Toronto. Street pastor Doug Johnson Hatlem, left, and steering committee chair Jane Pritchard, right, talk to Gabe (in wheelchair) and Steve. Steve, previously homeless, is now living in Hatlem's household, an intentional Christian community.**

up on the street when they lost a job to downsizing or injury.

Andrew Cressman, originally from Waterloo, Ont., now lives in Toronto and volunteers with Lazarus Rising. Every Monday afternoon, he joins Hatlem in walking the streets of downtown Toronto, stopping to speak to any street person they find. They take time to listen, give out gift certificates for Tim Hortons, and make sure people know about the meals and other services they can find at Sanctuary Ministries—such as drop-in programs, health services, counselling and drug rehabilitation.

"The church has a vital role to play in walking with people on the street, meeting them where they are at, and welcoming them into a loving, caring, Christian community," Cressman says.

The Lazarus Rising Steering Committee is now considering moving Hatlem from half-time to three-quarter time provided the required resources are found. Those wishing to support this ministry can send cheques made out to the trustee congregation—Toronto United Mennonite Church—to: Lazarus Rising at MCC Toronto, 1038 Woodbine Ave., Toronto, ON M4C 4C4.

—Joanna Reesor-McDowell

### News brief

#### MWC names national coordinator for Assembly 15

Ernst Weichselberger from Asuncion, Paraguay, has accepted Mennonite World Conference's invitation to be the national coordinator for Assembly 15, beginning on Aug. 1. The global assembly will be held in Asuncion from July 13 to 19, 2009. He will oversee and direct in-country planning, including the work of numerous committees, communication and publicity within Paraguay. Weichselberger is the son of an Austrian Catholic pacifist who immigrated to Paraguay in the 1930s. He is a member of the *Vereinigung der Mennonitengemeinden von Paraguay* (General Conference). Trained as a teacher, he spent seven years teaching and in youth work, and then 17 years directing Mennonite Voluntary Service and peace issues within all the German Mennonite conferences in Paraguay. "The Lord has given me many opportunities to serve at national and international levels. My trans-cultural and trans-denominational experiences have been important [and] my roots are deep in my [Mennonite] church," said Weichselberger.

—MWC release by **Ferne Burkhardt**



## People&Events

**Detmold, Germany**—The *Aussiedler*, who comprise several distinct enclaves of immigrants to Germany from former Soviet republics, recently joined together for the first time to hold evangelistic services in the Low German language. The theme they chose, “Finding a homeland,” addressed the homesickness they feel for Russia and offered hope of a permanent home in heaven. Jacob Funk, German radio producer at Family Life Network in Winnipeg, was invited to preach at these services held in June. Because of theological differences amongst the churches, the meetings were held in a neutral place: a Mennonite school auditorium. Between 600 and 850 people attended each evening, with some families driving 400 kilometres to attend. It has been estimated that about 200,000 speakers of Low German reside in Germany, although church leaders told Funk that “many of these are nominal Christians or non-churchgoers.” “But,” says Funk, “God is at work in how the *Aussiedler* churches are growing. Many of the people we were with had become Christians just five or six years ago, even seniors in their 80s.”  
—Family Life Network release

## Transitions

### Births/Adoptions

**Enns**—to Christine and Harold, Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, a son, Caleb Harold, in Warren, Man., Aug. 7.  
**Friesen**—to Diane and Kevin, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., a son, Louis Arthur, in Langley, B.C., Aug. 19.  
**Funk**—to Linda and Cameron, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Addison Marie, July 23.  
**Gerber Murray**—adopted by Kathy Gerber and Chris

Murray of Nepean, Ont., Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont., twin girls Erin Yue and Alexandra Xi (born in China on June 27, 2005), July 3.  
**Gingerich**—to Janice and Duane, Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., a daughter, Alyssa Amy Marie, Aug. 23.  
**Harris**—to Michelle and Chris, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Devyn Kerra, June 15.  
**Kent**—to Judy and Ken, Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont., a daughter, Alexis Marie, Aug. 1.  
**Krahn-Peters**—to Aubrey and Steven, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a daughter, Bailey Elizabeth, July 25.  
**Leis**—to Diane and Paul, Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont., a son, Tristan Ronald, Aug. 19.  
**Pena**—to Martha and Oscar, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Siena Jane, Aug. 17.  
**Ross**—to Angela and David, Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, a son, Samuel Ian, July 13.  
**Simpson**—to Eleanor and Dave, Schoenfelder Mennonite, St. Francois Xavier, Man., a son, Riley David, Aug. 18.  
**Tiessen**—to Gracie and Mark, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., twins Mattias James and Nadia Aime, in Texas, Aug. 2.  
**Unrau**—to Jennifer and Brian, Stirling Ave. Mennonite, Kitchener, a daughter, Leah Kate Snyder, July 30.  
**Wall**—to Tracy and John, Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Owen Brian, June 23.

### Marriages

**Aphayvong-Babphavong**—Sibou and Bouasy, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 17.  
**Busa-Gross**—Dean and Michelle, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, July 22.  
**Driedger-Ellsworth**—Tyler and Patricia, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., July 22.  
**Dyck-Thom**—Alan and Amy, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 5.

**Epp-Braun**—Kristen David and Jennifer Ashlee Jane (Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.), at her home, Aug. 5.  
**Fehr-Kehler**—Brent and Erin, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., Aug. 19.  
**Friesen-Regier**—Kevin and Christina, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., at Rosthern, Sask., July 28.  
**Janzen-Ruchotzke**—Jay and Amber, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., at Rosthern, Sask., July 8.  
**Janzen-Whittle**—Leonard and Ashley, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 19.  
**Kelly-Hiebert**—Adrian and Violette, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., Aug. 12.  
**Neely-Agnew**—Ray and Ruth, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont., July 4.  
**Neshida-Regier**—Gary and Jacqueline, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., at Emma Lake, Sask., July 8.  
**Ratcliff-Toews**—Arlon and Heather, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, Aug. 26.  
**Ropp-Stone**—Brad and Sarah, Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont., Aug. 19.  
**Runstedler-Roth**—Travis and Lori, Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont., Aug. 19.  
**Sawatzky-Bartel**—Michael (Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.) and Melissa (Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon), in Saskatoon, Aug. 19.  
**Schmucker-Braun**—David (Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.) and Damaris (Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg), in Winnipeg, Aug. 19.  
**Sewell-Hiebert**—Ryan and Amie, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Aug. 26.  
**Smith-Friesen**—Dexter and Marianne, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., at CMU, May 21.  
**Teichroeb-Schmidt**—Kristopher David and Tracy Lianne (Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.), in Winkler, Man., June 24.  
**Thiessen-Wiens**—Kendall and Deborah, Glenlea Mennonite, Man., Aug. 19.  
**Wall-Bleznuk**—Vladimir and Candace, Grace Mennonite,

Winkler, Man., July 29.

### Deaths

**Arnel**—Veronica, 39 (b. Sept. 28, 1966), Nairn Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 1.  
**Dyck**—Anton, 86, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Aug. 29.  
**Dyck**—John, 79 (b. Nov. 28, 1926), Steinbach Mennonite, Man., Aug. 26.  
**Erb**—Eleanor, 76, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., Aug. 4.  
**Friesen**—Margaret, 97, Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, Aug. 12.  
**Funk**—David, 95, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Aug. 9.  
**Graf**—Merv, 41, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., Aug. 20.  
**Hiebert**—Helen J., 75, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., in Steinbach, Man., Aug. 6.  
**Jacoby**—Max, 95, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Aug. 5.  
**Jantz**—Hugo, 76, Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, Aug. 12.  
**Konrad**—Gerhard (George), 84, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 24.  
**Lehman**—Mark, 43 (b. June 29, 1963), Erb St. Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., Aug. 23.  
**Neely**—Ray, 51, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont., Aug. 2.  
**Penner**—Jacob, 95, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Aug. 20.  
**Swartz**—Erma, 86 (b. Nov. 23, 1919), Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont., Aug. 26.  
**Toews**—John, 93, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 19.  
**Voth**—Frank H., 81, Schoenfelder Mennonite, St. Francois Xavier, Man., Aug. 17.  
**Wiebe**—Siegfried, 90, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., July 24.  
**Zacharias**—Frieda, 94, Pleasant Point Mennonite, Clavet, Sask., Aug. 17.

### Baptisms

**St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.**—Tonya Coplen, Meagan Harder, John Himes, Kurt Kornelsen, June 4.

## Mennonite Church Canada

### Prayer and praise requests

During the season of autumn harvests, remember to pray and celebrate with:

- The Global Mission Fellowship of Anabaptist-related Churches (GMF), a fellowship for Anabaptist-related churches and mission groups which meets for encouragement, vision-sharing, networking and cooperating in mission every three years. From Sept. 17 to 20, more than 100 Anabaptist mission leaders from around the world, including MC Canada staff members Janet Plenert, Jack Suderman and Rebecca Yoder Neufeld, are gathering in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Pray that God's Spirit would enable global collaboration and that the church's missionary identity would be strengthened.
- Kira Friesen, Witness intern and Canadian Mennonite University student, who will be leaving Winnipeg this month for a six-month internship in Botswana. She will be working in youth ministry in Gaborone under the supervision of Witness workers Glyn and Susan Allison-Jones. Pray for the success of her ministry in Botswana.
- Dann and Joji Pantoja, Witness workers in the Philippines, who give thanks for the privilege of being principal witnesses in a traditional Maguindanao Islamic wedding. This honour is a public declaration that the Pantojas have now been accepted as extended family of this particular Filipino family. Pray that the Pantojas might use this opportunity to relate more deeply and widely in the culture. They also hope to be bridge-builders between the Maguindanao community and the Filipino military. Pray that their interactions with

the military will be Spirit-led and will be a true witness to Anabaptist theology.

—Hinke Loewen-Rudgers

## Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

### A busy fall for leaders and congregations

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada is interested in "extending the peace of Jesus Christ in making disciples, growing congregations and forming leaders." A busy fall, full of events seeking to do just that is planned:

- **Oct. 28:** Principles and Practices for Planning and Leading Worship Workshop at Conrad Grebel University College. Pre-register by calling Conrad Grebel at 519-558-0220 ext. 226. Plenary session and break-out groups include: reading Scripture, leading prayer, children in worship, and music. The goal is to assist worship planners and leaders to develop a clearer understanding of their role and to hone skills in leading the various elements of worship.
- For the following events, registration is through Joan Schooley at the MC Eastern Canada office:
- **Sept. 27:** Pastors Fiction Reading Group in Conrad Grebel boardroom. Read and discuss novels which feature a pastor as the main character and/or dynamics of a faith community as a central theme. Leader: Sue Steiner.

- **Oct. 10:** Welcome and orientation for new or returning pastors to MC Eastern Canada, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the MC Eastern Canada office. Meet conference staff and discover the resources they are able to provide. Share hopes and dreams for ministry with colleagues.

- **Oct. 13-15:** Young adult retreat at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre.

- **Oct. 24:** Coaching for

Effective Ministry with Marianne Mellinger and Sue Steiner. Six monthly sessions beginning Oct. 24. The goal of this seminar is to assist pastors to become more effective spiritual leaders in their ministry setting.

- **Nov. 12:** Junior Youth Breakaway for Grades 6, 7 and 8 and their Sunday school teachers, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

- **Nov. 25:** The Woolwich-Grey Preaching Day at Floradale Mennonite Church.

## Mennonite Church Manitoba

### Mennonites share Graham's goals

Following up on the Franklin Graham Festival story, representatives of Mennonite Church Manitoba and Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba met with festival director Dan Klug and vice-president of crusades Herb McCarthy on June 19.

"The goal was to reiterate our concerns and see if there is any openness to further discussion on the issues," wrote Norm Voth, director of Evangelism and Service Ministries in a letter to MC Manitoba congregations. "Both Klug and McCarthy assured us they heard and understood our concerns, and asked for our continued support and participation based on the stated goal of the festival."

Festival goals are "to mobilize the Christian community to assemble as many people as possible to hear the message that Jesus Christ is 'the way, the truth and the life'; to give opportunity for personal commitment; to refer inquirers to a local church for follow-up and Christian nurture; and to strengthen the local church."

"We agreed that we share those goals and desire to see people come to faith in Jesus

Christ," reported Voth. "The diversity of responses to our participation in this event highlights the need for us to continue working on the issue. We need to find helpful and creative ways to address issues of evangelism and peace."

## Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

### Scholarship winners announced

The winners of the MC Saskatchewan education scholarships have been chosen for the coming school year. In total, five students received a scholarship, one from Mennonite Trust and four from the Saskatchewan conference.

Brittani Bergen from Waldheim received \$250 from Mennonite Trust, while Craig Friesen of Osler and Wendy Luitjens of Rosthern both benefited from scholarships to attend Rosthern Junior College, and Casey McDaniel from Saskatoon and Marco Funk from Rosthern received funds for their year at Canadian Mennonite University.

The Christian Education Commission is responsible for dispensing the funds for these scholarships and this year it had a more challenging task than other years because of the abundance of applicants.

"It was a very difficult process choosing our recipients," noted Joanne Epp, chair of the commission.

### Hispanic ministry begins at Mount Royal

In the past three years, Mount Royal Mennonite Church in Saskatoon has noticed an outreach opportunity growing practically on its doorstep. Hispanic refugees, mostly government-sponsored, have been settling in and around the west end church's neighbour-

Continued on page 36

**The Churches** *From page 35*

hood and a few have begun attending the church.

Eric Olfert, a member of the church and of the newly formed Hispanic Ministries Commission, says the church is taking steps to help the newcomers feel more at home. The church is translating its bulletin into Spanish, setting one bulletin board up to carry only information for Spanish-speaking congregants, and working hard to help the children feel more at ease in Sunday school.

In addition, Mount Royal is working with MC Canada and Mennonite Central Committee to bring a Colombian pastor to Saskatoon to help for three to six months.

Although only about 15 Spanish-speaking Christians attend the church's Sunday morning service, there is a possibility of impacting about 100 from the community. MC Saskatchewan has also pledged financial support to the outreach initiative.

**Mennonite Church  
British Columbia**

**Youths served and bonded this summer**

B.C. youth groups have been busy this past summer ministering to others while bonding and experiencing travel adventures together.

Seven youths and three leaders from Vancouver's First United Mennonite and First United Spanish Mennonite Church spent July 1 to 15 in Ahousaht, a small First Nations community on Flores Island. They spent the first week participating in the annual community sports weekend and helped set up a camp on Vargas Island. During the second week they helped run a Christian camp for aboriginal youths. Activities included serving as camp counsellors and participating in traditional native activities such as a sweat lodge and picking cedar bark.

Ten youths from Yarrow United Mennonite Church, along with four sponsors and two children, went on a service project to the gospel Mountain Music Festival in the northern B.C. community of Hazelton from Aug. 17 to 21. The group was responsible for the running of a children's program during the course of the festival, which included crafts, games, skits and singing, all based on the Lord's Prayer. Approximately 20 children took part in the program.

**Women's retreat to focus on prayer**

"Set fire to your prayer life" is the theme for the annual B.C. Women in Mission fall retreat at Camp Squeah, Hope, from Oct. 20 to 22.

Catherine Dagneau, a musician and speaker who loves to minister to "addicts" of all kinds—not only drug and alcohol addicts on the streets, but also to hidden addicts who fill North American churches

(those addicted to shopping, work, and other behaviours)—is the keynote speaker.

Friday night will be a time of worship and fellowship, followed by three sessions with Dagneau on Saturday. By popular demand, a silent auction will be held to replenish the bursary fund to help all interested women attend the retreat.

For more information or to register, call Jackie Rempel at 604-857-5381 or e-mail her at [j.rempel@mennohome.org](mailto:j.rempel@mennohome.org).

*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.*

JON OLFBERT



**From our leaders**

It's quiet here, unusually quiet, at Camp Valaqua. The place has been full of energy, life and noise for the past two months and now it's just...quiet. As the commotion of our hectic summer subsides, as the last tearful goodbyes of lingering staff are said, the reflection begins. It has been a good summer full of challenges, laughter and growth, and I am continually amazed by the energy and commitment displayed by the young people who call this place home. I am happy and proud of what has happened here and that is really all a person can ask for.

During our last week of camp, though, I sat in a chapel session troubled, barely listening. Some of our campers this summer were "hard" kids and our counsellors were pushed to their limits. This meant that some of the "good" kids were overlooked as our staff struggled to care for the more difficult campers. This downgraded and sometimes ruined the experience for the other campers and I was thinking about this, and wondering about balance and worth as I sat.

Our chaplain was speaking on Luke 14 and something in his words reached through my contemplative fog and

pulled me in. In this chapter Luke tells the story of Jesus at a banquet. Jesus addresses the host, saying, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind and you will be blessed."

As we plan the banquet we often take the easy approach, inviting those we care about, knowing that our generosity will be repaid somewhere down the line. But the teach-

ings of Jesus never allow his followers to settle for the easy approach. In Luke, Jesus calls us to invite those who would not otherwise have an opportunity to feast. We are challenged to invite the hard kids, the troubled kids, kids that make us work and grumble and work some more, that we might share with them a place at the table and show them a glimpse of God's love.

And so we plan for camp next year, knowing it will be hard, knowing we will struggle, and knowing that we will need God's help to get through.

*Jon Olfert is director of Mennonite Church Alberta's Camp Valaqua.*

**A place at the table**

**[S]omething in his words reached through my contemplative fog....**

## Prayer urged for the 'persecuted church'

**Ottawa**—Resource kits for the 2006 International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP) are now available online at idop.ca. This Nov. 12, Canadians will join together with churches from more than 100 countries in prayer for those who are persecuted for their faith.

"This global day of prayer for those who face persecution highlights an issue that we should pray about every day," says Janet Epp Buckingham, director of the Religious Liberty Commission of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), one of the partners in IDOP Canada.

The online resource kit is designed to assist congregations to pray effectively for the persecuted church—especially for congregations in the four focus countries of Belarus, Uzbekistan, India, and Israel/West Bank and Gaza.

Following this year's theme, "Blessed are the persecuted," the online kit includes a PowerPoint presentation, sermon notes, country information for this year's focus countries, children's materials, suggested songs, and archived kit materials from previous years' resource kits. A prayer map and DVD movie can also be sent out by mail.

Beginning in October, the website will also provide breaking prayer and news updates to keep participating churches and groups informed about needs that arise in the focus countries after the resource kit is produced. To purchase a kit for \$20, visit idop.ca and follow the "Order Info" link.

—EFC release

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Oct. 12-15:** MDS dessert and information evenings—Surrey/Delta (12), Mission (13), Chilliwack (15). For more information, call Leonard Klassen at 604-855-2542.

**Oct. 14:** Mennonite Heritage Society of B.C. annual banquet at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church with Harvey Dyck, speaker. Call 604-853-6177 for information.

**Oct. 19:** One-day workshop on faith and mental illness at Willingdon Church, Burnaby. Contact MCC Supportive Care Services at 1-800-622-5455 or www.mccscs.com.

**Oct. 20-22:** B.C. Women in Mission retreat at Camp Squeah.

**Oct. 21:** Mennonite Foundation all-day seminar for church leaders involved with governance, finance and employment. Rick Braun-Janzen and Clayton Loewen presenting at CBC. Call 1-800-772-3257 for information.

**Oct. 26:** Retired pastors meeting/lunch in the CBC boardroom; 10 a.m.

**Oct. 26:** One-day workshop on faith and mental illness at Cascade Community Church, Abbotsford. Contact MCC Supportive Care Services at 1-800-622-5455 or www.mccscs.com.

**Nov. 4:** MC B.C. special delegates sessions, West Abbotsford Mennonite Church, 8:30 a.m. Pension plan holders meeting follows.

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

**Nov. 16-18:** MC Canada general board meets at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

**Nov. 17:** Mennonite Heritage Society of B.C. presents lecture "Controversy, change and consensus" dealing with theological issues of the last century by David Ewert and John Neufeld (of Winnipeg) at Bakerview

M.B. Church, 7 p.m.

**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.

**Dec. 2,3:** Advent vespers with Abendmusik Choir, 8 p.m. Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (2); Knox United Church, Vancouver (3). Donations to Menno Simons Centre.

**March 31, April 1:** Lenten vespers with Abendmusik Choir, 8 p.m. Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (31); Knox United Church, Vancouver (1). Donations to Menno Simons Centre.

### Alberta

**Oct. 20-22:** "Imagine...a balanced life" conference presented by Women Alive, at Four Points Sheraton, Edmonton. Speaker: Pam Farrel, author of *Men are Like Waffles, Women are Like Spaghetti*.

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

**Oct. 24-26:** Pastors retreat at Camp Valaqua. To register or for information call Jim Shantz at 780-485-2518.

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

### Saskatchewan

**Oct. 13-14:** Saskatchewan Women in Mission fall retreat at Camp Shekinah.

**Oct. 15:** Wildwood Mennonite Church 30th anniversary celebration. Breakfast, worship and afternoon events planned.

**Oct. 20:** MDS dessert and information evening at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

**Oct. 27-29:** Quilting and scrapbooking retreat at

Shekinah Retreat Centre.

**Oct. 28:** MC Saskatchewan Equipping Conference at Mount Royal Mennonite Church. Theme: "Connecting diversity."

**Nov. 3:** RJC annual appreciation and fundraising banquet. Guest speaker: CPTer James Loney.

**Nov. 3-4:** MCC Saskatchewan annual meeting.

### Manitoba

**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.

**Sept. 30:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate cyclathon.

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

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

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

**Oct. 28:** CMU fundraising and dessert evening.

**Oct. 30:** Westgate Mennonite College annual general meeting, at 7:30 p.m.

**Nov. 3-4:** CMU youth ministry conference. Theme: "Kingdom-driven ministry." Speaker: Wendell Loewen of Tabor College.

**Nov. 15-16:** John and Margaret Friesen Lectures at CMU. Topic: "Mennonites and architecture." Speakers: Rudy Friesen, Harold Funk and

Continued on page 38

**Calendar** From page 37

Roland Sawatzky.

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

**Nov. 22:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate evening with the arts, at 7:30 p.m.

**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**

**Sept. 24:** Ground-breaking ceremony for a new multi-purpose building at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, at 1:45 p.m.

**Sept. 24:** Fundraising concert for the new MCC Thrift Centre in New Hamburg featuring the Kitchener-Waterloo male chorus, Jubilation, at Steinmann Mennonite Church, 3 p.m.

**Sept. 29:** Welcome Inn Community Centre's Celebration Dinner & Silent Auction at Carmen's Banquet Hall, 1520 Stone Church Rd. E. in Hamilton. Refreshments at 6:00 p.m., dinner at 7:00 p.m. Includes Don Couchie on guitar, musical group Five On The Floor and as speaker, former Ontario Premier Bob Rae. Tickets are \$100/person (\$70 tax receipt issued). For information or tickets, visit [www.welcomeinn.ca](http://www.welcomeinn.ca) or call 905-525-5824.

**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. 2-3:** Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp Annual Senior's Fall Retreat. Attend either day. More information at 519-625-8602 or [info@hiddenacres.ca](mailto:info@hiddenacres.ca).

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

**Oct. 12:** Celebrate Canadian church relationships with African congregations through food, music and a presentation by Hippolyto Tshimanga, MC Canada Witness African mission facilitator, 7 p.m., at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

**Oct. 12-14:** Ten Thousand Villages fair trade craft sale at Hamilton Mennonite Church; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (12-13), 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (14). Tea room open for lunch each day. For more information, call 905-528-3607.

**Oct. 14:** Mennonite Youth Fellowship fundraising dinner and auction at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, at 5:30 p.m. For tickets, call 519-744-6575.

**Oct. 28:** Silver Lake Mennonite camp fall fundraiser, "From wave tops to tree tops," featuring hypnotist Jerry Enns and the Mike Erb Band; 7:30 p.m. at the University of Waterloo Humanities Theatre. For tickets, call 519-888-4908.

**Oct. 19:** MEDA breakfast at the Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, 7:30 a.m. Speaker: Larry Martin.

**Nov. 23:** MEDA breakfast at the Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, 7:30 a.m. Speaker: Murray Bast.

**Feb. 9-10:** MDS all unit meeting at South Ridge Community Church, St. Catharines. For more information, call Rudy Thiessen at 905-562-0396.

**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](mailto: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/](http://www.bluffton.edu/eng/conference/).

**Nov. 2-5:** MEDA convention—"Business as a calling: Set the pace." Tampa, Fla. For more information, visit [businessasa-calling.org](http://businessasa-calling.org).

**Please send Calendar announcements EIGHT WEEKS in advance of the event date by e-mail to: [calendar@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org)**

Washington, D.C.

**Mennonite leaders meet with U.S. secretary of state**

**C**urrent U.S. policy and practice are not working for church organizations seeking visas for international guests. Leaders of several Mennonite agencies, in a June 21 letter, appealed to Condoleezza Rice, U.S. secretary of state, to consider policy changes.

The letter proposed that church agencies be consulted when consular officials are making visa determinations. Further suggestions included having a senior consular officer conduct a second interview in cases where there is a question about an applicant and that interview practices be adjusted to be more culturally sensitive.

Church organizations often attempt to bring international church leaders to the U.S. to meet with congregations and to attend conferences and training events. The guests, many from countries in conflict, frequently are seeking practical and theological help in peacebuilding in their country of origin. Denying them visas "seems to be counter to U.S. national security," said the letter.

The June 21 letter to Rice was a new initiative following an April 26 visit to Washington, where the same leaders met with Julie Furuta-Toy, director for the Office of Public and Diplomatic Liaison. (See "U.S. visa denials explained, Canadian Mennonite, June 12, page 37. Ed.)

—MWC release by **Ferne Burkhardt**

**News briefs**

**Christian quits Palestinian gov't**

The only Christian cabinet member in the Palestinian government headed by the Islamist Hamas movement has quit his post because of growing factional violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. "I confirm to you that I have resigned from the government due to the violence that has occurred in the Gaza Strip," Judeh Murqos said in a statement after sending a letter of resignation to Palestinian prime minister Ismail Haniyeh. —ENI release

**Southern Baptists reaffirm prohibition**

The Southern Baptist Convention, the biggest Protestant denomination in the United States, has said no one who drinks alcoholic beverages should belong to any denominational trustee board. "The use of alcohol as a beverage can and does impede our testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ," said Jim Richards, executive director of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, at the denomination's annual meeting in Greensboro, N.C. —ENI release

## Employment opportunities



### Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary invites pastors to register for a study group focusing on the writings of Paul, led by Jacob Elias, professor of New Testament. The group will meet twice at AMBS between

January and June, and will interact via online discussion with each other and with AMBS students enrolled in a course on Romans. The goal is to study Paul's pastoral correspondence, discuss his theology and ethics, and reflect on his counsel for ministry today. Reimbursement for travel expenses and a small stipend are available. Information and an application are online at [www.ambs.edu/php/EngagingPastors/ep\\_study\\_groups.php](http://www.ambs.edu/php/EngagingPastors/ep_study_groups.php). Information is also available from the Church Leadership Center at 574-296-6269. Send applications by Sept. 30 to AMBS, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517, or via e-mail to [easaner@ambs.edu](mailto:easaner@ambs.edu).

### Applications invited to the Frank H. Epp Memorial Fund

The administrative committee of the Frank H. Epp Memorial Fund invites applications for study/work projects which further Epp's vision for scholarship and peacemaking in Canada and throughout the world.

The committee annually distributes approximately \$2,200 to support projects dealing with history of minorities (especially Mennonite), peacemaking (particularly in the Middle East), Mennonite ecumenicity and communication of the Christian faith. Preference is given to Mennonite and Brethren in Christ persons who are studying or working in Canada.

Information and application forms are available from our website: <http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/academic/undergrad/pacs/epp.shtml>

Lowell Ewert, Administrator  
Frank H. Epp Memorial Fund  
Conrad Grebel University College  
140 Westmount Rd N.,  
Waterloo, ON N2L 2G6

All applications must be received by Jan. 15, 2007. The award will be announced in March, 2007.



### Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary invites pastors to apply for funded sabbaticals for up to nine weeks on the AMBS campus. Funding covers housing, provides a stipend and al-

lows pastors to participate in campus events, meet with professors and receive spiritual direction. Participants pursue a writing project of choice. Applications for spring 2007 are due on Oct. 2, 2006, and applications for fall 2007 are due on April 28, 2007. Openings are still available during both semesters. Information and application forms are available at [www.ambs.edu/php/EngagingPastors/ep\\_sabbatical.php](http://www.ambs.edu/php/EngagingPastors/ep_sabbatical.php), or call 574-296-6269 for information. Send applications to AMBS, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517, or [easaner@ambs.edu](mailto:easaner@ambs.edu).

## Wanted

Wanted: Someone to provide child care 2 days per week to a 1-yr-old boy starting October 2006. Located near Sherburn St, Winnipeg. Phone Karen, 204-957-5596 or e-mail [kgrobinson@mts.net](mailto:kgrobinson@mts.net)

Wanted: Seekers of Christian Spirituality who are moving to or already living in Toronto. We are an urban congregation who value worshipping together in our diversity, being involved in current issues, and having fun together. We are in an exciting stage of transition and invite all who are interested to join us. Warden Woods Mennonite Church: 416-694-1138, ext.30; [wmc@wardenwoods.com](mailto:wmc@wardenwoods.com); 74 Firvalley Court, Scarborough, Ontario

## For rent

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

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