

C A N A N Men's Minute

Jan. 22, 2007
Vol. 11, No. 2

**Answering
the call**
page 9

**What would
Jesus drive?**
page 18



Nurturing restless passions

What our church will be about when the current baby boom generation passes away will be strongly affected by the passions of those who are just now graduating from Mennonite Youth Fellowship groups. In fact, our churches identify the role of, and ministry to, youths and young adults as their overall No. 1 concern, according to what general secretary Robert J. Suderman heard in his visits.

At an MC Eastern Canada event on the topic held in mid-January (a report will come in a future issue), Ed Janzen, Conrad Grebel University College's chaplain, described the broad characteristics of the next generation.

Using research from William Strauss and Neil Howe, Janzen described this coming millennial generation (born from 1984 to 2003) as the "baby on board" generation (referring to the signs proud and protective parents put up in car windows).

This was a specially chosen generation (born by decision rather than chance); sheltered; confident and skilful (coming from a childhood full of church, sports, arts and social activities specially planned for them); team-oriented; and play-by-the-rules sorts of people. Technology and environmental issues are key. Having choices and diversity is expected as normal, something that is both an opportunity and a source of stress. Millennials have had the travel, the mission and service trips, and the educational opportunities that their parents wished they could have had when they were young.

They are also a pressured generation, with high fears of failure and a burden of heavy expectations. Growing up in a country with falling birth rates, the generation is much smaller than those before it. Millennials mostly come from

small families and need to carry the expectations of the much more numerous boomers on many fewer shoulders.

Five young adults on a panel at the event reflected these trends in their own lives: benefits from church schools, camps and programs like Bible quizzing, and the opportunities of travel and education, but also loneliness, lack of stability, the search for a truly meaningful life, and the burden of debt from more years of education than their parents had.

"A lot of young adults have trouble finding where they are connected. Where do we fit when you spend a year here and a year there?" asked Leah Reesor. "I changed and then found I didn't fit. People thought they knew who I was and I had to teach them I wasn't the same person as when I left," said Mary Anne Cressman after coming back from a year of mission service in Lithuania.

There was gratitude for authentic relationships with people in their home congregations. "On one hand, it is the one-on-one fellowship in the church; the other part are the values of what it means to be Mennonite. You don't know what you have until you go somewhere else," said Barrett Cressman.

We need to keep listening to what our young adults are saying and working at relationships that span the generations (*see page 37 for more*). The eight articles in our ongoing "Young Prophets" series we published last year are a part of that effort. After all, young adults are part of the church already, and their role will only grow.

"Each generation is called upon to contribute its work to the life of the church. If they don't, the church fragments. It may not be the very same work that we were called to do in our respective generations, but perhaps we are called to understand the work they are called to do," said Janzen.

—Tim Miller Dyck

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Canada

Jan. 22, 2007
Vol. 11, No. 2

4 **UpClose**
Kidney swap makes history **4**

6 **Arts&Culture**
Centuries of Christian tradition **6**

9 **Faith&Life**
Answering the call **9**
Agents of transformation **11**
Liberal or conservative? **12**

15 **InConversation**
Faces tell the story **15**
Letters **16**
Backwards days **16**
Pie in the warming sky **17**

18 **FocusOn Education**

24 **LocalChurch**
Two centuries in Bloomingdale **24**
Transitions **27**

28 **TheChurches**
God's work in progress **29**

30 **ToMorrow**

33 **WiderChurch**
2004 tsunami survivors **33**



Page 15



Page 36

Electronic delivery

All subscribers can get the complete contents of *Canadian Mennonite* delivered free by e-mail or view selected articles online. For either option, visit our website at canadianmennonite.org. The Feb. 5 issue will be ready by Feb. 1.

Page 7



Cover: Adam Beriault of Calgary repairs a bike at Sanctoral Cycle, the new CMU bike co-op. See this story and others about Mennonite post-secondary education institutions beginning on page 18. —CMU photo

Elmira, Ont.

Kidney swap makes medical history

For many years, Florence Jantzi watched her daughter Kristine suffer the debilitating effects of kidney failure. On Nov. 14, she was finally able to share a healthy kidney through a historic set of surgeries at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md.

Kristine was only a teenager when her kidneys failed completely and she began dialysis. Florence and her husband Darrell, who was pastor at Pioneer Park Christian Fellowship in Kitchener, Ont., at the time, were ready and willing to donate a kidney, but Kristine was adopted and neither of her adoptive parents was a match.

In 1986, Kristine underwent a successful kidney transplant and was able to resume a normal life. Florence and Darrell were delighted to see her free of constant ill health. She continued her studies and married Ted Shapiro, but after 10 years she suffered kidney failure again.

Recent years have been difficult. Kristine's health declined and she needed more care, but she lived in Maine, far from her parents' home in Elmira. When Florence retired after serving for 20 years as administrative secretary at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, she and Darrell could spend more time with Kristine, providing some respite for their son-in-law.

Although Kristine had been on a transplant list for more than a decade, it seemed hopeless. Several people from her extended family were tested, but no one was a match. Then Kristine became aware of a new program at Johns Hopkins University, in which serial kidney transplants took place in 2001. Under this program, Florence would donate her kidney to someone else if another donor matched Kristine.

It took a few trips to Baltimore for a health assessment and tests, but by the summer of 2006 Florence began to hope that she could relieve her daughter's



Photo by Sherri Martin-Carman

Kristine Jantzi is delighted to receive a visit from her grandmother, Matilda Gingrich, whom she hasn't seen in 10 years.

ter's suffering. Even when a surgery date was set, it was not certain that Kristine's health would allow it to go forward. She needed surgery to deal with a blood clot a few days before the transplant surgery.

Florence and Darrell asked their congregation, Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite, to pray for them before they travelled to Baltimore, especially that everyone involved would remain in good health because illness on the part of any of the donors or recipients would delay the surgery.

"We didn't have any idea until we got there that there would be five transplants," said Florence. "The media attention was extra and not anticipated." News of the transplants was widely broadcast because it was a first-ever five-way swap of kidneys. The process began with an altruistic donor who matched Kristine, so Florence's kidney went to another recipient-donor pair. Four paired recipients received new kidneys as well as someone waiting on the regular donor list.

"All that media attention was exhausting," said Florence, but she is recuperating well. They are very thankful that Kristine's new kidney

is functioning well. In order to allow their son-in-law to return to work, Florence and Darrell have remained in Baltimore, as Kristine needs to stay close to the hospital for the time-being.

The Jantzis have appreciated the support of Wilkins Avenue Mennonite Church in Baltimore, and especially of Lee and Genny Martin. "The church there has welcomed us overwhelmingly," said Florence, who contacted the Martins through mutual friends. For the first few weeks, the Jantzis were able to housesit for someone from the church serving with Christian Peacemaker Teams.

The Jantzis also appreciate supportive family. At the end of November, three of Florence's sisters, her mother and a niece made the trip from Elmira to Baltimore. Kristine hadn't seen her relatives for 10 years and they had a great time together. Although it was exhausting, the visit was wonderful medicine.

The entire family is thankful for the Incompatible Kidney Transplant Program at Johns Hopkins University, which provided a new kidney and hope for a normal life for someone they love.

—**Barb Draper**

Aylmer, Ont.

Fulfilling her dream of an education and a good job

Sara Teichroeb breathed a prayer of gratitude when she graduated last October from the computerized office essentials program offered through Fanshawe College in St. Thomas, Ont.

"I always wanted an education. I finally did it," says Teichroeb, 39, a mother of four children now working with spreadsheets and accounting programs in her new office administrative job at Aylmer Condos in Aylmer.

Sharing her excitement is John Wiebe, employment service worker for Mennonite Central Committee Ontario's Low German Newcomers program. Working in partnership with Aylmer Community Services, Wiebe provides employment services—funded by the federal government's Services Canada—to people who are unemployed and interested in exploring career options and developing individualized education and training plans.

"How can you not be passionate about this when you hear the stories—the remarkable stories of their accomplishments and the challenges they had to face," says Wiebe as he reflects on the accomplishments of Teichroeb and others who upgrade their education as adults.

Teichroeb was 11 when her family moved to Aylmer from Cuauhtémoc, Mexico.

"I didn't know a word of English," she says, explaining that studying with Canadian children much younger than her contributed to her decision to quit school when she was almost 15. "Two years later I was married."

Plans to upgrade her education were put on hold as she and her husband Cornelius put their time and energy into meeting the needs of their four children, now between the ages of 12 and 20.

In 2004, after working part-time at Tim Horton's for more than 13 years, Teichroeb took the first step to fulfilling her dream of getting an education and an office job. With Wiebe's support and assistance, she enrolled in

the general education development program to receive her Ontario high school equivalency certificate. Although she started the program with only a Grade 7 education, she completed the program in eight months, graduating in June 2005.

"I'm still learning and want to continue learning," says Teichroeb. "You feel good after you accomplished something like this. It is hard but it is worth it."

Wiebe provides employment assistance to about 600 people a year; about 60 per cent are from the area's Low German population. Each year about 200 new families from Low German communities in Latin and South America move to southern Ontario.



Photo by Joannie Peters

Sara Teichroeb, left, and Mennonite Central Committee employment service worker John Wiebe are pictured on the main street of Aylmer, Ont.

A Low German radio station, an annual gathering for newcomers and a variety of other settlement and integration services have been established to serve the Low German communities in the Aylmer area of southwestern Ontario.

—MCC release by **Gladys Terichow**

Winnipegosis, Man.

A life of service ends

Lena (Peters) Boehr, mission worker, friend and servant of God, passed away on Oct. 16 after having struggled with Parkinson's disease for more than 20 years.

Mission work in Taiwan played an important role in her life. After attending Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC, now Canadian Mennonite University) in 1954, Peters left Winnipeg to pursue mission work with the Commission on Overseas Mission in Taiwan. During her 15-year career in Taiwan, she realized her passion for helping others in need.

In 1956, Peters, who trained in Manitoba as a registered nurse, found work immediately at the tiny 27-bed Mennonite Christian Hospital in Taiwan caring for the sick and the elderly. A year later, she went to Taipei, the capital city of Taiwan, to study Mandarin. In 1959, Peters learned basic skills for administering anesthetic. Half-way through the

year, she was a regular in the operating room in the afternoon, while her mornings were spent on the ward with the patients.

Peters taught at the nursing school in Taiwan in the early 1960s, guiding them through their first surgeries while always finding time to offer advice and encouragement.

As a part of her ministry, she was very active in chapels and helped lead devotions. She was very concerned for her patients' spiritual welfare and often found opportunity for conversation and prayer with them.

Peters met her husband, fellow mission worker Richard Boehr, at Mennonite Christian Hospital. They were married on May 16, 1966. After their union, they left the hospital and moved to the west coast of Taiwan to continue their missionary journey.

Since January 2001, Boehr lived at the Winnipegosis Personal Care Centre. She was predeceased by her husband in 1987. A funeral service was held at Nordheim Mennonite Church, Winnipegosis, on Oct. 18.

—MC Canada release by **Krista Allen**

Anabaptists can't avoid centuries of Christian tradition

Becoming Anabaptist: The Origin and Significance of Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism, second edition. J. Denny Weaver. Scottsdale and Waterloo: Herald Press, 2005, 275 pages.

Was 16th-century Anabaptism a distinct movement with its own unique characteristics, or did it have many of the same features found in Catholicism or Protestantism? For decades, scholars have debated this question and have proposed various views. In the middle of the last century, historians generally held that Anabaptists represented the culmination of the Protestant Reformation, fulfilling the original visions of Luther and Zwingli. More recently, scholars have argued that Anabaptists also had much in common with late medieval Catholic mystics, and even peasant revolutionaries who sought to overthrow political and ecclesiastical elites.

Becoming Anabaptist provides a somewhat different response to the debate. The author, who has served as professor of religion at Bluffton University in Ohio since 1975, acknowledges that Anabaptism demonstrated elements of continuity with the various players of the Reformation period, but, in the end, he argues that the movement stands in its own right. Anabaptism, Weaver insists, appeared as its own kind of movement, different from the Roman Catholic tradition, but also different from various Protestant alternatives.

First published in 1987, this volume is a revised and expanded work that incorporates recent scholarly findings and seeks to reach a wider audience beyond the Mennonite world. The

author provides a readable history with the hope that his audience will embrace the Anabaptist perspective. The chapters introducing Anabaptism in Switzerland, South Germany, Moravia and the Low Countries are well written.

So what about the relationship between Anabaptism and the wider Christian tradition, and why should it matter? The book correctly recognizes the unique nature of Anabaptism. However, the assumption that Anabaptists were successfully able to loop back to the narrative of Jesus and the early church, without also being moulded by centuries of Christian tradition, is idealistic and misleading.

Virtually all Protestants in the 16th century—along with countless reformers throughout the Middle Ages—made an effort to return directly to the original apostolic character of the first-century church. Yet neither they nor the Anabaptists—nor the Mennonites who came after—were truly capable of jumping back 1,500 years of history to imitate Jesus and avoid the filter and sway of Christian tradition. Anabaptists had a high regard for Scripture, but their theological, spiritual and moral path, while not a strict imitation of Catholicism or Protestantism, was, nevertheless, influenced and shaped by these traditions, not unlike the way in which Christians today are influenced by their religious, political and social surroundings.

It is important to understand this dynamic not only for the sake of the historical record, but also for the cause of Christian ecumenicity. While denominations, in the context of inter-church conversations, have a responsibility to articulate their differences, they also have an obligation to point out where they can agree, if mutual understanding and cooperation is to be achieved.

—Karl Koop

The reviewer teaches history and theology at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg.



Strasbourg, France

Gift sharing book now available in German

The book *Sharing Gifts in the Global Family of Faith: One Church's Experiment* by Tim Lind and Pakisa K. Tshimika has been released in German under the title *Teilen, was wir sind und haben: Als Kirche weltweit geben und empfangen*.

Since 2002, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) has chosen a book each year to add to its Global Anabaptist/Mennonite Shelf of Literature. MWC encourages publishing houses and partners around the globe to translate the selected book into the language of the region as well as selling it broadly. This book is the 2003 selection.

Other "Shelf" selections available in German include *From Anabaptist Seed* by C. Arnold Snyder (2002) and *God's Shalom Project* by Bernard Ott (2004).

First published in English by Good Books in cooperation with MWC, the German edition of *Sharing Gifts* has been translated and published by David Neufeld, a publisher in Germany. It is the first time Neufeld has published an MWC book.

The 142-page book can be ordered by e-mail at info@neufeld-verlag.de or by visiting neufeld-verlag.de. Also available is a guide for discussion groups and Bible circles, which can be downloaded for free by visiting neufeld-verlag.de/teilen.

—MWC release by **Markus Rediger**



Steinbach, Man.

Website looks to promote Mennonite worship music

Mennonites are “happy to sing the best of everyone else’s worship music, but we aren’t singing enough of our own.” So says Phil Campbell-Enns, a youth pastor at Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach.

According to Campbell-Enns, other denominations are producing various kinds of new music for worship. He would like to see Mennonite musicians begin to create and share their own compositions, with lyrics and tunes that reflect unique Anabaptist theology.

Together with Darryl Neustaedter Barg, the associate director of media ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba, Campbell-Enns has come up with an idea he hopes will inspire sometimes reluctant Mennonite musicians to share their work with a larger audience.

The two have created a worship music web page on the MC Manitoba site (mennochurch.mb.ca) and follow the “Resources” link to “Worship”. Launched in early November, the page currently features five songs written by Campbell-Enns, complete with audio recordings of the pieces, suggestions for how the songs can be performed, and guitar chords and piano accompaniment arrangements.

Singers and instrumentalists Meredith Dailey, Ed and Val Peters, Kim Thiessen and Marilyn Houser Hamm perform the worship songs. They include “Mountain of God,” which Campbell-Enns composed for the Mennonite Youth Assembly in Abbotsford in 2000, and “Fill Us With Your Feast,” written

especially as a worship resource for the 2007 Lenten services featured in *Leader* magazine. Barg and Campbell-Enns are inviting congregations to use the music on the web page free of charge.

Campbell-Enns is hoping his willingness to share his music publicly on the page will inspire other musicians to follow suit. “There are many more Mennonite musicians with way more talent than I have,” he says. “My songs are just a kind of test balloon to get the web page started.”

Barg says the Menno Folk concerts staged annually in Ontario and Manitoba have proven there are talented musicians in the Mennonite church.

“Those musicians need to be nurtured and encouraged to be creative for the sake of God’s kingdom,” says Campbell-Enns. “We want our web page to motivate and enable musicians to write and then share their worship songs.”

Barg and Campbell-Enns are hopeful that in a year or two as many as 25 new songs by professional and talented amateur composers alike will be featured on the page.

Although the web page is part of the MC Manitoba website, Barg and Campbell-Enns are encouraging musicians from across the country to participate.

“This should be a way for someone writing music in British Columbia to share their worship songs with members of congregations in Ontario they don’t even know,” says Campbell-Enns.

Musicians interested in having their work featured on the page should e-mail Barg at dnbarg@mennochurch.mb.ca.

—MaryLou Driedger

Abbotsford, B.C.

New Rest CD mines musical ‘gems’

Longtime British Columbia musicians Cathy (Gemma) Hardy and Karin Dart, have released their first recording: *Rest*.

Rest is the 13th in a series of fundraising CDs produced by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Supportive Care Services; the CDs support such community services as helping people with developmental disabilities, mental health issues, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and brain injuries.

The CD features Hardy on vocals, piano and recorder, and Dart on harp, with supporting musicians on guitar, violin, recorder and vocals. The songs on *Rest* include selections written by the artists along with songs from the ecumenical Taize community in France, whose prayer-focused music has devotees around the world.

Gems like diamonds and pearls are formed through a very long process, in dark barren surroundings, under extreme pressure. The music on *Rest* was borne out of similar circumstances of challenge and darkness in the personal journeys of Hardy and Dart, so each of the songs has become a gem to them, a precious stone of beauty that they love and cherish.

Their artistic vision is to create sacred space, healing, restoration and joy through their music. These songs have deeply nourished their spirits, especially during times of struggle and uncertainty, and they feel privileged to offer them with the hope that they will provide wellbeing, beauty, simplicity and rest to listeners.

To purchase a copy of *Rest*, visit mccscs.com and follow the “Store” link.

—John Konrad



Darryl Neustaedter Barg, the associate director of media ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba, and Phil Campbell-Enns, a youth pastor at Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach, have created a web page to encourage Mennonite composers to share their worship songs with the wider church.

Photo by MaryLou Driedger



Washington, D.C.

First of 'Polyglossia' series released at U.S. religion meeting

The first title of "Polyglossia," a new radical reformation series, was released at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion and Society for Biblical Literature in Washington, D.C., in November.

Herald Press released *A Precarious Peace: Yoderian Explorations on Theology, Knowledge, and Identity* by Chris K. Huebner at this meeting of religion and biblical studies scholars. Huebner, of Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, is one of the editors of the series.

Gayle Gerber Koontz of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary said the editors are "from an emerging new generation of Mennonite scholars, well-prepared to encourage and evaluate the little developed conversation between Mennonite thought and contemporary currents in theology,

Chris Huebner of Canadian Mennonite University is one of the editors of "Polyglossia," a radical new reformation series on the knowledge, beliefs and practices of the Christian faith.

philosophy and cultural studies."

The series is intended for conversation among academics, ministers and laypersons regarding knowledge, beliefs and the practices of the Christian faith.

The editors note that "Polyglossia" grows out of John Howard Yoder's call to see radical reformation as a tone, style or a stance. The editors welcome titles that emerge out of conversations with contemporary movements in theology as well as in philosophy, literature, political theory and cultural studies. Other titles currently projected are on martyrdom, radical orthodoxy and the radical reformation.

Ron Rempel of Mennonite Publishing Network says, "As the



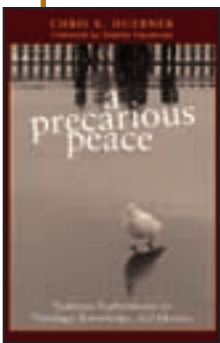
Photo courtesy of Herald Press

publisher for a series of books by John Howard Yoder, we're pleased to announce the launch of a new series featuring theologians currently developing some of the themes arising out of Yoder's seminal work."

Huebner notes that the intent is to move beyond "liberal and conservative, established and sectarian" categories, and "chart a theological path that is faithful to the call to live without having to control our world or that of those around us."

—MC Canada/MPN joint release by **Joshua Byler**

Herald Press: New Books for the New Year



A Precarious Peace: Yoderian Explorations on Theology, Knowledge, and Identity

"In a powerful homage to his mentor, Chris K. Huebner shows the alternative path of self-criticism needed to liberate a world suffused by religious strategies intent on dominating."

—David Burrell, *University of Notre Dame*

Paper, 242 pages, \$23.79

Stories: How Mennonites Came to Be

John D. Roth's straightforward, accessible narrative invigorates this contemporary introduction to the Mennonite story.

Whether you are new to the Mennonite community or just yearning for a fresh retelling of Anabaptist origins, this book will serve as a compact digest of the church's history.

Paper, 246 pages, \$13.79

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Arts note

Wiebe to address Write! Canada

Whether you write fiction or nonfiction, the ability to tell a compelling story is crucial to success as a writer. Participants at Write! Canada 2007 will be inspired as one of Canada's most acclaimed writers—novelist Rudy Wiebe—draws on his personal experience and his Christian faith to explore the conference theme, "Writing Canada: Telling stories with soul." Wiebe will be plenary speaker at Write! Canada, from June 14 to 16 in Guelph, Ont. Wiebe is widely published internationally and is the winner of numerous awards, including two Governor General's Literary Awards. His latest book, *Of This Earth: A Mennonite Boyhood in the Boreal Forest* (Knopf Canada, 2006), is an autobiographical memoir of a boy's coming of age, and a hymn to a lost place and distant time.

—Word Guild release

Answering the call to church leadership formation

In this issue, we focus extensively on Christian higher education. In the following Faith&Life pages, Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) president Gerald Gerbrandt looks at the relationship between MC Canada's affirmation of leadership development and its educational institutions; Columbia Bible College (CBC) president Ron Penner explores how such schools can foster our national church's goal to become a global church; and Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) president Loren Swartzendruber reflects on whether such politically charged labels as "liberal" and "conservative" are actually important in light of what he considers the more pressing need for Mennonite institutions of higher learning—that of maintaining, or recovering, their historic Anabaptist distinctives. For more stories of the exciting happenings on Mennonite campuses across Canada and the U.S., see our Focus on Post-Secondary Education section on pages 18 to 23.

Both at Charlotte, N.C., in 2005, and at Edmonton in 2006, delegates of Mennonite Church Canada affirmed leadership development—understood largely as pastoral leadership—as one of the key priorities for the national church. A commonly voiced motivation for this is the perception that there is an inadequate supply of pastors in the church, a situation that is likely to get worse in the years to come as pastors retire.

**CMU
Winnipeg**

But at the same time, the concern is surely also influenced by the mood of our times. There seems to be a general consensus in our culture that we lack strong, visionary leadership—in our society, local communities and the church. It is easy to look back, somewhat nostalgically, to earlier times when it was possible to name impressive leaders. Where are they now?

Against this backdrop, making leadership formation a top priority appears an appropriate response. But

Continued on page 10



How are we going to work at ensuring that a new generation of effective, faithful leaders rises to the challenge?

The call *From page 9*

what does this mean practically? How are we going to work at ensuring that a new generation of effective, faithful leaders rises to the challenge?

In this task our church schools have a critical role. Mennonite Church Canada is fortunate to have a range of schools, each committed to the task of leadership formation, each having a distinct task in the mix, each making a valuable contribution (see “*Mennonite Church Canada schools and leadership formation*,” below). The combination of schools, with their experiences and commitment, is really quite impressive for a small denomination. And yet the concern remains. To some extent at least, the call for increased emphasis on leadership formation is an indictment of this network of church schools. Despite our commitment to the task, the results have been perceived as inadequate.

Unfortunately, there is no easy formula for changing this. To achieve success in this area will require close cooperation and teamwork among our church schools, and between them and the rest of the national church, both its formal

structures and its congregations. And it will require a better understanding of how leadership develops and works in the church, and what is needed to develop it.

May I suggest that making leadership formation a priority will therefore require giving careful attention to at least the following:

- **First, leadership formation is a complex, multifaceted undertaking.** It may be possible to conceive of effective church leaders as combining strong personal character and faith, general leadership and people skills, and a range of job-specific skills.

Historically, pastoral training has tended to focus largely on the last, namely job-specific skills (biblical and theological knowledge, preaching and counselling skills). Increased emphasis on general leadership skills (human resources, organizational behaviour, finance) is needed. Further,

Mennonite Church Canada schools and leadership formation

Elementary and secondary schools (Mennonite Church Canada congregations relate to eight across Canada) may not play a formal role in developing job-specific leadership skills, but they make a critical contribution to the larger task. Here, teachers model dedicated leadership as they teach good habits, a Christian vision, how to manage conflict, interpersonal skills, and many other aspects of their character and style which will largely determine whether they can be good leaders.

More formal leadership preparation takes place at the post-secondary level. In the first half of the 20th century, Mennonites in Canada established Bible schools that provided both general theological education along with many of the specific skills needed for church and pastoral leadership.

Later, “higher Bible schools,” or Bible colleges, were founded with a fairly similar purpose for their time—theological education of an informed laity plus leadership or pastoral preparation. By the end of the 20th century, Bible schools had ceased to exist for the Mennonite community, replaced by Bible college and university programs. MC Canada has three such institutions: Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, B.C., Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., and Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg.

Each of these schools continues the balancing act characteristic of Bible schools, providing both general education and leadership/pastoral training. The majority of the students at these schools are preparing for “secular” careers, but these schools provide them with a combination of knowledge and skills needed for their professions, as well as faith formation through

formal biblical and theological study, student life programs, and arts and science courses which intentionally take the reality of God and God’s love for the world seriously. Forming the church by preparing students for informed participation in the life and mission of the church is integral to their mission.

At the same time, however, these schools also have programs which more formally than even the former Bible schools focus on the job-specific skills needed for leadership in the church. For example, CMU has a bachelor of church ministry program; Columbia has majors in areas like counselling and youth work, and Grebel is active in working with MC Eastern Canada in programs for pastors. Pastoral internship programs in these schools

are only one further example of how deliberately they incorporate options which introduce students to pastoral leadership as a possible calling for them, and at the same time help them to learn more specific skills needed to become effective leaders in the church.

The “both/and” of general education and explicit leadership preparation does not disappear entirely even at the graduate level, although the balance shifts significantly. There, the development of formal leadership skills takes the lead. This is consistent with the expectation common to many denominations that a master of divinity degree obtained from a seminary is the normal educational expectation of pastors.

For MC Canada, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., is the school explicitly recognized as the primary setting for pastoral leadership training at the graduate level. But the need to have options “closer to home” has led to the growth of smaller programs at Conrad Grebel and at CMU, and the cooperative founding of Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre. In these graduate programs students are given a thorough introduction to the Christian vision, along with practical courses in preaching, counselling and other aspects of pastoral work.

—Gerald Gerbrandt

By the end of the 20th century, Bible schools had ceased to exist for the Mennonite community....

answering the call



the significant place of “character” for effective leadership must be recognized, with greater stress on fostering positive habits or virtues in all church school programs.

• **Second, formal church leadership training programs only work with those who choose to participate, in most cases those who previously have experienced some call or encouragement to consider pastoral leadership.**

An insufficient number of pastors, therefore, cannot really be blamed on the seminaries. Meeting the leadership challenge will require that our congregations, homes, area and national church programs, and our church schools all find ways of encouraging people to open themselves to this calling. And at the same time we will need to work to change the way our pastors are understood and treated by congregations, so that pastoral leadership is perceived as a possible calling by the next generation.

• **Third, too often thinking about pastoral leadership assumes an established urban or semi-urban congregation of 100-plus members with a pastoral team of one to three full-time staff.**

Although many such congregations exist, they are not the norm. What about pastors for church plants, small rural congregations, ethnic congregations or even possibly a mega-church? Such settings call for additional or distinct skills, and may require an openness to bi-vocational ministry.

It is possible that our present reality is one not of a pastor shortage, but of the lack of a match between congregations and the kind of congregations for which we have prepared pastors.

• **Fourth, although effective leadership will move a congregation beyond where it might otherwise be, at the same time an informed, committed congregation does wonders for leadership.** In other words, our “crisis in leadership,” as some consider our present situation, may really be a “crisis in membership,” and as much an indictment of the life of our congregations as anything else.

As we Mennonites have become more a part of Canadian society, we also have been seduced by the secular vision of our time, a liberal democratic vision with little place for a God who calls us to be a light to the nations, to love our enemies, to live in an upside-down kingdom. As we work at leadership formation, we also need to work at forming the church—the body of Christ.

In this task, our church schools have a critical role to play as they work not only at formal leadership formation, but at preparing a people who are the church both when gathered together as well as when scattered during the week.

—Gerald Gerbrandt

The author is president of CMU in Winnipeg.



Agents of transformation for a global church

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.—MC CANADA VISION

So what does it take to become a global church? I suggest it takes knowledge, values, skills and relationships. While these are not the sole domain of education, church schools are powerful shapers in these areas. Here is how.

To be a global church, we need knowledge about the people and life of the church around the globe. We need people and places which research, analyze and make information available.

Continued on page 12

- Church schools do this in the following ways:
- Instructors study to stay current in the knowledge of their field and communicate this effectively to students, publish, and speak in the wider community.
 - Students expand their knowledge and learn about the way the world works.
 - School libraries and websites become resource centres for the wider church and community.

We need people who know what they believe, how Christians in other countries and cultures understand their faith, and what the major religious groups of the world believe. It is for such an opportunity that we devote the resources to operate schools, colleges, and universities.

To be a global church, we need people with a commitment to live interdependently and share generously. While knowledge is a wonderful asset, by itself it does not lead to a global church. It also matters that we live out our values through our resources.

Values are forged in a number of ways: we imitate people we admire, we formulate our values through debates, and we are shaped by transformational experiences like mission trips.

Teachers are powerful models and church schools bring together an amazing group of people. Church schools also deliberately set up dialogues that prompt the integration of faith and their subjects of study.

To be a global church, we need people with skills in spiritual matters. Many schools provide fine training in various careers—medicine, arts, engineering, counselling and business—but in order to form people to be global Christians it is also important that they learn skills in the areas of spiritual work, whether that be prayer, discernment, teaching or other ministries.

To be a global church, we need relationships around the globe. The challenges of connecting with “other groups,” whether around the block or around the globe, are made easier when we have a relationship with someone from that group. Church schools are amazing places to meet such people; it is surprising how many of these we encounter later and who can help us reach out beyond our local church to connect globally.

—Ron Penner

The author is president of CBC, Abbotsford, B.C.



**CBC
Abbotsford**

“Are you a conservative or a liberal?” This appears to be a simple, straightforward

question, yet my answer is never simple. It is: “I don’t know. I am both and I am neither. It depends on the issue. It depends on the person or group to which I’m being compared.”

I’m a pacifist because that’s how I understand the meaning of following Jesus, but that is a very liberal position to some of my friends. I support certain lifestyles and am disheartened by other lifestyles—ones that I believe EMU should actively discourage—so some call me (and EMU) conservative. If you really want to know what I believe, you’d be safe to read the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite*

Liberal or

Perspective. Not that I agree with every last detail, but I do trust the discernment process of my church body. When I was baptized I committed myself to follow Jesus and to “give and receive counsel.”

I was surprised when EMU was lauded in a 2006 college guide book, *All-American Colleges: Top Schools for Conservatives, Old-Fashioned Liberals, and People of Faith.* Many, though not all, of the other 49 colleges in the guide book are “conservative” in that they have a direct connection to orthodox conservative causes, such as educating and preparing students to serve in the U.S. military. Yet the profile on EMU is largely accurate.

The title of the guide underscores the dilemma that an institution like EMU faces in explaining itself to prospective students, donors, church

answering
the call



people and community members. How do we define ourselves within a cultural context that wants to reduce complex realities to simplistic clichés? Sometimes I receive calls from community folks who seem to know exactly how a Mennonite institution should conduct itself. These calls baffle me since those of us committed to this expression of the church rarely possess such certainty, despite our heartfelt prayers for guidance.

Since my ordination in 1975, I have preached in more than 230 congregations, mostly Mennonite, but some from other traditions. Frequently I have engaged folks in Christian education conversations and interacted with members and leaders over a meal. Although I am optimistic by nature,

conservative?

I have detected a trend that concerns me: I am troubled by the loss of identity among many who call themselves Anabaptist.

I am not referring to such simplistic identity labels as “conservative” and “liberal.” Do these really matter?

I meet church members who eagerly embrace one in opposition to the other, as though it is actually possible to be consistent across the spectrum, whether theologically or politically. As one of my Anabaptist mentors used to say rather frequently, “On some social issues I am rather liberal...because I take the Bible very seriously. Which is a conservative position.”

I have a deep concern that Anabaptist Mennonites have been derailed theologically by the influence of so-called Christian radio and TV. I grieve that we are increasingly unable to stand up for the Jesus of the New Testament, who called us to another way. We are also subject to derailment from liberal theology that downplays the significance of Jesus’ invitation to salvation.

The problem with drinking from other theological wells is that we are subtly lulled into thinking that all Christians share similar perspectives. Yet all do not read the Bible the same way. Many believers have a “flat book” view of Scripture. The logical result is

that Old Testament perspectives are put on the same level as those in the New Testament. Jesus himself demonstrated a different approach: “*You have heard it has been said..., but I say....*”

My Anabaptist theological ancestors interpreted the Old Testament through the eyes of Jesus and through the lens of the unfolding revelation in the New Testament. Unfortunately, that’s a perspective not heard from most speakers in the popular Christian media. Either my Anabaptist forebears were deluded—or they were right. I’m throwing my lot in with them. They believed the example and words of Jesus must be our guide, and so do I.

What practical difference does this make? Some years ago I was guest preacher for several days just prior to a U.S. presidential election. One individual told me, in all seriousness, that she would not vote for a particular candidate because “he would take away all of our Bibles.” Never mind that I doubt any U.S. political leader would denigrate the Bible, I have to ask the obvious question from a New Testament perspective: What difference would that make? I’ve always understood that the strength of the church—and the faith-based stances of its believers—is not subject to the “state.”

What kind of faith is demonstrated if we insist on being legitimized by government? Our friends in Ethiopia saw people flock to the church during a time of prolonged persecution. They didn’t need governmental support for the church to flourish, even as they would certainly appreciate, as we do, the freedom to worship in peace.

Continued on page 14

EMU
Harrisonburg

What kind of faith is demonstrated if we insist on being legitimized by government?



EMU photo by Matt Stoyer

Bike Movement students, eight of them from Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., embarked on a cross-country cycling and spiritual adventure last summer. One of their stops included “conquering” an instrument of war at a roadside park near State College, Pa.

Liberal *From page 13*

My observation is that many of us who grew up Mennonite have struggled to come to peace with our past experiences. We remember the days when we were, in fact, very different culturally. It was embarrassing to stand out in the crowd. It is so much easier psychologically to “fit in” with the multitude. And, now, particularly in the North American context, we fear the possibility of being ostracized by our neighbours if we dare to challenge prevailing assumptions.

What does this have to do with EMU and Mennonite education? I’ve devoted most of my adult life to this mission for one simple reason: I believe Mennonite Anabaptists have had, and still have, a unique theological perspective and practice that are needed in our world. I am disappointed with the headlong rush to “be like everyone else,” as though our theological forebears were badly mistaken.

Frankly, I think the burden of proof is on those who have embraced the majority culture. Again, the New Testament hardly promises that the followers of Jesus will enjoy majority status.

I’ve frequently said that I am “proud” to be a Mennonite, although I always add with a smile, “I’m proud in a humble sort of way.” That’s not because I value being Mennonite above being a follower of Christ. I do believe, however, that it is not possible to be a generic Christian. We are all part of theological streams with historical wellsprings, whether we are charismatic, Pentecostal, Lutheran or Anabaptist—and whether we realize it or not.

If EMU and our sister Mennonite schools and colleges are not unique and thoroughly committed to being Anabaptists as followers of Jesus, there is little reason for us to exist. There are hundreds of good, academically strong institutions that do a great job of educating young adults.

I am astounded at the number of parents around the church who aren’t aware of this simple fact: We’re different from other colleges. Even other educational and denominational leaders recognize we represent something unique. One university president from South Dakota, himself a Baptist, told me recently, “You Mennonites are among the few in the whole country who are making any sense right now.”

Jennifer Jag Jivan, a member of the Church of Pakistan (a merger of four Protestant denominations) and a recent EMU master of arts graduate, described the difference this way in a recent letter: “I feel richly blessed that my life crossed the Mennonites. Like all people, of course, they experience their ups and downs, church conflicts and

others, but they are a people whose commitment to walk in the love of God in humility renews one’s spirit in the goodness of humanity. My deep appreciation for all the Mennonites, whether meeting them in the cafeteria, bookstore or classroom—their culture of helping others and meeting others where they are, and spreading this culture of love and peace—is breathtaking indeed! But what is more, this environment is so catching that it enables others to embrace this spirit and be the miracle of this love-sharing life.”

These statements are not reasons to become proud, but they do show that others see something distinctive, a difference worth preserving.

It may seem strange for a university president to say that he doesn’t really care if his institution exists in the year 2026. And I don’t, not for the sake of the university itself. But I do care, with all my heart and soul, that the church’s witness is strong in the year 2026. I’m convinced it will only be so if a substantial number of our youths receive a Mennonite education.

To those who have stuck with me to this point in my “sermon,” and who are surprised at my audacity and passion, I made a similar speech to the EMU Parents’ Council one morning last spring. I made it totally off the cuff, after I had forgotten I was to join them, and then I apologized for my passion. I reflected that perhaps I’m getting old, and that I no longer feel as if I have much to lose. They were slightly stunned, I think, and then said, “Put it in writing. You’re preaching to the choir.”

My life would be blessed if the “choir” would carry the message and deliver their young adults in large numbers to EMU and all of our Mennonite schools—and most blessed when those graduates have become the faithful members and leaders of the church tomorrow.

—Loren Swartzendruber

The author is president of EMU, Harrisonburg, Va. Reprinted with permission from EMU’s quarterly magazine at emu.edu/crossroads/fall2006.



I am disappointed with the headlong rush to ‘be like everyone else,’ as though our theological forebears were badly mistaken.

They have kind faces—some of them—open even. They're young, boyish, younger now than my sons. They should be playing soccer or wielding bats and hitting home runs. But they're not. They're wielding submachine guns and percussion grenades, and they're playing a game that's deadly for both sides.

They are the Israeli soldiers that I have come to accept as part of the landscape when I return each year as a Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) reservist to Hebron in the Occupied West Bank of Palestine.

I ache for them. They don't want to be the oppressors. They see what it does to them, and what it does to those they have power over.

Like the man who bears a huge goose egg on his temple. His hands shake slightly as they move over his face, trying to wipe away the memory and the headache from the concussion he sustained when these same soldiers with the kind faces invaded his apartment in the heart of the Old City. The soldiers took the man and shoved him repeatedly against the metal door, his head crashing into it again and again. He had no defence against this violence.

When CPT responded to an urgent message and arrived at his apartment, he had just been taken away by the soldiers. His three small children, now left alone, were huddled, terrified, in the window ledge on the top floor. The mothers in our group absolutely insisted that the soldiers guarding the entrance let us by to get to the children.

I ache for the Palestinian parents who are helpless to stop the nightmares for their children—or to stop their own nightmares. As we sat with the family the next night, they showed us the kitchen window that the soldiers smashed the night before, and the lock on an interior door the soldiers had destroyed with a crowbar. They showed us where all their clothes had been dumped from the wardrobe and flour poured on top before they were trampled.

They have faces that are cynical, their innocence lost. They toss stones

Faces tell the stories of hope and despair



Photo courtesy of Barbara Martens

Barbara Martens chats with a young Israeli soldier patrolling the streets of Hebron as part of her activities as a CPT reservist.

at soldiers or at us. These are the children who are paying the price of the illegal Israeli occupation. Their reality is erratic school hours or none at all.

They have faces that show the worry beneath the smile. For the first time ever, our Palestinian partners have put words to their worry; their thread of hope is fraying because they have not received a salary for seven months now. Nor have doctors, nurses, teachers and civil servants.

I ache as I hear them say, "We are hungry. We have no salaries, we have

no food, but we are not hungry for food. We are not hungry for money. We are hungry for freedom. You see me smiling, but the smile is on my face only. It is not in my heart. In my heart is the pain."

But I rejoice at the sign of hope and determination evidenced by the joyful celebration of marriages and births in Hebron. I rejoice at the courage and determination of Israeli peace activists next to me, as together we pull on the cable that rolls the last of the three huge cement blocks off the road leading to farmers' fields, their market and to the school. It is symbolic only, because all too soon the military return the blocks to their former position.

I rejoice that the message of our solidarity through these actions—and our presence and our witness to their suffering—is received. And so I keep returning to Palestine as a part-time CPTer to patrol the streets of Hebron, accompany the school children past the militant settlers and Israeli soldiers, join other international and Israeli peace activists in actions like helping with the olive harvests, removing roadblocks, and joining with Palestinian volunteers to get football games organized for the street children so that they have a healthy outlet for their energy and their feelings of frustration.

Again and again I am strengthened by their hope, their resilience, their love of their land. And I pray for a just peace for this unholy, precious, torn Holy Land that I have come to love.

—**Barbara Martens**

The author attends North Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite Church and is currently serving as a CPT reservist in Hebron in the Occupied West Bank of Palestine.

Pontius' Puzzle



Letters

Trust in God should be a unifying factor

I have appreciated Robert J. Suderman's efforts in helping us become a missional church, his determination to understand our very diverse congregations, and his series of reflective articles (Oct. 2, page 5; Oct. 16, page 6; Nov. 27, page 10). In re-reading the last one—"Unity and diversity in the church"—I separated what he observed as the six unifying beliefs from his call for mutual "trust that will allow us to move towards greater openness."

The good news of God's reconciling love through Jesus is all about us trusting and obeying God, but, sadly,

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.

Suderman did not find God-ward or interpersonal trust among the top six priorities of Mennonite Church Canada. It sobers me to find that trust in God's grace no longer is a top characteristic of my denomination.

While imitating Jesus' social actions receives priority, without humble trust that can become legalistic, sterile and fractious.

Yet as I read Menno Simons

and recollect the multiple western Canadian congregations of my youth, trust in God determined our expressions of discipleship, personal and social behaviour, service and evangelism, integrity and marriage commitments.

Admittedly, even our God-ward trust may be unnecessarily shallow and unproductive if it is not preceded by an awareness of our brokenness

PHIL WAGLER



Outside the box

I vaguely remember high school but flashbacks do haunt, what with the revival of fashion trends that should have been left forgotten and repented of in the 1980s. Mark my words, spandex is just around the corner. Flee while there is still time.

One other clear recollection is "backwards days," an awkward attempt to concoct camaraderie by calling everyone to live with tags forward. As if this would create school spirit and reconcile "head bangers," "nerds," "preppies," "jocks" and "non-participant cynics" (guess which camp I was in).

Backwards days. Sounds like today in the life of the North American church. Our backwardness, however, has nothing to do with the way we tend to evaluate relevance. It is not related to dress codes or lack thereof, music styles, or with our propensity to jump on trendy—or anti-trendy—political, sociological or cultural bandwagons. We tried marrying the broader culture (the liberal experiment), imitating forms of the broader culture (the evangelical experiment) or running from the broader culture (the conservative experiment). Each attempt at relevance, so convinced of its "forwardness," has only become inconsequential, even laughable. The church has it backwards and an outside voice is calling our bluff.

Recently, the CBC's Mark Kelly lived for seven days in the world of "evangelical" Christianity. Although he spent most of his time analyzing and periodically ridiculing only the American version—and specifically the youthful and kitschy elements—he made one statement that ought to disturb any named "Christian." Kelly's fearful assumption that led him deep into the heart of Texas was that Christians are bent on taking over the world. What he discovered alleviated his fears, for he

Backwards days

'I would not have known what their world was like if I had not stepped into it.'

found these "Jesus freaks" trapped in their own religious sub-culture, a spiritual ghetto, a parallel universe within the Milky Way. His unknowingly prophetic statement was this: "I would not have known what their world was like if I had not stepped into it." There it is, my friends, the disturbing indictment of our backwardness.

We have undone the incarnation. We have put in reverse the forward nature of God, for we only behold the glory of God in the face Jesus Christ turned our way. God is only known because of his forward and fleshly advance. Grace courts us aggressively. We are only Christian because he first loved us. Jesus humbles himself and moves into the neighbourhood smelling of sheep, sawdust and salvation.

We, however, declare "everyone welcome" on signs outside our buildings, congratulating ourselves for putting the onus on others to come to us, challenging them to incarnate themselves in our peculiar world with its codes, inside jokes and family ties. We bang our heads creating ways to make "outsiders" comfortable if they come our way, but do we consider what it means to have the attitude of Jesus, who was a servant of another kingdom whether debating in the temple or wining and dining with tax collectors?

We have it backwards—expecting people to move our way, or secretly hoping they won't—and seem no longer blown forward by the Spirit into this cursed yet still beautiful world, a world God so loved that he sent forth the only begotten. Jesus sacrificed much to get comfortable in our clothes, yet we ask people to get comfortable only in ours.

How can backwards days end in your neighbourhood?

Phil Wagler is lead pastor of Zurich Mennonite Church, Ontario. E-mail him at phil_wagler@yahoo.ca.

and a repentant desire to be restored to the person God intended for us to be.

Could it be that we need to focus more on the transforming potential of God's Spirit within the lives of repentant and yielded people? Or has Satan used our sophistication and affluence to blind us to our self-sufficiency and idolatry?

With sadness, I failed to read that MC Canada held a belief in a believers' church with believer's baptism, mutual caring and accountability, non-conformity to secular priorities, and the ethic of love, peace and non-resistance as a priority. I hope they reached the Top 20.

—Ivan Unger, Cambridge, Ont.

Mennonites 'show off' their wealth, charity

I am not a subscriber to *Canadian Mennonite*, but a friend of mine passes on her copies after she has read them. I read the many very interesting articles, and although I am not a church-going Mennonite I am at heart very much in sympathy with many of their tenets of faith and pacifism—though I question their neutrality because they spout it with their mouths but I am not sure when it comes to their economics.

I am proud of my Mennonite ancestry, but the Sept. 4 cover photo and story ("Camping ministry the beneficiary of record harvest") left me speechless. It went against all my par-

ents' teaching of humbleness and quiet giving. That harvesting effort was done to "show off" our wealth and brag about how much charity we dispense.

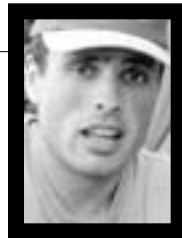
Congratulations to Will Braun for so mildly admonishing the despicable action ("Full-throttle fundraising," Sept. 18, page 13). Keep on "pricking the balloon" of the breast-thumping Mennonite Christians.

—Helen Johnson, Watrous, Sask.

Correction

The photograph of the Rosthern Junior College students handing out AIDS memorial ribbons in a Saskatoon mall (Dec. 18, bottom of page 14) was taken by Jake Nickel. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the incorrect attribution.

WILL BRAUN



New Order voice

I stepped down from a little 20-seater plane onto the tarmac at the Winnipeg airport. It was a windy December night four years ago and it was the moment I quit air travel. My feet have remained on or near the ground ever since.

I had arrived at a point where the geo-political and climatic consequences of oil dependence were too stark to ignore. My conscience was telling me it needed a break from the gas-powered, upwardly mobile lifestyle. Plus, I kind of wanted to see if I could do it. Remaining grounded seemed like an intriguing experiment given that climate change will, sooner or later, force significant lifestyle changes upon us all.

I'm not saying I'll never fly again or that no one should ever fly. It's not that simple. But I do think the faith community should have something to say about flying, and, more generally, about the oil appetite that air travel epitomizes.

The Church of England does. Last July, the Bishop of London said, "Making selfish choices such as flying on holiday or buying a large car are a symptom of sin. Sin is...living a life turned in on itself where people ignore the consequences of their actions."

I wondered what Mennonite leaders have to say about flying, fuel and climate change. So I asked them.

"We haven't taken any actions at this point to curtail travel," said Jack Suderman, speaking for the MC Canada office, which does, however, "constantly evaluate" air travel. Suderman pointed to a summit being planned with MC USA for July 2008, at which the ecological agenda will be "front and centre."

The story at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is similar—strong on awareness but less decisive on concrete action. A day before he flew to Akron, Pa., on MCC business, binational board chair Ron Dueck said ecologi-

cal concern "is definitely a factor" in planning how MCC functions. He mentioned as potential considerations, reduced frequency of fly-in meetings and the possibility of more overseas programming being done by local partners.

Jim Cornelius, who heads the Canadian Foodgrains Bank—in which Mennos are key partners—said he can imagine making significant changes to address climate impacts. The organization has started purchasing food closer to the point of need, rather than shipping it from Canada, thus reducing transportation and fuel use (although ecology was not the main motivation behind this switch). As further steps to consider, Cornelius mentioned a reduction of office size, a full energy audit and the purchase of carbon offsets.

None of the responses I heard seemed at all satisfactory. None gave me hope that Mennonites will lead society—or even keep up with society—in terms of a caring response

to the climate crisis. None offered a daring, provocative comment like that of the British bishop. None of the organizations even have targets for reducing climate impact, although Dueck said targets "should be part of our thinking."

Leaders at our church agencies are much like the rest of us. They're having a tough time even daring to ask what big change might look like. Together, I believe we need to be honest about the current reality we all face, as grim as it may be. And then we need to trust for the grace to imagine not only conferences, brochures and new light bulbs, but the grand possibility of experimenting with big change.

For the next "New Order voice" column I will go back to the same people and ask them to each imagine a 50 per cent reduction in their organization's climate change impact over the next five years.

Will Braun can be reached at editor@geezmagazine.org.

Pie in the warming sky

'We haven't taken any actions at this point to curtail travel.'

Leaders at our church agencies are much like the rest of us. They're having a tough time even daring to ask what big change might look like. Together, I believe we need to be honest about the current reality we all face, as grim as it may be. And then we need to trust for the grace to imagine not only conferences, brochures and new light bulbs, but the grand possibility of experimenting with big change.

Will Braun can be reached at editor@geezmagazine.org.

FOCUS

Post-secondary Education

Would Jesus drive...or ride?

If Jesus drove a car, what kind would he drive? For Chris Huebner, the answer is that he wouldn't drive a car at all; he'd ride a bike. The assistant professor of theology and ethics at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) is one of the driving forces behind Sanctoral Cycle, the university's new bike co-op.

"American theologian Stanley Hauerwas once said that if you teach children to play baseball early on in their lives, you'll raise good children," says Huebner. "I would say it's the same thing with riding a bike. It's more of a skill than driving is, and it's a training of the body."

The co-op takes its name from the liturgical cycle of feast days in honour of the saints. And just as feast days serve to nourish and sustain the body, by enabling people to form habits that contribute to virtuous character, the co-op seeks to cultivate good habits of physical health and

environmental stewardship, Huebner says.

The idea for the bike co-op originated in the spring, prompting Huebner to do some research about co-ops at other universities. Other staff at CMU began to take interest in the idea, and various Student Council committees became interested in helping the co-op get started. It officially opened in September.

Cost of joining the co-op is \$10 a year for students, and \$20 a year for faculty, staff and alumni. So far, more than 30 memberships have been sold. Benefits include free access to tools and workspace; access to affordable shop rates, parts and accessories; and a 15 percent discount at a local bike shop.

Lucas Redekop, a fourth-year theology major from Floradale, Ont., was the first student to purchase a membership. "I support the bike as a form of transportation, and not just a leisure activity. The co-op is a great service to students who commute by bike, and hopefully it will show students who don't bike how accessible it is."

**CMU
Winnipeg**

Adam Beriault, a fourth-year history major from Calgary, is the co-op's resident mechanic. He agrees with Redekop, saying that the co-op is "a good place to learn how a bike works, and how to fix a bike."

But in addition to the practical benefits, the co-op exists to promote other good reasons for bike riding.

For CMU admissions counsellor Karin Kliewer, riding her bike to work is "part of a conscious slowing down of life.... Any

decision to slow down can make space for reflection, which is something we often neglect."

Huebner adds that bike riding is also a political act. "There's a big war happening in the Middle East right now, and it's about oil," he says, noting that while bike riding won't alter North American reliance on oil, it is a way of "doing something on a small scale that is nonetheless significant."

— Aaron Epp

The author is a student at CMU.

Prayer book begins online testing

Volume 1 of *Take Our Moments and Our Days: An Anabaptist Prayer Book*, designed for Ordinary Time, has been tested and revised over the last three years and will be available in final form from Herald Press this summer.

A second volume, "Advent through Pentecost," will begin with Advent and also will include services for other special seasons of the church year: Christmas week, New Year's week, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost. Resources for prayer times during Advent are now available online at ambs.edu (follow the "Advent prayerbook" link on the home page). The other seasonal services will become available online throughout the coming church year for use and testing.

Guides for 13 services for one week, Sunday evening through Saturday evening, have been developed for use by groups or individuals. Each service incorporates scripture and hymns with a call to praise, a call to discipleship and a call to intercession. Users are encouraged to follow the suggested pattern of morning and evening prayer throughout the four weeks of the season.

**AMBS
Elkhart**



My classes are amazing! I have amazing conversations with other students and professors. Best of all, I'm growing in my faith as I prepare for a career in counseling or social work. *Jessica Rempel, Squamish, B.C.*

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The themes are drawn from the Magnificat and embody classic Advent themes of waiting, expectation and trust in God. The files include a translation of the Magnificat by Mary H. Schertz, professor of New Testament.

The editorial group for the Anabaptist prayer book project invites people to use these Advent prayers and send in their responses and suggestions for further refinement.

—AMBS release

Understanding the law as ‘sword’ and ‘shield’

Lowell Ewert’s presentation at the 2006 Benjamin Eby Lectures at Conrad Grebel University College was full of images.

“The law is like driving your car forward while looking only in the rearview mirror,” he suggested. “It is best done slowly, on a stretch of road with few surprises and with no children in the car.”

Ewert was referring to the medieval con-

vention of naming collections of guiding principles and laws as “mirrors” (such as the *Martyr’s Mirror*). His point was that law is based on a people’s history and aspirations—driving forward while looking back.

Grebel Waterloo

The Eby Lectures provide an opportunity for professors at Grebel to delve into their research and present it to their peers and students as well as the public.

A lawyer, conciliator and teacher, Ewert made the point over and over that without law there is no peace. Law lays down the minimum agreement of a society for behaviour, he said, adding, though, that the law is limited. “The law is like a house,” Ewert said. “It provides people with shelter, warmth and security, but it cannot make the residents into a community or family.”

Using a gripping story to bookend his presentation, Ewert told of the final lecture he listened to at law school: “Our professor told us, you came here for idealistic reasons, wanting to make a better world, but as you leave here your families and friends are saying, you’re going to be SOB’s just like all the other lawyers. The professor continued, ‘And I expect you to be SOB’s. You will be called on to evict an elderly widow from her apartment on Christmas Eve and you will do it. And there she’ll be, standing on the street in the snow with all her worldly possessions around her.’”

He then described how law creates situations for peaceful ends to conflicts between people, groups and, with the advent of both the UN’s Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Court, nations.

In conclusion, he finished the story of his last class. “But our professor didn’t end there. He said, ‘And when the law has done what it should—end a conflict between people peacefully—you will go and find that elderly widow a place to stay, or you will make agencies aware of her need.’”

In other words, the law is necessary to make peace and to act as a shield, but it cannot bring people and nations all the way to righteousness and justice.

—Dave Rogalsky



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Adventures with Jesus in downtown Vancouver

“Are there a lot of people with guns down there?” “Does the hotel where we’re staying have a pool?” “What do you do when someone asks you for money?” “Why should we bother with those lazy bums and drug addicts anyway?”

Those are some of the questions I have been asked by students as they prepare to venture into the downtown east side of Vancouver, one of the poorest communities in all of Canada.

**CBC
Abbotsford**

For the past six years, all first-year students at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, B.C., have participated in a four-day urban mission adventure into Vancouver. The primary purposes of this event are to encourage students to learn about urban life and ministry, and to serve in practical ways. We hear stories from urban missionaries and local residents, we walk the streets and marvel over the contrast between rich and poor, we eat foreign foods, clean houses and serve

meals. Oftentimes we also see and hear about the serious challenges and deep pain common to urban life.

Our students come from diverse backgrounds, so naturally some are very apprehensive about the whole idea of staying in a section of the city notorious for crime and substance abuse. On the other hand, some who have grown up in urban settings seem to think that there is little for them to learn. But it is amazing what can take place in a few short days. Countless students testify to being challenged both by the Christians who have chosen to live in this setting and those who see no hope of escaping their painful experiences.

Students are also surprised at how God can use even little things to break down stereotypes. In March, one of our teams came back both excited and reflective after spending an afternoon cleaning up a rundown rooming house. On their way back to the hotel they had passed through a park well known for its flourishing drug trade. The group had been praying that Jesus would give them an opportunity to connect with some of the people living on the street. As they walked by the park they saw some young men throwing a football around and one of our students felt God encouraging him to ask if they wanted a game.

The young men in the park immediately agreed and they quickly split into two teams with an even number of members from each group on the teams. Even though some of the men were slightly high, our students all spoke of how these men just wanted to be treated as people. Our guys played with them for an hour, joked with them and heard a little about their lives.

At the end, one of our students asked if they could pray together. All the men agreed. “We need prayer,” said one of them. “So do we!” replied our students. It was just a game, but the students returned thankful for the opportunity to see the humanity of these men and challenged to love others even as God has loved us.

— **Bryan Born**

The author is intercultural studies director at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C.

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African Christianity predates recent missionary efforts

Citing statistics that the Christian Church in Africa in 1900 was outnumbered nearly four to one by Muslims and 100 years later comprises almost half of the continent's population, Jonathan J. Bonk sketched a map of the worldwide Christian Church for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary students and faculty last fall.

The executive director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, Conn., pointed out how the growth and activity of the Christian Church in Africa has been misrepresented, under-represented and ignored by most historians and scholars. In spite of the growth of the church in Africa, even recent attempts by Christian historians to document what is going on in the church "take scarcely any note of Christianity in Africa," Bonk said.

To counter the perception that the Christian faith emerged in Africa only as a result of mission efforts in the last few centuries, the Dictionary of African Christian Biography, an Internet-based bank of stories of Christian people and ministries, includes more than 300 names of Christians prior to the fourth century in its database. Currently, there are more than 1,000 stories on the website, and it is continually growing as African Christian colleges and seminaries require students to collect and write biographies as part of their masters degree curricula.



Bonk

To broaden the picture of the worldwide church, Bonk presented another lecture showing the scope of the church through the world. The world's population is estimated to be 6.6 billion, he reported, with more than two billion of them Christians. Of these, 56 percent are non-white believers. Eleven countries send out more than 10,000 missionaries each year and 11 receive more than 10,000 missionaries annually, with the U.S. at the top of the list of countries receiving mission workers.

Bonk explained, "We don't feel ourselves to be a mission field, but we are." Then he added, "These numbers point to a relatively healthy international sharing of mission personnel."

When asked about the increase in the number of mission workers in the last generation, Bonk said, "Wherever you find an emerging church, you will find a missionary church. The first-generation Christians really want to share their faith."

AMBS Elkhart

Born in Canada, Bonk grew up in Ethiopia and then returned to Canada as a young adult. In his role at the Overseas Ministries Study Center, he edits the International Bulletin of Missionary Research. He has published five books, including *Missions and Money: Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem*.

—AMBS release by **Mary E. Klassen**

Tuition rebate plan both good and bad

Students recently heard good news from the Manitoba government on its commitment to address student debt. Manitoba recently announced a new tuition fee income tax rebate. Under this plan, 60 percent of eligible tuition fees paid after Jan. 1, 2004, may be refunded to Manitoba taxpayers who graduate after Jan. 1 this year from a post-secondary institution recognized by the Canada Revenue Agency. Recognized institutions include private colleges and institutions located outside of Manitoba or Canada. This new policy is an attempt to attract and keep young people in the province.

"This can be a really good thing," says Dave Bergen, executive secretary for Christian Formation at Mennonite Church Canada. "Out-migration of all sorts is a constant challenge in the Prairies. Our area conference ministers work very hard to keep pastors within their own area if at all possible. Mennonite Church Manitoba tries to place Manitoba divinity grads in Manitoba churches."

On the other hand, Bergen admits the rebate plan does have its drawbacks for students. "It does appear to put vocations like pastoral ministry in somewhat of a bind," he says, pointing out that the pool of opportunities for employment is smaller in the Prairies. "Students are not necessarily finding placements in the province and this puts them at a disadvantage."

And not all students are excited about the announcement.

Stacy Senkbeil, Manitoba chair of the Canadian Federation of Students, says, "It's a back-end measure that makes students and Manitoba families wait for assistance.... For students in Manitoba, reducing fees up front is much more effective than remitting them through the tax system."

—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

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Finding theological meaning in Mennonite architecture

People live, eat, work and worship in structures. But do they ever give much theological thought to their design? That was one of the questions raised at the John and Margaret Friesen Lectures at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) last November. Entitled “Sacred spaces, sacred places: Mennonite architecture in Russia and Canada,” they provided a look at architecture that many may not have considered before.

In the first lecture, Winnipeg architect Rudy Friesen looked at creativity, craft, culture and context in Russian Mennonite architecture. He noted that Mennonites initially expressed their creativity by emulating the old Prussian styles they were familiar with from the Vistula Delta. But as they travelled more and became more exposed to other influences, they began to import ideas from other parts of the world—often from western Europe.

Culture was expressed in sombre tones, Friesen said, with utility and comfort being paramount. Later, the large and very grand became the ideal. Finally, context ranged from prescribed village formats that spoke of the importance of commu-

nity, to being as grandiose as an individual's financial resources afforded.

In the second lecture, Roland Sawatzky, senior curator at Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, Man, showed that the design of the Russian village house-barn spoke of a particular sense of community. The house-barn, Sawatzky said, was a semi-private home with a spiritual core, their similarity implying shared values and shared theology. The interior was very simple, yet spoke of family, the importance of neighbourly visits, devotion and prayer. Even items on the wall, such as calendars, mirrors and family portraits, were placed above sight-lines in order to avoid being a spectacle.

House-barns were places for births, marriages and deaths, whereas the church was used mainly for worship and baptisms. The home, in other words, was the context for the family's spiritual journey, orienting it towards community, not individuality.

Mennonites from Russia brought the house-barn architecture to Canada, and examples can still be found in Manitoba and Saskatchewan today.

CMU Winnipeg

The final lecture by Harold Funk, one of Manitoba's most prolific church architects, wove Anabaptist Mennonite theology and history through it, layering it with philosophy, art and design, and concluding with very practical steps for how to design and build a church. Funk noted that churches today can be seen merely as meetinghouses, or they can be seen as holy sanctuaries where people are led through visual forms to worship God. They can be retreats from the world or they can be statements to the world of Mennonite faith and the congregation's relationship with God.

Funk said that the questions that need to be asked when designing a church include:

- Do church structures exemplify a congregation's vision and mission, or are they merely locations where people meet?
- What does a congregation visually say to its community, or to the world, when it builds?

—Ken Reddig

The author is director of the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg.

Conrad Grebel University College resident Mimi Hollinger-Janzen helped organize the Make-a-Difference Christmas Market at the college to raise funds and awareness of La Casa Grande, a children's home and orphanage in Benin, West Africa, where she spent last summer working (see “Kids' energy plus Bible study ignite camp,” Dec. 18, page 16). Hollinger-Janzen sold necklaces made by the children at La Casa Grande, and 10 other vendors and two organizations also had their wares for sale. With vendors donating 10 percent of their proceeds to the orphanage, more than \$500 was raised.



Conrad Grebel photo by Jennifer Konkle

Bloomington, Ont.

Schneider descendants celebrate two centuries in Bloomington

Bloomington Mennonite Church celebrated its 200th anniversary on Thanksgiving weekend, Oct. 7 and 8. Among the many weekend activities was a musical drama, *Journey*, performed on Saturday evening. It told the story of the early pioneers who travelled from Pennsylvania to the Oxbow of the Grand River in 1806. Throughout the weekend there were historical displays and tours. A new plaque in the cemetery and a cairn beside the main road in Bloomington were dedicated in honour of the first settlers, Jacob (known as “Yoch”) and Maria (Erb) Schneider.

Sam Steiner, historian and archivist, spoke at the dedication of the cairn. The Schneider family was closely related to many of the other early Mennonite families of the area. A major motivation in coming to this wilderness was probably to find affordable farms for their sons. They were accustomed to the hard work needed to clear the trees in order to grow crops.

The Schneider family provided spiritual leadership in the community. The church at Bloomington was called “Schneiders” for many years, since the congregation met in the Schneider home. “Yoch” was ordained as a deacon in 1809, the same year



Photo courtesy of Sam Steiner

Maynard Paul Snider of Pennsylvania, a direct descendant of Jacob and Maria Schneider, unveiled a plaque in the cemetery, honouring these ancestors who are considered the founders of Bloomington (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

that Benjamin Eby was ordained as a minister.

In the early years when a group met on Sundays they would have worshipped with singing, Bible reading and prayers from the Mennonite prayerbook. There would not have been a sermon unless an ordained preacher was present. They may have

read from the *Martyrs Mirror*.

From this early beginning 200 years ago, a congregation has thrived. Many Schneider/Snyder/Snider descendants came from a distance to participate in this celebration.

—**Barb Draper**, with files from **Marion Roes** and **Sam Steiner**

Saskatoon

Saskatchewan churches learn to ‘connect diversity’

One evaluation suggested that the best part of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan’s second annual Equipping Day was “the energy created by having committed people focus together on things they are passionate about.”

More than a hundred participants, presenters and organizers spent Oct. 28 at Mount Royal Mennonite Church worshipping together, interacting in workshops and meeting in the corridors.

Arlyn Friesen Epp, manager of the MC Canada Resource Centre, led the worship times. He used the image of salt and sugar, which look alike but are very different, yet are both important in successful baking. A display of 10 different kinds of breads, which participants were later invited to sample communally, further illustrated the conference theme of “Connecting diversities.”

Workshops ranged from a challenging session on “Respecting, not just tolerating, diversity” by Monica Goulet, to stories from congregations about their efforts to connect across age distinctions, and a presentation on the new web-based MC Canada Resource Centre.

A good number of the responses suggested that one of the more important aspects of the event was the “peoplehood building” that Equipping Day enabled.

—**Eric Olfert**



Photo by Betty-Anne Hildebrand

Around 30 members of MC Manitoba’s Women in Mission group heartily sang their theme song and other favourites at a recent retreat at Camp Assiniboia. Three sessions were offered: Yvonne Stoesz spoke about infertility and adoption, Lynette Froese shared her experiences about starting a new business (Wheat Song Bakery in Morden), and Lynn Martin offered first-hand advice about dealing with grief and loss.

Photo courtesy of Steinmann Mennonite Church

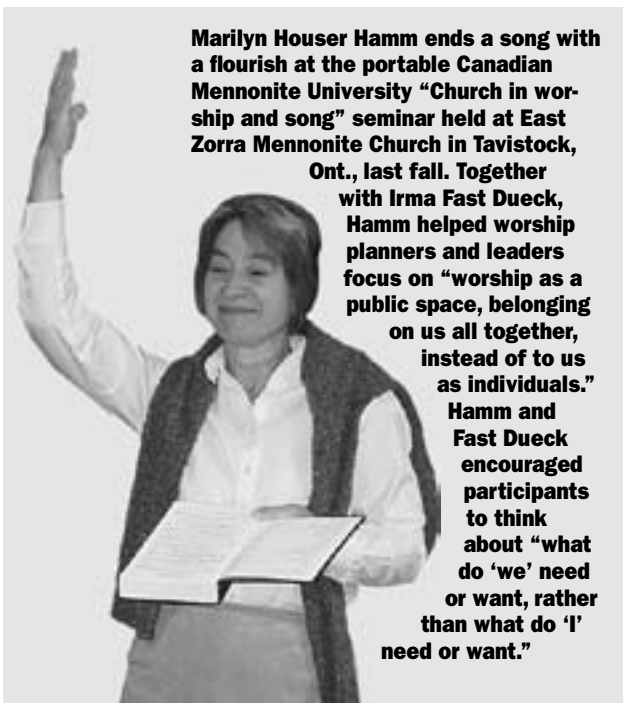


The official groundbreaking for a new 1,400-square-metre addition to Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden, Ont., on Sept. 24 was a multi-generational affair. The \$3 million multi-purpose facility will house a full-size gymnasium, kitchen, washrooms and nursery. As well, current offices and Sunday school rooms will be renovated to better accommodate anticipated church growth. To address energy conservation concerns, the plans include upgraded insulation, windows, lights and water conservation, and the installation of energy recovery ventilators to conserve energy required to heat or cool incoming air.

Carman (Man.) Mennonite Church pastor Bob Pauls, left, and Isaac Bergen, former chair of Wingham Mennonite Church, presided at a dedication service for a cairn in memory of the now closed Wingham church, which existed between 1939 and 2004. Inscribed on the cairn is Isaiah 40:8: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever." Many members from the former Wingham congregation now attend Carman Mennonite, while others have spread out around the world to further the cause of the gospel.



Photo by Elsie Bergen



Marilyn Houser Hamm ends a song with a flourish at the portable Canadian Mennonite University "Church in worship and song" seminar held at East Zorra Mennonite Church in Tavistock, Ont., last fall. Together with Irma Fast Dueck, Hamm helped worship planners and leaders focus on "worship as a public space, belonging on us all together, instead of to us as individuals." Hamm and Fast Dueck encouraged participants to think about "what do 'we' need or want, rather than what do 'I' need or want."

Photo by Dave Rogalsky



"Creativity: Blessing and inspiration" was the theme of last fall's Women of MC Eastern Canada workshop held at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., on Oct. 21. Pictured from left to right are presenters Marie Gingerich, an author and artist from West Hill Mennonite Church; Renska Helmuth, an appliqué quilter from Listowel Mennonite Church; and Luanne Shantz from Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton, who presented a dramatic monologue called *A View from the Garden*. Other presenters included knitter Karen Sauder; watercolour artist Marie Assad of Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton; and needlework artists and quilters Ly Vang and Sarah Yang of First Hmong Mennonite Church.

Photo courtesy of Liz Koop, Vineland (Ont.) United Mennonite Church

People&Events

Bismarck, N.D.—Three Plowshares Movement peace and disarmament activists from a Catholic parish in Duluth, Minn., have now been sentenced to jail for their participation in an act of civil disobedience at a missile silo in North Dakota in June (see “North Dakota’s peace clowns await sentencing,” Oct. 16, page 11). According to the *Bismarck Tribune*, Greg Boertje-Obed was sentenced to a year and a day in prison and Father Karl Kabot was sentenced to 15 months, when they appeared before U.S. district judge Daniel Hovland on Nov. 16 on charges of destruction of government public property. In sentencing the two, Hovland said of their actions—pounding on a concrete silo lid covering a Minuteman II missile and pouring their blood on the silo, “It’s not conveying the right message to go out and commit felonies.... I don’t think anybody’s listening to the actions of somebody who commits felonies.” The day before, the third defendant, Michael Walli, was sentenced to eight months in prison. The three were also ordered to pay a total of \$17,000 US in restitution to the U.S. air force.
—From a report by **Larry Kehler**

Ottawa—In light of Parliament’s decision last month not to re-open the marriage debate, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) has affirmed that it will continue to maintain that the institution of marriage is the public covenanting together of a man and a woman in a loving, enduring and exclusive relationship. The EFC holds that marriage bridges and celebrates sexual difference and is the primary relationship in which children are born and nurtured. This understanding was stated and confirmed in the Declaration of Marriage, which was recently signed by more than 50 religious leaders from

various faiths across Canada, including Roman Catholic, Evangelical and Orthodox Christians and Muslims. “In a plural and democratic society, faith communities must have language to communicate their principles and beliefs, and the freedom to promote a distinctive relationship that has stood the test of time and been accepted into common use,” said Bruce J. Clemenger, president of the EFC. The EFC is deeply concerned about the social consequences of this “experiment with marriage and the effects of this on marriage, spouses and children.” The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), on the other hand, has chosen not to take a formal position on the matter—because its constitution only allows it to speak when there is unanimous consensus by all CCC members. In a 2004 reflection paper, the CCC acknowledged, “The topic of ‘same-sex marriage’ is one of those issues of painful separation. In this matter, what is at stake for Christians is to discern the Spirit of truth and to articulate God’s message of salvation so clearly that all may recognize and cling to the image of God.” Mennonite Church Canada is a member of both the EFC and CCC.
—From EFC, CCC releases

Abbotsford, B.C.—Laura Loewen, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) B.C., has decided not to renew her term at the end of June. Loewen made the announcement to board members and staff at the end of November. Loewen has served as executive director since August 2000. Before her term at MCC B.C., she was pastor at Mennonite Fellowship in Montreal. She also served with MCC in Zambia and Zimbabwe. Her decision to not renew her term was made for personal reasons. The personnel committee is expected to have a new job description ready this month and will begin accepting applications at that time.
—MCC B.C. release

Winkler, Man.—Local resident Sally Harms was granted a lifetime membership in the Winkler Historical Society at the society’s heritage memorial banquet on Nov. 9. The award was bestowed on Harms in recognition of her dedication and service as editor and publisher of *Legacy Links*, the quarterly publication of the historical society, for the past five years. The first issue of a new publication, *Heritage Happenings*, is due out this month.



Harms

—**Elmer Heinrichs**

Toronto—The Rev. Dr. James Christie has been elected to a three-year term as president of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), of which Mennonite Church Canada is a member. Christie, a former United Church minister, is dean of the faculty of theology at the University of Winnipeg and chair of the Council of the World Federalist Movement. Elected as vice-presidents for 2006-09 were the Rev. Paul Johnson of Winnipeg (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada), the Very Rev. Dr. Marion Purdy of St. John’s, Nfld. (United Church of Canada), and the Ven. Pierre Voyer of Quebec City (Anglican Church of Canada). Other officers include treasurer Don Taylor of Toronto (Presbyterian Church of

Canada) and past president Prof. Richard Schneider of Toronto (Archdiocese of Canada of the Orthodox Church in America). CCC has also launched a monthly electronic newsletter; to subscribe, e-mail hamilton@ccc-ccc.ca.
—From Winter 2006-07 CCC newsletter

Edmonton—On July 1 Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) will open offices in the national capital and move public justice front and centre. “It’s an exciting time for CPJ to go where it is needed,” said chair Janet Wesselius of Edmonton following board approval to move the organization’s national offices to Ottawa. “CPJ is doing exceptional work on relevant and necessary issues, and we need to be where national public policy decisions are made.” “The fact is, CPJ needs to be in Ottawa at this time,” said executive director Harry Kits in a message to members in the fall issue of *Catalyst*, CPJ’s newsletter. “Public justice calls us to be where the conversations are happening, and to bring our more than 40 years of insight, analysis and tested positions.” CPJ will continue to have a national reach. Kits has pledged that the organization will look outwards to the rest of the country as much as it looks inwards to Ottawa. “It is time to bring public justice front and centre. It is time to do that from Ottawa,” he concludes.

—CPJ release

Advertising Dates

Issue	Copy Due
Feb. 19	Feb. 6
March 5	Feb. 20 (<i>Focus on Summer Travel, Food and Events</i>)
March 19	March 6
April 2	March 20 (<i>Focus on Elementary and Secondary Education</i>)
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Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Ankersmit—to Shana and Greg, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Reese Mackenzie, Oct. 14.
Awad Lobe—to Tamara and Greg, Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont., a son, Elias Gregory, Dec. 25.
Brenneman—to Jenny and Brad, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., a daughter, Hayley Christine, Dec. 28.
Dyck—to Shannon and Henry, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Griffin Alexander, Oct. 19.
Friesen—to Leanne and Daryl, Hamilton Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Sabrina Elise, Dec. 8.
Giesbrecht—to Sara and Abe, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Curtis James, Nov. 16.
Hiebert—to Rachel and Stan, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Rylan Carter, Dec. 10.
Klassen—to Jennifer and Sheldon, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Kate Emily, Oct. 19.
Martens-Funk—to Christy and Carl, Osler Mennonite, Sask., a son, Braden Henry, Dec. 6.
Martin—to Christiane and Alan, St. Agatha Mennonite, Ont., a son, Matthew Timothy, Nov. 14.
Neufeld—to Jen and Sheldon, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Carson Wade, Dec. 23.
Recker—to Elisa and Chad, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Benjamin Paul, Oct. 6.
Sharma—to Laurie and Sandeep, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Kiran Seth, Nov. 23.
Thiessen—to Sandi and Brian, First Mennonite, Edmonton, a son, Jonah Jacob, Dec. 3.
Unger—to Wendy and Henry, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., a son, Kalan Sebastian, Nov. 28.
Venne—to Susan and Gordon, Pleasant Point Mennonite, Clavier, Sask., a daughter,

Cheyenne Mary, Dec. 11.
Wasilewski—to Sheri and Gary, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Jori Ashe, Dec. 21.
Wiebe—to Jaimie and Peter, First Mennonite, Burns Lake, B.C., a son, Noah Samuel, Nov. 26.
Wiens—to Candice (Schoenfelder Mennonite, St. Francois Xavier, Man.) and Toban (Glenlea Mennonite), a daughter, Finely Annika, Dec. 12.

Marriages

Gammon-Tomlinson—Braden and Jessica, Hamilton Mennonite, Ont., June 3.
Janzen-Neufeld—John and Mary, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 14.
Matava-Good—Clive and Rachelle (Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.), in Zimbabwe, Dec. 30.
Schellenberg-McDougall—Harold (Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg) and Shannon, in Winnipeg, Oct. 14.
Schmidt-Allison—Greg and Nicole, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 15.
Schroeder-Enoki—Philip (Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.) and Saori, in Kitakyushu, Japan, Oct. 29.
Segedin-Dick—Richard and Lyndsey, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 23.
Wiebe-Reimer—Thomas and Andrea, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Sept. 17.
Wongsuna-Pawong—Suban and Chumpi, North Leamington United Mennonite, Dec. 16.

Deaths

Arnel—Ruth (nee Bender), 71 (b. Jan. 5, 1935), Nairn Mennonite, Ailsa Craig, Ont., Dec. 3.
Cressman—Glennys, 83, of Hamilton, Ont., Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 25.
Ediger—Ernst, 77, Niagara United Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 7.
Falk—Henry, 80, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Dec. 27.
Fehr—Helen, 78, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Dec. 18.
Fehr—Helen, 94, Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., Nov. 8.
Fischer—Lena, 76, North Leamington United Mennonite, Dec. 7.
Fransen—Lena, 87, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 30.
Frey—Martin, 92 (b. Oct. 2, 1914), Floradale Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 16.
Froese—Helen Susie, 69 (b. May 14, 1937), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Dec. 13.
Funkenhauser—Joseph, 81, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 6.
Heese—Agatha, 94 (b. Sept. 12, 1912), Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man., Dec. 5.
Heinrichs—Abe, 89, Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., Nov. 28.
Hoffman—Wendy (nee Parr), 59 (b. June 29, 1947), Breslau Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 8.
Janzen—Margaret, 91, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 6.
Klassen—Annie, 90, Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., Dec. 8.
Lichty—Abner, 79, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., Nov. 13.
Nikkel—Katie, 72 (b. Feb. 24, 1934), Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man., Dec. 10.
Peters—Anne (nee Quiring), Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., Dec. 14.
Ratzlaff—Lorne Arthur, 78, Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask., Dec. 29.
Riekman—Linda (nee Dueck), 80 (b. May 21, 1926), Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask., Nov. 23.
Rempel—Kaethe, 84, Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 8.
Rogalski—Paul, 59, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 4.
Ruby—Lydia, 94, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., Jan. 1.
Sawatzky—John, 67, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 2.
Schwartzentruber—Elmer, 97 (b. April 17, 1909), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Dec. 21.
Snider—Clifford, 103, First

Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., Dec. 20.
Striemer—Carl C., 86, Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask., Dec. 17.
Tiessen—Brian, 35, North Leamington United Mennonite, Nov. 24.
Tiessen—John N., 84, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 28.
Toews—Frank, 93, Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask./Emmaus Mennonite, Wymark, Sask., Nov. 25.
Voth—John, 94 (b. Dec. 11, 1911), Steinbach Mennonite, Man., Nov. 24.
Wiens—Vera, 79, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Dec. 17.
Zehr—Edna, 95, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., Oct. 30.

Baptisms

Floradale Mennonite, Ont.—Scott Bauman, Dustin Bowman, Kevin Bowman, Jon Greenwood, Amanda Martin, Christina Martin, Kaitlyn Martin, Corey Martin, Jolene Shoemaker, Garrett Shoemaker, Caleb Redekop, Dec. 17.
Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.—Trisha Niemeyer, Kimberly Harder, Dec. 24.
Steinbach Mennonite, Man.—Delwin Krahn, Dec. 3; Char Babel, Kristen Dueck, Tyler Dyck, Lottie Ginter, Dec. 17.

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

Advertising Information:

Contact:
Karen Suderman
 Advertising representative
1-800-378-2524
advert@canadianmennonite.org

Mennonite Church Canada

Prayer requests

As we enter the New Year, remember to give thanks and pray for Witness workers around the world, especially those involved in new initiatives, such as:

- Jeff and Tany Warkentin, who invite prayers for “continued [personal] guidance” as they seek to give leadership to a new church plant in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. They are thankful for the unified and supportive nature of their church community and the wonderful relationships they have developed. They now have enough church members—mostly university students—to form two soccer teams.
- Tim and Cindy Buhler, presently itinerating in Canada, invite prayers for a number of new believers in Macau who have been challenged with life situations that have rocked their faith and fellowship. Also, be in prayer for the government leaders of Macau.
- Rejoice with Todd and Jeanette Hanson and the Nanchong Christian Church as they are in their last stages of a church building project. The first service in the new building was filled to capacity with approximately 1,500 congregants who sang and gave thanks for the opportunity to worship together in this space. The Hansons ask for prayer that their connection with local churches will be a mutual source of encouragement and support with congregations in North America, and that Todd will find the vision and energy to embrace his new position with Mennonite Partners in China (formerly China Educational Exchange).

—**Hinke Loewen-Rudgers**

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Bibby to headline School for Ministers

This year’s MC Eastern Canada annual School for Ministers—a joint program with Conrad Grebel University College—features sociologist of religion Reginald Bibby of the University of Lethbridge, Alta. Scheduled for Feb. 20 to 22, Bibby will present three lectures on “The role of the church in contemporary Canadian culture.”

Bibby has been surveying and reporting on the state of religion in Canada for the past three decades, publishing books such as *Fragmented Gods* and *Restless Gods*. Until recently, his reporting has been technical and non-parochial, but in his most recent book, *Restless Churches* (Woodlake/Novalis, 2004), he used his research and interpretation to “call for people...to take up the challenge...of implementing a strategy for a ministry that touches people who are not actively involved in the nation’s churches.”

Bibby’s presentations will be framed by daily worship, extensive time for pastors to relate to each other, and by afternoon workshops. These focus on various strategies of outreach, covering the spectrum from postmodern worship and church planting to the Logos program and the role of the church in a multi-faith neighbourhood.

On Feb. 21, Bibby will present the second annual Rodney and Lorna Sawatsky Lecture on “The elusiveness of paradise: The legacy of Canada’s baby boomers.” The lecture begins at 7 p.m. in the Great Hall and is open to the public.

To attend the School for Ministers, contact Joan School at MC Eastern Canada (519-650-3806).

Mennonite Church Manitoba

‘Living on the edge’ at annual meeting

Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg is hosting the MC Manitoba annual delegate session on Feb. 23 and 24. This year the focus will be on the second part of the theme: “Rooted in the centre—Living on the edge.” Keynote speaker Len Hjalmarson, a church planter and writer from British Columbia, will speak to delegates on “Living on the edge.”

The agenda includes further discussion on the MC Manitoba “Our health/Our future” study. MC Manitoba embarked on this study last year and reported on it briefly at the 2006 fall delegate session. Four related issues were identified: leadership development, youths and the church, dealing with conflict/change, and responding to the cultural context.

Another session will look at camping ministry issues, including a summer volunteer honorarium increase and accountability in the regional committee structure.

“We will be looking for some direction related to these issues,” said Edgar Rempel, executive director.

A leadership conference will be held during the day on Feb. 23 at a location to be announced. Hjalmarson will address the issue of change, and the fears and concerns of leaders in the face of change.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

New program helps ex-offenders

The Saskatoon office of the Person to Person program is presently working with a group of released offend-

ers. Designed by a Winnipeg community chaplain, the new Forward Step program is not to be confused with the Circle of Support program.

“It’s designed to help ex-offenders integrate back into the community,” says Helmut Issac, a worker in the MCC-supported program.

Following the basic idea of the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-step program, Forward Step fills a need that a regular AA group cannot, in that it creates a safe place for former inmates to share their experiences.

Issac explains that within the criminal world, there is a certain hierarchy that comes into play, so certain released offenders are not welcome—based on their crime. The new Forward Step program can be a haven for these marginalized individuals, he says.

“We try to have an outing, like bowling or a pizza night, once a month,” which also helps to build a sense of community, Isaac says.

Mennonite Church Alberta

Pastors reflect on Advent events

In the Mennonite Church Alberta December newsletter, a number of pastors reflected on the importance of the Advent season and congregations gave brief reports of significant happenings in their churches.

Pastors commented on the sense of unity between congregations and communities during Advent worship services, the rewards coming from the effort put into preparing and attending services, the infectious enthusiasm of the message of Jesus’ arrival, and a sense of awareness of the larger world and its need for Christ.

A number of congregations participated in special projects or events during the festive

season:

- In Rosemary, Sunday school children filled stockings with toys and candy for local underprivileged children.
- Edmonton's Holyrood Mennonite donated 164 pairs of prescription eyeglasses to the Christian Blind International organization.
- Tofield Mennonite participated in an annual carol festival with its area ministerial.
- Edmonton First Mennonite celebrated the arrival of two young women from a Thai refugee camp, Nhaw Nhaw and Thaw Thaw Simon, into their fellowship on Dec. 10.
- Foothills Mennonite in Calgary continues to participate in the "In From the Cold" program, opening the church

to provide occasional shelter, food and fellowship to homeless families. The congregation is also considering setting up a guest home to house people travelling to the city for medical procedures.

- Due to the exciting growth of its youth population, the Trinity Mennonite Church council has put forward a motion to consider hiring a part-time Young Life staff position.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Meeting may decide future of B.C. WIM

B.C. Women in Mission will convene for its annual business meeting on Feb. 10 at

Bethel Mennonite Church of Langley, beginning at 2 p.m.

Sue Kehler of Abbotsford will lead in a devotional and prayer time on the theme "Seeking God's direction and guidance."

According to president Veronica Thiessen, this is a crucial time for the organization, as its future is uncertain.

It has been difficult even to get a full slate of delegates to let their names stand for executive positions, and at this meeting it may be decided whether B.C. Women in Mission will even continue.

"We encourage as many women as possible to attend this important meeting," Thiessen says.

No business meetings were

held last February, as a suitable date could not be found. Instead, normal business took place at the spring inspirational day in May.

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.

MURIEL BECHTEL



From our leaders

In this year's texts for Epiphany Sunday (Jan. 7), Paul pushes us beyond what "we can ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20) with his claim that it is "through the church [that] the wisdom of God in its rich variety" is "made known..." (3:10). Paul had the audacity to believe and preach that this commonplace community made up of former enemies—Jews and gentiles—was vital to God's epiphany!

How can that be? As I work with the nitty gritty of relationships between congregations and pastors, I am alternately fascinated by the possibilities and stunned by the presumptuousness of such a vision! I have witnessed how well-intentioned pastoral searches and review processes have hurt pastors and divided people, turning some away from the church. Is it possible for these all-too-human processes of the church to be instruments for fulfilling the desire of Jesus that all "might have life and have it to the full"?

The answer to that question depends in part on whether congregations and pastors can learn new ways of understanding and living out the covenant relationship between them. The 1966 version of the *Random House Dictionary* defines "covenant" (in an ecclesial context) as "a solemn agreement between the members of a church to act together in harmony with the precepts of the gospel."

In a recent conversation with a seasoned chair of a congregation's governing board, I asked how things were going with the new pastor who had been installed a year or more ago. He responded by saying, "In general, things

are going well. There were a few things that came up in our first review, but we're working at them together. We see this relationship as one in which pastor and people are in ministry together, and so we expect there will be growth and learning for the pastor as well as for us leaders."

The temptation is to search for the "perfect fit" between pastor and congregation and to look for "quick fixes" for any gaps that we discover. However, that congregational leader has caught the vision that the

covenant between congregation and pastor includes a robust commitment to the ongoing growth of both pastor and people, so that all may experience life in its fullness.

In *Night Visions: Searching the Shadows of Advent and Christmas*, Jan L. Richardson describes the experience of walking into an unfinished "wedding house" in the woods with other guests gathered to celebrate the wedding feast. "Walking in, I found myself stunned by the grace of its incompleteness," she writes. "Here was the wedding house, unfinished but waiting to celebrate the meeting of souls. Here were the guests, waiting to dance under the night sky."

In the spirit of Epiphany, can we be open to God's wisdom and see in our relationships between pastor and congregation a "work in progress"? Can we see in its incompleteness the possibilities for God's grace and our best human efforts to accomplish more than we can ask or imagine? I hope so!

Muriel Bechtel is the MC Eastern Canada conference minister.

The temptation is to search for the 'perfect fit' between pastor and congregation and to look for 'quick fixes' for any gaps that we discover.

Calendar

British Columbia

Feb. 9,10,16,17: MCC fund-raising banquets—Central Community Church, Chilliwack (9), Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford (10), Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond (16), South Langley Mennonite Brethren Church (17).

Feb. 10: B.C. Women in Mission special business session at Bethel Mennonite Church, Aldergrove, 2 p.m.

Feb. 23-24: MC B.C. annual delegate sessions at Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack.

March 16-17: Youth workers conference at CBC.

March 24,25: Lenten vespers with Abendmusik Choir, 8 p.m. Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (24); Knox United Church, Vancouver (25). Donations to Menno Simons Centre.

March 26-28: Mennonite Camping Association western regional meeting at Camp Squeah. For more information, visit mennonitecamping.org.

Alberta

Feb. 9-11: Annual Mennonite men's curling bonspiel in Didsbury. For more information, call Herman Epp at 403-335-3894.

Feb. 17: Winter fun day at Camp Valaqua. Call Jon Olfert at 403-637-2510 for more information.

Feb. 23-25: Senior high snow camp at Camp Valaqua.

March 10: Camp Valaqua fellowship banquet at Trinity Mennonite Church, Calgary.

March 23-24: MC Alberta annual delegate sessions in Lethbridge.

Saskatchewan

Feb. 5-12: Mid-year conference for MCC IVEP participants at Mount Royal Mennonite.

Feb. 10-11: Winter Fun Days for youths at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Feb. 11: International Worship Festival at Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, 7 p.m.

Feb. 16-26: Ethiopian storyteller Tesfa Dalellew is visiting Saskatchewan.

Feb. 23-24: MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions, at Western Christian College, Regina.

Feb. 25: Evening of Quartets—an MCC fundraiser—at Forest Grove Community Church, Saskatoon.

March 16-17: Mennonite Historical Society annual general meetings in Hepburn.

March 23-24: MC Saskatchewan Songfest at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

March 31: Shekinah Retreat Centre fundraising banquet and silent auction at Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Manitoba

Feb. 2-4: MMYO senior youth retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Feb. 3: Resonate, the MCI vocal ensemble, in concert with special guest Vic Engbrecht, at Buhler Hall, Gretna, 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 9-11: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

Feb. 12-14: Mid-winter retreat for adults with disabilities at Camp Koinonia.

Feb. 20-21: CMU winter lectures with Robert Russell, professor of theology, Graduate Theological Union. Topic: "Science and theology." Visit cmu.ca for more information.

Feb. 23-24: MC Manitoba annual delegate sessions at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

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.

March 8-10: MCI musical production of *Les Miserables*.

March 9-11: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

March 23-25: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

March 24: Winnipeg MCC Festival and Relief Sale banquet, at Douglas Mennonite Church.

Ontario

Jan. 30: Fairview Mennonite Home in Cambridge fundraiser for a new wheelchair-accessible bus. Silent auction viewing begins at 6 p.m. Live auction and dessert; special music by the Harmonica Harmonizers.

Feb. 2-4: MC Eastern

Canada Youth Winter Retreat 1 at Countryside Camp and Conference Centre, Cambridge.

Feb. 9-10: MDS all unit meeting at South Ridge Community Church, St. Catharines. For more information, call Rudy Thiessen at 905-562-4324.

Feb. 9-11: MC Eastern Canada Youth Winter Retreat 2 at Countryside Camp and Conference Centre, Cambridge.

Feb. 15-18: "One world: Seeking justice through faith and policy" student seminar. Presented by MCC Canada.

Subscriber services

How to subscribe:

- Individuals who attend churches that are part of Mennonite Church Canada or one of its five area churches can subscribe through our Every Home Plan (paid for by your church giving and CM's own fundraising). Please contact your church office to be added to the list.
- Personal subscriptions are also available to anyone. A one-year subscription (24 issues) is \$36.00 plus \$2.16 GST in Canada, \$53.50 (Can.) to the USA, and \$73.00 (Can.) for elsewhere. Two-year and group subscriptions are also available.

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

Contact information:

Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5,
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 6H7

Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 221

Fax: 519-884-3331 E-mail: office@canadianmennonite.org

For more information, e-mail chuckwright@mennonitecc.ca.

Feb. 20-22: School for Ministers with Reginald Bibby—"The Role of the Church in Contemporary Canadian Culture," at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

Feb. 21: Rodney and Lorna Sawatsky Lecture with Reginald Bibby, at Conrad Grebel University College

Great Hall, 7 p.m.

March 2-3: Engaged workshop at Living Water Fellowship, New Hamburg. For more information, e-mail denise_bender@yahoo.com.

March 2-4: Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter weekend at Delta Inn, Kitchener. For more information, call Marjorie Roth at 519-669-8667.

Employment opportunities

Richmond Park MB Church

A congregation of about 300 people in the growing, mid-sized city of Brandon – is searching for a
Youth Pastor

who is passionate about leading and discipling youths.

Please send resume and three references to Reinhold Kramer, 43 Noonan Dr., Brandon MB, R7B 0V7.

For information, e-mail: Kramer@brandonu.ca or phone: 204-727-7344.

Goshen College is inviting applications for a full-time tenure track professor in the biology department. For more information or to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College web page: <http://www.goshen.edu/employment/>.



TABOR HOME SOCIETY

INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR DIRECTOR OF CARE

Tabor Home is a 121-bed non-profit complex care facility with a 23-bed special care unit. Tabor Home Society is sponsored by area Mennonite Brethren churches and affiliated with the Fraser Health Authority.

This position requires:

- Baccalaureate degree in Nursing
- Additional preparation in Gerontology
- Minimum three years recent related management experience in a geriatric health care setting, preferably long-term care
- Commitment to promoting and providing Christian values-based programs and services as affirmed in our Mission Statement
- Familiarity with resident database computer system, ie. MDS (Gold Care)

Send Resumes to:
Attn: Human Resources
Tabor Home Society
31944 Sunrise Crescent, Abbotsford, BC V2T 1N5
or e-mail: lbortucene@taborhome.org
www.taborhome.org



Woodland Christian High School is inviting applications from qualified committed **Christian teachers** for the 2007-2008 school year. We invite inquiries from teachers in all subject areas, but we are looking especially for teachers of Mathematics and Physical Sciences.

Information about Woodland is available on our website at www.woodland.on.ca. Please direct questions and applications to:

Gary VanArragon, Principal
Woodland Christian High School
1058 Spitzig Road, RR #1
Breslau, ON N0B 1M0
Phone: 519-648-2114
Fax: 519-648-3402
principal@woodland.on.ca

United Mennonite Church of Black Creek, B.C., is seeking a **pastor** to provide leadership for a growing rural church.

Respond to Glenn Beaton, Search Committee Chair
c/o United Mennonite Church
2277 Enns Rd
Black Creek, B.C.
V9J 1H7
fax: 250-337-5229, ATTN: Glen
e-mail: stonecr@telus.net, ATTN: Glen



The MCCBC Board invites applications for the position of **Executive Director**.

MCCBC is a Christian relief and development organization active in supporting provincial, national and international endeavours. It has a staff of more than 85, volunteers in excess of 1,500 and a budget of over \$6.7 million. The Executive Director's role exists in order to lead the team to the fulfilment of its mission. It is a full-time position with a three-year renewable term beginning July 1, 2007.

The Board is seeking an individual who has a passionate relationship with Jesus Christ, a deep commitment to the church and to an evangelical Anabaptist theology that underscores peace and justice. Additionally, this person should have a related university degree with some emphasis in leadership training, and 5+ years of successful experience in a leadership position of an organization.

The successful applicant will need to have: the ability to guide the development of MCCBC program plans supporting the achievement of its mission; the ability to provide sensitive and supportive leadership to staff; the ability to work collaboratively with the Board, staff, colleagues in the family of MCCs, and the constituent church leaders; the skill of effective public communication; and the ability to lead MCCBC in fund development.

Send your letter of application along with a resume and three references to:

Personnel Committee of the Board
MCCBC, PO Box 2038
Abbotsford, BC
V2T 3T8.
or by e-mail to Ernie Schmidt at: eids@telus.net.

Full-time Pastor

Valleyview Mennonite Church is located in London, Ont. Valleyview is an urban congregation of about 150 resident members. We are presently looking for a **full-time pastor** and are inviting applications for this position. London is a city with a diverse economic base, including educational institutions, manufacturing and health care sectors. Valleyview Mennonite Church is a member congregation of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Interested candidates are asked to submit their resume to the MCEC office at 4489 King Street East, Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2. Attention: Muriel Bechtel.



Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a **full-time Director of Admissions**, beginning July 1, 2007, or when available.

This person will develop, implement and monitor an overall strategy for recruitment of students for AMBS programs, and oversee the director of financial aid. Qualifications include Christian commitment and passion for the mission of the Mennonite Church, ability to communicate well and relate well to others, strong attention to details, proven supervisory and organizational skills, ability to think strategically, and availability to travel 40-50 percent of the time. Women and members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. To apply, send a resume, three references, and letter of application by April 1, 2007, to Ron Ringenberg, Vice-President, AMBS, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517, or rringeb@ambs.edu. See the job description at www.ambs.edu/employment/director-admissions.



Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks **four event pastors**, two male and two female, for IExplore: A Theological Program for High School Youths. The position is full-time for one of two time

periods: June 7–June 30 or July 6–July 28, with several additional days of preparation. Pastors accompany the high school participants for the 18-day group experience.

Qualifications include experience as a congregational pastor and working with youths; ability to nurture youths through times of spiritual, intellectual and emotional growth; creativity in styles of worship, prayer and spiritual disciplines; knowledge of and commitment to the Anabaptist/Mennonite faith; and an undergraduate degree with additional seminary education preferred. Responsibilities include assisting in preparations, leading and directing worship and discussions, and being physically, emotionally and mentally present with the youths. To apply, send resume and letter of application by Feb. 28, 2007, to Andy Brubacher Kaethler, IExplore Director, AMBS, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517, or andybk@ambs.edu. A complete job description is available on the AMBS website: www.ambs.edu/employment/event-pastor.

For rent

Home away from home. Two rooms to rent, one 4-month and one long-term starting April 29. Close to Conrad Grebel University College. Energy Smart house. Phone 519-883-0252.

FOR RENT: Duplex in N.K. area of Wpg. Avail. Feb.1/07. 3 BR, 1.5 bath, 5 appl., fin. bsmt., gar. Cl.to bus, sch. Quiet family area. \$950 + util. Ph. 204-334-7220 or e-mail: silwiebe@mts.net.



Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a **Registrar**, beginning May 1, 2007. The position is 80 percent FTE.

This person will maintain all academic records for the seminary, monitor student progress, manage class schedules, provide statistical reports, and assist students with registration. Qualifications include skills in administration, ability to work with people, familiarity with higher education systems, knowledge of relational database management, strong computer skills, and a bachelors degree (masters degree preferred). Women, members of racial and ethnic groups, and members of other under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. To apply, send a letter of application, curriculum vitae, and three references by Feb. 16, 2007, to Loren L. Johns, Academic Dean, AMBS, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517, or ljohns@ambs.edu. See the job description at www.ambs.edu/employment/registrar.

Full-time Pastoral Team Leader

Milverton Mennonite Fellowship is a rural congregation on the edge of Milverton, approximately 40 minutes west of Kitchener-Waterloo. We are a congregation of varying ages, with an average attendance of 120 people. Our congregation places high value on: worship, being Spirit-led, prayer, and missions (local and foreign).

We seek a pastor who has gifts in the areas of: team leadership, preaching, developing lay ministry, mission/evangelism, and church growth.

Position is available early summer.

Reply in confidence by March 1, 2007, to:

Muriel Bechtel
Conference Minister
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
4489 King St. E.
Kitchener, ON
N2P 2G2

Do you have a passion for discipling young people?

CMU's Outtatown discipleship program is looking for leaders for its Guatemala and South Africa sites.

Outtatown Site Leaders (August 2007 - April 2008)

The Outtatown discipleship school is an adventure in unconventional learning. Students learn by experience, instruction and example.

The Mission of the Outtatown Program:

To inspire and nurture students in their life of discipleship with Jesus Christ ... in a journey towards:

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Idinthakarai, India

Survivors of 2004 tsunami get new homes

Two years after a tsunami devastated communities around the Indian Ocean, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) continues to help build hundreds of houses for survivors in India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

In India's Tamil Nadu state, MCC helped build 450 houses in order to relocate the coastal village of Idinthakarai, which was declared uninhabitable after it was damaged by the tsunami. MCC provided an Indian partner organization—Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA)—with about one-third of the funds for the more than \$2 million construction project. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) matched MCC's contribution.

The Idinthakarai houses, which cost approximately \$5,300 each to build, were handed over to recipients on Nov. 22. This was the largest of MCC's post-tsunami construction projects that have been completed to date. Several more large construction projects were recently completed or are underway—including an additional 287 houses in India, 181 in Sri Lanka and more than 300 in Indonesia.

The Idinthakarai project provided families with three-room, reinforced concrete houses that are resistant to earthquakes and other disasters. Additional funding partners included CASA and Canadian Presbyterian, Anglican and United Church of Canada organizations.

"For most people, it's a step up," explains Ed Miller, an MCC India country representative, adding that the region's traditional construction materials are wood and bamboo.

Finding the right site for the project was a challenge because of the village's reliance on fishing, Miller says. The Indian government required the village to be moved inland because of the danger of tsunamis and typhoons. The new site is about 750 metres from

the shore, which meets the government's safety requirements and still allows fishers to walk to their boats.

Miller says that CASA is also helping the newly relocated village to develop alternative sources of income because the local fishing industry is in decline.

This work includes planting more than a million trees on the village's former site to harvest fruit, nuts and timber.

According to Jeffrey Yoder, MCC's tsunami response coordinator in Aceh, Indonesia, providing houses to families whose homes were destroyed is a very significant way to help in the healing process. Many Acehnese



Photo by A. Shaikmoideen

Mennonite Central Committee helped build 450 houses to relocate Idinthakarai, a village in India's Tamil Nadu state, in November. The village was declared uninhabitable after it was struck by the killer tsunami that devastated southern Asia and the eastern coast of Africa on Dec. 26, 2004.

tsunami survivors have lived in tents and "barracks"—small, multi-family dwellings—for the last two years.

"After such a long period of being cooped up and feeling like they're right on the heels of the people next to them, they finally have their own place, and it provides them an opportunity to move forward," Yoder says. —MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

Quang Tri Province, Vietnam

Typhoon relief reaches coastal community

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is providing \$35,000 to help communities affected by Typhoon Xangsane in central Vietnam. Xangsane made landfall in central Vietnam on Oct. 1 after striking the Philippines several days earlier. It was the worst storm to hit Vietnam in 10 years, killing 66 people, destroying an estimated 20,000 houses and damaging an estimated 200,000 more.

On Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, MCC distributed household supplies to 132 families

in Quang Tri Province whose houses were flooded by the typhoon. Each family received pots, pans, two blankets, one mosquito net and two buckets.

Recipients said that poverty made their lives very difficult even before the typhoon hit. Trinh Dinh Gia, a clam fisherman, said that Xangsane was only the latest of several storms that have flooded his family's house in recent years. Gia's family has repeatedly rebuilt their small house on higher ground, but now they have reached the edge of their property and have nowhere to go, he said.

MCC spent \$3,500 on the distribution of the household supplies and is consulting with local authorities and Vietnamese Mennonite congregations to decide how best to spend the remaining funds on helping communities recover from the typhoon. —MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

Winnipeg

Giving and receiving in the family of God

As a youth, Al Rempel remembers watching his father write out a cheque for the church on Sunday morning. He saw the amount, did the math, and asked if his dad did this every Sunday.

“My dad said, ‘Yeah,’ and I said, ‘Are you crazy?’” recalls Rempel. “My dad wasn’t exceptional, but it was an awakening to realize that many, many people follow this kind of example, and it’s really shaped how I understand faith and faithfulness, particularly in the area of stewardship.”

Today, Rempel leads the Resource Development and Congregational Partnerships functions for Mennonite Church Canada. While his father’s example was a starting point for shaping his thoughts about stewardship, he also credits international travel, 14 years of pastoral ministry, and personal gratification in matching people who passionately want to serve God with a gift of money and those whose passionate service to God is in need of a gift of money.

The grandson of a circuit preacher in southern Manitoba, Rempel has been shaped by his own travels. “As a college kid I went to India for a couple of months. That was a formative experience for me in getting a picture of the world that I’d never ever had before,” he says. Since then, Rempel has seen the church at work in challenging circumstances in 13 countries around the world—a cumulative experience that continues to shape how he views stewardship in a world where 26 percent of the world’s Mennonites in North America hold an estimated 88 percent of the global Mennonite wealth.

Rempel’s goal is to help people get beyond the emphasis on getting the dollars. “I’m not interested in people’s money. I’m interested in their heart. We need to get past the money and connect our sense of faithfulness with what’s going on in other places,” says

Rempel, shifting the conversation to his leadership role with Congregational Partnerships and his passion for cultivating in people a lifelong sense of gratitude in response to God’s gifts.

He lists several examples:

- In Botswana, mission workers have trouble attracting students to Saturday Bible seminars because weekends are filled with funerals due to the AIDS crisis.

- The Chinese church says its greatest need is to train Chinese church leaders in a country and culture that is changing overnight.

- The aboriginal community and church in Canada continues to be marginalized.

But according to Rempel, money just can’t be thrown at a program with the hope that something sticks. “We need to get past the money and into the relationship,” he stresses.

The church is getting better at talking about stewardship, although there is still room for improvement, he suggests. The trend has been to address annual shortfalls with sermons on stewardship. Rempel is observing small but positive shifts in equating lifelong stewardship with discipleship. “We’re beginning to understand that stewardship is about faithfulness,” he notes, citing Martin Luther’s observation about three levels of personal transformation: the heart, the mind and the purse.

Rempel delightedly points out how the discipline of giving is embodied in Mennonite Church Canada’s recently adopted Identity and Purpose



Rempel

Statement, that states in part, “we commit ourselves and our resources to calling, equipping and sending the church....”

“In there I see a huge stewardship statement,” says Rempel, who is encouraged by the leadership in some congregations. One group processes its budget through a grid that seeks to balance ministry investment that

considers both short- and long-term impacts at home and globally.

What Rempel would like to see change is the language church and worship leaders use. Visiting a congregation recently, Rempel heard the worship leader say, “We will now take the offering.” Rather, churches could view the offering as “an opportunity to receive the gifts people are bringing.”

Rempel suggests using the recent Stewardship Sunday to make a permanent shift in the language typically used at offering time—to make the offering a more integral part of the worship experience for all Sundays in the year. The best gifts Stewardship Sunday might give, he says, is to help worshippers shape their generosity as one component of worship each and every Sunday, and to encourage wider sharing by congregations that are already innovatively making the offering time a real worship experience.

“Create something so special that people get the sense they are really making an offering to God and making a difference” he says. “Really celebrate the gifts given, both monetary and otherwise, and also help people to receive God’s gifts.”

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**



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Mennonite Bible classes help ministers with sermons

Although there are no Mennonite churches in Botswana, people say that Mennonite theological instruction is making a difference in sermons preached in local churches.

A student recently told Glyn Jones, a Mennonite Church Canada Witness/Mennonite Mission Network worker, that “you can tell who has been a regular attender of the [Mennonite] Bible class because of the quality of their sermons.”

Mennonite mission workers have been developing materials and teaching classes in Botswana for the last 30 years, but have made a deliberate decision to work with the African Independent Churches (AICs) rather than start Mennonite congregations.

AIC pastors are unpaid and work at other jobs, so their study time and costs involve a significant sacrifice. There are approximately 20 classes throughout Botswana that meet weekly. A leader guides the participants through the discussion and questions from one of a collection of textbooks written over the years.

Recently, Jones and his wife, Susan Allison-Jones, have been working to reduce textbook publishing costs by adjusting the format, thus making them more affordable to produce. But it's been a bigger challenge than anticipated. They discovered that the computer files are out of date, so they now face the significant effort and cost of updating and then translating the materials. They also subsidize the cost of Bibles for students who could not afford to purchase one otherwise.

The couple is grateful for the impact of the work done by leaders who preceded their arrival in 2003. In a recent newsletter posting, Allison-Jones wrote: “Once again we were impressed with the connections that have been made throughout the years. Mennonites have been faithful at helping to nurture Christians in their faith. Our decision many years ago to not plant churches in these countries has helped to strengthen the faith of people in AIC congregations. Together with our AIC brothers and sisters we are building up the kingdom of God!”

Jones noted one significant differ-



Photo by Glyn Jones

Bible students in Botswana make significant sacrifices to diligently participate in classes. “You can tell who has been a regular attender of the [Mennonite] Bible class because of the quality of their sermons,” one student told Glyn Jones, Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker.

ence between African and North American churches. “During the class I mentioned that sometimes in North America we think that sermons are the most important part of worship,” he said. “I tried to suggest that this is not good theology. The class agreed with me. They said that there were three elements of worship that were important—sermons, music and healing... For them, the healing is made visible in worship through the amount of time spent praying for people.”

Jones, a member of Wilmot (Ont.) Mennonite Church, and Allison-Jones, a member of Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite Church, offer Bible classes and HIV/AIDS education in the African Independent Church community.

—MC Canada release by
Jennifer Rempel and Dan Dyck

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Ibillin, Israel

New college peace program in the works

Glenn Witmer, peace worker in Jerusalem, brought together a group of North American educators earlier this month to pioneer a new peace initiative in a land where sides have been battling for centuries.

Gordon Matties of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg; Joe Liechty, chair of the Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies department at Goshen (Ind.) College; and David Brubaker from Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Va., arrived at Mar Elias College in Galilee the first week of January to help develop what will be the first undergraduate college peace program in Israel.

Witmer, whose ministry is supported by Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network, and Mar Elias Peace Center director Marie Loller spearheaded the planning efforts. Witmer calls the region a “laboratory for peace studies” to which Mennonites have been invited to help experiment.

Elias Chacour founded the college, located in Ibillin in northern Israel, 24 years ago. He is the Archbishop Metropolitan of the Melkite Catholic Diocese of Acco, Haifa, Nazareth and Galilee, and a Palestinian-born Arab-Israeli who has long worked for reconciliation among the Holy Land’s conflicting religious and ethnic groups. The student body includes Christians, Jews, Muslims and Druze. A peace centre affiliated with the school was started in 1994, but Mar Elias now aspires to become Galilee’s “university of peace.”

“I find it so exemplary that a community of Palestinian Christians in Israel should be that intent on peace,” Liechty says.

During the meetings, the three Mennonites joined two scholars from Australia and one from Ireland as consultants to a Mar Elias committee working on the peace studies program. The college hopes to submit a report to the Israeli Council of Higher Education by February.

Loller believes that short-term



Students at Mar Elias College in Galilee should soon be able to participate in the first undergraduate peace program in Israel.

efforts such as meetings between the region’s factions can have only limited positive effects on systemic issues. “We believe that it will be much more effective to increasingly channel resources into well-structured, long-term programs that are embedded within the everyday educational curriculum [of the school],” she says. “Applied research and the academic peace studies program will provide pilot studies and a foundation for achieving this goal.”

Liechty notes that most academic peace studies programs are spin-offs from programs such as international relations, but that’s not the case at CMU, Goshen and EMU. “In Mennonite institutions, peace studies is applied Christology,” he says.

Witmer says Chacour “keeps reminding us [Mennonites] of his wish to form a closer bond with us, appreciating so much our stance and work in the peace area.”

The three North Americans have extensive experience in peace work, both practical and academic. Liechty served for 24 years in Ireland and Northern Ireland with Mennonite Mission Network, helping start and

then direct a peace program in Dublin. Brubaker, a former associate director of Mennonite Conciliation Services, was a co-founder of the Arizona-based peace consulting organization, Cooperative by Design. Matties has broad Middle Eastern experience, including leading four tours to the region.

The North Americans, however, emphasize that they were going as much to listen as to speak.

“Putting together a peace studies program in a war zone is a different kind of endeavour,” says Matties, associate professor of biblical studies and theology at CMU. “We can learn from some of the practical issues they face.”

With nearly 400 students, Mar Elias is the largest Arab college in Israel. It is part of the Mar Elias Educational Institutions in Ibillin, providing schooling to 3,500 students from Kindergarten through post-secondary levels. Addressing inequalities between Arabs and Israelis is a major focus for Mar Elias, as only 8 percent of students in Israeli colleges are Arab, even though they make up 20 percent of the national population.

—MC Canada release
by **Rich Preheim**

News brief

Bankrupt Americans can no longer tithe

When the collection plate goes around at weekly services, America’s charitable but bankrupt must now abstain. A federal judge has reluctantly ordered debtors to repay their credit card bills first. Judge Robert E. Littlefield Jr. of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of New York has ruled that charitable or religious contributions are no longer considered a necessary living expense for those filing Chapter 13 bankruptcy. The judge was interpreting a new law that deems “tithing” acceptable only in very limited circumstances, such as for ministers who must donate as part of their contract.

—RNS release

South Bend, Ind.

Young adults give what they've got

Mennonite young adults are asking themselves if they are ready to be transformative agents and to listen intentionally to the many voices that make up the body of Christ.

This question was framed in the larger context of the 2006 North American Young Adult Fellowship gathering from Oct. 20 to 22 at Camp Ray Bird in South Bend. Based on the theme, "Give what you've got," 52 young adults from Canada and the United States focused on gift discernment and plugging into the church.

Peter Epp, a Canadian planning committee member, said the fellowship "is a place where the current and future inheritors of [the Mennonite Church] gather to be and become the church.... It is where we gather to support those young adults who have been disempowered and to celebrate those who have been empowered by the church."

Guest speaker Ken Hawkey inspired attendees by affirming the gifts, energy and vision that young adults bring to the church body:

- **Idealism**—a gift that Anabaptist ancestors relied heavily upon during the initial phases of their faith movement.
- **Relevance**—without blind conformity in their understanding of cultural trends—and recognition of the things Christ is doing through culture.
- **Commitment**—as they ask themselves the hard and painful questions that cause others to leave the church.

Mennonite young adults are learning to listen in a way that honours the past heritage of their elders. They also remember the young adult lives and subsequent deaths of leaders such as Menno Simons, Conrad Grebel and Dirk Philips, who were foundational to the Anabaptist faith movement.

As these new leaders learn to listen to others in the church and others learn to listen to them, they will feel empowered to "give the church what they've got" and to become integral to the church community of Christ.

Participants acknowledged that



Photo by Hinke Loewen-Rudgers

Pictured singing in four-part harmony at last fall's North American Young Adult Fellowship in South Bend, Ind., are Elaine Yoder, left, Molly Smith, Isaac Roth and Steve Weaver.

young adults bear a responsibility to become more heavily involved in church and church-related institutions if lasting intergenerational effects are to be felt.

The young adults gathered at Camp Ray Bird could identify with Frederick

Buechner when he said, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

—**Hinke Loewen-Rudgers**

The author is Congregational Partnerships facilitator for Mennonite Church Canada.



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MCC names interim executive director

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has selected Bert C. Lobe of St. Jacobs, Ont., to serve as interim executive director for the next year. He started on Jan. 8.

"We had some very good candidates that we interviewed," says Ron Dueck, chair of the MCC board. "Bert brings a wealth of experience and leadership from both within and from outside of MCC."

Lobe's appointment follows the Oct. 23 resignation of Robb Davis, who joined MCC as executive director in June 2005. Lowell Detweiler served as acting director following Davis's resignation.

Lobe and his wife Martha first served with MCC in the 1960s in rural India in a famine relief program, and later, from 1977 to 1980, as directors of MCC's program in India and Nepal. Lobe has since served as MCC's Asia director, overseas director for



Lobe

MCC Canada and director of China Educational Exchange. During the intervals away from MCC, Lobe was principal of a public high school in Saskatchewan and Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener, Ont., and served as associate principal at the Hong Kong International School.

In 2005, the Lobes served a six-month term as interim country representatives for MCC in Bangladesh. Lobe has most recently worked with MCC to develop a program to more deliberately engage youths and young adults in the organization's mission. He currently is vice-chair of Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., and moderator of Waterloo North (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Dueck says the committee that selected Lobe was struck by his ability to provide leadership in the context of building a strong team, by his long

history with MCC, and by his good connections with churches in Canada and the United States.

After Davis's resignation, the MCC executive committee asked staff to continue moving forward key initiatives, such as changes in the MCC governance structure, network facilitation, international program initiatives, a salary review and human resources initiatives.

As he reflects on his new role with MCC, Lobe notes that the ultimate measure of an organization is not where it stands when circumstances are calm. "It has much more to do with how we find our way when there are challenges, and in a learning organization these are a constant," he says. "To face the challenges with both a sense of gratitude to God and a passion for the dispossessed is the task of the church."

He draws on the words of Jean Vanier, author and founder of L'Arche communities, while pondering the challenges ahead. The foundational principle for MCC, Lobe says, "is to open our hearts and minds to the needs of others." This implies, he says, "a quality of observation and listening, as well as a commitment to action."

—MCC release

News brief

Canadian elected as international president

The Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton, general secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), of which MC Canada is a member, was the only Canadian elected as an international president during the eighth world assembly of the World Conference on Religions for Peace, held last year when the largest interfaith network in the world met in Kyoto, Japan. Attended by more than 2,000 people, the gathering issued statements and challenges to the global faith community to work together "for the sake of God's world" in such areas as sustainable development, HIV/AIDS and concrete actions for peace.

—From the Winter 2006-07 CCC newsletter

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American Mennonites seek to counter military recruiters

Organizers and participants in a November counter-recruitment conference sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. hope the event will inspire churches to work together to further develop strategies for countering the lure of military recruiters, who entice about 180,000 young people to enlist in the U.S. military each year.

MCC U.S. director of peace education Titus Peachey said the conference intended to provide a forum where churches could learn more about the realities of military recruiting, become familiar with some models for countering the lure of the military and begin to share with other churches some of their own grassroots strategies.

Military recruiters have a strong presence on many high school campuses. Students talked of how they circle during lunches and at the career centre. One army veteran said the

military recruitment was so heavy at her school she didn't realize until later that colleges recruited students too.

The military is passionate about enticing young people to join, and spends an enormous amount of money on recruiting, noted Ertell Whigham, a former marine recruiter who is now a Mennonite pastor.

"Anabaptist church leaders and members may talk passionately about helping people avoid the military," Whigham said, "but rarely does that translate into a paid position. Just as the military has people who are dedicated to recruitment, we ought to be putting into place people who are counters to that."

Norristown (Pa.) New Life Church, where Whigham serves as an associate pastor, has appointed a full-time minister of youth and community outreach who works to identify opportunities for education and training that youths in the church can tap into. He dreams that more congregations will put money into such positions or that churches would join together to hire a person who could pinpoint resources for their youths.

In urban settings he said the decision to go into the military is often spontaneous, driven by immediate needs of the family or by a strong desire for education. "When youth begin to ask, 'How can I make things better for me?', 'How can I make things better for my family?', the military has a ready answer. The church, too, needs

to have an answer ready for them," Whigham said.

Peachey said MCC U.S. will continue to develop resources related to countering the lure of military recruiters and he hopes local groups will begin to build networks to carry out this work at a grassroots level. "Counter-recruitment provides a great opportunity for congregations to make the way of peace practical in local communities," he concluded.

"We now have a lot of information to take home to our church members, people in our community, and the other youth who did not come to the conference," reported Verel Montauban of a Haitian Church of the Brethren congregation in Brooklyn, N.Y. "The commitment I found here is to help other people [learn] how to stay away from the military and teach them that their body belongs to God, not to the military. I believe we have to live for the glory of God, not live to kill each other."

—MCC release

Military recruiters have a strong presence on many high school campuses.

News brief

Intermenno seeks hard-working youths

Again this year, the Intermenno Trainee Program Europe is offering young people between the ages of 18 and 25 a chance to live and work in the Netherlands, Germany or Switzerland for a year. The European Intermenno Mennonite Committee is looking for independent, mature young people who are not afraid of hard work, a challenge and commitment. The program is non-profit, and requires trainees to work for a year—with holidays—in exchange for living expenses, the costs of the program, airfare and pocket money. The fringe benefits provided by this cultural work program include the opportunity to live with a European family, learn a foreign language, meet young people from different countries and cultures, travel in Europe, discover the European Mennonite heritage, and learn to know oneself better. For more information, visit intermenno.doopsgezind.nl. Applications must be received by Jan. 31 for the program starting August 2007.

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Photo courtesy of Philip and Julie Bender

The best gift that Julie and Philip Bender (kneeling, centre) received this past Christmas did not come wrapped in brightly coloured paper. In fact, it could neither be boxed nor bought. Shirley (front row, left) delivered it to the MC Canada Witness workers during the Christmas Eve worship service at the Chinese Agape Church the Benders attend in the central China metropolis of Chongqing, where they teach English to Chinese students at the Chongqing University of Medical Sciences. Her gift

was a prayer—delivered during Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" in Mandarin. On Christmas morning the Benders found an e-mail message that had been sent around midnight: "Phil and Julie: This night in church I really prayed that you two will be good teachers and friends to us! In fact you have been that all the time! May you be happy and lucky forever! In my heart you are my grandparents. Shirley." The Benders and Shirley are pictured with some of Shirley's friends who also attended the Christmas Eve service.