

C A N A D I A N
Mennonite

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the church**
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Hurting the least of these

In early February, the United Nations-organized Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is presenting its first report since 2001 on global climate change.

I'm writing this before the report is released, but it is expected to contain the finding that the group can now say with 90 percent certainty that human activities—mainly by increasing the levels of heat-trapping carbon dioxide in the air through heavy use of oil and natural gas—are the main cause of global warming since 1950.

We're seeing the effects of climate change already here in Canada. A just-released national poll carried out by the *Globe and Mail* reports that four out of five Canadians have personally noticed climate change. Environmental concerns were the top priority for 26 percent of Canadians last month in the poll, making it the top national concern. Less than a year ago, just three percent said the environment was their top concern. On this issue, the church needs to be out front.

Even more significant is the desire to do something about it. Virtually everyone was willing to make major (55 percent) or minor (38 percent) personal sacrifices to help. This included things like changing car and airplane usage, implementing carbon taxes, banning high-carbon methods of electricity generation like coal-fired plants, switching to more expensive but more efficient technology, and placing limits on how much fossil fuel a person could use in a year.

I think we're going to need to do all these things, as well as remedial measures like paying our farmers to take carbon out of the air the old-fashioned way—by growing things. There are intriguing high-carbon consuming plants and algae well-suited to this that can also even be used as fuel

sources after harvest.

I'd like to bring attention to particularly church-centred reasons why this issue is important to Mennonites. In November, the first U.N. climate meetings held in sub-Saharan Africa focused on the effects of climate change on Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa is probably going to suffer more than anywhere else in the world from climate change and yet is responsible for almost none of it.

It's not that Africa's climate changes are different in nature from other areas, but since it has so many people living in day-to-day subsistence dependence on crops and livestock, the area is terribly vulnerable to unpredictable weather. More severe droughts will combine with floods. I'm reminded of the conflicts over lack of water for animals between Isaac and his neighbours in Genesis 26.

Verses that are particularly important to Mennonites are Jesus' words to those who failed to help the hungry or thirsty, the suffering ones: *"I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me. Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life"* (Matthew 25:45-46).

And even more, we must respond not just for the sake of the least of these, but for our fellow Mennonite brothers and sisters. Updated Mennonite World Conference figures from November show that the continent with more Anabaptists/Mennonites than any other is Africa. The largest single national conference is in Ethiopia. There are more Mennonites in the Democratic Republic of Congo than any other country except the U.S. These are churches we here in Canada helped start a hundred years ago.

Our lifestyle gains are becoming their pain. This isn't what Jesus would have us do.

—**Tim Miller Dyck**

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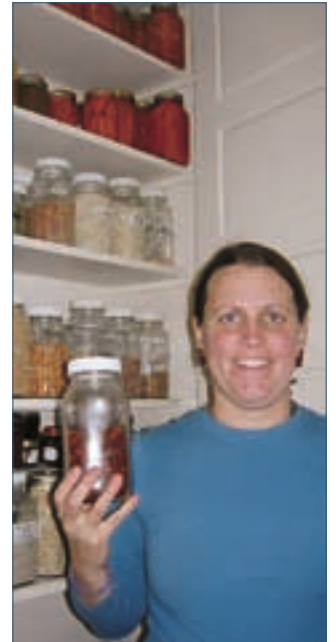
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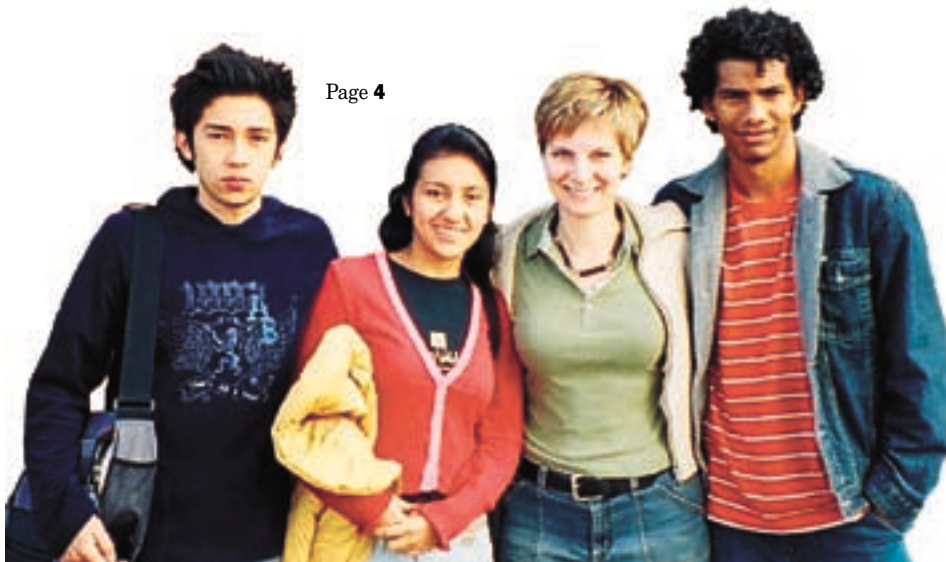
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ToMorrow



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Cover: Girls just wanna have fun at summer camp. At Mennonite camps like Alberta's Camp Valaqua (pictured), they have lots of fun, as this 2005 photo attests. But more than having fun, campers learn the good news that God is the creator, they are God's people, and the Earth is placed in human hands as a gift and a trust. See the Focus on Camping and Summer Christian Education section on pages 22 to 24. —Camp Valaqua photo

Bogotá, Colombia

When storytelling is all they ask

After touring Colombia for three weeks, Kendra Loewen found herself asking some hard questions, knowing the experience had changed her life.

Loewen was part of a group of 12 Canadians (including Johanna Petkau and Jared Martin—see their reflections on page 5) who travelled throughout Colombia with six young adults from that country. The trip was organized by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), which supports displaced people in Colombia by providing food, basic supplies, counselling and job training. Together, these young adults explored the historical, political and social realities affecting Colombians, learning from each other along the way.

The trip had many highlights, including a visit to an MCC-supported food project in Bogotá, visits with pastors and others working at collaborating on peace projects, meetings with indigenous people to experience their way of life, and more. What struck Loewen most was the way that so many people she met struggled to live with the presence of violence in their lives.

One Sunday morning, they visited a Mennonite congregation and part of that service was saying goodbye to a family that was getting ready to emigrate to Winnipeg, leaving because their lives had been threatened.

“It was interesting being on that end of the story,” Loewen said, explaining that she has been in churches that have received refugees. “It was unsettling to see this family and realize they were running for their lives, would be leaving this congregation of family and friends, everything familiar, leaving a warm climate and

heading for Winnipeg!”

A meeting with a labour union leader also left a deep impression on her. Labour unions fight for the rights of indigenous people and workers who are displaced by international companies that take over the land. When locals protest, they are killed or simply disappear, the group was told.

An economist and social activist who has worked with labour unions

would be financially impossible for any of the Colombian participants to make the same trip to Canada.

“Even if they could get here, the cost of buying a meal or a cup of coffee would be too much for them,” Loewen reflected, adding that this trip has made her realize how her actions in Canada affect people in Colombia. It has made her think more consciously of each purchase, of how she uses energy, of what value means.

“I grew up with a Mennonite ethic of fiscal responsibility—look for a deal,” she said. “That’s why it’s hard for me to buy a cup of fair trade coffee. But now I know what the real cost of that cup of coffee is. I can make choices—to buy fair trade coffee, to buy a hybrid car, to eat locally grown food. I have the luxury to choose.”

The trip has also impacted the way she reads her Bible and how that makes her look at her world. A familiar passage in Micah 4, which calls for peace and justice, includes the vision—“*each one will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid.*”

“That image became so powerful to me because I met people for whom this wish is all they want, to live with a little land, to live without fear,” she said.

It was the people that she travelled and lived with who made the deepest impression on her and it is these connections that she wants to maintain. They have become her friends and because of this she can now name people whose lives are affected by her choices here.

As they neared the end of their journey together, Loewen and her Canadian counterparts asked the Colombians what they wanted the Canadians to do when they returned home.

“‘Tell our stories,’ they said. ‘Yes,’ I answered, ‘but what do you want me to do?’”



Photo by Johanna Petkau

Canadian Kendra Loewen, second from right, is pictured with brother and sister Daniel and Yamile Bejarano, left, who served as her host family in Colombia, and Boris Ozuna.

spent most of his life living on the run. During his meeting with Loewen, his hands shook while his eyes darted back and forth.

The way he had to live his life made Loewen evaluate some of the basic principles with which she had been raised. Having grown up in a Mennonite congregation, with its clear peace theology, she had always considered herself a pacifist. Meeting people who put their lives on the line daily for the cause of peace and justice made her feel that she no longer had the right to call herself one.

Facing the poverty and the financial hardships that most Colombians live with also affected her. The money the Canadians paid to be a part of this trip subsidized their Colombian counterparts so that they could join them. It

Loewen already has speaking engagements lined up, at which she will tell their stories, and she plans to write for *globaleyes*, an MCC-based web forum for young adults on the impact of globalization.

—MCC B.C. release
by **Angelika Dawson**

‘How was your trip?’

I choose my words carefully when I answer the question, “How was your trip?” It is hard not to talk on and on for hours about the stories heard and statistics learned. However, as the time since the experience grows, so does my fear that I will forget what I learned and that the experience will fade to a distant memory.

Over the last few weeks, when that fear has threatened to overwhelm me, I am reminded of one evening in Bogotá in particular. It was pouring rain outside and a few of the Colombian participants, myself and my housemate couldn’t find a cab back home. So we grabbed a *eurapa* (a South American treat) and hot chocolate, and sat in a coffee shop and talked.

One of the Colombian participants faced me and asked, “Do you feel guilty?”

Do I feel guilty that many of the luxuries I enjoy—like gas to fill up my car or the soft drinks (Coca-Cola) I consume—come at the expense of the lives of Colombians who are killed when they attempt to form a union? Yes, I felt guilty.

His response was so simple, so kind. “Don’t feel guilty,” he said. “We want you to be happy, to have the things you want. We just don’t want your happiness to come at the expense of our happiness.”

He continued, saying we all have our own world, our own reality. It is when two worlds come together that there are no more excuses for looking the other way. To deny what is happening elsewhere in the world is not only to deny change and involvement, but our own consciousness.

By reliving that moment, I remember that my world has become per-

Drinking Chicha... and other memories

I was drinking coffee on a balcony at a Christian retreat centre on the slope of a mountain overlooking the fog-veiled city of Cali in Colombia, when my early morning solace was interrupted by a loud military helicopter speeding by pretty close overhead. I grinned at my newfound Colombian friend, Boris, and said, “American tax dollars hard at work.”

In the *departamento* of Valle de Calle we attended a meeting of delegations from Christian groups to bridge cultural gaps in order to present a united front in social protests. Lunch was a little intimidating when about a hundred smiling indigenous people watched us eat “game-chicken” soup that was very, very difficult to chew, and drink the traditional indigenous fermented corn drink called *Chicha*. We later learned—to our dismay—that it was prepared by taking corn, chewing it, spitting it out, chewing that, spitting that out—until you have a drink. About half of us who actually drank the *Chicha* became sick two days later. I didn’t, and I think it’s because I eat things

off the floor when I drop them!

Many Colombians wish that North Americans would adopt a progressive—instead of a punitive—approach to drug policy. They wish we would send our addicts to rehab, instead of making drugs illegal and then spending millions on jails and police, and giving millions to the Colombian Army to spray the drug crops (killing all local food crops).

Just like during Prohibition, when gangsters like Al Capone became rich off illegal alcohol, today’s rebel groups and right-wing militias fund their war off illegal drugs.

My duty to all my Colombian friends is to say that much of our prosperity, our cheap oil and cheap goods, and our militant policies come at the cost of many of their livelihoods and lives.

—**Jared Martin**

The author is a member of Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church and a student at the University of Guelph, Ont. His reflections are from a contribution to his family’s 2006 Christmas newsletter.



Martin

manently intertwined with his and I am no longer allowed—nor want—to forget my experience.

Paul reminds us that *“the body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ...”* (I Corinthians 12:12-21).

And so it is with myself. Returning after having my eyes opened by this experience, I understand my role to be a part of a larger humanity, united and connected under Christ.

I come from a centre of power and opportunity. I have the privilege to raise my voice, fight for peace, and seek justice without the risk of losing my life. As Jesus did when he fed the hungry, healed the sick and sought peace, I am reminded that we are also called to take responsibility for what is happening in other parts of our world and to take action.

—**Johanna Petkau**

The author is a member of Carman (Man.) Mennonite Church; she lives in Winnipeg and works in Portage la Prairie as a child and adolescent community mental health worker.



Photo by Mark Neufeld

Johanna Petkau of Winnipeg says she had her “eyes opened” during a Mennonite Central Committee-sponsored trip to Colombia last year.

seniors and the future of the church

We continue a series of reports from Mennonite Church Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman on his visits to our churches last year. He heard that our churches' collective top concern was youth and young adult involvement. In this report, he examines church demographic trends and argues how it will be important for older members in our churches to both continue to be active in church life and to embrace and encourage their youth and young adult members if a new generation of leaders is to rise up from our congregations. Canadian Mennonite will continue to spur thinking on this topic in our next issue when two Mennonite young adults present their thoughts on taking the spiritual reins.

God's
People Now!
LISTENING TOUR

A teenage girl prefers to attend her grandparents' small, rural and aging congregation, rather than the congregation of her parents. She has few peers there, and it means driving about an hour, instead of going to the big, modern, easily accessible and impressively programmed congregation where her parents attend. Why?

"The seniors in this congregation love me and encourage me," she simply responded.

A pig in a python

Present day seniors (born before 1946) and the baby-boom generation (born from 1946-64) have an enormous opportunity to shape the ongoing possibilities of our church. The spirit displayed by these members will



Anne Klassen, left, and Lily Williams of Home St. Mennonite Church in Winnipeg took part in an urban retreat in April 2005.

increasingly determine the health and potential of our church.

The demographic trend of Canadian society is similar to the church population. In the next 20 years almost 33 percent of Canada's population will move into the senior stage of life. In MC Canada, between 40 percent and 50 percent of our congregations currently have a senior demographic bulge (over the age of 60). This will only increase as the baby boom generation continues to age.

The image of a pig in a python helps us to visualize how the baby boom bulge is moving through our society. If a python swallows a pig, the bulge will be evident in the snake. Because of the abnormal size of the pig it will be possible to trace its progress as it moves through the long digestive process of the snake.

Similarly, the baby boom bulge can be traced as it moves through our social system. It first put pressure on hospital maternity units when the boomers were born. Then they overflowed the public school system, leading to overcrowded classrooms, record construction, and double shifts of classes. Next, it gave a huge boost to college enrolment. When the boomers reached child-bearing age, an echo-boom of births fuelled the success of the mini-van. This "pig in the python" escalated the housing market in the early 1970s and is now stimulating the price of recreational property. The oldest boomers turned 60 in 2006. This is the leading edge of more than 10 million Canadians who will retire in the next 15 years.

When the pig retires

Our church has its own pig in a python. The arrival of the "pig" at retirement will significantly increase the sense and the reality that we are an aging church.

Let me suggest a few implications of the increasing numbers of seniors in our church.

At times we are apologetic about being an aging church and we talk disparagingly about it as something we need to "put up with." This attitude will need to change. We will need to embrace our aging as a gift if our church is to remain active and vibrant. A strong church cannot be built on

apologetic attitudes. Strength must be built upon strength, and if the presence of seniors is our strength for the foreseeable future, then we will need to affirm that strength and build on it.

The health of our church will depend on the spiritual health and the encouraging spirit of the seniors. It is unrealistic to think that our spiritual health can be good if the health of the "pig" is not. Seniors and soon-to-be-seniors need to be fully aware of the impact that their spiritual health—or the lack of it—will have on the future of our church.

The financial health of our church will also depend on the generosity of seniors. If existing and beloved ministries are to continue, this group will need to be very intentional about its commitment to keep the church and its ministries strong. Seniors will not be able to hand off this responsibility to the following generations and expect the same financial power from fewer numbers. Seniors will need to model the importance of supporting denominational causes in the midst of personal and congregational decision-making processes.

Pro-active seniors required

Seniors will need to be intentional and pro-active in nourishing a positive and affirming spirit in church life. If they do not, the results will be very serious. Younger families, young adults, youths and children will come, stay or go depending on the encouraging spirit generated—or not—in the church by this group. If seniors have not yet learned how to be pro-actively affirming, they will need to learn.

Seniors will have the power to resist, block or promote needed change in the church. They will need to err on the side of encouragement, rather than on the side of critical discouragement.

One person commented to me, "If it's true that the CEO has to sign on to needed change for it to be successful, in our congregation the CEO is the seniors group. Nothing much can happen here unless they sign on."

Initiatives and energy to assure inter-generational harmony in the church will need to come from the seniors. Whenever there is an imbalance of influence, initiatives for harmony must come pro-actively from the majority group—in this case, the seniors. If this majority is not pro-active, it will be perceived to be resistant, thus severely damaging the life of our church.

On our tour, we learned of one congregation that wanted to encourage more participation by its young people. The younger folks responded enthusiastically by forming a worship band. They bought equipment: drums, guitars, amps and microphones. The seniors were incensed and feared that the volume would be too loud and the music would be unfamiliar. One older woman was especially critical.

The day came when this new worship band made its

Continued on page 8

Seniors...will need to err on the side of encouragement, rather than on the side of critical discouragement.

Sargent Ave. Mennonite Church is a multi-generational congregation in Winnipeg.



Photo by Dan Dyck

Seniors *From page 7*

debut. They did very well. After the service, the same critical older woman sidled up to the teenage leader of the group and whispered in his ear that if the group needed more microphones or other equipment, she would secretly finance it. This changed the sensitivity of the congregation.

No time for retirement

Seniors should not plan on putting up their feet too soon. The refrain we hear so often—“We’ve made our contribution, now it’s their turn”—will need to be more nuanced, less definitive, more flexible and adaptable. The church will continue to need the gifts and the active involvement of seniors. The new refrain should be: “This is what the ongoing but creative ministry of the seniors in the church looks like.”

Studies show that seniors who have grandchildren in their congregation have a more positive and affirming attitude toward the participation of younger generations in the life of their church. However, an increasing number of seniors will not have grandchildren in their congregation. This means that seniors will need to cultivate their capacity to embrace the children of other families and shower them with the same patience and love that they would give to their own grandchildren.

It will be tempting for seniors to want to participate in church life as consumers—seeking and focusing on the personal benefits of church membership and involvement. They will be tempted to import societal norms into

their participation in the church and exercise their sense of entitlement to their rights.

The antithesis of this is exemplified by an urban congregation, where an older gentleman said, “In this congregation, the seniors are the most active and most organized group in the church. And it’s a great church.”

“And what does your group organize around?” I asked. His response was immediate and enthusiastic.

“First of all, we are well organized for visitation,” he said. “We feel it’s our task now to take some of the visitation pressure off of the pastors. There are too many of us, and there’s no reason why we can’t support each other through regular and good visits.

“Second, we are organized to let the pastors know about any urgent or specific pastoral needs there may be among the seniors.

“Third, we are organized to pray, but we don’t just pray generically. We pray for and with persons, groups, ministries and initiatives in our church and beyond....

“Fourth, we are organized to serve. We do what we can and where we can so that the community life of the congregation can prosper. We feel that although there are things we can no longer do, there is ministry that is critical to being the church that we can now actually do better. We are so grateful to be here.”

Clearly, the church should—and will need to—pay attention to the special pastoral needs of seniors. However, the seniors should not see themselves primarily as consumers of benefits or

as entitled benefactors, but as gifted, positive contributors to the life and wellbeing of the church for others. The church needs to be encouraged by the presence of the seniors, not only for what the church once was, but for what it can still become. The presence of senior members needs to be a presence of wisdom and blessing, and one that equips the church for the future of its challenging vocation.

A shining example

And we can take heart. What I have described is already happening in some congregations.

In one church, several teenagers and women in their 80s came to our meeting. We experienced a remarkable intergenerational “love-in.” The young folks were very sensitive to the musical tastes of the older folks, and were very concerned that the drums and guitars should not be too loud for them. The older women encouraged the young people and wanted them to be able to praise God in ways that were meaningful to them.

When we prodded more deeply about this harmony, the older folks said, “It hasn’t always been like this. About 12 years ago we experienced an ugly split in our congregation. We learned from that and we are determined that this won’t happen again.”

I was inspired. These seniors were willing to set their sails at different angles when the wind changed direction. They were willing to initiate change in the corporate culture of their congregation.

But the teenagers, too, have been transformed. They eagerly admitted that their worship band was actually playing more traditional hymns in the worship service.

“Are you learning to love the older hymns,” I asked?

“No, not exactly,” replied one young woman. “It’s not that we’re learning to love the hymns more, but we have learned to love the seniors more and they love the hymns, and that’s why we enjoy playing them.”

It is remarkable that when identifiable groups begin to struggle for the wellbeing of groups other than their own, the spirit of the congregation changes.

—**Robert J. Suderman**

Middle-aged rockers reflect on life

U2 by U2. U2 and Neil McCormick. HarperEntertainment, 2006, 352 pages.

For almost 30 years, U2 has been making music together, becoming one of the most important rock and roll bands in history. This book of interviews and photographs lets readers see into the lives of four hard-working musicians—vocalist Bono (Paul Hewson), guitarist The Edge (Dave Evans), bassist Adam Clayton and drummer Larry Mullen Jr.

Bono, The Edge and Clayton—were part of a Christian community in Ireland in the late 1970s and struggled with the idea of being faithful while being in a big rock and roll band. The Edge and Bono actually considered leaving the band while making their debut album, *Boy*.

Says Bono of the experience: “We will go wherever we have to go. We will break all the rules of hipness. We will be as raw emotionally as we have to be, in order to be honest. Even after that, we were giving up the band. It was really pushing it as far as we could to prove that we couldn’t be bought off by our ambition. And I think it’s an amazing thing, we nearly succeeded in derailing the band, but at the same time we regained it more fully” (page 119).

U2—and Bono, in particular—took the responsibility of fame by keeping up with current events. Over the years they supported a variety of organizations—Amnesty International, Jubilee 2000 and Live Aid. They appear to have always loved America, but also recognized that the real America can be very destructive in the world. Several of their mid-career albums deconstruct American pop culture, although many fans have not picked up on that.



Listeners of U2’s music know that it is full of struggle. Despite their personal and relationship problems, perhaps their biggest struggle was to reconcile the world they experience with knowing and understanding God.

“There are a lot of arguments with God on this record [*Pop*],” says Bono (page 266). “He makes his biggest appearance on a U2 album since *October*. It should be called ‘Shouting at God.’ But it does not chart my loss of faith. I think even the most mediocre minds can figure out that if you’re rattling on and on about how much you don’t love somebody, it is evidence of passion. You can’t be having an argument with God if you don’t believe there is one.”

Watching U2 age—not gracefully, but by pursuing life and work passionately—is inspiring. To see Bono grow into a public person who speaks about global issues to those in power without resorting to partisan politics is an important reminder to those of us who have aged along with them.

U2 seems to keep saying: Love your work, never be satisfied with where you are, pay attention to the big picture, get involved in the world around you, care about your family and friends, and stick to it for the long haul.

“To me the burning questions of the moment relate to how you cope with threat and fear,” says The Edge (page 330). “Are we going to be ruled by fear or are we going to attempt to transcend that and find a way of holding on to faith?...”

—Jerry L. Holsopple

The reviewer is professor of visual and communication arts at Eastern Mennonite University. The review originally appeared in a longer format online at thirdway.com.

Arts notes

Of This Earth short-listed for Taylor Prize

Rudy Wiebe’s book, *Of This Earth: A Mennonite Boyhood in the Boreal Forest*, is one of three finalists for the Charles Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction. This Canadian prize includes a crystal trophy and \$25,000; the runners-up will receive \$2,000. The other short-listed books are *Citizen of the World: The Life of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Vol. 1: 1919-1968* by John English, and *The Judgment of Paris: The Revolutionary Decade that Gave the World Impressionism* by Ross King. The winner will be announced in Toronto on Feb. 26.

—Barb Draper

Steve Bell visits Ethiopia

Early in January, JUNO Award-winning musician Steve Bell boarded a plane bound for Ethiopia. While there, he visited a variety of projects funded by Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a non-profit organization working to end hunger in developing countries. In Ethiopia, a film crew followed Bell on his journey, documenting some of the experiences and conversations he had. In addition to contributing to a short documentary, Bell performed one of his songs for the production of a music video. Both videos will later be available through the Foodgrains Bank and Signpost Music. “The more I learn about the Foodgrains Bank,” said Bell, “the more I want to be part of the work they do. I think it’s really exciting that people from diverse Christian denominations can come together, set aside their differences and dedicate themselves to ending hunger.” At the end of the trip, two days were spent in Kenya visiting a project funded by Canadian Baptist Ministries through the Foodgrains Bank.

—Canadian Foodgrains Bank release

Winnipeg

Conversion, spirituality important to early Anabaptists

Pace, ethics, community—those are words often associated with the early Anabaptists. But Karl Koop, associate professor of theology and history at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, says that more words should be added to that list—words like worship, conversion, spirituality and theology.

Koop is editor of a recently released book called *Confessions of Faith in the Anabaptist Tradition, 1527-1660*. The book, published by Pandora Press, is a collection of 14 English translations of early Anabaptist confessions of faith, some of which have never been translated before.



Koop

“The confessions give us insight into the faith of the early Anabaptists,” Koop says. “They represent the core beliefs of the community. They tell us what the community was thinking.”

For Koop, the new book is an important corrective to the way Anabaptists have been viewed since 1944, when Harold S. Bender published his influential essay, “The Anabaptist vision.” That essay, written at a time when Mennonites in North America were challenged by war, liberalism and fundamentalist influences from other churches, helped Mennonites to refocus on Anabaptist distinctives such as non-resistance, discipleship and community.

“While Bender’s theology was firmly rooted in Christ, a generation of scholars after him tended to see the Anabaptist tradition making a contribution to the church and the world only through their ethics, rather than also through their doctrine,” Koop says. “Not surprisingly, scholars affected by this climate of opinion viewed Anabaptist confessional developments with little interest.”

But these confessions show that

“Anabaptism can’t be reduced to certain ethic principles; it was also a way of life expressed through worship, prayer, spirituality and deeply held beliefs,” he states. “The concern for moral and social reform among Anabaptists was deeply rooted in a particular way of believing, thinking and experiencing God.”

Altogether, the confessions of faith reveal that “the early Anabaptists contributed more to the church than just an emphasis on peace and justice,” he says. “Things like conversion, rebirth and a profound spirituality were also very important to them. After all, you don’t willingly die for your faith just because you believe in peace and justice—you do it because you have a profound faith in God.”

—CMU release

by **John Longhurst**



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When is the last time your pen ran out of ink? I ask because this happened to me recently. In Canada, I don't know if "my pen" ever ran out of ink. Sure, I sometimes grabbed a dud on my way to class or a meeting, but rarely did I use a single pen from new to empty. Pens are too cheap, too interchangeable, too insignificant. But last week in Egypt my pen ran out of ink. I'd known it was coming, so I had a spare along, but I couldn't switch until I was sure it was completely empty.

Before you continue reading, take a minute and think about your own pen supply. How many pens do you have? In your office, purse, backpack, junk drawers, on the kitchen table, in your glove compartment? I bet if you took the number of pens and divided it by the total number of hands in your house, you'd get a number greater than one. That is, you probably have some extra pens.

Now some of you may be thinking that the hot Egyptian sun has addled my brain if all I can write about is pens, but I do think there is a lesson to be learned from these everyday items.

However, although they provide a compelling subject, I am going to leave the topic of pens for now. Believe it or not, life in Egypt has presented me with an even greater challenge than losing a loved writing instrument.

It is this: As I get to know Egyptians, a fairly consistent theme that arises in conversation is emigration. Almost every educated, English-speaking Egyptian dreams of emigrating to Canada or the U.S.

As an aid worker, I sometimes feel discouraged by this. I am trying to work with Egyptian

people to empower them to improve life in their country. But they want me to empower them to leave their country! Still, it is not hard to see why they want to live in Canada. In Egypt, there is too little land, too little water, too little space. Egyptians see the abundance of all of these things in North America and want to share in



'Pen'sive in Egypt

The world cannot sustain all its six billion people living like Canadians (even with a reduced emphasis on hockey).

that lifestyle.

Reality, however, interferes. It is expensive and difficult to qualify for emigration. But there is an even greater reality than this merely bureaucratic problem: The world cannot sustain all its six billion people living like Canadians (even with a reduced emphasis on hockey). Just like the ink in my pen, the world's resources would run out! But, unlike my pen, there is no backup handy. So what do we do?

In Canada, I would say that my pen supply was beyond abundant. I had more pens than Mennonites have com-

mittees. My pen situation had gone beyond abundance to excess.

When God led the Israelites into Canaan, he promised them abundance—in food, material wealth and spiritual blessings. Our Lord still wants us to live in God's abundance. But "us" is not limited to privileged North Americans. God set some pretty clear guidelines for the Israelites to ensure that the abundance was shared justly among all of the people, and that people would not replace spiritual blessings with material wealth. Excess was not part of the plan.

This brings me back to my pen. I paid 60 cents for it. The Egyptian teachers I work with could perhaps buy two pens like mine with a day's salary. It is obvious that their pen supplies are not quite as abundant as mine. Seeing their lack has opened my eyes to the "beyond abundance" of pens—and other things—in my life. So, rather unconsciously, I have made the decision to be intentional about simply having "enough" pens. Through seeing their shortage, my eyes have become more attuned to the distinction between abundance and excess.

So as you consider how you will enjoy the abundance you have, think of this. The Egyptians who wish to emigrate want to do so because of the disparity between their lives and ours. But since it is unrealistic for all people to live as we do in North America, it seems that part of the way to narrow the gap is for North Americans to live with less than we currently do.

Maybe it means giving your Tim Horton's money to your favourite Central Committee (MCC) for a week. Maybe it means giving your power mower to your neighbour and cutting the grass by hand this summer. Or maybe it means selecting one of your pens and using it exclusively until it runs out.

—**Barrette Plett**

The author and his wife Sandy are currently working in Assiut, Egypt, with MCC. You can contact the Pletts and read more about their Egyptian experiences at wiebeplett.net and click on the "Egypt" link.

the young prophets

Letters

Bottom line of any debate is love

Amen from Newfoundland to the words of Peter Dueck in the Dec. 18 issue (“Klassen lends credence to ‘creation’ debate,” page 13). He writes that the bottom line for the creation debate is that people can hold many different theories and still be equal in their faith in a creative and omnipotent God.

Now there is a bottom line worth getting obsessed about! Imagine if all the debates of our church and our world could be hashed out in the spirit of this bottom line of love, respect and equality? The kingdom of God would flourish in ways we have never seen before.

So often, our debates on thorny

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.

issues harken back to the time when the disciples argued about which was the greatest. What a sad waste of kingdom-building energy! How many machetes, automatic rifles and vitriolic pens have been wielded in the battle over whose interpretation of God’s will is best? All of this tears at the foundation of the kingdom of love, and human equality and dignity.

I believe that, as Mennonites, our

key message to the world is our obsession with the bottom line of love that Dueck is talking about. Let us put our energy as a church into that obsession and by doing what we already know how to do—and do it better. Our church’s efforts at peacemaking, justice-seeking and dialogue-opening are our true missions in this world.

—**Scott Morton Ninomiya, St. John’s Nfld.**

MIKE STRATHDEE



God, money and me

The power of example is a much more potent influence than is generally understood.

Several incidents involving the Strathdee children have reinforced that principle for me.

We had a bumper crop of raspberries last year, the most abundant crop during the 15 years that Carolyn and I have had a house and a patch to pick.

Ella, our daughter, is keen to help with outside work, but less excited about the scratches or the mosquito bites that accompany berry picking expeditions. When the bite count went past her tolerance level, and when she realized that the job was not nearly done, she apologetically headed for the house, taking along what we had harvested together. Some time later, she returned to the edge of the patch, carrying the same berries in a series of plastic containers, and explaining which neighbours she had chosen to bless with the first fruits of these seasonal treats.

Humph! I muttered under my breath. Couldn’t she wait until the picking was done, so we could see the bountiful yield all in one place? And where did she come up with the crazy idea of giving away everything, anyway? Further reflection provided the answer. Until a few years ago, when the combination of regular varmint raids and the demands of a high needs younger child led us to abandon vegetable gardening efforts, we routinely passed on tomatoes, beans and zucchini to neighbours. Ella saw enough veggie sharing that the idea stuck with her, even after our practice had lapsed.

That’s a much happier influence than another scene witnessed recently. Both of our daughter Kate’s therapists, young women in their mid-20s, are fond of colourful, flashy clothes purchased from a retail chain that

Berries, ‘cold gravy’ and generosity

Ella saw enough veggie sharing that the idea stuck with her, even after our practice had lapsed.

rhymes with “cold gravy.” For months, every time we drove past a certain plaza, Kate would ask when we could go shopping there.

When their grandfather gave Kate and Ella birthday money, clothes shopping at a certain store quickly became the consensus on how the cash should be spent. They made good choices in their purchases. But their excitement around the experience of buying sparkly logos—and their persistent questions about when the next trip will be—left their

parents somewhat ill at ease.

Thankfully, the social epidemics that such emotions can spawn isn’t restricted to the consumer realm. A few years ago, Sam, a young boy who lives a few houses away, decided that for his birthday party, instead of bringing gifts, guests should make a donation to a local men’s hostel. When Ella heard about that, she decided that for her party, kids should bring materials for MCC school kits. Her friend Beth, for a party a couple months later, asked for donations to help an environmental charity save the tigers.

How can we, as parents, grandparents, mentors or friends in the church community, help to channel excitement and the enthusiasm of the next generation in the life-affirming direction of good deeds, as a counterbalance to the deadening consumerism that is all around us?

It’s an important question, and certainly worth a few boxes of berries.

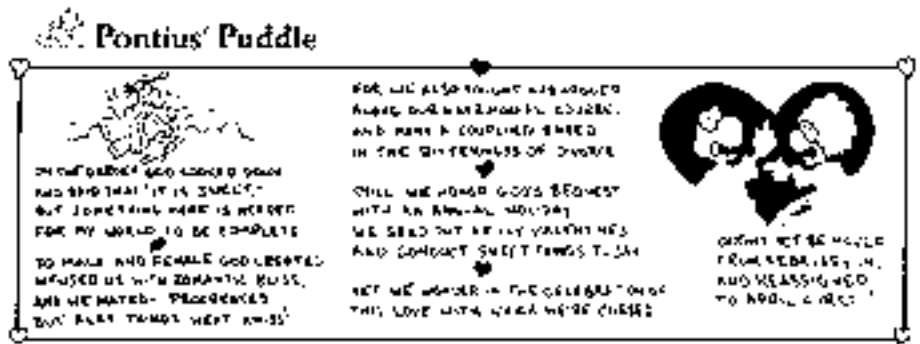
Mike Strathdee is a stewardship consultant at the Kitchener, Ont., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For stewardship education, estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit mennofoundation.ca.

God is above all human reasoning

The way to a joyful, happy life yesterday is past—gone forever, never to return; and power, joy, freedom and contentment for tomorrow are not attainable today. So why worry?

Accept God's everlasting abundant love for complete forgiveness. Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Set your mind on Christ Jesus, who is our true light and salvation. He meant to be our example because he was—and is—sinless.

A positive mind and attitude give us our true reward. He is our creator and is aware of our every thought and action. His Holy Spirit is constantly watching over us. What better guardian can we hope for? He is real. Simply by believing in his death and rising



again from the grave make it possible for us to be free from sin and death.

You need no longer feel bound. You are set free to rejoice. I believe that Christ Jesus wants us to continually rejoice and share with as many people as possible. We need not worry about tomorrow; it will take care of itself.

John 3:16 and II Timothy 3:16-17 tell us there is simply no room for doubt in the believer's mind, for Christ

came to be the light of this sinful world. He is indeed the true reason to rejoice and be truly grateful for everlasting and unexplained love.

There is really no need to try to prove his existence because he is always about us. He causes the rain, the sun and the night. Man cannot create night and day. He is the power above all human reasoning.

—Aiden Snyder, Kitchener, Ont.

MELISSA MILLER



Family Ties

In spare moments during mid-winter I am often occupied with a favourite ritual that has its source in one of my most cherished family roles. I am blessed to be an aunt. My nephews and nieces, and the spouses and children they've added to the family, are an unending source of liveliness, play and delight. Each February, I celebrate these younger family members and my "aunt-ness" with—what could be better?—valentines and chocolate.

Much of North American Valentine's Day celebrations are geared to romantic love and the people who find themselves so coupled at this time of year. Many other people, especially single adults, are excluded by the holiday. I like using the holiday for this alternative celebration as a way of expanding the language of love. I offer my valentines as a counter-cultural message in a world that promotes love as primarily available to those who are flawlessly beautiful, young and sexually engaged. What a lie!

While making valentines this year, I was also preparing a sermon based on I Corinthians 13, Paul's exquisitely penned poem of the love that God gives. Typically, a card shop valentine greeting does not contain the expansiveness and generosity of the love Paul describes. Often the heart-bedecked card contains the words, "Be mine!" suggesting possessiveness and control on the part of the sender.

Contrast that message with Paul's use of words like patience and kindness. Weigh the qualities Paul says are not a part of love: envy, boasting, arrogance or rudeness. Mid-stride, Paul waxes, "Love bears all things, believes

Break out of the valentine box

**Might we open ourselves...
to a vision of a love that
we tap into and share
with everyone...?**

all things, hopes all things, endures all things." Might we yearn for and aspire to such love? Might we open ourselves, as Paul did, to a vision of a love that we tap into and share with everyone, not just those with whom we're coupled, or those in our circle of friends and family?

Consider the love of one mother. Linda Bremner's "valentines" started with her young son's cancer. Each day, as her son faced illness and death, she sent him an anonymous note, intending to encourage him in his struggle. Shortly before he died, he let her know that he was clued in to her secret, and that her notes had been very meaningful.

Bremner took the hard experience she'd gained and became a great love letter writer. As she learned of other children facing life-threatening illnesses, she wrote letters to them, and enlisted other adults in her mission. Ten years after her son's death, Bremner had founded an organization with 65 volunteers writing more than a thousand notes a week to children they don't know.

She invites people she meets to join in the campaign. If they decline, she tells them to go home and write a letter to somebody in their life, to let the recipient know they're being remembered with kindness.

Break out of the valentine box. Pen a letter or note, or send an expression of love to an unexpected valentine this year. Open yourself to the love of I Corinthians 13—a love that never ends.

Melissa Miller (familyties@mts.net) is a pastor, counsellor and author from Winnipeg. She is currently serving as interim pastor of Arnaud Mennonite Church.

Nairobi, Kenya

Project Ploughshares' founder accepts international 'force' as last ditch option

The international community's responsibility to protect endangered populations when their governments fail to do so—if necessary, by the use of force—and church support for such measures was the subject of a lively debate at a World Council of Churches (WCC) workshop at last month's World Social Forum in Nairobi.

The "responsibility to protect" is an emerging—but controversial—international standard. Although the concept recognizes that the primary responsibility to provide for the safety of their people lies with national governments,

it also acknowledges that when there is a clear failure to carry out that responsibility, it is the international community's duty to override sovereignty and intervene in the internal affairs of the faulty state in the interests and safety of those in peril.

"At certain times, resorting to force is necessary," said Ernie Regehr, former director and co-founder of Project Ploughshares, a Canadian Council of Churches agency working with churches, governments and non-governmental organizations to build peace, prevent war and promote the peaceful resolution of political conflict.

But the use of force—which should come only when prevention has failed—has to be temporary, restrained, accompanied by humanitarian intervention and in the framework of peacebuilding efforts. "It's not about regime change, but protection of vulnerable people in immediate peril of grave human rights violations," Regehr emphasized.

Debate was lively at the crowded workshop. Questions were many and varied:

- Isn't there a gap between the ideal and practice?
- What or who is the "international community," and how can we trust such an entity?
- Don't churches include both defenders and offenders when it comes to human rights?
- Isn't there the risk of legitimating crimes?

Regehr stressed the international community's lack of moral and political will to protect the vulnerable. "It is a tragic reality that, all too often, the international community does not accept its 'responsibility' to protect, but only the 'option' to protect when it suits their interests," he said.

The risky character of the concept was acknowledged by Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat from Kenya, a former moderator of the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. He asked, however, "What other better option is available in cases like the Rwandan genocide or in relation to the current plight of the children of northern Uganda where, over the last 20 years, thousands of young children have been kidnapped, tortured, raped and killed by anti-government rebels?"

Rev. Shirley DeWolf from Zimbabwe suggested that if a national church is not living up to its duty towards a population whose government is not

Strasbourg, France

MWC vice-president pleads for help for Zimbabwe

"The challenges facing our nation do not seem to want to go away," Danisa Ndlovu, Bishop of the Brethren in Christ Church (BICC) in Zimbabwe, told Mennonite World Conference (MWC) officers and executive staff at a meeting in California last month. "Each day seems to bring more hardships."

Ndlovu asked the MWC global family to continue to pray for his country and his church, and to make solidarity visits to Zimbabwe. He also requested financial assistance for the BICC Peace Committee and for MWC's help in creating a Peace, Social Justice and Ethics desk to serve Zimbabwe and other African countries.

MWC officers at the California meeting agreed to send a "Koinonia Team" to visit Zimbabwe in 2007 to build community through presence, prayer and encouragement. Volunteers for the team will be considered along with selected participants.

Ndlovu, vice-president and president-elect of MWC, described increasingly devastating political, economic and social

conditions. To address the situation, three major Christian church groups in Zimbabwe have jointly produced a discussion document entitled "The Zimbabwe we want: Towards a national vision for Zimbabwe," which they presented to President Robert Mugabe. They are hoping all stakeholders, not only churches, will take ownership of the process.

Under Mugabe's leadership in recent years, the country has spun into sharp decline. Professional people continue to leave. The economic situation fuels corruption; unemployment is still at 80 percent; inflation continues at 1,200 percent, the highest in the world; and life expectancy is now about 38 years.

Many of the thousands of people made homeless by the 2005 "Restore Order/Clean Up" (see "Anabaptist bishop advocates for change in Zimbabwe," Feb. 23, 2006, page 23) still have no homes. The promised new homes have mostly gone to government employees and friends. New "clean-up" operations have left more people homeless. Ndlovu reported that on a December trip to Harare, the capital city, he saw people "who had piled their belongings, some along the road, praying for transport...to who knows where," their huts smouldering or in flames.

"We are praying that this cup of suffering will go away," said Ndlovu.

—MWC release by **Ferne Burkhardt**

Chengdu, China

China Educational Exchange marks anniversary, name change

China Educational Exchange's 25th anniversary and its name change to Mennonite Partners in China (MPC) marks the program's broadening work in China. MPC commemorated the anniversary with a celebration in Chengdu last October. While no major program changes are planned, the name change intends to more clearly identify MPC as a Mennonite program to its North American constituency.

"Since our work has moved beyond educational exchange to include church partnerships and social assistance, we felt that our name should not be as narrowly defined," says MPC director Myrrl Byler.

MPC's social services now include a student sponsorship program, rehabilitation for deaf and handicapped children and a counselling centre, as well as a church-based drug rehabilitation program. It serves mostly in Sichuan Province in south-central China. MPC will further its efforts in smaller and rural schools, and its work with Chinese people who are concerned about the society's needs, such as poverty, the environment, health care and more.

Byler says the integrity of the program is found in the commitment and motivation of the more than 260 North Americans who have taught in China for at least one year. He also values the program's principle of reciprocity, as almost 150 English teachers and foreign affairs officials, most of them from the Sichuan Province, have spent at least one semester at a Mennonite college.

protecting it, then the international church should fraternally call that church to stick to agreed-upon moral principles. "We have not been doing enough of this," DeWolf said. "We have not been outraged enough."

"The church can fail, sometimes spectacularly," Regehr acknowledged. "But it still is a resource for good that needs to be fully mobilized."
—WCC release

Lawrence Burkholder, then president of Goshen College, signed an agreement with the Sichuan Provincial Bureau of Education for an undergraduate exchange in 1979. MPC's predecessor (CEE) was created in 1981 to meet a request for an enlarged exchange and more teachers. Now it builds relationships and carries out projects with Chinese partners in

educational institutions, local government organizations, social service agencies and Protestant churches.

With headquarters in Harrisonburg, Va., MPC is a program of four Mennonite agencies: Mennonite Church Canada Witness, Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Central Committee and Eastern Mennonite Missions.

—MC Canada release by **Anna Groff**

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Serving And Learning Together



CMU photo by John Longhurst

Conservative MP Steven Fletcher answered a series of tough questions from students at a forum at Canadian Mennonite University late last year.

Students pose tough questions to Conservative MP

Winnipeg

Conservative Member of Parliament Steven Fletcher was impressed with the tough questions he was asked at a student forum at Canadian Mennonite

University (CMU) late last year.

Surprisingly, perhaps, tuition and transit weren't foremost on their minds. Rather, it was the environment, Canada's role in the Middle

East and aboriginal issues that they wanted to talk about.

When asked what Canada is doing to combat climate change, Fletcher admitted that Canada's level of carbon dioxide emissions is currently 35 per cent higher than it was 13 years ago; as well, he noted that Canada does not expect to cut emissions until 2050. That, he said, was "embarrassing to admit," but he noted that Canada only accounts for two percent of the world's emissions.

Regarding Canada's role in the Middle East, he said, "The prime minister has been very clear that, if given the choice between Israel and a terrorist group, we will pick Israel because it is a democratic country." He went on to say that the Canadian government has cut off Palestinian aid because it will "not deal with terrorists, which we define as a group of people who inflict



Photo by Matthew Lester

Leovijilda de Jesus García's MCC stove releases far less smoke than her previous stove and uses less firewood.

Zaongo, Mexico

In this rural village in the state of Guerrero, Leovijilda de Jesus García expertly pats out tortillas, moving them onto a round iron cooking surface heated from below by burning wood. The stove, which has a pipe that sucks smoke up and out of the house, is part of a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) effort to improve families' lives and health.

MCC provides moulds for stoves, latrines and cisterns, and explores ways farmers can make a better living from this region's parched soil. So far,

MCC has helped to build more than 60 stoves, more than 140 latrines and more than 110 cisterns in the area.

Before she got the MCC stove, García says that smoke filled her home each time she cooked or heated water. "We were enclosed in smoke," she says. "The strength of the smoke would make tears come."

"It's better now," García says of the stove with its two burners and a closed

Environmentally friendly stoves, latrines make life easier

deliberate damage on civilians to create a high degree of terror.”

When asked about the growing divide between Canada’s First Nations people and the rest of the country, Fletcher said the issue is a “mind-boggling mess.” Two key problems, he said, are ownership of private property and the rights of women in First Nation communities.

“First Nations peoples don’t have the option to home equity rights, so that’s one thing we’re looking at,” he said, adding that “the rights of women” is another area of concern. “When there’s a breakdown in a marriage, the woman’s rights are squashed. So we’re looking at that as well.”

Fletcher, who represents the riding in which CMU is located, was on a blitz of schools by Conservative MPs in an effort to connect with young people across Winnipeg. His visit was arranged and hosted by the CMU Student Council.

—Aaron Epp

The author is a CMU student doing a practicum assignment with the university’s communications department.

area for the fire. The smoke goes out of the house and she no longer has to watch out for flames that would sometimes burn her arms.

And this stove uses less wood, a critical consideration both for impoverished families and for MCC’s agriculture work in the area. In this mountainous, mostly dry region, trees are an extremely valuable resource to help preserve soil that washes down hilly slopes when rains do come.

García’s dry latrine from MCC replaced a simple toilet seat over a hole that she poured water into after each use of the toilet. The latrine design has space so that once one side is full, the waste and ashes can be left to compost while the other side is used. After a period of about a year the compost is completely dry and ready to be used on crops.

The first time García emptied the compost, she says, “I didn’t even want to take it out. But I used it. It was very dry.” And her crop thrived. “I see the corn comes up well if I put on the fertilizer.”

—MCC release

by **Marla Pierson Lester**



Maria Jose, two, plays on the swings at Guardería Moisés, a preschool in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

Photo by Melissa Engle

Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Preschool helps families stay together

Pupils in the class for three-year-olds at Guardería Moisés lean over tiny tables, intent on drawing or colouring, while children laugh as they swing or go down the slide on the playground.

But while children enjoy their time at this preschool on the outskirts of Santa Cruz, what the facility truly provides is an opportunity for families.

Guardería Moisés began in 2001 when staff at Stansberry Children’s Home, an orphanage long supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), noticed more and more children were being left there because parents could not afford to provide care for them during the workday.

Lucy Salas, director of the Guardería, said many families migrated to the area from other parts of Bolivia. Most parents must work to be able to afford housing, food and bus fare, but they have no extended family to care for the children. Today, 140 children from 92 low-income families come to the school, which serves children from six months to six years old.

Children daily receive breakfast, lunch and two snacks. A nurse moni-

tors their height and weight monthly, and watches for signs of malnutrition. Once every three months, all the children are given medication to prevent parasites.

A social worker is available to counsel and visit with families, and monthly workshops are offered for parents on topics such as relationships, communication and self-esteem.

MCC’s Global Family program helped the centre meet operating costs for hot water for bathing the children, an improvement staff call a “wonderful blessing that truly helps to prevent many skin problems.” Having hot water also helps assure proper food safety and hygiene practices.

In addition, Global Family funds provide a salary for a health and hygiene worker and supplies, and educational resources for Kindergarten and pre-Kindergarten programs. Two MCC workers in the one-year Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program are also working at Guardería Moisés.

Global Family supports more than 100 projects in some 40 countries.

—MCC release

by **Marla Pierson Lester**

Newton, Kan.

Congregations, other denominations embracing Gather 'Round

Besides proving popular with Mennonite and Brethren congregations in Canada and the United States, Gather 'Round now has six other denominations recommending the new Sunday school curriculum to their congregations. Two more are signing up to begin in 2007.

Some of these groups were users of the earlier Jubilee curriculum, and others are coming on board after selecting Gather 'Round from among several options they evaluated.

"We're certainly gratified when our colleagues in other denominations think highly of our materials," says Wendy McFadden, publisher of Brethren Press, which co-publishes Gather 'Round with Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN), the publishing arm of Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. "We've worked hard to produce the best curriculum we can for our congregations, and it feels great to have other Christian

educators and publishers evaluate Gather 'Round and say it's the best for their congregations too."

"Your materials are a hit," wrote Phil Okerlund, as he ordered more Gather 'Round materials via the www.gatherround.org website. "Our teachers, staff and children are really excited about it. What a ministry you have." Okerlund, of St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Muskegon, Mich., first learned of Gather 'Round from an ad in *Sojourners*.

Within Mennonite and Brethren congregations, *Connect*, a complementary parent resource for Gather 'Round, sold out by the second week of the quarter.

The *Connect* study guide includes weekly Bible sessions on the same Gather 'Round Bible texts and themes

as materials for other ages, as well as daily devotions designed for parents. *Connect* also relates to the content of the Talkabout, a quarterly take-home item designed to sit on each family's dining table.

'It feels great to have other Christian educators and publishers...say it's the best for their congregations too.'

"*Connect* is a much-needed resource to help parents talk about parenting and faith issues together," says Eleanor Snyder, Christian education consultant for Gather 'Round and director of MPN's Faith & Life Resources. "I've heard

from parents who feel better equipped to talk with their children about God and the biblical stories, and who appreciate the short daily devotions provided each week."

In addition to linking home with church, numerous congregations are also taking seriously Gather 'Round's call to nurture faith across the ages and integrate Christian education with congregational life and worship.

"Since all our Sunday school classes—children, youth and adults—are studying the same scriptures, we can use those scriptures as the focus for worship," explains Mark Diller Harder, pastor at St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church. "It's been a rich experience for us. It's great to look out at the congregation and see everyone repeating and signing the same memory passage. During the children's time we can talk about what the children learned in Sunday school, or work with the common story creatively."
—MC Canada/MPN joint release



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Locally grown food initiative spawned in Manitoba

While many are starting 2007 with new resolve to diet or eat more sensibly, a group of Manitobans is pledging to a diet that reduces the distance their food travels. This 100 Mile Manitoba project was spawned last fall at the Wiens Shared Farm near St. Adolphe, Man., when the eight partners hosted an open meeting called “Is there a sweat shop in your fridge?”

Jennifer de Groot of Hope Mennonite Church and a Wiens Shared Farm partner, said she was surprised by the attendance at that meeting and the interest it sparked. “We shared our passions and interest around food issues,” she said. Participants identified many related issues, including the lack of cold storage in the province for winter vegetables and the distance that food travels to reach consumers. They decided to embark on a campaign to get Manitobans to eat with more awareness about how far their food has travelled to reach their dinner tables.

The 100 Mile Manitoba project encourages consumers and marketers to think about how buying and eating

habits impact local and international economies and ecologies. The goal is to get 100 people to commit to eating food produced within 100 miles for 100 days beginning this Sept. 1 and ending on Dec. 9. “I think it is long enough to change people’s eating habits and how they think,” said de Groot, adding, “We already have 30 to 40 people signed on.”

The project aims to build community as well as provide education. “We are lobbying specific stores regarding labelling where their grains and beans come from. We are encouraging restaurants to come up with 100-mile meals and bakeries to offer sourdough breads,” said de Groot. A subcommittee is also working on a directory of local food sources.

Dan Wiens of Wiens Shared Farm said, “[Mennonite Church] Manitoba is involved with this project. They are currently working on a package for churches to use for planning 100-mile fellowship meals, highlighting some of the justice and ethical aspects.”

De Groot acknowledged that there will be challenges. “We want people to be transparent about when they are



Photo by Evelyn Rempel Petkau

Jennifer de Groot of Hope Mennonite Church checks out her pantry to see which of its contents meet the 100 Mile Manitoba criteria.

unable to stay within the limits. Salt will be one of the big things to work around.” Salt, sugar and vinegar are all used in canning, but are not produced in Manitoba. Participants will be researching and sharing new and different ways of adapting.

“A few years ago I thought I would never be able to give up orange juice, but I have and it’s totally fine,” said de Groot as the price of citrus products from California were about to spike following a frost that froze up to two-thirds of the crop. “We can get vitamin C from sauerkraut, potatoes and rosehip tea. The diversity of food grown and produced in Manitoba is surprising.”

Those interested in participating in the 100 Mile Manitoba challenge can download a pledge form on the program’s website: 100milemanitoba.org.

“As a Mennonite I would love to see more Mennonites participate because it is an outgrowth of our mandate for creation care,” concluded Wiens.

—Evelyn Rempel Petkau



Wilf Unrau, chair of Mennonite Central Committee’s meat canning campaign in Manitoba, displays one of more than 22,000 cans of pork—from 185 sows—that volunteers prepared over a 96-hour period late last year. “I think something like this gives people a sense of satisfaction,” he said. Unrau presided over a dedication service concluding the 2006 canning days, thanking Harry and Elaine Dyck, owners of Winkler Meats, who work hand-in-hand with the project, and the many volunteers from across Manitoba and from outside the province.

Photo by Elmer Heinrichs

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News brief

Relief Sale will proceed despite grandstand fire

A Jan. 7 fire that destroyed the grandstand at the New Hamburg, Ont., fairgrounds will not stop this year's Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario Relief Sale, according to administrative services director Bev Klassen. Relief Sale organizers had not used the facility for events for a

couple of years, Klassen said, noting, however, that the grandstand will be missed by people who liked to watch the activities from the raised vantage point. Talks are underway with Wilmot Township officials to deal with the loss of the grandstand washrooms and electrical power that was routed through the grandstand, she said. Wilmot Township is committed to rebuilding the grandstand, according to local newspaper reports.

—**Ross W. Muir**

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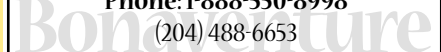
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FOCUS

Camps and Summer Christian Education

Reflection on the significance of summer camp

When someone asks me about profound experiences I have had in my life, I don't have to think about it very long. The answer is not far from my mind or my heart. It is camp.

Some of my first encounters with God were at camp. Several of my longest-lasting friendships began at camp. Many of my most challenging moments were at camp. I've had great moments of personal achievement at camp. My understanding



Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp photo

Summer camp at Hidden Acres near New Hamburg, Ont., is a place where children and youths can encounter God, make lasting friendships, and achieve personal milestones.

of worship deepened at camp. I found important mentors at camp.

Our experiences form us. We learn to understand God's story from those who have gone before us and those who are walking with us right now. The people with whom we share our weakest moments help to shape us. We find our place in the world by testing our abilities, and by receiving encouragement and direction from those with whom we work and play. We know our worth by allowing ourselves first to be loved and then to love. We know faith when we embrace the wonder of what God is doing.

These are the real experiences I've had

Hidden Acres New Hamburg

through my years as a camper and staff member at camp. These are the things that have given me roots, established my confidence in Jesus, and continue to form me.

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness" (Colossians 2:6-7).

—Hidden Acres release
by **Mary Anne Cressman**



Shekinah Retreat Centre photo

Young campers at Shekinah Retreat Centre in Saskatchewan learn to navigate without their sense of sight.

How can camps fulfil call to justice?

Ronald J. Sider, president of Evangelicals for Social Action, a theology professor and author of *Rich Christians in a Hungry World* and other works, presented a challenge last year at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center's spring association meeting—a challenge relevant for all Mennonite Camping Association (MCA) camps.

In speaking about the Bible's instructions on caring for creation, Sider posed these questions:

- Have Mennonites lost their commitment to simple living?
- Given the needs to combat global hunger and care for God's creation, what does a faithful lifestyle look like today?
- Can Mennonites—like the first Christians who lived like Jesus—change the world today?

Laurelville Mount Pleasant

"Christians must become vigorous environmentalists because it is biblical," Sider explained, and to practise creation care the church must hold together God's transcendence of creation and God's immanence in creation.

"Dominion must be gentle care; we have made it a domination," Sider said.

"Genuine Christians embrace both God's searing holiness and God's astonishing love, know who Jesus really is, keep their marriage vows and place family above success, share God's concern for the poor and love the whole person, and embrace servanthood," he said.

Sider observed that Mennonite retreat centres have improved their facilities and have become more expensive over the years. He asked, "How much are we pandering to the growing materialism in our churches? How do we make sure our facilities also serve the poor?"

—From November 2006 MCA newsletter, *Natural Links*

A full version of the article originally appeared in the Summer 2006 issue of the *Laurelville Mennonite Church Center Spring Breezes newsletter* (www.laurelville.org) and follow the "Breezes" link).

Camps help kids overcome 'nature-deficit disorder'

Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-deficit Disorder. Richard Louv. Algonquin Books, 2005.

The last thing our culture needs is another disease to worry about, but "nature-deficit disorder" is relatively easy to cure. Louv's insightful and startling book argues that nature has been marginalized in our society, to our detriment. He also provides ways in which that trend can be reversed.

Today's children prefer to spend time indoors, where the electrical outlets are, because the outdoors has been portrayed by adults as scary. Rules and liability concerns restrict traditional children's activities, such as building tree houses or playing in the forest. Unfounded parental fears, often media-driven, are transferred to children.

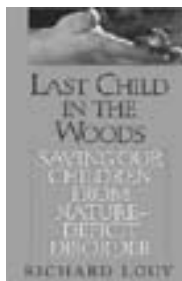
The cost is nature-deficit disorder, the symptoms of which include diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties and higher rates of illness. Louv cedes that this is not a clinically established term, but piles on the evidence that it is nevertheless of great concern. Exposure to nature may improve cognitive performance, emotional health, physical health and creativity.

Bringing nature into the lives of children takes intentional work. More people need to study the classic natural sciences,

which teach identification and understanding of flora and fauna. Children need to be encouraged to have a special natural place, be it as simple as a ditch or a corner of the backyard. Educators need to recognize, as has multiple intelligence theorist Howard Gardner, the existence of the "naturalist intelligence," which consists of the ability to identify, distinguish and differentiate natural objects.

At a spiritual level, we need to continue our contact with nature, lest we forget our place in the world. The ringing oratory of Job 38 to 41 comes to mind. Nature connects us to God and to humanity. Children often report transcendent experiences in nature. The nature experience needs to be shared with adults, who can help children rediscover the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.

Louv paints a picture of a new natural order. Passion based on personal contact with nature fuels the struggle to save our natural heritage. Classrooms



head outdoors, using the natural environment as a means of engaging students in learning. "Zoopolis" is created, consisting of a city transformed into a natural habitat. A new back-to-the-land movement constructs new green communities.

Louv states that camps have a key role to play in exposing children to nature. My personal experience is that camp nature programs succeed only when one intentionally finds and equips young adult camp staff with passion and the tools for learning and teaching about nature.

Can we imagine our Mennonite camps as "nature preserves" in the sense that they lead in restoring us to a proper relationship with nature, fuel our passion for conservation, and provide venues for reflecting on the lifestyle changes that will make us better stewards of creation and of humanity?

— **Bob Wiebe**

The reviewer is director of Camping Ministries for MC Manitoba.



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Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Cressman—to Kristen and Daryl, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., a daughter, Madilynn Mae, Jan. 16.

Dueck—to Heidi and Irny, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, a son, Ivan Rene, Oct. 22.

Epp—to Heidi and Wade, Laird Mennonite, Sask., a son, Shayne Adrian, Nov. 15.

Friesen—to Hally and Sheldon, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, a son, Caden Jared, Nov. 22.

Friesen-Smith—to Marianne and Dexter, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., a daughter, Karis Zelenah, Jan. 10.

Janzen—to Jen and Trevor, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., a daughter, Abby Joy, Dec. 22.

Janzen—to Tracey and Cecil, Laird Mennonite, Sask., a son, Nelson Curtis, Nov. 22.

Kehler—to Arminda and Gerold, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, a son, Gabriel, Dec. 14.

Kehler—to Verena and Sandro, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Emily Anabelle, Nov. 6.

Krahn—to April (nee Laskowski) and Wes, North Star Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Isabel Jane, Oct. 21.

Nganga—to Jeanne and Christien, Ottawa Mennonite, a son, Meshach, Dec. 31.

Regier-Harris—to Katrina and Chris, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., a son, Nathaniel Lachlan, in Yellowknife, NWT., Dec. 28.

Vogt—to Irene and David, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Christiana Leona, Nov. 16.

Wiebe—to Sophie and Ronald, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Malika Elena, Nov. 16.

Marriages

Klassen-Froese—Fritz and

Tracy, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, Oct. 14.

Deaths

Balzer—Menno John, 56 (b. March 16, 1950), Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask., Jan. 2.

Barton—Margaret, 77, Harrow Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 18.

Bast—Catherine, 84 (b. Aug. 14, 1922), Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 3.

Doerksen—Agatha, 74, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, Sept. 20.

Dyck—Alma Marie (nee Wiens), 80 (b. Oct. 21, 1926), Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta., Jan. 2.

Friesen—Helen, 104, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Jan. 15.

Friesen—Lucille Ann, 52, Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask., Sept. 27.

Froese—Ben, 78 (b. Oct. 10, 1928), Hanley Mennonite, Sask., Dec. 22.

Funk—Leonora (Nora), 70, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 15.

Giesbrecht—Pauline (nee Baun), 94, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., Jan. 14.

Hiebert—Betty Louise, 77, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Jan. 1.

Kliwer—Victor, 93, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, Sept. 20.

Neufeld—Verna (nee Schapansky), 66, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., Jan. 19.

Nickel—Frank, 91 (b. Sept. 27, 1915), Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask., Dec. 25.

Quiring—Anna, 85, Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 28.

Szuck—Priscilla (nee Woolner), 92 (b. Oct. 18, 1914), Breslau Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 26.

Thiessen—Jack, 92 (b. May 19, 1914), Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask., Dec. 25.

Vogt—Jakob (Jake), 72, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Jan. 7.

Warkentin—Peter, 85, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Jan. 12.

Baptisms

Mapleview Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.—Shannon

Koch, Amanda Bender, Christopher Albrecht, Oct. 29.

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.

People&Events

Baden, Ont.—Dale R. Bauman has been appointed as vice-president of sales for MAX Canada Insurance Company effective Feb. 1. Bauman spent more than 20 years pastoring in Mennonite congregations in the Elmira, Ont., area. Following his pastorate, he was employed by Erb Transport, most recently as account manager for the Greater Toronto Area, servicing some of the major food companies in Canada.



Bauman

He has served as a member of the MAX Canada board since 2005. In his new role with MAX Canada, Bauman will be responsible for overall sales development for the company; this will include agent and broker distribution management, generating new business and maximizing retention of existing business for the company. He will also have a significant role in collaborating with church relations and marketing personnel for MAX Canada. Paralleling Bauman's appointment in Canada, Jim Gascho of Goshen, Ind., took over as vice-president of sales for MAX US on Jan. 1. —MAX Canada release by **Nelson Scheifele**

Markham, Ont.—In light of the Dec. 3 Ontario Court of Appeal's decision to recognize that a child may have

more than two legal parents, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) has re-expressed the urgent need for a full study of the impact on future generations when longstanding social policies are changed to suit adult desires. EFC general legal counsel Don Hutchinson stated, "This is another unfortunate example of allowing the courts to make decisions in areas where the government should be determining public policy." Hutchinson said the decision left unanswered a number of questions: How many legal parents may each child now have? What will determine the number of parents a child will legally have? Will the number of parents allowed per child now impact the number of spouses permitted in a marriage? "The process that governments in Canada are now using to redefine social policy is seriously flawed," said EFC public policy director Douglas Cryer. "The courts examine mostly the facts of the particular case, rather than considering the broader social ramifications, which is something governments have the ability to do." The EFC (of which Mennonite Church Canada is a member) participated as an intervener in the case as a member of the Alliance for Marriage and the Family. —EFC release

Cotonou, Benin—A five-member delegation from St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church is visiting the Benin Bible Institute (BBI) from Feb. 8 to 22, to sign an official partnership agreement between the congregation and BBI. The institute is supported by MC Canada Witness workers Nancy Frey and Bruce Yoder; Frey grew up at St. Jacobs Mennonite. The partnership commits the church and institute to an ongoing relationship of learning and prayer, as they challenge and support each other to bear faithful witness

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Benin *From page 25*

to Christ in their different contexts and become more aware of their place within the global church. To follow the delegation's trip, visit its travel blog at <http://sjmcbenin.wordpress.com/>.

—St. Jacobs Mennonite release by **Mark Diller Harder**

Harrisonburg, Va.—The trustees of Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) have

given president Loren Swartzendruber an official call to a second four-year term of office. That term will begin July 1. During convocation exercises on Jan. 10, Susan Godshall, chair of the trustees, told staff and students, "We are grateful for his leadership and vision, for his deep commitment to God, the church and Anabaptist understandings, for his effective relationships within the EMU community and with a

wide constituency off campus...." The EMU presidential review committee considered 184 responses from across the church, which provided strong

affirmation for the president's leadership. Swartzendruber became EMU's eighth president on Jan. 1, 2004.

—EMU release by **Jim Bishop**

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 sale

For Sale: Bethany Mennonite Church. Rural church building, contents and two-acre property near Watrous, Sask. Box 1120, Watrous, SK S0K 4T0. Phone: 306-946-2661 or 306-946-3497; e-mail: edith.fransen@sasktel.net.

Canadian Mennonite

Notice of the 2007 Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Annual Meeting and Fundraising Banquet

The 36th Annual Meeting of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS), the non-profit corporation that publishes *Canadian Mennonite*, will be held on Saturday, March 10, 2007, at First Mennonite Church, 800 King Street East, Kitchener, at 4 p.m.

On the agenda are votes on board actions and financial statements for the past year, and elections to fill any open CMPS board positions. The meeting is public but voting is limited to CMPS members, who are those that donated at least \$25 in the past year and all current board members (see names and nominating bodies below). Members who are unable to be present may complete the proxy voting form below and mail it to *Canadian Mennonite*, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6H7 before the meeting.

A fundraising banquet follows at 6 p.m. at the church and is open to all. Tickets can be purchased through the *Canadian Mennonite* office or at the door.

Current Canadian Mennonite board members:

British Columbia: Henry Neufeld (MC B.C.), John W. Goossen (MC Canada)

Alberta: Brenda Tiessen-Wiens (MC Alberta)

Saskatchewan: Bernie Thiessen (MC Saskatchewan), Margaret Ewen Peters (CMPS)

Manitoba: Bernie Wiebe (MC Manitoba), Aiden Enns (MC Canada), Paul Krahn (MC Canada)

Eastern Canada: Larry Cornies (MC Eastern Canada), Brice Balmer (MC Canada), Mary Lymburner (CMPS), Ester Neufeldt (CMPS)

Proxy Voting Form

As a member of CMPS, I hereby appoint:

_____ as my proxy to attend, act and vote on my behalf at the CMPS Annual Meeting on March 10, 2007.

Name: _____

Address: _____

The annual report and audited financial statements will also be posted on *Canadian Mennonite's* website after the meeting.

Employment opportunities



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.
Closing date for applications is Feb. 27, 2007.

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.



Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is a Christian relief, development and peacemaking organization that seeks to demonstrate God's love by serving among

people suffering from poverty, conflict and natural disasters. MCC workers are required to be committed to personal Christian faith, church membership, non-violent peacemaking and a lifestyle consistent with MCC policy.

Human Resource Director

MCC has over 85 employees and 1,500 volunteers in B.C., including the head office, Thrift Shops, local programs and service workers on assignment. The human resource function provides leadership and support to the organization in the development of personnel policy, hiring, orientation, training, staff evaluation, salary classification, problem solving, risk management, and other human resource functions. This position is currently four days per week and may be extended to full-time.

Provincial Thrift Shop Coordinator - Interim

MCC Thrift Shops sell donated clothing, books, furniture and other items in order to raise income for MCC ministry. This position brings leadership to nine Thrift Shops in B.C. by working collaboratively on strategic planning, operations, expansion, marketing, merchandising, hiring and training staff, volunteer recruitment, and representing Thrift Shops in various settings. This is an interim position anticipated to be approximately one year in duration. It is currently full-time, but we are open to part-time arrangements.

Send a cover letter and resume by Feb. 27, 2007, to:

Wayne Bremner, Program and Personnel Director,
PO Box 2038, Abbotsford, BC V2T 3T8.

E-mail: wbremner@mccbc.com; or fax: 604-850-8734.

Check www.mcc.org/bc for more details on these job postings.



*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 rringenb@ambs.edu. See the job description at www.ambs.edu/employment/director-admissions.

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



*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



*Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary*

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks **four event pastors**, two male and two female, for !Explore: 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, !Explore 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.

Mennonite Collegiate Institute
Box 250
Gretna, MB R0G 0V0

MCI is a Christian high school operated by a society of 22 Mennonite churches throughout Manitoba, which seeks to develop God-given gifts in young people through the delivery of Manitoba & faith curricula, extensive arts, athletics and discipleship programming and a residence for approximately half of the student body.

MCI invites applicants for the following:

Residence Staff: Persons seeking full-time positions working within a team of six residence life directors with a passion for ministry to young people. Skills and experience in youth ministry with interests in sports, coaching, music and drama are assets. Post-secondary biblical study is also an asset.

- One position (male) to begin immediately.
- Multiple positions (male and female) are anticipated for September 2007.

Contact Darryl Loewen, principal, by phone: 204-327-5891 or e-mail: principal@mciblues.net.

Leamington United Mennonite Church invites applications for a **full-time Lead Pastor**

Our church is located in Essex County in southwestern Ontario, about a half-hour from the University of Windsor and three hours from each of Conrad Grebel College and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Essex County contains five MC Eastern Canada churches and about 20 other Mennonite churches. Our church has an average Sunday morning attendance of 350 people.

The successful candidate will lead a pastoral team, which includes an associate pastor, a youth pastor, and a part-time music minister. The planned starting date is July 2007, but this may be changed through negotiations.

Interested individuals are asked to contact the MC Eastern Canada office at 4489-4497 King Street East, Kitchener, ON, N2P 2G2, or at phone 519-650-3806.

Position for Leading Pastor

Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite Church, located in Gretna, Man., is welcoming applications for the position of Leading Minister. We are a congregation of about 100 members located in a family-friendly small town setting. Ministry in our congregation is defined by its multi-generational character and by the fact that we are the only church in our community. By God's grace we have enjoyed long-lasting, positive relationships with previous pastors and look forward to establishing such a relationship in the future. The successful candidate will have an Anabaptist/Mennonite faith orientation and be gifted in preaching, teaching and visitation ministries. Seminary-level education will be considered an asset. We are a member of Mennonite Church Canada and follow MC Canada salary guidelines. Our preferred starting date is July 1, 2007. Please direct your inquiries to Kerry Enns, Congregational Chair, at 204-327-5891 (work), 204-327-6666 (home), or write to me at kgenns@mts.net if you prefer e-mail. Further information is on file with MC Manitoba.



MENNONITE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY
www.mennoplac.ca

Chief Operating Officer
Menno Home & Hospital

Known for high standards of care and a supportive work environment, Menno Home & Hospital employ over 500 staff in providing residential complex care to hundreds of frail and elderly residents. Menno Home & Hospital are fully accredited facilities located at "Menno Place," an 11-acre campus of care in Abbotsford, British Columbia. Our most recent three-year CCHSA accreditation award was received in 2006.

Due to the pending retirement of our current COO, we have an opportunity for an experienced healthcare leader who can build on a legacy of excellence and growth. Reporting to the CEO, you will be a key member of the MBS Leadership Team, and direct a seasoned Management Team in providing day-to-day operational administration.

Qualifications and characteristics of a "best fit" for the position:

- Proven leadership and management skills in a large-scale setting.
- Relevant academic background and extensive experience in healthcare delivery and organizational planning.
- Consultative style and an ability to deal with complex issues in a dynamic work environment.
- Commitment to bringing a Christian values-based perspective to the organization's programs and services.

To explore this exceptional employment opportunity, please contact: Art Beadle or Dr. Sylvia Palmer at
A. R. Beadle & Associates
1-888-330-6714 • E-mail: art@arbeadle.com

SHEKINAH RETREAT CENTRE

has a full-time, salaried position opening in spring 2007 for a **FOOD SERVICES CO-ORDINATOR**

Job Requirements:

Training/experience in the area of food services: preparing balanced menus, interest in the Slow Food concept, purchasing groceries, cooking, monitoring food inventory, and ensuring that all guidelines in health and food safety are followed. Must have a food handling certificate; possess the ability to work well alongside other people; solid communication skills to ensure clear communication within the staff team, both year-round and summer; and a willingness to understand and uphold Shekinah's philosophy, aims and objectives.

Applicants should be willing to work a variety of hours, including evenings and weekends. Benefits available.

Please send applications/resumes or inquiries to:
Lill Friesen, Administrator
Box 490, Waldheim, SK S0K 4R0
Tel: (306) 945-4929
E-mail: retreat@sasktel.net

Shekinah Retreat Centre is owned and operated by Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.

Mennonite Church Canada

Equipping highlights Lenten resources

The February *Equipping*, now available in church offices, highlights many Lenten resources and other reflection/study/work opportunities, including:

- A volunteer coordinator assistant for Habitat for Humanity in Toronto is sought by Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS). The successful candidate will live in an MVS unit house and worship at Danforth Mennonite Church.
- A celebration story by Dan Nighswander and Yvonne Snider Nighswander entitled "South Africa: Missional-mindedness in the midst of poverty."
- Challenging letters from MC Canada leaders, including "Faithfulness that provokes" by Robert J. Suderman, and a reflection on the need for Sabbath rest by Sven Eriksson, who suggests that without this pastors can become "compulsive religious functionaries."
- A three-session study and reflection guide on the MC Canada Statement of Identity and Purpose.
- A Resource Centre update which notes many Lenten books and resources, including the "At Home" family worship booklet, "Blessed hunger, holy feast," prepared by Elsie Rempel to supplement 2007 Lenten worship materials.
- Information on Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, including the "Easter to Pentecost Worship Planner" workshop on March 10; a "Pastoring those who face financial crises" seminar on May 24; and application forms for the !Explore 2007 Summer Program.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Bible quizzing deadline approaches

Your hand rests lightly on the button. The smell and feel of sweat pervades the room as the questioner begins to read the next question: "The paralytic whom Peter and John healed was sitting at which temple gate in Jerusalem?" A hand twitches and the other team buzzes and answers, "The Beautiful Gate." Darn, you knew that one. "Follow up question," announces the questioner. "What is the significance of this healing for the early church?"

If you have answers to these questions, then perhaps you and your youth group would like to be at Floradale Mennonite Church on April 14 for the first round of Bible quizzing. The finals are April 28 at the MC Eastern Canada annual church gathering at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

The deadline for team registration is Feb. 19. To register, or to find out about teaming up with other churches if your congregation doesn't have enough youths to make up a team itself, contact Bev Raimbault (bev@mcec.ca).

Bible quizzing has long been a winter activity for youths in MC Eastern Canada. It promotes biblical literacy, builds group cohesion, and gets youths in contact with others of like-mind across the area church. Year after year youth groups study the passages, practise their skills in answering and learn how to apply Scripture in their own lives.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Engaging culture with the gospel

The annual MC Manitoba leadership conference will be held Feb. 23 from 1 to 4:30 p.m. at Sterling Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

Len Hjalmarson, keynote speaker at this year's annual delegate sessions, will speak to church leaders about "engaging the culture with the gospel," said Harold Peters-Fransen, director of Leadership Ministries. This will be followed by a panel discussion. "The panel will consist of persons who represent a number of different denominations and are actively involved in ministry in Winnipeg," said Peters-Fransen. "They will discuss new models of being the church."

The annual delegate sessions follow immediately at Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

Pastoral transitions

- On Sept. 24, Albert Cheang, pastor of Winnipeg Chinese Mennonite Church, was ordained. Cheang was one of the founding members of the church. He served as deacon for many years, assisting each of the previous pastors. He responded to God's call to equip himself for ministry at seminary a few years ago and then began serving as full-time pastor a year ago.
- Lynne Martin resigned as pastor of Arnaud Mennonite Church as of Dec. 31. She pastored there for seven-and-a-half years. Martin is remarried and relocating in eastern Manitoba. A farewell service was held on Jan. 7. *Canadian Mennonite* "Family ties" columnist Melissa Miller began as interim pastor on Jan. 15.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Delegate sessions to discuss P2P proposal

A six-page draft proposal—prepared for the consideration of delegates at the upcoming MC Saskatchewan delegate sessions—is opening up some exciting possibilities for the Person to Person program in Saskatchewan.

The draft, which includes a proposal for MC Saskatchewan, was written by Eric Olfert on behalf of the P2P Transition Committee. Meeting over the last six months has led the Transition Committee to suggest a solution to better coordinate provincial efforts for P2P and offer a vision for a base of support that encompasses all Christian churches in the province.

Committee members represented five different denominations plus one para-church organization.

In the report, Olfert stresses the importance of maintaining the basic biblical teaching behind P2P and insists that the original vision is "non-negotiable." "We strongly affirm that this must remain an organization that...is Christian and is rooted in the life and ministry of the church," writes Olfert in the draft.

The report also hints at a name change for the new inter-church organization which will emerge if this proposal is accepted by delegates. The impact of P2P will also be larger, said Olfert. Instead of mainly prison visitation and Circles of Support, there will also be a focus on victims of crime and a community chaplaincy.

The draft proposal comes after a decade of self-evaluations and outside assessment.

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TheChurches From page 29

Mennonite Church Alberta

Men's retreat planned for June

Plans are underway for the second annual Mennonite men's retreat at Camp Valaqua, June 8 to 10. This year, Mike Perschon, associate pastor at Holyrood Mennonite Church, will facilitate sessions on the topic of the use of wealth and influence.

A key question for the weekend will be how to make the shift from an understanding of the world's ideas of success to an idea of those things that have eternal significance.

Men of all ages are encouraged to come to the retreat

for a time of fellowship and discussion of issues important to men in the church. Participants are encouraged to pack their hiking boots and to be ready to enjoy the beautiful outdoor setting at the camp.

For more information or to register, call Marvin Baergen at 403-256-2894 or e-mail him at mbaergen@mennonitechurch.ca.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Conference to explore 'covenants'

"Call to covenant: Deepening our understanding of God's call to covenant" will be the theme of the LEAD conference on Feb. 23, just prior to the annual delegate sessions

of Mennonite Church B.C. at Eden Mennonite Church in Chilliwack.

Artur Bergen, pastor of Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church of Abbotsford, will speak from the perspective of the book *Work of Heart* by Reggie McNeal. Sven Eriksson, MC Canada denominational minister, will speak on what "receiving the call means in circles beyond our own congregation."

Although intended primarily for leaders, elders and deacons, the LEAD conference is open to anyone involved in the work of the church. Registration begins at 11:30 a.m., with the LEAD sessions beginning at 1 p.m. following a noon lunch. To register, or for more information, contact Janette Thiessen at 604-850-6658 or mcbbc@uniserve.com by Feb. 13.

Registration for the Mennonite Church B.C. annual delegate sessions will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Feb. 24, with sessions from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Eden Mennonite. The main focus for the day will be passage of the priority actions discussed at a Nov. 4 meeting, and approval of the covenant statement.

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

JANET PLENERT



From our leaders

“What value will this have for us?” “How do we benefit from this investment?” “How can I sell this idea to those who pay the bills?”

We are rightly concerned with using our resources in wise ways—ways that give us a good return on investment. But that isn't the only measure of good stewardship.

We are charter members of Global Mission Fellowship (GMF), an Anabaptist network whose purpose is to encourage all parts of the church—north and south, east and west, rich and poor, new and old—to collaborate in God's mission so that together we might function effectively and efficiently for the sake of the reign of God.

This affects our strategies for mission in important ways. It means we don't forge ahead without first checking how the rest of the global body is engaged. It means our gifts are discerned within the global body. It means that together we must find ways of empowering the newer churches to release their gifts. It means we must see that our efforts are not complete in and of ourselves.

Mennonite Church Canada is seriously committed to participating in the GMF, and has contributed to it with resources and staff. It is one key way in which we are becoming a global church, which is one of our three priorities.

In calculating a fair share of expenses needed for a global effort such as a GMF gathering, we come face-to-face with stark inequalities in the global church. There

are 13 North American churches and agencies that belong to the GMF and 65 members globally. When the calculations are complete, North American members jointly need to contribute about 94 percent of the total budget in order to bring parity among global members.

Herein lies the rub. We must begin to understand that becoming a global church means reframing many of our questions. Instead of asking what value we get out of our contribution, we need to ask, “How will this benefit the global church?” We need to look beyond ourselves and realize that investing in the global church allows gifts and resources to be released that otherwise would not be. We need to realize that when the global church works together, the synergy and strength that result are greater than the sum of its parts. We need to realize that we are generating efficiencies that benefit us all and allow us to accomplish more than we would by working on our own.

In other words, how we benefit is only one dimension of becoming a global church. The other dimension is how our participation and contributions benefit others. Partnership in mission at a global level is a very good financial and spiritual investment. And that is good value, no matter how you add it up.

Janet Plenert is executive secretary of MC Canada Witness. She has been the North American GMF representative since August 2003, and the GMF chair since September 2006.

Measuring the success of investment

We must understand that becoming a global church means reframing our questions.

Heifer Relief Sale set for Feb. 16

Listowel, Ont.—The 26th annual Heifer Relief Sale sponsored by Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale Inc. will take place at Carson Auction Facilities, Listowel, on Feb. 16. All proceeds of the sale will go to relief and development work of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Sale organizers expect about 100 heifers to be donated to the sale. Heifers will consist of calves, springing heifers, grades, and deep pedigreed purebreds. Local farmers, agribusinesses and individuals donate the heifers, sale facilities, staff, trucking, feed, straw, and veterinary and auction services.

Past Heifer Relief Sales have raised more than \$3.3 million for MCC through donations of almost 2,800 heifers. Last year's heifer sale raised \$84,280; an additional \$60,550 came in the form of cash donations.

For more information, or to make a cash donation, contact sale secretary John Brennehan at 519-662-1156. —MCC Ontario release by **Anne L. Brubacher**

Calendar

British Columbia

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

Feb. 28: Brown bag lunch at MCC Centre with Generations at Risk coordinator Sarah Adams.

March 16-17: Mennonite Historical Society annual general meeting at Bethany College, Hepburn.

March 16-17: RJC theatre arts program presentation of "One Act Plays."

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

Ontario

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

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

Feb. 16: Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale's 26th annual Heifer Relief Sale, at Carson Auction, Listowel. All proceeds to Mennonite Central Committee relief and development work.

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.

Feb. 24: Fraser Lake Camp annual family fun night at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. For reservations, call Rebecca Seiling at 519-880-0961.

March 2-3: Engaged couples 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.

March 4: Menno Singers present "By the Babylonian Waters: Bach and Lalande," at Zion United Church, Kitchener, at 3 p.m.

March 10: MC Eastern Canada "Before the Wedding: Providing Pre-marital Counselling with Integrity" workshop at Preston Mennonite, Cambridge, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

March 12, 13: Grandparent/Grandchild Days at Hidden Acres Camp. For children in grades 1 to 6 and their grandparents. Choose one day only. For more information, call the camp at 519-625-8602.

March 15-16: Bechtel Lectures with Sandra Birdsell at Conrad Grebel University College Great Hall, 7:30 p.m. each evening.

March 22: MEDA breakfast meeting, at the Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, 7:30 a.m. Speaker: Bob Nally.

March 31: Menno Singers fourth hymn sing fundraiser at Waterloo-Kitchener Mennonite Church. This full day of congregational singing (from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) will include selections from *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, the new *Sing the Journey* supplement and the *Sing the Story* supplement to be released this summer.

U.S.A.

March 17-18: Raleigh (N.C.) Mennonite Church 20th anniversary celebration and the Raleigh Service Adventure Unit 10th anniversary. For more information, e-mail annr.r.cooper@gmail.com.

To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements EIGHT WEEKS in advance of the event date by e-mail to: calendar@canadianmennonite.org



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We had hoped to place a fancy ad in your next issue but became too busy with a number of more important things including:

- Placing over \$1 million into community development investments including MEDA Sarona Fund, EcoTrust Canada, VanCity Shared Growth and Shared World Funds, MicroVest and several others
- Launching the Meritas Monthly Dividend and Income Fund which is managed by Jarislowsky, Fraser Inc.
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We will try to get that fancy ad to you in time for the next issue.

Sincerely,

Gary A. Hawton
Chief Executive Officer

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