

C A N A D I A N
Mennonite

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When our dancing turns to mourning



Hit by the Mennonite 'love train'

The theme of the annual Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) bi-national all-unit meeting just held in St. Catharines was *Psalm 127:1: "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain."*

MDS is about connecting willing labourers with the needs of those harmed by disasters, particularly the elderly and disabled. More than 6,000 volunteers laboured last year through MDS to build houses, repair damaged homes and clean up after disasters.

As reported at the meeting, after the unprecedented giving following the two U.S. Gulf Coast hurricanes, MDS found itself with more resources—and more needs to meet—than ever before. "We never expected in our wildest dreams that when these hurricanes hit that we would collect nearly \$10 million," said Rocky Miller, bi-national board chair.

MDS executive director Kevin King described the astonishing growth in the organization: a five-fold increase in vehicles and a doubling of staff over the past two years, and a doubling in the number of volunteers in the just past year. There are equally large needs that need meeting—officials in New Orleans say that more than 200,000 homes still need to be rebuilt there.

Many commented on the ways MDS volunteers are the hands and feet of Christ. The MDS logo is a cross with a pair of hands clasping in front. One speaker referred to the logo as a symbol for what MDS did—bringing people to meet at the cross. The organization itself states that "the cross is the centre of our logo because Christ is at the centre of our work. MDS volunteers serve in the name of Christ."

How do those outside the church see that service? I heard one valuable outside perspective from Ken Curtin, a staff per-

son with the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency. "MDS and I have something in common," he said. "I first became interested in disaster work after being helped by MCC [Mennonite Central Committee] in the early '70s to establish myself as a conscientious objector. I first saw MDS at work on Easter Monday in 1977. There were four floods in Grundy, Va. Here were these guys in overalls [with] beards, boots and buckets. Someone said that is the Mennonites doing mud-out. It was so instantly radically relevant, appropriate, loving, humble and radically effective. It never left me. That was 30 years ago, almost. 'That's love,' I thought.

"People who have been the recipients of your services never forget you. Imagine being elderly or disabled in a house full of mud and mould. Here come the people in boots with buckets, hammers, power washers and your house is clean at the end of the day. You get hit by the big Mennonite love train. They remember you."

I asked Kevin King about ways the church can work together to follow up on these acts of love. We need to serve in love like Jesus did and also witness to the salvation that faith in Jesus offers. "You should see the e-mails bouncing back and forth with Mennonite Church USA about church planting," he told me.

He followed up with a personal story of MDS's work in Bayou La Batre, Ala. "I was there on Day Five after Katrina. I got on the 'sat' phone to MCC on Saturday afternoon at 3 p.m. and requested four tractor trailer loads of meat, blankets and school supplies. By Monday, those trailers rolled in. That community has not forgotten the Mennonites. It's a powerful testimony. I believe one day there will be a Mennonite church in that community because of the testimony of reaching out with food, shelter and a gentle touch."

—Tim Miller Dyck

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Canada

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Cover: Gabrielle Plenert offered up a liturgical dance as part of a Refreshing Winds conference worship service last month. Her dance inspired Canadian Mennonite national correspondent Leona Dueck Penner to craft a Lenten reflection, "When dancing turns to mourning," on page 6. For a complete wrap-up of the worship conference, see "Christian work flows out of Christian worship" on page 32. —Dan Dyck photo; photo illustration by Tim R. Dyck

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Zaporozhye, Ukraine

Learning the language of contentment

Fertile farmland borders a well-maintained four-lane highway between the Dnepropetrovsk airport and Zaporozhye, a city of about a million people in eastern Ukraine that once was part of the Chortitza Mennonite settlement.

“I had expected to see old Ladas maneuvering around pot-holes,” recalls Stella Toews, a member of Springfield Heights Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, as she describes striking similarities between this part of Ukraine and her hometown of Steinbach in southern Manitoba. “I was surprised to see so many new and fancy cars—Nissans, Hondas, Mercedes Benzes and BMWs.”

Toews, a descendant of Mennonites who came to Manitoba from Russia during the 1874-78 migrations, has returned to her ancestral home on the banks of the Dnepr River to serve as the administrative assistant in the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) office in Zaporozhye.

Within a few weeks of her arrival in May 2006, striking similarities between Ukraine and southern Manitoba were overshadowed by the complexity of living and working in a country of contrasts. Like most of the larger cities in Ukraine, stores in Zaporozhye are filled with a large selection of merchandise, restaurants offer fine dining experiences and city streets are filled with young people wearing fashionable clothes.

However, the large number of older people selling flowers, sweeping streets and collecting garbage shows the plight of people who lost their jobs

following the collapse of the Soviet Union and who receive pensions well below the poverty line. Other transitional problems in this post-Soviet republic include political instability, rampant corruption, and growing health and social problems, she explains

Spurred in part by lack of public funds for social services, churches and community organizations are embracing newfound freedoms to start programs and projects that help people adjust to new economic, social and political realities.



Photo by Gladys Terichow

Stella Toews visits Galina Stephnova, who lives in a house built by Mennonites in 1882.

“MCC has opened my eyes to a world bigger than Steinbach,” says Toews, as she relates how MCC is working with churches and community organizations in Ukraine and Russia to provide mobile health clinics, HIV/AIDS awareness programs, mediation and restorative justice programs, church-run loan funds and practical support for orphans, the elderly and people with addictions and disabilities.

“I’m still learning about the challenges that people are facing,” says

Toews.

But she first needs to improve her language skills. Although the official language is Ukrainian, she is learning Russian because this language is widely used in Zaporozhye and many regions in Ukraine. Her language studies, she adds, bring back many memories of learning the English language as a nine-year-old child when she moved to Steinbach with her family from Paraguay. “I’m very hesitant to speak the few phrases I know because I’m scared that people will laugh.”

But she is eager to learn the language so that she can learn more about her ancestral roots in Ukraine. During a recent tour of former Mennonite villages and cemeteries, Toews met an 81-year old widow, Galina Stephnova, living in a brick house built by Mennonites in 1882.

Despite the language barrier, Toews observed that Stephnova did not base her happiness on materialistic goods. “I am amazed at how content she is,” notes Toews. “Her home is so simple—no TV, no microwave and no dishwasher. I didn’t even see any books. She has a cow, a garden, a few chickens, and children who help her. She has food on her table and roof over her head. That’s all she needs to be content.”

Another motivation to learn the language is her desire for independence. “At first, doing silent transactions by pointing and nodding is interesting, but that gets old very quickly,” she explains. “If you don’t know the language, you can’t ask for directions and can’t read the signs. You don’t even know if you are on the right street until you know the alphabet. That’s a big motivation for learning the language.”

Toews worked for MCC Manitoba in Winnipeg prior to leaving for Ukraine. —MCC release by **Gladys Terichow**

Calgary

On the open road with God

Passionate and articulate about life, faith and the open road, Jake Froese—also known as “Preacher Man”—makes trucker stereotypes vanish as completely as the steam rising from our coffee mugs. At a Road King truck stop in South Calgary, Froese looked back over the last decade of his life, a journey taking him from the pastorate, through depression and nervous breakdown, to a rediscovered purpose behind the wheel of a truck.

Froese was a pastor in various Alberta Mennonite congregations for 16 years. A self-described over-achiever, he pressured himself to succeed. “I needed to be really good at [pastoral work], but along came situations that weren’t going to show immediate results. These heightened my anxiety.”

Along with the demands of church leadership, Froese noted that further education and a positive experience with hospital crisis work served to heighten expectations he had of himself. “Further education led to losing my energy; it put more pressure on me,” he said.

He described acceptance of a part-time interim conference minister position in the early 1990s as “a perfect example of what people do when they are burning out—they take on more.”

In 1995, this temporary position ended, but Froese had also reached the end of his endurance. “I was burnt out and had a nervous breakdown. My body just quit,” he said.

After two months on disability, Froese realized he couldn’t handle sitting at home. “Nothing but trucks came into my mind. I wanted the road. I wanted freedom,” he said. “Either I was going to get in front and be killed by one, or I was going to drive it. I just knew I needed that open road.”

Having possessed a chauffeur’s licence since he was 18, Froese had a good idea of what the driving life could offer. Yanke, an international trucking company based in Saskatoon, took him on. The risk proved worth it for both Yanke and Froese.

“Trucking was therapeutic,” he said, describing his 10 years of trucking in

two distinct phases. “The first five years or so was therapy,” he said. “I wasn’t interested in a ministry. I just needed to get away from people. In the last five years, I’ve been reflecting more and thinking about ministry.”

In reality, Froese’s ministry never ended. Other truckers quickly began referring to Froese as “Preacher Man” and initiating discussions about faith and life. “It probably started right away,” he said. “Guys would ask, ‘You’re a preacher?’ I didn’t hide my story, and you wouldn’t believe the conversations I would have. If they want to call me ‘Preacher Man,’ I need to honour that. It may be their only connection to God. People are looking for models, someone or something to believe in. It’s part of the universal spiritual search.”

As for maintaining a healthy family life and spirituality on the road, Froese is positive. “Family life is better now than it ever has been,” he said. There are no pressures when the family is together. “It’s celebration and fun when I come home.”

Trucking also occasionally allows Froese to visit his adult children living out of province while enroute. As for maintaining a connection with God, Froese noted the importance of silence, prayer, Bible reading, books, music, and meaningful encounters with other truckers.

After 10 years—and a perfect on-time delivery record—Froese is thinking about the future. A sense of calling to ministry and regular congregational life are once again serious questions occupying his thoughts. Recent surgery to clear a clogged artery also has Froese considering getting off the truck seat.

Froese and his wife Verna, however,



Photo by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

Jake “Preacher Man” Froese, a member of Trinity Mennonite Church in Calgary, has been a long-haul trucker for the past decade, during which time he has ministered to other transport drivers along North America’s highways. He is pictured in his 2006 Freightliner Columbia cab complete with a 500-horsepower engine and 13-speed transmission.

are in no hurry to make a change. “I am very aware of the danger of getting back into ministry and feeling the need to overachieve again,” he admitted, although he has agreed to be part of an Alberta writing team for Mennonite Church Canada’s 2008 Lenten worship materials.

His frequent absences from their home congregation—Trinity Mennonite Church in Calgary—have had the side benefit of allowing Verna to take on a greater role in the congregation and develop her gifts as a Sunday school teacher.

Although the road is long, Froese is thankful to still be on it. He spoke highly of the support and encouragement he receives from family, the church and the Yanke trucking company. But it is clear that through it all, his unshakable companion has been his Lord. “God didn’t abandon me,” he said.

—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**

*Joy has vanished from our hearts;
Our dancing has been turned to mourning...*
LAMENTATIONS 5:15.

As the strains of
“*Wehrlos und Verlassen Sehnt Sich*”
 (“When I’m Lonely and Defenseless”),
sift through the penitential air
a black-robed dancer enters
the darkened sanctuary

head bowed and
covered with a prayer shawl
she moves quickly
bare feet pale upon
the gritty winter floor

drawn towards the rough-
hewn cross like moth to flame

once there
she pauses
kneels
and weeps

while I in my sad chair
(benumbed with grief and pain)
let stopped tears flow...

Then
with a graceful flourish
she arises,
lifts high her prayer shawl
drapes it softly o’er the cross-
beams and leaves the chapel
dancing

While I, with inner trembling,
join in the singing of the hymn:

“Confident and gently hidden,
I find sweetest rest in you.
Through the storms of life you hold me,
Lord, your feathers cover me.

“Under your soft wings of mercy
my soul rests and is renewed,
For you shelter me with kindness,
keep me covered, close to you.”

—**Leona Dueck Penner**

*The reflection was inspired by Gabrielle Plenert’s liturgical dance
(based on No. 93 from Sing the Journey—translation by Jean
Wiebe Janzen) during a Refreshing Winds conference worship
service at Canadian Mennonite University last month.*

**For Jim, Jessie
and Za’Myia
Nicole, our god-
son’s baby daugh-
ter, who died
during the Advent
and Christmas
seasons.**

Lenten Reflection:
**When our dancing
turns to mourning**



A young adult solution

In our last issue, MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman called on the church's senior members to be encouraging of young adults and youths who aspire to congregational and denominational leadership roles. In the following pages, two young adults—Peter Epp of Manitoba and David Landis of Pennsylvania—present their postmodern perspectives on taking over the reins.

There it was again—that frustrating question we keep asking, sighing over, giving up on and then coming back to: “Where are all the young adults?” Or in this case, articulated in the apt yet ironic phrasing of an older generation: “Where are all the younger people?”

The speaker was Norm Voth, Mennonite Church Manitoba's director of evangelism and service ministries. The results from the conference's “Our health and our future” survey came in last fall, and this question was one of the four most common themes. The other three were: responding to our current cultural context, dealing with conflict or change, and finding new leaders.

If you were listening closely, though, it wasn't hard to hear echoes of the young adult problem in those other themes too. No leaders? If only there were some aspiring young adults. Current cultural context? If only it wasn't seducing all those young adults. Conflict and change? If only we could find a way for the generations to work together.

But what if we stopped lamenting about the young adult problem and started believing in a young adult solution? Not just a solution to the question, “Where are all the young adults?” but to our other “problems” too.

In their book, *Millennials Rising*, Neil Howe and William Strauss describe the up-and-coming generation of North American young adults as a group full of solutions. Dubbed “Millennials,” this group is driven to achieve, get involved, function in community, and see happiness as a balance between outward success and inward satisfaction—just what we

need right now. Consider what the Millennials can offer to each of the themes identified in the survey.

As the most culturally integrated generation of Mennonites to date, it would be easy to see young adults as the most “worldly” generation too—no compliment in a traditional Anabaptist faith community. It would be more productive, however, to recognize that our ever-evolving church is in constant need of such a generation.

In the 1950s and '60s, when our traditional rural agricultural identity was being subsumed by urbanization, young Mennonites played a central role in moulding an identity that could withstand and speak to such changes—an identity based, in part, on peace and social justice.

Responding to culture, however, is an ongoing process. As our cultural context continues to change, our response must keep up. Fortunately, we're blessed with both our young and older generations. We have the wisdom of those who have navigated such changes before, and we have the fresh understanding of a young generation that understands the current context well. In short, a solution is in the making.

In fact, our young adults could already be playing such a prophetic role in another MC Manitoba issue—dealing with conflict and change. At the Young Adult Fellowship retreat in Indiana last fall, speaker Ken Hawkey recalled witnessing a discussion on homosexuality among young adults. What struck him most was

that a room with such diverse and passionate views had remained respectful to the end. Relationship had trumped agreement. Convinced of the church's need for more of this, he called young adults to share this gift with the church, to help the church speak boldly and honestly, but also respectfully and compassionately.

It's not hard to imagine that our young adults can be a part of the solution to our leadership crisis, too.

The biggest hurdle to leadership and involvement may be that we get mired in discussions about it. We spend so much time addressing the “problem” that we forget to embrace its solutions—solutions that are right in front of us. True leadership always encom-

passes both a respect for the past and a vision for the future. And while it would be detrimental to limit any generation to just one of those roles, it is helpful to acknowledge that both generations are needed for the process.

Our older generations can educate our younger generations about the work that's already been done, while our younger genera-

tions can help us evaluate the success of that work in our current context. In short, young adults and not-so-young adults need to stop seeing their interactions as a tension, and start seeing the ways in which they are complementary.

Today's young adults are not an apathetic, uninvolved or inherently disrespectful bunch. Most are community-oriented, idealistic achievers, ready to work alongside their elders. Many young adults are already getting involved; others are waiting eagerly in the wings. Doesn't sound like much of a problem, does it?

—Peter Epp

The reflection was written following the author's attendance at the Young Adult Fellowship in South Bend, Ind., and the MC Manitoba fall delegate sessions, both held last October. He is a teacher at Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, Man.



Epp

the young prophets

Cultural agoraphobia:

Why young postmodern Mennonites struggle to follow or lead

Two years ago I spent a week backpacking in southern Chile's Torres del Paine National Park. It boasted some of the most spectacular scenery I have ever seen: 5,000-foot vertical rock towers, mile-wide glaciers, and wind that knocked an Israeli military commander friend to the ground.

The final day of the trek was spent hiking across an expansive and monotonous field surrounded by gigantic beauty. As I walked hour after hour and my position seemed stationary in relation to the massive landscape, I had a vague feeling of panic and paralysis—a feeling sometimes referred to as agoraphobia. I felt overwhelmed, like I was on an endless treadmill and unable to make decisions to change my situation. I felt like a leader who could not empower myself to head in a specific direction.

My experiences as a Mennonite young adult (age 24) in postmodern American culture have expanded my understanding of the concept. Young adults are often described as transient, noncommittal and apathetic. In churches across the country, the number of participating young adults is steadily dwindling. This lack of engagement has often been interpreted as disinterest, deferment of responsibility or general rebellion against tradition. I would guess that church leaders often feel the intensity of these disconnecting characteristics the most, as leaders feel responsible for movement within their culture and see a lack of successors. After biking across the country last summer as the leader of a group of young adults, I understand better where these descriptions come from.

Entrapped in the open

In ancient Greco-Roman culture, the *agora* was the marketplace, where an assortment of goods was available for choosing. Merchants would bring an array of products, greatly increasing the options for consumers and opening up the market. Over time, the word *agora* became associated with open spaces, leading to the concept of agoraphobia—a fear of entrapment within that openness.

Our world offers the cheap consumption of a plethora of ideas, experiences and contexts in which to theologially, philosophically and ethically shape our paradigms and daily decisions. Within seconds, I can Google anything and get a listing of other people's perspectives on my inquiry. Inexpensive air tickets bring the world much closer by allowing a personal global exploration of my deepest fascinations. Blogger and Myspace show that we can all become publishers and add our two cents to the digital global conversation. Opportunities to learn from—and participate

in—a global expansion have come into our houses, making the postmodern marketplace of accessible ideas open to many of us.

Accessibility is also a justice issue, whether the access is to information or opportunity. We often preach inclusiveness as the absolute will of God, not wishing to cut out any potential marketplace participants—as it's only morally acceptable for all options to be available at all times.

Postmodernism has an exciting ability to encourage us to engage people who are different from ourselves, but I am anxious about the way it seems to have played out in our culture. We seem paralyzed to act for corrective change within our new and often complicated understandings of the world. I think we're scared to lead because it may hurt others.

Cultivating a relevant community

Bikemovement began when a group of young adults emerging from the

Inexpensive air tickets bring the world much closer by allowing a personal global exploration of my deepest fascinations.

As part of Bikemovement, David Landis helped lead a group of cyclists across the U.S. last year.



Photo courtesy of David Landis

so-called first postmodern generation wanted to foster movement and conversation in a church we perceived as tightly structured. Ours was an experiment to create a conversational, moving community attempting to define its participants' relationship with the church in today's culture.

We came with our experiences, dreams, hurts, passions and apathies. We felt a lack of empowerment in the church and wanted to do something about it, maybe even by being leaders bringing about this change. At least we wanted to begin an adventure, a bicycle journey across the country. Even if its purpose was loosely defined, we were excited to go somewhere together.

And we did go many places, covering 5,450 kilometres by bicycle from Oregon to New Jersey over seven weeks. We visited more than 20 churches and connected with 62 cyclists on the cross-country journey. We shared our life stories. We yelled when we were angry and trying to express our ideals to each other. We had many ideas, options and people to empower, and this process probably proved to be the most challenging.

Over the first few weeks, various arguments erupted regarding the true purpose of Bikemovement. Careful conversation brought us to an agreeable haiku vision: "cultivating a relevant community through conversation." It was empowering for us to define ourselves, even if the general phrase could be expressed practically in a thousand ways.

Although many young adults struggle with commitment, it started to become an attractive paradox within our community. As we were crossing the Continental Divide in Wyoming and struggling through deep sand on an unknown dirt road, many of us were becoming discouraged. At this point, one disheartened yet persistent person piped up; she declared she was "committed to this road." Strangely and quickly, everyone followed suit and repeated the phrase, a litany sounding like a group baptism. Reinforced and focused, we gazed down the long difficult road and proceeded together. Looking back, I wonder if our decision

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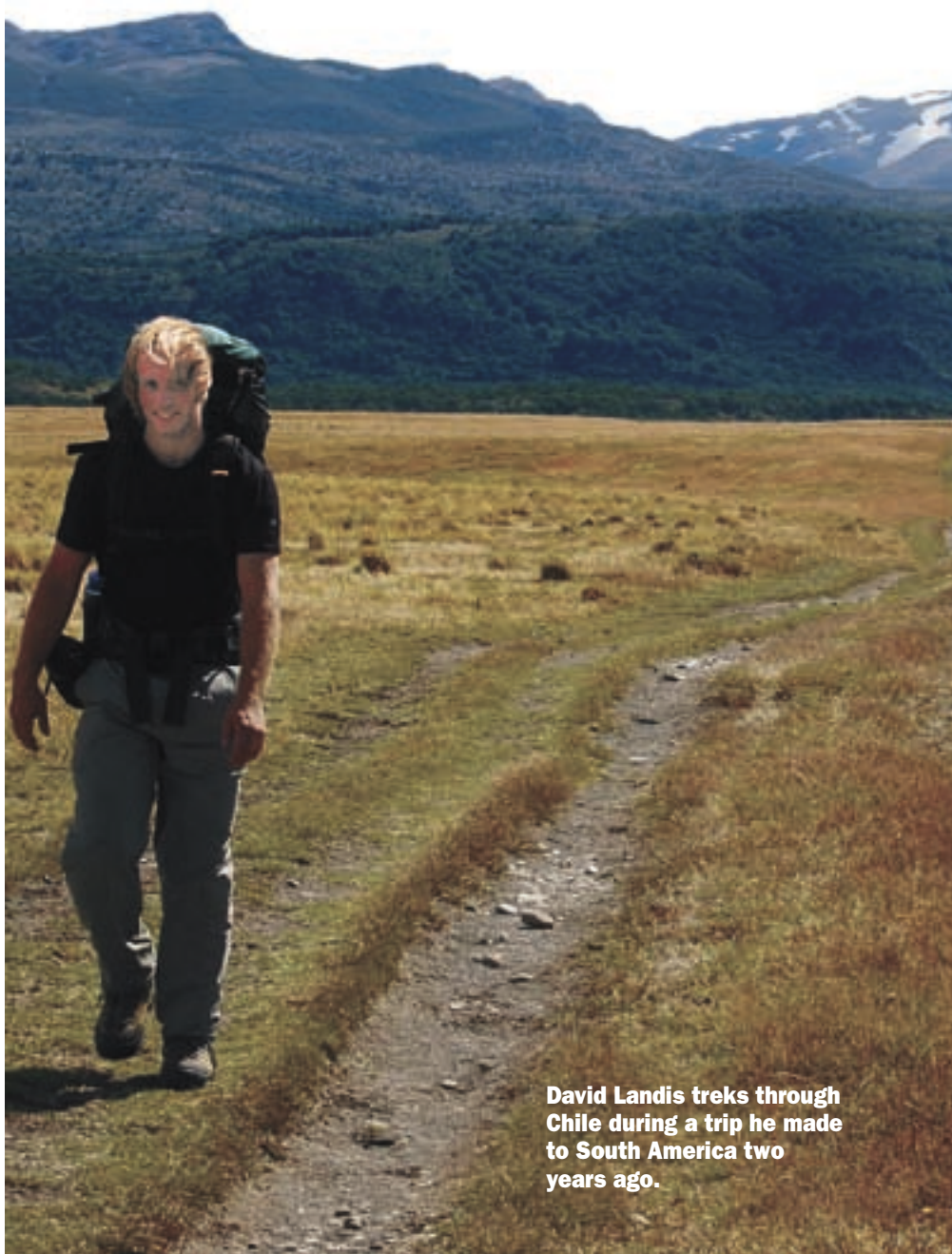


Photo courtesy of David Landis

David Landis treks through Chile during a trip he made to South America two years ago.

Agoraphobia *From page 9*

was made possible by only having two options, one of turning back and another to continue.

Adequate empowerment required

True young Anabaptist radicals need to emphasize community as a core value, and we pushed this concept to its fullest. A cycling journey at breakneck pace, focused on communicating our deepest struggles with religion and spirituality, requires the support of an incredible community. Community meant that we shared life stories with each other and strived to include everyone in all communication. Community was expressed as we cooked our meals and set up tents in the rain together. Community meant that we tried to critique each other while working for consensus in all situations. Community became volunteering to lead the pack to block the wind on our most challenging days.

Community also made it difficult to make decisions. With communal leadership being expressed as a value by some persons, those not included in decision-making processes felt hurt. It wasn't always possible or practical to have everyone involved in all decisions. Some were hesitant to trust others with responsibilities that included a lot of decision-making. The environment became a challenging one in which to empower others to lead.

It's impossible to lead effectively without feeling adequately empowered. My own role became that of providing the overall coordination for a group of leaders, all with ideas and directions. The challenge was to channel all our energy into one direction: the East Coast. As many organizational systems needed to be created to continue moving, we were continually reminded that we were completely responsible for our structural development.

Choosing one option

The versatility of the word "relevant" should not be underestimated. This adjective from our shared vision statement is easy to love because it tells you that what you're doing is timely

My fear for the future is that the poor stewardship of this idea [regarding power], combined with the postmodern array of overwhelming options, will make effective leadership in the Mennonite Church nearly impossible.

and important. But it doesn't tell you what to do. That's the part we all need to figure out for ourselves and choose to act upon. That's something young adults are craving—but struggling to approach, as we've experienced in Bikemovement.

In a world of privilege with endless options, it appears that choosing one option will eliminate all others. Yet if we shy away from a decisive perspective, we will ultimately strand ourselves in the milieu of our culture. We will become addicted to the feeling of being overwhelmed in our options, addicted to an agoraphobia that does not produce the leadership necessary to interpret the world around us.

The trick to countering this paralysis is to name the power we have in a way that allows us to trust ourselves and others as leaders. Although this seems like an obvious statement, it's one I have seen Mennonites—and sometimes other Christians—hesitant to embrace. Postmodern culture's default setting seems to be doing a good job at encouraging engagement, but it doesn't seem to be naturally promoting empowerment.

Growing up in an Anabaptist tradition, I have experienced power as a spiritual taboo. Power allows us to abuse others and implies a definite sense of pride. Having it seems to mean that we should throw it away, opening up space for us to serve others. My fear for the future is that the poor stewardship of this idea, combined with the postmodern array

of overwhelming options, will make effective leadership in the Mennonite Church nearly impossible.

Implementing decisiveness

To figure out what is relevant in the world around us, we need to spend time being relationally immersed in that world in a way that will allow us to wisely use the power we have been given. It's easy in a postmodern culture to stress the importance of understanding and trusting those who are different than us. The challenging next step is empowering each other to become decisive leaders in our contexts.

We need to hold each other accountable to implement decisiveness, even if it won't always be cheerfully received. We can decide to get a return on our initial investment from the marketplace of ideas, turning at least slightly against our agoraphobic culture to implement positive change in the world.

Looking back on my experiences, I realize that I must choose to lead and begin to redefine my religious culture. This personal and collective critique has reminded me that I need to be humbly aware of my imperfections, and forgiving of myself, my peers, my culture and my church community. Wading through this sea of options has been a struggle so far.

Comparable decisions to take the challenging road ahead await us all. I believe that many young adults who find themselves with an imperative to lead and act upon it will grow into a greater understanding of God's grace. Only by making the risky commitment to lead will we experience the joy and pain embedded in our journey, to move our world into the direction of the values that give us hope.

—**David Landis**

The author lives in Harleysville, Pa., does not own a car and bikes everywhere. He is an associate for communication and leadership cultivation for Franconia Mennonite Conference. He is looking for a graduate program that combines peace and conflict studies, cross-cultural education and travel adventure. Reprinted by permission from DreamSeeker Magazine, Winter 2007 (pages 25 to 29); also available at cascadiapublishinghouse.com and follow the "DreamSeeker" link at the top of the page.

I entered the world under the shadow of a mushroom-shaped cloud that ended World War II, when the U.S. dropped the first nuclear bombs on Japan. In Ann Arbor, Mich., on Sept. 19, 1946, I was one of the first Baby Boomers to arrive after the war. My dad had a heart murmur and, to his regret but my benefit, he was given a 4F classification that barred him from military service.

I was a teenager when the names of friends I'd known since Kindergarten and Sunday school began to appear in the local newspaper among soldiers who had died in an unpopular conflict in Vietnam. My younger brother was spared military service when he got married and had a baby immediately after high school.

In 1965 at university I met my first husband, Paul, while I sang passionate peace and protest songs and marched for civil rights. I performed Buffy St. Marie's song, "The Universal Soldier," with a strong young voice, pouring my heart into every word: "He's five foot two and he's six foot four. He fights with missiles and with spears. He's all of 17 and he's almost 31 and he's been a soldier for a thousand years."

At 28 I was divorced and moved with my daughters, Tiffany, six, and Anna, just three, to start a new career and life in Canada. In 1980 I married Ted Klassen, a Mennonite by birth and pacifist by conscience. Today I claim this faith as my own. Among the deepest rivers of belief that flow within me is the conviction that aggression, disregard for human rights, violence and, ultimately, taking another's life in war, are wrong.

The fateful day known universally as 9/11 was a life-shaping event. Two weeks after 9/11 I was visiting Tiffany at her home near Washington, D.C., where I met the man who had claimed her heart and with whom she hoped to build a future. Luke, 48, oldest son of a Jewish family of 12 children from

In love with peace... and a soldier



Photo courtesy of Joanne Klassen

Author Joanne Klassen's son-in-law, Luke, an American Army Reservist for 28 years, is pictured with his young son, Ben. While a pacifist, Klassen says, "I also stand with loving pride beside my American soldier."

Elmira, N.Y., was managing a large team of architects and engineers that construct and maintain government buildings in the nation's capital. He'd been active in the Army Reserve since college and still spent weekends with his engineering unit.

When I asked Luke if he thought he'd be called up for active duty, he said, "They don't need old guys like me." Two weeks later he received orders to lead a team of engineering soldiers to head up construction of the first U.S. military base to help fight the Taliban in Afghanistan.

We are pacifists. We love Tiffany. Tiffany loves Luke. Luke was a soldier, serving in the U.S. military overseas. Suddenly we saw American soldiers in a whole new light. It became personal. The statistics of troop losses, the war news and even

the weather "over there" flowed hot and cold in the very cells of our bodies. Our prayers acquired an intensity we never would have imagined.

On a recent visit to see Tiffany, Luke and my beautiful grandson, Ben, I shopped in the Army PX store at Walter Reed Military Hospital with Tiffany. As a young woman much like my daughter pushed a wheelchair past us, we froze when we saw the thin young man in the chair. His legs were missing. The price of war became real as we shopped for diapers. Although I hate the war, I love the soldier who, like my son-in-law, did what he believed was right.

Back home, Colonel Luke had a decision to make. He received the honour of being selected to attend the War College, next step in preparation to become a general. At 51, this is the pinnacle of

army service. I held my breath, thinking of my daughter and wee grandson while awaiting his decision. Luke is an engineer unit commander at Fort Meade, a part-time job performed on top of 12-hour weekdays as an architect in Washington, and 24-hour days as Tiffany's husband and Ben's dad. Luke is my soldier. He exemplifies honour, service, loyalty and excellence. I breathed a deep sigh of relief when he chose to end his military career after 28 years.

I am a pacifist. I believe with my whole being that war is wrong. I stand in opposition to George Bush's American military strategies—and I also stand with loving pride beside my American soldier. I pray today with new vision for a world at peace and for the safety of every parent's child and child's parent in uniform.

"Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me."

—Joanne Klassen, Winnipeg

The author is a member of Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg and founder of Heart-space Writing School.

Letters

Make a 'mission trip' to your local thrift store

I read with interest the news brief on page 15 of the Jan. 8 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* that Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Thrift Shops "contributed a record \$5.1 million to the work of MCC this past fiscal year." There is much to be grateful for in the many ways MCC supports its ongoing work of humanitarian aid.

We are all acquainted with the many worthwhile mission trips made by people of all ages in our constituency on an ongoing basis. But in the most recent Sardis Community

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.

Church newsletter, Helen Pauls suggested that people make a "mission trip" to the Chilliwack (B.C.) MCC Thrift Shop. With a constant need for volunteers, such a "mission trip" would give people a good glimpse of what mission is all about in our own community.

There, one will discover street people,

people receiving social services and a great variety of ethnic persons. Treating people off the street with respect is also a mission and not only in providing the useful products they need.

Why not make your local MCC Thrift Shop your next mission trip?

—**George Epp, Chilliwack B.C.**

WILL BRAUN



New Order voice

Our church is fueled by the Word of God, the Holy Spirit and fossil fuels. Without oil, many of us couldn't get to church, we wouldn't be able to heat our buildings, we wouldn't be able to meet as a broader family, we wouldn't have food for our potlucks, and many of our ways of expressing compassion would be ruled out. Without oil we'd have to reinvent how faith works.

With the growing consensus on the need to address climate change, it is becoming clear we must fundamentally change how we function as a church in order to reduce our oil dependence.

In my last column I asked the leaders of three church agencies about climate change. I heard of considerable concern, but limited action to date. Wondering about the chances of that concern translating into action, I went back to the same leaders—as promised—to ask whether they could imagine a 50 percent reduction in the greenhouse gas emissions of their organizations over five years.

"We are already very careful...very bare bones," said Robert J. Suderman of the MC Canada office. Many staff already walk or bike to work, some have moved to within walking distance, and they keep air travel to a minimum. I assume this represents a mix of environmental altruism and Mennonite frugality. Still, he said, "undoubtedly we can do more." Suderman believes specific targets are "definitely worth considering," even if a 50 percent cut is hard to imagine. Climate impact will be on the agenda at the July delegate assembly.

"Absolutely," and "a definite yes" were Ron Dueck's replies when asked if targets are useful and if he could imagine a 50 percent cut in Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) emissions. Dueck, who chairs MCC's binational board, believes a 50 percent reduction in air

Frugal instincts in a warming world

Leadership is needed, but leaders...live the most oil-dependent lives; they fly more than anyone.

travel for organizational meetings and in paper use over five years is possible. Transportation of aid shipments is more of a dilemma. For him, it is part of the call to love one's neighbours. "In order to help individuals, we have to address systemic issues," he said, adding that part of addressing poverty in the Global South is reducing climate impacts in North America.

"It is much easier to justify our lifestyle practices than to actually find solutions," said Dueck. It seems MCC has the momentum to take it beyond justifications. Dueck said much of that momentum is coming from younger people within MCC.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) is also ready to get down to business. Director Jim Cornelius said he would like to see a thorough audit of CFGB climate impacts and then an action plan based on the audit. While affirming the value of targets, he said he doesn't have enough information now to know what the right goal would be for CFGB. Some staff have started budgeting air travel miles, restricting annual flights based not only on monetary constraints but self-imposed mileage limitations.

A year from now I'll check back with these agencies to see how things are going.

On climate change, humanity seems stuck between good intentions and firm action. Leadership is needed, but leaders—whether politicians, authors or CEOs—live the most oil-dependent lives;

they fly more than anyone. The faith community has an opportunity to step in and lead.

Somewhat to my surprise, I found we Mennos are more or less poised for action on climate issues. Any self-congratulation would be fatally premature, but our tradition of caring, and our ingrained, bare-bones frugality could form the building blocks of a bold witness to the world.

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

Church must catch up to government on gay rights

Parliament has now spoken twice on the question of the rights of gays and lesbians, including the right to same-sex marriage. The courts, including the Supreme Court, have also ruled on these questions. It seems that there will be no changes possible through legal or political channels.

What does this mean for Christians of the Mennonite confession?

First, it means that we should no longer use any resources to oppose gay rights, which are now firmly entrenched in law and legal precedent.

Second, the legal and political realities should move us to question whether the opposition to gay rights was misguided at best and unscriptural at worst—in the sense that opposition to the ordination of women and

ignorance of ecological concerns were unscriptural.

Third, we need to move as quickly as possible to change our attitudes and policies toward the welcoming and acceptance of gays and lesbians in our congregations. The reality of gender differences is now seen as irrelevant when it comes to participation in the church and leadership roles; orientation should therefore be seen as irrelevant to complete inclusion in our congregations.

Fourth, we need to see that Galatians 3:27-28 could read: *“For as many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, there is neither gay nor straight, for all are one in Christ Jesus.”*

Fifth, it is clear now that all

Christian communities in Canada will—sooner or later—accept gays and lesbians into their fellowship subject only to the qualification that they confess Jesus Christ as Lord. Why don't we make it sooner rather than later? That way we do not draw out the pain and anguish that we are causing our lesbian and gay brothers and sisters, and their families and friends.

Finally, I know that there is still a small minority in our congregations fearful of lesbians and gays, fearful even of those who acknowledge Christ as Lord. Let us find ways to assure them that their fears are unfounded, and that accepting lesbians and gays is scriptural.

“You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 19:19).

—Jim Suderman, Winnipeg

PHIL WAGLER



Outside the box

As a young pastor with much to learn, I must pay close attention to the words of the silver-tops surrounding me. Recently, one such weathered saint kindly pointed out to our whole church family that I really had no idea what I was doing in 2006. I openly confessed that he was right.

Perhaps you will recall that our congregation changed our communal pace last year to Sabbath as a community of believers. There were several reasons for doing this, not the least of which was a desire to honour the wisdom of the Scriptures that call God's people to cease striving every seventh year and jubilee every 50th. It can only do us good to re-orient ourselves on the core elements of this sojourn—the love of God and neighbour, and our utter dependence on God—but that does not mean it is easy.

So here we are with 2006 an ever-shrinking speck in the rearview mirror and what did we learn? Here's what I see among us as a result of a year of breaking rhythm:

• **We are more aware of the heart of God.** We seem more sensitive, more conscious of what both pains and pleasures our Lord. We are more willing to take risks in his name because we somehow sense that this makes him smile. We have now decided to embark on a journey of new church multiplication in our area; this excites and frightens us, but since we are more aware of God's heart, we can't not move in this direction.

• **We are more aware of each other.** We seem more determined to know each other, not just know of each other. Having heard more of each other's stories, we are aware of the grace that has rescued us all and is demand-

I really don't know what I'm doing

We seem more hungry and thirsty for righteousness and God's Word.

ed of us all.

• **We are more aware of joy.** Those with serious Menno roots can make life an exceedingly serious business. Our weddings and funerals can look psychotically similar, while our weekly gatherings can be about as emotionally invigorating as a corporate reading of tax law on the sale of sawdust. Around here we have learned to laugh again, to enjoy God and each other, to enjoy salvation, and even to rejoice in our trials—for our strength is his joy.

• **We are more hungry.** We seem more hungry and thirsty for righteousness and God's Word. In 2006, more than 30 home churches—of three households each—were in the Word together and that feasting has spilled over into 2007. Our adult education has been reinvigorated from one class of about 15 in 2005 to an average of about 60 at the beginning of this year, and discussion in one class has already led to plans for a more effective food bank in our area.

• **We are more aware that we don't know what we're doing.** As leaders we didn't know what we were doing as we entered a Sabbath year and that was precisely the point. We had this church thing pretty much figured out and for that very reason we needed to stop—be-

cause at the end of the day the church is the Lord's and we risk undermining the whole enterprise if we claim that any of this is because of us. So my more mature brother was right. I really don't know what I'm doing and I'd kind of like to keep it that way.

Phil Wagler is one of many disciples of Jesus at Zurich Mennonite Church, Ontario. You can learn nothing from him at phil_wagler@yahoo.ca.

Praying to God as 'Our Father' is appropriate

While our family has been blessed over the years by the remarkable devotional book, "Rejoice," there is one little concern that I would like to express.

This concern centres around the prayers at the close of the daily devotionals. I have no quarrel with the various terms used to address God. It is quite in order, biblically, to use the terms "God," "Jesus," "Lord," "Saviour," etc. In some cases, however, there is no term of address at all. In such cases, to whom are we then praying?

A bigger concern for me, however, is the avoidance—by design—of the term, "Our Father." I have dialogued about this matter with the editor of "Rejoice," Byron Rempel-Burkholder. He tells me the reason for avoiding "Our Father" is that it is hurtful to some readers who have had bad experiences in their lives with their fathers.

If that is the case, I would suggest that we should find a better way of helping these people with their problem than simply avoiding the use of the term, "Our Father." Instructors at our Mennonite educational centres could perhaps contribute to finding that better way.

—Frank K. Isaac, Winnipeg

People who worship or worshipping people?

Thank you for your faithful work on behalf of the larger church constituency.

I wish to comment on the Jan. 8 "Refreshing winds' of worship" article on page 8. I appreciate much of what has been presented in workshops, articles and books on worship in recent years. To date, these have focused primarily on public worship services and thus mainly on one hour of the week. I value well-planned worship services, but does Scripture call us to be a people who worship or a worshipping people?

I hope to see the day when we explore this question with as much or more energy as we are currently giving to the more limited aspect of worship. Perhaps Jesus pointed us in that direction when he told the Samaritan woman that "the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither

on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.... [T]he true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth." I sense that we seek to experience this in public worship, but rarely in daily living.

Paul implored the believers in Rome with these words: "I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." This suggests to me that we are called to be a worshipping people rather than a people who worship. Can someone help us think outside the Sunday morning box?

—Clarence Epp, Winnipeg

Young reader missed Pontius Puddle cartoon

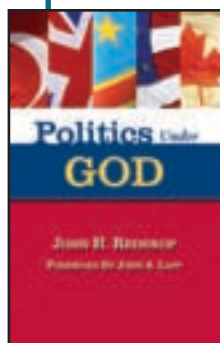
My name is Joshua Kuepfer. I am 12 years old and I always look for the Pontius Puddle in your magazine. I was disappointed at not finding it in the Jan. 8 issue and would really appreciate if you added a new section to your magazine; something that appeals to nine- to 16-year-olds would be ideal. Some of my ideas include a Christian humour section or an area of real life stories like they have in the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books.

—Joshua Kuepfer, Richmond, B.C.

Pontius Puddle



New Books from Herald Press



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Philip K. Clemens illustrates how the Sermon on the Mount opens new avenues of discipleship when received not as law, but as Jesus' generous welcome to people from all walks of life. Paper, 224 pages, \$17.49

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Winnipeg

Childhood poverty the theme of Heritage Centre art exhibit

Attending opening night at the latest Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery show felt like walking into a school playground at recess. It was noisy. It was alive and colourful, and certainly not the quiet reflective setting one expects to view an art show in.

But that did not unsettle artist Rhian Brynjolson, whose show "Playgrounds" was being opened. As a matter of fact, a swarm of Grade 4 to 6 students from Wellington Elementary School in Winnipeg's inner city were her special guests and assistants at the Jan. 19 opening.

Gallery curator Ray Dirks invited Brynjolson because he "liked why she was doing what she was doing" with her artistic depictions of children who daily face difficult circumstances, poverty, abuse or war. "She doesn't deny it, but champions their dignity, their worth, energy and good humour," said Dirks. "She addresses social issues in a way that is realistic yet hopeful. She is not only talented artistically, but passionate about issues of poverty and children."

Brynjolson is a children's book illustrator, author of *Art and Illustration in the Classroom* and art teacher at

Wellington Elementary. Prior to teaching there, Brynjolson worked as a community worker in the West Broadway neighbourhood of Winnipeg.

"These paintings are not these particular children [her students at Wellington], but some of the situations I've encountered at the school and in the neighbourhood have inspired me," she said. "Some of them have been in abusive situations. Some have brothers or sisters in neighbourhood gangs. Their behaviour and stories are reflected in the art, as is their creativity, joy and survival."

In her work, children swing, balance, skip and sometimes defy gravity against a backdrop of poverty or destruction.

"I play on canvas, sorting through rubble for bits of hope and small victories, wishing for the collective will of a war on poverty, wishing that the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, drafted in 1959, could one day be fulfilled. In the meantime, we offer breakfast programs and tape to fix broken shoes; such meagre aid and such small condolences," writes Brynjolson about



Photo by Evelyn Rempel Petkau

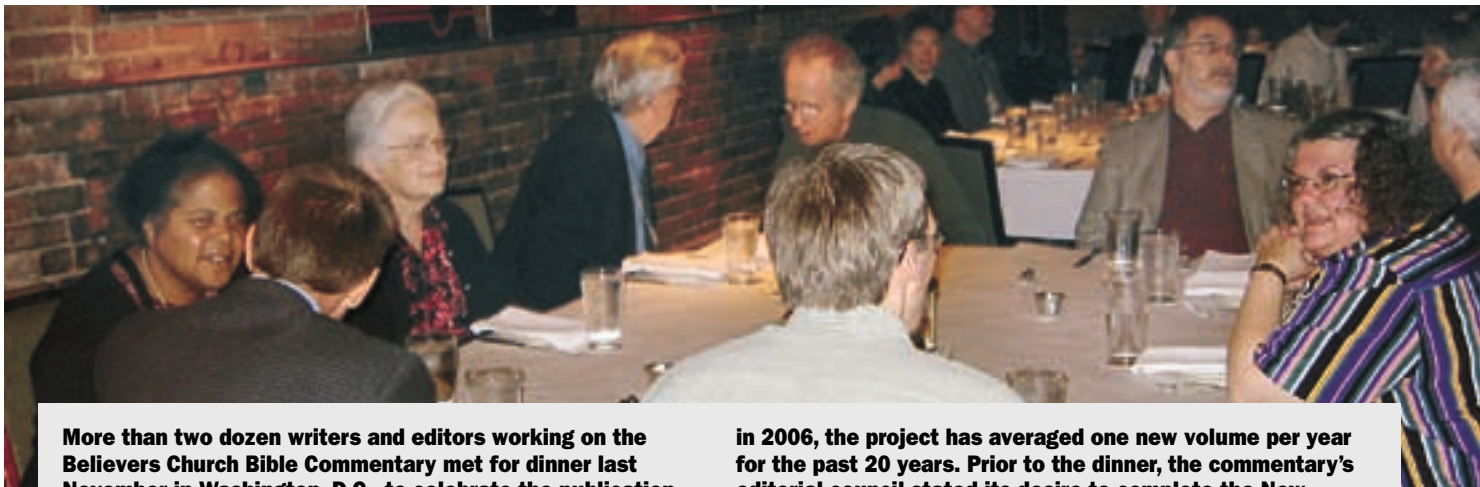
In her show "Playgrounds," artist, illustrator, author and teacher Rhian Brynjolson focuses on children in the inner city and the social issues they face daily.

"Playgrounds."

Brynjolson included some of the photography and paintings of her students in her show. The students proudly showed off their "dream community," a floor model of the kind of neighbourhood they would like to see. "If you get hurt, there's always help, that's why there are all the hospitals. Everything's free. We have a meeting place, the lighthouse, in case of an emergency," they point out.

Her students are equally as excited to show Brynjolson's work. "They [Brynjolson's paintings] make you

Continued on page 16



ECBC editorial council photo

More than two dozen writers and editors working on the Believers Church Bible Commentary met for dinner last November in Washington, D.C., to celebrate the publication of 20 volumes in 20 years. The first volume, Jeremiah, was published in 1986. With the publication of the Psalms volume

in 2006, the project has averaged one new volume per year for the past 20 years. Prior to the dinner, the commentary's editorial council stated its desire to complete the New Testament volumes within 10 years and the Old Testament volumes within 14 years.

Playgrounds *From page 15*

think.... They are about respect, friendship, keeping on trying, safety, war and anger," they explain.

"For some people, the paintings bring back childhood memories. Some see them as disturbing," Brynjolson acknowledged. "I try to leave them open so the viewers can bring their own responses to them."

Yet her work represents a message she is anxious to get out. "It disturbs me how seldom the phrase 'child poverty' is uttered by politicians—how the income gap is really growing and how neighbourhoods are growing apart. We don't understand the effect on children, here in our own inner city and around the world."

"Playgrounds" runs at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery until March 3.

—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Arts note**New Oke novel on DVD**

With the journey west behind her, a young woman looks forward to creating a home and family on the new frontier in *Love's Abiding Joy*, which arrived on DVD from Fox Faith, a new faith-based label from Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, earlier this year. Based on the fourth novel in the "Love Comes Softly" series by bestselling author Janette Oke, *Love's Abiding Joy* follows the enduring romance of pioneers Missie and Willie Lahaye as they build a new future together in the untamed frontier. With more than 30 million copies of the books sold, fans can continue to follow the inspirational love story of a more innocent time in this heartwarming sequel, written and directed by Michael Landon, Jr. The three previous titles in the series—*Love Comes Softly*, *Love's Enduring Promise* and *Love's Long Journey*—are ranked as the three highest-rated films in the history of The Hallmark Channel and are currently on the Christian Booksellers Association Top 10 adult titles charts. *Love's Abiding Joy* is rated PG (for mature theme).

—Fox Faith release

Waterloo, Ont.**Conrad Grebel University College introduces Rudolph and Hedwig Rempel Music Award**

To recognize his family's passion for music, Rudy Rempel has established the Rudolph and Hedwig Rempel Music Award at Conrad Grebel University College. This endowment will provide four students with \$2,500 each over four years to support and promote their musical studies at Conrad Grebel and the University of Waterloo.

Born in Halbstadt, Ukraine, and blind since the age of two, Rempel developed a keen ear and a love for music. He played piano from a young age and learned to play a variety of other instruments as well. He attended a music school in Simferapol in the Crimea, where he became a teacher, including of a class of blind music students. Although destined for fame in Leningrad, World War II interrupted his musical studies and led him on a different path.

Rempel immigrated to Waterloo in 1948 after spending five years during the war in Germany. Soon after arriving in Canada, he met his future wife, Hedy, who had immigrated to Canada in 1924 from Gnadenfeld, Ukraine. The Rempels settled in Kitchener,



Rudolph and Hedwig Rempel

Ont., and had a son, Walter.

Rempel worked at various projects to improve the quality of life of blind persons and helped the Canadian Mint to design coins that could be easily identified by touch by blind people. He served for four years as national president of the Council of the Blind.

His wife, who died in 2003, managed the family's finances, allowing the fruits of their modest life and their love of music to make this award possible.

"If this gift makes a little music, I'll be happy," mused Rempel. "It will be nice if this inspires students."

—Conrad Grebel release
by **Jennifer Konkle**

Winnipeg**CMU music therapy program granted Canadian accreditation**

The Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) music therapy program passed a significant milestone before Christmas when it was granted accreditation by the Canadian Association for Music Therapy (CAMT).

The decision means that music therapy students at CMU will be able to apply for internships with CAMT-approved organizations, and graduates of the program are eligible to apply to be an accredited music therapist—a definite aid in searching for employment.

"It's very affirming to receive the accreditation," says assistant professor of

music therapy Jim Wiebe, who directs the program. "It shows that our courses are meeting the requirements expected by people who are professionals in this field."

CMU's music therapy program was started two years ago; it is the only one in the Prairie provinces, and one of only six in Canada. The goal of the program is to teach students to use music to promote positive changes in the mental, physical, emotional or spiritual functioning of individuals and groups.

"We like to say that music is God's gift," says Wiebe. "But it's not just a gift for our ears. It affects us at many levels—physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. It enhances the quality of our lives, particularly at times when we are suffering, experiencing a crisis or feeling loss of control. A music therapist is trained to use music to help promote, maintain and restore people's health."

—CMU release by **John Longhurst**

Herschel, Sask.

Local pastor the author of online Bible study

It's 10 o'clock on a frosty winter morning and Claire Ewert Fisher is at her desk at Herschel Ebenfeld Mennonite Church. As co-pastor of two Mennonite congregations—Herschel and Fiske—Ewert Fisher shares preaching and teaching duties at the small rural churches with her husband Garth.

She can be also found online—at least until the end of February. She has written the Adult Bible Study Online feature for Faith and Life Resources, a division of Mennonite Publishing Network. The online accompaniment to the Bible study is meant to “bring current events and Bible study together.” Her contribu-

tion is a weekly write-up related to the Bible study lesson of the day and can be found at www.mph.org/abs/.

Being able to interpret the world around her has helped Ewert Fisher connect with various age groups. And although her online writing is for adults, Fisher admits she likes to write for youths and young adults. “I tend to use more contemporary images [in preaching],” she says, adding that she aims her comments on Sunday morning to the youths in the congregation.

Twists and turns along life's path have led her to grow spiritually in other Christ-centred denomina-

tions. As part of a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assignment in the Philippines, she became exposed to the

Roman Catholic Church. And after her first husband died in 1991, she got involved at the Catholic retreat centre in Saskatoon.

“It opened my spiritual life like never before,” Fisher Ewert says. She also found inspiration in authors like Nancy Reeves, a local Catholic writer and speaker, and Barbara Brown Taylor, an Episcopal priest from the U.S.

Three years ago she joined two others at the Queen's House of Retreat and Renewal Centre in Saskatoon in the role of spiritual director. Together, they plan monthly workshops for a two-year program that teaches participants spiritual direction. “It's formation work,” she says.

In addition to the strong Catholic influence, she also took her seminary training at a Lutheran school.

“But I still believe in Mennonites because we have our ethics figured out,” she states.

—**Karin Fehderau**

‘It opened my spiritual life like never before.’

Strasbourg, France

Book named 2006 selection for Global Anabaptist-Mennonite Shelf of Literature

Mennonite World Conference (MWC) has announced the release of its 2006 selection for the Global Anabaptist-Mennonite Shelf of Literature. The new book is entitled *Stewardship for All?* Subtitled “Two believers—one from a poor country, one from a rich country—speak from their settings,” the book is authored by Bedru Hussein of Ethiopia and American Lynn Miller.

Stewardship for All? offers a collaborative approach to a subject which has become exhausting in some parts of the world, while it has energized fellowships elsewhere in the global family of faith.

Hussein initially wrote Part 1 for the Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) as it faced the need to fund its own ministries after the departure of North American missionaries. Miller wrote Part 2, reflecting on the flame at the heart of stewardship—God's boundless generosity. Part 3 includes a handful of stories from fellow-

ships and individuals in various parts of the world, including Belize, Indonesia, Paraguay, Ethiopia and the U.S., about their experiences of practising stewardship today.

“Our settings and our circumstances can have a great effect on what we think Jesus and the Bible say,” commented MWC general secretary Larry Miller. “This unusual pairing of writers brings together voices from two vastly different parts of the world. They open an old subject to more light, no matter where and how we live.”

Published by Good Books, *Stewardship for All?* contains a section of discussion questions, making the book a helpful resource for small groups, Sunday school classes and weekend retreats.

Stewardship for All? is the fifth title in the Global Anabaptist-Mennonite Shelf of Literature. Previous selections include *A Culture of Peace* by Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider and Paulus Widjaja (2005); *God's Shalom Project* by Bernhard Ott (2004); *Sharing Gifts in the Global Family of Faith* by

Pakisa Tshimika and Tim Lind (2003); and *From Anabaptist Seed* by C. Arnold Snyder (2002).

Stewardship for All? is available in Canada from the Pandora Book Shop (1-866-696-1678).

—MWC release by **Phyllis Pellman Good**



Arts note

B.C. ferries carrying Mennonite anthology

Half in the Sun, a literary anthology published by Ronsdale Press last year that includes 25 writers in British Columbia of Mennonite heritage, has been selected for promotion on British Columbia ferries from January until March. The cover image appears on a poster that is displayed outside the Passages Gift Shops, where the books are for sale. The poster came about through the Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia; book titles are submitted by B.C. publishers and the association chooses which books to feature on the poster “by lot.” The program is designed to promote B.C. authors.

—**Elsie K. Neufeld**

Baden, Ont.

Leaders warned to not treat young adults as church consumers

“Young adults and the church” was the focus of the newly renamed Pastors, Chaplains and Congregational Leaders Seminar, held last month at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden.

Many Mennonite Church Eastern Canada congregations are struggling with the fact that the 18- to 28-year-old demographic is missing, and they don't know what to do about it. Like Jacob, who struggled with God at Peniel (Genesis 32), churches feel as if they are struggling with an unknown opponent in the dark. They feel alone, bereft, just as Jacob did, after sending

his family to the other side of the river before nightfall. Their families are gone and they wonder if they will see them again.

Ed Janzen, chaplain at Conrad Grebel University College and parent of two young adults, was the seminar's keynote speaker. His first “take home point” was that vital congregations need structures to connect and tell stories between the generations, where all are treated with deference and dignity. Questions, communication, community and truth in relationships are all invited and needed.

In his struggle with God, Jacob—



Janzen

“the sneaking cheat”—was blessed and re-named Israel—“the one who strives with God.” In multi-generational conversations, the honest and honouring questioning results in blessing

and in change. Like Israel, churches strive with God and with humans.

A panel of young adults, comprised of Suzanne Bender, Mary Anne Cressman, Barrett Cressman, Chris Keller and Leah Reesor, told their stories of restless passion to the gathered leaders—stories of their nomadic lives (geographically, educationally, congregationally and vocationally), of their desires to live out lives of Christ-like

Richmond, B.C.

Math prof leads parishioners to ‘the mind of Christ’

The surprise highlight of “The mind of Christ” learning weekend at Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, B.C. was Tim Rogalsky's inspired mathematics-based presentation. Some had feared if word got out that a workshop entitled “Celebrating the wonders of God” was being led by a math professor, he would be faced with an empty room.

Instead, more than 50 people gathered on Jan. 19 for the first of three sessions, to hear the story of Blaise Pascal. This 17th century mathematician and philosopher left a profound witness to the work of the Spirit in all aspects of his work and life. He valued mind and heart equally, and practised a discipleship of obedience in baptism, prayer, acts of charity and care for the poor. All this Pascal offered out of a Spirit-inspired celebration of God.

The next afternoon participants were introduced to the world of contemporary higher mathematics. Terms such as “chaos theory,” “attractors,” “fractals” and “the butterfly effect” set the stage for theological reflections on whether the rules of the universe are fixed or whether the reality



Following the two-day “Mind of Christ” learning weekend on Jan. 19 to 20, Tim Rogalsky spoke at Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, B.C., on Jan. 21. His sermon was entitled “Surprised by the Saviour: Jesus and the woman at the well.”

of the cosmos includes both independence and reliability, chance and necessity, order and disorder, time and eternity?

Rogalsky observed that in higher mathematics' demonstration of human limitations is found the implication that there may be room for some other kind of knowing beyond ours, a knowing which is not limited. It is one thing to read about a God who is eternal, but to watch an unfolding infinity demonstrated within and through a mathematical formula brought the theology of eternity into participants' hearts and minds in a whole new way.

These contemplations of the wonders of God concluded with a Vespers service.

The learning weekend also featured three other teachers: John J. Friesen, who set an historical overview of Anabaptist teachings on conflict and reconciliation within the larger Christian story; Gary Yamasaki, who demonstrated the importance of understanding “point of view” and asking of Scripture the same questions viewers intuitively ask after watching a movie; and, Chris Huebner, who spoke about medical ethics in the body of Christ.

—**Laura Sportack**

Photo by Amy Dueckman

shalom in communities, and of their desire to just be part of the church in every aspect of its communal life.

Janzen's second "take home point" was, "Don't treat young adults as consumers." Don't build programs or worship services for them and then invite them to take part, he said. Instead, treat them like members of the family, who have gifts to offer to both the church and the community. By doing this, church communities become holy places, similar to "Peniel," where Jacob saw God "face to face."

A second panel included the young adults and three leaders—MC Eastern Canada executive minister Dave Martin; Mennonite Central Committee Ontario director Arli Klassen; and Nith Valley Mennonite Church pastor Matthew Isert-Bender, who is a member of the church's Time of Discernment Committee. The leaders spoke with one voice about how impressed they were with the faithfulness of the young adults in their desire to live out the teachings they had received from their families and church schools.

—**Dave Rogalsky**

Mennonite Church Alberta DELEGATE SESSIONS

March 23 & 24, 2007

Lethbridge Mennonite Church

GUEST SPEAKER:

Henry Paetkau

Conrad Grebel University College

Roundtable discussion on

Vision & Mission

for Mennonite Church Alberta

Our theme is a precursor for
MC Canada's Abbotsford
National conference:

Built to Last

1 Corinthians 3:11 "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid: that foundation is Jesus Christ".



Valaqua

Growing in faith at snow camp

I loved snow camp! I filled my days with doing crafts; listening to the speaker, Allyson Lucas; singing; and just hanging out with friends.

Friday night was spent finding a room and meeting people. We spent a lot of our evening playing games oriented towards helping us meet new people.

On Saturday night we played Mission Impossible. It was great!

One thing that happened on Saturday that wasn't so great, though, was the speaker slipped on the ice and broke a bone in her elbow. She had to be taken to the hospital.

The weekend's theme was "How you see others, how you see yourself, and how you see God." A prison inmate named Rob came in to talk to us about his life, how peer pressure affected it, and how we should not let peer pressure affect our lives in a bad way.

We also watched a film on a kernel of popcorn popping. It was supposed to represent how the first thought we have of something or someone is not always the right one. Later, we saw a movie explaining someone's view on personalities; the theory is that you can be like a lion, otter, beaver or golden retriever, or a mix of more than one. I found it very interesting.

I think it is important for Alberta youths to come to snow camp for many reasons. One is so they can challenge their faith and help it grow. At camp, I find just being outside in God's

creation helps my faith grow. Also, you meet so many new people. I made friends in one weekend and I feel like I



Photo by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

Outdoor games were just one of many ways snow campers at Camp Valaqua relate to each other and to God.

have known them for years.

The adults you meet also help to challenge your faith. At camp, you can be open and just be yourself. It is a time when you can feel very relaxed and you can be your own person.

—**Kathleen Bergen**

The author is in Grade 7 and attends First Mennonite Church, Edmonton.

I wanted a university experience that was more than just basketball. I wanted to go to a school where I could play competitively, but have it balanced with my studies, social life and interest in service. I found that at CMU. Jeremy Zehr, Deer Creek, Illinois (2006 grad)

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Photo by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld



Terry Lesser, second from right, was installed as the pastor of Springridge Mennonite Church in Pincher Creek, Alta., on Nov. 26. The service included a meditation by Jim Shantz on ways to support, encourage and train pastors, as well as communion and a potluck. Shantz said, "We believe Terry to be the youngest sole lead pastor of a church ever installed in MC Alberta." He is 22. Also pictured are Bryan and Arlene Fuhr, and Terry's wife, Melissa Lesser.



Photo by Janet Weber

Dave Tiessen was installed as the new pastor at Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton, Ont., on Nov. 19; he and his wife Janice were also received into church membership at the same time. Tiessen has pastored Mennonite congregations in Guelph, Mannheim and Leamington, Ont., and in Winnipeg over the past 25 years. Tiessen has joined the local Revs on Ice non-denominational hockey team as goalie.



Photo courtesy of Irma Neudorf

Jerry Buhler, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan conference pastor, left, installed Barb and Wilmer Froese, as co-pastors of Rosthern (Sask.) Mennonite Church on Jan. 7. Wilmer thanked the congregation for putting its trust in them. "We need to be partners in proclaiming God's Word," he said. "Before accepting the call to be your pastors, we counted the cost and felt it was worth it." Barb said that she had three wishes: Wisdom, love for each other, and more wishes and prayers. A number of people representing family members and various age groups and committees in the church formed a circle around the Froeses and prayed for them.

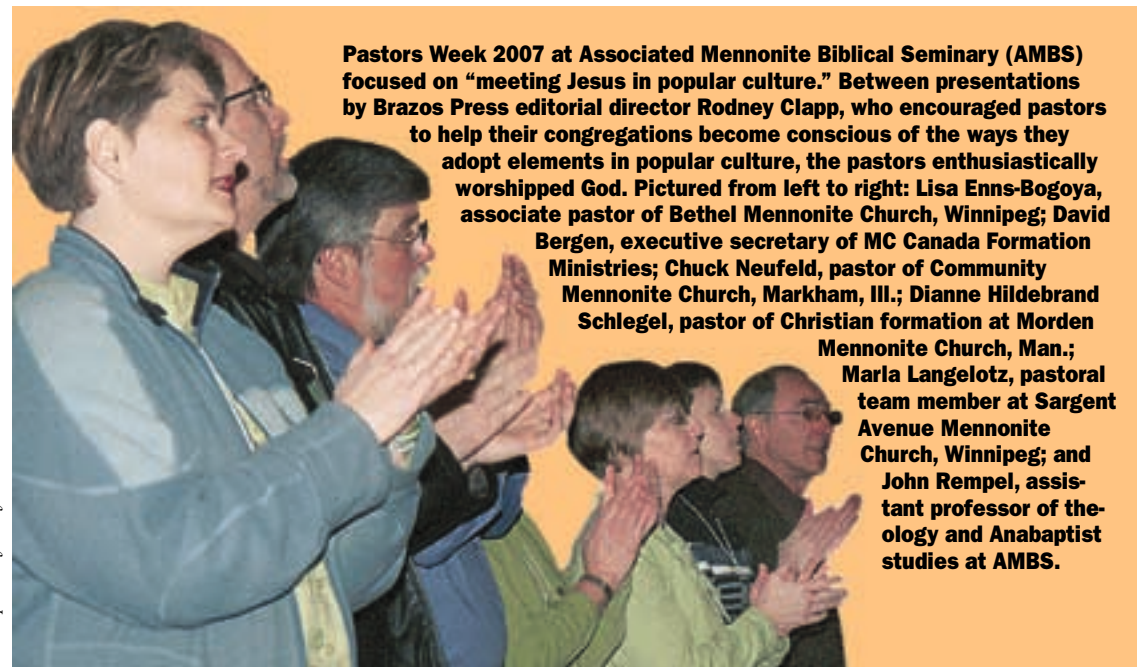
Church snapshots

North Leamington United Mennonite Church photo



North Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite Church recently held a weekend event to give thanks to God for the variety of calls, gifts, services and ministries that the congregation participates in—within the community and beyond. Rebecca Yoder Neufeld, Missional Formation and Congregational Partnerships facilitator for Mennonite Church Canada Witness, right, opened the Missions Fair by sharing stories about the children of Burkina Faso, West Africa. Also represented at the fair were Christian Peacemaker Teams, the local hospital, Meals on Wheels, Mennonite World Conference, the local Mennonite historical association, Shalom Counselling and United Mennonite Education Institute, among others. Neufeld also facilitated the "What is a missional church?" workshop. On Sunday morning, an audiovisual presentation of Jeff and Tany Warkentin's work with a new Mennonite church in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, was shown and a phone call to the Warkentins followed, during which the family shared some of their experiences in Burkina Faso. The worship service ended with a Litany of Blessing for service volunteers in the congregation.

AMBS photo by Mary E. Klassen



Pastors Week 2007 at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) focused on "meeting Jesus in popular culture." Between presentations by Brazos Press editorial director Rodney Clapp, who encouraged pastors to help their congregations become conscious of the ways they adopt elements in popular culture, the pastors enthusiastically worshipped God. Pictured from left to right: Lisa Enns-Bogoya, associate pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg; David Bergen, executive secretary of MC Canada Formation Ministries; Chuck Neufeld, pastor of Community Mennonite Church, Markham, Ill.; Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel, pastor of Christian formation at Morden Mennonite Church, Man.; Marla Langelotz, pastoral team member at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg; and John Rempel, assistant professor of theology and Anabaptist studies at AMBS.



Photo by Karen S. Peters

Lois Siemens, centre, was installed as pastor of Superb Mennonite Church, Kerrobert, Sask., on Jan. 14, by MC Saskatchewan conference minister Jerry Buhler, right, while a prayer circle of Elsbeth Bergen, left, Sarah Olfert, Jill Olfert and congregational chair Mike Warkentin laid hands on her. Following the service, Siemens' parents and other family members and friends joined the rural congregation and its new pastor for a community meal.

New Hamburg, Ont.

'Good citizen' receives provincial award

Wearing the jacket she bought at the local thrift store last year, Ruth Zehr of Hillcrest Mennonite Church in New Hamburg found herself flanked by Ontario Lieutenant Governor James K. Bartleman and Mike Colle, Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, on Jan. 24, as she was awarded one of 12 annual Ontario Government Medals for Good Citizenship.

Showing off the medal still pinned to her jacket, she said, "I didn't tell them that, though. I could have gone out and bought a whole new outfit, but I didn't need one."

Zehr began volunteering in summer Bible school at East Zorra Mennonite, near Tavistock, Ont., when she began high school. She was one of the first from her Amish Mennonite community who went to school beyond Grade 8. This exposed her to a world beyond the "good life of my sheltered family and church community."



Photo courtesy of the Ontario government

Ruth Zehr, centre, is pictured at the Ontario Legislature with her Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship that she received from Lieutenant Governor James Bartleman, left, and citizenship and immigration minister Mike Colle.

Others had less than she, and not just financially. Many spoke of abusive homes, lack of security, lack of con-

nections with family or church. This began a lifelong questioning on Zehr's part: "Why am I fortunate? Why am I more privileged?"

In the early years her apparent life of privilege led to feelings of guilt—"From everyone who has much, much will be required"—and she began to try to help those around her. "But guilt is not the answer," she says. "It only binds and hinders. Instead, generosity and gratitude are more appropriate." Gratitude at what God has given, and generosity to share out of that abundance.

By the time she was in her 40s, Zehr was able to begin to put this philosophy into words: "Guilt leads to gratitude, leads to a life of active community building."

Through the years she had heard many stories from people where she was volunteering, which moved her to build community.

In the mid-1960s, John Hess of Warden Woods Mennonite Church in Toronto invited rural Mennonite families to partner in friendship with urban families. Ruth, with her husband Ron, has carried on a lifelong friendship with a family from Toronto. In the 1980s two families from Kitchener-

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- RUSSIA and UKRAINE (July 27 - August 10)
- LANDS of the BIBLE (September 26 - October 8)
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- BEHIND THE VEIL - EXPERIENCING EGYPT (November 12-24 - with MEDA)

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- VIETNAM (January 18 - February 4)
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- MOSCOW and SIBERIA (May 24 - June 4)
- ENGLAND, SCOTLAND and WALES (June 25 - July 7)
- EUROPEAN HERITAGE (July 9-24)



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Waterloo, Ont., were added to their friendship circles through a similar program at the House of Friendship. Weekly contacts, either over the phone or in person, continue to this day.

Zehr continues to ask questions as the Toronto friend died of cancer in 2005: "Why does she suffer when I have it so good?" Transportation, listening without offering quick fixes ("there really are none"), and being an adult to talk to are the greatest gifts Zehr feels she has offered.

"We need to go out into the world and be salt and light," says Zehr. Growing up in an Amish family, she has seen the transition from Amish (build cultural fences to stay safe), to Amish Mennonite, and finally to Mennonite (declare a centre and reach out from it). Reaching out has changed Zehr. "Friendship is a two-way street."

A deep spirituality undergirds Zehr's volunteerism. "Spirituality and service need to be connected," she says. "I pray to God for strength, wisdom and courage."

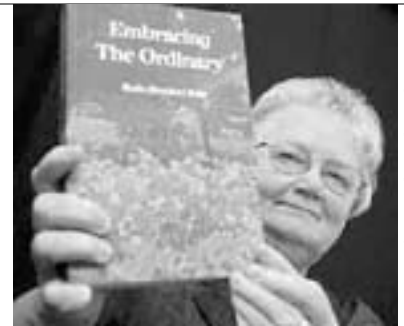
—**Dave Rogalsky**

Serving God through 'ordinary' efforts

Embracing the Ordinary. Ruth Zehr. Self-published, 2006. Available at the Pandora Press Book Shop in Kitchener, Ont.

The book is like Ruth's harvest in the Bible—gleanings from around the edges of life, not a full autobiography and yet neither a simple collection of anecdotes. It tells the stories of a life that asked God hard questions and stuck with God until answers became apparent. Some of the answers came in prayer, many more in contemplation of life, and yet others through serving people with friendship and ordinary love. (*Zehr is a 2007 recipient of the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship—see "Good citizen" receives provincial award," page 22.*) The book would best be seen as a collection of stories and read as such.

When a long-time friend was dying of cancer in Toronto, Zehr visited her often and just as often asked, "Why does she suffer when I have it so good?" Shortly after the friend died in December 2005, Zehr herself was diagnosed with cancer and pushed to complete her life story



New Hamburg Independent photo

Ruth Zehr self-published her book *Embracing the Ordinary* last year. It is available at Pandora Press.

before her surgery last May. Her writing club read many sections and gave helpful advice.

Due to the surgery, she reports "that was the first [New Hamburg] MCC Relief Sale I had missed in my memory." But look for her in the plant tent again this year.

Zehr's book tells the story of her life of service, doing what is needed in ordinary life situations, out of gratitude and because of God's generosity. Instead of seeing things as too meaningless to warrant her efforts, she "embraces the ordinary" as service worthy of God.

—**Dave Rogalsky**

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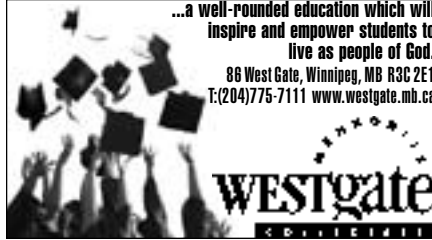
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Elkhart, Ind.

AMBS concludes Next Generation campaign

With the opening of the new Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary library and campus centre just months away, the seminary has concluded its Next Generation fundraising campaign, having reached its goal of \$20.4 million (all figures in US dollars) in cash and pledges.

AMBS president Nelson Kraybill shared the news with faculty, staff and students on Jan. 23.

The campaign, which began in July 2001, is the seminary's largest ever fundraising effort. It was established to strengthen the seminary as it prepares leaders for the next generation of the church. Components included:

- New library and campus centre: \$8.4 million, including a \$1.9 million endowment for ongoing operation and maintenance, provided in part by more than 60 gifts of \$10,000 or more;
- Annual Fund: \$6.8 million during the period of the campaign;
- Scholarships: \$2 million;
- !Explore: A theological program for high school youths: \$1.9 million, most of which was received as a grant from Lilly Endowment for the first four years of the program;
- Endowment for faculty support: \$1 million;
- Church Leadership Center programming and staff: \$500,000; and,
- Chapel of the Word, a smaller chapel for teaching worship and preaching: \$260,000 (completed in March 2006).

"We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to donors—friends from across Canada and the United States, alumni, employees, board members and students—for generous, even sacrificial giving," Kraybill said.

Funding for ongoing support of the seminary includes the scholarship component. These funds provide two full-tuition scholarships and stipends for living expenses, along with financial aid that helps numerous students each year.

—AMBS release by **Mary E. Klassen**

People&Events

Lancaster, Pa.—Lancaster Mennonite Conference credentialled leaders voted last month against affirming a recommendation by its Board of Bishops that would have allowed women to be ordained to serve in ministry and pastoral leadership. The constitution required 66.67 percent approval of the recommendation, but only 65.47 percent of the leaders approved the proposal. Because the bishops' recommendation was not affirmed, the policy affirmed by credentialled leaders in 1999 remains in effect. The 1999 recommendation approved granting a licence for specific ministry to women serving on church planting teams, pastoral teams or other specific ministries; while this licence grants all the privileges and responsibilities of an ordained person, this credential does not lead toward ordination for women. The 1999 policy also states that men will serve as primary leaders—or lead pastors—in Lancaster Conference congregations and that any exceptions require the approval of the Board of Bishops.
—From a report by the *Intelligencer Journal*

Winnipeg—“Values, vision and vitality” for churches, non-profit groups and businesses and “life-long learning for leaders”—that’s what Ted and Joanne Klassen hope to provide as new directors of the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) Centre for Leadership and Management. The couple, members of Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg, began their as-



CMU photo

Joanne and Ted Klassen



Ellen and Nelson Kraybill hold aloft “Banana Jesus,” a painting by Caribbean artist Luis Luma they received from the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) board honouring Nelson for 10 years of service as seminary president. The painting depicts Jesus doing something common people in the Caribbean do routinely—harvesting bananas. Kraybill began serving as AMBS president in January 1997 after serving as program director at the London Mennonite Centre in England, a pastor in Vermont and a high school teacher in Puerto Rico. AMBS photo by Mary E. Klassen

signment as directors of the centre in January, taking over from Neil and Herta Klassen, who helped found the centre in 2005. At present, the centre provides regular presentations for students, has held roundtable discussions for pastors, and publishes *Bulletin*, a newsletter about leadership issues. It is also running a pilot project called “Leadership development for church leaders,” which provides leadership development for pastors.

Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Doell—to Leanne and Carl, Carman Mennonite, Man., a son, Ezra Cole, Jan. 31.
Fehr—to Andrea and Clint, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Tyler Gregory, Jan. 28.
Hamilton—to Cindy and Jason, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a daughter, Carys Taite, Jan. 12.
Hinds—to Colleen and Jay, Warman Mennonite, Sask., a son, Isaiah Reid, Jan. 12.
Krueger—to Tracie and Dave, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Kate Marie Dorothy, Jan. 26.

Marriages

McCandless-Buckwalter—Andrew and Danielle (Warden Woods Mennonite, Toronto), in Belize, Central America, Jan. 4.
Neufeldt-Bergen—Marty (North Park Mennonite, Saskatoon) and Krista (Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man.), in Canmore, Alta., Aug. 9.

Deaths

Andres—Elizabeth, 91, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 31.
Bergman—Cornie, 80, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Jan. 18.
Enns—Agnes, 89, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Jan. 23.
Epp—Isaac, 85, Pleasant Point Mennonite, Clavet, Sask., Jan. 4.
Hildebrandt—Menno John, 72 Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Jan. 7.
Krahn—Abe A., 77, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Jan. 7.
Kroeger—Victor D., 69 (b. June 15, 1937), Springstein Mennonite, Man. Aug. 22. (An incorrect birthdate and age appeared in the Dec. 18 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*.)
Krueger—Mary, 93, Altona

Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Jan. 28.

Baptisms

Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.—Sandy Wong of Hong Kong, Dec. 25.
Carman Mennonite, Man.—Ron Doell, Jan. 21.
Osler Mennonite, Sask.—Tim Friesen, Connie Friesen, Jan. 21.

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.

School note

Goshen enrolment up

Goshen, Ind.—Enrolment and retention continue to rise at Goshen College. As the spring semester began last month, 934 students were enrolled in all programs at Goshen College compared with 870 for the spring semester in 2005-06 and 2004-05, and 854 in 2003-04, according to Bill Born, vice-president for student life and dean of students. In addition, fall-to-spring student retention figures continue to increase among first-year students. New enrolment figures show that 96.6 percent of first-year students attending classes in the fall are enrolled this spring. The comparable figure for 2001 was 88.6 percent. Last fall, the college began the 2006-07 academic year with an overall student enrolment of 951, compared with 922 a year earlier, according to the registrar's office. The enrolment count included both full- and part-time traditional students and those taking courses or seeking degrees through Goshen's Division of Adult and External Studies.
—Goshen College release

Mennonite Church Canada

Prayer requests

During winter quiet times, remember to pray and give thanks for:

- Growing mutually encouraging relationships between Peace Chinese Mennonite Church (British Columbia) and Macau Mennonite Church, which were begun during the 2006 Macau Learning Tour visit. A small group from Peace Church is travelling to Hong Kong this month as part of its Chinese New Year vacation and members are planning to visit their Macau brothers and sisters enroute.

- The Grace and Peace Church, a new Anabaptist/Mennonite church in Seoul, Korea, which held its first worship service on Jan. 4. Witness worker Cheryl Woelk reports that 29 people attended this historic service and that the communion service included questions and explanations of Anabaptist history and a message by the congregational leader, Nam Guishik.

- The Mennonite congregation of pastor Nguyen Hong Quang in Vietnam, which had part of its building dismantled by local authorities for the third time in the last 18 months. Pray for members of the congregation, as well as other churches related to the Mennonite Church of Vietnam as they seek to gain freedom for worship and recognition from authorities.

- Ben Wiebe of St. Catharines, Ont., on special assignment with MC Canada Witness, who is teaching New Testament courses at Union Biblical Seminary (UBS) in Pune, India, during February and March. This will be a return trip for Wiebe, who has taught at UBS in the past. The seminary trains Christian leaders, including those from Mennonite churches in

India. He also hopes to visit Mennonite churches in India. —**Hinke Loewen-Rudgers**

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Preston hosts community meal

Preston Mennonite Church continues its missional activity in and around Cambridge, extending the peace of Christ to those around it as it seeks to make faith relevant to its neighbours and to its community.

In 1978, Preston was one of the partners in starting the Lang's Farm Village Association, which provides social services in a traditionally high needs area of Cambridge. The congregation provides space in its building for some of the services, although the Spiritual Discovery Group, traditionally led by Preston's pastor, is currently in a re-organizational hiatus.

Not satisfied with just providing space and one board member, the congregation began a social evening about eight years ago, which has evolved into a community spaghetti supper. Pastor Claire Osinkosky attests to the great sauce made by volunteers, but admits that "it's the home-made pies that bring many people in."

A full house of 132 people signed up for this year's dinner, held on Jan. 26. Split evenly between Preston and Lang's Farm, the crowd enjoyed food, fellowship and the entertainment of Ch'ckl'ts, a vocal group led by a Preston member. The group uses the Preston building for practices, pointing to the fact that, for many congregations, the church property is a gift to the community.

This year's dinner participants included many more young families and children, understandable, perhaps,

since the Preston church is used twice weekly for a Lang's Farm parents/caregivers and tots program. Osinkosky believes that this makes the space familiar and comfortable to families.

Gerry Steinman, a long-time volunteer with the social evening, believes the program is successful in achieving its aims—connecting those who use the Lang's Farm programs with the congregation that supports them.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Northern churches voice concerns

Northern congregations voiced their concern and desire for ongoing Daily Vacation Bible School programs, leadership equipping, and for assistance in children's and youth programs, at the semi-annual meeting of members of the Mennonite Church Manitoba Partnership Circle, which embraces the various ministry circles that are made of north-south congregational partnerships, late last year.

Representatives of Cross Lake, Manigotagan, Matheson Island, Pauingassi/Little Grand and Riverton congregations, along with representatives from their partnering churches in the south, were present at the event hosted by Riverton Fellowship Circle.

Coming out of the discussions were the need for orientation workshops—on such topics as anti-racism—for southern youth groups, and for two-day learning tours of northern communities for southern church leaders.

They also recognized that they share many similar needs and would benefit from more networking among themselves. "We need to have gatherings—with laughter—a form of healing," said one participant.

Participants were reminded

that partnerships are a two-way street, and that concern and respect need to be shared.

The northern communities expressed interest in showing what church is like for them, and extended open invitations to visit during hunting season and join the trappers in their spiritual walk.

Northern congregations will be considering whether to have a council of native churches in Canada, which could then send representatives to the Native Mennonite Ministries meetings in North America. They will report back at the spring meeting, set for April 13 and 14 at Grunthal Berghaler Mennonite Church, at which Anita Keith will be the keynote speaker.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Military presence worries pastor

Osler Mennonite Church recently completed a three-week Sunday night study on peace and war. Members of the community were invited to attend the sessions.

As part of the study, MP Maurice Vellacott was invited to speak and answer questions. Instead, he sent an 18-page document detailing his convictions and the group then responded to his statement. A presentation by Christian Peacemaker Teams member Chris Buhler was also included; Buhler is a member at Osler Mennonite.

Church pastor Gordon Allaby said he has noticed more emphasis on the military in the news, including local newscasts, where he has seen "real intentional propaganda."

"I've seen flyovers at football and hockey games," he noted. Although common south of the border, Allaby, who moved to Osler from the U.S., said such occurrences are notably new additions in Canada.

“There was a jet fighter flown over at the Vanier Cup [university football championship], and at a recent hockey game a guard came out—a definite military presence,” said the pastor and father of one. Most people, he hinted, may not even notice the obvious focus on the military.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Church news briefs

- About 40 young adults attended the first annual college and career retreat at Camp Squeah on New Year's weekend. Pastor Tim Kuepfer of Peace Mennonite Church led

the group in a study of God's goodness in the past and leading for the future.

- Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church of Abbotsford sponsored a fundraising concert on Feb. 4, featuring the Abbotsford Male Chorus, raising funds for an African refugee family coming to Abbotsford through Mennonite Central Committee.
- West Abbotsford Mennonite Church sponsored a concert by the Welsh Brothers in January to benefit the Cyrus Centre for homeless youths in Abbotsford.
- Interim pastor Roland Cataford of First Mennonite Church, Burns Lake, has agreed to stay on in that position for another year.
- An Alpha course at Chinese

Grace Mennonite Church in Vancouver, conducted in Chinese, has attracted about 20 attendees.

- Members of Langley Mennonite Fellowship recently viewed the film *An Inconvenient Truth*, former U.S. vice-president Al Gore's documentary on global warming.
- Abbotsford's Emmanuel Mennonite Church has a newly remodelled banquet room, including stage area, professional lighting and sound, new flooring and fresh paint. It was used for the church Christmas banquet in December.
- Construction of Olivet Church, Abbotsford, is almost complete and members are looking forward to opening the

new building early this spring.

- Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, is seeking a full-time pastor for youths and young adults beginning in July. Peace Chinese has an outreach to Mandarin speaking immigrants; each Sunday its Cantonese service is translated into Mandarin.

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

GAIL SCHELLENBERG



From our leaders

As a member of the Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools (CAMS), I've been thinking about why I have spent much of my life working at our Mennonite church schools (Rosthern Junior College, Menno Simons Christian School, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate). Why do I believe that our schools play such a vital role in the life of our young people and our churches?

We offer academic challenge and opportunities to be involved in sports, drama, choirs and student leadership. But many public schools also do an excellent job of those same things. But if that's all we, as church schools, have to offer, we should probably close our doors. Don't get me wrong: learning, solid academics and opportunities are very important, but they only take on meaning when they're linked meaningfully to something else.

So what's the "something else"?

What I'm suggesting is that our CAMS schools and our colleges must also include building character and nurturing a particular worldview. We are in the business of opening questions and opportunities for students, so they can come to understand some of the mysteries of who they are and of our beautiful and broken world. Our minds and skills and abilities are gifts from God, and because they are gifts, they are not ours alone nor are they for ends that we alone desire. They are there so that in our wondering and questioning and creating we can serve others in love.

We are here to bear testimony that our learning matters most when our hearts are touched and our characters as children of God are formed. This link defines the

Celebrating Mennonite schools

**Our church schools exist
precisely because of a
people and a faith story....**

difference that we hope our students will experience. It is the challenge of integrating and connecting the knowledge gained with the capacity to love and serve creatively in our world.

Are our schools perfect? No, there are ways we can and ought to get better. We need to be educationally innovative and excellent. We need to work at consistently modelling love and restoration. But let us not doubt for a moment how important—how necessary—this very special learning environment is for our children and grandchildren.

Our church schools exist precisely because of a people and a faith story, because families and a larger faith community have said with their voices, their energy and their financial support, that our children need these faith roots. We ought never to take this for granted.

Differences are being made in young people's lives. They happen when academic learning becomes more than an end in itself and is celebrated as a natural gateway into the important stuff of our lives. They also happen when we nurture relationships within community and within our vision as a people of faith.

God has shown us an alternative vision of acceptance and grace—rooted in our relationship with God and in the life and teaching of Jesus. Our church schools are making important differences in the lives of students and for the life of the church. This needs to be celebrated!

Gail Schellenberg is the principal of Rosthern Junior College, Sask.

Birdsell to deliver Bechtel Lectures

Waterloo, Ont.—Canadian author Sandra Birdsell will deliver the 2007 Bechtel Lectures in Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies at Conrad Grebel University College on March 16 and 17. She has entitled her lectures “The confession of a reluctant Mennonite.”

In her first lecture, “Writing from the outside,” Birdsell will revisit the range of conclusions she arrived at after years of studying her Russian Mennonite relatives, and will offer a commentary on the influence their heritage had both on her development as a writer and on the themes of her fiction. In her second lecture, “From the inside out,” Birdsell will recall how, during a seven-year journey through the inner and outer landscapes of the Russian Mennonite world, she re-examined her Mennonite heritage, and will describe how she came to evoke the Mennonite voice while writing her historical novel, *The Russländer*.

The Bechtel Lectures begin at 7:30 p.m. each evening in the Conrad Grebel Great Hall.

The Bechtel Lectures were established in 2000 to foster interest in, and understanding of, Anabaptist/Mennonite faith and its current relevance by seeing it projected through the eyes of experts from a range of disciplines.

—Conrad Grebel release

Churches to worship for peace in Colombia

Washington, D.C.—On May 20 and 21, churches in Canada and the United States are being called by churches in Colombia to join together in a unified cry for justice, peace and healing in the war-torn South American country.

Churches in Colombia have recognized that without a response to the gross inequali-

ties and injustices imposed upon them by armed actors and the state, the war will continue to victimize the civilian population, including church members, of whom 29 were assassinated within the first six months of 2006, according to Mennonite peace and justice organization JustaPaz.

On May 20, churches in North America are petitioned to come together with those in Colombia in worship, reflection and unifying prayer for victims, perpetrators and peace-makers. On May 21—Victoria Day in Canada—churches are called to manifest a public witness by speaking truth with government officials; holding public vigils; sharing stories and other activities; and advocating for justice, truth and peace in Colombia.

—MCC release

In our April 30 issue, Canadian Mennonite will focus on the situation in Colombia in preparation for the May solidarity events. Ed.

Calendar

British Columbia

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.

April 20-21,26-28: MEI spring musical presentation of *Beauty and the Beast*. Evening performances all evenings, 7 p.m.; April 21 matinee, 2 p.m. For more information, call 604-859-3700.

April 27-29: Junior youth retreat at Camp Squeah. Theme: “Project U: The evolution of a hero.”

May 6: B.C. Women in Mission inspirational day at Eden Mennonite Church, Chilliwack.

May 27: Covenanting celebration for MC B.C. Sunday morning service details and location TBA.

Alberta

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

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

April 21-22: Songfest at Menno Simons School, Calgary. Host churches: Trinity and First Mennonite. Mass choir director: Richard Janzen. Special guests: Rosthern Junior College ensemble.

May 28-31: Theological Studies Week at Camp Valaqua. Theme: “The role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church.”

May 4-5: Alberta Women in Mission 60th annual Enrichment Days in Coaldale.

Saskatchewan

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

March 4: RJC Auxiliary sixth annual Guys and Pies night, 7:30 p.m.

March 16-17: Mennonite Historical Society annual general meetings 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; dinner at 6:30 p.m.

April 14: Saskatchewan Women in Mission Enrichment Day in Swift Current.

April 15-21: MCC Volunteer Appreciation Week.

May 5: RJC alumni golf tournament.

May 6: RJC spring concert.

May 22-26: Continuing education classes for pastors; speaker: Walter Sawatzky from AMBS.

Manitoba

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 9,11: Coffeehouse concerts at Morden Mennonite Church (9) at 7 p.m., and Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg (11) at 3 p.m. to benefit the Eden Foundation. Call 204-325-5355 for more information and list of entertainers.

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

April 13-15: Manitoba Mennonite Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend, in Winnipeg. For more information, visit marriageencounter.org.

April 14: Manitoba MDS annual spring banquet, at North Kildonan Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 6 p.m. To reserve tickets, call 204-261-1274.

April 19-21: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate senior high musical.

April 21: CMU spring concert.

May 5: Manitoba Women in Mission annual Enrichment Day.

May 7-9: “Talking about the tough stuff: Dealing with controversial subjects in the church” seminar. Sponsored by CMU Institute for Community Peacebuilding. Visit cmu.ca for more information.

May 16: Westgate Mennonite

Collegiate work day.

May 24: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Grade 10 to 12 spring concert at Bethel Mennonite Church.

May 25-27: Birding retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

May 28-30: Plus 55 retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

May 31: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Grade 7 to 9 spring concert at Bethel Mennonite Church.

Ontario

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.

Feb. 27: Foundation for International Development Assistance fundraising dinner and concert for Haiti, at the Lions Hall, Elmira; dinner begins at 6 p.m. Special music by the Gospel Echoes Team.

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

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

March 3: DaCapo Chamber Choir, with members of the Penderecki Quartet, presents *Midnight: Darkness and Wonder*, at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener, at 8 p.m.

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. Theme: "Talking to God like a friend." Resource person:

Sherri Martin-Carman. 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 30-April 1: Floradale Mennonite Church presents *What Shall We Do With the Family Farm?* by Barb Draper as dinner theatre, 6:30 p.m. (30, 31), and as a 2 p.m. matinee (1). Visit floramc.org or call 519-638-3624 for more information.

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.

April 14: MC Eastern Canada Youth Bible Quizzing preliminary rounds at Floradale Mennonite Church.

April 20-21: Engaged workshop at Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank. For more information, e-mail denise_bender@yahoo.com.

April 25: MC Eastern Canada Day of Quiet Prayer at Cedar Springs Retreat, Shakespeare, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

April 27-28: MC Eastern Canada spring annual conference session at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

April 28: MC Eastern Canada Youth Bible Quizzing finals at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

April 28, 29: Pax Christi Chorale's 20th anniversary gala concert, "The Music Makers: Elgar, Handel, Ager," 7:30 p.m. (28), 3 p.m. (29), at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto. To order tickets, visit paxchristichorale.org.

May 5-6: Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir 40th anniversary celebration, at St. Matthews Lutheran Church,

Kitchener. For more information or to join the Alumni Mass Choir for the weekend, call Deanna Webb at 519-742-3416.

May 11,12,17-19: *The Shadows of Grossmunster*, a musical; at the Church Theatre, St. Jacobs. Curtain time: 7:30 p.m.

Interviewees sought

Do you give money to Mennonite institutions? Why? Grebel theology student seeks to interview charitable donors for thesis on fund-raising and theology. I'm interested in why you give, not how much, and I will respect

your confidentiality. I currently live in Australia; so, this would be by e-mail and/or phone. All welcome, with donors younger than 50 encouraged. Please e-mail Lori Guenther Reesor at ozmenno@gmail.com

Canadian Mennonite

An invitation to the 2007 Canadian Mennonite Fundraising Banquet on March 10 in Kitchener

Enjoy delicious Latin American food, see journalist Mirko Petricevic present his award-winning photographs and hear musical group "No Discernable Key."

Canadian Mennonite would like to invite you to an enjoyable dinner and evening out starting at 6 p.m. on Saturday, March 10, at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener (800 King St. East, between Stirling Avenue and Ottawa Street).

We will enjoy a Latin American meal prepared by the Hispanic fellowship at First Mennonite, followed by a program of images and music.

Our after-dinner presenter is **Mirko Petricevic**, reporter and photographer, who has been covering religion for *The Record* newspaper since 2001. Last year, *The Record's* Faith section won the Religion Newswriters Association's Schachern Award for best Religion section for a newspaper under 100,000 circulation. Photographs are an integral part of religion coverage at *The Record*. Petricevic will talk about how he reports on religion in general and show some of the faith-centred photo projects *The Record* has published during the past six years. His photographs also appeared in Rev. Brice Balmer's 2006 book, *Meeting Our Multifaith Neighbors*. Local Mennonite musical group "**No Discernable Key**" will provide musical entertainment with its rich harmonies and distinct sound.

Proceeds from ticket sales and donations will go to support *Canadian Mennonite's* ministry. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at the door, but we do ask that those planning to come **RSVP by Monday, March 5**, by calling 519-884-3810 ext. 221 or at office@canadianmennonite.org. Thank you!



Employment opportunities

The Springstein Mennonite Church, located 10 minutes from Winnipeg's west perimeter, is welcoming applications for the position of **Lead Pastor** at two-thirds time. We are a multi-generational congregation of approximately 130 active members. The successful candidate will have an Anabaptist faith orientation and be gifted in preaching, teaching and counseling, as well as working with the ministry team to provide spiritual guidance to the congregation. The successful candidate should have strong administration and leadership skills. We are a member of Mennonite Church Canada and follow MC Canada salary guidelines. Our preferred starting date is May 1, 2007. Please forward applications to:

Mennonite Church Manitoba
c/o Harold Peters-Fransen
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB
R3P 0M4

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.

For rent

For Rent: Sleepy Hollow Cottage. All-season, 3-bedroom home in a peaceful wooded valley in the heart of the Niagara region. Small retreat centre or family accommodations. Bruce Trail. Shaw Festival, Wine tours. Phone: 705-476-2319 or e-mail: shcottage@sympatico.ca for complete brochure.

For Rent: Basement suite in west Hamilton near university available until June 2007 and possibly longer. Female tenant preferred. Call 905-627-4482.

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.

Position for full-time pastor

Arnaud Mennonite Church of Arnaud Man. is currently accepting applications for the position of full-time pastor. We are a multi-generational congregation of about 90 members located about 50 miles south of Winnipeg. This position could be either one person or a couple and will become available summer 2007. The successful candidate would be of Anabaptist/ Mennonite faith orientation and possess strong leadership qualities. Interested applicants are asked to direct inquiries and/or resumes to: Pastoral Search Committee, c/o Ewald Boschmann, Box 12, Stuartburn, MB, R0A 2B0, phone; 204-425-3554 or e-mail: boschma5@mts.net.

Canadian Mennonite University is accepting applications for a position in our Maintenance Department.

A keen aptitude and experience in the area of general building repair and maintenance is required. Processing of applications will begin immediately, and continue until the position is filled. Please reply via mail to Susan Warkentin, Director of Human Resources, 500 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 2N2, or e-mail swarkentin@cmu.ca. For more details, visit www.cmu.ca.

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.

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.

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

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.



Welcome Inn Community Centre, a faith-based charitable organization in Hamilton that fosters resilience through programs for children, families and seniors, seeks a dynamic individual to serve as

Volunteer and Office Administrator

The ideal candidate for this full-time position will:

- Be experienced in volunteer management.
- Be experienced in office administration/management.
- Possess excellent written and oral communication skills, and up-to-date computer skills (email, Office, publication layout).
- Be self-motivated and highly organized and efficient.
- Be able to sensitively interface with all types of people.
- Possess vision, flexibility, multi-tasker, and a positive attitude.
- Have previous experience in social service and/or education would be an asset.

Resumes will be accepted until Feb. 28. Those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Send cover letter and resume to Executive Director.

Mail: 40 Wood St. E., Hamilton, ON L8L 3Y3

Fax: 905-525-6873

E-mail: exdir@welcomeinn.ca

Seeking a dynamic and creative educator!

Affiliated with the Mennonite Church and located in Stouffville, Ont., Willowgrove Primary School is looking for a JK/SK teacher beginning in September 2007. The successful candidate will be creative, resourceful and able to work independently as part of a small staff. He/she will demonstrate a strong Christian faith and preferably possess a Bachelor of Education degree and Primary Certification. For more information visit, www.willowgrove.ca or contact Ron de Roo at ron@willowgrove.ca. Feb. 23 is the deadline for applications.

Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, British Columbia, is seeking a full-time **Associate Pastor of Youth and Young Adults**. This person will serve in a leadership team under the direction of the lead pastor. Although the primary responsibility will be to work with the youths and the youth leaders, an interest in providing leadership for the young adult small group would be considered a definite asset. The successful candidate will have a theological education, will agree with our church's vision statement and statement of faith, and will have a passion for youth ministry.

Starting Date: July 2007

Application Deadline: March 31, 2007

Interested persons are invited to visit our website for a complete job description, and to submit a cover letter and resume to:

Youth Pastor Search Committee
Peace Mennonite Church
11571 Daniels Road
Richmond, BC V6X 1M7
Phone: 604-278-0111
E-mail: office@peacemennonite.ca
Website: www.peacemennonite.ca

Administrator

United Mennonite Home for the Aged in Vineland, a Christian-based charitable organization operating a 128-bed LTC facility, a 48-unit apartment building and a 42-town home life lease development, is accepting applications for a seasoned administrator.

The ideal candidate will possess:

- Administrator Certificate as recognized by the Ministry of Health.
- Minimum five years management experience in a long-term care setting in nursing, finance or information technology, and relevant academic credentials.
- Excellent communication skills, both written and oral, together with proven leadership and good people skills.
- Advanced knowledge in computer applications.
- Knowledge of the German language would be an asset.

Interested candidates should forward their resume in confidence to:

Board Chair
United Mennonite Home
4024 Twenty-Third Street
Vineland, ON L0R 2C0
or e-mail: thhome@umh.ca

Application Deadline: Feb. 28, 2007.

Only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Winnipeg

Christian work flows out of Christian worship

If God's plan to restore the world is to become a reality, Christians need to both worship and work—and the work flows out of worship.

That's what theologian Marva Dawn told more than 250 people at the Refreshing Winds music and worship conference at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in January. The theme of the bi-annual conference, which attracted registrants from many different denominations from across Canada, was "Worship as reconciliation."

The temptation is for churches to emphasize either personal piety or action, said Dawn, author of 20 books on a variety of church- and worship-related topics. "We need both piety and work in the world to help bring about God's restoration on Earth. On Sundays we need to preach out the bigger story—not just one of privatized religion or one of reaching out to serve the world, but both."

Reflecting on the role that worship plays in reconciling people to God, Dawn stated that church services need a "ritual by which we know we are forgiven, through confession and absolution." Noting that everyone carries a burden of regret, she said churches need "bold, clear declarations of forgiveness, so that people can get rid of their burden." To "tangibly announce forgiveness is a powerful thing," she added.

Dawn also decried the "worship wars" that some churches get caught up in. For her, worship should be a mix of styles, including songs from the past. "Worship should not be about style or music—it's about worshipping God," she said, adding, "I hear that God has highly eclectic tastes."

Dawn said Christians need to live with a "dialectical tension" in worship—balancing the intellect and emotions. This tension "can stretch us, enable us to grow," she said, noting that "we tend to be on one side or the other."

Along with Dawn, the conference



Photo by John Longhurst

Keynote speaker Marva Dawn told participants that if God's plan to restore the world is to become a reality, Christians need to both worship and work—and the work flows out of worship.

featured Ken Nafziger, professor of music at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and workshops on worship, theology and music.

Nafziger stressed the importance of respecting various musical languages. "We do a disservice to these various musical traditions if we make everything sound the same," he said.

Worship leaders have an enormous responsibility every Sunday morning of guiding their communities into an encounter with God. How well they lead "has a direct impact on whether or not there is opportunity for that encounter to take place," Christine Longhurst told participants at her "Words in worship" workshop.

Longhurst, chapel coordinator at CMU, stated that worship leaders "need to see themselves as facilitators. They are not the engine that keeps

the worship going. Worship is not a performance driven by the action on the platform."

When it comes to music, Longhurst said that leaders "have to choose music carefully, with an eye to its role in our dialogue with God. The style of our music should not be our primary concern. Instead, we should choose music based on how well it furthers the conversation between God and God's people."

Bryan Harder and Cheryl Pauls provided insight in their workshop into how leading congregational singing can be less stressful for song leaders and instrumentalists. "Often music in church becomes limp because of a false sense of humility," said Pauls, professor of piano and music theory at CMU. "We think, 'I'm only the accompanist,' and so we don't play with any expression or style."

Ultimately, Pauls and Harder showed that song leaders and instrumentalists shouldn't be afraid to express themselves and play to the best of their God-given abilities, and to see congregational song leading not as a cause for stress but rather as a source of joy.

Steve Plenert, youth pastor at Springstein (Man.) Mennonite Church, was intrigued by two workshop/clinic sessions led by Allan Rudy-Froese. In "Reconciliation for the pastor," participants read the same text aloud in several settings and different ways. "What struck me was that, without ever discussing the meaning of what the text was about, huge implications of meaning came out simply from the way we used the words that were in the text," he said. "Some meanings were humorous, some were moving, some taught life lessons. The words themselves spoke louder and louder the longer we focused on them and the more times we repeated the text."

—John Longhurst, Aaron Epp and Leona Dueck Penner



Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) initiatives in northern Uganda, where a civil war between the Ugandan army and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has been raging for nearly 20 years, include dramatic re-enactments of an LRA kidnapping by a psycho-social drama group of the Concerned Parents Association of Gulu. The presentations take place in internally displaced person camps across the north, which are now home to more than 1.5 million Ugandans who were forced from their traditional homes by the fighting.

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Congregation continues to meet after yet another conflict with authorities

The Mennonite house church in Ho Chi Minh's District 2 continues to meet in the home of pastor Nguyen Hong Quang after the third and most recent dismantling of part of the building in the last 18 months.

On Jan. 9, when a group of believers was gathered for prayer, a large force sent by precinct officials came to the house and tore out most of the improvements made last summer. Although Quang argued that their actions were illegal, the authorities arrested and held 17 church members for several hours until their work was completed. The church members were then released with no charges filed against them.

This confrontation is the latest incident in a long "tug-of-war" between the congregation and the local precinct.

In July 2004, shortly after Quang and five others were arrested, authorities tore down one end of the building that they claimed was built beyond their property. Temporary repairs were then made. After an international gift was offered to make permanent repairs, Quang submitted a request to upgrade the building. Last May, the precinct authorities issued a build-

ing permit to repair the building, but stipulated that no additional alterations were to be made.

When it became evident that Quang was raising the roof and making a new upstairs loft, authorities forcibly tore down some of this construction and confiscated the building materials. However, city officials ordered the precinct to return the materials and the renovations continued. But last September, the chair of the precinct issued a statement to Quang indicating that he had made renovations not authorized by the building permit.

On Jan. 2, precinct chairman Nguyen Van Hai ordered that the "illegal" renovations be removed, and asked to discuss the matter with Quang, but Quang made himself unavailable for the meeting. Three days later, Hai issued an order to remove the parts of the building authorities claimed were built illegally on Jan. 9.

Quang believes that authorities selectively enforce newly enacted zoning laws to restrict the free association of religious groups, particularly the Mennonite group that he leads.

Some observers note that the local authorities did not move against the church last summer while Vietnam

was asking to be removed from the U.S. State Department list of "countries of particular concern" due to religious liberty and human rights issues, and because the country was seeking membership in the World Trade Organization. Now that Vietnam has achieved these aims, they suggest authorities may have fewer inhibitions in restricting religious groups.

Others, citing the growing freedom of Christian house churches to register their meeting places, observe that Quang might be specifically targeted due to his outspoken criticism of the government's policies concerning religious groups. Last April, he identified with a group calling for an end to the sole political leadership of the Vietnam Communist Party.

Mennonite World Conference asks the worldwide church to pray for the churches and authorities in Vietnam.—Vietnamese Ministries release

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Winnipeg

Putting your money where your faith is

Gary Hawton has had a lot of time to think about ethical financial investing. After all, he's been investing since he was 12. Today, he is the chief executive officer of Meritas Mutual Funds, a socially responsible investment (SRI) company in Cambridge, Ont.

"This is deeply inside me," says Hawton. "I feel I've been gifted to understand this. [It] is truly a way for me to be salt and light in the world, to have a meaningful impact in not just corporate Canada, not just corporate America, but corporate world."

To that end, Hawton and Michael

MC Canada investment seminar highlights

Mennonite Church Canada's "Putting your money where your faith is" investment seminar will take place on July 3 in Abbotsford, B.C., the day before the annual assembly begins. It will include:

- An introduction by John H. Neufeld, professor emeritus and retired president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University), who will give a theological reflection on how finances—especially pensions and investments—are part of Christian stewardship.
 - Presentations by Michael Jantzi (Jantzi Social Index©) and Gary Hawton (Meritas) about how their faith stances led them to socially responsible investing (SRI), and by SHARE, a Canadian advocacy group from Vancouver that works with shareholders to promote ethical and environmental policies with corporations.
 - Workshops on stewardship education and mission budgeting for congregational leaders by Mennonite Foundation.
 - Information and guidance to MC Canada plan members by representatives of Belton and Grom, MC Canada's pension plan consultants.
 - Roundtable discussions to allow for interaction among participants.
 - A closing worship service focusing on Christian responsibility to faithfully use financial assets in alignment with God's intentions for the world.
- MC Canada release

Jantzi, president of Jantzi Research, a Toronto-based investment research firm that is an SRI pioneer in Canada, are inviting pastors, congregational leaders, business people, pension plan holders—in fact, anyone—to attend the Mennonite Church Canada Ministers' Conference one day prior to the general assembly in Abbotsford, B.C., this July (see sidebar). The event will tackle the often sensitive subject of money and faithful living.

MC Canada denominational minister Sven Eriksson believes the topic is compelling enough to open the invitation to anyone outside the usual inner circle of ministers who have traditionally used the day for connecting and supporting one another. "Responsible use of money is the second most frequent theme in the gospels," he notes. "The first is kingdom building."

"The big idea," says Eriksson, "is that what we do with our money has a lot to do with our faith." Part of this big idea is that pastors want to be better equipped to build relationships with business people who have sometimes felt out of place in the church, so it's natural to bring the two groups together.

Hawton concurs. "I think God is bringing [business] people into our church and we need to have pastors and people there who aren't intimidated by them and who are able to discern how those people are best utilized in the church and outside of the church," he says.

Pastors, business people and workers in any one of thousands of jobs probably have their money invested somewhere. SRI leaders want to bring greater awareness that ethical investing is simply the right thing to do.

Jantzi claims that in many parts of the world, SRI is the fastest growing segment of the investment market. American investment funds that screen companies for their environmental, social and governance performance total \$2 trillion US—about 10

percent of total investments. Canada lags behind, with SRI investments of \$65.5 billion, or 3 to 5 percent of total investments, he estimates.

While consumers may see SRI as a passive way of moral investing, SRI industry leaders often see it as an opportunity to challenge corporate behaviour.

Hawton recalls how Meritas challenged PepsiCo on its zero response to the HIV-AIDS pandemic in Africa and other countries. It took several tries, but PepsiCo finally heard the clarion call when it became clear that the company's reputation and brand credibility were at stake.

"If a third of your employees and a third of their family and a third of your customers are dying, there's probably a business impact," says Hawton, reciting what it took to get PepsiCo's attention.

"Let's figure out how to address the problem so that you are a sustainable business long-term. And the great thing is that along the way you may save thousands of lives."

Since then, PepsiCo has developed unprecedented access to AIDS education and healthcare for its employees and the communities where they operate, says Hawton.

Aber Diamond is a company Hawton is currently challenging over the issue of "blood diamonds"—gems harvested in Third World countries where people pay the harvest price with their lives. While their Canadian operations are sound, Aber recently purchased a retailer with no known checks and balances regarding diamond sources.

"All of my assets are God's, which he has entrusted to me as his steward," says Hawton. "If we're going to own shares or mutual funds, we need to understand that we own each of the companies that are inside that mutual fund, and we have to take responsibility for how those companies act, how they earn money. There is no way that God wants to earn money by owning Playboy shares, or by owning shares in a company that manufactures landmines."

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**



Hawton



Jantzi



Siaka Traore and his wife Claire congratulate Othniel Dakuo, worship and song leader in the new Ouagadougou Mennonite Church in Burkina Faso, second from left, following the dedication service of their newly acquired church building. Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker Jeff Warkentin, left, and his wife (who took the picture) have been serving this church in a leadership role since Traore moved to Bobo-Dioulasso (about a day's journey from Ouagadougou) to minister. It was through Traore's initiative that this ministry to Mennonite university students in Ouagadougou began last November. With an average attendance of 15 to 25 young people, the congregation is excited about filling the building with singing, Bible study and praises to God throughout the coming year, while hopefully attracting others.

Winnipeg

School kits welcomed in Lebanon

More than 20,000 children in Lebanon are receiving Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) school kits as part of the organization's post-war response.

The school kits—along with 33,000 health kits, 14,000 blankets, 4,600 relief kits and 39,000 cans of meat—have arrived in Lebanon and are currently being distributed to families in need, says Willie Reimer, director of MCC Canada's food, disaster and material resources department.

Generous support from constituents made it possible for MCC to fulfil its commitment to send material aid valued at just over \$1 million to assist Lebanese families in this early post-war recovery.

MCC's post-war response also includes a commitment of \$513,000 to support local charitable organizations working with MCC in Lebanon and Gaza. This support makes it possible for MCC's local partners to provide much needed services, such as mobile health clinics, children and youth programs, trauma healing, cluster bomb awareness, peacebuilding and conflict resolution training.

School kits and other material aid

help alleviate the stress of families who lost their income during the war," said Joan Barkman Azar, a Winnipeg resident who assisted in the coordination of MCC's post-war emergency response. "What they really need is peace," added Barkman Azar, a former MCC country representative in Lebanon who completed a 10-week assignment in Lebanon on Nov. 30.

The country, she explained, is still reeling from the 34-day war last summer that resulted in the death of nearly 1,200 people in Lebanon, mostly civilians, and 157 Israelis, mainly soldiers. Many schools destroyed during the war have not yet been rebuilt and farm fields are still littered with cluster bombs.

Roughly one million residents of south Lebanon—nearly a quarter of the country's population—were displaced and took shelter in the mountains and the north. Most families, she added, have returned to their home villages.

"Their resilience is amazing, but the war has taken its toll," said Barkman Azar. "Those families, whose primary source of income was destroyed in the conflict, have been reluctant to commit

new financial resources and energy into re-establishing their farms or businesses. They wonder if the ceasefire will hold and are worried by the sectarian tensions in the country."

—MCC release by **Gladys Terichow**

News brief

2006 Living Gift total approaches \$1 million

Canadians got in the spirit of giving during the 2006 Living Gift Festival at Ten Thousand Villages (TTV). Within approximately three weeks, nearly \$1 million was raised at Ten Thousand Villages' 43 stores across Canada and on the organization's website. These funds—61 percent more than the 2005 figure—will assist families around the world in meeting basic needs for good health and decent living. In the coming months, nearly 30,000 Living Gifts will be received in countries such as Bangladesh, South Africa and Haiti. "We are pleased with the way our customers are combining their Christmas gift giving with helping people in the developing world. It shows that Canadians are looking for meaning beyond just giving one more gift," says TTV Canada executive director Marv Frey.

—Ten Thousand Villages release

Chongqing, China

Young-at-heart teacher makes a difference

Julie Bender is a bit old, but young at heart. At least that's what her English students say.

In 2004, Bender moved to China with her husband Philip, to pursue a ministry assignment with Mennonite Church Canada Witness. Firmly believing that God navigates people's lives through the longings of their hearts, she felt comforted in her placement.

But her first year required major adjustments. Sub-standard living conditions—at least compared to Canada—and a newcomer's wariness about her new role were a struggle.

"I had also left behind some things in Ontario that I really loved," she says. "I was involved in some community ministries, I had a job I really loved, and so I left my heart back in Ontario."

Anxious, Bender questioned what it meant to be doing ministry in China. She questioned how God was engaging her heart in this new place. She struggled with the task of regaining her passion as she worked among the Chinese people and in a new culture.

Near the end of the school year, Bender staged a mock North American wedding for her English class as an introduction of western customs to her Chinese students and the unconditional commitment of love promised in traditional wedding vows. Every detail, right down to mosquito netting for a veil, was carefully planned and executed. The response she received from her students was very reassuring.

"One thing I've learned from you, Julie, is that whatever you do, you should put your whole heart into it," one of her students confided later. It was only a demonstration in a classroom, but the mock wedding was a sacred moment she will treasure forever.

Although "a bit old," her "young" heart received just the reassurance that was needed. God's plan for her became a little clearer at that moment.

—MC Canada release
by **Krista Allen** and **Dan Dyck**

Each Sept. 10, China honours educators with Teachers Day. Bless, a former student, wrote to her teacher, Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker Todd Hanson, "You are like a third parent.... You have our respect and gratefulness. You have been a qualified teacher and even better friend."



Julie Bender, right, Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker, introduced her Chinese English students to western culture with a mock North American wedding.



Photo by Todd Hanson

university population. The local Nanchong church, where Hanson and his family worship, reaches out to its community by offering four levels of English classes—Kindergarten, primary school, junior middle school and adult—as well as offering local primary school teachers an opportunity to upgrade their own English language skills.

"It took less than half a morning to fill all of the slots, and we are still receiving requests from parents who didn't manage to get their children enrolled," says Hanson.

The high demand means that teachers like Hanson frequently work well beyond normal school hours, and spend summer breaks taking English classes to churches in other regions of the vast country.

Hanson strives to integrate his Christian faith and Anabaptist values into his teaching and relationships with students. Such relationships frequently lead to conversations about Christian faith and serve as a reminder that the difference his work makes goes well beyond language instruction.

On Teachers Day—a national day of recognition in China—a former student named Bless sent Hanson an e-mail which read, in part, "You are like a third parent.... You have our respect and gratefulness. You have been a qualified teacher and even better friend."

In moments like these Hanson is gratified.

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

Nanchong, China

China's demand for English teachers growing

Mennonite English teachers in China are so popular children are dragged from one instructor to another by parents demanding individual tutoring for them. Since many teachers volunteer at church-run English classes in addition to their university courses and extra-curricular activities, it is impossible to accommodate everyone.

Todd Hanson, Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker in China since 1991, recently invited a student to join him on his morning jog in order to provide some tutoring time to the daughter of an especially persistent university official. Learning English, says Hanson, is seen as a sort of Holy Grail among Chinese young people who are seeking every possible advantage in an increasingly competitive society.

The popularity of learning English has grown well beyond the traditional

Ottawa

Lost citizenship concerns continue to surface

Incidents of lost citizenship are surfacing as more Canadians apply for passports to fulfil a new American law requiring passports for air travel to the U.S.

But such incidents are not new to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers assisting descendants of the 7,000 Canadian Mennonites who moved to Latin America in the 1920s and '40s. Thousands have returned during recent decades, often for reasons of poverty.

One issue affecting this group relates to a requirement in Canada's

News briefs

Anger over Mohammed cartoons top U.S. religion story of 2006

Muslim outrage at the publication of cartoons in Europe depicting the Prophet Mohammed was voted the top religion story of the year by the U.S.-based Religion Newswriters Association (RNA). The indignation and the violence it triggered, that resulted in the deaths of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, was voted ahead of Pope Benedict XVI angering Muslims by including in a speech a centuries-old quote linking Islam and violence. This story about the Pope, along with his apology, was voted the second religion story of the year by RNA writers.

—ENI release

SMU in quandary over Bush library

Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Texas, which holds itself to its denomination's standards for leadership and public service, has become embroiled in a controversy over linking itself permanently to the husband of one of its most famous alumni, Laura Bush. Representatives of her husband, U.S. President George W. Bush, have selected SMU to be the location of his presidential library, and many members of the university faculty are protesting that the Bush Library would harm the university's mission.

—ENI release

1977 citizenship law that some second-generation born-abroad people must go through a retention process before turning 28 in order to retain Canadian citizenship.

"The retention requirement is reasonable," says Bill Janzen, director of MCC's Ottawa office. People simply have to send in a retention application and show that they have spent at least one year in Canada.

However, it has been difficult for people to know whether they come under this provision because it does not apply to all second-generation born-abroad people and because their citizenship certificates are indistinguishable from those of other people.

This changed on Jan. 1 following a federal government decision to place an expiry notice on new certificates issued to people who come under this provision.

"This is a welcome change," Janzen says, having lobbied for this for years.

Unfortunately, this change does not help the thousands who come under this provision and who already have certificates. The first of these turned 28 in 2005. Technically, these people ceased to be Canadian citizens if they did not go through the retention process, even if they have lived in Canada for most of their lives and carry certificates that appear to be valid.

A second problem relates to old marriages in Mexico. It has led to people—who may have lived in Canada for decades—receiving letters from the Canadian government telling them that their certificates of citizenship were "issued in error" and that they are not citizens. This flows from a requirement under early citizenship legislation that a child born outside of Canada to Canadian parents had to be "born-in-wedlock" in order to be eligible for Canadian citizenship.

Unfortunately, neither the Canadian government nor the Mennonites in their early decades in Mexico paid much attention to what "born-in-wedlock" meant. The Mennonites had church marriages, as

they had had in Canada, and when some of them applied for Canadian citizenship, government officials assumed that this satisfied the "born-in-wedlock" requirement.

Around 1960, however, the Canadian government noted that Mexican law recognized only civil marriages, and so the Canadian government began asking for civil marriage registration certificates.

The Mennonites did not object to having their marriages registered with the civil authorities. When some did apply for Canadian citizenship and were required to show that

their parent was "born-in-wedlock," they went to a local Mexican registry office and registered the church marriage of their grandparents to obtain a civil marriage certificate for them.

Many years later, though, the Canadian government began demanding stronger proof that a parent was "born-in-wedlock." Consequently, some applicants have received letters stating that they are not eligible for a certificate and that the certificate of their parents—or grandparents—was "issued in error."

Until now, if the people lived in Canada at the time they received such letters, the government has found ways of re-instating them into citizenship. But the process has been drawn out, costly and, in some cases, has caused interruptions in health coverage, the right to passports and even permission to work.

In late January, the government announced that it is introducing an expedited process to deal with such cases, at least for people who are in Canada when the "error" in their background is discovered. This expedited process will also help people who have turned 28 but failed to go through the retention process and so ceased to be citizens. The government is also setting up a better system to enable people to inquire about their status.

—MCC Canada release

The Canadian government began demanding stronger proof that a parent was "born-in-wedlock."

Akron, Pa.

MCC donations up in 2006

At mid-January meetings, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) executive committee heard about an increase in MCC donations; approved international program initiatives, including a \$1 million water project for Palestine; was brought up to date about a delegation to Iran; and participated in a review of events surrounding the Oct. resignation of the former executive director.

During the meeting the executive committee was told by MCC staff that donations from supporters in Canada and the U.S. exceeded the 2006 budget by nearly 8 percent, including more than \$1 million received in Canada through a joint MCC and Ten Thousand Villages Living Gifts campaign during the holiday season.

"We are so grateful for the gifts MCC continues to receive from supporters and for all of the volunteers in thrift shops, relief sales and all the other activities around MCC," said director of resource generation Dave Worth.

News brief

DVD promotes youth work at thrift shops

A new Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) DVD called *Second Hand Pants* promotes the idea of young people working together in a thrift shop for a meaningful and rewarding cause. In Ontario, Grade 8 student Cassandra Bauman started working in the Elmira MCC Thrift Shop three years ago with her grandmother, Ruth Ann Bauman. Cassandra's interest in working in the shop prompted her parents to schedule a family activity in the thrift shop the fourth Saturday of each month. MCC has nine thrift shops in B.C., three in Alberta, 12 in Saskatchewan, and 16 each in Manitoba and Ontario. To learn more about the DVD, visit mcc.org and do a search for "Second Hand Pants."

—MCC release

International program staff said the Palestine water project addresses wastewater problems in rural areas around Bethlehem and Hebron in the West Bank, where MCC is working with the Applied Research Institute in Jerusalem to implement the effort. The project will allow 180 homeowners in 18 villages to treat and reuse wastewater in agricultural production. The 42-month project will benefit around 1,800 people.

Staff plans for a visit to Iran in February or March as a follow-up to an MCC-sponsored meeting in New York City with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad are progressing. The upcoming visit, which is being jointly sponsored by MCC and the American Friends Service Committee, will include leaders from a variety of U.S.-based church denominations, including Mennonite, Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Evangelical churches. The purpose of the visit is to discuss with Iranian religious leaders how relations between Iran and the U.S. can be improved and conflict can be averted.

During the day-and-a-half before the MCC executive committee met, a number of MCC staff, executive directors and board members from the 12 MCC organizations met to review the impact of the October resignation of

Robb Davis and explore new models for how MCC should be governed in the future.

"The executive committee has taken ownership of the difficulties in which the former director worked," said MCC executive committee chair Ron Dueck. "These specifically related to the lack of clarity of mandate, insufficient monitoring of stress levels, and insufficient direction on board-staff roles and decision-making."

During an executive session the members of the executive committee worked with new interim executive director Bert Lobe of St. Jacobs, Ont., and senior staff, spelling out detailed expectations for Lobe's job during the next year. A priority will be the work of a governance transition team that was mandated in 2006 to work with various MCC boards and church denominations in changing the MCC governance structure.

Currently, MCC is made up of 12 separate entities in Canada and the United States, each with separate boards, although only nine of them are separately incorporated. The 12 groups include MCC (which conducts most of the international program), MCC Canada, MCC U.S., five provincial MCC offices in Canada and four regional MCC offices in the U.S.

—MCC release by **Mark Beach**

Wanda Smith serves a meal containing Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) canned turkey at Christ's Hands, a soup kitchen, food pantry and emergency homeless shelter in Harlan, Ky. Each month, Christ's Hands receives two cases (48 cans) of meat from MCC, which is turned into everything from turkey pot pies to hot turkey sandwiches with barbecue sauce. "MCC meat makes a good, nutritious, wholesome and filling meal," says Kevin Doan, the primary cook at Christ's Hands. "It's a wonderful product that's very easy and quick for us to fix, and it's delicious, too. We can fix lots of different kinds of meals with it, and serve 100 people quick."



Photo by Melissa Engle

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Ontario student part of first Goshen College Cambodia term

Nicole Bauman of Shakespeare, Ont., is one of 24 Goshen (Ind.) College students participating in the college's first study-service term (SST) unit to Cambodia.

Bauman, a 2003 graduate of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate who attends Tavistock (Ont.) Mennonite Church, is majoring in peace, justice and conflict studies and interdisciplinary studies at Goshen. She left for Cambodia on Jan. 10 and will return to the United States on April 10.

The students are spending the first six weeks in the Cambodian capital, studying the national language of Khmer and the country's culture at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. They will then be placed in service assignments around the country.

Students will live with host families during the first and second half of the semester, many of whom will be Buddhist, since 95 percent of the

population follows that religion.

Keith and Ann Graber Miller, with their children, Niles, Mia and Simon, are leading the SST unit to Cambodia. Keith is professor of Bible, religion and philosophy at Goshen; the Millers have previously led SST units in the

Dominican Republic, China, Cuba and Costa Rica.

Since the first SST units went to Costa Rica, Jamaica and Guadeloupe in 1968, beginning one of the U.S.'s pioneer international education programs, more than 6,500 students and 230 faculty leaders have travelled to 20

countries. Goshen currently organizes SST units to study and serve in China, Dominican Republic, Germany, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Senegal, Peru and Jamaica; groups from Goshen will now also travel to Cambodia every three years.

The SST's combination of cultural education and service-learning remains a core part of Goshen's



Bauman

general education program, and has earned citations for excellence from *U.S. News & World Report*, *Peterson's Study Abroad* and *Smart Parents Guide to College*, the John Templeton Foundation and the American Council on Education.

Bauman has also been named to Goshen's 2006-07 Dean's List, along with 172 other students.
—Goshen College release

Moscow

Baptist union re-forms external church relations department

One-hundred-and-forty years after its inception, the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (RUEC-R) is transforming more than just the outward appearance of its Moscow headquarters. Inner changes include the re-creation of a department that had not survived the *perestroika* period: the Department of External Church Relations.

Its new director, Moscow pastor Vitali Vlasenko, is convinced that "if...Baptists come together and share our resources across all European borders, we can create synergistic effects benefiting the entire kingdom of God!"

This revived department has three primary branches or desks:

- A diplomatic and representation desk will propagate the union's activities and convictions both externally and internally.
- A second desk will focus on the exchange of information with other churches and countries.
- A third desk will concern itself with the legal protection of union interests regarding property rights and finances. Religious freedom is an additional concern that this desk hopes to defend.

The union consists of 85,000 baptized believers in 87 church districts. They meet in 1,750 local congregations and groups located between Kaliningrad in the west and Vladivostok in the east.

—RUEC-R release by **William Yoder**

Jerusalem, Israel

Israelis kill 660 Palestinians in 2006, suffer only 23 casualties

BTselem, the Israeli human rights organization, published its annual statistics for 2006. According to the report, there was a deterioration in the human rights situation in the Occupied Territories, particularly in the increase in civilians killed and the destruction of houses and infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. At the same time, there was an improvement regarding violations of the right to life of Israeli civilians.

According to B'Tselem's research, Israeli security forces killed 660 Palestinians in the West Bank and in Israel in 2006. This includes 141 minors. At least 322 of those killed did

not take part in the hostilities at the time they were killed. Another 22 were assassination targets.

Palestinians, on the other hand, killed 17 Israeli civilians last year in the West Bank and inside Israel. In addition, Palestinians killed six members of the Israeli security forces.

Israel demolished 292 houses in military operations in the Occupied Territories, 279 of them in the Gaza Strip. These were home to 1,769 people. Some 80 of these demolitions were conducted after the homeowners received advance warning to the demolition. In addition, Israel demolished 42 homes in East Jerusalem that housed about 80 people.

As of November, Israel held 9,075 Palestinians in custody, including 345 minors. Of these, 738—including 22 minors—were held in administrative detention without trial and without knowing the charges against them.

—From a report in the January 2007 *MennoLetter from Jerusalem*



meritas
socially responsible investments

Dear Advertising Manager,

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.
- Ensuring that we screen every one of our funds for social, ethical, corporate Governance, and environmental issues
- Providing excellent financial returns like the ones for the **Meritas Jantzi® Social Index Fund** and **Meritas International Equity Fund** (as at December 31, 2006)

Meritas **Jantzi Social Index® Fund**

1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	YTD	1 yr	3 yr	5 yr	Since Inception	Inception Date
1.0%	9.9%	13.6%	15.4%	16.4%	16.1%	10.5%	9.5%	03/30/01

Meritas **International Equity Fund**

1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	YTD	1 yr	3 yr	5 yr	Since Inception	Inception Date
5.5%	12.3%	17.0%	19.3%	19.3%	12.8%	2.7%	0.5%	03/30/01

We will try to get that fancy ad to you in time for the next issue.

Sincerely,

Gary A. Hawton
Chief Executive Officer

Meritas Mutual Funds is a joint venture of Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, Mennonite Foundation of Canada and Mennonite Mutual Aid. These funds are available across Canada from your financial planner or advisor, banks, brokerages and credit unions.

Commissions, trailing commissions, management fees and expenses all may be associated with mutual fund investments. Please read the prospectus before investing. Mutual funds are not guaranteed, their values change frequently and past performance may not be repeated.

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