

CANADIAN Mennonite

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High Church Mennonites

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Worshipping rightly

Worship is an action—a verb, not a noun. It is something we do, not something we have.

In fact, it was the act of worshipping together in a certain way that resulted in the birth of the Mennonite Church. In January 1525, a small group of believers met together in Zurich to hold their own worship service. They baptized one another and shared the Lord's Supper. No longer would they worship as the government or the state church said they should.

"In state churches worship was an act of religious conformity; in Anabaptism it was an act of religious nonconformity," writes church historian John Rempel. "By offering baptism on profession of faith and refusing to have their infants baptized, the Anabaptists disobeyed the law of the land. Their worship was an act of theological and political dissent."

In this issue, our Faith&Life section examines ways in which some of the worship practices we have left behind might have new things to offer us in this new time. Depending on the needs of the age, the types of people coming, and so on, the specifics of how we worship should change. However, I'd like to draw attention to the larger issue of what Christian worship should do, no matter how we express it.

Worship is an outgrowing of the relationship we have with God. It is a majestic side-effect of our realization of the difference between us and the one who created us and all things. The origin of the word "worship" comes from the Old English *weorthscipe*, or "worth-ship." Worship is the reflex that occurs when we encounter the Holy God.

By the same measure, any action of worship that does not have God at its centre is a way of lying to ourselves about

what worship is and about the true nature of God. Nothing we can create or do can in any way equal with what God has done. "*Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name; worship the Lord in holy splendour*" (Psalm 29:2). In this, the widespread use of praise songs in our churches have been a gift to our worship by emphasizing to us the sheer glory and honour due our Lord.

Words translated from Scripture into the word "worship" include "to bow down," "to serve," "to honour," and "to respect." Each of these is a verb that requires an object. We must bow down to—and serve—something; we must honour and respect someone. Meeting the living God is where worship begins. No other reason for gathering is adequate—even our well-intentioned desire for Christian fellowship, or our need for instruction or encouragement. Unless we encounter God, we have not worshipped.

Worship must also be a witness to the world. Mennonite faith isn't based on worshipping any particular way. Our emphasis on faithful living as the defining characteristic of membership led us to lower the importance of shared worship practices, as well as to allow for a wide variety of local worship practices to arise. I think this is appropriate. While we certainly want to worship as best as we are able, we are not Mennonites because we worship rightly.

Instead, God-centred worship has the effect of teaching us the right way to live. Right living is the correct outcome of an encounter with God. Far from being a retreat from the real world, worship enables us to see more clearly what the real world is and equips us to live in it.

God-centred worship must continually be the rope that binds us as ambassadors of God's grace and power to the needs of the world.

—**Tim Miller Dyck**

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Electronic delivery

All subscribers can get the complete contents of *Canadian Mennonite* delivered free by e-mail or view selected articles online. For either option, visit our website at canadianmennonite.org. The March 19 issue will be ready by March 15.

Cover: A lit Christ candle and Bible are two of the focal points of Waterloo North (Ont.) Mennonite Church's Matins service each week. In this issue, *Canadian Mennonite* explores the fascination some Mennonite churches, congregants and schools have with High Church liturgy and practices. —Photo by David Klassen



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Embracing people of the **Book** (OF COMMON PRAYER)

One of the emerging trends in our worship life has been a rediscovery of the power of silence, ritual and reverence for God's holiness that High Church traditions preserved from earlier in church history. From Taizé services to alternative worship services in cafés, Christians are discovering good things in what their church traditions had left behind hundreds of years before. While our Mennonite worship services continue to be rooted in Low Church traditions, we can also benefit from a careful use of good ideas found elsewhere in the wider Christian tradition. For this issue, we commissioned articles from a group of people with insight in—and experience of—this growing edge of our worship practice. Ed.



We are all aware that denominational loyalty is a thing of the past. This is painful for some pastors and congregations who worry that they are losing their young people—or that a tradition of worship and belief might be losing its future.

Some congregations, on the other hand, are the grateful recipients of the enriching presence of Christians from many denominational backgrounds. I am rector of St. Margaret's, an Anglican parish in Winnipeg that is filled (we have a small building) with Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, Reformed, United Church and Mennonite—especially Mennonite—worshippers.

Is there anything to be learned here? Should

Mennonites be concerned that some of their young people are being attracted to liturgical churches?

That one small Anglican congregation is attracting Mennonite young people hardly makes for a statistically interesting trend. If our parish is going to attract young people at all, then, given that we are in Winnipeg, many of them are unavoidably going to be Mennonite. While some of them will become Anglican or Roman Catholic, many will return to their roots as they grow older.



Photo courtesy of David Widdicombe

David Widdicombe is rector of St. Margaret's Anglican Church in Winnipeg, the home of a growing number of "high church" Mennonite congregants.

Catholic, evangelical and historical

Our task, then, is to provide them with a home at once “catholic” enough to make their familiar faith strange, “evangelical” enough to make what is strange appealing, and “historic” enough to make it clear that it is not as if their doubts have never before been canvassed in the long history of the church. An intellectually alive parish can provide non-Anglican students with access to a great tradition of catholic worship and thought that is larger than the Christian world they have so far experienced, and deeper in its spiritual resources than they could have imagined.

This is so because—judged by the standards of the past—the present age is more superstitious than profound, and its worship is more pragmatic than mysterious. The historic litur-

Anabaptism, left her Anglican parish to join Broad Mead Baptist Church in Bristol, England. She decided, she said, to separate herself from “hearing Common Prayer.” Her husband cannot have been pleased, for he was the Anglican clergyman whose church she left.

What every city needs

So it seems to me there is no cause for alarm when young people from the Free Church tradition fall in love with High Church liturgy. Most of them will go home some day. And there is heavy traffic in the other direction besides.

Asked once after a church service what Mennonites could do to meet the needs of their young people who might otherwise start attending more “catholic” churches, I inane replied that every major Canadian city needs at least one large High Church Mennonite congregation.

To create such a congregation, however, two things above all are to be avoided:

[T]he ancient liturgies of the church ‘out-narrate’ the narratives of contemporary secularism.



gies of the church speak with the authority of the ages. They introduce young people to resources for faithful Christian thinking and living they will need to survive in postmodernity with its designer religions. To borrow a phrase from contemporary theology, the ancient liturgies of the church “out-narrate” the narratives of contemporary secularism.

On the other hand, Anglican young people, if they stay in the church at all, frequently discover a personal faith and invitation to discipleship among evangelicals, because—ironically—their own liturgical experience seems dry and faithless. They follow unknowingly in the footsteps of the independent-minded Dorothy Hazzard, who, in the middle of the 17th century, after studying the theology of

- Churches should never set out to meet anyone’s needs, even if they are young; and,
- Traditions should not copy other traditions.

And two truths need to be embraced:

- Worship is about offering to the thrice holy, all powerful, limitlessly majestic and wholly perfect God the honour due his triune name and the thanksgiving due his cruciform mercy; and,
- This can be done most effectively when Christian communities know well and deeply their own history and act congruently with their own historic witness.

What I am proposing here is that Christian traditions may be most truly themselves and, conversely, most truly able to learn and borrow from other traditions with integrity when they trace their histories back to the point where they were last in fellowship with those believers with whom

Continued on page 6

Why does the Mennonite cross the liturgical road?

In many cases, the answer to the title question often comes after long periods of rumination. There is an apprehensive quality to the inquiry, as if a balanced weighing of the facts might uncover a hidden agenda to displace tradition or upset a natural order.

A quality of fear towards the unknown is normal, I think, and as Mennonites who have become experts in conflict resolution across the globe, we understand that getting to know the particularities of a perceived enemy go a long way to alleviating mutual antagonism.

So even lifelong Mennonites are embracing the liturgy—both Orthodox and

Anglican—and forming habits of thinking around it. But when it comes to defining themselves as Orthodox or Anglican, many cannot shake the defining features of pacifism that grace the contours of their Mennonite souls.

I, for one, go to an evangelical Anglican church unanimously acclaimed as “the fastest growing Mennonite church in Winnipeg.” Am I still a Mennonite? Well, if it’s what defines the moment of departure, then no, I haven’t informed my parents of a change in heart.

What I tell them is that I’ve had an encounter with something that upholds the dignity of God in relation to his community and shatters human insistence on self-definition. I’ve also encountered a God who isn’t afraid of asking tough questions of my faith and challenges my use of reason to its full potential.



Siebert

I’ve encountered a consciousness of theological history and tradition woefully lost to a group focused on its own existence, and I’ve embraced a tradition that celebrates the arts but doesn’t need popular culture to dictate what’s in.

Whether Mennonites have what it takes to combat the idols of the marketplace today—that encourage desire over reason—is a good question. Perhaps innocence of the world can still save us. But for someone who sees the future challenge of the church as an attack on the legitimacy of reason, I’m not waiting around for the next U2 album to show me how my faith can be “emergent.”

—Andrew Siebert

The author is assistant editor of ChristianWeek newspaper.

they have since come to have significant disagreements, or with whom they are seeking some measure of mutual understanding.

Anglicans, for example, are powerfully attracted to the theology and practice of the undivided church of the first four great ecumenical councils. Here, they are nourished on the high Trinitarian theology of the creeds and the early church fathers. However, it is here they are also brought into vital contact with the eastern and western traditions of ancient Christianity that would eventually become Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. We can ignore neither one of these giants nor their respective—and non-Anglican—readings of that same undivided church.

I imagine it to be the case that there is a similar interest among Mennonites in the moment just before and just after separation from Rome. I imagine it to be the mission of a High Church Mennonite congregation to know:

- What of medieval liturgy, piety and theology was left behind and why;
- What was not left behind entirely but continued to shape the earliest Anabaptist believers; and,
- What was—but should not have been—left behind, because its rejection was, in the long run, not critical to the movement’s central claims and historical achievements.

What exactly are Protestants protesting these days? And why? For example, a High Church Mennonite congregation might model for its denomination the ways in which a return to patterns of worship based on the church year deepens an experience of Jesus as the one who calls us to take up the

cross and follow him. And the church calendar is surely compatible with a spirituality that seeks to imitate Jesus.

But this must be more than copying, importing or experimenting. It must be an appropriation of deeply informed catholic worship that, at the same time, keeps faith with the martyrs who counted the cost of discipleship and paid for it dearly. What of catholic worship and spirituality can serve contemporary Mennonitism? I doubt that the answer is anything as close to obvious as the random use of symbols in worship, but I suspect that it is worth looking for nonetheless.

Mennonite worship needs to be, at the same time, more beautiful and more austere than it often is—in both cases demanding, not easily accessible, worth submitting to, and at once Catholic and Protestant. Returning to its Reformation roots, High Church Mennonitism might ask whether it is not in some important respects a form of radical Catholicism, radically committed to the teachings of Jesus and the practices of the primitive church, yet interested to know where the Catholic tradition has also heard and heeded the call to embrace the politics of Jesus. It would not be seeker-friendly, but it might be deeply faithful.

—David Widdicombe



Formality in worship: Style or structure?

So, is it really High Church liturgy if last week's confession included part of a Bill Cosby sketch and this week's prayer for Christian unity involved a liturgical ball of string? The more serious question for me is, "Are we talking about a formal style of worship or liturgical structure?"

If it's style, then I don't think that Conrad Grebel University College chapel services would qualify as High Church. If we're talking about structure, that's a different story.

Good liturgical structure is at the heart of what gives worship at Grebel its character. In our policy books, our worship is mandated to both express and form our understanding and experience of God. Our chapel services are first and foremost worship of God and encounter with the risen Christ.

This corporate support of personal discipleship carries a distinct Mennonite flavour and welcomes influences from other Christian traditions. Our usual service structure is based on the Service of the Word, which essentially consists of Scripture reading, a sermon, prayer and song. It moves through four phases identified in the following sentence: "We gather...to hear God's

Word...and respond...as we go."

It is important that chapel services have a predictable structure based on the Service of the Word, but this does not preclude departing from it occasionally for sound pastoral or other reasons.

So how does this all work out practically?

Several years ago, Jen, a Lutheran student, was on the chapel committee. She asked why we never end our Scripture readings with "The Word of the Lord," and the congregation's response of "Thanks be to God." I could think of no reason other than we'd never done it. As we discussed it, it became clear that this was more than just another element for liturgy envy.

When we receive a gift, especially the gift of God's Word, it's only polite to say thank you—and so now we do. It comes naturally and without script. It's our habit to be thankful for the Word of God when it is shared in worship.

Another element of our worship service is "three silent minutes." As much as any element, students notice its absence and appreciate its presence. Sometimes we use our three silent minutes as a gathering confession, sometimes as a prayer of response, sometimes—ironical as it seems—as part of the sermon.

Most of all, however, it is a liturgical counter-cultural protest against the frenzy of life, which demands so much of our attention. In our three silent minutes, we give our attention exclusively to God. That doesn't mean we don't hear the sounds of the building around us, the wind breathing through the oak tree outside or the occasional rumbling stomach. Even in these things, God's presence and Word become clearer and available.

The other day, our academic dean, Jim Pankratz, observed that when you've got strong pegs to hold the tent, you can be most creative with the space in between. I think that's a pretty good metaphor for the way we approach worship at Grebel. We trust and value the structure of worship as we've received it from previous generations and various traditions. I get enthusiastic about the joy of working with students as they find their way into it and the freedom of expression it allows them to worship God and meet Christ.

—Ed Janzen

The author is chaplain at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.

When we receive a gift, especially the gift of God's Word, it's only polite to say thank you....



Matins: A new direction for Waterloo North worship

The impetus to a liturgical worship service at Waterloo North (Ont.) Mennonite Church did not begin with a focus on worship style. At our 1998 business meeting we discussed numerical growth in our congregation. Growth had come as a mixed blessing. Sunday school and worship space were not adequate. Although an accordion wall allowed overflow into the fellowship hall during worship, people in the overflow felt disconnected.

We tried various strategies, including two identical worship services and encouraging people to consider becoming part of other local Mennonite churches. Then a congregational transition team identified three core values and aspirations, one of which was exploring the development of a second worship service with the freedom to reconsider worship style.

Eight people accepted the call to give leadership and this group met for prayer and discussion for several months. The group was led to plan a contemplative worship service in a liturgical style.

This worship style was seen as a return to ancient Christian roots that Anabaptist Mennonites have traditionally avoided. We call our service Matins in reference

to the morning prayers of the monastic tradition.

Matins worship at Waterloo North began with four services in the spring of 2006 and then continued in an ongoing way last fall. We meet from 8:30 to 9:15 a.m. Attendance of 40 to 50 consists of people from the congregation, newcomers and regular visitors from other congregations. Some consider this their full worship participation; others participate as a contemplative preparation for the “regular” service.

The service follows a litany that is modified to reflect the liturgical seasons. It includes times of silence, singing and prayers. Matins begins with worshipful actions of opening the Bible and speaking words invoking God’s presence. The focal point of worship is the reading of Scripture, which is emphasized with a short homily. We have been blessed by this weekly ritual that honours the role Scripture plays in our walk with God. The movement of the liturgy helps us to hear the Word with the depths of our being.

There has been excitement in our congregation about a new initiative happening. We also face the challenge of keeping two worshipping groups together as one congregation—changing the Sunday morning schedule to accommodate two services and Sunday school for all.

We wait eagerly to see where God will lead us in this part of our journey.
—John Peters and Ron Flaming

The authors are members of Waterloo North Mennonite Church’s Matins Worship Planning Group.



Photo by David Klassen

Some consider the liturgical service as their full worship participation; others participate as a contemplative preparation for the “regular” service.

Vespers at CMU: A time for quiet worship

For Irvin Dyck of Winnipeg's Charleswood Mennonite Church, the monthly Vespers service at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) is an opportunity to meditate on the nearness of God. "I like the quietness of the evening, the Scripture readings and the music," he says.

Jake and Mary Wiebe of Home Street Mennonite Church also like the quiet of the Vespers service. "It's a good way to bring the weekend to a nice conclusion and start a new week," says Mary.

Rob Neufeld, who helps organize the monthly service, and who also plays organ and occasionally conducts the choir, says that it "helps us focus on God as we start our week.... It fills a need."

Vespers is an evening prayer service that originated in the sixth century in the Roman Catholic Church. The word comes from the Latin *vesper*, meaning "evening," and the service consists of prayers, Scripture reading and music.

Vespers at CMU is a time of quiet worship that occurs on the third Sunday evening of each month from September to April. Organized by a committee of CMU alumni, the choir is a combination of alumni, CMU students and community members. CMU staff and others take turns leading the services.

The service was started in the early 1990s at Concord College by Bill Baerg, then a music professor at Concord and now a professor emeritus at CMU. He thinks the appeal of services like Vespers for Mennonites is partly due to a desire for more formality in worship—and because "many people today have so little quiet in their lives."

And with so few churches having Sunday evening services, people have time to do other things—and some want to take time for a quiet worship experience. "The beauty of Vespers is that you don't have to formulate all the thoughts and words," he says. "It all comes to you."

—CMU release by **John Longhurst**



'It's a good way to bring the weekend to a nice conclusion and start a new week.'



Breathing space: Students find God in the silence

Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) students decided to break free from their frenetic and noisy routine of classes and all-nighters by participating in a silent weekend at a retreat centre outside of Winnipeg. During the event, held last month, they had a chance to stop, reflect on the day and on their lives, enjoy the sunset and pray.

For first-year student Andre Forget of Mount Forest, Ont., the experience was relaxing. "It was a relief being silent, since there were no exhausting efforts to engage in conversation," he says. "It forced you not to act and it allowed you to be silent with your own thoughts and to actually think without distraction."

Bethany Fehr, a second-year student

from Portland, Ore., also found it to be relaxing and a time where students could get "breathing space." "People were able to forget about their responsibilities and able to focus on God," she says.

Since students were not permitted to speak, they relied on gestures and facial expressions. "It was amazing to see how much communication happens non-verbally," Fehr says, adding that students also could get to know each other more intimately since they were able to be comfortable in silence with each other.

During the weekend, "my silence was answered by God's silence," she says. "Not in a way that God was not responding, but rather that God was with me in the silence, speaking to me silently as I realized and enjoyed the tiniest things about being alive."

—CMU release by **Alicia Visser**

The author, from Coaldale, Alta., is a CMU student.

Winnipeg

Former priest feels right at home

When Congolese Canadian Hippolyto Tshimanga returned from his first Mennonite Church Canada administrative visit to Southern Africa, he exulted over the diversity of the people, the food and the view from Table Mountain. But what excited him most was the “attitude” of Mennonite workers there. In the following interview by Canadian Mennonite national correspondent Leona Dueck Penner, Tshimanga, a former Catholic priest/missionary, reflects on this and other aspects of his work and life. He is married to Miriam Maenhout, former missionary in Zambia. They have one son, Emmanuel, and attend Charleswood Mennonite Church.

How does your work feel after a year? And what does it involve?

Quite comfortable. Both Miriam and I have missionary backgrounds. We have done this all our lives. It fits our vision of life, forming people in mission.... I have worked in Cameroon, the Dominican Republic, USA, Canada, Italy and Holland.

As MC Canada Mission Partnership facilitator for Africa and Europe, I serve as a liaison between MC Canada Witness workers and Mennonite/Anabaptist partners in these regions. In some places we collaborate with non-Mennonites, to bring in a Mennonite vision or perspective to their work. In Southern Africa, we work with the African Independent Churches, neo-Pentecostal and Evangelical groups. Also, we're broadening involvements with the wider church in Europe and Africa, including Anglican and Catholic.

What are the challenges and strengths of a Catholic background in a Mennonite institution or congregation?

I'm very appreciative of being missionary in a peace church and the emphasis of the Mennonite Church on disciple-



Photo by Leona Dueck Penner

Former Catholic priest Hippolyto Tshimanga is pictured in his “prayer centre” at his home in Winnipeg. For the past year, Tshimanga has served as MC Canada’s Mission Partnership facilitator for Africa and Europe.

ship. Our theological understandings should show in our daily lives. At the same time, I must confess that I suffer a loss of emphasis put on spiritual life: the Lord’s Supper, for example.

Although I understand the fear of making the bread and wine of our celebration a magical thing, for Mennonites communion is not central to the life of the church. That’s a very amazing thing to Miriam and me.

We also miss silence in liturgy. In Mennonite churches, there are only one or two minutes silence now and then! We need to let the Spirit of God speak to us in that silence to understand we are living in the time of the Spirit!

Mennonites don’t know how close they are to Catholics! They mostly know about 16th century Catholics, not about Catholics today. Catholic understanding of the Eucharist has changed from the time of the Reformation. There is a lot of need for

communication between Catholics and Mennonites.

In my year with the Mennonite Church, I have met young pastors and other people who are asking the same questions. During my visit to London, I was speaking with a very young person, Janelle Thiessen. She spoke to me about her love for the Lord’s Supper, and she wondered what can be done to enthuse Mennonite people to more often celebrate the Eucharist and make it central. Being in Europe, she came to this appreciation.

Having been born in Congo, what was it like to return to Africa as a Canadian mission administrator? Did it feel like a homecoming?

Because Africa is so diverse, our African partners do not see me as African; what they deal with is the delegate of MC Canada. When I travel to Africa, I am not going back to my culture or my continent. The unify-

ing factor here is the gospel—not the culture. It's only a homecoming when I visit my Mama in Congo!

However, I'm familiar with the overall situation...cultural, political, economical, religious. This helps to better understand a given problem. There are things that you might see an African do and identify them as a product of African culture. Sometimes political systems, such as apartheid, or the situation of poverty may oblige people to act in a certain way. It's easy to confuse this kind of thing with culture. Other times, it's my international experience on several continents that helps bridge gaps. It has given me eyes to see and discern where are the seeds of life and the idols of death in different cultures.

What excites you about the work in South Africa and Botswana?

The attitude of the Mennonite workers towards the people—they relate to other cultures and faiths very well. Most of our Witness workers in the region teach Bible courses to church leaders. Sometimes they are called to preach, to lead sessions and seminars. Also, many are involved in HIV/AIDS ministries and other social works. They are doing a wonderful job...and it's important to let them know that they are not alone. The church is behind them...visiting them through us.

Do you feel at home in MC Canada?

Very much so! I sense the love of God! At the MC Canada Christmas party, someone said, "Hippo brings joy!" That made me feel accepted!

—**Leona Dueck Penner**

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Stewardship stories for the generous life (Part II):

Tithe boldly—God may surprise you

What do you do when God's principles tug at your heart but you are afraid of what might happen if you obey? You want to trust God but are fearful of the personal, social and financial challenges that may follow that act of obedience.

For many years, my husband and I struggled with the principle of tithing. Finally, when we began to practise tithing, we discovered an immediate reward. My husband obtained a new full-time job. That was 15 years ago. Gradually, tithing became second nature in our bi-weekly budget planning. We simply did it.

About six years ago, though, we became struggling new business owners. In our type of business the gross income is impressive, but so are the expenses! There is a huge difference between what comes in and what is left after paying the bills. Should we tithe on our business income? I did not want to deal with that question even though a tithe on net income would have been very little. The question led to another discussion.

Since we based our tithe on my husband's employment cheque on gross income, should we not also tithe on our gross business income? As principal bookkeeper, I found that to be a scary proposition. Ten percent of gross business income would be quite a chunk of money to set aside when the balance sheet continually dipped into the red. I struggled with the question for months.

My persistent husband would not let the subject drop. (I often secretly wished he would have!) Finally, with a deep breath, I agreed to take the plunge. I did not know how it would work out, but I knew from past experience that we could trust God's faithfulness. Somehow, God would provide.

I still remember writing that first cheque from our business with trembling hands and heart. Looking back, I see that, since then, both our private and business incomes have increased

and only once did our business accounts dip into the red.

The most amazing response to our decision to tithe from our gross business income came within about a week of writing that first cheque. We desperately needed to replace our run-down business machines, but we had sunk every spare dollar into the business over the previous five years.

There was no extra money or unused credit with which to purchase new equipment.

Through a brief but timely search of the Internet, we came across a business identical to ours with equipment for sale. Even though we expected the price to be well out of our financial

range, we decided to call. The inquiry brought the most incredible answer.

All the 10-year-old equipment was in excellent condition. Retail value, if purchased new, would be more than \$80,000 plus taxes. The owners were willing to sell for \$3,000 plus taxes. Astounded, I asked the owner to repeat the price to make sure I had heard the figure correctly.

We borrowed the money, bought the equipment and made the eight-hour trip to pick it up with a borrowed trailer. Was it a coincidence that just a few months earlier we had purchased a used diesel truck that had exactly the right capacity and power to tow that huge trailer-load of equipment? Was it a coincidence that there were no other takers for such an unheard-of price or that this deal came to us exactly when we decided to trust in God's principle of tithing?

I call it a miracle and a direct blessing from above. I believe our God is a God of miracles who enjoys blessing his obedient children.

—**Connie de la Morandiere** with **Ferne Burkhardt**

Originally published in 2004-05 by the MC Eastern Canada Stewardship Commission; reprinted with permission.



Connie and Alex de la Morandiere

Klassen creates poetic beatitudes

A Curious Beatitude by Sarah Klassen. The Muses' Company, 2006.

Sarah Klassen has a broad vision for her poetry, taking on both the familiar and the exotic. She warmly invites us into her Mennonite upbringing in Manitoba in the 11-poem sequence, "German Lessons in the Interlake":

"Father as if he knew the wintry interlake could use a blessing read after morning chores in his prophet-voice from Luther's gothic script *Fürchtet euch nicht.*" (Don't be afraid.)

The title poem, "A Curious Beatitude," is about a Brahms requiem, and has a different section to correspond to each of the seven parts of the composition. The first, "Blest are those who carry sorrow," is both about hearing the music and about some women—familiar and exotic—in their grief.

Many other poems are also interconnected in a series. There are nine poems based on visual art, and an eight-part poem about a trip to the Inca ruins in the Andes.

A Curious Beatitude is Klassen's sixth book of poetry, but her first of the new millennium. In her earlier collections, she also tended to write poetry in a series. In *Borderwatch* (1993) she wrote extensively of two summers she spent in Lithuania during the transition from communist rule, capturing passionately a sense of the people she encountered in that particular place and time.

For the art poems in *A Curious Beatitude*, she has selected lesser-known works mainly by 20th century painters, making the poems a little less accessible than her poems about Leonardo Da Vinci in her second book, *Violence and Mercy* (1991).

In my favourite of her new art poems, Klassen shares her perception of the sketch artist's desire: "The artist adored these four pears, / wanted

with all her heart to preserve them / from shrivelling...." Unfortunately, I've never seen the picture, "Four Pears No. 3" by Martha Alf, and so my appreciation must stop with the poem.

I particularly like the new book's third section, "The Stripped Garden." "Thought Bird" begins with a dry leaf that she has mistaken for a sparrow, and carries us into other speculations, including the erroneous belief in a flat earth. Another poem takes us inside the head of a lion lying "on a withered tree as if he's dead / or dreaming," to



one forbidden to pounce on nearby zebras on the ark, and builds to a powerful image of "God spread-eagled on a tree, the temple torn," that still maintains the original lion image. The section concludes with a poem about the magi, and a series of four Advent poems.

Klassen doesn't propagandize her faith, but simply brings it out as she does with any other aspect of her life—with beauty in image and detail that makes it ring true.

—D.S. Martin

The reviewer is a Canadian poet and writer. His poetry chapbook, So The Moon Would Not Be Swallowed, will be available from Rubicon Press this month.



Ray Dirks, curator at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg, centre, braved Prairie roads in February to bring his photographs, stories and art out west. Rhonda Harder Epp of the Camrose (Alta.) Mennonite Fellowship came up with the idea to invite Dirks to Alberta, saying, "I saw in the gallery's newsletter...that Dirks was willing to travel with his presentations." Camrose Fellowship, with a membership of 30, invited Wildwood Mennonite Church of Saskatoon and Edmonton's First Mennonite Church to share expenses and Dirks' time. He visited the three congregations in as many days, while also giving presentations at Augustana College in Camrose and visiting Mennonite Central Committee offices in Saskatoon and Calgary. Through personal stories and photographs, Dirks shared his experiences photographing the elections in Congo and his recent travels to Ghana. Themes of partnership in the global Anabaptist family and mutual respect and learning across cultures shone through in both the visuals and words. Dirks, who specializes in watercolour portraits, is pictured at a watercolour workshop at First Mennonite Church on Sunday afternoon.

Photo by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

Aylmer, Ont.

DE BRIGJ 105.9 FM a hit with Low German audience

Canada's first and only Low German language radio station plays a crucial role in reducing the sense of isolation for some newcomers in southwestern Ontario.

DE BRIGJ 105.9 FM (The Bridge) is the primary source of news, weather, public service announcements, religious broadcasts and entertainment for many people in the Aylmer region who lack English language skills. "We often hear people say, 'Now we are not so isolated anymore; now we know what is going on,'" station manager Hein Rempel says.

The station, owned and operated by the Aylmer and Area Inter-Mennonite Community Council, provides four hours of daily programming Monday to Friday and three hours on Saturday.

In partnership with Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, the council started the station in 2003.

The station's success in communicating with its Low German audience resulted in DE BRIGJ receiving a provincial government grant of \$110,000 in December to develop public education broadcasts and other resources to help victims of crime. Also in December, the station held an open house to celebrate a new licence allowing the station to increase power to 250 watts and expand its listening audience to include nearby St. Thomas, Port Rowan and Woodstock.

A highlight of the open house was giving people the opportunity to participate in the popular Music by Request show in person. "By far, our most popular program is Music by Request," says Rempel. About half of the potential audience of up to 20,000 people listen to this hour-long program broadcast live on Wednesday evenings. "The phone never stops ringing. We could go for three hours and the phone wouldn't stop ringing," he says, noting that songs are dedicated to boyfriends or girlfriends, and to people who are sick or in hospital.

The station plays music in four languages: German, Low German, English and Spanish. "Aylmer," a Low German song composed and recorded

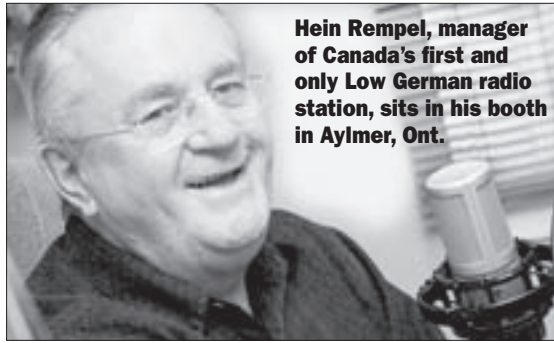


Photo by Joannie Peters

Hein Rempel, manager of Canada's first and only Low German radio station, sits in his booth in Aylmer, Ont.

by Manitoba musician Hank Neufeld, is the most popular request. "We call him *plaut dietcha* (Low German) Johnny Cash," Rempel says of Neufeld.

Neufeld, along with other Canadian entertainers, have participated in fundraising concerts that helped cover the \$70,000 set-up costs and raise revenue for the \$90,000 annual budget.

DE BRIGJ broadcasts news and announcements previously broadcast on Low German radio in Mexico, along with international news, children's programs and religious programs produced by HCJB. In exchange, DE BRIGJ distributes Low German

programs produced by and for the Aylmer station to other stations, including *Onse Jeschicht* (Our Story), a half-hour program on the history of Low German Mennonites produced by George Rempel of Winkler, Man., and *Dit & Daut* (This and That), a short commentary featuring the opinions of council executive director Abe Harms and Rempel, and a short *plaut-cast* (podcast) about news in southern Manitoba prepared on a weekly basis by Cal Zacharias of Winkler.

Rempel, who was born in Mexico and moved to Canada in 1965, says Low German radio stations instill a sense of community pride. "Low German is alive and well," he says, noting that HCJB in Quito, Ecuador, provides training for Low German broadcasters and will soon be launching an information-sharing website to strengthen networking among Low German radio stations.

—MCC release by **Gladys Terichow**

Winnipeg

MC Canada now on the air

Mennonite Church Canada launched a radio program called *Church Matters* on Feb. 18.

The program is the combination of an offer from Elmer Hildebrand, owner of Golden West Broadcasting—the host network, and the ponderings of MC Canada leadership on how to reach more people both in and out of its member congregations.

Using an issues and interview format, *Church Matters* will ask questions about the life of the church at home, across the street and around the world. MC Canada staffers Janet Plenert and Dan Dyck will host the program.

Robert J. Suderman, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, says the program fills a niche in the Christian radio market. There are lots of worship-style programs that focus on personal faith, but "*Church Matters* is grounded in

how we understand the life and spirit of the church," he says.

Planned topics include the militarization of Canada, the state of the international Mennonite Church, socially responsible investing and creation care—all from the perspective of why the church as a community of believers should be united in its concern for these issues. Each episode will bring out biblical stories and images that apply to faithful living today. Integral to the program is a desire to stay ecclesiastically grounded, adds Suderman.

Church Matters will be a trial effort for one year. Continuation or expansion will depend on listener feedback.

The program airs on the third Sunday of each month in southern Manitoba, at 8:45 a.m. CST. It will be broadcast on CFAM 950 in Altona, AM 1250 in Steinbach and CJRB 1220 in Boissevain. The program can also be heard in audio file format anywhere, anytime by visiting mennonitechurch.ca and doing a search for "church matters."

—MC Canada release

Neubergthal, Man.

Painter appreciates her faith community's artistic heritage

An 80-year-old barn in the historic village of Neubergthal is home to Margruite and Paul Krahn and their three daughters. The spacious loft, with its exposed beams and plank floor, plays host to community dances and concerts. Tucked in at the back of the loft is Margruite's studio. It's where two of her passions—art and history—come together.

As chair of the Neubergthal Heritage Foundation, she has been involved in the restoration of buildings in the village, working on the foundation's newsletter and creating picture panels to preserve stories.

But Krahn is first and foremost an artist. Her bold and vivid paintings almost always include rocks and trees, testimony to her love of the outdoors. Since she and her family moved from Winnipeg to Neubergthal more than eight years ago, she has developed a growing appreciation for the richness of a heritage. Neubergthal, one of only two Prairie settlements in western Canada where a historical cultural heritage remains intact, was designated a National Historic Site by the Parks and Monuments Board of Canada in 1989.

Krahn points out the intricacies carved 80 years ago into the beams that once defined the stalls of farm animals, but now frame her home. Art manifested itself in these early settlers, she explains, unfurling floor cloths that she has painted. The cloths imitate the patterns that Mennonites—in an effort to add colour and beauty to their lives—hand-

painted on their wooden floors over a century ago. Many of these original patterns she found under layers of linoleum.

Krahn wonders if the religious revivals of the 1930s weren't responsible for some of the artistic expression of

built in the 1880s. "I want the people to value this place. Mennonites don't always recognize their artistic heritage," she says.

Krahn fell in love with painting when she was in Grade 10. But for a while she tried to run away from this calling. It requires discipline, she explains, and she wasn't ready to give up other interests. "Four people were

instrumental in bringing me back," she says, including her husband Paul, father, quilter Alvina Pankratz and Margaret Buffie. "They encouraged me to just keep painting."

"I don't take for granted this gift," Krahn says. "It is my responsibility to use my talents wisely. In my 30s I had a spiritual experience. Through this experience I have been able to let go of certain conceptions...of the need to save others. Learning to accept them and love them and not need to change them is what's important, and has helped me become more compassionate and calmer. God became so much bigger and deeper in my relationships. I did a lot of soul-searching."

Krahn has noticed how the change is reflected in her art. "It has loosened me up," she says. "I used to be very tight. Then I went big. I don't even feel I've gone big enough."

Last year, Krahn's artwork depicting life in her village was part of an exhibit at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. Currently, she is working on a series of paintings demonstrating community called Gatherings Around the Table.

—Evelyn Rempel Petkau



Photo by Evelyn Rempel Petkau

Painter Margruite Krahn works on one of her creations in her family's historic house in Neubergthal, Man., that she and her husband and children are restoring.

that time being covered up. "It's just a theory I have," she adds.

"Forty families live in Neubergthal and almost every one of them has something original. There are eight housebarns still standing," says Krahn. The Krahns are presently restoring a herdsman's house that was

FOCUS

Summer: Food, Travel and Events

Things to do on the Prairies this summer

Manitoba

May 21: Spring on the Farm at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach. For information, call toll-free 1-866-280-8741.

June 2: Blumenort Fair Day, Blumenort Park. For information, call Bob Brandt at 205-326-6892.

June 8-9: Niverville Olde Tyme Country Fair. For more information, visit niverville-fair.com.

June 15-16: Winnipeg Festival and Relief Sale at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg; 5-9 p.m. (15), 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. (16). For more information, call 204-261-6381.

July 1: Canada Day Festivities at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach. For information, call toll-free 1-866-280-8741.

July 25-28: Manitoba Threshermen's Reunion and Stampede, Manitoba Agricultural Museum, Austin. For more information, call 204-637-2354.

July 27-29: Manitoba Sunflower Festival. Free pancake breakfast, great Mennonite food, lots to see and hear in the arts, and plenty of sports. Altona Centennial Park. For more information, call 204-324-9005

Aug. 3-6: Pioneer Days at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach. For informa-



TourMagination photo

In 2007, TourMagination is offering tours to Israel/Palestine and Jordan (including to the Dome of the Rock, pictured above); Exploring the World of Paul, which is Turkey and Greece; and a tour to Egypt. For more information, or to book a tour, e-mail office@tourmagination.com or call 1-800-565-0451 or 519-885-2522.

Continued on page 16

Alberta Mennonite Relief Sale

June 15- 16, 2007
Coaldale, Alberta www.mccreliefsale.com

Saskatchewan MCC Relief Sale

June 15 & 16
Prairieland Park, Saskatoon

Canadian Foodgrains Bank Sale

June 23 Hague/Osler Saskatchewan

Morris MCC Relief Sale

September 8, 2007
Morris Stampede Grounds
Huge farmer's market! Contact: 204-427-2667

Brandon MCC Relief Sale Events:

Cycle Clear Lake for MCC, June 30

Brandon MCC Relief Sale

Sept. 21-22 mcc.org/manitoba/brandonreliefsale

Winnipeg MCC Relief Sale and Festival

June 15 & 16
Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg

Aylmer Auction for Relief

June 30, 2007 Aylmer Curling Club

New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale

May 25 & 26
New Hamburg Arena and Fair Grounds
www.nhmrs.com

QUILTS AND MORE!

Visit a relief sale near you!



Summer *From page 15*

tion, call toll-free 1-866-280-8741.

Aug. 10-12: Harvest Festival and Exhibition at Winkler. Free family fun.

Aug. 17-19: Plum Festival at Plum Coulee. Crackers and waffles breakfast, water activities and tours of Prairieview Elevator. For more information, call June Letkeman at 204-829-2317.

Aug. 17-19: Hanover Agricultural Society Parade and Fair. Rodeo begins Aug. 16. Grunthal Fair Grounds. For more information, call Henry Funk at 204-326-2724.

Aug. 25: Honey Festival at Kleefeld Sports Grounds. For more information, call 204-377-4296.

Aug. 25-27: Corn and Apple Festival in Morden. Free, stage entertainment, corn on the cob, apple cider. For more information, call 204-822-5630.

Sept. 3: Fall on the Farm at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach. For information, call toll-free 1-866-280-8741.

Sept. 7-8: Pembina Threshermen's Reunion, west of Winkler. Farming and harvesting practices of long bygone years. For more information, call 204-325-7497.

Saskatchewan

May 20-Sept. 4: Duck Lake Interpretive Centre. Combination of pioneer and First Nations history. Lots of interesting artifacts. For more information, call 1-306-467-2057.

June 20-July 1 and Aug. 29-Sept. 9. Family-centred plays at the Barn Play-

house, between Martensville and Waldheim on Hwy. 12. A community theatre event run by the Dyck family. Tickets go on sale May 11. Call 1-306-239-4600. The plays are held in a renovated barn. There is also a gift shop, wagon rides and fiddle music. Supper can be purchased before the play begins at outdoor concession booths.

July 5-Aug. 5: The Drawer Boy theatre presentation at the Station Arts Centre in Rosthern. Family theatre in the Saskatchewan Valley (the heart of Mennonite country). For tickets, call 306-232-5332.

Relief Sale to fund water initiatives

Volunteers have already been hard at work for months preparing for the 14th annual Winnipeg Festival and Relief Sale. The sale—which takes place June 15 and 16, at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg—attracted 5,000 visitors last year and raised \$100,000 for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) projects worldwide.

Visitors to the Winnipeg sale have come to expect old-fashioned hospitality. This year, in addition to arts and crafts, baking, entertainment and home cooking, guests will be treated to a quilt show and sale.

Funds raised at this year's sale will go towards food, health and water initiatives in places like India, where \$35 pays for the necessary labour and materials needed to bring clean drinking water to three families.

—MCC release



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By Michael Healey
Director Stephen Heatley
July 5 - August 5, 2007
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An Award Winner!*
*Pre-show dinners Perennial Gardens
Art Gallery*
For reservations call
306-232-5332

ROSTHERN, SK.

Congolese women tell delegates **‘we really want peace’**

Last fall, in the midst of the first democratic elections in more than four decades, Wendy Lehman joined 10 other women on a two-week Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation to meet with women, human rights groups and churches in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to hear their stories and explore how the delegates might support their work.

“I used to be just like to rest of you,” Jeannette told us. That was before the Interahamwe militia soldiers came to her home in the Democratic Republic of Congo and attacked her, cutting off her hands. First, they raped her and killed her child in front of her, then they cut off her hands with a machete and slashed her across the head, leaving her for dead. “Before the war,” she said, “we were peaceful and were able to live in our homes.... We really want peace.”

The call for peace was echoed by many other women we met. They said if they had peace, they could go to their fields, collect water, take their children to school. They could control their own resources and create their own future.

“As mothers, we are so tired of war. We want peace. Please go tell other women about the situation in the Congo. Go and lobby for an end to this war,” said one woman in Uvira.

The war and ongoing conflict since 1998 has left four million dead and, according to the UN Development Fund for Women, hundreds of thousands of women and girls raped. Like many others, Denis Mukwege, a surgeon at Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, told us that rape in Congo is targeted



CPT photo

As part of a CPT delegation, Wendy Lehman, right, met with a group of Congolese women near the town of Goma last fall.

as a “weapon of war” against not only those directly attacked, but the larger society. Rape is public—committed in front of husbands, children, the community. Armed groups use rape as an inexpensive weapon to control communities, with different groups having their own “signature” style of rape.

Congolese women have taken creative, significant risks to get their messages out, such as bicycling human rights documentation across conflict zones, then hiding it under rocks for their partners in other towns to pick up. These messages have made it into the media and to international human rights organizations. The women we met wanted their stories told in our home countries and to our

policymakers, to help lead to a change in international policy towards Congo. Specifically, they want the flow of guns into their country to stop and they

want control over their natural resources.

The struggle for natural resources fuels the conflict in Congo. In an effort to support the women we met, we can ask businesses that sell gold and diamonds where these resources came from and whether or not they were ethically mined. The same is true for the manufacturers of laptops and cell phones, which rely on the mineral coltan—80 percent of the world’s coltan comes from Congo. For more information on these campaigns, visit nodirty-gold.org or amnestyusa.org and do a search for “blood diamonds.”

gold.org or amnestyusa.org and do a search for “blood diamonds.”

In these small ways we hope to support the articulate, courageous and well-organized women’s organizations in Congo—which are holding detraumatization sessions; providing AIDS treatment and rape counselling; training women in trades for economic self-sufficiency; and organizing to reform the legal, media and social spheres—as well as going about the day-to-day business of collecting water, growing and harvesting crops, and educating their children.

As the director of the Bukavu human rights group, Heritiers de la Justice (Inheritors of Justice), Maurice Namwira told us, “We have been killed and maimed, but we are still fighting. And we are working for change.”

—Wendy Lehman

Letters

Camp experience leaves no regrets

Your issue about camps (Feb. 5, pages 22 to 24) interested me since my son was a program director at Manitoba's Moose Lake Camp last summer.

He asked me to serve on the kitchen staff for one week. Although my work there was very different from my regular job as a high school English teacher, it was definitely rewarding. I gained a real respect for the organizational skills required by people like Alvie Martens, who is in charge of food services at Moose Lake. I worked with four other women from four different Mennonite churches. I had never met them before. We became a great team and I enjoyed my conversations with them. It didn't take long to realize we had many life experiences that were

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.

similar or connected in some way.

I also appreciated the opportunity to observe first-hand the important and challenging work the young adults from our churches do at camp. They cooperate and support one another as a team. They show God's love to children who can be difficult and demanding at times. They share the good news of Jesus Christ through word and deed and song. They are on call 24 hours a day and yet I never heard any of them complain.

I felt energized by the fact that I could meet the physical demands of my job in the kitchen. I spent 10

hours a day washing dishes, baking desserts, peeling and chopping vegetables, cleaning cupboards, mopping floors and serving meals. Despite eating lots of the great food, I lost two pounds during my week at camp due to the physical demands of the job! I wouldn't have traded the experience for anything.

I'd like to encourage parents who have young adult children working at camp this summer to think about joining them there for a week or two as a volunteer. I guarantee you won't regret it.

—**MaryLou Driedger, Steinbach, Man.**

MELISSA MILLER



Family Ties

On the southern Prairies, as January slides into February, the light of the winter sun begins to change. Through a window in my husband's office, a shaft of afternoon sunlight appears for the first time in months, an annual event that declares, "Take heart! The cold darkness will not last forever!"

A winter-weary clerk at the bakery offers her own hopeful note, saying that she is no longer shrouded in darkness when driving to and from work. Many people comment on the extra light, a more trustworthy harbinger of spring than any ground-hog prediction.

During my first winter on the Prairies, I missed this seasonal blessing. Walking with my dog over crusted ice and snow, bundled against the -30C chill, I was startled by another dog walker who proclaimed, "Isn't it a beautiful day?" In truth, I hadn't noticed. I looked very closely at her, to assess whether she was joking or mentally unhinged (she was apparently neither). She continued, "The light is changing and it's so sunny and bright. Makes you feel like spring is just around the corner."

Clearly her imagination was more optimistic than mine. Now, several years into life as a Prairie dweller, I too anticipate the light and the hope it offers.

The lengthening days correspond with Lent, the season in which Christians contemplate shadows that block God's light—human frailty and death, sins of the flesh, undisciplined appetites, addictions, violence and war. We turn our attention to these shadows, seeking God's presence to illumine and

free us. Wherever God's light shines, our broken, wounded world is warmed, healed and made whole. In our relationships, too, a little light can go a long way towards sparking a change, a shift in perspective, a thaw in what's frozen.

The problem is, we often miss the light. Like a parka-wrapped winter walker, we may be so focused on the treacherous ice or the bitter cold—the

dangers from reaching out or the hurts we still carry years after the original injury—that we may not take notice of the possibilities for spring, warmth and new growth that the light signals. We might misinterpret someone else's gesture. We might not even see the olive branch they're extending. We might hopelessly conclude that the current disruption or difficulty is the end of the story or the way it always will be.

Take heart, gentle reader. Imagine that the source of light streaming onto and warming the northern hemisphere can also brighten and warm the landscapes of

our hearts and relationships. Peel back your eyeballs and see what you're missing. Pause before retorting to someone else's anger. Open yourself to forgiveness, to releasing what cannot be changed. Whisper a prayer when you think of the other. Send a card. Pick up the

phone just to hear their voice. Position your relational hurts in the light of God's grace. Expect good things.

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

Looking for light

In our relationships, a little light can go a long way towards sparking a change, a shift in perspective, a thaw in what's frozen.

Swartzendruber article 'required reading'

I want to thank Loren Swartzendruber for his thoughtful and challenging article, "Liberal or Conservative?" (Jan. 22, page 12).

It should be required reading for all parents in our congregations who have school-age children, be they elementary, secondary or post-secondary students. While Swartzendruber writes from an American perspective, the same can be said about Canada—where we also have fine Mennonite schools, colleges and a university that deserve our wholehearted support.

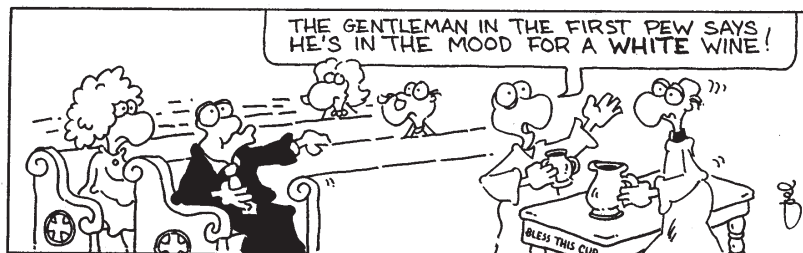
—**Paul Penner Sr., Toronto**

Reader appreciates Dec. 18 issue

Still rereading the Dec. 18 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* again—your best issue of the year!

Piet Visser's article on Rembrandt ("Portrait of the artist as a young Mennonite?" page 32) was the star,

Pontius' Puddle



but there were many standouts, including the article on Rachel Bueckert and her poetry ("Mennonite poet wins Remembrance Day contest," page 34); Evelyn Rempel Petkau's "Jewish-Mennonite interaction in Winkler recalled" article on page 18; and the theme articles—"Making space and time for God" by Gerry Ediger and Maurice Martin—were perfect for Christmas.

Keep up the good work!

—**Andre Pekovich, Vancouver**

Corrections

Val Pankratz has been the organizer of the quilting retreats at Manitoba's Camps with Meaning for the last eight years. She was incorrectly identified in the "Quilting retreats popular, productive" article that appeared in the Dec. 18 TheChurches section on page 37. And Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba is involved with the 100 Mile Manitoba project to get people to commit to eating locally grown food. Incorrect information appeared in the "Locally grown food initiative spawned in Manitoba" article on page 19 of the Feb. 5 issue. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the errors.

GARY SAWATZKY



God, money and me

The room was a mess again today. No matter how many times he had been told to clean, and despite all the past disciplining, it was still a mess.

Enough was enough. Judgment had come and it was time to clean. The whole day was spent sorting clean clothes from dirty and old from new, organizing and rearranging, and finally discovering the floor! By the time the task was done, he had found many long lost items. Comments like, "I have been looking for that," and, "So that's where that is," filled the room. His closet was now full, the dresser organized and sorted. He had lots of clothes. Some clothing no longer needed went to others.

Sometimes our financial lives look a lot like this room. We are disorganized and not quite sure where things are. We know that we have enough, but are not sure where it is all going or even how it got there. Often there is enough income, but there always seems to be more outgo. Then it feels like there is not enough income.

A basic rule of money management is that if I consistently spend more than I make, I will be broke. Not understanding how much I am spending—and on what—is a common problem.

The impact of tight finances is often felt first in our generosity. We see giving as neither a joy nor an act of worship, but rather as an evil that causes us to be short of money for other things. Giving is often the first

The impact of tight finances is often felt first in our generosity.

To fail to plan is to plan to fail

"expense" to be cut. Yet, as Christians, we are called to tithe and to give joyfully out of our abundance.

Money problems usually start small and continue to grow. We buy something that we don't really need or just plain want, like the extra coffee, snack or other frill. Our incomes are usually enough, but because we lack the budgeting discipline or the spending discipline, things get

away from us. Remember the old saying: "To fail to plan is to plan to fail."

Some people find putting money into envelopes or jars designated to various spending categories is helpful. Others put themselves on an allowance by having pay cheques direct deposited, bills electronically paid, and access to credit cards limited. For some families, putting someone who is less inclined to spend in charge of the purse strings can help turn things around.

If your finances feel like they are out of control, don't wait any longer. Seek some counsel. It is only too late if you wait until it is too late. Just as small spending leakages lead to big problems, so small changes in terms of planning and paying attention to spending habits can make a big positive difference over time.

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

Kitchener, Ont.

Rockway enriched by Muslim student from Iran

A student exchange program is breaking down barriers between Muslims and Christians at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener.

"I like it—it's like being an only child," says Maryam Daneshvar, one of two Muslim students at the school.

"We believe different things, but that doesn't come in the way of our friendship," adds her friend Christine Zwart.

Daneshvar, 17, moved to Canada in 1998 with her parents Yousef and Masoumeh and her older brother, Mojtaba.

Her father was the first Iranian selected to study in Canada under an unusual student exchange program initiated in 1998 by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) between the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute in Qom, Iran, and the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, which is part of Conrad Grebel University College. Her father will be completing his studies this year and the family will then return to Iran.

Rockway principal Terry

Schellenberg says Daneshvar's presence, along with the presence of students from China, Taiwan, Japan and Germany, enrich the school of 400 students that strives to create an environment where learning opportunities, caring and faith are modelled and taught. "She is forthright, open and honest," says Schellenberg, adding this openness leads to greater understanding of Islam and the situation in Iran.

Although Daneshvar has only vague memories of life in Iran, her contact with friends and relatives there and the Iranian community in Canada help her recognize that her faith and her home country are often misrepresented and misunderstood in North America. "The media make Islam look evil—it is insulting in a way, but it is even more hurtful that people believe it," she says.

Her family's involvement in Mennonite churches and the



MCC photo by Joannie Peters

Maryam Daneshvar, a Muslim exchange student from Iran, uses art as a tool to express her feelings. The frayed rope in her most recent drawing portrays the importance of living in the present and not letting memories dominate one's life.

Windsor, Ont.

Pastoral letter counters anti-Islamic conference

Mennonite pastors in southwestern Ontario have spoken out against a widely publicized January conference held in Windsor on "The deadly threat of Islam." The conference received national coverage on CBC Radio as "The Current" covered the event put on by the Windsor Christian Theology Centre, interviewing speakers, the local MP and participants on Jan. 16.

On Feb. 6, the pastors of the Essex County Mennonite Churches (Faith,

Harrow, Leamington, North Leamington and Windsor—all part of MC Eastern Canada) wrote to two mosques and the Islamic centre in Windsor condemning the conference.

The pastors had struggled with how to respond to the event. Some went to the sessions and described the content as biased, inflammatory and stereotypical, where Muslims and Islam itself were painted as violently expansionist.

The pastors responded as "members of an historic Peace Church...engag[ing] in a ministry of peace and reconciliation with Jesus as our example," their letter indicated.

"In recent weeks, objectionable intentions and language have been used to denigrate the Muslim faith and commu-

nity," they wrote. "We recognize that these actions are unjust and hurtful. We deeply regret that you have been targets of fear and misinformation. Stereotyping of any religion or people group violates human dignity, disregarding and attempting to silence the complex self-understanding and identity of those named. This, to our thinking, is not the way of loving relationships to which God calls us."

The letter ended with an offer by the pastors to begin "developing relationships of familiarity and trust, and to greater participation in interfaith dialogue." This offer was based on the pastors' realization that they did not know the members of the Windsor Muslim community, nor understand the essence of Islamic faith.

—Dave Rogalsky

Mennonite community has given her a greater understanding of the Christian faith. "Whatever I know about Christianity, I have learned here," she says.

When she was in Grade 9, she was selected to draw a large mural for the Rockway chapel. Her mural, "Image of God," portrays a collage of images that symbolize the similarities of the three religions based on the faith of Abraham—Islam, Judaism and Christianity. Her images include a rock to symbolize the stability of God, roses to symbolize love, books to represent the scriptures, and a dove to symbolize peace.

In both Qom and Canada, exchange students and their families are building bridges of understanding and friendship between Iranian Muslims and North American Mennonites, says Ed Martin, director of MCC's program in Iran. Four families have participated in this program; all report that the most profound moments of learning come from the friendships that are formed as students and their families face the challenges of living and studying among people of other faiths.

"Both Iranian Muslims and North American Mennonites are learning about an important sister religion and gaining a new respect for and acceptance of 'the other,'" Martin says.

—MCC release by **Gladys Terichow**

Harrow, Ont.

Churches catch thrift store vision

Harry Riediger is well known in Harrow. "Harry's Place" was the local second-hand and thrift store for many years. Just a small place, it served the purpose.

But as the years went on, two things became apparent: the shop was too small and Riediger would not be able to run a larger place alone. So he contacted the churches in Harrow, including his home congregation—Harrow Mennonite Church.

The vision caught on in the community and nearly all the congregations signed on. The renovating of a new space, staffing the store, decorating and displaying the goods were all accomplished in a spirit of ecumenical generosity.

Calgary

Macau missionaries challenge youths

On the eve of Mennonite World Fellowship Sunday last month, about 50 adults, children and youths of Chinese, Vietnamese and Germanic backgrounds from a number of area churches gathered at Calgary Chinese Mennonite Church for an evening of food and fellowship, and to learn about what God is doing in Macau.

Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers Tim and Cindy Buhler told those present that the primary focus of mission is no different in Macau than in Calgary. The goal of ministry in Macau is not to bring God to the people of that city, they said, since he was there from the beginning. The question is how to introduce Jesus to people who may never have heard of him.

The Buhlers noted that most people in Macau worship something. At one point or another in their life they go to a temple to make an offering concerning a need they have. Mission workers have found it helpful to present Jesus as the fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrificial laws, who is a means of gaining access to God.

They told a particularly moving story about Sarah. Now 19, she came to know the Lord several years



Photo by Cindy Chuong

Hugo Neufeld, pastoral advisor at Calgary Chinese Mennonite Church, encourages a young congregant to participate in a get-acquainted exercise at a church event.

ago through the ministry of Macau Mennonite Church. Since then, she has become an evangelist herself, sharing the gospel with her friends in every possible setting. Recently, she and two friends went to China for a whirlwind mission trip into the interior, to share the gospel in some rural villages. Now, she is talking of receiving further training for long-term mission work.

In closing, the Buhlers challenged the youths to seriously consider a short-term mission assignment to test God's call to possible longer-term assignments.

—**Marv Baergen**

The author is MC Canada's Missional Formation and Congregational Partnerships facilitator.



Photo by Dave Rogalsky

Volunteer manager Sandra Brown, left, Hermine Fennema and Margaret Riediger are kept busy at Full Circle Thrift Store in Harrow, Ont., where, says Brown, "donations have been great and so have sales."

The new Full Circle Thrift Store was opened last August. Full of tasteful displays, it is a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) associate store. Like other stores, it remits funds to MCC for relief and development, but it also contributes to local needs, such as the youth centre, a health clinic, the United Church's Coats for Kids program, and a non-profit sorority's Santa Sacks, a program for

children who might not otherwise get anything for Christmas.

The store is open daily each Monday to Thursday afternoon, and all day Friday and Saturday.

"Donations have been great and so have sales," says volunteer manager Sandra Brown.

—**Dave Rogalsky**

Goshen, Ind.

Gender violence speech tops Goshen College contest

Around the world, at least one in three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime, according to the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and the Center for Health and Gender Equity. This and other facts about global violence against women was presented by first-year Goshen College student Niti Mishra on Jan. 23 during the 2007 C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest. Mishra, an accounting major from Brampton, Ont., who originally hails from Nepal, won the competition with her speech, "Gender violence: A challenge across borders."

"I was about 12 years old when I first came to understand what violence against women could mean," said Mishra. "Violence against women is nothing new. The way our culture is set up definitely provides a platform for this kind of cruelty to exist.... Though my awakening to this violence came in Nepal, girls and women fall victim to mistreatment and injustice in countries across the world."

Mishra noted that women in economically desperate situations often are the victims of such violence, whether at the hands of their husbands or boyfriends, or when sold into prostitution by their family. She said that, in Nepal, 172,000 girls have been "trafficked" or forced into a life of prostitution. Women and girls are also the victims of war, Mishra said, because "rape is used in armed conflicts to in-

timidate, conquer and control women and their communities."

But Mishra didn't want her audience to think that violence against women was only a distant issue. "The abuse and violence, of course, does not prevail in Third World countries only," she said. "In the United States, a woman is raped every six minutes; a woman is battered every 15 seconds."

The effects of such violence, Mishra noted, are wide-ranging, leaving physical, emotional, social, mental and psychological scars. And although the physical effects can be quite significant, she said that researchers have found out that the psychological effects are "more severe and debilitating than the physical ones."

Mishra called her audience to action—to donate to organizations that help women and children around the world and to speak out for women's rights. "We need to recognize that abuse is a fundamental violation of numerous human rights," she said. "These violations impact the social, mental, physical and emotional health of thousands of women, and have a profoundly negative impact on the development and wellbeing of numerous families, communities and entire countries."

"We need to act now," she concluded. "We should not ever tolerate violence."

Because it is a peace oratorical competition, the topics of the speeches are required to be related to peace, in a universal or specific context, including war and violence, political policies, agencies of justice and peace, peace-making strategies or current events.

As the winner of the Goshen College competition, Mishra has the option of entering the U.S./Canada Mennonite Central Committee-sponsored C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest. Last year's winner, Goshen College senior Rebecca Fast of Waterloo, Ont., won the bi-national competition with her speech, "Misunderstood minds: Wasted human potential," about learning disabilities. —Goshen College release

by **Jodi H. Beyeler**



Ontarian Niti Mishra called for an end to abuse.



Taylor

Winnipeg

Young anti-homelessness activist addresses CMU chapel

Eleven-year-old anti-homelessness activist Hannah Taylor left students and staff at a Jan. 22 Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) chapel with an uplifting message: "If we never give up, and care enough for each other, we can do anything."

When people see a homeless person, "don't be afraid of them, be kind to them," she said.

The young Winnipegger's journey of helping homeless people across Canada began when she was five and she saw someone eating out of a garbage can. "I was very sad and felt sick about it," she said. "I asked my mom why he had to do that. She said it was because he was homeless."

Hannah turned that experience into a classroom project, then later began making "Ladybug" jars—glass jars spray painted red with black dots—to collect spare change. That was the start of the Ladybug Foundation, which has raised more than a half-million dollars for Canadian charities that help homeless people. Along the way, Hannah has spoken at 80 schools and to Canada's business and political elite.

Members of the CMU community are doing their part to help Hannah help homeless people. Ladybug jars have been placed around the campus so students, staff and visitors can donate their spare change.

"I know some people are afraid of homeless people," Hannah said. "But they are great people wrapped in old clothes with sad hearts."

Hannah's visit to the university was arranged by CMU's Centre for Leadership and Management.

—CMU release by **John Longhurst**

Markham, Ont.

Hagerman Mennonite 'births' emerging Lao congregation

A special service of celebration was held last month in recognition of Lao-Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church, an emerging congregation within Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (see "Learning about Jesus," Nov. 28, page 36). Traditional dances and Lao opera added a unique cultural flavour to the event held at Hagerman Mennonite Church in Markham.

MC Eastern Canada representatives David Martin (executive minister) and Brian Bauman (missions minister) were present to bring greetings and to officially present the document from the federal government granting charitable status to the Lao congregation. Samson Lo, director of Multicultural Ministries for Mennonite Church Canada, brought words of encouragement.

A group of women from the congregation sang a song in Laotian that told the story of their conversion: "What a joy to come to this land. It is even more joy to get to know the Lord here. We did not know Jesus when we were in Laos, that he is the Lord who loves all nations."

Hagerman Mennonite Church has supported the congregation, which currently meets in a warehouse in western Toronto, by being a trustee for donated

funds, and its treasurer has mentored the Lao leadership in how to administer church finances.

Part-time pastoral leadership is provided by Kuaying Teng from St. Catharines, Ont. Teng works for Mennonite Mission Network as a liaison with 50 Asian Mennonite congregations across North America. The new Lao church also benefits from the lay leadership of Chinda Kommala, a businessperson who has a passion for building the church.

The Lao members' relationships with Mennonites began after they came to Canada as refugees, fleeing war and oppression in their homeland. Some were sponsored by Mennonite congregations and a number expressed a desire to become Mennonite Christians.

The Lao congregation offers worship services, Bible studies, youth programs, homework help for students, and other practical services for immigrant families, including helping with government forms and translations. There are 20 to 30 adults plus numerous children involved on a regular basis.

—**Joanna Reesor-McDowell**

School note

Dean back to classroom

Elkhart, Ind.—Loren L. Johns, academic dean of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), will leave his post as dean to teach full-time at the seminary beginning this summer. Johns has served as dean since coming to AMBS in 2000; as associate professor of New Testament, he has also taught one course a year. With the upcoming change, he anticipates having more time for research and interaction with students. Johns recently became New Testament editor of the Believers Church Bible Commentary Series published by Herald Press, a role he will carry in addition to full-time teaching at AMBS. This change coincides with another shift in the Bible faculty at AMBS. Jacob Elias, professor of New Testament, is cutting back on his teaching assignment in anticipation of retirement after serving 30 years at AMBS. The seminary currently is conducting a search to fill the position of academic dean.

—AMBS release **Mary E. Klassen**

Photo by Joanna Reesor-McDowell

Traditional Lao dance and opera were part of the special service of celebration and thanksgiving recognizing the Lao-Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church.



Mutual Aid Ministries helped Shay and his family by giving the physical, emotional and spiritual support needed after the hurricanes caused damage to their home in the fall of 2005.

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Calgary

2007 Alberta Songfest cancelled... future of event uncertain

The annual Alberta Songfest is no more, at least for the time being. In early February, the Songfest Committee announced that the event would be cancelled for 2007, and the committee would dissolve.

A combination of difficulties in finding a congregation to host the event (Trinity and Calgary First Mennonite were originally slated to host the event this year), communications between the committee and hosting churches, and an overall dwindling interest in the event predicated this decision.

Mennonite Church Alberta conference minister Jim Shantz was somewhat surprised by the announcement. "Last year's event in Edmonton was so positive," he said. "I thought we had some positive energy going and a real good feeling of worship."

The Songfest Committee and MC Alberta executive are now working on a recommendation for the annual conference sessions, to be held in Lethbridge on March 23 and 24.

According to committee member Kim Wiens, "We want the recommendation to spur further thinking about how we do corporate worship in our conference."

Conference chair Marguerite Jack is looking forward to the results of roundtable discussions that will occur at the conference. "Songfest is such a joyful way to get together," she said. "There's no business, and we can sing and play to our heart's content."

Although the cancellation feels like an ending, it is not unprecedented.

In its 75-year existence, Songfest has changed according to the churches' needs and has even been cancelled before.

According to *The Mennonite Conference of Alberta: A History of its Churches and Institutions*, compiled by C.L. Dick in 1980, attendance at Songfest was difficult for many in the 1930s because of poor roads and limited finances. It was cancelled for a few years during World War II, and again in 1976, when the provincial youth organization, responsible for planning the event, was in disarray.

The history book notes that, in the

Laird, Sask.

Church pastor, wife serve at Ukrainian Mennonite Centre

After being granted leave by Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church, pastor Lorne Epp and his wife Hilda, who took a leave of absence from the Mennonite Nursing Home in Rosthern, Sask., spent from mid-August to the end of December at the Mennonite Centre of Ukraine in Molochansk. While there, they acted as the centre's North American directors.

Early in their term, a request came from the school director in Dolina, formerly the village of Schoenau, for assistance with setting up a Kindergarten in the school. The school's numbers were decreasing and many young children were going to the larger centre of Molochansk for Kindergarten classes offered there. Many did not return to Dolina for the rest of their education. As well, there were many parents unable to provide transportation to Molochansk for their children, leaving them in a position of being behind their peers when starting school.

Tiefengrund Rosenort's Sunday school decided to raise money for the Dolina school last fall, as it could eas-

ily identify with the situation because the enrolment in its local school in Laird is also declining.

Marina Romanova, director of the Dolina school, was overwhelmed when the church raised \$1,600—more than the projected amount—and she was able to buy Kindergarten furniture and supplies, as well as an electric stove and dishes to better provide meals for her school's students.

As a token of her appreciation, Romanova sent some gifts with the Epps on their return home to Saskatchewan.

—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**



Photo courtesy of Lorne Epp

Marina Romanova, a director of the school in Dolina, Ukraine, is pictured with an electric stove and pots paid for with money raised by Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church Sunday school students.

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—**Ross W. Muir**, from a report by **Lorne and Hilda Epp**

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Waterloo, Ont.

Grebel to benefit from agreement with university

An historic agreement on graduate theological studies between Conrad Grebel University College, St. Jerome's University and the University of Waterloo was signed late last year.

Since 1987, Conrad Grebel University College has been granting a masters degree in theological studies, and part of the reason for adding "university" to Grebel's name was to reflect this graduate program. The agreement with Waterloo will mean that degrees will now be conferred jointly by Grebel and the public university. It will also offer Grebel graduate students additional support from Waterloo's graduate student program for things like health insurance and allow students to qualify for Ontario Graduate Scholarships.

Under the agreement, Conrad Grebel retains control over admissions, curriculum and faculty hiring. This development will also assist in the process of attaining accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) that monitors standards of excellence in theological education.

This new relationship with Waterloo



Photo by Chris Hughes

An agreement that will see funding flow to Conrad Grebel University College and St. Jerome's University was signed late last year by St. Jerome's University acting president Myroslaw Tataryn, (left), University of Waterloo president David Johnston, Conrad Grebel president Henry Paetkau, and University of Waterloo academic vice-president and provost Amit Chakma.

will involve program approval and regular program review by the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies. This will strengthen the relationship with Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and the Toronto School of Theology, making it easier for students to transfer credit between these schools. This agreement will also serve to enhance what is a unique program in church leadership development in Canada and the United States.

"Our commitment to our students and to serving the church and its leadership needs will be enhanced through this new partnership with the university," suggests Tom Yoder Neufeld, who teaches biblical studies in the Grebel program.

A major component of Waterloo's "Sixth Decade Plan," announced last September, is the expansion of its graduate program from 2,600 to 8,000 students. This focus on gradu-

ate education reflects the increased funding available from the provincial government in response to recent undergraduate growth. The funding provided through this new agreement with Waterloo is based on enrolment and could net \$150,000 in annual revenue for Grebel's master of theological studies program.

This program has grown significantly in recent years and now has more than 50 students enrolled. Many of them are preparing for leadership in the church, some are pastors who are continuing their education, and others are preparing for further graduate studies. Of the 53 graduates from this program to date, about one-quarter have gone on to complete doctoral studies in Bible and theology, nearly half are in the pastorate, and the rest are in a variety of professions.

—Conrad Grebel release
by **Jennifer Konkle**

Essex County, Ont.

Mennonite pastors oppose military co-op program

Some high school students in the Greater Essex County District School Board will now need to spend more time than usual polishing their boots. The southwestern Ontario school board has begun allowing the Canadian military to run a co-op program in the county.

According to Dario Rossit, technology consultant and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program coordinator for the school board, the program allows high school students to "experience work settings while earning high school credits."

However, pastors of the five Mennonite Church Eastern Canada congregations in Essex County are opposed to the addition of paid military training to the school board's co-op program that had formerly focused on skilled trades and had prohibited payment to the students.

During a public meeting last year, the pastors, along with others, expressed their opposition to the school board's education committee. In their letter, the pastors stated that "our active faith

perspective of promoting peace in the world which God created challenges us to confront the value of training youth in physical aggression, violence and the use of weapons."

They further called on the school board to exercise its own high standards found in its declaration of beliefs and safe schools policy, which call for each schools to be "a safe, stimulating, caring and welcoming environment...free of intimidation, aggression, violence and weapons."

The pastors also noted that the remuneration given to those who participate in the military co-op—just under \$13 per hour or \$194 per week—could be seen as an incentive for these youths and their families to participate in the program. "Those with limited financial resources may feel pressured to choose this option," they stated, adding, "Let us say no to putting our economically disadvantaged students at risk of making a career choice based primarily on their financial restrictions."

However, the school board did not agree with those opposed to the military co-op and instituted it anyway.

Rossit claims the school board sees the addition of a military coop as "a great opportunity for its students to experience the trades within the military," including cooking and automotive training.

—**Barry Bergen**

People&Events



Elkhart, Ind.—Roelf S. Kuitse, Sr., former mission worker and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) professor, died Jan. 24 in the Netherlands after a brief illness; he was 82. Kuitse was professor of missions and director of the Mission Training Center at AMBS from 1978-91, alternating with Robert Ramseyer in serving in this position and doing mission work. In 1952 he went to Indonesia, where he taught at the theological school of the Mennonite Church in Java. Kuitse and his wife Juliette served in Ghana from 1962-69, when he was called as pastor for a Mennonite congregation on the island of Texel, North Holland. He took a four-year teaching assignment at AMBS in 1978, which stretched to 1992. During the span of time Kuitse served AMBS, he also taught at the seminary in Pune, India. After he retired from teaching at AMBS, Kuitse served Eighth Street Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., as interim pastor for several years before he and his wife returned to the Netherlands. Ben C. Ollenburger, professor of Old Testament theology at AMBS, said Kuitse “was an extraordinary gift to AMBS and to the church of Christ. Many in Indonesia know the name of Jesus because of Roelf.”

—AMBS release
by **Mary E. Klassen**

Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Driedger—to Amy and Tim, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont. a son, Nash Nicholas, Jan. 15.

Garstin—to Donna Toivonen and Stephen, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., a son, Ken Oiva, Jan. 4.

Martynshyn—to Jennifer Johnson and Mark, Hunta Mennonite, Driftwood, Ont., a daughter, Ava Elizabeth, Feb. 8.

Matheson—to Cathy (nee Janzen) and Brent, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., a son, Joshua Ethan, Dec. 5.

McWhinnie—to Suzanne and Lindsay, Hagerman Mennonite, Markham, Ont., a son, Eric Conrad, Nov. 21.

Neeb—to Lisa and James, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., a son, Aiden Douglas, Feb. 2.

Neufeld—to Russ and Kendra, Shalom Mennonite, Newton, Kan., a daughter, Natalie Marie, Jan. 16.

Plett Boehm—to Maria Boehm and Tim Plett, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Sarah Magdalene, Feb. 3.

Preston—to Marilyn and Fred, Rosemary Mennonite, Alta., a daughter, Megan Heidi, Oct. 4.

Rooney—to Amber, Wellesley Mennonite, a daughter, Kayden Maria, Nov. 26.

Roth—to Sara and Ryan, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., a son, Isaac John Iutzi, Jan. 19.

Schmidt—to Jackie and John, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a daughter, Tiana Brielle, Dec. 12.

Voth—to Colleen and Eric, Schoenfelder Mennonite, St. Francois Xavier, Man., a daughter, Lauren Lydia, Feb. 7.

Wiebe—to Tamkaki Saga and Tim, Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta., a daughter, Hanah, Jan. 21.

Marriages

Baechler-Wagler—Steven

and Beth-Ann, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 24.

Friesen-Giesbrecht—Will and Chrisie, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Aug. 12.

King-Dyck—Jason and Jessica (Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man.), Dec. 17.

Stockie-Mayer—Rob and Shelley (St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.), at St. Jacobs Mennonite, Feb. 3.

Deaths

Froese—Jacob, 83, Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon, Jan. 28.

Krause—Sarah (nee Janzen), 92 (b. April 2, 1914), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., Feb. 15.

Peters—John D., 91, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., Nov. 30.

Roth—David, 28 (b. July 7, 1978), East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., Feb. 10.

Segedin—Anne (nee Bergen), 85, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 22.

Wolfe—Betty (nee Janzen), 70 (b. Feb. 5, 1937), Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta., Feb. 6.

Baptisms

Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon—Breanne Martens and Kaylene Heinrichs, Dec. 17.

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

News briefs

Churches host test drives for Chrysler

Automaker DaimlerChrysler is finding “redemption”—as well as a valuable new venue for showcasing its vehicles—in the African-American megachurch. Six of the nation’s black megachurches are hosting test drives for Chrysler vehicles. So far, about 500 churchgoers

have driven the new Aspen SUV, the new Sebring sedan or the Chrysler 300 on premises better known for preaching and pastoral care. Observers say the experimental test drives mean Chrysler has overcome a centuries-old taboo on marketing goods for profit in sacred spaces, and also gained entry into influential black church circles less than three years after black Chicago-area pastors claimed the automaker was discriminating against black customers.

—RNS release

Kenyans ponder compensation claim

Some members of traditional nomadic communities in Kenya are considering seeking reparations from former mission educational establishments, asserting that the institutions in the past forced their communities to relinquish their time-honoured traditions. “Missionary education was a part of [a] paradigm that undermined the indigenous traditional way of life,” said Korrir Singoeie, executive director of the Centre for Minority Rights Development, a Nairobi-based group that campaigns on behalf of indigenous communities in Africa.

—ENI release

‘Talking Bible’ popular with visually impaired

The Bible Society has devised a talking Bible in Malawi’s Chichewa language, believed to be the first of its type to enable those who cannot read or write, or those too busy—or too lazy—to read, to listen to the Word of God. The associate director of programs for the Bible Society in Malawi, Kamwana Muyaya, told Ecumenical News International in Blantyre, Malawi, that the society has spent \$50,000 US to finish the project, which has taken two years to complete and is popular among the visually impaired.

—ENI release

Mennonite Church Canada

Prayer requests

This Lenten season, “do something” for Lent—instead of, or along with, giving something up—by adding extra prayer times for the work of Mennonite Church Canada and the various area conferences. Remember especially:

- MC Canada Native Ministries, as it is involved in the listening circles that bring together people of different cultural backgrounds. Author Adrian Jacobs of Six Nations will join MCC Canada staff person Harley Eagle in speaking at these meetings in Vancouver, Abbotsford and Chilliwack, B.C., from March 21 to 23. Please pray for encouragement and partnership during these meetings.
- The Mission Partnership meetings in Macau on March 9 to 11, held to strengthen the Macau Mennonite Church. They will involve MC Canada Witness and Mennonite mission partners from the U.S. and Hong Kong. Pray for the growth of the church in Macau.
- The MC Canada Africa Learning Tour to South Africa and Botswana, which is ending on March 8. Pray for participants who have seen first-hand the ministries of MC Canada and learned about the daily challenges and joys of our brothers and sisters in Southern Africa.

—**Hinke Loewen-Rudgers**

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Before the wedding

Waiting with anticipation, a young couple sits in their pastor’s office. They are making plans for one of the biggest steps of their lives. As the pastor enters the office, a slight grin passes over her face. Sensing the excitement

of the couple before her, she closes the door and they begin to talk.

How many times does a variation of this scene take place across MC Eastern Canada? Pastors, how many times does this take place in your office? Do you feel good about your pre-marital preparation with couples? Is there a difference between pre-marital preparation and pre-marital counselling? Is there a time to say no to performing a wedding?

The Leadership Council of MC Eastern Canada invites pastors to the Before the Wedding: Providing Pre-Marital Counselling With Integrity workshop. It will offer something for those who are new to ministry and have little experience in pre-marital preparation, as well as those who would like to update their skills. Presenter Ed Heide is an experienced marriage and family therapist who has provided marriage preparation classes and marriage enrichment retreats for more than 25 years.

The workshop will be held at Preston Mennonite Church in Cambridge, on March 10 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Contact Joan Schooley at MC Eastern Canada (joan@mcecc.ca) to register for this event.

Marianne Mellinger, MC Eastern Canada’s coordinator of Leadership Formation (marianne@mcecc.ca), would be pleased to have conversations about this event or other educational opportunities available to pastors and congregational leaders, which the Leadership Council provides.

—**Lisa Williams**

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Martyrs and monsters, MennoFolk theme

Winnipeg’s annual showcase of Mennonite young adult art and music took place Feb. 23 and 24. It included an art opening at a downtown gallery, A Label for Artists, on Feb. 23, and a concert at the West End Cultural Centre the next evening.

“Martyrs and monsters are similar because they both horrify and entertain us,” said MennoFolk Committee member Aaron Epp. “We are taken aback by their stories and appearances, but, at the same time, they can be something of a guilty pleasure for us—we can’t look away. Martyrs and monsters disturb us and I think that’s one thing that good art does. They disturb us and make us look at things in a new way.”

“Mennonites are pervasive through all art scenes here in Winnipeg,” said Jeff Friesen, another MennoFolk Committee member. “MennoFolk is a chance for us all to celebrate our common roots—religious and cultural—and the different artistic places our roots have taken us.”

A compilation CD of Winnipeg musicians who are affiliated with the Mennonite community called *MennoFolk: A Constant Reformation*, was released at the two-day festival. The CD includes Mike Petkau, Cara Luft, Mahogany Frog, Doug and Jess, Carter Monrose, Chris Neufeld and more.

Friday’s art opening featured pop-folk duo The Land, singer-songwriter Donovan Giesbrecht and Ben Dyck. *Faspa*—a traditional, light Mennonite supper—was served. Saturday’s evening event featured pop quartet Quinzy, adventure-funk quintet Flying Fox and the

Hunter-Gatherers, and folk band Paul Bergman and the Decomposers.

A website for the event has been set up at mennofolk.org, then click on the “Manitoba” link at the top of the page.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Churches host MCC, CFGB tour

Staff from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Saskatchewan recently went on tour. But it wasn’t to promote a new album or connect with zealous fans. Instead, they joined together with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) over a period of three days from Feb. 14-16 to talk with Saskatchewan farmers.

“The CFGB tour is directed towards MCC-supporting constituents who are [also] part of the Foodgrains Bank network,” said Bruno Baerg, MCC Saskatchewan director. “We thought this would be a good outreach.”

Baerg, together with Material Resources director Willie Reimer and CFGB coordinator Dave Meier, held question and answer sessions at Northstar Mennonite in Drake, Zion Mennonite in Swift Current, and Fiske Mennonite before finishing up at Rosthern Mennonite Church.

Called a learning tour, the events were open to the public and gave participants a chance to find out about upcoming projects and potential involvement with the two Christian organizations.

Continued on page 28

TheChurches From page 27

Mennonite Church Alberta

Bergthal Women in Mission turns 50

Bergthal Mennonite Church's Women in Mission group marked the end of its half-century of existence with a program of celebration and worship on Feb. 18. The group, once known as Busy Fingers, was formed in October 1956 and formally closed at the end of 2006.

Twelve members of the group, including five charter members, shared memories and spoke of symbols representing important values, activities and service projects that had shaped them over the years. Some of the symbols included a Bible, a dove

and olive leaf, a church, a Camp Valaqua logo, music notes, needle and thread, the Mennonite Central Committee symbol, buns and praying hands. A few members of the group are incorporating some of the symbols into a memorial display quilt for the congregation.

Erna Goerzen, a member of the group, writes, "Bergthal Women in Mission are thankful for their journey together; God has been with them through the many years. May they find a venue to maintain their friendships and to use their energy and their gifts in a positive way, as they trust God to lead them into the next season of their lives."

—From a report by **Erna Goerzen**

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Aboriginal listening evenings planned

Evenings of listening and fellowship with aboriginal people, co-sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) B.C. and Mennonite Church Canada, are planned for March 21 to 23.

Pastor and author Harley Eagle, co-coordinator of aboriginal work with MCC Canada, will be the presenter and Adrian Jacobs of Six Nations will be special speaker. A pastor and author, Jacobs is involved with the "My People International" organization. He began half-time work for MCC Ontario on Feb. 1, specifically relating to Mennonite churches and working in the

Grand River Valley on the issues surrounding Six Nations.

The three locations are Abbotsford on March 21 (details to be confirmed); First United Mennonite in Vancouver on March 22; and Eden Mennonite Church in Chilliwack on March 23.

Each evening will include a welcome by local aboriginal people, a presentation by Eagle, sharing through music and then a talk by Jacobs.

For more information, including the location in Abbotsford and start times for all meetings, contact Darryl Klassen of MCC B.C. at 604-850-6639 or e-mail him at abneighbours@mccbcb.com.

Continued on page 31

HENRY KRAUSE



From our leaders

As you read this I will have just returned from the Mennonite Church Canada Leadership Assembly. I've been helped in my thinking about the nature of the church and our work as MC Canada by a book by Samuel Wells called *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics*.

Wells asks readers to suppose that a previously unknown play by Shakespeare has been found but its fifth act has been lost. The play ranks with the best that Shakespeare has written and it is agreed that it ought to be staged, but it would be out of place to actually write a fifth act. It seems more appropriate to give the parts to experienced Shakespearian actors who would then live with the four acts and, after they have finished acting through what has been written, they would improvise the fifth act based on all they know about Shakespeare and what they have received in the script.

Wells suggests that this is the nature of the church. We have four acts before us in the Scriptures: creation; the history of the people of Israel; the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and the early church. Act five is left for us as we live in the "time in between times."

As the church during this time we have been given the resources of the Spirit, the power of the resurrected Christ, and the love of God the Creator. We know how the story ends with the vision of a new heaven and a new Earth. And so we are welcomed into the story, to live it

The fifth act: Improvising the church

We have four acts before us in the Scriptures....

out in our time and place, improvising as best we can, using our greatest resources and skills, and being the people of God.

And as we do this, Wells says, we need to be mindful of a couple of things. The first is that we are tempted to think that it is just a one-act play with the "crisis of believing that all achievements, all results, all outcomes must be celebrated and resolved in our lifetime." In fact, we need to be reminded that this life is not all there is.

The second is that our tendency is to forget which act we are in. "[T]he shape of the five-act play reminds the church that it does not live in particularly significant times. The most important things have already happened. The Messiah has come, has been put to death, has been raised and the Spirit has come.... This leaves Christians free in faith to make honest mistakes.... Christians find their character by becoming a character in God's story."

I think Wells gives us a very helpful way to look at who we are. It is this improvisation that we are part of as the church—living out the story that has already begun and which we know will end well. This is what I was part of during our Leadership Assembly and which we, as congregations, area churches and national church, are invited to engage in.

Henry Krause is moderator of Mennonite Church Canada.

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 3: MCC Supportive Care Services annual spring fundraiser, at Bakerview Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, 7 p.m. For tickets, call 604-850-6608.

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

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.

May 27: Glimmers of Hope 3: AIDS and its impact on women, at the University of Calgary, 2 p.m.

June 8-10: Third annual men's retreat at Camp Valaqua. Theme: "A Christian response to wealth and power." Speaker: Mike Perschon.

For more information, contact Marvin Baergen at 403-256-2894.

June 15-16: MCC Relief Sale and bike-a-thon at the Coaldale Sportsplex.

Sept. 15-16: Holyrood Mennonite Church 50th anniversary celebration. Details to follow.

Saskatchewan

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

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

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

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

June 8-9: MCC Relief Sale.

June 22-23: RJC musical.

June 26-29: Ecumenical "Making peace in the household of God" conference, Saskatoon.

July 29: Shekinah Retreat Centre Adventure Challenge.

Oct. 26-28: Quilting and scrapbooking retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Manitoba

March 24: Winnipeg MCC Festival and Relief Sale ban-

quet, at Douglas Mennonite Church.

April 6: Winnipeg First Mennonite Church Choir presents selections from Handel's *Messiah* on Good Friday, at 7 p.m. Featured soloists: Marni Enns, Kirsten Schellenberg, Elmer Kelher and Victor Engbrecht.

April 13-14: Meeting of Partnership Circle members at Grunthal Bergthaler 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, at Grace Mennonite Church, Steinbach; at 8:30 a.m. Theme: "Streams in the desert—Psalm 42."

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.

June 4-6: Plus 55 retreat at Camp Koinonia.

June 9-10: Bike the Interlake event for MCC (from Bird's Hill to Hecla Island). For more

information, or to register, call Paul Friesen at 204-261-6381.

June 10: MCI *Sängerfest*; worship at 10:30 a.m. and concert at 2 p.m.

June 11-14: 16th annual Believers Church Conference at CMU. Theme: "Congregationalism, denominationalism and the body of Christ."

June 23: Camp Koinonia golf tournament.

July 3-10: International Rural Church Association/Canadian Rural Church Network "How can we find hope in the rural landscape" conference, in Brandon.

Ontario

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 17: Fundraiser breakfast buffet for MCC meat canning project, at Calvary United Church, St. Jacobs, 8 to 9 a.m. Speaker: David Martin from MCC's Akron, Pa., office. Advance ticket sales only by calling 519-745-8458.

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

March 30-31: "Seeds of Encouragement" conference for the farm community, at

Continued on page 30

ToMorrow From page 29

East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock; 7:30 p.m. (30), 9:30 a.m. (31). Speaker: Elaine Froese, farmer and motivational speaker from Manitoba.

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 14: Silver Lake Mennonite Camp 34th annual "Smorg" fundraiser at Grace Mennonite Church, St. Catharines. Annual meeting at 3:30 p.m.; "smorg" from 4 to 8 p.m.

April 20: Bryan Moyer Suderman and Friends concert, at Bethany Missionary Church, Kitchener, at 7:30 p.m. (Part of Mennonite Foundation of Canada annual meeting.)

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 Wiebe at 519-742-3416 or e-mail imccalumni@hotmail.com.

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

May 12: Menno Singers present "Spring Fling" with soloist Brandon Leis, at Zion United Church, Kitchener, at 8 p.m.

June 19: Lebold fundraising banquet at Conrad Grebel University College.

Nov. 1-4: MEDA's annual "Business as a calling" convention: "Trust in a world of change," in Toronto. For more information, visit businessasacalling.org or call toll-free 1-800-665-7026.

U.S.A.

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

April 19-22: Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College nature tour of Highlands Nature Sanctuary in southern Ohio. To register or for more information, e-mail jenniferhs@goshen.edu.

May 18-21: Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College nature tour of a popular bird-

ing spot near Necedah, Wis. To register or for more information, e-mail jenniferhs@goshen.edu.

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

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How to subscribe:

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

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

Advertising Dates

Issue	Copy Due	Contact:
April 16	April 3	Karen Suderman,
April 30	April 17	
<i>(Focus on Books and Resources)</i>		Advertising Representative
May 14	May 1	1-800 316-4052 x224
May 28	May 15	advert@canadianmennonite.org
<i>(Focus on Seniors)</i>		

TheChurches From page 28

Women in Mission to disband

After 68 years in existence, the B.C. Women in Mission group will cease to exist in its present form as of July.

At a business meeting in Aldergrove on Feb. 10, 31 representatives from nine churches reluctantly voted to dissolve the group. Societal changes, including more women employed outside the home and the difficulty finding people to fill executive spots, are among the main reasons.

It is hoped the annual spring Inspirational Day and the fall retreat will continue, pending organizational restructuring and with individual churches' help. In its final act, the B.C. Women in Mission will host a women's

event at this summer's Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in Abbotsford.

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

Wanted

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

Employment opportunities

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 willowgrove.ca or contact Ron de Roo at ron@willowgrove.ca.

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

Camp Assiniboia, Headingley Man., has the following openings for September 2007:

Camp Manager

Guest Group Coordinator (.5FTE)

Camp Assiniboia is part of Camps with Meaning, the year-round camping ministry of MC Manitoba. Inquiries may be directed to Bob Wiebe, Director of Camping Ministries, MC Manitoba, 200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 2J1, e-mail camps@mennochurch.mb.ca, phone: 204-895-2267.

MCC Canada has the following **volunteer leadership** position-sin Happy Valley/Goose Bay, Labrador: MCC Canada Regional Representative, Newfoundland and Labrador Region. Position start date: July 1, 2007.

The person or couple will be responsible for overseeing the MCC program in Newfoundland and Labrador. For the complete assignment description, please visit mcc.org. For further information, contact Marsha Jones at 204-261-6381 or e-mail mjg@mennonitecc.ca.

Bloomington (Ont.) Mennonite Church invites applications for the position of **Music Coordinator**.

Duties: Help develop musical gifts of congregation. Participate in worship planning. Occasionally accompany congregational singing. Direct small choirs and soloists. Be aware of available music resources. Be an accomplished pianist.

Time Required: 5 hours per week plus some Sunday mornings.

Position available as soon as possible or September 2007. If interested, call the church office at 519-745-2411 or e-mail bmchurch@golden.net.

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 kenns@mts.net if you prefer e-mail. Further information is on file with MC Manitoba.

Housing

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.

Room in three-bedroom apartment in family house. Common area, kitchen, high speed, TV etc., inclusive. Walk to University of Waterloo. Lovely area. j.sauder@sympatico.ca.

Winnipeg

Resource advocates available to help churches

Mennonite Church Canada's Resource Centre just got a little bigger and more personal.

Four volunteers—Lisa Carr-Pries (Eastern Canada), Jeff Thiessen (Man.), Marion Bueckert (Sask.), and Tracy Brown Ewert (Alta.)—are in place and eager to serve as extensions of the MC Canada Resource Centre in Winnipeg. They will help congregations identify and locate faith formation and spiritual nurture resources that can be hard to find. Only one more position, in B.C., needs to be filled.

Resource Centre manager Arlyn Friesen Epp observes that congregations often work alone, trying to do outreach, faith formation and leadership training by themselves. Resource

advocates can help them along on their journey, so congregations don't have to constantly reinvent the wheel.

For each area church to have an advocate that leaders can go to with questions about Mennonite and

Anabaptist resources helps personalize ministry planning for congregations. They are available to assist leaders as they sift through the vast array of resources available and are ready to listen to how MC Canada and area churches can do their best to strengthen congregational ministries. It is an efficient way to support congregations in each region, in partnership with the area churches.

Advocate Tracy Brown Ewert is excited about having an opportunity to strengthen the church. "Exploring

Mennonite Publishing Network

Eleanor Snyder
1-800-631-6535
esnyder@mph.org

MC Canada

Arlyn Friesen Epp
Resource Advocate
coordinator
1-866-888-6785 ext. 152
afriesenepp@
mennonitechurch.ca

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Lisa Carr-Pries
519-888-1943
lisa@sjmc.on.ca

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Tracy Brown Ewert
403-337-5850
tracyandjon@telusplanet.net

Manitoba

Jeff Thiessen
204-637-2244
jtrb@mts.net

Saskatchewan

Marion Bueckert
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Photo by Dan Dyck

Mennonite Church Canada resource advocates invite calls from congregations in their regions to help identify and find help for worship planners, pastors, teachers and other congregational leaders. MC Canada is seeking to fill a vacant position in B.C.

resources for the church, and dreaming about what can be done with those resources in the church is a favourite pastime of mine," she says. "Staff at MC Canada and Mennonite Publishing Network have a deep desire to serve God by equipping the larger congregation of believers and the families and individuals within."

Friesen Epp adds that by more widely sharing books, videos and studies, more congregations can have better access to Mennonite- and Anabaptist-specific material. "This helps us better embrace and pass on our core Mennonite-Anabaptist values to the next generation and to others in our wider circles," he says, noting the powerful stories he hears from those who come from other faith traditions and how much they appreciate Anabaptist theology.

"It's more important than ever to learn about and strengthen our distinctive values, things we hold dear—such as our peace theology, our yearning to be strong disciples of Jesus, our desire to share with others the reconciling love expressed in the gospel," he adds.

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

Machanga, Mozambique

New well needed to ensure water for girls school

Before dawn every day, teenage girls line up to draw water from a well on the grounds of Machanga Center for Girls in central Mozambique.

They chat as one young woman lowers a bucket on a rope into the 10-metre-deep well. Others wait to fill buckets and plastic jugs with the water they need for drinking, bathing, cooking and washing.

Water is the first of many needs at Machanga Center for Girls, a school dormitory run by the United Church of Christ and supported by the Global Family program of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Machanga Village, a rural community near the coast.

Even with recent improvements to the well, water continues to be an issue at the centre. A regional drought lowered the local water table, and with heavy use by residents and community members, the well water is usually depleted by mid-morning each day.

The girls centre offers a home away

Wolf Lake, Ind.

Creation summit cancelled: 'Nonference' will save 45 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions

After more than a year of debate and careful planning, the Mennonite Creation Care Network (MCCN) has decided against holding a creation summit in 2008. This followed a day-and-a-half of heavy working sessions at the Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College, last month. The network decided that holding a separate event on the environment when earth care could be discussed at other planned meetings would unjustifiably contribute to global warming.

"This is the biggest non-event we have planned," joked David Neufeld of Winnipeg, "and it was not an easy decision to give up the idea of our own separate conference."

Several network members were challenged by *Canadian Mennonite* columnist Will Braun, whose Jan.

22 "Pie in the warming sky" column inspired them with his resolve to "quit air travel."

Oregonian Dave Hockman-Wert, who spent part of the weekend's work session researching "green" conferences, estimated that the network will save 45 tonnes of avoided carbon dioxide emissions with this decision—the equivalent of not using 19,000 litres of gasoline—and suggested that it be named a "nonference."

"Conferences where hundreds or thousands of people fly and drive many miles to get here may soon become unaffordable or unjustifiable, as fossil fuels become less available and the damage of using them more evident," Hockman-Wert said. "A nonference offers a framework for imagi-

native alternatives to the traditional 'bricks and mortar' conference."

"We are not saying that a creation summit is forever a bad idea," said Greg Bowman of Pennsylvania. "At this stage we would rather endorse local, regional or even national events already planned that may have a creation care component."

Network chair Luke Gascho plans to represent the organization at Mennonite Church USA's biennial conference in San Jose, Calif., in July, and convene a gathering there. Something similar is being contemplated for Mennonite Church Canada meetings in Abbotsford, B.C.

Members of the group agreed that avenues such as the network's website (mennocreacioncare.org) can generate dialogue, enthusiasm and action as well.

Can a nonference actually happen? Jennifer Schrock of Goshen, Ind., thinks it can. "I see from the Internet that ethnomusicologists, nanotechnology specialists and poets have already held nonferences," she observed. "We could call people to invest 20 hours in the environmental wellbeing of their local communities during a given month. They could send us stories about how they spent their time, or donate their unspent travel dollars to an earth-friendly cause."

The network is also developing a strong relationship with Mennonite Mutual Aid, as it expands its understanding of stewardship to include creation care.

Mennonite Creation Care Network is a network for Mennonite people and agencies actively engaged in the care and restoration of God's creation. The network encourages the church to claim its biblical and theological foundations regarding care of God's creation, discover the ties that link all created beings to each other and to God, confess the harm humans have caused the natural world, and act faithfully to restore the Earth.

—MCCN release

'This is the biggest non-event we have planned.'

from home for about 40 female students who attend the nearby Machanga Secondary School. It is the only school with grades 6 to 10 in Machanga District, an area about the size of Prince Edward Island. Each year, North American sponsors provide funds for food, school supplies and staff salaries at the dormitory through MCC's Global Family program.

Recently, these funds were used to deepen the well in order to increase the dormitory's meagre water supply. MCC is investigating ways to drill a new well for the centre. It will require resolving land and water rights issues because the centre does not own the property it sits on. MCC needs

additional sponsors for Machanga Center for Girls and many other Global Family projects. These projects help to provide education to children and young people from poor families in more than 40 countries. Canadian sponsors pay \$300 per year to provide basic educational needs, such as desks, books, school supplies, school lunches, teacher training, wells and latrines.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk** and **Sara Kauffman**

Girls draw water from a well at Machanga Center for Girls, a Mennonite Central Committee-supported school dormitory in Mozambique.



Photo by Harold Wenger

Calgary

Son of Russian Mennonite immigrants publishes their story

Arthur Kroeger of Ottawa, the author of the recently released book, *Hard Passage: A Mennonite Family's Long Journey from Russia to Canada*, was the keynote speaker at this year's Mennonite Historical Society of Canada meeting in Calgary last month.

Kroeger, the youngest child of Heinrich and Helena Kroeger, was born in Naco, Alta., after his parents emigrated from Russia with their five oldest children. He arose out of that poverty, gained a university educa-

tion—including a Rhodes Scholarship, worked for the Canadian government for 34 years, taught at several universities and served as chancellor of Carleton University in Ottawa, before retiring.

Hard Passage chronicles the lives of the Kroeger family that had lived in a Russian Mennonite community for 120 years before experiencing war, revolution, a typhus epidemic and hyper-inflation, all in quick succes-



sion. In 1926, they left their homeland to settle in what they discovered to be an arid region of western Canada.

Kroeger told society members of the book's genesis. While attending his father's funeral, the family discovered a small box full of old photographs and bits of hand-written notes.

Intrigued by this collection, he took it home with him. A friend translated the notes and the more information

History of Russian diaspora chronicled

Remembering Russia: 1914-1927. A film by Otto Klassen. Available in VHS or DVD from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). 43 minutes, 2006.

Conceptually I understand, but in reality I cannot truly comprehend what it must have been like to lose one's home, become a refugee and begin a new life in another country. *Remembering Russia: 1914-1927* is the story of some 20,000 Mennonites who lived through such an ordeal in southern Russia and who eventually made their way to Canada.

For more than 10 years Klassen worked at making this film, scouring German archives for footage never before seen by the general public. It also incorporates still photos, many of which will be new to viewers.

The film documents the story of Mennonites who had built a wonderful life for themselves within southern Russia—today's Ukraine. It wonderfully illustrates the infrastructure, villages, schools and hospitals that had been built. It speaks of the self-contained lifestyle of these Mennonites, but at the same time notes the extensive economic and political relationships they had with their neighbours.

When the Russian Revolution broke out in 1917, during the First World War (1914 to 1918), the life these Mennonites had built was destroyed. Caught up in the revolution, harassed by various political and warring factions, and robbed of their means to make a living, they became a



Ken Reddig and Otto Klassen examine some of the early equipment used by Klassen to produce his historical Mennonite documentaries.

MCC photo by Gladys Terichou

displaced people within their own country. Many later chose to leave the country entirely, rather than stay amid the chaos.

The strength of this film is that it is a thoroughly documented story. Told by a filmmaker who, together with his family, lived through this difficult period of time before emigrating to Paraguay and then to Canada, it has a sensitivity to real-life horror that carefully carries viewers through what can only be described as some of the most turbulent experiences anyone can ever face.

Well narrated, this film is relatively easy to watch, but is not intended to be entertaining or dramatic. It is faithful to historical facts and suitable for high school students and adults.

In addition to telling the story of these 20,000 Mennonites, it also tells the story of

the beginnings of MCC. This well-known agency was initially begun to help these very people. Hence, the story can be viewed by those whose history and background are among these 20,000, but it can also be viewed by those who wish to know about MCC's early beginnings and ministry.

War is often described within written histories or our daily newspapers in broad strokes, chronicling the building up and tearing down of ideologies and nations. Yet, as this film portrays, behind these broad strokes the people who are caught within the crucible of conflict live, breathe and die. Otto Klassen made this film so that all who view it will never forget.

—Ken Reddig

The reviewer is director of the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Winnipeg

that appeared, the more he was challenged to write a book to tell the world of the trials and difficulties that had faced his family and many others in that era.

(For another perspective on life in early 20th century Russia, see review of *Remembering Russia on page 34. Ed.*)

In other historical society news reported at the meeting:

- Bert Friesen brought members up to date on the progress of GAMEO (Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online—found on the web at gameo.org). Within a lifetime, unimaginable advancements have been made in the preservation of history, from handwritten or crudely published papers to the cyberspace technology of today.

- The society's Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites conferences are continuing. Following the latest conscientious objectors conference in Winnipeg last fall (see "*Conscientious objection critiqued by history conference*," Nov. 27, page 16), future conferences will focus on Mennonites and sexuality, mental health, the environment and money.

- The society's Award of Excellence will be given to Lorna Bergey for her life-long advancement of Canadian Mennonite history. Bergey, the first archivist of the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, has taken leading roles in many historical activities and has published numerous articles in various publications.

—Irene Klassen

Strasbourg, France

MWC delegations to visit Italy and Kenya

Mennonite World Conference (MWC) officials will be part of two significant international delegations in 2007. President Nancy Heisey will lead a delegation of up to nine people to Rome, Italy, in response to an invitation from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The meeting, Oct. 19 to 23, follows up on the report of the five-year international dialogue between

MWC and the Catholic Church.

MWC has been given at least three of 250 seats at the Global Christian Forum, to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, in November. President-elect Danisa Ndlovu, executive secretary Larry Miller and at least one other person will attend. The goal of the forum is to bring together representatives of all Christian churches, especially Evangelicals and Pentecostals who are not normally at the table with Catholics, Orthodox and mainstream Protestant churches.

—MWC release by Ferne Burkhardt

News brief

Kenyan Mennonites 'birth' Ugandan church

A new circle of four Mennonite churches in Rukungiri, southwestern Uganda, purchased its first property in December and began the process of registration with the Ugandan government as the first Mennonite Church of Uganda—a spiritual great-granddaughter for Lancaster Mennonite Conference and its mission agency, Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM). At the invitation of the "parents," Kenya Mennonite Church, EMM president Richard Showalter attended the "birth" and explains the family tree: "EMM sent its first missionaries to Tanganyika [now Tanzania] in 1934. Then in the 1960s, the Tanzanians began to plant churches in western Kenya along Lake Victoria. Less than two years ago, the Kenya Mennonite Church began sending missionaries into Uganda, and now we have a 'great-granddaughter' circle of churches." Showalter and Kevin Yoder, a worker in Kenya with EMM and Mennonite Mission Network, attended the first baptismal and communion service of the new conference of churches and witnessed the purchase of its first property. The constitution for the new national church has been written, and Ugandans are serving as its leaders. They hope to receive national registration within a few months.

—EMM release by Jewel Showalter

Jakarta, Indonesia

Floods ravage Indonesian capital

Heavy rains early last month caused the severest flooding in Jakarta in five years. Many people were marooned in their homes and workplaces. Flooding in the greater Jakarta area had already claimed 36 lives by Feb. 6 and 340,000 had been left homeless, according to police reports.

Water rose to a height of nearly four metres in some parts of the city, much of which lies below sea level. Water also poured into the city from higher ground around the city, creating lakes in low-lying housing areas and forcing people to climb onto roofs or flee to the homes of relatives or evacuation sites, reported Eddy Sutjipto, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) executive committee member from Jakarta.

Hotels were filled and passable streets were jammed. People who had a second floor were safe there, but many couldn't leave because streets in the greater Jakarta area were flooded and completely

blocked off.

Respiratory illnesses, skin irritations and other diseases like typhoid and dengue fever—linked to having homes submerged in dirty water from flooding and blocked storm drains—are affecting thousands of residents. In two days, 50,000 sought treatment for such conditions.

"Two of my friends are already hospitalized," reported Elina Ciptadi, chair of AMIGOS, the MWC youth committee, who lives in Jakarta.

Clean water, food and fuel are in short supply. Thousands in the capital were still without electricity, water and telephone lines nearly a week after the rains began.

"A friend of mine from church stayed at home for three days without electricity," said Ciptadi. "[The flooding] severely impacted church attendance [on Feb. 4]."

One Mennonite church immediately began organizing donations of clothes, food and water for flood victims at other Mennonite churches and in neighbouring areas.

"Please keep us in your prayers," said Ciptadi.

—MWC release by Ferne Burkhardt

Beirut, Lebanon

Crisis intervention, development both key to MCC

Despite political instability, tension and ongoing unrest, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Lebanon and its 12 partner organizations continue to provide much-needed crisis intervention services and plan new, long-term development projects.

A week of violence in January created temporary interruptions, but progress is being made on all projects supported by MCC, says MCC country representative Ken Seitz. “In such times of unrest, our challenge is keeping on task, but for the most part our partners are moving ahead with their projects.”

In most years, MCC supports about 15 projects in Lebanon, with their primary focus being strengthening local peacebuilding and conflict resolution programs. Currently, MCC is supporting 35 projects. About half are short-term projects started in response to the conflict in 2006. These projects include mobile health clinics, children and youth programs, trauma healing and cluster bomb awareness.

“We are running a double-track program,” says Seitz. “This is quite a challenge for us and our partners. Our partners are highly motivated people—they burn the candle at both ends to get projects implemented and completed.”

Dealing with shifting priorities between long-term development and crisis intervention projects is one of many challenges facing MCC staff and partners. Nearly everyone in Lebanon was impacted by the war that killed nearly 1,200 Lebanese, injured 4,000, displaced 25 percent of the population, and destroyed sources of livelihoods, buildings, bridges, roads and other infrastructure.

Fear of more violence and civil unrest makes it difficult for MCC’s partners to plan for long-term projects. “People aren’t sure what they want to do next year,” Seitz reports.

‘Our partners are highly motivated people—they burn the candle at both ends to get projects implemented and completed.’



Photo courtesy of Imam Sadr Foundation

Dr. Mohamed El-Shemale provides medical services in a mobile health clinic in the village of Markaba, south Lebanon. The clinic, organized by the Imam Sadr Foundation, received funding from Mennonite Central Committee.

“In a politically tense or security-tense situation, everyone shifts to short-term thinking. People’s moods, energy levels and ability to function are impacted. We are still trying to focus on development, but we are finding the whole process has slowed down.”

Another challenge is the restricted movement of people—restrictions created by roadblocks, bridges that have not yet been replaced, and threats of more violence.

MCC program coordinator Bassam Chamoun lives in a village 75 kilometres south of Beirut. While more than half of the partner organizations are located close to his village in south Lebanon, Chamoun is also expected to drive to Beirut once a week to meet with MCC staff and partner organizations there.

“How do we plan for next week—we wonder from day to day if it is safe or

possible for Bassam to come up here,” says Seitz.

Despite these challenges, Seitz says he and his wife Kathryn are optimistic that they will be able to complete their five-year commitment as country representatives. “These are times that really test us, but MCC is ultimately a people-to-people organization,” he says. “MCC partnerships are special because our partners sense our love, our concern and our desire to connect with people. We identify with the people. We try to support and encourage them. That’s what really counts.”

Partner organizations appreciate MCC’s monetary assistance, but Seitz says they recognize that MCC does more than provide monetary assistance. “They always tell us, ‘Your grants may not be that big, but your hearts are big.’”

—MCC release by **Gladys Terichow**

Akron, Pa.

American delegation to Iran bears quilted gifts

A delegation of 13 American religious leaders—currently in Iran for a visit that will end on Feb. 25—carried with them wall hangings that tap into more than a century of quilting tradition.

“We were looking for quilted wall hangings in traditional designs, in patterns that have been used by Mennonite and Amish women,” said Brenda Wagner, director of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Resource Generation Network.

Lois Flickinger, a quilter from Lancaster County, Pa., made four wall hangings in the Trip Around the World pattern for the delegation. The visit, she said, “is about different groups of people from different parts of the world coming together and trying to create something useful and beautiful, which is often what quilts are. You’re taking small scraps of fabric and stitching them together into something that’s functional...but also beautiful to look at.”

These wall hangings were designed specifically to reflect the traditions of the United States. The fabric, hand-dyed in the U.S., carries hues of deep red and green that were popular in colonial times. She noted the pattern,



Lois Flickinger, a professional quilter from Lancaster County, Pa., created four handmade quilted wall hangings that a delegation of U.S. religious leaders recently took to Iran.

Photo by Mark Beach

also known as Sunshine and Shadow, is popular in Amish communities.

Wall hangings for the delegation were donated by women in Pennsylvania, Indiana, Florida and Wisconsin. Relief sales and quilt auctions have highlighted the quality of

Mennonite and Amish quilting for the benefit of MCC. This effort, Wagner noted, takes advantage of those skills to send a message of goodwill and peace.

—MCC release

Mogadishu, Somalia

A turning point for Somalia

After 16 years of anarchy and civil war, Somalia has entered a critical point in its history, according to Abdullahi Shirwa, the director of Somali Peaceline, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) partner organization in the country.

In mid-January, Somalia’s transitional government ousted the Islamic Courts Union, a group that had controlled much of the country since last June.

It is too early to tell whether the new government, formed in exile and dependent on troops from Ethiopia or the African Union, will bring peace and stability to the country. However, the government’s victory presents a new opportunity to address Somalia’s many problems, Shirwa says.

“What I can say is, there is a good opportunity at this time,” he affirms. “If the government [leaders] get ready and come up with a conciliatory program, I think it can be manageable...because most of the people, they are fed up with these wars.”

MCC supports Somali Peaceline in a program to teach conflict resolution skills in schools. Through Somali partner organiza-

tions, MCC also supports several primary schools, a micro-credit program and public health initiatives aimed at preventing HIV and eliminating the practice of female circumcision. MCC is continuing to support these programs, but is not currently able to place personnel in Somalia because of insecurity.

Somalia’s last functioning government was overthrown by warlords in 1991, leaving the capital, Mogadishu, and much of the country in a state of anarchy.

Somali Peaceline was formed during the 1990s in response to school violence in Mogadishu. Violence and lawlessness in the city seemed to lead to conflicts in school—fights, bullying, stealing and defiance of teachers, Shirwa says. The organization now conducts three-day workshops on peer mediation for students in Mogadishu. To date, 450 students have completed these workshops and Somali Peaceline has organized workshops on peacemaking for teachers as well.

Shirwa says that the project is helping schools change a “culture of violence” through nonviolent conflict resolution. “We are trying to transform, peacefully, the environment of the school—that violent atmosphere around the school—from the management to the students,” he says.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

Photo courtesy of Jeannette and Todd Hanson



Todd Hanson, right, is one of four Mennonite Partners in China (MPC) teachers to receive their first provincial “Most Excellent Foreign Teachers” awards from the Sichuan Provincial Education Bureau. Hanson is supported by Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network. The others—Catherine McKinlay, Carol Park and Holly Showalter—are Mennonite Central Committee workers. Hanson is pictured with two of his students at the Sichuan Teachers College in Nanchong, China. Hanson says the recognition is another indication of the importance of English teachers in China and that it reaffirms the reputation of MPC (formerly China Educational Exchange) instructors.

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A prayer of **Jeremiah** in the 21st century

This is what the Lord says:
“Voices are heard crying out,
voices from the nations of Africa.
Weeping is heard from Sudan,
from the riverbanks of the Nile.
Who will comfort the orphaned children,
the children left parentless from AIDS?”

This is what the Lord says:
“Why won’t you act, O countries of the North?
Why do you sit motionless in your comfort and pride?
Have I not blessed you with an abundance of food?
Have I not entrusted you with wisdom and knowledge?
Are you not obese from your devouring of the harvest?
Will you not perish in your SUVs and Hummers?”

Look, I am doing a new thing in the South:
new churches and new life to those in agony.
Communities of children looking after children,
churches bursting at the seams.
But to you, O North, though you trust in your armies
and guns,
you will not avoid the destroying hand.
Though you trust in your agro-chemicals and
petro-chemicals,
Do you think you will be spared?”
Declares the Lord.

“Repent, O North, turn from your prideful ways.
Return and place your trust in the Lord!
If you share your gifts with the poor,
if you take in the AIDS orphans and the refugees,
if you stop trying to control my creation with science
and technology and poisons and gadgets—
then your communities will experience new birth,
then your families will be restored.
Then I will restore your churches,
and your buildings will not contain the masses.
Repent, return; trust in the Lord your God,
for I am longing to restore you,”
Declares the Lord.
—**Stefan Cherry**, 2006

The poet is currently serving as youth pastor at Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church. He lives with his wife Pascale in Guelph, Ont., and is studying at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto. He worked for 10 years in Africa in the areas of sustainable agriculture, church leadership development and HIV/AIDS.



The photo illustration by Ross W. Muir was created from a photograph he took at an internally displaced persons camp in northern Uganda in 2004.