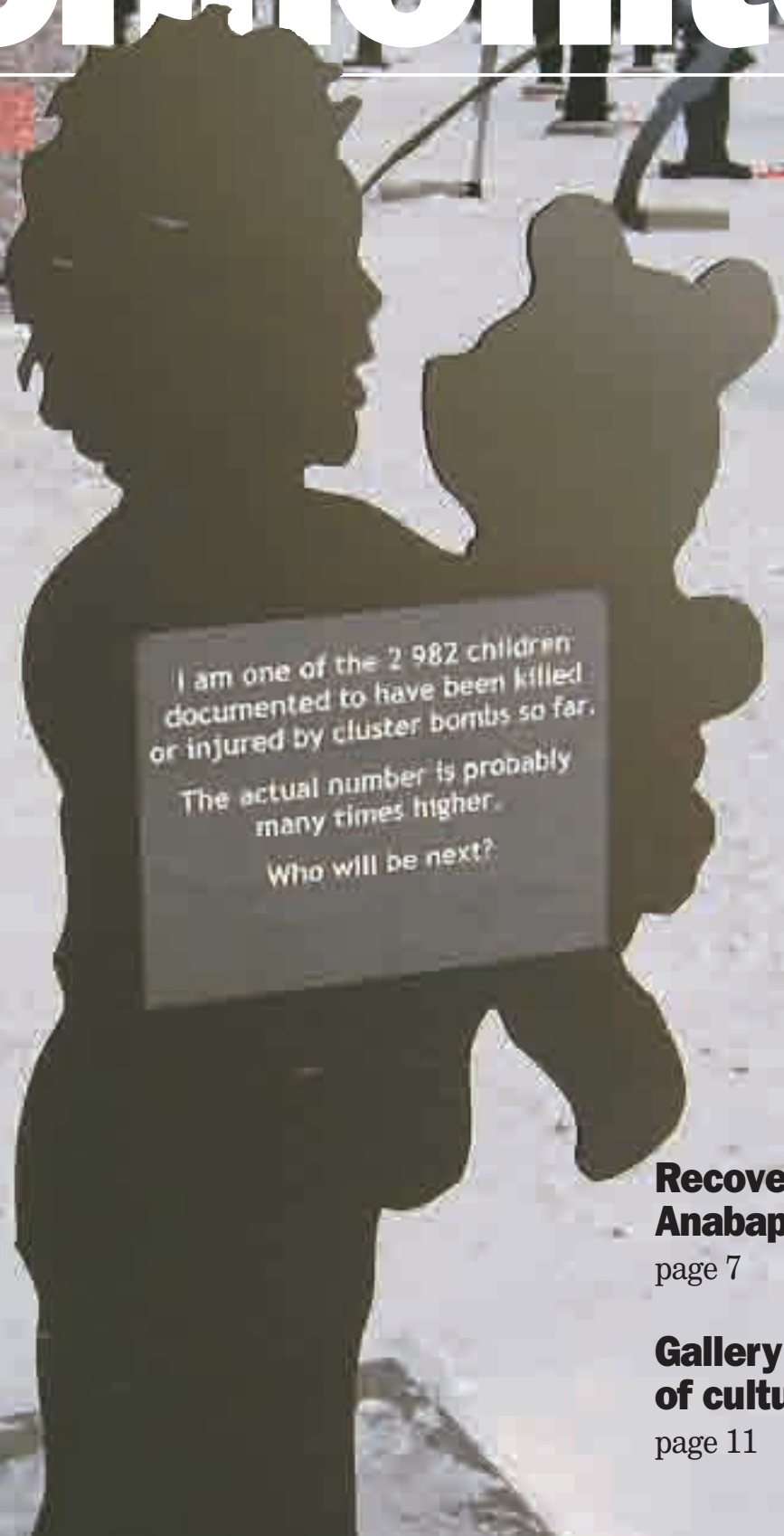


CANADIAN
Mennonite

April 16, 2007
Vol. 11, No. 8



I am one of the 2 982 children
documented to have been killed
or injured by cluster bombs so far.
The actual number is probably
many times higher.
Who will be next?

**Recovering the
Anabaptist vision**
page 7

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of cultures**
page 11

The accidental Anabaptist

According to Anabaptist scholar Walter Klaassen of Saskatoon, I'm a "modern Anabaptist." In his Faith&Life reflection on the difference between Anabaptists and Mennonites, on page 7, he lists two groups of latter-day Anabaptists.

The first are Mennonites who currently live in such places as Vietnam, Colombia and Ethiopia, where, Klaassen notes, they are being persecuted for their faith by repressive governments, "and therefore know what it is like to be Anabaptists back then [the 16th century]."

The second are people like me, who, he says, "came into the Mennonite Church from churches that still baptize infants, and have been rebaptized." Actually I'm not "in" the Mennonite Church yet, as my wife and I are still taking membership classes at our local congregation. And I didn't even know I was rebaptized until nine years ago!

After 12 years of living on Manitoulin Island in northern Ontario, in 1999 our family packed up and moved back south so I could go to seminary in Toronto. One day, while going through boxes of stuff that had sat in storage for more than a decade, I came across my baptismal certificate.

Except it wasn't the baptismal certificate I remember getting from Emmanuel Baptist Church when I was 17—after being immersed as an "adult" believer. This one was dated 1955, the year I was born, and it was from the United Church my parents had been married in. This was a shock because, from my earliest recollections, church for me was "Emmanuel" and baptism was "believers' baptism" in cold water!

When I asked my mother why this secret had been kept from me all these years, she wasn't sure, but figured her and dad had probably just forgotten. So I became the "ac-

cidental" Anabaptist. I guess if I had never discovered the certificate, I would still be the "unknown" Anabaptist.

To be Anabaptist, as Klaassen describes the term, is a high calling, one that I admit to feeling more than a little sheepish about having thrust upon me simply because I was unwittingly baptized a second time. For the original Anabaptists, and those who now practise their faith under oppressive regimes, there was nothing "accidental" about their decision to be baptized into a faith that might lead to their death. Not so for me, where, in 20th century Canadian society, my baptism has been largely ignored by the outside world and accepted within church circles in a spirit of inclusive ecumenism.

For someone like myself, who is walking down the Schleithem Trail today, Klaassen provides both a sober warning about the dangers of Mennonites "being conformed to this world in our enthusiastic embrace of consumerism," being "confused about what the truth is," and "reduc[ing] Christian faith to social activism"; and a loving reminder of what Anabaptism is all about.

Acknowledging that the original Anabaptists were not perfect, Klaassen says that "without exception they knew that their faith basis was that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had come into the world to save sinners; that in his death they had forgiveness of sins; and that in his resurrection they had the light and power to live the Christian life. They had confidence and trust in God's love and judgment that would see them through the darkness of their time to the light of God's eternal kingdom."

Are we ready to die for this, if need be? If that question is too hard to answer—or even contemplate, are we ready to live for it in the meantime?

—**Ross W. Muir, managing editor**

Mission statement: Published by Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, *Canadian Mennonite* serves primarily the people and churches of Mennonite Church Canada and its five area conferences. *Canadian Mennonite* is a bi-weekly Anabaptist/Mennonite periodical which seeks to promote covenantal relationships within the church (Hebrews 10:23-25). It provides channels for sharing accurate and fair information, faith profiles, inspirational/educational materials, news and analysis of issues facing the church.

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Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org
Transitions announcements: transitions@canadianmennonite.org
 Material can also be sent "Attn: Submissions/Letter to the Editor/Calendar/Transitions" by postal mail or fax to our head office.

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CANADIAN
Mennonite

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Please contact Lisa Jacky at office@canadianmennonite.org or x221 for subscriptions and address changes. A mail-in subscription order form is in the Tomorrow section. **Postmaster:** Send returns to head office. We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Government of Canada through the Publications Assistance Program toward our mailing costs (PAP Reg. No. 09613, Agreement No. 40063104). ISSN 1480-042X

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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 April 30 issue will be ready by April 26.

Cover: Silhouettes representing children affected by cluster bombs were placed outside the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, Norway, during a conference on cluster munitions earlier this year. The 46 countries at the conference—including Canada, but not the U.S.—agreed to negotiate a ban on cluster bombs by the end of 2008. For 30 years Mennonite Central Committee has spoken out about the dangers of unexploded cluster bombs, which can remain live in the ground for decades after a war ends. —Photo by Titus Peachey

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Abbotsford, B.C.

Now a citizen of three kingdoms

Maybe I should be singing, “O Canada, my home, *not* native land.”

On Feb. 23 I was sworn in as a brand new Canadian citizen, and it feels good! But it was a long time in coming.

A native of Newton, Kan., I ended up in British Columbia when I married a Canadian I’d met while doing voluntary service with Mennonite Central Committee. Settling in a new country after our wedding in 1981 took some adjusting. Eventually I learned Canadian ways of doing and saying things, but I never wanted to become a Canadian citizen. For 25 years I was content to remain a U.S. citizen with permanent resident status in Canada.

Then last summer I experienced growing conviction that it was time to consider citizenship in the country where I live, work and pay taxes. Partly it was the realization that my time spent in Canada would soon surpass the time I’d ever lived in the United States. Maybe too I thought that since I work for a magazine called *Canadian Mennonite*, I really ought to be one.

So after submitting my application and taking a written test, I was summoned to Citizenship Court to take the citizenship oath, the final step in the process. For me, as a Christian heeding Jesus’ command in Matthew 5 not to swear by anything, I had already decided I would merely “affirm,” not swear. But the words of the oath require one to “be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.”

As an American—which I would remain, as a dual citizen—declaring loyalty to a faraway British monarch was problematic. I wondered how I could in good conscience say words I did not really mean. I could rationalize they were “just words,” but then would I regard my marriage vows as also “just words”? The words we say, especially legally required words such as these, carry powerful meaning, and

I like to mean what I say.

Although I struggled with the concept, eventually I came to understand that I would not be pledging allegiance to the Queen as a person, but rather to the law and the nation she represents as Canada’s head of state. Thinking about it that way, I decided I could do it.

The ceremony itself was celebrative, inspirational and moving. There were 60 new citizens sworn in that day from 41 countries. I had never been in a room with so many different nationalities, and seeing people from six continents now pledging a common loyalty to their new country was inspiring.

Repeating the solemn words that bestowed Canadian citizenship on me truly felt like a sacred moment in my life. It reminded me in some ways of a wedding, with its promise of commitment. At the singing of “O Canada” to conclude the proceedings, as I thought about the new identity I was taking on as a Canadian citizen—and how long it had taken me to realize I really wanted to make this commitment—I was so overwhelmed with emotion that I could barely sing.

People have asked me how it feels now to be Canadian. I’m not sure how to answer, as nothing in my day-to-day life has changed except my eligibility to vote. But in some ways I do feel different. As a resident non-citizen I was always aware I was a foreigner residing in Canada. I was like a foster child, welcome and accepted but not legally a family member. Now I feel a real sense of belonging. I am like a child fully and officially adopted into a family—the Canadian family.

I must admit that the word “citizen” has a nice ring to it. I am reminded of the verse that says, “*You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and mem-*



Dueckman

bers of God’s household” (Ephesians 2:19). I don’t recall a time when I didn’t consider myself a Christian, so I don’t know what it feels like to come into God’s household from the outside. But thanks to my citizenship experience and the affirmations of so many Canadians, I think I now have an idea of what it might feel like to be welcomed warmly into God’s

arms after being outside the fold.

I am now a citizen of both the U.S. and Canada. More importantly I am a citizen of heaven (Philippians 3:20). Although our heavenly citizenship supersedes any earthly one, we must live our earthly lives as citizens of earthly nations. I feel truly blessed now to claim citizenship in two.

—**Amy Dueckman**

The writer, from Abbotsford, B.C., is the B.C. regional correspondent for Canadian Mennonite.

Edmonton

Home away from home

Bert and Doris Hamm have spent a lot of time thinking about homes while away from their own home. As repeat volunteers with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), they have witnessed the wreckage of homes and lives left by natural disasters and have worked to rebuild what they can.

Bert first became involved with relief work through an employer who allowed employees paid time off for charity activities. He initially volunteered for a week with MDS to rebuild after prairie fires in Granum, Alta.

“It proved to be an interesting and rewarding time for me,” he said during an interview he and his wife participated in during a worship service at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, before their most recent MDS assignment to Mobile, Ala. “And so when additional opportunities

Selkirk, Ont.

The enduring love of God

At the front of the Rainham Mennonite Church sanctuary hangs a banner of the shore of Lake Erie, just down the road. The banner, a gift from a previous pastor, is emblazoned “God’s love endures forever.”

Karen Sheil is also a study of God’s enduring love, as well as grace and paradox. Brought up Baptist, she now pastors the local Mennonite congregation in the same community where her father, Art Sheil, was at one time pastor of the local Baptist church. In one of the oldest Mennonite churches in Ontario, Sheil is the second woman to pastor this congregation in a row—following Catherine Hunsberger, now at First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

In a community that prizes marriage and family, Sheil, a single woman, is carefully studying celibacy as part of her master of divinity degree at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ont.

A careful planner, laying out where she wants to be in life in the future,

she has often felt God’s sudden tug or push in a new direction that changes everything else. Once this push took her from planning for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) work in western Canada to Redeemer Reformed College in Ancaster, Ont.

Then God brought her to Rainham as pastor shortly after finding out about the congregation’s need—after planning to work as a youth minister.

The Rainham congregation itself is not the first place where she felt supported in pastoral ministry as a woman. Growing up near Nairn, Ont., her pastor was Mary Mae Schwartztruber, now at Bloomingdale (Ont.) Mennonite Church. And Sheil’s home congrega-

tion in Hamilton was co-pastored by Julie and Phil Bender, now MC Canada Witness workers in China.

But that wasn’t all that drew her to Rainham. The congregation, over

Like the banner that hangs at Rainham (Ont.) Mennonite Church, pastor Karen Sheil is also a study of God’s enduring love.



Photo by Dave Rogalsky

Continued on page 6

arose through MDS, we responded to the call for help.”

Once Doris retired from her job, she joined him on the projects and the couple were hooked. MDS is about more than rebuilding homes for the disadvantaged; it is about developing relationships in the name of Christ.

“Each project is different in the work that needs to be done and each one had its challenges and troubles that seem to be inherent in helping others in need,” Bert said.

They also learned to trust in God.

In Newton, Tex., the problems seemed insurmountable. Funding had been cut off by a recovery group and there was suddenly no work for the volunteers. After supper, the director and Bert informed volunteers of the problem. Someone suggested praying for a sign so the right decision could be made.

“The mood was sombre, but there was an element of peace within the group,” Bert said. “About an hour later a pick-up truck drove into the yard and it was an acquaintance we knew from the area.... He took me to a house in the village that looked in sad shape.... It would take at least a week-and-



Photo by Mel Wedler

During a church service earlier this year Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, co-pastor of First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, put on her Canadian Mennonite correspondent persona and interviewed Doris and Bert Hamm about their experiences serving with Mennonite Disaster Service.

a-half to repair this house and would fit into our plans ideally. God came through a friend we all knew and respected to assist our decision for the project.”

The Hamms feel blessed and strongly encourage others to consider volunteering.

“When you go to help these unfortunate people, the blessings we get seem to be more than what we give,” said Doris.

Added Bert, “You do not need special talents but rely on the gifts God has given you to make a difference.... Leaders are the most stressed resource that MDS currently has, and many projects are shut down prematurely due to lack of leaders.... Become a leader and show your colours, and God will bless you many times over.”

—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**

Love From page 5

200 years old, is uncertain about its long-term future but has hope for what it is doing now. A few years ago, partially at the invitation of congregational members, partially spontaneously, a half-dozen local children and youths began to attend. They came without parents, although the parents gave them rides to church, and asked neighbours for rides home. When she candidated, Sheil was very impressed with the children's interest. Their dedication continues three years later.

Her background in theatre, as well as the chaplaincy training she is taking at McMaster, help her with her three-fold focus on worship, preaching and visitation during her two days of paid ministry each week.

She laughs as she recounts that she decided against a life in professional theatre. "That leads to no home, no marriage, no kids, and having to move every six months," she says.

And here she is in a different vocation, using those gifts, but—except for moving—in the same situation. She spends her other time studying, working on the combined topic of theology and theatre, and has been part of the Hope Rising troupe that sings in many Ontario congregations in support of MCC's Circles of Support program. For her, work and worship are part of a larger theme of embodied worship, as opposed to thoroughly cerebral or emotional worship.

Graduating with her M.Div. in the spring and beginning an M.A., she's not sure what the future holds but she is sure that God's enduring love will keep it full of grace and paradox.

—**Dave Rogalsky**

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Drayton, Ont.

Airline pilot, wife join aviation ministry

A commissioning service was held for Dave and Robin Metcalfe at Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton the day before Christmas, as the active church members prepared to leave for Papua New Guinea, where they will serve with Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF). Pastor Dave Tiessen and the congregation sent them off with their love, blessing and support. The couple left for Papua New Guinea on Dec. 30.

After a 27-year career as a pilot, flying everything from bush planes to Boeing 737 and Airbus commercial airliners both nationally and around the world, Metcalfe elected to take early retirement in 2005 "to pursue Christian education and mission service," he stated in his resignation letter to Air Canada. The couple chose to join MAF because of their interest in the mission organization and the knowledge that his aviation skills were in great demand.

Metcalfe's first contact with MAF occurred many years ago. As a Scout leader, he took a group of children to an air fair, to ride on a 737 simulator. While at the fair, held in an airline hangar, he met a young MAF missionary pilot. He became a supporter and prayer partner of the pilot. He told his then pastor, Willard Metzger, about MAF and his desire to join the mission

at some point in his life, a desire that Metzger supported.

Metcalfe quotes Jeremiah 29:11—*"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future,"* adding, "Maybe this mission is just what God had planned for all along."

Mission Aviation Fellowship, a non-denominational Christian mission based in Guelph, Ont., has been providing missionary air support since 1948, using airplanes and new communications technology to support mission projects in remote parts of the world. MAF operates 140 aircraft in 30 countries around the world.

Metcalfe's wife's role with MAF will include providing ground support for the organization in Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea, and assisting wherever needed.

The decision to become missionaries at this point in their lives will mean the Metcalfes will be separated from their adult children, who will remain in Canada. A married daughter lives in Kitchener, Ont. Their two sons are studying at Emmanuel Bible College in Kitchener and Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg.

The Metcalfes can be contacted by e-mail at rob-met@hotmail.com.

—**Janet Weber**



Photo courtesy of MAF

Former Air Canada pilot Dave Metcalfe took early retirement to join Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF). Dave and his wife Robin were commissioned for service by their home congregation—Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton, Ont.—on Dec. 24 and left for Papua New Guinea six days later.

"Hendrik Pruijt burned in a boat," by Jan Luyken. From *Martyrs Mirror* by Thieleman J. van Braght.



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Over the course of my life I have done my bit in lectures and books to make 16th century Anabaptism visible to our people and time. I have been, and remain, an advocate for the Anabaptist form of Christian faith as put forward by Pilgram Marpeck and others.

But I have grown increasingly uneasy by the now common designation of Mennonites as Anabaptists. We seem to think that, in spite of our often-uncritical cultural accommodation, we can somehow preen ourselves with the bright feathers of a heroic tradition. And then we go on to imagine that we can be like those who were part of that tradition those centuries ago by adopting the nickname their enemies gave them.

Those of us who have studied and written about 16th century Anabaptism, including myself, have not emphasized sufficiently that our 16th century forebears were not out to separate from the old Catholic Church of their day. Like the reformers Luther, Zwingli and Thomas Cranmer, they were out to reform the one church and not to create another.

It was the lamentable consequence of an intolerant century that Anabaptist reformation efforts were rejected and came to nothing because they refused to embrace the coercive methods of the other reformers. Their vision to contribute to the reform of the one church failed, as did that of the other reformers.

What especially characterized 16th century Anabaptists was that they stood consciously against virtually everything their Christian culture took for granted. They rejected all religious coercion, and insisted that governments had no role in the internal life of the church. They rejected the emerging

Continued on page 8

Recovering the Anabaptist vision

Recovering From page 7

capitalist economic system of the time, primarily because it discriminated against the poor and defenceless. They refused to accept any justification for the use of force and killing in the defence of the gospel.

They paid an extremely high price for accepting the baptism of believing adults as a sign of commitment to follow Christ, because it was against the law and often carried the death penalty. If we in North America are going to call ourselves Anabaptists, it would seem to me that there ought to be some resemblance between us and them.

The Anabaptists of the 16th century are our spiritual ancestors and we rightly celebrate their life, witness and martyrdom by rehearsing their story. But that does not make us Anabaptists.

First, with very few exceptions, we are not rebaptized, for that is what the name means. We are not persecuted and hounded into prison for our faith, nor do we face death. We are affluent and conformed to this world in our enthusiastic embrace of consumerism and therefore don't have the singleness of heart which was required of them for living faithfully in the face of imprisonment, torture, exile and death.

Without doubt, we are trying to live faithfully in our time and place, but it's hard because it costs us virtually nothing to be baptized. Baptism has no life-and-death outcome for us. It is confusing because we are no longer sure about our faith; its basis keeps shifting uncertainly for us as for other Christians. Inviting to our institutions people like Tom Harpur (author of *The Pagan Christ*), and to have some applaud their siren voices, is a sign that we are confused about what the truth is. [*Harpur engaged in a debate with*

There are, however, some Mennonites who may justifiably use the name Anabaptist.

Jim Reimer, director of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, at a 2004 fundraiser at Conrad Grebel University College. Ed.]

Anabaptists were human and did not always get things right, but without exception they knew that their faith basis was that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had come into the world to save sinners; that in his death they had forgiveness of sins; and that in his resurrection they had the light and power to live the Christian life. They had confidence and trust in God's love and judgment, that would see them through the darkness of their time to the light of God's eternal kingdom.

It is a betrayal of Anabaptism to reduce Christian faith to social activism, as we are inclined to do. We are not called to change the world by our own efforts. We do not build God's kingdom; it is a gift God gives us when we have faith in Christ and which we may, by God's grace, receive.

There are, however, some Mennonites who may justifiably use the name Anabaptist. They live in Vietnam, Colombia, Ethiopia and in other places in the world where they were—and are—being persecuted for their faith by repressive governments, and therefore know what it was like to be Anabaptists back then. And then there are also those who have come into the Mennonite Church from churches that still baptize infants, and who have been rebaptized. These also have a right to be called Anabaptists.

So perhaps we could dignify all of these as modern Anabaptists, and the rest of us should be content with being called Mennonites—our old nickname. If we are going to be faithful to the Anabaptist vision, then we will renounce all separatism and ethnic pride, and participate in the incomplete, ongoing reform of the whole church—to the glory of God and Jesus Christ, who prayed that we all might be one.

—**Walter Klaassen**

The author is a well-known scholar of Anabaptism. The article was originally published in the Sept. 21, 2005 issue of The Messenger.

Langnau, Switzerland

2007: Year of the Swiss Anabaptists

A service at the Protestant church in Langnau marked the beginning of the Anabaptist commemorative year in this Swiss canton's rural Emmental region.

More than 200 events will recall the persecution of Anabaptists, which began during the Reformation and did not end until the early 19th century.

Events include plays, exhibitions and excursions throughout Bern and neighbouring cantons in north western Switzerland.

"We, as the indirect successor to the political authorities of that time, regret the injustices done to so many and the suffering caused," said Werner

Luginbühl, president of Canton Bern's government, during the opening ceremony on March 24. "We can't undo what was done, but society can learn so that the mistakes are not repeated."

The country's existing Anabaptist community is uneasy about suddenly finding itself in the spotlight, said Paul Gerber, president of the Swiss Mennonite Conference. The challenge for Mennonites today is to remain true to their faith despite this new attention, he said.

There are 14 Mennonite congregations in Switzerland with about 2,500 members, and an estimated 600,000 descendants of Swiss Anabaptists live in North America.

Visitors from abroad are encouraged to attend an international gathering in Emmental from July 26 to 29. For more information, visit www.anabaptism.org. —MWC release

Waterloo, Ont.

Confessions of a reluctant Mennonite

Mennonite—ethnicity or Christian denomination? The old question came to many minds as Sandra Birdsell gave the 2007 Bechtel Lectures at Conrad Grebel University College entitled “The confession of a reluctant Mennonite.”

Over two evenings last month Birdsell, the award-winning novelist of *The Russländer*, time-travelled from the Prairie location to which her Schroeder relatives moved in the 1920s from Chortitza in what was then Russia, forward to the time when she herself stood in the village of her grandparents in what is now Ukraine.

Although she had many fond memories of family times growing up, as a young adult she eschewed her Mennonite heritage. Being Mennonite in Canada seemed to mean standing outside of society and watching it go by. She sensed an exotic existence sometime in her relatives’ past, but here in Canada, Mennonite life seemed to be “grim, sad and pious.”

Stories she overheard told her that everything—including children—had been better in Russia. “Why then,” she asked, “had they come to Canada?” The only answer she received was that “there were bad people” in Russia.

Birdsell grew up attending the local General Conference Mennonite Church, where she learned to “turn the other cheek” and that being Mennonite was to not have fun. If her father’s French/native ancestry was flashy and demonstrative, being Mennonite was “having acne.”

Birdsell’s decision to “not be Mennonite” was put to the test when she was grouped with others, including Rudy Wiebe, on a 1982 CBC radio panel to answer the question, “What does it mean to be a Mennonite



Photo by Dave Rogalsky

Author Sandra Birdsell, seated, chats with Imgard Penner at a book-signing session following her Bechtel Lecture at Conrad Grebel University College last month.

writer?” Feeling like an interloper, she wanted to explain her Métis background instead.

Following the panel discussion, she was invited by Hildi Froese Tiessen to speak at Conrad Grebel. On one of her visits with Tiessen, she discovered *Forever Summer, Forever Sunday*, Peter Gerhard Rempel’s book of photos of the 19th century Russian Mennonite colonies. To her surprise, she discovered photos of her relatives actually enjoying themselves. She realized that she really knew nothing of who they had been before they came to Canada.

This led her on an odyssey of reading Mennonite history and eventually two trips to Ukraine. On her first trip she found her grandparents’ home was gone. Her disenchantment was somewhat allayed on her last day when a Ukrainian woman, in the shadow of the famous Chortitza Oak, sang “*Gott ist die Liebe*,” her grandfather’s song, to her.

A few years later she accompanied a group of Mennonites on the Dnepr River Mennonite heritage cruise. She discovered that they came to not only sightsee but also to help fund a clinic for poor Ukrainians. “They came

with suitcases filled with antibiotics, Aspirin and forgiveness.”

The most difficult part of writing *The Russländer* was finding the author’s voice. When on the news she saw a truckload of raped Muslim Bosnian women being whisked away, she understood her aunts’ silence and wrote the book from the point of view of Katya, a Mennonite servant girl on a Mennonite estate in Chortitza.

After the book was published, Rudy Wiebe said to her, “So you’ve become a Mennonite,” and she did not object.

Yet in her pocket she carries a Métis identification card. “If Mennonites handed out heritage identification cards, I’d carry one too,” she admitted.

—**Dave Rogalsky**

Arts note

Book drive underway

Retired Wilfrid Laurier University professor John Peters, who was a guest lecturer at Meserete Kristos College last summer, was so impressed by the facility in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, that he is spearheading a drive to stock the college’s library with good used textbooks. In order to provide relevant, effective and quality instruction, and in order to be accredited by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, it is essential that the college has a well-rounded library with good quality books published in the last 30 years on such topics as peace and conflict studies, society, the environment, business, leadership, education, the humanities and religious studies. Pack selected books in boxes and deliver them in person or send them to: John Peters, 137 MacKay Crescent, Waterloo, ON N2J 3K1. For more information, e-mail jpeters@wlu.ca. The delivery deadline is June 1. Anyone wishing to contribute towards the shipping costs can make a donation to: Mennonite Church Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, Attention: MKC Books.

—**Ross W. Muir**

'Beautiful' violence offers dangerous messages

300. Warner Bros. Pictures. Directed by Zack Snyder. Written by Zack Snyder, Kurt Johnstad and Michael B. Gordon. R rating.

Make no mistake, *300* is a work of art. It is surely one of the most visually stunning films ever made. This is a gorgeous film. But the seductive beauty of *300* only serves to make the film more dangerous—a hook to draw in and entertain the masses with a tale of redemptive ultra-violence. And this is a very dangerous film indeed.

To start with, we have 300 Spartan soldiers—all perfect specimens of humanity—facing a vast horde of monsters, magicians and mystics who are fighting for the Persian king Xerxes. That one fact alone makes the film dangerous; *300* is an ode to dehumanization and there is not much worse I could ever say about a film.

The fact that the beautiful heroic Spartans are westerners facing Persian “monsters” is also dangerous in a time when the country that fabricated an excuse to justify the invasion of Iraq is now trying to fabricate excuses to invade Iran. Of course, today it is the U.S. that represents the invading empire of its time, so perhaps the film is a work of irony. Do the Spartans then represent terrorists?

But the real danger lies in the hugely excessive display of virtually non-stop graphic violence. Sure, the violence is stylized, with countless slow-motion scenes of spear and sword thrusts and heads being sliced off. But don't try to tell me this makes the bloodfest okay. On the contrary, it just makes people think it's okay to watch hundreds of people mercilessly butchered.

In fact, I have heard from young male Mennonites in North America (aged 18 to 28) that *300* is extremely popular—even in Mennonite academic settings—for this particular demographic. The two young men who told me this said they “loved” *300* because of its beautiful computer-generated images, because of the passion of the characters, because of the non-stop action, because it was “history,”

and because of the nobility of these 300 men being willing to sacrifice themselves—fight against hugely overwhelming odds—to make the world a better place.

But it's not okay. I was numbed and horrified by the cold and grisly deaths of the Persians, all the more so because they were so “beautiful.”

In a world at war, what kind of message does a film like *300* send to the millions who are apparently flocking to the cinemas? The glory of war, of fighting for freedom, of not showing weakness, of not negotiating, of showing no mercy—this is Sparta. If the writers and filmmakers were trying for some irony in their heroic and beautiful depiction of the Spartans, I fear it will be lost on the masses, especially the young men toward whom the film is clearly aimed.

But there is yet another danger. The religious symbolism looked like it was trying to make the Spartan



king Leonidas into a Christ-figure. Besides the crucifixion scene at the end of the film, there is also the scene in which Leonidas is tempted by Xerxes, who sees himself as a god: “Bow down before me and I will give you the world.”

I fear that some Christians will think Leonidas indeed stands for Jesus, leading his beautiful perfect followers into a battle against Satan and his hideous deformed minions, a small army of Christians who will stand firm against the horde of Muslims and atheists who are trying to attack the only true faith. That Leonidas is the exact opposite of Jesus—who was a man of compassion and mercy, who saw it as his mission to humanize those who were seen as less than human, and who loved his enemies instead of brutally slaying them—will not be noticed by many.

—Vic Thiessen

The reviewer is director of the London (England) Mennonite Centre.

Arts note

'U2-charists' gain popularity

U2's songs are sung by millions around the world, but lately the rock band has drawn a new score of fans—Christian clergy. Already, 150 churches in 15 U.S. states and seven countries have had, or plan to have, U2-based eucharists. The service stems from an Episcopal church in York Harbor, Maine, where the Rev. Paige Blair displayed U2's lyrics next to the altar in the summer of 2005. One Lutheran author has justified the replacement of hymns with the rock band's lyrics and a church's decision to choose Bono over today's contemporary Christian music (CCM). “U2 is good at the art, using language like a poet would, like the classic hymn language,” said the Rev. Christian Scharen, director of the Faith as a Way of Life Project at Yale Divinity School and author of *One Step Closer: Why U2 Matters to Those Seeking*

God, according to *USA Today*. Many CCM songs—largely sung in evangelical churches and in youth and young adult services—are not as artistic as the hymnal or even Bono's songs, Scharen indicated. He said a lot of CCM songs have “locked-down, straightforward meaning.” Since its debut, there has been little criticism of U2-charists within the Anglican body, reported *USA Today*. The U.S. church phenomenon is now hitting the Church of England for the country's first Holy Communion service using U2's best-selling songs. The U2-charists there will not just be about singing U2's “Pride (In the Name of Love)” or other hits, but a key part of the service will be the Millennium Development Goals, since Bono is at the forefront of a worldwide campaign to eradicate extreme poverty.

—From a christianpost.com report by Lillian Kwon



Hindu artist Manju Lodha asks a question of a Catholic Indian friend concerning the art of James Paterson, whose series of 54 prints (created for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada and on display until April 21) takes viewers through the life of Christ. On April 26, an exhibition of Lodha's art will open.

Gallery a hub of cultures

*Photos by
Ray Dirks*



Altona, Man., sculptor Ken Loewen is pictured at the opening of his scrap metal sculpture exhibition at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery last month. His work—with spiritual meanings to be discovered by viewers—is on display until April 21.

Heritage Centre Gallery curator Ray Dirks, seated in the photo below, gave a workshop at Winnipeg's St. Vital Hindu temple, which has led to a request to begin giving regular art classes there later this year. "My role in the gallery is not to be a verbal witness, but rather to be an example through the relationships I have with schools, community groups and individuals of other faith backgrounds, Dirks says. "If I 'preached' to any of these contacts, the connection would be lost. I have ongoing friendships coming out of the work of the gallery that range from Mennonites to Hutterites to Hindus to Muslims. These relationships extend beyond the gallery to many invitations to homes and places of worship. By being open to relationships across cultures and faiths, the gallery has earned a reputation as a place to have dialogue without fear. As a result, I am frequently approached by people from other communities asking if we can work together. Doors open. Today, as I speak, a group of Hindu women is touring, with great interest [in] an openly Christian exhibition on the life of Jesus in our upstairs gallery."



A group of nearly 100 English-as-an-additional-language students recently visited the gallery from Gordon Bell High School, located in downtown Winnipeg, where curator Ray Dirks has had a relationship with the school's language program for nearly a decade.



Will our children have faith? That was the question posed by John Westerhof in a book of the same title in 1976. It's a question that still challenges the church today.

In fact, there may be more cause for concern and alarm now. Recent studies on teenagers in the U.S. and Canada suggest that if teens have faith at all, it is a generic, shallow kind of belief—a faith that will not enable them to deal with the challenges of our increasingly secular age.

A recent U.S. National Study on Teenagers and Religion found that teens who belong to religious groups have extremely weak spiritual understandings about their faith; the majority do not even know the basics of what their religion teaches.

As reported by author Christian Smith in *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, the study describes the belief system of many teens as “moralistic therapeutic deism.” Its basic tenets are:

- God wants people to be good, nice and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
- The central goal in life is to be happy and feel good about oneself.
- God does not need to be involved in my life, except when I need God to resolve a problem.
- Good people go to heaven when they die.

A similar study has not been conducted in Canada, but I suspect that we might discover that things are not so different in this country.

How did church-going teens end up this way? The study suggests that the single most important influence and predictor of the spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents. Far from seeking their own spiritual paths, teenagers follow their parents' footsteps when it comes to religion.

Our values, attitudes and beliefs about things like God, the divinity of Jesus, life after death, love, sexuality, values and ethics will be picked up by them. According to Reginald Bibby, the University of Lethbridge (Alta.) sociologist who has been surveying

Will our children have faith?

Canadian teenagers' attitudes towards religion since the 1970s, “Teenagers will become eventually pretty much like the rest of us.”

Another major influence in causing teens to have a shallow faith has been the teaching they have received in some churches. Wendell Loewen, associate professor of youth, church and culture at Tabor College (a Mennonite Brethren college in Hillsboro, Kan.), suggests that many teens have been taught that “salvation is, in essence, a one-time transaction with God to escape damnation. Christians simply have to read the Bible more, pray more, and occasionally save souls.”

The result, he says, is a faith that is “virtually indistinguishable from its surrounding culture,” that is “primarily privatized,” and that “demonstrates a radical disconnect between belief and lifestyle.”

He goes on to say that what is needed today is a “biblical presentation of the church” as an “alternative culture that invites others to participate in the reality of God's reign. Understanding this can help move students beyond a privatized faith toward a strong desire to influence the world.”

For Loewen, this reign is most helpfully illustrated by the image of the kingdom of God. By emphasizing the “reign of God,” he says teens will “better be able to see their way out of their individualized, privatized faith bubbles. They will be able to wrestle with tangible ways in which they can impact their world. This discovery can move students beyond an individual and personal faith emphasis toward one that seeks to tangibly impact the world.”

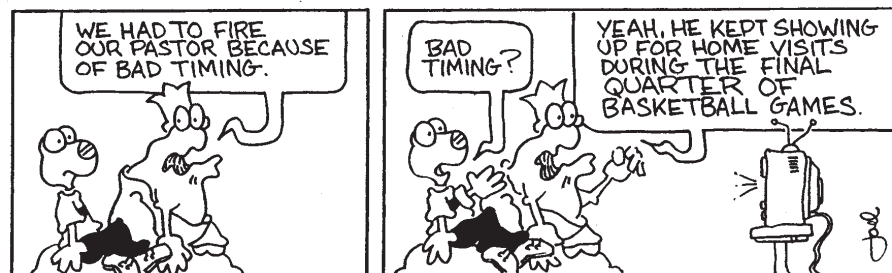
The message is clear: If the church doesn't live and teach a holistic gospel to our children, they will end up with a watered down faith—one that simply promotes personal well-being and teaches teens to be nice to one another. It will be a faith that keeps God on retainer, just in case they run into trouble, but not one that promotes the importance of deepening the presence of God in their lives.

As churches and Christian schools, our goal must be to help youths care equally about evangelism and social action; inner peace with God and peacemaking; personal spirituality and community; abundant life and simple living; serving God and serving the poor; praying and doing justice. We must help them avoid becoming moralistic therapeutic deists. We should help them to learn to know the one who created them, and who watches over all of life—and help them deepen that relationship in such a way that they will constantly feel God's presence as they commit themselves to serving God in all of life.

—Abe Bergen

The author is assistant professor of practical theology at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, specializing in youth ministry.

Pontius' Puddle



Letters

More 'Living on the edge' needed in Manitoba

When you hear the phrase "living on the edge," do you think of behaviour that exhibits signs of being on the verge of a breakdown—or do you think of a life that is non-conformist, risky, fearless and committed to embracing new ideas and ways of doing things?

I think the latter was at least partly implied in this choice of theme for the annual session of Mennonite Church Manitoba held in February at Bethel Mennonite Church ("Manitoba delegates speak on church survey and camp concerns," March 19, page 23). However, after attending the sessions and talking to other delegates, I really

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.

didn't see much evidence of serious grappling with this theme.

The opening worship service set the rather incoherent tone for the sessions. Guest speaker Len Hjalmarson, a computer software entrepreneur and anti-institutional church activist, gave a lecture entitled "Understanding cultural shifts," a barely audible hurried look at what constitutes postmodern culture. And although the reports by staff were presented in a creative way,

there was no chance for questions or discussion of the various aspects of conference work.

We spent half the morning on Saturday talking about what some considered internal structural matters related to Camps with Meaning. Many felt ill-equipped to make decisions about who regional committee members should be accountable to, and thought the time could have been bet-

Continued on page 14

PHIL WAGLER



Outside the box

I was trapped in a dilemma: Keep our small car or take the leap to a seven-seater. Sentimental me opted for the latter rather than vote one of our kids off the island. But now I may be the cause of polar bear homelessness and the drowning of untold thousands in coastal lowlands. The world is in quite a stew over the weather. What are we to make—or do—about global warming?

Two recent documentaries present opposite views of the "facts." *An Inconvenient Truth*, Al Gore's claim to Oscar fame, says humans cause global warming because of a fossil fuel addiction that sky-rockets carbon dioxide levels, heating the planet catastrophically. *The Great Global Warming Swindle*, aired by the BBC, dismisses this as the "pop science" of a new socialistic, anti-industrial colonialism, and declares the sun, of all things, as the culprit in this heated debate. And both, of course, accuse the other of skewing "facts" for dollars.

Let us think about this carefully as Christians, shall we?

Is it not shocking that human beings believe we are weather gods? The essence of the school of Gore is that we actually control the weather! This is an astounding claim and the fantasy of a renewed paganism that places humanity at the centre of all things. Having dismissed a sovereign Creator God from our worldview, and elevated ourselves in his place, we now find ourselves the only saviours from a doom and gloom apocalypse that would be laughed at if it came from the pulpit. The end of the world is the ironic message of secular humanist culture. Gore's "turn-or-burn" sermon of fear catechizes the new religion of God-emptied western humanity. To disagree with Gore is worse than spitting in the face of

The real inconvenient truth

The end of the world is the ironic message of secular humanist culture.

the pope; it is blatant heresy.

On the other hand, *The Swindle* seems determined to keep up with business as usual. Since this is just the sun doing its thing, we ought not worry and get on with the industrial development of the Third World. While the god of Gore is a green middle-class man with his family in a Honda hybrid, the god of *The Swindle* is green too—with

money and envy. Both breed a self-righteousness that distracts from the greater issues of justice, mercy and humility, which is what the Lord desires more than anything (Micah 6:8).

Is a tree-hugger more righteous than an oil-baron, if both know nothing of love, are idolaters and are only storing up treasures on Earth? Are we not called to a more radical witness as those who know Almighty God? to the humility of Job before a God who questions our speech? to the selflessness of the widow and her penny?

to the embrace of the least? to the simplicity of he who had no place to lay his head? to the outlandish generosity of he who throws a banquet for any who will come? to take good news as far and wide as possible? to be children of God who lead creation in liberation (Romans 8:19-21)?

The solution to all this is deeply spiritual. A person who is a new creation in Christ is re-oriented—in the power of the Holy Spirit—as the trustee of the gifts of creation and money, and is finally free of idolatry of either. Who is our God? That is the real inconvenient truth we are scared to address.

Phil Wagler is lead pastor of Zurich (Ont.) Mennonite Church. Converse with him at phil_wagler@yahoo.ca.

Living *From page 13*

ter spent talking about more critical issues—like our multicultural context, our endangered environment, and the control of technology in our lives.

The roundtable discussion format for the workshops provided a very good opportunity for discussion.

However, many were frustrated that facilitators were directed to summarize the discussions of their workshop into two sentences to take back to the executive. This process resulted in somewhat watered down summaries that really didn't reflect the conversation around those tables. Hopefully, the next time around, the delegates' contributions will get more attention.

I should add, though, that one young first-time delegate remarked, "This is a lot more exciting than I thought it would be!"

—Karen Loewen Guenther, Winnipeg

Articles on High Church Mennonites praised

I want to express appreciation for the commissioned High Church Mennonite articles in your March 5 issue.

David Widdicombe was particularly insightful in his article, "Embracing people of the Book (of Common Prayer)," as he gently led us through the current trend of young people crossing denominational backgrounds, and more specifically as this pertains

to Mennonites at St. Margaret's Anglican Church in Winnipeg.

I also found Hippolyto Tshimanga's interview with Leona Dueck Penner helpful. He obviously brings to his job a depth of understanding of two very different cultures on two different continents, and is able to sift through it all to articulate the important elements of commonality that allow these cultures to work together to bring the gospel to people. This is encouraging as it translates to other settings as well.

—Margaret Neufeld, Winnipeg

AIDEN ENNS



New Order voice

Ah, incremental change. That's very comforting for those of us who enjoy the benefits of the dominant levels of society. People, myself included, don't want dramatic change.

For example, after I complained about the church's best efforts at charity, a guy wrote and wondered, "Is nothing good enough for Aiden?" He was responding to my push for "Buy Nothing Christmas."

"Do you ever worry that you're going to alienate people and just make them deaf to your message by being critical about 'incremental' change?" he added.

I still don't know how to respond to the question of what I'll call radical action versus gradualism. Of course, I favour the former. But if I look at my life I see I embody the latter. So, like Plato and the gap between ideals and reality, like Paul Tillich and his polarities, and like the apostle Paul and his knowledge of what he should do and yet doesn't, I'm torn.

On the one hand, radical change is exactly what followers of Jesus should be about. It's called "repentance." We recognize the error of our ways, we see our complicity in the structures of destruction—which could include social structures like racism, capitalism and homophobia—and we repent. As the preachers say, "Do a one-hundred-and-eighty-degree turn" and walk the other way. Turn from the darkness into the light.

But on the other hand, what if I've turned my life around several times and feel a need to repent some more? The light, it seems, always fades, and the evening of rest, sloth and greed sets in. How many times can I have radical change? Is this psychosis? It certainly is discontentment.

Take food, for example. A few years ago I turned away

Embracing pathetic change

from eating animals. It was a matter of compassion—a growing sense of being a kindred spirit with all animals—chickens, squirrels, dogs and pigs. (I recognize this is irrational to carnivores). But it was also

a recognition of the way we raise animals for slaughter, the way we give them artificial supplements to grow faster and feed them waste products which cause health complications.

So, as it seemed then, I made a radical change in my diet: I became a vegetarian.

Now the latest challenge is to eat food that is grown locally. My friends are banding together for a 100-mile diet. For 100 days we only eat food produced within 100 miles. This requires another radical change. And I'm sure there's going to be another radical shift after this experiment.

The preachers, especially the Anabaptists, call this process of change "sanctification." We are "justified by faith," and then, by the grace of God, we "work out our salvation." Sanctification is the long process of becoming holy.

Holiness sounds lofty. But that's because it's been swept off Earth by apocalyptic doomsayers. Holiness is here, and we can taste it if we stick out our tongues, practise justice, exercise restraint. This is a steady movement towards the very source of life.

So I guess that's a blessing for incrementalism. Which, if you have high ideals—like I do, has a pathetic ring to it. So I guess I embrace pathetic change. That's part of seeking contentment and loving my neighbour as myself.

Aiden Enns can be reached at aiden@geezmagazine.org. He is a member of Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and sits on the Canadian Mennonite board.

Steinbach, Man.

Sider challenges 'comfortable' Mennonites

The great divide in the Evangelical world—between evangelism and social action—is “unfaithful to the gospel of Jesus,” according to Ron Sider, who brought his message that the power of the gospel is in the integration of social action and evangelism to Steinbach Evangelical Mennonite Church last month.

In his first lecture, “Overcoming one-sided Christianity,” Sider anchored his presentations in a classic orthodox Christianity, arguing that a dichotomy between social action and evangelism is a result of a skewed theology that reflects an unbiblical choice between salvation as an individualized personal faith or salvation as redemption of systemic/structural brokenness. He said the gospel calls for both a personal, individual response and a call into a redeemed community that models God’s desire for a reconciled and restored creation.

Sider noted that recent work on climate change, AIDS and HIV initiatives and political activism give evidence that Evangelicals are beginning to integrate evangelism and social action.

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) has the potential to expand Mennonite witness, Sider said, suggesting that the work of CPT needs to be at the heart of Mennonite identity. Mennonites have left their peace and justice witness to the most passionate activists, he said, allowing most congregations to avoid wrestling with systemic and structural injustices.

CPT needs pastors, denominational leaders and congregations to participate. Sider suggested that deploying a thousand or more Christian peacemakers in the Middle East would not only draw attention to the injustices but also impact political and economic realities and policies there.

The call to be an alternative community is not a call to withdrawal.

His second lecture, “The scandal of the Evangelical conscience,” focused on the failure of practice in the contemporary evangelical church. Sider argued that too many Mennonite churches are “comfortable clubs of conformity” because of cheap grace, the diminishing of sin and rampant individualism. The call to be an alternative community is not a call to withdrawal, he said, but to “active engagement that puts the church out in front of the world in stunning contrast to the dominant culture” on issues like racial reconciliation, generosity and sexual practice.

In his final lecture, “Rich Christians in an age of hunger,” Sider said that God’s preferential option for the poor invites Christians to a humble engagement of the spiritual, cultural and structural powers that maintain injustice. The creation and management of wealth are not con-

trary to a biblical faithfulness, but need to reflect God’s kingdom values that everyone shares in the wealth, he said.

Sider said that one way to practise such justice is to ensure that everyone can participate in wealth creation by having access to capital. Globally, people who claim Christian faith control approximately 60 percent of the world’s wealth. If they would invest just 1 percent of their wealth in initiatives like micro-loans, the standard of living for the poorest billion residents of the world would increase by 50 percent.

Sider presented his lectures at the invitation of the Anabaptist Evangelical Fellowship; Mennonite Church Manitoba and the Chortizer Mennonite Church co-sponsored the event.

—Norm Voth

The author is director of Evangelism and Service Ministries, MC Manitoba.

Palm Springs, Calif.

Entrepreneurs ‘get away’ for faith retreat

For Jake and Hilda Redekop and Harry and Edna Richert, a winter trip to Palm Springs, Calif., has been a ritual for the past 27 years. The two couples from British Columbia are pillars of the Mennonite Entrepreneurs Group, which draws businesspeople together to explore the integration of faith and work.

Attendees say the meeting lets them “get away” and meet other businesspeople in a smaller setting, where they can enjoy closer interaction than in larger conventions. Many see themselves as agents of change in the church and broader world. Others point to the inter-generational nature of the gatherings, where younger businesspeople can learn from the experiences of their elders.

Forty people attended this year’s Conference for Business Professionals and Entrepreneurs last month. The theme was “Workplace relationships: Mentoring godly faith and values.” The purpose was to examine biblical principles to help leaders “pass the torch” of faith through meaningful relationships with business partners, co-workers, employees and others they serve.

Bible study leader Ervin Stutzman, vice-president and seminary dean of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., examined the role of humility, counsel and diligence in the modern workplace, using a blend of Scripture and popular business books like *Joy at Work* and *Good to Great*.

“Simplistic, sentimental platitudes about humility will not go far in a highly competitive workplace,” said Stutzman. “Yet humility is essential to a godly life. And while he praised diligence as being vital for success, he cautioned against it “turning into workaholic toil.”

—MEDA release

Blanket project brings healing and comfort to women in prison

MCC Ontario volunteer Laura Nafziger and Krista make blankets for MCC as part of the Grand Valley Institution for Women employment program.

you realize they are just like us—they are mothers, sisters and daughters,” she says. “They care about their children.”

Cheryl Flamenco Steiner, a Grand Valley correctional program officer working with employment and employability programs, says the volunteers create a safe and non-judgmental environment to assist women as they develop and strengthen employability skills.

Her mother, Irene Steiner, has been involved in promoting blanket-making for MCC

for many years. In the past number of years, mother and daughter talked about the possibility of incorporating MCC blankets into an employment program.

The program, a partnership between the correctional facility and MCC Ontario’s material resources and restorative justice departments, became a reality in March 2006. It also receives community support from individuals and businesses through donations of fabric and sewing machines.

In the first 10 months, about 10 women participated in the program and completed about 40 blankets. Last December, the program expanded to two afternoons a week and moved to a larger space that can accommodate more women.

“This is not only meaningful employment,” says Flamenco Steiner. “They are developing relationships—that’s what makes this program so important. It is the unconditional support they receive from others that makes this a very unique and special space.”

—MCC release by **Gladys Terichow**



Photo by Joanie Peters

Kitchener, Ont.

Every Tuesday afternoon four women incarcerated at Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener make blankets for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) humanitarian aid shipments.

Krista, a mother of three children, has been involved in the program since it started in March 2006.

“I’m here [in prison] because I took a life,” says Krista. “I joined the program so that I can give something back to the world and to be at peace with myself. It brings tears to my eyes and goose bumps to be able to give something back to the world.”

Working with the women are 14 volunteers. The volunteers were recruited and trained by MCC Ontario to develop trusting relationships with the inmates who are serving sentences of two years or more in this federal institution. Just like women making blankets in church basements, they talk about the ordinary things in life—their families, favourite food,

hobbies and skills.

“This is very peaceful and healing,” says Michelle. “It is like you are part of a group.... [T]here is more to me than my crime. I like to sew, I like to quilt and I like working with Mennonite women. They give of their time, not only to quilt, but also to see us. We work together as if we have known each other forever. It’s a nice feeling.”

This non-judgmental support is helping Michelle and others start the process of reintegration into society. “When we leave here we have to see ourselves not only as ex-cons but as members of society,” she says. “These [volunteers] don’t treat us like ex-cons. We talk about our children, our life, what we do and what we can do. It’s like being with my mother.”

Getting to know women serving time in prison is also changing the lives of volunteers. Anna Mary Brubacher, who has been involved with the program since it started, says that at first she was apprehensive about going into a prison. “But the first time you meet the women,



CMU photo by John Loughurst

Canadian Mennonite University professor John J. Friesen, right, recently taught a history course for Hutterites that linked him and those in class with other students from four Hutterite colonies in Minnesota, South Dakota and rural Manitoba over the web via his computer screen (seen at left). The course was aimed at Hutterite teachers, or those studying to be teachers, at colony schools, although some colony leaders and others also took it. The goal of the course was

“to pass along the Hutterite heritage, particularly at a time when they feel under pressure from the surrounding society,” said Friesen. The learning wasn’t just one-way; Friesen was inspired by the Hutterite commitment to communal living. “They have something to teach us about community, about caring for others and about simplicity and sharing, especially at a time when the world is concerned about shrinking resources,” he said.

Borabu, Thailand

Living Water Church receives building grant

Living Water Church in Borabu, Thailand, is \$10,000 closer to realizing its dream of building a new meeting place, thanks to a grant from the JoinHands church building program.

Pat and Rad Houmphan, Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in Borabu, are helping Living Water Church achieve its dream of worshiping in its own Christian “temple.”

Temples in Thailand represent the centre of people’s lives, with many non-believers often seeking the Christian “temple” after they first

learn about Christianity, say the Houmphans. “The need for a proper Christian temple is great,” says Rad. “The Living Water Church needs a place to come to for fellowship and to worship God.”

The people of Living Water envision a multi-purpose building with a sanctuary/fellowship hall, office for the pastor and Sunday school rooms. The building will be situated on land just outside of Borabu and will be a central gathering place for all believers in the district. The new building will allow the group to run programs more effectively and will be an important new element for growth.

The \$10,000 grant from the JoinHands program will contribute to the building of this

dream. “The people of the Living Water Church are very grateful for the assistance and help from their brothers and sisters in the Mennonite church,” says Rad.

Construction was to begin last month, and will take an estimated four to five months to complete.

JoinHands is a ministry of Mennonite Men, a joint partnership of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA.

JoinHands (formerly the Tenth Man Building Program) began in 1985 and provides church building grants to newer congregations in Canada, the United States and internationally. The program has provided nearly \$1.3 million to 46 congregations worldwide.

—MC Canada/
Mennonite Men
joint release by
Krista Allen

Photo by Pat Houmphan

Sarmarn Senavong, associate pastor of Living Water Church of Borabu, Thailand, takes a break from weeding a tapioca field that will soon be home to the congregation’s new meeting place. Mennonite Men’s JoinHands church building ministry contributed \$10,000 to the project. Proceeds from the tapioca harvest will also provide cash to help construct the church.



Newton, Kan.

Survey shows aging, more diverse MC USA

Results from a new denominational profile show an aging Mennonite Church USA membership in which there is a growing number of people from non-Mennonite backgrounds.

Mennonite Member Profile 2006, the results of which were released Feb. 1, shows the average age of MC USA members is 54, five years older than a similar 1989 survey found.

The survey also showed the number of “non-cradle” Mennonites—MC USA members for whom both parents were not Mennonites—stood at 26 percent, up from 17 percent in a similar 1972 survey. A total of 39 percent surveyed had married a spouse from a different denomination, up from 25 percent in 1972.

In other findings, 34 percent of MC

USA members surveyed said they were “very strongly” committed to the denomination and 12 percent to their area conference. The survey also found that 58 percent are “very strongly” committed to their local MC USA congregation.

Of those surveyed, nearly half said they wanted to remain a member of MC USA for life.

Although its results are being weighed against two earlier surveys, this latest profile provides a somewhat different view of the Anabaptist landscape. Studies conducted in 1972 and 1989 included the General Conference (GC) Mennonite Church, the Mennonite Church (MC), the Mennonite Brethren, the Evangelical Mennonite Church (EMC), and the Brethren in Christ (BIC). Of these

five, only the BIC remained in the 2006 survey.

Since the last study, the MC and GC denominations merged in 2002 to become MC USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

Meanwhile, the EMC, which had its origins in the 19th-century Egli Amish, changed its name to the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches in 2003. The move was said to be part of an ongoing shift away from Mennonite distinctives that some members no longer felt attuned with.

The U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches was asked to take part in the study, as it did in 1972 and 1989, but declined.

The Church of the Brethren, which was not part of the previous studies, was added to the 2006 profile.

For the latest study, 3,080 MC USA members from 120 congregations received survey questionnaires. More than 76 percent of those who received

Kansas City, Mo.

Resolution calls for equal treatment of women pastors

At its March meetings near Kansas City, Mo., the Mennonite Church USA executive board accepted a resolution entitled “The calling and affirmation of women for leadership ministries in Mennonite Church USA.” The resolution was shared with members of the Constituency Leaders Council, which includes representatives of Mennonite Church USA area conferences and constituency groups.

The resolution acknowledges that “recently many persons across the church were disheartened by the narrowly defeated proposal of the Board of Bishops of Lancaster Mennonite Conference” who had “discerned and recommended that their districts and congregations be given the prerogative to ordain women for leadership ministries.”

Citing Exodus 18:13-23, Ephesians 4:7-16, and Article 15 from the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, the resolution affirmed a conviction that “women and men together are needed to fill our need for leadership. When we fail to call women to positions of leadership and fail to affirm their call

with recognized signs such as ordination, we are ignoring a gift for ministry that God has made available to us.”

The executive board issued a call to “all congregations and conferences to support our priority to find and equip leaders by calling, licensing and ordaining both men and women for all positions of leadership.”

While recognizing that “faithful Christians may disagree in their interpretation of Scripture on the call and affirmation of women to leadership ministries, the executive board appealed to the *Confession of Faith* as “a body of instruction to provide inspiration, direction and counsel, and to foster unity of purpose that is open to the continuing discernment of the body of the gathered church.”

In conclusion, the executive board’s resolution calls upon congregations “to consider the call and gifts of women for ministry on an equal plane of discernment with men. We call upon conferences to encourage this view among congregations and to respect the discernment of congregations who call women to leadership ministries in the same manner as they have respected this call to men, by the same process of examination and granting the same credentials in licensing and ordination.”

—**Ross W. Muir**,
from an MC USA executive board release



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questionnaires responded.

The profile effort was directed by Elizabethtown (Pa.) College sociologist Conrad L. Kanagy. A book by Kanagy, *Road Signs and Guideposts*, will provide an overview of the entire church member profile. The book will be accompanied by congregational

resources available on DVD and CD.

The full findings of the survey will be released in July at MC USA's delegate assembly in San Jose, Calif.

—Robert Rhodes

The article originally appeared in the Feb. 12 issue of Mennonite Weekly Review. Reprinted with permission of Mennonite Weekly Review.

Mbuji Mayi, Democratic Rep. of Congo

Diamonds are forever: Congo and U.S. Mennonites learn together

On the road from Mbuji Mayi through the diamond fields, Benjamin Mubenga was asked by passersby if he was taking his white passengers to see diamonds.

Mubenga, a pastor and president of the Communauté Evangelique Mennonite (CEM), said he was on his way to visit churches. Much later, his passengers, five members of a Mennonite Church USA delegation to Congo, agreed that Mubenga was helping to shape diamonds of a different kind—congregations in the Eastern Kasai province of CEM who love Jesus and serve him in their communities.

The group was part of a church-to-church visit in Congo for two weeks earlier this year, to help build new relationships between Mennonite denominations in Congo and the U.S. with the encouragement of Mennonite World Conference (MWC). Children, youths and adults, numbering well over 100 at each stop, sang of their love for Jesus, and delegation members offered greetings on behalf of the MC USA congregations.

The group learned that adequate transportation—both appropriate vehicles and the lack of an infrastructure of roads—is one of the major obstacles to the growth of CEM churches.

Mubenga said another challenge for CEM is keeping people together in one conference when they speak different languages. And there has been serious conflict in the church, with leaders working hard to resolve it with the help of Mennonite Central Committee and MWC. Their task is made more difficult because none of the leaders receive payment for their denominational work.

CEM administers 60 schools with about 10,000 students. The church re-

ceives some payment from the government, but it is far less support than is needed to run the schools effectively.

In addition to training 25 new evangelists, CEM leaders said their goals include expanding their office facilities and building a health centre, primary and secondary schools and homes for some of their leaders on the land surrounding the Dipumba parish in Mbuji Mayi.

The plans for the Dipumba parish are impeded, however, until CEM can recover land from families who have unlawfully built their houses on land given to CEM by a former government.

Leaders from churches in both countries agreed it is difficult to build mature relationships where both churches can give and receive gifts. MC USA delegates repeatedly felt expectations in the parishes that they had come to give them money, despite Congolese leaders' assertions each time that the visit was about building friendships.

“Our people can be motivated to be self-sufficient,” Mubenga said. “Our problem is how to get there to motivate them.”

Throughout the visit, delegation members were shown economic generation projects, including rabbit breeding, bread baking, and palm oil and grain producing. Congolese leaders said their congregations need to generate sources of income within the church, rather than expect help to come from outside the church.

Leaders of both countries talked together about the gifts they think the other church has to offer them. The U.S. church delegation said the Congo churches have vitality in worship, an understanding of generosity and endurance to remain faithful when times are difficult to offer American churches. Congo leaders said their American counterparts have political influence, experience in leadership training and resources to share.

On the road back to Mbuji Mayi, the 15-member SUV entourage jumped out of the vehicle to visit a diamond merchant who was a member of one of the CEM congregations. He showed them a handful of small, uncut diamonds worth more than \$1,500.

Like these diamonds, leaders agreed, the initial gift-sharing efforts between Congo and U.S. churches are very small, but the potential can be very valuable.

—MC USA release by **Ron Byler**



Mennonite Church USA delegation to Congo members James Wenger, Suzanne Lind and Ron Byler, left to right, joined Congolese church leaders and delegation members Keith Wilson and Sharon Waltner, for a tour of Communauté Evangelique Mennonite parishes last month.

MC USA photo

Tree planters paid with canned meat

Kirundo, Burundi

Gaspard Nzobakenga, a farmer in northern Burundi, plants trees to improve water supplies in this drought-prone region.

Photo by Brandon Thiessen

Subsistence farmers are planting hundreds of thousands of trees in the African country of Burundi through a project supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

MCC is providing canned meat to compensate more than a thousand farmers for their work in replanting forests that are vital to the local water supply. The ultimate goal is to alleviate droughts that cause food shortages, according to Brandon Thiessen, an MCC reforestation consultant from St. Catharines, Ont., who is working in Burundi.

“Trees play a critical role in the water cycle,” Thiessen says. “They return water to the atmosphere through respiration, and they increase the amount of water that soaks into the ground because their roots break the hard surface of the dirt.”

Burundi, located in east-central Africa, is one of the poorest and most densely populated countries on the continent. It was devastated by a civil war from 1993 to 2005. During the war, soldiers destroyed forests to deprive rebels of cover, and struggling farmers cleared more land for cultivation.

Burundi’s forests were reduced by 60 percent during the 1990s, and less than 4 percent of the total land area was forested in 2000, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. By comparison, 25 percent of the United States and 22 percent of Africa as a whole are forested.

An MCC partner organization,

Help Channel Burundi, is organizing farmers to plant trees in northern Burundi’s Kirundo Province in exchange for turkey meat that MCC canned in Canada and the U.S. For a day’s work planting trees or tending a tree nursery, farmers are paid two 795-gram cans of turkey.

Thiessen says that the project’s food-for-work design is very popular with farmers and government officials because of the region’s food shortages. “Last year, there was a famine because there wasn’t enough rain, and people were starving,” he explains. “They were suffering very much. So, in an effort to both provide people with employment and provide them with what they needed most, it seemed like a very good thing for them to be paid in a food-for-work arrangement.”

Thiessen says farmers tell him they prefer canned meat instead of cash payment for their work. The value of the canned turkey exceeds what most Burundians earn in a day, he says.

In the last year, farmers planted 460,000 trees through the food-for-work project. This total includes 400,000 trees that were planted to improve a watershed, and 60,000 fruit trees that the farmers planted for themselves.

Thiessen says farmers are hopeful that reforestation will lead to fewer droughts and better crop yields. These are likely results of the project, but reforestation is a slow process, he admits. —MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

Winnipeg

Pope closes communion to non-Catholics

Mennonites and other non-Catholics who have celebrated the Lord’s Supper in Roman Catholic churches in the years since Vatican II in the 1960s are no longer welcome at the table. Earlier this year, Pope Benedict XVI issued an instruction to Catholics under the title *Sacramentum Caritatis*, in an attempt to clear up confusion due to a trend that has made the mass more open to non-Catholics.

The Second Vatican Council had emphasized a fuller active participation of the entire people of God in the Lord’s Supper, reversing an earlier practice in which only priests and bishops partook of the communion elements, doing so on behalf of the people.

The pope’s latest instructions are addressed to the people in light of certain “abuses” that have crept in since Vatican II. Seeing the opportunity to become more free and more involved in Catholic worship, Catholic lay people sometimes have pushed the edges of the rules by taking the Eucharistic celebration into their own hands or by inviting their non-Catholic friends and relatives to partake as well. This is not allowed, according to the pope.

There is fear that if the laity takes hold of things, innovations at weddings, funerals and worship services may suffer “corruption.” There is also the fear that, with a greater openness to non-Catholics, there will be too much accommodation to outsiders. The hierarchy is concerned that there be order and uniformity in the Catholic Church around the world, since uniformity preserves unity.

While the pope’s recent statement again expresses the longing for “the day when we will be able to celebrate the Holy Eucharist together with all believers in Christ, and in this way to express visibly the fullness of unity that Christ willed for his disciples (John 17:21),” this day is not here yet.

Meanwhile, Catholics are obliged to ask Christians who are not Catholic to understand and respect Catholic convictions that are grounded in the

Kitchener, Ont.

MEDA convention considers 'personal branding'

Personal branding and financial savvy in the church were the two major themes addressed at Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) mini-convention last month entitled "Business as a calling."

Shirley Lichti, owner of Marketing Magic in Waterloo, Ont., gave the afternoon keynote address on "personal branding." If business is suspect, "branding"—or establishing an image—is often even more suspect, she noted. But Lichti stressed that a personal brand, either as an individual or as a business, must be in line with deeply held values and goals.

When Lichti helps establish a brand, she works to clarify those goals and values first, before trying to create a marketing strategy. Branding is communicating what is true, rather than falsely trying to communicate something not true.

Sarah Eby, a recent bachelor of science grad with a strong interest in international development, peace and social justice, felt Lichti's presentation applied to her personally. "I'm at a place in my life when I'm trying to develop my own sense of self and how to effectively communicate that to others—graduate school admissions committees [and] potential employers," she said.

In a follow-up seminar, Ed Epp, MEDA vice-president of development, used MEDA's brand—its core values of hope, trust and using business to create sustainable solutions to poverty—to explain its program of selling

Bible and tradition. If and when a person is not in full communion with the Catholic Church, it is impossible for such a person to share in the Eucharist with Catholics or for ministers of non-Catholic churches (referred to as "ecclesial communities") to assist in serving the elements of communion with a Catholic priest.

—**Helmut Harder**

The author was one of seven persons representing Mennonite World Conference on the Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue held between 1998 and 2003.



Photo by Dave Rogalsky

MC Eastern Canada conference minister Brian Bauman, left, talks "business" with fellow MEDA member Marion Good, manager of Mennonite and Savings and Credit Union's Milverton, Ont., branch.

mosquito nets in Tanzania. While giving nets away might seem more just, free nets are often seen as "valueless" and only 57 percent of the giveaways are used. On the other hand, when pregnant women receive a voucher that covers 90 percent or more of the price of a net and she has to contribute a few cents of her own money to buy it, the usage rate jumps to 86 percent. And the local pharmacies that sell

the nets find that others without the vouchers also come to buy the now regularly available nets from their businesses.

The gifts of business are successfully being used in dealing with a health issue, providing business income for families, and, by buying only in Africa, employment for hourly rated employees, Epp explained.

After dinner, Mark Vincent, a congregational and business consultant from Wisconsin, asked the question, "Does business care more about religion than the church cares about financial savvy?"

Key among his points was that the term "faith-based business" has so many definitions in the marketplace that it has become meaningless. He encouraged businesspeople to move to the simplest of the definitions: "Do your business, based on your faith values," values he defined as justice, virtue and generosity.

—**Dave Rogalsky**

Web-anthropy: Giving outside the box

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) launched medatrust.org late last month.

The site is a hands-on interactive experience with micro-finance. After setting up a personal portfolio, donors can give to real-life loans that finance small business ventures for men and women struggling to develop their economy. Most of these people have no access to financial institutions or credit.

The first phase of the website is focused on Nicaragua, but the site will soon add new countries. With a direct connection to a micro-finance institution in Nicaragua, loans are real-time and real-life. Most loans are repaid in monthly installments. As the money is returned to each lender's portfolio, they can choose to fund new loans. The loaned money is actually a donation to MEDA, but donors can manage the money for 18 months, getting a real-life experience of the strength of micro-credit.

An initial donation of \$500 could finance 1,500 small businesses or more in

18 months!

After 18 months, the donation is used to invest in the support of new micro-finance initiatives by MEDA. The ultimate goal is to build economic strength in areas where men and women struggle to earn enough to feed their children. Small injections of capital generate huge returns!

Angela, a young single mother, now has a clothing business. She is able to provide a home, food and an education for her children. But more than that, she has done it herself. The money she was loaned has been repaid and she has been able to develop her business.

MEDA Trust is changing the way people think about donating. J.B. Miller, a banker from Indiana, says, "I was excited to be a part of the beta [test] group. I funded three loans. Already, I've had one of the loans have a repayment for a third of the entire loan. It's easy to navigate and I like the broad range of businesses. Regardless of one's interest, there are businesses here that people can fund—clothing stores, cattle, bakeries."

Individuals, families and even Sunday school classes can set up a portfolio that is tax-receiptable at the end of the year.

—MEDA release

Saskatoon

Mount Royal seeks to answer identity question

With a growing number of Colombian families over the past few years, Mount Royal Mennonite Church in Saskatoon has been grappling with the question, “Who are we now?”

In an attempt to answer this question, the church held a winter retreat last month on the topic, “Growing together in community: A study of the book of Ruth,” led by Eigenheim (Sask.) Mennonite Church pastor Allan Friesen and his wife Maryvel (formerly from Colombia), who proved to be valuable resources as they have first-hand experience of both cultures.

Over the course of three sessions, the 80 or so participants talked about the story of Ruth and her journey into a different culture. We learned about the value of a name; were inspired by Ruth’s devotion to her new family and people, even though they were typically at war with her own people; and discovered again that God has been mixing cultures from the beginning to create wonderful things.

Participants were also able to share in love what we first noticed about each other’s cultural habits, which led to a better understanding of each



Photo by Laura Pauls

Colombian and Canadian cultures embraced at Mount Royal Mennonite Church’s winter retreat last month.

other. Some of us greet with hugs and kisses, while others shake hands; some of us organize our days from the moment we wake up, while others live in the moment; and some of us have fun dancing, while others have fun discussing. But we all had fun dancing on Saturday night!

On Sunday morning, we were joined by some more church members for worship and communion, where we were reminded of social injustice and hunger in Colombia and Canada. We

remembered that Christ—our light who shines through the darkness in our church, who breaks down barriers—is calling us into one body of believers with many gifts who will work to change war into peace, so that we will truly be strangers no more.

—**Laura Pauls**

News brief

Coaldale members on El Salvador mission

Four members of Coaldale (Alta.) Mennonite Church travelled to El Salvador in February as part of a 20-member ecumenical mission trip to the country. Funds raised for the project were used to purchase water filters, construction supplies, and material for youths and children. Pastors conducted classes using Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Life* book and other resources. English courses were also taught. Coaldale participants included Jose Navarrete, Consuelo Navarrete, Eric Giesbrecht and Walter Isaak.

—**Olga Epp**



Lorna Bergey, left, received an award of excellence from the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada on March 14 at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont. Presenting the award was Sam Steiner, vice-president of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada (pictured) and Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario president Maurice Martin. Bergey was a founding board member of the Ontario society and served as secretary for 32 years. She was the first archivist for the collection at Conrad Grebel and was influential in establishing the Brubacher House and Detweiler Meeting House as historic sites.

Photo by Barb Draper

Regina

Rural churches alive and mostly well

Weather advisories, icy roads and long drives only kept one of the remaining nine small rural churches in Saskatchewan from being represented at the Small Rural Church Caucus organized by Mennonite Church Saskatchewan as part of its annual delegates sessions in Regina in late February.

The congregations met to review what has changed in the four years since the Vibrant Rural Churches Project attempted to “pay attention to” the situation of Saskatchewan’s 10 smallest rural churches. They discovered that one of the 10—Bethany Mennonite Church in Watrous—has formally closed, and another—the Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church in Rabbit Lake—is no longer meeting as a group. Overall, Saskatchewan’s agricultural economy has picked up a bit, with better crops the last few years along with better prices, and a slow resolution to the mad cow crisis.

Several congregations reported growth in their communities, as people moved back from B.C. and Alberta, attracted by Saskatchewan’s lower cost of living. Several of the churches reported numerical growth in the intervening years, and the sense of vibrancy that characterized the original project was obviously still alive and well in many instances.

There was a strong sense of optimism for the future, a sense that

there is—and will continue to be—a key role for the small rural church in Saskatchewan. Interest was expressed in thinking together further about the special role of the small church. It was strongly affirmed that small churches need each other and need to communicate effectively with each other.

In response to the question, “How can Mennonite Church Saskatchewan further help the small rural church?” there were a number of suggestions:

- Provide guest speakers with the financial help of the area church, although some admitted they were embarrassed to have guest speakers come when they couldn’t guarantee an attendance of more than six or eight.
- Provide help identifying and training leadership. A conference or training session in small church leadership was seen as potentially very helpful, as was a study of bi-vocational ministry options.
- Create Sunday school and small group materials that are accessible to rural congregations—preferably simple and intergenerational.
- Continuation of the various rural-urban church connections and the MC Saskatchewan-sponsored Missionfest tours were strongly affirmed.
- Provide help to allow the small rural congregations to continue talking as a group on a regular basis, possibly by setting up a small rural church blog or planning regular get-togethers in conjunction with the annual delegate session.

Commented one pastor who had not been part of the earlier project, “I’m surprised how truly helpful getting together like this is. I was getting discouraged about my small church, but now I’m a believer again.”

—Eric Olfert

Waterloo, Ont.

Grebel votes to support a refugee student

In a groundbreaking constitutional amendment last month, Conrad Grebel University College students voted to increase their residence fees by \$10 a term, in addition to regular fee increases. This levy will help to fund expenses to allow a refugee student to live at the college while studying at the University of Waterloo.

Currently, the University of Waterloo supports one refugee student. Next year, it plans to support two, with hopes of increasing this number in the future.

“It is important that Grebel participates in this project to set an example for the greater university community, and show that we really can make a difference,” says Conrad Grebel student council president Justus Zimmerly. “It will also have an enormous effect on the life of the refugee student, hopefully helping not only them but many others as well.”

Participation in this program is an excellent fit with the living/learning values and beliefs foundational to Conrad Grebel, including promoting social justice, awareness of international issues, engagement among people with diverse backgrounds, and empowerment. In addition, the refugee student’s presence in the Grebel community will offer global learning opportunities for Grebel students who may otherwise not have a chance to experience development issues first-hand through internship opportunities.

“I believe that a refugee student living at Grebel will help to create a better understanding of each other through daily interaction,” says Zimmerly. “I am excited about this opportunity because I think it’s a demonstration that we really do care about making a difference in the world.”

—Conrad Grebel release

CMU is an amazing place where it is easy to grow both as an individual and as a musician. My professors are incredible, and I appreciate how they have a sincere desire to see all of us become the best musicians we can. *Melissa Hart, Winnipeg*

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Lethbridge, Alta.

Alberta churches look at 'what's right'

Camp Valaqua director Jon Olfert's words describing the camp's future provide a good summation of the general atmosphere at the Mennonite Church Alberta 2007 annual delegate sessions last month: "I get excited when I think about the future. I see lots of possibilities. I see lots of dreams and things we can work towards...."

Conrad Grebel University College president Henry Paetkau used Psalm 127 and passages from Ephesians to remind delegates that the foundation of the church is Christ and the building project is God's. As such, God provides the necessary energy and spirit.

"We shifted in our thinking from a focus on what should be to a focus on what already is, that is, what God is already doing," explained conference minister Jim Shantz. "You might call this approach an 'appreciative inquiry.' Rather than looking at what is wrong with us, an approach that leads to self-recrimination, let's look at what is right, and what and where we already perceive God to be at work."

For the second year in a row, delegates attended workshops to interact with the various committee arms of the conference. Following these, general session roundtable discussions focused on questions that came from last November's pastors council meeting, at which the missional vision for MC Alberta was considered.

Delegates called on the area church to:

- Explore creative ideas for a communal worship and fellowship event to replace the cancelled Songfest;
- Pay attention to needed youth and young adult ministries; and
- Consider a celebration of life-giving diversity in the Mennonite Church.

Although no motion was brought forward, the former Songfest Committee's suggestion that a two-year hiatus be used to consider future possibilities was met with a wealth of ideas, such as a folk-fest style event, a province-wide church picnic, and a combination of music and sports.

On the youth question, the executive



Photo by Tim Miller Dyck

Elaine Klassen enthusiastically led the singing at the MC Alberta annual delegate sessions last month with help from volunteers Walter Wiebe, Donita Wiebe-Neufeld and Jim Shantz.

informed delegates that it is currently in discussions with a candidate to fill the empty quarter-time youth coordinator position for the province.

In speaking about diversity, pastor Werner DeJong said, "At our little table...we have two churches. Holyrood Mennonite is a growing, used-to-be-traditionally Anglo-Saxon community with a growing African refugee population. We also have the Calgary Vietnamese Church, which is attracting Anglo-Saxons! We celebrate that and we see that God's Spirit is certainly leading us in diversity."

Highlights from workshop sessions included hearing about mission involvement with Low German Mennonites in southern Alberta, dreams of a young adult church plant in Calgary, and learning about the church in Vietnam.

The Finance Committee announced that the mortgage for the Edmonton worship centre, where the Chinese and Vietnamese churches meet, is paid off.

The former Congregational Life Committee, now known as Community Building, drew attention to the MC Alberta website calendar and chat rooms.

—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**

News briefs

Annual heifer sale raises \$112,775 for MCC

The 26th annual Donated Heifer Sale sponsored by Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale Inc. raised more than \$112,000 for the relief and development work of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Among other items, the sale consisted of 96 donated heifers and two embryos. The heifers sold for \$94,225 (averaging \$981 a head)..

—MCC release by **Anne L. Brubacher**

God's People Now! Listening Tour continues

Mennonite Church Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman will extend his 2006 listening tour of more than 200 congregations to 17 area churches, schools and affiliated agencies this spring. All will be visited to learn more about their ministries, where their energy is spent, and to discuss their concerns and needs. The ultimate goal, says Suderman, is to strengthen partnership relationships, identify common objectives, and find out how the denomination and its partners can together more effectively work at the church's mission in the world.

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

People&Events



Canadian Mennonite University handed out its annual athletic awards on March 21. Pictured from left to right, front row: Lucas Redekop of Floradale, Ont.—male athlete of the year; Rachel Funk of Jordan, Ont.—Trail Blazer Award for team leadership and leadership in the area of faith and service; and Christie Anne McCullough of Outlook, Sask.—female athlete of the year; and back row: Kalon Bergen of Beausejour, Man.—female rookie of the year; Jaron Friesen of Waldheim, Sask., and Alex Leaver of Winnipeg—male rookies of the year.



Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) men's basketball team coach Curt Warkentin has been named basketball Coach of the Year by the Association of Christian College Athletics (ACCA). Warkentin, who is also CMU's director of athletics, led his team to the season championship and then to a third place finish at the ACCA national tournament in Oklahoma in early March. Warkentin's team then won the Central Plains Athletic Conference championship, defeating the Red River College Rebels 59-57 in a dramatic comeback win.

Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Gerber—Reid Joshua (b. March 5, 2007), to Josh and Melissa Gerber, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Heppner—Harrison Grey (b. Feb. 20, 2007), to James and Marge Heppner, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man.

Hildebrand—Liam Johnston (b. Feb. 24, 2007), to Michael and Altaira Hildebrand, Stirling Ave. Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Hunsberger—Mikayla Rose (b. Feb. 16, 2007), to Kyle and Tina Jantzi Hunsberger, St. Louis (Mo.) Mennonite.

Janzen—Sadie Marie (b. Feb. 13, 2007), to Amy-Jean Janzen, Tofield Mennonite, Alta.

Krueger—Daniel Jeremy Steven (b. Feb. 15, 2007), to Jeremy and Marsha Krueger, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Lebold—Jadon Piers (b. Jan. 28, 2007), to Randy and Anita Lebold, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Pepper—Sam Vernon, Dec. 12, 2006, to Bruce and Tina Wiens Pepper, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont. (The surname was incorrectly spelled in the March 19 issue. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.)

Roes—Carrie Margareta (b. Feb. 5, 2007), to Tom and Lynette Roes, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Ropp—Maggie Grace (b. March 12, 2007), to Greg and Dana Ropp, Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont.

Sawatzky—Avery Nathaniel Forshaw (b. Dec. 19, 2006), to Gord Sawatzky and Tara Forshaw, Hope Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Schultz—Colin Daniel (b. March 21, 2007), to Tim and Kelly Schultz, Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont.

Deaths

Bast—Beatrice, 81 (d. Feb. 17, 2007), Stirling Ave. Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Bender—Howard, 82 (b. April 11, 1924, d. March 16,

2007), East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Friesen—David B., 95 (b. March 12, 1911, d. March 11, 2007), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Janzen—Peter H., 88 (b. April 10, 1918, d. Jan. 21, 2007), Rosemary Mennonite, Alta.

Lebold—Marion, 82 (d. March 15, 2007), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Martinson—Elsie, 89 (b. Jan. 30, 1918, d. March 17, 2007), Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask.

Matei—Elsa, 53 (d. March 10, 2007, in Romania), Peace Mennonite, Regina.

Metzger—Magdalena, 95 (d. Feb. 28, 2007), Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

Neufeld—Margaret (nee Letkeman), 80 (d. March 9, 2007), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Pankratz—Helen, 80 (d. March 18, 2007), Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Rempel—David J., 84 (b. Sept. 7, 1922, d. Feb. 18, 2007), Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Rempel—Diedrich (Dick), 85 (d. Feb. 10, 2007), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Sawatzky—Margaret (nee Heinrichs), 93 (d. Jan. 27, 2007), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Thiessen—Irma, 69 (d. Jan. 25, 2007), Tofield Mennonite, Alta.

Wiebe—Elmer, 76 (d. March 25, 2007), Carman Mennonite, Man.

Whitehead—Donald, 90 (d. Feb. 2, 2007), Stirling Ave. Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Baptisms

Stirling Ave. Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.—Suah Kim, Christina Martin, Reuben Musselman, Caitie-Jo Reusser, Jilienne Reusser, Dec. 3, 2006.

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.

Mennonite Church Canada

Prayer requests

Please pray for:

- Eagle's Wings Ministry, a new downtown drop-in centre in Prince Albert, Sask., which is the vision of Cree pastor Ray Dumais. Pray for him and volunteer staff as they coordinate the centre and welcome aboriginal people from many northern communities in the name of Christ.
 - The Korea Anabaptist Center's program director, Jae-Young Lee, who will be touring schools and groups in Sichuan, China, as a guest speaker for Mennonite Partners in China. Pray that this opportunity will be meaningful for all involved as he shares about peace and language from a Korean perspective.
 - The Company of 1000, an MC Canada financial aid program that gives vital support and encouragement to students preparing for ministerial leadership. Pray also for newly graduated seminary students as they and congregational search committees look to fill available pastoral positions.
- Hinke Loewen-Rudgers**

Equipping helps youths read Bible

The April issue of *Equipping*, now available in church offices, highlights updated Youth Ministry resources at the MC Canada Resource Centre such as *Read the Book* by Faith & Life Resources, including "a chart for youths to make a full reading of the Bible as interesting, fun and un-bewildering as possible."

It also includes a celebration story from Colombia by Dan Kehler, a recent MC Canada tour participant who was "overwhelmed" by the hospitality of their Colombian hosts, who offered them their beds while they slept on the floor.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Invitation to generous living

Three leaders from each MC Eastern Canada congregation are being invited to a series of dinners in May of this year to learn more about the Generosity Project.

The dinners are based on the cluster structure, and a member of the pastoral team, the congregational chair and a member of the finance commission of each congregation are invited to share the challenges and successes which they are experiencing in creating communities of faithful generosity.

This is an opportunity for the area church to hear from the congregations, and the congregations to hear from each other. This event is strictly to glean the wisdom of congregational leaders and to have their input in framing the focus of a church-wide consultation on Oct. 27.

Executive minister David Martin has begun this project as many congregations struggle each year to achieve their giving goals and are experiencing reductions in ministry capacity. The long-term health of MC Eastern Canada's community of congregations depends on a membership that is grounded in a spirituality of generosity and is committed to the mission of Christ's church with their time, service, prayers and money.

The consultations' purposes include: discerning the challenges and opportunities of cultivating a spirituality of generosity; developing strategic stewardship initiatives that respond to the challenges and opportunities identified by the consultation; determining what resources are needed to support pastors and congregational leaders in implementing stewardship initiatives aimed at cultivating generous congre-

gations; and devising a series of generosity benchmarks that provide objective criteria to assist congregations to assess their giving trends.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

CwM gearing up for summer season

Camps with Meaning is gearing up for a busy summer season. On May 6, each of the three camps will be hosting open houses from 2 to 4 p.m. They will give tours and offer visitors an opportunity to get acquainted with the services and programs of the camps.

The Regional Committee of Camp Assiniboia has been tapping trees for maple syrup and will serve the syrup at pancake brunch fundraisers on April 22 and 29 at noon. The money will go towards upgrading the sports equipment at the camp.

A new homesteading retreat has been planned for May 18 to 20 by Camp Assiniboia manager Rich Boyd. It will feature old-fashioned skills and activities such as hog butchering, soap making, cane making and natural medicines. There will also be a discussion on sustainability and some campfire entertainment.

The annual Plus 55 Retreat on May 28 to 30 at Camp Moose Lake will be led by Gary Martens, pastor of Steinbach Mennonite Church. The Birding Retreat on May 25 to 27 will be led by Adolf Ens and Fran Giesbrecht.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Hanley pastors on sabbatical

A husband-and-wife pastoral team that is completing 13 years as lead pastors is taking a year-long sabbatical. Gary and Margaret Ewen Peters, who work and farm around the

small congregation of Hanley Mennonite Church, will be leaving at the end of April for a time of travel and volunteer work.

The trip will take them to Jubilee Partners, an intentional Christian community in Georgia, and then on to work as hosts of the international guest house in Washington, D.C., which is run by the Mennonite Church. The service part of the year-long adventure will conclude in the Maritimes, where they will help with the Ten Thousand Villages festival sales.

Reflecting on preparations for the trip, Ewen Peters expressed gratitude for the congregation's support. Unexpectedly, their neighbours heard about their upcoming trip and offered to rent some of their land. All of their land is now rented out and people from the church have offered to help with livestock and household concerns as well.

Ewen Peters hopes that the trip will also give them time to ponder and pray, and that they'll find solutions for the troubling spiritual landscape in rural Saskatchewan. "What do we do about these small rural churches that keep getting smaller," she wondered.

Replacing the Peters for the second half of the sabbatical will be interim pastors Henry and Erna Funk.

Mennonite Church Alberta

Pastors busy this spring

Provincial conference meetings begin early for pastors. Last month, 14 Alberta pastors and an assortment of other church leaders gathered at Lethbridge Mennonite Church for personal sharing and a discussion on pastoral leadership development. The group acknowledged the need for the

encouragement, training and support of leaders, as well as noting some of the challenges of ministry that may discourage potential pastors.

MC Canada denominational minister Sven Eriksson said, "From where I sit, I see a lot of over-function among pastors, who then lose their sense of vitality."

Jonathan Neufeld, the new admissions worker for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), helped facilitate the leadership discussion. His role is to explore how AMBS might help develop, support and work alongside Canadian pastors and church leaders.

Pastors also heard more about plans for the upcoming IMPaCT event. From May 24 to June 6, five pastors from other countries will come to work, learn and socialize alongside their Alberta

counterparts. Congregations participating in IMPaCT include Edmonton First, Holyrood, Bergthal, Foothills and Lethbridge.

The annual theological studies week, normally open to anyone, will be reserved for pastors this year. The decision was made to give pastors intense and intentional time to share and learn from each other.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Church staffing prayer requests

A number of Mennonite Church B.C. congregations have pastoral staff openings:

- Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford—half-time youth worker and full-time associate pastor.
- Peace Mennonite Church of

Richmond—associate pastor for youths and young adults.

- Living Hope Christian Fellowship, Surrey—full-time associate pastor of student ministries, youths and young adults.
- Emmanuel Mennonite Church of Abbotsford—middle school youth worker.
- United Mennonite Church, Black Creek—summer youth worker.
- MC B.C.—executive minister.

Please pray for these churches and for MC B.C., that they will find the right candidates to fill the positions.

Historical Society presenting Saengerfest

Those who remember fondly the days of traditional German choir festivals will have an opportunity to participate in one in May. On May 6, the

Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. presents *Saengerfest* Choir Festival of Praise and Worship. Performing choirs and a mass choir will celebrate the tradition of choral singing. The program will also include audience participation and a brief history of Mennonite choir festivals in Russia.

The *Saengerfest* will take place at Central Heights Mennonite Brethren Church in Abbotsford. Call 604-853-6177 for tickets or more information.

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

JIM SHANTZ



From our leaders

Ever since the birth of Mennonite Church Canada about seven years ago, there has been a growing appreciation for the concept of the missional church. The concept has sometimes been elusive, but a picture is gradually coming into focus.

Being missional is not really a new idea, but is one that is as old as the church itself. That idea is that the church is the mission. "Missional" describes who we are.

This then puts the onus back on the church, challenging us to be all we can be as the evangelizing organism in the world. It also opens the door for us to dream again about the kind of church we want to be.

With that in mind, it has been encouraging to hear of some of the new ideas beginning to take shape right here in Alberta.

For several years now, we have been hearing from fellow church members and colleagues about the missing young adult generation. One idea coming from Trinity Mennonite Church has been that of a young adult church plant in Calgary, which would have special appeal for that generation—a church fully grounded in the Anabaptist conviction yet culturally relevant to the needs and mindset of this postmodern culture we are increasingly needing to come to grips with.

Discussions have also been taking place in Coaldale regarding a distinct need among the Low German

'Missional' is us

**There is no doubt that
God is setting open
doors before us.**

Mennonites in southern Alberta. The needs are fairly well known and God is beginning to stir a vision of hope and healing among the hearts of several individuals to imagine something new.

There is no doubt that God is setting open doors before us. He has been—and always is—stirring, fermenting and disturbing us to move with him into new areas of his mission in the world.

But it's one thing to dream. It's quite another to implement! Is there

anything that might give us some help on this? We need look no further than to review a sermon preached at this year's MC Alberta annual delegate sessions, "Build to last." Building to last means:

- Affirming the foundation already laid in Jesus Christ.
- Doing it together.
- Relying not on our schemes or power, but in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Staying connected to our source by remaining in an attitude of prayer.

• Being willing to be like a mountain stream that loses itself in the desert and is then reborn in the cycle of water that rains down again in life-giving power.

Let's do it! Let's go big and not go home. Let's allow God's imagination to thrill us. Let's get the big picture and see

God's kingdom from his perspective.

Jim Shantz is Mennonite Church Alberta conference minister.

Calendar

British Columbia

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 6: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. Sangerfest choir festival; 3 p.m. at Central Heights Church, Abbotsford.

Alberta

May 11: Youth night at Camp Valaqua. For more information, call 403-637-2510.

May 12: Spring work day at Camp Valaqua.

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

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

Saskatchewan

April 28: MDS workshop for congregational representatives at Rosthern Mennonite Church.

May 5: RJC alumni golf tournament.

May 6: RJC spring concert.

May 7: RJC chorale at Grace Mennonite Church, Regina.

May 14: RJC chorale at Herschel Ebenfeld Mennonite Church.

May 19-Sept. 2: Visit the Mennonite Heritage Museum in Rosthern; formerly the original German English Academy building. Call 306-223-4324 to arrange a tour.

Manitoba

April 29: Evangelical Anabaptist Fellowship of Canada presents "Christian discipleship and peacemakers," an evening of storytelling and singing, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. Featuring a Hutterite choir and storyteller Dora Maendel.

May 1: Voices for Non-violence begins an eight-week support group for male survivors of abuse in Winnipeg. For more information, call 204-261-6381.

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 6: Open house at the three Camps with Meaning; 2 to 4 p.m.

May 6: Open Circle art show at CMU, in the Great Hall; 2 to 5 p.m. The show features visual and performing arts by current and former inmates.

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.

Ontario

April 22: Prayer service for peace and healing in Afghanistan in the Anglican evensong tradition, at the Cathedral of St. James, Toronto; 4:30 p.m. Sponsored by the Canadian Council of Churches.

April 22: Celebrate Earth Day at Bloomingdale Mennonite Church. Refreshments at 12:15 p.m., followed by a showing of *An Inconvenient Truth* at 1 p.m. Freewill offering to support Mennonite Central Committee sand dam projects in Kenya.

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: DaCapo Chamber Choir presents "Daybreak: Sounds of a New Day," at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener; 8 p.m.

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 6: Shalom Counselling Services Waterloo fundraising breakfast and annual meeting. Speaker: Henry Paetkau. Theme: "When a child has cancer." Waterloo North Mennonite Church; 8:30 to 11 a.m.

May 8-31: MC Eastern Canada Generosity Project meetings: K-W Perimeter cluster at Wanner Mennonite (8); Wilmot cluster at Living Water Mennonite (9); Essex cluster at Faith Mennonite (10); Markham cluster at Hagerman Mennonite (15); Stratford cluster at Tavistock Mennonite (16); Niagara cluster at The First Mennonite (22); Wellesley cluster at Crosshill Mennonite (23); K-W cluster at Waterloo North Mennonite (29); GTA south cluster at Danforth Mennonite (30); Woolwich Grey cluster at Community Mennonite, Drayton (31).

Employment opportunities



Mennonite Church Manitoba (MCM) is inviting applications for the full-time position of **Associate Director of Congregational Ministries**. Processing of applications will begin as soon as they are received and continue until the position is filled.

The Associate Director is accountable to the Director of Leadership Ministries and is responsible for addressing congregational ministry needs through: developing and nurturing youth & young adult pastoral leaders, resourcing youth and young adult workers and volunteers, and resourcing congregations in nurturing other areas of leadership and ministry. For more details visit www.mennochurch.mb.ca/mcm.

The person we seek has the following qualifications: a mature commitment to Jesus Christ; knowledge of and commitment to the Mennonite Church and to the Anabaptist/Mennonite faith; a minimum of an undergraduate degree (preferably in Church Ministry); experience in youth ministry; excellent communications skills; and willingness to work in a collegial manner with other staff, congregations and related organizations.

Resumes should be sent in confidence to:

Edgar Rempel, Executive Director
Mennonite Church Manitoba
200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 2J1
E-mail: erempel@mennochurch.mb.ca
Phone: 204-896-1616

**Music Director and
Missions, Peace & Justice and Outreach Worker**

Stirling Ave. Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., welcomes creative mission-minded team players to apply for these half-time positions on our Ministry Leadership Team:

- The **Half-time Music Director** will serve as a primary resource for the music activities of the congregation, will encourage congregational participation in music-making, and will help to utilize congregational music talents in outreach activities.
- The **Half-time Missions, Peace & Justice and Outreach Worker** will serve as a primary resource for the outreach activities of the congregation and will nurture a holistic vision of missions, peace, justice and outreach activities within the congregation. This person will also support the work of the congregation's Peace and Justice Centre.

Application deadline is May 7, 2007. Starting dates are negotiable. Further details for both positions are available at stirling-mennonite.ca, by contacting the Search Committee Chair at the address below or through the church office at 519-745-4769.

Interested persons are invited to forward their resume to:

**Louise Murray Gorvett, Chair, Search Committee,
c/o Stirling Ave. Mennonite Church, 57 Stirling Ave. North,
Kitchener, ON N2H 3G4
E-mail: gorvettl@hotmail.com**



**SALEM HOME INC.
SOCIAL WORKER
FULL-TIME TERM POSITION**
Salem Home Inc., a 145-bed Faith-Based Mennonite Personal Care Home, requires a full time **Social Worker**.

THE INCUMBENT WILL:

- In collaboration with the interdisciplinary team, ensure that appropriate social work services are planned, organized, implemented and evaluated in response to identified resident needs.
- Provide counselling, consultation, education and advocacy functions for residents and/or families, as well as educative services for staff and/or volunteers, as required.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED:

- A Bachelor of Social Work degree and current registration with MIRS or be eligible to be registered.
- Superior communication and interpersonal skills.
- Demonstrated mediation/conciliation skills.
- Strong organizational skills and ability to establish and prioritize goals within an interdisciplinary team setting.
- Previous experience working in a health care setting.
- Ability to work well with the interdisciplinary team.
- Ability to dialogue in Low German an asset.
- Required health to meet job requirements.
- Appreciation for the Mennonite culture and faith.

Position Available – May, 2007. Closing Date – April 13, 2007
Submit applications to:

**Verla Driedger
Director of Resident Care Services
E-mail: vdriedger@salemhome.net
Phone 204-325-4316
Fax: 204-325-5442
Salem Home Inc.
165 15th Street
Winkler, MB R6W 1T8**

Visit our website at www.salemhome.net.

Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, British Columbia, is seeking a full-time **Associate Pastor**. This person will serve in a leadership team under the direction of the lead pastor. The successful candidate will have a theological education, will agree with our church's vision statement and confession of faith, and will have a passion for serving Christ and the church.

Starting date: July 2007. Application deadline: April 30, 2007. Interested persons are invited to submit a cover letter and resume to:

**Search Committee, Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church
2051 Windsor Street, Abbotsford, BC V2T 6L9
Phone: 604-850-8422
Fax: 604-850-8455
E-mail: eemc@telus.net**

Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, is seeking an **Assistant Pastor** with primary responsibilities for **Youths and Young Adults**. Some pulpit ministry and spiritual care is also expected. Interest in community outreach would be an asset. The successful candidate would be of Anabaptist/Mennonite faith orientation and be willing to work within a leadership team. Position available Aug. 1, 2007.

Please contact Harold Peters Fransen, Conference Minister
Mennonite Church Manitoba.

E-mail: hpetersfransen@mennochurch.mb.ca



Are you looking for a work environment where you can use your leadership talents, management skills and creativity in caring for the elderly?

Director of Resident Care Services
Salem Home Inc., Winkler, Manitoba

Salem Home Inc. is an accredited, faith-based, 145-bed Personal Care Home located in Winkler, Manitoba. We are committed to a vision of service excellence using a holistic model of care, dedicated to discovering and delivering the best in resident care with the heart and values true to our Christian faith. Salem Home Inc. has a rich history of innovation.

The Director of Resident Care Services, a senior management position, provides overall leadership and direction to the Resident Care Services department, an integrated model of care designed to meet the needs of the residents. Complete job description available upon request.

If you are interested in working in an exciting, resident-focused, team-oriented environment, please respond by April 13, 2007, to:

**Sherry Janzen, CEO, Salem Home Inc.
165 - 15th Street
Winkler, MB R6W 1T8
Phone: 204-325-4316
Fax: 204-325-5442
E-mail: sjanzen@salemhome.net**

Successful applicant will be a registered member in good standing with the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba. Will also be required to undergo a Criminal Record Check.

Only applicants being considered for interviews will be contacted.

Goshen College seeks a three-quarter time **Assistant Campus Minister** to begin in August 2007. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College web page_ <http://www.goshen.edu/employment/>.



Rosthern Junior College invites applications for the following positions:

- **Teachers** with training and experience in Chemistry, Physics, Art, Mennonite History, Phys Ed, Agriculture (two positions available: 1 full-time, 1 part-time)

- **Women's Residence Dean** (full-time)

Information about RJC is available on our website at www.rjc.sk.ca.

Qualified applicants should forward resumes to:

Principal, Rosthern Junior College
 410 – 6th Avenue
 Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0
 Phone: 306-232-4222
 Fax: 306-232- 5250
 E-mail: administration@rjc.sk.ca



Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools Inc.
Chief Executive Officer

The Organization:
 Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools Inc. (WMES) is looking for a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). WMES is an independent Mennonite-based Christian school with two locations in Winnipeg, educating students in grades K-8. Although grounded in the Mennonite-Anabaptist faith, WMES is supported by a broad-based constituency. Our mission is to provide quality Christ-centred education, integrating faith and life within a caring school community.

Description:

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO is responsible for the overall leadership of the organization. The preferred candidate is looking for an opportunity to use their experience to lead an educational organization in its continued growth and development as it pursues excellence as a faith-based school. This person has a passion for visioning and long-range strategic planning, and an ability to convert plans into results. Strong business skills and an entrepreneurial mindset are well developed as a result of the candidate's professional and volunteer experience.

The preferred candidate has demonstrated leadership ability within education and a commitment to excellence in teaching. Proven experience in coaching, motivating and empowering other professionals to achieve common goals is required. Priority will be given to those candidates who have built a strong network in the Mennonite community and are able to support the faith-based vision, mission and mandate of WMES.

Please send your resume in confidence to:
WMES, 250 Bedson Street,
Winnipeg, MB R3K 1R7
Attention: Search Committee
or e-mail to searchcommittee@wmes.ca

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

1. **Camp Manager:** a person with a combination of energy, knowledge and enthusiasm, eager to apply lessons learned in business or career and able to form staff and volunteers into a community with the task of building up the operational side of Camp Assiniboia. This person communicates effectively and has the ability to deal with a variety of relational situations. This person is committed to the Mennonite Church and dedicated to our mission of "inviting persons to life."

2. **Guest Group Coordinator** (.5 FTE: preparing for and hosting guest groups).

Direct inquiries to Director of Camping Ministries, MC Manitoba, 200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 2J1, camps@mennochurch.mb.ca, 204-895-2267.



National Correspondent

If you want a front row seat on what God is doing in our church, this is a great opportunity! *Canadian Mennonite* is seeking a part-time (40 percent time) National Correspondent for the bi-weekly Mennonite periodical. Resumes will be accepted until the position is filled, with the plan that work start in late June.

This position is based in Winnipeg with flexible arrangements around work schedules and location. Some travel is required and pay is salary (including retirement benefits) plus expenses. We will provide a work space and equipment. Responsibilities include filing bi-weekly reports and features on news, subjects and people of interest to our readers; covering church events and organizations; developing story features; and assigning articles to freelance writers.

Applicants should have strong knowledge of, commitment to, and a passion for the Mennonite faith community and for *Canadian Mennonite's* ministry and mission; a commitment to our Confession of Faith; skills in interviewing, news and feature writing, and photography; a creative and curious spirit; and the ability to work independently. Come and serve the wider church in this exciting way!

Please send questions and applications to:

Tim Miller Dyck, Editor and Publisher, *Canadian Mennonite*
 490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
 Phone: 1-800-378-2524, x225
 E-mail: editor@canadianmennonite.org

Pastor(s) sought for Calgary Chinese Mennonite Church

- to give full-time leadership to the Chinese and English Ministries (first preference) OR
- ½ time English-speaking pastor who enjoys working with and discipling children, youths, and young adults and
- ½ time pastor equipped in Chinese language, pastoral care and preaching skills

Applicant(s) desired who feel(s) called to a cross-cultural setting in a 26-year-old Evangelical Anabaptist congregation. Please respond to Sandy Chuong, Search Committee Chair, at chuong.sandy@colteng.com or phone 403-829-9080.



Mennonite Church Manitoba (MCM) is inviting nominations and applications for the full-time position of **Director of Leadership Ministries** for fall 2007.

The Director is responsible for addressing congregational leadership and ministry needs through: developing and nurturing pastoral leaders, developing congregational leaders, and resourcing congregations in nurturing other areas of leadership and ministry. The Director also gives oversight in the development and functioning of the Associate Director of Congregational Ministries position. The Director works on a team of ministry directors under the guidance of the Executive Director to further the vision and mission of MCM. For more details, visit www.mennochurch.mb.ca/mcm.

The person we seek has the following qualifications: a mature commitment to Jesus Christ; knowledge of and commitment to the Mennonite Church and to the Anabaptist/Mennonite faith; seminary education (M. Div. minimum); pastoral leadership experience; excellent communications skills, the ability to lead a multi-faceted ministry; willingness to work in a collegial manner with other staff, congregations and related organizations.

Suggestions and resumes should be sent in confidence to:

Edgar Rempel, Executive Director
Mennonite Church Manitoba
200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 2J1
Email: rempel@mennochurch.mb.ca
Phone: 204-896-1616

Full-time Lead Pastor

Sterling Mennonite Fellowship is located in the south end of Winnipeg. We are a congregation of 139 members. The ministry of our congregation is characterized by family programs and missions. The successful candidate will profess an Anabaptist Mennonite faith and be gifted in preaching, teaching and relate well to all ages, as well as work with our ministry teams to provide spiritual leadership to the congregation. We are a member of Mennonite Church Manitoba and MC Canada, and follow MC Canada salary guidelines. Please apply to:

Pastoral Search Committee, c/o Corinne Friesen Loewen
 1046 Dorchester Ave.
 Winnipeg, MB, R3M 0S2
 E-mail rcfloeuen@shaw.ca



FULL TIME POSITION

Living Hope Christian Fellowship, located in Surrey, BC, is a growing, multi-ethnic, cell-church of 250 attendees. With the departure of our present youth pastor for European ministries, we are seeking someone to help us continue to build on the foundation that has been laid for student ministries at Living Hope.

YOUTH PASTOR

- Continuing a ministry to our multi-ethnic, junior/senior High and young adults
- Organizing student cell groups
- Organizing service projects, worship, socials, retreats, and developing leadership
- One-on-one discipleship and prayer

Contact - Ewald Finzer - 1 2246 - 100th Ave, Surrey, BC, V3V 2X1,
 Fax: (604) 953-0901, E-mail: thynk@focnet.com
 For more information visit: www.lhcf.ca
 Please submit your resume by May 11 2007

Position for Leading Pastor

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

Executive Minister



Mennonite Church
 British Columbia

Mennonite Church British Columbia seeks applications for the position of Executive Minister. The Executive Minister will:

- 1) Foster and inspire the vision of Mennonite Church BC.
- 2) Provide pastoral support to pastors and congregations.
- 3) Give implementational and organizational leadership to programs of Mennonite Church BC.

For full job description, go to www.mcbc.ca.

Processing of applications will commence May 15, 2007, with a potential start date for the position of Sept. 1, 2007.

Please send applications to:

MCBC Executive,
#304-32025 George Ferguson Way
Abbotsford, BC V2T 2K7
E-mail: mcbc@uniserve.com

For rent

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

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.

Advertising Dates

Issue **Copy Due**
 May 14 May 1
 May 28 May 15
 (Focus on Seniors)

Contact:

Karen Suderman,
Advertising Representative
1-800 316-4052 x224
advert@candianmennonite.org

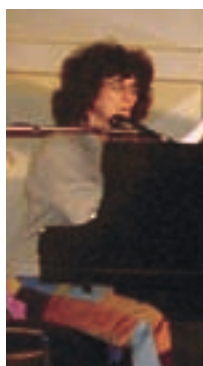


Photo courtesy of the Intelligencer Journal, Lancaster, Pa.

The New Hope School in Bart Township, Pa., replaces the West Nickel Mines School, which was razed following the shooting of 10 students there on Oct. 2, five of whom died.

Lobsang

(for the Amish girls)



WEEP OH SISTERS
Weep oh brothers
Weep oh fathers
Weep oh mothers
Oh weep for the children
Who have gone before us
Lobsang is a difficult song
When our children are taken away.

Words and music by Carol Ann Weaver, composed Oct. 2, 2006

Carol Ann Weaver, left, and Rebecca Campbell travelled to Franconia and Lancaster, Pa., last month, where, in the space of three days, they performed eight concerts. Each performance featured Weaver's *Lobsang* composed in honour of the five Amish girls who were murdered at their school last October. The concerts were all done in support of the Amish families, with proceeds from Weaver's new CD, *Thistle & Jewel*, going to assist the Amish community via Mennonite Central Committee's Amish School Recovery Fund.