


C A N A D I A N
Mennonite

June 11, 2007
Vol. 11, No. 12



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in dynamic
tension**

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are a witness**

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Confirmed kills

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The problem of greed

While travelling back from being with Albertan Mennonites at their annual delegate sessions, I was looking for some reading material while I sat in the airport waiting room. Being a cheap Mennonite, I scanned chairs looking for some left items I could read for free.

I found a magazine that seemed to be a sign of the times. Titled *Opulence: the art of fine living*, the magazine's cover story (somewhat ironically, considering where I found it) was on how rotten it was to travel in economy class flights compared to using a private jet, along with ads for \$490 slippers and \$145 belts. I was amazed that something I might have come up with as a joke on our consumerist culture actually existed in real life.

Our Faith&Life section examines how we use our money to the glory of God from three different angles. I think this issue, regardless of how much in dollar terms we have, is such an important one for our spiritual lives. We're soaked in a daily stew of messages on how much more we need to be satisfied. It's so quick, so very easy for us (certainly including me) to fall into sin here.

This gnawing at the pit of the stomach that I didn't buy domain names when they were cheap and made a fortune later on, or how I could have missed buying that item on sale when it cost so much more when I bought it later? Those grumpy, dissatisfied-with-life, why-I-didn't-get-my-share feelings? That's what greed feels like. It's a sneaky, nasty, corrupting sin.

A friend I first got to know when we were both residents at Conrad Grebel University College, Clayton Grassick, has been a teacher and model for me in redeeming our wealth for God's purposes.

Each month, he sets aside in separate accounts how much he will spend for living expenses and how much he will give away. "If lifestyle expands to available funds, this is limiting the amount my lifestyle can expand to," he says. Just as the living expenses fund gets spent each month, the giving account also needs to be spent. "You should be in the habit of keeping that account empty each month. It's flexible: not just registered charities, but any kind of giving away, buying something for someone in need, but nothing for your own use."

"You only need to get the motivation once, and you do that very prayerfully. After that, it is a matter of execution, which is a lot easier," he says. In the list of seven holy virtues, the antidote for greed is generosity. What a powerful spiritual discipline it is to keep looking for ways to be generous!

When I asked how he resisted the trap of "if I only had a little more, then I would be happy," his first answer is to immerse yourself in Scripture. "That's where you learn what our real deep needs are. We are surrounded by advertising telling us what our needs are." Second, he stresses the importance of living within a community of people who are also trying to live simply. "Being around people trying to live differently and that have happy and good lives makes it easier to see the folly of wealth being the solution," he says.

All that we have is God's, and we are accountable to God for how well we use it. With the help of God and our discipling communities, may we live out what Hebrews 13:5 says: "*Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.'*"

—**Tim Miller Dyck**

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Electronic delivery

All subscribers can get the complete contents of *Canadian Mennonite* delivered free by e-mail or view selected articles online. For either option, visit our website at canadianmennonite.org. The June 25 issue will be ready by June 21.

Cover: Grace Mennonite Church in Regina hosted a recent Mennonite Church Canada worship and mission workshop that featured general secretary Robert J. Suderman, John Rempel of AMBS and Ken Bechtel as keynote speakers. Pictured: Denise Martens of Wildwood Mennonite Church in Saskatoon and pastor Ken Quiring of Grace Mennonite in Brandon, Man., report back to the gathering on their group's chart of responses to changes in worship. In front of them are the candles that were lit throughout the weekend to remind participants of their unity in Christ. See story on page 18. —Photo by Hinke Loewen-Rudgers



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Carlsbad, N.M.

Feeding a hunger in the wilderness

There are those who want something more than security or pleasure; those who can't help but taunt security or pleasure....

There may be some bravado in their posture, but maybe they also know a tender dimension of adventure. Perhaps the restless risk-takers find in the wilderness a home for their brokenness; something of raw beauty to touch that which needs to be touched within.

And so they head out into the wilds, casting themselves...upon the ultimate insecurity and wonder of the elements.
—Geez Magazine

I lowered the magazine in my hands. The words I had just read about caution, security and pleasure rolled in my mind as I tried to look past my shadowy reflection in the bus window and into the black Arizona night. We were making our way back to British Columbia after five days of caving around Carlsbad, N.M., and our heads were full of images of rocks, stories of exploration, memories of fear and excitement—anything but feelings of caution and comfort.

There were 13 of us who drove the 40-plus hours to reach the promised land of New Mexico. We spent the week living like gypsies in a local caver's backyard—using the washroom at the grocery store next door, cooking our meals on stoves in the grass, sleeping under the stars.

Every morning we would be awakened by birdsong and the sounds of the trucks unloading their products at the grocery store loading dock. The locals watched us mill about in our little “lawn-village” all week, and I'm certain we thoroughly amused them.

By the end of the week, the milk truck driver became so curious that he approached me. “Do you like the chocolate milk?” he asked over the rock wall that separated our impromptu community from the loading dock. His English was textured by his native

Spanish.

“Well...I suppose I do,” I said, a bit taken aback.

He disappeared around the back of his truck and returned in a moment with two litres of chocolate milk in one hand, and four litres of skim in the other. Then we talked about where I was from, and why I was living in someone's backyard, and I thought how wonderful it was that I was getting to know the Carlsbad grocery store milkman. The others were just happy that I had scored some free milk.

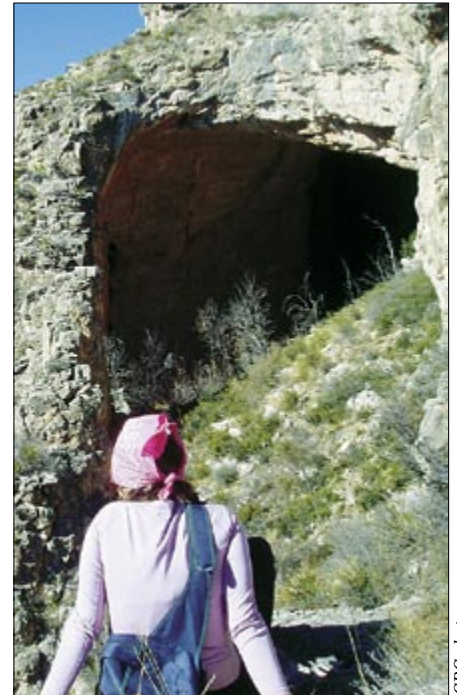
We spent our days wandering into the desert, weaving through cacti until we found holes that opened up under the hot, dry skin of the earth. And down we would go. Suddenly, the vast mesas and dizzying blue sky were a memory, and our worlds became only as big as the glow emitting from the headlamps affixed to our helmets.

We would run our hands along the dry walls and peer closely at the rock that was still alive—glistening with water that was dripping from the roof above. The caves were pulsing, breathing things that grew sluggishly but persistently, as if they knew that the slower they moved, the stronger they would be.

Some of the rooms were as big as churches, filled with columns and decorations. If you were the lucky one who wandered in to one of these rooms first—with only your light peering into the darkness around you—your heart would lurch and your breath would catch.

My friend Lori was writing about God during our bus ride home. She passed me her journal at one point, and I read:

“Where has our hunger gone? How have experiences like caving in New Mexico become the extreme and not the norm? Why do caution and comfort motivate us more than adventure and passion? How long have we been so afraid?”



CBC photo

Andrea Ykema peers into one of the many caves she and her fellow outdoor leadership students from Columbia Bible College explored while on an adventure in New Mexico.

It is time to live illogically. It is time to respond to your gut. It is time to accept that God is moving in ways that humans can never understand, and it is time to take a risk. We are all meant to be adventurers and explorers, to discover new and important things.

Some of us quench that thirst by going into the wilderness. But our needs are truly deeper than that. They will remain insatiable as long as we look to the earth to speak to our brokenness and longing.

It is our spirits and our hearts that must risk—that must move illogically—that must open their arms to fear and excitement and danger and hurt. It is in us that the greatest adventures should take place.

—**Andrea Ykema**

The author just completed her first year at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C., where she is studying outdoor leadership.

Thika, Kenya

Service, self-awareness all part of trip to Africa

For 18 of us who put our faith in God and chose to follow him to Thika, Kenya, in East Africa, earlier this year, our motto was, "We travelled 12,281 kilometres to serve God."

The purpose of this trip was to help people less fortunate than ourselves. We accomplished that and learned more about ourselves and our relationship with God. Not only did we serve God, we saw him too.

The first Sunday we were in Kenya we attended an early morning church service at Christian Church International, Thika. I was overwhelmed with their style of worship at first, so expressive with no hesitation. In a sense I was blown away that their worship made God seem so real and so reachable.

This was demonstrated more and more throughout the two weeks that we stayed there. I saw how our host families set aside time to spend in devotions each morning and how much discipline they needed to wake up at five o'clock in order to do so. I also saw

God in Africa in the way our Kenyan hosts prayed. They would raise their voices and pray out loud, not thinking of what the others in the room would think. It came from their hearts with no hindrance.

This caused me to wonder why, in North America, we are so

self-conscious of what we think. I am not trying to say that their way is better, but we can always learn something new.

Finally, I saw God in the children we met at the crusades. Considering the language barrier, they had a big impact on me. They were infatuated with us white people and could not get enough of touching our hair and hands. Then the praise team would get on the stage and start singing. Right away, despite the distraction we

caused, the children would get up and start singing and dancing right along with them.

With all of this going on around me, there is no way I was able to ignore it. That was God's way of getting in touch with me again. Their dedication encouraged me to get to know God better and to follow his calling. The Kenya trip was an incredible experience and I encourage everyone to take advantage of such an opportunity if they get the chance.

—Christina Steinmann

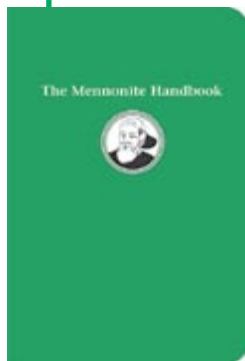
The author is a youth member of Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont.



Photo courtesy of Christina Steinmann

Christina Steinmann, right, a member of Steinmann Mennonite Church, is pictured with her Kenyan hostess, Paulyne. The Baden, Ont. church was in Kenya earlier this year as part of a service trip.

I was blown away that their worship made God seem so real and so reachable.



Mennonite Handbook

Seriously accurate and seriously funny, here is an essential field guide for all things Mennonite. Combining reliable, historical, and theological information, alongside some fun facts, *The Mennonite Handbook* provides very practical tips on being a churchgoing follower of Jesus Christ.

Paper, 208 pages, \$19.99

Take Our Moments and Our Days An Anabaptist Prayer Book, Ordinary Time

A four-week cycle of morning and evening prayer services prepared for the period in the church year between Pentecost and Advent. The services focus on the teaching and ministry of Jesus: the Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes, Jesus' parables, and Jesus' miracles.

Leatherette, 384 pages, \$28.79

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Our finances are a witness

In our continuing focus on being faithful with our money this year, we present three aspects of faith in finances that affect most of us in our everyday lives. Brice Balmer shares his story on how he has come to use his retirement savings as an extension of his faith; Gareth Brandt pricks our wallets with his reflection on shopping malls; and Lori Guenther Reesor focuses right on the church when she looks at how Christian organizations raise money.

For those of you in B.C. this July, note that on July 3 (the day the national church assembly starts), all are invited to explore and learn more about faith and finance issues at a one-day workshop, "Putting Your Money Where Your Faith Is." For more information, or to register, visit mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/305.

Financially I'm not very sophisticated. I'm a pastor and a social worker; my studies have been in theology, community development, addiction, spirituality and counselling. I have relied on my employer to determine the retirement benefits, but in the last 10 years things have changed and more awareness of finances has been necessary.

As I began in ministry, I decided to pay Social Security taxes in the U.S. In 1972, pastors had a choice and I thought it was both ethical and wise to be part of the Social Security system so all American workers had some retirement income. Like many other Canadians and

Americans, I did not purchase RRSPs in my 20s and 30s because we were paying off debts, raising two children and purchasing a house.

Moving to Canada as a pastor, I began participating in the pension plan of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) with my congregation paying half. I also was glad to pay into the Canada Pension Plan. It was fine to let the CMC staff handle the investments and they did very well. Through Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, I decided in my 40s to invest in Ethical Mutual Funds.

Being ethical both personally and systemically is important for me. My community work has been ministry with marginalized peoples who are sometimes unable to obtain jobs or do not have living wages and benefits because of business and government policies. My wife and I have worked for peace and justice. We are concerned about a clean environment for all peoples, especially future generations. Our investments need to promote health, living wages, clean environment, peace and justice.

As I left as co-pastor at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., to become chaplaincy director at House of Friendship, I received a letter from the CMC pension fund asking me to withdraw my retirement funds. A former pastor whom I trusted had become a financial advisor, so my wife and I talked with him; we enrolled in three mutual funds.

But as I read their annual reports, I saw in the *Globe and Mail* that some of my money was going to corporations that were involved in injustice and ecological damage. Our financial advisor told me the funds were as



ethically balanced as he knew how to make them. I knew that I could not be 100 percent pure like orange juice, but I didn't appreciate making profit when other peoples or the Earth suffer.

Thankfully, Mennonite Savings and Credit Union began helping members with financial planning and was a partner in creating the Meritas Mutual Funds. Not only ethical investors, Meritas challenged specific corporations to improve their policies and activities. So we began transferring our funds to Meritas as they became available for transfer.

As a member of the Support Services Council of Mennonite Church Canada, I was involved in beginning the pension plan. We wanted our Great West Life pension plan members to have a Meritas option, which most members chose. Although the pension plan meetings were often routine and dull, issues began emerging:

- How to balance ethics and profit-making?
- Long-term versus short-term financial gain?
- Trusting the wisdom of the Meritas staff?
- How many options should our plan have?
- Wondering why pension plan members did not become more involved in their retirement?

Through MC Canada's pension fund, we gave Meritas a tremendous push forward in its initial stages. Now it had others very interested in ethical investing and began receiving media attention when it surpassed \$100 million (just last month it passed the \$200 million mark).

Reading the *Globe and Mail* business section became more important as I checked out Meritas, Great West Life and businesses that were into mutual funds. Seeing Wal-Mart Mexico in Meritas was frustrating until I learned that the firm paid a living wage there.

I was excited when the House of Friendship pension plan chose Great West Life and I could again select Meritas. Now I wanted to know my options.

Twenty years ago, many of us felt powerless and resigned to let others determine our retirement and mu-

tual fund investments. We worked for health, community development in the Third World, ecology and justice in our churches and other organizations. But our significant retirement funds did not follow. Today, there is choice. Our investments can be a witness to our faith. But it takes time, education and decisive action to be a witness—even more for those who are in major pension plans.

—**Brice Balmer**

The 'abomination of desolation' found

With the ongoing violence in Israel and the West Bank, and the U.S. invasion of the former Babylonian Empire, the time is ripe for "new" conspiracy theories; hence *The Matrix*, *Left Behind* and *The DaVinci Code*. Who is real? Who was Jesus Christ really? Who is the Anti-Christ? What is the hidden agenda of organized religion? I have a conspiracy theory of my own.

There is a building that wants to take over my community and the world—the Seven Oaks Mall (pick any mall near you, it will do just as well). I believe this building is the "abomination of desolation" referred to in the book of Daniel (9:27, 11:31, 12:11) and quoted by Jesus in the New Testament. People have speculated about the identity of the abomination: Was it Roman conquerors in the temple in 70 AD? Is it the Islamic mosque built on the holy hill in Jerusalem? End your speculation! I have found the identity of the abomination of desolation; it is the mall.

An eerie chill goes up my spine when I drive by the mall and see the bright colourful signs, hundreds of cars in the parking lot and people streaming in like there's no tomorrow. It's like there's something evil and sinister going on inside this sprawling building, like they're going inside to worship at some forbidden altar and might never come out alive.

I actually had to go inside the mall when my son won a prize in the Science Fair and they made him display his project in the mall. (Ironically, his project was on the environmental effects of constructing roads and buildings.) I was sure it was a sinister plot to get unsuspecting parents into the "abomination!" I dashed in just long enough to see him collect his prize from the naturalist society, all the while hearing evil voices inside my head: "Shop, shop, shop. You'll

Continued on page 8

There is a building that wants to take over my community and the world—the Seven Oaks Mall.

Fundraising

Abomination *From page 7*

feel better when you shop, shop, shop.”

Good theology should not be based on feelings and personal experience, but on solid empirical and biblical research. People might scoff and say, “This is only your personal experience. I’ve had many trips to the mall and the people inside are selling legitimate wares in perfectly legitimate ways.” Hear me out; it may save your life.

All biblical terms must be interpreted in their proper context. It is clear from the context in Daniel that the “abomination that causes desolation” refers to a building that sets itself up as an alternative worship space to the temple, the dwelling place of God. Is this not exactly what the mall does? It’s now open on Sunday. It is the place where people go to pay their ultimate allegiance (i.e. drop most of their money) and it is there in the food court that they fellowship with like-minded believers.

The term itself also holds a key to its identification. An “abomination” is something “disgusting, intensely hated or loathed,” an “ill omen.” The outward appearance of a mall does not seem so bad, but the Evil One lurks around every corner, seducing innocent people into making life-destroying purchases. When you go inside, you are drawn into its evil clutches, compelled to return again and again.

“Desolation” is a state of ruin as in a barren wasteland. This is exactly what a mall does to the environment, to your pocketbook and to your soul. Earth, grass, flowers and trees are ruined by pavement; your wallet is left barren and empty—your soul the same. It all fits; it all makes sense! Why haven’t we seen this before? People all over North America rush headlong to the mall only to be devoured by this arch-enemy of the Most High.

A building such as this is none other than the abomination of desolation, more dangerous than a despot, more luring than a brothel, more captivating than a cult! Buyers beware.

—Gareth Brandt

The writer teaches theology and spirituality at Columbia Bible College.

**‘Desolation’
... is exactly
what a mall
does to the
environment,
to your
pocketbook
and to your
soul.**

Has a Christian institution—school, church, service agency, relief and development group, mission organization—asked you for money lately? It’s likely that most readers have received letters requesting donations, either in the mail or as magazine inserts, not to mention TV commercials and programs devoted to specific causes. Canvassers, both volunteers and paid workers, knock on our doors. Telemarketers phone us at home. Pardon the pun, but fundraising has become a “growth industry.”

Fundraising is a very public face of Christianity. That statement might make us squirm in our pews, but raising money is one of the endeavours through which non-Christians are most likely to get an impression of what Christians believe and value.

So what does Christian fundraising say about what Christians believe?

For starters, I think an outsider could be easily convinced that God is broke! Money seems perennially tight, except in response to rare high-profile disasters like the Asian tsunami. It appears that for many Christian organizations there is never enough money to meet the budget, launch a new program or respond to an urgent need. Many, but not all, of our fundraising letters perpetuate a “scarcity model”; there are never enough resources to respond to the needs.

On an individual level and, dare I say it, maybe even on a congregational level, I think many Christians also feel there is never enough, that we need to keep more money for ourselves.

Organizations write increasingly desperate letters in an effort to gain a response. I worry when an appeal says, “You can save a life.” That’s a very strong claim. It implies by extension that withholding funds is an exercise of power that denies life. Maybe God can use the money to help the organization help someone, but I am troubled by ascribing lifesaving

Does the



Photo by gremlin

and theology:

power to money.

This neediness perpetuates a vicious cycle. Donors begin to wonder if their last gift made any difference: Is there no hope? Why bother giving if the situation never improves? Conversely, if the situation sounds too hopeful, donors might feel their help is no longer required.

We are in danger of confusing wealth with powers traditionally reserved for God. Do we give our money to whichever organization sounds the most desperate? Is need the only criteria for giving? As long as donating money is primarily an emotional response, fundraising letters will dance awkwardly between portraits of desperate need and hopeful progress.

Fundraisers also talk about a phenomenon known as “donor fatigue,” in which donors become tired of repeat-

So don't give to a new charity if you only plan on giving once! Determine if this is a cause you would like to support in the long-term, instead of merely responding to a strong emotional appeal out of guilt or fear.

Let's return to our earlier question of what our fundraising practices reveal about Christian beliefs. I examined numerous fundraising letters for a theology paper I wrote. Too often, Christian fundraising letters imply that the organization will do whatever it takes to get more money; fundraising becomes a necessary evil which funds the real ministry.

I think that fundraising is a ministry, and one that needs more thoughtful reflection in Christian circles. We need to think about how and why we give money. I believe that the relationship between donors and Christian organizations needs to be about more than money, and our giving needs to be based on faith, not solely on emotion.

—Lori Guenther Reesor

The author is currently a quarter-time pastor, half-time theology student and full-time mother. She has a background in fundraising and marketing analysis.

We are in danger of confusing wealth with powers traditionally reserved for God.

end justify the means?

ed requests for money and stop giving to a charity. As a result of donor fatigue and a host of other factors, many charities are continually searching for new donors.

It's important to know that, as a general rule, it's not a donor's first gift that makes money for a charity. Acquisitions—acquiring new donors—are often a “loss leader,” as the return for the charity is less than the investment in fundraising costs. The money usually comes in the subsequent gifts received after a donor comes on board.

Many one-time donors give to resolve the cognitive dissonance created by troubling images of suffering. For instance, many Canadians responded to the December 26, 2004 tsunami devastation seen on TV. How can some people suffer so greatly while I am healthy and well? Giving money helps us resolve the tension between our situation and what we see happening to other people elsewhere. This behaviour is commendable, but often not sustainable. Will we still give when the TV is no longer covering the story?



Photo by Christina Balderas

Winnipeg

No place for Mennonite writing to go but to the city

What's the future of Mennonite writing? That was one of the questions addressed by well-known Mennonite author Rudy Wiebe last month at the closing event of the first School of Writing at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). Wiebe was joined by his long-time friend, author and poet Robert Kroetsch, in a meandering conversation about writing and the writing life.

Noting that the Mennonite story is one of migration—moving from country to country in search of peace and security—Wiebe observed that today there is “no place left” for Mennonites to go, except to the city. But while Mennonites in Canada may be increasingly urbanized, he noted that in literature “we haven’t quite moved to the city yet.” While there has been some “marvellous writing” by Mennonite authors in the last 20 years or so—by authors like David Bergen, Miriam Toews, David Elias and Di Brandt—their writing “is still pretty much in the country.”

During the wide-ranging discussion, Wiebe and Kroetsch—who have known each other for almost 40 years—gave the audience of about 90 people glimpses into the experiences that have shaped their writing.

Wiebe, 73, said that his path as a writer was shaped as a student at the University of Alberta, where he had decided to write about Shakespeare. But his professor took a dim view of the idea, and challenged him to write about his own experience. “He told me that there were hundreds of people who could write about Shakespeare, but maybe I was the only one who could write a good novel about Mennonites,” Wiebe said, adding that the result was his ground-breaking book, *Peace Shall Destroy Many*.

Wiebe told the audience that one of the main influences on his writing is the immigrant experience. In particular, he likes to write about how



CMU photo by John Longhurst

Distinguished Canadian Mennonite authors Rudy Wiebe, left, and Robert Kroetsch spoke about the future of Mennonite writing during their closing address at the first School for Writing at CMU last month.

Europeans came to Canada to “plant their society” in a new world, only to discover how “that society changes when you do that.”

Kroetsch, 80, a distinguished emeritus professor of English at the University of Manitoba, is internationally known for his contributions to Canadian poetry and fiction, including *The Puppeteer*, *Alibi*, and *What the Crow Said*. He told the group that he decided to start writing after discovering that his boyhood life in rural Alberta was absent from books he read as a youth. It’s not that there weren’t any stories in the life and land around him, he noted. But they were all “oral tradition, tall tales, gossip. I wanted to find ways to put it into literary form.”

But before starting to write, Kroetsch went to work on riverboats on the Mackenzie River in the Northwest Territories from 1948-50. “I believed in experience,” he said, adding, “But I didn’t realize I already had 20 years of experience on the Prairies.”

Asked what they would tell beginning authors, Kroetsch said they should “trust your own instincts. If it’s interesting to you, write about it. Find something that engages you for a lifetime. I found my passion in the place I was born.”

Wiebe added that writing takes time and is hard work. “It can take three, five or six years” to write a novel, he said. “You can’t do it on a long weekend.”

The conversation between Wiebe and Kroetsch was the culmination of the week-long School of Writing at CMU, which saw 28 people from B.C., Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario attend classes and have one-on-one sessions with instructors Rudy Wiebe, Sarah Klassen and David Elias, and meet authors Méira Cook, Maurice Mierau and Armin Wiebe.

—CMU release by **John Longhurst**

Publishing note

Building Communities released by CMU Press

Winnipeg—Canadian Mennonite University’s publishing arm, CMU Press, has just released *Building Communities: The Changing Face of Manitoba Mennonites* by John J. Friesen. Friesen has written a comprehensive and accessible history of Manitoba Mennonites from the 19th century to the present day. Illustrated

Winkler succeeds in 'living between worlds'

Living Between Worlds: A History of Winkler. Hans Werner. Winkler Heritage Society, 2006.

This is one community history book that has got it right. Often community books seek to accommodate members of the community, who they hope will purchase the book, rather than telling the story objectively and critically.

Living Between Worlds highlights the relationships both within and outside the many different kinds of Mennonites who made up the community of Winkler, Man. The book is divided into thematic chapters, rather than following a timeline. This methodology allows for interaction between the various aspects of community life and does not restrict the author from pursuing a theme to its present-day conclusion. For example, the interaction between early Jewish peddlers, who would trade cloth, pots and pans, and other household necessities with local Mennonite women for eggs, chickens and garden produce, is well chronicled.

One of the major themes is the beginning of the community and the importance of the railroad. While a railroad was vitally important, its presence did not ensure success, as nearby towns would compete for commerce, particularly the agricultural business of the region's farmers. Winkler's competition with nearby Morden was especially intense and the book contains numerous anecdotes illustrating that these tensions exist to this very day.

Immigration played a role from the very beginning of Winkler—and remains a vital ingredient in the community today. Initially, immigrants

with photographs and maps, and including illuminating excerpts from hundreds of personal and official documents, *Building Communities* is an important contribution to the history of Manitoba. Friesen is professor emeritus of history and theology at CMU. To order, contact the CMU Bookstore at cmubookstore@cmu.ca. —CMU Press release

were Mennonites from Ukraine, who played a significant role in the development of a thriving agricultural economy; today, they are Mennonites from Mexico, and people with distant Mennonite backgrounds, now largely Baptist in orientation, from Germany, whose skills complement a diversified manufacturing environment in an agricultural region.

Winkler was significantly impacted by outside influences such as the World Wars and the global Depression, yet the author notes how the community pulled together. During the intense economic constraints between the 1920s and the '50s, the arts, mostly in the form of performance music, flourished within the community.

During these hard times there was also renewal within the congregations of the town. A local Jewish merchant noted that following a particular series of revival meetings a number of people came to pay for goods they had taken

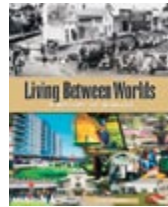
or to settle old accounts. This response so affected the merchant that he himself attended the meetings one evening just to find out what was happening.

Most of the town's businesses survived the economic turbulence of the 1930s, although many farmers went bankrupt. New crops, such as corn, and related industries sustained the agricultural community, but by the 1950s the community was no longer vibrant.

Perhaps the greatest boost came through Henry F. Wiebe, a former school teacher, credit union manager and later mayor. Wiebe was the promotional fire within the Chamber of Commerce, and industrial expansion began at a pace that to this day is the envy of small towns across Canada.

The combination of good anecdotes within an engaging narrative sets this book apart from most others. I highly recommend it.

—Ken Reddig



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Preserving & Restoring Wholeness in the Anabaptist Community

“Canada’s snipers are said to have the highest number of confirmed kills of any regular army unit in the battle.” I read this quotation on a recent visit to Canada’s War Museum in Ottawa. The words are those of Canadian journalist Stephen Thorne, who has spent considerable time with Canadian troops in Afghanistan over the past few years.

The quotation is part of a major new exhibit highlighting Canada’s military involvement in Afghanistan since the fall of 2001. It is an amazing collection of photos, films, video and audio clips, stories and newspaper reports, as well as assorted equipment and army gear.

Visitors to the museum can examine the special uniforms that Canadian soldiers must wear to withstand 50-degree Celsius heat, a half-destroyed military jeep that was hit by a roadside bomb, and even a piece of aircraft wreckage from the World Trade Center terrorist attack—which led to the “war on terror” and Canada’s involvement in Afghanistan.

As I wandered through the exhibit, I pondered Thorne’s words. I wondered how many “confirmed kills” Canadian snipers were responsible for. I wondered who they had been—old men, young men, confirmed Taliban ideologues, or simply people who have legitimate grievances with the current government and its foreign supporters?

The language of “confirmed kills” is probably nothing new. Military forces have long used euphemisms that diminish the sense that they are actually taking the lives of fellow human beings. “Collateral damage” is another

‘Confirmed kills’ include Canada’s peaceful identity

one, made famous by the Vietnam War.

There is something deeply troubling about the language of “confirmed kills” and the obvious pride behind it. Walter Dorn, professor at the Canadian Military College and a strong proponent of Canadian peacekeeping, says an “enemy mentality” is creeping into our Canadian forces. This mentality is reflected in the comment by General James Hillier, chief of staff: “We are the Canadian forces and our job is to be able to kill people.”

This enemy mentality goes along with a significant shift in how Canada perceives itself and its military role in the world. We see evidence of this shift in the following:

- Canadian forces are moving away from peacekeeping and peace support operations toward combat and counter-insurgency, such as in Afghanistan;
- A dramatic drop in financial and troop support for UN-mandated peacekeeping operations over the past decade;
- Promises of significant increases in military spending, from \$14 billion this year to \$19 billion by 2010, along with significant new weapons purchases, a major new recruiting campaign, the implementation of co-op programs that provide high school

students with academic credit and payment for training for the Army Reserve;

- Government priorities that place Canadian defence expenditures at quadruple the level of overseas development assistance; and,
- A preoccupation with responding to terrorist acts, rather than seeking to understand and address those things which cause people to embrace terrorism.

I believe that Christians who are committed to Jesus’ way of peace should have something to say about the new military realities that we are witnessing in our nation. Christ calls us to love our enemies, to practise justice and righteousness, and to trust God for our security. We cannot expect our government’s policies and actions to be guided by God’s revelation in Christ Jesus; nevertheless, we can urge our elected representatives to pursue peace and security through peaceful means—because such policies make sense.

We can insist that lasting peace will more likely result as our nation reaches out in friendship to other nations, as it promotes dialogue and diplomacy, increases foreign aid, advances just trade, and deepens its investment in the nonviolent resolution of conflict.

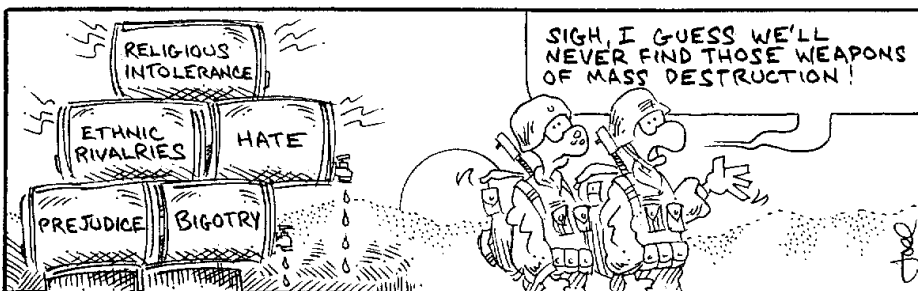
We can urge our leaders to seek to understand and respond to terrorism through measures that lessen its attraction, rather than killing those who threaten us. We can call our nation back to those values which have been important in the past, and which are not yet lost—values of cooperation, multilateralism, diplomacy and peacebuilding. We can proclaim a message that our own security as Canadians is found as we seek the security of all people.

And perhaps someday our children or grandchildren will visit a new peace museum and will read the proud words, “Canada’s soldiers no longer engage in killing their enemies because they have found better ways to build security.”

—Esther Epp-Tiessen

The author is coordinator of Mennonite Central Committee Canada’s Peace Ministries.

Pontius’ Puddle



Letters

Editorial misses church's outward focus

Re: "Look outward as well as inward" editorial, May 14, page 2. It is true that Mennonite Church Canada has processed a lot of agenda in the last six years, much of it dealing with the "inward" needs of the church. The editorial, however, gives the impression that because of this, the outward focus has been missing. It is this mistaken impression that I wish to address.

Assembly planners work hard at planning an integrated experience for assembly-goers. Your editorial focused only on one small part of that experience.

When the assembly experience is

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.

seen as a whole, it is quite remarkable that, in spite of all the focus on structure, re-organization, re-definition and financial issues, we have indeed been able to implement a very strong, outwardly relevant ministry of the church.

We have articulated a missional vision that has impacted the outward focus of the church in remarkable ways.

Related to this vision was the ap-

proval of our Purpose and Identity Statement that reminds us that we are "called, equipped and sent" by God to "engage the world with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ." While you included this as part of the "inward" focus, it is in fact quite the opposite. It is a motor that is propelling the church toward its engagement with the world in good and new ways.

Continued on page 14

PHIL WAGLER



Outside the box

I live in a rural area where fields are beginning to show forth life in tender, almost manicured rows. You would think we would understand the "sweat-of-your-brow" requirement for sustenance.

The area where I live also includes beach towns, which are beginning to bustle with bikinis, bikes and beer. You would think we would understand "darkness" that needs exposure.

Where I live is probably not too different from you. We rural folk rely on grocery stores as much as city slickers. Country bumpkins watch the same shows—often with the same HD clarity—as their urban counterparts. We're all trying to negotiate a living in a postmodern age, which at least means we've reasoned our way into a rampant individualism that means whatever we want it to mean.

Life in 21st century North America is pretty good and bad, pretty entertaining and boring, pretty advanced and, it would seem, very different from the one we read about in the Holy Writ. Even though the Bible is full of agricultural life and metaphors, even though Corinth and Ephesus sound eerily similar to the tourist traps we visit and sin cities we've built, and even though religion plays an important role in almost every culture (including postmodern ones), we North Americans have increasingly little reverence for Scripture—and I'm referring to Christians.

It is startling how quickly the Bible has taken a back seat to fiction and books about Scripture. God's Word is no longer seen as living and active by our laser-corrected eyes. African theologian Musimbi Kangoro warns, "Those cultures which are far removed from biblical culture risk reading the Bible as fiction."

Is this true? Believing ourselves distantly removed

The Bible as fiction

from life in the Bible we read Scripture as fairy tale—as Shrek on a camel and Cinderella at Boaz's stinky feet—all exposed by Dan Brown's new code. "Oh," you will object, "I hold a high view of Scripture." Well, when was the last time it brought you correction and rebuke, rather than you bringing it criticism? When was the Word hungered for over the playoffs, Oprah or CSI? When was it free to perform its double-edged

surgery on you?

Granted, we do live in a different era, which means Scripture requires the theological tasks of exegesis and interpretation, and this can be a challenge. We seem to have lots of time to study a whole host of other things, so what has happened to Christians immersing themselves in Scripture? Is it still a lamp to our feet and sweet as honey on our lips?

If the Bible has become only venerated classical literature—alongside Chaucer, Dickens and Shakespeare—

It is startling how quickly the Bible has taken a back seat to fiction and books about Scripture.

then we are bound to reap more of what we have begun to sow: a biblically illiterate breed of Christian who cannot define nor defend the faith; respond with Christ-centred compassion to the mess of the world we

inhabit; speak and live prophetically alongside cultures with their own canons of authority; produce fruit borne of repentant, sincere hearts; or identify when God is blasphemed with our silent approval.

If the seed of the Word is not welcomed as an authoritative, truth-filled, life-giving call to action, the church will increasingly be read as a sloppy piece of fiction in a world asking, "What is truth?"

Phil Wagler is seeking to live out his vocation as husband, dad and pastor in Zurich, Ont. Drop in this summer and say hello on your way to the beach or e-mail him at phil_wagler@yahoo.ca.

Outward *From page 13*

We proposed and approved two brand new ministry departments (Congregational Partnerships and Multi-Cultural Ministries).

One encourages congregations to reflect more profoundly on their missionary vocation and to initiate “outward” ministry. It also links congregations in partnership with already existing ministries in over 30 countries around the world. This initiative has inspired more than one-third of our congregations to identify and engage with meaningful partnership in ministry beyond them.

The other new department encourages our church to be more multicultural, also a theme of a special sym-

posium, held in conjunction with the 2002 assembly.

The “Making Peace with the Land” symposium, that you referred to, placed the “green” agenda in the midst of our church long before it became politically correct. We have offered workshops on the engagement of the church with its environment, and heard from mission workers coming from many parts of the world.

We have engaged speakers—like Peter Stucky from Colombia—who have helped us focus on our vocation as a church of peace in our troubled world.

We increased our focus on our relationship to Mennonite World Conference and the Global Mission Fellowship, and we have joined the Canadian Council of Churches and the

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada as full members, extending our reach and impact of ministry much beyond what we can do ourselves.

We have approved three priorities for the church, one of which is to “become a global church,” which is already impacting our program and budget planning for the church.

The overall experience of the annual assembly has, I believe, served to balance the “inward” and “outward” aspect of the church’s agenda. Each “slice” of the assembly experience is important and it is important that readers and assembly attendees keep the whole picture in mind.

—**Robert J. Suderman, Winnipeg**

The writer is general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada.

AIDEN ENNS



New Order voice

Our affluence and faith keep us from feeling sadness. We seem numb. We take more trees from the shrinking forests, we drag more fish from the seas and emit more pollution into skies that retain too much heat. It’s like we are eating in our sleep.

Fortunately, we’re beginning to wake up.

For example, we are acknowledging our human contribution to global warming. At the G8 Summit this month, Germany is pushing the major industrial nations to cut their greenhouse gas emissions to half of what they were in 1990.

There are hopeful responses among us Mennonites. Goshen College became the first Mennonite school to sign a commitment to reduce and “eventually eliminate all of the college’s global warming emissions,” according to an announcement in April. They joined 175 other colleges and universities in the United States in what they claim as an unprecedented goal to not just reduce but become “carbon neutral” institutions.

The Mennonite Creation Care Network recently cancelled plans for a large conference because of its impact on the environment (“Creation summit cancelled: ‘Nonference’ will save 45 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions,” March 5, page 33). They will find alternative ways to promote creation care at local and regional levels and at national events already taking place.

Excellent. These are applaudable changes in institutional behaviour based on principles of Christian stewardship.

I hope these announcements also signal a change in our collective heart. I hope we are at the brink of an inner, institutional transformation of consciousness. May we reshape our identity from being a people who dominate and destroy creation, to becoming a people who walk in a global garden with respect, care and demonstrable humility.

As creation groans, let us lament

We are doing wrong. We see our error and are numb. God help us.

My fear is that our affluence—and even our faith—will be stumbling blocks to this inner transformation. When faced with our mistakes, the constant temptation for us who are rich and powerful is to fix the problem—and still retain power.

As we attempt to fix the problem, we still retain our identity as the “fixers,” the dominant ones in control. I hear creation groaning under the grip of human domination. “Let go,” it cries. “We won’t let go, but we will make a few adjustments,” is our response.

Our faith can be a hindrance as well. We can reinforce our dominator mentality with the notion of submission to God. It goes like this: We submit to God’s will, and God tells us to have dominion over the earth. Hence, our domination (and too often our destruction) of the Earth is a God-given right. This theology keeps us humans apart from, and over, creation.

I see a deep spiritual pull towards the inter-connectedness of all things. In secular terms, I literally breathe the air expelled by trees and fish will swim in what my body expels. In theological terms, the same breath of life is in all things. We share a common foundation because everything is rooted in the same “ground of all being,” the term theologian and philosopher Paul Tillich uses to refer to how God is the basis for all things to exist in the first place.

As we recognize our impact on the planet, or admit that we’re squandering God’s creation, our most appropriate response is emotional. Yes, we need to clean up our act, declare a Sabbath, go fallow. But let us also awake to our regret and sadness. Let lament be our guide. We are doing wrong. We see our error and are numb. God help us.

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.

Global economy affects our local economies

I really appreciated Esther Epp-Tiessen's "Globaleyes: What's up?" article (March 19, page 7), and her experiences regarding global economic effects on the Philippines.

It has caused me to remember that, just as important as recognizing the uneven benefits of economic globalization in countries around the world, it is important to see these effects in our own backyards and within our own farming communities. In many instances, these "benefits" undercut our own local economies, our friends and our families.

It's no secret that we are in danger of losing "the family farm." May I remind us that a basic principle of North American agriculture is "go big or go home." But what happens when the income and subsidies are not enough for a small farmer to "go big," let alone stay afloat?

Make way for ever-bigger combines that can harvest fields in record time because we don't want to pay 50 cents more for a loaf of bread, money that could go directly to the farmer! We need to remember and think creatively about the phrase, "think global, act local," because acting local is both local and global.

—**Derek Funk, Winnipeg**

Speak out against wrong like Jesus did

Imagine what would happen if we, as Christian Mennonites, responded to the moral issues in the same way Jesus did, by speaking out against the injustices of the day.

Imagine a country where we told our MPs that we wouldn't vote for them as long as they support our Canadian arms build-up and continue to occupy other lands and murder their people.

Imagine a country where we told our elected provincial representatives that we wouldn't vote for them as long as they support the growth of the gambling industry by building new casinos and installing more video lottery terminals. Imagine a place where charities can receive money without this industry, and a budget that can be met without this addiction to gam-

bling revenue.

So when was the last time you wrote your federal and provincial politicians?

—**Ernie Engbrecht, Lethbridge, Alta.**

In defence of generosity if not banquets

I understand and sympathize with Will Braun's unease over expensive fundraising banquets. However, his poke at Canadian Mennonite University and its April fundraising banquet ("A complicated wealth," May 14, page 10) could have used a bit more research. Not all in attendance could afford to dish out \$500 per person, as he suggested.

I feel strongly that our wealth brings with it added responsibility. We'll have more to answer for some day than the truly impoverished. There are, however, even among those Canadians whose wealth exceeds that of the vast majority of the rest of us, people who are quietly, conscientiously accepting that their wealth requires generosity.

My wife and I were at the CMU banquet. We did not pay our tickets, nor could we have afforded to pay for them. In fact, the couple who asked us to attend, requested that I fill a table at their expense. I asked if they needed to be people who might donate. "No" was their answer. I asked if I could invite people who are not Mennonites. "Of course," I was told, so I filled the table with members of Winnipeg's Hindu community. They left saying they had loved the opportunity to get to know the university and something about Mennonites.

In the past few months I have spoken to literally thousands of public school students in Winnipeg as curator of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery. Schools pay nothing for these presentations. Wealthy patrons of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery—who can afford to pay \$500 a plate for a fundraising banquet—supply the funding. Without their quiet, generous and consistent help I could not work in the community in the ways I believe God has called me to serve.

—**Ray Dirks, Winnipeg**

Increasing militarization negatively impacts kids

Re: "Mennonite pastors oppose military co-op program," March 5, page 25. I find the article very alarming. It is a further sign of the increasing profile of our armed forces. For the military to have direct access to high school students, and pay them for enrolling in their courses, is a fundamental change in recruiting.

As alarming as I find the article, I am perplexed that pastors and theologians are not coming to the aid of the Mennonite churches in Essex County, nor has there been an editorial comment on the issue. Have we forgotten that over 50 percent of the eligible men during World War II volunteered for the war without having smelled gunpowder or heard bombs drop on town and cities? Nor had they been subjected to such enticing recruiting in their formative years as the students in Essex County.

Mennonite men, along with many others, were carried away by the fervour and propaganda of the war. Our country is at war. Our current government is more militaristic than we have ever had. The profile of our armed forces is rising around us. For example, Grey Cup football players entered the stadium in Winnipeg on a tank. Huge military recruiting billboards now appear in our cities.

In light of the shootings that we have seen in education institutions on this continent, should we not stop to think about what impact this glorification of war—not to mention the military training of adolescents—might have on our children?

What is the Mennonite Church's response to all of this? Will we wait until conscription is brought in? Might that not be a bit late?

—**Gerhard Neufeld, Winnipeg**

Correction

The April 16 article, "2007: Year of the Swiss Anabaptists," page 8, should have been attributed to the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation and reporter Dale Bechtel. Mennonite World Conference, which distributed the article, regrets the error.

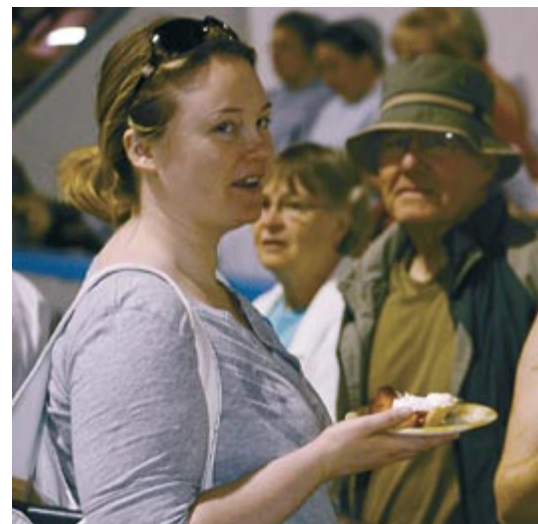


*photos by
Ross W. Muir*



Strawberries: the colour of relief

Bloomington, Listowel, Breslau and Pioneer Park Mennonite churches teamed up to create fresh strawberry pies for the 41st annual New Hamburg (Ont.) Mennonite Relief Sale. John "Strawberry Head" Jonas, bottom foreground of left photo, takes a short break from washing the thousands of fresh strawberries that pass before him each year (a job he has had for more than 15 years), while his co-workers continue making and selling the pies to hungry customers. Then Beatrice Dettweiler, photo right, slices the luscious berries before they are layered in their pie shells and covered with a luscious strawberry sauce and whipped cream (photo right top). The finished product could be purchased in either a full pie or by the slice. Those who couldn't decide, bought a full pie for later and a slice for now! According to committee chair Ross Shantz, the strawberry pies brought in more than \$14,000, while the sale and quilt auction will provide in excess of \$340,000 for Mennonite Central Committee relief, development and peace activities around the world, thanks to the efforts of upwards of two thousand volunteers.



Regina

Mission and worship held in dynamic tension

Then congregations across Canada met with Mennonite Church Canada staff and invited presenters earlier this spring to share ideas on how mission and worship dynamically shape and support each other. The event, which was hosted by MC Canada Formation and Witness, was held at Grace Mennonite Church in Regina.

MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman explored the context of missional worship. He delineated the relationships between tradition and change, and between tradition and conventions. Often “tradition” and “change” are placed in opposition to each other, but they are not contradictory, he suggested. Many think that change is what threatens tradition or that tradition stands in the way of change, but Suderman said tradition is “a continuous process to actualize the past in the present,” which means that a process of change is continually taking place in order to maintain tradition.

As an illustration, he used the Martin Luther hymn, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God.” The current

impression of this hymn may be that it is rather tame and devotional, he said, noting, however, that in Luther’s day it was sung as a protest song against government persecution.

Suderman also drew a useful distinction between traditions and conventions. The former represent the essential values of the faith, while the latter are usually the forms in which these values find expression. For instance, baptism is the tradition, while immersion and sprinkling are conventions.

John Rempel from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary described the dynamic of worship in terms of pursuit and response: God’s pursuit of humanity, and human responses to God. In the medieval church, he said a focus on God’s initiative took precedence and the role of the people was thought of in relatively passive terms. The 16th century, Protestants—especially Anabaptists—tried to balance this view with a belief in the power of the Holy Spirit to transform human communities into palpably holier people.

This was a valuable corrective, Rempel said, but the result has been that the power of worship ended up depending on those in the pew. Another problem is that people today

approach worship less as a way of being shaped to live more obediently, than as a way to be immediately gratified.

Many today are guided by subjective feelings and measure divine presence by the intensity of their feelings, he suggested. “The transformation that happens to us in worship is not so much an immediate experience, as it is a mark left on our hearts and wills that changes our disposition. Collectively and individually worship helps us grow in grace and become more Christ-like,” Rempel explained.

Remembering times of transition can be helpful for understanding any kind of change, according to Ken (“the change-meister”) Bechtel. Using the Exodus story of leaving Egypt behind, Bechtel traced the Israelites’ journey to the Promised Land—murmurings in the wilderness, receiving the commandments and receiving a new identity. The Exodus story has a happy ending, but the Israelites never would have reached the Promised Land if they hadn’t been willing to leave Egypt and endure wandering in the wilderness, he said, suggesting that these phases and tasks reflect the internal work of transition that accompanies all outward change.

—Elizabeth Wall

News brief

Human rights must consider morality

A senior official of the Russian Orthodox Church has told a meeting in Moscow that human rights cannot be considered only from a secular standpoint, which he said often fails to take into account questions of morality and the difference between good and evil. “To speak of freedom and not speak of good and evil is impossible,” said Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, the chair of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department of External Church Relations. “This is what is absent from the absolute majority of contemporary documents that describe the rights and freedoms of people.”

—ENI release



Representatives of the Christian Reformed Church of Canada visited Mennonite Church Canada leaders and staff on May 11, with a view to “establish an ongoing dialogue and encourage and symbolize the unity we have in Jesus Christ, to learn from each other, and to make real our mutual ecumenical commitment for the church to come together in faith and witness,” said Robert J. Suderman, General Secretary for Mennonite Church Canada, left. Also pictured, from left to right, are Louisa Bruinsma, Carel Gleynese and Bill Tuininga, all on the Christian Reformed Church Inter-Church Relations Committee; and Bruce Adema, director of Canadian Program Ministries.

MC Canada photo by Dan Dyck

Winnipeg

Creation care is the will of God

In order for the whole church to be involved in this important issue of creation care, Canadian Mennonite is printing the questions that will be discussed by delegates at the upcoming national church assembly in Abbotsford, B.C., from July 3 to 6. (Ed.)

1. To whom does creation belong?

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers (Psalm 24:1-2).

See also Genesis 1:12, 18, 21, 25, 31; Genesis 9:12-13; Leviticus 25:8-12; Job 39:41; Psalm 19:1; Psalm 24:1-10; Matthew 6:26-29; Revelation 21:1-4.

2. What is the rightful place of humanity in creation?

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the

Earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

See also Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 8; Philippians 2:1-11.

3. What does the care of creation have to do with God's plan of salvation?

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on Earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross (Colossian 1:19-20).

See also II Corinthians 5:17-19; Romans 8:18-25.

4. How is creation care an expression of justice and peacemaking, and the love of my neighbour?

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength...[and] you shall love your neighbour as yourself (Mark 12:30-31).

See also Exodus 23:1-12; Isaiah 52:7; Luke 4:18-19.

5. What is the future of creation?

For the creation waits with eager longing

God longs for the well-being and health of the whole world, for all of creation is bound together and belongs to God, who has created and who preserves all things. Our concern for faithfulness and discipleship should also lead us to care for creation. We believe that we are called to commit ourselves to be good stewards of the Earth.

(MC CANADA FAITH AND LIFE COMMITTEE)

for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Romans 8:19-21).

See also Revelation 21:1-2.

6. What is our future?

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the Earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult (Psalm 46:1-3).

See also Matthew 6:26-29.

Markham, Ont.

Mennonite heads new Christian higher education group

Albert (Al) Hiebert of Steinbach, Man., has been named the first executive director of the recently formed Christian Higher Education Canada (CHEC), a non-profit organization associated with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) and comprised of 34 institutions, including four Mennonite schools.

Commenting on the appointment, Ron Penner, Columbia Bible College president and CHEC council member, says, "Dr. Hiebert is a long-time leader in Canadian Christian higher education.... His knowledge and experience will be invaluable. He also knows the Anabaptist world well and is an excellent statesman for our cause."

Hiebert holds degrees from New York University, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and the University of Manitoba. He was ordained by, and formerly served as a minister at, Kleefeld (Man.) Evangelical

Mennonite Church.

Hiebert, who served as president of the Association of Bible Colleges of Canada and held administrative positions at Steinbach Bible College and the Association for Biblical Higher Education, says he is "humbled to be asked to give this project whatever leadership I am able to give it, in biblical servant-hood-fashion as our Lord gives grace." CHEC's mission is one that he heartily supports.

Of CHEC, Penner says, "This association, [which was established in 2005] for the purpose of fostering professional development, marketing research, joint public relations and advocacy for Christian higher education, will provide opportunities for mutual support as well as encourage more people to consider the Christian post-secondary opportunities. Research is verifying that Christian higher education makes a positive difference in young adults' faith choices and engagement in the church."

Canadian Mennonite University president Gerald Gerbrandt says that he too is "excited to be a part of CHEC.



Hiebert

CHEC brings together Christian or faith based-institutions of higher education in a way which allows us

to learn from each other and work together on special projects. There is value in working together," he adds, "especially given that Christian institutions have only a small portion of the post-secondary market. Through CHEC we can cooperate and do research together, which has the potential to benefit all of us. So I'm quite pleased about that."

CHEC was formed in the fall of 2005 as a merger of the Association of Canadian Bible Colleges, the Christian Higher Education Enrollment Association and the EFC's Higher Education Roundtable.

The CHEC fellowship now includes most of the self-defined evangelical seminaries, colleges and universities of the liberal arts and sciences, and accredited Bible colleges as voting members. Steinbach (Man.) Bible College and Bethany College in Hepburn, Sask., are also CHEC members.

—**Leona Dueck Penner**

Gaborone, Botswana

The shared, blackened pot

Mennonite pastor and writer Jonathan Larsen reflects on the influx of refugees from Zimbabwe to his hometown of Gaborone, Botswana, as conditions in neighbouring Zimbabwe worsen.

While in quiet conversation with a friend recently, I learn that her project to build a home in a suburb of Gaborone has suddenly come to an awkward halt. The half-finished building had lain quiet for some weeks after a raft of strangers had taken shelter there when no one was watching.

It seems that well-to-do neighbours had seen the improvised life of the squatters—the nighttime candles, the bundles of firewood, the smoke of cooking fires and the motley comings and goings—and had called the owner to complain.

With her heart in her throat she went to the site and had all her worst fears confirmed. As many as 20 strangers were camping on her property. Having glimpsed the scene, she fled out of fear for her own safety, not knowing what these desperate—and brazen—people might do.

What was she to do now? I suggest that we go together to initiate contact and seek some understanding with the squatters. When we arrive the next day, though, we found that the local police had swooped down on the property early that morning and had already

taken a vanload of the squatters to the precinct.

I begin to wonder if any of them might even be my Anabaptist sisters and brothers who put forth heroic efforts in hospitality at the Mennonite World Conference in 2003 in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. I recall the army of women who laboured to cook

and serve the multitudes, the array of blackened cooking pots ranged over the wood fires, and the humble nameless who washed, cleaned and swept with such zeal and dignity.

We arrive at the police station and find our squatters—men and women, even mothers with small infants on their backs—some in handcuffs, and all with the resigned, humiliated look of the wretched of the Earth. They are Zimbabweans, or “border-jumpers” as they are called here. Here in Botswana, it is estimated by some that nearly one in five people currently in the country are in flight from what has befallen them at home in Zimbabwe.

This once proud, educated and productive society has been drubbed to its skinned, wobbly knees, as the effects of HIV/AIDS, drought, corruption, inflation and political folly have left the people utterly destitute.

Little wonder that a ragged band of these unfortunates should have found their way through the back-country fences and crept under the eaves of an unfinished house seeking shelter.

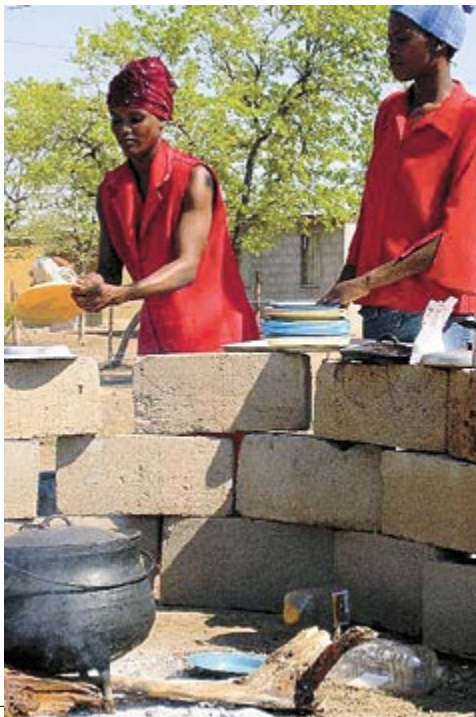


Photo courtesy of Glyn Jones and Susan Alison Jones

Botswana residents gather around a cooking pot in a country that is being inundated with “border jumpers” from Zimbabwe fleeing a country rife with HIV/AIDS, drought, corruption, inflation and political folly.

Witness workers unable to help refugees

Glyn Jones and Susan Alison Jones, Mennonite Church Canada Witness/Mennonite Mission Network church workers in Botswana, are at a loss as to how to help the political and economic refugees from Zimbabwe without endangering their own work visas.

“The illegal...population is a tricky one,” says Alison Jones. “First, they are

illegal. It may sound like a minor point, but they are not defined as ‘refugees’...and any association with them could jeopardize the work permit/residency permit status of anyone who is found directly helping them.”

She is reminded of the illegal Zimbabwean gardener they inherited with their home when they first arrived in Botswana. “Within a year we needed to let him go because the government was clamping down on the hiring of illegal people,” Alison Jones says. “He had been expelled twice in two weeks, driven to the border and released in Zimbabwe, then

made his way back to Gaborone.”

There is a Brethren in Christ group of legal Zimbabweans in Gaborone that is church planting. But it does not want to compromise its status either.

“Perhaps in the future there will be a role for Mennonites to play to help these people,” says Alison Jones, “but for now our hands are tied because of...the political reality.”

Mennonite World Conference figures number Mennonite and Brethren in Christ members in Zimbabwe at just over 29,000, slightly less than MC Canada figures.

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

As we speak with them at the police station, we assure them that we will not press charges. Who could bear to see them taken to prison or, even worse, returned to their shattered country? We only ask that they return the house to its owner.

The pressure of these growing numbers of arrivals has elicited an uncharacteristic resentment from Botswana society, which had always been known as a congenial haven for outsiders since before the days of apartheid. Now, the police sweep through our side of town, checking documents and accosting a young man we had hired

at the church hall as a day worker.

We return with our new acquaintances to the construction site. They begin—with astonishing efficiency—to gather their belongings, as they have done many times before. But the story of their troubles is far from over. The blackened cooking pots, the plastic jugs, the frayed bags in which they have folded their blankets and clothes are gathered on the unfinished entryway of the house—belongings we would cart away to a dumpster without a moment's thought.

Off they finally go in search of some other unguarded corner where they

will huddle together for a few days, where, by the evening fires, they will laugh the quiet laugh of those whose hearts are breaking. At the same time, the great and powerful leaders of the world gather at seaside villas and laud each other while surrounded by bodyguards. If only they could sit by those evening fires in the quiet and bitter corners of our country to hear the truth—the gritty, pitiful truth. Because, in this part of the world, the truth is—at evening, we all eat from the same blackened pot.

—MC Canada release
by **Jonathan Larsen**

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Chilliwack, B.C.

Inspirational Day marks ending...beginning

For 68 years, B.C. Mennonite Women in Mission have been meeting annually for an afternoon of inspiration, fellowship and remembrance. When they did so at Eden Mennonite Church here on May 6, it was with a difference. The B.C. Women in Mission group is dissolving as of July, and this was the last formally organized Inspirational Day under that umbrella.

"As one chapter closes, another opens," said president Veronica Thiessen. "I believe the Holy Spirit is encouraging us to be open to changes.... Today we're here to celebrate God's love and faithfulness through the ages."

Thiessen then gave a brief retrospective of the Women in Mission group in B.C. The first Inspirational Day was held on Feb. 28, 1939. At that time, the women present had been able to collect \$2 in the offering, which they sent in to the Eaton's mail order company with a request for as many sewing materials as that amount would buy. Eaton's responded by sending them \$10 worth of goods, which were used for sewing projects for overseas relief.

On that day in 1939, the group had decided on a theme song, "The Work is Thine, O Christ." That hymn was sung again on May 6, with the same person, Erna Tilitzky, serving as pianist—just as she had done 68 years ago as a young girl.

Seven past and present presidents



As she did in 1939 as a young girl—when the B.C. Women in Mission was formed—Erna Tilitzky reprised her role as pianist, playing as the assembled women sang "The Work is Thine, O Christ" at the organization's final Inspirational Day on May 6.

of the B.C. Women in Mission were called up to the front in a special recognition ceremony. Each gave a brief highlight of her term of service.

Deanna Neustaedter of Abbotsford spoke on the theme "Immeasurably more" and told of her recent missions trip to Africa. Showing a woven basket from Botswana, she said she realized that her life is like a basket, with all experiences in life woven together to make something beautiful. "The one who is able to do immeasurably more is still at work," she said.

One moving part of annual Inspiration Days is the memorial service, in which roses are placed at the front of the church in memory of those women who have died during the past year. Janet Bergen of Abbotsford led this year's service, focusing on women as biblical "heroes of faith."

The afternoon concluded with a fellowship supper and surprise enter-

tainment: a sentimental retrospective of the past 68 years through hats and fashions as modelled by the women of Yarrow United Mennonite Church. Accompanied by decade-by-decade musical favourites, the women spontaneously joined in singing songs such as *Lass die Herzen immer fröhlich* while enjoying a look back at their stylish—and sometimes not so stylish—garb of the past.

Although this was the last Inspirational Day formally organized by B.C. Mennonite Women in Mission under its present structure, it is hoped the tradition will continue, organized year by year by individual congregations. The women of Eben-Ezer Mennonite in Abbotsford have agreed to plan and host next year's Inspirational Day, with offers from other churches to host for the next couple of years following.

—Amy Dueckman

B.C. Women in Mission presidents from over the years were on hand for the organization's final Inspirational Day on May 6. Pictured, from left, they are: Helga Rempel (2000-02), Martha Rempel (1974-80), Marie Rehsler (1996-2000), Sue Kehler (1994-96), Agnes Friesen (1984-90), Mary Bergen (1980-84), and Veronica Thiessen (2002-07).



Photos by Lydita Krahn

Floradale, Ont.

Marie Martin 'enriches' Eastern Canada women

As Marie Martin shared her personal story at the Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Enrichment Day at Floradale Mennonite Church on April 21, there was a hush over the crowd of about 300 women. She shared so openly and honestly about the struggles of her life and how she has depended on God and on prayer, that her listeners caught a glimpse of what it means to live a life of faith.

She was widowed at age 32 with six children and no financial resources. In the midst of her tears and pain, she had to learn how to accept help from others, especially her congregation—Hawkesville (Ont.) Mennonite.

In the midst of her tears and pain, she had to learn how to accept help from others, especially her congregation...

"They blessed me over and over again," she said as she described the many ways that the congregation and the community assisted her in times of need. "I learned to pray about everything," she said, describing how she would remind God when she took the last piece of meat

from her freezer, or if she was anxious about finding a parking spot. It's important to pray beforehand, she said, because "God might need time to move a car" so that a spot is available!

She thought it would be impossible for a widow with six children to be remarried, but she assured her listeners that "whatever you are going through, nothing is too big for God." In 1980, she married Gordon Martin and became a pastor's wife.

At the beginning and end of her talk, Martin insisted that her story is not better nor more important than other people's stories. In 1998, she felt the Holy Spirit nudging her to write her autobiography, *Bloom Where*

You're Planted, which was published a couple years later.

The women also enjoyed the music of Lifted Voices, a women's group from First Mennonite Church in Kitchener.

Among their songs was "The Son's Flower," written by pianist Susan Pries, in memory of Joy Dorsch, a member of Lifted Voices who died of cancer a year ago. Dorsch had taken the sunflower as a symbol of hope during her illness. A sunflower quilt, made by friends from First Mennonite in memory of her, was hung in the foyer for the day.

In other business, it was reported that Shirley Redekop had agreed to serve as coordinator for another three-year term. The fall Enrichment Day is slated for Oct. 20 at Faith Mennonite in Leamington with the theme, "Sharing our heritage."

—**Barb Draper**



Martin

Steinbach, Man.

Women focus on Psalm 42

Manitoba Women in Missions held its annual Enrichment Day at Grace Mennonite Church on May 6.

Using Psalm 42 as the theme for the day, Marla Langelotz based her morning message on the familiar line, "As the deer pants for the water." She talked of the strong need a deer has for water just to survive. Her challenge was, "Do we believe we need God to survive?" In the afternoon, she focused on the Psalm's refrain, "Where is your God?" This refrain could be uttered as a taunt, she said, or as a check for believers—God's representatives—who are to show God to those who ask through their lives and caring actions.

The memorial service led by Karen Schellenberg was centred around a table filled with rocks and stones of vari-

ous sizes and shapes, with candles and wildflowers scattered among them. In her devotional about living stones, Schellenberg spoke of trying to grow a garden in Saskatchewan while stones kept "showing up." She talked of the Women in Mission members who had died over the past year as being "living stones" who "turned up" to do the simple things that needed to be done in their churches and communities.

Betty Heppner reported on her time at Cross Lake with Mennonite Disaster Service last summer—a time of building bridges between communities and supporting and encouraging the Mennonite church in Cross Lake.

The Mennonite Biblical Seminary of Colombia was chosen as the project Manitoba Women in Missions will be supporting over the next year.

—**Connie Goertzen**

Swift Current, Sask.

Women learn to be good listeners

The annual Enrichment Day of Saskatchewan Women in Mission brought 63 women to Zion Mennonite Church on April 14. It was hosted by the Women in Mission of Zion Mennonite and Emmaus Mennonite in Wymark.

Helen Kruger, co-pastor at Zion, welcomed the group. Audrey Mireau-Bechtel, who is beginning her second term as president, chaired the business meeting. Other members of the executive are Marie Peters-Stewart, Ruth Heppner (secretary), and Erica Unruh. Members of the program committee are Elsie Siemens, Lavonne Dyck and Margaret Friesen.

Leslie Allaby, a family therapist from Osler, Sask., gave three presentations on healthy relationships, emphasizing good listening with eyes and heart. Galia Wiens of Wymark led in the memorial service for the 37 women who had died in the past year.

The offering of the day amounted to about \$2,200.

—**Ingrid Janzen Lamp**

Ailsa Craig, Ont.

Information session turns into angry harangue

About thirty people gathered at Nairn Mennonite Church last month to hear former MC Canada staffer Sakioeta' Widrick speak about ways Mennonites can build relationships with their aboriginal neighbours. At least that is what they expected to hear.

Instead, they were treated to one angry comment after another from Widrick about MC Canada, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, Mennonite pastors (including four in the audience), and white people's ignorance in general. Widrick seemed loath to answer the question in the title of the event sponsored by the Nairn, Zurich and Brussels congregations. Even direct questions about how to go about building neighbourly relationships led to long explanations and diatribes on history, the current political situation and theology.

Using a two-strip wampum belt, Widrick explained how aboriginals made treaties with "the ones who came over the water." The two blue strips represent two parallel rivers on which two separate peoples sail their boats, he said, adding that each people uses the river and the lands around it for what they need, respecting the other people's right to do the same. But aboriginals have never sold or given away the land, he maintained. They have, however, invited the "others" to join them in using it. But the others have acted like guests who try to run their hosts' homes.

According to Widrick, the solution to land claim problems—including the one between his Six Nations community and the town of Caledonia in southwestern Ontario—is not bridge-building. Bridge-building implies two peoples, each standing on their own ground, reaching out to each other, he said. But the "latecomers" have no land to stand on. Instead, the image of landlord and tenant is necessary,



Photo by Dave Rogalsky

in which the aboriginals own the land and the Europeans are behind on their rent.

For Widrick, the co-existence theme runs to religion as well. Telling stories of aboriginal prophets, and their own experiences with "the One who was resurrected," he made the claim that each group has its own relationship with God, with its own ceremonies rooted in its lands and practised in its own language. He said that one group should not force its religion on its neighbours.

When it was all over, one participant commented, "It felt like he was preaching to the converted. We were there to learn how to right the wrongs, not to hear a litany of the wrongs."

—Dave Rogalsky

Former MC Canada employee Sakioeta' Widrick used a two-strip wampum belt to explain the way Canada's aboriginals and Europeans should relate to each other and the land they so uneasily inhabit together.

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Elkhart, Ind.

Pastors 'journey' to ministry at AMBS

The church needs training options for people who are called to be pastors from within the congregation, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary believes.

To that end, the Church Leadership Center at AMBS, in conjunction with the Indiana-Michigan and Central District Mennonite conferences, has developed "Journey: A conference-based leadership development program."

This program took shape in 2003, building on the curriculum of pastoral studies distance education, an undergraduate program. To that program of study, which already includes working with a mentor, Journey adds semi-annual weekend learning events in which all participants gather for focused study of specific areas of ministry.


The accredited Canadian extension site is in Winnipeg. Journey provides ministry training for people who have not completed a bachelor's degree, people who are beginning to explore ministry, or people who are looking for ministry preparation that allows them to continue in their current ministries or vocations.

—AMBS release by **Mary E. Klassen**

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People&Events

Elkhart, Ind.—Irene Koop began as the new Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) registrar on May 14, taking the position previously held by Nisha Springer. Koop has been director of financial aid for AMBS, a half-time position, since last



Koop

summer. She also served as acting registrar during the fall semester of 2005 and as a human resources consultant for AMBS in early 2006. Koop has a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Waterloo, Ont., and she also studied at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University), Winnipeg, Man. She and Victor Koop, her husband, are members of College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind. —AMBS release by **Mary E. Klassen**

Akron, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has named Lynette Meck as its new associate executive director. She will oversee the day-to-day operations of the Akron office of the relief, development and peacemaking agency. The associate executive director serves as the chief operations officer for the office in Akron, which has more than 100 staff. Meck, who is scheduled to begin work in the position in July, replaces Bruce McCrae, who has been associate executive director for nearly nine years. Meck, who holds a master's degree in management from Penn State University, served as executive director of MCC U.S. from 1989-98 and as a program director for the U.S. service programs for MCC U.S. from 1983-89. —MCC release

Goshen, Ind.—Nicole Cober Bauman, daughter of Rick and Louise Cober Bauman of Shakespeare, Ont., was named to the Goshen College Dean's List for the 2006-07 spring semester, joining 238 of her peers. Bauman is a senior studying Bible and religion at Goshen College; she graduated from Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont., in 2003, and attends Tavistock (Ont.) Mennonite Church. Bauman is currently travelling across southeast Asia with the BikeMovement organization (see "BikeMovement Asia an interactive learning experience," May 28, page 32).

—Goshen College release by **Jodi H. Beyeler**

Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Jacky—Wyatt Norman Daniel Jacob (b. May 17, 2007), to Jeremiah and Lisa Jacky, St. Agatha Mennonite, Ont.

Kostanecki—Mikka Z (b. May 18, 2007), to Bartek Kostanecki and Moni Janssen, First Mennonite, Calgary.

McPhee—Leah (b. April 26, 2007), to Chris and Amie McPhee, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Neufeld—Alexandria Hope (b. March 29, 2007), to Cornie and Lori Neufeld, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man.

Sharp—Daniel Jonathan (b. May 10, 2007), to Phil Sharp and Vivien McPhee, Coaldale Mennonite, Alta.

Vernon—Aspen Janelle (b. Jan. 17, 2007), to Jay and Beth Vernon of Newmarket, Ont., Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

Marriages

Boese/Cook—Scott Cameron Peter Boese and Aimee Elizabeth Cook, Tofield Mennonite, Alta., May 19.

Chartier/Lankin—Luc Chartier and Cathy Lankin, Windsor Mennonite, Ont., May 19, 2007.

Jantzi/Nafziger—Luke Jantzi and Kaitlyn Nafziger,

Hawkesville Mennonite, Ont., at Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont., May 12, 2007.

Deaths

Adrian—Abram P. (Abe), 88 (d. Feb. 28, 2007), Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.

Epp—Marion (nee Dubets), 63 (b. March 20, 1944; d. April 1, 2007), Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.

Friesen—Katharine (Tina), 62 (d. March 21, 2007), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

Friesen—Raelene Gail, 33 (d. Feb. 26, 2007), Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.

Goertzen—John, 78 (d. March 1, 2007), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

Hess—John, 84 (b. Aug. 15, 1922; d. May 19, 2007), Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

Horst—Rebecca Shantz, 82 (b. Sept. 12, 1924; d. April 1, 2007), Hawkesville Mennonite, Ont.

Baptisms

First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.—Stacey Gerber, Daniel Johnson, May 27, 2007.

Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.—Brittany Martin, Meagan Kuepfer, Stephan Kuepfer, Mag Kuepfer, May 27, 2007.

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

Winnipeg

United Church congregation considers Peace Church status

Should United Church of Canada congregations become peace churches? That was the question posed at Westworth United Church in Winnipeg last month. The local initiative, co-sponsored by the Faculty of Theology at the University of Winnipeg and attended by about 60 people (mostly seniors), heard presentations on the topic by two members of the Westworth congregation—Gordon Toombs and Mac Watts, who are both retired university professors.

Toombs, who has been a conscientious objector to war all his life, reminded the audience of the strong stance the United Church took against war in the 1930s, but then moved away from this position when World War II broke out. He lauded the stance of Peace Churches such as Mennonites and Quakers, and advocated that the United Church become a Peace Church too. "Let's risk our lives for peace," Toombs said. "The way of the cross is a stand we need to take."

Watts took a more pragmatic approach in his presentation. He said churches need to decide which leader to follow, recognizing, however, that none of them have "clean hands." Will Christians follow South African civil rights leader Nelson Mandela, Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe, or American presidents Abe Lincoln or George W. Bush? Of the latter two, Lincoln would be most people's choice, he said, noting, though, that thousands died in the war he fought to free the slaves.

No war is ever a good thing, he stated, but involvement in some conflicts is justified. "We should approach each new conflict with a critical mind," he advised. "The United Church shouldn't simply say it is against all war."

In the end, no decision was made to join or not.

—Larry Kehler

The author is pastor of Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

Mennonite Church Canada

Prayer and praise

Please pray for:

- Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministries, as the first phase of the “Reaching up to God our Creator” curriculum is complete. This six-session curriculum project for older children and adults has been developed by church leaders with European, Ojibwe, Metis and Cree roots, and is designed for use in Mennonite Church Canada and aboriginal Christian congregations. Pray that this project and the resulting curriculum will foster respect and understanding, and bring honour to Christ as the fulfillment of aboriginal and Hebrew sacred teachings.
- Cliff and Natasha Dueck, Witness workers in Ukraine, as they prepare for summer camps. They are very concerned about the lack of rain, the intense heat in the area and the lack of natural shade where they usually operate their camps. Please pray that God would supply this Ukraine ministry with much-needed camp staff and for relief from the drought that is adversely affecting crops.
- Multicultural Ministries, as Vietnamese Mennonite churches in Canada meet from June 29 to July 1, and Laotian Mennonite churches meet in early August.

—**Hinke Loewen-Rudgers**

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

How to conduct an exit interview

“We have always been a church who wants to do outreach and make a difference in the community, and [pastor] Michael [Strain] helped us build on that vision.” This and other observations were shared by a leadership group at Milverton

Mennonite Fellowship, which met with their pastor and MC Eastern Canada staff to conduct an exit interview after Strain’s four years of ministry in that congregation.

The purpose of an exit interview is threefold:

- To reflect as pastor and leaders on the work they have done together.
- To give some closure to the pastoral relationship.
- To identify hopes and opportunities for the next period of congregational life as a new pastoral relationship is formed.

In reflecting on the first part, the group said it valued Strain’s leadership in the opening of the youth centre in Milverton in partnership with other churches in town.

As they attempted to put some closure to the relationship, the group noted that there is now a structure that is working well at Milverton. “Through his example, Michael has shown us that delegating responsibilities requires the ability to pick out people with certain talents, which hadn’t been recognized before.”

In reflecting on the final part of the exit interview, it was agreed that Strain helped the congregation appreciate the role of the wider Mennonite Church. “We have learned that the pastor has people he is accountable to in the denomination as well,” said one leader.

MC Eastern Canada’s Leadership Council encourages the use of exit interviews as one way to help congregational leaders reflect on the past, in hope that this will lead them into a fruitful season of ministry in the future.

—**Maurice Martin**

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Jesus es el Camino seeks worship space

Iglesia Jesus es el Camino, a Spanish Mennonite immigrant congregation in Winnipeg,

is looking for a new place to worship and a sister congregation with which to partner. For several years, it worshipped at Bethel Place, but scheduling conflicts necessitated a move. This small congregation is looking for a partnership with a sister church, so their pastoral leaders could connect with other leaders and find encouragement from the larger Mennonite community.

Summer partnerships

Several youth groups are preparing to spend a week in some northern Manitoba communities with which their churches are partnered:

- Kyle Penner, youth pastor at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, will be taking a group of 15 to 20 youths to Matheson Island to lead a week of summer camp from July 16 to 21.
- This is the sixth year that a group of young people from Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church will be leading a week of children’s programs in Little Grand Rapids, from July 19 to 27.
- A senior youth group from Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg will be leading a week of Vacation Bible School in Riverton from Aug. 19 to 23.
- Pauingassi is still in need of a church group to lead a week of children’s programming this summer. In recent years the youths of Morden Mennonite Church led a week of VBS in this remote community, but this year the church is putting together money to buy a commercial sewing machine for Pauingassi.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Growth spurt at Rosthern Mennonite

Rosthern Mennonite Church recently added 11 members to its congregation. The event was celebrated on Pentecost

Sunday, May 27, and included a mix of people renewing church commitments and others transferring from other denominations.

Added to that, the congregation welcomed five young people as new members at the end of April and both pastoral couples joined as members in March.

Barb and Wilmer Froese began work there last November and Lucas Plett began as youth pastor at the beginning of this year.

In total, about 20 new faces have been added to the roster.

Herbert thrift store expands next door

The Mennonite Central Committee thrift store in Herbert is expanding. Known as Herbert Gift and Thrift, the store has purchased the building next door.

“There will be a larger quilting area and we’re also adding a used furniture section,” says store manager Edna Pankratz.

Herbert Gift and Thrift is the only second-hand store in the town, and draws support and volunteers from all the churches in the area.

An opportunity to increase its space came at the end of March, when the building beside it went up for sale, and the thrift store gained occupancy on April 1.

A fundraiser to pay for the addition is being held June 22. The store, which grosses about \$9,000 annually, will keep the same address—614 Main Street, Herbert.

Mennonite Church Alberta

Tofield Mennonite dedicates sanctuary

On May 27, Tofield Mennonite Church dedicated its new sanctuary to the Lord. More than 250 past and present members

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Tofield *From page 13*

and affiliates attended the celebration.

In his meditation, pastor Bob Crosland discussed the history of Mennonites in exile in relation to the congregation's exodus from its previous church home five years ago due to its deteriorating state of repair. Just as in Psalm 147:2, God also gathered those who began the Tofield Mennonite congregation in 1934, he said.

Church chair Loretta Kroeker told those gathered, "With God at the helm, all things are possible.... This building is only part of the plan. We as a church family need to uphold Christ's teachings both at home and in the community. Our new church is a symbol of our faith in this community. But it is still only a building and we want the



Photo by Michael Ewert

Tofield Mennonite Church dedicated its new sanctuary on Pentecost Sunday, May 27, as more than 250 past and present members and affiliates turned out for the celebration that including joyous singing, a meditation by pastor Bob Crosland, a Scripture reading by children Cynthia Bergen and Daniel Schmidt, and greetings from many people, including draftsman Lloyd Brandt, who did the designs and technical drawings.

community to know that our faith is built on a rock, Jesus Christ, and all the visionary work that comes with that commitment."

Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, pastor of First Mennonite in Edmonton, shared his spirit of excitement for Tofield. "Our

two churches have a long common history," he said. "Tofield helped establish First Mennonite Church, and more recently, they have provided us with musicians when we were short and encouragement during the drought."

(For a picture of the church's

new stained glass window, see the back cover. Ed.)

—Leanne Ewert

**Mennonite Church
British Columbia**

**Kelowna First
Mennonite turning 60**

First Mennonite Church of Kelowna will celebrate its 60th anniversary on the weekend of July 13 to 15.

Beginning in 1941, Mennonites began moving to the Kelowna area and by 1946 some felt a need to organize officially as a congregation. Jacob Janzen was called to be its leader.

Originally, services were held in a home, but in 1947 the group rented a hall in downtown Kelowna. That spring, John Vogt of Coaldale, Alta., was called to be pastor, and

JEFF STECKLEY



From our leaders

In my role with MC Eastern Canada, much of my time is spent directing initiatives that encourage congregational health and vitality. But an unlikely convergence of weekend activities—nary a one of them the result of my initiation—reminded me that there's more to leading than providing direction.

My sons were depending on me to assemble and install a bike carrier so that they'd have a way home from a 160-kilometre bike trip to the family cottage. My congregation makes and sells apple fritters as its contribution to the local Mennonite Relief Sale and I was signed up for a three-hour shift. Pastor friends and their families were being commissioned for an international mission assignment and I wanted to attend the service. Friends with whom our family shared a small group experience invited us to a gathering to mark their daughter's 13th birthday. The final event of the weekend was to host a celebration meal for my congregation's Apple Fritter Committee.

This convergence of activities was unique and it proved that leading is also about attending to the wonderful things that others have initiated, adding one's own unique complement to what's already happening.

I wonder if this learning might also be applied to congregations. Are there times when our congregations are over-inclined to initiate and direct their own ministries, rather than attending to the individuals or groups from beyond who are perhaps better equipped to initiate and guide ministry opportunities that can be shared together? Rather than assuming that congregational structures

need to be and do all things ministry-related, what would it look like if greater attention was paid to the places of connection and synergy that exist amongst congregations and various ministry partners—be they parachurch, ecumenical or community organizations?

These are challenging questions for those of us, myself included, who like to keep life tidy, contained and

controlled. As we defer to the initiation and leadership of others and find our places of contribution, there will be blessings, surprises, challenges and disappointments. Although not always in control, opportunities for influence will expand as we connect with new relationship circles and communities.

To live our individual and congregational lives this way requires that we're clearly rooted as God's people, knowing the presence and activity of God in our lives, and responsive to God's call to live lives of blessing in God's world.

This year at Pentecost I was encouraged to live and think this way by reflecting on the image of the wild goose.

The wild goose is an unconventional symbol of the Holy Spirit adopted by Celtic Christianity. Wild geese cannot be tamed. They come and go as they please. In the same way, we as Christians believe that the Holy Spirit cannot be contained or controlled. Wild geese are noisy and bothersome birds. In the same way, the Holy Spirit at times challenges our complacency, inviting us to unconventional action.

Jeff Steckley is MC Eastern Canada's Congregational Ministries minister.

Wild goose Christianity

Wild geese cannot be tamed.

They come and go as they please.

Calendar

British Columbia

July 4: Canadian Women in Mission tea and annual meeting, at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford; 1:15 p.m.

July 7: Camp Squeah alumni gathering. Register at squeah.com or by calling 1-800-380-2267.

July 13-15: First Mennonite Church, Kelowna, 60th anniversary celebrations. For more information, call Ann Wiebe at 250-763-4638 or e-mail hawiebe@shaw.ca.

July 14-21: "Connecting People and Place," an MCC camping tour on Vancouver Island. For more information,

31 people signed as charter members on July 23, 1947. The church grew, as more families moved into the area, particularly from the prairie provinces. In 1951, the congregation purchased a lot and began constructing a church.

Today's membership at First Mennonite is diverse, with many people from other denominations joining those of Mennonite background. Numerous members have also served in missions work abroad. The current pastor is Clare Neufeld.

Anyone who has been involved with First Mennonite over the past six decades is invited to attend the reunion festivities. For more information, call Ann Wiebe at 250-763-4638 or e-mail her at hawiebe@shaw.ca.

Unless otherwise credited, the articles in TheChurches pages were written by: 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.

contact Darryl Klassen at abneighbours@mccbc.com or Jon Nofziger at peace@mccbc.com.

Alberta

July 8: Cowgirl Stampede Roundup—Doris Daley and friends in concert at Trinity Mennonite, Calgary; 4 p.m.

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

Saskatchewan

June 22: Herbert MCC Thrift Shop fundraiser. For more information, call 306-784-2281.

June 22-23: RJC musical.

June 23: Canadian Foodgrains Bank sale in Hague/Osler.

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

July 29: Shekinah Retreat Centre Adventure Challenge.

Sept. 7-9: SMYO junior high retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Manitoba

June 21: Eden Health Care Services annual general meeting and spring event, at Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church; 7 p.m. Speaker: Dr. John A. Toews, University of Calgary psychiatry prof. Topic: "Spirituality and mental illness." Toews will also speak at two workshops at 9:30 a.m. ("Spirituality and mental health care") and 1:30 p.m. ("Working with the mentally ill"). For more information or to register for the workshops, call 204-325-5355.

June 22-23: Winnipeg Mennonite Children's Choir 50th anniversary celebration weekend at MBCI's Jubilee Place. For weekend passes, visit kwiktix.ca. For alumni registration, e-mail info@wmcc.ca.

[wmcc.ca](mailto:info@wmcc.ca).

June 23: Camp Koinonia golf tournament at Winkler Golf Course.

June 28: Eden Foundation's "Iron Man" golf marathon at Winkler Golf Course. Raise pledges and play 100 holes of golf in one day. For more information, call 1-866-895-2919.

June 30: Cycle Clear Lake fundraiser for MCC Relief Sale.

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

Aug. 18-19: Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship 40th anniversary celebration. For more details, contact Anne Peters at abann@shaw.ca.

Aug. 25-26: Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church 125th anniversary celebrations.

Aug. 26: Camp Moose Lake 50th anniversary celebrations.

Sept. 8: Morris MCC Relief Sale, Stampede Grounds. Huge farmers market.

Sept. 21-22: Brandon MCC Relief Sale.

Sept. 28-30: Camp Moose Lake work days.

Oct. 12-13: Women in Mission retreat at Camp Assiniboia.

Oct. 26-28: Scrapbooking retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

Oct. 27: Work day and camps celebration banquet at Camp Koinonia.

Ontario

June 17: Meserete Kristos University College president and development officer will speak about the Ethiopian Mennonite Church and college at Waterloo North Mennonite Church; 3 p.m.

June 19: Lebold fundraising banquet at Conrad Grebel University College; 6:30 p.m. Speaker: MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman. Topic: "Leaders shaping lead-

ers: The task of identity." For tickets, call 519-885-0220 ext. 24223.

June 20: Fairview Mennonite Home annual strawberry social, Cambridge; programs begin at 2 and 7 p.m. Pie will be served by the Fairview Auxiliary after the programs.

June 21: MEDA Waterloo chapter breakfast meeting, at the Stone Crock, St. Jacobs; 7:30 a.m. Speaker: Marcus Shantz, Mercedes Corp. vice-president.

June 23: Strawberry social at Nithview Home, New Hamburg; 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 8:30 p.m. Ticket available at the door. Sponsored by Nithview Auxiliary.

June 29-July 1: Hidden Acres Camp family camping weekend. Sunday resource person: David Driedger. For more information or to book a spot, e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca.

June 30: Aylmer Auction for Relief at the curling club.

June 30: Joseph and Barbara Schneider reunion and 200th anniversary at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, and the Schneider Haus Museum. Visit timetocome-home.ca or call 519-893-3075 for more information.

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

Employment opportunities

Aylmer & Area Inter-Mennonite Community Council (AAIMCC) is looking for interested people for some key positions.

Radio position: AAIMCC has a Low German radio station and is looking for someone who speaks good Low German and English, has computer skills and a "radio" voice. This is an ethnic station designed to help Low German newcomers be included in society. It operates under the motto: "integration and inclusion through information and education."

Duties: Help prepare and edit programs; sell, translate and produce advertisements; host some programs. Potential for specialization and/or advancement. (German, Spanish, and courses in broadcasting are an asset.) Possibility to get 4 week training in Quito, Equador, at HCJB in July. This could be a salaried position.

Visitation ministry: Looking for a retired couple for the Visitation Program. This is an MCC voluntary service position, seconded to AAIMCC. This couple would work closely with the staff at the MCC Aylmer Resource Centre and help Low German newcomers with settlement issues. Low German and a loving, patient heart are requirements for this position.

Contact: Abe Harms, 16 Talbot St. E., Aylmer, ON N5H 1H4. E-mail: abeh@mccayl.org or phone: 519-765-3020.



Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan invites applications for the position of **Youth & Young Adult Coordinator** for Saskatoon, Sask. Full-time salaried position available Sept. 1, 2007. Application deadline is July 7.

A complete job description is available on MCC's website at www.mcc.org. To apply, send cover letter and resume. For more information, contact Dorothy at MCCA, 600-45th St. West, Saskatoon, SK S7L 5W9, call 306 665-2555 or e-mail dbartel@mccs.org.

Advertising Dates

Issue	Copy Due
July 9	June 26
July 30	July 17
Aug. 20	Aug. 7
Sept. 3	Aug. 21
Sept. 17	Sept. 4
<i>(Focus on Education)</i>	
Oct. 1	Sept. 18

Contact:

**Karen Suderman,
Advertising
Representative**

**1-800-316-4052 x224
advert@
candianmennonite.org**

For rent

FOR RENT: Basement suite in west Hamilton near university. Female tenant preferred. Call 905-627-4482 or e-mail corniesp@interlynx.net.

FOR RENT: Waterloo, Ont. Two-bdrm apartment in quiet triplex. No smoking, no pets. 519-656-2983.

For rent: Dunromin Cottage. 3-bdrm cottage at Red Bay on Bruce Peninsula. Nestled among maple trees. Short walk to sandy beach and small park. Rear deck. Available June 30-Aug 25. Phone 519-746-4920.

Waterloo Mennonite Homes Seniors Apt. Bldg (60 +), 27 George St., Waterloo, accepting applications. Call: 519-886-6203.



WE ARE:

Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches." In a community surrounded by orchards and vineyards, we at Bethany live with the organic image of:

...growing God's goodness...

This vision grows like different varieties of fruit as we open our lives to spiritual gifts God has given us as a community of faith.

Focusing on the love of Jesus we become branches of God's goodness for the community and the world.

WE PRAY:

For God to nudge a person, knowledgeable in and committed to the Anabaptist belief tradition, to join our Pastoral Team. As Associate Pastor their primary function will be to engage with the youth and young adults of the postmodern generation, both within the Congregation and in the community.

WE INVITE:

All those whom God may nudge to call Ken Janzen at 905-685-4537 (evenings), or email to his attention at bethany@vaxxine.com, or write to his attention at Bethany Mennonite Church, Box 249, Virgil, Ontario L0S 1T0 to learn full details.
www.vaxxine.com/bethany

First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., invites applications for the position of **LEADING MINISTER** to provide leadership to a pastoral team of five and a large congregation. First Mennonite is a diverse community of believers with Russian-German Mennonite roots, a strong musical tradition, and three distinct Sunday services.

The successful candidate will have a M. Div. or equivalent, a commitment to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology, and pastoral leadership experience.

Specifically, the church is looking for a spiritual leader with a profound understanding of the Christian faith who is:

- Gifted in preaching, interpersonal relations, and administration.
- Energetic and positive, a catalyst and a synergist.
- Capable of working with church members to clarify a vision for the future of the church.
- Able to embrace and inspire the many gifts and talents of this congregation.

Start date and administrative allowance to be negotiated.

Apply in confidence to:

Mr. Richard Klassen, Chair
Ministerial Search Committee
First Mennonite Church
320 Kingsway Avenue
Winnipeg, MB
R3M 0H4
Phone: 204-474-1368
Email: richard.k@enduron.net

For more information contact Richard Klassen.



Mennonite Central Committee Ontario invites applications for the position of **Countering Militarism Advocate** in Kitchener or Toronto, Ont.

The position requires a person with a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and non-violent peacemaking.

This person will develop a program and ministry to assist MCCO constituent youths— along with their parents, pastors, and mentors— in resisting increased militarism and military recruitment in their high schools, and in becoming active peacemakers in their lives. Applicant should have initiative, creativity and flexibility, as well as strong communication skills, both written and oral, with an ability to communicate biblical non-violence to youths.

This one-year opening is for a half-time salaried position beginning Sept. 1, 2007. Application deadline: June 18, 2007. Complete job description available on MCC's website at mcc.org.

To apply, send cover letter and resume to Cath Woolner, 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1 call 1-800-313-6226 or e-mail cathw@mennonitecc.on.ca.

YOUTH CARE WORKERS needed by CARMEL HOUSE INC.

Established by MCC Saskatchewan, this boys group home in Saskatoon is funded by the Prov. Social Services Dep't. but retains a spiritual mandate.

This ministry to boys (preteens/teens) is seeking applicants (male or female) who have successfully worked with troubled youths and have appropriate related courses and experience. The excellent salary scale is commensurate with training and experience.

Send resumé to: Marie Speiser, Director
415 Bayview Cres., Saskatoon, SK S7V 1B6, 306-373-7029.
E-mail: marie.speiser@shaw.ca.

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

Respond to Glenn Beaton, Search Committee Chair
c/o United Mennonite Church
2277 Enns Rd.
Black Creek, B.C.
V9J 1H7

Fax: 250-337-5229, ATTN: Glen
E-mail: stonecr@telus.net, ATTN: Glen



SUMMER HEAD COOK required for **Silver Lake Mennonite Camp**, Sauble Beach, Ontario. This position runs full-time for 11 weeks from June 11 - August 26. \$375/week. Send resume to SLMC, R.R.#1, Hepworth, ON N0H 1P0. Job description and details at www.slmc.on.ca.

Nutana Park Mennonite Church is inviting an application for a position of **Co-pastor**

to provide full-time leadership within a pastoral team and to a multi-generational membership of approximately 250. The pastor we are looking for will be well schooled in and committed to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology, gifted in preaching, pastoral care, discipleship and visitation. Our pastors, together with the congregation, will seek ways in which we can participate in ecumenism, engaging the community and larger world in which we live with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ. Support for the Mennonite Church at the provincial and Canadian levels is viewed as important. Preferred starting time is in the fall of 2007. Remuneration guided by Mennonite Church Canada guidelines. Applicants are to respond to: NPMC Pastoral Selection Committee, c/o Nutana Park Mennonite Church, 1701 Ruth St., Saskatoon, SK S7J 0L7.

EMPLOYMENT / MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY

Mennonite Church Alberta has identified a need for, and wishes to sponsor, a Young Adults Christian Community in Calgary, Alta that will address the spiritual and relationship needs of:

- 18 to 30-year-olds who have had some exposure to a church in the past but who no longer are active in an organized Christian community.
- Young people who have recently moved to Calgary to either further their education or to take on employment in the rapidly growing city.

Required is a leader who will form a Calgary Young Adult Christian Community by:

- Identifying and contacting the young adults that meet the above criteria.
- Designing and establishing programs together with these young adults that will help in developing their Christian values and lifestyles.
- Teaching the young adults to be active Christ-followers.
- Developing the talents and abilities of these people to further the work of Christ's kingdom.

In essence, develop and grow an organization that is relevant specifically to young adults.

Mennonite Church Alberta has formed an Advisory Group that will provide:

- Funding.
- A meeting space.
- A senior pastor to assist and mentor the leader as requested.
- Other resources as required.

Those interested in taking on such a leadership position are invited to send a resume along with their vision(s) of the nature of such an endeavor and a brief start-up plan to e-mail address walterwiebe@cyacc.com. Please reference "CYACC Position" in the Subject heading of your e-mail.

Anyone who knows of an individual who may suit this position and should be contacted by the Advisory Group is also encouraged to make contact at the same e-mail address, using the reference "I know who would be good at this" in the subject heading.

Others who wish to be kept abreast of the formation and activities of this Young Adults Christian Community in Calgary, can do so by visiting cyacc.com.

Tofield window lets the Sun shine in

Tofield (Alta.) Mennonite Church designed a stained glass window for its new sanctuary. The committee—Carrie Janzen, Cathy Schmidt and Irene Crosland—wanted the window to reflect the congregation’s reality: an agricultural community in transition, a church whose faith in Christ is solidly based on Scripture, and which continues to be shaped by the Holy Spirit within the context of an historic Peace Church. The communion elements speak of a community that bears witness to the suffering Christ while living as a joyous resurrection people. For a story on the new church opening, see the Alberta section of TheChurches on page 27.



Photo by Irene Crosland