

# CANADIAN Mennonite

Aug. 20, 2007  
Vol. 11, No. 16



**Abbotsford2007  
youth assembly**  
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**New MC B.C.  
executive minister**  
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## Lessons from the global church

In Isaiah 43, God speaks of gathering his children up from the east, west, north and south. “*Let all the nations gather together, and let the peoples assemble,*” God says.

I had an experience of that last month when I attended the public day of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) World Assembly, a gathering of around 600 people from more than 140 countries for the mission of reaching “students in every nation with the gospel of Jesus Christ and to send them into the world to bear witness to Christ and his teaching.” IFES is an interdenominational student outreach organization (represented in Canada by Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship) that I appreciate and was involved with in my university years and through time in voluntary service.

It was wonderful to be surrounded by people from virtually every corner of the world, praising God together in many tongues and ways of worship. It was sobering to hear from those persecuted for their faith. I spoke with one young woman whose pastor is in prison for his ministry; each week, she risks her own freedom delivering a meal to him.

One of the biggest trends in Christianity recently has been the shift in weight to the church in the global south and east. This is true in our branch of the church as well, with African Anabaptist groups passing North America in size for the first time in 2003—due to their much higher church growth rates. I sure wish this turning to God for Canada as well.

IFES associate general secretary Las Newman has spent 28 years working with students around the world. I asked him why these parts of the church were growing so quickly. His answer was poverty, conflict and the search for hope.

“Where there is poverty, you find faith. Where you find affluence, you will find lack of faith,” he said bluntly. “People turn to religion searching for meaning, hope, some kind of comfort. Where you find the poor, you find great faith. This is in Africa, Asia, Latin America.” It’s disturbing to hear how our wealth and comfort act to keep us from God. Those aren’t new words, though. Jesus said the same thing in the Sermon the Mount.

Newman knew about Mennonites, having done a master’s degree on 16th century Anabaptist history at Conrad Grebel University College in the 1970s. His advice to Mennonite Christians was to highlight our peace theology and to do even more work in conflict resolution in our evangelism. “This is why the [Mennonite] churches grow in Africa, because of the peace and conflict approach to missionary work.... I would continue to provide hope, any poverty reduction, water, and...how to live in peace and hope in the gospel. There are so many stories of how powerful the gospel is compared to any other means of accomplishing these goals.”

**New National Correspondent:** I’d like to introduce our new national correspondent, Teresa Falk. She is a member of Crystal City (Man.) Mennonite Church and a graduate of the Red River College journalism program in Winnipeg. She comes to the magazine after two years working at newspapers in Medicine Hat, Alta., and Portage, Man. Many thanks to outgoing staff person Leona Dueck Penner for her five years in the position!



**Falk**

**Redesign:** After many months of work, you’ll see a whole new look for the magazine, starting next issue. Look out for it next month!

—**Tim Miller Dyck**

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

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**General submission address:** submit@canadianmennonite.org  
**Letters to the Editor:** letters@canadianmennonite.org  
**Calendar announcements:** calendar@canadianmennonite.org  
**Transitions announcements:** transitions@canadianmennonite.org  
 Material can also be sent “Attn: Submissions/Letter to the Editor/Calendar/Transitions” by postal mail or fax to our head office.

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**Board of Directors:** British Columbia: Henry Neufeld, John W. Goossen. Alberta: Brenda Tiessen-Wiens. Saskatchewan: Joe Neufeld, Margaret Ewen Peters. Manitoba: Aiden S. Enns, Bernie Wiebe, Paul Krahn. Eastern Canada: Brice Balmer, Larry Cornies, Joanna Reesor-McDowell, Tobi Thiessen.

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

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**Cover: Mixer games proved a popular way for Mennonite youths and young adults from across Canada to get to know each other at Abbotsford 2007. For stories and more pictures of the youth assembly, see pages 20 to 23. Pictures of the kids assembly are on the BackPage.**  
—MC Canada photo by Dan Dyck

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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](http://canadianmennonite.org). The Sept. 3 issue will be ready by Aug. 30.



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Herschel, Sask.

## Mother pens book in son's memory

**M**ary Sawatzky is a mother in mourning. Four years after her son died, she is slowly putting the pieces of her life back together. But it has been a long, pain-filled walk.

Wade was a child who touched everyone's life. A bright, loving, outgoing boy, he took time for all he met. He loved ladybugs and, when he spotted one, would pick it up and breathe a prayer of blessing for a friend. Only seven years old, he was already a pastor in his own way, showing concern for others and including those he knew in his nightly prayers.

"I used to call him 'the little old man,'" says Sawatzky. "He had such an old soul."

It seems almost incomprehensible then that a boy with a heart so full of love should face death so soon. In July 2003, the Sawatzky family had just returned from a holiday. With his 13-year-old sister Paige, weeding the garden nearby, young Wade was playing in the horse corral on their farm. Nobody saw what happened, but his sister found him lying in the dirt and he was rushed to emergency. Some believe he was kicked by a horse, but no one knows for sure.

Friends and family gathered in support as the Sawatzky clan watched in disbelief. Wade's head swelled up and, after struggling through two difficult days, on July 19, 2003, he died.

In the year that followed this tragic event, Sawatzky was forced to face many seemingly unanswered questions: What did we do to deserve this? Why did this happen? Her heart ached to find meaning in the midst of pain.

"We felt we needed to avoid people," says Sawatzky. "[We felt as though] this happened to us because we did something wrong."

Further to that came fears of living without her child. Somehow she knew he was safe in heaven—and that was a comfort. She recalls, though, that "if



Photo by Karin Fehderau

**Mary Sawatzky of Herschel, Sask., wrote *God Bless: A Goodnight Prayer and Memory Book* in memory of her seven-year-old son, Wade, who died in July 2003.**

I was angry at anyone, it was my son. Why did you leave me?"

Yet in the midst of the turmoil, she felt God's presence. Looking back, Sawatzky knows God prepared her for Wade's final hours. When she first arrived at the hospital, she noticed there was an organ donor sticker on his health card, but couldn't recall who put it there. So when the time came to decide, the family was able to donate Wade's organs.

After his death, so many stories about Wade came out, stories Sawatzky had never heard. People she didn't even know passed on accounts of meeting her son; his smile or friendly hello always made a difference.

"In seven-and-a-half years, he touched a lot of people," says Sawatzky.

Claire Ewert Fisher, co-pastor of Herschel Mennonite Church, where Sawatzky attends, agrees that Wade was unusual in his love for others.

"His life seemed especially blessed," she affirms.

But the emotional roller coaster continued for Sawatzky. Days were spent thinking what her son might have accomplished with his life or wondering what she could do so she and others wouldn't forget him.

As she talks—sometimes choking back the tears that flow from unwilling eyes, at other times filled with purpose and plans for the future—she knows she wants to stay positive and spend her time doing for others. "A lot of how we deal with life is our choice," she explains.

So she decided to create a book in honour of her son. Because Wade loved to pray for others—and because her own prayer time with her children was meaningful—she hopes other

parents will be encouraged to pray with their children through her simple prayer book, *God Bless: A Goodnight Prayer and Memory Book*, which was published in 2005.

Strong enough to find the silver lining, Sawatzky admits she has come through the valley a better person and she has seen good come out of this. "I understand what it means now to love completely," she says.

Her daughter, too—who suffered Survivor Syndrome in the year after her brother's death, prompting a suicide attempt—has been able to share her experience with other teens. She has contributed her own poem to the book.

*God Bless* is sold at the McNally Robinson Bookstore in Saskatoon and is available from Sawatzky herself. For more information, call 306-377-2132. Proceeds from the sale go to help young women in Ukraine.

—Karin Fehderau

Kitchener, Ont.

## Egyptian church worker shares skills in Canada

**A**rsanuos Faltas meets people from many different countries and churches in his role as a church worker at a Coptic Orthodox retreat centre in Egypt.

This past year he has been using skills honed at the retreat centre to support programs at First Mennonite Church and House of Friendship in Kitchener, Ont., as a participant in MCC's International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP).

Highlights of his year in Canada, he says, are the opportunities to use his Arabic language skills, and his understanding of other cultures and reli-

**'...I'm listening and also sharing with them the precious gift that I have—the message of Christ.'**

gions to break down barriers among people and faith groups in Canada.

A memorable event took place at First Mennonite this spring when he helped the church plan a mission weekend that included the participation of people from St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox

Church in Toronto. "We worship the same Lord, but we are totally isolated from each other," Faltas says. "I see this weekend as a very successful step to break down some of the walls that history built."

"It's been really good to have Arsanuos on our pastoral team," says Gary Knarr, pastor of First Mennonite Church, adding that Faltas' sermons and his presence brought a greater understanding of the wider Christian community.

Through his work at the House of Friendship, Faltas has participated in interfaith meetings that bring together people from different religions.

"This would not happen in Egypt," he says of the meetings, explaining that Christians today are a minority in his country, where the vast majority of the population is Muslim. "It has

opened my eyes to accept others. It does not mean that I agree with their religion, but I'm listening and also sharing with them the precious gift that I have—the message of Christ."

Faltas is also breaking down barriers among people at the House of Friendship, a faith-based organization that provides services for people who have a low income. Many of the newcomers are from countries where men are expected to be leaders of the community and be active participants in society, so Faltas started a men's group at the House of Friendship to give participants the opportunity to meet other male newcomers and discuss their common concerns, thus reducing their sense of isolation in their new communities.

—MCC Canada release  
by **Gladys Terichow**



Photo by Maged Khairy

**Arsanuos Faltas and a choir from St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church in Toronto took part in a mission weekend at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont.**

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Boissevain, Man.



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## Congregational visitation:

# God made visible

Photo by Tina Lortien, iStockphoto

It was an inflated sense of self-importance as a chaplaincy student several years ago that led me to a necessary discovery about spiritual care. Spiritual care comes in many forms and from unexpected places—and we, as the church, must allow that to happen.

You see, during this time of intense hospital training, I unconsciously developed a sort of “superhero” mentality that said I (or one of the other chaplains) were the only ones who could offer the emotional and spiritual caregiving and support that patients needed.

Now, as a congregational pastor, I recognize that we can fall into that way of thinking as well. I hadn’t identified that self-perception until one day I was not able to be all things to all people. In one groggy early morning on-call shift, I had to decide between an ongoing situation in the emergency room that I had been called to, and a relatively healthy woman in her late 70s who, about to go in for a routine hip replacement, asked her nurse to page a chaplain.

Without much deliberation, I chose the crisis in the

ER. I recall thinking, “If I can’t get to ‘Marjorie’ to pray with her before surgery, then I’ll see her once she’s out of recovery.” And so I dismissed the situation.

Several hours later, I was paged to the operating room to minister to the medical team that had unexpectedly and unexplainably “lost” a woman during a hip surgery. They were in shock and needing support, while I felt utterly sick at the idea that I had not prayed with Marjorie nor listened to her reservations about this surgery—that I had failed her in the moments before her unexpected death. I was devastated!

It was only later, as I went back to Rehab to visit her roommate, that I was able to forgive myself, because I caught a glimpse of God’s mysterious grace in this difficult situation. This

roommate told me how Marjorie had been very anxious about this surgery, and really wanted some prayer before she went in.

Since the on-call chaplain did not arrive, the roommate prayed with her instead, and they talked a long time about her anxieties. In the end, Marjorie was able to go into the surgery with a sense of peace. God had placed an unofficial chaplain in her room with her, to minister to her in her dark moment. Instead of thinking that I had failed, I saw that God, in fact, had been faithful.

### **Avoiding the ‘superhero’ complex**

As the pastor of caregiving in a large Mennonite church with an ever-increasing senior population, I have, out of necessity, also had to avoid the “superhero” complex. A small pastoral team in a context of 600 members is simply not able to fulfill all of the caregiving needs that arise.

This is the case for many congregations. So, in order to offer personal Christian care to those who are experiencing brokenness, we develop visitation teams, we train deacons and elders, and some churches adopt models such as the well-known “Stephen Ministry” that began in the U.S. in the mid-1970s.

The practical and often desperate need is frequently what urges churches to develop various models of congregational visitation. But I believe how effectively and powerfully we embody and embrace this ministry depends more on the theological reasons supporting congregational visitation.

Looking back at the confessions and articles of faith of early Anabaptists and Mennonites, it is clear that, for many generations, caregiving within the congregation has been shared among more than just the pastors. Such caregiving is also part of the documents our denomination uses today.

The Mennonite Polity Document of 1996 describes the functions of the deacon, elder or lay minister as doing “pastoral care with the pastor...providing spiritual oversight of the congregation.... They may do pastoral care,” and “look after the needy....”

But what, beyond practical need, is it that compels us to develop minis-

tries in our congregations that involve members ministering to members in the area of caregiving? Is it a simple modelling of what we read in Acts 6 or James 5, as the New Testament community exemplifies various forms of reaching out to one another in times of need, even commissioning individuals for the task? This certainly is included in our understanding of the biblical mandate that calls us to walk with one another in the faith community on our individual and communal life journeys.

In another vein, is it what Marva Dawn, in her book *Truly the Community*, describes as the nature of our “belonging to one another,” from her reading of Romans 12? She beautifully articulates how the Christian community can be the place where God’s enfolding love is expressed “in the persons that God gives us to meet our needs.”

Both of these explanations offer significance to our discussion. We sense a biblical call to mutually care for one another, and we—as members belonging together to the Christian community—are connected to one another as we represent God’s love to each other. In other words, we live out love to one another with an incarnational theology as our motivating reason.

### **An empowering strength**

Placing congregational caregiving and visitation in the framework of incarnational theology lends it an empowering strength that we might typically not recognize.

When considering engaging in the spiritual and emotional caregiving ministries of the church, many are held back by feelings of insecurity, incapability and “smallness.” I often hear expressions of self-doubt, comments such as, “I wouldn’t know what to do or say. I’d probably do more harm than good.” We get trapped in our sense of nothingness or ordinariness, rather than seeing the mystery of incarnation at work in our lives.

But it was in mere humanness that God chose to become known to humanity, placing ordinary humanness alongside the divine in one person, Jesus. And that Jesus, being the embodiment of God, is also the source of our embodiment of God as we live as followers of Jesus. God’s choice of Jesus’ humanness leads us to celebrate the fact that God also chooses to use our mundaneness, our ordinariness, our “nothingness,” in this broken world that needs God’s presence.

And it is in the mundaneness of our engaging with one another as Jesus’ representatives, that we see the spark of the mysterious divine. Just as God ministered to Marjorie through the ordinary person beside her (without the fancy prepared prayers), so God shows up to those needing care through the ordinary people of our congregations.

**Continued on page 8**

**God had placed an unofficial chaplain in her room with her, to minister to her in her dark moment. Instead of thinking that I had failed, I saw that God, in fact, had been faithful.**

**Visitation** *From page 7*

It can be a humbling concept for those of us who sometimes feel a bit more important than we are, but it is a vitally empowering concept for those who struggle to see themselves as embodiments of God's love for the building up of the faith community!

**Characteristics of the incarnation**

As we involve ourselves in congregational visitation ministries, I encourage us to reflect on characteristics of the ultimate incarnation that we participate in as the presence of Christ to one another. God entered the world through a human in these ways, and continues to enter the world through us in similar ways:

- **First**, *God entered the world through Jesus in a specific context.* Jesus lived with a particular people, addressed their distinct needs, offered teaching and healing and comfort in the places where they were. As members care for one another, God is addressing particular circumstances unique to our settings and lives.

- **Second**, *God entered the world through Jesus, who was wholly human and divine, in an undivided way.* He was fully involved in the human world of his time, while also being the divine Son of God. In a unifying way, God was involved in the world—becoming flesh and dwelling in the person of Jesus. Similarly, we who are so utterly human are graced with the Holy Spirit's indwelling, in order to be reflections of that Spirit to others.

- **Third**, *God could only be made known through the incarnation by way of active participation.* The only way that meaning and truth exist in God's self-revelation is by Jesus' participation in life and death. When members of the Christian community reflect Jesus to each other in significant moments of life and death, then God is present and already beginning to transform the darkness into light, the Good Friday into Easter Sunday.

My prayer for the church is that, as members belonging to one another, we might each embrace a sense of conviction, responsibility and joy as we seek to be a healing, Jesus-like presence to one another on the journeys of our lives. God has gifted us all with the ability to care for others, and it is in activating that gift at congregational levels that God becomes flesh, time and time again.

—**Lisa Enns-Bogoya**

*The author is associate pastor of care and education at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.*



**God's choice of Jesus' humanness leads us to celebrate the fact that God also chooses to use our mundaneness, our ordinariness, our 'nothingness,' in this broken world that needs God's presence.**

## Visiting at Bethania... becomes a time of intergenerational fellowship

*"For many people visiting a personal care home is not on their list of favourite things to do. It is such a painful ordeal that it causes them to stop visiting altogether," says Susan (Martens) Froese. But for others, it can become an opportunity for thankfulness and intergenerational fellowship, as it did for Froese and her family over the last two decades. She tells her story with the hope that it can offer practical and creative tips for others who face similar challenges. Ed.*

**T**he Martens family is well-acquainted with suffering and visiting the sick. It began with our father, Jacob Martens, who, in 1985, spent two years and four months in Deer Lodge Hospital in Winnipeg after suffering a stroke, unable to speak with a feeding tube down his nose.

We talked to him, read to him, sang to him, knowing that he probably understood not a word. After two years and four months, death mercifully freed him.

His last words to me prior to his stroke were, "I so wish that I won't suffer a long, slow death."

During this time, my sister Anne and I also took turns spending the nights with our mother, Anna Martens, who was suffering from macular degeneration and congestive heart failure. We were grateful when she was admitted to Bethania Mennonite Personal Care Home. Now, both parents were looked after.

There she sat in her dark little room. Anne and I each visited twice a week, while our brothers Peter and



John came on weekends. Other people came too, but for the most part Mother sat alone with her thoughts in her dim little room.

We read to her. She waited for *Der Bote* and the *Mennonite Mirror*. Many books were read cover to cover. She, in turn, told us many stories of times long ago. When a birthday card arrived from her niece Liesel in Chicago, she said, "Not just a card. She wrote me a letter!" That was very special.

A year-and-a-half later, she died one morning, alone in her room.

Ruth Martens, Peter's wife, was admitted to Bethania in 1997, and my brother Bill, two years later, both suffering from Parkinson's disease. They were unhappy there in the beginning.

Ruth wanted to go home. Peter visited her three times a week at least during those nine years—travelling 56 kilometres. Son James and Bev and family also made visiting a family outing.

Ruth's room was beautifully decorated with family pictures and Peter's art. She suffered severe tremors, which could make the visits painful for herself and her visitors. Gradually, visits lessened, then some stopped altogether. Over the years, it became difficult to communicate with her. She eventually retreated into herself.

And Bill often couldn't get his words out, although he tried hard.

My late husband Dave and I, and my sister Anne and her husband Erni, began to visit together. We wheeled Ruth and Bill out of their small rooms into a pleasant sunny spot and got a pot of coffee from the kitchen. We offered delicacies such as strawberries, blueberries, chocolates and *platz* (Mennonite fruit cake). They smiled and ate eagerly. In summer, we moved into the beautiful gardens, enjoying the flowers, the brook and the sunlight.

Our cousins began to join us. Bill lit up when he saw them come. We read letters from relatives in Germany, showed the latest family pictures and told stories. The times when Ruth and Bill were uncommunicative, we still enjoyed the fellowship.

Bill still wished to come to family celebrations, even when transporting him became difficult, so we began to



come to him. On his birthday, the whole Martens clan came, including children and grandchildren, to gather in Bethania's Oak Room for a potluck, presents, flowers and candles. Bill and Ruth could see all the family and watch the little ones play.

The Martens family Christmas was now celebrated in the tea room. The celebration—including a potluck and visiting with out-of-province nieces and nephews, together with Bill and Ruth—became a special annual event.

When our sister Helen moved back to Winnipeg from Waterloo, Ont., three years ago, she joined our group, but also visited on her own, to have one-on-one communication. She read to them from the New Testament.

This past December, Ruth began to fail. The family kept vigil around her bed for 10 days and nights. She slipped away peacefully one morning, her family at her side. Free at last. The sun shone brightly all that day.

A few weeks later, Bill also stopped eating. For two weeks, his children Andrew and Lisa sat by his bedside. On Dec. 26, the Martens family gathered for our annual Christmas celebration. One by one, we slipped out to spend time at Bill's bedside. The next day at dusk Bill, too, peacefully drew his last breath.

Thinking back on those times, the hardest were when the ailing were still in their own homes. Once in Bethania, they were taken care of. We could go home after a visit and look after our own families.

Often when leaving Bethania, walking past all those wheelchairs and those seemingly vacant faces, we remarked how fortunate we were to be able to walk out and go home. These experiences have caused us to be profoundly grateful for personal care homes and their staff and volunteers. How could we have possibly managed alone?

—Susan (Martens) Froese



**Thinking back on those times, the hardest were when the ailing were still in their own homes. Once in Bethania, they were taken care of.**

Scottsdale, Pa.

## New handbook contains wisdom and humour

**S**eriously accurate and seriously funny were the editorial norms in creating a new Mennonite handbook for “all things Mennonite.” Combining reliable, historical and theological information alongside some fun facts, *The Mennonite Handbook* editors secured the help of conference leaders to provide reliable church history and theological information.

Brinton Rutherford, theological and historical leader for the Lancaster Conference, provided leadership in choosing church, theological and historical documents from the Beatitudes to the 2006 “core convictions” of the Mennonite World Conference. Karl Koop of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, also served as a consultant in this capacity.

The editorial effort was headed up by Sarah Kehrberg of Lexington, Ky., a former editor of Herald Press, who, with a number of 20-something young adults, provided counsel on very practical tips for being a churchgoing follower of Jesus Christ.

Step-by-step instructions in the handbook include:

- How to get to know your pastor;
- How to sing a four-part hymn;
- How to listen to a sermon;
- What to bring to a church potluck;
- How to survive a church split;
- How to console someone; and,
- How to memorize a Bible verse.

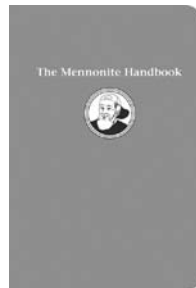
*The Mennonite Handbook*, published by Herald Press, has come in for some high praise on both sides of the border.

Duke University theologian Stanley Hauerwas says, “A handbook with a sense of humour, as well as filled with wisdom.”

“This concise anthology of the Mennonite history, beliefs and practices is a rich mine of...ah, forget it—it’s a hoot,” enthuses Steve “Reece” Friesen, associate pastor of Eben-

Ezer Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C. “Rookies will get questions answered and veterans will nod in appreciation as the mystery of ‘What’s up with us?’ gets unpackaged in this clever and easy-to-read book.”

“Where else can you find advice on how to stay alert in church, the meaning of baptism, communion and



foot washing, sharing your faith and the text of the Schleithem Confession—all between two covers?” asks Craig Carter of Toronto, Tyndale University College and Seminary religious studies professor and author of *The Politics of the Cross: The Theology and Social Ethics of John Howard Yoder*.  
—Herald Press release

Winnipeg

## Author on Mennonite ‘mission impossible’

**A**rlette Kouwenhoven is on a nearly impossible mission to find a Mennonite family thread that can be traced from the Netherlands to Mexico. Although she has no personal connection with Mennonites, it is her personal passion for tracing the migration pattern of the Dutch diaspora that drives her.

As a student she wrote a thesis on her own faith background in the Dutch Reformed Church. This time she hopes a book on Mennonite migrations will result from her work. But even deeper than the diaspora, she has a keen interest in understanding the reasons why various religious groups have left the Netherlands over the centuries.

Her interest in Mennonites arose when her agriculturalist husband—with a special interest in yucca plants—came upon Mennonites in Mexico. As her first research stop, Kouwenhoven visited the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, a connection she made while doing research on the Internet.

Her task won’t be easy, according to Mennonite Heritage Centre director Alf Redekopp. “It’s been attempted before, but very few reliable threads have been found that trace a single family line back to Holland,” he says. “There is a Wiebe



Kouwenhoven

family that has potential, but there may have been many Wiebes in Holland in the 16th century.”

By the end of her six-day stay in Winnipeg, and with the help of Redekopp and archivist Conrad Stoesz, Kouwenhoven managed to come up with a hopeful lead in the DeFehr family. It is possible, she says, that the DeFehr family is descended from Jan de Veer in Holland, born in 1521 in the town of Veere, and also possible that there are relatives currently living in Mexico.

“It will now be a challenge to find a DeFehr family [in Mexico] that does link up with this line,” says Kouwenhoven. “Any help in this respect would be welcome.” She welcomes contact from readers who may have had success in reliably tracing their family roots to Holland. She can be reached at arlette@tiscali.nl.

In the end, Kouwenhoven’s goal is to “make a readable book for a large group of people who are interested in the history of the Mennonites. When reading about them, I think they deserve to have their history written down and to be known to a large group of people outside the Mennonite diaspora.”

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

**W**hat do editors talk about when they get together? One thing is letters. We love 'em.

The letter is one of the great forms of communication. A third of the New Testament and a good deal of its doctrinal teaching come to us as letters.

Letters to the editor are churchly democracy in action. Even the unhappy ones show that readers care about our publication. Editors dread being ignored, and sometimes wonder, "If an article falls in the forest and no one writes a letter, has it really been read?"

Readers love letters, too. Many will say, "The first thing I turn to is the letters to the editor."

I received some memorable missives when I was a denominational editor, like the one that began, "Dear pacifist puke" (unsigned, of course). Another, dripping with venom, closed with, "In the bonds of Christian love."

Then there was this cryptic note: "Normally I don't write letters to the editor, but in this case I felt I had to." End of letter.

One "pen pal" was a meek and gentle soul who became transformed when writing to editors. The act of sitting down before a keyboard seemed to pull out the stopper of decorum, releasing a gush of bile from his fingertips.

Another writer sent a generally thoughtful letter marred by two profanities. One was a non-theological reference to an unpleasant afterlife

# Dear editor...

and the other was a barnyard term. When I deleted them, the writer complained that I had "cut out the best parts." I couldn't help replying, "You mean — and — were the best parts of your letter?"

Well, what about the charge that editors cut out the best part? Do people really think that when a letter or article arrives, we read it over carefully, searching for the best part? And when we find it, we pounce, exclaiming, "Aha, there it is—the best part. Out it comes." Do some readers really think we aim to shield them from the best parts of anyone's writing, and give them something bland instead? (That would make it difficult to sensationalize, which we also are accused of doing. It takes a creative genius to sensationalize bland.)

Most churchly editors love putting out an issue with plenty of letters. But that doesn't mean anything goes.

Sometimes we have to cut off debate, and that rankles readers, especially those who waited too long to send their own comments. Editors rarely invoke the cut-off. Trust me on

this; they really don't want to deprive you of material that is interesting, instructive and inspirational. But periodically they have to ask, "Will yet another letter on Topic A, no matter how precious it may seem to the writer, make readers' eyes glaze over with boredom?" One more letter may indeed hold the last great insight that no one else has yet considered, but sometimes it's just another fly buzzing over a horse long dead.

Want to be an effective letter writer?

1. Keep them short. Can you say it in 200 words or less? That takes work. As Blaise Pascal wrote to a friend, "I have made this letter longer than usual because I lack the time to make it shorter." A Mennonite editor recently received an 1,800-word "let-

ter" with strict instructions not to edit. Ever compliant, she didn't edit a single word. Nor did she print it.

2. Sign your name. Only in rare cases will editors publish a "name withheld."

3. When signing off, don't cite your employer or institution unless you are speaking on its behalf.

4. Before you hit "send," take one more look; maybe set it aside for a bit. Not to spoil your fun, but is this "a word fitly spoken" (Proverbs 25:11)? Will it persuade anyone? Think about the last time your mind was changed by a letter to the editor. What worked best—a rant or reasoned discourse? Getting something off your chest may feel good for an hour, but how will it look when you see it in public print?

Ask if you have simply reacted or if you have actually advanced and illumined the discussion. Learn to do that and editors will love you—and will be happy to open your e-mail or envelope the next time you write.

—**Wally Kroeker**, for Meetinghouse, an association of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ publications

## What about the charge that editors cut out the best part?

### Pontius' Puddle



## Letters

## Reader finds financial articles stimulating

I very much enjoyed the financial articles in the June 11 issue. Money is always a stimulating topic whether it is discussed at a secular level or from a spiritual perspective.

In “Our finances are a witness” on page 6, Brice Balmer takes his investing seriously and follows a careful, ethical course, which could be a good recipe for all of us. But I would add one more “issue” to his list: What kind of economic growth does my investment support?

I try to avoid companies whose growth strategy is based on acquisitions (generally gets rid of workers) rather than a more natural growth

**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.**

(employs more people). This strategy also helps in part with the globalization problem.

Garth Brandt’s article, “The ‘abomination of desolation’ found,” was “off the wall,” but it does raise the issue about our innate propensity to shop at malls. I have never shopped at Seven Oaks, but have it on my revised “destination list” to experience first-hand this “abomination.”

Lori Guenther-Reesor’s brief article,

“Fundraising and theology: Does the end justify the means?” was apropos. We at More Than A Roof Mennonite Housing (MTR) have just started a foundation to raise funds for homelessness and affordable housing in B.C. It is our desire that, while we want to be focused in our fundraising, we also want to adopt her adage that “fundraising is a ministry.”

—Peter A. Dueck, Vancouver

PHIL WAGLER



Outside the box

I feel it rise up within me now and then—that drunken sense of expertise.

This frightens me because the claim of the expert is so closely related to the slander of the serpent, who asked Eve, “Did God really say...?” The serpent claims to know more than we do. It hints at some secret, Gnostic superiority that can be had that flies in the face of everything we have been told. Suddenly the benevolent Creator becomes suspect.

The expertise of the expert is the dime-store fare of the self-inflated. Anyone who claims to be an expert in anything has yet to study it enough; they have yet to become genuine disciples.

“Gloom and reluctance are the hallmarks of expertise,” writes Harland Cleveland. It is this gloom and reluctance I have felt in my expert moments. It floods over me and I have seen it overwhelm others when the Living God challenges our grand conclusions. When I’ve managed to build something that looks wonderful I become an expert, but in that same moment I become reticent to see what I’ve created disturbed and there is a constant sinister gloom hanging over my efforts to keep my creation alive.

Many of our churches are experts at the Christian religion. We know how to do it. We know the songs. We know the game—we can build buildings, run programs and spout what Christians (right- or left-leaning) should. We are institutional experts who hire institutional experts to manage our religious enterprises.

And then along comes a person, a dream, a vision, a Holy Spirit thing that confronts our expertise, and we—who know it all—see only gloom. Then the first thing we

dig in is our heels. Having figured this church thing out, mastered the show and confined every possible work of the Holy Spirit to our structural or philosophical framework, we shake our heads and fret what might be lost if we confess our misappropriated expertise.

This is what has risen up in me and, quite frankly, almost more than anything it frightens me that I can become an expert accomplice in the lie from the pit. A hellish presence can infiltrate even the most beautiful garden.

I’m no expert on God. I’m no expert on his church. I’m a servant. I’m a slave to Christ. I depend on his speech to me, not my speech about him. I don’t receive any original words or find any previously undiscovered path; I simply retell and relive a mysterious Life that was, and is and is to come again. With my feet planted on the Rock of Ages, I am anticipating the next breeze of the Holy Spirit.

When gloom and reluctance overshadow me, I have lost my bearings, my way and my place. I have lost the adventure, stopped heeding the creative voice of the Eternal and settled for the squawk of the expert. Where have gloom and reluctance become the sullen, grumpy weather in your life or in the life of your church?

Beware the expert enterprise of human religion, even when it is bathed in the name of Christ. A sure sign that we’ve lost our bearings is that fear overpowers the word of the Lord to “Fear not” as he breathes new life, new hope and a new future that is as infinitely ancient as he is.

Phil Wagler is one of many servants at Zurich (Ont.) Mennonite Church (phil\_wagler@yahoo.ca).

## The expert

**A sure sign that we’ve lost our bearings is that fear overpowers the word of the Lord to ‘Fear not...’**

## Direct questions not always answered directly

Re: "Information session turns into angry harangue," June 11, page 24.

Sometimes constructing a bridge accentuates a chasm rather than spans it, and I wonder if perhaps some people's expectations of Sakioeta' Widrick's information session created the gap between speaker and listeners reported in this article. I understand that many people present at the information session felt uncomfortably targeted by Widrick's critiques. I also agree that dwelling on the resentment that sometimes exists in relationships can lead to more or different ill feelings.

That said, however, such sentiments can also form the basis for valuable discussion and learning. The reporter

writes that "[e]ven direct questions about how to go about building neighbourly relationships led to long explanations and diatribes on history, the current political situation and theology." Here is excellent proof that direct questions do not necessarily come paired with direct answers!

Indeed, the history of native-newcomer interactions in Canada is long, varied and complex, and every relationship that is formed is rooted in some aspect of that history. As a result, questions that arise are not easily summed up in a tidy package. The answers, and their significance, may still be waiting to be teased out from the many layers of the past.

No one person or group will have solutions or ideas that are functional, acceptable, or even comprehensible to

all. It is important, then, to conceptualize native-newcomer relations not in terms of expectations or goals, but in terms of honest and self-analytical dialogue. Hearing voices of anger and criticism is one way of opening doors to deeper understandings of past and present situations.

—**Katya MacDonald, Saskatoon**

## Reader thankful for insightful challenge

Re: "The Bible as fiction," June 11, p. 13.

This was one great piece on Scripture. Thank you to Phil Wagler for his observations of our times and his challenge to us. I was riveted in my seat in reflection on my life and my world as I read, and I need not say any more.

—**Garry Janzen, Delta, B.C.**

AIDEN ENNS



New Order Voice

In July I was hiking in the Rocky Mountains alongside three sons from an Old Order Mennonite family in Alberta. As we exchanged views about Mennonites, one asked if I believed in heaven and hell.

I used to worry a lot about that, I said, especially when I was younger. I "took Jesus as my Saviour" because I didn't want to go to hell if I died in a crash on my motorcycle. But now I don't worry about the afterlife, I said. I find this present life gives me enough to worry about.

Consider, for example, the hell on Earth we North American Christians create for others through war efforts—a minimum of 65,000 civilians killed in Iraq since the beginning of the U.S.-led attack in 2003 (see [iraqbodycount.org](http://iraqbodycount.org))—and economic policies of displacement and exploitation. How we respond, shows our allegiances. Do we actively resist the spoils of empire or capitulate and enjoy the conveniences? How we respond, I believe, determines the extent of our salvation.

I'll admit it's simplistic, but I've adopted a view of looking at people as being either oppressed or oppressors, which I learned from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. As one who identifies in the latter category, I need a theology of liberation for the oppressors.

Unfortunately, as Mennonites, we follow the mainstream in our reluctance to give up power and control. We point to mission and relief efforts, and aim to be responsible with the wealth and power we've been given. But rarely do we—and I include myself, as a white, male, heterosexual, highly-educated property owner—celebrate downward mobility.

Sallie McFague calls for an "ecological theology of liberation." In *Life Abundant* (Fortress, 2001) she says we need a theology "that can free us from insatiable consum-

erism and, as a result, liberate others, including the natural world, for a better, healthier life."

I'm haunted by the words of Gustavo Gutierrez in *A Theology of Liberation*: "To be with the oppressed is to be against the oppressor." Voluntary poverty can be an act of solidarity and resistance, he says. "Christian poverty

has meaning only as a commitment of solidarity with the poor, with those who suffer misery and injustice."

Instead of idealizing material poverty, he sees it as an evil. For Christians to voluntarily adopt a life of poverty, or to adopt a "spiritual poverty" as he calls it, "is to protest against it and to struggle to abolish it."

"Because of this solidarity—which must manifest itself in specific action, a style of life, a break with one's social class—one can also help the poor and exploited to become aware of their exploitation and seek liberation from it," Gutierrez writes.

As a person of power and privilege, I... Let me try again. As one who participates in oppression and exploitation, I need avenues of repentance and resistance. With all the despair in this world, I find it escapist to simply rely on an other-worldly hope in heaven. I need hope to pursue a more difficult and materially sacrificial life now.

I need to taste more of that heaven that Jesus said was already in our midst. "My yoke is easy and my burden is light," said the Saviour, who dwelt among the poor, held scorn for those pursuing wealth and died without a robe. Where is that burden now? How can I put on that yoke?

Aiden Enns is a member of Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. He is the publisher of *Geez* magazine and sits on the Canadian Mennonite board. Send him feedback at [aiden@geezmagazine.org](mailto:aiden@geezmagazine.org).

## Here and now Christianity

...as Mennonites, we follow the mainstream in our reluctance to give up power and control.

## 'Angry harangue' article damages relationships

As a young white Mennonite couple living in South Dakota on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation working with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) while learning how to build right relationships between white Mennonites and natives, we are saddened that the "Information session turns into angry harangue" article (June 11, page 24) is damaging to these relationships. Word of this article is already making the rounds in aboriginal communities even south of the U.S.-Canada border.

We have worked hard to come to this community with a humble spirit and an open mind, in the role of a listener. White people and governments have done, and continue to do, terrible things to the First Nations of this continent, and aboriginals have every right to express anger about those actions. Although we personally may wish to separate ourselves from these actions, we recognize that we are a part of the system that harms our friends and neighbours here, and that we have also benefited from the land and wealth taken from the First Nations.

We are learning how to listen better when aboriginal people share about their experiences with white people and governments. We find that we gain respect and friendship from our aboriginal friends when we are able to listen and not take their words personally or react defensively. We also find that we come closer to God and become better people by taking time for self-reflection when we feel defensive or angry. We are learning to "own" our own feelings, rather than blaming them on someone else.

If we really want to learn how to build relationships with First Nations peoples, we need to let go of preconceived notions of the answers we expect, and begin with careful and respectful listening to their perspectives, even when they are not easy to hear.

—**Carl Meyer and Karissa Ortman**  
Loewen, Porcupine, S.D.

*The authors are program coordinators with the MCC's Oglala Lakota Nation Unit in Porcupine.*

## Churchill quoted in preposition debate

I enjoyed the exchange between my old friend Gil Epp and the editor ("CCP judge needs grammar lesson," June 25, page 16), and I agree with both of them!

As an old English teacher, I always enjoyed the comment from Winston Churchill which, I think, puts into proper perspective the particular rule about the use of prepositions. Supposedly an editor had clumsily rearranged one of Churchill's sentences to avoid ending it in a preposition, and the Prime Minister, very proud of his style, scribbled this note in reply: "This is the sort of English up with which I will not put."

—**John Schellenberg, Calgary**

## Corrections

Regarding coverage of the Mennonite-Muslim dialogue at Conrad Grebel University College (June 25, page 32), the police did not advise organizers against admitting protesters into the public meeting or raise safety concerns about doing this. Organizers told protesters they would have time to ask questions, but did not lengthen the planned question period for this purpose. Also, the person on the left in the top right photo on page 34 was misidentified: It is Rick Janzen of Mennonite Central Committee's Europe and Middle East Department.

The Bible reading resources "My Bible Reading Chart," "Dig Into the Bible" and "Read the Book: A Reading Record for the Whole Bible," are published by Mennonite Publishing Network's Faith and Life Resources. Incorrect information appeared in the "Listing of children's books and resources," June 25, page 12.

*Canadian Mennonite regrets the errors.*



## God's People Now!

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Bogotá, Colombia

## Free trade not free for Colombia's poor: Christian groups oppose bilateral talks

In response to Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's visit to Bogotá on July 16, Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), Kairos Ecumenical Justice Initiatives and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)—in collaboration with the Americas Policy Group of the Canadian Coalition for International Cooperation—gave the Canadian press an opportunity to hear alternative versions of the Colombian reality.

At a press conference, organized by these groups, the media heard the concerns of small-scale farmers and miners, indigenous peoples, displaced persons and victims of state crimes.

The journalists, meeting with human rights workers just outside the hotel's official press suite, zoned in on the free trade issue since Harper had just announced that free trade talks had already started with Colombia.

In a statement released by the Prime Minister's Office that day, Harper said that Colombian President Alvaro Uribe's government had "made tremendous progress against the vicious cycle of conflict, violence and under-development that has plagued Colombia for decades. They have persuaded tens of thousands of paramilitaries to lay down their arms and join their countrymen in building a safer and more prosperous country."

To that end, Harper said, "We believe greater economic integration through trade and investment will help alleviate poverty and create new wealth and employment opportunities for Colombians and Canadians." Claiming that "Canadian expertise complements Colombian economic strength in such areas as mining, engineering, and oil and gas," he said, "We anticipate mutually beneficial agreements that will strengthen the partnership between our countries."

While Uribe has also spoken favourably about free trade's role in stabiliz-

ing the Colombian economy, CPTer and Canadian human rights activist Robin Buyers told the press that poor Colombians do not believe free trade will improve their lives. Rather, they fear that the entry of multinational corporations—particularly into the mining and biofuel sectors—will only increase the displacement of rural people from their lands.

Teofilo Acuña, president of the Federation of Peasant Miners of the South of Bolivar, spoke to journalists about the plight of small-scale miners.

Acuña's concerns include the re-arming of paramilitary groups in the mining region and pressures from multinational mining interests, including Canada's Bema Corporation, and said, "Until the world understands these realities of Colombia's rural population, free trade negotiations will not address their interests."

Lilia Solano, director of Project Justice and Life, an organization that accompanies Colombian victims of state crimes, insisted that human rights issues should take priority over business. "Around the country we have 30,000 that have been detained or

disappeared in the last 10 years, three million internally displaced people [and] thousands have been killed," she said. "So how can someone say, 'Okay, all this blood is running, but business goes first?'"

Luis Evelis Andrade, the president of Colombia's national indigenous peoples organization, had planned to address human rights and the demobilization process, among other issues, but was prevented because of time constraints the journalists were operating under.

Jenny Neme from JustaPaz, a Mennonite Church initiative that works on issues of peace, justice and nonviolence in Colombia, distributed written materials highlighting the impact of the conflict on Colombian Protestant churches and the recent theft of sensitive human rights documentation from its office.

However, according to Carol Tyx, who wrote the CPTnet release, "the message from grassroots workers was clear: The Canadian government should value human rights over trade deals and investment."

—**Ross W. Muir**, from CPTnet and the PMO's Office releases

**Concerns include the re-arming of paramilitary groups...and pressures from multinational mining interests, including Canada's Bema Corporation.**

Photo by Dave Rogalsky



**MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman, left, discusses his presentation at the annual Conrad Grebel Ralph and Eileen Lebold Endowment Dinner with Ralph Lebold. This year, over \$14,000 was raised, putting the fund at nearly \$600,000. The endowment provides nearly \$29,000 towards the ministry stream of the Conrad Grebel University College's Master of Theological Studies program.**

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

## Former soldier now follows the ‘Lord of Heaven’

**P**astor Hai\* is a small, wiry man whose cheerful smile belies a lifetime of struggles. He was a soldier of the Vietnamese government for 14 years, then a policeman for 12. So when he decided to seek the “Lord of Heaven” he had heard about—and leave his life of force and violence (including persecuting Christians) behind—he faced harsh opposition from his former comrades-in-arms. Hai has spent time in prison and suffered painful physical abuse and social pressure.

Because of his long service in the armed forces of the present government of Vietnam, he is entitled to a monthly pension—and a more substantial block or brick house that the government would build without cost to him. But because he chose to follow the Lord, and to become a pastor in a house church that meets without legal permission by the government, he has forfeited these benefits.

Now he is a shepherd for three small house churches. One meets in a small front room of his frame-and-bamboo house, down a winding sandy path off the main road. The other two



**Vietnamese Mennonite Pastor Hai\* and his wife stand next to one of their crops which is drying on the ground at the right. (The photo was altered to protect their identity.)**

require weekly bike rides of more than 20 miles, one on Saturday and one on Sunday afternoon, with his wife bouncing along on the back. Their income is based on labour and raising pepper and fruit trees growing on their small plot of land.

But Hai has determined there is greater value in worshipping the Lord, shepherding his flock and sharing his new faith with others, so he has chosen not to give up these blessings for an easier life that could be his.

And he is cheerful. The sign above the altar, seen in every meeting place for worship across Vietnam, expresses his foremost mission now: “Ton Vinh Duc Chua Troi!” (In English: “Praise the Lord of Heaven!”)

—MC Canada release

by **Don Sensenig**

*The author worked in Vietnam from 1963-73 with Eastern Mennonite Missions.*

\* Pseudonym

Falls Church, Va.

## Vietnamese fellowship names Canadian as president

**R**epresentatives of the Vietnamese Mennonite churches in North America met at the eighth biennial conference in Falls Church from June 29 to July 1. The event was hosted by the local congregation, Vietnamese Christian Fellowship.

The conference of the North American Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship was chaired by Rev. Nhien Pham from Vancouver, B.C., who served as the organization’s president for 10 years. During his tenure the fellowship supported church development in Vietnam, and in 2006 established a Vietnamese congregation in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Rev. Chau Dang from Calgary was chosen as the new fellowship president. Other members of the executive committee are Nhien Pham, Peter Duc Nguyen, Think Ho, Hoa Chau and Tuyen Nguyen.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Stebbins, a former Christian and Missionary Alliance missionary in Vietnam, who is well known across evangelical Vietnamese denominational groups worldwide, was the keynote speaker; he also led a workshop on Evangelism Explosion.

A special feature was the recognition of Eastern Mennonite Missions’ personnel who had served in Vietnam from 1957-75. A pictorial presentation of the development of the Mennonite Church in Vietnam, which today has thousands of members in more than 100 congregations, was shown.

The next conference is scheduled for Edmonton in 2009.

—**Luke Martin**



**Chau Dang of Calgary, left, the new president of the North American Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship, speaks with retired Philadelphia pastor Quang Tran and his wife, Tam Nguyen, at the eighth biennial conference held earlier this summer in Falls Church, Va. Ordained in 1969 in Saigon, Tran was the first Vietnamese Mennonite pastor.**





Photo by Gordon Janzen

sh crops, black pepper, their identities. Ed.)



Photo by Luke Martin

Darfur, Sudan

## Knotted comforters bring comfort

**F**our years of war in Sudan's Darfur region have killed hundreds of thousands of people and driven about 2.5 million from their homes.

Languishing in camps with next to nothing, more than 80,000 survivors have received a token of compassion in the form of blankets donated by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Many of the blankets are simple comforters knotted by hand in Canada and the United States.

Recipients recently told their stories and expressed their thanks in conversations with Charlotte Brudenell, a worker for an MCC partner organization, ACT-Caritas.

"I am suffering. God is generous," said Fatima Yusef, a mother of eight children. "Thank you for spending the time to make

this blanket."

Yusef's husband, a police officer, was killed by one of the many armed groups fighting for control of Darfur. The family's house was burned, and Yusef and her children lost nearly everything they had. They fled on foot to Bilel, a camp of more than 5,000 people in southern Darfur.

"Before the fighting we had beds to sleep on; now just grass mats," Yusef said. "The children sleep on this mat and use the blanket to cover themselves."

The family used to grow much of its own food, but Yusef is unable to farm in Bilel. Instead, she collects firewood outside the camp, makes charcoal and sells it to buy a little food.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**



**Fatima Yusef, right, lives in Bilel, a camp for displaced people in Sudan's war-torn Darfur region. She is one of more than 80,000 people in Darfur who have received a knotted comforter from Mennonite Central Committee.**

Vatican City/Winnipeg

## Mennonite leaders not worried by papal pronouncement

The Vatican has reaffirmed the primacy of the Roman Catholic Church, calling other churches defective and, in the case of Protestant denominations, not even churches “in the proper sense.”

The statements, which were “ratified and confirmed” by Pope Benedict XVI and published by his order, reiterate some of the most controversial ideas in a 2000 Vatican declaration that was published under Benedict’s authority when he was still Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. The July 10 document purports to correct “erroneous interpretation” and “misunderstanding” of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council with regard to ecumenical dialogue.

“I am not at all surprised that Ratzinger would reiterate what he has promoted for decades as a basic

doctrine and understanding of the church. This is neither new nor is it a surprise. It is the ‘same-old, same-old,’” says Mennonite Church Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman. “This was the normal pre-Vatican II language, and he moved back to that language.”

However, Suderman admits the statement “continues to put ecumenical relationships on uneven ground. We can work together, but not as presumed equals.”

The Vatican’s top official for Christian unity has rejected criticism that the document will hinder dialogue. “Every dialogue presupposes clarity about the different positions,” says Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. “If this declaration now explains the Catholic profile and expresses what, in a Catholic view, unfortunately still divides us, this does not hinder dialogue but promotes it.”

Neither Suderman nor Helmut Harder, who represented Mennonite World Conference at the Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue from 1998-03, are worried that the Roman Catholic Church will shut down its ecumenical agenda.

“Dialogue is only possible if you begin by stating the truth as you see it,” Harder says, reiterating Kasper’s point-of-view. “But then both sides have to be open to the Holy Spirit. What that means for Catholic-

Mennonite dialogue is that we need to bring forward our best understanding of...how...we understand the church as one, as holy, as universal, as having apostolic authority.

“Let’s converse, debate and pray among ourselves and with all who claim to be Christians in a context of openness to the Holy Spirit,” Harder recommends.

—**Ross W. Muir**,  
with files from RNS and ENI

**‘We can work together, but not as presumed equals.’**

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St. Malo, Man.

# \$100 million food aid agreement celebrated

**A**t a special event at the farmyard of Harold and Maryanne Penner near St. Malo last month, Canadian Foodgrains Bank supporters welcomed the announcement that the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) will provide \$100 million in funding over the next five years to help in the organization's efforts to end hunger in developing countries.

Penner, who is coordinator of community growing projects in Manitoba, explained that many of those attending the announcement were grassroots supporters representing some 25 growing projects from as far away as Boissevain and Brandon.

"The accomplishments of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and its supporters in both rural and urban communities across the country serve as a reminder that Canadians are making a real difference in the world," said Vic Toews, president of the federal government's Treasury Board. "I believe organizations like the Canadian Foodgrains Bank go to the very heart of Canadian values," he added. "Famine has touched the lives of many Canadian families, and many are deeply concerned about the millions of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition."

"This is a great day," said Jim Cornelius, executive director of Canadian Foodgrains Bank. "Our partnership with the government of Canada allows us to multiply the food and cash that is generously donated by Canadians and reach many more people and communities."

In previous three-year agreements, CIDA provided \$16 million per year to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. This announcement marks a \$4 million annual increase, giving the Foodgrains Bank a new flexibility to fund cash-based food security activities with a matching contribution and boosting its ability to support food security activities from \$2 million a year to \$5.5 million.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a Christian-based food aid development organization that collects donations

of grain, cash and other agricultural commodities for distribution to the world's hungry.

—Elmer Heinrichs

**MP Vic Toews, left, president of the Treasury Board, joined Canadian Foodgrains Bank chief executive officer Jim Cornelius prior to announcing a five-year, \$100 million federal funding program for the Foodgrains Bank in St. Malo, Man., last month.**



Photo by Elmer Heinrichs



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## Youth assembly was 'smurftastic'

All youth conferences need one ingredient above all others—youths—and so our group from Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford happily joined others from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, and other parts of B.C. The youth assembly was held at Mennonite Educational Institute in Abbotsford, where we spent the majority of our time.

Youth worship sessions were held in the secondary school gym, and it was a thrill to hear the singing of hundreds upon hundreds of youths from all over the country mixed together to praise God. Our theme was "Built to last," symbolized by a giant Styrofoam Inukshuk, which I had the privilege of helping put together the day before the assembly. At every session we would have a new topic within the "Built to last" theme, including "Built on Christ," "Built in love," and "Built through community."

We would also get a new speaker at each of the evening worship times, and they would share stories and experiences with us. One of the speakers that stood out the most for me was Dann Pantoja, who told us the story of Haron Al-Rasheed-Baraguir and Elwyn Neri—a Muslim and a Christian, respectively—who were put on a boat for three days together to talk to each other about their beliefs. Through that experience, and afterwards, they learned that they shared more beliefs than they originally thought and they learned to work together. I found it to be very uplifting.

Besides the worship sessions, there were service projects. Along with a few of the youths from my group and others from all over Canada, I went to the Fraser Valley Gleaners one afternoon to help cut up potatoes and tomatoes. Creating soup mix to feed people in Third World countries from rejected food is a brilliant idea, and we were proud to help a little in that effort.



Photo by J.D. Dueckman

Seminars were also offered to us in a wide variety of topics, from becoming a global church and honouring Scripture to disaster preparedness and biblical sex education. Kyle and Ashley Penner's talk on sex didn't pull any punches or beat around any bushes; they were straightforward, frank, and spoke from the heart. A group from Ontario said they found the talk "stretching." I would definitely agree; my comfort zone got pushed around.

A personal highlight of the conference was the Starfield concert. A Christian group (and mostly Mennonite), they had an awesome lineup of songs, both originals and choruses that I knew from church or youth group. I had a great time there, and others felt the same way. "The Starfield concert was an awesome



Besides attending seminars and worship events, Mennonite youths played mixer games at Abbotsford 2007.



Photo courtesy of J.D. Dueckman

**J.D. Dueckman and Cam Tate pose in front of the Inukshuk that was the centrepiece of the Abbotsford 2007 youth assembly.**

way to break out and praise God with dancing," some youths from Ontario told me. Who says Mennonites don't dance?

Sadly, though, the conference only lasted a few days, and when it was over we had to say our goodbyes and go home—which for us was all of a 10-minute drive.

Darren Goertzen of Delta, B.C., summed up Abbotsford 2007 the best, when he said, "It was smurftastic!"

—J.D. Dueckman

*The author is a youth sponsor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C.*

**Anne Campion, left, youth hosting seminar, welcomes jubilant youth sponsors Randy Hildebrand and Kristin Wieler of Steinbach (Man.) Mennonite Church to the Abbotsford 2007 youth assembly.**



MC Canada photo by Dan Dyck

## Youths seek 'fun' in Abbotsford

**W**hy did some young Mennonites come all the way from the Stouffville area of Ontario to attend the youth assembly?

"To have fun, learn, meet new people, learn about God and our beautiful country. We went to the U.S. last year. We can meet new Canadians [here]," said Allison Turman of Community Mennonite Church, Stouffville.

"Why go to San Jose?" asked Ben Reesor, from the same church. "It's for Americans. Just because it is bigger doesn't mean it's better."

For Ellen Reesor of Hagerman Mennonite Church in Markham, Ont., coming to B.C. meant her first trip on an airplane. "It was really interesting to fly above the clouds. The advice I got was, don't be nervous and chew gum." Asked what her expectations for the assembly were, she said, "A whole lot of fun, and to grow closer to God."

She also added that she hoped to meet "new friends that aren't related to me." Asking further about that, it turns out that, of the 14 young people she came with, 10 have "Reesor" as, or in, their last name!

—Tim Miller Dyck

## Standing room only for 'sex talk'

**V**enturing bravely into territory that many parents, pastors and youth sponsors have difficulty navigating with their youths, Kyle Penner, youth pastor at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, and his wife Ashley entitled their presentation at the Abbotsford 2007 youth assembly, "SEX!!!" The room was packed both times the presentation was offered.

The Penners began with a description of sex as a beautiful part of God's creation and plan for the human experience, present before the Fall. That led to the question, "If sex and sexuality is so great, why wait?"

They explained that Scripture teaches that full sexual expression is intended for a man and a woman who have pledged their lives to each other in marriage. They acknowledged that, although the Bible does not specifi-

cally give reasons, there are benefits from following this teaching. Apart from the obvious concerns about pregnancy, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, sex is the most "intimate thing that you can do with another human being," they said. It makes participants vulnerable, and creates "spiritual and physical unity so powerful" that people get hurt when it is experienced outside of the marriage relationship.

As young adults themselves, the Penners are well aware of the practical challenges that Christian teens face in trying to follow this teaching in Canada's sex-saturated culture. They discussed issues such as:

- Deciding "how far to go" in expressing physical affection in dating relationships;
- Masturbation (when is it a "problem?");
- The dangers of pornography—especially now that it is available on home computers; and,
- How to form accountability relationships with other Christians to deal with these temptations.

Other topics were covered, including a holistic description of what a healthy love relationship involves, and the high value that Scripture places on those who choose to be single in order to serve God more freely.

During small group time, one young man said, "It is the first time anyone in the church has talked to us about pornography." Many seemed grateful to have these issues brought into the open.

—Joanna Reesor-McDowell



**Youths celebrate being at the Abbotsford 2007 youth assembly.**



Photo by Tim Miller Dyck

## BikeMovement releases DVD at MC Canada and U.S.A. assemblies

**B**ikeMovement the Documentary: *A Young Adult Perspective on Church* was simultaneously released on DVD at the Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. assemblies last month. The documentary follows BikeMovement, a group of young adults who rode bicycles across the U.S. for two months last summer as an initiative to engage in open conversation about the church. It summarizes conversations that took place both within the BikeMovement group and with more than 20 church communities the cyclists visited along the way.

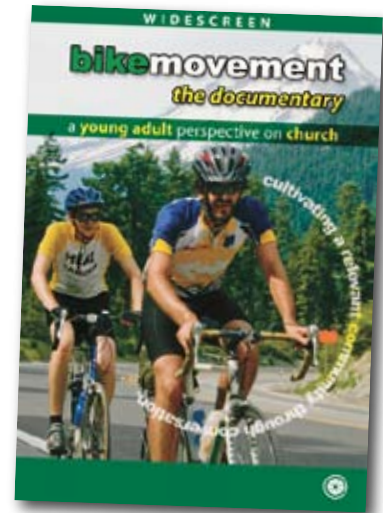
A common question asked in many of these church conversations was, “Why are many young adults who grew up in the church not returning?” The BikeMovement group discovered that there is

no single answer to this question, but the documentary attempts to identify common threads and offer suggestions to create safe places where generations can come together and better understand each other.

Topics covered in the documentary include: examining what it means to live in a tight-knit community while inviting people in, and exploring ways to create intergenerational dialogue despite language and generational differences. The documentary also includes a study guide with activities and questions to help groups work through the various issues together.

To order, visit [mennonitechurch.ca](http://mennonitechurch.ca) and follow the “Resource Centre” link.

To help continue this conversation on a global level, all proceeds from



the sale of the documentary will go to Amigos, the Mennonite World Conference’s Global Community of Young Anabaptists, in assisting young adults from all over the world attend the next Mennonite World Conference assembly in Paraguay in 2009.  
—BikeMovement release

Nanchong, China

### Cyclists hope conversations continue...in cyberspace

**F**ollowing a gruelling final day in the mountains of southern China’s Yunnan Province, four cyclists representing BikeMovement Asia unpacked their panniers for the last time in Asia. After cycling more than 2,400 kilometres—catching buses when time was an issue—six bikers from Canadian and American Mennonite churches arrived in Nanchong on June 18.

The group departed from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on May 5, and travelled through Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and China. The group’s size varied at times, as a few locals joined for portions of the journey, but the majority was biked by the original six riders.

Besides having a great opportunity to experience the sights, sounds and tastes of southeast Asia and China, throughout their journey the cyclists were able to connect with individuals and communities affiliated with Mennonite Central Committee and Eastern Mennonite



BikeMovement photo

**BikeMovement Asia participants Nicole Cober Bauman, left, Tim Showalter and Neil Richer ride through Laos, mid-way through their 2,400-kilometre trip.**

Missions, who often helped make initial connections with local communities.

Along the way, the cyclists posted photos and journals on their interactive website ([bikemovement.org](http://bikemovement.org)) to illustrate the stories of their travels and those they met. The photos served as a way to communicate the riders’ experiences, while the journals helped to describe the conversations they had and the personal growth they underwent.

Neil Richer, who participated in both BikeMovement Asia and U.S.A., summed up his first 13 days of travel and conversation in a journal entry by saying, “I don’t think I will ever have personal space issues again.”

Nicole Cober Bauman of Ontario encourages the cyclists’ sending communities to continue to join in conversation through BikeMovement’s website. “I’d be glad to hear [more of] your thoughts, because I think it is by sharing my questions—bringing my reflections home and letting them infuse conversations with my peers, colour the life of my communities—that this experience...is made meaningful, relevant, worthwhile.”

The six original riders include Richer and Cober Bauman plus Jesse Bauman, Addie Liechty, Nick Loewen and Tim Showalter.

—BikeMovement release

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

## Former soldier now follows the 'Lord of Heaven'

**P**astor Hai\* is a small, wiry man whose cheerful smile belies a lifetime of struggles. He was a soldier of the Vietnamese government for 14 years, then a policeman for 12. So when he decided to seek the "Lord of Heaven" he had heard about—and leave his life of force and violence (including persecuting Christians) behind—he faced harsh opposition from his former comrades-in-arms. Hai has spent time in prison and suffered painful physical abuse and social pressure.

Because of his long service in the armed forces of the present government of Vietnam, he is entitled to a monthly pension—and a more substantial block or brick house that the government would build without cost to him. But because he chose to follow the Lord, and to become a pastor in a house church that meets without legal permission by the government, he has forfeited these benefits.

Now he is a shepherd for three small house churches. One meets in a small front room of his frame-and-bamboo house, down a winding sandy path off the main road. The other two



Photo by Gordon Jaizen

**Vietnamese Mennonite Pastor Hai\* and his wife stand next to one of their cash crops, black pepper, which is drying on the ground at the right. (The photo was altered to protect their identities. Ed.)**

require weekly bike rides of more than 20 miles, one on Saturday and one on Sunday afternoon, with his wife bouncing along on the back. Their income is based on labour and raising pepper and fruit trees growing on their small plot of land.

But Hai has determined there is greater value in worshipping the Lord, shepherding his flock and sharing his new faith with others, so he has chosen not to give up these blessings for an easier life that could be his.

And he is cheerful. The sign above the altar, seen in every meeting place for worship across Vietnam, expresses his foremost mission now: "Ton Vinh Duc Chua Troi!" (In English: "Praise the Lord of Heaven!")

—MC Canada release  
by **Don Sensenig**

*The author worked in Vietnam from 1963-73 with Eastern Mennonite Missions.*

\* Pseudonym

Falls Church, Va.

## Vietnamese fellowship names Canadian as president

**R**epresentatives of the Vietnamese Mennonite churches in North America met at the eighth biennial conference in Falls Church from June 29 to July 1. The event was hosted by the local congregation, Vietnamese Christian Fellowship.

The conference of the North American Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship was chaired by Rev. Nhien Pham from Vancouver, B.C., who served as the organization's president for 10 years. During his tenure the fellowship supported church development in Vietnam, and in 2006 established a Vietnamese congregation in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Rev. Chau Dang from Calgary was chosen as the new fellowship president. Other members of the executive committee are Nhien Pham, Peter Duc Nguyen, Think Ho, Hoa Chau and Tuyen Nguyen.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Stebbins, a former Christian and Missionary Alliance missionary in Vietnam, who is well known across evangelical Vietnamese denominational groups worldwide, was the keynote speaker; he also led a workshop on Evangelism Explosion.

A special feature was the recognition of Eastern Mennonite Missions' personnel who had served in Vietnam from 1957-75. A pictorial presentation of the development of the Mennonite Church in Vietnam, which today has thousands of members in more than 100 congregations, was shown.

The next conference is scheduled for Edmonton in 2009.

—**Luke Martin**



Photo by Luke Martin

**Chau Dang of Calgary, left, the new president of the North American Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship, speaks with retired Philadelphia pastor Quang Tran and his wife, Tam Nguyen, at the eighth biennial conference held earlier this summer in Falls Church, Va. Ordained in 1969 in Saigon, Tran was the first Vietnamese Mennonite pastor.**

Darfur, Sudan

## Knotted comforters bring comfort

**F**our years of war in Sudan's Darfur region have killed hundreds of thousands of people and driven about 2.5 million from their homes.

Languishing in camps with next to nothing, more than 80,000 survivors have received a token of compassion in the form of blankets donated by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Many of the blankets are simple comforters knotted by hand in Canada and the United States.

Recipients recently told their stories and expressed their thanks in conversations with Charlotte Brudenell, a worker for an MCC partner organization, ACT-Caritas.

"I am suffering. God is generous," said Fatima Yusef, a mother of eight children. "Thank you for spending the time to make

this blanket."

Yusef's husband, a police officer, was killed by one of the many armed groups fighting for control of Darfur. The family's house was burned, and Yusef and her children lost nearly everything they had. They fled on foot to Bilel, a camp of more than 5,000 people in southern Darfur.

"Before the fighting we had beds to sleep on; now just grass mats," Yusef said. "The children sleep on this mat and use the blanket to cover themselves."

The family used to grow much of its own food, but Yusef is unable to farm in Bilel. Instead, she collects firewood outside the camp, makes charcoal and sells it to buy a little food.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**



**Fatima Yusef, right, lives in Bilel, a camp for displaced people in Sudan's war-torn Darfur region. She is one of more than 80,000 people in Darfur who have received a knotted comforter from Mennonite Central Committee.**

Abbotsford, B.C.

## Garry Janzen named new B.C. executive minister

**A**fter much discernment and prayer, Garry Janzen, senior pastor of Sherbrooke Mennonite Church in Vancouver, has accepted the call to be the new executive minister for Mennonite Church British Columbia.

Janzen will continue as Sherbrooke pastor until the end of 2007, going to half-time as of Oct. 1, when he will begin his duties with MC B.C., and then move to full-time with MC B.C. at the beginning of the new year.

The executive and search committee both affirmed Janzen as their first choice, says conference moderator Gerd Bartel. "Garry has vital urban multi-ministry, multicultural experience, and an excellent grasp of the challenges and opportunities that are ahead for us as MC B.C.," he says. "Garry has skillfully chaired our Steering Committee that led us through our successful restructuring and covenanting process. We stand amazed at God's leading in the unanimous affirmation that has been expressed for Garry's appointment at all levels of our discerning process."

The position of executive minister is a new one, replacing the conference minister position previously filled by Henry Kliever. Janzen envisions his role as that of a conference leader, paying attention to the overall vision and ministry of MC B.C., helping to develop healthy and growing congregations, discerning shared ministry, ensuring care and support for pastors, and maintaining connections with the larger Mennonite Church.

Janzen has three goals he hopes to accomplish. "Together with the Executive Committee, I will help those congregations who have been members

of MC B.C., but have not signed the covenant, to come to the place where they are clear as to what direction they will go with their denominational membership," he says.

A second goal "is to ensure that the leadership positions in the new MC B.C. structure are understood and filled" he says.

For his third goal, Janzen wants to visit each MC B.C. congregation for worship, fellowship and meetings with their leadership in his first year.

In accepting the call, Janzen is thankful to the Sherbrooke Church



**Janzen**

Council and congregation, that are releasing him to God's call to serve the larger church community.

"I have been overwhelmed by the experience of God's call in this whole journey," Janzen says. "The most powerful moment was when the Sherbrooke Church Council gave their overwhelming support immediately upon hearing of this invitation. I truly feel that this whole process has been a beautiful picture of the church at its best—the church working the way it should, in selfless abandon to the call of God."

Janzen has pastored at Sherbrooke since 1998. Formerly, he was pastor of the Zoar Mennonite Church in Langham, Sask.

—**Amy Dueckman**

Winnipeg

## 100 Mile Curriculum grows out of diet challenge

**M**ore than 100 people have pledged to participate in the 100 Mile Diet that will be launched Sept. 1 at St. Norbert Farmers Market. The diet involves eating only food that is grown or produced within a 100-mile (161-

kilometre) radius for 100 days. (See "Locally grown food initiative spawned in Manitoba," Feb. 5, page 19.)

Now, three teachers who are participating in the diet have introduced a companion challenge, the 100 Mile Curriculum.

Sheila Giesbrecht, a professor at the University of Winnipeg, explains: "The 100 Mile Curriculum encourages teachers and students to think about teaching and learning within a place-based framework. The goal of the project is to have 100 learners

commit to looking at an issue through a local lens and share these projects at a 100 Mile Curriculum Fair. Our hope is to embed this in the Manitoba curriculum and to bring the curriculum closer to home."

Giesbrecht is reluctant to offer too many suggestions for fear of inhibiting other ideas, but suggests that there is room in the math curriculum to graph and chart distances and costs of transporting food, and in science and nature studies to look at the growing season and food groups covered during Manitoba's growing season.

The challenge is not limited to food. Other environmental issues and problems that have a local focus can also be investigated.

"We're hoping for all kinds of projects," says Giesbrecht.

The challenge is open to students at any level, including post-high school.

The project will culminate in November with an opportunity to showcase projects at the University of Winnipeg.

The website (100milecurriculum.ca) states that "the challenge is to celebrate the abundance, diversity and complexity of Manitoba's communities, to raise awareness surrounding issues affecting Manitoba's communities, to support habitation, care and concern for our communities, and to develop more complex ways of thinking, analyzing and problem-solving."

—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**







Photo by Dave Rogalsky

**On June 15, the Cober Bauman Farm in southwestern Ontario was rocking to the music of Chuckee and the Crawdaddies (pictured) and Crackerjack Palace. The concert was in support of the Uganda Mengo Hospital Project, a Mennonite Central Committee-sponsored initiative run by Anglicans in the capital city of Kampala. MCC is supplying \$75,000 to work with people affected by AIDS. Uganda has one of the best records on HIV/AIDS education and care in Africa.**

# Church snapshots



Photo courtesy of Hugo Tiessen

**A full slate of 144 golfers raised \$23,500 during the fifth annual Leamington (Ont.) Mennonite Home Charity Golf Tournament held on June 23. Proceeds from the event will be used to build a sidewalk along Pickwick Drive in front of the long-term care facility. The sidewalk will make it possible for seniors and the frail elderly to walk in safety and comfort along the street. The tournament featured numerous skills competitions; the top two teams in the putting contest had a shoot-out, with the team of Phil Cornies, left, Dave Krahn, Rudy Krahn and Henry Konrad coming out on top. In the past five years, a total of \$108,000 has been raised for special projects at the home.**



Twenty-one people from a variety of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada congregations—including Hawkesville Mennonite pastor Perry Bartel, left, and Markham Chinese Mennonite pastor Paul Mo—helped strip and re-shingle the MC Eastern Canada office in Kitchener, Ont., one weekend last month. Besides pastors, the “roof-raising” group included skilled labourers, students and even a returned missionary. As she reflected on the response to the call for volunteers, MC Eastern Canada operations minister Ester Neufeldt stated, “To imagine that 21 individuals were prepared to give energy to a project like this is humbling. Their gift of time provided significant savings...that can be invested in MC Eastern Canada ministries.”



Photo courtesy of Olga Epp

Manfred Boller, back row right, was installed as senior pastor of Coaldale Mennonite Church, Alta., on July 22. He is pictured with his wife Shannon, who hails from Saskatoon, and their three children, Hannah, Rebekah and Mattias. Boller arrived from Germany 10 years ago; he studied theology in England, Germany and Canada.



Camp Squeah photo by Angelika Dawson

Alumni gathered at Camp Squeah in July to share photos and stories from their past. But the event had a broader purpose as well, as the B.C. camp has embarked on the building of a challenge course—a series of activity centres that are designed to challenge people to work together as teams to solve problems, and to learn more about themselves and God. At the close of the day, alumni raised nearly \$6,800 to help begin the next phase—a high ropes course.



Photo by Twila Schumm

Elsie and Delmer Epp were presented with a hand-pieced quilt as a parting gift from the East Zorra Women of MC Eastern Canada, on June 24, when the congregation said farewell to their long-time pastors. Other parting gifts included a memory book filled with pages of personal reflections by members of the southwestern Ontario congregation, in addition to a monetary gift to be used for landscaping their new home in Winnipeg. The afternoon ended with a potluck meal and an opportunity for visiting.

## People&Events

**Waterloo, Ont.**—Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) has hired communications professional Linda Whitmore to increase the organization's profile during its current period of unprecedented

growth and innovation. In her role as communications and media relations manager, Whitmore's assign-



**Whitmore**

ment is to expand MEDA's image and exposure in the North American public at large. She will develop media contacts in print, radio and TV; prepare news releases; monitor MEDA's activities for press opportunities; and provide support to MEDA staff on preparing press kits and incorporating media links in their work. She has 18 years of experience in corporate communications, most recently with St. Joseph's Health Care in London, Ont., where she worked in strategic communication, media relations, issues management, and publication development and management. Whitmore will be based in MEDA's Waterloo office and will work closely with its member services and community economic development office in Lancaster, Pa., and its publications office in Winnipeg. MEDA, founded in 1953, has a dual thrust of promoting business-oriented solutions to poverty and encouraging a Christian witness in business.

—MEDA release

**West Abbotsford, B.C.**—Effective July 11, Mennonite Central Committee Supportive Care Services changed its name to *Communitas Supportive Care Society*. This decision is a pragmatic one and does not signify any change in focus regarding the people supported, staffing

accountability or leadership. It continues to be the goal of *Communitas Supportive Care Society* to provide high quality service to people with disabilities or mental health issues. *Communitas* is a Latin word referring to the spirit of community. For further information, visit [communitascare.com](http://communitascare.com). —Communitas release

**Bluffton, Ohio**—Sally Weaver Sommer has been appointed as Bluffton University's new vice-president and dean of academic affairs. The appointment became effective July 1. Sommer has been serving as interim dean and vice-president of academic affairs since the end of last December. She has been a part of Bluffton's academic affairs office in a variety of capacities since 1999. Sommer joined the Bluffton faculty in 1982 as a lecturer in economics, a position she held until 1988, when she was named associate professor of economics. In 1995, she became a full professor of economics. Sommer has also spent time overseas, serving on Witness for Peace delegations to Nicaragua and Guatemala, teaching at the University of Mobile in Nicaragua while conducting sabbatical research, and living and studying in Colombia and Puerto Rico.

—Bluffton University release

## Transitions

### Births/Adoptions

**Ens**—Caden Jerome (b. May 10, 2007), to Corinna and Peter Ens, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.  
**Kasdorf**—Avery Brea (b. July 19, 2007), to Dennis and Kristine Kasdorf, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.  
**Kroeker**—Cameron (b. July 24, 2007), to Rick and Joanne Kroeker, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.  
**McCallum**—Jonathan (b. July 24, 2007), to Brian and Shelley McCallum, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.  
**Mohr**—Gavin Christopher (b. July 10, 2007), to Sarah

and Tony Mohr, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.  
**Osorio**—Emiliano Alberto (b. May 13, 2007), to Barb and Mario Osorio, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.  
**Prychak**—Noah Glenn (b. May 25, 2007), to Darcy and Jennifer Prychak, Emmaus Mennonite, Wymark, Sask.  
**Rempel**—Jayna Bryce (b. July 31, 2007), to Mike and Marla Rempel, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.  
**Schroeder**—Zachary John Victor (b. July 22, 2007), to Richard and Judy Schroeder, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.  
**Zinter**—Thomas Gerhard (b. April 22, 2007), to Brian and Monica Zinter, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, in Calgary.

### Marriages

**Christie/Kropf**—Ian Christie and Jenny Lee Kropf (East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.), in Zurich, Ont., July 14, 2007.  
**Clark/Melick**—Richard Clark and Brenda Melick, Zurich Mennonite, Ont., May 20, 2007.  
**Costello/Martin**—Darlene Costello and Leroy Martin, at Floradale Mennonite, Ont., July 7, 2007.  
**Derksen/Hiebert**—Andrew Derksen and Mary Hiebert, at North Leamington United Mennonite, June 30, 2007.  
**Doell/Thiessen**—Ronald Doell and Malina Thiessen, Carman Mennonite, Man., at Altona (Man.) Evangelical Mennonite, July 28, 2007.  
**Enns/Kroeger**—Irene Enns and Peter Kroeger, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, July 21, 2007.  
**Ilett/Richardson**—John Ilett and Gloria Richardson, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., June 22, 2007.  
**Reimer/Voth**—Tobin Reimer and Meghan Voth, at Toronto United Mennonite, May 19, 2007.  
**Shantz/Teichrob**—Heather Shantz (St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.) and Nicolas Teichrob, in Mission, B.C., July 21, 2007.  
**Voth/West**—Andrew Voth

(Toronto United Mennonite) and Amanda West, at Toronto United Mennonite, July 6, 2007).

### Deaths

**Bartel**—Sophia (b. July 26, 2007; d. July 26, 2007), infant daughter of Steven and Yulia Bartel, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary.  
**Boshart**—Melvin, 75 (d. July 21, 2007), Crosshill Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.,  
**Fast**—Anni (nee Albrecht), 93 (d. July 2, 2007), Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.  
**Friesen**—Lydia, 93 (b. April 11, 1914; d. July 12, 2007), Waterloo-Kitchener, United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., in Vineland, Ont.  
**Gingerich**—Cliff, 54 (b. Sept. 22, 1952; d. July 21, 2007), Zurich Mennonite, Ont.  
**Neufeld**—Mary (nee Barkovsky), 100 (d. July 13, 2007), North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.  
**Unrau**—Harvey James, 41 (d. June 6, 2007), Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.  
**Wall**—Rodney, 40 (d. July 12, 2007), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.  
**Wiebe**—Albert, 46 (d. June 30, 2007), Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

### Baptisms

**Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg**—Emilie Braun, May 27, 2007.  
**Jane Finch Faith Community, Toronto**—Kerry Wilson, Susannah Fraser, Douglas McKinlay, June 17, 2007.  
**Toronto United Mennonite**—Andrew Voth, April 8, 2007.  
**Wilmot Mennonite, Ont.**—Tessa Weber, Chevy Kastner, June 24, 2007.

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

## Menonite Church Canada

### Prayer and praise requests

Please take time to pray and praise God for:

- Julie and Philip Bender, Witness workers in China, and other Menonite Partners in China teachers, as they attend a three-week summer language program where they will study Mandarin with Chinese teachers. They are looking forward to studying Mandarin because “the more language we learn, the more we can make friends and experience Chinese culture.”
- Bridging the Gap, a week-

end of gospel singing and testimony that brings together aboriginal and non-aboriginal people to worship on Aug. 25 and 26, at Siksika First Nation in Alberta. Menonite Church Canada Native Ministry is a supporting partner and asks for prayer that this would be a time of bridge-building and forming new relationships.

- Monica Shank, a Menonite Church Canada intern, who is living in Botswana for a 12-week student internship. She spent her first few weeks with an HIV/AIDS initiative led by a Baptist church and she will also volunteer at Old Naledi Educational Center, a school for people who want to complete their primary

education. Pray for Shank and for the Allison-Jones family as they continue ministering in Botswana.

## Menonite Church Eastern Canada

### Upcoming events of interest to all

MC Eastern Canada and Conrad Grebel University College’s annual catalogue of education and training for pastors and lay leaders arrived in August. The events cover the whole year, focusing largely on pastors but including several events of interest to others.

Of interest to lay leaders are the fall spiritual retreat

on “Self Care: Notes from the Spiritual Traditions” in September; and the John Bell (Iona Community, Scotland) event on worship, and “Caught in the Web? Pornography and the Church,” both in October; as well as the annual pastors, chaplains and congregational leaders event, “With a Spirit Large and Free... Generous Giving, Grateful Living,” in January.

Pastors new to MC Eastern Canada are invited to a one-day event to orient them to the area church, while all pastors in their last decade of ministry are invited to an event to help them prepare for retirement. February brings the annual

**Continued on page 28**

HENRY FUNK



From our leaders

**W**hether our day is filled with appointments or striving to meet heavy schedules, we seem driven to accomplish as much work as possible. Perhaps our culture expects us to be busy. To be acceptable, to have worth, we tend to begin our conversations by relating all the activities we are involved in.

Being involved in agriculture, which is closely connected with the seasons, I too am caught up in a multitude of activities that at times seem to make the days too short to accomplish the required amount of work. I am always grateful for the rest periods. Embracing these times of rest allows me to reflect on God’s rhythms of peace, celebrations and blessings.

Sabbath is a gift, rather than a duty, when we are drawn to God, the creator of all, a God of peace and hope, a loving God who walks with us. Sabbath makes our lives meaningful. We listen, we pray, we sing, we celebrate God’s gifts, we learn about values that sustain us—away from the need to accomplish or be productive, away from tension and worry.

We have pastors and church leaders in our congregations who are committed; who care deeply; who encourage us to cultivate healthy relationships with God, family, community and the larger world. I am grateful for these spiritual leaders who encourage us to stop and nurture our soul:

- Aberdeen Menonite Church serves Sunday noon lunches throughout the summer months to people attending their church services. Many people from the commu-

nity also enjoy the food and fellowship. Proceeds from these meals are given to Canadian Foodgrains Bank, thus meeting the needs of a worldwide community.

- Rosthern Junior College staff are committed to guiding their students’ search for a living faith, while church youth leaders encourage them in their spiritual journey.

God is also active in several new endeavours:

- Eagle’s Wings Ministry, a drop-in centre for visitors to have coffee, engage in conversation, use various resources and attend Bible Study, in Prince Albert is being led by Ray Dumais.
- Hispanic ministry has taken shape at Mount Royal Menonite Church in Saskatoon under the leadership of Jaime Meza, a pastor from Bogotá, Colombia.

Perhaps the time has come to take inventory of our talents and resources, allowing them to blossom and flow freely. To whom much is given, much will also be required, Jesus said in Luke 12. May stewardship of all our resources lead us to a life of discipleship—a life filled with gratitude, peace, joy, justice, love, faith and hope.

May our love “overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God” (Philippians 1:9-11).

Henry Funk is deputy moderator for MC Saskatchewan.

## We are busy people

**I am grateful for these spiritual leaders who encourage us to stop and nurture our soul....**

**The Churches** *From page 27*

School for Ministers; this year, Mary Shertz of AMBS will focus on the theme of “Jesus and the quest for human fulfillment” in Luke’s gospel.

Following former director Laurence Martin’s lead, numerous opportunities for spiritual development and direction are also listed in the catalogue. Miriam Frey will lead five two-hour sessions in a month-long journey of spiritual renewal from mid-October until mid-November. Four days of quiet prayer are scattered throughout the year, and contact information to begin spiritual direction relationships is included in the catalogue.

Besides all these opportunities, Conrad Grebel’s calendar of master’s level courses is printed in full. This year, being Jim Reimer’s last year before retirement, the annual Pastors’ Theology Seminar (for credit or audit) on “Mennonites and political theology,” led by Reimer, will be of special interest to many.

Contact Marianne Mellinger ([marianne@mcec.ca](mailto:marianne@mcec.ca)) for more information.

**Mennonite Church Manitoba**

**Do something different**

The Bible theme this summer at Camps with Meaning was “Come, follow me.” However, a secondary theme also emerged over the summer, “Do something different.”

Summer program directors brought it to life through various innovative twists. A first night introductory activity included frozen T-shirts. Nature games were incorporated into the weekly campout. Night hikes involved smells, sparks and awe at God’s creation. Over a dozen new scenes were developed for use in a weekly “Passion Play.” These new twists brought life-giving energy to the summer program.

Bob Wiebe, director of Camping Ministries, reports other “different” programs this summer that were a welcome addition to Camps with Meaning. This year, the Bible curriculum was shaped in a cooperative manner by the three camp Bible teachers, with guidance and direction from a pastor of one of the MC Manitoba congregations.

A fine, enthusiastic group of teens took part in a new Servant in Leadership Training program, which included a challenging week-long out-trip at Camp Koinonia. A Day Camp program at Camp Assiniboia, in which children came out daily to the camp for a week of activities, was so successful some campers signed up for a second week. Enrolment targets were met for a brand new Assiniboia youth camp in August.

Wiebe expressed gratitude for the creative and passionate individuals who brought these new ideas. These changes have had a positive effect on CwM programs, he said.

**Mennonite Church British Columbia**

**Korean Mennonite installs pastor**

Sherbrooke Korean Mennonite Fellowship of Vancouver, which meets at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, continues to be a multicultural congregation. It installed its first pastor, Nak Sun Kim (“Knocks”), along with his wife Key Kwon, at a joint worship service on July 8. German, English and

Korean services combined for the day, and were joined by the Vancouver Vietnamese Mennonite Church, which also meets in the Sherbrooke building. The service, though conducted in English, included singing in all four languages. Conference minister Henry Kliever assisted in the installation, which was followed by a barbecue lunch.

After two years, the Korean Fellowship continues to be an active part of Sherbrooke life, joining the English congregation monthly for a worship service and fellowship lunch. It also signed the MC B.C. covenant during the Covenant Celebration service on May 27.

*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.*

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**News briefs**

**Pakistani Christians decry blasphemy law**

Churches in Pakistan say they are dismayed that the country’s parliament has rejected amendments to a law on blasphemy against Islam that includes a mandatory death sentence. “We are disappointed once again,” said Victor Azariah, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Pakistan. Blasphemy against the prophet Mohammed in the overwhelmingly Muslim state is punishable by death under Pakistani laws, although nobody has been executed for it. Critics of the law say it is often misused to settle property and personal disputes, and that it affects Christians disproportionately. —ENI release

**Canadian Foodgrains Bank adds Catholic, Anglican groups**

Canadian Foodgrains Bank welcomed two new member agencies recently, bringing the number of church-based agencies engaged in its mission to end hunger to a total of 15. At a bi-annual board meeting in Winnipeg on June 21, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, and the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund of the Anglican Church of Canada were unanimously welcomed into membership. With this decision, the membership of Canadian Foodgrains Bank has grown to represent almost all Christian denominations in Canada. Member agencies represent Evangelical, mainline Protestant and Catholic churches, with more than 17,000 congregations and parishes

connected to this ecumenical effort to end hunger in developing countries. —Canadian Foodgrains Bank release

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## Churches sought to 'write for rights'

Mennonite churches are invited to join hundreds of faith groups, schools and community organizations in Write for Rights, Amnesty International's global write-a-thon on Human Rights Day, Dec. 10.

Participants write short letters to bring attention to human rights violations or to offer support to human rights leaders at risk of harm in other countries.

Enthusiastic faith community participants rave about Write for Rights—how it inspires and excites, and the quality of materials and online support. One past participant stated, "I felt the pain of the victims, the injustice.... Taking action on their behalf felt very spiritual."

Churches or individuals can join now at [amnesty.ca/writeathon](http://amnesty.ca/writeathon).  
—Amnesty International release

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Sept. 14-15:** Central Fraser Valley MCC Relief Sale, Auction and Festival at the Tradex Exhibition Centre, Abbotsford. For more information, visit [mcc.org/bc/festivals](http://mcc.org/bc/festivals).  
**Sept. 29:** Mennonite Fall Fair at the Prince George Civic Centre. For more information, visit [mcc.org/bc/festivals](http://mcc.org/bc/festivals).  
**Oct. 19, 21, 27:** M2/W2 fundraising events; dinner and door prizes at Summit Drive Baptist Church, Kamloops, 6:30 p.m. (19); Calvin Dyck and Gabrielle Youseff in concert at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, 6:30 p.m. (21); dinner and silent auction at Garden Park Tower, Abbotsford, 6 p.m. (27). For tickets to all events, call 1-800-298-1777.  
**Oct. 26-28:** Women's retreat

at Camp Squeah. Theme: "Jesus our redeemer and friend." Speaker: Laurel Hildebrandt. For more information, call Jackie Rempel at 604-952-0041.

### Alberta

**Sept. 15-16:** Holyrood Mennonite Church 50th anniversary celebration. For more details, visit [holyrood.mennonitechurch.ab.ca](http://holyrood.mennonitechurch.ab.ca). or call the church office at 780-466-3277. RSVP your attendance to [hmcoffice@interbaun.com](mailto:hmcoffice@interbaun.com) or call the church office.

### Saskatchewan

**Sept. 7-9:** SMYO junior high retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.  
**Sept. 25:** Youth Farm Bible Camp annual fall supper, Rosthern.  
**Oct. 12-13:** Saskatchewan Women in Mission fall retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.  
**Oct. 13:** Youth Farm Bible Camp ride-a-thon, Rosthern.  
**Oct. 26-28:** Quilting and scrapbooking retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.  
**Oct. 27:** MC Saskatchewan Equipping Day.

### Manitoba

**Aug. 29:** Westgate alumni golf tournament at Southdale Golf Course. Call 204-775-7111 for more information.  
**Sept. 8:** Morris MCC Relief Sale, Stampede Grounds. Huge farmers market.  
**Sept. 8:** Eden Foundation fifth annual "Head for the hills" bicycle fundraiser. All proceeds to Eden Health Care Services mental health recovery programs. To register, visit [edenhealth.mb.ca](http://edenhealth.mb.ca).  
**Sept. 21-22:** Brandon MCC Relief Sale.  
**Sept. 23:** MCI homecoming celebration. Supper and Steve Bell concert at Buhler Hall, Gretna. For tickets, call 204-327-5891.  
**Sept. 28-30:** Camp Moose

Lake work days.

**Sept. 29:** Westgate cyclathon. Call 204-775-7111 for more information.  
**Oct. 12-13:** Women in Mission retreat at Camp Assiniboia.  
**Oct. 15-16:** J.J. Thiessen Lectures at CMU, Winnipeg. Speaker: Ellen Davis of Duke Divinity School. Theme: "Live long on the land: Food and farming in biblical perspective."  
**Oct. 19:** "Going Barefoot" conference for church communicators at CMU, Winnipeg. Speakers: Reginald Bibby and Gayle Goosen. Visit [cmu.ca](http://cmu.ca) for

details.

**Oct. 26-28:** Scrapbooking retreat at Camp Moose Lake.  
**Oct. 27:** Work day and camps celebration banquet at Camp Koinonia.  
**Oct. 29:** Westgate annual general meeting, 7 p.m., at Westgate, Winnipeg.  
**Nov. 2-4:** Quilting retreats at Camp Koinonia and Camp Moose Lake.  
**Nov. 3:** "Adding to the Toolbox" conference on equipping people for congregational ministry at CMU, Winnipeg.

Continued on page 30

## Subscriber services

### How to subscribe:

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

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- Changes will be made immediately but may take four to six weeks to take effect because of printing schedules.

### Contact information:

Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5,  
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 6H7  
Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 221  
Fax: 519-884-3331 E-mail: [office@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:office@canadianmennonite.org)

**Calendar** *From page 29*

Workshops on youth ministry, music and worship, pastoral care and conflict resolution.

Visit [cmu.ca](http://cmu.ca) for details.

**Nov. 3-4:** Camps celebration banquets at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church (3); Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg (4).

**Nov. 6-7:** John and Margaret Friesen Lectures at CMU, Winnipeg. Speaker: John D. Roth, Goshen College. Topic: "Mennonite identity in the 21st century."

**Nov. 9-10:** CMU Tip-off Classic basketball tournament, Winnipeg.

**Nov. 9-11:** Quilting retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

**Nov. 9-11:** Scrapbooking retreat at Camp Koinonia.

**Nov. 10-11:** Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 50th anniversary homecoming and celebration.

**Ontario**

**Sept. 7-9:** Annual "Building Community" retreat for people with disabilities and others at Hidden Acres Retreat Centre. Theme: "All God's children: The global community."

Speaker: Esther Kern. For more information or to register, call 416-423-5525 or e-mail [canada@cpt.org](mailto:canada@cpt.org).

**Sept. 14:** MEDA Waterloo chapter fall tour, 7 p.m., at Martin's Family Fruit Farm, Waterloo.

**Sept. 20-23:** CPT ninth annual Peacemaker Congress: Tearing Down Walls, Restoring Community, at Toronto United Mennonite Church. Keynote speakers: Jim Loney and Judy Da Silva. To register, or for more information, visit [cpt.org](http://cpt.org) and follow the "Peacemaker Congress IX" link.

**Sept. 24:** Willowgrove fall golf tournament at St. Andrews Golf Club in Aurora. To register, or for more information, email John Philips at [jsphilips@sympatico.ca](mailto:jsphilips@sympatico.ca).

**Sept. 26:** Greening Sacred Spaces meeting. Topic: How to teach church members to make their homes environmentally

friendly; 6:30 p.m.; Room 508, 99 Regina Street, Waterloo.

**Sept. 29:** Official opening of the Willowgrove dining hall, Stouffville.

**Oct. 12-13:** "Family and sexuality in Mennonite history," an academic and community education conference hosted by Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. For more information, call 519-885-0220 ext. 24257.

**Oct. 14:** Benefit concert for the Abner Martin Music Scholarship Endowment Fund; 3 p.m. at Waterloo North Mennonite Church. Performers include Carol Bauman, Daren Di Santo, Jennifer Enns Modolo, John Hess, Bethany Horst, Brandon Leis, Tim Shantz and Andrea Weber. For more information, call Lewis Brubacher at 519-884-3072.

**Oct. 18:** MEDA Waterloo chapter breakfast meeting, 7:30 a.m., at the Stone Crock, St. Jacobs.

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

**Oct. 18:** MEDA Waterloo chapter breakfast meeting, 7:30 a.m., at the Stone Crock, St. Jacobs.

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

**Quebec**

**Nov. 10:** In celebration of 51 years of a Mennonite presence in Quebec, La Societe Mennonite Historique du Quebec and Mennonite Central Committee Quebec are holding an evening of pioneer stories and a Mennonite-Quebecois dinner to be hosted at La Maison de l'Amitie.

**For rent**

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

**Employment opportunities**

Camp Assiniboia, Headingley, has an opening beginning in spring 2008 for a **Camp Manager**, a person with a combination of energy, knowledge and enthusiasm, eager to apply lessons learned in business or career, and able to form staff and volunteers into a community, with the task of building up the operational side of the camp. This person communicates effectively and has the ability to deal with a variety of relational situations. This person is committed to the Mennonite Church and dedicated to our camp mission of "inviting persons to life". Direct inquiries to Director of Camping Ministries, MC Manitoba, 200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 2J1; [camps@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:camps@mennochurch.mb.ca) or 204-895-2267.



**MCC BC Job Posting  
Material Aid Coordinator**

*About Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)*

MCC is the international relief, development and peace agency of the Mennonite and Brethren in

Christ churches in North America. MCC seeks to demonstrate God's love by serving among people suffering from poverty, conflict, oppression and natural disasters. In British Columbia we support international relief and development efforts by sending funds, personnel and material aid, and we also have local programs that assist people in need here in B.C. Check our website at [www.mcc.org/bc](http://www.mcc.org/bc) for more information.

*About the Position*

The Material Aids (or resources) Coordinator is responsible for organizing the promotion, collection, sorting, packing, storage and shipping of various kinds of material aid designated for MCC international relief efforts. This position also coordinates a central depot for recycled clothing in cooperation with MCC Thrift Shops. The Material Resources Coordinator is also responsible for recruiting and supervising volunteers of all ages and abilities (e.g., seniors, youths, disabled, church or school groups) who donate, sort or assemble relief kits, school kits, comforters, clothing and other material resources, and is also responsible for making informal presentations on the work of MCC and material aid. This position is based in Abbotsford at the MCC B.C. warehouse and requires some travel within B.C. and occasional travel outside of the province. The Material Resources Coordinator supervises staff and volunteers at the material resources warehouse and is accountable to the MCC B.C. Executive Director. This is full-time position.

*Qualifications*

MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to personal Christian faith, active church participation, and nonviolent peacemaking. The specific qualifications for this position include: strong support for the mission of MCC, appreciation for MCC's supporting churches, ability to work effectively with volunteers, commitment to teamwork and flexibility, good organizational and time-management skills, good communication skills including presentations to small groups, appreciation for workplace equity, able to do some heavy lifting, good driving record and ability to drive a small truck and forklift, and ability to use standard workplace computer programs.

To apply, please send a cover letter and resume to:

Attention: Marie Reimer

MCC B.C., Box 2038, 31414 Marshall Rd., Abbotsford, BC V2T 3T8

Fax to: 604-850-8734

E-mail to: [hrdirector@mccbc.com](mailto:hrdirector@mccbc.com)

Apply before Sept. 22, 2007, to ensure consideration.

Zion Mennonite Church of Swift Current, Sask., is seeking a **pastor** to provide leadership and spiritual care for a small-city church. Respond to Zion Mennonite Church, 78 - 6 Ave. NE, Swift Current, SK S9H 2L7, 306-773-4770, zion@sasktel.net.

Sherbrooke Mennonite Church of Vancouver, B.C., is seeking a **full-time lead pastor** to provide leadership for their inter-cultural church.

Send resumes ATT: Pastor Search Committee, 7155 Sherbrooke St., Vancouver, BC V5X 4E3, or to smcvan@telus.net.



MCC seeks applications for the following full-time salaried position in Winnipeg, Man.: **Low German Program Coordinator**. The Coordinator will be responsible to manage MCC's Low German program in Mexico and to exercise a facilitating, coordinating role for the Low German Programs wherever they are found within the MCC system. This highly relational position requires excellent communication skills and understanding of the Low German-speaking communities.

Qualifications include:

- Ability to relate with sensitivity to all Mennonites.
- Administrative and leadership skills.
- Fluency in Low German and openness to acquire Spanish.
- Willingness to travel to Latin America, the United States and in Canada.

The job description may be viewed on the web at [www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org). All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith and discipleship, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. For further information, contact Marsha Jones at 204-261-6381 or email: [mgj@mennonitecc.ca](mailto:mgj@mennonitecc.ca).

Applications will be accepted until Sept. 10, 2007.

**Associate Pastor Position**  
First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alta.

This vibrant, multi-generational, urban congregation of approximately 200 members is seeking a half-time **Associate Pastor** with primary responsibilities for Youths and Young Adults. The successful candidate will work with the lead pastor and with other leadership people of the congregation. Some pulpit and spiritual care ministries will also be expected. A seminary degree or a related bachelor's degree that reflects our Anabaptist/Mennonite beliefs and practices is preferred. Starting date is negotiable. For a more detailed job description, please visit our website at <http://edmonton1st.mennonitechurch.ab.ca>.

Interested applicants should forward questions and resumes to:

Wesley Berg, Chair, Second Pastor Search Committee  
c/o First Mennonite Church  
3650 – 91 Street, Edmonton, AB T6E 6P1  
780-436-3431  
[wberg@ualberta.ca](mailto:wberg@ualberta.ca)



**Employment and Community Development Director**

MCC is a Christian organization that seeks to demonstrate God's love by serving among people suffering from poverty, conflict and disasters. The Employment and Community Development (ECD) Director provides leadership and support to a department with 40 staff and a budget of \$2.5 million per year. This includes employment programs (job search, life skills, work experience and skills training), social enterprises (landscaping, renovations and retail), and community development initiatives to address poverty in partnership with churches and community groups.

MCC workers are required to share a personal commitment to Christian faith, active church participation and nonviolent peacemaking. The qualifications for this position also include: support for the mission of MCC, appreciation for MCC's supporting churches, university degree in a related field, experience in social services and/or economic development, knowledge of poverty dynamics, proven track record in program management, aptitude for research and feasibility studies, understanding of community development principles, excellent interpersonal skills, commitment to team work and collaborative decision-making, strong communication skills, good organizational skills and standard workplace computer literacy.

**Apply before Sept. 28, 2007 to ensure consideration:**

Marie Reimer, Human Resources Department  
MCC B.C., Box 2038, 31414 Marshall Rd., Abbotsford, BC V2T 3T8, or by fax to: 604-850-8734 or by e-mail to: [hrdirector@mccbc.com](mailto:hrdirector@mccbc.com).

**Check the website [www.mcc.org/bc](http://www.mcc.org/bc) for more information on this and other positions.**

Mennonite Church Canada invites applications for the position of **Denominational Minister/Director of Leadership Development**.

Accountable to the Executive Secretary of Christian Formation, the Denominational Minister/Director of Leadership Development is responsible for building up the ministry of MC Canada and its area churches through pastoral and other leadership development and support, and serves as minister to the denomination.

This full-time position, located in Winnipeg, Man., provides key leadership for the denomination, is part of the Executive Staff Team and requires a person of vision with strong leadership and administrative capabilities. Travel across Canada is a requirement of the position. For a complete list of key duties and qualifications please see the job description posted at [www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/241](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/241).

All staff are expected to exhibit a personal faith commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord, uphold the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, and the vision of Mennonite Church Canada as a missional church.

Inquiries, applications and nominations for this position can be directed to Kirsten Schroeder, Director, Human Resources at [kschroeder@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:kschroeder@mennonitechurch.ca); Mennonite Church Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 (ph. 204-888-6781; toll-free 1-866-888-6785). Applications will be processed starting Oct. 1, with a preferred start date in the first quarter of 2008.



# Mennonitekidsare



**A game of Find the Mouse proved popular with the younger children at the Abbotsford 2007 kids assembly.**

*Photos by Dan Dyck*



**Katrina Epp wears one of the Inukshuk necklaces the children at Abbotsford 2007 made and sold to raise funds for a project in Thailand. The necklaces sold out quickly, raising enough money to buy two cows.**



**Between worship sessions and story times, Arvid Bergen, left, and Joshua Kuepfer found time to enjoy a friendly game at the kids assembly.**