

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Volume 12 Number 1

Food for
thought

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CANADIAN
MENNONITE
10th anniversary

EDITORIAL

Following the money

TIM MILLER DYCK
EDITOR / PUBLISHER

As Will Braun writes in the feature article for this issue, money tells its own story.

Our government's budget shows which promises will be kept and which will be left to another day. Charitable tax laws define social priorities that say those who give directly to certain selected organizations have lower—or even no—obligations to the otherwise mandatory common purse.

Our Mennonite organizations and churches make decisions that direct their finances to emphasize these priorities and not those others. If we collectively decide we don't like the way these priorities are ranked, we need to direct the boards of these organizations to select differently.

We decide, in an unfortunately private way, if we will obey our obligation to the God who has made us and give us all that we have, to invest at least 10 percent of our income in kingdom work.

Each day we make many small decisions—every time we pull out a wallet or open a purse—on what is really important to us and what isn't. If you take all those daily decisions and add them up—and this is a very worthwhile thing to do—what results is a clear picture of where true financial priorities lie.

Financial priorities, in turn, provide a very revealing look into what our overall life priorities are. Our time, attention and

passions tend to reflect what's in our spending. What if we were to imagine posting a list of what we spent our money on upon our church walls at the end of each year? Or, more practically, share them with one another in a Bible study group or Sunday school class? I have greater faith in our collective wisdom than I do in my own.



I don't see this relationship between money and priorities in a cynical way. I think it is simply true. Money is such a flexible and powerful tool that it becomes the most effective way for us to accomplish our goals.

The relationship can be easily used for good as well as evil. Generosity with money pulls a string in our lives that leads to generosity of spirit, a harvest of good works and the life that is really life. *"As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life"* (I Timothy 6:17-19).

At the MC Eastern Canada fall delegate sessions, the results of the area church's Generosity Project study

listed nine statements that had at least 85 percent agreement among survey respondents. One of these was that "an indicator of personal spiritual health is the willingness of individuals to commit themselves to offering their gifts of time, talent and money in service of the mission of the congregation." Another stated, "When congregations invite individuals to a deeper commitment to Jesus Christ, money and resources are released in abundance for ministry in the local congregation and the wider church."

Mennonites are such generous people! The studies our churches have done over the years show this. I see it personally over and over (about 1,500 times each year, actually) as I write my thanks to each of you who give directly to the ministry of this publication. Each gift leaves me humbled and grateful to have such a team backing the work we have been entrusted to do. I personally really enjoy giving money away to do the things I can't otherwise do. It is a rich blessing, and is fun to boot!

A song that Bryan Moyer Suderman wrote and taught to those at the MC Eastern Canada delegate sessions introduced me to a new passage of Scripture. This is Agur's prayer to God, from Proverbs 30:7-9: *"Two things I ask of you; do not deny them to me before I die: Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that I need, or I shall be full, and deny you, and say, 'Who is the Lord?' or I shall be poor, and steal, and profane the name of my God."*

May we all be blessed with neither poverty nor riches in this new year, and may God be glorified in how we use what we have been given.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate's annual Christmas food drive for House of Friendship surpassed its goal of 25,000 items by raising the equivalent of 31,018 food items (in food and cash)! The school has been conducting a Christmas Food Drive for the past 17 years. Brian Hunsberger of House of Friendship, left, is pictured with students Sawyer Adams and Tim Wenger.

ROCKWAY MENNONITE COLLEGIATE PHOTO

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Mission statement: *Canadian Mennonite (CM)* is a bi-weekly Anabaptist/Mennonite-oriented 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 analyses of issues facing the church. In fulfilling its mission, the primary constituency of *CM* is the people and churches of Mennonite Church Canada and its five related area churches. *CM* also welcomes readers from the broader inter-Mennonite and inter-church scene. Editorial freedom is expressed through seeking and speaking the truth in love and by providing a balance of perspectives in news and commentary. *CM* will be a vehicle through which mutual accountability can be exercised within the community of believers; the paper also encourages its readers to have open hearts and minds in the process of discerning God's will.

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:23-25, NRSV).

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Electronic Delivery

All subscribers can get the complete contents of *Canadian Mennonite* delivered free by e-mail or view selected articles online. For either option, visit our web site at canadianmennonite.org. The Jan. 21 issue will be posted by Jan. 17.

The root of much good?

A tale of Mennonite money

BY WILL BRAUN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Taken together, Mennonite-related organizations both raise and spend huge amounts of money each year. Where does that money come from, and where does it go? Will Braun's investigative report into the big picture of church finances explores these issues.

—Ed.

There are those who perk up for budget discussions, those who tune out and those who don't even show up for church business meetings. Fair enough. Numbers aren't for everyone. But the numbers tell an important, if sometimes confusing, tale. It's easy to make a mission statement sound good, but the budget contains the cold hard priorities. All of us need to be in on that discussion.

The subject of money tends to quicken the moral pulse. Awkwardness, guilt, judgment and defensiveness can enter in. So it is important to create a space in which we can talk openly, a space in which grace cushions guilt, a space in which we can ask the tough questions, make the tough confessions and work together at faithful living in a complex world. Presented in that spirit, the following profiles and case studies on Mennonite money highlight some of the questions, dilemmas and opportunities to be found behind the budgets of church organizations.

A peek inside the offering plate

According to 2005 data, the most recent figures available from Statistics Canada, the median total income for Canadians filing tax returns is \$25,400 per year. Using these figures, if all the 33,000 baptized members of MC Canada churches tithed 10 percent of their total income, their annual giving would be over \$80 million.

Although we don't know how much this group actually gives, there are some things we do know. In 2005, Canadians gave \$7.9 billion to charities. That's an average of \$330 for each of the 24 million people who filed a tax return that year, or a modest 1.3 percent of the median income figure. But most people—about 75 percent—gave nothing, so a small group of Canadians did most of the giving.

The numbers also show that religious people do more than their share. Statistics Canada identified a 9 percent slice of the population that goes to church regularly and accounts for 42 percent of all charitable giving. Many Mennonites would land in this category.



According to a study done by Al Rempel, director of resource development for MC Canada, about \$45 million went into the offering plates at MC Canada churches in 2002, or about half of a hypothetical \$80 million tithe.

However, this does not include money given outside local church congregations, and we know Mennonites give to a range of causes.

Gayle Goossen heads a Kitchener, Ont., marketing firm that helps non-profits—both Mennonite-based and other organizations—with fundraising. She says that if you look at the donor databases of many non-Mennonite charities, Mennonites show up in disproportionately high numbers.

In addition, by most accounts, funding for Mennonite organizations is steady over time, providing a stable financial base for these organizations to do their work. “There is tremendous generosity,”

says Rempel.

By these standards we’re generous. But if you consider that we’re comfortably settled into one of the most affluent societies in history, our giving could be interpreted differently.

“We want to be seen as generous but we don’t want to let our giving impinge on our lifestyle,” says Dave Kroeker, who was a stewardship consultant with Mennonite Foundation of Canada for 15 years.

Money and unity: The global faith family

A 1993 report by the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (the predecessor of MC Canada) noted that Mennonite giving to overseas projects was diminishing at that time. The study by Rempel, which covering the years 2000-02, confirmed this finding. It found three-quarters of the budgets of MC Canada

churches go to congregational and local expenses, with less than 6 percent going overseas. And international giving declined over the study period.

According to Mennonite World Conference’s website, at least 60 percent of global Anabaptists are African, Asian or Latin American. “Sadly,” the site says, “deepening economic disparity accompanies this wonderful global transformation. . . . Ninety-five percent of our wealth remains in the hands of North Americans and Europeans.”

In any discussion of money, then, an impossibly awkward question lurks: How do we deal with the fact that we have far more than an equal share of the world’s wealth?

One response to disparity is guilt. In a June 2007 article in *Canadian Mennonite*, Lori Guenther Reesor wrote, “Giving money helps us resolve the tension between our situation and what we see happening to other people elsewhere.” Still, she doesn’t believe most Mennonites give out of guilt. Reesor has been a Mennonite pastor and marketing analyst with World Vision, and is now completing a master’s degree focusing on non-profits and giving.

Instead of being motivated by guilt, she believes we should be drawn by a vision of economic equality as an expression of unity in Christ. “It really struck me when looking at Paul,” she wrote in a recent e-mail message, “just how much he was concerned about the unity of the church and equality within the church. His theology of unity and equality presents a real challenge to Christians everywhere, but particularly in the rich West.”

**Long-handled spoon:
Ottawa's millions for MCC**

From internal church relations to external relations with governments—the availability of government money for church purposes presents an interesting case study in worldly relationships. Since the Vietnam War, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has chosen not to accept any money from the U.S. government. But in Canada, MCC accepts millions from our government—about \$10 million last year (including funds

from the U.S. government would be to identify with a government that many people in the world see as the bringer of problems, not solutions.

With the recent militarization of Canadian foreign policy, should MCC re-visit its relationship to the Canadian government? Mathies says the question is “spot on,” although he’s not calling for MCC to cut ties with Ottawa. Mathies and current interim MCC bi-national director Bert Lobe—both Canadians—advise caution in dealing with any

relations. He says the potential need to revisit MCC’s relationship with government is “a long ways down the road.” It’s a view echoed by MCC Canada director Don Peters, who is very positive about the MCC-government relationship. He says the money comes with virtually no strings attached.

Mathies also sees value in MCC collaboration with the government. Sometimes MCC can make better use of the money than government because of its connections overseas. He also notes the importance of being at the table talking with government, since changes it makes can potentially have a much greater impact than MCC actions. But he also sees a “substantial change in the impression” of Canada internationally. He says the militaristic language of our government, its posture on climate change, and cases like the Maher Arar fiasco, are noticed by other countries. We are seen more and more as being in “lockstep with the U.S.,” he says, and, therefore, “MCC has to be increasingly vigilant.”

**AMBS and Eli Lilly:
Is all money the same in God’s eyes?**

Somewhat similarly, the case of corporate funding for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS)—an important training ground for MC

The financial landscape is full of ambiguity. Some say money is neutral . . . but it would probably be more truthful to admit that virtually all money comes with some moral and ethical baggage.

transferred via Canadian Foodgrains Bank).

“All money has a price,” says former MCC bi-national director John Lapp. In the U.S., the case is relatively straightforward. Clear separation is required between MCC and a super-powered, trigger-happy government with a badly stained international reputation. Ron Mathies, another former MCC bi-national director, says accepting money

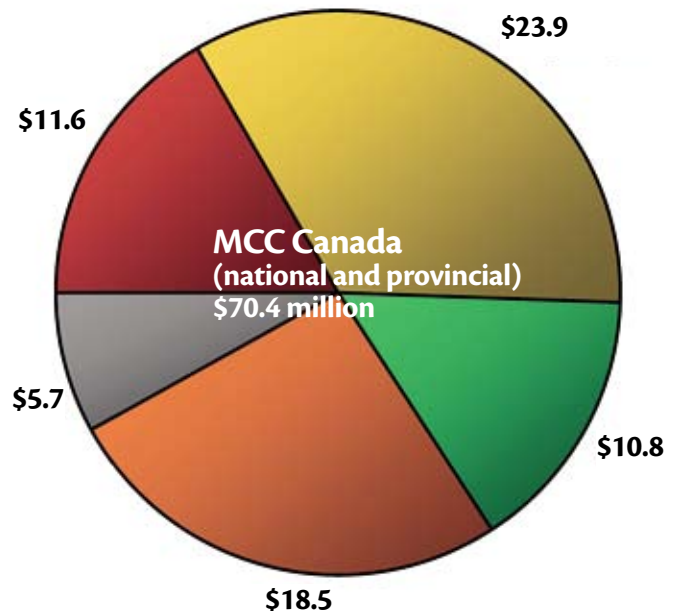
government. Lobe applies the adage, “When you sup with the devil, use a long spoon,” saying, “Empire is never church, no matter how hard it tries. My own sense is that Canadians especially should be more mindful of this.”

Bill Janzen, MCC’s Ottawa office director, cautions against overstating the Americanization of Canadian foreign policy and says Canada’s foreign policy does not affect MCC-government

Where the money comes from (in millions of dollars)

RESEARCH BY AARON EPP
Methodology posted online

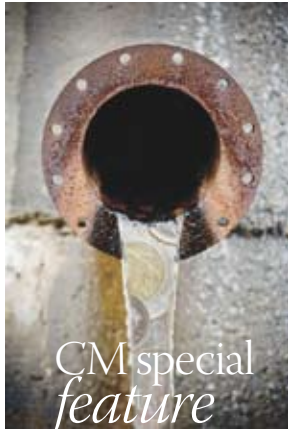
- Tax-receipted donations
- Investments
- Other charities
- Renters
- Government
- Sale of goods and services
- Other revenue



Canada pastors—forces us to ask whether it matters how money is made.

In the last few years, a very large source of funding for AMBS has had its origin in the business activities of a multi-billion dollar pharmaceutical company. Since 2002, the Lilly Endowment has given \$4.2 million US to AMBS (for comparison, AMBS's total tax-receptable gifts were \$4.4 million US in its last fiscal year). Almost half of the Lilly money paid for the Explore youth ministry training program, from which a number of Canadian Mennonite youths have benefited. The Endowment's money comes primarily from shares in Eli Lilly and Company, the maker of Prozac and a corporation with a questionable track record.

According to 2006 reports in the *New York Times*, the company engaged in a "decade-long effort to play down the health risks of Zyprexa, its best-selling medication for schizophrenia." The company withheld information from doctors and marketed the drug to "primary care physicians, who its internal studies showed were less aware of Zyprexa's side effects."



Then there is the company's close ties to the Bush administration. Eli Lilly CEO Sidney Taurel has been appointed to the President's Homeland Security Advisory Council and two other similar bodies. The Lilly Endowment itself takes a pro-war posture, providing grants to support veterans and

military families. Its 2006 annual report speaks about the troops serving in Afghanistan and Iraq, saying, "We are exceedingly grateful to these brave men and women. . . ."

The Endowment also funds the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), a hawkish Washington think tank strongly backing U.S. military efforts, and which includes on its staff Bush's former deputy secretary of defense Paul Wolfowitz. "Victory in Iraq and Afghanistan is vital to U.S. national security, and we must spend whatever it takes to win in both places," said AEI resident scholar Frederick W. Kagan, as quoted in the *L.A. Times* last October.

How does AMBS feel about the origins of Lilly money? Is it tainted, redeemable or neutral?

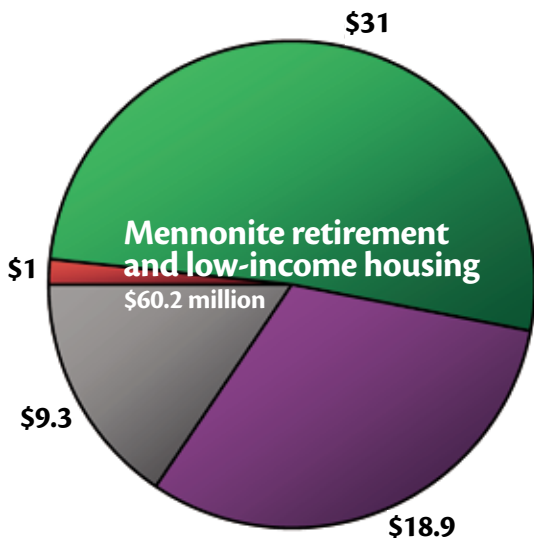
"If there's money that's known to be

coming from unethical behaviour, I don't think institutions should accept it," says AMBS president Nelson Kraybill. But he doesn't put Lilly in the bad books. "I have confidence that there is common ground between what AMBS wants to do and what the Lilly Endowment Religion Division is about," he adds.

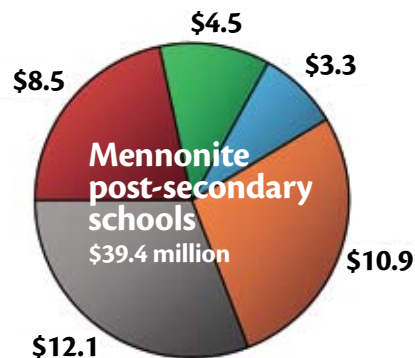
For him, important factors are whether Lilly tries to influence AMBS, whether the company's products improve life for society, and whether the company is accountable to the law and responsive to public concerns. On all three counts he gives Lilly a passing grade. Nonetheless, he says the questions being asked about Lilly funding are "important and appropriate."

Seminary ethics professor Ted Koontz expresses concern about the commercialization of medical care and the aggressive manner in which Lilly and other drug companies advertise and promote their products to doctors. He also says he doesn't like Lilly's funding of AEI.

But he also points out that if AMBS were to refuse money from Lilly, perhaps it would also need to refuse money from many of its donors, since "the majority of U.S. Mennonites voted for Bush and . . . paid for the war with their taxes without protesting." He said that because of the complexity and ambiguity surrounding



National and area churches
\$12.3 million



accepting Lilly money, “this ought to be a conversation, rather than assuming there’s not an issue here.”

Beyond ethical investment

A further question is what we do with the large amounts of savings that Mennonites have accumulated. While our Anabaptist theological cousins, the Holdeman Mennonites, take seriously the biblical warnings against loaning out money at interest, most Mennonites have no qualms about investing in interest-bearing funds.

Mennonite Foundation of Canada has \$93 million under management. MC Canada has \$35 million in a pension fund for its staff and staff of member churches, including many pastors. In Ontario, Mennonite Savings and Credit Union administers over \$650 million. And Mennonites have hundreds of millions of dollars—or more—in RRSPs and other personal investments elsewhere.

While some of this money is in ethical, or socially responsible, investments, Gary Hawton, who heads an ethical investment firm, says he’s been “surprised by the lack of response from the Mennonite community.” Hawton is CEO of Meritas Mutual Funds, an investment firm owned by Mennonite Foundation, Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, and Mennonite Mutual Aid. All of the \$260 million Meritas manages is in ethical funds, but only about 20 percent of that is Mennonite money.

For Meritas, socially responsible investment means that none of the money is invested in companies involved with weapons, nuclear power, gambling, pornography, alcohol or tobacco. They also screen based on labour standards, environmental impact, employee relations, and gender and cultural equity policies.

But for Hawton, socially responsible investing is only the first step. The next step is shareholder advocacy. Noting the biblical mandate to care for widows and orphans, Hawton says, “Sometimes [investors] end up owning companies that are creating widows and orphans, not caring for them.” For him, that’s the time for Meritas to go to a company directly and suggest specific changes.

Hawton says we are “called to be salt and light” in terms of what we do with our investments. He says that as investors we need to act “as if we had a corner office at the head office” of the companies in which we share ownership. Referring to a recent call with the chair of the board of CIBC, Hawton says Meritas has found a very positive reception among companies it has approached.

Meritas was the only investment company to publicly challenge Telus when the company started offering adult content for download on cell phones. Telus quickly backed down.

Pam Peters-Pries, executive secretary of MC Canada’s Support Services Council, which oversees the church pension fund, sees “a lot of potential for calling for change in corporate practices” if a large portion of the 33,000 MC Canada membership would invest with firms that engage in shareholder advocacy. Both MC Canada and Mennonite Foundation are committed to promoting this agenda with constituents.

Summing up

To sum up these tales of Mennonite money we could say: We Mennonites do a lot of good with our money and also keep quite a bit for ourselves. Mennonite organizations are generally financially stable. Disparity is an economic and

theological challenge for the global Mennonite family. Outside sources of funding for church agencies raise important questions that we need to keep in front of us. We have become more comfortable with wealth accumulation and interest than we used to be. And we could be more ethically proactive with the money we set aside for ourselves.

The financial landscape is full of ambiguity. Some say money is neutral—it just depends how you use it—but it would probably be more truthful to admit that virtually all money comes with some moral and ethical baggage. The apostle Paul states that our tendency to grow fond of money is linked to much evil: “*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains*” (I Timothy 6:10).

Despite the ambiguities and dangers, money is one of the main ways we Canadian Mennonites interact with the world. Nowadays, we’re less likely to think in terms of the love of money being the root of all evil, than in terms of money itself being the root of much good. ❧

Will Braun attends Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. He can be reached at will@geezmagazine.org.

❧ For discussion

1. Why might talking about how we use our money—in our families and churches—make us feel awkward or defensive? Will Braun says that how we use our money shows our real priorities. Do we sometimes prefer not to know the details of how we use our money?
2. Al Rempel is quoted as saying that support for Mennonite institutions shows that there is “tremendous generosity.” What makes a person generous? Is it something that is taught?
3. Mennonite giving to overseas projects has been declining while churches are keeping more money for local expenses. Is this trend evident in your congregation? What might be some reasons for the decline in overseas giving? How can we work at sharing with Mennonite churches in poorer countries?
4. Should Mennonite Central Committee continue to accept money from the Canadian government (about \$10 million a year)? Should AMBS accept money from the Lilly Endowment? If money is used for a good purpose, does it matter where it comes from?
5. Gary Hawton says he is surprised that Mennonites are not more enthusiastic about choosing ethical or socially responsible mutual funds. Where do you and your friends invest? Should Mennonites be more concerned about ethical investing?

VIEWPOINTS



Church leaders call on PM to end poverty in Canada

The following letter, dated Nov. 27, 2007, was signed by Mennonite Church Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman and the 13 other national Christian leaders whose denominations belong to the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC). The CCC does not make public pronouncements on issues unless all members are in agreement. —Ed.

AS NATIONAL LEADERS of Canadian churches and members of the Canadian Council of Churches, we call on our government to take immediate steps to develop and implement a national poverty reduction strategy.

Concern for the poor and a commitment to address poverty are deeply held aspects of our Christian faith, as we know they are for many faiths. We believe we are called, as churches and as Canadians, to address the social and economic structures which impoverish thousands of children, parents and single people in Canada, and keep them in the conditions of poverty.

In his life and ministry, Jesus identifies with and is present among “the least of these.” We see all humans as possessing a profound dignity because all have been created in the image of God. Poverty is an assault upon the dignity of the poor, robbing them of the opportunity to develop and share their gifts with the world. Poverty also undermines the dignity of the wealthy, for when we fail to share our goods and selves with the poor we fail to live out the image of God who gave his life for the healing of the world.

In Chapter 25:45 of the Gospel of St. Matthew, in the parable of the sheep and the goats, Christ calls us to acts of compassion: feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, caring for the sick and visiting those imprisoned. These verses also point us toward a much more profound compassion. It is the nations of the world which are gathered for judgment. Thus we are called, as churches and as a nation, to address the social and economic structures which afflict the poor and keep them in the condition of poverty.

The barriers that prevent people from living fully differ across Canada and between communities. This is why developing and implementing a poverty reduction strategy is important. An effective strategy will pay attention to particular groups with specific needs,

such as:

- The more than 750,000 children whose life chances are limited by conditions of poverty;
- The 42 percent of urban Aboriginals who live in poverty as well as Aboriginal People living on reserves or remote areas;
- The increasing number of immigrants who remain in poverty up to a decade after coming to Canada.

Canada is a prosperous country that can afford to do better. We note the growing level of wealth among the richest in Canadian society, while others lack basic resources, such as affordable housing and decent wages for the work they do; face discrimination and racism because of their ethnic, cultural or national heritage; or are prevented by poverty from learning the skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century economy.

The growing gap between the wealthiest and those living on the margins in Canada threatens the social cohesion that gives Canada a positive reputation in the world.

Poverty is also an important social determinant of health. Addressing poverty, then, is an essential step in the building of healthy communities.

Reducing poverty in Canada is an achievable goal. Uniting Canadians to remove the barriers that marginalize people and limit their potential to live in dignity and contribute to the development of Canada requires visionary leadership. We are asking you to exercise that leadership.

Together, as Canadian Christian religious leaders, we call on the Canadian government to establish a high-level government task force mandated to develop

Canada is a prosperous country that can afford to do better.

a national poverty reduction strategy. We propose that the task force include people living in poverty, immigrants and representatives of aboriginal communities, along with people who work with them.

An effective national poverty reduction strategy, in our view, must include measurable goals and timelines, publicly comprehensible indicators that measure the poverty in Canada, and a means for monitoring and evaluating progress. Most of all it must include budget commitments that focus on the needs of vulnerable people. Because the lives of people are at stake, we further urge the government to establish this task force and initiate a poverty reduction strategy within the next budget year.

We would appreciate a response from you which indicates what steps your government will take to develop and implement a strategy which will reduce poverty in Canada.

We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. Respecting our theology of the priesthood of all believers and of the importance of the faith community discernment process, this section is a largely open forum for the sharing of views. Letters are the opinion of the writer only—publication does not mean endorsement by the magazine or the church. Letters should be brief and address issues rather than individuals.

Please send letters to be considered for publication to letters@canadianmennonite.org or by postal mail or fax, marked "Attn: Letter to the Editor" (our address is on page 3). Letters should include the author's contact information and mailing address. Letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines.

/// Readers write

✉ How to follow the Prince of Peace at Christmas

HOLYROOD MENNONITE CHURCH has blossomed with sisters and brothers from various parts of Africa. They bring to us their personal histories, which include war, strife and loss of life. As we Mennonites strive to bring God's message of peace to others and to others in cultures of war, the Christmas season becomes a time when we are free with our glad tidings and wishes for peace and joy. It also becomes a time to reflect on how we live out our beliefs about peace.

Being a peacemaker can be as simple as not speaking in an angry voice. Teaching a child to walk away, rather than escalate a situation, might seem like a weak response to schoolyard bullying, but it is a way to turn the other cheek.

We do have church positions about peace, but what do we do with them? What do we do with the church statement on agreeing and disagreeing in love? Do we sometimes lift it up or have we forgotten it? How do we apply Article 22 of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (Peace, Justice and Non-resistance)? As new folks come into our congregations how do we bring our peace positions to them?

When we chose gifts last Christmas, was peace-making a criterion for the selections we made? Do we foster peace in our choice of games that we buy for others and play ourselves? What choices in entertainment do we make daily in our homes that do not promote violence against others? How do we interpret the news so that our children learn about the importance of peace rather than the destruction of lives.

If we face daily situations with the question, "How would Christ do this?" what peace would we foster? Do we choose actions that follow the Prince of Peace?

FLORENCE DULEY, EDMONTON

✉ What it really takes to live environmentally responsibly

ONE OF MY favourite quotes is from an American who is reputed to have said that "Canadians offer all manner of aid and assistance short of actual help." In reading the "One hundred mile grace" column by Will Braun (Sept. 17, 2007, page 10), I can't help but think the appropriate response to many of these types of musings is that good and pious people are prepared to engage in all manner of "ethical and environmentally responsible living" short of actually making a real difference.

For reasons completely unrelated to any stunted and cynical personal sense of ethical or moral considerations regarding food production and environmental issues, I bicycle to work 12 months of the year; grow my own organic strawberries, raspberries, peas, carrots, apples and potatoes; and faithfully water—with rain barrel water—the 13 mature trees I have crammed onto my suburban lot. This lifestyle followed a university experience financed by planting 142,000 trees and a personal ethic forged in a two-year Mennonite Central Committee voluntary service term, but it is my earliest formative years spent on a Manitoba farm that leads me to my current scepticism directed towards all the well-meaning suggestions of buying organic food grown within 100 miles and reducing one's "carbon footprint."

From their marriage in 1947 until they sold the farm in 1972, my parents derived at least 90 percent of the nutrients that sustained them and their nine children within 100 metres, never mind miles, of the family house. The net family carbon footprint was negligible, but the cost of duplicating the feat now would require a little more than selectively choosing local shops and produce.

For our family, the cost of this lifestyle meant spending the nicest weeks of summer hoeing, canning and preserving the produce from a massive garden; getting up close and personal with the carcasses of the recently dead pigs, steers and chickens; milking 20 cows by hand twice a day; and forgoing such simple pleasures as hot running water, music lessons and participation in organized sports, school musicals and virtually every other activity taken for granted by modern urbanized Mennonites.

At the risk of sounding unduly fatalistic, I would suggest that even the earthiest contemporary urban Mennonite has not the slightest inkling of the true commitment required to live environmentally responsibly, and those with that inkling lack the skills or will—or both—to truly commit to the lifestyle required to make a difference.

RON TOEWS, BRANDON, MAN.

✉ Remembrance should be reserved for those who have suffered loss in war

HOW CAN SOMEONE in a pacifist church observe two minutes of silence in honour of soldiers? Killing human beings is wrong, so how can we honour those who have been part of the war machine?

Our pastor at Rosthern (Sask.) Mennonite Church said it well when he had us observe two minutes of silence “for those who have suffered losses during past wars, who’ve lost loved ones, lost homes, their livelihood, dignity, self-esteem, their sanity and lost faith

in mankind. Let’s remember those who have suffered because of wars.”

We are often sheltered from the horrors and after-effects of war. Not realizing how inhuman war actually is, many here are caught up in the hype of glorifying those who go out to perform acts of violence. Those returning from the front are often so devastated and “shell-shocked” that they have difficulty coping with life; a recent report on the homeless in North America stated that many of them were men who had returned from war.

There is just no way that I can support war. On the

FAMILY TIES

Two sides to forgiveness

MELISSA MILLER

I woke up with a sense of resolve. A disagreeable task was in front of me, so I decided to tackle it first thing. I needed to apologize to two different people for two different situations. In one case, I had thoughtlessly disregarded the other’s point of view. In the other situation, I’d released an emotional eruption complete with hot tears and a waterfall of intense words. Oh how I wanted to take back those words.

Manifesting the enthusiasm of picking up a slimy fish, I reached for the phone. After exchanging a few words of greeting, I launched into my apology. Before I could even finish, the listener interrupted, “Not at all!” he said. “No need to apologize. I totally understand.” I was surprised . . . and grateful. But mostly I felt release. We didn’t have to stay stuck in that past unpleasantness. We ended our call with the air clearer and lighter between us.

On to call No. 2. Still tense, though slightly more hopeful, I again offered an apology. As before, the listener

interrupted me with words of assurance. “There is no need for you to apologize,” she said. “I feel badly for my part in our interaction. Please do not give this another thought.” I was deeply touched. Again I had a sense of release.

Could it actually be this easy to forgive readily and let go of these hurts that happen between us, I wondered. I felt blessed by the Spirit’s activity, a little dispensation of grace when I was expecting only difficulty. Jesus’ teachings



‘Just let it go. You don’t have to keep feeling badly about this.’

on forgiveness make good sense!

What makes it easy for some people to extend forgiveness quickly and kindly? What trips us up from letting go of the injury? What keeps us holding onto those past thorns? What makes it easy or difficult for us to accept forgiveness? What stops us from forgiving ourselves?

My mother and I took a turn at these questions recently. The matter between us began three years ago with an incident at my home. After a patio lunch, my mother gathered some of the dirty

dishes and made her way into the house. Unfortunately, the path to the kitchen led through a dark hallway and included a treacherous step. She missed the step and fell forward, plates crashing around her. Fortunately, she had no serious injuries. But she continued to feel badly about the dishes, often commenting to me about them over the years. I reassured her that I wasn’t upset, and that I felt badly that I hadn’t warned her about the step, or turned on a light. “It’s my fault,” I protested, to no avail.

Things stayed this way until the day I arrived late at the airport to pick up my mother. I felt badly because good daughters are supposed to greet their mothers when they come off the plane. I had failed. My mother cheerfully hugged me, and we were soon on our way. I kept circling back to my sinful late arrival. She repeatedly assured me it was no problem. I continued to apologize. She

persisted, “Just let it go. You don’t have to keep feeling badly about this.”

Finally I laughed and said, “Okay, here’s the deal. I’ll let it go, and not mention it again if you forgive yourself for breaking those dishes.” She agreed, and we both relaxed into forgiveness. Offering and receiving forgiveness—two sides to the same gift.

Melissa Miller (familyties@mts.net) lives in Winnipeg, where she ponders family relationships as a pastor at Springstein Mennonite Church, a counsellor and an author.

other hand, I cannot sit back and do nothing. Therefore, my support goes to help those who have suffered because of war. It includes, but goes deeper than, giving to the helping agencies.

As personal, individual opportunities arise, we must try to restore self-esteem. We can come alongside of, and be a true friend to, refugees and others who have suffered the atrocities of war. We need people who take seriously the calling to really make a difference!

ALFRED W. NEUFELDT, ROSTHERN, SASK.

✉ God can be affirmed inside and outside of Christianity

THANK YOU TO Tim Miller Dyck for his faithfulness to the *Canadian Mennonite* mission statement, including appropriate editorial comments that clarify the position of our denomination on key issues like the unique and essential role of Jesus for salvation.

Unlike Dean Peachey and Philip Martin in their Nov. 26, 2007, letters (pages 11 and 13), I do not see the editorial insertion into Aiden Enns' column, "Five

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Becoming a gracious receiver

ED WEDEL

A Statistics Canada report stated that in 2006 the city of Abbotsford, B.C., was the most generous city in the country. Being a new resident of Abbotsford, I was pleased to hear it. StatsCan went on to say that charitable donations increased in all provinces and territories, with the highest increases being in Alberta, the Yukon, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Why is that important? For one very important point—that for every gift that is given, there must be a receiver of the gift. Acts 20:35 says, *"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"* When I was growing up, the last part of this verse was stressed, and I truly believe this. But where is the blessing for the giver if the gift is not received?

We are encouraged to be independent, to not need anybody. We are taught to take pride in being self-reliant. We work hard to take care of ourselves and our families, but there may be times when we need a helping hand. The first part

of Acts 20:35 says, *"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak."* When we face need and others are reaching out to meet that need, we must respond as gracious receivers.

In 1995, I had begun working as an independent financial planner with my income based solely on commission. Three months into my new career, I became very ill and spent six weeks in hospital, and then could not work for



Being the proud provider for my family, I responded, 'Wow, that's unbelievable, but we can't accept that.'

seven months. What a way to begin a new venture!

Having left a salaried job, I no longer had a benefits program and my provincial Blue Cross program had a waiting period before I could draw any benefits. That meant I had no income of any kind for awhile. We had two small daughters at home and my wife was a stay-at-home mom.

My wife called our pastor and asked if the church would pray for us. She went to church on Sunday to find that our

little church in rural Alberta had heard of our need and had been praying. That afternoon, while I was still awaiting surgery, our pastor and his wife came to visit.

My wife joined us and said, "Look what was in our mailbox at church." There were several cards and notes, mostly anonymous, containing many cash gifts. I believe we received about \$700 that Sunday. Being the proud provider for my family I responded, "Wow, that's unbelievable, but we can't accept that."

At that point my pastor approached the bed, looked me straight in the eyes and admonished, "How dare you rob God's people of the blessing of giving!"

At first I was speechless. Then I asked forgiveness for my pride and graciously accepted that precious gift. For the next seven months, this small church of about 150 people supplied more than 60

percent of our household budget, and we received it graciously and with great thanks.

I Peter 4:10 says, *"As each has received a gift, employ it for one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."* Faithful stewardship is both an act of giving and of gracious and thankful receiving.

Ed Wedel is a stewardship consultant at the Abbotsford, B.C., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit mennofoundation.ca.

reasons to stay in church,” (Oct. 15, 2007, page 9) as offensive—or even as contradicting Enns’ assertion that “God is present everywhere, in all people and . . . in all faiths.”

As a church, we can affirm, and be inspired by, the active presence of God among those who do not confess Jesus even as we proclaim that he is the only Saviour of the world. Miller Dyck’s editorial approach allowed us to hear Enns’ challenge to “[l]ook for glimpses of wonder, love, grace and compassion” all around us—and also to remember the rich particularity of Jesus Christ, without whom we would not be the church.

BRENT KIPFER, BRUSSELS, ONT.

✉ Horse and buggy Mennonites prove rural Canada has a future

I READ WITH interest the recent issue focussing on “the state of Mennonite farming today” (Nov. 12, 2007, page 4).

I am part of a group of folks, mostly from a Mennonite background, who have grouped together to form a Christian agrarian community we’ve called “Ploughshares Community Farm.” We collectively own 59 hectares southeast of Beausejour, Man. So far, we’ve mostly been busy with buildings and a garden for ourselves, and renting out most of the land. In a few years, we hope to manage the whole farm ourselves.

We’ve had a few visits with the newly established

FROM OUR LEADERS

Being faithful witnesses

RUDY BAERGEN

We sat around the table celebrating the end of my wife’s pronunciation class with international medical students. Sonqing (not his real name) explained that adjusting to the snow and cold in Winnipeg was not difficult for him and his family since northwestern China, where they come from, has winters as cold as ours. He went on to tell us that in his native province alone, there are more than 50 nationalities and he had learned to be open to, and accepting of, any and all cultures and ideologies. If one is going to believe in a god, he concluded, it is better to believe in several, rather than just one. He had been raised to believe in none.

Conversations such as this, though perhaps unusual around our diningroom table, happen regularly for us as a Mennonite people across the land. Contact with people in our own Canadian society who do not profess the Christian faith, let alone our Anabaptist/Mennonite worldview, has become part of our daily

work and social life. How do we show respect and care for others while still witnessing to our faith in Jesus as Lord and Saviour?

This is the latest theological question to which the Faith and Life Committee of Mennonite Church Canada has turned its attention. What does it mean to be a faithful Mennonite Church in the face of the growing pluralism and diversity in



If one is going to believe in a god, he concluded, it is better to believe in several, rather than just one.

Canada? How do we relate to our non-Christian neighbour with acceptance and respect, and still be faithful witnesses to the good news of Christ?

This is not a new question for us as a Mennonite Church. Our mission workers have led the way for us in cross-cultural ministry, although often in far-away lands. Here at home we have had some success with evangelism, but now the post-Christendom/postmodern era

has put the challenge to us in a new way.

We must now not only relate to non-Christians who share many common cultural assumptions arising out of a “Christian” society, but also to those who are committed to another spirituality which they believe is as good—or better—than what we offer. As people of God commissioned to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, we cannot casually accept a relativistic pluralism and be content to keep our faith convictions to ourselves.

On the other hand, as people of God’s shalom, it is incumbent on us that we approach those who have a different spirituality with sincere humility and with an openness also to receive. What is the essence of Jesus that we want to share with Muslims, secular people, Sikhs or

others of diverse spiritualities? What is there in our Mennonite/Anabaptist theology that is of special relevance for our time? What does it mean to be a faithful missional Mennonite Church? How should we continue our conversations with new friends like Sonqing?

Rudy Baergen is chair of the Mennonite Church Canada Faith and Life Committee and senior pastor at Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

Westbourne Orthodox Mennonite community newly established here in Manitoba, horse and buggy plain folk from southern Ontario. We find some aspects of their life very inspiring. It seems they are beating the trend of “get big or get out” that is killing so many rural communities:

- Their farms are small and close together.
- They are poor materially, but rich in fellowship.
- They farm with horses, instead of fossil-fuel-dependent tractors.
- They are convinced that this way of simplicity and renunciation is a way to pursue “newness of life” in Jesus Christ.
- They are retaining young people—in their church and on the farm—at a higher rate than the more liberal Mennonite groups.

We liberal, educated Mennonites often look down on our more conservative kin as quaint and outmoded. Could it be that their analysis of the crisis we are in, farming and otherwise, is more profound than we had suspected, and that their way of life holds more answers to our hopes and fears than we have imagined?

MARCUS REMPEL, WINNIPEG/BEAUSEJOUR, MAN.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Brown-Ewert—Zander Nate (b. Oct. 9, 2007), chosen son of Jon and Tracy Brown-Ewert, Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.

Erb—Rose Anna (b. Nov. 9, 2007), to Ryan and Serena Erb, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.

Falk—Brandon William (b. Dec. 2, 2007), to Stephanie and Trevor Falk, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Fransen—Vaughn Nicholas (b. Dec. 18, 2007), to Lori and Brian Fransen, Altona Mennonite, Man.

Funk—Morgan Lorlei (b. Nov. 17, 2007), to Andy and Patricia Funk, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Gossen—Alex Tiessen (b. Nov. 6, 2007), to Paul and Sharon Gossen, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., in Winnipeg.

Hamilton—Preston John (b. Dec. 5, 2007), to Amy and Steve Hamilton, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Klassen—Brooklyn MacKenzie (b. Nov. 15, 2007), to Andrea and Clint Klassen, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man.

Lee—Matthew Callum and Nadia Anne (b. Dec. 6, 2007), to Leanne and Garth Lee, Altona Mennonite, Man., in England.

Martin—Gracie Marlene (b. Dec. 4, 2007), to Natascha and Ryan Martin, Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Stockdale—Naomi Lynne (b. Nov. 14, 2007), to Gregg and Jenny Stockdale, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Taves—William Gerhard (b. Nov. 29, 2007), to Gerhard and Jamie, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Baptisms

Cory Halbert, Rachel Klassen, Joel Toews, Gabrielle Wiebe—Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 9, 2007.

Elayna Bergen, Nancy Ens, Sashira Gafic, Lindsay Harms, John Hodge, Amy Marshall, Tabitha Marshall—First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 2, 2007.

Jodi Klassen, Autumn Taylor, Will Wiebe—Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., Nov. 25, 2007.

Ken Erb, Jaey Kwak, Julie Kwak, Eugenie Kwak and Jae Won Lee—Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C., Dec. 9, 2007.

Marriages

Lind/Urbonas—Cory Lind (North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg) and Kimberly Urbonas at St. Vital Catholic, Winnipeg.

Sawatzky/Zylstra—Matt Sawatzky and Karen Zylstra, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 16, 2007.

Deaths

Brubacher—Orvie G., 66 (b. July 25, 1941; d. Oct. 28, 2007), Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Daniels—Maria, 82 (d. Nov. 29, 2007), Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Enns—David, 72 (d. Nov. 3, 2007), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Enns—George, 83 (d. Nov. 25, 2007), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Froese—Mary, 76 (d. Nov. 7, 2007), Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Hodder—Suzanne, 84 (d. Oct. 28, 2007), Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Kroeker—Jacob, 83 (b. Jan. 30, 1924; d. Nov. 30, 2007), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Lage—Hildegard (Hilda), 78 (d. Dec. 3, 2007), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Martens—Frieda Derksen, 77 (b. June 8, 1930; d. Dec. 3, 2007), Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.

Shier—Bruce, 72 (d. Dec. 10, 2007), Hunta Mennonite, Ont.

Thiessen—John, 83 (d. Oct. 30, 2007), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Woelk—Jacob, 81 (d. Nov. 26, 2007), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

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

Pontius' Puddle



YOUNG PROPHETS

From 'han' to hallelujah!

WILL LOEWEN

Amidst a conversation I do not understand, I hear a word I recognize: "Hallelujah!"

However, neither the man nor his mother are speaking dramatically. The conversation continues, and again I hear "hallelujah." The man will tell me later that he was simply telling her that his family had attended that morning's prayer service at Jesus Village Church in Chun Chon, South Korea.

Prayer is a fundamental part of the Korean church experience, but this woman believes that something special happens when people pray early in the morning, as though God were listening more closely or the Holy Spirit was more willing to deliver blessings while the sun is rising.

Our congregation has five morning prayer services each week—Tuesday through Saturday at 5:30 a.m. Once a month, though, it gets bumped back to 6, to encourage people to bring their children!

I can barely haul myself out of bed for this prayer service, and I can vividly recall hearing North American parents tell me about the difficulties of getting their children to church for 9 a.m. worship. I can't imagine many—any?—would even try for a 6 a.m. prayer service with their kids in tow.

This man has done that, though, and his mother couldn't be prouder.

He goes on to tell me that, despite

Korea's current prosperity, most of the people here can remember more difficult times. The civil war has left an indelible stain on the psyche of the nation. Poverty, separation of families, and tremendous loss of life brought great sorrow to these people.

I have been told this story before, and I will hear it again.

He also begins to tell me about *han*, a concept he tells me will take years to understand. It roughly means sorrow and regret, but encapsulates so much more. The Koreans bring this with them when they pray. They pray for their *han* to be lifted. They pray for estranged family members. They praise God for bringing them out of poverty and strife, and ask for blessings upon those less fortunate.

There was a time when prayer was all that the Korean church had, and they will not allow their current prosperity to erase that from their memories.

No matter what the time of day or week, Koreans pray passionately. Prayers flow from their lips like the mountain streams that carve their way through the countryside—effortlessly, almost rhythmically, and giving every indication that they have flowed that way for a long time.

Prayers here often happen with many people speaking aloud at once. The



PHOTO COURTESY OF WILL LOEWEN

words spoken are mostly indiscernible to me and I'm sure are often only discernable to God. Koreans are a busy people, busier by far than our friends back home, and when the prayer meetings end, they return to their busy schedules. Still, they make time to pray, even if it means meeting before the sun comes up.

There was a time when prayer was all that the Korean church had, and they will not allow their current prosperity to erase that from their memories. This determination is a powerful reminder of

how much I, too, have been blessed, and how much I also should draw close to God in prayer.

Will Loewen and his wife Ana are Mennonite Church Canada Christian Witness workers in South Korea, where they live, work and worship with Jesus Village Church in Chun Chon. Jesus Village Church was the first South Korean congregation to identify itself as Anabaptist and became an associate Member of Mennonite World Conference in 2003.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

New life found in Hong Kong

BY RYAN MILLER

Mennonite Church Canada
CHEUNG CHAU ISLAND, HONG KONG

For at least one Hong Kong immigrant, new life begat new life. On Aug. 14, 2007, nine months after she was baptized in the Pacific Ocean waters, Winnie Moyco Chan gave birth to a son. Zane Austin Chan's arrival was the culmination of years of searching for happiness and for God.

Although Chan, a Filipino living in Hong Kong after marrying a Chinese man, had grown up Catholic and been baptized as a Mormon, she never felt that she understood either faith. From the end of a Cheung Chau Island park bench, she proclaimed that she would go to church if God would give a child to her and her husband of 16 years.

On the other end of the bench was Nora Iwarat, a fellow Filipino who serves at Cheung Chau Christian Center, a ministry through the Conference of Mennonite Churches in Hong Kong, supported by Mennonite Church Canada Christian Witness and other Mennonite missions in the U.S. and Asia.

▄ Briefly noted

Regina congregation explores Vietnamese issues, concerns

REGINA—Grace Mennonite Church recently engaged in a series of frank and challenging dialogues on the Mennonite Church in Vietnam. Cam Nguyen and Anh Do, project workers of the Vietnamese Women's Union, shared how Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) interfaces with existing organizations such as the women's union and its 13 million members, while discussion groups explored issues of political and religious persecution and different strategies to confront injustices. Members were delighted with the good news of official recognition of some of the Mennonite churches in Vietnam (see "Vietnam recognizes Mennonite Church group," Oct. 29, 2007, page 31). A highlight of the series was a message on Mission Sunday by Thu Nguyen, who shared her personal experiences as a Christian from Hanoi living in a culture rooted in socialist/communist ideology and Buddhist religion. She told worshippers that, although Vietnamese society is very spiritual, it is "crying for the love of Jesus Christ." Grace Mennonite prayed for mission work worldwide, and for the growth and unity of Vietnamese Mennonites.

—BY DOUG DURST

PHOTO BY MEY IDAWATY ARUAN



Andy Wade and Nora Iwarat baptize Winnie Moyco Chan in the Pacific waters off Hong Kong.

Although she explored the Christian faith, Chan still did not believe, at least until she conceived. In August 2006, Chan and her husband announced that they were expecting their first child after an in vitro embryonic transfer. Chan's mood and her faith were buoyant for about two months—until she miscarried.

Chan said she did not know how to react. First, she scolded the doctor. Then, in her anger, she blamed God. Iwarat was sure that Chan would turn from God.

But she didn't. "I thought, 'It's just a test from (God),' " Chan wrote at the time. "I asked forgiveness to the Lord for blaming him and asked for strength to accept it and

go on with my life."

In November 2006, Chan held her breath as Iwarat and Andy Wade, a joint MC Canada Christian Witness/Mennonite Mission Network worker in Hong Kong, dipped her beneath the ocean waters. During her testimony, she quoted from I Corinthians of God's promise not to test followers beyond their strength and that God's grace is sufficient for any trial. Rather than being discouraged by her unsuccessful attempts to become a mother, Chan instead became more resolute in her faith, even offering testimonies to her relatives and friends.

Iwarat said those testimonies are important within a population of immigrant workers—many Muslims and others who are Catholic but not actively part of the church—who are looking for compassionate friends at the Cheng Chau Christian Center, a hospitality and friendship ministry. "They need somebody to listen to their problems, somebody they can rely on," Iwarat said. Chan said the ministers at the centre encouraged her with their words and prayers, strengthening her personal faith.

On Sept. 16 of last year, one day after Zane Austin was dedicated, an Indonesian worker who said her faith in God melted away her fear and anxiety was baptized in the same location. From the shore, Chan held her son while she watched another new life begin. ▄

Watch your in-box

Two suspicious emails appear to specifically target Mennonites

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent
WINNIPEG

At least two dubious e-mails specifically targeting Mennonites have been reported in Canada.

The first e-mail caught the attention of a group of Ontario businesspeople at the beginning of December. It claims to come from a 28-year-old Mennonite engineer from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The engineer asks for correspondence and help in developing various programs, including “industry, employment, education, health, sports,” in his country. The addresses that received this e-mail appear to have been harvested from the *Canadian Mennonite* website.

E-mails like these are best ignored, said Dave Klassen of Waterloo North Mennonite Church. Klassen was born in the Congo to missionary parents, and has spent time there serving with Mennonite Brethren Missions and Service International. He was last there in 2006 as part of a group helping to oversee the Congolese elections.

Is there a chance the e-mail is legitimate? “Absolutely,” Klassen said. Still, it’s unwise to respond to an e-mail from Africa asking for assistance when there are more reputable ways to help. “We have legitimate Mennonite organizations that have built relationships with people and are working with them” in places like the Congo, he said. “Why not respond to need using the organizations that we have?”

The e-mail is just one example of advanced “fee letter fraud,” often known as Nigerian fraud, because of where many of the letters and e-mails originate. Others call it 419 fraud, named after a formerly relevant section of the Criminal Code of

Nigeria. The variations of advanced fee letter fraud are endless, but always involve the target receiving an unsolicited letter, fax or e-mail asking for help in getting access to a large sum of money. In exchange for this help, the sender promises the target a portion of the money. The sender’s reward isn’t always stated outright, however.

Another e-mail also targeting Mennonites claims to come from a Mennonite in Tanzania who needs funds to pursue a degree in youth ministry.

In 2006 alone, a conservative estimate puts Canadian losses to various scams at \$24.5 million, according to RCMP Cpl. Louis Robertson of the criminal intelligence and analytical unit of the Canadian

Anti-Fraud Call Centre. “Probably only 5 per cent of Canadians report their fraud to us,” Robertson said, either because they don’t know they’ve been scammed, or are too embarrassed to come forward. The actual figure, then, could be upwards of \$500 million.

Robertson said anyone receiving an e-mail that seems suspicious should send a copy of it to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Call Centre (phonebusters.com), and then delete the message.

Victims of e-mail or phone fraud can call Phonebusters toll-free at 1-888-495-8501 and tell them their story. “This information is invaluable because eventually we will identify the people or organizations behind these scams,” Robertson said. ☞

Annual retreat has ‘impact’ on youths

BY J.D. DUECKMAN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
HOPE, B.C.

As they traditionally do every November, teens from Mennonite churches all over the Fraser Valley travelled to Camp Squeah for their annual Impact retreat.

Keynote speaker Tim Larson, Camp Squeah’s program director, spoke about “Identity,” and explored such topics as:

- How we see ourselves and how God sees us;
- Identity theft, and how our true image as children of God has been warped into something it isn’t;
- God’s identity and the identity of Christ; and
- What our identity is now in relation to Christ and God himself.

Activity blocks filled Saturday afternoon, ranging from field games like Continuous Cricket to a theatre sports block. Any free time was usually filled with card games or catching up with old friends, sometimes both at once.

The songs were a mixture of the new and the familiar, including a pumped-up version of “O Come Let Us Adore Him.” Mixer games included seeing how many people can fit inside a stretched-out inner

tube. The record was somewhere around 39.

Bonding time involved the youths staying up as late as they could each night, playing games in the lodge and then hanging out in the cabins. After all, what’s a retreat without having fun late at night?

When all was said and done, this retreat was a proud addition to a long line of memorable Impact retreats. Just think—only about 11 months left until the next one! ☞

PHOTO BY J.D. DUECKMAN



A humorous moment during a theatre sports skit at the B.C. Youth Impact retreat brought a spontaneous reaction from Wendy Luitjens, Lara Bergen and Natasha Plenert.

The next step

Mennonites in Congo and Canada deepen international partnership

BY ALEDA KLASSEN

For Mennonite World Conference
WATERLOO, ONT.

There were tears in congregants' eyes as Mama Beatrice Kadi and Mama Sidonie Swana participated in their last service at Waterloo North Mennonite Church following a recent three-week visit with the congregation. Swana's ululating during "Jesu Azali Awa," the drumming, and the two women's spontaneous duet in dynamic Congolese harmony carried at least seven back "home" to a country they had visited just over a year ago as election observers.

The women's visit was the result of a growing relationship between Waterloo North and Congolese Mennonites. In July 2006, the Democratic Republic of Congo held its first democratic election in more than 40 years; seven people from Waterloo North responded to the call from Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren churches in Congo to witness and support this hopeful moment in the country's otherwise tormented political history.

Waterloo North also mandated the delegation to find a group with whom to explore a partner relationship. After the elections, members met with several groups, including the Association of Mennonite Women Theologians of Congo. The association's mandate is to encourage the education of women theologians who, in addition to pursuing theological scholarship, seek to foster Mennonite values in their work against social injustice. Kadi, president of the group, said that by offering support for victims of violence against women, by sharing skills and gifts with each other, and by their unity in faith, they seek to answer God's call to effect change in the world.

The women's visit to Canada was the "next step" in pursuing that relationship. The visit impressed the two women, those who hosted them, and those with whom



Mama Beatrice Kadi and Mama Sidonie Swana, members of the Association of Mennonite Women Theologians of Congo, sing at Waterloo North Mennonite Church as part of their cross-cultural visit to Canada.

they shared meals and conversation.

Swana, rubbing the sweater around her shoulders, expressed gratitude for the hospitality and warmth they received. Kadi said that they tried to look at everything they experienced with the objective of adapting it to their lives back in Congo.

While in Canada, the women talked about their vision for a relationship between Waterloo North and their association: unity and communion in Christ, in mission, in relationship, and, in a very real sense, in both suffering and blessing.

Barbara Cook, a member of Waterloo North's delegation, hosted Kadi during her visit. Early on the morning of Cook's scheduled knee surgery, she found her guest waiting to pray with her before she left for the hospital. "You are such a blessing to me," Cook told her.

Eleven-year-old Allison Penner is in a half-day French immersion program at her school. "I've been learning about other cultures for a long time," Allison said. This experience made one culture tangible for her as she put her French to use by translating for the women and her friends at Logos, a children's program at Waterloo North.

A week later, as though in response to a request by Swana to pray for those suffering in Congo, Allison stated poignantly: "If we don't do something now, things won't change." ❧

Women enriched through telling of heritage stories

BY BARB DRAPER

Editorial Assistant
LEAMINGTON, ONT.

Telling their stories is important, said Anna-Lisa Salo, pastor of Leamington United Mennonite Church, to the Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada gathered on Oct. 20. Not passing on their stories is a moral issue because their identity is foundational to their character, she declared. Salo's devotional opened the women's fall Enrichment Day in Leamington, at which speakers told stories from four different Mennonite migrations to

Canada.

Esther Reesor Saito from Vineland, Ont., described the migration of Swiss Mennonites to Canada beginning in the 1780s. Due to persecution, thousands of people fled from Switzerland to Germany. When they travelled by ship to Pennsylvania, one third of the people perished along the way. Later, they came from Pennsylvania to Canada by Conestoga wagon.

Margaret Reimer, the wife of an Old Colony Mennonite deacon from Tillsonburg, Ont., told stories of those who arrived in Canada in the 1870s. Today, the Old

She remembers counting the grains of rice on her plate to make them last longer.

Colony has nearly 11,000 members and 11 churches in Ontario, from Kingsville to Virgil. When Reimer was growing up, her family lived in a chicken coop for a while. She remem-

bers counting the grains of rice on her plate to make them last longer. Now she finds it hard not to eat too much because she remembers leaving the table hungry so many times.

Kay Gortson represented the migration of the 1920s and told stories of the journey from Russia to the Peace River District in northern Alberta. The first house her family lived in was three metres by 4.5 metres, and the only place the children had to play was on the bed. Her family received citizenship papers in 1931 for \$5.05. In 1943, they moved to Virgil.

Gudrun Mathies is a post-World War II immigrant who came to Canada with her mother and brother in 1949. After more than four years of unsettled living in Europe, they finally arrived in Halifax and then came to Kitchener, Ont. It was their strong faith that gave them the strength to continue in spite of many hardships, and this faith continues to be an inspiration for the family.

These stories of perseverance and thankfulness in the face of poverty and hardship reminded the women listening that they too should count their blessings. ❧

From a report by Doris Cressman

Who is a Mennonite?

Sawatsky Visiting Scholar addresses faith and ethnicity issues

BY SUSAN FISH

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

Leading Mennonite historian Royden Loewen explored the connection between faith and ethnicity among Mennonites in Canada during his Sawatsky Visiting Scholar Lecture at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo on Nov. 8.

While even many non-Mennonite Canadians would distinguish between what Loewen called “progressive” and Old Order Mennonites, simply on the basis of appearance and practices, Loewen went deeper into the “creative tension” between their faith and ethnicity. He observed that it is possible for Mennonites to be guided through the entire life cycle in familiar Mennonite social institutions—from schools, credit unions and vacations, to retirement homes and funeral arrangements—and called the ability to live almost exclusively within this virtual Mennonite village “institutional completeness.”



He observed that it is possible for Mennonites to be guided through the entire life cycle in familiar Mennonite social institutions. . . .

He offered six discourses that reveal how self-identifying Mennonites manage the tension between faith and ethnicity:

- Those who criticize Mennonite church life as narrow and patriarchal, but embrace Mennonite culture as life-giving and comforting. They are typified by writers like Patrick Friesen, Di Brandt, David Bergen and Miriam Toews.

- Those who maintain an affinity for Mennonite ethnicity while embracing a Chris-

tian evangelical theology.

- “Urban neo-Anabaptists” who embrace Mennonite faith but are guarded about the role of their ethnicity. Group members are inspired by their Anabaptist roots and seek to transform modern society in a similar way.

- Those who link faith and ethnicity. For Old Order Mennonites, cultural practices express spiritual principles and cannot be separated.

- The “large, quiet majority.” For this group, faith and ethnicity exist along complementary, parallel tracks.

- New immigrant congregations who designate themselves as Mennonite, often because their Canadian sponsors were Mennonite and who do not always have a clear sense of Anabaptist teaching or history. This group identifies as Mennonite because they see a compatibility between Mennonite values and those of their own original country, as well as a way to integrate into Canadian society.

Despite these very different ways of living out faith and culture, Loewen emphasized that ethnicity cannot easily be erased, in part because it sets the rhythm of people’s lives, announces a unique narrative to the world, and binds members together by memory.

Loewen has held the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg since 1996.

The Rodney and Lorna Sawatsky Vis-

iting Scholar is awarded to renowned scholars, practitioners and performers whose expertise in their field represents a wide range of interests to the Grebel community.

This lectureship honours the leadership and contributions of former Grebel academic dean and president Rod Sawatsky, who died three years ago, and his wife, Lorna, to Conrad Grebel and the wider church and academic communities. ❧

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Church

Pastors help themselves at the annual Pastors' Breakfast hosted by Conrad Grebel University College on Nov. 13, 2007. Professor Len Enns (third from right) gave a presentation on "Music as Communion" to about 65 pastors and teachers. Music is communion with each other as human beings and communion with God he said. Also pictured from left are: Paul Penner Dyck, Jane Kuepfer, Muriel Bechtel, Jim Brown and Don Penner.

PHOTO BY BARRY BERGEN



The sixth annual Leamington (Ont.) Mennonite Home gala gave participants a taste of Europe while raising funds for the seniors centre. The six-course meal—complete with live music—featured specialties from several different European countries, while a silent auction and dancing rounded out the evening. This year's gala raised approximately \$45,000 for a revamping of the broadcast system that sends worship services to the home from nearby Leamington United Mennonite Church. Over the past six years the galas have raised more than \$200,000 for the home's long-term care facility.

PHOTO BY RICHARD LOUGHEED

On Nov. 19, 2007, the Mennonite Historical Society of Quebec hosted a dinner in celebration of the 51st anniversary of Mennonite mission work in the province.

Pictured from left to right, front row: Tilman Martin and Harold Reesor, the first two Mennonite missionaries; Ellen and Mel Schmidt; Leeta Horst and Luke Martin; and back row: Nicole Ouimet, Mary-Lou Docherty and André Ouimet, the current pastor at Joliette/Rawdon.



PHOTO BY MARLENE WIEBE

snapshots

CONRAD GREBEL PHOTO



Conrad Grebel University College student John Wray, right, was presented with a \$225 cash award for his speech, "Banana workers and involving anger in the Christian peace position," as the second-place finisher in the 2007 bi-national C. Henry Smith Oratorical Contest. Presenting the stipend is Lowell Ewert, director of Grebel's peace and conflict studies program. Wray also won \$300 from Conrad Grebel for his speech.



Lyle Brown, left, Betty Brown, Albert Peters and Richard Goerzen wield lighters at Bergthal Mennonite Church near Didsbury, Alta., on Nov. 18, 2007, to burn the approximately \$1 million mortgage the congregation of 120 took out for building improvements in 2000. The church enjoys a new kitchen and fellowship hall, enlarged foyer, retrofitted basement and a number of needed upgrades. The original facility was built in 1948, with an education wing added in 1964.

HOLYROOD MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO



On Dec. 2, 2007, Edmonton's Holyrood Mennonite Church joyfully welcomed 21 members into fellowship. Nineteen of the new members came to Canada as refugees from Africa, from the countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Rwanda. The other two are originally from Peru and New Brunswick. Said pastor Werner De Jong at the membership ceremony, "It is a beautiful sign of the kingdom of God when people of many cultures gladly join together in a common commitment to worship and follow Jesus."

African churches now to be administered from Africa

BY LYNDA HOLLINGER-JANZEN

Mennonite Church Canada

BURKINA FASO / CONGO

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) Partnership Councils held in Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of Congo last fall were planned to empower African churches and promote mutuality in mission.

Benjamin Mubenga Wa Kabanga, president of Communauté Évangélique Mennonite (Evangelical Mennonite Church), believes that moving the decision-making process to their continent from North America helps African leaders collaborate in formulating a clear vision of what their churches can become and to hold fast to that vision so that the churches can become authentic and autonomous.

Damien Pelende, president of Communauté Évangélique des Frères Mennonites du Congo (the Mennonite Brethren Church in Congo), says that the benefits of a Partnership Council model extend beyond Africa and help to knit Mennonites from the northern and southern hemispheres into one big family.

In Kinshasa, 30 Congolese church leaders participated in the administrative process, along with representatives from Canada, France and the U.S. Before the Partnership Councils were established three years ago, only a token representative may have been present if the meetings had been held in North America.

“What impresses me first is that the priorities for both the Burkina and Congolese Churches are the same,” said Hippolyto Tshimanga, Mission Partnership facilitator for Mennonite Church Canada Christian Witness. “In both countries, leaders focus on evangelism and leadership training for their growing churches. They also look at ways of generating income for the administrative expenses of their churches.”



PHOTO BY STEVE WIEBE-JOHNSON

In conjunction with the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission Partnership Council meetings in Burkina Faso, Hippolyto Tshimanga, MC Canada's Mission Partnerships Facilitator for Africa, third from right, also spent time with Donna and Loren Entz, international ministry workers in Burkina Faso, second from left and second from right, and local members of the Samoghohiri Mennonite Church.

The Partnership Council model of administration grew out of an extensive program review that AIMM commissioned Rick Derksen to undertake in 2001. Dave Dyck, formerly from an AIMM partner organization—Mennonite Brethren Mission and Service International—gave leadership to drafting an administrative structure based, in part, on the findings of Derksen's review, whose proposals focused on giving a greater voice to AIMM's African partners. “Basically, the goal was to formalize a system whereby decisions about mission in Africa would be made in Africa with Africans as central and equal participants in the decisions,” Dyck said.

Originally organized as the Congo Inland Mission in 1912, AIMM is currently supported by three North American Mennonite partners—Mennonite Mission Network, MC Canada Christian Witness and Evangelical Mennonite Conference—that work with churches in four African countries (Botswana, South Africa, Burkina Faso and Congo). From its inception, AIMM ministry has been characterized by inter-church collaboration. The present vision statement expresses this commitment: “A common witness as a joint Mennonite team lends credibility to our claims to be one in Christ.” ☞

Global business seminar planned for Paraguay 2009

MWC / MEDA Joint Release

ASUNCION, PARAGUAY

A two-day seminar for global Mennonite businesspeople is planned to coincide with the 2009 Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Assembly 15 in Paraguay. The by-invitation-only event is scheduled for July 12-13, immediately prior to the July 14-19 assembly in the capital city of Asuncion. Five Anabaptist businesspeople will be invited from each of the five MWC continental regions, plus five from the host country, to explore the challenges facing Anabaptists in business.

Sponsors are Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) along with MEDA Paraguay and MWC.

“The Anabaptist business community

is a vital part of the global church,” says Ray Brubacher, Assembly 15 international coordinator. “It is fitting that MEDA is giving direction to these conversations since MEDA began its international work in Paraguay 54 years ago.”

The program is expected to have four components:

- Business as a calling—how faith influences business;
- Business opportunities in a shifting global economy;
- Business as salt and light; and
- How business can address poverty.

People who want to be considered for invitation by the selection committee should contact MEDA vice-president Howard Good at hgood@meda.org by March 30. ☞

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Investing in risky places

Annual MEDA convention attendees asked to trust in a world of uncertainty

BY LINDA WHITMORE

Mennonite Economic Development Associates
TORONTO

Close to 500 people from across North America heard messages of trust at the annual Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) Business as a Calling convention last fall in Toronto. MEDA called on convention attendees to trust in a world of uncertainty and to act on that trust by investing in the poor around the world. (See “Give the poor some credit” sidebar below.)

Delegates heard a slate of high-profile plenary speakers.

Eric Pillmore was hired by Tyco to restore integrity and values to the company in the wake of one of the largest corporate fraud scandals in the history of American commerce. He noted the lack of functional

MEDA PHOTO BY CALEB MACDONALD



Ben Porter, left, Sheri Brubacher and Jared Penner—MEDA staff from the Waterloo, Ont., office—enjoyed themselves at the annual Business as a Calling convention in Toronto last fall.

leadership that led to Tyco’s downfall, and challenged his audience to ask themselves, “What are the non-negotiables in your life?”

Rotman School of Management dean Roger Martin addressed the essential role of trust in building an organization’s sense of community. He pointed to three key things about community as it relates to creating a satisfied workforce: being a valued member of a community, valuing that community, and being part of a community that is valued by people outside it.

Debbie Sauder David, a member of the third generation of leadership of

the Sauder Furniture legacy, spoke on preserving values and trust through the generations. Her memories of MEDA co-founder Erie Sauder, her grandfather, struck a chord with the audience. David quoted her grandfather as saying, “If the Lord blesses you, then use it for his glory. God can make miracles out of common people, and we can all make a difference. . . . We are passing our heritage on to our children so they know they, too, can make a difference.”

Business as a Calling also offered more than 30 seminars on a wide variety of topics, from economic trends in North America and a project to integrate Afghan women into horticultural markets, to how to incorporate faith and finance.

Convention organizer Howard Good, MEDA vice-president for North American operations and director of member services, noted, “Convention brings together Christian businesspeople and challenges them to be a source of salt and light in the corporate world. It provides opportunities to learn and discuss how they can live their faith every day of the week.”

Next year’s Business as a Calling convention, with a theme of “Dividends of hope,” is scheduled for Nov. 6-9 in Columbus, Ohio, where Christian author Philip Yancey will be the keynote speaker. ¶

Give the poor some credit

New MEDA Trust website allows credit union members to provide loans to Third World entrepreneurs

MEDA/MSCU Joint Release
KITCHENER, ONT.

Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU) and Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) are launching the next phase of a partnership forged in 2000 with the development of a co-branded website that invites MSCU members to provide microloans to entrepreneurs in some of the world’s developing countries.

MEDA Trust creatively links donors in North America to entrepreneurs around the world through its website—medatrust.org—giving those who want to help the chance to become involved in the world of microfinance.

This new partnership was announced by Ed Epp,

MEDA’s vice-president for resource development, at MEDA’s 2007 Business as a Calling convention in Toronto last fall. “MEDA Trust makes microfinance more real to the average person,” says Epp. “It brings the dignity and work of entrepreneurs in other countries home to people in Canada.”

MEDA and MSCU are inviting the credit union’s 16,000 members to “give the poor some credit.” The program provides the working poor with many opportunities, including experiencing the dignity gained by being able to financially provide for themselves and their families.

MSCU members who visit the website can set up a virtual portfolio through which they can choose clients from a real microfinance institution to fund. Once a client has repaid her loan, the funds are returned to that portfolio and the donor is free to fund another loan. These revolving loans make it possible for that money to influence multiple entrepreneurs. Live portfolio reports give donors a list of current and past clients, their repayment progress, the value of loans made and the remaining balance.

A half-century of giving

Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite celebrates 50 years of helping others

BY GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee
TIEFENGRUND, SASK.

On a chilly Sunday morning in November a small rural church one hour north of Saskatoon celebrated a milestone—50 years of continuous support for the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Global Family Program.

“Everyone knew it was forever, but nobody knew we had been doing this for 50 years,” said Sherry Regier, education director of Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church. “To me, this shows a continuity of philosophy—a perseverance of being aware of the needs of others. We are still doing something important that was considered important 50 years ago.”

About 12 adults and 15 children are currently part of the Sunday school that meets in the basement of a church built in 1958. Every year in January, February and March, they keep their eyes on a “giving thermometer” to watch the progress as they raise \$300 to sponsor a student in Raghappur St. Paul’s High School in India.

Over the years, the church has sponsored seven students attending the high school and 11 students attending Hope Secondary School in Palestine. This sponsorship program includes exchanging gifts of cards, letters, drawings and photographs.

Tiefengrund’s Sunday school is currently sponsoring Jhuma Sinha, who lives in a one-room brick house with a mud floor. Her most recent letter states, “I want to become a teacher. Because of your help I am able to study, so I am extremely grateful to you.”

Bernice Regier, 82, was teaching Sunday school in 1957 when the Sunday School started supporting this MCC program. Over the years she has enjoyed reading letters from students and school princi-

Sylvia Regier brings a cake to a celebration marking 50 years of Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church’s support for MCC’s Global Family Program.



MCC PHOTO BY JOANIE PETERS

pals. “I just wish there was more that we could do for them,” she said.

From 1957-89, the Sunday school sponsored students attending Hope Secondary School near Bethlehem—a school that was founded by MCC and supported by MCC financially and through placements of North American volunteers. In 1972, MCC appointed Bishara Awad as the school’s first Palestinian principal and officially transferred the school to the Arab Charitable Society in 1977.

Awad’s brother, Alex, was the guest speaker at the MCC Saskatchewan annual meeting in November. He acknowledged the sponsorship support at the annual meeting and met briefly with Regier and pastor Lorne Epp to express his gratitude for MCC’s support. Over the years, MCC gradually reduced financial support to en-

courage self-reliance, and support from the Global Family Program ended in September 2003.

Although the official name is now Hope Secondary School, Alex Awad said many people still refer to the school as “the Mennonite school.” Today, the school has an enrolment of about 200 students.

“We so seldom get this type of connection to the projects that we support—to have this type of connection is rare and unexpected,” said Epp following the meeting with Awad. “We give without expectations of hearing these stories. The joy of what we experienced today is because of what our parents and grandparents did.” ❧

Cyclone update

Houses to be rebuilt along Indian Ocean coastline, feeding program begun

BY TIM SHENK

Mennonite Central Committee
BAGERHAT DISTRICT, BANGLADESH

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is beginning a project to build 1,250 houses in a rural Bangladeshi community where thousands of people lost their homes to the winds and floodwaters of Cyclone Sidr last fall.

Sidr tore into Bangladesh’s coast on Nov. 15 with wind speeds comparable to those of Hurricane Katrina. The cyclone destroyed more than a half-million houses and left a death toll in the thousands, according to the Bangladeshi government.

Seven MCC workers have relocated to

the coastal district of Bagerhat to organize the construction project, according to Larry Fisher, MCC’s Bangladesh representative. With the help of an additional 40 hired workers, MCC will rebuild houses in Taffelbari, a coastal area of Bagerhat that is home to many fishing and farming families. Since the storm, many families in Taffelbari are living beside roads in makeshift tents constructed out of whatever materials they could find, including blankets, sticks and tin sheeting.

MCC is currently helping to provide food to 10,000 households in Bangladesh through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Fisher says that, while many other organ-

MCC PHOTO BY DEREK D'SILVA



Families whose homes were destroyed by Cyclone Sidr last fall camp out on a roadside near Taffelbari, Bagerhat District, Bangladesh.

izations are providing food to people affected by the cyclone, MCC will be one of the first to rebuild homes. He notes that building houses is one way to help families become self-sufficient again after the trauma of the cyclone. "As long as they're concerned about trying to get under a roof, it's hard to focus on getting back to fishing or farming," he says.

The simple houses will measure three metres by nine metres, with concrete posts, timber walls, and corrugated steel roofs and siding. The houses will be similar in size to those that were destroyed, but sturdier; they will be built where the old houses stood.

Fisher estimates that each house will cost about \$320 to build, including labour, materials and administrative costs. MCC is appealing for funds now to build the 1,250 houses by April, and Fisher says the only reason to stop then would be a lack of funds. "I'm hoping that we get another fresh burst of money and can keep building," he says. "Two years from now, we could still be building." ❧

Closer to home

AIDS not just a problem in Africa, Ovide Mercredi tells MCC fundraiser

Mennonite Central Committee Release
CALGARY

The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) World Aids Day fundraiser has become a November staple for many members of the Mennonite community in Calgary. Although the fundraiser date was moved several weeks ahead of the internationally recognized Dec. 1 date, in order to accommodate the invited speakers, many of the same faces appeared to support the work of MCC in Africa as well as with northern Canadian populations, where AIDS is a rapidly growing issue.

Keynote speaker Ovide Mercredi, the former Assembly of First Nations grand chief, approached the AIDS crisis from a different perspective, one that gave stark acknowledgement to the growing problem of AIDS in Canada's aboriginal communities. Speaking for an hour, he kept coming back to the same refrain: "We cannot deal with AIDS." On top of economic and political marginalization, the decimation of traditional cultures and identities, and the struggle to maintain access to even minimal levels of healthcare, these communities cannot deal with AIDS too, Mercredi said. While still fighting to get roads, viable and sustainable local

economies, and the ability to re-acquire self-sufficiency, these communities do not have the resources for fighting AIDS, he said. But AIDS has come.

John Beriault, who attended the fundraiser, noted, "Often the education and treatment we strive to provide in Africa is not available to people less than four hours drive away. Have we become too eager to look outside our borders? Are we too uncomfortable with the thought that we are part of the oppressive force dominating these [aboriginal Canadians]?"

"Listening to Mr. Mercredi, I was painfully aware of how easy it is to let issues like taxation and education take precedence over the fate of a population," Beriault continued. "The aid work we do as a Mennonite organization is essential to our confession of faith, but maybe it is time to begin stepping outside our comfort zone, to be willing to take a political voice. . . ."

"Christ's love, in a Mennonite perspective, manifests itself in our work with communities around the world. Within our own borders, however, we have the unique opportunity to show our love in ways we may not be entirely used to. Indigenous communities affected by AIDS need access to education and treatment, the same kinds of things that are so necessary in Africa. But they also need a voice. They need to know that their voices are heard. And, most importantly, they need to know that our voices will join theirs in working to end the oppression of First Nations peoples." ❧

MCC PHOTO



Former Assembly of First Nations grand chief Ovide Mercredi, centre, was the keynote speaker as this year's annual Mennonite Central Committee AIDS Day fundraiser in Calgary. He is pictured with event coordinators Nina Kesel, left, and Kim Thiessen.

Walking to the edges

Three-way education partnership proves to be a success

BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Saskatchewan Correspondent
HEPBURN, SASK.

Steve Siemens was just 18 when he left his home in Plum Coulee, Man., to go to Bethany College, a Mennonite Brethren Bible school in the small town of Hepburn. During his final year there, he spent eight months getting a thorough grounding in the field of restorative justice. The former farm kid and pastor's son was exposed to the world of prisons and ex-convicts while working with Person to Person (P2P) and Circles of Support prison ministry under the tutelage of Helmut Isaac.

"I was blown away," Siemens says of the

PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE SIEMENS



Steve Siemens has benefited from an educational partnership of Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan, Bethany College and Rosthern Junior College.

experience.

All this was made possible because of a successful working relationship between three previously unconnected organizations: Bethany College, Rosthern Junior College and Mennonite Central Com-

mittee (MCC) Saskatchewan.

The brainchild of MCC Saskatchewan executive director Bruno Baerg, the loosely defined agreement allows students to gain a better understanding of the work MCC does. In turn, both schools have ministry and service opportunities for their students and MCC gets much-needed manpower for its programs plus a chance to share its vision with a younger generation.

Both schools use the service in different ways that reflect the unique emphasis of each institution and the respective ages of their students. But leadership development is an important component of the program for students at both colleges, says coordinator Ellen Klassen Hamm.

At Bethany College, the students spend their Christian service class learning about different aspects of MCC. Material resources coordinator Darlene Wall explains how Bethany students are exposed to various issues in caring for the world's needy as they move from one department to the next each week. As their fourth year service component, students at the college spend up to eight months in a ministry-related area.

For its part, Rosthern Junior College (RJC), a Grade 10 to 12 high school with a Mennonite faith focus, has sent a group of students down to Guatemala to work with an MCC-sponsored school; had Grade 10 and 11 students take in sessions on AIDS awareness and learn about Equal Justice For All, a grassroots organization that advocates for the poor; and placed Grade 12 students in an MCC Urban Plunge, in which they study the daily struggle of an inner city society in closer detail.

Ties are not automatically cut upon graduation, however.

"Many students have gone on to do short-term or long-term [assignments] with MCC or [Mennonite Disaster Service]," says RJC principal Gail Schellenberg.

Siemens, now 22 and living in Saskatoon, doesn't know what career he'll pursue, but suspects the future may involve something in the line of prison ministry. And that, he suggests, would be taking his Christian commitment away from the comforts of a predictable life.

"We have to walk to the edges," he concludes. ☸



Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools

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GOD AT WORK IN US

God's intentions for the church: An ecclesial vision

BY DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada

WINNIPEG

Christians have lost sight of what God intends the church to be. This is the bold, perhaps prophetic, proclamation MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman makes. "What the church is meant to be" is not a question that's being asked very seriously today, he says. "Instead, people are asking what should we do or how should it be done?"

Suderman began pondering the purpose of the church during his university days, when exposure to new people and ideas broke into his traditional, rural Manitoba Mennonite mindset. At 21, Suderman, a product of the public school system, accepted his first professional job as a teacher at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in Winnipeg. Influential conversations about faith with fellow colleagues led to further study at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind., where his resolve deepened through the teaching of theologian John Howard Yoder.

"I took every course from him that I could and read every book that he wrote. Yoder made me realize that this faith stuff does make sense, and that I didn't have to throw it away," he says.

Today, Suderman's mantra is declaring the ecclesial—or churchly—vision for the church: "The primary role of the church is to be a peoplehood of God. . . . That is the message we need to recover, but it's hard to do because it's not where we are at."

Suderman believes people have reduced the ecclesial vision of the church as a peoplehood of God into a series of "good things" that become isolated and disconnected from a discerning church community. These good things take on a life of their own: discipleship, evangelism, mission, peace, justice, devotional life,



MC CANADA PHOTO BY DAN DYCK

The mantra of MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman is declaring the ecclesial—or churchly—vision for the church: "The primary role of the church is to be a peoplehood of God. . . . That is the message we need to recover, but it's hard to do because it's not where we are at."

ethics, relief and development work, violence reduction.

Centuries of tradition have made this mindset a virtual part of our spiritual DNA. Constantine (AD 272-337), the first Roman ruler to legalize Christianity, created a set of rules governing the church that simultaneously restricted the church's role to spiritual tasks. "It put limitations, restrictions and inhibitions on the vocation of a church that was so wild. . . . when you read the book of Ephesians," says Suderman. "This wild vocation for the

community, every context, every geographical, political, social and economic setting has a living, vibrant, contextualized, indigenized, permanent, deeply rooted community of faith that is living what God wants for that context. In some cases, it may mean being in confrontation with what there is; in others, it might be embracing what there is."

On an individual level, Suderman describes an ecclesial vision as each member of the church having a "tenacious, contagious passion burning in their heart to be a peoplehood that incarnates the value that God wants for the world. We should be satisfied with nothing less."

The people gave him hope that 'good, sincere, dedicated, well-intentioned members are not resisting this [message], and so we will keep pounding away at it.'

church has been domesticated."

Spending 10 years working with the Mennonite Church in Latin America provided Suderman with a glimpse of a new possibility for a more ecclesial reality. In Colombia, where daily violence, a strong military presence and poverty describe life, the church is "attempting to address every woe of that society from the foundation of being a people of the kingdom of God," he says enthusiastically.

North American vision

How an ecclesial vision for the church would look in today's North American congregations is difficult to describe, concedes Suderman. "[People] have a lot of the same questions I have about how we make this practical."

In today's terms, an ecclesial vision for the church would mean that "every com-

And there is hope. In 2006, Suderman visited nearly every MC Canada congregation. The people gave him hope that "good, sincere, dedicated, well-intentioned members are not resisting this [message], and so we will keep pounding away at it."

Suderman recalls a recent story about several young adults on a learning tour in Colombia. Impressed by the ecclesial vision of the relatively small Colombian Mennonite Church that is faced with seemingly insurmountable hurdles, the North American group became disillusioned with their home congregations and how little was being done to help the Colombians.

At the close of the tour, they received some unexpected advice from a Colombian church leader: "The best thing you can do for Colombia is to go home and love your church." ❧

Say yes to soldiers who say no

American war resister tells Conrad Grebel students how he feels betrayed by his country, disowned by his family

BY SANDRA FISH

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

Chuck Wiley is a member of a family with deep military roots. One of his ancestors was an American Revolutionary War soldier and every generation since has had a member who has been proud to defend his country. Until last February, Wiley was no exception.

On Nov. 14, Wiley visited Conrad Grebel University College to tell his story.

An only child, born in Kentucky in 1972, Wiley entered the U.S. army before he had even finished high school. Three years later, in 1992, he transferred to the navy, where he worked as a nuclear engineering technician and rose to a supervisory position, responsible for the overall operations of four reactor plants on the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise, as well as for the supervision of more than 70 personnel.

In May 2006, the Enterprise was deployed as part of Operation: Iraqi Freedom, to provide air support off the coast for troops on the ground in Iraq; this included bombing and surveillance missions.

This was his first deployment as a chief petty officer, a rank that allowed him access to a new range of information about what was actually happening in Iraq. "Much of this information troubled me on a personal level," Wiley told Conrad Grebel students and staff.

At issue was whether the invasion of Iraq could be considered "justified military action" under the Geneva Conventions or whether this was a war of aggression. Numerous mission reports and profiles

CONRAD GREBEL PHOTO BY SUSAN FISH



Chuck Wiley, an American veteran of the war in Iraq, told Conrad Grebel peace and conflict studies students that "I can only call myself shocked and dismayed at what I was a part of for so long, without really understanding the impact of my actions."

that Wiley read during this deployment led him to believe that this was the latter. The reports pointed to what Wiley calls a "complete abdication of the responsibilities the U.S. has to the Iraqi people to protect them as much as possible from the violence of warfare." But some missions deliberately put the Iraqi people in harm's way, he said.

'Chuck Wiley's story is the kind that keeps you up at night, thinking.'

Wiley made the decision that he would not re-enlist when his term of service was completed, but when he was reprimanded for open discussion of these issues with others in his crew, even when the questions were raised by others, he realized this was a more serious matter.

Wiley returned to the U.S. with his ship in November 2006. The ship would be re-deployed to Iraq in five months, but Wiley said he did "some soul-searching about my willingness to return to taking part in such a war, and decided I could not do that." Last February, Wiley entered Canada and applied for refugee status.

Wiley was invited to speak at Conrad Grebel by professor Marlene Epp to her

peace and conflict studies students in the context of their learning about the history of war resistance—from religious conscientious objectors in World War Two to Vietnam draft-dodgers and present-day deserters from the U.S. war in Iraq.

"The change in Canada's reception of war resisters from the Vietnam era, when the country welcomed close to 50,000 American deserters and resisters, to today, when the doors are seemingly closed to these young people of conscience, is striking," said Epp.

On Dec. 6, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration adopted a motion recommending that the Canadian government immediately implement a program to allow war resisters and their families to stay in Canada. It also calls for an immediate halt to deportation proceedings in these cases.

Wiley and his fellow war resisters hope that Canadians will urge their Members of Parliament to focus attention on this issue.

While he waits to know his fate, Wiley works at a small private school in Toronto and is learning how to relate to those who have always surrounded him. The military considers him a deserter, while his family, with its long military history, currently does not speak to him.

Wiley is uncertain what he should call himself. The best term, he suggested, is "be-

trayed," believing that what he was taught about military engagement—particularly about the invasion of Iraq—was untrue. "I have been doing a lot of learning over the last few months and my worldview is evolving," he said. "Right now I can only call myself shocked and dismayed at what I was a part of for so long, without really understanding the impact of my actions."

Peace and conflict studies student Denise Whaley was inspired to action by Wiley's talk. "Chuck Wiley's story is the kind that keeps you up at night, thinking," she said. "I began telling everyone who would listen, and even some who didn't want to." ❧

OBITUARIES

A man of wisdom and vision

Walter Franz, 1940-2007

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada
ALTONA, MAN.

At his funeral, Walter Franz was compared to an eagle, an appropriate image considering his long-term commitment to Mennonite Church Canada's Native Ministry. Franz passed away on Nov. 7, 2007, at age 67, after an 11-year struggle with chronic lymphocytic leukemia. His funeral was held at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

"Eagles have sharp vision, so did Walter," Norman Meade, a long-time church leader, friend and associate from Manigotagan, Man., said. "He was a prophet. Walter was also strong like the eagle."

Born in Tofield, Alta., to George and Tena Franz, he spent his formative years on the family farm. In 1955, the Franz family moved to Edmonton, where George pastored First Mennonite Church. Walter Franz and Hilda Penner were married in 1962.

After graduation from Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University), Franz pastored at Osler Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan for six years. During these years their children, Laurie, Chris and Tamara, were born. Franz went on to serve as principal of Swift Current Bible Institute. In 1975, they adopted their seven-year-old aboriginal son, Len.

From 1979-90 Franz pastored at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church. During this time he served in various roles in the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (now Mennonite Church Canada), including as moderator. Eventually, he became executive director of the Native Ministry program, a role he held until his retirement in 2005.

Franz's commitment to Aboriginal Peoples shaped his retirement years; the couple continued their work in a volun-

PHOTO COURTESY OF MC CANADA



Walter Franz holds a scale model of a Native Ministry summer camp for Matheson Island, Man., a dream that was never fully realized.

teer capacity as part-time pastors to the Riverton (Man.) Fellowship Circle.

In his final hours, Walter Franz expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work with Canada's Aboriginal Peoples. "Results for the future are not in church buildings or the institutional church," he said, "but in relationships." ❧

Serving with passion

Henry Dueck, 1927-2007

BY DEBORAH FROESE

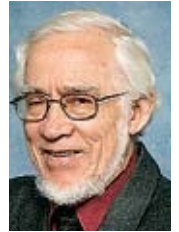
Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG

Henry Dueck had a passion for people and for the Word of God. In partnership with his wife Helen, Dueck served in various educational and pastoral capacities, primarily in Latin America.

After an eight-year struggle with cancer, Dueck passed away on Nov. 4, 2007, in Winnipeg.

He was born in Coaldale, Alta., on Oct. 17, 1927, one year after his parents, Jacob

P. Dueck and Susanna Dyck, arrived as refugees from Orenburg, Russia. Dueck met his future wife, Helen Redekop, while they were studying in Winnipeg and they were married in 1954. In 1960, with three young children, Karen, Robert and Suzanne, the Duecks answered a call to mission work and headed for Brazil. They worked under the auspices of the Mennonite Brethren Conference, working with German-speaking Mennonites. In those years, children William and Louise were born.



Dueck

In 1969, the Duecks began working with the Commission on Overseas Mission, the predecessor of Mennonite Church Canada Christian Witness, and over the next 23 years they served in Uruguay, Bolivia and Paraguay, as well as a short-term assignment at the Bienenberg Bible Institute in Switzerland.

Upon retirement in 1992, the Duecks moved to Herbert, Sask., and continued working in a volunteer capacity. They assisted in the development of an Anabaptist curriculum for Latin American Mennonite children under the condition that the material was not simply translated, but was written from a Latin American perspective.

In 2005, the Duecks moved to Winnipeg and became active members of Douglas Mennonite Church. Their final accomplishment as a team was the completion of a family book compiling images and memories of their journey together. ❧

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ARTBEAT

FILM REVIEW

Warring for the minds of our children

The Golden Compass. Written and directed by Chris Weitz. New Line Cinema, 2007. PG-13. Based on the novel of the same name by Philip Pullman.

REVIEWED BY VIC THIESSEN

The big movie hit of the Christmas season—*The Golden Compass*—was also one of the most controversial films of 2007, with many Christians arguing that the film, like the novel, denigrates the Christian church and promotes atheism. Because it is aimed at children, many Christian parents are afraid the film will play havoc with the minds of their children, especially with their thoughts about God and the church.

The minds of children also happens to be a central theme of the film.

The Golden Compass is an adventure story set in a parallel universe in which all humans are accompanied by their *daemons*, which are animals that represent the souls of the humans. The ruling power in this universe is the Magisterium, which works hard to preserve centuries of “correct teaching.” To this end (to limit free will), it is kidnapping children and taking them to the far north, where it is experi-

about *The Golden Compass*. The acting is strong, especially that of Dakota Blue Richards as Lyra and Nicole Kidman as the evil Mrs. Coulter. The *daemons* work very well. And the parallel universe is beautifully realized, with excellent cinematography and brilliantly made modes of transportation.

Unfortunately, the film also has many flaws. The writing is uneven, with some great dialogue but also numerous scenes which feel unnatural and clumsy, as if Weitz is desperately trying to find a way to fill in needed information in the fewest scenes possible. The result is an episodic and occasionally convoluted plot. In summary, I think *The Golden Compass* is a flawed but entertaining adventure film



represent the church. But what is being attacked is not Christianity as such, but an authoritarian church that tries to limit free thinking. So, no, the film will not cause your children to become atheists, although it might cause them to ask questions about the church.

I see such questions as a positive thing. Indeed, I see the film as an opportunity to talk to children, and adults, about God, faith and the church. After all, is the best way to counter accusations against Christianity to attack the film and keep children from seeing it, or to show the world that the accusations are misleading by admitting our flaws and stating clearly that we support free thinking, truth-seeking and working hard to make our world a more just and peaceful place?

Nevertheless, I believe *The Golden Compass* is dangerous to our children when it suggests that violence and war are necessary to resolve the crises faced by the film’s protagonists. Lyra’s closest companion (aside from her *daemon*) is Iorek the bear, who lives for fighting and war. And, like *Narnia*, the film ends with a triumphant battle scene. Released at a time of year when we celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace in a world full of violence and war, do we really need another film aimed at children which depicts violence as redemptive, rather than exploring alternatives?

By all means, take your children to see *The Golden Compass*, but afterwards take time to talk to them about it. Besides exploring their feelings about *daemons*, Dust and the Magisterium, ask them how they felt when the bad guys were killed in the battle scene and whether there might have been other ways to resolve the conflict (as Lyra attempted earlier in the film).

We can win the war for the minds of our children non-violently. ☸

Vic Thiessen is director of the London (England) Mennonite Centre.

[W]hat is being attacked is not Christianity ... but an authoritarian church that tries to limit free thinking.

menting on separating children from their *daemons* so that the children will be at peace with themselves and not ask questions.

The story centres on a girl named Lyra, who has been entrusted with the world’s only remaining alethiometer, or golden compass, which reveals the truth to those who know how to use it. Only Lyra knows how to use it, and she does so to go north to try to rescue the kidnapped children.

There are many good things to say

comparable to *Narnia* or the early Harry Potter films, but not in the same league as *Lord of the Rings*.

Returning to the film’s effects on children, are we, like the world in the film, in the midst of a war for the minds of our children? Is *The Golden Compass* that dangerous? I would answer both no and yes.

Despite claims that the film was toned down to avoid controversy—it never mentions the church—it is quite obvious that the Magisterium is supposed to

MWC announces 2007 'Shelf of Literature' pick

Mennonite World Conference Release
STRASBOURG, FRANCE

Paraguayan church leader Alfred Neufeld's *What We Believe Together* has been named the 2007 selection for the Global Anabaptist/Mennonite Shelf of Literature by Mennonite World Conference (MWC). The book will help member churches explore the meaning and implications of beliefs that bind them together.

Written simultaneously in Spanish, German and English, *What We Believe Together* builds on the "Shared Convictions of Global Anabaptists" developed by MWC's Faith and Life Council after studying confessions of faith from member churches around the world and then developing a concise document of key common points that each member church could claim.

MWC commissioned Neufeld, a theologian and teacher in Asunción, to comment on the "Shared Convictions." Taking them one by one, he explores their biblical roots and applies illustrations from history and current church life to suggest how they might be lived and expressed among today's nearly 1.6 million baptized Anabaptist-related believers around the world.

As he worked on the book, Neufeld kept wondering to what extent "global theology" was helpful to Anabaptist worship and life together. He found it "quite inspiring" to see how much common ground could be found, he says, adding, "I think our shared convictions will contribute to our sense of being a global community of faith, which will enrich our worship and our faithfulness. With this book, we're creating basic reference points which I hope will strengthen our connections."

"Neufeld breathes contemporary life into these convictions, always with an eye to the fundamental Anabaptist understanding that what we believe will be reflected in how we live," says MWC general secretary Larry Miller of *What We Believe Together*. "Besides being excellent personal

reading, it is ideal for small-group study and Sunday school classes."

Study questions prepared by editor Phyllis Pellman Good at the end of each chapter offer entry points for groups to discuss the material.

What We Believe Together has been released in English by Good Books. The 150-page paperback is available in Canada through the Bookshop at Pandora Press (1-866-696-1678) or online at goodbooks.com. ❧

BOOK REVIEW

Up-to-date information on world's Anabaptists

Anabaptist Songs in African Hearts: A Global Mennonite History. 3rd edition.
John A. Lapp and C. Arnold Snyder, eds. Good Books and Pandora Press,
2006, 291 pages.

Testing Faith and Tradition: Global Mennonite History Series: Europe.
John A. Lapp and C. Arnold Snyder, eds. Good Books and Pandora Press,
2006, 324 pages.

REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER

These first two volumes of the Global Mennonite History series provide up-to-date information about Mennonite congregations on these two continents. The books are divided into geographical sections and written by local people.

It is interesting to read about African Mennonites from an African perspective. Several writers mention that the gospel shared by early missionaries was strongly influenced by western culture and the churches came to be dependent on the missionaries and on financial support from North America. Today, the situation is changing; African churches are self-supported and many use indigenous music. In spite of many challenges, the Mennonite Church in Africa is growing rapidly.

Although much history has been written about Mennonites in Reformation Europe and the Mennonite experience in Russia, this book provides a glimpse into European Mennonites today. These Mennonites generally accepted conscription in the 20th century, but have been working towards a peace

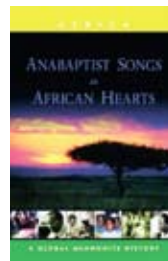
position in recent years. Where German congregations once supported the Nazi war machine, today they have organized a volunteer service organization called *Christliche Dienste*. The Mennonite

Church in France has been growing since 1970; it no longer worships using the old Bernese German dialect, but holds services in modern French.

The work of Mennonite Central Committee in Europe after World War II influenced many of the Mennonite congregations. New congregations have been developed in Spain and England through mission projects by North Americans. Other new churches began in Germany when emigrants from the former Soviet Union (*Aussiedler*) settled there.

Both of these history books have photos and maps to help orient the reader. They also have helpful appendices, including lists of Mennonite conferences, their membership numbers, and whether or not they are members of Mennonite World Conference. ❧

Barb Draper is Canadian Mennonite's Books and Resources Editor.



BOOK REVIEW

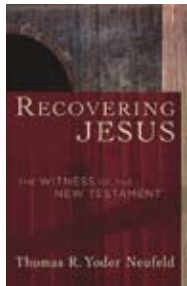
Four gospels, one singular story

Recovering Jesus: The Witness of the New Testament. Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld.
Grand Rapids, Mich: Brazos Press, 2007, 336 pages.

REVIEWED BY RENE BAERGEN

Recovering Jesus is an attempt to encounter the Jesus to whom the New Testament writers give witness. The result is a life of Jesus emboldened by the gospel tradition and committed to the communal memory of his earliest followers.

The first four chapters set the agenda for this recovery. Here, Yoder Neufeld privileges the New Testament canon as a “treasure trunk.” Inside the trunk are four distinct stories of Jesus, but together the gospels serve to open our eyes to the singular story of Jesus.



The next nine chapters pursue the recovery along canonical lines:

- Birth announcements (chapter 5);
- Centrality of the kingdom of God (chapters 6 to 10);
- Jesus’ death (chapter 11);
- His resurrection (chapter 12); and

- His Christological investiture by the early Jesus movement (chapter 13).

With the synoptic gospels, at least, and much contemporary Jesus scholarship, Yoder Neufeld makes the kingdom of God central. Jesus announces the kingdom in continuity with John the Baptist (Matthew 3:2; 4:17); teaches the kingdom in parables (Mark 4:26-34); enacts the kingdom in healing touch (Matthew 12:28 and Luke 11:20) and welcoming table (Mark 2:16-17); and lives the kingdom in the ethic of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

Jesus’ death comes already interpreted by Jesus himself as a logical consequence of his life and ministry. Very much in contrast to most Jesus scholarship, however, pride of place in this recovery effort goes to Jesus’ resurrection and Christological investiture. Here, Yoder Neufeld is at his most bold; the resurrection experiences that contemporary Jesus scholarship typically rule out of court now confirm the self-understanding of Jesus as God’s Messiah. The Christological elaboration that ensues among Jesus’ earliest followers now embodies the trajectory laid already by Jesus. Who Jesus was as prophet, teacher and healer turns out to be very much in line with who Jesus is as Christ.

Such an equation is not without ten-

sion, however. The canonical story of Jesus depends on at least four witnesses, whose accounts are harmonized only at the risk to their theological integrity. Yoder Neufeld very clearly does not wish to make “one soup” of the various traditions, but his decision to privilege a biographical framework provided by the gospel writers invites him to do just this.

The modern tendency to make history the referee of the real Jesus also presents Yoder Neufeld with something of a problem. He is much more interested in pursuing the Jesus to whom the New Testament writers give witness—notwithstanding the preoccupation of modern historians—but the latter still conditions much of his inquiry, especially the birth and passion narratives.

Yoder Neufeld is not unaware of either tension. At its best, *Recovering Jesus* is an attempt to embrace the ambiguity of the former and escape the limitation of the latter. That it is not entirely consistent in this regard does nothing to diminish the book’s fine contribution to our encounters with Jesus. %

Rene Baergen is a doctoral candidate at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto.

Century of Christian unity celebrated with new book

Canadian Council of Churches Release
TORONTO

The pursuit of Christian unity is something to be celebrated! To mark the historic occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the Canadian Council of Churches’ Commission on Faith and Witness has created a celebratory retrospective and anthology of resources from the past century.

Liturgies for Christian Unity, compiled and edited by Rev. Judee Archer-Greene, Mary Marrocco and Rev. Richard Vandervaart, and published by Novalis Press,

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includes a history of modern Christian prayer for unity and an introduction to each decade, as well as an extensive selection of prayers. The prayers have been chosen for their beauty, historicity and liturgical usefulness. This resource witnesses the movement of prayer that has been breathing through the lives of Christian churches during the past century.

The book is aimed at parishes, ecumenical gatherings, retreat centres, chaplains, educators and lay people, but thematic and scriptural indices make the anthology particularly useful for liturgists and historians.

The book may be ordered from Novalis (novalis.ca or 1-800-287-7164) and is available at local religious book stores. ❧

BOOK REVIEW

An introduction to the past

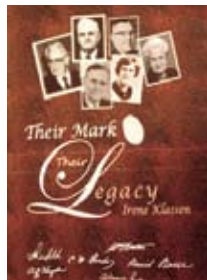
Their Mark: Their Legacy. Irene Klassen. Calgary: Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta, 2006, 226 pages.

REVIEWED BY DAVE TOEWS

Irene Klassen's latest book, *Their Mark: Their Legacy*, is a good introduction to the key personalities in the leadership of the Mennonite Conference Church of Alberta during its first century. Written in an informal style, the book is divided into three sections and includes the biographies of 13 elders, 24 ministers and more than 60 deacons, choir leaders, missionaries and other workers. Klassen also incorporates biographies written by eight contributing authors. Her material has been researched from various conference records, autobiographies, letters, and interviews with subjects, families and friends.

Notable heavyweights examined in the collection include elder Cornelius C. Harder, the first chair of the Alberta Conference; minister Wilhelm G. Pauls, the driving force behind the Menno Bible Institute at Didsbury; John Unrau, a tireless worker who helped establish First Mennonite Church in Edmonton; and choir director David Paetkau, who had a very positive and professional influence on music in Alberta.

The book also highlights the important role that women played in the early development of the church and its related provincial institutions. One of these women was Maria Pauls, who, besides being her husband's greatest supporter,



was a dedicated leader and organizer of the Alberta Women's Mission Conference. Another is Anne Harder, who was the first woman to chair a Mennonite Church council in Alberta and who served on local, provincial and national executives and committees until recently.

A relative newcomer to Alberta, I am glad that I had the opportunity to read this important historical work. As Jacob Harder stresses in the book's foreword,

❧ Briefly noted

Life writing class added to CMU School of Writing

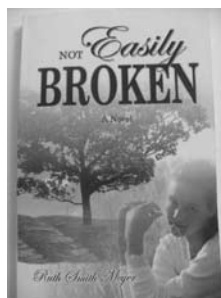
WINNIPEG—Many people intend to write their life story. They just don't know how or they lack the confidence to get started. But help is now on the way through a new life writing class at the Canadian Mennonite University School of Writing. The class, which runs from May 19 to 23, will be taught by Joanne Klassen, an author and small group facilitator who has helped hundreds of writers achieve their goals of writing about their lives. The deadline for applications is March 1. For more information, visit cmu.ca.

—CMU Release

we need to introduce our young people to the rich heritage to which our leaders have contributed.

Klassen has written two other books: *Posey and Ponderings*, and *Pieces and Patches of My Crazy Quilt*. ❧

Dave Toews is a member of Edmonton First Mennonite Church and the current editor of the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta newsletter.



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FOCUS ON FINANCES

ADVERTORIAL

Institutional values are important for consumers

By NELSON SCHEIFELE
MAX Canada Insurance Company

In light of scandals that have significantly impacted the North American business environment in recent years, the subject of values has become an increasingly important issue for both business and the consumer. This interest in values permeates business practices, environmental issues and health concerns.

As consumers, we all experience the impact of saturation advertising, using every media available to persuade us that products and services are better, improved

or the lowest-priced. Few advertisements, however, speak to values. Increasing consumer concerns about the globalization of food production and the related ethical and environmental issues is an example of a growing interest in value considerations related to corporate activity.

It is incumbent upon church-related organizations to ensure that their values mesh with the theological underpinnings of the constituency they serve. MAX Canada and the North American Mutual Aid eXchange (MAX) have spent a great deal of time articulating the values by which they wish to serve the Anabaptist constituency across Canada and the United States with mutual aid and insurance products. Following are some of the principles and values by which MAX defines itself:

- MAX is in the business of sustaining wholeness, or shalom, to use the Hebrew term. A carefully defined insurance policy protects the wholeness of members' property. The ministry of mutual aid alongside, and integrated with, insurance strives, in partnership with the congregation, to restore wholeness beyond the insurance

policy.

- MAX chooses to serve the Anabaptist community exclusively, allowing it to better serve a constituency with similar values and understandings with insurance and mutual aid.
- The MAX insurance program is the primary supporter of Mutual Aid Ministry activities, which include a response ministry, ensuring emotional and spiritual support at the time of loss, a prayer support ministry and a financial support ministry.
- When paying their insurance premium, members not only assist each other financially in situations of claim losses, but also partner in supporting a ministry nurturing spiritual and emotional wholeness during the claims process and during other traumatic events.
- Underwriting values strive to ensure that members have adequate limits and proper coverage, should a loss occur. Underwriting places high value on being preventive in order to lessen the chance of a loss in the first place.
- Claims do happen and the MAX claims team strives to work diligently in making the "wholeness restoration" of the claims

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process timely, efficient and sensitive.

- MAX investments are made within a carefully defined investment policy following the theological stewardship understandings of the Anabaptist faith communities and committed to socially acceptable investment principles.

- In addition to living with the values of the faith communities it serves, MAX also commits to following the legal and regulatory requirements in jurisdictions in which it operates.

- Each staff member and agent of MAX is to fulfill a 14-point statement of internal values of the organization.

Clearly articulated values are a critical anchor in the rapidly changing and complex society in which we live. Organizations serving the church strive to emulate the biblical values of the church while also meeting the best business practices of the societal context in which they operate. These values are tested and refined in the crucible of service. As with our churches, they are seldom lived out perfectly. Nevertheless, they remain guiding beacons that influence behaviour and decisions. ❧

Common cents

Zurich Mennonite puts congregants' spare change to good use

BY PHYLLIS RAMER

Zurich Mennonite Church
ZURICH, ONT.

The first Sunday of November found three-year-old Alexander Gould struggling to climb the steps to the Zurich Mennonite Church sanctuary. His pant's pockets were bulging and he jingled as he walked. He had emptied out his piggy bank to bring his contribution to the Mission Committee's project called "Using Common Cents to Reach the World."

After other children gathered containers of loose change from the congregation and added them to the large bucket at the front of the sanctuary, Alexander was determined to make sure that every penny from his pockets was put in the bucket.

The church's World Missions Committee initiated this fund to provide addi-

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tional dollars for mission projects by suggesting that congregants could provide a lot of support with their spare change.

Since the inception of the "Common Cents" program in June, about \$5,500 worth of loose change has been turned in.

Alexander was determined to make sure that every penny from his pockets was put in the bucket.

Some of the projects that the "Common Cents" money has supported include a developing church in Medellin, Colombia; a group of young teenagers going to music camp; a Christian ministry in the Jane-Finch area of Toronto; and a short-term youth mission trip to Guatemala. ☺

ADVERTORIAL

RRSP tips

Mennonite Savings and Credit Union Release

Another registered retirement savings plan (RRSP) season is upon us and the following question is frequently asked, "Should I invest in an RRSP or pay down my mortgage?" There is not a "one size fits all" answer; however, there are some general guidelines that you should consider:

- By not paying down your mortgage, you are, in fact, borrowing additional money to invest in an RRSP.
- If the long-term return on the RRSP investment is greater than the interest expense that is being paid on the mortgage, it is most likely in your best interest to contribute to your RRSP, despite the fact that the interest on the mortgage is not tax-deductible.

Other important personal tax changes for 2007 include:

- The age limit to convert an RRSP to a registered retirement income fund (RRIF) has increased from 69 to 71. This change

offers taxpayers two more years of tax-deferred growth. Also, if you have contribution room and you are between 70 and 71, it may make sense to make additional RRSP contributions, depending on your taxable income.

- It is now possible to create pension income (an RRSP converted to an RRIF) for your spouse and claim the offsetting \$2,000 pension income credit. If you are both 65 or over and you have registered retirement income, but your spouse does not, this option will provide an additional pension credit of \$2,000.

For more information, contact Mennonite Savings and Credit Union at 905-646-9223 or the financial planner at your financial institution. ☺

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Calendar

British Columbia

Feb. 8-10: College and Career young adults' retreat at Camp Squeah.
Feb. 9, 10, 16, 17: MCC fundraising banquets. Central Community Church, Chilliwack (9) Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford (10), Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond (16), South Langley MB Church (17).
Feb. 22-23: Mennonite Church B.C. annual sessions, Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond.
Feb. 23: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C., "Letters from Stalin's Gulag" documentary and book launch with Ruth Derksen Siemens, Bakerview MB Church, Abbotsford, 7 p.m.

Alberta

Jan. 18-20: Jr. High Snow camp at Camp Valaqua. Contact ritaheidebrecht@gmail.com or 403-289-7172 for information.
Jan. 25: Camp Valaqua fundraising banquet with entertainer Gery Schubert at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, 6 p.m. For information call 403-637-2510.
Feb. 15-16: Mennonite Men's curling bonspiel in Didsbury. Contact Herman Epp at 403-335-3894.
Feb. 22-24: Sr. High Snow camp at Camp Valaqua. Contact ritaheidebrecht@gmail.com or 403-289-7172 for information.

Saskatchewan

Jan. 17: "Peacebuilding on the Prairies: Mennonite Immigrants in a Land of First Nations" presentation and discussion at MCC Saskatchewan, 7 p.m.
Jan. 18: RJC open house.
Jan. 18-20: Prairie Winds worship and music retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre. Theme: "Sing the story."
Jan. 24: "Peacebuilding on the Prairies: Challenges and Hopes of Newcomers" presentation and discussion at MCC Saskatchewan, 7 p.m.
Jan. 25-27: SMYO senior high retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.
Jan. 31: "Peacebuilding on the Prairies: Building Cross-Cultural Skills" presentation and discussion at MCC Saskatchewan, 7 p.m.
Feb. 22-23: MC Saskatchewan

delegate sessions at First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Manitoba

Jan. 14-15: Church Ministry Seminar at CMU with Thomas Long, Candler School of Theology. Topic: "The witness of preaching." For more information, visit cmu.ca.
Jan. 18-20: MMYO Junior High Retreat at Camp Koinonia. Register by Jan. 9 at office@mennochurch.mb.ca or 204-896-1616.
Jan. 24, 25: Westgate junior-high three one-act plays at Franco-Manitoban Centre.
Jan. 29-30: Winter lectures at CMU with Erica Grimm Vance. Theme: "Art, beauty and Christian theology." For more information, visit cmu.ca.
Feb. 1-3: MMYO Senior High Retreat at Camp Koinonia. Register by Jan. 23.
Feb. 8-10: MMYO Junior High Retreat at Camp Moose Lake. Register by Jan. 31.
Feb. 15-17: Mennonite Church Manitoba Young Adult retreat at Camp Koinonia.
Feb. 22-23: MC Manitoba annual delegate sessions at Steinbach Mennonite Church.
Feb. 29-March 2: Ministry of Listening "Seeing God's Heart" retreat at Circle Square Ranch near Holland. Visit ministryoflistening.com for information.

Ontario

Jan. 13: Join Menno Singers for "Even-song: A Vesper Hymn Fest" at Rockway Mennonite Church, 7 p.m.
Jan. 17: MEDA breakfast at the Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, 7:30 a.m. Speaker: Dale Brubacher-Cressman.
Jan. 19: MCEC pastors, chaplains and congregational leaders event at W-K United Mennonite Church, 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. Barbara Fullerton will present "Offering as Worship." Register by Jan. 11 at mcec.ca.
Jan. 20: MCC Ontario constituency farewell for Arli Klassen, executive director, at Breslau Mennonite Church, 2 p.m.
Jan. 26: MCEC Young Adult Volleyball tournament at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate. For information or to register go to mcec.ca/Cong/Min.
Feb. 1: Benjamin Eby Lecture with A.

James Reimer, Conrad Grebel Chapel, 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 1-3 or Feb. 8-10: MCEC Youth Winter Retreats at Countryside Camp, Cambridge. Register on-line at mcec.ca/Cong/Min by Jan. 17.
Feb. 10: Join Menno Singers for "Even-song: A Vesper Hymn Fest" at Tavistock Mennonite Church, 7 p.m.
Feb. 19-21: MCEC/CGUC School for Ministers, "Jesus and the Quest for Human Fulfilment" with Mary Schertz of AMBS at Conrad Grebel. Register online at mcec.ca.
Feb. 29: Peace and Conflict Studies of Conrad Grebel University College 30th anniversary celebration, CIGI Atrium, Waterloo, 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 29-Mar. 2: Inter-Collegiate Peace Fellowship Conference, "Building bridges, breaking down barriers: Reli-

gion's role in reconciliation" at Conrad Grebel. Contact icpf.grebel@gmail.com.

March 1: Menno Singers present "Lenten Journey" with Nota Bene Period Orchestra, at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener; 8 p.m. Performance of Buxtehude's "Membra Jesu Nostri."

March 1: Fundraising dinner for Frank Epp Memorial Fund at Conrad Grebel celebrating 30 years of Peace and Conflict Studies. Call 519-885-0220 x24223 for tickets.

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

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Applicants should be at ease interacting with the public and possess strong interpersonal and communication skills. In addition, the ideal candidate for this position will enjoy writing and processing correspondence, organizing data, and performing a range of other clerical duties.

Previous administrative experience in a multi-staff setting, strong attention to detail, organizational skills, and computer proficiency, specifically in all aspects of Microsoft Office, are desired.

MFC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. A complete job description is available upon request. Processing of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. If you are interested, submit your resume to:

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Mennonite Church Eastern Canada invites applications for Regional Minister.

Half-time **REGIONAL MINISTER** required for ministry in the Eastern Region of MCEC to resource pastors and lay leaders for effective congregational ministry. Applicants will require previous pastoral experience, a familiarity with denominational resources, a depth of spiritual maturity, and a commitment to Anabaptist theology. Applicants will be excellent communicators and team builders who are energized by working alongside the MCEC Leadership Team to realize MCEC's mission of Extending the peace of Jesus Christ. Ordination and seminary level training required. Application deadline is Jan. 31, 2008. For more information or to request a job description, please contact:

David Martin, MCEC Executive Minister
Phone: 519-650-3806 / 800-206-9356
E-mail: dmartin@mcec.ca
Web: www.mcec.ca

Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite Church, located in Gretna, Man., is welcoming applications for the position of **LEADING MINISTER**. We are a congregation of about 100 members located in a family-friendly small town setting. Ministry in our congregation is defined by its multi-generational character and by the fact that we are the only church in our community. By God's grace we have enjoyed long-lasting, positive relationships with previous pastors and look forward to establishing such a relationship in the future. The successful candidate will have an Anabaptist/Mennonite faith orientation and be gifted in preaching, teaching, and visitation ministries. Seminary level education will be considered an asset. We are a member of Mennonite Church Canada and follow MC Canada salary guidelines. Our preferred starting date is February 2008 but we are open to negotiation on this point. Please direct your inquiries to Kerry Enns, Congregational Chair, at 204-327-5891 (work), 204-327-6666 (home), or write to me at kgenns@mts.net if you prefer e-mail. Further information is on file with MC Manitoba.

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ASSOCIATE PASTOR POSITION

First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alberta

This vibrant, multi-generational, urban congregation of approximately 200 members, is seeking a full-time Associate Pastor with a primary focus on youth and young adults. Working with the pastoral team and other leadership people of the congregation, the associate pastor will also focus on supporting and strengthening the community, contributing to congregational worship, and providing pastoral care.

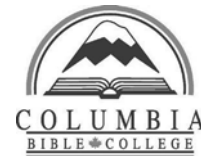
Recognizing that ministry happens in many ways and that each person brings his/her own gifts and abilities to a position, we will encourage the successful candidate to seek creative ways to meet the responsibilities of the position. A seminary degree or a related Bachelor's degree that reflects our Anabaptist/Mennonite 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
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It is essential that all applicants agree with CBC's mission statement, Responsibilities of Community Membership and Confession of Faith.

Visit our website at www.columbiabc.edu/facultystaff/employment for more information and application procedures.



During celebrations at W-K United Mennonite Church to acknowledge a successful roof repair fundraising campaign, children gathered food and stuffed animals that were brought to fill Noah's Ark (the campaign's symbol). Hilda Krotz puts the last of the food items into the ark while the Sunday school children look on.

Showers of blessing

W-K United Mennonite sees rainbow at the end of successful fundraising campaign

By HILDA KROTZ

Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church
WATERLOO, ONT.

After 32 years the flat roof of W-K United Mennonite's Sunday school wing and gymnasium needed replacing. Although a roof fund had been initiated in 2005, the amount raised was a far cry from the \$100,000 needed.

Under the leadership of John Reimer—who built an ark as a symbol of the ambitious project—the Noah's Ark Fund Committee was organized last March to tackle the roof replacement. As Noah prepared for the rain and built the ark to demonstrate his faith in God, the congregation had faith that sufficient funds to keep it dry when the rains began to fall would be provided.

Between April 1 and the June 3 deadline, more than \$125,000 was donated or pledged, enough to replace the flat roof and re-shingle the old sanctuary roof as well. Guiding members were the words from I Chronicles 29:14: *"Everything comes from you, Lord, and we have given you only what comes from your hand."*

Like the rainbow that appeared after Noah's ark again rested on dry ground, the success of W-K's Noah's Ark Project showed many rainbows—the coming together of the church as a community for this common cause, and the generosity of giving in the face of a decreased membership.

To celebrate, food and stuffed animals that filled the ark were donated to a local food bank, Mary's Place and House of Friendship.

The roof replacement was completed in October.

Hilda Krotz is a committee member of W-K United Mennonite Church's Noah's Ark Project.