

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

March 31, 2008  
Volume 12 Number 7



## Ecumenical quilting

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## EDITORIAL

# From Tofield to Johor Bahru

TIM MILLER DYCK  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Attending the MC Alberta delegate sessions at Tofield (Alta.) Mennonite Church earlier this month (see page 16) provided an exciting opportunity to hear about God at work in many ways and places.

One of these was a presentation by Edmonton Vietnamese Mennonite Church pastor Thomas Pham. With God opening doors in a mighty way, his congregation and Calgary Vietnamese Mennonite Church have seen God's Spirit moving people to faith in amazing ways.

Pham described how Malaysian manufacturing, construction and clothing companies have been heavily recruiting cheap labour from Vietnam. The workers need to pay between \$1,500 and \$2,000 to be able to go. Since the poor are being targeted, the recruiters loan them the money, which later is taken off their wages. They are told that they will be paid so well if they leave home that they will pay off their debt in a few months. The reality is that many need to work for three years to break even, said Pastor Pham, as they make around \$1.50 per day. There are an estimated 120,000 Vietnamese workers in Malaysia.

Last year, a group of Albertan Vietnamese Mennonites, including Pham,

went to the large industrial Malaysian city of Johor Bahru to tell their people about God's love. He spoke of being overwhelmed by the response at the specially organized services aimed at the Vietnamese migrant workers.



"When I arrived there, bus after bus loaded with workers came to that place," he said. "The seating capacity was about 250 and it was packed. The kids were staying outside. The leaders of the Chinese church had to set up a projector to project the service downstairs. . . . The service was three hours long, but they couldn't leave. At the altar call, the platform was full; there wasn't enough room and so some kids have to stand on the floor.

"At another location, to do outreach, again buses of workers unloaded. I did the message there and gave out the altar call, and over 300 responded to the gospel. It was amazing," he said.

It wasn't just the Vietnamese in Malaysia who were hearing the good news of Christ. There were all kinds of things that God had brought together, connections seen and unseen.

"These kids that become Christian, they speak about the Lord to their parents and their parents accept the Lord. For many of these kids, this is the first

time they have heard the gospel. The Lord sent them to Malaysia in order to evangelize them. There is no way to do that in North Vietnam. It is not allowed.

"The Lord opened a wide door for us to do mission work in Malaysia. The Malaysian government won't interfere, even though it is a Muslim country. We just focus on the Vietnamese and it is okay," Pham said.

God didn't prepare this ground without the work of others. I heard more of the story from Vinh Le, assistant pastor at Calgary Vietnamese Mennonite. He told me of his church's trip to Johor Bahru to prepare the soil about a year before the Edmonton group arrived.

"We don't feel really touched from God to go to Taiwan, but we felt a strong call to go to Malaysia, without any contact, without any connection," he said. (He and his wife paid for their trip using money from their wedding gifts.) "We just booked a hotel and looked for Vietnamese. We found the first one in the hotel. He immediately accepted Christ. We were amazed. We were so excited."

They connected with a local Chinese Christian church that wanted to start a ministry to the Vietnamese people and began holding services in Vietnamese. "At our first service, we had 96 people. We were running around looking for black hair, calling them over and asking if they are Vietnamese. The second service, there were 430 people, and the third service even more than that," he said.

God, the master guide, connects our steps of faithfulness in Tofield or Edmonton or Calgary to lead us to joy-filled places we never could have found on our own.

## ABOUT THE COVER

As their community shrinks, the Superb (Sask.) Mennonite Church Ladies Aid group, whose members include Helen Olfert and Anne Peters, back row left and right, has broadened its horizons to embrace local Catholic and United Church women who think that tying quilts is fun. See story on page 18.

PHOTO: LARISA J. STROBEL, STROBELIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

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# CANADIAN MENNONITE

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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, and 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**

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# No big deal? Why Mennonites play Halo

STORY AND ILLUSTRATION

BY TRAVIS DUERKSEN

“H

ow do you, as a pacifist Mennonite, justify playing a violent game like Halo?” That was the question I got through the telephone one lazy afternoon. I stopped for a moment, nervously chuckling. “Heh. Um, well, you see. . . .”

I trailed off, my voice trying to hide the sheer panic spinning in my mind. “Halo? Mennonites? How do you justify that, anyway?” I asked myself.

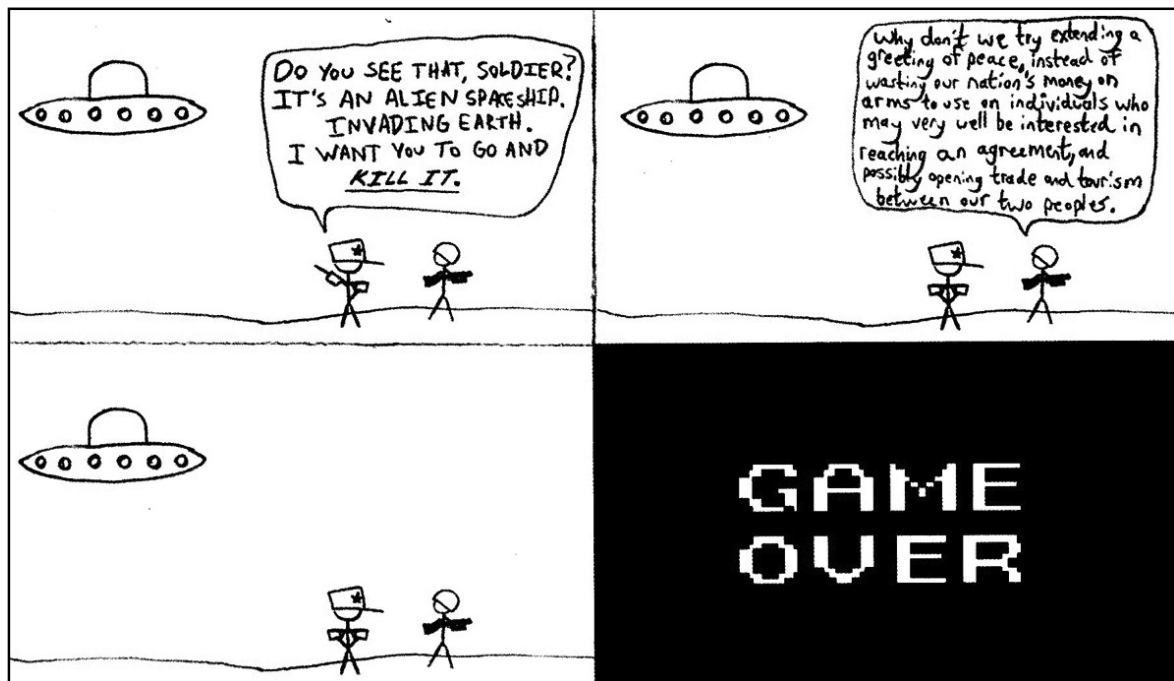
Not hearing any answers, I immediately started going through the standard catch phrases.

“What else am I going to do?” Too wishy-washy.

“It’s not that bad.” Ugh, that’ll require an explanation.

“I really need to go. I smell something . . . burning.”

Hey, there’s a winner!



## Halo 101

After the editor of *With* (where this article originally appeared in the Winter 2007/08 issue) hung up, I knew she expected I would write a small explanation or apology—I can't remember which—on how some pacifist Mennonites justify playing Halo.

Prepare to be disappointed.

First off, let me give you a little background on this Halo. It was released way back in 2001 for the Xbox video game console. Since then, it has been released for PCs as well. It is rated "M" for mature, a rating very similar to "R" for a movie, because of "blood and gore" and "violence."

The game revolves around a super-soldier named Master Chief whose goal is to stop an alien force, the Covenant, from destroying all humans. Compelling, huh?

During most of the game, you'll find yourself looking from the perspective of Master Chief. So if Master Chief is holding a weapon, you would see his back, as well as his hands holding it, and an aiming scope in the centre of the screen.

You are expected to beat the game by, at the most basic level, depositing small fragments of lead—propelled at a high rate of speed—into the bodies of your enemies, until the entrance and residence of these said fragments impede the normal operation of any of their primary biological processes.

In short, you're supposed to shoot the aliens until they die.

This immediately poses a bit of a problem, as you are put on the forefront of a war, spearheading an effort to rain destruction upon an alien race that would love to do the same to you.

### No room for Anabaptists

Mennonites have taken a stance of peace when two groups create war with one another but, unfortunately, that is just not possible in the game of Halo. Nowhere in the game does it allow you participate in peace negotiations—or to write up a truce of any kind.

### Kill the aliens

In the single-player mode, killing your enemies is the only way to reach the end.

And kill you do. While you are never pitted against other humans, you'll find yourself up against a variety of aliens, from half your size to over three times as big, and even zombie-like creatures, each with their own colourful blood. Red. Green. Purple. Blue. Orange. Much like the colour of Smarties . . . but in tougher, mobile packaging . . . and piloting spaceships.

Regardless of the fact the gore never gets beyond what is shown on various shows on TV, or that you're fighting fictional aliens, the content of the single-player game is very difficult to justify for a Mennonite. And it should be. Many people like to breeze over it with such phrases as, "It's just a game," and, "It's not real." But I can't.

Granted, I love playing Halo, and looking from the outside in I can see how easy it would be to call us Halo-playing Mennonite youths "hypocrites." But in

## *How can we say we dislike war when we are participating in digital battles ourselves?*

this case, the word is totally justified. How can we say we dislike war when we are participating in digital battles ourselves? While it's not outright hypocrisy—that would be declaring you're a pacifist, but still jumping at the chance to go to war—it is a form of it. It's the same thing as looking down on adultery, then running home to finish writing your saucy romance novel. It's not physically the same, but mentally there's no difference.

### A kinder, gentler Halo

In the multiplayer-game mode, you and up to 15 of your closest friends can shoot it out in a variety of matches, the two main ones being Deathmatch (where you see who can score the most kills in a set amount of time) and Capture the Flag. The main problem here is that, instead of aiming your gun at computer-controlled opponents, you're gunning for an enemy that is controlled by your buddy sitting next to you.

But I don't look at it that way. I view it as a competition between friends, much

like a quick game of basketball or football. Like those sports, it's a place where you can show off what little skills you love to brag about. And like those games, if you're not a team player you'll end up losing.

Granted, Deathmatch doesn't require much strategy at all, but Capture the Flag absolutely demands it, as well as communication and strategy between you and your teammates. It's a really good feeling when you can organize a plan, change it on the fly, adapt to the other team, and watch the scheme come together seamlessly.

### No big deal?

"But that still doesn't excuse the fact that you're shooting each other," you might say aloud, hoping that somehow this writer will try to come up with some witty retort.

Well, there's no witty retort here. I fully

agree with you. It really doesn't excuse the fact that we're shooting each other.

But, hey, I had to try.

The thing is, to a lot of youths this moral dilemma isn't really a big deal at all. When I posed the question that I was asked to some of my friends, they all did the same thing I did. They chuckled. Then they said something was burning.

Many of them simply admitted they hadn't really thought of it, or that it's not that big of a deal. And I believe them. To us, this stuff really isn't that big of a deal.

Should it be?

To me, at least, if I really want to belong to the Mennonite Church, and if I really want to live by its beliefs, I need to at least think it over, talk it out with a variety of people, and, most importantly, pray about it.

Will it end with me giving up Halo and its ilk? I don't know yet. Will I be weighing the morals that a game is impressing on me from now on?

Oh yes.

*Travis Duerksen lives near Goessel, Kan., where he is a senior at Goessel High School.*

# Honouring Jesus: The play's the thing

BY STEVE "REECE" FRIESEN

**M**eaningless, meaningless . . . everything is meaningless. That's what the wisest man who ever lived said. But some stuff is more meaningless than others. We argue which. Our brains bend and strain, trying to defend our guilty pleasures and bring meaning into what we secretly dread might be meaningless. We must do this because we love these things.

And isn't the pleasure we take from them reason enough to engage in them? Of course not. We all know that. But the society around us does not. In our society entertainment has intrinsic value. Something has worth if someone enjoys it.

Of course, sometimes one person enjoys it and another does not. People of every generation have adored something their parents considered utterly pointless and devoid of value (meaningless, one might say). At one time it was the radio, then TV and movies, and now—are you ready for it—video games.

Parents argue that their children are filling their young minds with violence. Young people don't answer because they're busy enjoying themselves, and society has trained them to believe that their parents and elders can't possibly relate to their world and don't know anything about anything.

Those who play games argue correctly that there are many different types of games and that it's not fair to paint them all with one broad stroke. That makes sense, but young people, if they are honest, will often concede that the vast majority of games—and certainly the most popular ones—are violent or sexually exploitive, or both.

I don't mean to present this so one-sidedly. My heart goes out to those people, young and old, who love to game (yes, "game" is now a verb) and actually consider their actions. They head to the Bible for answers and note, with sincere disappointment, that the Bible doesn't say a thing about video games. That means it's up to each person, right?

The early Christians didn't have the Bible in front of them like we do today. When Paul first came to Corinth, those who became Christians didn't have any written guidance beyond the Old Testament—which Paul, their spiritual father, interpreted in a pretty bold way—and the verbal stories and rules he passed on to them. They had a terrible time figuring out what socially popular things they could keep doing and what things



*The argument that something is not personally 'harmful' is a poor one for any follower of Christ.*

they had to give up. They tried to think everything through logically, but they just ended up talking themselves into doing what they liked to do. Paul hammered them over these choices and, believe it or not, his words speak directly to our questions about video games.

There was a group of particularly spiritual Corinthians who noted that, since there is only one God, all idols are really just hunks of wood and stone, and, therefore, it was no big deal to go to their temples and take part in pagan eating rituals. Really. In fact, these guys looked down on the others because they weren't strong enough in their faith to go and hang out at Apollo's temple.

Paul argued in I Corinthians 8 that

these people were not nearly as smart as they thought they were, because they were actually enticing others to go to a place where they were sure to sin (much like encouraging a sober alcoholic to frequent bars because drinking isn't a problem for you). So for the sake of a party, these Corinthians were willing to destroy their spiritual brothers and sisters.

Those who claim that they are personally unaffected by the violence they are practising on the TV or computer screen should be aware of how their actions are influencing others. So does this mean that it's okay to play these games if we ourselves are unaffected and we keep things to ourselves?

The argument that something is not personally "harmful" is a poor one for any follower of Christ. We cannot label the words or actions of our radical Messiah as neutral, at least not by any definition I'm familiar with. His words, actions, thoughts—his very being—declared and ushered in the kingdom of his Father. I don't know how much Jesus played. I

don't know which sports he enjoyed, if any. I don't know what he did for fun. But it's the things I do know that demand my life. Not some of it, or a large part of it . . . but all of it.

We don't have to prove that video games are harmless, let alone beneficial. That's not the issue here. God gave us free will. We can make choices. But if we want to make choices that honour him, then we must ask ourselves—like Paul asked the Corinthians—how our actions are building up the church. Everything else is meaningless. ☞

*Steve "Reece" Friesen is currently taking a break from pastoral work to finish his master of theology degree at Canadian Mennonite University and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.*

# Violent video games: What concerned Christians can do

Mennonite Central Committee Canada Release

*“One of the most effective ways for Christians to be salt and light is by simply confronting the culture of violence as entertainment.”*

—LT. COL. DAVID GROSSMAN

**D**avid Grossman is an American military psychologist. He has determined that the tools and tactics used to train soldiers to kill are the same as those employed in the media entertainment industry, specifically, in video games. “Every time a child plays an interactive video game, he is learning the exact same conditioned reflex skills as a soldier or police officer in training,” he stated in a 1998 *Christianity Today* article.

## **What is wrong with violent video games?**

Games are built on violence and little else. Many computer and video games sold today are built exclusively around violence and aggression. The goal of the player is simply to shoot or blow up any person or creature that appears on the screen. There are no opportunities to develop problem-solving or communication skills.

## **Violence is rewarded**

Most games reward a player’s skill by moving him to a new level of violence. As the player masters this level, the amount of violence increases. There are rewards for those who become skilled at killing. Moreover, as players associate game-playing with leisure activity or a favourite snack, they come to associate the violence on the screen with pleasure. Killing becomes a pleasurable activity.

## **Increase in violent behaviour**

A growing body of literature links the playing of violent video games with

increased levels of aggressive behaviour. Although not every child or youth who plays a violent game will behave in a violent way, some will, particularly when there are other risk factors at work.

## **Interactive nature**

Initial studies indicate that the negative effect of playing video and computer games is greater than that of simply watching violent TV programs or movies because of their interactive nature. Children and youths are not only watching acts of depravity, they are participating in them.

## **Distorted images**

Violent games, especially first-person shooter games, portray all those who appear on the screen as enemies to be destroyed. Where women exist, they are usually helpless victims; occasionally they are violent predators. In almost all cases, the women have very sexy bodies and have few clothes on.

Violent video games go against the biblical teachings that:

- All people are created in the image of God.

- We are called to love our enemies.
- Men and women are to relate to one another with justice and respect.
- We are to think on those things which are pure and honourable.

## **What can Christian parents do about this problem?**

### **At home:**

- Monitor video game play even more vigilantly than TV viewing.
- Limit game-playing time to no more than an hour a day.
- Become familiar with the games your child is playing.
- Purchase or rent only games that are recommended for your child’s age. Be aware that “Mature” games can be downloaded from the Internet.
- Provide alternative ways for your child to spend time.
- Do not put computer or video game sets in your children’s bedroom where they can play behind a closed door.

### **At church:**

- Discuss your concerns with other families; pray together for guidance.
- Hold a workshop or adult education class on media violence.
- Provide healthy activities for children and youths.

### **In your community:**

- Share your concerns with the managers of stores selling or renting games.
- Let the provincial government know you support a regulatory system for the sale and rental of video games—as exists for movies. ☞

## ☞ For discussion

1. Steve Friesen says that in our society “entertainment has intrinsic value.” Do you think that something is worthwhile if someone enjoys it? How much does entertainment (movies, TV, etc.) influence our moral values?
2. Do you accept the idea that violent video games influence the people who play them, making them associate violence with pleasure? How much does this violence translate into the real world?
3. Travis Duerksen says that to young people, “this stuff really isn’t that big of a deal.” Are young people just blind to the danger or are older people just over-reacting to a new form of entertainment?
4. Are there video games that teach positive values? Are there some ways that games can be used to build up the church?

## VIEWPOINTS

## /// Readers write

*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](mailto: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.*

## ✉ Forbidding children to play sports may drive them away from church later

THANK YOU FOR the sports and religion feature in the Feb. 4 issue ("Sainthood & sports," page 4). Beggars can't be choosers, but let me say I would prefer to read a regular sports section in *Canadian Mennonite*, to stay in touch with the accomplishments of our many fine Mennonite athletes, teams and coaches.

Your page 2 editorial, "What's a parent to do?" suggests that Floyd Landis' parents made church attendance mandatory when Floyd was young, and once he was able to decide for himself he left the church to pursue an athletic dream that had been forbidden to him.

You ask whether Floyd Landis' devout Mennonite parents should have skipped church to watch their son win the Tour de France. The answer is yes. This story portrays parents completely out of touch with their son's God-given abilities and talents, and who refuse

## FROM OUR LEADERS

## Basking in the season of Easter

SUE STEINER

In my childhood congregation in the 1950s we celebrated on Easter Sunday, and it was glorious. As we arrived at church, we greeted one another with the words, "The Lord is risen. He is risen indeed." We sang six Easter carols, much more music than usual. Each year we revelled in the tempo changes and sheer energy of "Low in the grave he lay."

Joy overtook the usual sombre tone of our worship. And then, abruptly, Easter was over for another year.

In the late 1980s, I applauded when some folks suggested that we serious Mennonites need more than one Sunday to celebrate Easter. I'm grateful for Mennonite worship resources for the season of Easter, now available each year in the spring issue of *Leader* magazine. I'm grateful to the writing team from Mennonite Church Alberta that prepared this year's materials, guided by Dave

Bergen and Elsie Rempel of Mennonite Church Canada.

Why do we need a whole season to absorb Easter? Because Easter taken straight is like looking directly at the sun. Easter blinds us and burns us with



*Easter taken straight is like looking directly at the sun.*

life, and we can hardly stand it. We need an ozone layer and sunglasses and sunscreen and time to slowly absorb its rays.

That's what Jesus' first disciples are doing in the post-Easter narratives in Luke and John. In these familiar stories, the gospel writers struggle to express the reality that Jesus is alive and present with his disciples. The disciples catch on slowly and gradually.

In one of my favourite gospel passages, Easter sneaks up on those two unnamed disciples on the road to Emmaus. They

had thought Jesus was the One to redeem Israel, they really did. But now the dispirited disciples sadly conclude it's over—until they meet a stranger on the road. He talks with them, lingers to eat with them, and only then do they recognize him. Afterwards they recall, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road?" (Luke 24:32).

Later, in the upper room in Jerusalem, Jesus' living presence is too much for the disciples to take in all at once; in their joy we find them "disbelieving and still wondering" (Luke 24:41).

More than 2,000 years later, Easter still sneaks up on us. The living Christ

continues to present himself to us, in whatever doses we can handle. It takes time for us to trust the warm rays of Easter, and to bask in them.

As we bask in Easter in this season that stretches to Pentecost, may God give us the deep assurance that death in all its forms does not have the last word. God does. May we trust that our future lies in the hands of a God who loves, forgives and empowers us beyond our imagining.

*Sue C. Steiner of Waterloo, Ont., chairs the Christian Formation Council of Mennonite Church Canada.*



to become part of his life. How sad to see such lack of communication and acceptance.

It is also a lost opportunity. Parents of aspiring young athletes who get involved with their children's community teams play a hugely influential role in the physical and psychological development of their child, and in the sports program in which they are involved. High ethical and moral standards, quality of coach-athlete relationships, scheduling of practices to avoid conflicts, equality of play time, healthy eating habits, safety—these are all areas in which Christian parents can exert pressure and voice.

Should that child develop into a successful elite athlete, they will exhibit traits such as self-confidence,

determination, discipline and commitment. They will understand the meaning of sacrifice, dedication, teamwork and leadership. We need people with these attributes in our church. If the church supports these athletes while they are training and competing, perhaps they won't leave the church in pursuit of dreams forbidden to them.

**LARRY PLENERT, FORT LANGLEY, B.C.**

*Larry Plenert competed in the 1976 Olympics.*

*(See "Life is more than skating and sports" on page 22 for Olympic medallist Cindy Klassen's take on this complex and sometimes divisive issue in congregations. Ed.)*

## FAMILY TIES

# I hope you dance

MELISSA MILLER

A few years ago country singer Lee Ann Womack had a big hit with "I Hope You Dance." The local radio station played the song nearly every morning around 8 a.m., just as my son and I were driving to school. Probably each day I said to him, "I really like that song." It's the kind of song that sentimental adults might warm to and wish for a child in their lives. In fact, it's still hard for me to hear the song without a few tears prickling my eyes.

The song is laced with hopes and advice about taking risks and living fully. "Never lose your sense of wonder," the singer croons, and "lovin' might be a mistake but it's worth makin'." There are even a few brief nods to God and faith in the song. The chorus, though, is what pushes it over the warm, mushy top. "When you get the chance to sit it out or dance," the song continues, "I hope you dance," repeated over and over again.

Given my reaction to the song, I wasn't surprised to open a gift from my son that Christmas of a CD with the song and the singer's comments on what the song meant to her. I wasn't surprised, but I

was very pleased, reading into it a sense that maybe he hoped this same message would be true for me—that when given the chance to sit it out or dance, he hoped I would dance.

It's a sentiment I return to often, particularly when thinking about one of my loved ones doing something that has them separating from me, going down a path I wouldn't choose, dancing away from me. Our children do this, hear-



*The song is laced with hopes and advice about taking risks and living fully.*

ing some music that bids them follow. Sometimes that means we find ourselves in places we never imagined we might be—at ballet classes, judo competitions or police school graduations.

Some parents put their teenagers on airplanes to pursue adventures in far away countries—cross-cultural exchanges in Germany; Serving and Learning Together assignments in Africa or Jamaica; teaching English in China; or even joining Christian Peacemaker Teams in Palestine. Caring adults do this

because they see something of how the adventure shapes the child into the person God made them to be, the adult they are becoming.

Sometimes such a response is called for in other close relationships, like marriage. Recently my husband elected to go to Uganda for a few months, a journey I was unable to make with him. It's clear to me that he's "dancing" in this place, as he tells of his experiences with joy and awe. He followed God's call to take on this particular short-term Mennonite Central Committee assignment, listening to and recording the stories of parents and church workers who are bringing justice, peace and healing into their wartorn communities.

Another song runs through my mind

as I write, the folksy "Lord of the Dance" that found its way into Mennonite churches in the 1970s and still shows up occasionally, sometimes at Easter. "Dance, then, wherever you may be," goes the chorus, as a dancing Jesus promises to "lead us all in the dance." It's a good way to celebrate the new life we know in Easter, and the promise of spring.

*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.*

## ✉ Dissenting churches should be sent off with a blessing

I AGREE WITH Jake Rempel, who wrote in his Feb. 4, page 14 letter that dissenting churches should be released to go their own way, albeit with a different spirit than he suggested. I thought that compromise and accommodation were virtues valued in MC Canada to find consensus. So if harmony is not reached, why not send the B.C. churches off with a blessing in the Spirit of Christ.

Having been a pastor for more than two decades in two MC Canada congregations—both of which left after my time—I understand some of the complicated

dynamics leading to such decisions. Churches do not leave a denomination easily without a great deal of soul-searching. There may be decades of misunderstanding before such hard decisions are made.

I know most of the seven congregations in Saskatchewan and four in British Columbia that have left in the past few years. If Rempel knew these people personally, I expect he would be more charitable than to identify them as being on a “power trip.”

The vitriol expressed in the letter is wasted, for it seems these churches have arrived at the difficult decision that they do not need MC Canada either.

MAL BRAUN, CARSTAIRS, ALTA.

### GOD MONEY AND ME

# Driven by fear and greed

MIKE STRATHDEE

Someone once said the investment world is driven by fear and greed. Recent events have shown that to be true. Big losses in world stock markets can be traced back to ill-considered, repeated behaviour rooted in greed.

The seeds of the “sub-prime mortgage crisis” were sowed by people getting fat commissions giving mortgages to borrowers who never should have been approved. Families with no income, job or assets were told, “No problem. Just sign here and you can have a large, variable rate loan.” These junk loans were repackaged, given exotic names like asset-backed commercial paper, and resold to the largest financial institutions in North America. When interest rates rose, home values decreased and borrowers walked away from their properties. The smart money didn’t look so clever.

Cue the multi-billion-dollar write-downs, firings and layoffs. The average Joe and Jane saw their past couple of years’ worth of retirement savings gains vaporize in a matter of weeks.

It’s depressing to sift through these complex stories and realize just how large—and foolish—were the gambles taken by highly-paid, supposedly brilliant people. Finance books explain the

relationship between risk and reward. Generally, that’s true. What is stunning in this case is just how much imprudent risk was taken for relatively little promised reward.

One Canadian bank blew up a lot of its profits, not to mention credibility, for the prospect of one-tenth of a percent higher earnings than it would have earned in a more stable investment. In another case, a decision that put millions of dollars at risk was based on the possibility of earning three-hundredths of a percent extra.

Sadly, this riverboat gambler mentality has infected the charitable world as well. In recent years, a sizable industry has sprung up: promoters promising people that they could give to “charity” and get back tax savings equalling or



*Sadly, this riverboat gambler mentality has infected the charitable world as well.*

even exceeding their original investment. These complex, leveraged products—also called tax shelter gifting arrangements—appeared to work for a while. I’ve met people who say they’ve used these products for several years without problems, so why should anyone be concerned?

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA),

our federal tax collector, is generally three years behind in auditing questionable situations. Sadly, promoters seem to be able to dream up new schemes, and find lawyers willing to attest to their validity, faster than the federal government can act in closing loopholes. CRA has investigated 100,000 people in connection with these shelters, denying more than \$1.4 billion in claimed donations. Decisions are pending on hundreds of millions more. CRA says it will flag and audit each one of these cases.

An accountant I spoke with last fall told of a client who was re-assessed and penalized for claiming donations to one of these schemes on her 2004 income tax return. She was quite upset with her advisor’s insistence that she not submit similar receipts for subsequent tax years.

In Luke 12:15, Jesus warns us to be on guard against all kinds of greed. It’s as true now as when he spoke those words 2,000 years ago. More than ever, we need wise and objective counsel to help make financial decisions. Ask people how they

get paid. Think it over, and if it seems too good to be true, get a second opinion, or maybe even a third.

*Mike Strathdee is a stewardship consultant at the Kitchener, Ont., 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](http://mennofoundation.ca).*

## ✉ True hope lies in God, not in human action

**RE:** "AWAKE TO despair, I discover hope" column by Aiden Enns, Feb. 18, page 8. I am thankful to the Lord for making Enns realize that it is not through his action, but rather in God, that true hope lies. I am also grateful for both the ways in which he calls the church to greater faithfulness and how his writings show the dangers and pitfalls of modern arrogant humanism. If the Lord can speak to Enns, then there is hope for us all. I will remember him in my prayers as I hope he will remember me.

**RAMON REMPEL, KITCHENER, ONT.**

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Cook**—Preston Carter Robert (b. Feb. 24, 2008), to Rob and Sandra Cook, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Enns**—Zinnia Carmen (b. March 8, 2008), to Dale and Krista Enns, Langley Mennonite, B.C.

**Giesbrecht**—Adan Cole (b. Jan. 28, 2008), to Dan and Vanessa Giesbrecht, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man.

**Hand**—Jacob Vernon (b. Feb. 17, 2008), to Emily and Terrance Hand, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.

**Kinsie**—Grace (b. Feb. 24, 2008), to Josh and Krista Kinsie, Preston Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

**Pollet**—Serenity Agatha (b. Feb. 21, 2008), to Candace Kroeker and Luke Pollet, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Recker**—Meghan Anne (b. Mar. 4, 2008), to Chad and Elisa Recker, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Regier**—Lucy Violet (b. Jan. 24, 2008), to Andrea and Thomas Regier, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.

**Scott**—Annelise Clara Thiessen (b. Jan. 24, 2008), to Jennifer Thiessen and Nathan Scott, The First Mennonite, Vineland, Ont.

**Streicher**—Jed (b. March 10, 2008) to Dwayne and Tonia Streicher, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

**Wirth**—Caitlyn Elizabeth (b. Feb. 23, 2008), to Jason and Melissa Wirth, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

### Baptisms

**Chris Frankland, Julia Hamm, Matthias Hamm, Meredith Koehler**—Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Jan. 27, 2008.

### Marriages

**Goerzen/Neufeldt**—Joani Goerzen and Paul Neufeldt, Bergthal Mennonite, Didbury, Alta., Dec. 28, 2007.

**Cooper/Moses**—Dustin Cooper and Andrea Moses, First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alta., Oct. 7, 2007.

### Deaths

**Becker**—John, 89 (d. Feb. 9, 2008), Schoenfelder Mennonite, St. Francois Xavier, Man.

**Dueck**—John, 73 (d. Jan. 24, 2008), Graysville Mennonite, Man.

**Dyck**—Henry, 80 (d. Feb. 29, 2008), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Fittler**—John, 75 (d. Feb. 16, 2008), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Frey**—Beatrice, 57 (b. Aug. 9, 1950; d. Jan. 1, 2008), Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

**Friesen**—Wiegand, 78 (b. Feb. 24, 1930; d. March 2, 2008), Altona Bergthaler, Man.

**Good**—Milton, 96 (b. June 20, 1911; d. March 3, 2008), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Harms**—John, 84 (b. May 17, 1923; d. Dec. 9, 2007), Fort Garry Mennonite, Man.

**Hildebrand**—Roberta Wayne, 74 (d. Feb. 16, 2008), Graysville Mennonite, Man., in Grants Pass, Oregon.

**Omstead**—Christopher, 19 (d. Feb. 11, 2008), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event. Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to [milestones@canadianmennonite.org](mailto: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



## LIVING WITHIN LIMITS: PART IV

## The end of cheap energy

PAUL FIEGUTH

*“The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash”*

MATTHEW 7:27.

Let me be bold: Like a vast chain letter pyramid scheme, like a house built upon the sand, western society is built upon a poor foundation—cheap energy (oil).

To be sure, cheap energy is not inherently bad. For two centuries the ever-increasing availability of energy has allowed the development of tremendously complex societies, with services like health care and education, and opportunities like communications and travel, that were once not even imaginable but are now available to huge numbers of people.

However, like all good things, we get used to them, and the availability of cheap energy is now something we take for granted. It wouldn't be so bad if cheap energy were merely a convenience, an opportunity to enjoy and then to live without again. But the assumption of cheap energy has become far more deeply entrenched in our society in three ways that are extremely difficult to undo.

**First, cheap energy has become physically entrenched in the structure of our society.** Only a few generations ago life centred around small walkable towns, with most food produced and goods manufactured locally. Such a society was consistent with expensive energy.

However, that structure has largely been dismantled. It is no longer available to be returned to. Instead, having work and home far apart, multi-lane highways, and big-box stores with vast parking lots are all premised on cheap energy. The expressways, suburbs, sprawling cities, strip malls and pipelines have been built and will require energy to rebuild.

**Second, cheap energy has become**

**economically entrenched in the structure of our society.** The skills people learn and the jobs people do are, in most cases, highly specialized and service-oriented, contributing to and relying on the continued existence of a highly complex society.

Although it is true that the total amount spent on energy is a relatively small fraction of Canada's gross national product, many significant contributors to our economy—tourism, automobile production, leisure activities—rely on the presence of cheap energy to function.

**Third, cheap energy has become psychologically entrenched in western society.** For the past 100 years, every



*[C]ities, industries or economies that are not growing are called “stagnant,” as if a sustainable society should be equivalent to pond scum.*

year there was more energy available per person than the year before. It was always possible to do more; it was always possible to keep what we had and to plan for more things, a bigger vision, a brighter future.

These hundred years have given us the illusion of indefinite, perpetual growth. The need for growth is deeply embedded. Indeed, cities, industries or economies that are not growing are called “stagnant,” as if a sustainable society should be equivalent to pond scum.

However, energy-per-capita has levelled off, and is likely to begin decreasing, meaning that some year we will not, in fact, be able to do more than we do now.

The notion of western society's sustainability has almost become a bad joke. Most people, even people not environmentally or socially motivated, will concede that the western way of life is not sustainable long-term.

But it's not a joke. There were parts of the Roman Empire that exported a lot of

agricultural produce to Rome, and yet were productive and well-off. But after the collapse of the Empire—although there was no plague, no environmental catastrophe, and even no more food exports—the people were left desperately poor, literally eating mud and grass. The supporting structure of an advanced, organized, specialized society had fallen apart.

The only possible conclusion is that we need to use remaining fossil fuels to rebuild our society and infrastructure, and put it towards the development of new energy sources.

This has been done before. Western society moved from wood to coal to oil to gas to nuclear. Using fossil fuels to preserve the status quo is crazy. We have a limited endowment of fossil fuels remaining that is needed to rebuild our infrastructure.

Many people will argue that “the market” will automatically take care of

this transition, as it did the transition from horsepower to coal and then to oil. However, these previous transitions were always to denser forms of energy, always towards a future with more energy.

Furthermore, economic markets are short-term and do a terrible job of anticipating the future or accounting for non-economic costs like an ecosystem. There is a very real possibility of getting stuck; as long as energy is cheap, we squander a precious resource and compromise the future. As energy gets expensive, we may find too little energy remaining to rebuild.

Rebuilding society's infrastructure seems like a vast, hopeless task for the individual. But we need to start, one person at a time, changing our attitudes towards energy use and indefinite growth. ❧

*Paul Fieguth is an associate professor in systems design engineering at the University of Waterloo, Ont., and a member of Waterloo North Mennonite Church. For expanded versions of these articles, resources, or to contact him, visit [ocho.uwaterloo.ca/limits](http://ocho.uwaterloo.ca/limits).*

## ARTBEAT

NEW RELEASE

# East of West heads in 'toe-tapping' direction

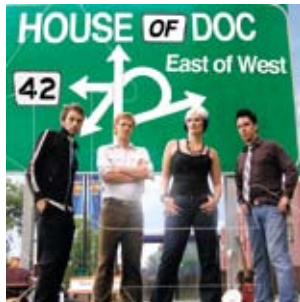
*House of Doc's third CD features new members and less 'minor key dirges'*

REVIEWED BY AARON EPP  
National Correspondent

How do you honour the memory of a deceased loved one? When Matthew Harder of folk/bluegrass quartet House of Doc lost his grandfather, he decided to pay tribute by writing a song about him.

Matthew describes his grandfather, Henry Koop, as "a blowhard" who loved to stand up at family gatherings to recite Shakespeare before the meal. "When you're 10 years old, this guy's wasting your time," he says while sipping coffee at a café in a Winnipeg mall. "But those are the sorts of things you end up missing the most. His funeral was the first family gathering where his voice wasn't present."

The song he wrote is "The Poet," the last song on House of Doc's new CD, *East of*



with losing a loved one and the comfort that comes with knowing he is with the Lord.

The band, which includes Matthew's wife Rebecca, her brother Dan Wiebe and her friend Jesse Krause, released *East of West* at the beginning of February. It's the follow-up to 2005's *Prairiegrass*, and the group's first CD without

Rebecca and Dan's brother, David Wiebe. David's bass vocals had been an important part of the group since it began singing on Sunday mornings and at fundraising events at Winnipeg's Charleswood Mennonite Church, where the Wiebe family grew up.

David and his wife Andrea left the band because they didn't enjoy touring, according to Rebecca. "They weren't getting the thrill on stage that I get that makes all of the hotels and airplanes and car trips worth

it," she says. Jesse was asked to replace David, and he began touring with the band, followed by writing and recording *East of West*.

The CD was recorded in Bath, Ont., in a studio owned by famed Canadian rock band The Tragically Hip. Matthew says House of Doc made a conscious effort to make a CD that would appeal to a younger audience. "There's a lot of death and dying and minor key dirges," Matthew says of *Prairiegrass*. "There's a little more toe-tapping involved on *East of West*."

Like *Prairiegrass* and *Sacred Blue*, the band's 2002 debut, harmonization and proficient musicianship take centre stage on the new CD, with all four band members singing and playing multiple instruments. And like those first two discs, *East of West* draws from traditional styles of music such as old time bluegrass and folk for songs like "Milk and Cookies" and "Heav'n Bound Train." "Rain Before the Fall" and "Summerstone," however, are more pop-infused. That was Dan's influence, Matthew says, coupled with the fact that the band had more time to experiment with different instruments and sounds while recording the CD.

Regardless of any stylistic changes, the songs are still steeped in the band's Mennonite heritage, exploring themes of faith and family life.

Now that *East of West* is in stores, the band is looking forward to touring. As for future goals, Rebecca says, "We would like each year to be successful enough for us to be able to do music the next year. If we can do that, I think each of us would die with a smile on our face." ☘



## Photo Contest

Enter your photos on:  
Caring for God's creation, or  
Young adults in our churches

Send them to:  
cmcontest@canadianmennonite.org,  
our Flickr photo pool  
or by postal mail.

Details on prizes and judging are at our  
website, [canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org).

CANADIAN  
MENNONITE

*House of Doc made a conscious effort to make a CD that would appeal to a younger audience.*

*West*. Over a gently-strummed acoustic guitar, Matthew sings, "This is not the poet / This is not the bard / This is not the laureate here lying silent." Later, a choir joins in singing "Amazing Grace." Mixing the classic hymn with popular song is clichéd, but in this instance it works to maximum effect. "The Poet" is a touching tribute that encompasses both the sadness that comes

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# Lust in the church

*Five Mennonite congregations tackle taboo subject*

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent  
WINKLER, MAN.

This past winter Winkler received media attention for more than just hosting CBC's Hockey Day in Canada. Beginning on Jan. 13, five local Mennonite churches offered a four-week series of sermons on sexuality and intimacy called "Pure Intimacy."

"Everyone talks about sex, but not in church per se," said Glen Klassen, associate pastor at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church. "It is seen as a very private, delicate and sensitive matter, but it is a powerful part of who we are,"

The discussion began at the local min-

*"It was interesting to learn that the guys wished the girls would dress more modestly."*

isterial level, which brings together 23 pastors in the area. Not all the churches were ready to participate fully, but Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Winkler Mennonite Brethren, Winkler Evangelical Mennonite Mission and Bethel Bergthaler Mennonite took hold of the issue and embarked on months of planning and preparation.

"We were aware, as a result of our work in the community, that there are issues of abuse, issues around sex and sexuality," said Randy Smart, pastor at Bethel Bergthaler Mennonite.

They agreed to a proposed outline of sermon topics. The first two Sundays laid a foundational and theological framework, as the pastors preached on "Created for

intimacy" and "Let's talk about sex: Why God invented sex." The last two sermons—"Lust" and "What happens in Vegas doesn't stay in Vegas"—addressed ways humans get into sexual problems. Although the topics and outlines were worked on together, the pastors developed their sermons independently.

Several sent letters to their members ahead of time outlining the series and encouraging discussion at home. The pastors also worked actively on community publicity.

"We had posters, ads in the paper, radio spots and bulletin announcements," said Klassen. For some of the ministerial, though, the aggressive publicity campaign was a deterrent to participating in the series.

Some of the churches used the series with their youth groups and Sunday school classes. In one youth group the young people wrote out things they wished the opposite sex knew.

"It was interesting," said Smart, "to learn that the guys wished the girls would dress more modestly."

"This is a topic that is not talked about very much in church, and it needs to be," said Amber Thiessen, a young married member at Plum Coulee Bergthaler. "It was a very good thing."

"It has given permission to talk about sex and sexuality," Klassen said of the series. "It has given the opportunity to talk about the

good and the not-so-good aspects [of sex] within a context of community, worship and biblical teaching."

Cleo Heinrichs, a member at Plum Coulee Bergthaler, wondered at first why she came. "Other single gals close to my age chose not to attend during the series," said Heinrichs, who has never been married and is close to 80. "But then I realized, hey, this is good. Even singles need to know what couples experience when they go through tough times. I enjoyed it very much."

"We have had positive responses across the board," Klassen reported.

Several churches even noticed more visitors during the series. ❧

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA PHOTO



**Christina and Darnell Barkman departed on March 16 for a 10- to 12-month internship assignment with Mennonite Church Canada Witness in the Philippines. The couple is from Abbotsford, B.C., where he is a member of Northview Community Church and she is a member at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond. They will be serving at Peacebuilders Community in Davao City, Mindanao, under the supervision of Daniel and Joji Pantoja. Part of Christina's assignment will be to teach peace education at a high school in Davao, and Darnell will be assisting the Peacebuilders team in a variety of ways. Darnell is a student at Columbia Bible College and this assignment also fulfills an internship for him.**

## Briefly noted

### New MC Manitoba director of Leadership Ministries

WINNIPEG—Henry Kliewer has been appointed Mennonite Church Manitoba's director of Leadership Ministries effective May 1. He has served as a pastor for 18 years at Winnipeg's Springfield Heights Mennonite Church and Sherbrooke Mennonite Church in Vancouver. He served as MC B.C. conference pastor for the past seven years, concluding on July 15, 2007. Of his appointment, Kliewer says, "My journey in pastoral and conference work is increasingly confirming the church, the body of Christ, as the most holistic place to live out life and ministry."

—MC Manitoba Release

PHOTO BY DAVE SIEBERT

# Kingsfield welcomes second member to church family

*New 'multiplying movement' grows from century-old roots*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY  
Eastern Canada Correspondent  
CLINTON, ONT.

The hundred-year-old Zurich Mennonite Church has become both the initiator of Kingsfield, a "multiplying movement of churches who bring the kingdom of Jesus Christ to relevant reality, where we live and wherever we go," and part of it.

Tim Doherty's position—as pastor of "multiplying the church," and "leadership development and coaching"—signals one facet of Zurich's change. A second would be the intentional watching and waiting for God at work in southwestern Ontario's rural Huron County.

Comparing what they are doing to strawberry plants, Kingsfield leaders are looking for new nodes to emerge. Quoting from Jesus' charge to his disciples in Luke 10, Doherty notes that they are looking for a "person of peace," someone who welcomes Jesus and his kingdom growth through them, and for leaders for a new congregation.

In Clinton, about 30 kilometres from Zurich, the people of peace were found in the home of Joel and Melanie Siebert, and Brian and Bonnie Steckle were identified as elders to begin leading a new congregation.

Kingsfield-Clinton began meeting last November and it now numbers around 20 congregants.

Kingsfield—from I Corinthians 3:9: "For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building"—was configured as an association from the beginning. Each congregation can be quite different, but remains connected. While



the strawberry patch only contains two nodes at the present, others are being identified.

A final facet of Zurich's change is the congregation's rethinking of itself.

"A congregation does not require a building or programs," says Doherty. "The church is an evident centre of God at work, a covenant people who gather to grow in Christ, a people on a mission together, and leaders to lead the group."

Kingsfield-Zurich is reimagining itself in its neighbourhood, influenced by its sibling in Clinton. ☼



*Taken after the commissioning celebration, the four families pictured were sent to begin the Kingsfield-Clinton, Ont. congregation.*



## I Am Not a Social Activist Making Jesus the Agenda

In *I Am Not a Social Activist*, Ronald J. Sider outlines his key ideas and central passions in short, easy-to-read chapters. Whichever stream of the church you identify with, you'll be surprised, upset, and affirmed by Sider's confessions of making Jesus the agenda.

Paper, 214 pages, \$16.99

## Bouquets: Intentional Relationships in Making Disciples

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# MC Alberta at the crossroads

*Annual delegates discuss future promises and perils*

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD  
Alberta Correspondent  
TOFIELD, ALTA.

Participants at the 79th annual Mennonite Church Alberta delegate sessions discovered that *Canadian Mennonite* editor Tim Miller Dyck is also a preacher. As keynote speaker, Miller Dyck unpacked the theme, “At the crossroads: Promise and peril,” pointing out biblical “signposts” for decision-making.

Using passages from Deuteronomy 4:1-9, Matthew 4:1-11, and II Timothy 3, he urged churches to obey, remember and teach. Old Testament commandments are read through the lens of Jesus’ life and enacted in church communities as they face

the future, Miller Dyck said, concluding with the admonition: “Remember to turn to Scripture . . . be led by the Holy Spirit . . . and be shaped by the interpretation of your church in your community, because I think those are gifts that God gives us to be faithful in the crossroads of our own lives.”

## Business highlights

Alissa Bender, associate pastor at Calgary First Mennonite Church, introduced discussions about young adults.

“The first thing that it will be helpful to remember is that we aren’t just talking about young adults here, we are talking about the church,” she said.

Drawing on responses to a previously circulated questionnaire, Bender emphasized the value of intergenerational community and said young adults want a church that is “real, relevant, authentic, passionate, based in community, and welcoming to all gifts.”

Conference committee workshops offered reports and heard feedback.

A finance committee proposal for a deficit budget in 2008 received solid support. The overrun is mainly due to increasing the conference minister from half- to three-quarter-time. Funding will be drawn out of accumulated surpluses from previous years.

In his written report, conference minister Jim Shantz stated that the extra time will respond to “a felt need in our last two assembly gatherings for lay leadership training and help.”

Outgoing chair Linden Willms reminded delegates that, although there was no Songfest in 2007, there is interest in some kind of celebration event for the future. Songfest and community building committees will process responses they receive from congregations, and Trinity Mennonite Church in Calgary has offered to host a 2009 event.

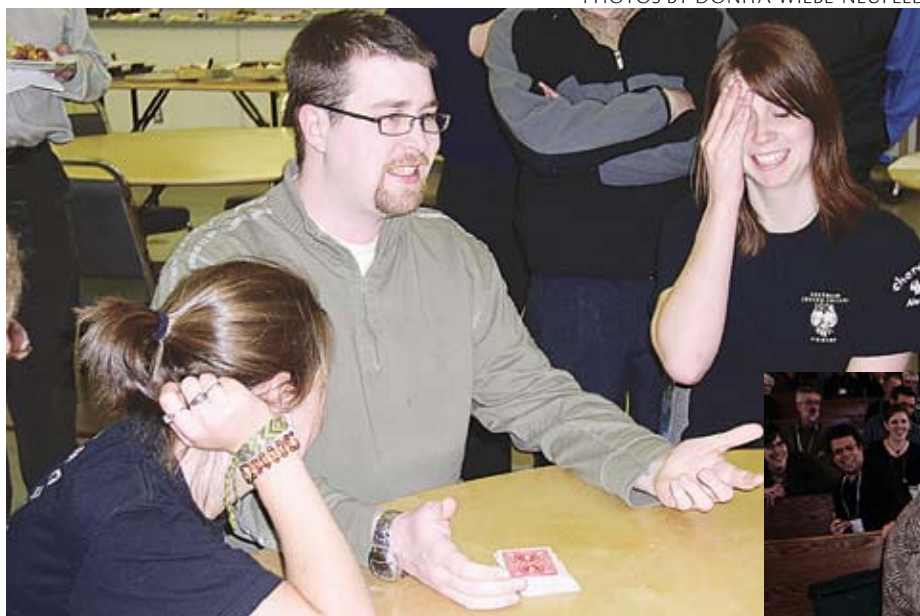
The missions and service committee proposed that churches consider possibilities for housing students and other young adults seeking to live in a faith community while studying in Alberta cities. Results will be discussed in 2009.

Shantz’s closing comments emphasized three priorities for the Alberta conference as it looks ahead:

- Growing healthy congregations;
- Becoming a more global church; and
- Developing leaders. ☸



PHOTOS BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



A new sanctuary, spacious hall and warm Tofield hospitality inspired many fellowship opportunities. Joe Goslin, associate pastor at Rosemary Mennonite Church and a gifted illusionist, entertained Rosthern Junior College choir members during a coffee break. The choir sang Friday evening, then went to Edmonton to meet with First Mennonite and Holyrood youths.



Pastor Ken Tse’s “scissors” beat Melissa Lesser’s “paper,” winning him his choice of a book from area conference resource advocate Tracy Brown Ewert. Tse chose *Stories: How Mennonites Came to Be* by John D. Roth.



# 2008 snow camps continue a popular tradition at Valaqua

BY STEPHANIE GINGUES

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
WATER VALLEY, ALTA.

More than 60 youths from across Alberta gathered together at Camp Valaqua for the annual senior high Snow Camp last month. From an afternoon of games that included broomball and sticks to a relaxing evening with new and old friends, the activity-filled weekend was a great way for the youths of Alberta to leave behind the sometimes overwhelming stresses of teenage life.

Providing a similar experience to summer camp, the weekend allowed the youths and their sponsors to worship together in a new setting surrounded by the beauty of God's creation.

As Doug Klassen, senior pastor from Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary, Alta., spoke of living a life of gratitude and purpose, many hearts were touched by his personal stories and lessons about Jesus. With stories ranging from the Lord's Supper to an eagle that believed it was a chicken, Klassen successfully portrayed many examples of how one can live this kind of life every day.

On Sunday morning, the youths were presented with unique faith testimonies from the Youth Leadership Team. The application of gratefulness and purpose in life became reality when the youths' peers spoke about a situation in which they were grateful and in which they saw purpose despite the difficulties that had burdened them.

As the weekend drew to a close, the leadership team welcomed many new members and said farewell to those that are graduating from high school this year. The new team consists of Nick Bergen and Stephanie Jorritsma (Edmonton First Mennonite); Lauren Harms (Calgary First Mennonite); Jesse Derksen, Allison Goerzen and Jordan Possenroth (Bergthal Mennonite); and Anna Schellenberg, Mark

PHOTO BY STEPHANIE GINGUES



*Steve Bergen and Chantal Gingues demonstrate their cooking skills during last month's senior high snow camp at Camp Valaqua.*

Heinrichs and Karis Klassen (Foothills Mennonite). Rita Heidebrecht, youth coordinator for Mennonite Church Alberta, leads the group.

Although many youths were disappointed that snow camp couldn't continue past the Sunday, the positive feedback on this weekend leaves no doubt that these following months will be filled with anticipation for summer camp and next year's snow camp.

Junior youth snow camp, held Jan. 18-20, attracted 60 youths. Speaker Steve Heidebrecht encouraged participants to think about how God calls people to be good stewards of the environment.

*Stephanie Gingues is a senior member of the current MC Alberta Youth Leadership Team, which plans and runs the area church's youth activities. With files from Donita Wiebe-Neufeld.*

*The weekend was a great way for the youths of Alberta to leave behind the sometimes overwhelming stresses of teenage life.*

## /// Briefly noted

### **Bergthal Mennonite Church learns to worship God with all its senses at Valaqua retreat**

WATER VALLEY, ALTA.—On the weekend of Feb. 29 to March 2, Bergthal Mennonite Church held a retreat at Camp Valaqua. It was a delightful time as babies, children, adults and seniors enjoyed the peaceful setting together. Participants were treated to deep blue skies and sparkling snow as they cross-country skied, tobogganed or simply went for walks. One evening Ken and Bev Fromm set up telescopes in an area that was open to the stars; Saturn with its rings, Pleiades, the Dog Star Sirius and others were viewed. Arlyn Friesen-Epp from the MC Canada Resource Centre in Winnipeg spoke on the theme, "Sensing God in our worship." Through seeing, touching, hearing, smelling and tasting, each participant learned ways to sense God in worship. The Sunday morning service included communion, and the smell and taste of freshly baking and broken bread reminded each one of the love of God who gave his Son to die for the sins of the world and who loves each one for whom he died.

—BY ERNA GOERZEN

## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

## FRONT PAGE STORY

## Ecumenical quilting

By LOIS SIEMENS

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
SUPERB, SASK.

It was a bit of a discouraging time for the Ladies Aid members at Superb Mennonite Church, whose numbers had dwindled. Their original plan of working in groups was no longer feasible, so members tied quilts alone in their homes. Meetings became few and far between. They needed a boost of energy if they were to continue their philanthropic endeavours on behalf of Mennonite Central Committee.

One day, the weekly coffee group was gathered at the home of Anne Peters from Superb Mennonite. There was little room at the table, as her latest quilt was in its frame and taking up most of the space. The women were curious and full of questions. Finally, the most important question was voiced: "Do you mind if we help?"

So the women of Superb Mennonite Church and their Catholic and United Church neighbours began to gather to tie quilts in Helen Olfert's basement.

One day as they squeezed into the tight space of the Olfert basement, Joyce Gottfried from the United Church had an idea: "Why don't we quilt in the Superb church basement? There is heat, light, room for us to bring children, and, most importantly, a place where we can make coffee."

As word spread, other neighbours began to drop by one day a week to help quilt or donate fabric and wool.

One year, Vera Sauerwald, also a Catholic, donated 70—yes, 70—quilt tops for the Ladies Aid to complete. And at 91, Marie Wetzstein from the Catholic church continues to knit many bags full of toques, scarves or sweaters for donation.

The women are no longer discouraged. They are excited that someone can use their warm quilts and they value the time to catch up on the news with their neighbours. ☸

# Nature preserve donated to Canadian Mennonite University

*Facility will be used to create Braintree Creation Care Centre*

Canadian Mennonite University Release  
EAST BRAINTREE, MAN.

**"D**ad, you have no idea of what's out here!"

That's what Walter Loewen's son told him 25 years ago, after the family purchased some property at East Braintree, Man., about 100 kilometres east of Winnipeg.

It didn't take long for Loewen and his wife Elly to discover exactly what it was they had out there: A spectacular and undisturbed 283-hectare nature preserve of forest, fields and peat bogs bisected by the clear waters of the Boggy River.

At a March 12 ceremony, attended by Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) faculty, staff, students and friends, along with people from the community of Braintree, the Loewens formally signed use of the property over to the university to create the Braintree Creation Care Centre of CMU.

"Our exposure to this setting has meant much to us," said Loewen, 79. "It has enhanced our faith journey as we marvel at God's good creation. But now the time has come for us to pass on what we hold very dear in our hearts."

In addition to the land, much of which is protected by a Nature Conservancy agreement that will keep it in its pristine condition, the property contains a two-storey lodge, three rustic cabins and a modern bungalow, along with other assorted buildings. Along with the property, the Loewens are also donating \$250,000 over five years for operations.

CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY PHOTOS



*Walter and Elly Loewen donated 283 hectares of pristine land east of Winnipeg.*

Loewen, the founder and former president of Yamaha Canada Music Ltd., said he hopes the donation will "inspire students and others to commit themselves to the furtherance of the Lord's work by learning how to look after his creation."

"This is an exciting and moving day," said CMU president Gerald Gerbrandt, adding that the university is "profoundly grateful to the Loewens for this donation." By accepting it, "we are committing ourselves to look after that property," he said, adding that it "will be a symbol and reminder of our commitment to take care of God's creation, a resource and learning centre for students and others."

In addition to preserving the land, Gerbrandt said the Creation Care Centre will also serve as a place to do research about the environment and care of creation, and serve as a retreat and teaching centre.

CMU has appointed biology professor Glen Klassen as director of research for the centre. He will oversee the transition of ownership of the property from the Loewens to CMU, and work on refining and developing the vision and program for the centre. ☸



*The new centre includes a number of buildings including a two-storey lodge, pictured.*

## PACS turns 30

BY DAVE ROGALSKY  
Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT.

From Feb. 29 to March 2 Conrad Grebel University College's Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) program celebrated its 30th anniversary. Throughout the weekend, pastor James Wuye and imam Muhammad Ashafa, co-recipients of the Tanenbaum Peacemaker Award in 2000 and the founders and co-executive directors of the Interfaith Mediation Centre and

the Muslim-Christian dialogue Forum of Kaduna, Nigeria, spoke about making peace in multi-faith and multi-cultural societies.

Friday night's public event included a multimedia presentation; a speech by Waterloo mayor Brenda Halloran, a grad of the PACS Certificate Skills Program; and the presentation of Grebel's Distinguished Alumni Service Award to Ruth Teichroeb, a journalist who developed a "social issues" beat first at the *Winnipeg Free Press* and now at the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

Ashafa and Wuye closed out the

celebration, focusing in a prophetic way on how difference leads to demonization. Ashafa noted that when people recognize "difference" they can either reach across the gaps of difference or retreat away, which can lead to fear and acts of violence. He said that he sees far too much retreat from difference in Canadian churches that are too one-coloured racially and unmixed

PHOTO BY FRED MARTIN



*Imam Muhammad Ashafa and pastor James Wuye of Nigeria, seated, were the keynote speakers at the Inter-Collegiate Peace Fellowship Conference entitled "Building bridges, breaking down barriers: Religion's role in reconciliation," last month at Conrad Grebel University College.*

## Building bridges, breaking down barriers

*Religion's role in reconciliation key topic at Inter-Collegiate Peace Fellowship Conference*

BY SARAH JOHNSON  
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
WATERLOO, ONT.

How can people overcome fear and forgive their enemies? Do exclusive faith statements fuel intolerance and violence towards people of other faiths? Is there a universal spirituality common to all religious traditions? What is the role of interfaith friendships in peacemaking? Are differences seen as threats, illusions or blessings?

Students from Mennonite colleges across North America and the local Waterloo community struggled with these and other challenging questions at the Inter-Collegiate Peace Fellowship Conference entitled "Building bridges, breaking down barriers: Religion's role in reconciliation," last month. The conference was held at Conrad Grebel University College.

Participants were inspired by the story of keynote speakers pastor James Wuye and imam Muhammad Ashafa of Nigeria. The two religious leaders led opposing militia groups and lost loved ones and physical abilities in combat before being convicted by their faiths that forgiveness and peace are the paths revealed in both the Quran and the Bible. They now travel to communities marked by Muslim/Christian tension to tell their story of reconciliation and to facilitate conflict resolution in a vehicle emblazoned with the phrase, "Peace is divine."

Workshops led by individuals from five faith traditions

on themes associated with religion and peace stimulated conversations that extended beyond sessions to lunch tables and break times. Faith was put into practise in a reflective interfaith service of prayers for peace.

Leah Reesor, who coordinated the conference along with Kara Klassen, was inspired by the event. "This weekend reminded me of what a privilege and a gift it is to live in a multicultural and multi-faith community like Kitchener-Waterloo. Even though as a University of Waterloo student I'm surrounded by diversity every day, I found the conference gave me a valuable opportunity to ask deeper questions and really engage with difficult issues like religious exclusivity that are often glossed over in day-to-day life."

Students described how they would return home with prior assumptions dispelled, and empowered to make peace at individual and communal levels with people of other faiths, in the confidence that new friends in Waterloo and at other Mennonite colleges would be doing the same. To borrow a metaphor used by pastor Wuye, many seeds of peace were planted that will bear fruit for years to come.

*Sarah Johnson, a master of theological studies student at Conrad Grebel University College/University of Waterloo, took part in the conference.*

culturally.

The PACS program began in 1977 as the passion of Frank H. Epp, then president of Conrad Grebel, as the natural outgrowth of the establishment of a Mennonite college on the campus of a secular university. An interdisciplinary program, it seeks to draw students from many disciplines to take electives, as well as offering undergraduate majors, joint majors, minors and non- or post-degree diplomas.

In celebration of its first 30 years, current director Lowell Ewert said, "PACS is incredibly blessed to be at Conrad Grebel. Conrad Grebel is incredibly blessed to be on the campus of the University of Waterloo. There are immense opportunities to be salt and light, to encounter and influence students."

He expressed his hopes for the future, including acknowledgement of interest on the part of students in developing a graduate degree in Peace and Conflict Studies.

A Saturday night banquet raised funds for the Frank H. Epp Memorial Fund in support of PACS; at press time, the fund stood at \$96,000. ☺

## Tanzanian success story

*MEDA celebrates distribution of three-millionth anti-malaria net*

BY LINDA WHITMORE  
MEDA  
WATERLOO, ONT.

As American president George W. Bush witnessed the progress in the battle against malaria in Tanzania during his recent trip to Africa, Canadian non-governmental organization Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA)—a key player in the fight—celebrated the distribution of its three-millionth anti-malaria net in the country.

Waterloo-based MEDA marked the occasion with a cake in the image of a program voucher during a visit by two Tanzanian officials from the Ministry of

MEDA PHOTO BY CALEB MACDONALD



**MEDA**  
*Tanzania program manager Faith Patrick holds an anti-malaria net.*

Health and Social Welfare. They were accompanied by MEDA's management team for the project.

MEDA is the Tanzanian government's logistics manager for *Hati Punguzo*, an initiative that promotes a unique public-private partnership that provides Tanzanians with subsidized vouchers to purchase insecticide-treated mosquito bed nets at very low cost. Through the initiative, MEDA has helped to create a network of more than 6,500 retail outlets nationwide, where the life-saving nets were previously not available.

MEDA designed and implemented Tanzania's novel voucher scheme to get more treated nets into the hands of African mothers and children, who are most at risk. Malaria is the leading killer of children in Africa, claiming more than a million lives every year.

Pregnant women receive vouchers at local health clinics during their regular prenatal check-ups and infant children receive a voucher during their regular childhood immunization. Vouchers for pregnant women are supported with funding from the Tanzanian Ministry of Health and the Global Fund, while vouchers for infants are supported with funding from USAID.

So far, the impact of the project is staggering. Research suggests that six lives are being spared for every thousand nets sold. In addition to the lives saved, the nets prevent serious illness that would devastate families who would face lost wages and the need to purchase costly treatment. ☺



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# Fresh from the farm

*Urbanites offered meats and other foods produced on Old Order Mennonite and Amish farms*

BY JOANNA REESOR-MCDOWELL  
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
TORONTO

**F**resh From the Farm, an alternative food store in Toronto, makes it possible for urban families to enjoy meats and other foods produced using traditional methods on farms owned by Old Order Mennonites and Amish families in the Waterloo area of western Ontario. The products appeal to people who are looking for drug- and hormone-free meats, and to environmentalists who promote "food localism," a philosophy that encourages support for local family farms in order to reduce oil consumption in food transportation.

Store owners Tim and Jacqui Schmucker did not plan to go into the specialty food business. It all started when he was working with some recent immigrants from the former Yugoslavia in the mid-1990s. They were used to buying food more directly from small farms in their homeland, and were drawn to the traditional family farms in the Old Order Mennonite and Amish communities. After asking Tim if he could help them purchase chickens and other meats from those farms, he started making monthly trips to the Kitchener-Waterloo area to purchase food.

The business gradually evolved as "friends of friends" started placing orders. For the first five years, the Schmuckers rented space a few days per month from a local business for their customers to come by and pick up their orders placed through the Fresh from the Farm website ([freshfromthefarm.ca](http://freshfromthefarm.ca)).

In October 2003, they took the leap of purchasing and renovating a store at 350 Donlands Ave. in the East York area. The business is now open Thursday to Saturday

*Tim and Jacqui Schmucker operate Fresh From the Farm, an alternative food store in Toronto that sells foods produced using traditional methods on Old Order Mennonite and Amish farms in western Ontario.*



FRESH FROM THE FARM PHOTO

each week. Products in the store have expanded to include certified organic meat; grains and

dairy products; fair trade snacks, chocolate, tea and coffee; farm-raised elk; and wild fish from aboriginal communities. More recently, they have started to make "meals to go" using organic products from the store.

"We had no idea how many people in Toronto were looking for a place where they can make a personal connection to their food," Tim says, adding that besides knowing that the meat has been produced

using traditional, natural methods, "they like to know about the family with 11 children that raised the chickens."

Jacqui carries the main retail responsibilities for the store since Tim has another career as a Mennonite Central Committee Ontario staff person. Fresh From the Farm allows him to link his work and business interests in areas such as food justice and environmental concerns related to food production and consumption. ☼

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GOD AT WORK IN US

## Life more than skating and sports

*Olympic athlete Cindy Klassen speaks at Peace-It-Together conference*

Canadian Mennonite University Release  
WINNIPEG

It takes a lot to win a gold medal in speed skating at the Olympics. But more than the cardiovascular training, weightlifting and practice laps, Cindy Klassen says it's her faith in God that gets her through a race.

"When I go to the line, [my faith] helps me because I know this is where [God] wants me to be," Klassen, 28, told students from across Canada on March 8 at the annual Peace-It-Together conference at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg. "Every time I go out . . . I know I'm doing it for him and not for me. That takes a bit of the pressure off."

*When she played hockey as a teenager and had to practise on Sundays, her family made sure she at least got to attend the church service—even if that meant being late for practice.*

Growing up in a Christian home, Klassen said that God was always at the centre. When she played hockey as a teenager and had to practise on Sundays, her family made sure she at least got to attend the church service—even if that meant being late for practice.

Klassen's parents not only encouraged her in her faith, but they also encouraged her to pursue sports. When she was two, her father made her a hockey stick. Every day after work, Klassen insisted her father play road hockey with her until it was time to go inside for supper.



*Olympic speed skater Cindy Klassen, right, talks to Abe Bergen, CMU director of admissions, at the university's annual Peace-It-Together youth conference.*

She had her sights set on playing hockey for Canada in the 1998 Olympics and, in 1997, got a call to try out for the women's team. She didn't make it.

"I was devastated," Klassen said. "I thought [hockey] was God's plan for my life."

Since she had always been a strong skater, her parents suggested she try speed skating. She said her first attempt at the sport was a humbling experience. The difference in the blade size on the skates made her shake, and she could barely stand up. She was 18 years old, and kids only a third

she went to her dressing room and broke down. "I didn't understand why I'd been so fortunate to do so well," Klassen explained. She knows, however, that God played a big part. "It's neat to do well, but I couldn't have done it without God."

Klassen is currently taking a break from the competition season to spend time with family in Winnipeg while her sister Lisa recovers from her injuries (*see "Klassen miraculously survives crash," Canadian Mennonite, March 17, page 30*). She will rejoin her teammates in Calgary in May for the beginning of training. She already has her sights set on the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, where everyone will be watching to see if she can repeat her victories.

"I'm fortunate because I can give that up to God," she said of the pressure placed on her to repeat. She added that her status as an Olympic speed skater provides an opportunity to witness in the face of victory or defeat, and also makes facing the pressure easier. Whether she wins or loses, Klassen said, "life goes on."

"[Life] isn't about skating, it's not about sports—it's about more than that," she said.

Asked what advice she would give to young Christian high school students, Klassen said, "Stay close to God and make sure he's No. 1 in your life. If you're listening to him and you're praying, you'll be amazed with the things he'll do in your life." ❧

her age were zipping by her.

She persevered, though, and by 1999 was accomplished enough to earn herself a spot on Canada's junior national team. During the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy, she became the first Canadian Olympian to win five medals in one Olympic Games, and the only Canadian with six Olympic medals.

When asked how she's experienced God in times of such great success, Klassen recalled the World Singles skating competition in Germany in 2005. After winning both the 1,500- and 3,000-metre races,

## FOCUS ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

## VIEWPOINT

# Stirring biases in students

TERRY SCHELLENBERG

**B**eing biased implies prejudice or having a predetermined mind or a strong tilt in one direction. Biases surface, sometimes painfully, in attitudes towards race, skin colour, sexual orientation, beauty or ugliness, homelessness, wealth and much more. So it's ironic that chapels have sought to stir biases in us—to have us think on an angle, a slant, with an orientation or in a particular direction. They have done so because the world we live in is not neutral or objective. Here are three biases to which chapels have spoken at Rockway this year.

**Bias 1: If our first and highest priority is “me,” our needs will be met, our goals achieved and we will be happy.**

In response, chapels have asked, “Will you live with gratitude, a word rooted in the word grace?” Grace is about being given a gift that we haven't earned, about delighting in the undeserved. “Will you live with gratitude?” cuts to the heart of the “self” bias in our culture, because we can't be both grateful and self-centred.

Gratitude celebrates what we've been given, but have neither earned nor have a right to: our lives, healthy minds, being born in this part of our world, having a future, knowing God's love for us. These are gifts we didn't earn. That's grace.

Our chapel bias has said if we live gratefully we will also live generously for others. Will you live with gratitude?

**Bias 2: Since 9/11 a bias has emerged about people who look or dress differently, believe differently than we do, or**

**live in certain parts of our world.**

This bias says we should fear such people and guard against them with a high wall or simplistic slogans. This year, the United States is going to spend \$5 billion in support of HIV/AIDS relief in Africa. That's a lot of money! But this year the U.S. will also spend \$530 billion dollars on guns, tanks and planes—in the name of building a wall to protect their way of life and to fight “bad guys” who might threaten them. The \$5 billion for relief is important—but to spend 100 times that amount on the military!



*Will you open yourself to a journey of faith—to God—so that the deepest parts of who you are can be touched and changed?*

Many other nations are not so different—just on a much smaller scale. Something is deeply wrong with this bias. Fear of the “other” hurts us. And in response our chapels have asked, “Will you welcome your neighbour?”

**Bias 3: We are embedded in a world claiming that technology and science will solve the issues we face.**

Don't get me wrong, their power is incredible and necessary. But this bias leaves little room to see ourselves through windows of faith and mystery, through the love and presence of God, or with language that opens alternative assumptions about who we are and why we're here. That's sad because many of our challenges are deeper than those with which science can deal.

After the Virginia Tech massacre, an e-mail began circulating that read in part: “The paradox of our time is that we have wider freeways but narrower viewpoints; . . . more conveniences but less time; more technology and knowledge than ever before but less wisdom and judgment; more medicine but less wellness; . . . we've conquered outer space but not inner space; we've split the atom but not our prejudice. . . . We live in a time . . . when technology can bring this e-mail to you and a time when you can choose either to make a difference or just hit ‘delete.’”

In response to the science and technology bias, chapels have asked, “Will you open yourself to a journey of faith—to God—so that the deepest parts of who you are can be touched and changed?” That question goes against a bias that

faith is for people who don't think, who are narrow in their viewpoints, who are not open to life. In truth, if there's anything our world needs, it's young people of faith opening themselves to God's way of love.

Chapels have claimed that the biases of our culture—self, fear, the sufficiency of science and technology—are inadequate. Instead, we have spoken of the importance of living with gratitude, welcoming our neighbour and journeying in faith. These are biased convictions which open us to life and to not hitting “delete.” ❧

*Terry Schellenberg is principal of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont. This article is adapted from Rockway's closing chapel on June 14, 2007, and was originally printed in a longer format in Rockway Reflection Summer 2007 issue.*

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

## Worldview paradigm shift

*RJC students experience life in Central America during annual service and learning tour*

BY DAVID EPP

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

On Feb. 6, a group of 10 Rosthern Junior College (RJC) students and four chaperones boarded a plane with a mixture of anxiety and excitement for our school's annual International Service and Learning Tour to Guatemala.

During a tour of Guatemala City led by Rob Cahill, a former Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker who served as our guide for our 11 days in Guatemala, we learned stories of the people, of the civil war that lasted for decades and the effects of such a war, and about the desperate conditions common to many of the people of Guatemala.

Equipped with a small knowledge of the locale, we embarked on the heart of the trip—our visit to Alta Verapaz, a district inhabited by the Kekchi people, descendants of the ancient Mayans. MCC has focused much energy here, and our time was divided between Bezaleel, a Mennonite boarding school for young boys and girls who learn academic subjects and vocational arts to equip them to become leaders in their home communities, and Semesche, a Kekchi village that RJC has had a relationship with for the past six years.

Bezaleel was the recipient of RJC's student fundraiser, Pennies for Poverty. RJC students raised \$2,700, which meant that 27 new students would be given the opportunity to attend school. We were proud to deliver this money to Bezaleel. As our time with Bezaleel's students came to a close, we presented them with hockey sticks and had an international exhibition game—Guatemala versus Canada!

In Semesche, we were made welcome in



Members of the 2008 Rosthern (Sask.) Junior College trip to Guatemala pose for a group shot.

the Mennonite church—the largest congregation of Mennonites in all of Guatemala—and were given the Kekchi ceremonial banquet meal: “Mayan Borscht” with chicken, rice and some hot sauce, complete with all you could eat corn tortillas. The church deacons met with us and gave stirring personal testimonies. One of the deacons

left the group with a powerful quote: “We come from different languages and different cultures, but we share a oneness in Christ.”

We spent much of our time in Semesche learning about empowerment, and how in order to really help people in situations like this, you need to give them the

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means to help themselves. We talked about problems the people encounter, and visited many of the projects that MCC and Heifer International have begun. We were given the unique opportunity to stay with a host family while we were there and were touched by their genuine hospitality, their generosity to us as guests, and to their richness of spirit, even though they are quite poor.

We finished the trip with two days in Santiago Atitlan, where we visited people who were affected by Hurricane Stan in 2005 and with whom MCC is currently working.

This Guatemala experience has left us all with an entirely new worldview and new questions that we must take upon ourselves to answer. World and personal perspectives have been challenged, and we will never forget what we learned, saw and felt while we were in Guatemala. ❧

*David Epp is a Grade 12 student at Rosthern Junior College, Saskatchewan.*

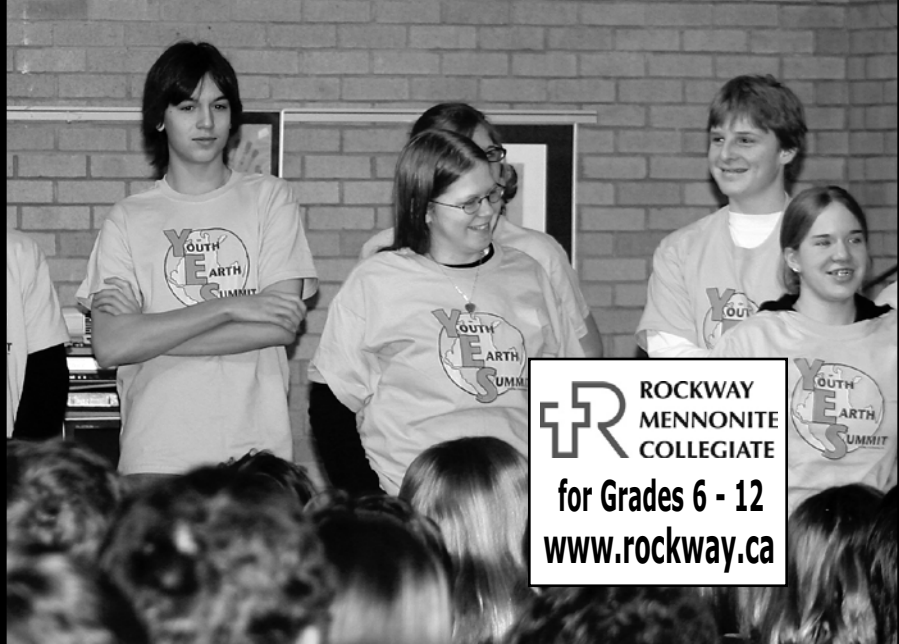
MEI PHOTO




**Mennonite Collegiate Institute's Dillon Peters (No. 7 in white) jumps for the ball during this year's Grade 9 boys provincial basketball tournament hosted by MEI, Abbotsford, B.C.**

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PERSONAL REFLECTION

# Say YES to the environment!

By **ABBIE McLELLAN**  
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

A half-hour before the Youth Earth Summit (YES) was to begin, I found myself running around at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate trying to ready the school for the event. Booths had to be set up, a fair trade café was to be prepared, and books had to be readied for a raffle. The excitement was building as everyone anticipated the very first YES. But outside the snow was falling thickly.

When the event finally began, the energy pumping through the school was very obvious. Students rode the halls in the newest cycling technology, bumping into students and teachers alike.

Locally produced organic ice cream was a big hit at the Radius Foods booth, which focused on foods grown within a reasonable radius of the community. The real shock from that booth was the amount of time and research it took to find carrots, apples, bread, peanut butter, jam, popcorn and apple juice grown in our region. It is clear that foods that are a part of our daily diet should not have to be shipped out of the area and sold, when we could be eating them straight from the market.

One of the most interesting things I

discovered at the conference was called the Grand House Student Co-operative Inc. It is an entirely student-run building project in Cambridge, Ont. University of Waterloo students decided to build a more affordable home that was environmentally friendly and convenient. They are using straw bale construction, which has a very high insulation value and is made from locally grown straw. The amount of work these students are putting into this building gives me a lot of hope for our future. Change is possible, and can be achieved.

The keynote speaker, Paul Parker, connected well with Rockway's theme, because he talked about solar power shortly after we had our big solar panel launch. He was loud, energetic, and really got the students pumped and ready to jump out of their seats and take action.

I hope that an event like this will affect many of the youths in our community, so that they learn to love the environment and take positive steps towards change.

On this note, I challenge youths to become more involved. Though it was a very snowy night, I think that such a big event should have had more people come. It is up to us to make the change and clean up the Earth. I don't know how many people out there understand this—or if many of them just don't care—but without more initiative the environmental crisis can only get worse.

*Abbie McLellan is a Grade 8 student at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont.*




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## Calendar

### British Columbia

**April 16-19:** Mennonite Educational Institute spring production.

**April 19:** Columbia Bible College commencement.

**April 19-20:** Camp Squeah Paddle-a-thon for staff bursary fund. Visit [squeah.com](http://squeah.com) or call 604-869-5353 for details.

**April 25-27:** Junior Youth Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

**May 4:** Women's Inspirational Day at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

**May 8:** Communitas Supportive Care fundraiser dessert evening with Ukrainian dancers and Dr. Lucy Romanenkova from Ukraine speaking at Bakerview MB Church, Abbotsford, 7 p.m. Order tickets at [CommunitasCare.com/store](http://CommunitasCare.com/store).

**May 10:** B.C. Mennonite Historical Society, "Contributions of *Der Bote* and *Mennonitische Rundschau*," with Helen Franz and David Ewert at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, 3 p.m.

### Alberta

**April 12-13:** 25th anniversary

celebration at Trinity Mennonite, Calgary. Call 403-256-7157 for more information.

**May 2-4:** Alberta Women in Mission retreat at Camp Valaqua, "Relax, refresh, renew." Contact [evbuhr@awm.mennonitechurch.ab.ca](mailto:evbuhr@awm.mennonitechurch.ab.ca) to register.

**May 9:** Pre-workday youth event at Camp Valaqua for senior high youth and sponsors, at 7 p.m. Bring overnight gear and work clothes. To register call Rita at 403-289-7172.

**May 10:** Spring work day at Camp Valaqua. Call 403-637-2510 for information.

### Saskatchewan

**April 8:** Information meeting with Glenn Witmer about a tour to Israel and Palestine at Wildwood Mennonite, 7:30 p.m.

**April 12:** Saskatchewan Women in Mission Enrichment Day, "Service and Song" at Battleford United Church, North Battleford.

**April 12:** Camp Elim fundraiser at Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**April 17:** MC Sask and MCC Equipping Conference at Forest Grove Community Church, "Being a good

neighbour: How the church responds to victims of crime," with speakers Wilma Derksen and James Loewen, 9:30-2 p.m.

**April 19:** MC Sask touring Mission Fest.

**April 19:** Bethany College spring concert, "Echoes of Africa," 7:30 p.m.

**April 20:** RJC spring dessert theatre at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

**April 20:** Bethany College commencement, 2:30 p.m.

**April 23:** CMU Chamber Choir and RJC in concert at Osler Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m.

**April 23:** MEDA Connecting Faith and Business banquet at the Travelodge hotel with Wally Kroeker from *Marketplace* magazine.

### Manitoba

**April 12:** MCI fundraising banquet and concert at MCI, Gretna, 6:30 p.m.

**April 13:** CMU Outtatown graduation.

**April 15:** MCI fundraising concert/dessert evening at Laudamus Hall, CMU, Winnipeg, 7 p.m.

**April 18-20:** Manitoba Mennonite World-wide Marriage Encounter weekend, Winnipeg. For more information, visit [marriageencounter.org](http://marriageencounter.org).

**April 19:** CMU Celebration Dinner with speaker Dr. John Foerster, 4:30 p.m. and Spring Concert at Loewen Athletic Centre.

**April 20:** CMU graduation at Loewen Athletic Centre with Arli Klassen, new executive director of MCC speaking, 2:30 p.m.

**April 22:** MCI fundraising concert/dessert evening at Bay Ave. Mennonite in Killarney, 7 p.m.

### Ontario

**April 5:** Allan Reesor-McDowell and Rouge River Connection benefit concert for House of Friendship and MCC at Mannheim Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m.

**April 5:** MCC Relief Sale promotion dinner at Niagara United Mennonite Church with Adrian Jacobs speaking on "A First Nations Question" at 6 p.m.

**April 11:** Coffee House hosted by Menno Youth Singers at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, 7-9 p.m. Free admission.

**April 11:** Rescheduled Benjamin Eby lecture with A. James Reimer at Conrad Grebel Chapel, 7:30 p.m. Reception to follow.

**April 12:** Fraser Lake Camp Dinner and Auction at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, 6 p.m. For tickets contact 905-640-2127 or [eric@fraserlakecamp.com](mailto:eric@fraserlakecamp.com).

**April 13:** Conrad Grebel Convocation, 2 p.m., Theatre of the Arts, University of Waterloo.

**April 14:** Mennonite Savings and Credit Union annual meeting with guest speaker John Siebert of Project Ploughshares at Waterloo MB Church; registration begins 6:30 p.m.

**April 18:** WMCEC Spring Enrichment Day at Vineland United Mennonite, 10:15 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Speaker: Melodie Shantz. Register by April 8 to Florence Jantzi, 14 Nightingale Cres., Elmira, ON N3B 1A8, or 519-669-4356.

**April 18:** MCC meat canner ham dinner fundraiser at Hamilton Mennonite Church, 5-7 p.m. Call 905-387-3952 or 905-528-3607 for tickets.

**April 19:** MEDA Waterloo convention and banquet at Holiday Inn, Kitchener, beginning at 12 noon. To register contact 519-725-1633 or [cmcgillivray@meda.org](mailto:cmcgillivray@meda.org) or visit [www.meda.org](http://www.meda.org).

**April 20:** Join Mark Diller Harder and Menno Singers for "Evensong: A Vesper Hymn Fest (Easter and Pentecost)" at Floradale Mennonite Church, 7 p.m.

**April 21:** New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale promotion dinner at Bingeman Park Lodge, Kitchener. Guest speaker: Brandon Thiessen and MCC Burundi. Order tickets at 519-745-8458 or 1-800-313-6226.

**April 24:** Shalom Counselling Services Open House, 9 Avondale Ave. S., Waterloo, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. with dedication at 5:30 p.m.

**April 25-26:** Engaged Workshop at Living Water Fellowship, New Hamburg. Contact Denise or Barry Bender at [denise\\_bender@yahoo.com](mailto:denise_bender@yahoo.com).

**April 25-26 and May 2-3:** Rockway Mennonite Collegiate presents Disney's "High School Musical." For tickets call 519-342-0007 ext. 3012.

## Briefly noted

### Siberian Mennonite history conference planned for 2010

NOVOSIBIRSK, SIBERIA—The largely hidden story of Mennonites in Siberia will be explored in a conference slated for the spring of 2010 in Novosibirsk. The conference is being co-sponsored by the Russian Academy of Science and the University of Winnipeg (Chair in Mennonite Studies). Various Mennonite historical agencies in Canada and the United States, and some Mennonite *Aussiedler* groups in Germany, will participate as co-sponsors. Siberia holds a profoundly important place in Mennonite global history. It marked a place of frontier hope when the first of many voluntary farm settlements were established around Omsk and on the Kalundasteppe between 1897 and 1912. Then it became a place of unspeakable sorrow to which tens of thousands of Mennonites were exiled in the 1930s and '40s. Later, it became a place of hope again when it became apparent that, even in the face of communism, Mennonites had survived as an Anabaptist people. For more information, e-mail Royden Loewen, chair of the North American Committee for the Siberia Mennonite History Conference, at [r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca).

—University of Winnipeg Release



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/// **Classifieds**

**Reunion**

Southern Africa Reunion for alumni of Mennonite Central Committee and mission agencies who served in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe. July 25-27, 2008, Bethel College, North Newton, KS. Contact Norma Johnson, 316-283-4018.

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**See our web site at [www.sunybreeze.com](http://www.sunybreeze.com)**

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This position is accountable to the Director of National Programs of MCCC.

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

Applications will be considered until April 30, 2008.



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

Darryl Loewen, Principal  
Mennonite Collegiate Institute  
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Gretna, MB  
R0G 0V0  
[principal@mciblues.net](mailto:principal@mciblues.net)

Hague Mennonite Church is seeking a full-time **YOUTH PASTOR** to lead and disciple an active youth group of about 30. Hague, Sask., is a growing community located 50 km north of Saskatoon. For a job description and contact information, go to [www.134youth.com](http://www.134youth.com).

#### YOUTH PASTOR

Poole Mennonite Church, an active congregation with average attendance of about 170, is seeking a half-time youth pastor. We are a well-established, family friendly, rural congregation about 40 minutes from Kitchener/Waterloo, with an energetic youth program that has emphasized service and organized MDS service trips to the gulf coast the past 3 years.

See our website at [www2.cyg.net/~poolemen/](http://www2.cyg.net/~poolemen/) for a job description. Interested applicants please contact:

Muriel Bechtel,  
MCEC Conference Minister  
[muriel@mcec.ca](mailto:muriel@mcec.ca)  
1-800-206-9356

#### ASSOCIATE PASTOR POSITION

Mount Royal Mennonite Church – Saskatoon, SK  
Mount Royal Mennonite Church is inviting applications for the position of Associate Pastor. The Mount Royal congregation was established in 1963 and is one of several Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Saskatoon. The person(s) in this full time position will become part of a pastoral team with responsibilities particularly relating to ministry to youth in a multi-generational, multicultural congregation of about 250 members. Anabaptist faith orientation and training are strongly preferred. This person will have the skills, attitude, and vision to bring a leadership role to working with the Youth Ministry Team. Interested persons are invited to visit our website for a complete job description and to submit a resume to:

MRMC Associate Pastor Search Committee  
610 Avenue O North  
Saskatoon, Sask. S7L 2V3  
Or Attn. Len Andres at [lbandres@shaw.ca](mailto:lbandres@shaw.ca)  
[www.mount.sasktelwebsite.net](http://www.mount.sasktelwebsite.net)

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Hope Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, a congregation of about 60, worshipping in an inner city neighbourhood, is searching for a half-time **PASTOR** with duties to commence in September 2008. Hope seeks a candidate with suitable educational and leadership qualifications who is enthusiastic about working with an active membership in expressing a shared congregational vision and ministry. We are a member of Mennonite Church Manitoba and Mennonite Church Canada, and follow MC Canada salary guidelines. Application deadline: April 21, 2008.

Please direct requests for further information and/or a letter of application to:

Pastoral Search Committee  
c/o Bruce Guenther  
7-821 St. Paul Ave  
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OTTAWA MENNONITE CHURCH is inviting applications for an

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This is a full-time position, commencing in July 2008. Applications will be accepted until April 14, 2008.

Please direct applications and inquiries to:  
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phone: 613-733-6729

St. Catharines United Mennonite Church invites applications for an **ASSOCIATE/YOUTH PASTOR** (Full Time Position).

St. Catharines United Mennonite Church is committed, passionate and enthusiastic for Christ. We are in transition to a more contemporary style worship.

Our Purpose: Our missional aim is to reach youth and young families with the Good News of Jesus. We are looking for someone who can complement our pastoral team in providing leadership as we grow.

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Primary Focus would be: the development of the youth programs with the purpose of teaching, discipling and training youth for peer leadership, ministry to the body, and community outreach. Candidates should demonstrate a commitment and love for the Lord and His church and possess strong teaching, relational and leadership skills with youth. The Associate Pastor will be supported and nurtured under the mentorship of the Lead Pastor.

Please forward resumes by April 15, 2008 to:  
St. Catharines United Mennonite Church  
P.O. Box 20299  
St. Catharines, Ontario L2M 7W7  
Attention: Peter VandenBerg  
E-mail: [thevandenbergs@cogeco.ca](mailto:thevandenbergs@cogeco.ca)



Ten Thousand Villages is Canada's largest retailer of unique, fairly traded products from around the world, with 50 locations across the country. We are starting our search for a new Chief Executive Officer to help carry forward our mission to provide vital, fair income to artisans in developing countries. You will be highly skilled in managing people, finances and processes within a dynamic and complex retail environment. As our organization continues to experience rapid growth, we offer committed professionals the distinct opportunity to make a difference through Fair Trade.

As a program of Mennonite Central Committee, individuals considering employment with Ten Thousand Villages Canada should be able to exhibit a commitment to MCC's core values. This position is based out of New Hamburg, Ontario, Canada.

Interviews are likely to be held in late April – early May 2008. For further information, contact Hazel Douglas at our recruitment consultants, Oxford HR, [hdouglas@oxfordhr.co.uk](mailto:hdouglas@oxfordhr.co.uk) and [www.oxfordhr.co.uk](http://www.oxfordhr.co.uk)



Mennonite Collegiate Institute  
Gretna, MB

MCI is a provincially accredited independent Anabaptist Christian high school (Gr. 9-12) and a member of Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools & Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools. MCI emphasizes a strong academic program leading toward post-secondary studies, excellent athletic & fine arts programs and a residence program for approximately half of the student body.

MCI invites applications for a **COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR** for immediate hiring.

The Communications Director will be responsible for the development, presentation and circulation of communication media including website & electronic media, print and radio news or advertising, school event & programming news for an internal audience of students and parents, as well as an external audience of constituent churches & the public. Development of a broad referral network for admissions/enrolment purposes will also be central to the position.

The candidate will possess organizational, marketing and communications skills, and will be comfortable as an ambassador for the school in large & small group settings. The candidate will possess proficient oral and written communicator skills. Post secondary degree, training or experience in marketing and/or communications would be an asset.

All candidates must have an active faith & declare commitment to the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.

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

Darryl Loewen, Principal  
Mennonite Collegiate Institute  
Box 250  
Gretna, MB  
R0G 0V0  
[principal@mciblues.net](mailto:principal@mciblues.net)

# The importance of prayer

HINKE LOEWEN-RUDGERS

A big thank you to those who are part of Mennonite Church Canada's prayer ministry. Every month I have the opportunity to welcome to the MC Canada offices in Winnipeg several volunteers who make it possible for us to mail the monthly PrayerNet to prayer supporters around the world.

Jake and Anne Harms and a small group of friends have put together the monthly PrayerNet mailings for several years now.

Says Jake of the experience, "This venture not

*'The PrayerNet... inspires us to keep them in our minds and prayers.'*

only provides a pleasant outing for us as a group, it keeps us in touch with MC Canada staff members and makes us more keenly aware of our [Christian] Witness workers in the various countries and places in the world. The PrayerNet... inspires us to keep them in our minds and prayers.

Our volunteer work helps us to better understand the issues they face in their ministry, the efforts they expend in their work and how very important it is for them—and for us—to keep in contact with one another."

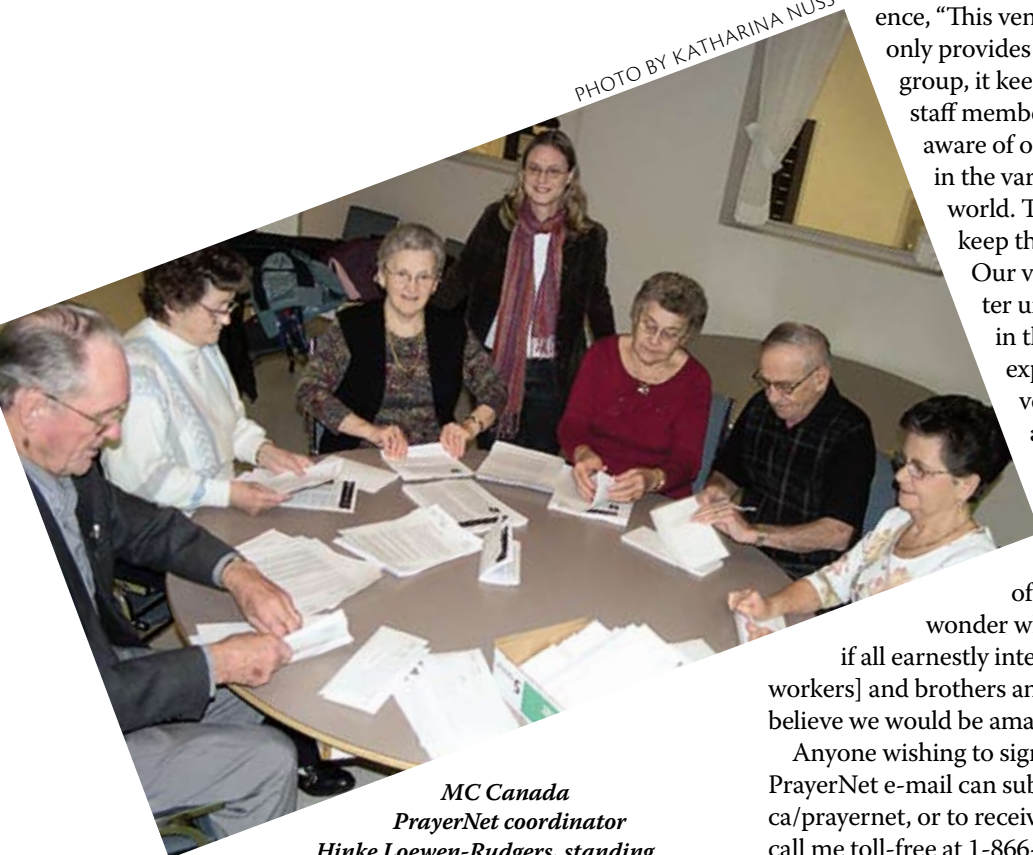
I recently received a letter from one of our prayer supporters, Peter A. Unger of Abbotsford, B.C. He writes, "I

wonder what a difference it would make if all earnestly interceded for our [international workers] and brothers and sisters around the world. I believe we would be amazed!"

Anyone wishing to sign up for the MC Canada PrayerNet e-mail can subscribe at [mennonitechurch.ca/prayernet](http://mennonitechurch.ca/prayernet), or to receive a printed version in the mail, call me toll-free at 1-866-888-6785 ext. 184.

*Hinke Loewen-Rudgers is coordinator of the MC Canada PrayerNet.*

PHOTO BY KATHARINA NUSS



**MC Canada  
PrayerNet coordinator  
Hinke Loewen-Rudgers, standing  
centre, appreciates the volunteers—from  
left to right, Jake Harms, Anne Harms,  
Tina Wiebe, Anne Funk G., Ike Guenther  
and Anni Funk—who help mail out the  
monthly prayer newsletter.**