

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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IS POSSIBLE

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Overcome evil with good

TIM MILLER DYCK
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

The international community has been wrestling with the question of moral responsibility when facing atrocity and evil for a long time. What do we do when faced with hundreds of thousands of dead in Rwanda in the mid-1990s and in the Darfur region of Sudan in the last few years?

It's been a real accomplishment just to have the question considered as seriously as it has been. During the Cold War years, western governments ignored or supported all kinds of vicious rulers as long as they were on "our side."

In this issue, we bring you an in-depth examination from a Mennonite perspective on what could become the biggest change to international law in this area since the prosecution of genocide and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights shortly after the end of the Second World War. That change is the idea of "Responsibility to Protect" or R2P (see pages 4-12). After the non-intervention in Rwanda and the NATO intervention in Kosovo (which included Canadian bombing flights) without a UN Security Council authorization, there was a strong push for some kind of international agreement on if, when and how genocide should be prevented.

It was Canada that stepped forward to address this need. In 2000, it was the Canadian government, along with a

group of foundations, that announced the establishment of the International Commission on Intervention and State

Sovereignty. This group was to come up with a new policy for the world to consider on how to respond to genocide and ethnic cleansing. That policy was the R2P principle, and it was passed by the Sept. 2005 summit of world leaders at the UN General Assembly and by the Security Council in April 2006.

How our larger society understands the moral implications of violence is an important topic for Mennonites to address. Just to agree that everyone has a moral responsibility to respond when the vulnerable are killed and abused by those more powerful is a great step forward towards God's vision of justice for the powerless.

Saying that everyone's life and dignity is worth protecting—not just the ones who are white or have oil or mineral wealth—lines up with Jesus' love and death for the whole world. Stating that there are more important moral principles than not interfering with other governments is in agreement with the church's view that it is more important to obey God's teachings than human law, if the two are in conflict.

I'm glad to see these things recognized in secular society, and I hope these principles are more influential in



the future than in the past, because of the Responsibility to Protect initiative. Nations of every kind have for too long ignored moral principle if it was in conflict with what they wanted to do.

But, as a church, we need to remember that before we are citizens of Canada or another country, we are first citizens of God's holy nation, "a people belonging to God," as I Peter 2:9 says. Our Confession of Faith states, "Even at its best, a government cannot act completely according to the justice of God because no nation, except the church, confesses Christ's rule as its foundation."

This is why it is not surprising to see that, in addition to many admirable statements, the R2P doctrine turns to violence as its final method of bringing about change. In any system that does not turn to Jesus as its ultimate example—the one who refused violence and harm to others through to his death—those that have more power will see it as right to kill others who disagree with them.

This is one of our particular Mennonite gifts to the world. Our belief that we will follow Christ in not using violence to get our way is so simple, so profound and so far-reaching. With this, so many sins of the church would have been avoided: no crusades, no killing of Jews or Muslims or Mennonites, no Inquisition. We cannot accomplish the goals of heaven using the tools of the world. Romans 12 tells us, "No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

There is much that we can and must do to prevent injustice and genocides, but more violence will never solve the problems of violence.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) delegations have recently visited Africa's Great Lakes region to meet with local peacebuilders and explore possibilities of CPT violence-reduction work in Uganda and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. See pages 4-12 for our feature interview with CPT's Gene Stoltzfus and others on the best way to protect vulnerable populations in this and other parts of the world.

PHOTO: CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAMS

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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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All subscribers can get the complete contents of *Canadian Mennonite* delivered free by e-mail or view selected articles online. For either option, visit our website at canadianmennonite.org. The April 28 issue will be posted by April 24.

Caring for the least of these

Four Mennonite responses to the controversial Responsibility to Protect doctrine in the light of Jesus' teachings

BY ROSS W. MUIR
Managing Editor

At a meeting of the UN General Assembly in 2005, heads of state and government agreed that, in the matter of the “responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity . . . [e]ach individual state has the responsibility to protect its populations” from such atrocities.

In the event that such states fail in their “responsibility to protect” their citizens, it was further agreed that “the international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with [the UN Charter] to help protect” these vulnerable populations.

However, “should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities manifestly fail to protect their populations,” the international leaders declared that they are “prepared to take collective action,” including armed intervention, to provide the necessary protection.

The decision was ratified by the UN Security Council in early 2006.

With the help of members of the Historic Peace Churches, the World Council of Churches (WCC) has been grappling with the concept of various forms of human intervention, including the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, for many years. The WCC released its own position statement on R2P in 2006. (*See sidebar on page 5*).

In an effort to help our readers understand and respond to this relatively new and controversial concept, *Canadian Mennonite* asked two North American peace activists and a scholar, and an African member of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) executive for their perspectives on R2P:

Any pacifist Christian who has not struggled deeply with the force of the argument that love of neighbour implies a responsibility to protect—with violence if necessary—is morally obtuse.
(Ted Koontz)



“Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. . . . We accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it. . . .”
(Commission report, UN World Summit 2005)



• **Ernie Regehr** is a co-founder and former director of Project Ploughshares, an agency of the Canadian Council of

Churches and supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). He is a former commissioner of the WCC Commission on International Affairs and helped draft the WCC position statement on R2P.



• **Gene Stoltzfus** is a founding director of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), having served from 1988-2004.

CPT trains and places violence-reduction teams in such high-conflict situations as Iraq, the West Bank/Israel, Colombia and various aboriginal communities in Canada and the U.S.



• **Ted Koontz** is director of peace and justice studies and professor of ethics and peace studies at Associated Mennonite

Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.; he was also a pastor in Oklahoma in the 1960s and executive secretary of the MCC Peace Section in the 1970s.



• **Pakisa Tshimika** is associate general secretary of MWC. A Congolese expatriate, he currently lives in Fresno, Calif. In 2005,

his report of a trip back to his homeland was featured in the Oct. 17 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* (“The forgotten emergency”).

Canadian Mennonite: What is the relation between R2P and Christian pacifism? Are the concepts in line with one another, at opposite ends of the spectrum, or somewhere in the middle?

Ernie Regehr: Protecting the vulnerable from violence is clearly a primary concern and objective of Christian pacifists and the emerging R2P doctrine is a welcome move by the international community towards better pursuing that same objective. The commitment to the use of “peaceful means” is at the core of the R2P doctrine. Under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, international protective action is carried out with the consent of the host government to pursue social,

economic and human rights measures designed to prevent social and political disintegration to the point of extreme violence.

In instances of extreme violence, nation-states said in 2005 that they are “prepared to take collective action” under Chapter VII of the Charter on a “case-by-case basis.”

Chapter VII authorizes intervention and the over-riding of national sovereignty when international peace and security are threatened, and the R2P doctrine now says that national sovereignty can also be set aside by force in a country in which the people are in extreme peril.

The language linked to the resort to force

World Council of Churches position statement on the Responsibility to Protect doctrine

The 2006 WCC statement reads in part:

“In calling on the international community to come to the aid of vulnerable people in extraordinary suffering and peril, the fellowship of churches is not prepared to say that it is never appropriate or never necessary to resort to the use of force for the protection of the vulnerable. . . .

“[T]he objective must be the welfare of people, especially those in situations of extreme vulnerability and who are utterly abandoned to the whims and prerogatives of their tormentors. . . .

“The resort to force is first and foremost the result of the failure to prevent what could have been prevented with appropriate foresight and actions, but having failed, and having acknowledged such failure, the world needs to do what it can to limit the burden and peril that is experienced by people as a consequence. Just as individuals and communities in stable and affluent societies are able in emergencies to call on armed police to come to their aid when they experience unusual or extraordinary threats of violence, churches recognize that people in much more perilous circumstances should have the right to call for and have access to protection.”

is more circumspect than that applied to peaceful means, but the principle is clear. Although the primary obligation is to use non-military means to protect people, when peaceful means fail to protect the vulnerable it is not acceptable to simply abandon them to their tormentors.

The responsibility of pacifists is not met when they themselves refuse to participate in violent acts. A strong and compelling stand against violence must also include the commitment to try to ensure that vulnerable people are also protected from the violence of others. Pacifists should, therefore, welcome the international community's recogni-

not help but see the pain and grief in their faces. I could also see the sense of frustration because those who were supposed to protect them are also among the perpetrators.

In Kinshasa [the capital city], I heard the same sense of frustration because many political leaders felt that those from the international community—who are supposed to assist them with mediation and non-military humanitarian intervention—are also the nations fuelling the war for economic gains.

Unfortunately, greed for Congolese natural resources is one of the factors fuelling the war. No one is exempt

to take coercive—and, in particular, military—action against another state for the purpose of protecting people at risk in that other state?”

Christian pacifism, on the other hand, is defined by Wikipedia as “the theological and ethical position that any form of violence is incompatible with the Christian faith.” It goes on to state that such a view is a minority one, yet it represents a large perspective within Historic Peace Churches such as our own Anabaptist family. We draw our foundation on our belief that Jesus was a pacifist. He lived and practised pacifism and he calls his disciples to do the same

[T]he R2P doctrine ...acknowledges that the responsibility to protect people in peril does not end when those peaceful means fail. (Ernie Regehr)



tion that it has a collective obligation to protect the vulnerable from violence, and should be active in holding the international community to account on that obligation.

So far, the R2P doctrine is a welcome commitment made in principle, but Darfur, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, among other places of extraordinary horror, still stand as damning testimony to the fact that the international community has yet to find either the will or the way to consistently act on its commitment.

Pakisa Tshimika: I just came back from the Democratic Republic of Congo, a country destroyed by several years of civil wars and invasion by neighbouring countries. In meeting with women who are the most affected by war and greed, I heard over and over, “Please, *you* help us get rid of those monsters killing us and destroying our future and that of our children.”

Many of what they called monsters are Congolese and others from neighbouring countries terrorizing women and communities, especially in the eastern part of the country.

As I listened to these women, I could

from participating in what is going on in Congo. Anyone using a cell phone is contributing indirectly to the misery of the Congolese people because a high percentage of [the mineral] coltan used in cell phones comes from Congo. It is being taken from Congo through the neighbouring countries to be sold on the world market, not to mention diamonds, gold, timber, uranium and many other natural resources.

When I asked the question regarding what the women meant by *you* in helping them get rid of the monsters, in more cases than not, their answer was without hesitation those people in the U.S., Europe, Canada and Kinshasa who are buying the goods that are supporting the conflict in Congo.

So as I reflect on the UN Responsibility to Protect, and the historical pacifist stand and response to Africa of the Anabaptist family, I view both approaches through those eyes and not just from sitting in my comfortable bed in Fresno, Calif.

As far as the relationship between R2P and Christian pacifism is concerned, it is first a question of definition. R2P was developed to answer the question, “When, if ever, is it appropriate for states

thing. Therefore, the creation of CPT by Ron Sider and other Anabaptists is that expression of obedience to Christ’s teaching.

I believe that at the heart of both of these two approaches is the desire to protect human lives, which Anabaptists believe to be sacred and created in God’s image. If the differences between both of them seem to be so clear in terms of their theoretical perspective, I am not convinced that they are so in practice. These approaches are both driven by economics and the colour of skins. In Africa, the intervention by both camps usually comes when thousands, or millions, have already died. I believe the two approaches tend to meet at the centre of the spectrum and the relationship is not as linear as we might think. It might even be circular.

Gene Stoltzfus: R2P sets a new standard for intervention and protection for civilians when a state cannot, or will not, protect its people. On the political level, this doctrine is intended to provide legitimacy for well-behaved nations to intervene in places like Darfur, Palestine or Zimbabwe, where civil order and human rights are flagrantly violated.

At the root of this discussion, though, is our understanding about how violence is overcome. The habits of making things come out right by means of armed intervention reach back to the founding of organized warfare in the land of Iraq 5,000 years ago. In fact, the premier symbol of nationhood and empire is the military. Nations and empires turn to their soldiers because there is nothing else available that they think works. Governments generally resist change and think short-term. But breaking our habits of turning to military models for solutions requires generations of effort and experiments at all levels.

The hope that violence can be held in check and perhaps melted by non-violent means is good news to a lot of people. "Where have you been all these years?" shouted an Afghani activist when I first met him.

However, it's a bothersome nuisance for those who are stuck in old ways. The growth and success of conflict transformation initiatives should not surprise us. But it often does. In our weaker moments, all of us are tempted to submit to the superstitions about the effectiveness of violence and the use of force that surround us.

Christians of all shades might agree that they have a responsibility to protect and minister to the vulnerable. Certainly, an armed international peace force is a better answer than unilateral "great power intervention." Interestingly, though, this R2P doctrine comes at a time when Mennonite ministries in conflict transformation and peacemaking rooted in biblical pacifism enjoy attention worldwide. I regard R2P as a wake-up call for Mennonites.

Ted Koontz: There can be no doubt that Christians have a responsibility to protect neighbours and enemies whose lives are threatened. When it is possible—and often it is not practically possible, as we are not God and cannot stop all evil, even all egregious evil—we clearly have a responsibility to help such people escape the dangers they face.

We do this through hosting refugees; advocating changes in immigration

policies; providing material assistance to deal with hunger, disease, lack of shelter, etc.; urging governmental and international bodies to apply pressures to stop genocide and create just political processes; intervening CPT-style, with "grandmothers carrying pies and cookies, instead of with soldiers carrying weapons"; and publicizing the plight of those who are suffering. The list of possible nonviolent ways to take up our responsibility to protect is long indeed.

But there are good reasons for Mennonites and others committed to the nonviolent way of Jesus to be sceptical

about recent claims that we have a responsibility to protect people who are victims of violence, even genocide. This is because the R2P doctrine is really the newest guise under which those seeking a Christian justification for shedding blood are hiding.

CM: *Is R2P the thin edge of the wedge for giving credence to a Just War theology?*

(See "Just what is a Just War?" below.)

If so, what are the ramifications for those who hold to a strict pacifism? If not, how are the two distinct?

Koontz: Of course, the nonviolent means

MENNONITE REPORTER ARCHIVES PHOTO BY ALLAN SIEBERT



With the help of an overhead projector and rigorous logic, John Howard Yoder explains the presuppositions that underpin the concept of a Just War. Yoder believed that the Just War theory does not take seriously the call of Jesus Christ. The photo was taken at the 1984 peace seminar at Strawberry Creek Lodge in Alberta.

Just what is a Just War?

According to "Overcoming Violence: WCC statements and actions 1994-2000," there are six criteria nation-states must meet in order to enter into what is termed a Just War:

1. There must be a just cause.
2. The aims of the war must follow a just intent, such as the pursuit of a just peace.
3. War must be a last resort.
4. War can be made only by legitimate authority, such as a sovereign government or competent international body.
5. There must be a reasonable prospect of success.
6. War must honour the principle of discrimination, requiring non-combatant or civilian immunity, and avoiding massacres, atrocities, looting or wanton violence; and violence applied in war must be restrained by the principle of proportionality.

I mentioned in answering the first question might not work and the violence against victims might continue. Violence to stop violence frequently fails also, although this is seldom noted in arguments that favour violence to stop violence. Because nonviolence might not work, many Christians advocate a responsibility to protect, by which they mean supporting intervening military violence to stop the existing violence.

Put another way, they argue we have more than one neighbour and we are to love them all. But one group of our neighbours is massacring another group of our neighbours. Doesn't our love of the neighbours who are being massacred require us to stop the massacring neighbours, even if this requires us to kill the "bad" neighbours? Failing to do so would amount to a perverse moral preference for the lives of guilty over the lives of the innocent.

This is a powerful argument for Just

War and against pacifism. But it is by no means a new argument. I cannot make the case for pacifism against this argument here, but Christian pacifist arguments against accepting a responsibility to protect through military interventions on behalf of those suffering great violence are just as strong—or just as weak—as they have been from the time of Christ. Nothing essential has changed, as a bit of history will show.

After several centuries during which Christians were largely pacifist, perspectives changed after the first "Christian" emperor, Constantine. Christian Just War theory originated with Augustine. He argued that he should not fight back if he was personally attacked, but that he should fight to protect others if they were with him. It was on the basis of this love of neighbour that Augustine counselled Christian emperors that they had a responsibility to protect, with violence if necessary, innocent neighbours from

guilty neighbours—or enemies.

The major challenges to pacifism in the last century have all had this same underlying shape, although with different guises:

- *World War II*: Was there not a moral responsibility—based on love of neighbour—to protect through war the innocent victims of Japanese and German slaughter?
- *Revolution*: Is there not a responsibility to protect innocent victims of violent international and national political/economic systems through violence when other means fail? For example, the ongoing situation in Colombia?
- *So-called "humanitarian" interventions*: Should we not support, or participate in, military interventions to save Somalis from chaos and starvation or Rwandans from genocide?

At the heart of Christian arguments for these and other "just wars" is the notion that love of neighbour implies a responsibility to protect, violently if necessary.

In defence of mothers and sisters

What happened when Russian Mennonites thought they had a responsibility to protect themselves

BY HENRY NEUFELD

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

The ultimate test of nonresistance for Mennonites in Russia occurred during the Bolshevik Revolution. Non-resistance seemed ludicrous to many in the face of mounting violence, but the armed Mennonite resistance reflected a bankruptcy in Mennonite peace theology, according to historian John Toews.

The Russian government had collapsed, the army disintegrated and was fighting amongst itself, and there was no police force—a situation ripe for criminal gangs and would-be warlords wanting to seize power. In that situation in Ukraine from 1918-20, armed gangs came and took whatever they wanted, murdering and raping in the process, Toews says.

A retired history professor (University of Calgary and Regent College, Vancouver), Toews says that when Mennonites found themselves in that chaotic

situation, some decided to resist. They formed an armed militia, the *Selbstschutz* (Self-Defence Unit), whose purpose was to protect, not to fight. Gradually, though, the *Selbstschutz* moved from being protectors to engaging in armed conflict.

In considering armed self-defence, Mennonite church leaders debated the idea. They affirmed the nonresistance principle, but allowed individuals to disagree and follow their own conscience. "A key element of the Mennonite confession of faith was declared optional," says Toews.

In the self-contained and self-governing Mennonite villages of Ukraine the line between government and church was unclear, blurring the interests of church and state. "The Mennonites had made a decision—allowing individuals to join the *Selbstschutz*—and the Mennonite Church is debating its theology of non-resistance when, in fact, it is already compromised," Toews says of the situation.

He does not fully blame the Mennonite pastors, many of whom lacked theological training. They were influenced by German evangelists, whose preaching and teaching brought renewal to the soul along with overtones of German nationalism.

Initially, the self-defence idea seemed logical, as villages were threatened and self-defence was very different from actual participation in war, and protecting family and home was a fundamental duty. Mennonites

Regehr: R2P is not based on Just War theology. If there is a theology behind R2P, it is that all people the world over are children of the same Creator and are called to look after one another. The challenge we face is to find the way and will to consistently and effectively obey that call. Because we often collectively fail to effectively use the peaceful means available to prevent the perpetration of extreme violence against vulnerable people—in fact, our collective failure is regular and egregious—we cannot avoid the challenge of figuring out how to protect people in extreme peril when all prevention has failed.

The R2P doctrine unambiguously calls for the resort to force when peaceful means fail, but it does not propose war. In fact, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), the Canadian-sponsored study whose report set out the basic elements of the R2P doctrine, specifically said that

the resort to force to protect the vulnerable “is not a war to defeat a state, but an operation to protect populations in that state from being harassed, persecuted or killed.”

Thus, the commission says, “this means accepting limitations [on the use of force] and demonstrating . . . the use of restraint.” The commission then says that while such restraint “is a clear violation of the principles which govern war operations, one has to keep in mind that operations to protect are operations other than war.”

The R2P doctrine, as adopted by the UN, does not elaborate criteria for the resort to force, except that the international resort to force to protect the vulnerable is to be reserved for the most extreme cases—that is, genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The ICISS report refers to these conditions as the “just cause threshold”—not in relation to a Just War, but in defining

the conditions that oblige international action, up to and including the restrained use of force in line with what others have called a “just policing” model.

Not all resort to force is the resort to war, even when military forces are involved. The ICISS report lists a number of “precautionary principles” that echo Just War criteria in order to condition the resort to force—namely, right intention, last resort, proportional means, reasonable prospect and right authority, although these are not included in the UN version of R2P.

The obligation to protect vulnerable people—for example, women in Somalia, Darfur or Rwanda, who are subject to systematic and serial rape—is not a slippery slope leading to the justification of war. It is the commitment to come to the aid of victims of extreme violence even when there is no obvious way to do that effectively and even if it means the collective resort to force.

MENNONITE REPORTER ARCHIVES PHOTO



A detachment of armed Mennonite soldiers serving in the Selbstschutz (Self-Defence Unit) of southern Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution in the early part of the last century. They were led by German officers (standing centre).

were seduced into fighting with the “White” Russian army against the “Red” Russians. The Red Army was victorious and consequences began to be felt in Mennonite villages.

The Mennonite foray into militarism came to an ignoble end, Toews reports. Some members of the self-defence group were tried and executed by a military tribunal in Melitopol. Mennonite villages were attacked, people massacred and village buildings were burned—retaliation for armed Mennonite activity.

Toews says the Mennonites finally did what they should have done all along—they organized a prayer meeting and prayed for forgiveness. In times of crisis, he says the interests of the state tend to triumph over the church.

Toews notes that *Selbstschutz* advocates lacked a long-term perspective; to them, non-resistance in the

face of growing violence directed at families, women and children seemed ludicrous. The position of self-defence also reflected a bankrupt theology, so, when faced with violent evil to person and property, the historic peace position seemed an abstract principle.

Toews cautions that 21st century Mennonites not judge their ancestors too harshly. “Like us, they lacked a theology of the suffering church,” he says. For Mennonites in Ukraine, life was comfortable, perhaps too comfortable, he says, drawing parallels with Canadian society today—so they had to learn to become a suffering church.

Henry Neufeld is the MC B.C. representative on the Canadian Mennonite board of directors.

Even though one might “hold to a strict pacifism,” the responsibility to protect is still present when nonviolent means fail. It is important to recognize that a refusal by governments to act in such instances also produces what might callously be called “collateral damage.” The rejection of the resort to force of any kind and in all circumstances, even when there is a reasonable prospect that such intervention would save lives and give some measure of protection to vulnerable people, also has victims.

Tshimika: In February, I asked a woman in eastern Congo what she thought about the UN peacekeepers assisting the Congolese government in launching a major offensive in order to free the region, keeping in mind that many civilians will perish in the process.

“We are already dying now,” she said. “What we want is to preserve our children and the future of this region and the country.”

I don’t think she was thinking in terms of just or unjust. That is a luxury for many of us who are not being oppressed, or being killed, on a daily basis. I wondered from her response if I was not naïve to think that everybody understands the language of pacifism when they have chosen not to take arms. The Congolese experience is showing me that extreme pacifism does not assist countries like Congo or Zimbabwe in dealing with the issues of violence that destroy lives. The paradox in our [Anabaptist] witness is that we are usually the first ones to leave areas of unrest and make declarations once in safe places.

Stoltzfus: A thread of humility helps as we face the actual conditions in the field. None of us who name the name of Christ have invented the perfect path to overcoming violence with love. All of us who strive to create official or private initiatives of violence-reduction, at some point cooperate with armed groups and police—sometimes with some success, often with disappointing results. I have yet to meet an armed group, government or otherwise, that doesn’t at some point abuse its power or become destructive in



The launch of a weapons exchange program in Walungu, Democratic Republic of Congo, brought out a large crowd, including representatives of the country’s military and police forces. The program was initiated in part by the non-governmental organization Mama Makeka House of Hope, of which Pakisa Tshimika is executive director.

the pursuit of just goals.

“What if Hitler had not been stopped?” is the popular question. The what ifs of history surround us. But I ask, “What if Christians had taken the generic New Testament teachings of peacemaking literally and refused to join Hitler’s armies? What if Christians had refused to participate in slavery and the plantation system before the American civil war?”

Christians around the world—with the exception of some in the U. S.—reflected more unity in opposition to the war in Iraq than Christians may have had in many centuries of wars. Some of this opposition resulted from serious engagement with the Bible, some from practical local experience with war and violence in the last century, and some opposition arose from a worldwide renaissance of interest in the gospel of peace.

This renewed interest is a sign of enormous opportunity to deepen our faith in the good news of peace and organize ourselves to turn back violence in places where people are not protected. This is not the time to negotiate away five centuries of Mennonite pacifism.

CM: *If nation-states have a responsibility to protect the citizens of other countries whose governments can’t—or won’t—protect them after hostilities have begun (as the WCC espouses), don’t people within these countries have a legitimate claim to ask these same nation-states to accept a “responsibility to prevent” such horrific situations before they begin? If so, don’t such “pre-emptive strikes” come close to*

the concept of a Just War? If they don’t have the right to make such a claim, why not?

Tshimika: As a public health professional, I always believe that prevention is better than cure. There are not many situations that require intervention where one would say they were not predictable. The situations in Somalia, Congo and Rwanda were predictable, but these situations were just ignored by those who should have assisted in preventing them.

It’s a question of all the parties involved to recognize that their respective destinies are tied to each other. It is like Martin Luther King Jr. suggested when he said we must learn to live together or we will all perish like fools.

Koontz: Yes, we should press governments to “prevent” genocides before they begin. But no, we should not press governments to undertake “preemptive military strikes.”

Regehr: Any action to protect people of other states that involves military coercion must be carried out collectively on the basis of Security Council authorization and according to the UN Charter. It is not individual states, acting on their own authority, that have

the responsibility to protect; rather, the responsibility is that of the international community collectively.

The requirement that collective action be authorized by the UN Security Council—the right authority criterion—is both a safeguard and a major problem. The fact that all five permanent members of the Security Council must agree before an intervention has the authority of the council helps to guard against reckless interventions, but that same requirement for unanimity frequently means inaction, even in the face of extreme violence, as in Rwanda in the mid-1990s and in Sudan today.

No part of the R2P mandate authorizes the resort to force in a relatively stable situation for the purposes of preventing future chaos. The resort to force comes into play when “genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” are already present or are imminent and apparently unavoidable—in other words, when prevention has demonstrably failed.



It would certainly be possible to make a theoretical case for military pre-emption to prevent extreme suffering, but there is virtually no possibility that such a pre-emptive action would gain Security Council approval.

The overwhelming response of the international community is caution and reluctance to intervene—and the women and children of Darfur, Somalia and Congo pay a heavy price for our caution.

Stoltzfus: Forty years ago I renewed my Anabaptist baptismal vows after five years as a civilian in the Vietnam War. I did so because I believed that the place to start peacemaking was from a people and faith position that would not kill other people or use armed force.

Years later, when I participated in the founding of CPT, I regarded this position to be not only a doctrinal guideline but a strategic advantage in the development of workers and programs. Over the years my thinking unfolded from the negative stance of not killing to more Christ-inspired experiments in nonviolence. Despite occasional periods of isolation and capitulation to violence, I now regard the Mennonite experience of 500 years of peace-living built on Jesus to be an important—and perhaps even crucial—gift in a world teetering on the brink of self-destruction.

An example from the CPT team experience in Colombia illustrates this. When I was visiting there a call for a presence of protection came from a remote village where conflict had broken out between armed groups allied to the government and to underground forces. By the time Scott Kerr, an experienced CPT member, and I reached the village, more than half the people had fled and the firefight was temporarily over. When

armed group arrived and were similarly encouraged to respect the local people.

I believe our presence may have saved lives, property and affected the future of the community. An armed presence of protection may have been less effective in this situation. Additionally, in the long-term an unarmed presence creates space for people to make decisions about their own lives, whereas an armed presence forces compliance and awakens hidden hatred.

CM: For the sake of the oppressed in places like Darfur, Somalia and Congo, do you think Mennonites should embrace the R2P doctrine, however reluctantly, as maybe making the best of a bad situation? If not, what other options are there?

Regehr: Yes, Mennonites should most assuredly embrace the R2P doctrine—but not reluctantly.

Our tradition embodies an extraordinary commitment to aiding the vulnerable and we should welcome the 2005 UN Summit commitment by states col-

Despite occasional periods of isolation and capitulation to violence, I now regard the Mennonite experience of 500 years of peace-living built on Jesus to be an important—and perhaps even crucial—gift in a world teetering on the brink of self-destruction. (Gene Stoltzfus)

we arrived, we saw blood. Those who remained were terrorized because they knew that both sides would return and charge individuals in the community with collaboration, with the possibility of further executions.

Indeed, one armed group returned to the village two hours later and began conducting house-to-house searches while their commander sat down with us. My experienced partner talked to him softly and firmly, requesting that his soldiers not enter houses because visiting homes would make the occupants targets of his enemy.

Within minutes, the commander ordered soldiers to stop and within an hour his 30-soldier unit moved out. Later in the day, representatives from the other

lectively “to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means” to try to protect the vulnerable. Our tradition also counsels a deep wariness of the resort to force—and we should continue to be guided by that wariness.

But when the choice is between military intervention modelled on responsible police action that has a reasonable chance of saving lives and protecting people from heinous crimes, on the one hand, and the abandonment of communities to genocide and women and children to such heinous crimes, on the other, then it is not the theology of Just War that should compel us to call on responsible state authorities to protect those subject to extreme and ongoing violence, availing themselves of the

means of restrained force if necessary. That call should come from the theology of a common humanity and a spirit of forbearance.

Of course, there can never be any guarantee that such intervention will be successful. Indeed, in circumstances of extreme lawlessness and endemic violence, there is always the chance that forced intervention will make the situation worse. Therefore, both the methodology

Stoltzfus: Our words are only completed with our actions. Billions of people are now calling out to all Christians—and to us specifically. This is the moment to remember who Mennonites are and how we do things. This is the time to multiply our peacemaking and conflict transformation efforts, maybe by thousands, and invite people of the Spirit everywhere to join in.

If Christians, including Mennonites,

the Spirit has chosen to plant within us, this century will really be different. The children of lions and lambs will truly play together.

Tshimika: I don't think Mennonites should embrace either one of these extremes.

Mennonite World Conference, which brings together all the Mennonites and Brethren in Christ from around the world, sees itself as a "community," which means that our goal is to seek for ways that best express our greater sense of belonging following the example of Jesus Christ. Jesus was not an extremist. He met people where they were.

I know that we are far from being a perfect community, but we should continue to challenge each other to make a reality of Paul's teaching to the Ephesians that we are no longer foreigners or aliens to each other. When that becomes a reality, then and only then will we walk side by side with each other to make a difference in the countries where we are present.

We must strive to promote peace and justice not only in theory—or because that was the way of the 16th century—but because it is the right thing to do in our time. ☸

The paradox in our [Anabaptist] witness is that we are usually the first ones to leave areas of unrest and make declarations once in safe places. (Pakisa Tshimika)

of force and the circumstances in which it is used must be carefully assessed to weigh the risks and the possible benefits of intervention. If such assessment concludes that forced intervention has a reasonable chance of saving many lives that would otherwise be abandoned, we obviously cannot counsel abandonment.

It is the mission and vocation of pacifists to redouble our efforts towards the peaceful prevention of genocide and other horrific crimes against vulnerable people, but when prevention fails nation-states have a responsibility to act. The international community's affirmation, through the UN, of that responsibility is welcome. The next step is to ensure the world goes beyond affirmation to timely action.

Koontz: As I stated earlier, the recent argument for R2P is really just the newest shape of the argument against pacifism. This is not to say it is a weak argument. Any pacifist Christian who has not struggled deeply with the force of the argument that love of neighbour implies a responsibility to protect—with violence if necessary—is morally obtuse.

But this form of the argument is no more right than the other forms of it were when they were used against our pacifist forebears. If we now find it more persuasive, it is likely because we are more wealthy and influential—powerful—than most generations of Mennonites before us. We are in our own Constantinian shift.

can't figure out a way to do better, we must admit that an armed interventionist group is the answer and we may have to get behind it with money, people and organization. However, this will mean putting off finding alternatives to blood-letting and war for another generation.

This is a time of enormous opportunity. This is our time to overcome our caution and compromise. The spirit has given us wide margins of grace. If one million Mennonites and their friends now in every corner of the globe got behind the peacemaking dream that

☸ For discussion

1. Are there situations in our families and communities when we use force to provide protection? Under what conditions would you inform authorities that a neighbour's child needed protection?
2. How effective is violence or the use of force in providing protection? Do you agree with Koontz that "violence to stop violence frequently fails" (page 8)? Was the Mennonite *Selbstschutz* (Self-Defence Unit) able to protect Mennonite women and children?
3. Regehr declares that the R2P doctrine is not based on Just War theology (page 9), while Koontz says it is (pages 7-8). Which argument do you find more convincing?
4. How should the Mennonite Church respond to the World Council of Churches' position on the Responsibility to Protect doctrine (page 5)?

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 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.

✉ Enlightenment philosopher not an individualist ideologue

SCOTT BRUBAKER-ZEHR'S FEATURE article ("Dying and rising: The church through the eyes of Paul," Feb. 18, page 4) is timely in that he calls us to remember that Christ's ways are not our ways. Alas, Brubaker-Zehr's criticism of philosopher John Locke does not stand up to scrutiny. It is important to know the people of the Enlightenment better, because they sought to implement valuable ideas and modelled attitudes beneficial for us today.

Locke saw monarchs who claimed divine right as a threat to individuals' right to life and property. But Locke was far from believing that individuals were the fundamental sociological reality. God, Locke says, did not make humans to live and act alone, but to seek out and enter into society. His fundamental argument is developed in "The Second Treatise of Government," in

FROM OUR LEADERS

Still learning to be a missional church

MARV BAERGEN

As I come to the end of my time with Mennonite Church Canada, I am so very thankful to God and to the church for the opportunities for service that I have been given.

For the past five years I have had the privilege of working with Mennonite Church Alberta and its leaders in the area of missional formation and congregational partnerships. These have been times of tremendous change as MC Canada and MC USA reshaped their structural identities and developed their respective visions for ministry "across the street and around the world."

It has been exciting to walk alongside congregations as they transferred their "name brand" loyalty from our beloved Commission on Overseas Mission in the former General Conference structure to the new MC Canada Witness.

Highlights include several formal celebrations of international mission complete with banquets prepared by newcomer groups. In the past year, the African community at Holyrood Mennonite Church helped celebrate

that congregation's partnership with Norm and Lillian Nicolson in Burkina Faso. Earlier, the Word of Life (Hispanic) congregation at Calgary co-hosted a celebration of mission in South America; Lao Community Mennonite Church in Calgary co-hosted a celebration of mission in southeast Asia; and the Korean contingent within Trinity Mennonite Church prepared the meal to celebrate that congregation's new partnership with



Learning what it means to become a missional church . . . is an ongoing challenge.

Jesus Village Church in South Korea.

It was both humbling and gratifying to find ways of connecting our newcomer groups with our predominantly Caucasian congregations and, in turn, linking them to international ministry.

Having a small part in planning and hosting the IMPaCT gathering in Alberta last year was another highlight. It was truly a work of the Holy Spirit to observe how quickly pastors from three different continents came together in spirit,

worship and fellowship. I will never forget our times of praying together.

Helping link congregations with Witness workers on North American assignment—and often then helping them formalize mission partnerships with these workers—has been exciting and rewarding. More recently, there has been significant interest expressed by congregations wanting to partner directly with other Mennonite congregations around the globe. This represents yet another step in the direction of truly becoming a global church.

Learning what it means to become a missional church "across the street" as

well as "around the world" is an ongoing challenge. We still have much to learn, as individuals and congregations, about how to best proclaim God's good news in our daily lives. It helps to be reminded of Jesus' parables of mustard seed and yeast. God is the author of mission and he can bless even our smallest and apparently insignificant efforts.

Marv Baergen is just finishing his job as MC Canada Witness missional formation and congregational partnership facilitator with MC Alberta.

which he argues that people can best guard their natural freedom and enjoy equal rights when they form a political covenant with one another. Political society begins where everybody gives up their individual rights and consents with others to make a body politic. That body is a community with the power to act as one body, and everyone is bound by the majority decisions of the body. When government violates human rights and freedoms, the people can dismiss it through regular elections, but the life of society continues.

In his "Essay Concerning Toleration," Locke recognized the rights of individual conscience in religion.

Beliefs about salvation, he wrote, cannot be forced by the government, but are formed by the voluntary and secret choice of the mind. But Locke limits religious freedom, saying that the good of the commonwealth prevails over individual choices.

The writings of Locke had a tremendous influence on continental philosophers and rulers. Joseph II of the Habsburg monarchy and his peer, Frederick II of Prussia, used society's tool, the state, to relieve the oppressions of the common people. Both introduced a limited religious toleration, ended the use of torture in the judiciary, and sought to relieve the sufferings

OUTSIDE THE BOX

The new energy crisis

PHIL WAGLER

Slightly northwest of my home near thawing Lake Huron stands a mammoth windmill. This attempt at the greening of our energy needs was raised skyward a couple years ago, but has yet to work. It just sits there, towering over cattle that seem as baffled by this overgrown propeller Popsicle as the rest of us.

This recent move to harness the wind seems like the "Wal-Marting" of the old mom and pop windmills that occupied a space on many farms for generations. The problem with this particular megaton man-toy is that, apparently, no one thought through how it might connect to the grid. So there it stands, monumental and motionless, a reminder that we're still trying to figure things out.

There are parallel realities facing this new energy crisis and the forms of church life we know. Our fast-moving, power-sucking culture is being forced to figure out new ways and forms. This is good, but it will take time. Furthermore, there appears to be a rediscovery of what the ancients already knew—hence, windmills.

In our churches an equally profound and confounding shift is taking place. Much church life these days seems disappointing, frustrating and tired. A few generations ago we, in the words of

the late British prime minister Winston Churchill, shaped our buildings and then they shaped us. Many of the forms we have relied on for passing on the faith are burning us out, sucking us dry, and lack signs of life transformation. One generation can't figure out why no one will step up and another can't understand why anyone would want to. Much of what we're doing is proving unsustainable for a new world where the church is increasingly on the margins. The church has its



Many of our forms keep us busy but really don't form radically obedient disciples of Jesus. . . .

own energy crisis. Allow me to propose a blueprint for moving forward:

- **First, we must rediscover the gospel and the Holy Spirit.** Jesus and his good news do not change. He, his cross, his kingdom and the breath of the Spirit are our true energy. We are not going to program or politically manoeuvre our way out of this. We need a miracle!

- **Second, we must resist the temptation to over-reliance on what we know.** No forms will ever adequately contain the power of God. In fact, they might hinder it once we entrench them and become blind to the fact that they're no longer hooked to the grid.

- **Third, at the heart of every form**

(program, gathering, household and life) must be disciple-making. If we aren't making disciples, we're not being disciples. Many of our forms keep us busy but really don't form radically obedient disciples of Jesus who have picked up their crosses to follow him and usher in the kingdom wherever they go.

- **Fourth, we must learn from ancients and currents.** Most of what we're frustrated with has been found wanting previously and renewal has always come from those able to harness the wind for a new day. We can gain courage and creativity by looking back and by being students of current fresh movements of the Spirit, which are often found where we're not looking.

- **Fifth, we must remember that God's**

focus is people. Our forms should serve people, people shouldn't serve forms. God loves people and uses forms; we must be wary of loving forms and using people.

- **Sixth, we must return to our knees.** It is pathetic how much of what we do is done with nothing more than token prayer. Having erected our forms with our hands, we rarely call on God to stretch out his. No wonder we have an energy crisis.

Phil Wagler is a pastor of the Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite & Kingsfield-Clinton congregations. (phil_wagler@yahoo.ca).

of the peasants.

Although the roots of contemporary individualism can be found in the 18th century, Locke and the rulers he influenced had a stronger commitment to the welfare of the larger community than they did to individualism.

JOHN KLASSEN, LANGLEY, B.C.

John Klassen is professor emeritus in Trinity Western University's history department.

✉ Preaching rightly done is 'expository exultation'

TOM LONG'S CONCERNS about preaching are timely and pertinent ("Breaking the habits of defective sermons," Feb. 18, page 15). John Piper, in his book *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, calls preaching "expository exultation." He points out that a lot of contemporary preaching is too anthropocentric—relational, anecdotal and psychological.

JOHN PETERS, WATERLOO, ONT.

NEW ORDER VOICE

Finding hope while sleeping in cars

AIDEN ENNS

I'm not afraid to try different things. The adventure alone is a source of excitement. It can also be a source of hope.

For example, in early March I travelled from Winnipeg to Elkhart, Ind, in a rental car, a Ford Focus station wagon. I went with Karen, who wanted to try sleeping in the back of the car as an adventure.

Motel rooms are generic and therefore profoundly disorienting. I want to exist physically on this earth, not in some figment of formulaic rental space. Yes, the familiar surroundings are designed for our comfort, but these spaces are also designed to take us away from our connection to the soil beneath our feet and the neighbour next door. This not only reduces our capacity for compassion, it helps us forget about it altogether.

If you sleep in a car on the street in a strange town, however, it's much harder to forget where you are. So, with three heavy blankets and some foam padding, we slept "outside" in Fargo, N.D. The temperature dropped to minus-20 degrees Celsius. By the time we awoke the next morning, the frost was almost a centimetre thick on the inside of the windows. We spent the next night in

Madison, Wis., and then Chicago before we finally arrived in Elkhart.

How does this fit with a reflection on hope? Well, it stems from my discovery that there are at least three things we can do to facilitate the arrival of hope in our lives.

- **Take action.** In a consumer society we are trained to be passive. We look for labour-saving conveniences; we prefer the easy to the difficult. Why make pizza dough when you can buy it ready-made? But with passivity comes a sense of powerlessness and a diminished capacity for the rigours of life. Led by your conscience, any small, difficult step can bring a sense of empowerment. This can



By the time we awoke... the frost was almost a centimetre thick on the inside of the windows.

precipitate hope.

- **Seek meaning.** When we're overwhelmed with the problems of the world, it's easy to feel numb or paralyzed. This is a good time to pursue knowledge through lectures, books or adult education in church. With understanding comes new possibilities for action, which often brings hope.

- **Try contemplation.** Time spent in

prayer, silence or guided meditation can bring a sense of calmness and an awareness of God. Even though destruction surrounds us, we can perceive and participate in a love that unites and edifies. Irrationally, I perceive something larger in our midst working for healing and hope. I trust that Jesus embodied this something larger; this transcendent dimension that is also immanent.

I know that along each of these avenues of hope lies the potential for discouragement. You may take some action and things may not improve; you may seek meaning and yet remain confused; you may try contemplation and still feel spiritually dry. Hope is not guaranteed; it's a state of mind that comes from continual effort and "breakthroughs" beyond our control.

If I'm discouraged by a society that promotes consumer comforts and neglects nature and the lower classes, it brings me hope to sleep in a car instead of flying in a plane or taking a hotel. As I augment

this action with counterculture teachings, such as Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, my hope moves towards the fullness of life. If you try similar experiments, let me know. I want to share the hope.

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

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Friesen—Sonia Kisa Elizabeth (b. 2003; adopted March 4, 2008), by Debbie Friesen, Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, in Uganda.

Griffioen—Aliya Marie (b. March 15, 2008), to Mark and Stephanie Griffioen, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Hamann—Anna Elisabeth (b. Jan. 2, 2008), to Claudia and Scott Hamann, First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Jacomen—Mya Heather (b. March 19, 2008), to Jaime (nee Nafziger) and Tom Jacomen, Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.

Leis—Lauren J. (b. March 7, 2008), to Lindsay and Scott Leis, Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Mauer—Katherine Rose (b. Dec. 28, 2007), to Robert and Rosemarie Mauer, Springstein Mennonite, Man.

Mierau—Pieter Rudi (b. Jan. 4, 2007), to Monique and Terence Mierau, Petiscodiatic Mennonite, N. B.

Peters—Kyle (b. Jan. 30, 2008), to Jae Sook and James Peters, First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Reimer—Portia Rose (b. Dec. 17, 2007), to Pam Reimer and Malcolm Balk, Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal.

Roth—Bennett Christopher (b. March 8, 2008), to Adam and Melanie Roth, Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask., in Red Deer, Alta.

Toews—Isabella Rae (b. Nov. 7, 2007), to Amanda and Jeff Toews, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Veitch—Alex Robert (b. March 10, 2008), to Krista and Scott Veitch, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Williams—Aidan John (b. Jan. 12, 2008), to Lilli and Stuart Williams, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Baptisms

Katrina Bender and Chantel Roth—Crosshill Mennonite, Ont., March 23, 2008.

Rachel Enns—Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, March 16, 2008.

Marriages

Redekopp/Wiens—Elizabeth Redekopp and Matthew Wiens, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 15, 2007.

Deaths

Bearinger—Jessie Ann (nee Milne), 82 (b. Dec. 4, 1924; d. Nov. 22, 2007), Mannheim Mennonite, Petersburg, Ont.

Bergen—Irma, 80 (b. Feb. 2, 1928; d. March 18, 2008), Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask.

Borne—Lena (nee Schlichting), 87 (b. May 13, 1920; d. Feb. 7, 2008), Springstein Mennonite, Man.

Dyck—Jacob, 87 (b. Dec. 30, 1920; d. Jan. 20, 2008), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Elias—Isaac W., 89 (b. Oct. 28, 1918; d. Nov. 8, 2007), Morden Mennonite, Man., in Vancouver, B.C.

Enns—Peter, 90 (b. Nov. 14, 1917; d. Jan. 19, 2008), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Enns—Wilhelm, 75 (b. Sept. 21, 1932; d. March 5, 2008), Springstein Mennonite, Man.

Froese—Frieda, 95 (b. Jan. 2, 1913; d. Jan. 3, 2008), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Funk—Tina, 86 (b. July 20, 1921; d. Dec. 16, 2007), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Horst—Selina, 87 (b. Jan. 22, 1921; d. March 13, 2008), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Loewen—Olga (Ollie), (d. Jan. 2, 2008), Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Martens—Elisabeth, 85 (b. Dec. 24, 1922; d. March 5, 2008), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

McBeath—Heather, 56 (b. April 8, 1949; d. Nov. 17, 2006), Petiscodiatic Mennonite, N. B.

Moyer—Carson Menno, 81 (b. May 3, 1926; d. Feb. 14, 2008), Mannheim Mennonite, Petersburg, Ont.

Peters—Arnetta, 93 (b. March 25, 1914; d. March 8, 2008), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Riediger—Nick, 85 (b. Aug. 21, 1922; d. Jan. 12, 2008), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Striemer—Rosella (nee Giesbrecht), 79 (b. Sept. 21, 1928; d. Jan. 10, 2008), Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask.

Thiessen—Pamela, 81 (b. Nov. 12, 1926; d. Dec. 22, 2007), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

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

Pontius' Puddle



LIVING WITHIN LIMITS: PART V

The high cost of cheap food

PAUL FIEGUTH

We have, as a nation, become amazingly flippant about food.

We are ignorant about where food comes from, we utterly rely on “the system” for food security, we appear willing to consume the strangest concoctions of chemicals made to appear as food, and we buy food as cheaply as possible. There is a cost, however, to cheap food.

Our government looks for ways to make food cheap with subsidies or trade barriers, and farmers are pressured to look for ways to make food cheap by using pesticides and especially by relying on cheap energy. The reliance on energy has progressed to the point that, by the time the food reaches our plates, approximately 10 calories of fuel energy have gone into every single food calorie we eat.

Cheap food is probably eroding future agricultural capital.

To produce food—temporarily at least—at the lowest possible price is easy: Wreck the land! Plant like mad, deplete the topsoil, drain the groundwater, fertilize and poison the ecosystem. But just like ballooning credit-card debt, eating away at agricultural capital can continue only so long.

While it is true that food prices have recently increased, it's not because North American consumers have embraced quality food. The reason is far more pernicious: In the same way that we can use fuel to produce food, we can convert food into fuel.

In principle, producing bio-diesel or ethanol seems like a good idea. They are carbon-neutral. However, producing fuel from agricultural output is not necessarily good for the environment. Large-scale production of bio-fuel is most convenient from the large-scale production of single

crops, mostly corn for ethanol and soy beans or jatropha (a tropical plant) for bio-diesel. We are now seeing extensive mono-cropping (no crop rotation) of corn in North America, and the clearing of the Amazon rainforest for soy beans and the Indonesian rainforest for jatropha. All three of these are ecological disasters and, in many cases, human and cultural disasters, too.

Although the world grows vast amounts of produce, it pales in comparison with our energy use. Total worldwide food production has an energy of only one-fifth to one-sixth as much as worldwide fossil fuel consumption. The entire U.S. corn crop, if converted into ethanol,



If you don't like the sound of fuel-versus-food, the only rational response is to . . . declare your unwillingness to have energy at any cost.

would come nowhere near replacing U.S. gasoline consumption. It is important to clearly understand, therefore, that to replace even a modest fraction of fossil fuel use will require a huge amount of food.

And who ends up suffering when food starts getting converted into fuel? The poor, mostly in Africa and Asia. Terrible political games have been played with food prices, primarily between the United States and Europe. Even worse is the deliberate, systematic targeting of the poor, such as the despicable history of the United Fruit Company in Central America.

Now the food-to-fuel race will be yet one more slap against the world's poor. First, the energy crops like corn and beans are staples, so increases in the costs of these products affect the poor very strongly. Second, many Third World cash

crops like coffee, cocoa and bananas are not energy crops, so their export value will increase more slowly than the import cost of staples. Third, the poor already spend a large fraction of their income on food, and have far less economic room to manoeuvre than most North Americans do.

There is no single person to be held accountable for this mess. If there are people willing to pay for energy, then “the system” finds a way to provide it. Every time you book a flight or buy gasoline you declare yourself willing to pay for the energy, regardless of where it comes from.

If you don't like the sound of fuel-versus-food, the only rational response is to reduce your energy consumption, to declare your unwillingness to have energy at any cost.

In contrast to daunting global issues, food and energy consumption is one place where the individual has clear choices. One can buy local organic foods, buy fair-trade products or plant a vegetable garden. One can purchase dry

goods by the sack, purchase butchered meat in bulk from a local farmer, or buy fruits and vegetables by the bushel in season to freeze or can.

You are commanded, in no uncertain terms, to love your neighbour as yourself. I, therefore, see a responsibility to:

- Yourself (your health, the health of your family);
- Your community (by not eating into ecological capital);
- The rest of humanity (through fair forms of trade); and
- All of creation (the global environment). ☸

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 or e-mail pfieguth@uwaterloo.ca.

YOUNG PROPHETS

Living life *in'shallah*

BY RACHELLE M. FRIESEN

In Palestine, we conclude every appointment made and social event planned by saying *in'shallah*, meaning “God willing.” This small phrase illustrates two crucial aspects of daily life in Palestine:

- The unpredictability of the situation we live in; and
- The steadfast hope, rooted in faith, that is needed to function in such an unstable, volatile place.

It is learning to live my life *in'shallah* that has shaped my faith so strongly while living here in Bethlehem. Every day in Palestine, checkpoints, roadblocks and military incursions disrupt meetings, family times and appointments.

When I travel to Jerusalem, I have no idea how long I'll spend at the checkpoint. Some days, I have stood for over an hour waiting to get my documents checked and my purse X-rayed so that I can visit a friend who lives only a five-minute walk away on the other side of the “security wall.”

Here in Palestine we are uncertain if we will reach our destination or if we will have to turn back. And yet we continue to try to reach our destination even when the probability of success is bleak. This is not a time to give up when we know we might not make our destined event, but to attempt to arrive, attempt to live a life, and *in'shallah* we do.

Living in a place of constant violence and oppression, *in'shallah* is a bold statement. It is an affirmation of our faith and trust in God, and our belief that God has a plan far greater than ours. Living life *in'shallah* requires taking risks, getting turned away, being interrogated for hours, and living our lives regardless of

the consequences, for the consequences are out of our control.

It's easy to get discouraged while listening to people's stories of occupation, hearing gunfire and bombs from Israeli soldiers, and seeing a two-storey wall divide communities. My neighbours struggle to put food on the table, others have been arrested and tortured in Israeli detention, and my friend cannot reach her olive trees because of the wall.

The peace talks last fall in Annapolis, Md., were just theatre without implementation, bringing the risk of even more

PHOTO COURTESY OF RACHELLE M. FRIESEN



Rachelle M. Friesen stands in front of the “security wall” separating Israel from Palestine.

violence. On the ground, factionalism and disunity run rampant. If ever there was a hopeless situation, it is here in Palestine.

When I witness what is going on, I have to ask myself why I continue to work on social justice issues when positive change ceases to happen. Then I realize the reason is *in'shallah*.

In'shallah is not idle resignation. It is actively working for the freedom and justice of others. Just as Palestinians don't wait for the checkpoints to be lifted to cross into their neighbouring villages, even when harassment and humiliation seem inevitable, we as Christians must strive to be witnesses of peace, actively working against violence and the oppression of all people, and nonviolently dismantling the injustices of empire, holding the builders and defenders of empire to account.

In reality, we know things may not turn out positively, but through our trust in God we have hope, and our actions need to reflect our trust in God and God's coming kingdom. Our actions are the actions of being Christian, refusing to submit to empire and standing against it, not because the empire will collapse with this stance but because we are Christians following the will of God who will someday overcome the empire.

Thus, our hope comes not from our own work, but from the work of God. This hope is not mere optimism, but is rather a hope rooted in the action of following in the path of Jesus, which requires living a life for the liberation of others regardless of the results, with an attitude that *in'shallah* it will happen.

In'shallah, Palestine will one day feel liberation's warm embrace.

Rachelle M. Friesen, 22, is currently in the middle of a one-year internship serving in Bethlehem with Wilam, a grassroots organization that provides the people of Bethlehem with community-based mediation, and is trying to disseminate a culture of active nonviolence in the West Bank. She is a member of Emmaus Mennonite Church in Wymark, Sask., and a recent graduate of Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Plan for a clean world

BY CATHRYN CLINTON
Mennonite Central Committee
CANDEIAS, BRAZIL

Kristin Hurst's plan for a clean world is happening one step at a time. During a peace walk in Candeias, many joined Kristin in her work.

Seven-year-old Kristin and her five-year-old sister, Kyra, together with their Mennonite Central Committee worker parents, John Hurst and Julie Alexander, took part in the first peace walk in Candeias. A number of the schools in the region sponsored the event, with the objective of promoting social, environmental and internal peace.

Children, youths and adults wearing white shirts filled the streets for the 3.2 kilometre walk. Some waved white handkerchiefs, and some, like the Hursts, carried a peace flag. The crowd sang along as a

PHOTO BY JULIE ALEXANDER



Not only did Kristin Hurst participate in a peace walk in Brazil, she picked up trash strewn on the street by some littering walkers.

truck at each end of the walk played peace songs over loudspeakers.

There were tents along the way with water for the walkers. Ignoring the trashcans, many carried their cups and dropped them in the street when they were finished. Kristin noticed this and picked up the discarded cups, but soon her hands were full. The father of a schoolmate found a bag for her. It was quickly filled, so he went into a store and got another one. Other walkers noticed, and both children and adults began to help Kristin and Kyra, who had joined her sister in the task.

Kristin thanked people for their trash deposit. Kristin's mother pointed out to Kristin that her actions had encouraged others to take care of the earth. Kristin grinned and said, "Then my plan is working!"

When asked for specifics about her plan, Kristin replied, "Well, I hope that if I pick up litter, then maybe other people will see me and want to do it too. If they do it, then maybe it will spread to other people and on and on, until the whole world is clean!"

As her mother said, "Why aim small?" ❧

A prophetic call

Violence against Protestant churches, congregations still a reality for Colombian Christians

BY CATHRYN CLINTON
Mennonite Central Committee
BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

Some Colombian government statistics would suggest that human rights violations in this South American country are improving, but the churches there offer a fuller version of what's really happening.

Janna Hunter-Bowman, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker, coordinates a documentation and advocacy program that records the suffering and hope of the Colombian Protestant churches. JustaPaz, a Colombian Mennonite peace and justice organization, and the Peace

Commission of the Evangelical Council of Colombia released their second report on the violence endured by the Protestant churches, entitled "A Prophet's Call"

Hunter-Bowman says the report indicates that there is still "a long way to go in achieving peace and the conflict can't be solved militarily."

This report on international humanitarian law and human rights violations against church and church members documents findings from 2006. It also contains cases that occurred in 2004-05, but were not published in the first report released early last year, including 16 homicides and many cases of people who were forced to flee, used as human shields, tortured or subjected to other human rights violations. Death threats were the most common form of aggression.

Like the first report, though, the second one includes examples of how churches are working for peace, bringing transformation through repentance, reconciliation and justice. While others focus on war and weapons, some courageous congregations focus on hope by responding to the needs of victims of violence. In addition to humanitarian work, the churches provide psycho-social recovery and legal advice.

"In suffering there [are] always signs of hope," says Alix Lozano, president of the Mennonite Church of Colombia.

Javier Pinzón, whose testimony is in the report, is an example of positive transformation. A colonel in the Colombian military for 28 years, he resigned because he "in no way could continue taking up arms and preparing for war." He found the Mennonite Brethren Church and committed his life to Christ. Today, Pinzón is farming, with the goal of creating an Anabaptist community to serve the rural community of El Rodeo.

The report calls for the international community to respond in a number of ways, including:

- Participating in the Days of Prayer and Action scheduled for April 27 and 28; and
- Sharing the report's testimonies in churches and in advocacy letters to government officials. ❧

Bridging the cultural divide

Aboriginal theologian urges 'proper' mixture of Christianity with First Nations traditions

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada

WINNIPEG

Nine out of 10 aboriginal people reject Christianity as the “white man’s” religion, according to Richard Twiss. And he finds it ironic that in the Genesis story, Adam is created from “red” earth.

A Rosebud Lakota theologian from Washington State, Twiss encourages aboriginal people from North America and around the world to use appropriate aspects of their cultural traditions to express Christ-centred theology. He recognizes culture as the heart language of the indigenous church, a language that will free indigenous people to live the abundant life that Jesus came to provide.

At the invitation of Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry and Mennonite Church Manitoba, Twiss brought this vision to the annual spring Partnership Circles gathering hosted at Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg last month.

Twiss recognizes that addiction and poor economic circumstances are tough issues for First Nations communities, but suggested that questions of self-identity pose larger problems. He pointed to the conflicting notion that God loved aboriginals so much that he allowed his son to die for them, yet objected to their drums, music and ceremonies. “Jesus loves us, but he doesn’t like us very much,” Twiss quipped.

Aboriginal Peoples have been led to believe that in order to follow Jesus, they must abandon their traditional ways and become “white.” These “white”—or Eurocentric—biblical interpretations and expectations have eroded aboriginal identity, generating low self-esteem and even

self-hatred, he said.

Twiss recalled being labelled a syncretist when he began calling aboriginals back to their culture. “I was continually accused of trying to blend Indian religion with Christian faith, resulting in a hybridized, mongrel religion that was neither one nor the other,” he said.

Integrating culture and theology requires discernment, he cautioned, referring to the example of praying with sweetgrass smoke. “Praying with sweetgrass smoke can be idolatry or worshipful,” he said, explaining that, “if you thank God for giving smoke power, it’s syncretism.” However, he added that using smoke as a symbolic representation of prayer rising to God in heaven can be worshipful and meaningful in a cultural context. Only when cultural tools are worshipped in and of themselves do they become dangerous, he noted.

Participants watched two videos depicting aboriginals worshipping God

through song, dance and drumming. In the follow-up discussion some asked how to discern the theological validity of such practices.

But for most, the sights and sounds of reverberating drums, chanting, bright traditional dress and expressions of pure joy evoked emotional responses. Norman Meade, a Metis elder, was moved by the uninhibited dance of children. “It comes from here,” he said, tapping his chest.

For others, the videos stirred memories. Hilda Franz recalled observing her adopted aboriginal son attend his first powwow. His connection to it was instantly evident, she said.

Egon Enns was reminded of a young aboriginal man who buried a traditional drum in the woods, afraid of what it represented.

Twiss noted that some aboriginals are hesitant about embracing their own culture because they have been led to believe it is inherently evil, but a contrary realization is gradually spreading. As the gathering drew to a close, he suggested that the benefits of leaving faith open to cultural interpretation can extend beyond aboriginal communities. “Take this approach sideways for youth and other groups,” he said, suggesting that they may want to inherit Jesus but they may not necessarily want to inherit the traditionally organized church. ☼

Richard Twiss offers prayer with traditional song and drum during the annual spring Partnership Circles gathering in Winnipeg last month.



PHOTO BY HYO SOOK YUN



Norman and Thelma Meade, long-time church leaders in aboriginal communities, were presented with a quilt during the annual spring Partnership Circles gathering.

PHOTO BY HYO SOOK YUN



Trying to find the way

A review of the successes of MC Manitoba's Partnership Circles and the challenges they face

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

After their creation nearly six years ago, Partnership Circles—the twinning of aboriginal communities and congregations in northern Manitoba with Mennonite churches in the southern part of the province—*Canadian Mennonite* caught up with some of the leaders at last month's spring

meeting in Winnipeg to assess where the relationships are currently at.

"The most developed relationship is between Riverton Fellowship Circle and Sargent Mennonite, Bethel Mennonite and Douglas Mennonite in Winnipeg," said Norm Voth, director of Evangelism and Service for Mennonite Church Manitoba.

Barb Daniels, secretary and leader at Riverton Fellowship, which is currently without a pastor, explained the relationship: "They come and help us with the worship service. We also visit and share with them. At our yearly Gospel Jamboree they help us. The youth group from Douglas comes every summer with a Vacation Bible School program for 40 to 50 kids every night. We have had a close relationship with these churches for five years."

Other partnerships currently exist between:

- Manigotagan and Steinbach Mennonite Church;
- Matheson Island/Pine Dock and Grace Mennonite in Winkler and Springfield Heights in Winnipeg; and
- Pauingassi and Springstein Mennonite and Morden Mennonite.

Winkler Berghaler Mennonite and Little Grand Rapids have done some programs together in the past, while Cross Lake is currently without partners.

"We struggle with what a partnership should look like," said Voth. "There is a fear on the part of the aboriginal and the non-aboriginal of repeating the past. One thing we do very well as Mennonites is serve. We like doing that, but we need to exercise caution that we don't make charity cases."

Living Word Church in Cross Lake has had the longest history of indigenous leadership, but is currently without a partner and a pastor. "We still have services," said Florence Benson-Umpherville, who runs the Sunday school program for 38 children. "We got a building and the basics. Things mean more if you can work for them yourselves. Right now, our church couldn't financially support a minister. If we got between a rock and a hard place we could ask for help, but I won't."

Elsie Wiebe and others at Morden Mennonite have been trying to discern what their partnership with Pauingassi can look like. For three or four summers, youths

from Morden brought a VBS program to the remote community. More recently, the church helped purchase an industrial sewing machine for making moccasins, but the aboriginal woman who was teaching the Pauingassi women how to use the machine is no longer in the community. "We don't really know what direction to take," said Wiebe.

"The VBS [Vacation Bible School] program was a good experience for our youths, and Allan Owen, the pastor, said the children really enjoy that and it is what they want," Wiebe said. "The question for us is how to get the adults involved"

Voth, who spends about a third of his time visiting aboriginal churches, stressed the importance of developing face-to-face individual relationships. "We need to create a structure where people could develop these kinds of relationships. It hasn't happened yet, but we are still hopeful that we can develop relationships in which we can share resources and empower each other."

He acknowledged, though, that geography also presents challenges. "It is not

You can fly to Haiti for less than it costs to fly to Pauingassi!

easy or cheap," he said. "You can fly to Haiti for less than it costs to fly to Pauingassi. And yet we can raise thousands of dollars to send people on projects all over the world."

Norman Meade of Manigotagan works with Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba's Aboriginal Neighbours program. Meade feels positive about the partnership relationship his community has with Steinbach Mennonite Church, whose youths provide a summer VBS program. "We would like the relationship to continue and we would like to have more exchanges, especially agriculture exchanges with our youths. We would like to see our youths more involved with the land, with breaking some new soil and gardening," he said.

Meade likes the concept of Partnership Circles in general. "They are a good way to exchange resources with each other, but they have to be nurtured," he said. "They don't happen on their own. Both parties have to bring something to the table." ▄

A step forward

Supporting ex-offenders helps build safer communities

BY GLADYS TERICHOW
Mennonite Central Committee
SASKATOON, SASK.

Backyard barbecues hosted by Helmut and Dory Isaac are filled with laughter, fun and plenty of food.

“These are the kind of things you take for granted, but for some of us this is a big deal,” said Mark, a 29-year old Saskatchewan man who committed 10 sexual offences before he was 14.

He spent most of his youth in jail and now lives in a group home for people who have a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) or other mental and emotional challenges.

To help him break harmful patterns and adjust to independent living, Mark joined Forward Step, a faith-based program started by the Saskatoon Community Chaplaincy in 2005 and supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Saskatchewan.

Forward Step supports ex-offenders through “being a sounding board, advocating on their behalf and reducing stress in their lives,” says Helmut Isaac, an MCC worker who supports ex-offenders through the Forward Step and the Person-to-Person programs. “It is all about safety in the community. Whenever there is too much stress in their lives, that’s when things go sideways. It’s about friendship—it is not rocket science—it is just being a friend.”

Mark was released from prison in 2004 and has not committed a sexual offence for 10 years. Forward Step, he says, gives him the opportunity to develop new friendships and talk in a safe environment about the things that he is experiencing. The weekly meetings and the ongoing support, he says, reduce stress in his life and give him new ideas on how to handle different situations.

Darren Friesen, chaplain of the Saskatoon Community Chaplaincy program, is frustrated that so many church congregations don’t feel compelled to be more involved



Mark (with his back to the camera), a participant in the Forward Step program, meets with chaplain Darren Friesen, left, and Ken Landis Funk, coordinator of MCC Saskatchewan’s Restorative Justice Program.

in the lives of ex-offenders and others who are marginalized by society. “The church as a whole is not engaged in these needs,” he says. “It is time for churches in North America to do what God wants us to do—love people. You don’t need a degree in theology to know that we are created to love people.”

Mark was adopted when he was two years old. “I grew up in a great home,” he says, explaining he has maintained contact

with his adopted father until about four or five years ago. “I would like more contact with him—I would like to be part of a happy family again.”

His immediate goal in life is to get a job like moving and stacking boxes. Eventually, he would like to become a trained and qualified forklift operator.

Mark is optimistic that the support he receives will help him achieve these goals. ☼

/// Briefly noted

Raising non-believers can be a challenge

ATLANTA, GA.—Atheist Dale McGowan has developed two ground rules for his mother-in-law with regard to his children: Don’t discourage them from having doubts about the existence of God, and don’t tell them they’re going to hell. Other than that, everything else is fair game. McGowan, the author of *Parenting Beyond Belief: On Raising Caring, Ethical Kids Without Religion*, says he came up with the two guidelines as his family was trying to negotiate the relationship between his three children and their Evangelical grandmother. McGowan says he doesn’t want his children to identify with any particular religion until they are old enough to decide for themselves. But McGowan is the first to admit that the kind of environment he has chosen to raise his children in doesn’t always bode well with the rest of society.

—Religion News Service Release

Congregation, preservationists at odds over ‘ugly’ D.C. church

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The faithful of Washington’s Third Church of Christ, Scientist, insist their church has got to go, so they can stay. The structure is brutal, they claim. Brutal to look at, brutal to fix, brutal to the church’s efforts to invite new members. Local preservationists agree, calling it the city’s finest example of Brutalist architecture—a harsh, imposing concrete mammoth straight out of the 1970s. Now the two sides are in a pitched fight over the church’s future. The Christian Scientists say they want a smaller, more intimate space that’s easier to maintain. Preservationists say it would be a sacrilege to tear down the ugliest church in the nation’s capital.

—Religion News Service Release

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Is he saved?

CMU Apologetics Lectures series features four questions Christians shouldn't ask

Canadian Mennonite University Release
WINNIPEG

For Christians who want to share their faith, there are at least four questions they shouldn't ask, according to John Stackhouse. The professor of theology and culture at Regent College in Vancouver, B.C., was the keynote speaker at the three-part Apologetics Lectures series entitled, "Is He Saved? And Other Questions Christians Shouldn't Ask," at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg.

"Is he saved?" is the first question Christians shouldn't ask, Stackhouse said.

ask is: "Does he need to hear the gospel?" The answer, Stackhouse said, is, "Of course he needs to hear the gospel—everyone does."

For non-believers, hearing the gospel can lead them to salvation, he said. For those who already believe, hearing the gospel is a reminder and reassurance. Christians need to hear the good news at all stages of their lives, he added.

"What can I do to convert him?" is the third question Christians shouldn't ask. The answer, Stackhouse said, is "nothing." And not only is there nothing people can do to convert non-believers, there is nothing people can do to convert themselves, he added. "There are no surefire, snappy arguments to [make people] become Christian, or to make spiritually dead people alive. That's God's province."

The final question Christians shouldn't ask, Stackhouse said, is, "How do I treat people?" Again, his answer was simple. "Love them. You care for them, you give

Stackhouse illustrated his answer with a story about his uncle. He talks about everything with his uncle, except the gospel. That's because his uncle doesn't want to talk about it, and Stackhouse said he doesn't want to be one more person trying to shove it down his throat. His uncle knows, however, that if he did want to bring it up, Stackhouse would gladly share about his faith.

"When we are commending the faith to people . . . we need to focus on what really matters," Stackhouse stated. First and foremost, that means loving your neighbour as yourself, because "love is the context in which anything else that's going to happen is going to happen."

People don't want to hear from someone who doesn't care about them, he noted. Therefore, Christians need to genuinely love and care for the person they are witnessing to.

This is different than how some view apologetics—the practice of defending and sharing faith, he stated. For Stackhouse, apologetics is not a "bang-clash battle of the champions," or an "intellectual and spiritual blood sport." It's not supposed to be about "bagging victims. It's supposed to be about loving [our] neighbours," he stressed.

Sharing faith has to be "I care about you, and I don't care so much about how I look in this conversation," Stackhouse concluded. "Let's win the friend, not the argument, by God's grace." ❧



Stackhouse

[H]is uncle doesn't want to talk about [the gospel], and Stackhouse doesn't want to be one more person trying to shove it down his throat.

The reason: Because one can't know the answer. "I can guess, and I can guess reliably," Stackhouse said, "but I can't know for sure because I am not privy to the [inner workings] of his heart."

The second question Christians shouldn't

ask them whatever good gift you can," he said, adding that it may mean talking about the gospel with them, and it may mean not talking about the gospel with them—it depends on whether they are open to it or not.

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Mary Schiedel, left, one of the planners for the Mennonite Spiritual Directors of Ontario's Month of Guided Prayer, lights a candle at the March 2 closing service at Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., watched by Sue Steiner and Margaret Nally, two of the other planners. More than 40 guides and participants took part in a combined individual and group Lenten spiritual journey, "Out of the Depths."



TECHNOLOGY AND THE GOSPEL

Blogging home

Online video sharing connects international workers with home

BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada
CYBERSPACE

A catchy chord progression on an electric guitar is what you hear first, then the words “We [love] Isaac Toast” flash blue against a black screen. Cut to a bearded young man in a heavy jacket and toque. “We’re on our way to Isaac Toast, which is our first-ever regular dining spot,” says Joel Kroeker as he packs up his laptop.

And so begins an engaging video tour of Seoul, South Korea, with Kroeker and his wife Heather Peters as they head to a local restaurant for a Saturday morning treat. They are communicating with friends and family in Canada through YouTube, the popular video-sharing website.

Communicating electronically is not new for young adult Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers. E-mail, blogs and popular social networking sites like Facebook have been used for some time. Kroeker and Peters, who teach at Connexus, a language institute associated with the Korea Anabaptist Center (KAC), say they also use regular communication devices like telephones and “snail-mail,”

Blogging has provided a way to reflect on her experiences and articulate her thoughts.

which are relatively inexpensive in Korea.

Will and Ana Loewen have also posted a video online. “I could develop and mail home a bunch of photographs, include a CD with Korean music and send a little story, but at a relatively high cost and at a limited value,” Will writes in an e-mail



Joel Kroeker and Heather Peters share an “Isaac Toast” sandwich made with cabbage, pickles, processed cheese, meat and a fried egg with honey-herb sauce.

exchange. “A slideshow takes very little effort to produce with software that is readily available and fairly user-friendly, and with the power of the web tools like YouTube, the small effort to upload the video pays dividends by making it a mouse-click away from anyone who wants to watch it.”

The Loewens also upload photos to their website to complement blog posts (online journal entries that others can connect to and view).

For Cheryl Woelk, a key staff member at KAC, blogging has provided a way to reflect on her experiences and articulate her thoughts. “It helps me to appreciate aspects of my daily life here that I might just take for granted otherwise,” she writes. “I think this blog is more for me in that way than for anyone else.”

Woelk admits her English-language blog isn’t as active as her Korean-language

blog, where she and her Korean friends frequently post pictures and messages. “Although it’s more work than my English one, I’m more motivated to write when I know someone will respond,” she adds.

Connexus workers Mark and Vanessa Claassen Wiehler also find blogging allows them to keep in touch with a wider audience, but they prefer e-mails for friends and family. “E-mails are a little more personal,” Mark notes.

Leah Buermeyer agrees. On a short-term internship assignment in Borabu, Thailand, she posts a blog with photos and activity updates, but she uses e-mail to keep in touch with close family and friends. She also speaks to her family on Skype, free software that allows phone-call-like conversation over the Internet. “Technology sure has made communicating easy and convenient,” she says. ☼

PHOTO BY ALICIA REIMER

TECHNOLOGY AND THE GOSPEL

Getting the message out

Mennonite organizations flocking to YouTube

By AARON EPP

National Correspondent
WINNIPEG

Mennonite Church Canada and Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) are two of the latest organizations to create their own pages on YouTube, the popular website that allows users to upload, view and share video clips.

MC Canada communications director Dan Dyck says the reason for creating a “channel” (youtube.com/

mennonitechurchca) on the popular website was to build awareness among congregations and the wider world of what the denomination does.

Searching the word “Mennonites” on YouTube yields a variety of results, Dyck says, “some helpful, and some not-so-helpful. It’s important to give another point of view of who Mennonites are.”

Founded in early 2005 by three computer engineers, YouTube was purchased in November 2006 by Google Inc. for \$1.76 billion. In January, the site accounted for three billion of the over nine billion videos viewed on the Internet, according to PCWorld.com.

MC Canada began producing videos in 2005 to distribute as DVDs through its resource centre. Dyck sees YouTube as another way to distribute the videos, which document Canadian events as well as work being done by Witness workers around the world.

Is MC Canada targeting young people with the channel? Not necessarily, Dyck says. He questions whether the videos MC Canada produce even have “the edge” necessary to appeal to a generation raised on MuchMusic and the Internet. How MC Canada uses YouTube in the future to reach out to younger people “is dependent on what strategy is developed [by MC Canada] for keeping in touch with that

For the moment, [YouTube is] ubiquitous, it’s huge.’

demographic,” Dyck explains.

CMU recently developed a series of videos advertising the university. For John Longhurst, director of communications and marketing, YouTube is another way the university can reach out to potential students.

“YouTube is just one of the ways we share [the videos] with the wider world, but it’s an important way,” Longhurst says. His goal is to provide a variety of ways of finding information about CMU, and he believes “YouTube is the one [place] that most potential students would be going to anyway.”

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) created its YouTube channel last November. Like MC Canada and CMU, MEDA uses YouTube as another way of distributing videos it is already producing for special events, churches and schools. The channel also affords MEDA other opportunities as well, says Ed Epp, vice-president for resource development.

“You can make a quicker video that’s not the 100 percent quality you might want to show at a presentation, but that still might interest people,” Epp notes.

Although most people think of YouTube as something for young people, Epp and Dyck both note they have been approached by people 55 years old and older who say they have seen the videos on YouTube.

Given the ephemeral nature of popular culture, it is unclear that YouTube is here to stay. For the moment, however, “it’s ubiquitous, it’s huge,” says Darryl Neustaedter Barg, associate director of media ministries at MC Manitoba. “Anyone who’s using a computer on the Internet today has likely encountered YouTube.” ❧

AMBS PHOTO BY MARY E. KLASSEN



New Order Voice columnist Aiden Enns, centre, was one of 21 participants at a consultation on the impact of technology on cultures at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary last month. Trevor Bechtel, right, assistant professor of religion at Bluffton (Ohio) University, said, “Mennonites do sometimes maintain a different stance towards technology than either the Amish or general trends in society. Why do some Mennonites not own televisions? What are the connections to their ideas of community? These are interesting questions, and potentially politically powerful ones.” Bechtel had hoped the consultation would push the discussion even farther than it did. “I’m interested in probing not just whether we should use the Internet or not, but what on the Internet is virtuous,” he said, wondering, “Can we think of ways that the church should use Facebook? I think so. What does community on Second Life or World of Warcraft mean? We need to be critical, and not just negative, about these, too, because Mennonites are using them.” Pictured at left is Nina Bartelt Lanctot, pastor and assistant director of the Engaging Pastors program at AMBS.

Soulspace . . . not a church plant

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent
STRATFORD, ONT.

Imagine coming to worship at your regular Sunday evening meeting time. The worship space is completely dark, not even a candle to guide you. One of the worship curators hands you a blindfold to keep your eyes from getting used to the pitch black of darkness.

Tonight, the fourth Sunday of Lent, the focus is on the story of the blind man in John 9. After reading the story, for 20 minutes the worship leader asks questions about what you are experiencing in the story as a blind person. Afterwards, one participant notes that to really have experienced blindness, movement should have been added to the “blind time.”

“We try to stay away from language of ‘church planting’ at soulspace,” says Anne Campion, the pastor, abbess, midwife and spiritual guide of soulspace. “When people talk about church planting, they ask, ‘Who’s your target audience? Who are you trying to reach?’ We don’t have a target audience.

“I guess in a way that’s not true,” she says, correcting herself. “I was thinking about friends with whom I had conversations about faith and spirituality, but who would never come to church. They didn’t experience church as a place for those conversations. They saw church as a place to go when you had belief, to buy into the doctrinal statement,” rather than a place of searching.

“Church is a very linear place, rather than a place to engage in the arts as worship,” Campion says. Soulspace is thus a place to engage the text publicly and through the arts. And “there is always food,” she adds.

Meeting together since 2004, the group worshipped bi-weekly in the Campions’ home until January of this year, when they



opened their own space in a storefront to gather weekly. Between 13 and 30 people of all ages usually join in the struggle with the text while music of all kinds is played and multimedia presentations play on the big screen. All are invited to express themselves in response to the text through tactile art. A

Pastors ponder growing in faith

BY DIANNE HILDEBRAND SCHLEGEL
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
GRUNTHAL, MAN.

What is faith? What does it mean to grow in faith? What does this look like? What’s the goal?

On Feb. 22, 45 pastors and church leaders from Manitoba gathered at Elim Mennonite Church in Grunthal for input and discernment on these questions.

Resource person Ken Hawkley from Community Mennonite Church in Chicago began by asking, “What is faith?” He then proposed that faith is about more than believing; it also encompasses doing. He said faith is “the activity of making meaning in relation to what we perceive as ultimate.”

The dynamics and questions of growth in faith at different life stages were noted. Hawkley noted that individual life stages provide a backdrop for people’s faith



PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Anne Campion, soulspace leader, back row left, visits with guests and regulars at the inaugural open house of their new worship space earlier this year.

high attendance of 50 participated in the interactive exhibit of the Stations of the Cross on Maundy Thursday. ❧

journeys, but the experiences and distinctive perspective of each person at any age will reveal as much or more about their faith journey and relationship with God than their life stage alone.

Participants were encouraged to consider a specific person or group of people from their own congregation and ponder

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PHOTO BY DIANNE HILDEBRAND SCHLEGEL



Jonathan Neufeld, left, Judith Doell and Lisa Enns-Bogoya were among 45 Mennonite pastors and leaders who attended a workshop on faith journeys and attentive listening at Elim Mennonite Church in Grunthal on Feb. 22.

what their faith questions might be, how these people perceive themselves on their journey, and how the leaders themselves see them. Those in attendance were then asked what might it mean to notice, name and nurture the Christ-likeness they recognize in others.

Hawkey spoke about the ministry of attending to, taking notice, and simply being willing and able to listen. The pastors and leaders then participated in an exercise in which they listened—or tried to listen!—to one other person for five minutes without interjecting their own story or questions. This was just a taste of how challenging it is to listen well—and a glimpse of what can happen when people are really heard.

Attendees were left with the question, “How might this practice of attentive listening shape the church . . . to become more Christ-like?” ❧

Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel is associate pastor of Morden (Man.) Mennonite Church.

‘Mission by migration’

Bechtel lecturer unafraid to name strengths and weaknesses in Paraguayan Mennonite experience

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

In last month’s 2008 Bechtel Lectures presentation, Alfred Neufeld spoke on “The Mennonite Experience in Paraguay.” Dividing his two-part talk into *Deiner am Wort* (servants of the word) and *Deiner der Notdurft* (servants of need), he explored the experience of the many different groups of Mennonites that migrated to Paraguay between the 1920s and the wave of post-Second World War refugees in the 1940s.

From the beginning, these immigrant communities ministered to both the indigenous populations around them and the Spanish-speaking descendants of the European conquest of the Americas. Calling it “mission by migration,” Neufeld noted that for Paraguayan Mennonites mission has always been holistic, including both evangelism and diaconal (service) ministry, and was done “at home” since the refugees had nowhere else to go.

On both evenings Neufeld noted both the strengths and difficulties in the Paraguayan Mennonite experience, and the hope for the future of the church there.

The 21 different groups do not come from church splits, but rather from migration, mission work and the establishment of racial/cultural churches among Spanish-speaking and indigenous groups.

But great disparities of social standing and financial power exist between the German-speaking immigrant communities and the other churches. Also, Neufeld said that the failure to deal with the grief of loss resulting from the anarchistic communist revolution in Russia resulted in strong support of Nazi Germany during World War II, as well as complicity in the rule of Paraguayan dictator Alfredo Stroessner, who brought a heavy-handed order to the chaotic Paraguayan scene.

Neufeld is the child of immigrants from Russia, and a leader in the Paraguayan Mennonite Brethren Church and the country’s All-Church Committee. He also chairs the national coordinating committee for next year’s Mennonite World Conference Assembly 15 in Paraguay. Most recently, he co-wrote *What We Believe Together* with his wife Wilma, which explores the seven “shared convictions” of Anabaptist-related churches developed by Mennonite World Conference members over the past three years. ❧

❧ Briefly noted

MBs ordain first woman minister

VANCOUVER, B.C.—On March 30, Grace Kim, pastor at Pacific Grace Mennonite Brethren Church in Vancouver, was ordained. According to Ken Reddig, executive secretary of the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission, Kim is believed to be the first woman to be ordained as a minister of a Canadian MB church, although other women have been ordained as missionaries or affirmed in their roles. The invitation to the ordination service included a reference to I Timothy 6:12: “Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made good your confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

—BY ROSS W. MUIR

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GOD AT WORK IN US

EXIT INTERVIEW

Steady as she goes

Retiring denominational minister was calming influence for the 'ship of faith' known as MC Canada

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent
WINNIPEG

It's hard to talk about the end of Sven Eriksson's ministry as denominational minister of Mennonite Church Canada without mentioning how it began.

Eriksson started his time in office on Feb. 12, 2003, after a pastorate at Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, B.C.—right in the middle of the fledgling denomination's financial crisis. In an open letter to members of the denomination written last month, Eriksson praised the leadership he observed in MC Canada during this crisis, likening it to the crew on a ship weathering a storm.

"The thing that made our survival as a denomination possible was the resolve of the churches to do their best to save the ship," Eriksson wrote. "You as a church assured us of your support and you gave faithfully and generously."

Eriksson also mentioned the faithful leadership he observed by the general board and executive staff, who "took responsibility, made difficult decisions and guided the ship through the storm."

Just as he praised the way others handled the situation, past and present MC Canada staff praise his contribution during that difficult time.

He was instrumental in supporting people affected by the program changes that came as a result of the crisis, says Dan Nighswander, former general secretary of MC Canada, and he planned and led several services of staff worship that helped to

address the pain staff were experiencing.

"Sven demonstrated the value of being a non-anxious presence, confident in God's providence and sovereignty to sort out complex relationships and issues," Nighswander says of his time working with Eriksson. "One of his references, when we hired him, spoke of Sven as a quiet person with great wisdom to whom one could turn for sound advice. That was a true assessment."

Eriksson's contribution extended well beyond that period, however. As he reflects on the delight he found in his work caring for the spiritual health of an entire

PHOTO BY DAN DYCK



After five years as denominational minister of Mennonite Church Canada, Sven Eriksson begins his retirement in eager anticipation of what God has in store for him.

denomination, he recalls some challenges that have embraced the length and breadth of MC Canada with its cultural and theological diversity.

"I enjoyed that challenge, but it was an impossible task, almost," Eriksson says, noting that working with the area church ministers was helpful.

The diversity enriches the church, he says, and because Canada is becoming increasingly multicultural, the church will need to continue to adapt if it is to survive.

"It's the call of the church to be welcoming and hospitable to people of all cultures, so if the church is missional and being what it's supposed to be it will become more

multicultural," he says.

What are specific things congregations can do to accomplish this?

"Be welcoming and inviting to other cultures," he urges. "I'm not saying it's easy, but it should happen. It may be a challenge for an ethnically defined church, but by being intentional, creative, flexible and anticipating the guest rather than expecting the guest to just fit in, it can happen."

Other priorities for the future of MC Canada include mentoring new pastors and providing support and resources for pastors at each stage of pastoral life, as well as cultivating spiritual practices such as prayer, Bible study and other spiritual disciplines in congregations.

"We need to get people reading the Bible," Eriksson says, noting that he has received feedback from pastors, church leaders and professors that suggests biblical illiteracy is a concern.

"We need to find ways to stimulate interest in the practice of Bible study, both individually and in groups," Eriksson says. "Some leadership is needed. If you raise the bar, people will rise to it."

Eriksson says he leaves his post with gratitude, thankful for the privilege he has had of connecting through ministry and friendship with pastors, church leaders and ministry students. He is also thankful for his time working with the MC Canada staff team. He says that his successor is "embracing a really wonderful challenge. They can expect to find a lot of joy in it, and they will have great companions in the staff at MC Canada and on the general board."

MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman says Eriksson's optimism, wisdom, humour and patience made him a true spiritual presence among staff and in the constituency. "He was not anxious about the ultimate destiny of the church," Suderman says. "He knew it was in good hands, and he reminded us of that over and over again."

Eriksson will begin his retirement with a move back to B.C. with his wife Laura, where he will spend a one-year sabbatical. It will be a time for "reflection and reorientation," Eriksson says, "at the end of which we'll see what God has in store, because I don't know—and it's great that I don't know. I'm excited." ❧

Born to bridge

*Mennonite convert says
Christ's kingdom is
about love to all*

BY AMY DUECKMAN
B.C. Correspondent
VANCOUVER, B.C.

On her first day of classes in a Damascus school run by Catholic nuns, young Riad Kassem El Rifai learned her first prayer, a French prayer she still uses: "Mon Dieu, je vous aime. Je vous offre mon travail. Aidez-moi à bien le faire." (My God, I love you. I offer you my work. Help me do it well).

Loving God through her work with music and drama in Vancouver is something that Riad, now a member of Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, is still doing. The child of a Syrian Muslim father and a German Protestant mother, she was born in Paris. Moving to Syria and attending a mainly Catholic school that also included Muslims began her international and interfaith view of the world.

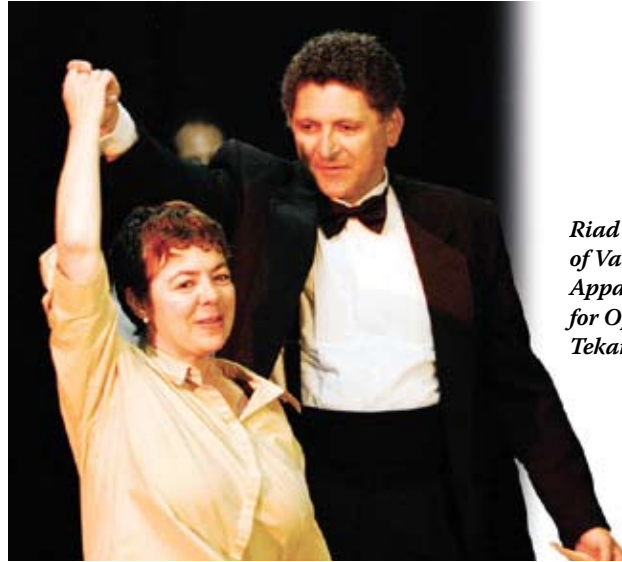
Each student at the school prayed the same prayer, regardless of their religion, Riad recalls, noting, "This had a deep influence on me. God is the same for all people."

Her life was always a mixture of cultures and religions. By age 10, Riad considered herself a Christian and was reading the Bible in French. At the same time, she was visiting mandatory Muslim classes at school. "As a child I definitely felt blessed to be able to choose my faith and still be accepted and loved by my parents and my Christian and Muslim friends," she says.

When she was 13, she moved to Berlin. In her German high school, she first discovered her love for theatre, eventually studying at the School for Performing Arts in Saarbrücken and landing a two-year contract with the State Theatre. She realized that acting was to become her life's work and says, "Looking back, I know that this was part of God's amazing plan of my life."

Through her theatre connections, Riad met her future husband, Frank Klassen of Vancouver, who was working in Pforzheim

PHOTO BY GERHARD VON ROSEN



Riad Klassen, left, co-founder of Vancouver's Opera Appassionata, rehearses for Opera Fest with Argun Tekant.

as an opera and symphony conductor. The pair overcame obstacles, including a German bureaucracy that made it very difficult for a German-Parisian to marry a Canadian.

Riad had been attracted to Canada since childhood. "God did not ask me if I would like to marry a Mennonite. He just made some wonderful arrangements," she says. The two were married in 1999.

When the couple moved to Vancouver, they first attended Frank's home church, First United Mennonite. But nearby Sherbrooke Mennonite Church also beckoned. As Riad tells it, "The transfer to Sherbrooke was compelling after God sent me a dream in which angels told me, 'Go to Sherbrooke and get baptized.'"

She followed the call to fully commit her life to Jesus. She was baptized in February 2007 at Sherbrooke and the couple then began attending there. Recently, she was hired as the church office administrative assistant.

Riad realizes that some people have questions about her background in the Muslim faith and what it means for her Christian faith. "About a year ago, my pastor asked me if it is the same God that Muslims and Christians believe in," she says, adding, "There was never a doubt in my heart that, yes, there is only one God."

Both Frank and Riad have become very involved in the music ministry at Sherbrooke, but have expanded their vision further. Drawing on their experiences in theatre and opera in Europe, the

Klassens have created Opera Appassionata, a place where singers and musicians of all ages can find a place to perform. "Opera Appassionata is definitely a main focus in my life," Riad says.

The Klassens' goal with their opera company has been to focus on serving the community with unique concerts and operas; they sometimes do fundraisers for charitable organizations such as Mennonite Central Committee, hospitals and seniors homes.

"I think this is where our faith plays a role," says Frank, artistic director for Opera Appassionata. "We and other artists have received our talents from God in order to share them with others."

Riad now sees how the intercultural threads of her life have been woven together to bring her to the place she is today, having lived in several countries; been influenced by Catholics, Protestants and Muslims; and having chosen to be a Mennonite Christian.

"In my adulthood I often chose not to join and to commit to a group or a community," she says. "Not long ago I started not only to understand, but also to accept, that God's plan for me was in this pattern of not belonging, that I was born to bridge, to reach out and to show tolerance to those who are different than I and the people of my culture. I believe that Christ's kingdom is about love, comfort and consolation to all, even to our enemies and to those who do not adopt our views." ❧

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Blessed to be a witness

By OTTO KLASSEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
WINNIPEG

When I reflect on a recent service trip, the refrain of a Ben Harper song comes to mind: "I am blessed, I am blessed to be a witness."

I was one of 18 men from Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg who travelled to Cameron Parish, La., to volunteer with Mennonite Disaster Service in January. Our congregation had already responded to the need there by raising \$15,000 for tools for the site. Now we were ready to help rebuild homes destroyed by Hurricane Rita in the fall of 2005.

We framed, wired, installed windows and doors, shingled and prepared two foundations. The people of Cameron were witnesses to work being done in their community, but the following story is a witness to God's kingdom being built.

Dorothy is a shrimper. She spent long hot days on her boat to support her son Peter and the tiny house they called home. Home is Bayou country along the Gulf of Mexico. Hurricane Rita crashed against the shore, taking her house, boat and truck.

The true miracle is not that Dorothy and

PHOTO COURTESY OF OTTO KLASSEN



Otto Klassen, second from right, was "blessed to be a witness" with Mennonite Disaster Service in Cameron, La., earlier this year.

Peter survived, but in the story she shared with us. Peter is autistic, and Dorothy was told that he would likely never speak. After Hurricane Rita, mother and son were placed in group shelters along with hundreds of others. During that time, Peter began to speak. The doctors couldn't explain it, but Dorothy says, "A God who created a world that brings tremendous storms gave my child words to speak."

I have been blessed to be a witness.

The piece of land we built Dorothy's home on was sold to her for less than half-price by an older couple in her area. The material for the home was donated by a Catholic church group. We were assisted in building Dorothy's home by an enthusiastic group from AmeriCorps. "Where are you all coming from?" she kept asking, becoming emotional as she watched the progress.

I have been blessed to be a witness.

Every day our group looked forward to 4:30 p.m. That's when Peter's school bus would drive down the street and stop in front of Dorothy's trailer, close to where we worked. The scene was always the same: The bus door opened, and Peter ran out, shouting, "My house, my house! You're building my house!"

I have been blessed to be a witness.

Friday came all too soon. The little home near the centre of town stood as a symbol of hope. Dorothy invited us to a feast of shrimp and chicken gumbo—Cajun style. Little Peter hugged and high-fived all the volunteers. The people from the area had been a witness to faith in action.

And we had been blessed to be a witness.

That evening, as the sun set on the Louisiana Bayou, I could picture God jumping up and down, shouting back to his children, "My house, my house. You're building my house." ❧

Otto Klassen is an electrician by trade. This article was adapted from a report he gave at Winnipeg's Douglas Mennonite Church annual general meeting in January.

/// Briefly noted

Historical Society awards Gerhard Ens its Award of Excellence

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—After spending most of his life in public service within the Canadian and Manitoba Mennonite communities, Gerhard Ens was honoured in late January at the annual meeting of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. He received the Award of Excellence for his life-long advancement of Mennonite history as a minister, teacher, editor, historical society/museum promoter, and German and Low German broadcaster. Ens was a founding member of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society in 1958 and sat on the board of the Mennonite Heritage Village Museum from 1958-2004. From 1972-2006, he produced a Low German radio broadcast, airing more than 1,400 programs on three radio stations during that time. In 1977, he moved to Winnipeg and began editing *Der Bote*; as an ordained minister, he was asked to become a lay minister at Winnipeg's Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, where he preached and taught the German Bible study group there for 30 years.

—Mennonite Heritage Centre Release

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AMBS window

50 years in Elkhart

Serving and learning in the community

Elkhart, Indiana, has been the context for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary for 50 years. In 1958 Mennonite Biblical Seminary (MBS), a school of the previous General Conference Mennonite Church, moved from Chicago, Ill., to a new campus on the south edge of Elkhart. That fall, AMBS began as a cooperative venture between MBS and nearby Goshen Biblical Seminary (GBS), a school of the previous Mennonite Church. In 1969 GBS moved from the Goshen College campus to the Elkhart campus, and in 1993 the two schools were incorporated as one seminary.

This issue of AMBS Window explores the significance of Elkhart as home for the seminary. Through several vignettes, we will look at how experiences in Elkhart help prepare students for ministry and how the seminary makes contributions to the city where we live and work.

— editor

Mentoring: Doing something now

Moriah Hurst

In my second year of seminary I was chafing at the bit to have some kind of involvement in the community around me. I was not content to only train for ministry; I wanted to be doing something now. But as a student I had little time. From a forum on campus I heard about a program called CARES (Communities Actively Relating to Elkhart Schools) that places mentors alongside kids who need some help at school.

I am not good at spelling

or math but I like to hang out with people, so I signed up. For half an hour each week since then, I spend time getting to know my mentee. I have been matched with two girls, one in first grade and then one in second. Some weeks we work on their school work or play educational games. Other times we sit and draw, look through books or tell each other what we have been doing. There is a rush of joy as I enter each classroom and am greeted

(continued on p. 2)



AMBS student Moriah Hurst and Shareta read a book together in the library at Roosevelt Elementary School, where Shareta is a student.

Mary E. Klassen

Spring 2008
Volume 18 Issue 2

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Panorama**

Serving and learning in the community



Moriah Hurst and Sharetta, the student she mentors

Mentoring (continued from page 1)

by my mentee grabbing my hand and hugging my leg along with a chorus of “Hello, Miss Moriah” from the rest of the class.

I am not sure that the 30 to 40 minutes I spend at the school each week makes a huge difference. I do know that I can’t change the home environments of the kids in my neighborhood and yet am not content to just let it go at that. I am glad to be a helpful adult and a friend in the life of a little person who might not always get affirmation. Beyond my weekly trips up the street to Roosevelt, I have a picture of my mentee and me on my refrigerator. As I walk by it every day I say a prayer for that little smiling face and the life she represents.

Moriah Hurst, a Master of Divinity student, gives this glimpse into a program that began ten years ago. Michele Hershberger, now a Bible professor at Hesston (Kan.) College, Hesston, Kan., began a mentoring effort when she was an AMBS student and mentored a classmate of her daughter’s at another school near the campus.

Mentoring activities involve AMBS students and employees in spending time with elementary school students during class time and at lunch and playing games together before school begins in the mornings.

Assisting Habitat for Humanity

Hammers and saws—not only textbooks and computers—can be tools for seminary learning. The AMBS Student Peace and Justice Committee sponsored an effort to assist with a Habitat for Humanity house in the neighborhood a half mile north of the campus on November 19.



Ted Koontz, professor of peace studies and ethics, and Samantha Lioi, AMBS student, cut baseboard trim for a Habitat for Humanity construction project.

This effort was an addendum to another project in 2005, when the student committee took on the task of funding and organizing workers for a Habitat building blitz. The earlier home-building project was located between Goshen and Elkhart, so the fall 2007 effort gave students

and faculty an opportunity to work in their own neighborhood.



Part-time job becomes ministry

Joe and Cara Pfeiffer are first-year students at AMBS who have found that their part-time work of substitute teaching is a form of ministry.

Joe works two days a week and Cara three days a week, reporting where each has been called for the day—one of 19 schools in the Elkhart Community School district.

Joe says, “Doing this as a seminary student gives grounding. I’m asking, ‘How is what I’m learning going to affect these people?’ It helps me think about how I will minister in the future.”

Cara adds, “It’s definitely a stretching exercise.” Substitute teaching provides “a presence of love” for the students and the other teachers they encounter.



!Explore will serve in Elkhart

When 15 high school youth gather this summer for !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth, the service component will involve them in the neighborhoods of Elkhart. Rather than going to another city, such as Chicago or Miami (as in previous years), !Explore now will work with Elkhart churches and organizations. Andy Brubacher Kaethler, !Explore director, says this will allow participants to more fully integrate service with their worship and theological exploration experiences. ●

1958—mid-1960s

Welcome and tensions

In the early years, the relationship between AMBS and Elkhart was an “interesting mix,” Erland Waltner says. Erland was president of Mennonite Biblical Seminary from the launch of AMBS in 1958 until 1978.

Some snapshots:

- When Erland met the president of Elkhart’s First National Bank, he had not said anything about funds when the bank president handed him a check for \$1,000. “It was a gesture of welcoming that was more than words,” Erland said.
- The contractor, Henry Knuck, employed workers—many of whom were Mennonites—who were not members of the AFL Carpenters Union, and the union protested with pickets to prevent delivery of materials. “At points it looked like we would be done in,” Erland reported. In this conflict, the seminary received support from civic leaders but not necessarily from workers in Elkhart.
- In the early 1960s, the sale of a lot to an African-American family created tensions. “We knew the sale would incite opposition, but it was a witness on our part,” Erland said. The Ku Klux Klan symbolized the opposition by burning crosses on lawns of both the seminary and the home built on the lot.
- The 1968 establishment of Church Community Services is the result of efforts led by C.J. Dyck, AMBS administrator and professor, Erland notes. CCS now involves more than 50 churches in addressing needs for food and utilities and in helping to empower women with job skills. ●



The executive committee of the MBS board checks on the progress of construction on the Elkhart campus, May 28, 1958: R.L. Hartzler, Erland Waltner, J.N. Smucker, Henry Knuck (contractor), A.E. Kreider.

1966—mid-1970s

Outreach in downtown Elkhart



When Leland Harder, professor at MBS and AMBS, used *The Coffee House Ministry** for an evangelism course, his students said, “Let’s do it!”

So the coffee house called Partly Dave began in downtown Elkhart in 1966, a cooperative venture of AMBS, the Elkhart County Council of Churches and a number of congregations. Open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings until at least 1974, Partly Dave offered skits, live music, drug abuse seminars, a Japanese tea ceremony

and, most of all, a safe place for conversation for youth in the city.

A high school senior was quoted in an article in the May 1967 *Youth’s Christian Companion*, saying, “A lot of kids come in here that would normally be roaming the streets; here they have a place to express ideas and to hear other ideas.”

A sophomore said, “No one really comes out and says, ‘We’re going to talk about religion today.’ It just sort of sneaks up through programs.”

The first paid manager was AMBS student David Schmidt. Subsequent managers included Dale Sudermann, now a professional counselor in Chicago; Robert Charles, until recently with Mennonite Mission Network; John Kampen, college dean and professor formerly with Bluffton University; and Lauren Friesen, drama professor who has taught at Goshen College. The staff were all volunteers from churches in the community. One waiter was an Elkhart judge who served coffee and doughnuts to his parolees.

Leland, who taught at MBS and AMBS between 1955 and the mid 1980s, explained, “Partly Dave’s was one of the more successful seminary-related coffee houses and outlived most of them. I spent a fair amount of time at Party Dave’s on weekends, trying to practice what I was teaching in the evangelism course.”

**The Coffee House Ministry* by John D. Perry, Jr. (John Knox Press 1966) ●

Former faculty and students have shared reflections and memories of AMBS 50 years ago. Read these at www.ambs.edu/ anniversary-dedication.

1958

Seminarisians Aid In Work At YMCA

The Mennonite Biblical Seminary, which moved to Elkhart from Chicago last summer, is already an integral part of community life with both students and faculty participating in civic activities.

Walt Rinchart, acting general secretary of the YMCA, said today four seminary students have been helping in Y work since they came to Elkhart in September.

Miss Catherine Snyder and Peter Neufeld are instructors in the Christian Education school; John Friesen and Marvin Zehr are assisting Jack Hampson, youth director.

Archive photo

Reproduced from *The Elkhart Truth*

As AMBS celebrates our fiftieth anniversary, we are rethinking the task of leadership formation. In the next half century, AMBS will prepare men and women for ministry and mission in a Western culture that increasingly looks like the setting into which Priscilla, Aquila and others first spoke the gospel: a multi-religious world in which Christians are a minority—sometimes a despised minority—with little political power. AMBS will be preparing leaders for witness from the margins, for evangelism from a minority position and for church as a community of alternative allegiance.

Being Anabaptist is a gift, because ours is a long tradition of functioning at the margins. Our spiritual



memory includes persecution, perseverance, bold testimony and resisting the Powers. Mennonites recently have learned much from Catholics, Pentecostals, Evangelicals and others. It is urgent that we also claim our spiritual inheritance and bring forth the treasures of Anabaptism for ourselves and the whole people of God.

We need leaders who cherish the riches of this stream of renewal, who have the courage to lead the church into counter-cultural ways of the Kingdom of God. Otherwise Mennonites will be swamped by the forces of

consumerism, militarism and individualism so pervasive in the West.

Even as AMBS welcomes students and faculty from beyond the Mennonite Church, we are committed to remaining Anabaptist. Our calling is to embody central aspects of an Anabaptist vision: a biblically-ground people who confess Christ as Lord, worship God three-in-one and follow Jesus in a ministry of reconciliation in the world. Anabaptists emphasize discipleship, evangelism, community, economic sharing, peacemaking, service and hospitality. Mennonites will most productively engage other traditions, and best meet the needs of a suffering world, if we claim our own strengths.

— J. Nelson Kraybill

In *The Way is Made by Walking* (InterVarsity 2007), **Arthur Paul Boers** (Master of Arts: Peace Studies 1983 and associate professor of pastoral theology) shares insights and experiences of walking the 500-mile Camino de Santiago. The book and Arthur's reflections on nurturing faith through pilgrimages like this have garnered attention from media, such as Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "100 Huntley Street" on a Canadian Christian television network and the *Toronto Star*.

Vern Rempel (Master of Divinity 1986) completed a Doctor of Ministry degree in preaching at Iliff School of Theology, June 2007.

Rachel Epp Miller (Master of Divinity 2004) was ordained on February 24. She serves the San Antonio (Texas) Mennonite Church.

Panorama

When AMBS moved to Elkhart, it turned corn and soybean fields into a 43-acre campus. Now the city surrounds the campus, with cultural, retail and civic resources nearby. AMBS's setting now is reflected in these statistics and details:

Elkhart population: 51,874
 Elkhart median household income: \$34,863
 Languages spoken by students in Elkhart schools: 30

Within three miles of AMBS:

- Median income spans \$11,000 to \$69,000.
- 46% of the residents in some neighborhoods are African American.
- 31% of the residents in some neighborhoods are Hispanic or Latino.
- Eight Mennonite churches have meeting houses where seminary students worship and do internships.
- Elkhart hosts an annual jazz festival, an art museum, a symphony and a series of connecting city parks for recreation.

Within 20 miles of AMBS:

- The University of Notre Dame and Goshen College offer myriad music, sports and cultural events.
- A stable economy is based on manufacturing, educational institutions and service agencies.
- Diversity abounds, including Amish, Hispanic and Ukranian communities.

Spring 2008 Volume 18 Issue 2

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor, designer, photographer:
Mary E. Klassen

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*.



Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary

3003 Benham Avenue
 Elkhart, IN 46517-1999
 574 295-3726
www.ambs.edu

ARTBEAT

Visual prayers

Artist Karen Thiessen stretches Mennonite women's experience with textiles

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent
DUNDAS, ONT.

As Karen Thiessen puts it, her most recent show, "Shadow," is the confluence of two quotes:

- "In a dark time, the eye begins to see" (Theodore Roethke).
- "I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places" (Isaiah 45:3).

"Through this series I map the spiritual and psychological terrain of 'difficulty' through a topography of fabric, dye and thread," Thiessen, a member of Hamilton (Ont.) Mennonite Church, says. "Those situations that challenge, disturb, that



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.

**CANADIAN
MENNONITE**

induce crisis, chaos, or change, can be our greatest teachers. Difficulties disrupt our comfort zones and create openings for awareness, wisdom and compassion to emerge and grow.

"The 'Shadow' textiles were born out of difficulty. Most of the materials started out as mistakes or failures—my own botched screen prints and dye jobs, quilt tops and even entire quilts whose colour combinations didn't work. The 'Shadow' series has been my own greatest teacher."

Some of the works hung on the wall of her studio for years before they and God "told" her how they needed to be reworked in order to become successful works of art in their own right. Much like writers speak of fictional characters having minds of their own, Thiessen's works don't allow her to force her will on them.

She senses them as God flowing through her. But this flowing is not all of joy and peace. In a world where people are increasingly encouraged to distract themselves from the dark side of life, to "take a pill if you feel sad," she believes people need to embrace the darkness, despair and grief in their lives. And so the pieces have been mistakes that Thiessen has reworked, re-used and transformed.

The verse from Isaiah was the sermon reference at Hamilton Mennonite Church



Wearing her grandfather's hat and her grandmother's brooch, part of her cycle of life, artist Karen Thiessen poses with "Shadow: Hope No. 4."

the Sunday before the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. Even in the darkness that followed those acts of violence, God was present for Thiessen, and also through 2007, when she lost 11 significant people in her life. Quoting from Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*, she says, "Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding."

Using textiles, Thiessen follows Mennonite women's creativity, but these are no simple pieced quilts; instead they are "maps of the spirit and the soul," with holes, patches, and spiral embroidery, inviting the viewer to enter the cycle of life with all of its experiences.

The month-long show took place at the Carnegie Art Gallery in Dundas in March. ☿

/// Briefly noted

'Reaching up to God our Creator'

Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry and Mennonite Church Canada Christian Formation Council have developed a new aboriginal curriculum. Entitled "Reaching up to God our Creator," this resource will help aboriginal and non-aboriginal people learn about sacred teachings that reflect the wisdom of Christ and develop respect and understanding for aboriginal culture.

With components for children and adults—DVDs, storybooks, posters, teaching manuals and other resources—this curriculum is suitable for Sunday school classes, Vacation Bible School and other group settings.

"Reaching up to God our Creator" is currently being audited by the Nootka First Nation on Vancouver Island, B.C., and a Grade 5 class at Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School. Feedback from these groups will be used to fine-tune the resource before its official launch this July.

—Mennonite Church Canada Release

Calendar

British Columbia

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.

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.

May 23-24: "Come to the Table," a worship and arts conference. Speaker: John Bell of the Iona Community in Scotland. For details, e-mail Angelika Dawson at music@emmanuelmennonite.com.

June 5: Mennonite Educational Institute graduation.

Alberta

April 26: MCC Peace Event featuring UN human rights award winner and Oprah guest, Angelina Atyam of

Uganda at Woodcliff United Church, Calgary, 7 p.m. Call 403-275-6935 for more details.

April 27: Lethbridge MCC Thrift Shop volunteer appreciation event.

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

May 3: Edmonton MCC Thrift Shop 5th anniversary celebration.

May 3: Calgary MCC Thrift Shop volunteer appreciation dinner.

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.

June 3-4: Theological studies event at Camp Valaqua with Bryan Moyer Suderman; stewardship theme, "Our Money Talks," designed for church leaders. To register call Doug Klassen at 403-289-7172 or Jim Shantz at 403-485-2518.

June 7: Camp Valaqua Hike-a-thon. Call 403-637-2510.

Saskatchewan

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.

June 1: Prairie Falcon motorcycle rally, fundraiser for MCC.

June 1-3: Alban Seminar for pastors and church leaders at Shekinah Retreat Centre sponsored by MC Sask.

June 13-14: MCC Relief Sale at Prairieland Park.

Manitoba

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

May 3: Women in Mission Enrichment Day, "Oil for my Lamp," at Crystal City Mennonite Church.

May 14: Westgate work day.

May 16-18: Camp Moose Lake work-a-thon.

May 16-18: Fundraising Ultimate Frisbee tournament at Camp Assiniboia. Team registration by May 1 at Camp Assiniboia (204-864-2159) or Camps with Meaning (204-895-2267).

May 19-23: School of Writing at CMU.

May 23-25: Birding retreat at Camp Koinonia.

May 24: The Church Made Strange, a symposium at CMU to mark the retirement of Professor Harry Huebner. More information at cmu.ca.

May 24, 25: Faith and Life Choirs spring concerts, TBA (24), Mennonite Collegiate Institute (25).

May 26-28: Plus-55 Retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

May 26-30: Youth Ministry Course at CMU: Canada's Teens—Sociological and Theological Reflections.

May 28: Westgate grades 10 to 12 spring concert, 7 p.m., at Bethel Mennonite Church.

May 29: Westgate grades 7 to 9 spring concert, 7 p.m., at Bethel Mennonite Church.

May 31-June 1: Hope Mennonite Church 20th anniversary celebration. For more information contact 204-786-5077 or office@hopemennonite.ca.

June 11-14: 16th annual Believers Church Conference at CMU.

Theme: "Congregationalism, denominationalism and the body

of Christ." Visit cmu.ca/church-community/02_BelieversChurchConf.html for information.

June 13-14: Winnipeg MCC Festival and Relief Sale.

Ontario

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.

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

May 3: Menno Singers present "Partly English" at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener; 8 p.m. Featuring works of Parry, Elgar and Vaughan Williams.

May 10: Shalom Counselling fundraising breakfast and annual meeting featuring John Ruth at Crosshill Mennonite, 8:30-11 a.m. Order tickets at 519-886-9690 until May 5.

May 10: Springfest at Niagara United Mennonite Church with bake sale, garden centre, barbecue, silent auction, kids' stuff and live musical entertainment, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

May 14: Spring Concert at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, 6:30 and 8:00 p.m.

May 22: MEDA breakfast at the Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, 7:30 a.m. Speaker: Dale Bauman, VP Sales, MAX Canada.

May 24-25: 25th anniversary celebration of St. Clair O'Connor Community, Toronto. For more information contact s.gallant@scoc.ca.

May 27-30: Quilts for the World at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church with guest artists Needle Sisters, Elmira, 10 a.m.-8:00 p.m. (27-29), 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (30).

Briefly noted

'Come to the Table' conference on the arts in worship planned for May

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—Coming together to worship God is like a feast, and everyone has something to contribute. This is the idea behind "Come to the Table," the second conference on the arts in worship, planned for May 23-24 at Emmanuel Mennonite Church. Special guest will be John Bell, ordained minister in the Church of Scotland and a member of the Iona Community. He has an extensive background in the areas of church music and worship, and is primarily concerned with the renewal of congregational worship at the grassroots level. On the menu are Bell's keynote addresses entitled "Theology in the church's song" on May 23 and "Stumbling blocks and stepping stones" on May 24. Side dishes include workshops on worship planning, liturgical worship, jazz in worship, and such aspects of worship as the use of visuals, theatre, symbols and signs. Dessert will be a question-and-answer session with Bell. For more information, contact Angelika Dawson at music@emmanuelmennonite.com.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

May 30, 31: New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale at New Hamburg fairgrounds. Visit nhmrs.com for more information.

June 3: Lebold Fundraising Banquet with April Yamisaki at Conrad Grebel, 6:30 p.m.

June 4: Golf Tournament for Rockway Mennonite Collegiate at Willow Valley Golf Course, Mount Hope. Call 519-342-0007 ext. 3011 for information.

June 7: Willowgrove Golf Tournament, dinner and auction at Angus Glen Golf Course, Markham, 1:30 tee-off, best ball format. For information contact 905-640-2127 or ron@willowgrove.ca.

June 12-14: Write! Canada, Christian

writers' conference, for beginner to professional writers in Guelph. Visit www.thewordguild.com or call 519-886-4196 to register.

June 19: MEDA breakfast at the Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, 7:30 a.m. Speaker: Dave Erb, president, Erb & Good Family Funeral Home.

June 20-22: Zurich Mennonite Church 100th anniversary homecoming weekend celebrations.

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

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.

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate invites applications for full and part-time **TEACHING POSITIONS** in French (grade 7-10); German (grade 10-12) and Mathematics (grade 9-12). Teaching certification required. To inquire or apply, please forward a resume c/o Principal, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, 110 Doon Road, Kitchener, ON, N2G 3C8; Fax 519-743-5935; Email principal@rockway.ca

Classifieds

For Rent

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

For Rent: Basement suite in west Hamilton near university. Available Sept. 1. Female preferred. Call 905-627-4482 or e-mail corniesp@interlynx.net.

Employment Opportunities



WE ARE:

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

...growing God's goodness...

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

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

WE PRAY:

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

WE INVITE:

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



Stewardship Consultant

MFC seeks a full-time stewardship consultant to work in its Abbotsford, BC, office. This person will be responsible to provide charitable gift and estate planning services and to promote biblical stewardship of financial resources in our constituency churches in British Columbia.

The successful candidate will:

- Communicate effectively with individuals and in public presentations
- Have a good understanding of charitable gift and estate planning
- Be creative, organized, and self-motivated
- Support and incorporate MFC's stewardship mission in personal life
- Be willing and able to contribute as part of an interdependent staff team.

The position will be open on July 1, 2008. Processing of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Submit resumes to:

Erwin Warkentin, General Manager
12-1325 Markham Rd, Winnipeg, MB R3T 4J6
1-800-772-3257 fax: 204-488-1986
e-mail: ewarkentin@mennofoundation.ca
www.mennofoundation.ca

Advertising Information

Contact *Canadian Mennonite*

Ad Representative

Karen Suderman

1-800-378-2524 x.224

519-745-4507

advert@canadianmennonite.org



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 and www.oxfordhr.co.uk

Mount Royal Mennonite Church (Saskatoon, Sask.) is inviting applications for the position of **HISPANIC PASTOR**. The Mount Royal congregation 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 and will assume responsibilities relating to ministry to a Colombian immigrant Hispanic group in a congregation of about 250 members. Anabaptist faith orientation and training and some previous pastoral experience are strongly preferred. This person will speak, read and write Spanish fluently and have the skills, attitude, and vision to bring a leadership role to working with Spanish-speaking new Canadians. Familiarity with Colombian culture would be an asset. Interested persons are invited to visit our website for a complete job description and to submit a resume to:

MRMC Hispanic Ministry Search
610 Avenue O North
Saskatoon, Sask. S7L 2V3
Attn. Len Andres
Email mrmc@sasktel.net
www.mount.sasktelwebsite.net

Applicants are to respond by May 30, 2008. Start date is negotiable.



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 applicants for the following positions in September '08:

1. **FULL-TIME TEACHER** (term Sept. '08 through June '09) with duties in content areas which may include English, Religious Studies, Biology and junior Science. Ability to contribute to co-curricular programs is an asset.

2. Full-time positions (male & female) on **RESIDENCE STAFF** team. This is a 6 member team whose duties include programming & supervision of resident students, student leadership development, personal mentoring & other co-curricular involvement including athletics & fine arts. Experience and training in youth ministry is 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



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

Executive Director. Menno-Hof in Shipshewana, Indiana, is a vibrant Amish/Mennonite interpretive center celebrating 20 years of successful operation. Looking for an **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** to exhibit creativity and work with the board of directors to expand and refine vision for the future. Desired qualifications: strong knowledge of the Anabaptist faith tradition; ability to communicate issues of faith and culture passionately. Complete job description at www.menno-hof.org. Send resumes or inquiries to Leanne Farmwald c/o Menno-Hof, 510 S Van Buren St, Shipshewana, IN 46565 or lfarmwald@aol.com.

FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Trinity Mennonite Church is located in the rolling foothills of the Rocky Mountains between Calgary and Okotoks, Alta. We are a growing congregation with a current membership of 104 believers. The successful candidate will profess an Anabaptist Mennonite faith and willingness to learn and grow under the mentorship of the Lead Pastor and through congregationally supported formal education opportunities. We are active members of MC Canada and MC Alberta. Please apply to:

Associate Pastoral Search Committee,
C/O Search Committee Chair
PO Box 48082, Midlake PO
Calgary, AB T2X 3C7

<http://trinity.mennonitechurch.ab.ca/>
Email: Search@Trinity.MennoniteChurch.ab.ca



Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan Board invites applications for the position of **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**.

MCCS serves in Saskatchewan and engages people and resources from the province in the ministries of MCC around the world to provide relief, to promote community development, and to pursue peace and justice in the name of Christ.

The Executive Director is to lead the organization in such a way that, as people come together for this work, they are drawn into the passion and hope represented by the church of Jesus Christ and become actively engaged in its ministry. It is a full-time position with a three year renewable term. The start date is negotiable.

The Board is seeking an individual who exhibits a commitment to a personal Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Additionally, the person should have 5+ years in an organizational leadership position and a university graduate degree (or undergraduate degree and related life experience).

The successful applicant will be a humble servant-leader with proven ability to lead MCCS in planning, program development, public communications and resource generation in close collaboration with the Board, staff, partners, volunteers and supporting constituency.

A full position description is available at www.mcc.org or upon request.

Applications will be accepted until May 30, 2008. Send a letter of application along with a resume outlining how you meet the MCCS faith criteria and qualifications for the position to:

John Elias, Chair
MCC Saskatchewan Search Committee
600 - 45th Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7L 5W9
or email to: elias@shaw.ca

Connexus (Korea Anabaptist Center ministry in Seoul) seeks **ENGLISH CONVERSATION TEACHERS**. Opportunity for Christians with university degrees to learn, serve, teach, travel, earn and make friends! For more information, visit www.connexus.co.kr/english.

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/ for a job description. Interested applicants please contact:

Muriel Bechtel,
MCEC Conference Minister
muriel@mcec.ca
1-800-206-9356

CANADIAN MENNONITE

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Canadian Mennonite is seeking a half-time Graphic Designer for our national church magazine. A resume, design samples and references should be submitted by May 12, 2008. The salary scale, benefits, and a full job description are available on request. The position begins in June.

Duties include issue design and layout using our established design templates, helping solicit and select artwork, creating and placing ads, troubleshooting any ad or print problems, and online distribution of issue contents on our website and by e-mail. Applicants should have good skills in electronic page design using Adobe InDesign, in image editing using Adobe Photoshop, in prepress issues (using a cold-set web press) and in basic HTML. Some training is available to get applicants up to speed in unfamiliar areas if needed.

Location is preferably at our Waterloo office, but we will also consider remote arrangements. However, the designer needs to be reachable during business hours of production days to work with staff on the layout. The standard Graphic Designer work schedule is five days on followed by five days off.

Applicants should have a passion for the church and for *Canadian Mennonite's* ministry and mission. Come to serve and build up the church in this exciting way!

Direct inquiries and applications to:
Tim Miller Dyck, Editor/Publisher, *Canadian Mennonite*
490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
Phone: 1-800-378-2524, ext. 225
E-mail: editor@canadianmennonite.org

Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
May 12	April 29
	<i>Focus on Fair Trade</i>
May 26	May 13

Prayer for the least of these

Compassionate and gracious God, in these days of darkness,
when the forces of destruction are unleashed in the world,
we come to you, not knowing what else we can do
but throw ourselves upon your mercy.

We place into your care all who are affected and afflicted
by war and oppression—
those who are fighting,
those who are fleeing,
those who are wounded, orphaned,
homeless, hungry, dying.

Grant us the strength, O God, to pray, with Zechariah so long ago:
*“By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”* Amen.

MARY H. SCHERTZ

“NIGHT COMMUTERS NO. 1: SAFETY IN NUMBERS” / DIGITAL ARTWORK BY ROSS W. MUIR



Children and young adults—known as “night commuters”—make their nocturnal march into a protected town in northern Uganda, to escape possible capture by the Lord’s Resistance Army, which has been waging a two-decade-long civil war against the government using mostly child soldiers. The night commuters sleep in shelters, in doorways— or in the open—then they make their way back to their rural homes and schools. . . until the sun sets tomorrow night, when they will do it all over again.

... from the least of us