

CANADIAN MENNONITE

June 9, 2008

Volume 12 Number 12

Beneath the tremors: A firm foundation

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High octane living

TIM MILLER DYCK
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

I commend to you this issue's feature on climate change and creation care, where we bring you voices ranging from two Grade 9 Mennonite girls, to one of our church workers in this area, to a Mennonite scientist who was one of the authors of the world's most authoritative study on climate change published last year by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Research scientist Henry Janzen describes the science so clearly and understandably, and then goes on to beautifully, and poetically, connect this with our faith. I'm grateful to him for this gift to the wider church.

"Global warming is merely a symptom of deeper ills—a symptom of greed, of injustice, of violence to each other and to our Maker. It is a symptom of our selfishly squandering the gifts of God," he writes.

The apostle James writes, "*Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? You want something and do not have it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures*" (James 4:1-3).

James describes the same struggle

we have as Canadian Mennonites, tempted as we are at every turn to yield to our cravings, to get more, to covet, and spend, spend, spend on our pleasures.



I think Paul Fieguth's extended series on this subject has shed light on the connections between our actions and the lives of others.

There is a direct link between our consumption and the massive use of fossil fuels to subsidize our lifestyles, and the resulting changes in our global climate. Twenty-five percent of corn production in the U.S. now goes into fuel production, contributing to corn prices doubling in the last two years.

"It used to be fuel for people. Now it's fuel for cars," said Simon Johnson, chief economist at the International Monetary Fund.

We Mennonites, who have such a rich theology of not using weapons to harm others, need to see that we now use our money and power as weapons to make sure that the 20 percent of us richest people in the world continue to use 80 percent of the world's resources.

Will Braun's hard-hitting May 12 column on this subject shows the work that lies ahead. At the same time, I am hearing stories across the country of how Mennonites are making changes. While visiting Saskatchewan this spring, I heard about Camp Shekinah's plans

to start generating some electricity using solar power. Canadian Mennonite University and our church's seminary, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, have switched to using cutting-edge environmentally sustainable building designs. Last issue, you read about Rockway Mennonite Church's carbon offset program, the first I am aware of at a congregational level, and the new Mennonite Economic Development Associates' Green Investment Fund that is being used to offset carbon for travel to the global Mennonite World Conference next year in Paraguay. The right solution is to lower our emissions, not offset them, but it's still movement in the right direction.

Congratulations: I'd like to congratulate a number of CM staff people and writers that won awards for their work at last's month's annual Canadian Church Press Convention:

- First place for *media reviews*, including writing by Karin Fehderau, Vic Thiessen, Angelika Dawson and Mark Steinacher.
- First place in *service journalism* for "Other inconvenient truths/A cartoonist's perspective" by Ross W. Muir (on churches sometimes ignoring copyright issues with films or articles they use).
- Second place, *magazine news story* for "Protesting dialogue" by Dave Rogalsky and Ross W. Muir (our coverage of the Mennonite/Muslim conference last summer and the associated protests).
- Second place, *magazine opinion piece*: "Fragile Vessels" by Cam Harder (in our fall feature on Mennonite farmers and rural communities).
- Third place, *layout and design of a magazine* for our June 25, 2007, issue designed by Tim R. Dyck and Ross W. Muir.

ABOUT THE COVER:

A cross lies amid the rubble in front of the Mianzhu church following the May 12 earthquake that left tens of thousands of people dead in central China, including two Christian members of the Mianzhu congregation. For story and more photos of a Mennonite response to the disaster, see pages 16-17.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MC CANADA

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CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Mission statement: *Canadian Mennonite (CM)* is a bi-weekly Anabaptist/Mennonite-oriented periodical which seeks to promote covenantal relationships within the church (Hebrews 10:23-25). It provides channels for sharing accurate and fair information, faith profiles, inspirational/educational materials, and news and analyses of issues facing the church. In fulfilling its mission, the primary constituency of *CM* is the people and churches of Mennonite Church Canada and its five related area churches. *CM* also welcomes readers from the broader inter-Mennonite and inter-church scene. Editorial freedom is expressed through seeking and speaking the truth in love and by providing a balance of perspectives in news and commentary. *CM* will be a vehicle through which mutual accountability can be exercised within the community of believers; the paper also encourages its readers to have open hearts and minds in the process of discerning God's will.

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

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GORD ALTON

Electronic Delivery

All subscribers can get the complete contents of *Canadian Mennonite* delivered free by e-mail or view selected articles online. For either option, visit our website at canadianmennonite.org. The June 23 issue will be posted by June 19.

Carbon revelations

*How saving the environment leads us to Jesus' two most important commands:
Love the Lord your God, and your neighbour as yourself.*

BY HENRY JANZEN

W

hen I've let slip among friends that I study facets of climate change, I've sometimes sensed a furtive unease, a polite drift of attentiveness. We people of faith have not always talked easily about global warming. We worry, perhaps, that stressing too much such earthly questions might detract from more-pressing spiritual aims, that saving the environment will distract us from saving souls.

I wonder that, too. For now, though, my timid answer is this: Climate change deserves no special prominence in our churches, no bold-faced items in our bulletins. Rather—and this is harder—we might enfold it into our other faith-oriented aims. It's not a question of evangelizing less so we can preach environmental ethics more. We evangelize more by voicing and living our hope in the Redeemer of all on this earth. Saving the environment, then, is not a detour from the saving of souls; it's on the road that leads us there.

The issue

Our home on this earth is astonishing in grandeur, exquisite in grace and elegance. And, my biases notwithstanding, few facets of this creation are more enthralling than the relentless cyclical rhythms of carbon.

The air all about us contains this element as carbon dioxide (CO₂). Using sunlight, green plants trap this carbon gas, turning it into sugars. The earth's creatures—fungi, giraffes and people—then ingest this carbon and breathe it back into the air again.

And so the carbon atoms flit and flow around the planet, continuously being absorbed by plants, resting for a while (perhaps in soils as humus), before finding their way back into the air, over and over again, furnishing energy to countless creatures. This seamless



"RIVERSONG NO. 1" / DIGITAL ARTWORK BY ROSS W. MUIR



continuity, surely one of the Creator's finest touches, connects us all. The carbon fuelling your very thought this moment will soon escape your lungs, and one day soon may reside in someone's banana; the carbon in that rotting log in the park may one day appear in your french fry.

But CO₂ also serves another critical function—it helps keep us warm. Along with other greenhouse gases, CO₂ absorbs energy radiated from the sun-heated earth, keeping a layer of warmth next to its surface. We depend on this greenhouse effect; without it, our planet would be a frigid, barren place. If CO₂ in air increases too much, too quickly, though, the enhanced greenhouse effect might become uncomfortable.

And the CO₂ content has been rising because we've been messing with the carbon cycle:

- We began by cutting down forests, burning them, releasing in bursts of flame their carbon stores as CO₂.
- We ploughed up grasslands for farmland, advancing decay of soil carbon to CO₂.
- But most ominously, beginning with the Industrial Revolution, we have been burning fossil carbon—solar energy trapped eons ago by prehistoric plants— and spewing it into the air as CO₂.

And with more and more of us scabbling about and our demands for energy growing year by year, these emissions are hastening. Today, we emit about seven billion tonnes of fossil carbon into

the air each year, which averages out to about a tonne per person per year. Sadly, Canadians emit much more than that!

Although trees and oceans mop up some of that extra CO₂, they can't keep up. So the CO₂ in our air keeps rising. Before the Industrial Revolution its concentration was 280 parts per million (ppm); when I was a student it was 330 ppm; today it is 380 ppm; and every year now it goes up about another 2 ppm.

How will that affect our climate? Scientists cannot yet predict that exactly. The complexity of creation still confuses

Affected most by these changes will be the weak, the vulnerable, the poor... instead of the wealthy (us) who brought the changes about.

their best equations. Not least among the uncertainties is the behaviour of the planet's most capricious species: us!

But with passing time and growing understanding, it seems harder and harder to justify a waning optimism that nothing unpleasant will ever happen. The worries abound:

- Will the sea level rise, swamping the millions, like those in Bangladesh, who live on the ocean's edge?
- Will droughts and hunger visit Africa more often?
- Will we lose even more plants and animals, as they are squeezed from their habitats?

- Will diseases spread ever wider on a warmer earth?

Affected most by these changes will be the weak, the vulnerable, the poor—the ones largely innocent of causing the changes—instead of the wealthy (us) who brought the changes about.

Some still insist that we cannot yet predict the future easily, so let's wait until we know exactly what will happen. But waiting for certainty may only amplify our children's problems. The earth responds slowly and subtly to changes we impose on it, so the effects of our assaults on it

today will continue long after we have stopped.

Our response

Although consensus is now building among scientists, arguments about the impending warming still fester, even in Christian circles. But maybe such debates are misdirected, maybe they address the wrong question. For the deeper issue is not how much the earth is warming, but how faithfully we are stewarding God's gracious creation. Global warming is merely a symptom of deeper ills, a symptom of greed, of injustice, of violence to each other and to our Maker. It is a

symptom of our selfishly squandering the gifts of God.

Whatever our viewpoint, surely we can agree that, as a people of faith, we want to use energy more thoughtfully; to take more tender care of the land, the seas, the skies; to foster peace among us, for what ravages the earth and skies more than conflict?

Is that not precisely what is needed to avert climate change? Endless debates about science merely distract us. What counts is that we, worshippers of our Creator, become more frugal, more reverential, more far-seeing in how we live in God's handiwork.

Jesus says two commandments undergird all others: *Love the Lord your God, and love your neighbour as yourself.* Can we pretend to love God while trampling on a creation he deemed good? And can we pretend to love our neighbours while we smugly besmirch their skies? We are all connected. The CO2 from my sputtering Pontiac seeps into the skies of the Bangladeshi peasant; he, too, is my neighbour. And more sobering, the child still unborn—the vulnerable child awaiting innocently the consequences of what I do this day—she, too, is my neighbour.

How we behave on this land, graciously given by God to us and to our neighbours, surely affects our relationship to him. And surely it colours how others view our praise of God, and whether they want to worship him too. Will they be inspired by our love of the one whose exquisite gifts we trash?

What can we do?

Our first instinct might be to draw up lists of dos and don'ts—regimens and rules by which to judge our progress and each other. These must come, I suppose, but they are not the beginning.

The place to start is to see the majesty, to cherish the mystery, to exult in awe of what God has made. We moderns have withdrawn from creation. We dwell in insulated palaces and scurry about in motorized canisters of steel and glass, sealed from the wind, rain and starlight. We eat foods encased in plastic, plucked from sterile metal racks. We stare transfixed at flickering screens, forgetting how

Pontius' Puddle



to really see.

Seeing is the first step, for seeing leads to wonder. And wonder leads to worship. Who of us can gaze skyward at night, beholding light that left a star towards our eyes a thousand years ago, and not want to honour someone? Who can contemplate a grain of rice, knowing its sun-given energy may fuel a poetic phrase, and not yearn for someone to praise? Who can watch the tulip unfold from the long-frozen earth and not be driven to worship?

In thrall of wonder, then, we bow our heads in humble gratitude, honouring the life-breathing Creator of the mysteries about us. And we fall to our knees, repenting of having walked unseeing through mazes of miracles and trampled obliviously on artistry crafted with infinite care. Repentance, then, leads to joy anew in nurturing our little fragments of creation.

Sometimes we're tempted to ask, "But what difference does my paltry effort make? If humanity emits seven billion tonnes of carbon into the air each year, does the litre of gas I leave unburned by walking to work today really matter?"

But that evades the issue. I am not called to solve all global ills, but only to be faithful with the gifts in my care—the moment of time I exist in, the plot of land I walk on, the litre of gas I use (or not) today. I can be content with nurturing the sprout from a mustard seed planted, the litre of gas unburned, the newly planted sapling, the lesson of caring taught to a child, the fervent prayer of thanks for petunias.

The reward from each little act of stewardship may not be a world saved, but our own faithfulness confirmed. My little act of reverence may not change the world much, but it will change me. I

will be remade. Our acts of faith may not yet heal the earth, but they may awaken us. And having been transformed, we become the salt that pervades a world grown musty. Dare we dream what our Creator might make of that?

Finally, then, from our trivial acts of faithfulness comes hope. That, in the end, is our greatest joy and most urgent mandate—conveying hope to an anxious, troubled world. Despite all the ominous signs, all the wringing of hands and voices of gloom, there is hope—for we are not in this alone. We are stewards for the Creator, who, we believe, is intent on restoring what he has created and we have abused. We share the aims of the Creator, whose unrelenting plan, it seems, is to redeem, to reclaim, to resurrect.

The opportunity

As children of the Creator, we are invited by God to make known his love and forgiveness, and his enfolding care for us all. The question of caring for creation need not distract from that calling. Indeed, it's a new chance to show how much we reverence our Lord. It guides us to nurturing peace, defusing the violence that so destroys God's handiwork. And it gives us a chance again to be renewed and redeemed ourselves by an act of faithful devotedness to the God who longs to save us. ❧

Henry Janzen is a research scientist studying land use and its effects on the global environment. He was one of the authors of the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report and is a member of Coaldale (Alta.) Mennonite Church.



YOUNG PROPHETS

Putting a face to climate change

BY DARREN KROPF

Recently, we've seen increased energy expended on creation care within the Mennonite Church. In my many conversations on environmental issues, I've noted a number of reasons for this:

- Many see creation care as an inherently spiritual journey. Who can witness a beautiful sunset, or listen to the wind among the trees, and not experience the presence of God?
- Reports from the scientific community have raised awareness that something is seriously wrong with God's creation and humans are largely responsible.
- Caring for creation is, dare I say it, fun! Living simply and in harmony with creation is a life-giving experience that compels many to untangle themselves from highly consumptive and hectic lifestyles.

Need another reason to care for creation? How about because Jesus said so? Being a disciple of Christ implies caring for our brothers and sisters, something that is not new to us Mennonites. We have a faithful tradition of adhering to Jesus' command to care for the poor, seen most succinctly in Matthew 25. In this passage, Jesus puts a face to injustice, for Christ himself is one of the sick and hungry.

Similarly, Jesus challenges us to see his face in the marginalized people of our world, forcing us to recognize that each person is a beautiful child of God. To follow Jesus faithfully, we, too, must put a face to injustice by standing with our brothers and sisters against practices that harm the earth.

Unfortunately, the Mennonite Church hasn't consistently or forcefully proclaimed the connection between environmental destruction and human injustice. To some, caring for creation

is even at odds with social justice, as if protecting polar bears must come at the expense of raising people out of poverty. Yet God made us to be inextricably connected with the earth, so that any offence we commit against creation we ultimately commit against humans as well. It is time we remember our oneness with all of creation by putting a face to climate change.

Sheila Watt-Cloutier was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for her tireless efforts to raise awareness of the impact climate change has on her people in Canada's Arctic. The very survival of the Inuit people is threatened with warming temperatures breaking up ice, hunting populations struggling to survive and weather patterns changing significantly. She states very clearly, "We must give climate change in the Arctic a human face—an Inuk face."

The dignity of these proud people is being eroded because we have failed to understand that our contribution to climate change is having very real consequences for our northern brothers and sisters.

Thinking globally, there are many faces that will struggle to adapt to climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a series of reports on the impacts climate change will have on various regions of the world. It concluded that sub-Saharan Africa will likely bear the worst of these impacts, with scarce and irregular rains threatening subsistence farmers. By 2020, between 75 million and 250 million people are projected to be exposed to an

increase of water stress and decreased agricultural production.

If we see the faces of hungry children when we make crucial lifestyles choices—where to live, what food to consume or how we travel—we are more likely to be sure our choices will protect God's creation.

As a Mennonite Church, our response to climate change must come from the same source of motivation we've used to feed millions of people in need—faithful discipleship to Christ. Behind every act of injustice, including environmental degradation, there is the face of a child of God. When we truly see the faces of our brothers and sisters, we are moved into new relationships and new ways of living that bring God's peace to all. It is

time the Mennonite Church move creation care from an isolated issue on the fringes to the very core of being a people that is called to embody God's peace and reconciliation in the world.

In seeking to assist congregations in caring for creation, Mennonite

Central Committee (MCC) Ontario has developed the Creation Care AUDIT. It is designed to encompass personal and collective change, as well as spiritual and earthly renewal. The Creation Care AUDIT includes:

Awaken your church to creation care issues.

Untangle yourselves from an excessive carbon footprint.

Donate carbon taxes to the church.

Integrate your tax dollars to conduct a church-building energy audit.

Transform your church by becoming leaders in solar energy.

Through these areas, we can resist actions that have a large impact on the earth, while at the same time create new opportunities in energy conservation and solar energy, so that we might live in harmony with creation. ❧

Darren Kropf is the Creation Care Program coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee Ontario.



The next generation speaks out

Canadian Mennonite *excerpts two essays written by Melanie Cameron's Grade 9 English class at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont.*

Global warming and its effect on the Arctic environment

BY VANESSA SNYDER-PENNER

Global warming is the current crisis that is terrifying the global community. It is warming up the winters in some places and creating harsher winters in others. . . . The part of the world that is most affected by global warming, however, is the Arctic. The Arctic is warming almost twice as fast as the rest of the world, causing terrible damage to the ecosystem.

The Arctic environment is one of the most delicate environments on the planet. Because the environment is so delicate, there are many negative changes that are taking place. For one thing, the water is warming up. . . .

Arctic animals are at risk of losing their habitat, lifestyle and lives. One of the most greatly affected species is the polar bear. Polar bears swim out to floating ice, where they catch seals and fish to eat. Because the water is warming up, the amount of floating ice is greatly decreasing. Even if they do find ice, it can often be too thin to support the polar bear's weight. Polar bears end up swimming great distances to find food, and if they don't find it soon enough, they drown.

There is another important member of the Arctic ecosystem that we don't always think of as "in danger" from the effects of global warming. I'm talking, of course, about the Inuit. Global warming isn't only affecting our plants and animals; an entire human culture is being threatened. . . . We are losing an ancient human civilization to this catastrophe, and no one seems to care.

It is evident that the collapse of the Arctic will have negative repercussions

for the rest of the world. . . . [W]ith the melting of the Arctic, the sea levels will rise, creating vast amounts of flooded area and millions of refugees—not to mention the loss of a very unique culture and animals that you don't find anywhere else in the world!

The global community must step up and fight the looming destruction of global warming, or there will be nothing left of the planet we proudly call home. ❧

The fight against global warming

BY EMILY BRUBAKER-ZEHR

Are you driving to work today or planning a trip to the Bahamas? Fifty years from now, if we keep that up, there could be no work or no Bahamas! Transportation and our travel around the world have a big impact on global warming. Cars and other motorized vehicles like planes and trains send a

lot of carbon emissions into the atmosphere. These emissions get trapped in the ozone layer and heat up the earth.

Instead of driving short distances, we should walk or bike. This would be good for the environment and also for our health. If it is necessary to drive, then we need to carpool. This reduces the amount of cars on the road and the amount of carbon we emit and inhale.

Is your electricity bill sky high? Well, if it is, it's not just your bank account being affected; the world is being affected. People use so much electricity in their everyday lives. They are like human vacuums!

Our landfills are filling up! Where's the garbage going next—your backyard? We need to reduce the amount of garbage we generate, to save the environment. Remember this: Reduce, re-use and recycle. It takes a little more effort, but the earthly pay-offs are incredible. . . . Follow the three Rs to save money, time and, most importantly, the world from the horrible pollutants and carbon emissions. Keep the garbage from coming to your backyard!

If we pollute our world with carbon emissions, if we suck out too much electricity and if we create too much garbage, who knows where we will be in 50 years? You must act on this today, right now! Walk or bike instead of drive; turn off the lights; reduce, re-use and recycle! Step up to the plate and do something! ❧

❧ For discussion

1. Henry Janzen says that people of faith do not easily talk about climate change. Do you agree? What are your biggest questions, concerns or fears as you think about creation care and the environment?
2. Darren Kropf encourages Christians to undergo a creation care audit in order to reduce our impact on the earth. How hopeful are you that people will change in order to live more in harmony with the earth? Do you agree with Janzen that there is hope in small acts of faithfulness?
3. The Grade 9 Rockway students call us to step up and fight the looming destruction of global warming. Does the younger generation tend to be more aware of how energy is consumed than older generations? How much do you think about the effects on the environment when you go about your daily tasks?
4. The amount of energy expended for travelling has risen significantly in the last 50 years. What factors have led to this increase? What will it take to reduce our travel? How guilty should we feel about travelling for things such as short-term mission trips or to Mennonite World Conference?

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.

✉ Killing for peace is not an option, but fighting injustice is

I SAY, "WELL said," to Tim Miller Dyck, editor and publisher of *Canadian Mennonite*, for his editorial, "Overcome evil with good" (April 14, page 2).

I have on hand a paper from the Church of the Brethren General Board called "Take the Pledge," which states: "I won't fight to kill." "I will fight injustice." "I will fight hatred." "I will fight racism." "I will work to make sure that everyone has what they need to live as God intends."

For those of us opposed to "killing for peace," even as a last resort (as was implied by some in the "Caring for the least of these" feature article in the same issue), "overcoming evil with good" and "working to make sure everyone has what they need to live as God intends," should be a must, but it has to actually happen, not just be lip service.

I think it's fair to say much of this is already happening, but as we all know, there is also much room for improvement. We live in a suffering world; let's redouble our efforts, and more.

STAN PENNER, LANDMARK, MAN.

✉ Hard to trust governments with the responsibility to protect

THANK YOU TO Ross W. Muir and the contributing activists/scholars for their insightful and thoughtful reflections on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine ("Caring for the least of these," April 14, page 4).

It seems to me that a successful R2P is dependent upon a rational and cautious government. It is

dependent upon a non-judgmental analysis of available facts. The government in the U.S. is internationally upheld as the democratic model for the world to follow. However, in light of Iraq, it is neither rational nor cautious, and ignores non-judgmental thinking. If the U.S. can't properly implement its version of R2P, then how can citizens expect the rest of world to respond with care and wisdom?

Our own government is spending over \$1 billion per year in Afghanistan with questionable results. In addition to these dollars is the more serious personal destruction of Canadian and Afghan families with death and permanent disabilities.

Currently, our duly-elected federal government is quietly spending more than \$200 million dollars arming border guards with small arms. The decision to arm border guards was made without debate or discussion, and probably made with pressure from the U.S.

Even if one agrees with a policy of R2P, Canadians cannot trust our governments to make sound independent decisions. As Mennonites, we need to voice the alternative and, as Gene Stoltzfus pointed out, it is our "gift in a world teetering on the brink of self-destruction."

DOUG DURST, REGINA

✉ Children not present at the first communion meal

AFTER READING ALL of the articles on kids and communion in the April 28 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, I am concerned with what I have read. There were no Scripture passages to back up the discussions.

Please read I Corinthians 11:17-32. At communion, the bread we take represents Jesus' body; the wine we drink is Jesus' blood that he gave to wash our sins away. How do we respond? Have we confessed and made right the things we did wrong? If we didn't and then partake of the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper, we are eating and drinking damnation to ourselves (verse 29).

How many churches still have the Sunday before communion as a preparation Sunday? There was a hard sermon on making things right. You had one week to make things right. If things were not right, you didn't take the supper.

When Jesus had the Last Supper, they had it in an upstairs room—the 12 apostles, no children.

We need to praise Jesus for what he has done for us, but we cannot forget what is our part.

P.J. REMPEL, ROSTHERN, SASK.

✉ Mennonites should take Canadian government to court over 'war tax'

IN THE APRIL 28 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, Henry Rempel commends Benno Barg for his concern about military activities being carried out on our behalf by the government ("Alternatives to not paying a Canadian 'war tax' suggested," page 11). Rempel suggests two alternatives to paying the war tax. I would like to suggest a third.

When he was sworn in as prime minister, Stephen Harper made a solemn commitment, under oath, that he and his government would govern according to

the rule of law; his predecessors did the same thing. Nevertheless, the Canadian Forces, an arm of the federal government, consistently and repeatedly violates the rule of law. It did so when soldiers murdered three young men in cold blood in Somalia in 1993. In killing Afghan civilians, and turning prisoners in Afghanistan over to others who torture them, it continues to violate the rule of law today. Yet almost no one calls the Canadian Forces or the Government of Canada to account.

Mennonite Central Committee, the Mennonite Church of Canada and the Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches of Canada all have the intellectual

OUTSIDE THE BOX

I willingly have to

PHIL WAGLER

Every Sunday morning a stream of people make a stupendous countercultural declaration. They decide to gather as the church.

Although some youths might disagree, there are very few people who are dragged against their will to gather with Christians for corporate worship, where they experience life beneath God's Word, Christian conversation, mutual encouragement and pre-Swiss Chalet coffee.

Long gone are the days when stores were closed, playground swings chained and the western world screeched to a Sunday halt out of respect for the gathering of the faithful. These days we shop, golf, play hockey, read the paper or go to work without anyone so much as blinking an eye. Every day is mostly like every other.

This is the day of the truly voluntary, willing church. It should be wonderfully encouraging that anyone gathers at all, given the myriad of options and distractions, work schedules and family realities. For possibly the first time in Canadian history, the church gathered is a willing countercultural statement, and most Christians don't realize how rebellious they really are. If only they would!

We come together not because we

are forced to, but because we have to. Perhaps that sounds contradictory, but there is an enormous chasm between "force" and "have" in this case. No one in our culture is remotely forced to gather with other believers. There is no overt state pressure to be together. There is nothing in the wider culture that encourages or supports the corporate gathering of the church on Sundays, or any other day for that matter. Christians gather—whenever they gather—because of Jesus, because the Spirit draws, and because we have to.

So, we're not forced, but how is it that we "have" to gather? We have to because we who have determined to follow Jesus with shouldered cross need



Long gone are the days when stores were closed ... out of respect for the gathering of the faithful.

to be "unperverted." While it's true that the whole of life is given to God, that my whole life from breakfast to coffee-break to midnight snack is worship, I live in a world in which I am ever swimming upstream against a raging torrent of consumerism, idolatry, selfishness and indifference. Given that the following of Jesus is increasingly a lonely journey on

the street corners, in the factories and in the schools of our nation, it is increasingly necessary for Christians to gather. If we don't, we inevitably catch the common "cold" of our world, lose the fire of our first love, miss how beautiful Jesus is in the face of our neighbour, and begin to wither.

We simply have to be together as more than two or three—not simply so that hymnals get used, pastors have something to do, or offerings get collected—but because every day we are hammered by the perversion and ungodliness of our culture and we need the time together to "unpervert" ourselves, to remember who we really are, to support one another, love one another and hear the Word again, all in order that we may be re-commissioned to love the world as Jesus does.

We are a peculiar people. We're really quite strange. Every time Christians gather we are making a shocking declaration that there is another way and only

one Lord. We gather because we willingly have to. So, *"let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching"* (Hebrews 10:25).

Phil Wagler lives in Zurich, Ont. You can reach him at phil_wagler@yahoo.ca.

capacity, the technical skills and financial resources to challenge the Canadian government to make good its commitment to ensure that the rule of law prevails in Canada. We have the democratic right to do so. Further, I believe we also have the moral and ethical duty to do so (see Ezekiel 3:16-19).

I believe we could credibly challenge the government in a court of law—and the court of public opinion—to demonstrate that it is abiding by the rule of law, and that it is not using the taxes we pay to commit criminal acts. But are we committed enough to our Confession of Faith to do so?

A court challenge could be mounted on the basis of Part 1 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which states: “Canada is founded upon

principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law.” Another clause that could be used is Article 27, which states: “This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.” Our Anabaptist heritage has held since 1528 that paying the war tax is paying blood money.

We shouldn’t complain about paying taxes, but as followers of the Prince of Peace we should insist that, as a minimum, our taxes are used only in ways that are consistent with the rule of law and, preferably, in ways that create peace—rather than perpetuating the cycle of violence.

DAVE HUBERT, EDMONTON

FROM OUR LEADERS

Is this all there is?

GORD ALTON

In my travels, I am running into people who are discontented with church. Some of them are young adults who question the current functioning of church and dream of a new way of being church. Others are older adults, even some pastors, who have been in the church for years, and they wonder, “Is this all there is to Christianity?”

As I hear these people’s longings, I am reminded of Nicodemus’s encounter with Jesus (John 3). Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a faithful Jewish leader. However, for him, Jesus embodied a Jewish faith full of life, courage, truth, love and power, elements missing in his own faith. And so he secretly visited Jesus one night.

Many church people can relate to Nicodemus. They sense there is something missing in their Christian faith, and since they haven’t found it in church, they have looked beyond its walls—in workshops, retreats and books. They have done this searching in secret, like Nicodemus, not wanting to be judged by their Christian friends.

If Jesus were to speak to the modern-day Nicodemuses, I believe he would share the same message: “*You must be born from above.*” Normally this story has been interpreted to highlight the importance of Christian conversion. I see this story as stressing the importance of spiritual formation.

Jesus basically tells faithful Nicodemus that he is a follower of the flesh. In mod-



Many church people can relate to Nicodemus. They sense there is something missing in their Christian faith

ern language, the term flesh refers to the human ego. Our ego, made up of all our history, seeks to control our life, for it is fearful, self-centred and desires pleasure. Our ego shapes all of our thinking, feeling and doing, and as a result we become identified with our ego and our history.

We think this is who we are until one day, when we are in a place of openness, we encounter the Spirit of God in our life. When this happens, we become born from above, as Jesus says, for we discover our true identity as children of God.

Upon this spiritual birth, we are baby spirits, one could say, and there is an entire journey of development that our human spirit passes through until we are able to fully embody the fruits of the Holy Spirit like love, compassion, generosity, self-control.

This journey of spiritual formation involves continual acts of prayerful surrender, something our ego resists at every turn, for our ego wants control. As a result, a major part of this spiritual journey involves transforming our ego so that it slowly loses its ability to influence our life.

My hope is that the church will create

more settings where people can work intentionally at their Christian formation. As they do so, they will discover the “more” that can be found within Christianity—a life in which the Holy Spirit is more able to freely flow in their lives, thus allowing them to be even bolder and braver servants of Christ in the world.

Gord Alton is Mennonite Church Eastern Canada’s regional minister for the north-central region.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Bringleston—David Harry (b. May 2, 2008), to Alen and Amy Bringleston, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Cherry—Elijah (b. May 2, 2008), to Pascale Tranche-montagne and Stefan Cherry, Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Doherty—Eliana Joy (b. May 15, 2008), to Monica and Tim Doherty, Zurich Mennonite, Ont.

Epp—Marina Amalia (b. May 21, 2008), to Gerhard and Kathy Epp, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

Fehr—Julissa (b. April 11, 2008), to Andrea and Rolando Fehr, Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Friesen—Alexa Lynn (b. March 27, 2008), to Christina and Kevin Friesen, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.

Funk—Annthea Marie Jeske (b. May 15, 2008), to Susan Jeske and Eldon Funk, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.

Janzen—Jubilee (b. March 10, 2008), to Jennifer and Jeremy Janzen, Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Janzen—Vivian Claire (b. May 2, 2008), to Paul Janzen and Polly Stanley, Rockway Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Kauenhofen—Kumera Joseph (b. July 22, 2007 in Ethiopia) adopted by Connie and Wayne Kauenhofen, Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., March 10, 2008.

Klassen—Shannen (b. Feb. 10, 2008), to Rosalina and Uwe Klassen, Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Loewen—Max (b. April 18, 2008), to Dave and Maria Loewen, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Martin—Emma Kathryn (b. March 31, 2008), to Sarah (Hastings) and Taylor Martin, Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

Penner—Sebastian (b. May 2, 2008), to Cornelius and Liliane Penner, Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Schaub—Clara Grace (b. May 13, 2008), to Lisa and Mark Schaub, Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

Schroeder—Porter (b. Feb. 21, 2008), to Mary and Thomy Schroeder, Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Schroeder—Gabrielle (b. April 3, 2008), to Horst and Lizzy Schroeder, Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Shantz—Martin John (b. April 17, 2008), to Lisa and Marcus Shantz, Rockway Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Baptisms

Sara Dyck, Esther Franz, Megan Friesen, Christina Janzen—Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 11, 2008.

Christine Barkey—Community Mennonite, Stouffville, Ont., March 23, 2008.

Jessica Dyck, Melanie Dyck, Jocelyn Enns, Tamika Enns, David Harms, Sarah Lazar, Jeremy Penner, Christine Peters, Zach Publicover—Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 11, 2008.

Karly Chamberlin, Justin Friesen, Weston Smith—Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man., May 11, 2008.

Larry Fillion—Hunta Mennonite, Ont., May 25, 2008.

Beth Reimer, Stephanie Teichgraf—Niagara Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 18, 2008.

Cindy Caouette, Christopher MacDonald, Nicole MacDonald, Jonathan Wiens, Shauna Zacharias—North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 11, 2008.

Marriages

Dyck/Wilson—Chantel Dyck and Ben Wilson (Tisdale Pentecostal) at Rosthern Mennonite, April 26, 2008.

Epp/Jensen—Steven Epp and Monica Jensen, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 17, 2008.

Martin/Van Esch—Travis Martin and Janet Van Esch, Floradale Mennonite Church, May 24, 2008.

Deaths

Born—Abram Frederick, 88 (b. June 8, 1919; d. May 2, 2008), Carman Mennonite, Man.

Bowman—Grace (nee Shantz), 98 (b. Feb. 19, 1910; d. March 28, 2008), Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Ens—Lara Elizabeth, 39 (b. June 1, 1968; d. May 11, 2008), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Friesen—Katharina (nee Neufeld), 90 (b. Dec. 14, 1917; d. April 22, 2008), Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Head—Sally, 5 (b. Nov. 15, 2002; d. April 1, 2008), foster daughter of Reg and Rhonda Nickel, Carrot River Mennonite, Sask.

Martin—Norene (nee Bauman), 72 (b. Jan. 27, 1936; d. April 14, 2008), Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Rempel—Maria, 94 (d. May 19, 2008), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Ruediger—Susanne (nee Martens), 88 (b. Sept. 9, 1919; d. Feb. 19, 2008), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Steingart—Frank, 92 (b. March 20, 1915; d. March 14, 2008), Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Thiessen—Ben, 75 (b. April 9, 1933; d. May 21, 2008), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Toews—Philip, 85 (b. March 8, 1923; d. April 15, 2008), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Unger—Katharina, 93 (b. Oct. 23, 1914; d. May 17, 2008), Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Warkentin—Agnes (nee Driedger), 96 (b. April 27, 1911; d. March 9, 2008), Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Wiens—Larry, 54 (d. April 5, 2008), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Winter—Rev. Henry, 82 (d. April 24, 2008), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

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

LIVING WITHIN LIMITS: PART IX

Moving ahead in the face of change

PAUL FIEGUTH

Those who have been following this series may despair at the scale of the problem at hand. Indeed, it is very common for people, when first encountering the topics of peak oil and ecological limits, to feel overwhelmed, to wish to retreat to a cozy status-quo world and hope that these problems go away.

There are two difficulties, however:

- Barring spectacular progress in energy and agriculture, the problems of finite oil and ecological limits will not go away.
- It is in nearly everyone's short-term economic interest to retreat to a cozy status-quo world as long as possible. Our economy requires debt, consumption and growth, so advertisers, government and the media are highly motivated to perpetuate the status quo as long as possible, opposing transitions to a sustainable society.

Why can't we continue to live how we're living? And if problems come up, then we'll just adjust, along with the rest of the society, in some way or other. To some extent, this position is defensible—as long as difficulties don't arise.

My personal commitment to change stems from the following main reasons:

- **Concern for the future.** Using up the planet's capital is a terrible burden to place on future generations.
- **Concern for creation.** There is significant species loss and ecosystem destruction taking place because of our huge demand for energy and wealth.
- **Concern for my neighbour.** Our current lifestyle is already subsidized by the world's poor; I cannot live a life which systematically impoverishes others.
- **Concern as a pacifist.** I will not have others fight wars on behalf of my lifestyle!

I believe these are urgent and

compelling motivations for change. However, the lifestyle change that is needed is much more than changing the light bulbs or buying a hybrid car. We need a positive spirit, hope and faith, and a radical lifestyle change.

I think it is crucial to think of the issue positively. Not naively, in the sense of "I'm sure everything will work out alright," but rather as a challenge, a problem needing a creative response. Ministers, farmers, counsellors, teachers, politicians, urban planners, accountants,



We need to let go of a superficial dream that our children will be "better off" or wealthier than us, something I consider unlikely.

tradespeople and academics can all find really important aspects of these problems, relevant to them and to their work, which can be rewarding to think about and to work on.

The fact that I find the problems of ecosystem limits, energy limits and societal responses complex and fascinating, means that I can think about, write about and work on these problems without constantly finding myself depressed or upset. Seeing a problem and wanting to address it means to have hope for the future.

It is probably unlikely that we will successfully address the limits facing us worldwide; however, this does not mean that we need to descend into despair or negativity. As Christians, we act because we are motivated by a desire to be faithful. We are not the masters of our fate, nor are we the creators of creation. Faithfulness to God means caring for our world and living in a way that is fair to

our neighbour, but it also means being prepared to leaving certain questions in God's hands.

Next, we need to be prepared to let go of the status quo—not in a reluctant sort of way, but in a joyful or celebratory way—to release ourselves from its bondage. Although fossil fuels have brought us many physical comforts, we suffer more mental ones, including stress, depression, isolation and loneliness, compared to many poorer countries.

These and other things we may want to let go. For many people, Christmas and Easter are primarily a time of binge eating and material consumption. Similarly, many people spend more time commuting in traffic than they do with their families.

Many people will complain that significant drops in material- or energy-con-

sumption will have significant economic consequences. They're right; however, the economic consequences will arrive, one way or the other, and I see no joy or hope in the indefinite perpetuation of a broken system with no future.

My hopes for the future aren't economic. We need to let go of a superficial dream that our children will be "better off" or wealthier than us, something I consider unlikely. Instead, my hopes for the next generation are mental and spiritual; I would like them to be at peace, to have hope, to have a purpose and to understand their role in God's creation. ❧

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.

STORIES OF FAITH IN LIFE

Agents of hospitality

BY JACK DUECK

As agents of hospitality, restaurants make poignant demands on two counts: customer service and staff management. Christian restaurant managers encounter an added challenge to their spiritual creativity.

Grace (all names are pseudonyms) supervised several restaurants, four managers and 50 employees. By choice and conviction she was an Anabaptist Mennonite. At a Bible study on peacemaking, a theologian expounded on II Corinthians 5:16, noting that peacemaking starts with the principle of *“we regard no one from a human point of view,”* and on Romans 5:4: *“endurance produces character and character produces hope.”* “These,” he said, “are the key ingredients of peace. From these spring the good news.”

“It’s interesting to talk about this in a Bible study session, but how does this idea of character and hope translate into tomorrow’s secular business day?” Grace asked. “What are we? What is a peace character? How do we manage people with discipline and compassion, not merely regarding them as human pawns?”

Her query led her to some unconventional, even risky and controversial actions. No employee—especially those performing poorly and in need of correction and pointed evaluation—ever left her office without some affirmation. Often a difficult session ended with, “But are we, you and I, still okay?”

To the sullen and downcast, she insisted, “Look at me.” When they looked up, they saw an encouraging smile.

To the shock of some, a session ended with a raise in pay, in recognition of something positive, however slight, in their work. “I’m going to invest in you, you’re worth it,” she would say.

At a regional restaurant management seminar, Grace and seven colleagues sat silent, ill at ease. The morning topic, “How to manage employees,” evoked strongly confident, aggressive, no-nonsense responses from many of the attendees. “You’ve got to be firm and let them know who’s in charge,” one said,



It’s interesting to talk about this in a Bible study session, but how does this idea of character and hope translate into tomorrow’s secular business day?

while another chimed in, “Kids today are spoiled and just don’t want to work.”

“So what’s your approach to success?” the seminar facilitator prodded.

Answered one manager, “To shape them up, I tell these kids, ‘Half of you will fail. You only get two warnings. There are a lot of kids waiting at that door who want your jobs. Shape up or ship out.’”

The seminar air vibrated with such tough-guy tools for success.

At lunch, Grace’s group sat subdued.

“We must be the world’s easiest push-overs,” commented a colleague.

Another sighed, “When the convener asks us about our approach, we’ll be seen as wimps.”

The afternoon session opened with a focus on insurance and liability issues. The facilitator asked, “Since our food business encounters an increasing number of lawsuits, how many of you have been sued in the past five years?”

The tough-talkers from the morning session raised their hands. No hands were raised in Grace’s group, however.

“So,” the facilitator asked Grace, “how do you deal with employees?”

“We’re not really sure, but we try to train and relate to each employee on the

basis of who and what they are,” Grace responded. “We’re also fortunate, in that we get very few kids who don’t want to work. But we see them more than just kids to pass through. We try to match their personality to the task. And we try to start with them from where they are.”

When pressed for an illustration, Grace was reluctant, but the story of Mike the dishwasher emerged. “Soon complaints rose about his sullen responses to cooks and servers who needed a utensil—now!” she said. “He came on shift unfriendly, left grumpily. Had we threatened him with firing, he would have quit, only to face an already belligerent father. We met with him and found that he was particularly unhappy and overwhelmed, locked away in the steamy corner unable to deal

with constant demands. His comment was always, ‘If I died, I’m sure no one would notice.’

“So we assigned him a position bussing tables and relating to hosts,” Grace continued. “Soon he became the chief set-up person for banquets, even assisting the hosts. He developed real gifts for customer service. He began to arrive and leave cheerful. And he earned raises and commendation. We were all delighted when, years later, he graduated from university *summa cum laude*.”

“How do you advertise for employees?” the facilitator asked. “And what are your turnover rates?”

“We’re fortunate,” Grace admitted. “We don’t need to advertise. Our employees tell others. We have a waiting list. When someone plans to leave, applicants appear. Our turnover is very low.”

The facilitator turned to the others in the room with these words: “Ladies and gentlemen, so there is hope and good news for young people in the food industry.” ❧

E-mail Jack Dueck at ejadueck@gmail.com or visit his website at jackdueck.com.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Grassroots peacemaking

MC Canada joins campaign calling for the creation of a federal Department of Peace

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG

On April 19, the Mennonite Church Canada General Board approved a Christian Witness Council recommendation calling for the denomination to become a supporting organization of the federal Department of Peace movement.

As outlined on the campaign website (departmentofpeace.ca), the primary mandate of a peace department would be to rejuvenate and enhance Canada's traditional peacebuilding role in areas of nonviolent conflict resolution, human rights, and social and economic justice. As a central coordinating agency, this department would have the potential to "infuse all departments and agencies of government with an ethic of peace," the website says.

Several board members recognized MC Canada's endorsement of the campaign as an important response to growing mil-



has been growing at a grassroots level. In response to increasing levels of global insecurity and violence, some 69 countries are involved in the movement, including Canada, the U.S., the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia and Italy.

"To get a national government to think creatively enough to have a Department of Peace is a radical movement," says Janet Plenert, executive secretary of MC Canada Witness and a key player in presenting the recommendation before the MC Canada General Board. "It is clear that there are many places within the government where different peace initiatives could be lodged and discussed, but [these initiatives] are uncoordinated."

Plenert believes that the variety of organizations giving sponsorship to the campaign for a Canadian Department of Peace—from Christian and interfaith groups to non-faith organizations—is a strong indication of the common desire among Canadians to see the government adopt an ethic of peace.

In Canada, the movement is supported by former foreign affairs minister Lloyd

Plenert is encouraged by the grassroots nature of the peace department campaign, saying, "I find it quite inspiring and motivating because, as Mennonites, we also talk about the church being the people. As a grassroots Anabaptist Church, we believe that the Holy Spirit inspires all people and not just the hierarchy." She acknowledges that, although MC Canada's General Board has given blessing and hearty endorsement to the proposal as a sponsoring organization, grassroots involvement is needed to provide hands and feet for the effort.

On May 12, Prime Minister Stephen Harper unveiled a \$30 billion military budget over a 20-year timeline for its Canada First Defence Strategy. This may appear to fly in the face of a possible peace department, but Plenert remains hopeful. As a body of power, the government "will do what they will do, but ultimately they are responsible to the people through our elections. The government will feel pressure when it hears a groundswell of voices they cannot ignore," she says.

Some may be surprised to find Mennonites involved on a political level, since Mennonite polity supports the separation of church and state. "There will be others who will come back and say that we've always been political," notes Plenert. "So there are different perspectives. Is this political or is this not? Because we believe in separation of church and state does not mean we should ignore the state."

As the national church body, MC Canada's role will be to disseminate information to congregations and individuals, encouraging them to create local chapters to strengthen the campaign and intensify its influence on the government. ❧

'Because we believe in separation of church and state does not mean we should ignore the state.' (Janet Plenert)



itarization in Canada. Others suggested that MC Canada support might encourage other Canadian churches and individuals to follow. Currently, the United Church of Canada and the Canadian Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) also back the movement.

International support for the development of federal departments of peace

Axworthy and Senator Douglas Roche. Sponsoring groups include Mennonite Central Committee Canada, Conscience Canada, the Council of Canadians, the Dali Lama Foundation of Canada, the World Council on Religions for Peace, Nonviolent Peaceforce Canada, and YOUCAN, an organization for youth-led nonviolent conflict resolution.

Beneath the tremors: A firm foundation

*Response to Chinese earthquake begins,
Mennonite workers in the region all safe*

By **ROSS W. MUIR**
Managing Editor
SICHUAN PROVINCE, CHINA

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Mennonite Church Canada are both accepting financial contributions to help people affected by the May 12 earthquake in central China.

MCC and Mennonite Partners in China—a joint program of MCC, MC Canada Witness, Mennonite Mission Network (MMN) and Eastern Mennonite Missions, based in Harrisonburg, Va.—have committed an initial \$100,000 for earthquake relief and recovery efforts. They are providing \$20,000 to the Amity Foundation, a Chinese Christian partner organization, to help distribute water, food, plastic sheeting and other supplies to families whose homes were destroyed, and \$80,000 to churches in Sichuan province to purchase and distribute aid in affected communities.

“Depending on the level of giving that comes in, we can do more to assist Amity and the churches in responding to the needs created by the earthquake,” says Tom Wenger, MCC’s associate director for Asia.

On May 18, Peter Yuan, pastor of a church in Chengdu, Sichuan province, led eight mini-vans and sport utility vehicles full of church youths to a church in the earthquake-devastated city of Mianzhu, reports Mennonite Partners in China director Myrrl Byler. The group then split up, visiting eight villages outside the city, delivering food and supplies, including much-needed medicine. While most of the villagers were working in the fields when the quakes hit, many of their homes were

destroyed, burying their possessions.

“I just felt so sad when I saw their suffering,” Yuan says of his experience in Mianzhu, which included a short worship service, in which he preached and



PHOTO COURTESY OF MC CANADA



Pastor Peter Yuan distributes milk packets to survivors of the May 12 earthquake.

encouraged the local believers. Two Christians lost their lives in the earthquake and others were injured.

MC Canada Witness/MMN workers Todd and Jeanette Hanson are on the ground in Nanchong, near the earthquake’s epicentre, and are responding with immediate medicine and other supply needs, while ongoing gifts will also be needed to assist with long-term spiritual care and compassion ministry in the affected areas.

The Hansons wrote in an e-mail of their experience: “The shaking seemed to go

on for quite a long time. . . . The quake was centred in Wenchuan, northwest of Chengdu. We’re northeast of Chengdu. So far as we know, no one was hurt here. On our little walk, we noticed a shattered streetlight globe that had shaken loose, and noticed some soffit stuff that had fallen off. At Claire’s primary school, one of the old buildings apparently lost a few roofing tiles. But we’re all okay.”

Philip and Julie Bender, MC Canada Witness/MMN workers in Chongqing, about 350 kilometres from the quake’s epicentre, also sent an e-mail home. “The

PHOTO BY TODD HANSON



Earthquake survivors sleep outside in Nanchong, a city in China's Sichuan Province, after a May 12 earthquake destroyed and damaged homes and buildings in the city.

tremors here yesterday were quite sharp," Philip wrote. "I was out for a walk when they struck and didn't feel anything. However, when I started passing large groups of people on the street . . . I knew something was up. . . . Julie had been at home, in our 14th floor apartment, which shook. She and other foreign teachers around us exited quickly, along with the students on the other floors. All of our MC Canada Witness and Mennonite Partners in China colleagues are okay. Today's *New York Times* says that this is China's worst natural disaster in three decades. . . . Please remember China and the many who are suffering in your prayers."

Eight MCC workers are serving as English teachers at universities in the affected areas of Sichuan Province and Chongqing Municipality. All have been accounted for, and none were harmed in the earthquake, according to Kathleen Suderman, an MCC representative in Beijing. ❧

From Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Church Canada files.

'Please remember China and the many who are suffering in your prayers.' (Philip Bender)

PHOTO COURTESY OF JULIE BENDER



MC Canada Witness/MMN worker Julie Bender, right, and some of her students took part in a May 18 memorial service for the thousands of victims of the massive earthquake that rocked central China the week before.

/// Briefly noted

Rockway students feel close ties to earthquake victims

KITCHENER, ONT.—News about the earthquake in China hit close to home for many students at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate. Not only are there 15 international students from China studying at Rockway, 11 of them from Sichuan province, but a group of about 30 senior students recently spent three weeks there, mostly in Sichuan province, where the earthquake did the most damage. The Chinese students had some difficulty contacting their families, especially during the first 24 hours, when there were no telephone connections, but after a couple days they all had telephone or e-mail contact with their families and were assured of their safety. The Rockway students visiting in China spent a good deal of time at Xingdu No. 1 Middle School in Chengdu, which suffered some damage from the earthquake, but it was not as serious as the devastation in nearby areas. An e-mail from the school said all the students were safe. After a May 15 chapel service, at which the Chinese students offered a heartfelt description of the devastation in their homeland, the Rockway community raised nearly \$5,700 for Mennonite Central Committee's "China Emergency Assistance" campaign to purchase tents, tarps and plastic sheets for families whose homes have been destroyed.

—BY BARB DRAPER

Listening a vital step to resolve land conflicts

By GLADYS TERICHOW
Mennonite Central Committee
SASKATOON, SASK.

When Gary LaPlante stands on the crest of Stoney Hill, an historic site about 35 kilometres north of Saskatoon, he listens to the wind and senses a spiritual connection to all people whose identity is connected to this land. He also says that when he and other descendants of the Young Chippewyan Band stand here they feel spiritually connected to their ancestors—nomadic people who once hunted buffalo and considered the knoll a sacred place.

They also recognize that the European settlers and their descendants—mainly Mennonites and Lutherans—who have farmed the land since the turn of the last century and built schools, churches and thriving communities, also have a spiritual connection to the land.

“We need dialogue—that is the only way,” says LaPlante.

Listening to people talk about their experiences in a trusting atmosphere is an important step towards understanding and resolving outstanding grievances and injustices, he believes. This understanding, he says, brings about changes in public opinion at the grassroots level, adding that when public opinions change, governments are forced to respond.

Stoney Knoll, now called Stoney Hill, is a broad mound that provides an impressive view of agricultural cropland and river valleys between the North and South Saskatchewan rivers as they run from Saskatoon to Prince Albert. It is situated near the centre of a 78-square-kilometre triangular tract of land selected by Chief Young Chippewyan and the Plains Cree Band in exchange for signing Treaty 6 in 1876. The band lost this land in 1897, when the federal government—without consultation or compensation—assigned it to be part of a larger area reserved for



Mennonites Wilmer and Barb Froese, left, stand on the crest of Stoney Hill with Leonard Doell, coordinator of Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan's Aboriginal Neighbours program, and aboriginal spokespeople Milton McKay and Gary LaPlante.

Mennonite settlers.

In August 2006, a celebration marking the 130th anniversary of the signing of Treaty 6 took place on the knoll, adjacent to land owned by grain producers Wilmer and Barb Froese, who are also pastors of Rosthern Mennonite Church.

Although very little follow-up has taken place since the 2006 celebration, LaPlante believes the dialogue that started then will continue. “If we put our minds together, all of us, that is where the strategy will come from,” he says.

The Froeses share LaPlante's dream of working together to establish community-driven models of communication that demonstrate how people directly impacted by conflict can work together to bring about just and fair solutions.

Barb says that when she saw the teepees on the knoll during the 2006 celebration she recalled the fear she had felt in the 1970s when threats of violence had erupted over the unresolved land claim in their community, creating tension and fear. “We have to continue to be proactive,” she says, noting the celebration was the first opportunity for her and for many of her neighbours to meet people from the Young Chippewyan Band.

“What is important is that you come into a situation like this with a desire to understand other people and have a heart of compassion” adds Wilmer.

Milton McKay, who works for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations in the treaty governance office,

says more public education is needed to help everyone understand land development and colonization experiences in Canada. “The fact that we are still alive today, that we exist in this world, is a massive testimony to the strength and resilience of our people,” he says, noting that aboriginal youths also need to hear more stories of what “life was really like” before and during colonization. ❧

PHOTO BY JAKE NICKEL



On April 23, the Saskatoon, Sask., chapter of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) chose to highlight the connection of faith and business in the lives of two of their retired members: Ross Borne, a former insurance broker, and Wes Heinrichs, former managing partner of Caswell's men's clothing store. They were honoured for their integrity and community involvement, both in church and civic affairs. Pictured from left to right: MEDA board member Paul Tiessen, Ross and Hedi Borne, and Elsie and Wes Heinrichs.

From the ground up

Young greenhouse entrepreneur learns as he goes

BY GLADYS TERICHOW
Mennonite Central Committee
BOW ISLAND, ALTA.

Creating and maintaining a perfect growing environment for a crop of 14,000 peppers is a rewarding challenge for a young entrepreneur in this diverse agricultural community southeast of Calgary.

"A greenhouse is a brand new idea for us. It is a brand new learning experience," says Peter Dyck, 23, whose family moved to southeastern Alberta from the Manitoba Colony near Cuauhtémoc, Mexico, in 1993, when he was nine years old. Nine years later, at the age of 18, he became manager of a new family business venture, Prairie Oasis Farms, which grows peppers in a 4,000-square-metre hydroponics greenhouse that are then packed and distributed by a co-op in nearby Redcliff, Alta.

"You just learn as you go," he says. "You have to be willing to try new ideas. You do a lot of reading and research. You meet with consultants and go to conferences and meetings to be with other people who understand the business."

His parents, Abe and Tina Dyck, and their six children moved to Canada 15 years ago following a prolonged drought in northern Mexico, where they were farming. "We had to go somewhere else to make a living," says Abe. "We have no education, but we have knowledge of farming." After working for another farmer for five years, Abe purchased land near Bow Island, an agricultural service centre of just under 2,000 people.

In the past 15 years more than 10,000 Mennonites from Latin and South America have moved to Alberta, according to Ruben Bueckert, manager of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) services for Low German Mennonites in the province. They are descendants of the Canadian Mennonites who moved to Latin

MCC PHOTO BY JOANIE PETERS



The greenhouse industry is a new learning experience for Peter Dyck and his father Abe Dyck.

employment services; health services; and such government services as helping people get their social insurance numbers, driver's licences and family allowances.

America in the 1920s and '40s. Many have returned to Canada for reasons of poverty in Latin and South America.

The Dyck family exemplifies the innovative entrepreneurial spirit that Mennonites from South and Latin America bring to Canada, Bueckert says, noting, "They see an opportunity and make things happen."

When they first arrive in Alberta, many take advantage of settlement and support services available at the MCC resource centre that recently moved to Taber from Lethbridge. "We play a very small role in their resettlement, but it is significant," says Bueckert, noting the MCC centre provides information; referrals and support on issues related to housing; public education for children; English language classes; training and adult education programs;

Peter wants to follow the example set by his parents and develop a business that will be a "Christian light in the community." His goal is to provide a good work environment for employees and to use the business as a means to provide financial support to church ministries in Canada and other countries.

He also wants to follow the example set by his parents to support MCC. His parents are avid supporters of the Mennonite *Treffen*, a gathering of newcomers hosted by MCC, as well as other projects. Bueckert notes that many of the people using the services of the MCC centre support other MCC ventures in their communities, including donating time and resources to support thrift shops and relief sales, and to sit on advisory boards. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Mining dispute displaces community

TANZANIA—A small community forced to relocate to an old courtroom nearby when an international mining company moved in, is receiving help from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). MCC has joined with the Christian Council of Tanzania to provide food, clothing and blankets after the mining company, which owns the nearby Geita gold mine, informed the people in the community last summer that they were going to explore for gold on their land. The villagers filed an appeal in the High Court of Tanzania to receive just compensation but, before any action was taken, the local authority and Tanzanian police force unexpectedly moved the people from their village. The 258 men, women and children were moved to a courtroom without adequate food, water or sanitation, and have been living there ever since. In addition to food, clothing and blankets, the Christian Council also plans to advocate for the villagers by taking the issue to the Tanzanian government.

—Mennonite Central Committee Release

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Reaching out

Home Street Mennonite's 'Third Usher' program makes the homeless welcome at church

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

Four years ago a few members of Home Street Mennonite Church committed themselves to getting to know their church's neighbourhood, a low-income area in the core of the city. Homeless or transient people would frequently stop by for a hand-out, but little was known about the people who lived in the neighbourhood.

The group refers to that initial study year as its "mustard seed year," from which the seed of an idea would germinate and take root. Members spent the year visiting social agencies in the area, inviting in local leaders, doing some volunteer work, participating in a neighbourhood clean-up and going for neighbourhood walks.

"At the end of that year we looked at what we had learned and what we could do more intentionally about how we welcome guests on a Sunday morning," says Judith Friesen-Epp of the experience. "We decided to offer them a place to sit, to offer them coffee and a bit of food—but not hand-outs. We wanted to make it relational. We didn't know if they would stop coming, but people have come in droves, some very regularly."

For the past three years, members of the small group, known as the "Third Usher," have taken turns bringing food, preparing coffee and welcoming those who come by every Sunday morning before worship. The visitors share the basement space with children who begin their Sunday school hour with lively singing. Sipping coffee, eating bread and cheese, and visiting with each other, the visitors seem to feel at home amidst the usual flurry of activity.

The Third Ushers—and occasionally others from the congregation—sit at the



Arlyn and Judith Friesen-Epp, left, and Byron Rempel-Burkholder, right, members of Home Street Mennonite Church's "Third Usher" group, discuss food justice issues with David Northcott of Winnipeg Harvest, an organization that distributes food to the needy in and around Winnipeg.

round tables with the visitors and listen to their stories, look at stained and faded photos pulled out of plastic bags, or hear exchanges about what transpired in the past week. Those who are homeless and transient often talk about families they haven't seen for years, the Third Ushers learned.

"There is an oral culture on the street," says Judith. "Almost every Sunday new people come by."

Occasionally some find their way up into the sanctuary and join the congregation for worship.

"They have participated in sharing time and in communion. There have been some very poignant moments," notes Judith, recalling one communion when "one of our low-income aboriginal people slid into the pew beside me to have communion with me. There is so much that separates who we are, but here we were, united in the act of communion."

Arlyn Friesen-Epp adds that there have been other such poignant moments: "We've heard stories of sharing when there is so little to share, the story of the death of a son, the need to forgive."

"Many of their lives are fraught with tragedy and yet there is community there, and we get occasional glimpses into it. So many biblical stories just spring to life in the table

conversations," says Arlyn as he recalls the time a woman embraced her son's killer.

An important part of the Third Usher group is the monthly meetings when members take time to reflect biblically and share about their Sunday morning encounters. There have been challenges bridging the different cultures and worlds, they acknowledge.

"It's more than coffee. They come to share significant news, like 'my brother died,' or they come asking for prayer," says Judith.

Although Third Usher grew out of the initiative of a small group, it receives the support of the congregation.

"In the past there was little consistency in how we would respond as a church to the people who showed up at our door," says Byron Rempel-Burkholder. "Now there is greater consistency and also a sense of security for everyone."

The ongoing work and reflection of this group—currently comprising seven official members—is resulting in more mustard seeds being planted. It has organized open meetings to discuss and learn more about food security and food justice issues. Many in the congregation have responded with interest and even passion. ☿

PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

The more things change . . .

Under new leadership, the MC B.C. Inspirational Day featured a number of new ideas but kept its traditional mission focus

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

When B.C. Mennonite women met for their annual afternoon of inspiration and fellowship last month, many noted how much things had changed over the years—and yet how some things remained familiar even after many decades.

Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church women hosted the May 4 event with the theme “Grow where you are planted.” This was the first year members of a single congregation coordinated the event in the absence of an organizing committee from the no-longer-existing B.C. Mennonite Women in Mission.

Different this year was three featured speakers instead of one. Betty Kampen, Janet Bergen and Joyce McElhoes each addressed a different aspect of the theme.

Kampen talked about the different plants she has grown and compared them to the Christian life with God as the master planter. “Are we growing in [the fruits of the Spirit]?” she asked.

This year’s B.C. Inspirational Day was different in many ways from years past, but the group kept tradition alive by singing the original mission hymn chosen 69 years ago, “The Work is Thine, O Christ.”



PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

Bergen spoke about Jeremiah’s call for the Israelites to establish roots, and shared about a time in her youth when she hurt her nose, had to be hospitalized and was overwhelmed with the outpouring of love from many people. “My crooked nose is a constant reminder of God’s surpassing love for me,” she said. “What is the injury in your life that remains broken?” she asked.

McElhoes, who works at the Cyrus Centre for homeless youths in Abbotsford, cited the parable of the withered fig tree in Luke 13 and the gardener who wanted to give the tree a second chance. McElhoes called for compassion as she said, “I know youths who were those barren fig trees. I know adults who wanted to cut them down.”

Closing the service was the customary memorial to women who had passed away during the year. Different was the use of candles in the shape of a cross, instead of roses, but the group again sang the traditional mission hymn chosen 69 years ago, “The Work is Thine, O Christ.”

Of the \$4,796 in offerings received, half will go to the Mennonite Family Centre in Zaporozhye, Ukraine, with the other half split between Camp Squeah and the Cyrus

Centre.

Over a fellowship supper, a number of long-timers reminisced over how the spring inspirational day has evolved.

Helen Epp of Aldergrove recalled that it used to be the biggest social event of the year, a rare time that women got away from home responsibilities. While this year’s event drew 160, attendance in years past was often 500 or more. “There wasn’t a church that could seat us all. I think there were always two settings [for supper],” Epp said.

Former presidents Veronica Thiessen and Marie Rehler of Yarrow, B.C., talked about the switch from German to English in the mid-1960s, and the formality of the event, with the executive members wearing fancy dresses and corsages.

Sue Kehler of Abbotsford believes the Inspirational Day still has its place. She pointed out that MC B.C. churches no longer have joint ventures such as music fests, so “this is an event where women find identity. It brings more unity to us.” ❧

/// Briefly noted

Vietnamese outreach expanding to Abbotsford

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—A new ministry to Vietnamese people is starting in Abbotsford. Nhien Pham, pastor of Vancouver Vietnamese Mennonite Church, began work on May 7, making contacts with the Vietnamese community in the area and getting acquainted with local people. He will be working out of an office at Emmanuel Mennonite Church one day a week. Plans are to begin a Bible study group, with the hope of eventually forming a Vietnamese congregation in the area. If things go well, Pham hopes to have a regular Vietnamese worship service on Sunday afternoons or evenings, with children attending Sunday school classes at Emmanuel Mennonite.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

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Becoming Mennonite

Sri Lankan congregation seeks to become first Tamil Mennonite church

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent
MARKHAM, ONT.

Markham Christian Worship Centre began with five people in 2001 and now numbers 75 for worship, many of whom are refugees from the Sri Lankan civil war. The congregation worships at Hagerman Mennonite Church in Tamil, with translation to English for both non-Tamils and for youths who prefer English. Sunday school for children and youths is in English.

Pastor Simon Pathmanathan works full-time outside the church, yet puts in the equivalent of another full-time



Ken Wellington, left, former pastor at Wideman Mennonite Church, Markham, Ont., is pictured with pastor Simon Pathmanathan, Kapilan Savarimuthu and Roy Jeevaratnam, all of Markham Christian Worship Centre, at MC Eastern Canada annual delegate sessions in Leamington earlier this year.

job—spiritually caring for people in need and sharing the good news of Jesus with them. He is on call four weeks a year and visits at the Markham-Stouffville hospital regularly, especially ministering to the many Tamil-speaking patients. He describes his ministry as one of being with people in need



by listening and caring. When they ask why he cares, he tells the patients about his relationship to Jesus Christ and the church

that he co-pastors.

Joseph Savarimuthu, the other pastor, is paid half-time by the congregation.

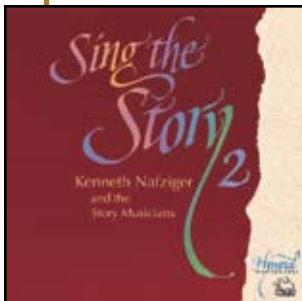
Pathmanathan has been in contact with Wideman Mennonite Church in Markham since 2002, which led the congregation to gather food, lanterns, baby supplies and money when a tsunami devastated parts of Sri Lanka in December 2004.

Pathmanathan took three weeks off work without pay, paid his own way to Sri Lanka, distributed the goods from Canada and used the money to buy local food for the victims.

This assistance by the Wideman congregation, together with the cultural similarities of mutual village-like care, drew the Tamils to the Mennonites. Now they are teaching themselves how to act as Christians in society, as well as how to respond to enemies with the love of Jesus Christ, instead of weapons.

Pathmanathan uses the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* in his class. He and Savarimuthu hope to reach both Tamil- and English-speaking people in the Markham area, and to become the first Tamil Mennonite Church.

They have begun the application process for “emerging church status” in MC Eastern Canada. ▮



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Nourishing the Spirit

Arts and worship leaders 'come to the table'

By AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

A feast of sight, sound and spiritual refreshment awaited those who attended a conference on the arts and worship in late May at Emmanuel Mennonite Church.

This was the second "Come to the Table" conference in B.C., co-sponsored by Mennonite Church B.C., the Columbia Bible College Worship Arts Program, Bakerview Mennonite Brethren Church and Emmanuel. John Bell, hymn writer, ordained minister of the Church of Scotland and member of the Iona Community, was the keynote speaker.

'Discipleship is shaped by what we sing when we first came to faith.'

Bell opened Friday night's plenary session with a message on the power of hymns and worship songs to shape spirituality for life. "What we sing will shape what we believe," he said. "Discipleship is shaped by what we sing when we first came to faith." He also urged those planning music in worship to ensure there is a "good balanced

Hymn writer John Bell of the Iona Community in Scotland was the keynote speaker at last month's "Come to the Table" conference in Abbotsford, B.C.

diet" of songs.

On Saturday, participants could choose to attend various workshops on liturgical worship, embodied worship, visual arts, symbolism/ritual, and jazz in worship. A Saturday morning session by Bell centred on the place of ancient Scriptures in contemporary contexts.

Keeping with the theme of the weekend, three different kinds of tables decorated the church stage: a children's table, a rustic table made of crates with boxes for seats, and a beautifully set table with damask tablecloth.

Heidi Epp of Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, who prepared the tables and added to them throughout the weekend, explained that each represented one kind of table at which worshippers may find themselves, "a table God sets just for us." Symbolic communion elements adorned the side of the sanctuary, with large banners of Christ at the front.

At a question-and-answer session with Bell more visual aids were used, including



PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

a fountain symbolizing Christ as the living water. The climax of the weekend was a time of singing together.

According to planning committee member Angelika Dawson, the "Come to the Table" conferences are well received and likely will continue every other year.

Many participants voiced appreciation for all aspects of the conference.

Jane Grunau, who helps lead worship at Langley Mennonite Fellowship, said she appreciated Bell's reminders that "worship always needs to begin with Scripture," and, "Worship is not about us, but God." ❧

/// Briefly noted

Pastoral changes in three West Coast churches

BRITISH COLUMBIA—Kerry Palmer, pastor of Eden Mennonite Church in Chilliwack for the past five years, resigned effective April 1. Palmer and his family are planning to go into ministry in Asia later this year. Eden youth pastor Rob Brown has been appointed lead pastor, effective immediately, and a search committee is looking for a new youth pastor to start in September.

- Pastor Jeff Wall of Wellspring Christian Fellowship in Abbotsford recently resigned and has returned to New Mexico to pursue further ministry. The two remaining part-time pastoral staff and congregational lay leadership are leading in preaching and teaching as the congregation looks at different options for the future.

- Sherbrooke Mennonite Church in Vancouver has announced that James Wittenberg will begin as senior pastor beginning Jan. 1, 2009. Gerald Neufeld is serving as interim pastor until that time, while Russ Klassen remains as youth pastor.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

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IMPACT building global Mennonite Church

BY LISA WILLIAMS

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
KITCHENER, ONT.

Fifteen pastors were drawn together from April 24 to May 5 for a life-changing and life-giving experience. IMPACT (International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together), a program of Mennonite Church Canada, drew seven international pastors and eight MC Eastern Canada pastors into deep discussion about

'The kind of peace that we embrace does not come through power and military engagement....'

what it means to extend the peace of Jesus Christ to the world. International guests arrived from Ukraine, the United Kingdom, Burkina Faso, Congo and South Africa, while MC Eastern Canada pastors came from both urban and rural congregations in southern Ontario.

Upon his acceptance into the program, Vasya Shevchenko from Ukraine began six weeks of intensive English training. Both Shevchenko and Leon Pula from South Africa preached in English for the first time during their stay in Canada.

Through Bible study, congregational contact, casual conversation and simply having fun, participants developed and nurtured relationships with each other. Focusing on the Lord's Prayer and on peace, the pastors brought unique perspectives from their own ministry settings.

One way the IMPACT pastors explored the theme of "extending the peace of Jesus Christ to the world" involved a visit to Canada's capital and Ottawa Mennonite Church. As the group passed through security in a tour of the Peace Tower as part of a visit to the Parliament Buildings, Claire Osinkosky of Preston Mennonite Church, Cambridge, Ont., and Claire Traore of

PHOTO BY JANET PLENERT



Claire Traore of Burkina Faso, left, and Claire Osinkosky of Preston Mennonite Church, Cambridge, Ont., created a stir at the Peace Tower with their peace-promoting T-shirts.

Burkina Faso required special screening.

Both women were wearing identical T-shirts bearing the theme words of this year's program—"Seek peace and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14)—a gift given to each participant at the beginning of their exchange

experience. The security guard called his supervisor to ask if the T-shirts would have to be removed, since items bearing political or religious statements are not allowed. After a brief interchange, both women were allowed to continue on the tour, their T-shirts intact.

Said Osinkosky afterwards, "I did think it seemed ironic that the words, 'Seek peace and pursue it,' from Scripture would be considered controversial in the Peace Tower. As I walked through the Peace Tower, I realized that it was a monument to peace won through the self-sacrifice of

soldiers in wars. The kind of peace that we embrace does not come through power and military engagement, but through the self-sacrificing love that Jesus demonstrated. We proclaim in five words that there is another option, that God's love can make a way where there seems to be no way."

Many of the international pastors experience a sense of isolation in their ministry, as they may lead the only Mennonite church in their region or perhaps even their country. Several pastors expressed appreciation for theological conversations with their colleagues and the opportunity to provide and receive support and encouragement from each other.

Steve Schumm, pastor of Hamilton Mennonite Church, shared his hope that his fellow participants would have a sense of community fostered by the IMPACT program. He spoke of the inspiration he experienced from his fellow pastors in knowing that they would now be holding each other in prayer as they continue to minister in their home settings.

Hendrike Isert Bender, co-pastor at Nith Valley Mennonite Church, stated that the world had become a little smaller and God's people a little bigger through this experience.

As the pastors broke bread together in their final worship setting it was evident that, although a week earlier they had been strangers, that was no longer the case. Their final worship moments were holy, as the participants each took the opportunity to pray for their exchange partner. Prayers in French, English, Russian and Afrikaans united in a common, spiritual voice to God. ❧

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

African IMPACT participants Leon Pula of South Africa, left, Claire Traore of Burkina Faso, Mubenga (Benjamin) Wa Kabanga of Congo, and Daouda Traore of Burkina Faso share a song at the closing program at Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite Church on May 4.



PERSONAL REFLECTION

Overcoming problem laces

*Annual IMPaCT session brings together
different worlds and viewpoints*

BY DARREL TOEWS

I was constantly bending down to tie the ever-loosening lace on my left shoe. The lace on my right shoe was no problem.

For those of us caught in the postmodern world, walking with an untied lace, while rather uncomfortable and often distracting, is not an unusual occurrence. On the other shoe, foundational assumptions remain unexamined—tied up—in their political, socio-cultural religious wrap.

It was certainly a wonderful privilege to share almost two very full weeks of IMPaCT (International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together). One purpose of this Mennonite Church Canada program is to promote personal and ecclesial connections among global Mennonite clergy, and we encountered just such a growing fellowship as an important component in building up a reconciling Peace



Church. Unanticipated but wonderful outcomes were the deepening of pastoral relationships in MC Eastern Canada (the host area church this year), and connecting with the various translators of this officially bilingual event as well as with personnel from both our national and area churches.

Our international guests were exposed to a number of MC Eastern Canada settings: from Nithview Home in New Hamburg to Montreal Mennonite Fellowship, and the annual spring delegate sessions held this year at United Mennonite Educational Institute in Leamington.

Observing that MC Eastern Canada is buttressed by a generous group of congregations—old and new, alive in faith and seeking to live out their understandings of the gospel in each locale—our international friends expressed amazement at the structural range, from camps, schools,

seniors residences and financial organizations to the numerous social and religious programs of worship, education, community and witness.

But we postmodern North American and British Christians, who enjoy our very progressive and relatively wealthy social environs, learned again from our African and Ukrainian brothers and sisters that our prayer life is shallow and that our Scripture reading is almost non-existent, an evaluation which unfortunately may be all too true.

Formal exchanges by pastoral participants on the theme, “The peace of Jesus Christ,” were usually quite stimulating and fostered some significant theological re-

lection. One important question circled around the willingness of Jesus’ followers to be peacemakers in our various contexts.

We were blessed to hear Arnold Snyder, a history professor at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., provide an historic Anabaptist context for the spiritual concept of *Gelassenheit* (yieldedness). Suggesting that peace is not so much an ethic as a spiritual condition or rule, Snyder proposed a simple human “impossibility”—that of the gentle, loving and nonviolent life.

As our time together progressed, a visceral visual image presented itself as paradigmatic—seeing eye to eye, looking honestly and lovingly from our unique perspectives while simultaneously striving to see from each other’s point of view. During significant times of sharing personal life stories, song, prayer and breaking bread

together, we learned that different is not deficient. We recognized our varying settings as gifts from God to be celebrated and the necessity of gospel translatability in culturally appropriate fashion.

While the global Mennonite Church is represented by many faces from a multitude of cultures and contexts, we nevertheless gather around a common bundle of beliefs and practices, not the least of which is our extraordinary commitment to being a Peace Church as central to the good news of God’s kingdom in the world.

Unfortunately, there was virtually no time allotted for any free-time activities. The planning teams outdid themselves in attempting to ensure a “hothouse” experience. The idea that our host congregations would also be exposed to an international Mennonite pastor was fine in theory, but practice limited that faint hope to two or three events: public worship, a potluck and perhaps a small group. The IMPaCT pastors also attempted to work their way through the Lord’s Prayer line by line, day by day, but again—due to very long days and tight timeframes—this corporate discipline faltered.

But not all our time was engrossed in

During significant times of sharing personal life stories, song, prayer ... we learned that different is not deficient.

deep theological exchange. There was laughter as an African friend attempted to skate on very slippery ice, oohs and aahs at the mighty Niagara Falls, wonderful tours of the Peace Tower and the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, and many humorous attempts to practise another conversational language with our new friends.

It is enlightening to humbly offer and receive hospitality, to enjoy the company of brothers and sisters from another land, and to begin to evaluate the practice of enculturated faith from a variety of perspectives. Hopefully the IMPaCT encounter will continue. Perhaps we’ll yet walk with both shoelaces somewhat untied.

Darrel Toews is pastor of Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite Church and was a participant in this year’s IMPaCT sessions.

GOD AT WORK IN US

Leading leaders

New denominational minister looking forward to nurturing national church pastors, laity

By AARON EPP

National Correspondent
SASKATOON, SASK

Although she doesn't start until September, Mennonite Church Canada's latest denominational minister is looking forward to beginning her new job.

Leadership, support, encouragement, resources—these are all things Karen Martens Zimmerly hopes to bring to the role. “My hope and my dream is to work very closely with the area churches—including the area church ministers and the executive staff of the denomination—and really listen and find out where the challenges within MC Canada are,” she says by phone from Grace Mennonite Church, the Saskatoon congregation she and her husband Terry have co-pastored for more than 15 years. According to her, the continual development of leadership models that will serve the church—so that the church can serve the world—is paramount because “that’s what we’re called to be, the church present and active in the world.”

Leadership development is a key part of the job description, Martens Zimmerly says. With the recent pastoral trends survey, MC Canada staff have done preliminary work to find out what the joys and challenges of being a pastor are, and she is eager to be a part of the process to discern what comes next. That will include asking a number of questions: “What are the most effective ways to call pastors and nurture them?” and, “How should MC Canada call young people to pastoral ministry and other avenues of church involvement?”

Martens Zimmerly knows her new role will have its challenges, but says that God calls the church to work together through differences and difficulties. MC Canada may not know what lies ahead, but that’s always been an aspect of what it means to be a part of God’s people, she says, citing

Pentecost as an example. Pentecost was a time Jesus’ followers couldn’t have imagined but, nonetheless, they were called to come together and pray for what was happening.

“That’s really my sense of what’s happening in the denomination right now,” Martens Zimmerly says. “Preparatory work is being done. We don’t know exactly where it will lead and I’m being invited to enter that work at this point.”

She points to the diversity within MC Canada. Different churches will find different ways of calling and equipping people for pastoral or other ministries, but the common denominator should be good role models within the church, she maintains.

“As adults, we need to model for [young people] lives of faith that are strong, vibrant and connected to our church communities, as well as in the larger communities we’re a part of,” she says. “We need to show that we are excited about what God has the potential to do and is already doing, and invite young people to participate.”

Connecting with people and working together with them is one of the similarities Martens Zimmerly sees between caring for the spiritual health of a congregation and caring for the spiritual health of an entire denomination. Developing a vision for the church is also something that happens at local and denominational levels. One difference she sees is that the denominational minister role requires more “big-picture thinking” than being a pastor in a local setting does. Being denominational minister means “seeing the big picture of what’s happening in one area of the denomination and being able to bring that to area church leadership,” she says.

Tobyann Willis-Camp is the chair of the board of deacons at Grace Mennonite, and has known Martens Zimmerly for five years. She says Martens Zimmerly “will be a great blessing” to MC Canada. “Karen is someone who doesn’t just barge in when a discussion needs to happen or a decision needs to be made,” says Willis-Camp. “She’s someone who looks at everything. She sits, she looks, she listens, she asks questions, and then she listens some more. Then she advises.”

Martens Zimmerly has an ability to call

people to roles in the church and nurture them along the way, Willis-Camp says. When she began attending Grace Mennonite with her family in 2002, Willis-Camp didn’t imagine herself eventually being in leadership. She credits her current role as a deacon in part to Martens Zimmerly. “Every step of the way, Karen’s

been really great at saying, “These are things you can do, and if you have any questions, we can talk. Don’t fret about these things. Pray about them, talk about them, and let’s see what can happen.”

Muriel Bechtel, conference minister for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, is looking

forward to the fresh insights Martens Zimmerly will bring. “To have someone coming in who represents the age group of a significant number of our current MC Canada pastors is important,” Bechtel says. “I think, from that perspective, Karen will help us understand what pastors need, and what kind of leaders the church needs as we look to the future.” ❧



Martens Zimmerly

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ROSTERN JUNIOR COLLEGE PHOTO


After stops in Memphis, Tenn., to visit the site of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination and Graceland, home of the late Elvis Presley, and in New Orleans, La., to take a tour of the Hurricane Katrina-battered city aboard the paddleboat "The Creole Queen," two dozen Rosthern (Sask.) Junior College students took part in a volunteer assignment with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) in Pass Christian, Miss., helping repair four different homes at various stages of construction.

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ARTBEAT

FILM REVIEW

Ironic, Man

Iron Man.

Directed by Jon Favreau. Starring Robert Downey Jr., Gwyneth Paltrow and Jeff Bridges.
A Paramount Pictures/Marvel Entertainment release, 2008. Rated PG.

REVIEWED BY VIC THIESSEN

Part way through *Iron Man*, this spring's first big hit movie, Obadiah Stane reminds Tony Stark that Stark Industries built its innovative energy device, called the "Arc Reactor," as an instrument of peace designed by a company that specializes in designing and manufacturing the world's most advanced and deadly weapons. The fact that the Arc Reactor itself becomes an instrument of death is therefore "pretty ironic, man." But even more ironic is how

war-profiteering." Stark's answer: "I guarantee you the day weapons are no longer needed to keep the peace, I'll start making bricks and beams for baby hospitals."

This is good stuff, and it continues when Stark returns from captivity in Afghanistan as a new man. "I saw young Americans killed by the very weapons I created to defend them and protect them," he admits. "And I saw that I had become part of a system that is comfortable with zero-accountability . . . so, effective immediately, I am shutting down our weapons program."

Wow! And when Stane reacts to this news by saying, "Your father, he helped give us the atomic bomb. Now what kind of world would it be today if he was as selfish as you?" we can surely be forgiven for thinking that we are watching a film that is using irony to condemn the American weapons industry and the whole military-industrial complex. Unfortunately, such thinking would be premature. For no sooner has Stark stated that he is shutting down his weapons program than he be-

gins work on the ultimate weapon—Iron Man.

the filmmakers fill their film with irony and yet don't seem to realize it themselves. *Iron Man* is full of clever writing and wry humour, with many wonderful lines superbly delivered by its two central actors, Robert Downey Jr. (who plays Tony Stark to perfection) and Jeff Bridges (great as "baddie" Obadiah Stane).

Before his "conversion" experience in a cave in Afghanistan, Tony Stark is naively casual about his role as a weapons designer, saying things like, "My old man had a philosophy: 'Peace means having a bigger stick than the other guy,'" to which a journalist responds, "A lot of people would call that

And all such lines suggest the writers are aware of the irony. But to say the film itself sustains little of this irony would be an understatement.

After seeing the movie, my daughter said, "On the surface, *Iron Man* seems to be the tale of a man who discovers the

error of his ways, repents and starts on a journey of redemption."

But Stark's journey is short-circuited by inconsistent writing, which prevents him from seeing the irony of his own deadly use of weapons. The audience, likewise, is expected to applaud Stark's use of redemptive violence. And a film that begins by challenging the weapons industry is left suggesting that weapons are okay in the right hands; the problem only arises when you sell them to the wrong people. In other words, guns don't kill people; people kill people.

Not only will *Iron Man* the movie not cause anyone at the Pentagon to lose sleep, but by the end we are wondering whether Iron Man the character will soon be working for the Pentagon. If only *Iron Man*, which is an otherwise well-made, well-acted, funny and enjoyable superhero film, hadn't allowed the final irony to be that the most ironic film of the year wasn't ironic enough. ☹

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



Photo Contest

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Send them to:
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our Flickr photo pool
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Details on prizes and judging are at our
website, canadianmennonite.org.

**CANADIAN
MENNONITE**

/// Briefly noted

“Living inside out” the theme of 2009 MC Canada youth assembly

CARONPORT, SASK.—Planners of Mennonite Church Canada’s 2009 youth assembly promise it will be about more than wearing your heart on your sleeve. It will be an opportunity for participants to figure out just how God is working in their lives—and embolden them to tell about it as well as live it. From July 6–10, 2009, youth participants will gather to discover tools for “Living inside out.” The theme is based upon Colossians 3:12–17, which calls God’s chosen people to cloth themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience as they live according to the Word—characteristics that shape the “inside” and inform the “outside.” The assembly will be held at Briercrest Bible College and Seminary in Caronport. For 2009 only, the youth assembly will not be held in conjunction with the adult delegate assembly. Pam Peters-Pries, executive secretary of MC Canada Support Services, says it’s a matter of timing. “The Mennonite World Conference will be holding an assembly in Asunción, Paraguay, at the time we would normally schedule our delegate assembly,” she notes. “To avoid scheduling conflicts, we felt it was prudent to schedule our Canadian delegate assembly for an earlier date.”

—Mennonite Church Canada Release

Shekinah Retreat Centre planning another Adventure Challenge

WALDHEIM, SASK.—On July 26, participants in the fourth annual Adventure Challenge will canoe, bike, run or climb ropes as they race against teams and individuals. The event was proposed by a number of youths after the former cyclathon was discontinued. “The idea didn’t cross over,” says camp administrator Lorne Friesen, who admits the camp has felt the loss of funds since the cyclathon ceased. The upside of the change, however, is that more people outside the Mennonite community have been exposed to Shekinah. For the serious competitors, a nine- to 12-hour race has been developed. Calling it “seriously upgraded,” Friesen wants participants to know there will be a big bang for their buck this year; registration costs \$225 per team or \$75 for individuals. A second level of the challenge targets those who prefer leisurely walking; known as the recreational level, this walk costs \$25 and prizes are given out for best dressed, oldest and youngest team members, as well as the highest score. Registration ends on June 27.

—BY KARIN FEHDERAU

/// Calendar

British Columbia

July 13: Picnic celebrating 35 years of MCC thrift shops in B.C., King Road MB Church. For more information contact MCC B.C. at 604-850-6639.

July 14–18: MCC camping week to visit with Aboriginal neighbours on Vancouver Island. For details contact Darryl Klassen at abneighbours@mccbcc.com or call 1-888-622-6337 or 604-850-6639.

Sept. 19–20: MCC festival auction and sale at Tradex, Abbotsford.

Sept. 27: Prince George Mennonite Fall Fair at the Civic Centre in Prince George.

Alberta

June 29: Springridge 80th anniversary and picnic at Spring-Glen Park with speaker Jerry Buhler, 10:30 a.m.

July 4–5: MCC Relief Sale and Auction at Millennium Place, Sherwood Park.

Oct. 11–12: Coaldale Mennonite Church 80th anniversary celebration. For more information, call 403-345-3363.

Saskatchewan

June 20–21: Rosthern Junior College presents “Pirates of Penzance,” 7:30 p.m. All seats reserved.

June 21: RJC decade reunion groups meet. Alumni supper.

June 22: RJC graduation: Baccalaureate service at Rosthern Mennonite Church, 10:30 a.m. Graduation exercises in RJC gym, 2:30 p.m.

June 28: Southern Valley Foodgrains Bank charity sale near Hague.

July 20: Farewell for Bruno Baerg, MCC Saskatchewan director at Barn Playhouse, 3 p.m.

July 26: Shekinah Adventure Challenge.

August 23–25: Green Trek: A Christian Call to Creation Care. Contact MC Sask office.

October 19–21: Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly conference in Saskatoon.

Manitoba

June 20: World Refugee Day at Central Park, Winnipeg, with music, dancers and special guests, 4–10 p.m. For more information call 475-3816.

June 21: Camp Koinonia fundraising golf tournament at Winkler Golf Club.

July 1–4: Family camp at Camp Moose Lake.

July 5: Cycle Clear Lake for MCC Manitoba. For more information visit mcc.org/Manitoba/bike or contact hila@mts.net.

July 7–8: MC Canada delegate assembly, “Living Faithfully,” at CMU.

July 8–10: Joint MC Canada/MC USA Summit, “At the Crossroads: Promise and Peril” at CMU with speakers Tom and Christine Sine, April Yamasaki and Tom Yoder Neufeld.

July 12–13: Grace Mennonite Church 50th anniversary celebration with barbecue and program (12), worship, lunch and reflections (13). Register at gracemennonitechurch.org.

July 16: Drive the Ball to Ukraine MCC Manitoba Golf Tournament.

Aug. 2–3: 40th anniversary celebration for Braeside Evangelical Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. BBQ and worship, Sat. (2), 5:30 p.m.; Sun. worship 10:30 a.m. (3). Register at braesidechurch.ca.

Sept. 6: Morris MCC Auction and Relief Sale

Sept. 7: MCC Alumni barbecue.

Sept. 26–27: Brandon MCC Relief Sale

Oct. 3–5: Work weekend at Camp Moose Lake.

Oct. 17–19: Scrapbooking retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

Oct. 25: Workday at Camp Koinonia.

Ontario

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 celebrations. Historical displays and tours (20–21); dinner and evening of music (21); worship at 9:30 a.m. (22). Register at Zurich Mennonite Church, Box 131 Zurich, ON, N0M 2T0.

June 20–22: Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter weekend at Futures Inn, Cambridge, 7:30 p.m. (20) to 4 p.m. (22). Call Marjorie at 519-669-8667.

June 21: Strawberry social at Nithview Home, New Hamburg, 2–4 and 6:30–8 p.m.

June 22: 60th anniversary celebration at Nairn Mennonite Church. Call

519-232-4425 or visit naim.on.ca.
mennonite.net for more information.

June 21: Willowgrove and Glenbrook Day Camp 40th anniversary celebration.

June 27-29: Hidden Acres Family camping weekend. To book a campsite or more information contact 519-625-8602 or info@hiddenacres.ca.

June 29: Transport for Christ truckers Sunday sponsored by Milverton Mennonite Fellowship. Truck parade from Milverton Co-op, 9:30 a.m.; church service, 10 a.m.; barbecue lunch. Call 519-595-8762 for details.

July 14-18: Please join our "Beach party" daily Vacation Bible School at Leamington United Mennonite Church, 9 - 11:30 a.m.

Aug. 8-9: Schürch Family Association reunion at Selkirk. For more information, contact Betty Sherk at bsherk@interlog.com or 416-431-0650.

Sept. 8: First rehearsal of Mennonite Mass Choir to sing Handel's *Messiah* (Dec. 13) at First Mennonite, Kitchener. Contact www.mennosingers.com to register.

June 4-8, 2009: Sound in the Lands II, a festival/conference of Mennonites and music at Conrad Grebel University College.

U.S.A.

July 24-27: Bridgefolk summer conference, "Holiness the Road: Saints and the spirituality that sustains them," to discuss Catholic and Mennonite understandings of holiness and sanctity at Saint John's Abby, Collegetown, MN. Visit bridgefolk.net for more information.

July 25-27: Southern Africa reunion for alumni of MCC and mission agencies at Bethel College, North Newton, KS. Contact Norma Johnson at 316-283-4018.

Nov. 6-9: MEDA presents Business as a Calling 2008, "Dividends of Hope" at Columbus, Ohio. Visit meda.org or call 717-560-6546 for details.

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

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Tavistock Mennonite Church invites applications for the part time position of **ASSOCIATE PASTOR**. It is an exciting opportunity for the right person to grow within a vibrant, inter-generational ministry. Primary duties would include equipping volunteer leaders, offering pastoral care, preaching and supporting the spiritual formation and missional work amongst youths and young adults. We believe in personal spiritual formation and professional training throughout one's term of service. We are conveniently located close to Waterloo university campuses and Stratford's arts community. A suggested job description is available from Muriel Bechtel, MCEC Representative, muriel@mcec.ca.



DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is a church-based relief, development and peace organization with international and local programs that seeks to demonstrate God's love by serving among people suffering from poverty, conflict and natural disasters. MCC BC has approximately 100 workers, over 2,000 volunteers and an operating budget of approximately \$10 million. The Director of Finance and Administration for MCC BC reports to the Executive Director and is responsible for planning, organizing, reporting and directing all accounting functions including the supervision of accounting staff and ensuring compliance with MCC policies, government regulations and general accepted accounting principles. This position is also responsible for administrative functions including the management of office equipment, information systems, buildings, insurance and administrative staff. This is a full-time position based in Abbotsford.

MCC workers share a personal commitment to Christian faith, active church participation and non-violent peacemaking. Other qualifications for this position include; support for the mission of MCC, familiarity with MCC and our supporting churches, certification in a professional accounting association, 5 years of related experience in a management role, knowledge and experience related to the not-for-profit charitable sector, proficiency working with computer systems and accounting software, experience with policy development, ability to work effectively in a collaborative team environment, and strong inter-personal and administrative skills.

Please send a cover letter and resume to:
 Attention: Marie Reimer, HR Director (confidential)
 MCC BC, Box 2038, 31414 Marshall Rd., Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 3T8
 Or fax to: 604-850-8734 or e-mail to: hrdirector@mccbc.com.

Interviews will start in June and will continue until a qualified candidate is found. Check the website www.mcc.org/bc for more information on MCC and a detailed job posting on this and other positions.

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Please contact: Search Committee Chair
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Complete job description available on MCC's website at www.mcc.org/serve. To apply send cover letter and resume to Cath Woolner, 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1 or cathw@mennonitecc.on.ca.



MCC Saskatchewan [MCCS] seeks applications for a **RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COORDINATOR** to facilitate justice practices, education and advocacy within the MCCS constituency and its communities, including the intersecting agenda of Peace and Justice with Aboriginal Neighbours and Treaty Justice.

The full job description is available on the web at mcc.org/sask. All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith and discipleship, active church membership, and nonviolent peacemaking. For further information contact Dorothy Bartel at 306-665-2555 or email: dbartel@mccs.org. Applications will be considered until June 30, 2008.

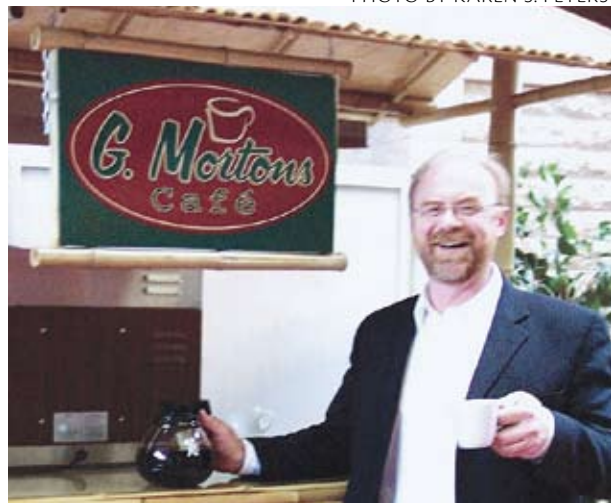
The Winnipeg MCC Furniture Thrift Store is looking for an **ASSISTANT MANAGER**. Part-time paid position that can lead to full-time. Duties include training and supervising volunteers, moving furniture, maintaining supplies, and administration. Experience with store and office equipment an asset. Position may include bookkeeping and accounting duties.

Please apply to: Jona Leppky at: 18 Keewatin St. Winnipeg MB
Phone: 694-3669
Email mccfts@shaw.ca



The fifth annual Woolwich-Grey Cluster Road Hockey Tournament was contested at Elmira (Ont.) Mennonite Church on April 13. Approximately 60 people of various ages showed up for a great day of sportsmanship and competition. Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton were the victors, while Zion Mennonite Fellowship were the consolation champions. Also “icing” teams were Bethel Mennonite of Elora, and Listowel, Floradale and Hawkesville Mennonite churches.

Church snapshots



When the local Tim Hortons became the popular alternative to adult Sunday school, the Steinbach (Man.) Mennonite Church Worship Committee decided to take action, opening a fair trade coffee cart in the foyer to help stem the tide of congregants rushing out the door for their caffeine fix. In honour of lead pastor Gary Morton, who is on a first-name basis with the local Timmy's drive-through staff, the committee named the coffee cart after him.



More than 70 volunteers at Niagara United Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., organized, prepared and served the annual Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) dinner, which raised \$2,245 for the MCC Relief Sale in New Hamburg on May 31. The evening also included a book drive for aboriginal schools.