

CANADIAN MENNONITE

September 1, 2008

Volume 12 Number 17

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EDITORIAL

Stitched together by God

TIM MILLER DYCK
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

In my last editorial, I described worshipping with and meeting my sisters and brothers in Christ at Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton. The congregation has many refugees and recent immigrants from Africa, including George Mutabazi from Rwanda. Over lunch, I asked him about his experiences.

He told me how much he had appreciated the visits and help from Holyrood and Edmonton's Mennonite Centre for Newcomers when he first came to Canada. "When you are a Christian and get to a Mennonite church, it is a place to feel safe, share with others the Word of God and keep your Christianity, and raise my daughter in a way that is good for her," he told me. In Africa, he had never heard of Mennonites, but the welcome and practical care that Holyrood showed him when he came brought him into its fellowship.

I also asked him what stood out for him at the church in comparison to his experience in Africa. "In Africa, the worship is very different," he said. "If someone comes in [there], it can interrupt the timetable and take longer. Here, it is really, really organized."

As he said this, I was seeing in a new way how upright our worship life is sometimes!

The experience of blending cultures and backgrounds is especially visible in our churches that have large numbers of newcomers to Canada, but it goes on in many ways across the entire Canadian Mennonite Church.



I remember a story from the last Mennonite World Conference Global Assembly (the global gathering of Mennonites). Pauline Aguilar arrived in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, carrying cloth from North American, South American, Asian and other African countries. There, she and hundreds of others stitched together 258 squares of fabric. With the addition of another 12 squares later in California, the Koinonia HIV/AIDS Quilt was finished. If you saw this quilt as it travelled through Canada afterwards, you will have noticed those who pieced it together sometimes stitched in a name, either their own or that of a loved one who had been affected by AIDS.

I later heard Mennonite World Conference general secretary Larry Miller say how strange the European Mennonite tradition of quilting seemed to some of those African Mennonites that helped make it: "It was stitched together by about 400 people, many of whom who had never done a quilt and didn't know that this was part of the family's tradition. [They] wondered, 'Why are you cutting up that good

material to just sew it back together?'" he related with a smile.

The quilt is a metaphor for Mennonite Church Canada: many shapes, varied colours, and much cutting-and-reshaping go into creating what becomes an unexpectedly lovely object. There is misunderstanding and difference, yes. Yet, with mutual respect, commitment to stay at it, and with time, beauty emerges. This is what God does: He takes us from rags to richness, remaking each of us while stitching us all together anew into his church.

An MWC release on the quilt describes that by the fourth day of quilting together, "a sense of community had developed as stitchers learned to know each other by name." The quilt's name is a good fit. *Koinonia* is the Greek word used both to describe the fellowship of believers with each other and our joining in Christ in the communion meal. It comes from a family of words that describe a willing and ready sharing with each other. In Acts 2, what believers did to show mutuality in sharing their resources is described using a word from the same root.

A willing and ready sharing of our gifts with each other, a steadfast commitment to mutuality and connections kept strong through the trustworthiness of our bonds in Christ's body, is what koinonia should be for us.

Obituaries: As I announced earlier this summer, we are launching a new obituary section (see page 11). This is in response to the closing of our church's separate magazine, *Der Bote*, which published many of these. (Obituaries are open to all of you, not just *Der Bote* readers.) We will also be publishing obituaries online and indexing them. Details on submission information, costs and funding are available by contacting our office or sending an e-mail to obituaries@canadianmennonite.org.

ABOUT THE COVER:

"Two roads diverged in the middle of my life, I heard a wise man say. I took the road less travelled by, And that's made the difference every night and every day," sang the late Christian rocker Larry Norman. Tom Yoder Neufeld, in his sermon to the binational summit this summer on page 4, looks at the challenge of today's church of choosing "the road less travelled."

PHOTO: MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA

Circulation: Please contact Lisa Jacky toll-free at 1-800-378-2524 ext. 221 or at office@canadianmennonite.org for subscriptions and address changes. Subscriptions can also be ordered at our web site. Postmaster: Send returns to head office. ISSN 1480-042X

We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Government of Canada through the Publications Assistance Program toward our mailing costs (PAP Reg. No. 09613, Agreement No. 40063104).

Canada

CANADIAN MENNONITE

Head office: 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON, N2L 6H7
Phone: 519-884-3810 **Toll-free:** 1-800-378-2524 **Fax:** 519-884-3331
Web site: canadianmennonite.org

Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Letters to the Editor: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Obituaries: Karen Suderman, obituaries@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

Material can also be sent "Attn: Submissions/Letter to the Editor/
Milestones/Obituaries/Calendar" by postal mail or fax to our head office.

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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Ross W. Muir, Managing Editor, managinged@canadianmennonite.org
Barb Draper, Editorial Assistant, edassist@canadianmennonite.org
Dan Johnson, Graphic Designer, designer@canadianmennonite.org
Lisa Jacky, Circulation/Finance, office@canadianmennonite.org

Advertising: **Karen Suderman,** advert@canadianmennonite.org, toll-free voice mail: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 224, home office: 519-745-4507

Correspondents:

Aaron Epp, National Correspondent, ca@canadianmennonite.org, 204-885-2565 ext. 259; **Amy Dueckman,** B.C. Correspondent, bc@canadianmennonite.org, 604-854-3735; **Donita Wiebe-Neufeld,** Alberta Correspondent, ab@canadianmennonite.org, 780-436-3431; **Karin Fehderau,** Saskatchewan Correspondent, sk@canadianmennonite.org, 306-933-4209; **Evelyn Rempel Petkau,** Manitoba Correspondent, mb@canadianmennonite.org, 204-745-2208; **Dave Rogalsky,** Eastern Canada Correspondent, ec@canadianmennonite.org, 519-579-7258

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Electronic Delivery

All subscribers can get the complete contents of *Canadian Mennonite* delivered free by e-mail or view selected articles online. For either option, visit our website at canadianmennonite.org. The Sept. 15 issue will be posted by Sept. 11.

SUMMIT SERMON

Challenge at the crossroads:

BY TOM YODER NEUFELD

More than 3,000 years ago, in the desert by the banks of the Jordan River, Moses called together a bunch of tired and dispirited survivors of slavery and put before them the greatest decision anyone will ever make, namely, whether to be faithful to the calling and mission of God.



When the authors of Deuteronomy placed the words from chapter 4 verses 1 to 9 onto a scroll several hundred years after Moses first called the people together, they were challenging their own people, in their own time and place, to face that same decision. By then much water had passed under Israel's bridge. The land had occupied them more than they had occupied it; the worship of the one God had given way to apostasy; military and economic glory had long ago already given birth to oppression and violence; imperial arrogance had led finally to exile in Babylon. What a fall!

In reminding the people of that day in the desert, Deuteronomy told them: It's not over; you can go back out to the desert, and face that test all over again. What will it be, you who stand at the crossroads? Faithfulness or unfaithfulness? Promise or peril? Life or death?

Centuries later yet, Moses' challenge was echoed in the preaching of that great desert prophet, John the Baptist, calling on the sons and daughters of Israel to come out to that same wilderness where Moses once summoned the people, and in baptism to go through the Jordan in order to symbolically re-enter the land, ready now for the kingdom of God.

One of those who heeded this call, Jesus of Nazareth, went out to the desert and placed himself among the people at the Jordan, in solidarity with all those who were turning toward and preparing themselves for the reign of God. There he heard those ancient words spoken at the coronation of Israel's kings: "You are my

Summoned and sent

beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" "You are messiah!" "You are king!"

No sooner had Jesus heard these majestic words of commission and sending than the Spirit "threw him into the desert," as Mark puts it, to be tested. As Matthew relates it, the tester holds before Jesus the perks of being a Messiah: to be able to make bread out of stone; to count on God's miraculous protection; and to have absolute control over the world's peoples—food, security and power.

At every test, Jesus responds by reciting words from Deuteronomy. On whether to turn stones into bread, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3: "*One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.*" On whether to jump off the highest point in the temple to prove God's care of his Chosen One, he responds with Deuteronomy 6:16: "*Do not put the Lord your God to the test.*" On whether to exercise imperial control over the affairs of the world, Jesus responds with Deuteronomy 6:13: "*The Lord your God you shall fear, and him only shall you serve.*"

At each point Jesus refuses to enter the palace and goes rather to stand in

the desert with the people in their most vulnerable time of testing. By relating this event half a century later, Matthew, much like Deuteronomy, wishes his readers, who have said "yes" to following Jesus, to see themselves in these tests—food, security and power—and that includes us here today in the wealthy and powerful Global North.

With respect to stones and bread, the poor of our world are becoming ever more restless and angry in their hunger. We are being tested, not quite like Jesus, who had too little food, but on what we do with too much. How do we, at this moment in history, keep our bread from becoming stones in the mouths of the hungry? This is for us nothing less than a test of our loyalty to God, a test on whether we will be true to God's mission in this world.

We are being tested today not only on what we do with our bread, but on whether we will offer the "word coming from the mouth of God" to those whose deepest hunger is not stilled by bread. Sharing and proclaiming the gospel of the Bread of Life is every bit as much a matter of peace and justice as is sharing our daily bread! A true Peace Church

knows that.

It is true that too often what passes for evangelism has betrayed the kingdom Jesus came to announce; the gospel has been wedded to imperial politics, to religious and cultural arrogance, and to an individualism that turns its back on the world. A gospel that leaves creation to rot is not the gospel of the One through whom all things came to be and who gave his life to save it. A gospel that offers private insurance with no fine print on the hazards and obligations is bogus; it is not the gospel Peter and Paul preached. The gospel of the kingdom is not a ticket out of here; it is a ticket into here, into this world.

So let's never disparage sharing the good news of forgiveness, reconciliation and transforming life in Christ. Let us rather pray to be evangelized ourselves all over again, to rediscover the full and whole gospel, to learn again the ancient ways, and forge new and fresh language that can once again communicate the hospitality and transforming power of the kingdom. We won't find those words unless the Word takes on flesh in our own lives; that is when bread and word become one in our witness.

We have our own form of Jesus' second test. Ever since 9/11 "security" has become the obsession of our time. We are right to wrestle—as we are—with what it means to protect the most vulnerable in our world. But for us Mennonites here in the Global North the security and safety test has less to do with "them" than it does with "us." Our society's mad search for security, which will only increase in intensity as more and more lay claim to the earth's fragile and limited resources, is killing us—and them. Are we not thereby putting God to the test? By expecting God to miraculously deliver us from the mess we are making with our environment in this frantic rush to secure our own lives, that is exactly what we are doing. Will we trust God enough to disarm body, mind and heart—and border and market—even as we struggle for true security of those most vulnerable?

The lure of power and control, represented in the third test, is closely related. Jesus' refusal to grasp the reigns of power stands in stark contrast to the imperial aspirations of his time, and ours. Think not only of the military means of dominance and control, however, but of the way we seek dominance in work and relationship. To fear only God, as Jesus quotes Deuteronomy, is to fear no one else, and thus also to forego the need to dominate and control.

Remarkably, there were those who took up Jesus' challenge and joined him in his mission. Stirred by news of kingdom, cross and resurrection that sprang up in the most unlikely places within a few short years, were what we might call "cells" or "colonies of the kingdom," microcosms of an alternative world, families of sisters and brothers drawn together from well beyond the borders of biological, ethnic and racial kinship—Jews and Gentiles, men and women, slave and free, wealthy and poor, strong and weak.

That great prophet to the Gentiles, Paul, wrote a magnificent manifesto of peace to some of these "cells of the kingdom," as we might call the house-churches in the urban wilderness of high culture, brute force, callous power and privilege we know as Rome. He summoned them

as Moses once did Israel, to remember the covenant they had once made at their baptism, and once again to stand and offer themselves to God. We are right to hear that summons as directed to us: *"Urge you, sisters and brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is the worship that makes sense. Don't be conformed to the prevailing ethos of our time, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you might be able to discern what is good, and acceptable, and perfect"* (Romans 12:1-2).

Deuteronomy might lead us to believe that if we do pass the test, the world will sit in wonder and amazement at our wisdom and discerning insight. That would be nice. And sometimes it happens. But God's wisdom, incarnate in Jesus, met not with applause, but with deadly resistance. The Creator's wisdom became flesh in a world that would finally nail it to the cross.

This call, summoning us in our desert, may then feel more perilous than promising. This test scares us. But remember, we are not the first to be at this crossroads. Israel has been here, Jesus was



here, Paul and his little colonies were here, our forebears in the faith were here in the 16th century, and many times since. Jesus is here, now, as our brother and mentor.

We are called to pledge ourselves to hoard neither bread nor word, but to offer them freely, to pledge ourselves not to stay at home, but to enter the world as witnesses to, and practitioners of, God's grace. As church and congregations we are called to pledge ourselves anew to be colonies of the kingdom.

Tom Yoder Neufeld, associate professor of religious studies and peace and conflict studies at Conrad Grebel University College, preached this keynote address at the MC Canada/MC USA People's Summit held from July 8-10 in Winnipeg.

/// For discussion

1. In his sermon, Tom Yoder Neufeld points out that time and again Israel had to choose who it would serve. What situations in your life or the life of your church have caused you to feel the need to recommit to God's call?
2. Testing today includes "not only what we will do with our bread, but on whether we will offer the 'word coming from the mouth of God' to those whose deepest hunger is not stilled by bread," Yoder Neufeld says. Which test is harder for you: being generous or speaking out about your hope in God? Why?
3. After quoting Paul, who urged believers to present their bodies *"as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God,"* Yoder Neufeld notes that these words weren't mere metaphors, but could—and often did—lead to physical death. Does that possibility empower you to emulate "our forebears in the faith" or, in this world of relative security and ease, give you pause to put your life on the line? Why?
4. On pages 16 and 17 are stories of people who responded to direct calls from God. Has God ever spoken to you directly? If so, how did you respond? If not, is such a direct encounter something you would covet, or is it something out of your comfort zone? Why?

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.

✉ Postcard Project article polarizes homosexual issue

RE: "POSTCARD PROJECT sends controversial letters on homosexuality" article, June 23, page 12.

I saw the project as a gift that I was confident would be used by MC Canada in a redemptive healing way. It pained me that it was again set up as an adversarial position, and that our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people and friends are again "denied space" at their own assembly. Instead of taking advantage of the opportunity, it seems to have been taken as a threat. Something does not seem right.

A greater disappointment for me was the article. I had not expected *Canadian Mennonite* to add to the polarization.

In the first paragraph, "... asking for support in its desire to change the church's position that homosexual activity is sinful," is completely missing the point, and

FROM OUR LEADERS

Following Jesus wide-eyed

HENRY KRAUSE

These last six years as moderator have been a truly enriching and growing experience. My eyes have been opened to see much more of what God is doing in our national church than I ever imagined. God is good and has blessed us with a church that is vibrant, alive, diverse and faithful, and I am confident that God will continue to use our church to proclaim Christ and his reign.

Thinking about the future of MC

Canada in all its varied forms, I see us being challenged to be "wide-eyed" followers of Jesus. Wide-eyed followers have a number of characteristics:

- Being like little children naively trusting Jesus and obedient to his call;
- Staring in wonder as Jesus' first disciples did when he calmed the sea, healed the sick, and challenged the powers and principalities; and
- Having our eyes opened wide as we recognize that the way of Jesus is the way of the cross, one of suffering love.



First, we must continue to be naively faithful in our peacemaking, with enough childlike faith to believe the words of Jesus that call us to love our enemies. In our violence-filled world the witness of a people who say yes to nonviolent love and no to death is desperately needed.

Second, we have an obligation to invite others to follow Jesus with us and to imagine how we can create new communities of Jesus-followers, establishing

[W]e must continue to be naively faithful in our peacemaking....

and nurturing them.

Third, it is important for us to take seriously what it means to live in a postmodern, post-denominational, post-Christian culture, a culture where "I'm spiritual but I'm not religious" is the mantra of many, both inside and outside the church. It is vital for us to find new ways to tell the "old, old story" in this cultural context, trusting that the Spirit of God is already at work.

Fourth, it is important for us to continue to explore ways to speak to the fears and concerns that we have around issues of sexuality. We must continue to take seriously the call "to mutually bear the burden of remaining in loving dialogue with each other in the body of Christ," in order to study both the Scriptures and our culture, and to discern what it means to live faithfully with our sexuality.

Finally, our commitment to the global church is calling us to re-examine our understandings of wealth, power and privilege. When we listen to the voices of the church in the South we will be challenged in ways that will deepen our faith and actions.

The list is not exhaustive, but it

highlights some of the ways in which we can continue to be a faithful people in a Canadian context, following Jesus wide-eyed, for we know that the one who called us is faithful.

Henry Krause is the outgoing moderator of Mennonite Church Canada and the current lead pastor at Langley (B.C.) Mennonite Fellowship.

adds to making this an “emotionally heated issue.”

This article does not help to reduce fear around this topic. We do not have a safe or equal playing field.

The covering letter for the Postcard Project includes the statement, “we are collecting postcards of support from individual Mennonites, and will share them with others . . .” The purpose and intent is not hidden, so I do not see the opinions of anyone anywhere being excluded or silenced, as Jim Brown is quoted as saying.

As children of God, let us allow the Holy Spirit to work among us in a healing process, leading to better understanding for all.

EGON ENNS, WINNIPEG

✉ Population control the only way to environmental sustainability

THE SUMMARY OF Paul Fieguth’s series of articles (June 23, page 15) reminded me of the “back to the land” movement of the 1970s. Such a bucolic life was less than practical even then, and our society has changed dramatically since.

The elderly are a growing population sector and condominiums dominate the housing market. Many of the author’s suggestions are irrelevant to seniors who feel they have “paid their dues” or to condo dwellers who live where they do to avoid many of the

FAMILY TIES

Polar bear swims

MELISSA MILLER

“Will you come with us on the polar bear swim?” my 10-year-old nephew, Nathan, asked me a few years ago at our family reunion. When I immediately said yes, he replied, “Do you know how many people I asked before I got to you? They all said, ‘Go ask your aunt. She likes mornings and she’s Canadian.’” Thus began my role as adult accompanier of the early morning swims.

Each summer my extended family congregates for a reunion, a wonderful ritual celebrating—and sometimes chafing at—the family ties that bind us. This year we gathered in the mountains of southwestern Pennsylvania at our church camp. Fulfilling my role meant joining a few hardy children to plunge into the camp’s spring-fed lake.

The last day was particularly memorable as soft rain fell as we swam. Given the coolness of the morning, the lean ones of the group only lasted a few minutes as they left the water, teeth chattering and skin turning blue. But we all made it into the water and “chorused” the requisite polar bear song.

It’s an ironic role for me. I’m not a particularly strong or avid swimmer. In fact, I’ve been known to declare that I

only want to swim when it’s really warm outside. Somehow on canoe trips in the Canadian wilderness, I learned the pleasures of an early morning swim just as the sun is warming the air. I swim, savouring the release of muscle tension and the buoyancy the water provides. I swim, knowing that later in the day when the air is hot and still, the early morning coolness will be a refreshing memory.

My nieces and nephews have taught me to seize the moment, to relish this summer opportunity. Originally, I lin-



They all said, ‘Go ask your aunt. She likes mornings and she’s Canadian.’

gered on the shore, moving into the deeper water with agonizing slowness. “Just go in!” they would exclaim. “It’s easier if you run in and get it over with.”

The “it” they’re referring to, of course, is that bracing shock of icy water hitting at once all of one’s skin still warm from the slumbers of the night. The kids drop their towels at the edge of the sand and race into the water, plunging into its coolness with abandon. I’ve not yet matched their speed. My body stills protests, “No!

It’s too harsh!” But I share their enthusiasm, and now enter the water with steady resolve, fully immersed just seconds after my toes get wet.

I swim leisurely laps while the kids chatter and splash around me. I marvel at the blessing of this moment, the opportunity to be with people I love in a place I call home. The family reunion has happened each year since 1987. Some nieces and nephews have grown up during those years, married and had babies. They show up at reunions, introducing the next generation to the pleasures of “s’mores” and mountain pies, scenic hikes and polar bear swims.

When families are working well, they offer their members of all ages a comfortable, encouraging place to grow. Individuals learn, through family

reunions or other rituals, that they belong to others and that they are valued. People are noticed and appreciated for the gifts they bring to the world, which helps them discover their true selves and claim their God-given characteristics and talents. May our families be such places.

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

author's suggested changes. In Calgary, the rush to be within walking or biking distance of work has produced prices in the centre that are twice as much, or more, than similar accommodation in the suburbs.

He suggests moving to a smaller home. What does that accomplish in the big picture if his former house is merely occupied by someone else? The only group I know of that produces zero garbage are residents of cemeteries.

Celebrating the simpler life sounds very noble, but I do not believe that people who already have simpler lives want to immigrate to Canada for that purpose. They aspire to our lifestyle. Few Canadians would envy

the lifestyle of Chinese or Indian peasants.

Worrying about that which we are powerless to change is paranoia. There is only one road to ultimate long-term sustainability for the human race, but nobody wants to talk about it, because it requires traumatic adjustments. Without population control and reduction, all other measures will fail to reach sustainability. In our supreme arrogance we imagine that we can control climate and global warming, but the only thing over which we have control is population. If we chose not to control it, even that will be taken out of our hands.

CLYDE OVENS, CALGARY, ALTA.

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Where will you be in 2048?

SHERRI GROSZ

Where will you be in 2048? How old will you be? What will your life be like? Will you still be paying a mortgage?

More and more Canadians are saying yes to the last question. In 2007, nearly 40 percent of mortgages carried terms (or amortizations) longer than 25 years, compared to only 9 percent of mortgages in the previous year. Clearly, longer terms are popular!

Spreading payments out over 10 or 15 more years means you pay less monthly. This can make home ownership affordable in households in which budgets are tight. But stretching out your payments costs you a lot more in total interest charges and increases the risk that you could buy more home than you can really afford.

Let's take a \$100,000 mortgage as an example, and assume a 6 percent interest rate with regular monthly payments. Choosing a 40-year mortgage would free up nearly \$300 per month compared to a 15-year mortgage. This money could be used for utilities, taxes, repairs and maintenance on your new home. It's

an attractive choice. But make sure you consider the cost! A 40-year amortization costs you a whopping \$161,000 in interest alone, compared to just \$51,000 for a 15-year mortgage!

Proverbs 22:7 reminds us that *"the borrower becomes the lender's slave."* There is



Proverbs 22:7 reminds us that 'the borrower becomes the lender's slave.'

a cost and a risk to borrowing. Sometimes you really can't afford a house yet, even if you are able to squeeze out the payments. Sometimes it is better to rent, to limit debt and to continue saving for a down payment on a home. Keep in mind that it is not just a mortgage payment you are adding. Before you buy, you also need to consider the other costs, such as property taxes, repairs, utility bills and the pressure to keep up with the neighbours' new cars, decks and landscaping.

Some lenders will ask what you would like your monthly payments to be, rather than asking what term or amortization you would like. In the example above,

they might ask if you would like your payments to be \$545, \$640 or \$840 per month. Uneducated borrowers might jump at \$545 and not ask any questions. But knowing that they will end up paying 2.5 times the loan amount could cause them to consider other options.

When considering a mortgage, don't be a slave to your lender. Before you talk to a lender, do your homework. Ask around for advice and use financial calculators to find out the total cost of borrowing.

Buying a house can be an overwhelming and lonely experience. Consider inviting a trusted couple or individual in your church to walk alongside you through the process. Perhaps your church could consider offering a basic personal finances course that includes information

on mortgages and debt. The Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC) First Things First resource covers personal finance from a Christian perspective. Call your nearest MFC office for a copy.

Home ownership is a worthy goal. Be certain you count the true and total cost, and understand how much debt you are really taking on prior to signing anything.

Sherri Grosz is a stewardship consultant at the Kitchener, Ont., MFC office. For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit mennofoundation.ca.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Cheny—Naomi Nyamvula (b. July 6, 2008), to Alayne and John Cheny, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Enns—Airo John Lukas (b. July 25, 2008), to Ang and Luke Enns, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Ewert—Simon Benjamin (b. July 31, 2008), to Ben and Charmaine Ewert, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., in Saskatoon.

Felsmann—Cole Thomas (b. July 16, 2008), to Jenny and Karl Felsmann, First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Gerling—Derek Paul (b. July 9, 2008), to Kathryn and Jason Gerling, First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Goodwin—Michael (b. March 13, 2008), to Lynne Dueck and Rich Goodwin, Stirling Ave. Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Hildebrand—Larissa Samantha (b. July 14, 2008), to Allan and Bertha, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Janz—Malcolm Kevin (b. June 22, 2008), to Kevin and Rosella Janz, Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Baptisms

Erika Enns—Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, May 4, 2008.

Stephanie Siemens—Osler Mennonite, Sask., July 17, 2008.

Laura Bingeman—Stirling Ave. Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., May 4, 2008.

Jack Baker, Mark Killens, Chad Monteith, Jimmy Turner, Mykayla Turner, Amelia Ward, Ashley Ward, M'Lynn Ward, Sam Zehr—Zurich (Ont.) Mennonite, July 20, 2008.

Flora Wiebe—Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., Aug. 10, 2008.

Marriages

Andrade/Frey—Sarah Andrade and Jonathan Frey, at Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont., July 5, 2008.

Bender Shetler/Fast—Paul Bender Shetler and Rebecca Fast at Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., July 27, 2008.

Bingeman/Upshaw—Emily Bingeman (Stirling Ave.

Mennonite) and Andrew Upshaw at Stirling Ave. Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., July 26, 2008.

Bruinsma/Snider—Scott Bruinsma (Christian Reformed) and Hannah Snider (Breslau Mennonite, Ont.) in Cambridge, Ont., Aug. 9, 2008.

Burkholder/Szendrovits—Kristian Peter Burkholder and Andrea Marta Szendrovits, at Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont., July 26, 2008.

Cameron/Epp—Desiree Cameron and Brett Epp, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., July 12, 2008.

Clayton/Schroeder—Cory Clayton and Macy Schroeder, at Altona Mennonite, Man., Aug. 16, 2008.

Dmitrovic/Janzen—Evica Dmitrovic (Orthodox) and Chris Janzen (St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.) in Burlington, Ont., July 20, 2008.

Doepker/Neufeldt—Lisa Doepker and Andrew Neufeldt, at Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., July 4, 2008.

Dyck/Letkeman—Kelly Dyck and Jenna Letkeman, Carman Mennonite, Man., July 19, 2008.

Deaths

Armin—Jay, 93 (b. Jan. 11, 1915; d. July 12, 2008), Toronto United Mennonite.

Bergen—Elias, (d. July 17, 2008), Eben-Ezer Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Clarke—Erica Blanche, 99 (b. April 12, 1908; d. March 20, 2008), First Mennonite, Kelowna, B.C.

Derksen—Helen, 85 (d. July 29, 2008), Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.

Dyck—Franz (Frank), 91 (b. Sept. 21, 1916; d. July 10, 2008), Rosthern (Sask.) Mennonite.

Dyck—Sally, 76 (d. July 14, 2008), Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.

Dyck—Stella (nee Siemens), 70 (b. July 13, 1938; d. July 25, 2008), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Enns—Frieda (nee Dueck), 76 (b. Sept. 12, 1931; d. July 7, 2008), Rosthern (Sask.) Mennonite.

Falk—William F., 92 (b. March 4, 1916; d. June 27, 2008), Altona Mennonite, Man.

Pontius' Puddle



Hoepfner—Harry, 62 (b. July 3, 1945; d. June 7, 2008), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Isaac—Peter, (d. May 1, 2008), First Mennonite, Kelowna, B.C.

Janzen—Elizabeth (nee Boldt), 91 (b. March 17, 1917; d. Aug. 4, 2008), Springridge Mennonite, Pincher Creek, Alta.

Klassen—Jacob, 89 (b. Nov. 14, 1918; d. July 4, 2008), Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Krahn—Elizabeth, 96 (b. May 24, 1912; d. July 4, 2008), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Krahn—Katherina, 90 (b. March 18, 1918; d. July 14, 2008), First Mennonite, Kelowna, B.C.

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.

/// Obituaries

Boettger, Edith Marie (Yoder)

Edith Boettger of Tofield, Alta., was born on January 23, 1922, to David and Lucinda (Stauffer) Yoder on a farm southeast of Tofield in the home she lived in most of her life. Edith passed away peacefully on Tuesday, May 27, at the Tofield Long Term Care Centre where she was a resident for the past 16 months. She accepted Jesus Christ as her personal saviour in her youth. She became an active member of the Salem (Alta.) Mennonite Church where she served faithfully. Edith is survived by her husband Marvin; her sons Derril (Wanda), Elwood (Heather) and Jerry (Val); one granddaughter; seven grandsons and two great granddaughters. She was predeceased by her parents David and Lucinda (Stauffer) Yoder and her sisters Edna and Lavanda Wideman. She will be remembered for her love of family, gardening, flowers, music and travelling with family and friends. Her memory will always live in our hearts. A funeral service was held on May 31, 2008, at Salem Mennonite Church. Interment took place at the Salem Mennonite Cemetery. Memorial donations are gratefully accepted to MCC Alberta or the charity of one's choice.



Janzen, Elizabeth

Elizabeth Janzen died peacefully at Vista Village in Pincher Creek, Alta., on Aug. 4, 2008, at the age of 91 years. Elizabeth was born on March 17, 1917, to Peter and Anna Boldt in Slavgorod, Siberia, immigrating to Canada in 1924 and settling in Standoff, where her father

taught school. Elizabeth married Jacob Janzen in 1937 and they farmed for 50 years in the Halifax District. In 1995, Elizabeth moved to Pincher Creek, spending the last four years at Vista Village, where she received loving care from the staff and her personal caregiver, Judy Pinel. She was predeceased by her husband Jacob (1989), two daughters Marlene (1939) and Lorena (1942), one son

Marvin (1968), three sisters, three brothers, and three sisters-in-law. She is survived by three sons, Jack and Marilyn Janzen, Crawford Bay, B.C.; Alvin and Carol Janzen, Lethbridge, Alta.; and Ron Janzen, Pincher Creek, Alta.; and one daughter, Lorita Janzen, Pincher Creek, Alta.; three grandchildren, Shawn and Sheila Janzen; Tanya and Darren Howe; and Terri and Brad Heidt, all of Lethbridge, Alta.; six great grandchildren Kyle, Ethan, and Blake Heidt; Myranda and Ashleigh Blunden-Postman; and Kaiden Janzen; five brothers, Peter Boldt, Victoria, B.C.; David Boldt, Calgary, Alta.; Menno and Anne Boldt, Lethbridge, Alta.; Rudy and Sharon Boldt, Proctor, B.C.; Ed Boldt and Lori Wallace, Winnipeg, Man.; and one brother-in-law, Allan Megli, Linden, Alta.; and many dear nieces and nephews. Elizabeth received Christ as her personal saviour at 15 years of age and was baptized at 18 years of age and has been a member of Springridge Mennonite Church since 1935, where she served as librarian and youth Sunday school teacher for many years. Her gift as a seamstress resulted in many quilts being sewn for Mennonite Central Committee, Alta., to be distributed to Third World countries. She also kept busy tending her garden and flowers until 85 years of age. Elizabeth loved receiving company and greatly enjoyed children of all ages. She was a devoted mother who unselfishly served her family. Her integrity, energy, hard work, and sense of humour gained the respect and admiration of all those whom she encountered. Her greatest attribute was her steadfast faith and devotion for God. Throughout all her adversities her faith provided her the courage to live life fully, simply, and humbly. "Come good and faithful servant, yours is the kingdom of Heaven." Those wishing to remember Elizabeth with a donation may consider Mennonite Central Committee, Alberta, #210 2946-32nd St NE, Calgary, AB T1Y 6J7. Funeral service was held at Springridge Mennonite Church on Aug. 8, 2008, with Rev. Terry Lesser and Rev. Fred Unruh officiating.

STORIES OF FAITH IN LIFE

From a talking ass to a milking goat

BY JACK DUECK

In biblical accounts, animals are used when human spiritual sensibilities become dulled or when human action will not undertake a needed mission. Consider Moses and the cane-serpent, the raven, the dove, the Palm Sunday donkey, the Gadarene swine and the fatted calf, to mention but a few.



As reported in Numbers 22, Balaam's ass speaks, and in Balaam's language—with perfect grammar and pronunciation! The ass sees the angel of the Lord who has a message from God for Balaam (who does not see the angel) and assaults the ass as an unruly beast. “Dumb jack-ass” holds a double irony. But God speaks through the ass to further a mission.

In our postmodern and rational world, miracles lie dormant, a remnant of the olden days. But on a small New England goat farm someone declared, “Goats are a miracle today. They serve a mission where God-talk and patronizing charity mean little.”

That someone was Dan West. Born in Ohio in 1893, West spent the years of World War I (1914–18) as a conscientious objector, and in 1936 he served in the emergency peace campaign during the Spanish Civil war.

Surrounded by images of widespread hunger, and painfully aware of Jesus' call to action with “*I was hungry and you fed me,*” West imagined importing milk for the children of Spain. This charity would feel good, but when the children had drunk it, what then? Reality would remain unchanged.

Not only were the costs of shipping prohibitive, the gesture would be, at best, short-term. Shipping milk to passive recipients might only postpone a solution.

West sat under an almond tree wrestling with this conundrum. Now Isaac Newton may have needed the sharp thud of an apple to turn on his mental light bulb, but for West it was a tiny almond that triggered his vision.

Goat milk was her first scholarship!

“Of course,” he exclaimed, suddenly seeing the solution: Don't bring milk, bring a cow! One condition: Each recipient must agree to give a cow's offspring to another villager.

This marked the beginning of Heifer Project International.

In Uganda, Idi Amin terrorized his people and drove the country into abject poverty. The plague of starvation rampaged over the land. Amin is no longer, but the poverty continues. In recent decades, Uganda and many Third World countries have received food aid. Dumping aid, however, has also devastated local farmers, exacerbating the root problem and turning whole populations into passive non-productive recipients.

Enter a goat. In 1991, Heifer Project International brought 12 goats for 12 families to the village of Kisinga, Western Uganda. Beatrice Biira's family received a goat. At the age of nine, Beatrice was

already burdened down with adult work. She remembers the hunger of seven siblings under a tin-roofed shack with no running water. She desperately wanted to go to school, but there was not even enough money for food. Some days, meals consisted of cassava both morning and evening. With barely a coin for food, school seemed a mirage.

The goat, not picky regarding fodder, is bred to give milk abundantly. Goats can even turn thistles into milk!

When the goat arrived, the children had milk. Every day! Other milk products appeared on the table. The goat's prodigious generosity even provided enough milk for some sales. When Beatrice

turned 10, her mother was able to send her to a local school. Goat milk was her first scholarship! At the local school, Beatrice earned a scholarship to school in Kampala, Uganda's capital. From there—on a monetary scholarship this time—we find her in an elite New England prep

school. Although the goat enabled her to cross hemispheres, Beatrice harbours the intention of returning home and “have my work do good for children in Africa.”

The goat keeps producing milk. Offspring after offspring are passed on to other villagers. The town has even instituted a goat-sharing ritual called “Passing the Gift”.

And so a goat joins the gallery of “God-talking” animals. It's time for milk again! ❧

'CHILD WITH GOAT' BY ROSS W. MUIR



E-mail Jack Dueck at eajdueck@gmail.com or visit him at jackdueck.com.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Continuing dialogue

MC Canada meets with Postcard Project organizers; church leaders working on longer-term dialogue plan

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent
WINNIPEG

Mennonite Church Canada executive staff and General Board members met with the organizers of the controversial Postcard Project at the beginning of July to discuss the initiative and hear the organizers' perspectives.

In May, Postcard Project organizers sent a letter to every MC Canada congregation, asking for postcards of support in the group's desire to see "a full welcome of our LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered] sisters and brothers." The church's position is that homosexual activity is sinful.

Dave Bergen, executive secretary of Christian Formation for MC Canada, described the conversation as "congenial and open," as well as "very frank, but never angry."

"We all love the church, we all want the church to be healthy and we all want the church to live into its mission," Bergen said.

Jacob Quiring, who attends Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, is one of the organizers of the Postcard Project. He said the meeting went "very well," adding that it was never the objective of Postcard Project organizers to change anyone's mind regarding the issue of homosexuality. Rather, they wanted to create dialogue.

"I think that it's very important that, as a church, we are allowed to disagree," Quiring said. "Our unity is in Christ, and not in the exclusion or inclusion of LGBT people. We can disagree on this, and the church can still be the church."

The group reported it received more

than 120 postcards from Canadian Mennonites of all ages, both urban and rural. Organizers said all of the postcards had been encouraging, although they also received three negative e-mails.

Postcard Project organizers had hoped to display the postcards at July's assembly and summit, but were denied display space, Bergen said, in part because the project "didn't have a formal programmatic connection to any of our ministries," unlike the rest of the displays.

'I think that it's very important that, as a church, we are allowed to disagree.'
(Jacob Quiring)

The issue of homosexuality came up once during assembly delegate sessions. Speaking from the floor during July 8's closing session, Arlene Fuhr of First Mennonite Church in Edmonton asked what MC Canada is doing to "ensure an open and honest conversation with people of various sexual orientations."

MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman responded on behalf of the General Board, saying its members have talked "a fair amount" about the "pain that is being experienced in our congregations" regarding the issue.

He stated that the national church is doing three things in this area.

First, the General Board is continuing discussions on a long-term plan to address the part of the 1986 delegate resolution on sexuality which calls for "remain-

ing in loving dialogue with each other in the body of Christ."

Second, that the area church pastors are developing guidelines

for pastoral care for people affected by this issue. Third, the national church continues to hold a yearly meeting each assembly for those affected by this issue.

Suderman said progress was expected both on the long-term dialogue plan and the pastoral guidelines document by November. ☞

PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU



Linda Wiebe, Frank Ens and Shirley Ens were among the former members of Homewood Mennonite Church who dedicated this 20-tonne granite boulder on July 20. Homewood Mennonite Church closed in November 1999, after 55 years, and the building was sold and moved to Vita Bible Church in the southeastern corner of Manitoba. In the 1960s the congregation began to see a declining population in the area. Ed Klassen, a former member and son of David D. Klassen, the first pastor, said, "Homewood was a microcosm of what was happening in rural areas where the population was declining as farms grew larger and larger." This monument was a gift from the Vita church and is inscribed with the Bible verse that greeted Homewood churchgoers as they entered the sanctuary every Sunday: "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and obey it" (Luke 11:28).

Fatal accident provides witness in Burns Lake

By AMY DUECKMAN
BURNS LAKE, B.C.

A car accident in early July claimed the life of Tory Wiebe, son of Jake and Judy Wiebe of First Mennonite Church in Burns Lake, along with two other young people.

A memorial service was held for Wiebe at First Mennonite on July 10 and on July 11 for one of the other youths who came from a family with no church connection.

"We believe there was a great opportunity to reach out to the community through this whole ordeal, as the church was packed for each service [with 500 people]," said Roland Cataford, pastor of First Mennonite.

According to Cataford, a community-organized secular memorial for the three accident victims was disappointing, as it had no church input and the lead speaker

"Don't worry. It's all good."



Tory Wiebe

May 17, 1990 - July 5, 2008

seemed to downplay the Christian message of the First Mennonite services.

"But the incredibly amazing witness for the Lord was that Jake [Tory's father] was asked to close the evening with a statement," added Cataford, "and he closed it wonderfully to the glory of the Lord as he stated that 'each youth here this evening has been given a purpose from the Lord and there is no chance about it! Please look to Jesus Christ and know that this life is not all there is and find eternal purpose!'" ❧

Saskatchewan women reflect on what it means to serve

By LOIS SIEMENS
Special to Canadian Mennonite
BATTLEFORD, SASK.

There was a buzz of excitement as women gathered in Battleford on April 12 for the annual Enrichment Day of the Saskatchewan Women in Mission (WIM). "Enrichment" is a good word for this day, particularly in these times when Women in Mission groups are disbanding across the country one by one. There is strength in being together.

Reports of activities from different groups opened new possibilities for groups to take back home. The Zoar group makes

baby blankets/kits for women who would otherwise leave the local hospital with nothing for their baby. The Glenbush women had a spring tea focusing on gardening. Rosthern offers a program for seniors and prays for the ill.

Naomi Unger's devotionals provided a basis for service. A willingness and strength to serve comes out of a choice to serve, worship and honour God. She encouraged participants to respond to the glory and love of God by continuing to choose

service, thus demonstrating they belong to Jesus. This year in particular there is a serious call to WIM groups across the country to think about the slow decline of the organization. What is needed to encourage younger women to join? What is their identity and role?

Women's groups have been questioning their role since the early 1970s as women's identity and roles in society and the church began to change. Since some provincial groups have been closing down, the Canadian Women in Mission executive has struck a Task Force on which Irene Bartel from Drake is the Saskatchewan representative. Mentoring programs and revising meeting schedules might be one way to draw in women. Younger women were again encouraged to come to the annual retreat.

A review of the budget showed the Saskatchewan WIM continues to support many people and projects around the world. Needs are ongoing for comforters, relief kits and sewing kits.

One of the sad moments of the morning was the farewell to outgoing president Audrey Mierau Bechtel. Her wisdom, humour and deep faith has encouraged and given hope for the future of this organization. Ruby Harder was welcomed to the role of president; Marie Peters-Stewart as vice-president; Erica Unruh as treasurer; Barb Wolfe as secretary; and Lavonne Dyck, Margaret Friesen and Marlies Patkau to the program committee.

The afternoon was a lively and fascinating look at three areas of service from Saskatchewan missionaries. Candace Wurtz shared her thoughts from her service in Mexico. She encouraged women to bless people and truly care for them in simple, heart-felt ways. Margaret Dyck from Saskatoon served in Arkansas and Rebecca Epp has been serving in the medical field in Angola.

The day ended with a service to remember and mourn those from WIM groups who have died. Their faith, generosity and kindness, and prayers and hugs will be missed. As WIM lives under the threat of being disbanded as an organization, our work is to be faithful. ❧



PHOTO BY NONI WIEBE

/// Briefly noted

New associate at Mount Royal Mennonite Church

SASKATOON, SASK.—After a long period of being without a youth pastor, the congregation at Mount Royal Mennonite Church has hired Ron Schellenberg as its new associate youth pastor. Schellenberg, who has been a member of Mount Royal and previously ran a computer repair business, began the full-time position on Aug. 1.

—BY KARIN FEHDERAU

New women's blog attempting to 'bridge the gap'

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—“Bridging the Gap,” a new online blog, is being launched to connect women in Mennonite congregations in British Columbia. According to Waltrude Gortzen, who is coordinating the blog, this is one way of attempting to keep the connection alive in the wake of the dissolution of the official B.C. Women in Mission organization last year. For more information, women are invited to check out the blog at <http://mcbcwomensministry-bridgingthegap.blogspot.com>.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

MEDA, book projects aided by fundraiser

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—Abbotsford Mennonite Fellowship held its ninth international fundraiser event this spring. Nearly \$4,000 was raised, with about three-quarters designated for the Mennonite Economic Development Associates' anti-malaria mosquito net project in Tanzania. The balance was designated for the Bergen Fund sponsored by the Mennonite Historical Society of B.C., to promote the *Remember Us: Letters from Stalin's Gulag (1930-37)* book and DVD by Ruth Derksen Siemens.

—BY WALTER PAETKAU

Russian Mennonite specialties like *rollkuchen* (deep-fried pastry) were on sale at the 38th annual Mennonite Community Festival, held at the United Mennonite Educational Institute (UMEI) in Leamington, Ont. Besides food and entertainment, the event is a major fundraiser for seven different community organizations. This year's festival raised more than \$35,000 for UMEI, Shalom Counselling, Mennonite Central Committee, the Salvation Army, Leamington District Memorial Hospital, Leamington Mennonite Home, and VOICE (an organization helping hearing-impaired children).

PHOTO BY KAREN S. PETERS

Savouring summer Sundays!

Summer Sunday potluck lunches began as an adapted experiment in 1996 and have become a permanent highlight at Steinbach (Man.) Mennonite Church. Benefits beyond measure have surfaced. The display of Mennonite creativity is a salivating sight indeed. Individuals who live alone enjoy the companionship. It is heart-warming to observe the intergenerational connections. Seniors are sorry to see September arrive. What a wonderful opportunity to welcome newcomers and visitors. Many a Sunday afternoon plan originates around those tables. Paul Dyck, pastor when the idea took root, felt that the Holy Spirit had a strong influence in launching the church's grand tradition of summer finger food potluck lunches.



GOD AT WORK IN US

Saying yes

Female Asian leader a first for Joint Christian Services International

BY ROSABETH BIRKY KOEHN
Mennonite Church Canada Release
BAYANKHONGOR, MONGOLIA

In February, Kwai Lin Stephens took on the role of executive director of Joint Christian Services (JCS) International. In doing so, she became the first woman and the first non-western person to lead the Mongolia-based Christian consortium.

More than a year ago, many at JCS began urging Stephens to consider succeeding interim executive director Marlow Ramsay, who is supported by Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network. At first, she challenged her sense of God's call, protesting, "I cannot do it. I am an Asian [and] JCS is an international organization. Furthermore, I am a woman!"

She put off the decision until the 2007 JCS retreat last August. God's call intensified through several scriptures and spiritual visions shared by others at the retreat. One woman offered this vision: "I saw a woman of Asian origin doing embroidery. It was beautiful. When she finished, she hid it in a drawer."

Stephens had possessed a youthful talent for needlework, once creating a tablecloth chosen for an exhibition in honour of the

PHOTO BY SHELDON SAWATZKY



king of Malaysia. Nobody at the retreat knew this about her past, though.

"I felt the Lord was saying, 'I have given you gifts and yet you hide it,'" Stephens said.

On the last day of the retreat, the speaker told the story from Exodus 3 about Moses resisting God's call to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. God eventually assuaged Moses' fears and, in the same way, Stephens heard God speaking through her doubts. She heard God saying, "It is I who made you Asian and I know you are a woman."

Like Moses, Stephens finally said yes to God's call. "I am just giving myself to [God] for his use, that the church of Mongolia may be built on the ancient, aged, old foundation of Jesus Christ, the rock of ages," she said.

Stephens' vision for the organization involves "challenging JCS to live as a community in unity, to live to our full capacity as an agency rich with personal resources."

According to Ramsay, Stephens brings ample experience and skill to the leadership role. "After nearly 14 years in Mongolia, Kwai Lin has a good handle on the language and culture, and she knows a lot of people," he said.

Ramsay thinks Stephens' ethnicity, gender and background will provide JCS with a new creative perspective. He also acknowledges that some in JCS's diverse constituency will find it challenging to adjust to a leadership style that is neither male nor western.

Stephens compares her position, with all its challenges, to that of the disciple Peter: "Jesus knew that one day Peter would be a great leader, but he must follow his master's call and plan. In a similar way, my ability to lead is dependent on my ability to follow [Jesus]."

Kwai Lin Stephens, left, is the first female executive director of Joint Christian Services International and the first non-westerner. She succeeds Marlow Ramsay, the interim executive director, who is returning to Canada with his family this fall.

When GO

After nine years of service in Mongolia, Marlow and Vicky Ramsay and their daughter Jessica are returning to Canada for a North American Ministry assignment this fall, followed by a leave of absence. ❧

Walking in the will of the Lord

Weekday accountant leads weekend evangelism ministry in city's downtown core

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

Admittedly once ashamed, awkward and embarrassed to share his faith, Derek Reimer now feels called by the Lord to speak clearly and boldly.



d calls

What changed Reimer was that he had a vision from God. He recalls that last November, “I was on a 21-day . . . fast and I felt close to God. I woke at 2 a.m., filled with the Holy Spirit. I had a close encounter with God. Since then, he has spoken to me in a number of ways.”

That vision clarified what happened to him a few years earlier. Reimer was driving home through the inner city when he was overcome with the Holy Spirit. “God was pointing to the Occidental Hotel on Main Street,” he says. “‘This is where you will build my church and it will be called the Twelve Pillars,’ God was saying. The Occidental had the worst reputation of any hotel, as a place of drinking, prostitution and debauchery.”

Back in 2000, Reimer felt called back to Canada after working for an accounting firm in the Caribbean. “I felt the Holy Spirit speaking to me, ‘Make a choice with your life; either choose to follow the Lord or choose money,’” he says, adding that

he chose to come home and “pursue and strengthen my faith.”

Reimer, 36, who works full-time as a chief financial officer, continues to actively pursue God’s will for his life. He is a member of Douglas Mennonite Church, a middle class suburban church where he grew up and was baptized when he was 18.

He now takes seriously Christ’s words in Luke 10, where Jesus sends out his workers two by two to carry out his ministry. “We as believers don’t do this very much any more,” he laments.

“So I started trying it out,” he continues. “I called my cousin Ian Dyck, who has a heart for this, and we went to Main Street and started talking to people. It opened my eyes. There are so many who have not heard the truthful gospel and there are so many who want it. People are longing to share their hurts and their burdens. We are there to listen and to feel compassion. We pray for them and . . . with them.”

Since January, the two have been doing this every Saturday. Up to 30 people join them at the former Occidental Hotel for an hour of prayer, worship and sharing, before going out into the streets in groups of two or three. Reimer’s Twelve Pillars group is giving focus to First Nations people in the hopes of encouraging rising native leaders and evangelists. “If we as a church can support them, that will please the Lord,” he says.

The street ministry takes them into hospitals, either to see people they met previously or to meet with people outside the

emergency entrance. The street evangelists have been to casinos and talked to people there who are extremely lonely.

Reimer has also visited aboriginal communities in northern Manitoba. “Sometimes people are literally drowning in their despair,” he says. “If you can lead a person to Christ, you can breathe hope into their situation.”

“I never felt I was in danger,” says Reimer, who has seen even the roughest and toughest break down in tears. “I have had encounters where people have gotten upset, but the Holy Spirit comes at that point and protects.”

Reimer uses Billy Graham tracts and tickets from Winnipeg’s Calvary Temple that give a special invitation to people to drop in, worship and fellowship there.

“I definitely feel support from certain individuals at Douglas Mennonite through their prayers and encouragement,” says Reimer, although “I haven’t really raised awareness in my church.”

Don Rempel Boschman, pastor at Douglas Mennonite Church, says, “Most of us experience God speaking in a still small voice through song or Scripture. Other people experience or long for something else.”

Having worked with the Commission on Overseas Mission years ago in Botswana, Rempel Boschman believes Reimer’s experience of a direct encounter with God resonates more comfortably with people in other cultures, and less so in a suburban middle class mindset, where “we’re pretty predictable.”

“Derek, who served two years as council chair, brings a strength of character and competence,” Rempel Boschman says. “When he feels God calling him to do something, he’ll just do it.”

Reimer admits, though, that “I don’t know at this point what the entire vision is, but I want to walk in the will of the Lord.” ✎

PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU



During the week, Derek Reimer works as a chief financial officer. On the weekend, though, the Douglas Mennonite Church member runs the Twelve Pillars ministry to people in Winnipeg’s downtown core, focusing primarily on the urban aboriginal population.

Sunny farewell to long-time executive director

MCC Saskatchewan bids goodbye to Bruno Baerg

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON, SASK.

On a hot July afternoon under cotton-candy clouds, friends and staff members gathered to say goodbye to Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan executive director Bruno Baerg.

Baerg ploughed through tense times in the 12 years he embraced the role, times when he was called upon to wait, explain, mediate and wait some more. Strengths he brought to the position helped him to shoulder the load with success. His people skills carried him through many conversations and struggles.

"Bruno has good relations to the constituency," said Leonard Doell, a staff member in the Aboriginal Neighbours program in Saskatoon. "He had good people skills, he could mediate conflict."

Long-time Mennonite Brethren (MB) conference minister Ralph Gliege was effusive in his praise, calling Baerg "a man who crosses borders beautifully."

"He cared about all the people he connected with, both in and out of the office," noted staff member Elaine Harder, coordinator of the Refugee Assistance program.

Strong administrative skills were also an asset. "Bruno was always on top of things," explained Doell, adding that the executive director's deep and living faith inspired the staff. "There was a lot of respect for Bruno's faith stance and how he lived it out."

His vision

In his final mailing to the churches, Baerg recalled how he came to the province hoping to find God among Saskatchewan Mennonites. And he did. But his vision for the provincial program went way beyond that.

"Bruno was passionate about MCC and wanted for MCC to be the best it could be,"

said Harder.

Doell agrees. "MCC Centre was his dream," he said.

MCC Saskatchewan board chair John Elias could also see it. "Bruno's vision was to get the new building renovated," Elias said. "He had a vision for the entire complex," which involved putting all the programs under one roof and opening up the main foyer to create an inclusive atmosphere.

Baerg himself might not have owned the dream as his own, however, for he saw the vision for a change in direction take place among the people. "We wanted to increase our profile in the community," he said. "That meant shifts in the way we'd been operating."

Some of those shifts endured a stormy start. The dream for a different MCC building was bold and, although accepted in principle, was at times a bit much for the cautious, careful spenders that normally supported the work. Some felt that that money endowed to MCC by faithful givers shouldn't be used to spruce up the organization's public image. Baerg patiently waded through the waters of opposition, as meetings were held in various congregations and people were encouraged to express concerns. For his part, Baerg worked hard to alleviate the fears and did so in such a gentle and convincing manner that dissenting voices died down after awhile and the project moved ahead.

His contributions

Although owned and supported by two conferences, the MCC program has, for years, seen more of one than the other. In 1996, when Baerg was hired, the board was interested in hearing more from the MB churches. While the program had seen steady involvement from MC Canada congregations, more was hoped for from the MB congregations.

Baerg spent a lot of time building relationships in the MB community. He made an effort to know the leaders and helped bring to fruition a partnership between Bethany College, MCC and Rosthern Junior College. Because of that, the bond between MCC and the MB churches was strengthened.

"We, as leaders, understand the significance of what he's done," said Gliege.

"Our support from MB congregations has greatly increased because of Bruno," acknowledged Elias.

The redesigned and much-improved MCC building bore testament to Baerg's long-range vision for Saskatchewan.

"We now have an amazing centre where people love to come, where we can celebrate . . . and hopefully inspire others," said Harder.

"After 12 years, the organization greatly bears his stamp," acknowledged Elias.

Baerg has accepted a call back to Africa, where he grew up, to work as a regional director with MCC.



Baerg

Briefly noted

New executive director to head MCC Saskatchewan



Ewert Fisher

SASKATOON, SASK.—Claire Ewert Fisher has been named executive director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Saskatchewan. This appointment becomes effective Sept. 1.

Ewert Fisher has extensive experience in the ministries of MCC, conference boards and committees, having served on the MCC Saskatchewan board from 1977-83 and the MCC Canada board from 1983-86; her first MCC assignments were in Vietnam from 1973-75 and in Winnipeg with MCC Canada 1975-76. She currently chairs the ministries commission of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, a position she has filled since 2003. Ewert Fisher and her husband Garth are co-pastors of MC Canada congregations in Herschel and Fiske, Sask.

—MCC Saskatchewan Release

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Free aid not the solution

CMU prof Ray Vander Zaag part of an international fact-finding mission on Haitian food crisis

By JOHN LONGHURST

Canadian Mennonite University Release
HAITI

When Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) professor Ray Vander Zaag returned to Haiti earlier this year after an 11-year absence, he says, "It broke my heart to see how conditions have deteriorated for so many. Life is certainly getting more difficult for people there."

Vander Zaag, who teaches international development studies at CMU, was back in Haiti as part of an international fact-finding mission on the right to food. The trip was sponsored by the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, an organization created by the government of Canada to encourage and support the universal values of human rights and the promotion of democratic institutions and practices around the world.

While in Haiti, the mission found that hunger and malnutrition are pervasive, and that lack of access to food risks escalating into a full-blown humanitarian crisis. Since the right to food is enshrined in Haiti's constitution, mission members called on the Haitian government to take immediate steps to resolve the problem.

Vander Zaag, who researches and writes about Haiti, says the Caribbean country puts "almost all the various theories and issues in international development studies to the test. There are many competing explanations to explain the causes of the food crisis."

One theory holds that the crisis is the result of how foreign governments have encouraged Haiti to open its markets to cheaper imported food. But as prices on imported food have risen, in part because of rising fuel

costs, Vander Zaag notes that "it is harder for poor people to buy staple goods."

Another theory emphasizes the weak capacity and will of successive Haitian governments to deliver effective services to the poor, resulting in many aid groups sending help to Haiti. Since the food riots in April, this trend has only increased, he says, with numerous churches in North America responding by filling up containers of food to ship to Haiti.

The problem with this approach, according to Vander Zaag, is that while it helps people in the short-term, "it discourages development and home-grown economic activity. Why should farmers try to grow food for sale if free food is being given away, or subsidized American rice can be bought more cheaply?"

What is hopeful, Vander Zaag states, is that the current food crisis is serving as a wake-up call. "Increasing numbers of Haitians are calling for more national self-reliance," he says.

The solution to the food crisis in Haiti is not to send more free aid, he says. Rather, the Haitian government, aid groups and Haitian grassroots organizations need to "invest in farmers in the countryside, so they can become more productive."

Vander Zaag doesn't want to discourage North Americans from wanting to help people in Haiti. "But we need to do it in a way that doesn't cause more problems for them in the long-term," he says. "Otherwise, we run the risk of just making things worse, instead of better." ❧

Building bridges

International visitors learn about North America while serving in Canada, U.S.

By DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

Mennonite Central Committee's International Visitor Exchange Program (IVEP) brings young adults from around the world together in North America, where they learn about Canada and the U.S. and their hosts learn about

them through a variety of service opportunities. At that same time, the IVEPers also learn about all of the other countries they come from.

The experience "builds bridges and opportunities for sharing among people from around the world, and in that way takes us all one step closer to peace through understanding and friendship," says Canadian IVEP coordinator Isabella Sellar Voll. She was in Kitchener on July 20 as the 59 IVEPers from 24 countries had their closing program for 2007-08 before returning to their home countries.

"Through this program, both North Americans and IVEP participants begin to look at the world through new eyes; when they hear about another country in the news they no longer just flip the channel or turn the page, but they see the face of a friend in their minds, and it means something to them," she says, adding, "It makes the world more personal, and it makes people want to do something to make the world a better place. In this way, IVEP is a significant peace-building program of MCC."

A new group arrived on Aug. 8 for orientation in Akron, Pa. ❧

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



From left to right, Bridget Ndlovu of South Africa—placed at Reedley, Calif., Community Youth Ministries; Ginah Mudenda of Zambia—placed at MCC B.C.; and Mncedisi Vilakati of Swaziland—placed at the MCC Great Lakes Office participate in the closing program of IVEP 2007-08 on July 20 at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.

Chortitza oak to anchor Heritage Park

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
WINKLER, MAN.

In the heart of a rapidly growing city in southern Manitoba the decision to turn prime real estate into a heritage park instead of a fire hall is significant. Winkler, with a population of 9,300, is growing at a rate of 10 percent every year.

"This is one of the times and places where the past, present and future come together," said Ken Loewen, secretary of the Bethel Heritage Park Committee on Aug. 18, when plans for the site were unveiled. "With this park we want to honour the past, build relationships in the present, and inspire our city for the future."

Formerly the home of Bethel Hospital, development of the one-hectare site is scheduled to begin this month.

In honouring the past, the park will feature an entrance gate that is reminiscent of the architecture in former Mennonite villages in Ukraine. There will be both a war memorial and a memorial to conscientious objectors (COs).

Bernie Loepky, who is helping plan the CO memorial, said, "We are proposing a wall of remembrance that will consist of 3,021 bricks, [one] for each of the conscientious objectors in Manitoba during World War II. We don't have all the names because the government destroyed them in 1946."

A Jewish pioneer cairn and German cairn will give recognition to the significant influence of these groups on the community.

"The Jewish community brought entrepreneurship, thriving businesses and made other significant contributions," said Loewen, noting, "There used to be a Jewish synagogue here."

A young oak tree, an offshoot of the ancient oak that grew in the former Chortitza colony in Ukraine, stands alone in the park at present, but will eventually

PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU



Bill Siemens, chair of Winkler's Bethel Heritage Park Committee, and secretary Ken Loewen pose with an oak tree seedling from the ancient oak that grew in the Mennonite colony at Chortitza, Ukraine. The oak tree will be one of the focal points of the still-to-be-developed Bethel Heritage Park.

be surrounded by trees representing the agricultural success of Mennonite farmers in the area.

"This park will have a greater impact than many other projects," said Winkler mayor Martin Harder. "It will be a spot where future generations can come to enjoy, reflect and remember their heritage." ❧

MEDA project to preserve mangroves

BY LINDA WHITMORE

MEDA Release
PERU

A new approach to creation care is being explored in Peru's mangrove forest by Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). MEDA recently undertook a five-year, \$1.8-million project for the Peruvian government to protect exotic birds and bio-rich plant life through sustainable development in the country's only mangrove sanctuary.

Mangrove forests, which can look like a tangle of jagged roots twisting deep into the mud, are among the most biologically diverse wetlands on earth, hosting plant life that can't survive elsewhere. They're a haven for hundreds of bird species, and offer refuge and nursery grounds for fish,

crabs, shrimp and mollusks.

Many residents of Peru's mangrove sanctuary make their living from fishing, and a \$50 million prawn-exporting industry operates nearby. But the mangrove forest faces pressures such as contamination from sewage, garbage and industrial waste.

"As well, villagers and companies have been tempted by short-term gains, such as cutting mangrove wood illegally for commercial purposes," says Ben Fowler, MEDA's project manager.

More than half of the thousands of residents in the sanctuary do not have access to clean water or sewage drainage, and a third are undernourished, Fowler says, adding that already limited economic options will be further diminished if ecological health declines.

MEDA's approach is to boost awareness of how conservation and long-term economic interests go hand-in-hand, so that all stakeholders join hands to protect the mangrove forest. Fowler cites the example of discouraging people from going into logging that directly impacts their own ability to earn a livelihood. "A key task will be to gain the trust of villagers themselves, bring them on board and empower them to develop their own strategies and community regulations," he says.

A related tactic is to expand cooperation among local producer associations that sometimes see each other as rivals. "There are strong local associations that need to be brought into the picture and made to feel that they have a stake in managing it," says Fowler. "We want to build a recognition of their common interest and link that into government structures."

For local Peruvians, a lot is riding on the project, both economically and environmentally, according to Fowler: "If it succeeds as planned, it could be replicated in many of the other protected areas." ❧

Sustaining grace

World pressure needed to bring change to Zimbabwe says church leader

BY FERNE BURKHARDT

Mennonite World Conference Release
TORONTO

“It is God’s grace that sustains us,” said Bishop Danisa Ndlovu from his hotel room the morning after Zimbabwe’s presidential run-off election late this spring. The vice-president and president-elect of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) travelled from his home in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, to Toronto, where he spoke at the Brethren in Christ General Conference (North America).

Although discredited by much of the world after the June 27 run-off, Robert Mugabe was sworn in again as Zimbabwe’s president in time for him to attend the African Union summit in Egypt as the

[C]hurch leaders are especially targeted because they are seen to have influence and they speak out on political issues.

nation’s newly elected head of state. His election was announced within hours of the polls closing, in contrast to the March 29 election when citizens waited for more than a month for vote results. Morgan

Tsvangirai, leader of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, had withdrawn from the run-off ballot, condemning it as a farce.

The March general election was called free, but not fair; the run-off election was said to be neither, with beatings and harassment happening within sight of African and international observers, claimed Ndlovu.

While he hopes the aggression and harassment of opposition party supporters will decrease, Ndlovu does not expect much change in the country without regional and international pressure on the president. “The meeting in Egypt is significant,” he said. “The situation is ripe for the African Union [leaders] to take a stand. This is no longer a Zimbabwean issue, but an African issue and an international issue.”

Many Zimbabweans have fled to neighbouring countries, particularly to South Africa, where churches are growing due to the influx of refugees. Some of Ndlovu’s own Brethren in Christ members are trying to leave Zimbabwe, he said.

People live with anxiety, Ndlovu said, maintaining that church leaders are especially targeted because they are seen to have influence and they speak out on political issues. “We know we are being watched, but when we preach we can’t overlook corruption and suffering,” he said.

He expressed gratitude to the global faith community for the presence of Dan Nighswander and Yvonne Snider-

Nighswander, Mennonite Church Canada workers in South Africa who were sent by MWC to Zimbabwe, to pray and walk with church leaders and their families for two weeks around the time of the run-off election. “We are overwhelmed by the moral support of the international church and the prayers of God’s people everywhere. It is a great encouragement,” said Ndlovu.

The economic situation continues to be extremely difficult, he said, as people simply get whatever they can wherever they can, often crossing into neighbouring countries. “The government is pushing people too far and there is potential for violence, but people are not keen on engaging in any form of violence,” Ndlovu observed. “I don’t anticipate violence in the streets unless there is a big provocation.”

His own BIC church members, he concluded, “need to be peaceful and not lose their trust in God.” ❧

/// Briefly noted

Rosthern Mennonite Nursing Home making a ‘FRESH’ start

ROSTHERN, SASK.— Rosthern Mennonite Nursing Home is now one year into a three-year strategic plan known as FRESH (Foster spiritual growth, Revitalize resident-centred care, Enhance community awareness and partnering, Sound stewardship and Heighten staff development). During that time, the home has found financial resources to create a half-time chaplaincy position, and has appointed a search committee. A list of resident rights and responsibilities has been formulated and enacted. A new website is being developed, which will improve information and communication with the community. Aboriginal training and hiring is high on the agenda. The home became aware of its environment and is responding to this urgent concern. Safety issues concerning both residents and staff are being monitored very closely, and corrections and training are being made where possible. —Rosthern Mennonite Nursing Home Release





Mennonite Church Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman, left, and MC Canada Witness executive secretary Janet Plenert, right, were part of an MC Canada/Mennonite World Conference delegation that met with Philippine General Ferrer last month during talks aimed at restoring peace in the nation after the Supreme Court blocked the signing of an ancestral domain agreement between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a key rebel force in the Philippines, which could have ended more than four decades of conflict. Since the Mennonite delegation's visit, which included time with MILF representatives, peace talks between the two sides have stalled. Serious fighting has resulted in dozens of deaths and as many as 160,000 people have fled their homes and villages for safety. Peacebuilders Community (under the leadership of Dann and Joji Pantoja), with support from MC Canada Witness, is working to provide food for some of those displaced families. Also pictured is Irene Suderman, second from left.

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Iraqi refugee family recalls horrors of war in Baghdad

By GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Release

AMMAN, JORDAN

Meeron Chamoun is only eight years old, but he courageously shares vivid memories of children being kidnapped from his school in Baghdad and school closures resulting from bombings and threats of bomb attacks.

"They kidnapped 16 kids from my school," he says, explaining that kidnappings usually take place at the end of the school day when many students leave the school grounds at the same time. Chamoun also remembers the explosions and threats of explosions in his school. "I felt very scared," he says. "I would go to school one day and then stay home for a few days."

Chamoun and his parents, Majid Chamoun and Missa Hanni, and his siblings, six-year-old twins Karol and Karaam, now live in Amman waiting for resettlement in another country.

"We don't have a future in Amman," says Hanni. "There is pain in this waiting, but we know that someday things will change."

The lack of peaceful options to deal with conflicts in Iraq has resulted in a cycle of violence that has uprooted and displaced about 4.8 million people; nearly three

MCC PHOTO BY MELISSA ENGLE



Meeron Chamoun, left, shares vivid memories of children being kidnapped in Baghdad as his father, Majid Chamoun, and sister Karol listen in.

million have found refuge in safer regions in Iraq and about two million others have found safety in other countries, mainly Syria and Jordan.

This family is among 25,000 Iraqi Christians who have fled to Jordan, explains Father Raymond Moussalli, who was sent in 2002 by the Chaldean Catholic Church in Baghdad to start a church in Amman for Chaldean Catholic refugees from Iraq.

Through financial donations from individuals, and grants from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and other partner organizations, Moussalli's church provides a variety of services and programs to support Iraqi families, including youth programs, Sunday school classes, after-school programs, training programs, health services and humanitarian aid.

Chamoun and Hanni were born in Baghdad. Chamoun, an engineer specializing in air conditioning and refrigeration, owned an electrical appliance shop. He says he became a target for militant groups in 2004 because he had sold televisions and air conditioning units to the international military forces. In response to threats, he and the children fled to Amman for three months. His wife stayed with her family in Baghdad because she did not have a passport at that time.

He tried to re-establish his business when he returned to Baghdad, but within a few months a gang of men stole everything from his shop as a warning that he was not allowed to operate his business in that neighbourhood.

This time the whole family fled to Amman, but returned to Baghdad in October 2005 because they wanted to give Meeron the opportunity to go to school.

(Only in 2007 was new legislation passed in Jordan that gives all Iraqi children there access to Jordanian schools.)

Chamoun once again tried to open his shop in Baghdad, but these plans ended abruptly on Dec. 20, 2005, when militants placed a bomb in his shop and burned it down. Two days later they sent threatening letters to his house. "This was their way of letting me know that they knew where I lived," he says.

The family went into hiding, but in March 2006 two men from the militant group came to the neighbourhood asking people if they knew the whereabouts of "Majid, the engineer." When the men parked their vehicle in front of the house where he and his family were hiding he went to the vehicle to talk with the men.

"They said, we want you to work with us to make explosives. We will give you the money that you want," Chamoun says, explaining that he was offered the job because the militants needed an experienced engineer. He knew that rejecting this job offer would put his life in jeopardy, but it was a risk he was willing to take.

The family tried to hide in another neighbourhood, but within a few months they were found. "In June 2006, we left Baghdad for the last time," says Chamoun, adding he does not expect that it will ever be safe enough for him to return.

In the meantime, the family finds support from the church and places its hope in resettlement in another country. Chamoun and Hanni are not allowed to work in Jordan, where their stay is viewed by the government as temporary. They get some financial assistance from relatives who have already resettled in other countries. ☸

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Skyrocketing costs affect goat project in Jordan

By GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Release
GREGRAH, JORDAN

Goats provide a much-needed source of income, meat and milk in this Bedouin village of 3,000 people in the Wadi Araba Desert in southern Jordan. But skyrocketing costs for livestock feed and reduced demand for local meat are shattering dreams that a herd of goats will give families an adequate source of income and food security.

Maytha Amareen, a widow with two children under the age of three, was among the first 17 families in Wadi Araba to receive four pregnant nanny goats under a community development program supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and administered by the Prince Hussein Benevolent Society.

"The best thing is that I don't have to buy milk," says Maytha, explaining that her small herd of two goats (following the death of two animals) produces two litres of milk a day, making it possible for her to make a small contribution to the family's food requirements.

She lives in a tent in the same yard as

MCC PHOTO BY MELISSA ENGLE



Ali Amareen chairs a benevolent society that provides goats to needy families through a program supported by Mennonite Central Committee. Two of the goats in this pen belong to Maytha Amareen.

her deceased husband's first wife and that woman's eight children, aged one to 22. The two families live as one, sharing meals and financial resources. Each family has its own tent for sleeping and they share a tent for cooking. Their main source of income is the late husband's pension of 150 Jordan dinars—just over \$200—an income that is not enough to support this family of 12 people.

Maytha can't afford to buy livestock feed for her two goats but Joseph, 18, takes care of her goats and the seven goats that belong to his mother. Every morning he finds a place near the village where the goats can graze on shrubs and grasses growing in the desert.

"Lots of people in this area raise livestock," says Ali Amareen, chair of the benevolent society. "We thought this would be a good project to help poor families, in the hope that things would go better for them."

Under this program, recipients of the goats are required to give money from the sale of male offspring to the benevolent society for three years. The society uses

these funds to buy female offspring, which are bred and given to other poor families.

"It could have been an excellent project [but] nobody knew the prices would go up," he says, explaining that prices of all basic commodities, including fuel, electricity, wheat and barley, are escalating because the government is phasing out subsidies. In addition to escalating prices, the demand for local meat is going down because it is cheaper to buy meat that has been imported from Sudan and Syria.

Despite these unexpected challenges, farmers in Jordan are anticipating that the economics of keeping goats will improve. The benevolent society wants the project to continue because the price of milk is increasing and this project gives poor families their own source of milk, says Ali, adding the program might be changed to provide each family with only two pregnant ewes, instead of four.

MCC has supported projects in this community for more than 10 years, many of them related to water systems. Most recently, MCC provided a grant of \$30,000 towards a \$140,000 water catchment

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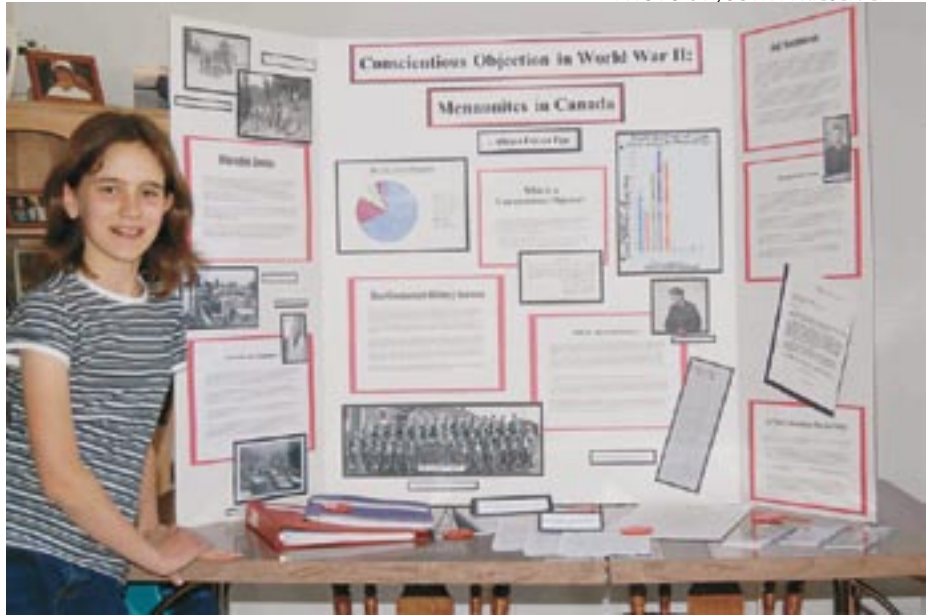
PHOTO BY JUDITH FRIESEN EPP

system for irrigating 300 hectares of farmland. Water from an artesian well is collected and stored in a 9,000-cubic-metre concrete cistern built on top of a hill. The water moves by gravity through above-ground pipes to the flat farmland below. MCC has also provided funds to install and upgrade water distribution systems in the village. ☞

Young Mennonite brings CO project to National Historica Fair

BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada Release
VICTORIA

Twelve-year-old Allegra Friesen Epp took her project on conscientious objection to a national audience this summer. She was one of 15 students chosen to represent



Bright red Mennonite Central Committee buttons reading "To remember is to work for peace" placed in front of Allegra Friesen Epp's project send an alternative message about war.

Manitoba at the National Historica Fair in Victoria, B.C., for a week in July.

A student from École Golden Gate Middle School in Winnipeg, Friesen Epp

has family ties with conscientious objection. Her great-great uncle, Nick Friesen, went to prison during World War II when he was denied conscientious objector (CO) status.

"I heard a bit about his story and I wanted to gather the information that was all around me and put it into a project," Friesen Epp says. She realized that the topic of conscientious objection was something many people would not be aware of and she liked the idea of doing something different.

Friesen Epp divided her project into three sections: Alternative Service, Non-Combative Military Service, and men who were denied CO status. With photographs, copies of newspaper clippings and personal stories of COs, her project raised curiosity among her schoolmates. "Many of them asked questions," she says. "They were really interested because they'd never heard of it before."

Her project was one of several chosen to represent Grades 6 and 7 at a school-wide fair, gradually progressing to divisional, provincial and national levels.

Undertaking this project has enhanced Friesen Epp's personal commitment to peace. "There is another option or solution for conflict," she says. "You never need to go to war to solve arguments or problems. There are alternatives." ☞

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BOOK REVIEW

Politics: God's 'Plan B'

Politics Under God.

John H. Redekop. Herald Press, 2007, 224 pages.

REVIEWED BY DAVID DRIEDGER

John H. Redekop's *Politics Under God* deals with the basic issues Christians face when trying to understand their relationship with the state. For Redekop, the political realm was instituted when God "put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him" (Genesis 4:15). He views the state as a provisional rule for those who rejected God's lordship; it is God's "Plan B." Christians are concerned about good government, but they cannot give their full allegiance to it.

Redekop calls the government to particular ethical requirements, but they are not the same as those Christians are called to. Acknowledging this difference, Redekop critiques various historical approaches to living in two ethical realms. He introduces an approach that he calls "Reformed Anabaptism," which allows proportional participation with the government. Christian participation increases or decreases according to the government's "civic righteousness." Christians are



allowed to participate to the extent that their actions do not violate a Christian ethic.

In the second half of the book Redekop deals with the relationship between church and state, and responds to the question of whether or not morality can be legislated. The state, he argues, is not called upon to do the work of conversion, but is mandated to

control particular behaviour. As behaviour is shaped over time, there is the possibility of a shift in moral self-understanding.

Redekop also asks whether there can be a Christian political party and, if so, what place it would take on the political spectrum. He is sceptical that a political party that is faithful to the gospel would be elected. Because a political body in power does not put others ahead of itself, it cannot function as a truly Christian expression. He acknowledges that civil disobedience can be warranted, but he makes it clear that Christians are called to peace and order.

Although *Politics Under God* is clear

and straightforward, at times it is limited and unhelpful. It provides a helpful orientation for issues relating to politics and Christianity, but many of the arguments remain under-developed and at times come off as naïve. In arguing for policy being able to change morality, Redekop makes this debatable comment: "Perhaps the same effect occurs in the training of children. When parents force a child to say please and thank you, within a few years the child wants to do so." He offers a chart comparing different aspects of the church and politics, but the categories are largely unqualified and the reader is left with more questions than insight.

In his conclusion Redekop names Quakers and Mennonites as groups that have had a low view of Christian involvement with government. Although his book may not advance the larger discussion on politics and faith, it may be helpful in bringing these resistant traditions into conversation—and possible action—in the political world. ❧

David Driedger is a pastor at Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

/// Briefly noted

Recovering Jesus wins Word Guild Canadian Christian writing award

MISSISSAUGA, ONT.—*Recovering Jesus: The Witness of the New Testament* by Tom Yoder Neufeld, a Conrad Grebel University College professor, was named the best apologetics/evangelism book in the 2008 Word Guild Canadian Christian Writing Awards in June. Short-listed finalists with Mennonite connections included John H. Redekop of Abbotsford, B.C. for his book *Politics Under God* (Herald Press) in the biblical studies book category and for his article "Miracle on the freeway" in the personal experience article category (published in the *MB Herald*); AMBS professor Arthur Paul Boers for his book *The Way is Made by Walking* (InterVarsity Press) in the Christian living book category; and *Canadian Mennonite* managing editor Ross W. Muir for his short feature article "Other inconvenient truths."

—By *Canadian Mennonite* Staff



Mennonite Central Committee BC invites applicants for the following positions

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is a church based international relief, development and peace agency that

seeks to demonstrate God's love by serving among people suffering from poverty, conflict and natural disasters. In British Columbia we support international relief and development efforts by sending funds, personnel and material aid, and we also have local programs that assist people in need here in BC. Qualified candidates for the following positions need to share the mission and beliefs of MCC as well as the specific qualifications for the position.

Please check the website www.mcc.org/bc or call for a detailed job posting on these and other positions. MCC values diversity and invites all qualified candidates to apply.

Assistant Accountant

The assistant accountant is responsible to the director of finance and administration and is responsible for specific accounting tasks within the department. In addition to overseeing accounts payable and receivable, this position will also have responsibilities related to payroll, benefits, vacation records, supporting the year end audit, record keeping, and recording Thrift Shop activity. Several years of accounting experience and a related degree are required, payroll training and several years toward a CGA or CMA preferred. Ability to provide IT problem solving support for office staff is an asset. This is a full-time salaried position based in Abbotsford.

Resource Generation Assistant

The Resource Generation Assistant provides support to the Director of Resource Development in a variety of roles related to communications and donor relations. This includes assisting with the creation of promotional materials, responding to donor inquiries, ordering and organizing communication resources, assisting with special events such as fund raising banquets, organizing schedules, taking minutes and record keeping. The specific qualifications include good communications skills, being organized and able to multi-task, willing to take the initiative in new situations, and being a flexible and collaborative team player. This is a part-time salaried position based in Abbotsford.

Executive Assistant

The Executive Assistant provides support to the Executive Director in day to day activities by assisting with special events, board meetings, annual general meetings, taking minutes at board and management meetings, keeping official records, general filing, correspondence, church relations, alumni activities and a variety of other duties. Specific qualifications include several years of experience in a similar role and excellent skills related to written and verbal communications, inter-personal relations, computer literacy and being well organized. This is a full-time salaried position based in Abbotsford.

Thrift Shop Manager- Furniture and More and Surrey MCC Thrift Shop

The Manager leads a small staff and over 60 volunteers in the daily Thrift Shop operations. This includes empowering and encouraging staff and volunteers, as well as working under the general direction of the Thrift Shop Committee. The specific duties include: budgeting, annual planning, promotion, assisting customers, organizing displays, recruiting and training volunteers, and other duties to keep the shop running smoothly. These are full-time salaried positions based in Abbotsford and Surrey.

To apply please send a cover letter and resume to:

Attention: Marie Reimer, Human Resources Director (confidential)
MCC BC Box 2038, 31414 Marshall Rd., Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 3T8
By fax: 604-850-8734 or by email to hrdirector@mccbc.com

For more information call 604-850-6639 or check www.mcc.org/bc

Interviews will continue until qualified candidates are selected. All applicants are appreciated, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Yellow Page Business Directory

Education Resources



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519-745-8458 ext.225 | 50 Kent Ave.
www.mbicresources.org | Kitchener, ON

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Calendar

British Columbia

Sept. 19-20: MCC festival auction and sale at Tradex, Abbotsford. (See back cover.)

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

Oct. 4: "Prime time" seminar on end-of-life issues, First Mennonite, Kelowna.

Oct. 4-5: Thanksgiving Vespers with Abendmusik Choir at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford 8 p.m. (4) and Knox United Church, Vancouver 8 p.m. (5). Donations to Menno Simons Centre.

Nov. 3-5: Annual retreat at First Mennonite, Kelowna. "Blooming deserts and prickly cactus: The story of the Mennonites in the green hell of Paraguay" with Harry Loewen.

Alberta

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

Saskatchewan

Sept. 28-30: Pastor/Spouse retreat and pastors' gathering at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

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

Oct. 25: MC Saskatchewan Equipping Day.

Oct. 31-Nov. 1: MCC Saskatchewan annual general meeting.

Manitoba

Sept. 13: Morris MCC Auction and Relief Sale.

Sept. 13-14: Sterling Mennonite, Winnipeg, 50th anniversary celebrations.

Sept. 21: Mennonite Collegiate Institute presents a fall celebration supper and concert featured Brad Johner, in Buhler Hall, Gretna. To reserve tickets, call 204-327-5891.

Sept. 26-27: Brandon MCC Relief Sale.

Sept. 28, Oct. 5, Nov. 9: Power of Peace Concerts. Offering for teaching materials on peace at the Winkler and Steinbach CO memorial. (28) Morden Mennonite Church, 7 p.m. (5) Rosenort Evangelical Mennonite Church, 7

p.m. (9) Grace Mennonite Church, Steinbach, 10 a.m.

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

Oct. 3-5: "Take and Eat: A Conference on Food and Creation Care," hosted by Providence College, CMU and A Rocha Canada at Providence College. For information or to register visit www.prov.ca or e-mail takeandeat@prov.ca.

Oct. 3-5: 50th Anniversary Homecoming weekend at Westgate Collegiate. Program at Bethel Mennonite, 6 p.m. (3); Cyclathon and Coffee House (4); worship service (5).

Oct. 8: Mennonite Church Manitoba Leadership seminar: "God's business: Practices of the Christian community in church and business." Resource person: Werner Franz.

Oct. 9-10: "Mennonites and Money: Wealth and Poverty in the Past/Present" conference hosted by Chair in Mennonite Studies, U. of Winnipeg. Keynote: Dr. James Urry, New Zealand. For information, visit mennonitestudies.uwinnipeg.ca/events or write r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca.

Oct. 11-12: Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite 50th anniversary celebration. Interested participants, e-mail Cheryl Braun at cherylbr@mtns.net.

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

Oct. 17-19: Manitoba Mennonite and Brethren Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend, Winnipeg. For more information, call Peter and Rose Dick at 204-757-4705.

Oct. 21-22: JJ. Thiessen Lectures at CMU. Keynote speaker Mark Noll, professor of history at the University of Notre Dame. Topic: "A Yankee looks at Christianity in Canada." For more information, visit cmu.ca.

Oct. 23: Mennonite Church Manitoba fall delegate session, 7 p.m. at Springfield Heights Mennonite.

Oct. 25: Workday at Camp Koinonia.
Oct. 25: CMU fall dessert evening and fundraiser. For more information, visit cmu.ca.

Oct. 26: Camps with Meaning celebration banquet at Camp Koinonia.

Oct. 31-Nov. 2: Quilting/scrapbooking retreats at Camp Koinonia.

Oct. 31-Nov. 2: Quilting Retreat I at Camp Moose Lake.

Nov. 1, 2: Camps with Meaning

celebration banquets at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite (1) and Douglas Mennonite (2).

Nov. 3: Annual General Meeting at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, 7 p.m.

Ontario

Sept. 6: Corn Festival at Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, 5:30 p.m. For more information, call (519) 658-4902.

Sept. 7: George Albrecht reunion, 1 p.m., at Khaki Club, Wellesley. Potluck meal (bring your own dishes). For details, call Gwen Albrecht at 519-662-2927.

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.

Sept. 12-13: Amazing Race. Find your next clue on the Steinmann Mennonite Church website.

Sept. 13: Pioneer cemetery memorial stone dedication at the Riser/Reschly burial plot .5 km west of Kingwood. Program at Faith Mennonite Church, Kingwood, 2 p.m. Potluck to follow.

Sept. 14: Aldaview Services' pork barbecue, New Hamburg community centre, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Sept. 14: EvenSong: A Vesper Hymn Fest at W-K United Mennonite

Church. Join Menno Singers for an evening of hymn singing.

Sept. 20: Black Creek Pioneer Village (Toronto) Relief Sale in support of MCC. Gates open at 10 a.m. Quilt auction at noon.

Sept. 27: Roundabout! A training even for Gather Round teachers, at Crosshill Mennonite, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Speaker: Marlene Bogart, Christian educator, Western District, Kansas. Co-sponsored by MC Eastern Canada and Mennonite Publishing Network. For more information, visit mcecc.ca.

Sept. 29: Seniors retreat at Hidden Acres with Esther Kern speaking on "Created to serve." For information call (519) 625-8602 or email info@hiddenacres.ca.

Oct. 23-25: Ten Thousand Villages Fair Trade craft sale and Villages café, Hamilton Mennonite Church, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (23, 24) 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (25).

Oct. 25: CPT benefit concert at Breslau Mennonite, 7 p.m. Featuring Rev. Douglas W. Hallman of McGill University on piano. For tickets, e-mail Benno Barg at bennobarg@sentex.net.

Oct. 26: Fanfare of Canadian Hymns concert by Pax Christi Chorale and chamber chorale, at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto, at 3 p.m. Guest host: Howard Dyck.

Briefly noted

CBC alumni invited to 73rd annual homecoming

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—Columbia Bible College (CBC) invites all former students, faculty and staff of the college and its formative schools, to join in a time of celebration and reconnecting at this year's Alumni Legacy Homecoming, Sept. 25-27. The weekend features a basketball game, a luncheon for all those who attended one of the Mennonite or Mennonite Brethren Bible schools in B.C. from 1936-70, workshops by Columbia faculty, a barbecue for alumni and their families, a concert featuring local alumni musicians, and significant opportunities to reminisce and connect with old friends and other alumni. The highlight of the weekend will be the banquet on Sept. 27 featuring an alumni choir lead by Rudy Baerg. Choir members are needed for this event. The choir is open to all alumni and their family members (even if they didn't sing in a musical group). Those desiring to sing in the choir, please contact the alumni office at 604-853-3567 ext. 327. To register online, visit columbiabc.edu/alumni.

—Columbia Bible College Release

U.S.A.

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.

Paraguay

July 14-19, 2009: MWC assembly, Asuncion. Registration materials available at mwc-cmm.org.

Classifieds

Announcement

Springstein Mennonite Church of Springstein, Man., is celebrating its 70th anniversary on Sept. 14, 2008. Guests are welcome to join us for 10:30 worship, noon lunch and 2:30 program. Call 204-735-2758 for more information.

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.

For Rent

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

Announcement

Parent Support Group: Announcing a bimonthly support group for Mennonite parents of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) persons in Southwestern Ontario. We provide confidential support, fellowship, resources and opportunities for dialogue in the Spirit of Christ. For more information please contact the following: rvfast@rogers.com, pmsnyderangel@rogers.com, or Roy and Mary Gascho, 519-742-1850.

Advertising Information

Contact *Canadian Mennonite*
Ad Representative
Karen Suderman
1-800-378-2524 x.224
519-745-4507
advert@canadianmennonite.org

Employment Opportunities

Camp Assiniboia, Headingley, Man., has **1-4-MONTH OPENINGS** for persons with skills in food service, maintenance, custodial or hosting who would enjoy volunteering in a Christian camp setting.. Partial food and lodging or RV pad provided. To inquire, contact Manager at 204-864-2159 or campa@prairie-sky.com.

The following positions are required for Camp Moose Lake, Sprague, Man., for fall 2008: **CAMP MANAGER** (1.0); **FOOD SERVICES COORDINATOR** (0.5). Contact Director of Camping Ministries, Mennonite Church Manitoba at 204-895-2267 or camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.

Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
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Oct. 13	Sept. 30
<i>Focus on Music</i>	

Good busy people wanted.
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FULL-TIME PASTOR
Bergthal Mennonite Church, a well established rural congregation, 45 minutes north of Calgary invites applications for a full-time pastor.
We are looking for a pastor who:
- Is committed to an Anabaptist theology and practice.
- Supports the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.
- Supports membership in MC Canada and MC Alberta.
- Is willing to work in a service oriented congregation.
Please apply to:
Pastor Search Committee
C/O Search Committee Chair
Site 1, Box 2, RR1
Carstairs AB T0M 0N0

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If you are excited about Christian post-secondary education, and are open to a new opportunity, consider joining the dynamic Resource Generation Team at Canadian Mennonite University as a **Development Associate**.

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- Self-motivated, excellent communication skills, strong organizational skills and a commitment to working within a team environment.
- Fundraising experience and/or knowledge of post-secondary education are an asset

For more information, please check the CMU web page at www.cmu.ca. Please send a resume, letter of intent, and brief statement on how you see your faith intersecting with such a role to swarkentin@cmu.ca. Processing of applications will begin immediately, and continue until the position is filled.

Please reply via mail or email to:

Canadian Mennonite University
500 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Attn: Susan Warkentin Director of Human Resources
Winnipeg, Man. R3P 2N2

Shalom Counselling Services Waterloo, a not-for-profit community counselling agency, and a United Way member agency staffed by Christian professionals, seeks applications for the position of:

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Qualifications:

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- Accreditation with a recognized credentialing and regulatory body.
- Advanced clinical skills complemented by broad clinical experience—competence in individual, couple, family and group counselling.
- Experience in clinical presentations an asset.

Please forward resumes by Sept. 8, 2008, to:

Executive Director
Shalom Counselling Services Waterloo
9 Avondale Ave. S.
Waterloo, ON N2L 2B5

Only those selected for an interview will be contacted.



Mennonite Church Canada invites applications for the position of **DIRECTOR OF RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**.

Mennonite Church Canada is a dynamic and exciting place to work and serve, where the team players are enthusiastic and energetic, and strive to put their faith into practice. This position, located in Winnipeg, participates in the mandate given to Support Services to support Christian Formation and Christian Witness with administrative services to enable these programs of the church to do their work efficiently and effectively.

The successful candidate will develop and maintain positive relationships with individual and congregational donors, resulting in financial support for the ministries of Mennonite Church Canada. Frequent travel within Canada is required.

All staff are expected to exhibit a personal faith commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord, uphold the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, and the vision of Mennonite Church Canada as a missional church. For a list of qualifications and responsibilities for this position, see the job description posted at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved/jobs/>.

A letter of intent and a resume, or any inquiries or nominations, can be directed to Kirsten Schroeder, Director, Human Resources at kschroeder@mennonitechurch.ca, Mennonite Church Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4; (ph. 204-888-6781; toll-free 1-866-888-6785). Application processing will begin Sept. 17.

CANADIAN MENNONITE

EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Canadian Mennonite is seeking an editor/publisher for the bi-weekly periodical, based in Waterloo, Ontario.

Canadian Mennonite is one of the primary communication vehicles in Mennonite Church Canada and its five area conferences. Owned and operated by Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, *Canadian Mennonite* works in a relationship of trust with the church, seeking to provide fair and accurate information, faith profiles, inspirational articles, news, and analysis of issues facing the Mennonite church. *Canadian Mennonite* is guided by the church's Confession of Faith and a representative Board.

The editor/publisher is accountable to the board, guides and directs the magazine, provides a vision and strategy for growth, accomplishes goals, and has overall responsibility for the publication.

Applicants should have strong commitment to and knowledge of the Mennonite faith community and for *Canadian Mennonite's* ministry and mission; a commitment to our Confession of Faith; membership in a Mennonite church; communication and listening skills; denominational knowledge; administrative and personnel skills; knowledge of publishing; a journalism degree or related experience; computer competence; and be self-motivated.

Please direct inquiries and resumes by contacting the search committee via:

Henry Neufeld
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hneufeld@telus.net



Stewardship Consultant

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

The successful candidate will:

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

The position will be open on January 1, 2009. Processing of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Submit resumes to:

Erwin Warkentin, General Manager
12-1325 Markham Rd, Winnipeg, MB R3T 4J6
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It's your **move**

Hand-carved chess set up for bid at annual auction

MCC B.C. PHOTO BY ANGELIKA DAWSON



Erwin Cornelsen, right, and Herbert Daniel stand proudly with their hand-carved chess set, which will go up for auction at this year's MCC Festival at the Tradex in Abbotsford, B.C., on Sept. 20.

BY ANGELIKA DAWSON

Mennonite Central Committee B.C. Release
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

People seek out Erwin Cornelsen's booth at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Festival at the Abbotsford Tradex each year. He is famous for his hand-carved wooden plates with "Give us this day our daily bread"—or the German equivalent—carved around the edges.

Many families have these proudly displayed in their dining rooms, where they sit on chairs that Cornelsen has recycled and restored, while their children play with building blocks he has also made, all of which are the legacy of a quiet, unassuming, wise elder.

Cornelsen's desire is to share his gifts with others both in B.C. and around the world. He and his distant relative, Herbert Daniel, work to create these items to sell at the Festival, but they don't make a dime personally. Those who purchase plates, chairs, blocks—and now an ornate chess set—know that their dollars go to benefit the ministry of MCC worldwide.

The focus of this year's Festival is MCC's work with refugees, something Cornelsen can relate to. "Recycling and saving our environment, as well as sharing and helping people in need, gives me a deep satisfaction," he says. "MCC is my first choice because my family was helped by our church, through MCC, to come to Canada in 1956. There is so much to share and be thankful for in this great country."

Although Cornelsen, now in his 90s, is slowing down a bit—"my work hours are getting shorter and the resting hours longer," he admits—he will still have a good number of plates and other items for people to purchase at this year's Festival.

And, of course, there is the chess set, which has a reserve bid of \$1,500! ♫