

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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EDITORIAL

Radical discipleship

TIM MILLER DYCK
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Over the summer, I've been having conversations with two newcomers to our congregation who are just getting to know what a Mennonite church is and Mennonite teachings are.

It's a good experience to talk about what I believe and how I understand how Mennonites got to where we are in terms of church teaching. Newcomers see things with fresh eyes and a new perspective that helps all of us see more clearly.

What should a Mennonite do about a Hitler, exactly? How do Mennonites relate to government? Why don't we drive horse-and-buggies or wear plain clothes like other Mennonites in this area? What do we think of other Christian denominations? How does environmentalism relate to Mennonite teaching?

These kinds of questions have left me pondering some familiar questions again. What does it mean to be a Mennonite anyway? What makes a Mennonite a

Together, published last year by Good Books in cooperation with Mennonite World Conference (MWC). The book is MWC's most recent annual book recommendation.

MWC is a global gathering of the Christian churches that originated from a church renewal movement in the 1500s, called the Radical Reformation. Many of the churches that came out of the Radical Reformation are called Anabaptist. (The word, literally, comes from the



Greek word meaning "to baptize again," because that's what the Anabaptists did. The word was at first an accusation the existing church officials used to identify these radicals: "Are you one of those heretic Anabaptists?" Later, the Anabaptist Church started using the term itself.)

From those origins close to 500 years ago in Northern Europe, Anabaptist-related churches have spread throughout the world. MWC identifies 97 member churches in 53 countries on six contin-

Anabaptists are such social stand-outs, both then and now, because of radical discipleship.

Mennonite?

I'm going to be revisiting this topic a number of times from different angles over the coming months, as I study and reflect upon the latest church work in this area: Alfred Neufeld's *What We Believe*

ents, representing almost one-and-a-half million individual followers of Christ that come from these historical origins.

The nature of the group is changing fast these days, making the question of what we believe together especially important

to be asking. Just in the past five years, Africa has passed North America as the continent with the most Anabaptists (and its lead continues to grow, even though the North American church is growing too). Three years ago, the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia passed Mennonite Church USA as the single largest individual church group. India now has more Anabaptists than Canada does, a credit to the work Mennonite missionaries started more than a hundred years ago in that country (See "Marching for Jesus" article on page 21).

Overall, the worldwide group is growing fast, with an increase of 14 percent from just 2003 to 2006. I am looking forward to seeing what the 2009 figures will be. Early court records from Germany, Austria and Switzerland recorded just 12,522 Anabaptists.

What makes the faith of those early Anabaptist women and men so compelling to people living 15 generations later and with no ties whatsoever to that early group other than faith in the same Saviour and Lord?

What We Believe Together is the end-result of a multi-year discussion among MWC churches to answer that question, but for me, the whole idea is summed up using one of the words describing my spiritual ancestors: "radical." The word means not just "affecting every part," or "extreme," but also "going back to the root" and "forming a foundation."

Anabaptists are such social stand-outs, both then and now, because of radical discipleship. It's reshaping every part of your life to follow the teachings and example of the one person of whom you are a disciple—Jesus Christ. Nothing else about what it means to be a Mennonite is as important as that, and everything else follows from that.

ABOUT THE COVER:

This armed military checkpoint in the West Bank city of Hebron provides access to the marketplace as well as the Patriarch's Tomb, an important site for both Muslims and Jews. The Muslim entrance is through a narrow stairway guarded by soldiers and metal detectors. The Jewish entrance has a wide stairway and a manicured lawn. Feature story begins on page 4.

PHOTO: DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD, CANADIAN MENNONITE ALBERTA CORRESPONDENT

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

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

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Her account of this revelatory trip—"From throwing rocks to living stones"—anchors an 11-page feature on life in this troubled part of the world.

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WILL BRAUN

Electronic Delivery

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LIFE UNDER SIEGE

From throwing rocks

This spring, Mennonite Central Committee led a learning tour group of Canadian Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren church leaders to Israel/Palestine, so they could better understand the situation there from those who live it every day. The group included Canadian Mennonite's Alberta correspondent, Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, whose lead article anchors two reflective pieces by Garry Janzen, Mennonite Church B.C.'s executive minister, and MC Alberta conference pastor Jim Shantz. Also included in the package is a heartfelt letter written by an Israeli mother to the mother of the Palestinian sniper who killed her son, along with articles about the Yella adventure in the Middle East by Michael Turman and the new Jesus Trail by Hinke Loewen-Rudgers, as well as a letter signed by all the participants to Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD
Alberta Correspondent



The dead-end street in front of the Christian Peacemaker Teams' headquarters also serves as a soccer field for local children.

The image of adults throwing rocks at children is surreal and disturbing, and a painful part of life in the Palestinian village of At-Tuwani. Children, some as young as five, have had rocks thrown at them by Israeli settlers as they walk to school and play outside their homes.

The rocks fly both ways. Ardie Goldman, an Israeli settler in the town of Ephrat, has had his car stoned by Palestinians on several occasions. Once, returning from a hiking trip, Goldman and his son drove past a Bedouin camp. "There were two Bedouin boys there; they had to be about four years old," he told our learning tour. "As our car went by, they picked up rocks. Now where does a four-year-old boy learn to throw rocks at cars?"

A trip to the Holy Land is all about stones. The landscape is grey and craggy with them, the ancient cities and sacred places are built with them, and the ongoing conflict in the region is all about who owns them.

Father Elias Chacour, archbishop of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church in Palestine, has pondered the situation for many years: "What is going wrong? Is it two religions against each other? . . . It can't be, because it is not the first time they are living together. . . . So what remains is a racial conflict. . . . But in the history of



to living stones



In the Hebron marketplace, the overhead wire mesh is to protect Palestinian vendors from rocks and garbage thrown down by Jewish settlers living above. Many shops in the market have closed because business is very poor due to the restrictions on Palestinian and Israeli movement through the market. There are checkpoints everywhere in Hebron, many of them complete with metal detectors. Palestinians are regularly stopped and searched, or simply refused entrance.

thousands of years we don't see any real racial conflict between different races. . . . What could it be if it's not religious or racial? It's only a territorial conflict."

The conflict casts ripples worldwide, pitting nations and religions against each other. In this volatile mix, what is the responsibility of the Christian church?

On a tour from April 19 to May 2, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) sponsored a group of 13 Canadian church leaders to meet with its partners. MCC aligns itself with local Palestinian and Israeli groups working for peace. Many of these identified Zionism as a major stumbling block to peace (*see definition in box at right*).

Zoughbi Zoughbi, director at the Wi'am Center for Conflict Resolution,

/// Definition of Zionism

Political Zionism began in the late 19th century, as European Jews sought to solve the problem of anti-Semitism they had faced for generations by establishing a Jewish homeland.

Political Zionism was not originally tied to Israel.

Christian Zionism is the belief, among some Christians, that Old Testament prophecy gives Jews exclusive claim to the land of Palestine/Israel and that the establishment of the State of Israel is a prerequisite for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Theologically, Christian Zionism holds to "premillennial dispensationalism," which is a particular interpretation of the progression of end time events.

(Adapted from *What is Palestine/Israel?* by Sonia K. Weaver, and *Under Vine and Fig Tree*, edited by Alain Epp Weaver.)

said, "To be frank with you as a Christian, in our world we suffer from

[Zionism] a lot. . . . As I used to say, if anyone sneezes in the West, we will

PERSONAL REFLECTION

An incurable malady

BY GARRY JANZEN
MC B.C. Executive Minister

In our two weeks in Palestine/Israel, we really came to appreciate the Palestinian people. First impressions are lasting. Several members of our group went for a walk on the first night of our stay in Bethlehem. As they were passing by the homes, complete strangers invited them in for tea. They accepted the invitation and had a wonderful time of fellowship.

The Palestinian people must live with many restrictions because they are all seen as potential terrorists. The 10-metre-high concrete wall and connected fences have made cities like Bethlehem and much of the West Bank into prisons. The inhumane checkpoints—that reminded me of cattle chutes—actually provide the avenue into the larger world. Many Palestinians are turned back because they are without a permit. It is difficult to get a permit to travel from the Palestinian-controlled areas in the West Bank to the Israeli controlled areas.

Another permit application that is difficult for Palestinians to get is for building or renovating a

home. Some have tried getting building permits for five years and still have been refused. The hassles they must go through are unbelievable. They must pay thousands of dollars every time they initiate a permit application process.

One family that is seeking to build an addition to their home will have paid \$80,000 by the time they get their permit, and they are being required to give up some of their property on top of that! Then they still have to pay the cost of the renovation.

Up to 80 percent of Palestinian homes have demolition orders on them because they were built without a permit. They must live with the haunting awareness that a circle of soldiers around their house and bulldozers may greet them on any given morning, ordering them to vacate within hours because their home will be bulldozed.

Jewish people who move to the settlements that are being built on Palestinian land are paid to move there and get brand new, beautiful homes with sidewalks and lawns.

The inequities are unbelievable, really. Like the fact that, while the Jewish areas have wide roads, curbs and sidewalks, and the Palestinian areas have glorified goat paths, all pay the same taxes.

In the midst of all this, we were favourably impressed with the hopefulness of the Palestinian Christians—much more so than the Muslim people with whom we talked. I want to close with a quote from Zoughbi Zoughbi, director at the Wi'am Center for Conflict Resolution, in response to this observation about the Palestinian Christians: "We are suffering from an incurable malady called hope."



Janzen

catch the flu.”

Zoughbi sees the Zionist emphasis on Jewish immigration and sole entitlement to land as complicating relationships between Jews and Muslims, and causing rifts in the worldwide church. He believes dialogue between Eastern and Western Christians must be enhanced to build understanding of the problems.

Jad Isaac of the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem expressed worry about the future of the church in the Holy Land. The Christian population is

shrinking as many Palestinian Christians emigrate because they do not see hope for a decent life if they stay, he said, adding, “My worry is the brain drain of the Palestinian Christians. . . . I can’t see Bethlehem without the ‘living stones,’ you know. I don’t want the Church of the Nativity to become a museum!”

To hear a Christian Zionist view, the group visited the Christian Embassy in Jerusalem. There, spokesperson David Parsons said his organization exists “to minister to the wounds and historic

grievances of the Jewish people against the Christian world in a way that shows acts [fit] for repentance.” While the learning tour members resonated with the goal of comfort for Holocaust victims, frustration with Parsons’ evasiveness on Palestinian issues was evident.

Victor Kliewer, a Manitoba pastor, summed it up, saying, “I hate long fuzzy answers!”

In a debriefing session, Peter Rempel, executive director for MCC Manitoba, commented on the variety of Zionist

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Christian Zionism!?

BY JIM SHANTZ

MC Alberta Conference Pastor

I titled this reflection with both an exclamation and a question.

The explanation has to do with the admiration for the modern State of Israel relating to its birth in 1948 and the Six Day War of 1967. I well remember 1967, for it was during that year that I happened to be a volunteer staffer at the headquarters of an American para-church campus ministry. I remember the near euphoria among some staff in response to that war and the high expectations it raised. That war was viewed as the completion of Israel’s quest to become full possessor of Palestine and was seen by many Christians as a necessary prerequisite to Christ’s return and the coming of God’s kingdom on earth.

I have subscribed to that view to varying degrees over the years, and I know if I dig deep enough I will find some sermons along those lines.

But I had placed such prophetic matters on the back burner until the notion of Christian Zionism confronted me recently. At one of our regional ministers’ sharing times,

we learned from a colleague that a church had been actively teaching Christian Zionism and had even raised the Israeli flag in its sanctuary. Then my recent participation in the Mennonite Central Committee-sponsored learning tour to Palestine/Israel gave me the needed opportunity to see how this theological and political debate played itself out on the ground.

I came to appreciate the gripping story of Archbishop Elias Chacour, who grew up in the region, the scene of a massive expulsion of the Palestinian people from their much-loved homeland. As we travelled among the gracious Arabic-speaking people of the West Bank, I felt the oppression and the loss of hope in a system of walls, checkpoints and discriminatory treatment born out of the Israelis’ intense fear of terrorism. We also heard the plea of a Jewish mother to understand Israel in the context of the Holocaust.

This tour was the needed life experience to expunge any vestige of Christian Zionism in me!

While the exclamations of amazement at the so-called “modern miracle of Israel” are easier to identify, the questions I referred to in the title around Christian Zionism will require much more careful thought:

- Who owns the land?
- What does the Bible mean when it says, “All Israel will be saved?”
- What is Israel?
- In what ways do we unconsciously side with power?
- And perhaps more pertinent to the gospel is the question, “How will the church respond to both Palestinians and Israelis now living together in the land?” Or to bring it much closer to home, “How will I respond?”

PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



MC Alberta conference pastor Jim Shantz is surrounded by scarves in a Hebron market.



Mennonite Central Committee Canada Peace Ministries coordinator Esther Epp-Tiessen presents Melkite Greek Catholic Archbishop Elias Chacour with an oil lamp to symbolize a sharing of the light between people.

views heard by the group. “A person can be Zionist and still hold up Israel’s policy to scrutiny,” he said. “It doesn’t mean we suspend judgment. If promises still apply, so do the warnings!”

Rabbi Arik Ascherman, of the group Rabbis for Human Rights, thinks Israel has a long road to travel to reach a state of freedom, justice and peace as envisioned by biblical prophets. “The way of understanding Judaism that I grew up with at least—I mean what I learned from my parents and my teachers and my rabbis—was that a basic part of what it means to be a Jew is to be concerned with universal human rights and social justice,” he said. “When I first came here, my first greatest shock was to find out bagels weren’t readily available! But my more profound shock was to find out that these values that were so axiomatic and not to be questioned, as far as I was concerned, were not shared by all Israelis!”

Ascherman puts words into action, and has stood in front of bulldozers poised to destroy Palestinian homes.

Frustration with the “other side” is predominant in the occupied territories of the West Bank and in Israel.

Mustafa Abu Sway, a Muslim professor

of philosophy, seethed with it when asked what Palestinians can do for peace. “We are indigenous, this is our land,” he exclaimed. “We are very weak. Don’t ask us. . . . It is like asking a woman who has been raped to sit down and negotiate with the rapist and accept his terms. . . . This is not about seeing light at the end of



Israeli settler Ardie Goldman at his home in the Ephrat settlement.

the tunnel; we don’t even see the tunnel!”

Israelis also appear stumped. Asked what Israel could do, Goldman replied, “To be frank, I’m not very optimistic these days. . . . I think we’ve already done that [offered peace].”

While the stalemate continues, settlements are built on disputed land, Palestinian homes are demolished, the “security wall” keeps people apart, and Israel lives in fear of terrorist attacks.

Prospects for immediate peace are dark, but small glimmers of light for the future can be found where relationships are built between ordinary people. Amos Ron, who holds a doctorate in cultural geography, recently wrote a paper on the theory of minorities acting as “middlemen” in conflict resolution. Using Nazareth Village, a reconstructed village from Jesus’ time, as an example, Ron’s paper discusses the role of middlemen in peacebuilding. The Nazareth site attracts Muslim, Jewish and Christian groups, and by not identifying with one group in particular, it is able to interact with all of them.

Shirley Roth, a director at the site, said, “Being Mennonite has been tremendously helpful. We are seen as being neutral, someone who listens and takes them seriously.”

MCC partners see hope where Israelis and Palestinians work together to build understanding, support human rights and work with relief organizations:

- The Parents Circle pairs Israelis and Palestinians who are grieving the loss of an immediate family member to the violence, providing opportunities for support and reconciliation. These partners share a message of tolerance with as many groups as possible.
- A water project in Nahaleen, near Jerusalem, recycles wastewater for agricultural use, reducing groundwater contamination and easing scarcity issues.
- Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center is a Palestinian Christian initiative to empower and connect local Christian leaders in their commitment to nonviolent peacemaking.

In the spring 2008 issue of *Cornerstone*, a Sabeel publication, Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu affirmed the importance of relationships. “All things



Raja Bannoura, an olive wood carver in Bethlehem, supplies Ten Thousand Villages shops with his handiwork. Bannoura employs 20 people, supplying much-needed local jobs for Palestinians.

become possible when hearts fixed in mutual contempt begin to grasp a transforming truth; namely, that this person I fear and despise is not an alien," he wrote. "Just as I do, this person longs for well-being in a world of peace. . . . Because of what I experienced in South Africa, I harbour a vast, unreasoning hope for Israel and the Palestinian territories."

Asked what Canadian churches can do to help the situation in Israel/Palestine, MCC partners encouraged members of the learning tour to share what they learned, to encourage more people to visit Israel and Palestine, to continue to support current programs, and to call governments to respect international law.

"My mission is to create local jobs here," Isaac said. "I would like if you can help with this. We don't want money. We want people to work with us so that we can make this place a livable place with the indigenous population. I want to help them stay and be proud."

Chacour does not want the church to take sides. "You started by mentioning your church's almost automatic sympathy with the Jews," he said. "Fine . . . but stop concluding that to be a friend of the Jews

means to be an enemy of Palestinians. . . . We do not need one more enemy. . . . The peace needs one more common friend. Can you be that? Do you have the courage?"

The stones of the Old City of Jerusalem verify that conflict here is as ancient as the land itself. Tourists see excavations of David's city, Solomon's temple, Roman and Byzantine construction, Crusader alterations and modern buildings all in lasagne-like layers melted together over the centuries. Located on a trade route with water and arable land, Jerusalem and the surrounding area is the historic home of a mosaic of peoples. The association of this land with the stories of Abraham, David and Jesus makes it a holy place for Muslims, Jews and Christians. If conflict

over the historic stones is ever to be solved, it is the living stones—the God-fearing people of the land—who must find ways to build relationships that work toward reconciliation.

The learning tour group was most encouraged by Zoughbi's comments on Mennonite efforts, however. "I believe you might be small in numbers," he said, "but that the impact is bigger than the numbers." He urged the continuation of current Mennonite efforts. "You are doing it. You are meeting people, you are visiting, you are seeing first-hand what is going on. You are creating a rich dialogue with all people. You are not visiting the holy stones only, which is very important, you are meeting the living stones." ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE



The learning tour group.

✉ Letter from a grieving mother

The Parents Circle pairs Israelis and Palestinians who are grieving the loss of an immediate family member to the violence in the conflict, providing opportunities for support and reconciliation. These partners share a message of tolerance with as many groups as possible. The following letter was written by Robi Damelin, a member of the circle whose son David was killed by a Palestinian sniper, to the mother of her son's killer.

THIS PROBABLY IS one of the most difficult letters I will ever have to write. My name is Robi Damelin and I am the mother of David, who was killed by your son. I know he did not kill David because he was David. If he had known him, he could never have done such a thing.

David was 28 years old. He was a student at Tel Aviv University doing his masters in the philosophy of education. David was part of the peace movement and did not want to serve in the occupied territories. He had a compassion for all people and understood the suffering of the Palestinians. He treated all around him with dignity. David was part of the movement of the officers who did not want to serve in the occupied territories. But nevertheless, for many reasons he went to serve when he was called to the reserves.

PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



Aisheh Aqtam, left, and Robi Damelin of The Parent's Circle. Aqtam is a Muslim woman who lost her brother to an Israeli soldier's bullet; Damelin, an Israeli, lost her son to a Palestinian sniper. The women have become close friends through the group, supporting each other and spreading a message of reconciliation and peace.

What makes our children do what they do? Do they not understand the pain they are causing? Your son having to be in jail for many years, and mine, who I will never be able to hold and see again, or see him married or have a grandchild from him.

I cannot describe to you the pain I feel since his death, and the pain of his brother and girlfriend, and all who knew and loved him. All my life I have spent working for causes of co-existence, both in South Africa and here. After David was killed, I started to look for a way to prevent other families, both Israeli and Palestinian, from suffering this dreadful loss. I was looking for a way to stop the cycle of violence.

Nothing for me is more sacred than human life; no revenge or hatred can ever bring my child back. After a year, I closed my office and joined the Parents Circle families forum. We are a group of Israeli and Palestinian families who have all lost an immediate family member in the conflict. We are looking for ways to create a dialogue, with a long-term vision of reconciliation.

After your son was captured, I spent many sleepless nights thinking about what to do. Should I ignore the whole thing, or will I be true to my integrity and to the work that I am doing, and try to find a way for closure and reconciliation? This is not easy for anyone, and I am just an ordinary person, not a saint. I've now come to a conclusion that I would like to try to find a way to reconcile.

Maybe this is difficult for you to understand or believe. But I know that in my heart it is the only path that I can choose. For if what I say is what I mean, it is the only way.

I understand that your son is considered a hero by many of the Palestinian people. He is considered to be a freedom fighter fighting for justice and for an independent, viable Palestinian state. But I also feel that if he understood that taking the life of another is not the way, and that if he understood the consequences of his act, he could see that a nonviolent solution is the only way for both nations to live together in peace. Our lives as two nations are so intertwined. Each of us will have to give up on our dreams for the future of the children who are our responsibility.

I give this letter to people I love and trust to deliver. They will tell you of the work we are doing and perhaps create in your hearts some hope for the future. I do not know what your reaction will be; it's a risk for me. But I believe that you will understand it comes from the most honest part of me. I hope that you will show the letter to your son, and that maybe in the future we can meet. Let us put an end to the killing, and look for a way through mutual understanding and empathy, to live a normal life, free of violence.

ROBI DAMELIN, ISRAEL

LIFE UNDER SIEGE

Hope in spite of fear

BY MICHAEL TURMAN
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Fear and hope drive all people. This is the most prominent lesson I learned on Yella, a trip to Israel/Palestine this past May that was organized by Mennonite Central Committee Ontario and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. During the three weeks we spent in the Holy Land, our group of 23 young adults was exposed to overwhelming layers of history, religion, culture, race and politics. The conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, and the hope and fear we witnessed on both sides, stood out for me.

The “security wall” surrounding the West Bank is the most prominent symbol of this conflict. We travelled to Bethlehem and stayed for three days in the West Bank town of Beit Sahour. For visitors, as for residents, it is hard to ignore the massive eight-metre-high concrete structure that passes right around and through the city. It may be seen as a symbol of fear—the Israeli fear of Palestinian violence. Conversely, it represents the fear that the Israeli military is inflicting on the residents of the West Bank.

Throughout those three days, our host families and others we met told us about the difficulties imposed on them. For instance, the night we arrived I was taken to the birthday celebration of my host family’s grandfather. In spite of the cake and gathered relatives, the festivities were muted. That day was the 60th anniversary of the *Naqba*, “the Catastrophe,” when Israel was formed and many Palestinians were forced from their hometowns. It’s harder to celebrate when simply commuting to work

means an hour or more of waiting at a checkpoint.

We walked along the wall ourselves. It runs right through the city of Bethlehem, dividing neighbourhoods arbitrarily. The West Bank side is covered with art and

PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL TURMAN



Michael Turman spent time in Israel this spring as part of the MCC Ontario/MC Eastern Canada Yella team.

graffiti. Politically charged images of beasts, bombs and cultural clashes seemingly respond to the wall’s dehumanizing effects—it not only cuts off all residents of the West Bank from the land (Jerusalem, Israel and other cities), it also keeps Israelis living nearby from seeing their Palestinian neighbours. Eight-metre-tall concrete slabs can do little but oppress the spirits of people on both sides.

Yet as we walked along that

overbearing wall we saw signs of hope. There are hundreds of hopeful messages spray-painted on it. German slogans recall the Berlin Wall and the belief of its builders that it would stand for hundreds of years. The Israeli side of the wall bears banners proclaiming peace in Hebrew, Arabic and English. A favourite mural of ours was a colourful collage of teddy bears and toys below the words, “I want my ball back! Thanks.” The hunger for free and secure lives is palpable on both sides.

This discovery of the forces that drive people has changed me. Before, conflicts around the world seemed distant. The greatest hopes and fears I encountered during my life as a student were getting good grades, having enough money for the term, or the insecurity of a bad break-up. Now I’ve seen what happens when a whole group of people is violated in some way, as both the Jews and the Palestinians have been in the last century. They are all looking for the kind of security that we have in Canada. We must not take it for granted.

This trip and its lessons have given

I now know in my gut what I’m working for—hope.

me purpose as well—to share the thin slice of perspective on humanity that I’ve gained. We are connected to people and events everywhere. The pain and joys visible in that part of the Middle East are analogous to the experiences of people in conflicts throughout the world, whether affected by residential schools in Canada, devastated by natural disasters in Indonesia, or hoping for change in Zimbabwe. These are sometimes matters of life and death, yet life goes on nevertheless.

There is a challenge here for me and for each of us, as Christians. Although fear is a powerful force, I now know in my gut what I’m working for—hope. ☸

“Young Prophet” Michael Turman, 23, lives in Stouffville, Ont., where he attends Community Mennonite Church.

LIFE UNDER SIEGE

Walking through the Holy Land

BY HINKE LOEWEN-RUDGERS

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

We began in Nazareth and the Galilee. The beauty of the area was breathtaking, despite it being the dry season, and my favourite hike of the trip took us to the top of the Horns of Hittin. I co-led the tour with David Landis, who lives in Nazareth, works part-time for Franconia Mennonite Conference, and is also a co-founder of the Jesus Trail. For a few days we had the opportunity to hike small pieces of the trail while taking in the more “touristy” biblical sites as well.

I was struck by how the Jesus Trail brings together people from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds. On the trail or in a hostel, travellers naturally become more reliant on the hospitality of others as the common act of travelling breaks some of the social barriers that might cause us to resist opening up to strangers. Travellers experience Arab culture while in Nazareth, supporting an economy that is often ignored by tourists.

In Bethlehem, the group was taken

My hosts never forget this. Over small cups of very strong Arabic coffee, they told stories of life under occupation and what it is like to be allowed to visit the

PHOTO COURTESY OF HINKE LOEWEN-RUDGERS



Hinke Loewen-Rudgers is pictured with the Horns of Hittin in the background.

United States but not be allowed to visit Jerusalem only a few miles away.

Jerusalem’s bustle contrasted sharply with the peace of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour, and we spent our time navigating narrow cobbled alleys through the Old

I was struck by how the Jesus Trail brings together people from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds.

City, eating *shwarma* (a type of sandwich), sightseeing, bartering with friendly shopkeepers and sharing time on the roof of the Ecce Homo French Convent. Looking out over Jerusalem from the vantage point of that roof with the golden Dome of the Rock glistening in the sunlight, it was hard to imagine that such a beautiful place is also the source of such tension. It was not difficult to imagine Jesus weeping over Jerusalem as his

heart broke at the city’s beauty, with the heart-wrenching empathy of someone who feels and knows the pain of a people packed into such a disputed piece of land. The joy of a crowd gathered to celebrate God and each other at the Wailing Wall is something to behold. I marvelled at the ability for all to put aside busyness and an “on edge” feel I witnessed earlier in West Jerusalem, as Jews came together to forget and to remember. The wall is under heavy security and, to be sure, the crowd is either tourist or local Jewish, but still the joy present is infectious enough to make one forget both security and division.

What can I as an outsider offer this land and its people? We are told that solidarity and learning are essential, and I believe that is true. Is it alright to come away from this time in the Holy Land feeling like I just spent time feeling truly at home? When so many suffer from political injustice, racism and violence, and the feelings of anger and frustration that these cause, can I allow myself to long for the basic beauty of simply talking to those I have built relationships with? While in the West Bank we visited with organizations and heard personal accounts of land taken, lives lost, livelihoods ruined, and the effects of trauma on an entire population. I asked our host in Beit Sahour how they manage and he said simply, “What can we do? We live.”

A pervading sense of optimistic endurance in Israel/Palestine sticks with me more closely than the stories of injustice and inequality. Perhaps this sense can not exactly be called hope, but it seems to be born in grace and extends much grace to the strangers who are fortunate enough to pass through. This sense can only be experienced in person through relationships that to me were very much like an oasis. The people themselves made it possible for me to spend time in that oasis so that I could keep from being swallowed entirely by the oppression of conflict and injustice. In a land where so many have lost their homes, I was treated like family and offered the rare gift of homecoming. ❧



A hiker begins the road leading to Mount Tabor (the Mount of Transfiguration of Jesus).

/// A short history of the Jesus Trail

Founded by Israeli hiker Maoz Inon and Franconia Mennonite Conference worker David Landis earlier this year, the Jesus Trail is a 65-kilometre hiking route from Nazareth to Capernaum that connects major sites in Jesus' life, including the Mount of Beatitudes, Tiberias, Mount Tabor, Cana and the Sea of Galilee.

"Our vision is for the Jesus Trail to become a world-class route that provides a way to literally follow in the footsteps of Jesus and experientially learn about his life and teachings," says Landis. "We hope it will bring people together from different nationalities, cultures and religions."

During his time in Nazareth, Landis had many conversations with travellers, hikers, students and the press relating to Jesus' itinerant lifestyle. "Everyone is curious about the Jesus that existed before Christianity, asking, 'What can we learn from the Jesus who walked between villages, encountered a diversity of people, and invited them on a journey that promises abundant life?'" he says.

To learn more about the Jesus Trail, visit jesustrail.com.

PHOTOS BY DAVID LANDIS

Today, the Mount of Beatitudes is a tranquil garden with a Franciscan church featuring the eight beatitudes in stained glass and provides a good vantage point to view the Sea of Galilee towards Tiberias and Capernaum.



✉ Excerpt from a May 3 letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper

WE ARE A group of 13 Christian leaders from Mennonite churches in Canada who . . . visited Israel and Palestine from April 19 to May 2 on a learning tour sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee Canada and the Canadian Council of Anabaptist Leaders. On the eve of the 60th anniversary of the formation of the State of Israel, we would like to share with you some of our observations and hopes. . . .

The current reality in the land appears to be one of dispossession, insecurity, fear and enmity, rather than the security, prosperity and reconciliation envisioned in the emergence of a Jewish state. As people committed to Christ's way of peace, we deplore all forms of violence, mourn with all who have lost loved ones in this conflict, and hope for the day when peace will come to this land.

It is our opinion that the following principles will need to be embraced in seeking solutions to the conflict:

1. A commitment to respect human rights as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. An end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem as called for by United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

3. A shared Jerusalem where all would be able to worship and practise their faith freely.

4. An end to discriminatory confiscation and distribution of land and water resources, and other practices prohibited by the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the dismantling of the illegal separation walls in accordance with the International Court of Justice rulings.

5. Justice and security for Palestinian refugees as called for by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194.

6. An end to the reliance on military force to solve human problems.

As Christians, we believe that statehood is not an end in itself and we did not formulate a position on whether a one-state

or two-state solution is the best alternative. But we lament the reality in the Holy Land that falls far short of the biblical vision of all people created in God's image living in peace in the land God creates for all his children.

We encourage you during this time of the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel to offer Israelis the best wishes of all Canadian citizens and also to use every means at your disposal to work with Israelis and all Palestinians for peace, justice and security for all.

• **GARRY JANZEN**

Executive Minister, Mennonite Church B.C.

• **STEVE BERG**

Conference Minister, B.C. Conference of MB Churches

• **JIM SHANTZ**

Conference Minister, Mennonite Church Alberta

• **DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD**

Pastor, First Mennonite Church, Edmonton

• **RALPH GLIEGE**

Director of Church Ministries,

Saskatchewan Conference of MB Churches

• **VICTOR KIEWER**

Senior Pastor, Elmwood MB Church, Winnipeg

• **DINORA VALLALTE**

Elder, Toronto New Life Centre;

MCC Ontario board member

• **RON PENNER**

Moderator, Evangelical Mennonite Conference

• **RON DUECK**

Chair of Board, Mennonite Central Committee

• **WENDY DUECK**

Member, Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg

• **PETER REMPEL**

Executive Director, MCC Manitoba

• **DON PETERS**

Executive Director, MCC Canada

• **ESTHER EPP-TIESSEN**

Peace Ministries Coordinator, MCC Canada

/// For discussion

1. What have been your sources of information about the conflict between the State of Israel and the Palestinians? Which side do you feel most sympathy with? Has your sympathy changed over time? What role has the Holocaust played in the world's sympathy for the Jews?

2. How much support is there for Christian Zionism in your community? What role does Christian Zionism play in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict?

3. Where do you find hope for peace in this conflict? What role should Mennonite organizations such as MC Canada, Christian Peacemaker Teams or Mennonite Central Committee play?

4. What is needed to bring a fair settlement to this conflict? What would you like to say to the nations of the world? Could you sign the delegation's letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper?

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.

✉ Church opposes Jesus and Paul when it denies homosexual acceptance

IT IS REGRETTABLE that so much discussion on sexuality rests on the assumption that Christians know the difference between good and evil, and can sit in judgment over those not like us. To support this, they cite passages such as Romans 1:26-27 and I Corinthians 6:9-10.

I believe that both Jesus and Paul have a greater desire to pull believers away from an analysis of evil and show them a God who makes no distinctions. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus describes God as he who makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. Such is the character of divine perfection.

Strikingly, Jesus evokes the words used to describe the Fall in Genesis. It was not knowledge itself, nor evil itself, that brought death, but human knowledge of good and evil. Ethical knowledge in the hands of human beings brings death. Since the Fall, God has worked with sinful people to undo the damage. In Jesus, God seeks to win all people through acceptance and forgiveness, not coercion or exclusion.

When Jesus wants to rebuke, he directs his words at the priestly leaders concerned about the sins they see in the lives of others. The church's blindness towards Romans 2:1 is breathtaking given its proximity to Romans 1:26-27. In Romans 2, Paul emphatically rejects anyone's right to judge the actions he has described in chapter 1.

Once Paul has established that there is no difference between good and evil people, he clarifies that

to linger over sin negates God's redemption through Christ. This corrects not only Eve and Adam's sin, but also the sins of all their descendants. As John E. Toews in his Believers Church Bible Commentary on Romans points out, Paul's focus was hope and reconciliation, not the origin and terrible tragedy of sin.

It takes a deliberate act of opposition to Paul when a church excludes gifted gay and lesbian believers from worship and leadership. Yet this is what we do even while we preach acceptance, love of enemies and openness to all. To one group of believers with an alternative sexual lifestyle, we say no, you cannot enter the sanctuary or at least you cannot stand behind the pulpit.

It is time we move beyond this to a serious confession of our sins as a community and a joyous celebration with all who believe that Christ is the messiah who put an end to death.

JOHN KLASSEN, LANGLEY, B.C.

✉ Stepping on toes a part of Christian magazine publishing

I JUST WANT to thank Larry Cornies, the new chair of *Canadian Mennonite*, for his July 7 editorial, "Encouraging the saints . . . an issue at a time," page 2.

For me, one of life's important developments was getting to know Frank H. Epp, founding editor of *The Canadian Mennonite*, this publication's predecessor. His vision—not always popular, but consistent and visionary—was inspiring to me and I think to many others.

It is probably not surprising that he got into some difficulties, as did many saints before him. I find Cornies' editorial encouraging, in that to be truly Christian a witness must be willing to step on some toes and take on challenges. I pray that he and his team will have the courage and joy to carry on this important mission.

VICTOR DOERKSEN, KELOWNA, B.C.

✉ Pushing sexual boundaries takes church away from God

RE: AIDEN ENNS and the Postcard Project campaign to have same-sex marriage and homosexuality declared to be a non-sin by Mennonite Church Canada (June 23, page 12).

This is seen by Enns as pushing the boundaries so that the church may become more accepting of same-sex marriage, homosexual activity and sodomy. This suggestion is very interesting, but absolutely wrong.

When Satan, who Genesis 3:1 describes as "more

subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made,” approached Eve on that fateful day and said “*Yea, hath God said, ‘Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’*” he was using a subtle approach.

Enns must surely be aware that if the boundaries can be extended just a bit at a time, then eventually homosexuality, sodomy and same-sex marriage will become acceptable in the church; indeed, this has happened in some denominations. That is the nature of using suggestions—a little bit now and then again in a few months when the resistance is a bit less, another

subtle suggestion.

Here the Postcard Project is using the same approach that Satan used: “Just make us with our homosexual acts a little more acceptable to the church.” “Hath God said?”

The Bible calls homosexuality an abomination. In Leviticus 20:13, God states, “*If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them.*”

Enns speaks of expanding the boundaries of the

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Ripe for a new harvest

PHIL WAGLER

For the past few summers our clan has bustled about Ontario’s threshing and steam-era shows and small town festivals making and selling homemade ice cream. It’s the continuation of my late father-in-law’s vision to fatten up the population one creamy spoonful at a time. Our kids very much enjoy Grandpa’s vision and Grandma’s recipe!

To be honest, I’m mostly a fish out of water when it comes to these shows and the 1928 engine I’m somehow supposed to know how to run and occasionally fix. I grew up rural and worked on farms, but there’s a good reason cows kicked me!

Actually, it’s really not so bad. We get copious amounts of family time, meet lots of cool people with interesting stories, and there’s nothing quite like a steam engine whistle at five metres to shake loose the cobwebs that build up from reading too much theology. It’s like a call back to where the writing meets the road.

I’ve actually been learning valuable lessons from these jaunts down memory lane. That whistle is a shrill reminder of a day we hardly imagine existed. A mere century ago things were very different. Cities now sprawl and the countryside is latticed with pavement and patterned by

fields worked by tractors the size of the houses the first settlers raised a dozen kids in. There was a time when people actually cleared bush to survive. There was a time when land was worked for the very first time. Those old tractors with steel-studded wheels were groundbreakers in more ways than one.

For me, the sunny days of dust and constant drone of putt-putts has given new vision to my glazed-over screen-saver eyes. Comfortable in our advancements, affluent to a fault, thoughtless and deconstructionist of our pasts, we need a rekindled pioneering spirit. The spirit that shaped much of what made Canada and the United States unique—



Where is there ground yet to be broken for Jesus in your neck of the woods?

and which yet can be seen in the lives of recent immigrants—has cancerously become what historian Jacques Barzun simply calls “decadence.” We’ve settled in, hunkered down, upgraded the implements and lost our drive to find space where no plow blade has turned the ground. If personal cost or discomfort is involved, we’re against it. As much as this

is true in many of our lives, it is certainly true for the vast majority of churches.

The Apostle Paul was always looking for a place where the gospel had never been preached, but we act like he pretty much swallowed up all the possible real estate. We have memories of an adventurous, entrepreneurial, missionary past, but now buy the secular line that such zeal is unnecessary, misguided and probably mean-spirited. All this works to close our ears to the commission to go, to be compassionate, and to be Christ-centred and Christ-sent people who pioneer with our Lord in inner cities and vacated hamlets.

Where is there ground yet to be broken for Jesus in your neck of the woods? For all of our new-fangled gadgetry, the land around us is spiritually dry, overgrown and un stewarded. The wildness and weeds are choking out life.

Who are the pioneers willing to take long-term, faith-filled initiative for a new day? Is there any room for this pioneering spirit in our churches?

What might the implements of a new

pioneering season of Christian mission look like? Someday they too will look out-dated, but Lord knows we need them now. After all, just look to the fields, they are ripe for harvest.

Phil Wagler is a servant in the king’s field living in Zurich, Ont. You can reach him at phil_wagler@yahoo.ca.

church. However, is he trying to expand the boundaries away from the centre of God, the gospel and of the church?

GERHARD JANZEN, PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.

✉ Logical fallacies alleged in letter placing humans above the environment

KEVIN SCHROEDER'S "DON'T place the environment above human beings" letter to the editor on page 9 of the Aug. 18 issue is full of good writing and bad logic.

First, he engages the rhetorical ploy of creating a false binary: "If I have to choose between emitting CO₂

NEW ORDER VOICE

Second-class Mennonites

WILL BRAUN

In the Menno town of my youth, it was an insult to call someone a *mexa*. As the "n" word is to African Americans, *mexa* was to Mexican Mennonites. All through my school years in the solidly Mennonite town of Winkler, Man., pretty much everyone was familiar with the term. You might not get scolded for using it in school, but the fact that it wasn't taken seriously by authorities made it no less effective at delineating the acceptable members of society from the unacceptable. With every use, the term reminded people that it wasn't good to be Mexican Mennonite.

Historically, about 7,000 Old Colony and Sommerfelder Mennonites moved to



Mexico from Manitoba and Saskatchewan in the 1920s. They left Canada for greater freedom from the state, particularly freedom to run their own schools. There has been continued movement of Mexican Mennonites—or Low German Mennonites, as they are also called—back and forth between Mexico and Canada, especially since the 1980s. These moves are motivated largely by economic factors. Now, significant populations exist in Manitoba, Ontario and Alberta.

During my growing-up years in

Winkler, these Mennonites were a visible minority, generally identifiable by their more conservative dress and sometimes by their Low German accent. They generally went to different churches, lived in poorer areas of town or in surrounding villages, and didn't mix much socially with the rest of us. This is still the case to some extent, although the lines are more blurred.

I was guilty of using the term *mexa* and I was guilty of looking down on Mexican Mennonites. It was not, however, a sin that was ever talked about in my church. Official faith had nothing to say about the

When I confronted a large potato farmer about this inequity, he insisted he was providing quality labour opportunities.

prejudice and second-class treatment we visited upon our fellow Mennonites.

Also not acknowledged was the fact that the considerable economic prosperity of the Winkler area owes something to the high quality and highly compliant labour provided by Mexican Mennonites over the years. Particularly on large farm operations that require manual labour, Mexican Mennonites have done the work others would not. In general, they have done it well and without complaining or making demands on employers. I

remember seeing Mexican Mennonite women working on the back of potato harvesters during blustery fall nights, doing work that was "beneath" most of us.

When I confronted a large potato farmer about this inequity, he insisted he was providing quality labour opportunities. I insisted that at least some of his workers would have preferred their own land to work. Rather than helping these cousins in the family of faith acquire their own land, large farmers have made it harder by purchasing available land and driving up land prices.

The dynamic of economic stratification still exists to some extent, although, again, the lines have blurred. A study of the economic role of Mexican Mennonites in the Winkler area would certainly be fruitful but contentious ground for Mennonite researchers. And the extent to which similar dynamics exist in other provinces is for people more familiar with those settings to assess.

Mennonite Central Committee has

various programs to help Low German Mennonites, but I'm talking about something different than reaching down to the lower class from our point of sometimes ill-gotten privilege. I'm talking about humble acknowledgment of a legacy of injustice. I'm talking about a confession, partly personal in my case, that no one should be treated as second-class, especially in the family of faith.

Will Braun now lives in Winnipeg and can be reached at editor@geezmagazine.org.

and feeding the poor, the poor will win out.” In reality, those two options are not necessarily mutually exclusive; it’s not hard to imagine ways in which reductions in CO₂ would actually result in more food for everyone on the planet.

Second, he engages in a form of the logical fallacy known as denying the antecedent when he draws a conclusion from the negative assertion that “We have no commandment to keep the earth in its original condition.” The classic form of this fallacy is: “Other men die. I am not other men. Therefore I will not die.” Just because we are not told not to do something doesn’t necessarily mean that we are allowed to do it.

Third, he conflates two distinct categories when he says, “I thank God for oil and coal because he made it, and it was good.” The goodness of oil and coal is one thing; how we extract them and use them is quite another. God also made the serial killer Paul Bernardo, but clearly what Bernardo chose to do with the gifts that God gave him was not good.

Finally, in response to Schroeder’s claim that “God’s masterpiece is us, not our planet,” and that “we are the pinnacle of creation,” I would point out something that Jesus says several times in the New Testament (including Matthew 23:12, Luke 14:11; Luke 18:14): “*Whoever exalts himself will be humbled.*”

MARK MORTON, KITCHENER, ONT.

✉ Mountainview congregants highlighted in *Canadian Mennonite*

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN a congregation ceases to exist? Mountainview Mennonite Church pioneered in the 1950s in Vancouver as the first English-language Mennonite General Conference congregation. Vancouver demographics and real estate prices led to its demise in the 1990s, and the building is now used by another Christian group.

However, I was pleased to see that the July 7 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* mentioned the names of four former members:

- Jacob Elias, who is pastoring after retiring from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS);
- Ken Hawkey, who has become associate director of development at AMBS;
- Henry Neufeld, who is on *Canadian Mennonite’s* board of directors; and
- Janet Plenert, who graduated from AMBS.

Obviously, it is sad when the unique fellowship of a group ends, but the people themselves do not disappear. Many are now active members of other congregations. As we remember each other, is there something beyond ordinary friendship that carries on?

JANICE KREIDER, VANCOUVER, B.C.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Brown—William Thomas Petherbridge (b. April 4, 2008), to Woodie Brown and Leanne Martin, Hanover (Ont.) Mennonite.

Dault—Delaney Rielle (b. Aug. 7, 2008), to Mark and Marla Dault, North Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite.

Driedger—Cole Jordan (b. May 14, 2008), to Cayle and Beatrice Driedger, North Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite.

Friesen-Stoesz—Jacob William John (b. March 20, 2008), to Trevor and Jolene Friesen-Stoesz, Pembina Mennonite, Morden, Man.

Kiefer—Xander Trevor (b. June 25, 2008), to Brent and Dixie Kiefer, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., in Provost, Alta.

Kuttschutter—Kaleb (b. July 1, 2008), to John and Nicole Kuttschutter, Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont

Martens—Aidan Elijah (b. July 30, 2008), to Kristina and Robert Martens, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Martens—Oliver Noah (b. July 6, 2008), to Delia and Tomas Martens, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Ogilvie—Gavin Paul (b. July 23, 2008), to Greg and Rachelle (Reimer) Ogilvie, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., in Edmonton.

Peters—Brady Jonathan Blair (b. July 16, 2008), to Ashley and Jonathan Peters, Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Rempel—Clara Martine (b. May 12, 2008), to Maggie R. Nighwander and Daniel N. Rempel, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Tetzlaff—Natasha Elaine (b. Aug. 14, 2008), to Stacey and John Tetzlaff, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Thiessen—Luke Stanley (b. June 26, 2008), to Derek and Laura Thiessen, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man.

Wahl—Gavin Alexander (b. July 5, 2008), to Rachel (Klippenstein) and Ryan Wahl, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Wiens—Dawson Carter (b. May 28, 2008), to Amanda (Hiebert) and Joe Wiens, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Wilhelm—Bradley (b. April 23, 2008), to Kimberley (Bechte) and Steve Wilhelm, Stirling Ave. Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Baptisms

Merle Martin, Evan MacPherson, Krista Weber—Community Fellowship, Drayton, Ont., June 15, 2008.

Kristine Miller, Nellie Zacharias, Perry Cherniwchan—First Mennonite, Burns Lake, B.C., July 27, 2008.

Grant Chapman, Ben Gerber—Poole (Ont.) Mennonite, May 25, 2008.

Marriages

Becker/Warkentin—Devan Becker and Kathy Warkentin (North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.), at North Star Mennonite, Aug. 16, 2008.

Brown/Horst—Jason Brown and Liana Horst (Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.), in Hamilton, Ont., Aug. 16, 2008.

Chodos/Krahn—David Chodos and Natasha Krahn (of Edmonton), at Waterloo North (Ont.) Mennonite, June 29, 2008.

Cornies/Shuttleworth—Holly Cornies and Stephen Shuttleworth, North Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite, July 26, 2008.

Crosland/Randall—Nathaniel Crosland and Kara Randall, at Tofield (Alta.) Mennonite, Aug. 9, 2008.

Downey/Rempel—Kelli Downey and Jamie Rempel, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Aug. 23, 2008.

Enns/Rodine—Erika Enns (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite) and Josh Rodine (Dawson Creek, B.C.) at Altona (Man.) Bergthaler Mennonite, May 17, 2008.

Ens/Morda—Sara Ens and Rocky Morda, St. Catharines (Ont.) United Mennonite, Aug. 16, 2008.

Falk/Friesen—Nathan Falk and Mandy Friesen, Altona Mennonite, Man., Aug. 2, 2008.

Falk/Graham—Brent Falk (Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg) and Jill Graham in Brandon, Man., May 24, 2008.

Fast/Friesen—Ryan Fast and Jennifer Friesen, at Altona Mennonite, Man., June 21, 2008.

Fehr/Harder—Kristen Fehr (Mennonite Fellowship of Rosthern) and Phillip Harder (Pleasant Point Mennonite, Clavet, Sask.) near Rosthern, Sask., June 14, 2008.

Friesen/Tiessen—Sherrie Friesen and Levi Tiessen, at Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Aug. 23, 2008.

Friesen/Voth—Justin Friesen and Daphne Voth, at Altona Mennonite, Man., June 14, 2008.

Guarasci/Thiessen—Pete Guarasci and Nancy Thiessen, St. Catharines (Ont.) United, Mennonite, Aug. 17, 2008.

Helmuth/Schneider—Shawn Helmuth and Emily Schneider, at Listowel (Ont.) Mennonite, July 5, 2008.

Honderich/Osborne—Teresa Honderich (Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.) and Richard Osborne, at the Honderich farm, July 12, 2008.

Huang/Pham—Andrew Huang and Tammy Pham, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C., Aug. 2, 2008.

Kasdorf/Reimer—Amy Kasdorf and Shawn Reimer, at Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, July 17, 2008.

Kerfoot/Lichti—David Kerfoot and Alyssa Lichti, at Tavistock (Ont.) Mennonite, May 31, 2008.

Kroeker/Stuart-Edwards—Andrea Kroeker and Matthew Stuart-Edwards, at Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, Aug. 23, 2008.

Kulik/Petkau—Joel Kulik and Tamara Petkau, Carman Mennonite, Man., July 26, 2008.



Nov. 20 *Pastoring in the context of addictions*

Examine how pastors can provide appropriate care to those exhibiting addictive behaviors and to others in the congregation affected by these addictions.

Presenter: Brice Balmer

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Latam/Renwick—Jenna Latam and Justin Renwick—North Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite, Aug. 16, 2008.
Noble/Shantz—Corrie Noble and Luanne Shantz, at Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont., Aug. 16, 2008.
Oulahen/Paetkau—Greg Oulahen and Becky Paetkau, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., Aug. 23, 2008.
Pybus/Warkentin—Rhonda Pybus and Henry Warkentin, at Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Aug. 23, 2008.
Walker/Weber—Rachel Walker and Nicholas Weber (Bloomingdale (Ont.) Mennonite, at Bloomingdale Mennonite, Aug. 15, 2008.

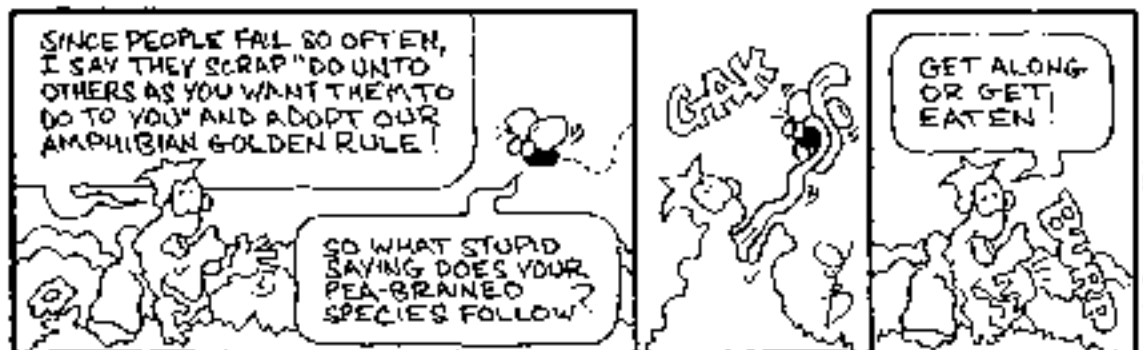
Deaths

Bender—Orville, 85 (b. May 19, 1923; d. Aug. 23, 2008), Tavistock (Ont.) Mennonite.
Boese—Margaret (nee Heidebrecht), 83 (b. Aug. 1, 1925; d. Aug. 9, 2008), Tofield (Alta.) Mennonite.
Burkholder—Eva A. (nee Ressor), 85 (b. July 31, 1923; d. Aug. 16, 2008), Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.
Friesen—Abram, 85 (b. Dec. 5, 1922; d. June 21, 2008), St. Catharines (Ont.) United Mennonite.
Harder—Maria, 108 (b. Feb. 13, 1900; d. July 28, 2008), St. Catharines (Ont.) United Mennonite.
Heinrichs—Gertrude, 74 (born April 30, 1934; d. July 19, 2008), Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.
Hildebrandt—Henry, 80 (b. June 11, 1928; d. July 21, 2008), St. Catharines (Ont.) United Mennonite.
Kampen—John J., 101 (b. March 27, 1907; d. June 10, 2008), Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.
Konrad—Annie, 88 (d. June 28, 2008), North Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite.
Kuepfer—Vera, 82 (b. Aug. 6, 1927; d. July 27, 2008), Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.
Jantzen—Robert, 73 (b. Feb. 27, 1935; d. Aug. 19, 2008), Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.
Lammert—Natalie (nee Bartel), 85 (b. June 25, 1923; d. July 30, 2008), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.
Loepky—Marie (nee Mueller), 89 (b. Feb. 22, 1919; d. Aug. 15, 2008), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Olfert—Helen, 77 (b. Sept. 30, 1930; d. July 26, 2008), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.
Paetkau—Elizabeth, 95 (d. Aug. 10, 2008), Rosenfeld (Man.) Bergthaler Mennonite.
Penner—George, 98 (d. July 20, 2008), Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask.
Peters—Erdman, 92 (b. March 8, 1916; d. July 3, 2008), Vineland (Ont.) United Mennonite.
Rahn—Jacob, 77 (b. May 25, 1931; d. Aug. 6, 2008), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.
Redekop—Mathilde (nee Peters), 89 (b. Dec. 8, 1918; d. June 17, 2008), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.
Rempel—Jim, 66 (b. Aug. 22, 1941; d. July 17, 2008), Osler Mennonite, Sask.
Rempel—Mary (nee Sawatzky), 89 (b. July 25, 1919; d. July 25, 2008), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.
Rempel—Peter, 83 (b. Sept. 11, 1924; d. Aug. 24, 2008), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.
Schulz—Leonard, 86 (b. Feb. 18, 1922; d. June 22, 2008), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.
Snyder—Amos, 87 (b. Feb. 23, 1921; d. July 15, 2008), Bloomingdale (Ont.) Mennonite.
Steinman—Alvin, 81 (b. April 11, 1927; d. July 12, 2008), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.
Steinman—Elda (Ruby), 80 (b. Jan. 15, 1928; d. Aug. 28, 2008), East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.
Suderman—Tony (Anthony), 60 (b. April 10, 1948; d. Aug. 19, 2008), Carman (Man.) Mennonite.
Unger—Kathy, 66 (d. Aug. 18, 2008), North Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite.
Wiebe—Torrance Jacob (Tory), 18 (b. May 17, 1990; d. July 5, 2008), First Mennonite, Burns Lake, B.C.
Willms—Agnes, 66 (d. Aug. 20, 2008), North Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite.

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

 **Pontius' Puddle**



GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Marching for Jesus

Indian Mennonites celebrate half-century of Bible festivals with public demonstration of their faith

BY RYAN MILLER

Mennonite Church Canada Release
PARRAPAT, INDIA

Indian Mennonites from the Bharatiyah General Conference Mennonite Church celebrated 50 years of Bible festivals earlier this year by proclaiming Christ's victory to their neighbours and worshipping thousands-strong.

For the first time ever, participants at the Golden Jubilee *mela* (festival) in India's Chhattisgarh region celebrated their Christian faith by marching about three kilometres from nearby Basna to Parrapat, which has hosted the gathering since 1959. Two days later, nearly 3,000 people attended the culminating worship service.

Former Ontario pastor Ben Wiebe attended the celebration as a representative of Mennonite Church Canada, while serving on a special assignment with MC Canada Witness as an instructor at Union Biblical Seminary in Pune, India. Wiebe said that he found it personally rewarding to see Mennonites from various regions of India gather as one group despite the challenges they have faced over the years.

Only 2.3 percent of Indians are Christian, and in Chhattisgarh, as in many regions of India, public preaching is banned and some persecution of Christians exists. Still, the ban did little to inhibit the marchers, who spent more than two hours joyously covering the road.

Mahendre Kulbeep, an agent of the Indian Mennonite Church, said, "The public should know there are Christians here. . . . This is a peace rally. . . . [W]e are leaving a message for the name and hand of Jesus."

Rev. Ismael Kumar, pastor of the Church of the Savior in Orissa and the festival

chair, said such festivals are common in his region of India, but this one was different. "This *mela* is worshipping. This is completely Mennonite."

Barkat Chandu, who claimed his grandmother was the first Mennonite convert in India, said the festival, march and other forms of witness are important in an age when outright public evangelism is difficult. "You can do it, but many government regulations have to be gone through," Chandu said. "We can teach from the Old Testament, the New Testament . . . but we're not able to talk about conversion."

Ibrahim Nand, a Jagdeeshpur Mennonite who has attended each of the Parrapat festivals, said in an electronic age the events retain their importance. "This is not just fellowship with God, but fellowship with people also," he said.

This fellowship resonated with Wiebe, who noted that gathering together has given Indian Mennonites collective momentum. "They are together and they can now go on to further work in India," he said.

Bharatiyah General Conference Mennonite Church formed in 1922, 23 years

PHOTO BY DAVID FISHER FAST



For the first time ever, participants at the Golden Jubilee mela (festival) in India's Chhattisgarh region celebrated their faith by marching about three kilometres from nearby Basna to Parrapat.

after General Conference Mennonites from Canada, the United States and Russia arrived in central India as mission workers. Since mission workers left more than two decades ago, the church has grown to 27 congregations with more than 7,000 members. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Church bodies call for end to violence, seek solidarity

ORISSA, INDIA—The World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) have jointly called on the prime minister of India, requesting his intervention to end the violence in the state of Orissa. The violence started after the killing of a prominent radical Hindu leader on Aug. 23. Although a Maoist rebel group has claimed responsibility, radical Hindu militants blame Christians for it. Some 20 people have been killed, 50,000 displaced and 4,000 homes have been destroyed over a 10-day period following the assassination, as a result of the "worst ever communal riots against Christians," according to a report by the Indian National United Christian Forum. Of those who have fled their villages, some 13,000 are living in nine relief camps run by the government. Some 200 villages were affected, with hundreds of churches burnt down. In their letter issued on Sept. 4, the WCC and LWF general secretaries called on Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to "ensure an immediate cessation of violence, the restoration of law and justice, and sanctuary for the displaced" in Orissa. The Indian state has seen "indiscriminate killing, burning of church buildings and destruction of institutions" they stated, adding, "We are aware that it is the most vulnerable sections of the population who are worst affected by the violence." The WCC also called on member churches to pray "for the families of those who have lost their dear ones, for those who are displaced, for all others who suffer the consequences of this violence and for all those who are striving to restore trust and goodwill among people and communities." Mennonite Church Canada sent out a similar prayer request to its member churches.

—BY ROSS W. MUIR

MWC president cares for creation

By JIM BISHOP

Eastern Mennonite University Release
HARRISONBURG, VA.

Nancy R. Heisey is being taken for a ride, but she's not objecting. Heisey, Mennonite World Conference president and chair of the Bible and religion department at Eastern Mennonite University, says she is "trying to do my responsible part" in caring for the environment by leaving her car at home and getting to campus by other means.

For two years now, she has committed herself to walking, biking or taking public transportation for the 2.5-kilometre commute to work. Heisey says she "especially enjoys" taking the bus, noting, "I've gotten to know some neat people who are

PHOTO BY LINDSEY ROESCHLEY



Mennonite World Conference president Nancy Heisey prepares to board a bus at the stop next to Eastern Mennonite University's Hartzler Library. She likes taking the bus in her effort to be environmentally responsible.

regular users."

Heisey says she began thinking about riding the bus after reading Ray Dirk's book, *In God's Image*, which includes stories of Anabaptists in Cuba and Zimbabwe waiting for the bus to go to church.

She also pays attention to recycling. "It was a student of mine who chided me some time ago for not recycling my office copy of the daily newspaper," she says. "I'm doing that now. It's no big effort to keep a storage container handy for recyclable materials."

Recently, Heisey says she and her husband Paul Longacre have "recommitted ourselves to simplifying our diets, purchasing locally produced foods whenever possible and planting a garden every year."

Unless the weather is bad, the couple usually walks to church on Sunday mornings. Heisey and Longacre are members of a local voluntary gas tax group that calculates what should be a reasonable price for fuel and contributes to a fund based on the alternative figures.

"Practising recycling and other simple efforts to help care for God's creation can be a natural part of our daily activities," Heisey says. "It's a matter of being willing to do some planning and being mindful of how our actions affect so many others." ❧

Mennonite farmers get 'innovative'

By KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent
WALDHEIM, SASK.

When Don and Louella Friesen decided to take charge of their hog farming operation, they knew they would have to look beyond the borders of traditional marketing.

"We wanted a system we could have control over," explains Louella. Being at the mercy of fluctuating prices was "very unsettling," she says.

So they downsized their herd, do their own processing and even sell their own products out of the back of a truck.

Other Mennonite farmers also wanted more say in their farming operations. What originally began as a project of Heifer International, has grown and evolved into an independent group known as Innovative Prairie Farm Families. The

PHOTO BY LOUELLA FRIESEN



Don Friesen sells farmer's sausage made from their pasture-raised pigs. The animals are fed only organic grain, according to Friesen.

Friesens are the main marketers and they collect the fresh eggs, vegetables, meat and honey from eight Mennonite farmers, and bring it into the city once a month to sell based on orders received.

Their "pasture-pork" is also sold in nearby towns. "We sell to [places in] Waldheim, Laird and Rosthern," she notes.

In an effort to help local farmers, Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, Sask., offers space for the group to use.

"Lots of people are just happy to know where [the food] is coming from," Louella says. "They know the product they're buying is going to be good." ❧

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BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada Release
ORODORA, BURKINA FASO

In Burkina Faso, the Bible story of the foolish man who builds his house on the sand is lived out yearly; houses don't last here. A common adage in the town of Orodara, where MC Canada Witness workers Lillian and Norm Nicolson work, says that if your house continues to stand through August—the month with the highest average rainfall—it will probably stand for another year.

Although the short lifespan of houses is often blamed on the inferiority of mud bricks, the Nicolsons report that two walls in a cement brick house in Orodara fell even before the building was complete.

Lillian is engaged in Bible translation while Norm is developing recorded audio media for all the local languages among the Siamou-speaking people surrounding their home village of Tin. They say that buildings collapse because of the lack of sound foundations. Lillian writes, "People cut corners because they want to save money, and a foundation isn't visible."

When it came time to build their own home, the Nicolsons decided to set the example of the wise man by building their home on "rock"—in this case, a solid concrete foundation.

Before construction began, the Nicolsons had to convince Yacouba, the head mason, that they wished to have the floor poured on the foundation before the walls were constructed. Under typical local building practices, a thin layer of concrete would be poured for the floor as the final step in the construction process. Fortunately, Yacouba was curious enough about the Nicolsons' "weird" ideas to try something new.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MC CANADA



Yacouba, the head mason, left, teaches Norm Nicolson how to lay bricks.

Teamwork and knowledge exchange was also a large part of the building process. Yacouba taught Norm how to lay bricks. Locals Drissa and Omar shovelled cement mortar from wheelbarrows up to the masons as they worked from scaffolding. As Norm and their friends put up the rafters, Yacouba watched, learning a new approach to roof construction. Lillian took a break from her translation work to treat the rafters with insecticide to discourage boring insects from sharing their residence.

Throughout the project and the ensuing camaraderie, the Nicolsons prayed that their time working with local tradespeople would build another kind of foundation—one upon which community relationships could grow. ☸

When it came time to build their own home, the Nicolsons decided to set the example of the wise man by building their home on 'rock'—in this case, a solid concrete foundation.

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Emergency food aid funding sought

BY TIM SHENK

Mennonite Central Committee Release
ETHIOPIA

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is appealing for \$1.5 million to provide emergency food assistance to people who are facing hunger in Ethiopia and other countries because of drought and high global food prices.

Local harvests failed in June and July because of inadequate rains in February and March, according to Mekonnen Dessalgn, MCC's Ethiopia program manager. Meanwhile, food prices have risen sharply throughout Ethiopia, making it more difficult for families who lost their crops to purchase what they need. Corn is more than three times as expensive in Ethiopia

now as it was a year ago, mirroring a steep rise in the prices of basic foods worldwide, Dessalgn said.

MCC is working with a partner organization, the Meserete Kristos Church Relief and Development Association, to distribute more than 3,000 metric tons of corn, wheat

[B]ecause of rising prices, MCC needs an additional \$1 million to continue distributing food until the end of October....

and cooking oil to about 81,000 people in the Boricha and Awassa Zuria districts of southwestern Ethiopia. The Meserete Kristos Church is a Mennonite World Conference member denomination.

In exchange for the food, more than 9,000 men and women are working on community projects, including digging reservoirs, building terraces to control erosion and planting trees. The organizations are also distributing bean seeds and sweet potato cuttings to more than 3,600 farm families.

MCC received funding for these projects from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. However, because of rising prices, MCC needs an additional \$1 million to continue distributing food until the end of October, when families will be able to harvest their crops, according to Bruce Guenther, an

MCC relief coordinator.

Because of the global rise in food prices, many countries where MCC works are experiencing food shortages. MCC is planning to provide an additional \$500,000 in emergency food aid in locations that will soon be determined, according to Ron

Flaming, MCC's director of international programs.

Flaming said he expects food shortages to be a continuing worldwide problem because of climate change, high fuel prices and the use of crops to produce biofuels such as ethanol. MCC is planning a long-term response to this global food crisis that will increase MCC's agricultural development work with low-income farmers, according to Flaming. "We're going to have to focus more on production in the years ahead," he said. ☼

/// Briefly noted

'Whatever it takes': Summer ministries engage Cedar Valley youths

GUATEMALA—Ten youths and young adults from Cedar Valley Mennonite Church in Mission, B.C., spent two weeks in Guatemala this summer, building a home and helping with Vacation Bible School through Bethel Church, their partner church in the area. Last fall, the group began fundraising, learning Spanish, and preparing *drimes* (musical dramas) and the VBS program. According to youth pastor Chad Neustaeter, who went on the service trip, the group adopted the slogan, "Whatever it takes!" from Jesus' words in Matthew 25:40: "Whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." "Our team did an amazing job and the family now has a home that is warm, safe and dry," he reports on the building project, adding, "We visited a men's rehab home and shared testimonies, songs and ended with a biblical encouragement for the men." The VBS project was also a success, starting with 60 children and ending up with 145 four days later. Many requested prayer and showed interest in getting to know Jesus better. "It is amazing what God can do with a team of 10 willing hearts who are willing to do 'whatever it takes!'" says Neustaeter.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN



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GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Merging churches

Birthing new congregation like a roller coaster ride

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

A new Mennonite Church B.C. congregation will be born in Abbotsford this fall, combining the strengths and vision of two existing churches for a fresh, shared ministry.

West Abbotsford Mennonite Church and Wellspring Christian Fellowship have decided to form an entirely new congregation, as yet unnamed. Joint worship services were to begin Sept. 14, with the complete merger scheduled for January 2009.

The two congregations have very different backgrounds. West Abbotsford, the oldest General Conference/MC Canada congregation in the city, was established in 1936 and spawned a number of daughter churches in the city. Wellspring is much newer, planted in 1992 on the “cell church” model; it has been meeting on Saturday nights, using space in Clearbrook Mennonite Church.

The blending of the two churches came about through a gradual process of visioning and evaluating church life. West Abbotsford was facing a declining and aging population, and sought ways to revitalize itself as a congregation. It approached Wellspring, a congregation with a much younger population, about the possibility of some kind of joint ministry. Talk of merger began seriously when Wellspring’s pastor resigned earlier this year and that church also had to consider its future.

The two churches began meeting together to consider the possibilities. They held four joint worship services this summer, two on Saturday night with Wellspring hosting, and two on Sunday morning at

West Abbotsford. Many people from both congregations were overwhelmed by a sense of togetherness.

West Abbotsford church chair Ben Falk says his feeling was that “the Lord brought us together at the perfect time. It feels like we’re speaking the same language. We belong together.”

One program that particularly excites members of both churches is the ministry at the Kinghaven treatment centre for men recovering from addictions, located next door to West Abbotsford. Residents in the program have been attending West Abbotsford for years and finding spiritual nurture there. Those coming in from Wellspring bring a fresh passion and vision to continue this outreach ministry and the church is exploring the possibility of hiring a half-time recovery ministries worker.

“We’re very excited,” says West Abbotsford pastor Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen. “It’s not about compromise, it’s about two churches with the same calling coming together to birth a new church. We bring complementary resources and gifts. Our weaknesses are their strengths and our strengths are their weaknesses.”

Adds Wellspring youth pastor Robin Mauthe, “We’re not choosing to merge because we have to, but because of the potential of widening of ministry and sharing of resources, both people and financial.”

In order to start anew on equal ground, it was felt that the new congregation would adopt a new name. Falk acknowledges that “a lot of tears were shed over that,” particularly from West Abbotsford, with its long history in the community.

“Each church will have to grieve,” says Thiessen. The name will be determined by the time the new church officially begins early next year. The new church will meet at the West Abbotsford building, with worship time on Sunday morning, and staff from both churches on board.

Thiessen compares the new venture to standing in line for a roller coaster ride. “We have some nervous flutters in our stomachs, but even more we have an eager anticipation for the ride that God has prepared for us,” she says. “We have a confidence that God will carry us through and so we plan to let go and have fun together on the ride that lies before us.” ☼

PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN



Staff from West Abbotsford Mennonite and Wellspring Christian Fellowship will combine for ministry at Abbotsford’s newest Mennonite congregation this fall. Pictured, from left to right: Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen, senior pastor; Robin Mauthe, youth/young adult pastor; Wanda Hildebrandt, preschool ministries; Marlene Daku and Rita Ewert, office support; and Dan Loewen, worship. Not present: Adrian Dueck, children’s ministries.

VBS troupe ministers in seven congregations

By DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent
TAVISTOCK, ONT.

Focussing on the messages of five Old Testament prophets, the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Vacation Bible School troupe brought energy and dedication to seven congregations this summer. The troupe led VBS for groups as small as 15 (Windsor Mennonite Church used it as an outreach in its community), and groups over 100 (Tavistock Mennonite, the last stop of the summer).

In its 18th year of operation, the 2008 troupe was organized and run by Sherri Martin Carman. Martin Carman was a member of the first troupe in 1990, the brainchild of Eleanor Snyder.

The troupe partners with local congregations, sending five young adults to lead the sessions, run games and work with crafts. The congregation supplies snacks for the campers, pays \$1,300 for the troupe, buys the materials, and houses the troupe members, who get paid the equivalent to working at camp for the summer for both the preparation weeks and their time with the congregations.

Following the mission statement, "Loving, inspiring and affirming people by creating relevant opportunities to experience God in their own way," Heather Davidson, a troupe member from Pioneer Park Christian Fellowship in Kitchener, was excited about the possibilities of leading children in worship and study. The interaction with new people, both the other troupe members and the many volunteers from the congregations, was a high point for her, as was the flexible and creative potential of the materials.

Martin Carman notes that the troupe fulfills some of MC Eastern Canada's mission statement, "Making disciples, growing congregations, forming leaders." In particular, she points to past lists of participants and notes where they went after their time with the VBS troupe. ☘

Participants at the Tavistock Mennonite Church VBS program prepare scrolls containing a prophetic message which can be eaten, just like Ezekiel was challenged to eat the scroll presented to him by the angel.



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ISRAEL and PALESTINE (May 24-June 3)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (June 4-17)
RUSSIA and UKRAINE (June 5-19)
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MWC #1 / #3 / #4 / #6 - SOLD OUT
MWC #2 - CHILE, URUGUAY, PARAGUAY (July 5-20) A Few Seats
MWC #5 - PARAGUAY and BOLIVIA (July 12-25)
MWC #7 - PARAGUAY and IGUAZU FALLS (July 8-20)

EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN SHARP (July 31-August 13)
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND (September 15-23)
ENCHANTING DANUBE RIVER CRUISE (October 24-November 1)
BEHIND the VEIL - EXPERIENCING EGYPT (November 16-28)

2010 TOURS

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SPRINGTIME in HOLLAND, BELGIUM & GERMANY (May 6-17)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (June 1-14)
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PHOTO BY AARON EPP

When prayer isn't enough

Seminar encourages pastors, church leaders to use 'healthy responses to difficult behaviour'

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent
WINNIPEG

Prayer is a powerful tool for a congregation facing conflict—but it's not appropriate in every situation.

That was one message conflict management expert Speed Leas delivered during the concluding session of "Never Call Them Jerks: Healthy Responses to Difficult Behaviour" in June. Held at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), the three-day seminar aimed to strengthen the capacity of congregations to work constructively with controversy and conflict.



Fifty-nine pastors, students and interested laypersons from at least eight different denominations attended a three-day seminar on church conflict led by conflict management expert Speed Leas, above.

"Prayer is a very useful way for you to begin to reframe the conflict," said Leas, who has spent almost 40 years as a consultant and teacher in the area of conflict

management. He added that one sees the person one is in conflict with "in a different light when you pray for them."

Once the conflict has reached a certain degree of intensity, however, prayer should not be allowed when the conflicting groups are together, because it can be used to cajole, as in, "Dear Lord, please help the other group see the error of their ways."

Using the example of a congregation at odds with its pastor, Leas outlined six levels of unhealthy conflict, beginning with denial and depression, then wanting to defend the church against the pastor, building to a desire to fire the pastor, and finally reaching a point where the conflict goes beyond professional to personal attacks.

Leas then shared strategies for dealing with difficult interpersonal conversations:

- Create a safe environment for both parties by sharing optimism about the situation, praying for everyone's success in the situation, establishing ground rules, and going to a neutral venue to deal with the conflict.

- Do what one can to meet the other's needs by giving recognition to the other's thoughts and feelings, and recognizing the other's need to have some power, impact and influence in the situation.
- Use active listening.
- Apologize where appropriate.
- Express one's views.
- Attempt to come to an agreement by exploring each other's interests and exploring options for mutual gain.

Overall, the event was "very positive," said David Pankratz, director of CMU's Institute for Community Peacebuilding, one of the institutions that organized the event. Overall, 59 pastors, students and interested laypersons from at least eight different denominations attended.

Derek Funk, associate pastor at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, described what he learned as "an affirmation," saying he appreciated the perspective that Christians need to be honest and deal with conflict openly—and realize that a certain amount of conflict is helpful. "As Mennonites, we often don't want to deal with conflict," he said. "We have to realize it's good to engage in it, and realize that there's hope when we do." ❧

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GOD AT WORK IN US

PERSONAL REFLECTION

A journey in faith

Wilderness canoe trip leads to unexpected discoveries

BY ELIZABETH WALL

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
MISSINIPE, SASKATCHEWAN

A chance to experience God in creation, to build community with other church members, and canoe in the wilds of northern Saskatchewan—the invitation was too good to pass up.

I didn't have much experience, but I had a lot of faith in the leaders, two members of our Edmonton First Mennonite Church with extensive wilderness experience and spiritual maturity. Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, our pastor, has a background in camping ministry, and Ric Driediger, our local guide, is the owner and operator of Churchill River Canoe Outfitters and Horizons Unlimited in Missinipe, Sask. Driediger and his crew took care of the logistics and our pastor led us in reflections based on *Seeking the Wilderness*, a book by Tim Lehman.

Driediger said the first day would be the hardest. And he was right. We had a strong wind against us and a long way to go. I found the first portage frightening. Even though we just needed to guide the canoes over a rushing creek, finding my footing on slippery rocks was difficult while trying to keep myself and the heavy canoe from being swept away in the current.

That morning we had been invited to reflect on our sense of home or belonging in creation. I was struggling in more ways than one. Wasn't this just typical of humanity's approach, dragging a lot of heavy baggage with us, pushing our agenda, trying to go against the flow, chafing at being

inconvenienced by obstacles?

Later, though, my partner and I shot the rapids so gracefully it seemed like a miracle. The rocks and current were still risky, but this time they added to the exhilarating feeling of flying. I even found peace paddling against the wind, as it brought out my strength and determination, and as I enjoyed pure, mindful exertion and graceful, rhythmic paddling in concert with my partner. We all felt the satisfaction of reaching our landing spot, especially in light of all the difficulties we had overcome.

Adversity can reveal what makes you anxious and how you deal with it. The

PHOTO BY STEVE JORRITSMAN



The Edmonton First Mennonite wilderness trip into northern Saskatchewan included a number of tricky portages.

wind, weather and rugged portages became symbols of everything we couldn't control about our life journey, and we were in solidarity with one another in that process. We learned which attitudes helped and which ones got in the way. That first

day formed us into a group that worked together, right from the beginning. We quickly used our various abilities to help one another.

After supper we gathered to share our thoughts. I felt too tired to stay awake, let alone think or talk. I didn't feel close to God or creation. Teary-eyed, trying to soothe my broken spirit by unconsciously stroking lichen on a rock, I heard the words I needed to hear: "Every molecule of our body is animated through the medium of belonging. God's blessed Spirit of life moves within every brain cell and heart cell and cell of life within us, according to the design of our belonging."

I then felt peace and gratitude. I do have a home. I do belong to God. Like all the other members of creation, God created me and God loves me.

My increased sense of home and belonging in God and creation originated with my travelling companions. I found my home in the process of appreciating them and taking the journey of relationship together. From them I learned to choose thankfulness and celebration over trepidation and doubt. I learned to celebrate the moment—even ones you might not naturally celebrate, like a difficult portage, a fierce hailstorm or the possibility of encountering a bear.

As Lehman writes, "Faith begins as we get on with our journey: exploring our doubts, living our pain, and facing our fears."

Taking a journey in faith means participating in relationship and being open to its possibilities. It will be a wild ride, not without risk, and we will not be in our comfort zone. We will not always know what to expect.

But we will be alive, we will be discovering and growing, we will be moving with the God who was present with the Israelites in the wilderness, the one who established an everlasting covenant with humankind and all of creation. We can take the journey, receiving God's presence as the blessing that it is, listening to how God's handiwork speaks without speech or words, and sharing ourselves authentically with all of our travelling companions. 卍

Elizabeth Wall is a member of Edmonton First Mennonite Church.

The wind, weather and rugged portages became symbols of everything we couldn't control about our life journey, and we were in solidarity with one another in that process.

OBITUARY

The Lord was his close companion

*Jacob David Giesbrecht,
1924-2008*

BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada Release
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Jake Giesbrecht, who served in India from the early 1950s until 1977 with the General Conference Mennonite Church through the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM), a predecessor of Mennonite Church Canada Witness, passed away on May 16, shortly after being diagnosed with a brain tumour. He was predeceased by Dorothy (nee Andres) in 2005.

One of 11 children, Giesbrecht spent his formative years on the family farm in Waldheim, Sask., before attending Swift Current (Sask.) Bible College.

After graduation, he followed his fiancé to India in August 1952, where they were married in December of that year. Three of the Giesbrecht children—Gary, Hazel and Larry—were born in India, while daughter Hilda was born in Winnipeg during a North American ministry leave.

In 1977, the Giesbrechts' work in India drew to a close and they embarked on a journey from India to England in a Volkswagen van held together with ingenuity and epoxy glue with their family in tow.

Upon their return to Canada, he pastored Prince Albert (Sask.) Mennonite Church for two years. He was later instrumental in establishing the B.C. Centre for World Missions, and helped mobilize retired missionaries to meet the needs of refugees arriving from East Asia.

A memorial service was held at Olivet Church in Abbotsford on May 22.

His family and Mennonite Church Canada are currently in the process of establishing a memorial fund in India for Jake and Dorothy Giesbrecht. ❧



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.



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Where is your treasure?

BY SHIRLEY REDEKOP

“I’ve heard many a pastor observe that people in the church are far more reluctant to discuss money than they are to talk about sex.” So begins Patricia Burdette, author of *Your Treasure, Your Heart: Women and the Stewardship of Money*. The book is the third and last Bible study guide in a series on the theme of “time, talent and treasure” commissioned by Canadian Women in Mission and Mennonite Women USA.

Turns out that this thought-provoking comment about churchly attitudes towards money is not just a catchy way to begin the study guide, but indicative of the challenging content explored in the 12 lessons that follow.

Burdette, the new editor of *Timbrel*, published by Mennonite Women USA, retired from teaching English at Bluffton University in 2008. She and her pastor-husband are members of Grace Mennonite Church in Pandora, Ohio. They served as Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteers in Saskatchewan for six years, working on projects related to aboriginal concerns, and with the Lakota in North Dakota for another six years. She was baptized into the Mennonite faith while on assignment in Saskatchewan.



Burdette

“The six years our family spent living in Saskatchewan working with MCC were extremely influential in our spiritual journey and in our attitudes about money,” Burdette says. “We learned that all we have belongs to God, and that these things are to be shared with others as the need arises. We learned that our responsibility to

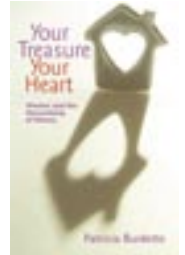
Does it mean it is okay to have frivolous consumer items if we purchase them at a Ten Thousand Villages store or at an MCC fundraising event?

share with others the money God entrusts to us is part of what it means to be faithful, and that our call is to be faithful, not necessarily successful in the eyes of the secular world.”

In the first lesson, “Re-thinking money,” based on Mark 2:21-22 about the parable of putting new wine into old skins, Burdette emphasizes that following Jesus requires a completely new “mind-blowing” way of thinking

about money and she asks some tough questions of her new church family regarding time-honoured beliefs about money and simple living.

In the “Deepening” section she writes: “Living in a culture that seems to revolve around consumerism presents unique obstacles for Christians to overcome. As Mennonite Christians, we complicate the situation further with our commitment to simple living. Does living simply mean having what everyone else in our society has, but getting it at bargain prices? Or does it mean forgoing some consumer items because they are not necessary no matter how good the bargain? Does it mean it is okay to have frivolous consumer items if we purchase them at a Ten Thousand Villages store or at an MCC fundraising event? Does it mean we must put hundreds of thousands of dollars in savings for our church in order to be good stewards, or does it mean spending most of that money for ministry in our own communities? Does it mean saving for our retirement by avoiding taxes?”



These are not easy questions to honestly answer and they became quite personal because I began writing this article a short time after buying a used—meaning cheaper—motorcycle that I said would save on gas. The only problem is that we kept our other vehicles. The motorcycle is definitely a want, not a need. Even our children challenged me on this. (Three of them spent time in Third World countries this year, which raises questions since travel enlarges our ecological footprint.)

Yet “these are the kinds of questions we need to ask our congregations, our families and ourselves,” writes Burdette. “As the Holy Spirit helps us to use the principles Jesus teaches, and as we rethink our relationship with money, [the] spiritual growth [that results] can be a ‘mind-blowing’ experience,” drawing us closer to God and helping to usher in God’s kingdom.

Other lessons in the guide that encourage radical new ways of thinking about money include “Guarding against affluenza”; “Social morality: Do justice, love mercy”; and “Who will inherit?”

Each lesson includes a Bible reading, scriptural overview, visual object to symbolize the theme, “gathering” story, “deepening” comments and “integrating” questions on how to apply the biblical lesson to modern living, and ends with a closing action, prayer or song to fit the theme. ☸



Shirley Redekop is the president of Women in Mission for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and is on the Canadian Women in Mission executive.

ARTBEAT

BOOK REVIEW

A moving experience on a tractor

Keepers of the Land: A Celebration of Canadian Farmers.
Carl Hiebert. Gift of Wings Publishing, 2007.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY

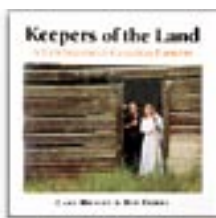
K*eeper*s of the Land: A Celebration of Canadian Farmers is Carl Hiebert's latest photo journal, written with his partner Debbie Cripps, a writer, and published by their company, Gift of Wings Publishing. Accompanied by Cripps in an RV, Hiebert drove a 1949 W4 McCormick tractor, modified with a roof and hand controls for the paraplegic Hiebert, across the country. The trip fulfilled his dream "to celebrate the unsung heroes of our land," and to share his "new appreciation for the importance of food and its production."

Artists often create by setting limits and using their ability within those limits. To drive the tractor across the country from British Columbia to Newfoundland; to visit 39 farmers, their families and farms; to photograph those farms; to write three-page

'I think urban people are caught off guard when they visit a farm for the first time.'
(Dave Weber)

essays about each visit; and to donate the proceeds to charity—were the limits which Cripps and Hiebert set for themselves.

Each day of the trip began with Hiebert hitting the highway just after 5:30 a.m. and driving for several hours. Cripps would drive ahead to set up the next five-hour interview/photo shoot. They repeated this for more than 12,000 kilometres. The pace was gruelling and eventually they made



the decision to have the tractor shipped from the Manitoba/Ontario border to Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., sparing Hiebert the danger of Highway 17's narrow shoulders and busy truck traffic.

By reading this book we learn what farmers are all about. From the half-hectare organic farmer to the 1,200-hectare corporate farm, from strictly producing food to the agro-tourist farm experience, from sending raw materials around

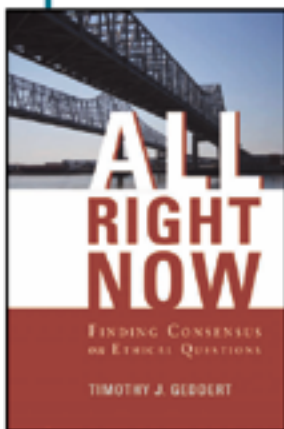
the world to selling finished products at farm stores, readers learn about the joys and worries, tenacity and fragility of this country's farmers, and how interdependent everyone is with the mostly invisible farmers around our cities.

"I think urban people are caught off guard when they visit a farm for the first time," Dave Weber, a lentil farmer from Regina, tells Hiebert and Cripps (page 145). "[They can't] believe that in my backyard I have hundreds of acres planted in crops. I have high-tech equipment, and I'm running a business as efficiently as anyone else in the business world. I guess people just don't know what farmers are all about."

The book is available to charities to sell as a fundraiser. The review copy came from the Elmira Lions Club (519-669-0398/keepers@marbro.com).

Beautifully photographed and interestingly written, *Keepers of the Land* is less a coffee table book than a resource for city folks to learn that farmers do indeed feed cities. ☘

Dave Rogalsky is Canadian Mennonite's Eastern Canada correspondent.



All Right Now: Finding Consensus on Ethical Questions

Timothy J. Geddert offers concrete help to Christian communities as they struggle with ethical questions and try to determine appropriate ethical guidelines. His goal is to encourage churches to think biblically when confronted with difficult ethical questions. What would Jesus have done? What does the Bible teach? How can we find biblical guidance?

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FOCUS ON EDUCATION

'Talking to the enemy'

Peacebuilding project hopes to build bonds between diverse inner-city youth groups

BY JOHN LONGHURST

Canadian Mennonite University Release
WINNIPEG

With assistance from the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) Institute for Community Peacebuilding, six Winnipeg groups have combined to create a new effort to help improve relationships between youths from established, aboriginal and newcomer groups in Winnipeg's inner city.

On July 23, CMU, Ka Ni Kanichihk ("Those Who Lead"), Welcome Place (Manitoba Immigration Interfaith Council), the YM-YWCA of Winnipeg, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM) and Manitoba Multicultural Resource Centre signed a memorandum of understanding to create the Youth Peacebuilding Project. The initiative aims to help youths from different cultures develop peaceful relationships through guided conversation around activities such as sports, art, drama and other group activities.

Partial funding for the year-long project was provided by the United Way of

Winnipeg.

Winnipeg city councillor Jeff Browaty, the mayor's youth ambassador, praised the project, saying that it would help the city achieve its goal of building "strong and respectful relationships between youths in Winnipeg."

Eric Robinson, Manitoba's minister of culture, heritage and tourism, acknowledged there is tension between aboriginal and newcomer youths in the city, adding that "we look forward to this [project] . . . We bring peace not by covering over our differences, but by honouring them."



"Peace flows from understanding, and this project is truly the key to that vision," said Judy Wasylcyia-Leis, Member of Parliament for Winnipeg North. "It is an incredible, visionary project."

Also speaking at the signing was IRCOM executive director Noëlle DePape, who came up with the idea for the project. "It's a dream come true," said DePape, who based the project on Seeds for Peace, an organization that brings together youths from conflict areas around the world to promote peace and understanding. "Our goal is to create a safer city, a more inclusive and pluralistic environment. I can't wait to see the culmination of this work. . . . Winnipeg will be a place that is known for its peacebuilding."

Muuxi Adam, one of 20 mentors hired

by the project, shared that many newcomer youths like him find it hard to make new friends in Canada. "It's easy to close ourselves off," said Adam, who is from Somalia and is studying at Menno Simons College.

The work of David Pankratz, director of CMU's Institute for Community Peacebuilding, was also praised at the signing. "The institute was a consistent force for driving us forward and making this happen," said DePape.

One of the project's first major activities took place at the end of August, when 50 youths, 20 mentors and a dozen facilitators gathered at Manitoba Pioneer Camp for the first Summer Peace Gathering. During the gathering, youths participated in activities that promote an exploration of, and healthy response to, stereotypes and biases towards each other.

In an interview, Pankratz noted that the gathering "isn't about sharing rainbows and pretty flowers between people who've already figured everything out. This is about the hard work of overcoming societal and personal stereotypes and biases."

Unlike programs like Seeds of Peace, which take youths to another country to work out their differences, Pankratz said that "we want to do it right where our youths live and interact on an ongoing basis."

For Pankratz, things like workshops, lectures and traditional cultural exchanges "can open doors, but relationships transform the person and cement the change. True transformation, especially for youths, occurs as they do things together and then talk about their experience, drawing out the underlying hostilities and prejudices, and dealing with them in a safe and facilitated context. The fundamental premise of the project is the belief that deep changes between communities can occur through relationship-building."

He said that the project's partners believe that it has the "capacity to significantly change the relationships between identity groups in Winnipeg's inner city. It's a big challenge but, by working together, we can make a difference." Building peace "means you have to talk to the 'enemy,'" he concluded. ☼

CMU PHOTO BY JOHN LONGHURST



Leslie Spillet of Ka Ni Kanichihk, Wanda Yamamoto of the Welcome Place, Ken Mason of the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg, Noëlle DePape of the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba, and Gerald Gerbrandt of Canadian Mennonite University are pictured at the July 23 signing ceremony for the new Youth Peacebuilding Project.

Advertorial

Goshen College excels in 2009 'U.S. News & World Report' rankings





GOSHEN, IND.—For the eighth straight year, Goshen College placed high in the third tier of Best Liberal Arts Colleges in the “U.S. News & World Report”

2009 edition of “America’s Best Colleges.” Goshen was ranked 149th out of 265 of the country’s top liberal arts colleges. Chosen from all 4,000 private and public colleges and universities in the country, Goshen College also was listed among 32 top colleges and universities with outstanding study abroad programs, for its 40-year-old Student-Service Term (SST). In addition, Goshen was ranked sixth for the percentage of graduates studying

abroad, with 85 percent. Among similar liberal arts colleges, Goshen was ranked 66th out of 300 for being a “least debt college,” with an average total indebtedness for the 2007 graduating class of \$18,976. In other rankings, Goshen was among the top 200 colleges in the freshman retention rate (82 percent); in the top 200 for the six-year graduation rate (61 percent); and on the list of schools with the highest proportion of classes under 20 students, at 60 percent. In addition, high school counsellors gave Goshen high scores for providing the best education to their students on a list of 200 liberal arts colleges, a 3.7 rating on a scale of 5.

—Goshen College Release





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Edible histories

Food workshop considers cultural politics in light of culinary influences

By **SUSAN FISH**

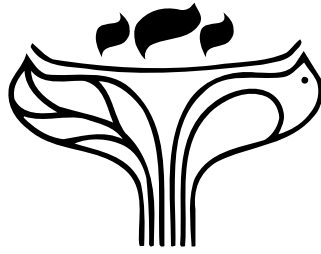
Conrad Grebel University College Release
WATERLOO, ONT.

Delicious smells of curry emanated from Conrad Grebel University College's Great Hall on the morning of Aug. 7. The event was part of a two-day workshop called "Edible Histories, Cultural Politics: Towards a Canadian Food History," hosted by the college and organized by history professor Marlene Epp.

"Food issues have recently become of great interest to researchers, to the media and to the general public," noted Epp. "The Edible Histories project is a fascinating historical complement to a contemporary issue by demonstrating how significant food has been in shaping Canadian politics, culture and everyday social interaction."

The role of food in Mennonite history was discussed during the workshop, and Grebel's kitchen provided opportunity for participants to sample traditional recipes, such as shoofly pie, *zwieback* (bread rolls) and *rollkuchen* (deep-fried pastry).

Many of the papers presented by the 30 invited participants will be included in a book by the same name as the workshop, co-edited by Epp and her colleagues Franca Iacovetta (University of Toronto), and Valerie Korinek (University of Saskatchewan).



Several lectures were open to the public, including the one in which Daniel E. Bender, Canada Research Chair in urban history at the University of Toronto, punctuated his lecture with a demonstration of the earliest published recipe of a curry dish, from a mid-18th century British cookbook. Bender, who teaches global food history, commented that students today are more motivated and politicized about food than they were even five years ago, and he talked about how food symbolizes identity for people and the ways in which "power becomes visible at the table."

University of Minnesota history professor Jeffery Pilcher, author of *Food in*

PHOTO BY SUSAN FISH



Daniel E. Bender, Canada Research Chair in urban history at the University of Toronto, punctuated his lecture with a demonstration of the earliest published recipe of a curry dish, from a mid-18th century British cookbook.

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Lief, student at Latin Parish of Wahadneh School, Jordan.

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World History, spoke on “the future of food studies,” focusing on the evolution of Mexican food customs in different national contexts.

Insisting that food offers a means of examining global history in a way “that’s small enough to hold in your hand and to pop in your mouth,” rather than a variation on a Food Network show, workshop participants emphasized food as a lens for considering history in an integrative, tangible, accessible yet complex way.

Other workshop participants presented research on varied topics, including: colossal Ukrainian food sculptures on the Prairies; the global food movement of the colonial era (an interesting counterpoint to today’s local food movement); cook-books and ethnic identity; encounters over food customs between Aboriginal Peoples and European newcomers, and between immigrants and the state; the politics of changing nutritional standards; the intersection between religious practice and eating rituals; and the health food movement of the 1960s and ’70s. ☞

Why Bible college instructors smile

Bethany College Release
HEPBURN, SASK.

Ever wonder what it is that Bible college instructors love about their job?

Gil Dueck, who teaches first-year Bible and theology courses at Bethany College, says it has a lot to do with each year’s classes. He calls it “a privilege . . . to spend time with students, talking about the things that matter most—things like who God is, who we are and what it means to commit to following Jesus in our world.

“Students are in an exciting period of



their lives,” he continues. “They are thinking about striking out on their own, deciding what to do with their lives but, more importantly I hope, deciding what kind of people they want to be. My hope is that I can guide them as part of that process.”



Dueck

Paul Woodburn, Bethany’s ministry arts director, looks forward to walking students through questions like, “Have you ever wondered why sometimes God feels close and other times . . . not?” ‘Have you ever wondered why some prayers get answered and others don’t?’ ‘Have you ever wondered if God might have big plans for you, like Moses or David?’ ‘What about spiritual gifts?’ ‘The church?’ ‘Devotions?’”

These are the kinds of things that students and instructor talk through in Woodburn’s course in spiritual formation.

Bible college instructors believe strongly that when people have the foundation of a biblical worldview, they will be prepared to see the world, live in it and reach others, for Christ. That’s why they love their jobs! ☞



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Saved from 'a life of crime'

Jamie Matwyshyn now headed for a career in international development

Canadian Mennonite University Release
WINNIPEG

Before studying at Menno Simons College, Canadian Mennonite University's campus at the University of Winnipeg, Jamie Matwyshyn was headed for a life of crime.

The 24-year-old began her post-secondary education studying sociology at the University of Winnipeg with hopes of someday working in the field of law enforcement. After completing a B.A. in sociology, Matwyshyn pursued her newfound interest in development issues at Menno Simons, where a course that looked at water and food security issues changed her career goals.

"It took ideas I'd never really thought about before and brought those to the forefront," says Matwyshyn, adding that, although she had always had an interest in poverty-related issues, her interest in inter-



national development "was really sparked by that class."

"It definitely helped shape the worldview that I have today," she says of her studies at Menno Simons, which culminated with her graduation in June.

Matwyshyn's practicum placement also had a great impact. From May to August of 2007, she worked in Zambia, developing an evaluation manual for programs funded by organizations such as Mennonite Central Committee, the Canadian International Development Agency and Brethren in Christ World Missions. She also worked in the areas of community economic development and HIV/AIDS.

"Being on the ground, and talking to

CMU PHOTO



After studying at Menno Simons College, Jamie Matwyshyn changed her focus from crime to international development.

people whose lives are affected by HIV/AIDS helped to bring to the forefront what people [in other parts of the world] are dealing with," she says. "I was hoping for

a cross-cultural experience that would be profound and eye-opening, and I wanted to put the theory I had learned into perspective through practical experience."

Matwyshyn was also struck by how she was accepted when she arrived in Zambia. "The people, their hospitality and generosity, . . . I never could have thought I'd be received so well," she says.

And even though the practicum ended more than a year ago, Matwyshyn says she thinks about it "every single day."

"It didn't just happen and now it's over," she says. "It's still happening. By opening that door, I don't know if you can necessarily close it. I still have a desire to maintain those connections."

Matwyshyn is currently working at International Development Enterprise, and volunteering at the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba. She isn't sure what she'll do long-term.

What she does know is that international development has turned out to be a better fit than the life of crime—or at least, criminal investigation—that she had planned for herself a few years ago. ❧

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Ripple effect

New and returning students urged to make an impact during their studies and beyond school

By JIM BISHOP

Eastern Mennonite University Release
HARRISONBURG, VA.

“So, why are you here?” A rather strange question, perhaps, for the president of Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) to ask those who filled Lehman Auditorium on Aug. 27 for the opening convocation of the fall semester.

“Most of us think about education in terms of what it will do for us,” Loren Swartzendruber said. “What we will learn that will be useful for our future. What we can achieve, a particular goal that becomes more concrete.

“At EMU, we frequently talk about the educational enterprise as grounded in the liberal arts—the idea that an educated person is ‘liberated’ from the con-

finer of ignorance, free to explore beauty and pursue intellectual challenges. It’s our conviction that an education in the liberal arts is the best foundation for a lifetime of learning. All of these are valid reasons for being at EMU,” the president stated.

“This morning, I offer yet another ‘reason’ for being at EMU,” Swartzendruber added. “[Noted theologian] Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff calls it ‘educating for shalom.’ It’s a biblical concept that is often translated ‘peace,’ but it’s more comprehensive than one English word can embody.

“Wolterstorff suggests at least four dimensions to ‘shalom’: right relationship to God, to fellow human beings, to nature and to oneself,” he noted. “To these, he adds yet another facet—shalom is best experienced in community and it is characterized by ‘delight.’”

The university president recalled the untimely death just two months earlier of 2008 EMU graduate Matthew Garber, 22, of Elizabethtown, Pa., a nursing major, gifted musician and EMU Cords of

EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY PHOTO



New students, faculty members and staff receive a “Shenandoah welcome” as they exit Lehman Auditorium following convocation on Aug. 27.

Distinction recipient.

Before starting a job in the emergency room at Lancaster (Pa.) General Hospital, Garber travelled to Costa Rica for a summer of ministry. On July 1, while swimming with a group, he was caught in an undertow and drowned. More than 700 people, many of them from EMU, gathered in

Garber’s home community to mourn his death and to celebrate his life.

“Matt embodied each of Wolterstorff’s definition of shalom; he was comfortable

with himself as a person, with his gifts and his place in his family and congregation,” Swartzendruber said. “He was a confident young man, knowing that he had a variety of gifts, but seemingly without arrogance. He was clear about the importance of faith in his life and about his relationship to God.

“Matt wanted to serve in a physical way—to serve as a nurse—to bring healing and hope to the world through his work. And Matt had a unique capacity to make others feel they were his best friend; he was other-oriented. ‘Delight’ is a good word to describe Matt’s approach to all of life,” the president said.

Each person had been given a pebble upon entering Lehman Auditorium. The president commented on the “ripple effect” created when a pebble is dropped into a pond of water: “The initial splash is small; we may feel insignificant. But the impact of our lives grows in concentric circles, changing the world around us even beyond what we can eventually see.” ☺



Why . . .

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- Are so many people poor and hungry?
- Is there so much injustice?



What . . .

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Through Peace & Conflict Resolution Studies and International Development Studies programs at CMU’s Shaftesbury & Menno Simons College campuses, you can learn more about of the nature and dynamics of conflict, injustice and poverty—and find ways to make a difference in the world.

Also check out programs in Arts, Sciences, Music, Music Therapy, Communications, Business, Disaster Recovery Studies.



www.cmu.ca

Canadian Mennonite University

Calendar

British Columbia

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.

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.

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

Manitoba

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. 8: Marlene Epp launches her new book, *Mennonite Women in Canada: A History*, at McNally Robinson Booksellers, Grant Park, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m. Co-sponsored by the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba Press. Hosted by Royden Loewen.

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 rloewen@uwinnipeg.ca.

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

Ontario

Sept. 27: Rendezvous! A training event 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 mcec.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. 5: Hidden Acres benefit concert with Ted Baerg, Brandon Leis, Daniel Licht, Charlene Nagziger and more, at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont., at 7:30 p.m. To reserve tickets, e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca.

Oct. 17-18: MC Eastern Canada "Ministering to youth in a technological culture" event, Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

Oct. 17, 18: Ten Thousand Villages sale and tea room/bake sale, Zurich Mennonite Church; 3 to 9 p.m. (17), 10

a.m. to 6 p.m. (18).

Oct. 19: Leis reunion for the descendants of Joseph Sr. and Catherine (Kennel) Leis, at the Wellesley Community Centre. Potluck meal at 1 p.m. For more information, call Sandy Poole at 519-656-2909.

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

Oct. 25: Menno Singers presents a "Celebrating congregational song" workshop with Marilyn Houser Hamm, from 9:15 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener. For more information, visit mennosingers.com.

Oct. 25: Menno Singers presents "Rejoicing," featuring Marilyn Houser Hamm, at 8 p.m., at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

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.

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: Mennonite World Conference assembly, Asuncion. Registration materials available at mwc-cmm.org.

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.

Upcoming

Pax Christi season opens with 'Fanfare of Canadian Hymns'

TORONTO— Pax Christi Chorale and Pax Christi Chamber Choir will open their season with "Fanfare of Canadian Hymns" on Oct. 26 at Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd., Toronto. This concert will highlight hymns written and arranged by Canadian composers and poets, including those of Healey Willan in the 40th anniversary year of his death. Well-loved CBC Choral Concert icon Howard Dyck will act as guest host. Accompaniment will be provided by organist Bruce Kirkpatrick Hill and a brass ensemble. The participatory concert, which will feature hymns from many traditions—Mennonite to Anglican, begins at 3 p.m.

—Pax Christi Chorale Release

Classifieds

Employment Opportunities

Camp Assiniboia, Headingley, Man., has an opening for a **GENERAL ASSISTANT**. This person's duties will include tasks in food preparation and custodial, with hosting, activity leading and assisting with horse program as options. Explore interests, develop skills, enjoy nature, Christian community and recreational opportunities. Room and partial board available on-site. Contact Manager at 204-864-2159 or campa@prairie-sky.com.

Good busy people wanted.

We're adding staff to our great team. We're a vibrant church with many young families, 500+ attendees, three services, two languages and growing.

Can you contribute long term or interim? Do you have an Anabaptist understanding and training of the Bible, love for people, love for God and a passion for ministry in a church setting? Or do you know someone who does? Contact Dan Rempel or Abe Harms at the Aylmer Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church in Ontario, serve@aemmc.ca. Check out our vision at www.aemmc.ca.

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

Resource Generation Team Member



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**.

Along with others on the team, the Development Associate will develop and implement a program for promoting the institution and inviting investment in CMU from its many friends and supporters. Some travel is required.

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- A personal commitment to the church and the mission of CMU
- 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

MANAGER (1.0) and **FOOD SERVICES COORDINATOR** (0.5) required for Camp Moose Lake, a small, well-maintained, year-round facility in southeastern Manitoba, one of three camps operated by Mennonite Church Manitoba. Skills and abilities required in hosting, menu planning, food preparation, facility and equipment maintenance in an isolated setting, financial management, encouragement. Full job descriptions available at www.campswithmeaning.org. Contact Director of Camping Ministries at 204-895-2267 or camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.

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
Tel: (604) 946-3961
hneufeld@telus.net

Announcement

2ND REUNION CONCERT

Sunday, Oct. 26, 2008 @ 7:00 PM
The St. Catharines United Mennonite Church
335 Linwell Road, St. Catharines, Ont.

All former Church Choir members and friends of the Choir are invited to join us for this evening, which will highlight traditional Hymns of our Faith. Rehearsal will be on Sunday, Oct. 26 at 4:00 p.m., followed by a coffee time. We also encourage those who are available, to attend rehearsal on Thursday, Oct. 23 at 7:30 p.m.

We look forward to seeing you there. Please contact Art Wall (905-634-0346) or Carol Penner (carol@penners.ca), if you require further information.



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