



# CANADIAN Mennonite

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## EDITORIAL

# God's gift of mercy

TIM MILLER DYCK  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

This fall, I, along with others at my congregation, have been “leafing through the gospels.” It’s a shared spiritual discipline where we read one chapter of the Bible a day. Over the past months, we’ve been reading through Matthew, Mark and Luke. Each Sunday, we write the chapters we’ve read on paper cut-out leaves, and put them in the offering baskets. It’s exciting to see a tree up front in the sanctuary going from bareness to full foliage as it gains more leaves each Sunday.

I listen to the Bible on my MP3 player as I drive to and from work. Hearing the gospels as a continuous story helps me see bigger patterns and to connect the different parts of the books together. It’s also such a good reminder to me to keep the issues I am facing that day in perspective compared with the vast story of God’s care for all of us, and helps me keep close the teachings of Jesus Christ, who is at the centre of that story.

I’m currently leafing through Luke and I’m struck by the way that God’s gift of mercy comes to unlikely people, and how grateful the people receiving that grace are. It isn’t particularly important to the story how the prophet preparing the way for Jesus, John the Baptist, is born. But God selected an elderly couple with no children to be his parents, renewing the faith of the father and taking away the disgrace the mother had endured from her people because of her inability to bear children.

God selects as Jesus’ mother a lonely unmarried young woman of no particular status and sends angels to announce the good news of great joy to farmhands in a field. God arranges that two faithful but elderly people know that the Messiah



has come before they die even though this seems unnecessary to the story. It is the outcast lepers, the handicapped, the blind, the tax collectors, the poor and the demon-possessed who seek Jesus out and are given mercy and healing. Meanwhile, the people in Jesus’ own hometown, the people who grew up with him and went to the synagogue with him, and the religious leaders who spent so much time working to be holy—they are the ones who reject Jesus and what he was freely offering: forgiveness of sins, healing and good news. The woman who comes to Jesus in Luke 7 knows how much of a difference mercy has made in her life.

Jesus is eating with Simon the Pharisee (an especially religious Jew) at Simon’s home. A woman comes in. Simon recognizes her as someone who was publicly known as a sinner and not someone a respectable person would want to be around. But she comes in anyway and is completely overcome with emotion. Perhaps not considering herself worthy enough to go further, she stands behind Jesus at his feet (he would have been lying on a couch to eat) and her tears fall on them. She then uses her hair to dry his feet, kisses them and rubs on the expensive lotion she had brought with

her for this purpose. She is deeply grateful to Jesus. Nothing—not her fears about going into the house of a religious leader who would condemn her, interrupting a private supper or appearing foolish before dinner guests—will prevent her from seeing Jesus.

A while later, Jesus is again eating with Pharisees, and tells them, “*Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! . . . For you tithe the mint and rue and herbs of all kinds, and neglect justice and the love of God; it is these you ought to have practised, without neglecting the others*” (Luke 11).

One of my Sunday school teachers growing up was a man who had been in prison for a time. He didn’t talk much about those days but what he did say, over and over (so that it sticks in my memory to this day), was how grateful he was to have been forgiven. His life was completely changed by Jesus, and he knew it. I didn’t want to have his experiences, but I was envious of the way he could see so clearly what Jesus had done for him.

I think I’m a lot more like the Pharisee than the publicly sinful woman or my teacher—looking clean on the outside but full of greed and wickedness inside. I pray for the ability to be as grateful as the sinful woman, for I am just as needy of God’s mercy and forgiveness and, (praise God!) just as able to receive it through God’s grace.

### Remembering Edwin Friesen:

Shortly after our last issue went to print, I received word that one of our regular columnists (who, in fact, had a column in that very issue) had died due to a sudden illness. I’d like to express gratitude for Edwin Friesen’s ministry in these pages over the past years and send our wishes for God’s comfort to his family in their time of sorrow.

### ABOUT THE COVER:

The value of a conductor can never be over-estimated by a choir—like the Conrad Grebel University College chapel choir, pictured—or those listening to its blended voices. In our feature article on page 4, Ryan Siemens makes the case for congregations viewing their pastors as choir conductors and themselves as the choir.

PHOTO: TIM MILLER DYCK, CANADIAN MENNONITE

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490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5

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Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 Fax: 519-884-3331

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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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## Correspondents:

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

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A confession—Or mixed  
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MUSIC FEATURE

# The pastor as choir conductor

*A metaphor for pastoral ministry and church leadership*

BY RYAN SIEMENS

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

*'Mennonites want strong song  
leaders, but not strong pastors.'  
(Adam Tice)*

In December 2006, Adam Tice led singing during the closing worship service in my human development and Christian formation course at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). We were seated in a circle in the chapel and Tice was in the middle so that everyone was able to see him. Through his clear and precise conducting, he was able to direct the group's singing in such a manner that all were able to follow. This permitted him to ask for different sections to sing at different times, and to make the songs come alive more so than just by us singing what was written. As a result, the singing was done well and the worship felt more inspiring.

After we were finished, a participant said to Tice that his choral leadership was greatly appreciated because it made it easier for her to follow the words and notes. He thanked her for the comment and then added, "Mennonites want strong song leaders, but not strong pastors."

His words struck a chord. What is it within the Mennonite Church that does not allow for strong pastoral leadership? Why is there hesitancy within the Mennonite Church when the issue of excellence in pastoral ministry is raised? Why is the priestly role of the pastor looked down upon?

## ***Singing in the Mennonite Church***

For as long as I can remember, I have been singing in Mennonite churches. Growing up at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, I started singing when I was about four. Before Sunday school would begin, all the children would gather together and sing "camp" songs led by guitar or piano. When I was six, I joined

the children's choir, which was one of five choirs at our church. For years, our normal mid-week ritual involved my two sisters and me eating supper quickly on Wednesdays in order to go to rehearsals.

There is a sacramental value that singing provides for Mennonites. Even though we often claim we are not a sacramental people, Marlene Kropf and Kenneth Nafziger, authors of *Singing: A Mennonite Voice*, point out that "singing functions for Mennonites as sacraments do in liturgical churches. Singing is the moment when we encounter God most directly. We taste God, we touch God when we sing."

In light of the sacramental value that music has within the Mennonite tradition, the song leader has the authority to make this experience of God more meaningful or not. Tice used his authority as the AMBS song leader to enhance our encounter with God through singing. However, on the flip side, song leaders also have the ability to mess things up.

Kropf and Nafziger asked congregants about "incompetent" and "ineffective" song leaders. When song leaders are not



confident about the material, make poor eye contact with the congregation, or do not show any life while leading, they detract from the overall congregational encounter with God. Even though as Mennonites we like to claim that no one role or office has the ability to be a conduit of God's presence or grace, the song leader during a Sunday morning service is capable of this.

Thus, Kropf and Nafziger conclude by saying, "In effect, those we interviewed were describing in effective song lead-

church and those who were called to give ministerial leadership to the church. Such a teaching emerged from the mistaken notion that 'our Anabaptist concept of the priesthood of all believers' means that every member is equally to serve as a pastor/leader."

As pastoral ministry in the Mennonite Church changed in the last century from lay ministers to paid professionals, the demands upon pastors increased. Conversely, there was also much concern expressed that paid ministers would take

members. Ties weren't worn, so he didn't wear a tie. He strived "to be low-key and not 'on a pedestal.'" However, as time moved on, he began to see that, in fact, he was not like everybody else.

Like the choir conductor who has been called out of the choir, the role of the pastor is set apart from the congregation. This does not make the pastor "superior" to the rest of the congregation. It is a specific calling within the church that serves to help shepherd God's people into more faithful living.

If, however, the discussion around differentiation were to take place in a choral setting, would the same concerns arise? Conductors or song leaders exhibit the strengths and skills needed to conduct. Such people have generally been involved with choirs most of their lives and have been shaped deeply by the experience; the mantle isn't handed over to someone who just "likes to sing."

When someone is called out of the choir to fill the role of conductor, he or she is no longer "just a choir member," but is still a part of the choir. What is significant, though, is that the role has shifted from someone who sang to someone who is leading and empowering others to sing. And this role, while functional, has also to do with power and authority, whether people want to recognize this or not.

It is the same with pastors. The office of pastor has authority that is bestowed upon the pastor by the congregation.

*The conductor is also able to strategically place weaker singers beside stronger singers, so that the weaker members may be mentored into their part.*

ers a priestly role—the skill not only to embody the song and lead it well, but the ability to open a way into God's presence."

### **The pastor as conductor or song leader**

In many ways, the metaphor of the office of pastor as song leader or choir conductor will help bridge some of the concerns Mennonites have regarding the pastoral office.

According to *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership*, "Over the course of the last generation, we have been taught to believe that the Anabaptist Reformation essentially denied any differentiation between members of the

over the responsibilities of the church, they would hold too much power and authority, and that the differentiation between the "clergy" and the "laity" would become accentuated. Therefore, the biblical concept of the "body of Christ" was the main driving metaphor to understand the church and pastoral leadership, and that the pastor was at the "same level" as everyone else.

This misunderstanding of the "priesthood of all believers" created a scenario in which the pastor wanted to be seen as everybody else. In his book *Never Call Them Jerks*, Arthur Paul Boers describes moving into his new pastorate not wanting to be different than the other

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA FILE PHOTO BY DAN DYCK



But those holding the office of pastoral ministry represent more than a congregation; they also represent God. And this is where Mennonites become uncomfortable.

### **Effective leadership**

I have been fortunate to perform under several prominent conductors, some of whom have a worldwide reputation. What they all have in common is their ability to get choirs to sing and perform well, which is the primary task and role of

leadership is not about the pastor. Even though pastors preach on Sunday morning, are very visible and act as representatives of God and the church in the community, the role is not about them.

### **The church as a choir**

If it is the goal of conductors to have their choirs perform well, so too is the goal of pastors. Even though it sounds somewhat silly to think of Christianity and the church's work in the world as a performance, that is exactly what it is.

*Like musicians who train to become better on their instrument, Christians need to train in order to become better in their ministry.*

a conductor. And in order for this to happen, the conductor needs to do several things:

- **Know the score, which takes time to study.** Even though the choir will be singing from the same page, the conductor needs to know the details and nuances that are not as easily picked up.

The pastor too, needs to take time for study and prayer. Even though Christians are reading from the same book, it is important for the pastor to take the time to understand the nuances and dynamics of the Bible, theology and church history.

- **Know the choir.** This way the conductor is able to find the strong singers in each section to help lead when they are needed. Furthermore, the conductor is also able to strategically place weaker singers beside stronger ones, so that the weaker members may be mentored into their part.

This is also the case with pastoral ministry. Catechism classes, mentoring programs and spiritual direction are ways in which the pastor, along with other leaders and mature Christians within the church, can nurture new converts into the faith or help those who are struggling.

- **Understand that the role is not personal.** The primary task is to get the choir to sing. People don't go to performances to watch someone wave their arms in the air; they go for the music.

Like the choir conductor, pastoral

church to perform at its best.

As Mennonites, we love to sing. It sends chills down the spine, it connects us with each other and it creates a space for the Holy Spirit to enter and be present. When pastors see themselves as song leaders or choir conductors, this is what they are working towards. But this experience of transcendent holiness is not just happenstance; it takes time to learn to sing and know the music. It is the role of the pastor to help in this process by practicing with the congregation—sometimes in sectionals and sometimes one-on-one—with the hope that over time we will all become conformed more and more into the likeness of Christ.

If Jesus had had Mennonites as his first disciples, Matthew 5:14-16 might have been written like this: *"You are the voice of the world, a choir in a loft that cannot be hid. No one, after rehearsing the most beautiful melody, hides it under their breath, but sings it in the air, for all in the house to listen to. In the same way, let your voices ring before others, so that they may hear your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."*

*Excerpted and adapted from an essay by Ryan Siemens for professor Arthur Paul Boers' pastoral ministry and leadership class at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., in 2007. Siemens is pastor at Grace Mennonite Church, Prince Albert, Sask.*

### /// For discussion

1. Ryan Siemens writes about the importance of clear and precise conducting to make a song come alive. What experiences have you had with competent and effective conductors? What is the role of the song leader in your congregation?
2. Siemens says that singing has been very important in the Mennonite tradition and that the song leader can enhance or diminish our experience of God. Do you agree? Does music speak in the same way to everyone? Is a strong song leader important for all music styles?
3. Recently, pastors have tended not to be authoritative, says Siemens. Do you agree? In what ways has that been detrimental/beneficial to the church? Why do you think pastors moved to a less authoritative role in the second half of the 20th century?
4. Do you find the image of the pastor as an authoritative conductor helpful? How would this style of leadership play out in today's world or church? Using this image, what would "choir practice" involve?

## 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: Readers Write" (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.*

### ✉ Focus on godliness . . . and dress accordingly

**REGARDING THE LETTERS**, June 23, page 8 ("Girls and women must learn to dress modestly, for Jesus' sake," and "What women wear isn't important to Jesus, and shouldn't be to men either"), the first letter took a positive stance on modesty for women—good—but the other one left me feeling discouraged.

As a child, I learned that the instructions in I Timothy 2:8-9 for men ("*lift up holy hands without anger or argument*") and women ("*to dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing*") related to what was most naturally the tendency for men and women, respectively.

It is extremely rare to see men dressed immodestly. Are women trying to get men's attention—asking to be seen as persons—regardless of their attire?

As Christians, we need to be prepared to focus on godliness, and the resultant good works, to "*pray without ceasing*" and to dress accordingly.

EUNICE YANTZI, TORONTO

### ✉ Bankrupt morality lets the rich off the hook for climate change

**IT'S REGRETTABLE THAT** Paul Fieguth's articles on consumption can be so misinterpreted, as they were in the Sept. 1 letter, "Population control the only way to environmental sustainability," page 8.

The root causes of untrammelled population increase have been definitively linked to poverty and the lack of opportunity to provide for the necessities of life for more than two centuries, beginning with

Malthus, yet still there are those who say that the 2.3 billion poor who live on less than \$2 a day must now somehow find ways to provide for contraception as well as food, medical care and rent, after being kicked off their land. If only it were that easy.

Obviously it is, to some at least. When the best argument that can be mustered against changing our own wealthy lifestyle—one in which 99 percent of all that is manufactured or created in this country ends up in the dump within six months—is that we've paid our dues, then I suggest our morality is bankrupt. When the United Nations Development Program demonstrates that the wealthiest 20 percent of the world's people consumes 86 percent of the world's private goods, while the poorest 20 percent consumes only 1.5 percent, it becomes quite apparent who God will ask much of.

It won't be the poor; they don't have anything. Fieguth's arguments rested on the assumption that everyone knew the facts about the linkage between poverty and population. It appears that perhaps he assumed too much. That's our shame, not his.

ANDRE PEKOVICH, VANCOUVER, B.C.

### ✉ If allowed, homosexuals would 'push' their views on others

**RE: "CHURCH OPPOSES** Jesus and Paul when it denies homosexual acceptance" letter by John Klassen, Sept. 15, page 15.

Why does the church not allow gays and lesbians to preach or teach in church? It is because, if they were, they would push their beliefs on others.

Do we believe that all Scripture is inspiration from God? If so, Genesis 1:27 states that God made men and women, who were to become one flesh and multiply. Genesis 18 and 19 recount the tale of Sodom and Gomorrah, where God did not find one righteous person. Leviticus 18:22 says it is an abomination for men to have sex with men. Romans 1:26-28 states that women and men gave up the natural use of their bodies and God gave up on them. Finally, II Thessalonians 3:15 says we are to admonish wrongdoers as brothers. PETER REMPEL, ROSTHERN, SASK.

### ✉ Time for church to put the homosexual issue behind it

**I READ THE** "Postcard Project sends controversial letters on homosexuality" article (June 23, page 12) with interest.

I had heard that there had been letters sent to congregations without the approval or consent of the



Mennonite Church Canada executive. This shows me that those involved in the Postcard Project intend to push their agenda at any cost, including the disruption of conference sessions.

I Corinthians 6:9-10 is very clear about who will not inherit the kingdom of God. It warns the church not to be deceived about such sins. This is not just a resolution passed by MC Canada. Rather, this is God's list of

unacceptable human behaviour.

To my mind, there has already been too much discussion, discernment, listening, debates and, most distressing, divisiveness in the church. Let's close the book on this topic. God has said, "*Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God?*"

**DICK HILDEBRANDT, BLACK CREEK, B.C.**

#### NEW ORDER VOICE

# A priesthood of MCC believers

WILL BRAUN

**I**nstitutional revisioning bores me. In too many church institutions, leaders have been replaced with administrators, spirited guidance has been replaced with organizational navel-gazing and new visions often aren't very new. But the worldwide, 13-month Wineskins re-visioning process Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is undertaking has my interest.

One participant says the process could lead to a point at which "[MCC Binational director Arli Klassen] might need to resign, along with the entire binational board, to make room for any new possibility." That's MCC Alberta director Abe Janzen in a report about a Wineskins consultation in Nicaragua. He says the push there was



for MCC to move beyond being a North American-driven organization to a global "priesthood of all believers," with the possibility of ownership being shared between those who bring funds and those who bring needs.

Aside from whether such resignations ever happen, the suggestion raises an important point. The desire to expand MCC ownership beyond North America has become a key point arising from the consultations, but how much control is actually being put up for grabs by current

decision-makers?

Klassen says she is committed to "walking with all of MCC and the churches locally and globally to find new structures," even if that would require her to resign.

A larger question is whether MCC culture will be permeated by various parties vying for control or by a cooperative focus on the needs of the world. Janzen reports from the Nicaragua meeting: "There is a very strong wish here to make MCC a community and not CEO- and board-driven."

Another factor that makes the Wineskins process interesting is MCC Canada's push for more say over inter-

*The desire to expand MCC ownership beyond North America has become a key point arising from the consultations . . . .*

national programming, most of which is run by MCC Binational out of Akron, Pa. Currently, two-thirds of the money raised by MCCs in Canada, plus millions in government funding, get funnelled through Akron for international programs. But now, according to MCC Canada board chair Neil Janzen, MCC Canada wants "a more direct say in how those resources are used." This would include responsibility for programming in places like Cuba, Afghanistan and North Korea, where U.S. foreign relations are problematic.

How does this relate to the Wineskins process? "There are some who see these processes as completely linked, and others who see them as distinct," Klassen says.

Neil Janzen told me they should be distinct, but on the Wineskins website he writes that if MCC Binational will not accommodate MCC Canada's wishes, then MCC "can hardly take any further steps towards an MCC Global."

While one could make a case for MCC Canada taking responsibility for certain programs, it is hard to see why the globalization of MCC ownership would be contingent on MCC Canada first getting expanded powers.

Dan Leonard, the young adult initiative coordinator for MCC Binational, who attended the Wineskins consultation in Winnipeg, says the focus should be on "how to best respond to the needs of the world," not on "which powerful North American country gets to have control." Indeed, if groups within MCC advocate for themselves rather than for the poor, it would seem they are headed more toward a jostling of administrators than a

priesthood of believers.

On the broader question of ownership and potentially resigning his post, Neil Janzen said the church conferences, which ultimately own MCC, "will have to decide to what extent they are willing to give up ownership," but he would be willing to step aside if required.

*Will Braun can be reached at editor@greezmagazine.org. For more on the Wineskins process, visit [mcc.org/newwineskins](http://mcc.org/newwineskins).*

## ✉ Plainness in Mennonite worship spaces advocated

WHEN I READ the article “More than a visiting chamber,” Sept. 29, page 16, it brought to mind the time I showed a Catholic friend around our sanctuary on a weekday evening. He was quiet until he finally said, “It’s very . . . plain.” It was obviously an underwhelming experience for him.

What I explained to my friend is that Mennonites have emphasized that God is encountered in the gathered group of believers. A church is a meetinghouse. God is present wherever we meet, it doesn’t matter where.

I doubt that the artist is “introducing reverence and awe to Bethel Mennonite.” Reverence—or awe and respect for God—is undoubtedly present in that group of believers whenever they gather for worship. Does

### OUTSIDE THE BOX

# Buck-licking good times

PHIL WAGLER

Recently my son and I saddled some bikes to explore the flora and fauna in another part of the country. To our great delight, we came upon a handful of grazing deer. Hardly bothered by our presence, this photogenic bunch, led by a relaxed buck who obviously has some thinking to do before hunting season, even allowed my son to snap some extreme close-ups. Then, astonishingly, the buck poked out his nose and licked my boy’s hand. Wonder. Smiles. Simple pleasures.

I far too often complicate and petrify life. I can even do this to faith. Let’s face it, the faith and wonder of a child is quickly lost as we grow. I hesitate calling such growth “maturing” because, really, the most mature ones I know have an infectious wonder of simple things. They seem to revel in buck-licking good times.

As the church these days seeks to respond to a world with the dry heavens, we can—even in our call for simplicity (a mesmerizing Mennonite pastime)—lose sight of simple pleasures. Instead of receiving life as a gift, and celebrating the joy of breath beneath the benevolent gaze of our creator and his lavish love in Christ for struggling sinners, we heap

guilt trips on the faithful. I confess I can be found wanting here.

In our grand attempts to “save the world” we feverishly tie Pharisaical burdens on people that neither we, nor our ancestors, can carry. Many voices like mine, while hopefully saying some important things, are at risk of making faith a joyless, guilt-infused trip into some religious wasteland. The world is going to hell in a hand-basket and we’re happy to place blame. Unwittingly, grace, hope, joy and love begin playing second fiddle to our laments, complaints and new legalisms. Church is seen as a problem rather

*[T]he resurrected Lord seems at home on the beach grilling fish and enjoying redeeming friendship.*

than the bride of God’s great delight.

Calm down, I still believe our following of Jesus should be marked by radical differences, but shouldn’t joy and enjoyment be part of a Christ-centred life too?

Think the Scriptures through with me. Nehemiah reminds the sorrowful Jews to stop their blubbering and celebrate because of the joy of the Lord (Nehemiah 8). Ecclesiastes calls us to enjoy simple things like food, drink, friendship,

marriage and love. Even sex gets a wink of approval; ever tried to read Song of Songs without smirking?

And what about Jesus, who unashamedly hangs out at uncouth parties and employs things like treasures, lilies, fields and fluttering sparrows to reveal the heart of God. His first miracle was intended to keep a party going, not end it. His last miracle did not transform his slain body into some other-worldly, higher-plane, world-bashing avatar. No, the resurrected Lord seems at home on the beach grilling fish and enjoying redeeming friendship. The Lord’s Supper, which we take with great seriousness, is celebrated in simple things: bread, wine and company. Even Paul’s communion instruction to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 11), although steeped in strong corrective language, reveals an unwillingness to wait for each other and recognize the simple wonder of being saved by faith together.

So can we lighten up a little, please?

Is it okay to smile and enjoy God’s good gifts? Can we have some more buck-licking good times? Or has life and faith as we know it become far too serious to make room for a Lord who lavishes and laughs?

*Feel free to share your buck-licking good times with Phil Wagler at [phil\\_wagler@yahoo.ca](mailto:phil_wagler@yahoo.ca).*



reverence require silence?

I feel reverence in quietness and in the rousing singing of a hymn. I also experience reverence in the loud and sometimes chaotic pre- and post-service visiting in my congregation. I see people interacting and caring for each other and welcoming newcomers. The community in action is something beautiful.

Mennonite worship is not just about what is happening between me and God and my Bible, it's about being together and loving each other. Especially in our context, where people live far apart, the church is a meetinghouse.

I am all for reverence-inspiring beauty in the sanctuary, and I welcome the contributions of artists of all kinds to our meetinghouses. I am thankful for my church's altar committee that brings beauty into the sanctuary every week. As a denomination, architecturally we have, and continue to create, beautiful sanctuaries.

Yet I find I am still an advocate for plainness in our worship spaces. The plainness itself places the community in bold relief. How beautiful can we be when God is here?

CAROL PENNER, VINELAND, ONT.

## ✉ Farmer questions the righteousness of 100 Mile Diet, organic farming

**DURING THE LAST** few years at least two significant emphases involving agriculture and food have gained appreciable support from the public, including Mennonite Church Canada adherents. Two issues often championed are the 100 Mile Diet and organic farming. I must be missing something in both of these emphases.

The way I understand the 100 Mile Diet is that it promotes buying and consuming only, or mostly, food that is produced within 100 miles of our habitation. That sounds appealing at first glance. However, where does that leave the family farm operation that I am involved with? If we are only to purchase food produced within 100 miles of home, does it not logically follow that, as a producer of raw food products, I should only sell those products within 100 miles of my home?

Saskatchewan produces much more food than can be consumed in our province. The same applies to most of the rest of Canada. If the 100 Mile Diet is held up as the only sustainable option, then no food products would be exported to the rest of the world. None of my wheat, canola or peas would be able to find their way to the hungry people of Somalia or elsewhere.

Organic farming, likewise, raises concerns. Depending on the crops chosen, and the particular crop rotation followed, Saskatchewan Crop Insurance

data suggests that an acre of organically produced field crops only produces between half and 85 percent as much grain as conventionally grown field crops.

If there was a wholesale shift to organic farming worldwide, there would be a drastic shortage of food in the world. Millions of additional humans would be driven to starvation. Is it the righteous thing to champion producing organic foods while letting a major portion of the human population starve, when sufficient foods can be grown that are just as wholesome and healthy when produced with the prudent use of fertilizers and chemicals?

TONY FUNK, HAGUE, SASK.

## /// Corrections

The photographs accompanying the obituaries of Katharina (Tina) Rempel and Helen (nee Klassen) Rempel on pages 13 and 14 of the Oct. 13 issue were inadvertently reversed. The pictures are reprinted with the correct attributions.



Helen Rempel



Katharina Rempel

In our coverage of the filming of a violence-response training video at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate ("Violence issues come to class," Oct. 13, front cover and page 21), we inferred that the students in the photographs attended Rockway. A small number of Rockway students did participate in the event, but were not in the photos published. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the errors.

## /// Obituaries

**Irma Letkemann (nee Vogt)**  
Aug. 10, 1926-June 23, 2008

I, Irma Letkemann, nee Vogt, was born on Aug. 10, 1926, the ninth child of my parents Erhard Rudolf Vogt and Elisabeth Vogt, nee Voth. I was born in Deutsch Kazun, a village near Warsaw, Poland, where I also spent my childhood and my youth to the age of 18. The beginning of the Second World



War on Sept. 1, 1939, ushered in a period of fear and uncertainty into my life. Nevertheless, in 1942 I was able to take part in faith development classes in preparation for baptism; and on the day of Pentecost that year I was baptized on the confession of my faith by Bishop Bernhard Koppert and received into full membership of the Mennonite Church of Deutsch Kazun. Because of the war, we were evacuated in July of 1944, and forced to leave our beloved homeland, never to return. After several months on the road, fleeing west, we arrived in Gleiwitz, Upper Silesia, and found refuge and lodging with my uncle. Since the eastern front was advancing, our stay was of short duration. We continued our efforts to escape to the West, and came to Mecklenburg. Here we learned from friends and acquaintances that the MCC had established a camp for Mennonite refugees in Gronau, Westfalia, Germany. And so we continued our journey and arrived there on June 15, 1947. Here, I shared in the camp life with many other Mennonite refugees. In September 1948, an opportunity presented itself for me to emigrate to Canada as a contract domestic. I came to the area of Kitchener-Waterloo, where I found work in a family household. On free Sundays, I attended W-K Mennonite Church in Waterloo, where in due course I was accepted and received as a member of that congregation. In this church, on Oct. 15, 1949, I was married to John Letkemann. Bishop Jacob H. Janzen officiated at our wedding. God blessed us with four healthy children: Rudy, Hilda, Irma and Martha. (*The above was written by the deceased.*)

It is hard to think about Mom without thinking about the Lester Street bungalow in which she lived. With Dad, she managed the household expertly; it was always an oasis of hospitality, love and comfort for her children and grandchildren. She enjoyed a very active life into her senior years, spending countless hours hosting family and friends, and tending her vegetable and flower gardens. Her faith life was centred on W-K Church and she cherished her involvement with Kränzchen and Mission Circle. Blessed with excellent health through her senior years, Mom started experiencing symptoms in November 2007. After a series of medical tests and weeks of uncertainty, Mom was diagnosed with terminal cancer in January. Her health declined quickly, but her courageous spirit and humour were an inspiration to us. No doubt her ability to come to terms with death had to do with her strong faith, and her conviction of being reunited with the many family members and friends she lost so early in life. In her final weeks, Mom's family came together to help care for her the house was always bustling with family members and

nurses. She died peacefully at home surrounded by family on the evening of June 23. Mom was predeceased by her parents and siblings: brothers Eugen, Eduard, Richard, Paul and Peter; and sisters Olga, Erna and Else. She leaves behind husband John; children Rudy, Hilda (Brian), Irma (Herb), and Martha (Rudy); and her grandchildren Jacob (Benjamin), Katie (Craig), Matthew (Stephanie), Nicholas, Johnathan, Christin, Meghan, Melinda and Stephanie; great-grandson Joshua Underwood; and sister Elfriede Neufeld.

### **Marvin Frey**

May 10, 1949-Oct. 19, 2008



Passed away peacefully at his home in Kitchener, Ont. on Oct. 19 in his 60th year, after a one-year pilgrimage with brain cancer. A memorial service was held at Waterloo North Mennonite Church on Oct. 25. Beloved husband of Ardith (nee Bauman) Frey for 34 years, cherished father of Eric (Genevieve) Frey of Edmonton and Christopher Frey of Kitchener, proud Papa of Adria Frey of Edmonton. Dear brother of David (Cheryl) Frey of St. Jacobs, Seleda (John) Frey of Moorefield, Clare (Margaret) Frey of R.R. 2 Elmira, Aden (Sheryl) Frey of Millbank, Miriam Frey of Waterloo, Barbara (Roy) Draper of Elmira, and Mary (Orval) Martin of R.R. 2 Wallenstein. Also lovingly remembered by sisters and brothers-in-law Karen (Tilman) Metzger of St. Clements, Arlene (Jim) Martin of Hawkesville, Margaret (Ron) Martin of Elmira, Murray (Ingrid) Bauman of Waterloo, and numerous nieces and nephews. Predeceased by his parents, Martin and Selina Frey, three siblings in their infancy, parents-in-law David and Elizabeth Bauman two nieces and a nephew. Marv's career was dedicated to service through 23 years with Mennonite Central Committee in Jamaica, Swaziland, Somalia, Lesotho and Winnipeg (five years as executive director of MCC Canada), two years as program director of Canadian Foodgrains Bank in Winnipeg, and as CEO of Ten Thousand Villages in New Hamburg from 2002-2008. When diagnosed with an aggressive form of brain cancer one year ago, he faced treatment and a curtailed life in the same direct way in which he embraced work challenges, with an abiding faith and sense of peace that were inspiring to all he met. His initial response to the diagnosis was, "I have lived a rich life." Indeed you have. We shall remember you.

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Berg**—Oliver Edwin (b. Oct. 19, 2008), to Bryan and Kristen Berg, Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite.

**Broadbent**—Corran James Brown (b. Oct. 2, 2008), to Amanda Brown and Gavin Broadbent, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Dueck**—Oliver James (b. Oct. 12, 2008), to Jason and Heidi Dueck, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Froese**—Maya Lianne (b. Sept. 24, 2008), to Abe and Rolande Froese, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Kehler**—Jade Abiela (b. Sept. 9, 2008), to Sandro and Verena Kehler, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Krahn**—Madeline Jenae (b. Sept. 24, 2008), to Wes and April Krahn, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., in Winnipeg.

**Little**—Connor Robin (b. Oct. 17, 2008), to Darryl and Pam Little, Zurich (Ont.) Mennonite.

**Martin**—Sebastian Alexander (b. Sept. 27, 2008), to Tim Martin and Dorothy Tymchyshyn, Bloomingdale (Ont.) Mennonite.

**Parent**—Madissyn Paige (b. Aug. 27, 2008), to Daemon and Vanessa Parent, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man.

**Wiebe**—Noah Henry and Owen Richard (Aug. 13, 2008), to Lambert and Marcy Wiebe, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Wiens**—Mackenzie Jane (b. Oct. 5, 2008), to Toban and Candice Wiens, Glenlea (Man.) Mennonite.

### Marriages

**Allen/Steinmann**—Joel Allen and Bonnie Steinmann, Crosshill Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., Oct. 11, 2008.

**Chabot/Edmiston**—Christina Chabot and Greg Edmiston, Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont., Sept. 27, 2008.

**Driedger/Guerin**—Meghan Driedger and Ryan Guerin, Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont., in Toronto, Oct. 24, 2008.

**Gundrum/Wiens**—Dianna Gundrum and Arlen Wiens, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., Sept. 20, 2008.

**Funk/Janzen**—Conrad Funk and Gillian Janzen, Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., at Swift Current, Sask., Sept. 13, 2008.

**Peters/Wiebe**—Allison Peters (Hope Mennonite, Winnipeg) and Reginald Wiebe (Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.), at Poplar Point, Man., Aug. 2, 2008.

**Snyder/Wagner**—Murray Snyder and Teena Wagner, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., Oct. 4, 2008.

### Deaths

**Braun**—Katherine, 89 (d. Sept. 19, 2008), Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man.

**Dyck**—Herman, 83 (b. Feb. 25, 1925; d. Oct. 7, 2008), Rosthern (Sask.) Mennonite.

**Funk**—Mary, 86 (d. Oct. 13, 2008), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Gascho**—Carl, 83 (b. Oct. 3, 1925; d. Oct. 15, 2008), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

**Good**—Olive, 90 (b. June 6, 1918; d. Oct. 19, 2008), Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

**Hildebrandt**—Katharina, 90 (d. Oct. 10, 2008), Glenlea (Man.) Mennonite.

**Manske**—Violet (nee Witmer), 92 (b. July 12, 1916; d. Oct. 10, 2008), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

**Metzger**—Rose Marie (nee Bretz), 69 (b. Dec. 25, 1938; d. Sept. 18, 2008), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

**Unrau**—Walter, 81 (b. Feb. 24, 1927; d. Oct. 10, 2008), Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

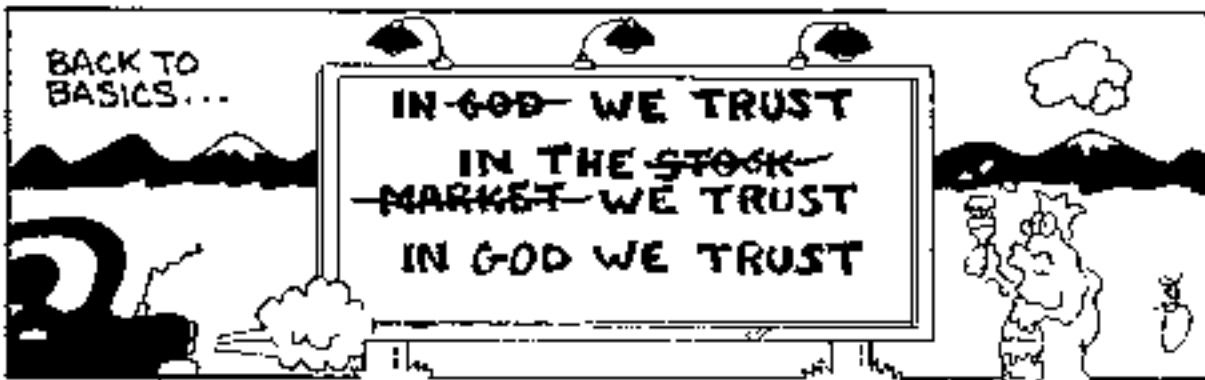
**Warkentin**—Leni, 70 (b. Jan. 30, 1938; d. July 3, 2008), Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Wiebe**—Helen (nee Heinrichs), 85 (b. April 26, 1923; d. Oct. 5, 2008), Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event.**

**Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to [milestones@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:milestones@canadianmennonite.org), including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please include birth date and last name at birth if available.**

## Pontius' Puddle



## FOCUS ON MUSIC

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

# Rocking the church

*How my guitar and I found a voice in two very different worlds*

BY MIKE PERSCHON  
EDMONTON

Sweat runs down my face. Drops sting my eyes, which are half-blinded by the glare of stage lights. I strain to see people I know in the shadows of this dimly-lit bar, who applaud in waves whenever we finish a song. Our own volume is a tsunami by comparison, a roar so loud my ears will ring until I drift off to sleep around 4 a.m. after the final song has been sung, last call announced and the gear safely stowed in our practice space. Tomorrow night we'll haul it out again. I'll set up my amp and plug in my guitar in a very different venue.

Tonight, wine is one of many spirits imbibed—probably the least popular in the type of places my band, Seven Devil Fix, plays. Tomorrow, if wine is present, it will be a sacrament of God's Spirit. Tonight, I sing for the pleasure of these patrons; tomorrow, I will sing for the applause of heaven. In less than 24 hours my feet will touch down in two worlds. While I'm learning to live with the tension between the secular and the sacred, it hasn't always been easy.

## **Different worlds: Take one**

Music and faith have been the two constants of my life and work for as long as I can remember. If it's true that we practise our future professions through childhood play, then I started sowing these career seeds very early. I made my public debut at age five, singing "Jesus Loves Me" with a plastic toy electric guitar in front of a small church congregation in Fox Creek, Alta., a logging and oil town midway between

Edmonton and Peace Country. My family was heavily involved in church work; my father led music, singing "Amazing Grace" to the tune of "House of the Rising Sun," while my mother taught Sunday school. We sang in church on Sundays and danced to the Beach Boys in our living room. As a child, I sensed no tension between worlds.

## **Different worlds: Take two**

When we moved to Medicine Hat, Alta., and began attending a conservative Baptist congregation, the tension became apparent. At our new church, "Amazing Grace" was not open to modification and kids didn't play toy guitars in the service. It was in that church I learned to live in two worlds. I wasn't a hell-raiser or a rebel. I loved my faith. But I was also drawn to hard rock and heavy metal music.

I grew my hair long, traded pastel sweaters for skate-wear adorned with skulls and doctored my jeans with sandpaper and bleach. "Mike," one venerable church usher asked, "when are you going to start dressing like a Christian?" If I knew how complicated my life would become, I would never have formed a band. I'd have become a teacher, just like my father had advised. But I was stubborn, young and idealistic.

But once I had a degree from a theological school, I figured my ideas about rock music in the church would be respected, accepted and implemented. So I moved to Edmonton and during the day attended

classes at North American Baptist College to become a pastor. At night, I was either rehearsing or playing in clubs around the city in a metal band called Athan Asia.

Christian rock in Alberta was still in its infancy. Christians were just starting to ask why the devil should have all the good music, so, in addition to clubs, Athan Asia played churches. But for our efforts we were accused of myriad infractions:

- Our music couldn't be "Christian" because it was too loud and the lyrics unintelligible;
- We encouraged dancing;
- One elder denounced our stage backdrop as "Satan's cloth";

*We sang in church on Sundays, and danced to the Beach Boys in our living room. As a child, I sensed no tension between worlds.*

- We saw countless frowns and demonstrative walk-outs; and
- We were denied payment for a set and told, "If Jesus walked by the church and saw what was going on, he would have walked right on by."

Those experiences notwithstanding, Athan Asia agreed to play at the largest Baptist church in Edmonton—at the music pastor's insistence. We rehearsed laboriously to create a multi-generational mix featuring both contemporary worship songs and our own renditions of ancient hymns, such as "Be Thou My Vision."

It was a disaster. After our first set we were quietly informed that a pianist and one of the regular vocalists would be completing the service. Some of my band-

PHOTO BY JENICA PERSCHON



PHOTO BY JEFF NELSON



*Mike Perschon, at the microphone left, is pictured with his Seven Devil Fix band-mates in concert at Edmonton's The Gathering.*

mates hadn't been to church for years; some vowed never to return.

I remained stubborn and idealistic about rocking the church. I thought about the parties I went to after Athan Asia gigs, where people asked why none of us smoked or did drugs. I had no problem sharing my Christian views in conversation and with subtlety in our lyrics. Musician friends said things like, "I'd go to a church where people believed like you." But I was all too aware that if someone like me felt like an outsider

and the de-churched who had left after bad experiences.

In our first years, we met in living rooms, and held services in community halls, a tiny chapel in West Edmonton Mall, the basement of a United church, and finally, a former pub. The walls were purple, the ceiling was teal, the main room was illuminated by blacklights. It smelled like spilled beer and cigarette smoke. It was just like the clubs I played in, and the idea of reclaiming a pub as a church appealed to us all. It was

*'Mike,' one venerable church usher asked, 'when are you going to start dressing like a Christian?'*

in a conventional church—someone who grew up in the church and knew all the secret handshakes—then people outside the Christian ghetto wouldn't stand a chance.

### **Two new worlds**

So in the spring of 1998, with a handful of friends and band-mates, I helped start The Gathering, a multi-denominational mosaic of a church in Edmonton where it wouldn't matter what you wore or what kind of music you listened to—a church for people who don't like church. The types of people The Gathering attracted were the un-churched who had never attended before; the over-churched who were burnt out by over-involvement or a pressure-sales approach to spirituality;

the perfect mirror of our congregation: We had blue hair, shaved heads, earrings and tattoos.

The year we moved into the pub The Gathering became radically congregational and I prepared to become a tent-maker, a term used to describe ministers who serve a congregation and pursue a second career at the same time.

My tent-making got off to a shaky start, though, given the fact that my résumé was dominated by two strengths: music and faith. Tough to find work outside the church with experience like that, I discovered quickly. So I enrolled at the University of Alberta in graduate studies and, to pay the bills, took a job at Holyrood Mennonite Church, a very traditional congregation, as

an associate pastor.

On Sunday mornings I wore a suit, sang old hymns and preached from behind a heavy wooden pulpit. I made few, if any, pop culture references. I attended potlucks and taught Sunday school. On Sunday night, however, I wore jeans or shorts and T-shirts while volunteering at The Gathering—light apparel so I wouldn't sweat too much while jumping around with a guitar strapped on my back. When I preached there I animatedly walked around, with visuals projected on the screen behind me.

In 2004, I started my current band, Seven Devil Fix. The name is a reference to Jesus casting seven devils out of Mary Magdalene. We started out playing regularly at The Gathering, writing songs for the worship service and recording our first CD.

We started playing clubs again. And I discovered something about my two worlds. Somewhere along the line, they'd merged completely. I no longer thought of one as secular and the other as sacred. We played songs we'd written for church in clubs, and I wasn't embarrassed.

The Gathering helped me with that. I was just Mike at The Gathering. Just another guy who helped out. I was no longer up on a pedestal, which ultimately helped me avoid falling off. I stopped living a double-life.

No longer a paid pastor at Holyrood, I'm just finishing a master of arts degree in comparative literature. I still play with Seven Devil Fix. And I volunteer at The Gathering on Sunday nights. Irony of ironies, we moved in with that traditional Mennonite church. It's a good fit. With real estate prices soaring, we needed a cheaper space. And they needed a better sound system. Talk about worlds coming together! ☘

*Originally published in the Aug. 15 issue of ChristianWeek. Reprinted with permission. Since the article was first published, Mike Perschon has begun teaching English at The King's University College and MacEwan College in Edmonton, as well as starting work on his Ph.D. Seven Devil Fix played its last gig in June, but rumour has it that a new—and somewhat less noisy—musical entity is in the works.*

## PROFILE

# Composing a musical livelihood

*Pax Christi Chorale artistic director is also a church musician, music history prof, private music teacher and composer*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
TORONTO

The Oct. 26 Fanfare of Canadian Hymns by Pax Christi Chorale: Toronto's Mennonite Choir featured hymns by Leonard Enns, Harris Loewen and Stephanie Martin, the choir's artistic director. Howard Dyck, recently of CBC, told stories about the hymns during the performance and the audience was invited to participate in the singing.

One of the hymns, James Montgomery's "Prayer is the Soul's Sincere Desire" (No. 572 in *Hymnal: A Worship Book*), is set to Martin's hymn tune "Dorking."

"I wrote the music for that hymn at my parents' farm," she says. "The drive up there from school meant going through that charming hamlet [Dorking, Ont.], and it's a hymn-writing tradition to name tunes after towns. The original Dorking in England is where [British composer] Vaughan Williams grew up."

Music came naturally to Martin. Her father, Abner Martin, founded the Menno Singers in Kitchener in 1955, she says, "with an aim to providing Mennonite choristers opportunities to study and perform sacred choral music." Martin graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University's music program and later received her master's degree from the University of Toronto.

During her university years, Martin and her friend Chris Culp would sing through all the parts of hymns at Listowel (Ont.) Mennonite Church, each taking a different part on each verse until they had sung all four parts.

"We were learning harmonic theory, all you would learn in university about foundations, harmony and cadences," she remembers now.

Like many artists, Martin has composed a livelihood in music—assistant professor of music history, harpsichordist and organist at York University, private

studio teacher, music director at St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church (an Anglo-Catholic congregation), and artistic director of Pax Christi Chorale.

The choir was founded in 1987, inspired by the success of an ad hoc choir assembled for the Toronto celebration of the 1986 bicentennial of Mennonites in Canada. Over the years, the choir has grown from about 35 members to 80, including both Mennonites and singers from various faith traditions and cultures.

Musing about music and spirituality, Martin notes that music varies from denomination to denomination, and she appreciates the variety. "Mennonite spirituality is tied up with our community," and is focused on the intellect as expressed in the sermon. At St. Mary Magdalene she revels in the liturgical tradition, with its mystery and aesthetic experience—the smell of incense, the taste of bread and wine, the colours that change throughout the church year. Denominations "retain

distinct community, heritage and, at the same time, we need to not allow distinctiveness to keep us apart from so many wonderful things," she says.

At St. Mary Magdalene, Martin oversees the musical content of four services per week, and more during feast days like All Souls and All Saints. As a church musician, her "spiritual ears are more open to diversity," she says. As a professor of music history, much of which is tied to the church, she is aware of the diversity in her classes—Muslims, atheists and many denominations of Christianity

The Pax Christi Chorale sings two oratorios a year, besides other programs. Martin hopes to continue to "explore the great literature" of spiritual choral music. Her goal, she says, is to "experience what the writer wanted in spiritual experience. First-time audience members say, 'Singers have something extra beyond more polished groups. They've invested a lot in learning the music. You can see it on their faces.'" This is made possible, in part, by 14 weeks of practice as a choir before the orchestra is added to the musical mix for each performance, which, Martin says, she expects to be "polished."

This season the Pax Christi Chorale will perform Haydn's *Creation* on Dec. 6 and 7, and Bach's *B Minor Mass* on April 25 and 26, 2009. All concerts take place at Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd., Toronto. ☘

PHOTO BY BETSY MOSS



*Stephanie Martin, standing right, directs the Pax Christi Chorale and the Christ Church Deer Park Junior Choir.*



Advertorial

# Community important to Menno Singers

By MARK DILLER HARDER  
AND MARILYN RUDY-FROESE

Menno Singers Release  
KITCHENER, ONT.

"Reaching into the community." This phrase aptly describes the new season of choral excellence with Menno Singers, as the community connections are key to the choir's success. These connections happen on so many levels.

This fall, more than 230 singers from the broader community, Menno Youth Singers and Menno Singers have joined together as the Mennonite Mass Choir to sing the classic oratorio, *The Messiah* by G.F. Handel, on Dec. 13 at Kitchener's Centre in the Square. The choir has raised the roof at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener during dynamic, energetic rehearsals. So many singers, young and old, comment on the sense of community

FILE PHOTO BY ROSS W. MUIR



In 2005, Menno Singers performed its golden anniversary concert with the Guelph (Ont.) Chamber Choir at Benton Street, Baptist Church, Kitchener, Ont.

## Briefly noted

### Abner Martin Music Scholarship winner named



WATERLOO, ONT.—Allison Howorth of Heidelberg, Ont., is the 2008-09 recipient of the \$2,000 Abner Martin Music Scholarship. Howorth graduated from Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont., in 2006, and after two years of non-musical studies at the University of Waterloo, she entered her first year in the music program at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, this fall. Howorth has participated extensively in musical activities in church and community. At her home church, Wellesley Mennonite, she likes to contribute musically as often as she can. She has sung in choirs at Conrad Grebel University College, and in the past three years she has been involved in several productions with the local Singers' Theatre, including a lead role in the musical *Rags* this summer. In 2007, she participated in a music theatre workshop at the New York University's Steinhardt School. The Abner Martin Music Scholarship was established by the Menno Singers in 1981 to honour his contribution to music awareness among Ontario Mennonites and in the larger community.

—Menno Singers Release

and oneness by coming together each week to sing. The soloists are all from the local community: Sandra Tucker, Jennifer Enns-Modolo, Brandon Leis and Ben Janzen.

Menno Singers continues to reach out to the Mennonite Church community, particularly as leaders in congregational song. In October, Menno Singers invited Marilyn Houser Hamm for a weekend of exploring the wonderful resources of *Hymnal: A Worship Book* and its two new supplements. Over the last year, Menno Singers has also sponsored four Vespers hymn sings in different congregations. Watch for more in the new year, as congregations continue to offer invitations to enliven congregational singing.

One of the gifts of Menno Singers is the range of musical styles and genres it sings so well.

The 2008-09 season will include a performance of Mozart's *Requiem* on Feb. 28, 2009, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener.

Next May, Menno Singers is sponsoring benefit concerts in support of ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) at St. Matthews, Kitchener (May 2) and at St. Paul's United Church, Paris, Ont. (May 3). These concerts will feature music by local contemporary composers. Menno Singers will be joined by the other two choirs under its umbrella: InterMennonite Children's Choir and Menno Youth Singers.

This will be followed by a CD recording and an invitation to premiere some of the works at

the Conrad Grebel University College's Sound in the Land conference, June 5-7, 2009. ❧

Mark Diller Harder and Marilyn Rudy-Froese are co-presidents of Menno Singers.

George Friedrich Handel

*Menno Singers*

# MESSIAH

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## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

## Migrant hands help harvest

*Niagara's Mennonite farmers bring in workers from Mexico and Jamaica each summer to help pick crops*

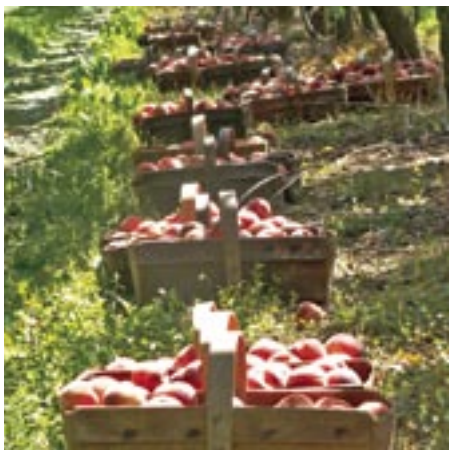
BY ANDREA EPP

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, ONT.

The Niagara region of Ontario is known for its lush orchards and picturesque vineyards, which produce much of Canada's fruit and wine. While farmers work throughout the year to manage their businesses and prepare the fields, the actual harvesting season is quite brief. As the industry requires a large workforce to harvest and package the produce for a short length of time, migrant workers are a natural fit.

In the late 1960s, the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program was created, matching Canadian employers with potential employees from Mexico and the Caribbean. Mennonite farmers in the Niagara region are often program participants.

John I. Janzen of Janzen Farms in



*Baskets of ripe fruit harvested by Mexican and Jamaican seasonal workers sit waiting to be picked up at Abe Epp and Family Farms' peach orchard.*



*Abe Epp and Family Farms' migrant workers Tomazina Shaw of Jamaica, left, and Aurelia Espejel of Mexico, right, flank local supervisor Bev Zeglinski.*

Niagara-on-the-Lake began farming in 1960, taking over operations from his parents. A member of Bethany Mennonite Church in Virgil, Ont., he employed workers from Mexico in his fields this season, a long-standing practice for him.

Appreciative of his employees and their strong work ethic, Janzen offers bussing to the local grocery store, a city plaza and the area's largest shopping mall, and provides winter storage space for them to keep their goods while they return home each winter.

A direct consequence of his faith, Janzen ensures his workers have Sundays off, saying he "made that policy many years ago," although it is a feat difficult to manage in peak production season.

George Lepp of Lepp Farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake has been farming for 35 years, building his parents' hobby farm into a substantial business. He currently employs Jamaican workers. He puts a lot of effort into meeting the strict government standards and inspections of employee living quarters.

"To me, it's important that the men have really appropriate accommodations," he says.

As well, he takes time to get to know them personally. "I take the opportunity to ask each one of them about their families," Lepp says. "I meet personally with my men three times a year for a celebration meal. It gives me an opportunity to talk and fellowship with them on an individual basis, rather than in a large collaborative group."

Dave and Shirley Froese of Cornerstone Community Church, a Mennonite Brethren congregation in Virgil, have been running

Froese Farms together for more than 30 years. They seasonally employ Jamaican and Mexican workers, and enjoy sharing their faith with them when the opportunity arises.

"We hope that our faith has an effect that everyone can see," Shirley says, "that our attitudes are ones that are pleasing to God and that we live in a way that is obedient to God."

She makes a point to comfort employees if they ever take ill, making hospital visits and even bringing co-workers along. To further foster good spirits, the couple has organized volleyball games, domino tournaments and barbecues. Shirley also began Peaches Café 12 years ago, a community event that provides an opportunity for farm workers to meet with locals.

Edith Epp of Bethany Mennonite Church helps manage Abe Epp and Family Farms, begun by her in-laws in the 1950s. The farm employs both Jamaican and Mexican workers. Bethany Mennonite provides free space for Sunday evening services for the area's Jamaican workers.

Epp annually collects clothing donations for employees and arranges trips to the local MCC Thrift Shop. This year, the female workers were also taken to Niagara Falls for a day of sightseeing and entertainment.

Epp Farms marks the end of the season with a large party. Proceeds from a raffle at this year's party went to cover funeral costs for a long-time employee. As a farewell token, Epp hands out photo DVDs, allowing her employees to take summer memories back home. ❧

# Economic crisis may open door to socially responsible investing

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada Release  
WINNIPEG

**S**ustainability. Value. Transparency. As the world's economy quakes, these are key issues in the demand for restructuring the global financial system, and they may be qualities that open the door to wider recognition of socially responsible investing (SRI).

Mennonite organizations, including Mennonite Church Canada, have long been SRI supporters, where investments are screened according to environmental, social and governance criteria. Such altruistic notions may be appreciated by some, but brushed aside by others during times of economic crisis, as investors focus on protecting their own financial interests.

But times are changing. Michael Jantzi, the founder and president of Jantzi Research, an independent Canadian investment research firm that evaluates and monitors the performance of global securities, points out that probably for the



Jantzi

first time ever, issues of the environment are not fading into the background as the world struggles with economic volatility. "It's unusual. There is no question that we're seeing people reflect their values in different ways," he says.

For Patricia Lovett-Reid, senior vice-president with TD Waterhouse Canada Inc. and the host of the cable Business News Network's program *Moneytalk*, SRI is taking on new importance because it has shifted from an ethical focus to one of sustainability.

The self-professed "investor on the street" says that ethical investments tend to focus on negative screens—or what not to invest in—such as "sin" stocks in companies involved with alcohol, tobacco, gambling or sex. "But with sustainability-investing, the focus shifts to more positive qualities—the integration of economic, environment [and] social governance

standards that build communities and people." She defines this as a holistic view of investing "that is good for business."

But besides being good for business, SRIs can also translate into profitability. Lovett-Reid points to the US Domini 400 Social Index, which was launched in May 1990. "It's a widely recognized benchmark for measuring the impact of social and environmental screening," she says. "Since inception to September 2008, the index had a return of 9.98 percent and that clearly outperformed the large cap [Standard and Poor's] 500 [Index] at 9.35 percent."

"So . . . socially responsible investing is not a compromise for investors," she concludes.

The Jantzi Social Index (JSI), the Canadian counterpart to the US Domini Index, emerged in 2000. It offers lower but still encouraging results. From inception to Sept. 30, 2008, the JSI demonstrated an annualized return of 5.93 percent, slightly lower than the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) 60 Capped Index.

On a recent *Moneytalk* interview, Gordon Pape, author of *Sleep Easy Investing* and publisher of *buildingwealth.ca* suggested that 5 percent was a solid return for the average investor over the long term. ❧

## Donations on track

*Looming economic crisis cause for concern by MC Canada*

BY DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada Release  
WINNIPEG

**D**onation income for Mennonite Church Canada is on track with projections for the fiscal year ending Jan. 31, 2009, and comparable to income at this time last year. According to finance director Randy Wiebe, as of Sept. 30, \$1.8 million dollars in donations had been received, while expenses are tracking below budget due to some delays in filling vacant staff positions.

With less than four months of the fiscal year left to go, half of the total donation budget of just over \$3.7 million remains to come in. Although this percentage is not unusual compared to past years, the recent global financial

crisis is causing concern for executive staff members who met recently to discuss how the economy may affect MC Canada's finances and ministries.

"It is difficult to predict the impact that today's financial climate will have on giving to the church," says general secretary Robert J. Suderman. "We want to be good partners in ministry and uphold the commitments to others we have made in faith, but we also want to administer our responsibilities with the prudence required by our circumstances."

On average, congregations were ahead of budget in their giving to Sept. 30, while individual donors as a group were behind, a break in the trend of the past several years.

Wiebe speculates that this could be due to economies that are already slowing down in some regions. As of Sept. 30, income from other sources was also slightly behind projections. Investment income is expected to be down by year's end due to recent and forecasted volatility in financial markets, says Wiebe.

# Community snapshots

PHOTO BY DEBBIE SANDLAND



*A series of three fundraising golf tournaments held this summer in Olds, Coaldale and Tofield, Alta., have raised \$137,000 for the work of Mennonite Central Committee Alberta. All three tournaments were greatly aided by generous donations from sponsors all over the province, including a \$50,000 matching donation from Frank Flaman, an Edmonton area businessman. Pictured, guest speaker and first time golfer Joseph Kiranto of Kenya attempts a putt at the Tofield tournament with the helpful advice of Adam Beriault, slightly less of a novice.*

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



*Rebecca Seiling and her daughter Eden, of Waterloo, Ont., enjoy soup and bread at the Oct. 18 Empty Bowls event, a fundraiser for Mennonite Central Committee's Haitian reforestation program and Kore Pwodiksyon Lokal (KPL, "Support Local Eating" in English), an organization founded by MCC workers that educates Haitians on the value of eating locally grown and processed foods. Josh Steckley of KPL notes that while Haitian-grown sorghum is more nutritious than imported rice, Haitians see it as "animal, slave or peasant food," only to be eaten as a last resort. The fundraiser, held at The Healing Barn outside of Waterloo, raised more than \$8,000 through the sale of local potters' bowls and soup provided by area restaurants.*



PHOTO BY ELMER HEINRICH



*One of the big draws at the Morris, Man., Mennonite Central Committee Relief (MCC) Sale and Auction on Sept. 13 was a large produce tent on the grounds where patrons choose produce like spaghetti squash, corn, beans and much more. The Morris sale, always a success, raised some \$130,000, which is earmarked for various MCC relief projects around the world.*

MCC B.C. PHOTO



PHOTO BY LAWRENCE BASCHAK/CAPTION BY INGRID THIESSEN



*“Let everything that breathes praise the Lord” (Psalm 150:6). The psalmist’s admonition was taken to heart at Grace Mennonite Church, Regina, on Sept. 14. Families were encouraged to bring their pets—cats, dogs, guinea pigs and birds—to join in the service to worship God. A procession of animals and their owners circled around the sanctuary; pictured, young Tannor Giesbrecht keeps a tight grip on the leash of his exuberant dog, Oscar.*

*A delegation of North Korean agriculturalists visited the Fraser Valley Gleaners in September, where they met with Fraser Valley Gleaners manager Carl Goosen, second from left; Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) British Columbia peace and development education program coordinator Jon Nofziger, fourth from left, and MCC B.C. communications writer Angelika Dawson, fifth from left. Their two-week tour of Canada also took them to Manitoba and Ontario, where they looked at potato and vegetable farming practices. The visiting North Koreans are working to find solutions to their country’s food crisis as well as build relationships with MCC.*

# Economic downturn the time to work at poverty reduction

*MCC Ontario disagrees with politicians on poverty reduction postponement*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY  
Eastern Canada Correspondent  
KITCHENER, ONT.

“Economic road bumps no excuse to slow down on poverty reduction,” is the title of a letter to Ontario’s premier.

The letter, from 25in5, a poverty reduction coalition of more than 100 organizations across Ontario, urges Premier Dalton McGuinty “to follow through on his promise to actively and comprehensively address poverty in this province.”

The coalition, which includes Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario, argues for a 25 percent reduction in poverty over the next five years and a 50 percent reduction in a decade.

## /// Briefly noted

### CPJ launches new website and advocacy toolkit

OTTAWA—Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) has launched its newly redesigned website (cpj.ca), an interactive and accessible platform for increasing public justice dialogue and encouraging hopeful citizenship. Exciting new features include a blog with daily postings from policy staff on current justice issues, bookmarking tools and a thorough search engine. Also released is CPJ’s Advocacy Toolkit, an in-depth and comprehensive guide for Canadian citizens on how to be an effective advocate for any cause. Complete with sample press releases and petitions, the toolkit provides detailed instructions on how to be a capable advocate at any level of politics. CPJ staff, members and partner organizations celebrated the release of both of these advocacy resources at a wine and cheese reception on Oct. 9 at the CPJ office in Ottawa.

—Citizens for Public Justice Release

The government had planned a significant attempt at poverty reduction in the next few years, but in light of the current economic downturn in Ontario (worse than in many other provinces), and before the depth of the U.S. economic crisis became apparent, had begun to back track. McGuinty was quoted in the Sept. 22 *Toronto Star* as saying, “Given the state of the economy, it may very well mean that we won’t be able to move as quickly as we would have liked or as we had originally intended. In government, we have to act

responsibly in the same way that our families do. If finances get tight in our homes, families make adjustments, and they focus on their priorities.”

In response, 25in5 challenged the government. “We know public investments can provide a critical booster shot to stimulate economic activity in hard times,” said spokesperson Jacquie Maund. “That’s why we’re calling for a significant down-payment on poverty reduction in the 2009 budget, with larger investments phased-in over the five-year life of the plan.”

MCC Ontario executive director Rick Cober Bauman added in a Sept. 23 letter, “If there are hard budget choices to be made, they should not be made at the expense of the poorest in our society. Too often in good times, little has been done to eradicate poverty. And in hard times, those who are most vulnerable bear the greatest cost.”

## Seniors help feed the hungry

BY HILDA J. BORN  
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Jacob Born and many seniors like him enjoy helping at the Fraser Valley Gleaners plant, where onions, potatoes, broccoli, apples and other fruits and vegetables are dried for hungry people around the world. Produce donated by companies and individuals is washed, peeled and sliced, then placed on metal trays that are wheeled into huge walk-in dryers for overnight dehydration.

Born likes to be there by 8 a.m. to scrape the trays that have been in the dryer overnight. A little salt and dried peas and barley are mixed with the dried produce to make soup. Similarly, tonnes of apples are made into nutritious treats.

Only the manager, Carl Goosen, is paid; all other work is done by volunteers—usually between 40 and 60 a day. Real camaraderie develops as some local seniors come regularly and others from a distance bring their campers and stay in the six RV spaces on the grounds. Local teachers bring their classes to teach the children about helping others.

The soup has been shipped to more than 30 countries around the world. ☘

PHOTO BY HILDA BORN



*Volunteers clean and cut mounds of donated peppers for a nourishing soup mix at the Fraser Valley Gleaners.*

*Meeting Needs Together*



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# Under attack

*Christians take to streets to protest as violence against them continues*

From Ecumenical News International and Mennonite World Conference Releases  
BANGALORE, INDIA

Traffic came to a standstill in central Bangalore on Sept. 25, as thousands of Christians took part in protest rallies against a wave of violence directed against them in eight of India's regional states.

At the end of a rally organized by the Karnataka Christian Federation, participants staged a sit-down protest in front of a statue of Mahatma Gandhi, the campaigner for Indian independence, who was known for his advocacy of nonviolence.

More than 100 churches and Christian institutions are reported to have been attacked, and dozens of Christians have been killed in the violence that broke out following the killing in late August of a Hindu leader, Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati, who had been accused of persecuting Christians for a long time. Although the Indian government has said that a Maoist group is suspected of his killing, Christians are being blamed by Saraswati's supporters, and all Christians and some non-governmental organizations are their targets.

Following an early September meeting of the executive committee of the International Brethren in Christ Association held in Toronto, the regional administrator for South Asia spoke in Kitchener, Ont.

"There have been threats, beatings and persecution for the last 20 years, but the [current] situation is very tense," the regional administrator (who is not named for safety reasons) said. "People have been brutally murdered, hacked to death, women have been gang-raped, and more than 100 churches in all six districts have been burned. Brethren in Christ members have been attacked, but not killed," he reported.

In August, a crowd of up to 4,000 Hindu militants attacked the Brethren in Christ Girls Hostel at Nuagoan. The mob set the

hostel and church ablaze, destroyed its water tank and demolished the campus. Ten policemen who were on guard at the hostel fled when they saw the approaching crowd. Staff, girls and local believers, some of whom were beaten, managed to flee.

The Cuttack-based offices of the Brethren in Christ Church in India were also a target, and several pastors and church planters lost all their belongings when their homes were looted and burned.

"People, including pastors, who are still hiding in the forest have lost everything," the BIC representative told the Kitchener audience. "They have no clothes, no food, and are at risk of snakebites and malaria. They have no medication. It is not yet safe to help them," he said, as anyone offering assistance would be at risk of retaliation.

He believes the current situation is politically motivated. An election is scheduled for next year, and he suggested that the government is "buying votes" by offering rewards to people who leave the Christian faith and return to Hinduism. The government is providing some food for people affected by the August violence, he said, but only for non-Christians.

In the immediate future, the BIC association and Mennonite World Conference (MWC) officials are sending a letter to government officials while BIC Church leaders in India are sending a delegation to the state government, asking it to put pressure on the local government to protect its citizens and to restore peace and harmony. ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF MWC



*Following an attack by Hindu militants, this home, which belonged to a Christian in Orissa, India, was completely destroyed.*

## /// Briefly noted

### **MCC provides relief to Indian flood victims**

BIHAR, INDIA—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is providing \$50,000 to Mennonite Christian Service Fellowship of India to distribute food and other aid to about 18,000 people affected by flooding in the Indian state of Bihar. An estimated three million people have fled their homes in Bihar since mid-August because of flooding along the Kosi River, which runs into India from Nepal. Many displaced people are living in camps until the floodwaters recede. Since Sept. 9, volunteers from India's Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches have been organized to distribute food to about 1,000 displaced families. With financial support from MCC, Mennonite Christian Service Fellowship is planning to distribute nearly a month's supply of rice and lentils to 5,000 families, as well as salt, soap, candles and matches. The majority of people affected by flooding in Bihar are Hindu, and a minority are Muslim. In addition, about 8,000 members of Brethren in Christ churches live in the affected districts.

—Mennonite Central Committee Release

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# Discerning the future

*Canadian Women in Mission task force considers options for the organization in the 21st century*

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent  
WINNIPEG

A group committed to promoting the spiritual growth of women in Mennonite Church Canada congregations and supporting the missional outreach of the denomination has assembled a task force to discern how women connect with each other in 2008.

"We value very much the experience of women meeting together, the fellowship that happens, the caring for one another and the working together in doing service and supporting missions," says Canadian Women in Mission (CWM) president Erna Neufeldt. "It's a very worthwhile endeavour and we've been doing it for a very long time, so we are reluctant to lose that."

CWM held its first conference in Gretna, Man., in 1952. Since then, it has committed itself to promoting spiritual growth; discerning and nurturing women's gifts and skills for leadership and service; building relationships and networks of support; and supporting and strengthening the missional outreach of MC Canada.

It has done this by organizing an annual meeting for women at MC Canada assemblies, facilitating inter-provincial/regional communication and work through its executive and newsletters, and by giving financial support jointly to projects of the broader church.

Neufeldt said that while a CWM enrichment day in Saskatchewan in the 1970s might have drawn 1,200 women from across Canada, today that number would be fewer than 300. The B.C. CWM group closed a year ago, and the Manitoba group

will fold in May.

Neufeldt hopes the task force will be able to discern "where God is showing us new ways of connecting women to each other in the congregation, in the province and nationally."

The eight-member task force is an inter-generational group composed of women

affirmed the need for CWM. "They have done some amazing things in their history," Jack said. "It's an important group to have, but the question is, in what form? That's a hard one to answer."

One of the first things the task force will do is create a questionnaire for women across Canada about how they meet

*I think all organizations need to . . . [look] at how we appeal to the new generations in our churches.*

*(Willard Metzger)*

from all across Canada, including a French-speaking member from Quebec. The task force had its first meeting on Sept. 18 in Winnipeg.

After going over the history of CWM, the task force began discussing whether or not the organization should change its name, how its mission statement can be updated, and what CWM can do to find out what women in MC Canada congregations are looking for when it comes to connecting with one another.

Marguerite Jack of First Mennonite Church in Calgary is a co-chair. She said the initial meeting was very positive, and

together in their churches. The task force will make its final recommendations to CWM within a year-and-a-half.

CWM is a free-standing organization affiliated with MC Canada through its Christian Witness Council. The council's chair, Willard Metzger, describes the group as "a real source of encouragement for our work" and applauds the formation of the task force: "I think all organizations need to do a similar sort of exercise, looking at how we appeal to the new generations in our churches. So I think the revisioning they're doing is a critical step." ❧

PHOTO BY AARON EPP



*The task force appointed by Canadian Women in Mission (CWM) to discern the organization's future gathers at the Mennonite Church Canada offices in Winnipeg on Sept. 18. Pictured from left to right: Justina Heese (Manitoba), Irene Bartel (Saskatchewan), Ruby Harder (CWM rep), Marguerite Jack (Alberta), Waltrude Gortzen (B.C.), Liz Koop (Ontario), and Mylene Melançon (Quebec). Missing from the picture is Pamela Klassen (Ontario), member-at-large.*



# Much to celebrate

*Camps with Meaning to celebrate summer ministry and plan for the future*

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent  
WINNIPEG

Camps with Meaning is celebrating the completion of a successful summer program with three celebration banquets this fall. Although there was a slight drop in the overall number of campers, Bob Wiebe, the director of Mennonite Church Manitoba's camping ministries believes there is much to celebrate:

- Camp Moose Lake had its highest ever

registration;

- Camp Assiniboia reached a five-year high; and
- The day camp program and Adults with Disabilities camp reached attendance records.

Registration at the three camps indicated that 40 percent of campers were from MC Manitoba and other Mennonite congregations, 35 percent were from a variety of other church backgrounds and 25 percent identified no church connection.

"We had several Muslim campers this summer and they appreciated being given a substitute when pork was on the menu," Wiebe noted. "A couple of campers wrote in their final comments that Christianity was not their religion, but they appreciated the opportunity to learn about it."

The Bible program encouraged campers to follow the Prince of Peace and live in peaceful ways at both personal and broader levels. One camp wrote a letter to the Prime Minister expressing concerns about

Canada's militarism.

The Passion Play, a re-enactment of Christ's journey to the cross, the grave and resurrection, was presented every Thursday.

"A revealing moment came one week when campers were asked to take turns reading the gospel passion account aloud," Wiebe said. "It became clear that they were not at all familiar with the story." He also noted from the end-of-week evaluations, "that a number of campers had learned to pray."

Last February, a group spent a week-end thinking about the future of Camps with Meaning. The MC Manitoba board studied the ideas that came out of that weekend and have called the group to engage in the next round of planning in early November.

"We are planning to pray and think about what our programs and facilities would look like if we put faith and creation care at the forefront," said Wiebe. ☸

## Staff changes made at Camp Assiniboia

HEADINGLY, MAN.—Several important changes in the Camp Assiniboia staff team have taken place in the past several months. Voluntary service workers Patrick Herbst and Mathias Ruff returned to Germany in July after a 12-month stay. Chrissy Friesen completed her four-month term as seasonal horsemanship coordinator. Food services assistant Dolores Friesen completed her

second one-year voluntary service term and moved on to other ventures. The position of maintenance coordinator has been discontinued; Doug Deline, who served faithfully in that role for almost eight years, will be leaving in November. Two general assistant positions have been created at the camp; these will be multi-tasking roles with flexible job descriptions. Josiah Brubacher will fill one of the roles and Carla Bergen-Joyce, the other. They have the skills to look after the horses, so a winter horse program will be available for guest groups.

—MC Manitoba Camping Ministries Release

PHOTO BY ERIC UNGER

**Erwin Kroeker** was installed as the intentional interim pastor of Glenlea (Man.) Mennonite Church at a special service on Sept. 14. He is pictured with his wife Carol. The service was led by Henry Kliever, director of Mennonite Church Manitoba's Leadership Ministries. Kroeker will serve a term of one year as the congregations transitions to new leadership. He replaces retiring pastors Del Epp and Ernie Wiens, who served the church for about two decades.



# Refugees past helping refugees present

*Toronto Mennonite New Life Centre celebrates quarter-century of assisting refugees*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
TORONTO

**T**oronto Mennonite New Life Centre celebrated its 25th anniversary on Sept. 21 with a joint worship service with Toronto United Mennonite Church and the Toronto Mennonite New Life Church, with which it shares a building. The service included Scripture readings in Spanish,

English and Mandarin. An afternoon party featured speeches; song; dance; drama; a karaoke time featuring English, Chinese and Spanish songs; and salsa dancing.

The centre came into being in 1983 as the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, the Ontario United Mennonite Conference

and Toronto United Mennonite remembered their roots as refugees coming to Canada in the 19th and 20th centuries, fleeing political, religious and economic persecution in the Soviet Union. Leaders like Darrell Fast and Donovan Smucker noted that Canadian Mennonites had a fixation on southeast Asian refugees at the time, while the plight of a huge number of Hispanic immigrants and refugees was going unaddressed.

Studies by Ernest Harder and Adolfo Puricelli showed that in the early 1980s there were upwards of 100,000 Hispanics from South America living in Toronto, along with some Spanish-speaking Moroccans. This was before the influx of refugees in the mid-to late 1980s from El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala.

Puricelli and his wife Betty Kennedy—Argentinean pastors, workers with the United Bible Societies and grounded in Anabaptist and liberation theology—were invited to become the first directors of the centre in 1983. They served until 2006, overseeing the development of the Spanish-speaking Mennonite New Life Church, a building project they shared with Toronto United Mennonite and New Life Church, and a transition to a broader ministry to non-Hispanic refugees.

In September 2006, Tanya Chute-Molina was named executive director. A review of the centre's vision in 2007 concluded that it was "important and necessary to work together with the newcomer community to identify and address concerns related to immigration and social policies implemented by the government. In other words, New Life Centre clients should be active participants in elaborating policy proposals and working for social change."

Jorge Silvestri, coordinator of the language instruction program, says, "At the end of the day, our objective is to fully integrate newcomers, so that they feel included in a diverse society."

Miriam Wiebe, a member of the centre's board of directors, affirms "the human warmth extended to newcomers at the New Life Centre. Here," she notes, "people do not become numbers or statistics." ❧

*Includes excerpts from a report translated by Jessica Farias.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF TORONTO MENNONITE NEW LIFE CENTRE



*Teresa Wiens, left, Zi Qiang Ma and Jin Lian Sun sing "One Voice" during 25th anniversary celebrations for the Toronto Mennonite New Life Centre on Sept. 21.*

## /// Briefly noted

### 'Horse and buggy' research team assembles

ST. JACOBS, ONT.—An eight-person research team met in early September in preparation for an extensive oral history project among the so-called "horse and buggy" Mennonites that include 4,000 Old Order Mennonites in Ontario and some 60,000 Old Colony Mennonites (originally from Manitoba and Saskatchewan) in various parts of Central and South America. The international team, organized by Royden Loewen, Chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, consists of graduate and post-graduate students in a diversity of fields. Over the next three years, the students will disperse throughout the Americas, asking these "horse and buggy" Mennonites how they have confronted and adjusted to pressures of modern life in Ontario, northern and southern Mexico, Belize, Bolivia, East Paraguay and Argentina. The main interest is how these Mennonites have resisted and declined the wider world's middle-class values of upward mobility, higher education, technology and nationalism. The students will reassemble in 2011 at the University of Winnipeg for an international history conference entitled, "Horse and Buggy Mennonites and the Promise of Anti-Modernity." The final product of the project will be several case studies, as well as an overarching history of Canadian and Canadian-descendent "horse and buggy" Mennonites.

—University of Winnipeg Release

# Preparing for Paraguay

BY DAVE ROGALSKY  
Eastern Canada Correspondent  
KITCHENER, ONT.

Youths from MC Eastern Canada are preparing to raise \$90,000 to fund their trip to Paraguay for the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly in Asuncion next summer.

Meeting for the first time on Sept. 21, the group agreed that all funding will be pooled. Plans were immediately implemented to publish and sell a cookbook of the youths' favourite recipes (mac and cheese is expected to dominate), sell Zehr's grocery gift cards (earning the group 5 percent of each card's value), and to have fundraising dinners.

Of the 35 youths and 10 adult sponsors making the trip, two of the adults were youths

themselves at the Zimbabwe 2003 MWC assembly and seven of the leaders are lay people using their holidays for this ministry.

Before the assembly begins, the youths will serve at Kilometre 81, a Mennonite Central Committee-supported leprosy hospital in eastern Paraguay, for five days, painting, doing laundry and serving in the kitchen.

After the assembly, they will travel to Iguazu Falls; Curitiba, Brazil, home of a large Mennonite community; and Rio de Janeiro, from where they will fly home.

The youths are anxious about the food they will eat while away, time away from home and animals along the way, but are excited about language studies, seeing Anabaptists from around the world, experiencing a different culture's worship, and the opportunity to serve.

To contribute to the fund, purchase Zehr's cards or cookbooks, e-mail Anne Campion at [acampion@sympatico.ca](mailto:acampion@sympatico.ca). ☼

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE CAMPION



*Thirty-four MC Eastern Canada youths and 10 sponsors are fundraising for their trip to Paraguay next summer.*

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# Shalom as God intends

*Non-natives called to humbleness and repentance for their indebtedness to aboriginal North Americans*

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada Release  
CLINTON, OKLA.

This is a pivotal moment in Native American history, according to Adrian Jacobs, speaker at this summer's native assembly in Clinton, Okla. Jacobs, a Canadian Six Nations pastor from southwestern Ontario who was invited to the event by Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry, called on aboriginals to take action in God's salvation narrative.

Assembly participants examined Philippians 2:1-11 and focused on unity and service during the four-day event in Clinton that was hosted by Cheyenne and Arapaho Mennonite churches.

Bringing justice and restoration to indigenous people will move all humanity towards the shalom that God intends—a realm where all will be at peace with God, with each other and with the earth, Jacobs said. He encouraged listeners to “live unafraid of [your] hearts and to also live in truth and graciousness with non-native people.”

In turn, he called on non-native people and governments to assume an attitude of humility and repentance, as they will never

be able to repay all that is owed to native communities.

Jacobs spoke from his own experience. He works half-time for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario, relating to Mennonite churches and working in the Grand River Valley on issues surrounding Six Nations land disputes with the Canadian government. He is also involved with the My People International organization.

Jacobs used a metaphor of “singing the stories of God in our native tongues,” the stories of all nations and peoples of the earth. During the assembly, several aboriginal languages were heard. Canadian First Nations people sang praises to God in Ojibway and Kwakuit.

Other speakers at the event included Zoughbi Zoughbi, a Palestinian peace activist and director of the Wi'am Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center in Bethlehem; Anita Keith, a Mohawk educator and author and administrator for the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies; and Iris de León-Hartshorn, Mennonite Church USA's minister of intercultural relations.

A Canadian group of 30 people, led by MC Canada Native Ministry co-directors Edith and Neill von Gunten, came from several communities in Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia and southern Ontario. Harley Eagle and Norman Meade from the MCC's

Aboriginal Neighbours programs were among those who served as workshop leaders.

After the event drew to a close, pastor Steve Heinrichs of Granisle, B.C., wrote: “I loved my experience. Being in that diverse mix of people, worshipping, eating, praying and listening together, brought peace to my heart.”

Walter Wiebe of Morden, Man., was also moved by the experience. “As one from a

PHOTO BY EDITH VON GUNTEN



*Emily Collins of Riverton, Man., second from left, and MC Canada Native Ministry co-director Neill von Gunten, second from right, present a dream catcher that Collins crafted to Betty and Lawrence Hart, left and right, respectively, the hosts of this year's native assembly in Clinton, Okla. Lawrence Hart is pastor of Koinonia Mennonite Church in Clinton.*

non-aboriginal background, I was humbled by the gracious reception and hospitality I experienced at [the] native assembly,” he said. “I couldn't help but wonder, what if the aboriginal people treated me like they had been treated? Instead, I felt a sense of love, acceptance and a desire for unity.”

The native assembly is held every other year. It is co-sponsored by MC Canada Native Ministry and Native Mennonite Ministries, a partnering organization of Mennonite Church USA. Event locations alternate between Canada and the U.S. ✎

*MC USA Mennonite Mission Network staff also contributed to this article.*

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GOD AT WORK IN US

# Pacifism in action

*Neill von Gunten followed in his father's footsteps, refusing to fight when called to go to war*

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada Release  
WINNIPEG

For Neill von Gunten, pacifism is not passive. The co-director of Mennonite Church Canada's Native Ministry knows from personal experience that standing for peace demands action.

Von Gunten, who grew up in Berne, Ind., first took a stand for peace when he was 18 and chose to enter the conscientious objector (CO) program, instead of fighting in the Vietnam War. He was harassed for his choice and called names, he recalls. In a sense, he was following in his father's footsteps, who was classified militarily as a 1AO—someone who refused to carry a weapon.

Two years later, von Gunten and his wife Edith, currently the other co-director of Native Ministry, moved to a Chicago ghetto to participate in a Mennonite Voluntary Service program. It was there, serving together at Woodlawn Mennonite Church, that the couple became involved with Martin Luther King and the American civil rights movement.

Von Gunten, who participated in several peaceful protests with King, speaks highly of the man's commitment to pacifism. "When he was hit in the head with a rock, he would say, 'We need to love our brothers and sisters because they don't know what they're doing.' . . . I often wondered what my own response would be if I were attacked personally."

He found out during an anti-war demonstration in downtown Chicago. "I was walking with another fellow carrying a sign that said 'Peace is the Answer,'" he recalls.



Von Gunten

"These men jumped on us. Neither one of us fought back. I had my glasses smashed. I got punched and then the police rushed in and grabbed the men. But I refused to fight back. That was my response."

He recalls wondering "what kind of background [his attackers] had and how they were misled."

During his time in Chicago, von Gunten saw cars turned upside down and set on fire. He was the target of rocks and cherry bombs, and remembers riding on a city bus with his black friends as rocks crashed through windows.

The von Guntens observe that many in the church today—particularly young adults—have not had the same opportunities to engage in conscientious objection the way he did. He worries that the younger generation of Mennonites knows the talk, but wonders how many would be able to sustain their words with action if push came to shove. "I've felt the fear and I've seen the anger and the hatred that people have in their hearts toward other cultures. And that hurts," he says.

Von Gunten's commitment to peace and to people—he and his wife have served in Manitoba aboriginal communities for 40 years—seems to be a part of his family heritage. He remembers his grandparents feeding the men who would hang out on the railroad tracks. His grandfather also helped where he could. "It didn't matter about race or status in society," he says. "In that sense, they were good models for me, influencing how I began to look at others."

Von Gunten says that leading by experience is one of the better ways to teach non-violent responses. The other way is to tell stories and talk about it. "What would Jesus do? Would you expect him to go in with guns a-blazing?" he asks, noting that, "he was hung on the cross to die and he didn't fight back. He responded peacefully."

Even when Jesus was angry, Von Gunten points out, he was not violent. "He overturned tables in the temple when he was angry with those who were selling goods there," he says, "but he did not harm anyone."

"I have never seen violence resolve a conflict," he concludes. "It only escalates conflict." ❧

OBITUARY

## Standing against the Vietnam War

*Orville L. Voth, 1924–2008*

Bethel College Release  
NORTH NEWTON, KAN.

Bethel College's eighth president, Orville L. Voth, Hesston, died Sept. 22 at St. Francis' Harry Hynes Memorial Hospice in Wichita, Kan., following a stroke. He was 84.



Voth

Voth was born Jan. 4, 1924, in Rosthern, Sask. The son of John J. and Mariecha Voth, he grew up as a Bethel College "campus kid," where his father was on the Bethel faculty, teaching Bible and industrial arts from 1925-46.

In 1945, Voth married Helen M. Voran. He graduated from Bethel in 1948 and continued his education at Oklahoma State University and Pennsylvania State University.

Voth began his teaching career at Kansas Wesleyan University in Salina. He served as interim academic dean at Bethel College and then as president from 1967-71.

James Juhnke, professor of history during Voth's tenure at Bethel, recalls that, on Nov. 11, 1966, when Voth was academic dean, he joined the "Repentance Walk" from the campus to the North Newton post office, an early protest against the Vietnam War organized by the college Peace Club. "That event divided the campus," Juhnke says. "It was especially dramatic for a top administrator to participate because [college president] Vernon Neufeld had been critical of the plans for the Repentance Walk. I took it as an expression of Orville's commitment to the Mennonite peace witness."

In addition to his wife, Helen, Voth is survived by four daughters: Judy Fisk of Salina, Marian Robinson of Newton, Kathryn McChesney Voth of Hesston, Kan., and Peggy Voth of Lawrence, Kan.; six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. ❧

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**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](http://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.

### 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 Positions: Driver/Shipper/Receiver at Abby East Thrift Shop located in Abbotsford, BC.

This is a full-time salaried position. Required to drive the thrift shop's one ton vehicle for pick ups and deliveries, must be able to lift and move heavy objects safely, possess good customer service skills, and ability to multi-task are required. Satisfactory driver's abstract and criminal record check required. Assistant Manager, Vancouver Thrift Shop. This is a part-time (.6 FTE) position located in East Vancouver. This position includes assisting customers, organizing displays including furniture, strong interpersonal, communication and computer skills. Swamper, Vancouver Thrift Shop. This is a part-time (.4 FTE) position located in East Vancouver. Responsible for assisting truck driver in all aspects of loading and unloading furniture, appliances and other items. Must be able to lift and move heavy objects safely. Must be proficient in English. Interim Assistant Manager, Clothing Etc. Thrift Shop This is a full-time interim position working in the receiving and sorting area. Ability to lift and move heavy objects is required. Strong organizational skills and ability to relate well to volunteers and customers. Responsible for the flow of donated items through the sorting and pricing process and onto the sales floor.

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

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MCC BC Box 2038, 31414 Marshall Rd., Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 3T8  
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Interviews will continue until qualified candidates are selected. All applicants are appreciated, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

## ARTBEAT

## Marpeck for the masses

*New book on Anabaptist pioneer meant for lay audience*

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent  
WINNIPEG

Standing in a bookstore in front of rows of books with titles that included *God is Not Great*, two Mennonite scholars launched a book about a 16th century leader who believed the exact opposite.

*Marpeck: A Life of Dissent and Conformity* explores the life of early Anabaptist leader Pilgrim Marpeck. The book was researched and written over the course of five years by Walter Klaassen and William Klassen, who released the book with a reading at a local McNally Robinson bookstore last month.

"Marpeck was a humane man with little of the hostile edge that characterized many of the religious leaders of his time," Klaassen said, adding that Marpeck's "quiet legacy" lives on today. That legacy can be described as "quiet" because Marpeck wrote anonymously and, as a result, most of his writing was virtually unknown until the 1920s.

Pilgrim Marpeck was an engineer who was elected mayor of Rattenberg, Austria, at about age 20. He eventually left his position of power and influence to become an Anabaptist and a man on the run.

Today, he is known for being one of the first to call for freedom of religion and separation of church and state. He advocated and practised the equality of women in the church and affirmed the world he lived in. He did not reject the wealthy, who he knew to also be a part of the kingdom of God.

While Marpeck has been the subject of other biographies, they have been written strictly for scholars. Klassen, who also worked with his co-author on 1978's *The Writings of Pilgrim Marpeck*, said the two scholars "felt strongly the need to introduce this great Christian not only

to Mennonites, but to the entire world," and so they aimed the book at lay readers with a general interest in history and the Reformation.

The book is significant because it will serve to contextualize an important author, said Karl Koop, associate professor of history and theology at Canadian Mennonite University. "One can expect that this will be a very good, very definitive biography," he added. ☘

*Walter Klaassen and William Klassen's new book explores the life of Pilgrim Marpeck, a 16th century engineer who left his position of power and influence to become an Anabaptist.*

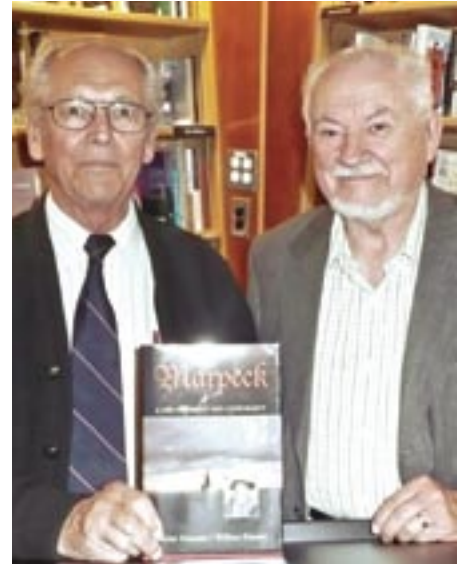


PHOTO BY AARON EPP



PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

**The *Na sonje* (Creole for "We will remember") theatre troupe, sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee and the Canadian International Development Agency, performed *Three Innocents and a Spirit* in Kitchener, Ont., on Oct.**

**9. The play portrayed the historical intertwining of European, African and Caribbean influences in Haiti. The performance was also a fundraiser for the creation of an "historical therapy village" on the Caribbean island, where, by experiencing history, people of all races can discover their "root selves." It was also a call to Canadians to see that their wealth is to some extent stolen from the security of the Haitians when they consume goods made there or when they travel to the Dominican Republic, which shares the island with Haiti.**

## CANADIAN WOMEN IN MISSION

—A place to belong—

WOMEN WALKING  
TOGETHER IN FAITH

## A really great Christmas secret

BY ANGELIKA DAWSON

It's not often that I'm able to stop all conversation in a room. But that's exactly what happened to me earlier this year. While travelling with colleagues, we started talking about shopping and I expressed my passion for thrift shops.

"I even buy my Christmas presents there," I said.

The silence that followed wasn't the kind of silence that indicated agreement. There were no satisfied smiles or encouraging nods. It was the kind of silence that indicated they had to be really careful what they'd say next.

PHOTO BY KAREN HEISLER



*The author—wearing her “Another thrift shopper for peace” T-shirt—gathers items at the MCC Abby East Thrift Shop in Abbotsford, B.C., that she thinks would make wonderful Christmas gifts.*

I've purchased at a retail store, I don't advertise that. But when I give a thrift-shop gift, I can hardly wait for the person to open it, so I can say where I got it. That's because the response is always the same: “No way!” followed by a look that says, “I'm impressed.” It's like sharing a really great secret.

To say that I love thrift shopping is an understatement. My dream job would be to be a thrift-shop critic: travel the country, visit thrift shops (and shop, of course), then write a column. My son suggested I apply for a Canada Arts Council Grant.

No one wanted to offend me, even if I was an idiot.

“Really?” one brave soul stuttered. “Do you tell people that?”

Needless to say, I was surprised, and not just by the fact I had suddenly become the centre of attention. I was surprised because I was in a van full of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) colleagues who, I would have thought, would share my passion for year-round, all-occasion thrift shopping. Don't we read our own PR?

It was an interesting question, though. Because the fact is, when I give a gift that

I don't mind regular shopping, but it doesn't give me the same thrill. I can only compare thrift-shopping to childbirth: anticipating that beautiful baby, the adrenalin rush when you get to hold it and realize it's yours—it's indescribable. Only thrift shopping is better because there's no pain involved. And it's less messy. Plus, if you change your mind about your purchase, you can always donate it back and find something new. You can't do that with your kids!

What thrift shopping really needs is an image makeover. People seem to think that thrift shops are simply filled with junk for “poor” people to buy because they have no other options. That's what really stopped the conversation in the van: Why would I buy other people's junk and give it as a gift?

But thrift shops are not junk shops, and all kinds of people shop there. The thing is, thrift shopping is different than regular shopping. Thrift shopping requires a sense of adventure and a willingness to wait. You may go in looking for a sweater and not find one; but you might come out with a great pair of jeans or that novel you're just dying to read.

I don't thrift shop because I have to; I consciously choose to do so. Thrift shopping is an active expression of my faith in God. It makes a statement against a consumer-driven, instant-gratification, throw-away society. It supports volunteerism, since most thrift shops are largely staffed by volunteers. It supports charitable work—often of faith-based organizations—and is way more fun than just writing a cheque. It shows care for God's creation because both your purchases and your donations stay out of the neighbourhood landfill.

And if all those reasons aren't good enough, you also save money. I find great stuff and pay way less than I would at a retail store. I have found clothing, shoes, CDs, books and more. My best purchase—so far—is my nearly new, art-deco-style couch that I got for \$250. If I had bought it new, it would have cost me four times that or more. Do I tell people where I got it? You bet I do.

By the time you read this, Christmas advertising will have begun. At least one advertiser will say something like, “Choose a gift that says [insert sentiment here: you love her, you care, you're important to me . . . or whatever].” But why not choose a thrift-shop gift that says, “I love you so much that I sought out the perfect gift and found it at a place that enabled me to express my faith in God, to support volunteers, the environment and charity—and I saved a tonne of money”?

Now, that should leave them speechless. ☺

*Angelika Dawson is an avid thrift shopper and works as a communications writer for Mennonite Central Committee B.C.*





# w i n d o w

A M B S

Congregation and classroom

## Bridging the gap

**"F**or a long time I have noticed the kind of community that develops when a group studies Scripture together," Mary Schertz, professor of New Testament, says.

So Mary has been testing this process recently with pastors—in addition to students. Through the AMBS Engaging Pastors program, professors and pastors come together for ongoing collaboration, not just now-and-then encounters. For Mary, Engaging Pastors has meant engaging the Bible.

The contemplative study she and the pastors do together is "studying the Scripture as though one is really hungry for it, as though it meets a desperation in us—and it does. It changes us and helps us grow in Christ," Mary says.

Collaboration like this is at the heart of Engaging Pastors, which involves faculty with pastors and conference ministers across North America. Interactions among these groups happen from time to time, but Engaging Pastors gives more structure to bridging what can be a gap between classroom and congregation. The goal is to support and nourish pastors, to expand our understanding of pastoral ministry and so to strengthen the church. (See more on pages 2–3.)

Daniel Schipani, professor of pastoral care and counseling, also met with a group of pastors over several months. He wanted to test a model of pastoral ministry he has developed, and Engaging Pastors provided a framework to do this with experienced pastors. "Pastors are doing fresh things in the congregation," and keeping in touch with them helps AMBS prepare new pastors, Daniel explains.

Steve Schweitzer, assistant professor of Old Testament, participated in the Listening Project of Engaging Pastors. This took him to two different congregations for conversations with pastors, members and community representatives. "I could learn more than if I showed up on a Sunday morning to preach," Steve concludes.

Steve also worked with his pastor in a course revi-

sion project and then invited his pastor to teach with him. "By taking something I was passionate about and making sure it was relevant to people going into ministry, I saw new connections and insights I might not have had otherwise," Steve says.

For both the pastors and professors, the unhurried pace and the retreat settings are affirming and renewing. However, the benefits go beyond this. "The things we do in preparing people to be missional must be informed by the variety of congregations in the church and the variety of leadership gifts needed," Rebecca Slough, academic dean, says. Engaging Pastors helps the faculty better know the church for which we are preparing leaders, she adds. "We are being enriched by very wise and committed people." ●

Fall 2008  
Volume 19 Issue 1

- 2 **Participants reflect breadth of the church**
- 3 **Projects support pastors, foster collaboration**
- 4 **President's Window  
Panorama**



**Mary Schertz opens a study group session that focuses on the theme of release in Luke. Tyler Hartford, member of the pastoral team of Pleasant View Mennonite Church, is one of the participants.**

## Pastors, professors, conference ministers Participants reflect breadth of the church

**A** first-year pastor from a Canadian congregation ... a conference minister from the west coast ... a Hmong congregation in the south ... the pastoral team of a city congregation ... a cluster of pastors from different denominations in a region ... Hispanic pastors in a Dallas, Texas, class. All of these have become partners with AMBS professors through Engaging Pastors.

The program includes ten components that give pastors and professors different ways to learn from each other. Now four years into a five-year plan, Engaging Pastors has a significant record both in the variety and in the number of participants. (See page 3.)

The program brings pastors to campus and professors to congregations; it brings pastors and professors together both in groups and in pairs. It has reached congregations in rural and urban settings of Canada

and the U.S. The directors are taking steps to assure that diversity of racial and ethnic pastors and congregations is included. Involvement has ranged from people who are very new to ministry to those who have a lifetime of learning to share.

Nina Bartelt Lanctot, assistant director, said, "We are more able to keep the variety of pastors and contexts of the church in our minds. Each congregation has a unique culture—a mix of character, gifts and stressors. Engaging Pastors is helping us experience more of this first-hand."

"These encounters have given us a heightened awareness of how important it is to be in conversation with people in ministry," Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, director, said. "The program allows a wider range of opportunities for faculty to get into ministry settings than they would otherwise have."

Participants for the final summative conference in



Mary E. Klassen

**José Elizalde, pastor from Goshen, Ind., and David Bergen, representing Mennonite Church Canada, serve on the Engaging Pastors Oversight Committee, along with Cyneatha Millsaps, pastor in Markham, Ill.; and Arthur Paul Boers, Nelson Kraybill, Mary Schertz and Rebecca Slough from AMBS. Staff for the program are Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, associate dean for leadership education, and Nina Bartelt Lanctot, assistant director of Engaging Pastors.**

December 2009 will include pastors and conference ministers who have experienced the program as well as ministry educators and denominational leaders in MC Canada and MC USA.

"We want to see if our

findings resonate with conference ministers, pastors and people working with leadership in the church," Jewel said. ●

## Engaging Pastors projects

- Clarifying the Call
- Pastor-Faculty Colloquy
- Pastor-Faculty Study Group
- Pastor Sabbatical
- Listening Project
- Seminary Course Revision
- Seminario Bíblico Anabautista
- Pastoral Habits Research Project
- Connections with conference and denominational leaders
- Summative Conference

For descriptions of these projects, see [www.ambs.edu/engagingpastors](http://www.ambs.edu/engagingpastors).



Mark Shephard, Shephard Imageworks

**This view of the 2005–06 Pastor-Faculty Colloquy shows the mix of pastors and faculty who participate (clockwise from center front): Carolyn and Keith Collins, pastors of the Church of the Overcomer, Ridley Park, Pa.; Rebecca Slough, AMBS faculty; Samuel Lopez, overseer of the Spanish Mennonite Council in New Holland, Pa.; Mag Richer Smith and Bob Smith, pastors of First Mennonite Church, Iowa City, Iowa; Jacob Elias, AMBS faculty; and Doug Luginbill, pastor of Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan.**

## Projects support pastors, foster collaboration

**E**ngaging Pastors is a five-year program that makes pastors and professors into colleagues as they learn from and teach each other. This program extends to pastors, conference ministers and congregations across North America.

According to its mission, "Engaging Pastors will transform seminary-church connections through sustained interaction between professors and pastors. Our learnings will feed into our formation of pastors and serve as a primary vehicle for AMBS strategic planning even as we support the ecology of ministry."

Began in 2005, the program will conclude in December 2009. It is funded by a grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc., whose goal was to help seminaries strengthen relationships with their sponsoring churches. ●

## Engaging Pastors by the numbers

**202** participants have been involved **264** times (some people have participated in more than one project). This does not count congregations or AMBS professors.

**33** from Canada, **1** from Japan, **168** from the U.S.

**17** professors (every member of the AMBS teaching faculty)

**23** conferences (Conference ministers for all conferences have participated, along with pastors and congregations in these conferences.)

**7** congregations in **5** denominations other than Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA



Arthur Paul Boers, (left) associate professor of pastoral theology, is a facilitator for the Pastor-Faculty Colloquies, along with David Wood, (right), pastor of First Baptist Church in Gardiner, Maine.

Mary E. Klassen



In January, seven pastors were at AMBS in the Pastor Sabbatical program of Engaging Pastors: Margaret and Gary Peters, Hanley (Sask.) Mennonite Church; Henry Krause, Langley (B.C.) Mennonite Church; Hugo and Doreen Neufeld, Trinity Mennonite Church, Calgary, Alb.; and Roy and Loretta Kaufman, Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Mary E. Klassen

## Invitation to comment on AMBS

AMBS will have a comprehensive evaluation of our programs Feb. 16–18, 2009, by a team representing The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. AMBS has been accredited by the Commission since 1974. Its accreditation is at the Master's degree level.

AMBS has been engaged in a process of self study over the last year and a half. The evaluation team will visit AMBS to gather evidence that the self study is thorough and accurate. The team will then make a recommendation regarding continuing accreditation to the Commission for final action.

You are invited to submit comments regarding AMBS to:

**Public Comment on Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary  
The Higher Learning Commission  
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400  
Chicago, IL 60602**

Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. Written, signed comments must be received by January 15, 2009. Comments should include the name, address and telephone number of the person providing the comments.

## President's Window

**A** sidewalk at AMBS bears testimony to half a century of links between the seminary and the church. "July 25–Aug. 10 1959 / Teen-Age Work Camp," an inscription reads. The teenagers who laid that sidewalk now must be retirement age! How many became leaders in the church? How many became visionaries for Christian witness in business, agriculture, education or other vocations?

When I started seminary thirty years ago, I was sure I did not want to become a pastor. But I did internships where I encountered exciting models of ministry and had inspiring mentors. I found so much joy in connecting classroom learning to the mission of the church that I accepted a call to ordination soon after seminary.

Linking seminary edu-



cation with practical ministry in the church and the world is like connecting to both poles of a battery. The church needs leaders with broad theoretical knowledge of biblical studies, ethics, theology, church history, counseling and other disciplines. But when students immersed in these studies also do internships in congregations or other practical contexts, high-voltage learning happens.

It can feel daunting for new seminary students to think of assuming the spiritual and moral responsibility for leadership in the church. But

AMBS faculty members have lifelong experience in congregational leadership, service assignments, peace witness and mission work. With the Engaging Pastors project, teachers at AMBS have collaborated with pastors to ground curriculum in practical realities of ministry in the church and the world.

That connection between theory and practice, between theology and ministry, is the most transforming part of education at AMBS. Whether addressing issues of racism (see photo below) or helping congregations understand their own vocation, this generation of seminary students will leave an imprint on the church and world, to the glory of God.

— J. Nelson Kraybill



AMBS helped to coordinate Community Solidarity Day on September 13, an effort to demonstrate a commitment to peace and justice in Elkhart following racially-motivated incidents in spring. A two-mile walk began on the campus of AMBS and ended in downtown Elkhart with a program.

"Participation in this event helped students and the seminary as an institution because it was an opportunity to live our theology out loud and collectively," Sarah Thompson, AMBS student on the planning committee, said. "It was an opportunity to be brave, to take risks for peace and justice, to organize.

## Alumni News

**Steve Ratzlaff** (Master of Divinity 1998) is author of *7 Steps to End War and Save the Planet*, published by Xlibris.com.

**Krista Dutt** (Master of Divinity 2002) is national program director of DOOR (Discovering Opportunities or Outreach and Reflection).

**Craig Oury** (Master of Divinity 2005) was ordained at Mount Zion Menonite Church, Boonsboro, Md., on Sept. 21.

**Troy Osborne** (Master of Arts: Theological Studies 1998) is assistant professor of history at Bluffton University.

**James Horsch** (Bachelor of Divinity 1966) is chair of the committee on the Uniform Series adult Bible study materials.

**Dorothy Jean Weaver** (Master of Divinity 1977) co-lead a work group to Nazareth and Bethlehem with a program of Virginia Mennonite Missions.

### Fall 2008 Volume 19 Issue 1

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

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen

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

Mary E. Klassen



Associated  
Mennonite  
Biblical  
Seminary

3003 Benham Avenue  
Elkhart, IN 46517-1999  
574 295-3726  
[www.ams.edu](http://www.ams.edu)

**Schools directory**

**BETHANY COLLEGE**  
www.bethany.sk.ca  
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CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY PHOTO BY JOHN LONGHURST



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**John and Katie Penner, centre, are flanked by Canadian Mennonite University students Jessica Dyck of Milverton, Ont., Terrell Wiebe of Leamington, Ont., Jeff Wiehler of Calgary, Alta., and Janna Bryce of Strathclair, Man., following the announcement that the Penners had given a \$1 million endowment to the CMU library for books and other resources. John Penner recalled being told in the 1960s by a professor at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, one of CMU's predecessor colleges, that it would be nice to have more money to buy more books for the library. "It may have taken me a while [to make the donation], but I have a good memory," he said. "Our prayer and wish is that this gift will be of benefit to faculty and students at CMU."**

**Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools**  
www.wmes.ca  
**Middle School at Bedson**  
250 Bedson St., Winnipeg, MB, R3K 1R7 Ph:885-1032  
26 Agassiz Dr., Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2K7 Ph:261-9637  
"Providing quality Christ-centred education..."

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Dec. 2-6:** Ten Thousand Villages sale, at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

**Dec. 6-7:** Advent Vespers with Abendmusik Choir at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford 8 p.m. (6) and Knox United Church, Vancouver, 8 p.m. (7). Donations to Menno Simons Centre.

### Saskatchewan

**Nov. 26:** MEDAffinity breakfast, at the Saskatoon Club, at 7:30 a.m.

**Nov. 27:** Ten Thousand Villages sale at Covenant Church, Norquay.

**Nov. 28, 29:** RJC's Christmas presentation of *Scrooge*; 7:30 each evening.

**Nov. 29:** Ten Thousand Villages sales at Grace United Church, Weyburn, and in Macklin.

**Dec. 2:** Ten Thousand Villages sale at Bethany College, Hepburn.

**Dec. 3:** Ten Thousand Villages sale at RJC.

**Dec. 6, 13:** Buncha Guys concerts; at

Knox United Church, Saskatoon (6), and at Shekinah Retreat Centre, at 7:30 p.m. (13).

**Dec. 12:** RJC chorale performance at Knox United Church, Saskatoon. (Note: Date changed from Dec. 14.)

**Dec. 19:** RJC Christmas concert, at RJC.  
**Jan. 10, 2009:** MCC Saskatchewan gathering for "New wine: New wineskins: Reshaping MCC for the 21st century," at Cornerstone Church, Saskatoon, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2009:** Senior high youth retreat.

**Feb. 27-28, 2009:** MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions, at North Star Mennonite Church, Drake.

### Manitoba

**Nov. 29:** North Kildonan Mennonite Church Quartet's annual Advent concert and introduction of its new CD, *Near to the Heart of God*, at North Kildonan Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 29, 30:** Faith and Life choirs Advent concerts; at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg at 7

p.m. (29), and at Winkler Berghaler Mennonite Church at 3 p.m. (30).

**Nov. 30:** First Mennonite Church and O. Koshetz choirs perform "Ceremony of the Carols," at First Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.

**Dec. 18, 19:** MCI Christmas concerts, Greta; 7:30 p.m. (18), 1:30 p.m. (19).

**Jan. 3, 2009:** Westgate 50th anniversary basketball tournament, at Westgate.

**Jan. 16-18, 2009:** MMYO Junior High Retreat at Camp Koinonia.

**Jan. 22-24, 2009:** CMU Refreshing Winds conference. Theme: "Worship: Come to its senses." Keynote speakers: Don Saliers, retired theology and worship professor at Emory University; and Doug Gay, lecturer in practical theology at the University of Glasgow.

**Jan. 23-24, 2009:** MMYO Senior High Retreat at Camp Koinonia.

**Feb. 6-8, 2009:** Manitoba Mennonite Young Adult retreat at Camp Koinonia.

**Feb. 6-March 29, 2009:** Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery exhibit of curated works from the Westgate 50th anniversary art show.

**Feb. 13-15, 2009:** MMYO Junior High Retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

**Feb. 14, 2009:** Westgate 50th anniversary celebration dance on Valentine's Day, at the Gateway Community Club, at 8 p.m.

### Ontario

**Nov. 21:** Eby Lecture at Conrad Grebel University College, at 7 p.m. Speaker: Marlene Epp.

**Nov. 22, 23:** Soli Deo Gloria Singers present "Praise God's Holiness," a concert that will include Advent and Christmas music; 8 p.m. at Leamington United Church (22) and 3 p.m. at UMEI (23). For tickets, call UMEI at 519-326-7448. Proceeds to UMEI.

**Nov. 22:** Nithview Auxiliary Christmas Tea and Bake Sale, from 2-4 p.m., at Nithview, New Hamburg.

**Nov. 22, 23:** Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter annual general meeting, at Hawkesville Mennonite Church, at 10:30 a.m.

**Nov. 24-26:** Church leadership seminar: "Theological perspectives on conflict resolution," in Waterloo.

**Nov. 25:** Willowgrove annual general meeting, at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, Markham. Reception at 6

p.m., followed by members' dinner at 6:30 p.m. (members please RSVP). Meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call 905-640-2127.

**Nov. 26:** Church leadership seminar: "Understanding the congregational life cycle," in Waterloo.

**Nov. 28, 29:** Naim Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig, presents "Spirit of Christmas" craft show with live music; 7 to 9 p.m. (28), 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (29).

**Dec. 6, 7:** Pax Christi Chorale presents Haydn's *Creation*, at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto; 7:30 p.m. (6), 3 p.m. (7). With full orchestra and soloists. For tickets, call 416-491-8542.

**Dec. 7:** Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir presents its Christmas concert, "Hodie!" at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. Tickets available at the door.

**Dec. 13:** Mennonite Mass Choir presents Handel's *Messiah*, featuring the K-W Symphony Orchestra, at the Centre in the Square, Kitchener, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets available at Centre in the Square.

**Jan. 24, 2009:** MC Eastern Canada young adult volleyball tournament, in Kitchener.

**Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2009:** MC Eastern Canada winter youth retreat, in Cambridge.

**Feb. 6-8, 2009:** MC Eastern Canada winter youth retreat, in Cambridge.

**March 7, 2009:** Church leadership seminar: "Hope for the small church," in Waterloo.

**March 26, 27, 2009:** Bechtel Lectures in Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies at Conrad Grebel University College. Speakers: Ched Meyers and Elaine Enns. Topic: "Restorative Justice and Theology."

**April 18, 2009:** MC Eastern Canada youth Bible quizzing competition (first round).

### Paraguay

**July 14-19, 2009:** Mennonite World Conference assembly, Asuncion. Registration materials available at [mwc-cmm.org](http://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](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org).**

## UpComing

### 'Worship come to its senses' theme of Refreshing Winds Conference

WINNIPEG—For Don Saliers, a keynote speaker at the Jan. 22-24, 2009 Refreshing Winds Conference, worship needs to come to its senses—quite literally. "The history of Christian worship is the history of the eye, the ear, of the mind, the imagination, the body," says Saliers, a theologian, musician and author of several books on worship, including *Worship Come to its Senses*. "The grace of God is mediated to us through very human senses." But that's not all, says Saliers, who recently retired as professor of theology and worship at Candler School of Theology, Atlanta, Ga. "It's also a call to come to our senses. . . . Worship has got to be more than leaving our sorrows and the world at the door, and coming in for some ultra-bright Christianity and some consolation." Also speaking at the event is Doug Gay, an ordained minister, musician, songwriter, leader of Alt Worship and a lecturer in practical theology at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. Gay describes Alt Worship, which began in the United Kingdom in the early 1990s, as a "combination of a positive attitude towards the Catholic tradition and an adventurous attitude towards the use of new media, particularly visual media." For more information about the conference, or to register, visit [cmu.ca](http://cmu.ca).

—Canadian Mennonite University Release

## Classifieds

### Employment Opportunities

**MANAGER** (1.0) and **FOOD SERVICES COORDINATOR** (.5) required for Camp Moose Lake, a small, well-maintained, year-round facility in southeastern Man., one of three camps operated by MC 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](http://www.campswithmeaning.org). Contact Director of Camping Ministries at 204-895-2267 or [camps@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:camps@mennochurch.mb.ca).

#### PART-TIME (0.5 FTE) ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Avon Mennonite Church is located in Stratford, Ont., a picturesque city that features unique shops and the world-famous Stratford Shakespeare Festival. We are a welcoming congregation with an average of 120 attending the Sunday morning worship service. The Associate Pastor will serve, lead and enable the congregation through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, particularly in areas involving children, youths and their families, and will provide significant input into the Youth and Christian Education programs. The successful candidate will be committed to Avon Church's covenant, as well as to Anabaptist theology and will be licensed and ordained, or willing to work toward it. This position will begin on or before January 2009. Applications with references are requested by Nov. 14, 2008, and can be submitted to: Muriel Bechtel, Conference Minister, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, 4489 King Street East, Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2, or [muriel@mcecc.ca](mailto:muriel@mcecc.ca).

Wellesley Mennonite Church seeks a **PASTOR** to join Julie Ellison White to create our pastoral team. Time commitment is negotiable up to 1.0 FTE.

WMC is a well-established, growing congregation in the rural village of Wellesley, Ont., located in diversified Waterloo Region. We are a community-based church, with close proximity to the universities and seminaries in Kitchener/Waterloo. For further details, please see: <http://www.wellesleymennonite.ca/>.

We are seeking a pastor who:

- Supports and nurtures a team model that builds on each pastor's strengths and experience
- Will share pastoral care, preaching and teaching and worship planning
- Is committed to an Anabaptist/Mennonite theology and practice

Post-secondary and/or seminary education is preferred. Start date is negotiable.

Please reply to:

Muriel Bechtel, Conference Minister  
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada  
4489 King Street East  
Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2

Tel: 519-650-3806 / 800-206-9356 ext 107 Fax: 519-650-3947  
Email: [muriel@mcecc.ca](mailto:muriel@mcecc.ca) / Web Site: [www.mcecc.ca](http://www.mcecc.ca)

Can you provide energizing, inspirational leadership to a congregation of approximately 150 that is beginning to revitalize itself through a spirit-led transformation process? Are you a team-player and a gifted communicator, able to relate to all generations and preach in both traditional and contemporary worship styles enabling us to live out the Anabaptist vision? If you feel called to this full-time **LEAD PASTOR** position at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., please read our "letter of introduction to our new lead pastor"

on our website at [www.wkumchurch.com](http://www.wkumchurch.com).  
Enquiries and applications can be directed to:  
Muriel Bechtel, MCEC Conference Minister  
4489 King St. East, Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2  
519-650-3806



Mennonite Central Committee is seeking qualified applicants for a **GRAPHIC DESIGN** position. A B.A. or equivalent work experience in graphic design is required. This position also requires 1-3 years of experience in electronic pre-press production and proficiency in using the Internet, e-mail, Mac computer, InDesign and/or Quark Xpress with grids and style sheets, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Flash, Web design and the willingness to learn Dreamweaver. The ability to juggle multiple tasks, meet deadlines and understand and articulate the agency-wide visual identity for MCC is required. Magazine design experience is a plus. Please review full job description at [www.mcc.org/serve](http://www.mcc.org/serve) before applying. Send resume and letter of interest to: Prem Dick at: [psd@mcc.org](mailto:psd@mcc.org) or MCC Human Resources, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501, or call 717-859-1151.

## 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](mailto:hneufeld@telus.net)

## Upcoming Advertising Dates

### Issue Date    Ads Due

Dec. 15            Nov. 25

Jan. 5, 2009    Dec. 16

*Focus on Finances*

# Canoeing go to class



CMU PHOTO BY JOHN LONGHURST

*CMU students paddle to school as part of provincial environmental challenge*

**BY JOHN LONGHURST**

CMU Release

WINNIPEG

**E**ach September, during Resource Conservation Manitoba's Campus Commuter Challenge, university and college students are encouraged to show concern for the environment by walking, biking, carpooling or taking the bus to classes.

Using a canoe is not listed among the options. But that's exactly what six Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) students did last month: They canoed to school.

Ashley Cole, Caroline Wintoniw, Melanie Penner, Melanie Duckworth, Corinne Klassen and Kate Menzies launched two canoes into Winnipeg's Assiniboine River at 6 a.m. on Sept. 26 and paddled several kilometres west to Assiniboine Park. After disembarking, they portaged through the park and up Shaftesbury Blvd. to attend classes at the university. At 11:30 a.m., they repeated the process in reverse, so that three of the students could attend class at Menno Simons College, CMU's campus at the downtown University of Winnipeg.

"We wanted to take the idea of alternative forms of transportation to a different level," says Cole, explaining the motivation for using canoes. "Being mindful of the environment is constantly at the forefront of what CMU promotes," she adds. "With concerns about climate change, it's important to think about ways of commuting that are more sustainable."

For Wintoniw, it was also a way to be connected to Winnipeg's history. "We also wanted to recall how rivers were once an important form of transportation for many," she says. "Winnipeg was built around rivers."

Using canoes is just one way the six intend to get to CMU this school year. Along with biking, walking and taking the bus, they also intend to snowshoe and cross-country ski this winter.

"Our goal is to find as many different ways as possible to commute to school," says Duckworth. ☿