

CANADIAN MENNONITE

November 24, 2008

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EDITORIAL

Hyphenated-Anabaptists

TIM MILLER DYCK
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

What does it mean to be Mennonite? This issue features the stories of five people who chose to become Mennonite as adults. Their reasons for finding Mennonite congregations and Mennonite theology so compelling help us all better understand the value of the faith we share.

I also had the chance this month to talk with someone who lives in a part of the world where hardly anyone knows what the word “Mennonite” means. Vic Thiessen, his wife Kathy, and daughter Janelle are all Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers at the London (England) Mennonite Centre.

Almost no one he meets in Britain has heard of Mennonites, and, if they have, they think of them as being Amish and wearing only black clothing. The word is a barrier to outreach. “In the U.K., ‘Mennonite’ is seen as having an ethno-cultural meaning and that’s why others don’t feel they can be part of it,” he said. His solution? “We talk about being Anabaptist almost exclusively.”

What’s wonderful to see is how eagerly Anabaptist ideas have been adopted by those discovering the Jesus-centred values of Anabaptist theology. Vic calls these people hyphenated-Anabaptists: Anabaptist-Baptists, Anabaptist-Anglicans and so on. “Anabaptists in the U.K. think Jesus-centred. They think of

Jesus as practising a non-violent understanding and compassion for the poor.

To be an Anabaptist is to be completely Jesus-centred and you can do that in any denomination,” he said.

One of the biggest groups claiming Anabaptist theology is British Baptists. Vic told a story of going to Greenbelt, a big Christian outdoor cultural event, and sitting

across from a woman on the train. She said that she had never heard of Mennonites, but when Vic talked about being Anabaptist, she exclaimed that she was one too, as was her church—a large Baptist congregation.

Baptists and Mennonites share a close theological heritage, as both have roots in the Anabaptist movement and theology. That church is named Baptist for the same reason Mennonites are also called Anabaptist—because membership was (and is) tied to a public confession of faith and adult baptism.

I’m glad to see Baptists around the world rediscovering their Anabaptist heritage. One big example is Baptist Church in Chile reaching out to Mennonite Church Canada for help in its desire to become Anabaptist.

This connection has also been a recent rediscovery by Southern Baptist theologians in the U.S. Emir Caner, a history professor and dean at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, had this to say



about Anabaptists in a report published in that denomination’s news service:

“It was [early Anabaptist leaders] Balthasar Hubmaier and Pilgram Marpeck who advocated the right for all to worship whomever they wished, knowing that conversion does not come by physical sword but by the convicting of the Spirit of God through the Word of God. . . . Anabaptist history has long been ignored and neglected by most historians and Christians. . . . Yet, the Free Church and Believer’s Church [are] a direct result of Anabaptists, many of whom died for their baptistic beliefs.”

“We come from the Anabaptists,” he continued. “They were those who believed in a regenerate church, religious liberty, separation from the perversions of the world, and the believer’s baptism.”

Caner said he wanted to help bring Southern Baptists back to their Anabaptist heritage, to dialogue with scholars of like mind, and “create an Anabaptist movement that will be broader than it is in its present day.”

From unexpected sources—a train in the United Kingdom to a Southern Baptist theologian—we discover connections between different parts of God’s church and gifts that Anabaptist insights can bring for all to share.

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Christmas issue schedule: Note that we publish on a three-week cycle over Christmas, so the next two issues will be dated Dec. 15, 2008, and Jan. 5, 2009.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Pipes are stockpiled outside of Lubicon Cree territory in northern Alberta, in advance of government approval of a TransCanada application for a pipeline through contested aboriginal land. See story on page 15.

PHOTO: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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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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IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Why I am a Mennonite

Welcoming newcomers into our churches is something we all want to do well. This issue's feature presents the stories of five people who chose to become Mennonites as adults. Find out what drew them in and keeps them engaged.

With open mind and arms

SALLY AND LES WARKENTIN

We came to the Waterloo Region of Ontario in October 2005, arriving from England, where we had lived for the first 12 years of our marriage.

Sally was from Georgia, reared, like Herman Melville, “in the infallible Presbyterian Church.” Les had a Reform Church upbringing in Yorkshire, England, but during a 20-year career in the Royal Air Force he began to attend an Anglican church. As a couple living in England we continued Church of England involvement, believing the dwindling numbers at village churches needed all the help we could give. Neither of us is heavily into doctrine, but we believe in service where we are.

In Canada, we decided to visit other denominations with an open mind before choosing a church home. One of our first visits was to Bloomingdale (Ont.) Mennonite Church on a snowy January day in early 2006, the beginning of the congregation's 200th anniversary celebrations. That first day we saw Yoch and Maria Snyder come into the building by different doors and tell about their long journey from Pennsylvania. We were warmly welcomed both going in to worship and afterwards. Curious and encouraged, we decided to go again.

We appreciated the warm greetings we received and a visit from the pastor, Mary Mae Schwartzentruber, after we had attended three times. We were told that if we would like, there would be a “friendship couple” to help us integrate. We became fast friends with Paul and

Although we are not prone to making doctrine a goal, we enjoyed the class and learning more about Mennonites in general.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SALLY AND LES WARKENTIN



Martha Snyder, but other members of the congregation were in touch as well.

Within six weeks, we were asked to help on one of the many committees set up for the year-long anniversary celebrations. We had done work with family histories, so it was natural to ask us to help with the history book being written during the year. Because Sally has written a book

about storytelling, she was asked to help with a class on sharing faith stories.

We felt we were included as one of the family right away, and being here for the 200th anniversary helped us get to know both the living members of the family and those who have crossed the “Great Divide.” That first year was a thrilling time-travel trip.

An article in *Canadian Mennonite* summed up what attracted us to the larger Mennonite community, “the church,” if you will. In Vic Thiessen’s review of *The*

Golden Compass movie (“Warring for the minds of our children,” Jan. 7, page 30), he wrote that the film is an opportunity to talk to children about the church, admitting its flaws, but “stating clearly that [Mennonites] support free thinking, truth-seeking and working hard to make our world a more just and peaceful place.” We have found all three of his points to be plentifully demonstrated in Mennonite activities locally, nationally and around the world.

Although we had never felt we could

“join” the Church of England, in spite of being very active in it, we decided after a year to go through a Mennonite membership class. Although we are not prone to making doctrine a goal, we enjoyed the class and learning more about Mennonites in general. The Snyders attended the class with us, and all the others considering membership had friendship partners

as well. This tactic made for a lively class. Discussion was free and all points of view were accepted non-judgmentally.

We joined on Easter Sunday 2007, requesting to be baptized again, although we had both been baptized as children. We had not been made to feel our first baptisms were faulty, but we wanted the baptism to symbolize our new life together as Mennonites. We feel privileged and blessed to be with Mennonites and to be Mennonites on this part of our faith journey. ☸

I'm an MBC

DORIS DALEY HAYSON

I make my living as a cowboy poet and I am from the MBC Conference.

Often my conference membership comes up in a scenario like this: I have just finished a show in a theatre or community hall, and likely made a witty remark about Mennonite food or my favourite Mennonite cowboy poet, Corny Reimer. Later, a well-intentioned bystander says, "I heard you say that you're a Mennonite. I know some Mennonites in Burns Lake (or Winkler or Tofield or Fresno, take your pick.) Wonderful people! Now are you a Conference Mennonite? Or Brethren?"

That is when I explain that I'm from the MBC Conference. Sometimes my new friend nods sagely, sometimes he looks puzzled. All is revealed when I explain that MBC stands for "Mennonite By Choice."

When you're from the MBC

Conference, it takes a long time to figure out answers to the following questions:

- Are you an MB from BC or a GC from AB?
- Did you attend EMC? CBC? CMU?
- Did you work with MCC?
- Going to MWC?
- Do you cook with MWL?
- Did you volunteer with MDS?
- Does MCA relate to CM through MC Canada?
- Do you read CM? The MQR? FQ? MWR? Gospel Herald?
- How did the MC/GC merger affect you?
- Do you prefer crumbs or batter on top of your *plautz* (fruit squares)?

The alphabet soup of acronyms is just the beginning. Don't get me started on conferences, associations, relationships, covenants, assemblies, gatherings or misshapen boards.

In the mid-1980s I actually joined MCC (Mennonite Central Committee

for those who didn't already know) for a two-year voluntary service term. At that time, more than a quarter of MCCers were non-Mennonites. We were a motley crew: Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Alliance and many others who were attracted to the work and committed to its motto, "Service in the name of Christ."

I took a risk with MCC—Who the heck were these people?—and thank goodness they took a risk on me. As it turns out, I found my tribe of people. Two years of voluntary service stretched into four, and eventually I worked with MCC's Ten Thousand Villages program for just over 16 years. I returned to Alberta and joined a Mennonite church. Don't ask me which conference. I think we are, or were, GC.



There are likely many advantages to being an ethnic Mennonite raised from the get-go in a Mennonite church: A rich heritage. A strong sense of identity. Faith tempered and strengthened by generations of stories. Churches and communities where pacifism and service are modelled.

The ability to sing the trickiest of hymns in four-part harmony. Understanding Low German jokes. Free places to stay in Winnipeg. Learning, by osmosis, about faith, values, service, sacrifice, culture and how the whole Mennonite world works and interacts.

But let me share with you the advantages of being a Mennonite by Choice: I have no baggage. No resentment or bitterness about church rules or splits. I am free to embrace all that's good about being a Mennonite with no painful experience about what pinches. I see through

un-jaded eyes what it means to serve and to work for peace. I am neither naïve nor cynical, just grateful to be in a church, which, despite its flaws, welcomes me for who I am and the journey I'm on. I appreciate every manifestation of Mennonite faith, Mennonite humour and Mennonite culture because I had plenty of time to live in a non-Mennonite world and I like this one better.

I had plenty of time to live in a non-Mennonite world and I like this one better.

I'm not the least bit offended when families play the Mennonite Game. I only look on with envy and say to myself, I hope you know how lucky you are! And besides, as it turns out, I have a dear friend at church who shared a room with my English great grandmother in Major, Sask., when she had her appendix out as a teenager! How's that for playing the game?

Praise God for my chosen church family. Individually and collectively, they have taught me about peace, living simply, working together, serving others, worshipping through music, and laughing and crying together.

It must be said that the ride hasn't been without its annoyances. Surely there can be no denomination on earth that has more meetings, conferences, assemblies, sounding boards, listening posts and committees. We affirm and seek consensus and facilitate and reflect and process until it's time for another conference. Mennonites can spend a lot of time reading minutes!

Even so, I am so grateful to be in the MBC Conference. Without a Klassen, Thiessen, Penner, Shantz, Good or Giesbrecht-Schwartzentruber in sight on any branch on my family tree, I am nevertheless a Mennonite . . . By Choice. ☿

Doris Haysom is a member of Trinity Mennonite Church near Calgary and represents Mennonite Church Alberta on the Canadian Mennonite board. To find out more about her cowboy poetry, visit dorisdaley.com.

At home in the Mennonite Church

APRIL YAMASAKI

I've been part of the Mennonite Church now for almost 30 years, but the first part of my life was more like a patchwork quilt of different churches. When I was a child, I happily attended Sunday school at a Lutheran church. As a young teenager, I went forward in tears during an altar call at a Baptist youth rally. At the age of 15, I was baptized on the confession of my faith—but in an Anglican church that practised mainly infant baptism. For a while I tried the Gospel Hall, where I memorized long passages of Scripture. I went back to the Baptist church for a time, since it had a very active youth group. At the age of 21, my husband and I were married in the Baptist church, but we also attended the United church, which was his family background. We tried the Plymouth Brethren, the Alliance and others that I no longer even remember.

Some might say all of that was an extended exercise in church shopping, or even church hopping, but as I look back

It was the place where I led my first Bible study, taught my first Sunday school class, led my first worship service, preached my first sermon.

I think of it more as a pilgrimage. During that time, I didn't have the language to describe it, but what we were really doing—longing for, looking for—was a church home. And in that sense it was a pilgrimage, a sacred journey to a sacred place.

One day in the midst of this journey, a close friend called and said, "We're starting a new Mennonite church, and it's going to be all English. Are you interested?"

Gary and I already knew a bit about Mennonites. We appreciated the Mennonite concept of discipleship; of following Jesus in daily life; its emphasis on

community, simplicity, peace. Those were already things that we cared about. But most of the Mennonite churches in our area seemed very German and not really the place for us. But a new Mennonite church? All English-speaking? Yes, we were very interested!

Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, B.C., quickly became our church home. We were even counted among the founding members, and we put down roots in a way that we had not done before. It was the place where I led my first Bible study, taught my first Sunday school class, led my first worship service, preached my first sermon. It was the place and the people who encouraged me in my writing, who encouraged my husband in his studies and in his area of teaching. Our pilgrimage was no longer

from church to church, but a pilgrimage of deeper relationship with the Mennonite Church.

But why Mennonite? There are many good Christian churches where two or three or more are gathered in the name of Jesus. As I look back, there were two things in particular that drew me to the Mennonite Church. One was the invitation of our friends, and the community it led to. That sense of community was so strong, that even when we left Peace Mennonite Church and moved to Elkhart, Ind., and then to Richmond, Va., and then back again to the Fraser Valley

of B. C., where we now live—in each place, it was the Mennonite congregation that we turned to for that same sense of community.

Although it's been almost 30 years since that phone call, we still see those same friends and others from that congregation. Years after we had moved on, when we went back to worship at Peace, one of the founding members greeted us warmly, and said, "Welcome home—this is still your home, you know." That sense of home, that sense of community, drew us years ago and continues to draw us today.

The other thing that drew us to the Mennonite Church was what we understood to be Anabaptist distinctives. In addition to community, we understood those to be discipleship, simplicity and peace.

Long before it became fashionable to be green, I'd been influenced by the small-is-beautiful economics of E.F. Schumacher, who wrote in the 1970s when there was another energy crisis. We deliberately sold our car in favour of public transit and our own feet. We didn't own a television.

We tried to limit our tax dollars to the military by keeping our income close to the poverty line—which was pretty easy since we were both students at the time. For us, these were all attempts to follow Jesus in our daily lives.

Not everyone was doing exactly those same things in the Mennonite Church then or even now—and we ourselves have changed considerably—but we found enough of a connection between the life we were trying to live as Christians and the discipleship, simplicity, peace, and community of the Mennonite Church. ❧

This talk was from her address at MC Canada/MC USA Summit, "Challenge at the crossroads: Following Jesus," on July 9.



Finding true Anabaptism

STEFAN CHERRY

Cherry is not a very common Mennonite name.

My mother hails from Montreal, where her ancestors on both sides go back to two of the first 10 families that made up the village of Montreal. My father's roots go back to Seaforth, Ont., and his family is a mix of English, Irish and Scottish.



My mother was French-Canadian and so she was Catholic. Like all French-Canadians born before the 1980s, I also was raised Catholic.

I like to think of myself as a true Anabaptist, though. At the time of the Reformation, everybody was Catholic, but when the Holy Spirit came upon the Anabaptists he transformed them, giving them a different understanding of what it meant to be a follower of Jesus Christ, and what it meant to be the church here on earth. Because of the work of the Holy Spirit and Scripture, these people made a personal decision to follow Jesus.

That's a bit like what happened to me and so I consider myself a true Anabaptist. I was raised in the Catholic Church, but I was not very interested in the church. My parents separated and got divorced when I was 10, and after that I completely left the church. Through my pre-teen and teen years I drifted farther and farther away from God. I started abusing alcohol and drugs, and yet, somehow, I knew God was still working in my life. After I finished university, I chose to join the Peace Corps, a secular volunteer organization. (At that time I had dual Canadian and American citizenship, but I renounced my American

citizenship when the U.S. began bombing Iraq in 2003.)

In 1991, I went to Cameroon with the Peace Corps with a program to introduce agri-forestry—to integrate tree-planting and sustainable agriculture with traditional farming. My personal objective at the time was to save the rain forest, as

I was a hard-core environmentalist. I didn't know that God had a different plan and God ended up saving me instead.

Three months after I arrived in Cameroon, I had an incredibly powerful conversion experience. I was living in a rural village, the only white person for miles and miles, and one morning, after a very strange dream the night before, I picked up a copy of the New Testament that a friend's mother had given me as a Christmas gift years earlier. I flipped it open to Luke 2, the Christmas story, and I started reading. The only way I can describe it is that the scales fell off my eyes and I was filled with the Holy Spirit. For the first time in my life, I understood that Jesus came to provide us with a gift so that we could have peace and a relationship with the creator of the universe.

The only way to explain it is that I was born again. I had a new spirit in me and my life changed drastically; I was transformed. I stopped abusing drugs and I started living for God. Although the Peace Corps is normally

only a two-year service opportunity, I stayed in Cameroon for five years and those five years were fundamental to my Christian journey. I was re-baptized in a rural Baptist church in Cameroon and for the first five years of my Christian life I walked alongside the poor and they taught me how to be a disciple of Jesus.

After my five years in Cameroon, I returned to North America to do a masters degree at a university in New York. I began looking for a Baptist church, but it just didn't work for me. I was coming from an African context and maybe they were a little too liberal for me. They were keen on justice issues, but they didn't seem comfortable acknowledging Jesus as Lord. And so I checked out another church, an evangelical one. That church was very keen on the Bible and Jesus as Lord and Saviour, but when I talked to the pastor, asking about justice ministries or peace issues, he said they didn't have time for that. I found in North America that the church was divided: some people were very keen on Jesus and the Bible, and other people were very keen on peace and justice, but I couldn't find the two together. And then I came upon a Mennonite house fellowship.

The Mennonite Church has an incredible gift for the world and I have received

The Mennonite Church has an incredible gift for the world and I have received that gift.

that gift. I found a community of believers who struggle, not perfectly, but they struggle to hold the two things in tension. They take Jesus at his word, acknowledging him as Lord, but also seek justice and peace. These were things that I was craving and I found them within the Mennonite context. ❧

This article is based on a May 18 sermon he preached at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont. Cherry, his wife, Pascale, and their new baby have recently moved to Ottawa, where they are planting a multicultural Mennonite church.

See "For discussion" questions on page 30.

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.

✉ A Funk responds to what's in a name

RE: "WHAT'S IN a name? A lot if it's Funk!" letter, Sept. 29, page 8.

My name is also John Funk. We came to Canada in 1923 from Russia (now Ukraine). My father Johan J. Funk left us children a reference to our origin. He wrote:

"The Funk family originated in Switzerland. When, in 1523, the Reformation started, the Re baptizers (later called Mennonites) did not agree with Zwingli and split from him. In 1525, the first Mennonite church was founded. Soon after, the persecution started, and our family and many others had to leave Switzerland. Our family fled to Mamel by Germany. In 1793, my great great grandfather Johann Funk and others moved away to Litowen by Germany to Russia, and settled in the village of Alt-Kronswiede by the river the Dneper in the Province of Ekaterinaslow."

My grandfather Jacob Funk's cousin immigrated to Canada in the 1870s and settled in southern Manitoba. He was elected into the ministry as a young man and later became an elder. In time, he wanted to start a Sunday school with the children. The church was against it, so he and his faction split off the main body. Since he lived in the village called "Summer Felt," consequently they are known as "Summerfelder."

JOHN T. FUNK, COALDALE, ALTA.

✉ Only sex between a man and woman within marriage is holy

WHAT IS WITH all this talk of homosexuals and lesbians wanting to be behind the pulpit?

As anyone who has had sex knows, there can be a

oneness, a unity and an intimacy like no other. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had that kind of relationship with God. But then came the Fall. After that, sex became a weapon.

In John 15:1-17, Jesus says he is the vine and his followers are the branches. Now, as followers of Christ, why are some people being defensive and ready to pounce on anyone who suggests a negative comment about alternative sexual lifestyles?

If we dig a little deeper into the Bible, it has much to say about sex. From cover to cover, I read of the holiness, oneness and unity between a married man and woman. All other kinds of sex are wrong. Among them are adultery, incest, bestiality, sodomy, prostitution, lust (pornography, leering), sex before marriage, debauchery and orgies.

But God is a God of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:17-21). That is why he sent Jesus his son to die on the cross for us. Jesus wants to be our saviour, lord and king, so that we can again have that relationship with God that Adam and Eve had in the Garden. This is what we all long for.

AGATHA REMPEL, STEINBACH, MAN.

✉ Are Mennonites in a position to judge Israeli actions in Middle East?

RE: "MENNONITE AGENCIES charged with bias against Israel," Oct. 13, page 8.

The letter struck me as remarkably respectful, given their personal stake in the issue. While it was bluntly critical of what Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein and Lou Adler perceive to be Mennonite bias, it also communicated respect for the Historic Peace Churches and affirmed Mennonite "real hands-on projects that bring Israelis and Palestinians together."

The usual reaction to criticism is to respond in kind, and challenge the claims. However, the tone of their letter invites us, I think, to suspend that initial response and engage in a little introspection. I offer the following:

Do we as Mennonites truly appreciate the gravity and ongoing reality of anti-Semitism? Jews can point to 2,000 years of history to argue that as long as they live as minorities among nations of non-Jews, they will always be at the mercy of the majority. Has that changed? Isn't it still the case that all Jewish parents live with the knowledge that their children, wherever and whenever they may live, may be a target of ideologically motivated violence? How should the Mennonite Church relate to the Jewish community in light of that reality?

Mennonites view their developing relationships with Palestinians and Iranians as a natural working out of

the ministry of reconciliation. However, let's not forget that it is always difficult to speak the hard truths to one's friends. Have we spoken—or are we able to speak—the necessary truths about anti-Semitism to our friends in those places where hatred of Jews/Zionism/Israel is accepted and endemic? Is it possible to clearly distinguish hatred of Jews from hatred of Zionism/Israel, or does hatred inevitably ignore those lines?

It is so tempting, when faced with the suffering and injustice in Palestine/Israel, to immediately advocate particular political solutions, but then they can cut in several directions. The infamous wall built by Israel, for example, has resulted in humiliation and severe hardship for Palestinians, and may be a “land grab.” Removal of the wall, on the other hand, would plausibly permit a hate-filled person from the Palestinian

side to cross over to the Israeli side to kill Jews. Are we prepared to judge between those alternatives? How do we weigh the costs? Is it our place to do so?

Adlerstein and Adler urge Mennonites to seek a more truly neutral position. I am not sure that neutrality is the right term for those who confess the extravagant love of God for all nations. On the other hand, living in obedience to the promise of that divine love to the Jewish community, as well as Palestinians and Iranians, may be a greater challenge than neutrality.

In Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, baptismal candidates and their congregations pledge to give and receive counsel. Could it be God's will for that ethos to inform relations among the religions of the Book as well?

RUSSEL SNYDER-PENNER, WATERLOO, ONT.

FAMILY TIES

Give-away love

MELISSA MILLER

One of my great-aunts, so the story goes, had a creative approach to “resource management.” She belonged to the West Virginia clan, the lineage of my paternal grandmother, folks who lived in the hills and hollows of the northern part of the state. Apparently, this aunt had such difficulty throwing things away that she elected not to; instead, as her small shack-like home filled with newspapers, dish-ware and clothing, she simply built on new rooms, creating more space for her stuff. After she died, the relatives who cleaned out the astoundingly cluttered home marvelled at the mostly useless collection she'd preserved.

When I survey any of the clutter spots that lurk in the corners of my home, I might think of my departed aunt and wonder how much of her legacy lives on in me. I, too, have difficulty letting go of stuff—dishes, clothing, blankets, bags, medicines (those expiry dates don't really mean anything, do they?), plants, mementos, and especially things involving paper. I might need it someday! But with my aunt's habit as a cautionary backdrop, I regularly resolve not to leave behind the

same kind of mess for my survivors. This resolve strengthens me when I take on a challenging closet or a box of long-held “treasures.”

The resolve, fortunately, was present recently when I let go of a particular item, a scrapbook of mementos marking my transition from adolescence to adulthood—photos, cards, ticket stubs and a



Given the season, we may be more preoccupied with acquiring than with letting go.

host of other bits and pieces, symbols of people and places from a time long gone. I slowly turned the pages, looking, remembering, smiling, letting go. I saved just two things: a Thanksgiving poem I wrote when I was 16 (which I humbly confess I still think is pretty good), and a heart-tugging letter from my dad that etched some of the painfully delicate ground we travelled. All the rest I released when I closed the dusty frayed scrapbook and put it carefully in the trash.

Given the season, we may be more preoccupied with acquiring than with letting go. The gift-giving of Christmas drives

many of us to box stores or shopping malls to buy items to give away as expressions of our love or our ties with family members and friends. Recalling my aunt's hoarding, I wonder about letting go of something as a gift. What about letting go of something that harms a loved one or a relationship? What about letting go of an ancient grudge or demanding expectations? What about letting go of addictions to work or possessions? What about letting go of self-centredness or a long, cool silence? Imagine how these gifts would shine tucked into stockings or

spilling out from under the tree.

In Jesus, God offered a give-away love, a love that pours itself out for others in waves of goodness and wholeness. As we receive this love gift from God, we are invited to let go of all that restricts and damages our love relationships. This season, what might we give away, or release, as an expression of our love?

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

✉ Mennonites should not stay silent on Middle East conflict

RABBI YITZCHOK ADLERSTEIN and Lou Adler accuse Mennonite leaders of unfair, unbalanced and hostile reporting of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict ("Mennonite agencies charged with bias against Israel," Oct. 13, page 8). After a recent trip to Israel and a short stay in the West Bank, I must declare that I strongly disagree with them.

In my enthralling trip to the "Holy Land" I was elated to walk where the prophets of old walked, to sit where Jesus taught and tread where God's nation worked to fulfill the mandate to be his people.

Everywhere in Israel there were signs of the pride that people took in their strengths: their roads, industries and homes.

But there was more to see. Soldiers stood on many street corners and at each tourist site; young men and women carried machine guns that looked ready for use. Huge concrete walls and checkpoints sprang up beside roads and around villages.

My heart was heavy for both sides; the heavily armed Israelis and the stone-throwing Palestinians. The people we met in Ramallah in the West Bank expressed their frustration, dismay and anger at the situation where they are controlled by Israelis occupying their territories, controlling their roads and

GOD, MONEY AND ME

A model of generosity

DORI ZERBE CORNELSEN

At Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC) we are mourning the loss of our colleague and good friend, Edwin Friesen, who passed away on Oct. 23. Edwin worked with the Foundation for 13 years as a stewardship consultant, giving shape to that role within the organization. While he was based in the Winnipeg office, Edwin worked with clients and congregations throughout Manitoba and Saskatchewan, nurturing relationships wherever he went.

I had the special privilege of having Edwin as a mentor in this first year of my work with MFC. He was a patient teacher who led by example. In his life and work Edwin demonstrated the kind of generosity that he encouraged in the donors and congregations with whom he worked. I experienced that generosity in so many ways.

First, Edwin was generous with his time. In this past year he made himself available to respond to my seemingly endless questions about what it meant to be a stewardship consultant with the Foundation. I'm sure there were times when he could have used fewer interruptions in his day, but he was always

gracious when I showed up at his door. It was also apparent that Edwin spent quality time with clients and donors, sometimes bending his own schedule to make in-person meetings possible. Edwin valued each individual, couple or group he met, and worked diligently to assist them with whatever issues they raised, investing his time with them.

Second, Edwin was generous with his insights. He was passionate about



Edwin valued each individual, couple or group he met, ... investing his time with them.

ongoing learning and discovery, especially when it came to connecting faith and everyday life. He was not afraid to test his ideas and often engaged us in lively discussions at coffee time. Because of his ability to put his thoughts into writing, MFC asked Edwin to take on several writing projects exploring the spiritual significance of money in our daily lives. He put his effort and heart into resources such as "God, Money and Me" and *First Things First*, a Foundation resource book. MFC will continue to benefit for years to come from his willingness to share what he had learned through study and

discernment.

Third, Edwin was generous with his respect. It is an understatement to say that he did not claim to be an expert, even with all of the experience he brought to his work at the Foundation. He was always genuinely collaborative and sought out the wisdom of others with whom he worked. Very early in my tenure with MFC, he invited me to be a co-presenter with him for a class at Steinbach (Man.) Bible College. He was clear that he expected me to help shape the presentation, even though I still had so much to learn. His confidence in me was humbling.

Who are the people you can name that have modelled generosity for you? The stories of people that we remember and repeat are the stories that help shape us. While it has been difficult to say goodbye to Edwin, he leaves behind an incredible legacy of generosity that we will cherish.

Dori Zerbe Cornelsen is a stewardship consultant at the Winnipeg office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada. For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit mennofoundation.ca.

limiting their access to places that were their homes for centuries.

Adlerstein and Adler suggest it is only “a small number of hotheads in the settler population” that are causing the problems for Palestinians. They also say that “MCC is only the tip of the anti-Israeli iceberg that Mennonites have floated for decades.” These statements are false.

First, the Israeli incursion into Palestine is widespread and supported by the Israeli government that builds roads and infrastructure, and defends these settlers. Second, Mennonites greatly admire Israel and pray for the return of the Hebrew homeland. They do not, however, accept or condone persistent and aggressive movement of Israelis into lands long owned

and farmed by Palestinians. The “issue” that is alive and hotly contested within Israel is not just an “issue” for Palestinian people; it affects their everyday lives in the most horrible way.

Should Mennonites be involved in the real issue of Israelis and Palestinians, or should we be neutral? Should we again become silent? If Adlerstein and Adler have personally seen the many places where Israeli settlers have made incursions into traditional Palestinian lands, and have spoken with and listened to the people on both sides of this border, let them convince us that justice is being done and that God’s nation is being built as he would have it built.

JOHN SAWATZKY, WINNIPEG

FROM OUR LEADERS

Becoming partners with God

KAREN MARTENS ZIMMERLY

Young Samuel hears an unknown voice calling in the darkness of the night, but only in repeated trips to Eli’s room for repeated conversations does Samuel finally recognize God calling him (1 Samuel 3:1-9). God then delivers bad news and Samuel is not sure that he wants to share it, yet with the coaching ministry from a wise, but very human Eli, Samuel speaks honestly. Samuel continues to mature in leadership so that “*none of his words fall to the ground*” (1 Samuel 3:19). This leadership is shaped by continued encounters with God and recognition by the people of Israel that he is trustworthy.

The Pastoral Trends Survey that Mennonite Church Canada conducted and shared at the Winnipeg assembly this past summer reveals that 34 percent of our 385 pastors will leave the pastorate for various reasons in the next three to five years. At a recent gift discernment consultation with MC Canada and MC USA, leaders heard that local churches are finding it more and more challenging to find individuals who will serve in their

various ministries. Clearly, there is a great need for people with a wide variety of gifts, but how will the children, youths and adults of our congregations hear the voice of God calling them?

Across this land, whether in rural or urban contexts, there are so many voices calling for our attention that the call of God can be muffled. Thankfully,



It took Samuel and Eli more than one encounter to realize the call of God.

like Samuel we are not left alone in the discerning process! The biblical story suggests that calling leaders comes from a partnership that begins with God, but which invites human partnership with individuals and communities of faith.

As we consider the immediate need for both pastoral and lay leaders in our church, I would invite us to be intentional about becoming “learning partners” in ministry. We may not be able to immediately find the individual to fill a role

in the current structure, such as a deacon, Sunday school teacher or board member, but there are those who may be open to other meaningful ministry with a very specific focus. Consider the role you have within your local congregation or area church. Whom can you invite as a learning partner to explore and participate in one aspect of the work to which you have been called?

It took Samuel and Eli more than one encounter to realize the call of God. Being intentional about becoming learning partners in ministry is more than a one-time task to check off on a “to do” list. It invites ongoing conversation between the partners to reflect and ponder if God is calling you or me in this

ministry situation? What is God saying? How will we respond?

In the process of working and learning together we may be surprised how God becomes present and transforms our ministry to face our current reality and provide the leadership we really need.

Karen Martens Zimmerly is MC Canada’s denominational minister and director of leadership development.

✉ Mennonite stand on Middle East shouldn't polarize conflict

THANK YOU FOR printing the letter from Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein and Lou Adler ("Mennonite agencies charged with bias against Israel," Oct. 13, page 8), raising questions about bias from Mennonites in our efforts to respond to the conflicts in the Middle East.

We need to keep the dialogue with the Jewish community active. Mennonites are right to be concerned about the hardships and injustices suffered by the Palestinians, to challenge the assumptions of Christian Zionists, and to talk to those the West deems to be our enemies. Yet we also need to be intentional about communicating our respect for the Jewish people and our deep concern for their well-being, too. The situation is so polarized in our world that people may assume when we raise concerns about the plight of the Palestinians, we are taking a stand against the Jewish people.

I am uncomfortable with Mennonites using political symbols to show support for either side, such as recent reports about a farmer flying the Palestinian flag from his combine ("Turning tanks into combines," Oct. 13, page 32), and a Mennonite congregation having an Israeli flag in its worship sanctuary ("Christian Zionism!?" Sept. 15, page 7). These symbols do not call to mind the way of Jesus—loving people on all sides of the conflict the way that God loves them, showing grace to all parties and working tirelessly for reconciliation.

JOANNA REESOR-MCDOWELL,
STOUFFVILLE, ONT.

✉ Scripture should be the basis for Israeli land ownership

RE: "FROM THROWING rocks to living stones," Sept. 15, page 4.

I was amazed and dismayed that no one in the tour group was able to quote Scripture with regard to ownership of the land in question. See Genesis 26:2-5 and 28:13, Psalm 105:8-11 and Ezekiel 47:13-23, and read Joel 3:12 to see what happens to those who divide up the land.

The Adlerstein/Adler response ("Mennonite agencies charged with bias against Israel," Oct. 13, page 8) mirrors my thoughts. The last sentence is profoundly insightful: "But as long as Mennonite leaders persist in unfair, unbalanced and hostile treatment of Israel, God will have to find himself other helpers in his continued quest for peace." With leaders such as those quoted in the Sept. 15 articles, I fear for the spiritual safety of our Mennonite congregations.

And the letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper (Sept. 15, page 14) seems to show the tour group's reliance on secular humanistic (UN) solutions, rather than on Scripture and Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Also, the selection of the picture and accompanying story of the back page of the Oct. 13 issue ("Turning tanks into combines") was an error in judgment, in my view. It provided an uninformed, unfair epilogue to the Sept. 15 article. What about the Jewish children in Nablus who are driven to school in bullet-proof buses or the innocent citizens of Sderot, near Gaza, who suffer daily rocket attacks?

It is vitally important to consider God's words to Abram in Genesis 12:2-3: "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse."

ANDREW SAWATZKY, CALGARY, ALTA.

/// Correction

The title of Steven "Reece" Friesen's graphic novel is *Pax Avalon: Conflict Revolution*. It was incorrectly named at the beginning and end of the interview Friesen did with Alberta correspondent Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, "Redeeming our superheroes," Oct. 27, page 30. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.



Jan. 17

Lent Planner

Our lives are in your hands...



Explore ideas for prayers, children's time, dramatic readings, and music and visual elements for the Lent season.

Presenters: Rosanna McFadden, Marlene Kropf and Rebecca Slough

Hosted by the Church Leadership Center at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart Ind. For details and registration, visit www.ambms.edu/workshops or call 574.296.6269

Visit us online

www.ambms.edu

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Bergen—Henry Adam (b. Sept. 19, 2008), to Adam and Stephanie Bergen, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Diehl—Jack Martin (b. Oct. 24, 2008), to Tracey Martin and Lloyd Diehl, Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite.

Driedger—Tessa Lauren (b. Oct. 4, 2008), to Kim and James Driedger, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man.

Duyu—Crystal (b. Sept. 30, 2008), to Roshan Duyu, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Harder—Jody (b. July 26, 2008), to Bertha and Waldemar Harder, Steinbach (Man.) Mennonite.

Jantzi—Chloe (b. Aug. 17, 2008), to Tom and Sherri Jantzi, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Kauenhowen—Alexia Nicole (b. Sept. 14, 2008), to Manfred and Gloria Kauenhowen, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Krueger—Maaike (b. Aug. 31, 2008), to Jeremy and Marsha Krueger, Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Loewen—Ruby (b. Oct. 3, 2008), to Will and Ana Loewen, Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., in South Korea.

Baptisms

Lena Epp—Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Oct. 26, 2008.

Marriages

Bueckert/Dueck—Shara Bueckert (Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask.) and Joe Dueck (Sterling Mennonite, Winnipeg), near Langham, Aug. 31, 2008.

Burkholder/White—Daniel Burkholder and Jessica White, at Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont., Nov. 8, 2008.

Clement/Willms—Bryan Clement and Amy Willms, Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite, Oct. 18, 2008.

Dueck/Taylor—Eric Dueck and Autumn Taylor, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., Oct. 11, 2008.

Dufton/Nipper—Sharon Dufton (First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.) and William (Bill) Nipper, at St. Andrews

Anglican, Kitchener, Ont., Oct. 4, 2008.

Enns/Klassen—Joel Enns and Becky Klassen, Altona (Man.) Bergthaler Mennonite, Sept. 6, 2008.

Freeman/Pinnell—Jared Freeman and Sarah Pinnell (First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.), at Williamsburg Chapel, Kitchener, Ont., Oct. 18, 2008.

Garland/Scott—Andrew Garland (Brussels [Ont.] Mennonite) and Julie Scott, at Fenelon Falls, Ont., Oct. 18, 2008.

Jutzi/Kimmel—Catherine Jutzi (First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.) and Jeremy Kimmel, at Riversong, St. Jacobs, Ont., Sept. 13, 2008.

Kasdorf/Watson—Cara Kasdorf and David Watson, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, in Guelph, Ont., Oct. 10, 2008.

Deaths

Bechtel—Reta, 91 (b. Sept. 13, 1917; d. Oct. 12, 2008), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Boshart—Helen, 84 (b. June 18, 1924; d. Oct. 13, 2008), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Fiss—Paul, 88 (b. Feb. 19, 1920; d. Oct. 25, 2008), Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite.

Fransen—Henry, 79 (b. Feb. 20, 1929; d. Sept. 30, 2008), St. Catharines (Ont.) United Mennonite.

Frey—Marvin (b. May 10, 1949; d. Oct. 19, 2008), Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Harder—Ruth, 85 (b. Nov. 5, 1922; d. Aug. 27, 2008), Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite.

Jutzi—Verna, 93 (b. Aug. 6, 1915; d. Oct. 20, 2008), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

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

Pontius' Puddle



GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

FRONT PAGE STORY

Pipeline pressure

Lubicon Cree seek help in fighting government inaction, public apathy

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent
LUBICON LAKE FIRST NATION, ALTA.

Band councillor Dwight Gladue's voice trembles with undercurrents of grief as he describes what has happened to his vibrant community of Lubicon Lake First Nation in northern Alberta since the oil and gas industry came 30 years ago. According to him, before 1978 the community was healthy and self-sufficient. But now industrial damage has polluted the environment, driven off wildlife, destroyed livelihoods and increased disease. Over 90 percent of the community requires social assistance.

To this day Gladue laments the lack of awareness of many Albertans to Lubicon Lake's plight: "People don't understand how bad the situation continues to be. No matter how we try to fight these oil and gas companies, we're always perceived . . . as very hard to get along with and self-serving."

On Oct. 10, the Alberta Utilities Commission approved an application by Nova Gas Transmissions, a TransCanada Corporation subsidiary, to construct a major gas pipeline through highly contested land. Like other projects in the past, the Lubicon people did not give approval to

this one either.

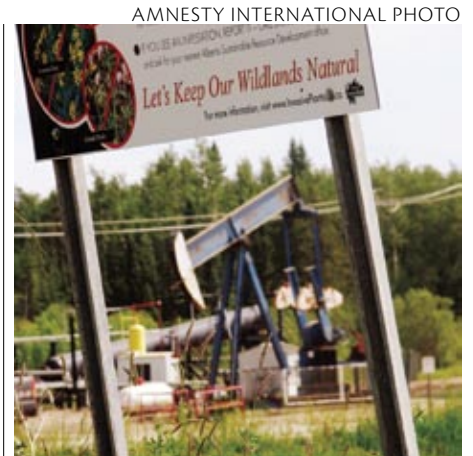
Craig Benjamin of Amnesty International visited Lubicon Lake in October. "It's really astounding," he says. "You hear the noise almost constantly. You smell it. Everywhere you turn there are trees felled, these big wide roads have been cut, there are warnings for oil and gas pipelines and hydrogen sulphide. . . . How is it possible that someone could go out hunting when you are essentially in an industrial landscape?"

An Amnesty International report entitled "Land and Way of Life Under Threat: The Lubicon Cree in Canada," was released last month. It estimates that, in 30 years, more than 56 square kilometres of land has been cleared, 2,200 kilometres of road built and 2,000 oil and gas wells drilled in traditional Lubicon territory, producing resources worth more than \$14 billion for everyone but the Lubicon.

Although the Lubicon and some of the oil and gas companies have worked together—an article in the Oct. 27 Edmonton *Vue Weekly* reports that "TransCanada . . . says it has already had a series of meetings with the Lubicon . . ." on this most recent project—agreements with governments are elusive, with jurisdiction frequently lost between provincial and federal bodies.

Both levels of government are aware of the history, but despite many negotiations and promises, there is no settlement, according to Ed Bianchi of Kairos, a Canadian church-based social justice group with ties to Mennonite Central Committee.

The Lubicon have strong legal claims to their territory, Amnesty International and Kairos believe. Overlooked by an 1899 treaty, they never signed away land rights. Forty years later, a promised reserve was never formalized. In the late 1970s, court proceedings relating to Lubicon



claims were stayed while Alberta retroactively changed its laws; when the case was reopened, it was dismissed. In 1988, an agreement called the Grimshaw Accord was reached; however, the province did not follow through on it.

The same *Vue Weekly* story also reported that, "both opposition parties [in the Alberta legislature] called on the government to suspend construction of the pipeline, but Minister of Aboriginal Relations Gene Zwozdesky rejected such calls, saying it is a federal responsibility to negotiate with the Lubicon."

Gladue has a clear sense of why the governments are reluctant to settle. "Because there is a tremendous amount of resource here," he suggests.

At this point, the Lubicon are relying on organizations like Kairos and Amnesty International to get their message out.

"We've told our stories over and over year after year, and people would rather believe, in their own minds, what the government puts out," Gladue charges. "[W]e need people out there to be a voice as to what's happening to [our] entire community . . . a voice to both levels of government [who] just carry on, business as usual." ❧

/// A short history

MCC has supported the Lubicon Cree for 30 years

LUBICON LAKE FIRST NATION, ALTA.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) involvement with the Lubicon Cree began in the late 1970s, when vigorous oil and gas exploration was drastically changing the lives of the people. Menno Wiebe, former director of the MCC native concerns portfolio, organized

a gardening program and community presence for about a decade. An MCC presence in the community ended in 2000, but Abe Janzen, director of MCC Alberta, says, "MCC is involved in advocacy at the national level, and also participates at a local level when a community requests such involvement." MCC is currently a member of KAIROS, an ecumenical social justice organization that has spoken out against Canada and Alberta's treatment of the Lubicon people.

—BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

FOOD JUSTICE

Take and eat

Conference focuses on food issues from various Christian perspectives

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent
OTTERBURNE, MAN.

Sometimes the best conversations and discussions take place around the dinner table. The recent “Take and Eat” conference hosted by Providence College brought much food for thought to the table, as representatives from large agribusinesses, a community gardener, a neighbourhood bakery owner and a family farmer—all of them Christians—reflected a diversity of experience and perspective.

From genetically modified organisms to organic farming, from the family farm to agribusiness, from the local marketplace to the global economy, controversy was a significant ingredient in the two-day discussion.

“The biggest challenge in producing food is our relationship with people,” said Don Kroeker, vice-chair of Kroeker Farms, explaining that people love their neighbour when they help supply those who are hungry with food.

But Will Braun, editor of *Geez* magazine and a *Canadian Mennonite* columnist, questioned this rationale. “What does love your neighbour mean,” he asked, when “the existence of large companies like Kroeker’s drives land prices up and makes it very difficult for small farmers—for me—to get a start?”

Jan McIntyre of Clearwater, Man., chairs the Manitoba Farm and Rural Stress Line Advisory Committee, and, together with her husband, farms 690 hectares. She is concerned about the direction farming is going. “It seems our current food system operates on the understanding that bigger is better,” she said. “High inputs, high financial risks, cut-throat environment—the pressure on individual farmers is intense. Water, soil, wildlife, people, communities seem to be a lesser part of the equation.”

“The production of food in an environmentally responsible way is one of the things I am confronted with at least on a weekly basis,” said Len Penner, president of agribusiness Cargill Ltd. “The growing population is the challenge. By 2050, we need to look at doubling what we have. We need to figure out how to produce twice as much food in 40 years.”

While the No. 1 health concern in North America is obesity, close to one billion people in other parts of the world go to bed hungry every night, Penner pointed out. “Canada is a significant player in providing food to the world. We have been blessed with some of the most productive land. How do we, in a truly responsible, sustainable, environmentally friendly way, feed the world?” he asked.

“The past year has seen a global food crisis with food riots erupting in some parts of the world and yet Cargill, one of the three largest grain trading companies in the world, saw their profits increase at the same time,” challenged participant Paul Hagerman, asking, “How does a company like Cargill look at their influence, increasing hunger, increasing prices? How does

PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU



Cathy Campbell, rector of St. Matthews Anglican Church in Winnipeg, and Len Penner, president of Cargill, a large agribusiness, discuss food issues at the recent “Take and Eat” conference at Providence College and Seminary, Otterburne, Man.

that sit with a company that professes to be concerned about hunger?”

At the other end of the business spectrum, Winnipeg’s Tall Grass Prairie Bakery began in 1990 as the Grain of Wheat Church wrestled with how to worship and support the art of farming, explained Tabitha Langel, part-owner of the bakery. “At that time there were a lot of farm suicides and grain prices were at a record low,” she said, adding, “A group of us at Grain of Wheat felt called to respond.”

“We try to support local farmers who are doing creation-care practices. I was raised at the communion table,” said Langel, who grew up on a Hutterite colony. “It seemed a good vision for me: ‘enough and the same for all.’”

In conclusion, she said, “I hope that with the Holy Spirit something will happen if we stay at the table together, big and small.”

PHOTO BY BRENDA BURKHOLDER



Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) canners Steven Bricker, Josh Voth, Peter Reimer and Viktor Schwendich hit the road this fall for their annual meat canning effort. Between October and the end of next April the mobile meat canner will visit 13 U.S. states and two Canadian provinces. “Every time you work with volunteers it’s a different experience,” says Reimer, the lone Canadian (from Tolstoi, Man.). “I worked with Mennonite Disaster Service before. This [canning] will challenge my leadership skills.”

FOOD JUSTICE

A really COOL field

How one church turned a small budget surplus into a big harvest

BY STEVE PLENERT

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
SPRINGSTEIN, MAN.

When the Springstein Mennonite Church council met last February, members discovered that a \$3,100 surplus needed to be dealt with. “Let’s do a project with a multiplier effect,” council chair Dave Wiebe suggested. Little did anyone know just how much those funds would multiply over the next few months!

The council settled on a Canada Foodgrains Bank project and other rural congregations in the area were asked to participate. At a planning meeting, Lutheran, Catholic and United Church congregations showed up. A 32-hectare field was selected, hard spring wheat was chosen as the crop to plant, and committee members started asking around to see who else wanted to help out.

Soon crop insurance and herbicides were donated. Rent on the field was reduced. Equipment was volunteered. Seed was donated. And a chemical company said, “We’d like to give two kinds [of fertilizer] before anybody else takes the opportunity.”

People in the communities around Springstein started talking about what the project should be called. “Food for Others” was an early favourite, but ultimately the choice was “Communities Offering Others

/// Briefly noted

Church fun fair focuses on food and justice issues

WINNIPEG—Home Street Mennonite Church hosted its inaugural “Fun Food Fair” in the basement of the church on Oct. 12. Congregants browsed a variety of displays ranging from do-it-yourself composting to garden preserves and recipes, and fairly traded food from Ten Thousand Villages, that all focused on the theme, “Food justice and the church.” Byron Rempel-Burkholder ran the bean bonanza that combined local and international food justice issues by offering three types of beans bought in bulk directly from a local organic farmer and donating excess proceeds to a Mennonite Central Committee initiative in Bolivia that supports local bean farmers. The idea of the fair developed after a partnership between Winnipeg Harvest, which distributes food to the poor, and Home St. Mennonite amicably ended due to logistical issues. Congregants wondered what other ways the church could respond to local and international food issues. The food fair was held in conjunction with Thanksgiving and World Communion Sunday worship services, which both focused on the issue of food justice.

—BY LUCAS REDEKOP

Life,” or COOL.

On a brisk April day the seed went into the ground. The beautiful green shoots soon made their way out of the damp ground. In May, a dedication service was held at the field before Springstein Mennonite congregants held their church picnic.

An ecumenical worship service attended by more than 200 people was held at the field on Aug. 17. Hymns were sung, Scripture was read, prayers of thanksgiving were offered and messages of good will were pronounced. Many said how wonderful the project was and how meaningful it had been to worship in a wheat field. (Unfortunately, the field wasn’t quite ready for harvesting, so the four combines lining the field during the service were relegated to the status of “worship visuals for men.”)

Ten days later, nine combines, a bunch of trucks and a cheery group of onlookers saw the 4,000 bushels of wheat get safely thrashed in just over an hour and trucked to the bin. Under the 4-1 matching agreement with the Canadian government, the value of the crop came in at \$150,000.

At a wrap-up meeting of the COOL Committee, the local reeve stated enthusiastically, “This project is the best thing that has happened in and to our community in years!” //

100 Mile Diet: A year later

Most participants have eased up on the restrictions, but continue to believe in the concept

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
MANITOBA

A year ago, more than 100 people in Manitoba made a commitment to eat only food grown or produced within a 100-mile radius for 100 days. *Canadian Mennonite* tracked down a few of those participants recently, to see how that experience changed them and what they had learned in the process.

Jennifer deGroot, one of the organizers of the event, says that, although not officially practising the 100 Mile Diet any more, “in general, I am a 100-miler for life.” It has made for some adjustments in her family, though, like “organizing our lives so we have space and time. For example, not going on holidays in the harvest season.”

They also started eating meat during the 100 Mile Diet. “It added variety and it was a way to support local producers,” deGroot



Worship in a wheat field proved meaningful to many on Aug. 17.

FOOD JUSTICE

says.

Delilah Krahn and her partner were very faithful to the 100-mile limit during the 100-day tenure. "We didn't go to restaurants, ate nothing with sugar, no alcohol," she says, "but since then we haven't continued to the same degree."

"The hardest thing was the social aspect," Krahn admits. "If friends were going to a



restaurant, we decided not to go with them. We missed out on some social things that way, but we enjoyed some good potlucks with friends."

Although more relaxed about the rules, she and her partner are making a diet of locally grown and produced food a way of life. They continue to grow their own food and shop where they can source local food more easily, which

often means avoiding the big grocery chains.

Byron and Melita Rempel-Burkholder and their two teenage children say they are not strictly following the 100 Mile Diet now, but they are continuing with some of the habits they acquired during that time. "We are more aware of not just how far our food has travelled, but also how much processing and packaging has gone into it," says Byron. ☼

PHOTO BY ELMER HEINRICH



Former Mennonite Central Committee India worker Cynthia Peacock, in sari at right, Canadian Foodgrains Bank Manitoba resource co-ordinator Harold Penner and other Canadian Foodgrains Bank staff from Winnipeg joined combine operators and truckers for a Manitoba project harvest near Winkler this fall.

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GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Called to live creatively

B.C. women's retreat draws 90

BY WALTRUDE GORTZEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
HOPE, B.C.

The call to creative living" was the theme for the 2008 Mennonite Church B.C. women's retreat at Camp Squeah, which attracted about 90 women who came to listen to Betty Spackman, a Christian artist, teacher and author.

In her talk on "Art and the Christian community," Spackman said people are:

- Called to be co-creators with the Creator; and
- Created in the image of the Creator and, therefore, have the responsibility to be creative through the gifts God has given them.

As Christians, Spackman said the biggest stumbling blocks are fear and the false belief of having to be modest. Christian women should let the love of creativity overcome their fears and learn to enjoy their creative gifts. "It does not matter what others say or think. If we know that God loves us, we will do what he has called us to do. No matter where or what!" she said.

In her presentation on "Creative work and play," she said women don't feel safe to go out and play—and be creative—but when they do, they are rewarded with a feeling of well-being and happiness. "Playing can be a difficult and dangerous leap of faith for many Christians who desire to 'tell the truth' with their hearts and God-given gifts and talents," she acknowledged, adding, "How sad that we seem to allow the gift of imagination only to children." Referencing I Corinthians 1:26-28, she said, "The enemy will try to steal your gift, but he can't get at them if you have given them to God, the Creator."

Heidi Epp facilitated a workshop called



PHOTO BY WALTRUDE GORTZEN

Besides workshops on being creative and playing without guilt, participants at this year's MC B.C. women's retreat actually took some time out to play.

"Who is drawing on my canvas?" Everyone who participated came away having learned new things about themselves and each other.

The Sunday morning worship service involved sharing and singing, and a very

moving communion celebration.

Participants agreed it was a wonderful weekend of making new friends and meeting old ones again, a time to share their burdens and joys with each other, and a time for prayer and renewal. ☸

THE MENNONITE PHOTO BY ANNA GROFF



Laura Epp of Saskatoon, Sask., left, Shanda Hochstetler of Portland, Ore., and Amanda Gross of Atlanta attended the recent binational Young Adult Fellowship retreat in Keezletown, Va. Instead of having a keynote speaker, this year the participants set about naming their top concerns: inclusiveness (how to welcome new religions, ethnicities and sexual orientations into congregations); being able to disagree well; how to deal with "quarter-life crisis" (defined at quarterlifecrisis.com as "a period of anxiety, uncertainty and inner turmoil that often accompanies the transition to adulthood"); and using the earth's resources well.

'A miracle of history'

Charleswood Mennonite Church celebrates a decade of Korean ministry

BY LEONA DUECK PENNER

Charleswood Mennonite Church Release
WINNIPEG

Charleswood Mennonite Church celebrated the 10th anniversary of a Korean presence in the congregation and the subsequent formation of a bicultural congregation, this past summer.

As various Korean- and English-speaking people gathered from across Canada to share the story and reflect on how this coming together of two distinct cultures had come to pass, and how it continues to unfold within the congregation and within the wider world today, there was a growing sense of awe and joy over what the unifying Spirit of God had done among them

almost despite themselves.

Pastor John Braun said—with translation into Korean by associate pastor Heemyeong Kang—he sometimes thought about this “special relationship” that has developed in terms of the ancient past. “Koreans,” he said, “may have some ancestry with the ancient Huns. Mennonites of European background have a Barbarian heritage going back a few thousand years. The Huns and the Barbarians tried to destroy each other around the 4th century . . . It’s a miracle of history now, in my estimation, that for the last 10 years or more in our small corner of the world in Winnipeg, that the descendents of Huns and Barbarians worship the Prince of Peace together. I believe that God is at work among us.”

Hun Lee, the first Korean pastor at Charleswood, spoke about the Korean concept of 정성, roughly translated as “time and care,” which is necessary for raising children, honouring parents and welcoming visitors. “Our Lord Jesus raised his disciples with time and care,” he said, linking it to what Koreans experienced at Charleswood. “I give thanks to God for the

CHARLESWOOD MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO



Members of the Korean Mennonite Fellowship of Canada are pictured with Tim Froese, executive director of MC Canada International Ministries, left, prior to the 10th anniversary celebrations at Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, this past summer.

blessing we have been offered by you. . . . I hope and pray that we Koreans may continue to grow in Christ, observing, learning and participating in the church life here together, so that we too may be a mature fellowship with time and care.”

From a small group of Koreans consisting of six families, the group now consists of a network of 83 families and 274 people, some in Winnipeg and others who are now scattered around the world.

“I believe that these people are all fruits of our congregation and our mission, and also that they are growing as seeds grow into plants in the kingdom of God,” said Hwang Lee, a deacon at Charleswood. “This means our mission is to keep expanding and reaching out to the world, to the ends of the earth. . . . May God’s love and encouragement continue on this beautiful mission in the name of Jesus!”

The celebratory service included some spirited singing by the Korean group and concluded with a Korean fellowship lunch served to a packed house. ❧

The release is based on longer articles that appeared in the Summer 2008 Charleswood Mennonite Church e-zine, The Grapevine.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JONATHAN EMERSON-PIERCE



“I really felt connected to everyone this morning. It didn’t seem to matter that we came from different backgrounds. We really felt like one church.” This was one of many similar comments by congregants at Hagerman Mennonite Church, Markham, Ont., on World Communion Sunday, Oct. 5. Hagerman’s regular members were joined by others from Markham Chinese Mennonite and the Markham Christian Family Worship Centre, a predominantly Tamil congregation seeking membership with Mennonite Church Canada. Bryan Moyer Suderman provided special music and Albert Jebanayagam, a visiting Sri Lankan pastor (pictured standing), preached the sermon.

PHOTO BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Something for everyone at Equipping Day

BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON, SASK.

For everyone who has ever felt inadequate in their role at church, the Mennonite Church Saskatchewan Equipping Day was a good place to find answers. The annual event for church leaders of all descriptions took place on Oct. 25 at Mount Royal Mennonite Church in Saskatoon.

'I tend not to structure a particular children's time.'
(Brian Moyer Suderman)

A day filled with workshops and worship seemed like a good place to get recharged for the new fall schedule and people attending the day received their share of inspiration and direction. Speakers came from across

the country and around the province, covering topics on children and worship, the church's response to homelessness, technology in the church, building friendships in aboriginal communities, and talking on sensitive topics.

Brian Moyer Suderman sat on a bench strumming his guitar as he invited discussion on children in worship.

"How do we make the service more child-friendly," wondered Anna Rehan, MC Saskatchewan youth minister.

"I tend not to structure a particular children's time," answered Suderman, dismissing the idea that having a children's time in



Mennonite singer/songwriter Brian Moyer Suderman speaks about children and worship at the MC Saskatchewan Equipping Day.

the service takes care of their needs, while the rest of the service is for the adults. He suggested trying to keep children engaged in all aspects of a worship service, using as many opportunities as possible to teach them about faith and worship. ☿

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Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary is seeking comments about the seminary in preparation for its periodic evaluation by its accrediting agency. AMBS will have a comprehensive evaluation of 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.

You are invited to submit comments about AMBS to:

Public Comment on Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
The Higher Learning Commission
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
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Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of AMBS 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.



AMBS

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GOD AT WORK IN US

A personal odyssey

Cyclist endures rigours of biking across America in support of a Kenyan orphanage

STORY AND PHOTOS

BY PAUL LOEWEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
WINNIPEG

Extrême. That's what I'd call it. But that word barely begins to scratch the surface. It's called Race Across America (RAAM), and it's known as the world's toughest bike race. Four thousand eight hundred kilometres from Oceanside, Calif., to Annapolis, Md. Over 30,500 metres of climbing (the equivalent of scaling Mount Everest three-and-a-half times). And all in less than 12 days.

I was part of the crew for my father, Arvid Loewen, who wanted to test the human limits of his physical, mental, emotional and spiritual endurance this past summer. It meant staying awake when his body wanted to fall asleep—even while on the bike. It meant riding around 20 hours a day just to make it to the finish line. The clock never stops. Everything the riders do is part of their time, eating and sleeping included.

RAAM is not known as the world's toughest bike race without reason. During the heat of the day in the California desert,



Dad would drink nearly two litres of water every hour and struggle severely with eating. He soon discovered that, apart from his regular sports drinks, the only food that would slide down his throat was greasy KFC. That and McDonald's Big Macs and milkshakes became common over the next week.

After 10 days on the bike, having had only a couple hours of sleep each night, Dad was nearing the East Coast of the USA; we were sure we could smell the salt in the air. Determination born of years of experience shone through as he put his "race face" on and literally attacked the Appalachian Mountains. He set a blazing pace through some of the steepest climbs of the entire trip, outdistancing the competition in his age category (50-59) and passing three riders on the way to the finish line. He fought through that last night with only half-hour naps to keep him awake on the bike.

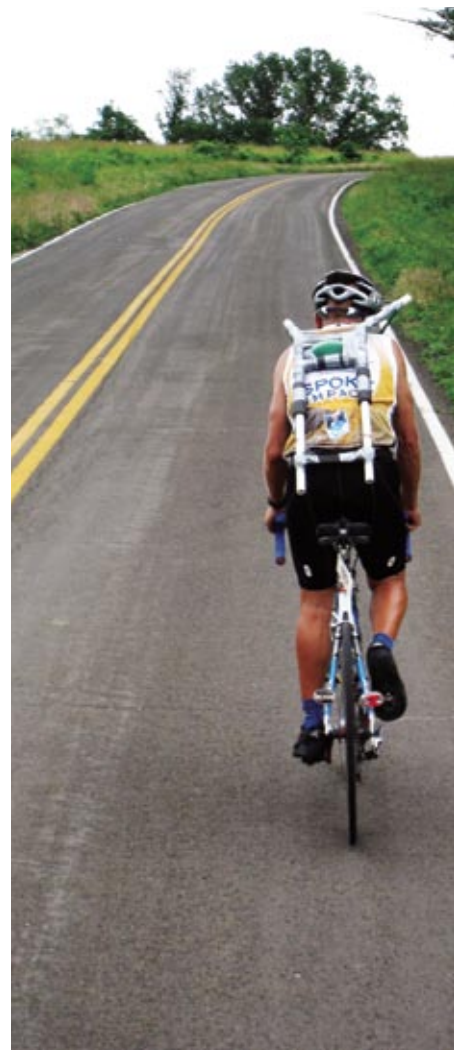
Finally, after an accumulated time of 11 days 3 hours 19 minutes, Dad pulled up to the pier in Annapolis. Tenth out of 25 riders—and first in his age category—he had done phenomenally better than he had ever hoped for. As a finisher of RAAM, he received a jersey, a medal and the chance to stand up on the podium and speak about the race.

The passion and excitement shone through his weary face as he held the microphone in one hand and kept his bike steady with the other. There was much

more to this event than simply a bike race, he said.

Dad has been a supporter of Mully Children's Family (MCF), a dynamic street rescue orphanage in Kenya, for the past three years. This event was a fundraiser for MCF, and the jersey Dad wore proudly displayed the logo of the orphanage which has saved over a thousand lives and souls, as founder Charles Mulli has pulled them from poverty and given them food, shelter, education, love, and hope, with the help of a loving God—a God my father loves to serve. ☸

Originally published in a longer format by Breakaway magazine. Paul Loewen and his wife Jeanette are junior youth pastors at Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. Visit Arvid Loewen at his website (spokeimpact.com).



PERSONAL PROFILE

A pastor of pastors

Saskatchewan conference minister Jerry Buhler focuses on building trust

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON, SASK.

Having spent 18 years ministering in Alberta, Jerry Buhler came to the role of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan conference minister with plenty of experience. More than two-and-a-half years into his position, his focus is not necessarily to hire great pastors for leaderless churches or deal with problems between individuals. Instead, building trust among pastors and between pastors and their congregations

The father of five has also poured his energies into building healthy churches, not just healthy leaders.

is important, says Buhler, admitting that it “drives a good part” of his job.

“To be a healthy area church, trust needs to be there,” he says. He knows there are good working relationships between leaders in Saskatchewan, and wants to encourage them. That, it seems, is the impetus for the retreats he organizes.

When Buhler noticed there was a high number of fresh new faces among MC Saskatchewan pastors, he saw the benefit of getting everyone together to talk about their experiences.

“The biggest gift Jerry provided at our retreat for new pastors was to create a space for conversation,” says Lois Siemens, pastor of Superb Mennonite Church. “It is difficult to find ways to provide places for pastors to connect with each other.”

A similar idea was spawned when Buhler noticed the startlingly high number of pastoral husband-and-wife teams in the province. During a one-day retreat at his home, Buhler, together with his wife Kara, cooked for and hosted the six couples who came and gave them opportunity to discuss the unique dynamics in their situations.

“It was a positive day,” says Margaret Ewen Peters, who, together with husband Gary Peters, pastors Hanley Mennonite Church.

Another theme that also pushed its way into the day was the concept of working in bi-vocational pastorates. A high number of MC Saskatchewan churches also have pastors who both preach and work at a second job, many of them in agriculture.

His care and concern for the well-being

of church leaders may be just part of his job, but Buhler is wise to put such time and effort into these relationships. Two years ago, lack of leadership among Saskatchewan churches was an issue. A dearth of good pastors made his job more challenging.

The father of five has also poured his energies into building healthy churches, not just healthy leaders. Since his arrival in the province, the number of intentional interim pastors has grown. That, he believes, is a good thing. He doesn’t believe in rushing to fill a pair of shoes behind a pulpit. Rather, he is more concerned with how the congregation is dealing with the upcoming change in leadership.

“In situations where the congregation has been with the same pastor for 15 years, it is a good idea to have an interim period,” he explains. The church members can use the time for reflection or work to review its expectations. “If there’s an unfortunate ending, the congregation needs to deal with that,” he adds.

The role of an intentional interim, then, is to come into the situation and help

PHOTO COURTESY OF JERRY BUHLER



Mennonite Church Saskatchewan conference minister Jerry Buhler says building trust among pastors and between pastors and their congregations is an important part of his job.

a church through the grieving process. Drawing a distinction between the intentional interim and interim, Buhler suggests the role of the first comes with a definite agenda while the role of the second relates to helping out with pastoral duties such as preaching and visiting.

Just because a church has hired an intentional interim doesn’t mean there are problems, however; sometimes it is just a good idea to take time to process a change in leadership. “It’s more than filling in,” notes Buhler, “It’s working with that period of a church’s journey.”

The first one to take the role of intentional interim pastor in the province was Ken Bechtel, when he signed on to be an intentional interim conference minister. He was hired specifically to help the area church travel through a time of decision-making.

This way of looking at congregational life is an increasing trend, says Buhler, using the idea that an intentional interim is a “pastor of the process.”

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ARTBEAT

MUSIC REVIEW

A worship CD without the platitudes

Devotion.

By Steve Bell. Produced by Roy Salmond. Signpost Music, 2008.

REVIEWED BY AARON EPP

Canadian singer-songwriter Steve Bell has long been critical of contemporary Christian music, including worship music.



"I'll be very surprised if this season isn't one of the low points in the history of music writing," he told *Christianity Today* in 2005, adding later that "there's nothing about the music that's coming

out that's even remotely reflective of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There's no mystery. There's no nothing. It's just all platitude after platitude after platitude. And half the time one line actually is not a logical flow of the last one. It's just bizarre . . . but it sounds right, so everybody goes for it."

On *Devotion*, Bell gets to put his music where his mouth is. Although many of his songs, such as "Ride On, King Jesus" and "Wings of an Eagle," have been used in worship for years, this is the first of Bell's 15 CDs that is deliberately and consciously a "worship" album.

Contemporary worship music is often criticized for monotonous repetition of lyrics, crescendos that play on people's emotions and lyrics that focus on the individual—"I love you, God; I need you, God;

you are my God"—rather than focusing on community.

Songs like "Almighty God," "Jesus Feed Us" and "The Lorica" on *Devotion* manage to avoid these pitfalls. Eight of the disc's 10 songs were written by Bell's longtime friend, Gord Johnson, and are sung regularly at St. Benedict's Table, the Anglican church the two attend in Winnipeg. Bell and his wife Nanci even chose the sequence of songs deliberately to follow an arc of worship similar to that of St. Benedict's.

Although the songwriting on Bell's albums is always marvellous, they have often suffered from over-production. Not so on *Devotion*. Whether it's the electric guitar on "Almighty God" or the backing vocals on "Everything We Need," Bell and producer Roy Salmond have hit on just the right mixture of instruments and vocals to tastefully serve these simple songs.

While some people may be put off by Bell's use of male pronouns to refer to God, *Devotion* is a finely crafted collection of music that reflects the mystery of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Best of all, the CD booklet includes lyrics and guitar chords so that listeners can actively participate in the music by singing along at home or freely incorporating these songs into their own worship settings. ✎

Aaron Epp is Canadian Mennonite's national correspondent.

PHOTO BY AARON EPP

Edith Krause, a printmaker from Langley, B.C., stands in front of "Arnica," one of 11 pieces that are part of her "Through the Flowers" exhibit that opened at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg on Nov. 7. Krause was inspired to create the exhibit by a series of letters received by Franz and Liese Barga from 1928-33; in spite of the fact



that it was illegal—and virtually impossible—for those in the former Soviet Union to communicate with family outside the country, the Bargas received 463 letters from family members who were still living under Stalin. The exhibit attempts to reflect the experiences of those who were left behind, based on the letters. Krause used text and images directly from the letters to create the pieces, as well as family photos. "Through the Flowers" is on display until Dec. 10.

FILM REVIEW

Buy N Large a great family film

Wall•E.

Written and directed by Andrew Stanton. A Disney/Pixar Release, 2008. G rated.

REVIEWED BY VIC THIESSEN

The animated science fiction film *WALL•E* (one of the year's biggest theatrical hits and now available on DVD) opens with a tremendously evocative scene of a strip mall on 28th-century earth. It's a polluted wasteland covered with trash, but we can still see all the ads for Buy N Large, the big box chain of superstores that dominated life in the 21st century, offering every conceivable item and service, including the space ships that were used to evacuate the humans when toxicity levels rendered the planet uninhabitable.

The ship was only supposed to be gone for five years while Buy N Large cleaned up the planet, but the clean-up proved too difficult. Seven hundred years later, the cruise ship is still sailing through space and the only "life" on earth is WALL•E, a small clean-up robot who creates skyscrapers with his squares of compacted garbage.

With almost no dialogue, the first half-hour of this gorgeous, intelligent film shows us how *WALL•E*'s daily routine (which includes watching old musicals on a VCR) is disturbed by the arrival of a female robot. This is followed by a delightful romance and a journey to Axiom, the Buy N Large space ship.

On Axiom, people have been taking an endless cruise, with every need met and every super-sized food and beverage available for purchase and consumption. As a result, people have become so large they can no longer even stand. "Buy more, eat more and be happy," say the ads on Axiom.

When WALL•E arrives on Axiom, he disturbs the routine of its passengers and crew, waking them up from their dream-like stupor. My favourite line comes from the captain, who, after "waking up," tells the autopilot (patterned after HAL, the

malfunctioning computer of *2001: A Space Odyssey*), "I don't want to survive, I want to live!"

Besides opening the eyes of the blind, WALL•E brings good news to the poor and oppressed, hangs out with those who have been marginalized by corporate culture (after freeing them from captivity), and sacrifices his life to save humanity before being raised from the dead. Sound familiar?

That this film was made by Disney, one of the world's great consumer-promoting corporations, is astonishing. It is either a sign of hope or of the crassest cynicism.

Not that *WALL•E* is perfect. I was

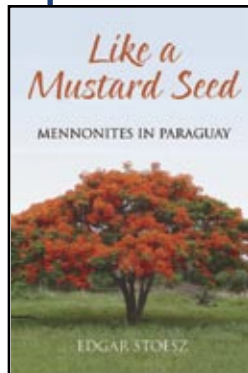
DISNEY/PIXAR PHOTO



disturbed by the way the little red-topped robot "villain" was thrown off the captain's bridge to fall to his "death" on the floor below, just like countless Disney villains before him. This time, because it's a robot, children even get to see the body crash and die.

Still, the messages in *WALL•E* are so overwhelmingly positive and radical (for Disney) and the film so beautiful and delightful, that I am willing to overlook a few flawed minutes and give it my blessing as a marvellous film for all ages to watch again and again. ☘

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



Like a Mustard Seed Mennonites in Paraguay

Edgar Stoesz tells the inspiring story of the Russian, Canadian, and Mexican Mennonites who, beginning in 1927, immigrated to Paraguay and made a new homeland out of the jungle wilderness.

This is a fascinating story that deserves a prominent place in the annuals of Mennonite history. Paper, 280 pages, \$24.99

At-Tuwani Journal Hope & Nonviolent Action in a Palestinian Village

Art Gish offers an inside view of the work of Christian Peacemaker Teams in the Palestinian town of At-Tuwani. Through vivid stories told in journal fashion, Gish offers a candid but sympathetic portrait of traditional Palestinians in the shadow of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank.

Paper, 366 pages, \$17.99

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FOCUS ON MISSION & SERVICE

Taiwan group celebrates 60 years of medical mission

BY SHELDON SAWATZKY
Mennonite Church Canada Release
HUALIEN, TAIWAN

With dancing, choirs and speeches, Taiwan believers and former mission workers celebrated the 60th anniversary of Mennonite medical ministry in Taiwan on Sept. 19 at the Mennonite Christian Hospital in Hualien.

A 35-bed hospital built in 1954 under the leadership of Dr. Roland Brown has evolved into a 500-bed regional teaching hospital with more than 900 employees.

The Taiwan medical work by Mennonites began in 1948 when Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) sent workers from Kaifeng, China, at the invitation of the

Taiwan Presbyterian Church. Mobile clinics, eye clinics and distribution of relief goods were carried out around the island among the indigenous groups, who mostly lived in the mountainous areas of the island.

By 1956, MCC transferred the medical ministry to the Board of Missions of the General Conference Mennonite Church, a predecessor agency of Mennonite Church Canada Witness and MC USA's Mennonite Mission Network.

During the celebration, Paul Lin, MCC's first employee in Taiwan and the first

Taiwanese Mennonite pastor, preached on "service in the name of Christ." Dr. Carl Epp and Susan Martens Kehler, former Canadian mission workers, received honorary Hualien County citizenship from the local magistrate.

Following the two-and-a-half-hour thanksgiving service, hospital officials dedicated the obstetrics delivery suite and ward of Mennonite Christian Hospital to the memory of Dr. Alvin Friesen, a missionary doctor from 1958-76. Friesen's widow, Ruby, of Outlook, Sask., and daughter Heidi were present for the ceremony.

Among other past medical workers who returned to Taiwan to attend the anniversary celebrations was Tobia Veith, daughter of Han Vandenberg, who served with MCC and the Commission on Overseas Mission, and Martha Vandenberg, who served as a nurse. Veith, her husband George and their three children are carrying on the family mission tradition as long-term workers for MC Canada Witness in Macau.

There are now 20 Mennonite churches in Taiwan. ☿

PHOTO BY SHELDON SAWATZKY



At the 60th anniversary of Mennonite medical ministry in Hualien, Taiwan, celebrants sliced a special cake. Doing the honours are former Commission on Overseas Mission worker Dr. Carl Epp of Winnipeg, Man., left, former mission worker Susan Martens Kehler of Abbotsford, B.C., Mennonite Christian Hospital board chair Paul Wang, and Mennonite Foundation chief executive officer Peter Huang.

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Mennonite Church USA

/// Briefly noted

CMU grads' radical journey leads them to Paraguay

WINNIPEG—Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) 2008 grads Scott Bergen and Dorothea Toews, both of Winnipeg, are serving for a year with the Mennonite Mission Network (MMN) Radical Journey program in Paraguay. Bergen is a member of Sterling Mennonite Fellowship, while Toews belongs to Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship. Radical Journey is designed to give young adults an opportunity to experience faith formation within an Anabaptist perspective, and help them to develop their leadership abilities. It consists of a month-long orientation, followed by 10 months of service in a ministry location around the world, and ends with a one-month internship at the participant's home congregation.

—CMU Release

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**Mennonite
Central
Committee**
British Columbia

**Mennonite Central
Committee BC invites
applicants for the following
positions:**

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is a church based

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

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

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:

Attention: Marie Reimer, Human Resources Director (confidential)
MCC BC Box 2038, 31414 Marshall Rd., Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 3T8
By fax: 604-850-8734 or by email to hrdirector@mccbc.com
For more information call 604-850-6639 or check www.mcc.org/bc

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

Yellow Page Business Directory

Education Resources

Mennonite & BIC Resource Centre
519-745-8458 x225 www.mbicresources.org

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Calendar

British Columbia

Dec. 6-7: Cedar Valley Mennonite Church in Mission is hosting a festive Olde English Christmas feast and dinner theatre, including jesters, minstrels and madrigal singers. For tickets, call 604-826-2445.

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.

Alberta

Jan. 23-25, 2000: Junior high snow camp at Camp Valaqua. For grades 7 to 9. Call 403-637-2510 for more information.

Jan. 24, 2009: Mennonite Men (Alberta) is celebrating the 25th anniversary of the JoinHands Building Program at Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, Alta. A noon-hour banquet will be followed by a time of celebration and challenge. For more information, call Marvin Baergen at 403-256-2894.

Feb. 20-22, 2009: Senior high snow

camp at Camp Valaqua. For grades 10 to 12. Call 403-637-2510 for more information.

Saskatchewan

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

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

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

For discussion

1. Does your congregation have people who became Mennonites without having grown up in a Mennonite church? How are their stories similar to, or different from, those featured here? In what ways are we all "Mennonites by choice?"

2. April Yamasaki writes about the sense of community she experienced at a Mennonite church. How successful is your congregation at fostering community? What responsibility do individual members carry to maintain community?

3. Doris Haley Haysom says, "I found my tribe of people." What makes her feel connected? Is her tolerance of Mennonite foibles unusual? Why do people play the Mennonite Game (trying to find connections with new acquaintances)?

4. Stefan Cherry and Sally and Les Warkentin comment that they were attracted by the concern for peace and justice in the Mennonite Church. Is this something that might attract others as well? How much do those who grow up in the Mennonite Church value peace and justice?

5. If you moved to a new community, would you seek out a Mennonite congregation? Why or why not?

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. For more information, visit cmu.ca.

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

Jan. 26-27, 2009: CMU winter lectures with Norman Wirzba, Duke Divinity School research professor of theology, ecology and rural life. For more information, visit cmu.ca.

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.

Feb. 20-21, 2009: MC Manitoba annual delegate sessions at Winkler Berghaler Mennonite Church.

March 6-8, 2009: Peace, Pray and Praise-It-Together (PIT) at CMU's Shaftesbury campus. Theme: "Face your fears." Speaker: Tony Campolo. For more information, visit cmu.ca.

Ontario

Dec. 3: Mennonite Heritage Centre Club presents "Mennonite Memorial 2009: Remembering victims of the Soviet inferno (1919-89), at the St. Clair-O'Connor Community Centre, Toronto, at 7:30 p.m. Keynote speaker: Harvey Dyck, historian and author. Topic: The background and events leading up to the unveiling of a monument in Chortitza in 2009.

Dec. 6: Grand Philharmonic Choir presents Handel's *Messiah*, featuring the GPC Chamber Singers and the Nota Bene Period Orchestra, First United Church, Waterloo, 7:30 p.m. Tickets available at 519-578-6885.

Dec. 6: Wayne Gilpin Singers present "That Christmas Night"—traditional and popular Christmas songs along with jazz stylings of Handel's *Messiah*;

at St. John the Evangelist Church, Kitchener, at 8 p.m. Tickets available at the door or by calling 1-800-867-3281.

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: Grand Philharmonic Choir presents Handel's *Messiah*, featuring the GPC Chamber Singers and the Nota Bene Period Orchestra, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Cambridge, 3 p.m. Tickets available at 519-578-6885.

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.

Dec. 14: Evening festival of lessons and carols, at Wanner Mennonite Church, Cambridge, at 7 p.m.

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.

Jan. 31, 2009: Grand Philharmonic Choir presents R. Murray Schafer's *Threnody* and Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man* with the KW Symphony Orchestra, Howard Dyck conducting. Centre in the Square, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m. Tickets available at 519-578-6885.

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.

Paraguay

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

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

UpComing

Tyndale Seminary offers 'Leading through conflict and change' course

TORONTO—When Tyndale Seminary asked its alumni of the past seven years what the seminary should change in its current curriculum, more than a few said, "Add a course on how to lead through conflict and change." Betty Pries, a member of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., will teach the graduate course, "Leading through conflict and change" in a one-week intensive format from Jan. 5-9, 2009. Pries is a senior associate with PACT Associates, a mediation and training firm based in Kitchener, Ont. The course, which can be taken for credit or audited, is geared to current pastors and leaders of para-church organizations. For more information, e-mail admissions counsellor Ryan Klassen at rklassen@tyndale.ca.

—Tyndale Seminary 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. Contact Director of Camping Ministries at 204-895-2267 or camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.



Goshen College announces six full-time, **TENURE-TRACK FACULTY** positions in the departments of Art, Biology, Education, English, Physics and Psychology beginning in the 2009-10 academic year. Application reviews will begin Dec. 1, 2008, and continue until the positions are filled. Please visit our website at goshen.edu/employment for more information about each position's responsibilities and requirements, as well as to submit an application. Women and minorities are especially encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is a liberal arts institution affiliated with the Mennonite Church.

Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church is looking for a **CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR**. This is a ¾-time position available immediately. Applicant must have strong administrative/managerial skills, financial and accounting experience, and be proficient with MS Office and computer accounting programs. The successful applicant will be required to indicate agreement with the purpose, vision and mission statement of Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church and the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and related statements of faith of Mennonite Church British Columbia. Direct resume w/cover letter by fax (604-850-8455) or e-mail: eemc@telus.net, or mail to Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Exec. Committee, 2051 Windsor st., Abbotsford, BC V2T 6L9.

Project Peacemakers **PROGRAM COORDINATOR**, a full-time MENNONITE VOLUNTARY SERVICE position in Winnipeg. Applicants will have a strong commitment to faith, peace and justice issues, as well as experience in writing, researching, public speaking and volunteer coordination. Contact 204-775-8178 or info@projectpeacemakers.org.

URGENTLY NEEDED

Christian Alliance International School (CAIS) in Hong Kong invites applications for the position of **GUIDANCE AND CAREER COUNSELLOR**, a post that has recently been vacated due to the serious illness of the former counsellor. CAIS is an Alberta- and Saskatchewan-registered school utilizing a Western Canadian curriculum. The School offers an attractive salary and benefits package.

Further details about the post and the application process may be found on the school web site at cais.edu.hk or those interested may contact the School Headmaster directly. Closing Date: Open until filled.

Please send applications to:

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ATTN: Mr. A. Enns, Headmaster
2 Fu Ning Street
Kowloon City, Kowloon Hong Kong
Phone: 852-2713-3733 Cell: 852-9221-3036
Fax: 852-2760-4324 Email: jobs@cais.edu.hk

Personal data will be used for recruitment purposes only.

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:

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hneufeld@telus.net

REFLECTION

Bind them *as a sign* on your hand



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID NICOL

Pastor takes to heart Moses' admonition to the ancient Israelites in an effort to remain faithful to God

BY DAVID NICOL

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

At this summer's Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Winnipeg we were urged to find our way at the crossroads of confusing signs by remembering how Jesus meets the people of faith there in the midst of troubling times.

During one worship session, we were invited to tie a thin strip of fabric around our wrists as the symbol described in Deuteronomy 6. There, Moses gives the commandments and decrees of God summed up with, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.*" These are not to be just cold laws chiselled in stone, but a way of life: "*Bind them as a sign on your hand.*"

I'm amazed that my thin band is still on my wrist more than four months later. It's been through a trip to the United Kingdom, a summer of yard work and occasional summer sun!

That little band on my wrist has reminded me of how God's steadfast, covenant love delivered so far away and so long ago remains firm despite our resistance to follow the path that has been shown to us. How much more will God do with us and through us if we more faithfully live in his love and follow his guidance at each crossroad we face. ☛

David Nicol is pastor of Waters Mennonite Church, Lively, Ont.