

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

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## EDITORIAL

# Emmanuel, God with us

TIM MILLER DYCK  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

**R**etired Mennonite Mutual Aid stewardship theologian Lynn Miller tells the following story in his book *Firstfruits Living*. Here is a shortened version.

There was once a monastery that had fallen on hard times. Fewer people came to visit. A handful of old monks carried out their tasks with heavy hearts. The abbot spent many hours in prayer, asking God to send renewal.

At the edge of the property, an old Jewish rabbi had built a little hut and came sometimes to fast and pray. One day, the abbot decided to visit the rabbi and open his heart to him. As he approached the hut, the abbot saw the rabbi standing in the doorway, his arms outstretched in welcome.

The two embraced like long-lost brothers. The rabbi invited the abbot into the hut. In the middle of the one room was a table with the Scriptures open on it. Then, to the astonishment of the abbot, the rabbi began to cry. The abbot found himself crying, too. For the first time in his life, he cried his heart out in the presence of another man.

After the tears ceased, the rabbi said, "You and your brothers are serving God with heavy hearts. You have come to ask a teaching of me. I will give you a teaching, but you must not repeat it to anyone.

For if you do, on that day you will die."

The rabbi looked straight at the abbot and then said in a quiet hushed voice, "The Messiah is among you."

For a while, all was silent. Then the rabbi said, "Now you must go." The abbot left without a word and no one saw the rabbi again after that day.

The next morning, the abbot called his monks together. He told them he had received a teaching from the rabbi. He was forbidden to repeat it, but he was sure it was from God and would change their situation.

Change things it certainly did. Each time the abbot saw one of the monks he thought, "Is Brother John the Messiah? Or Father Matthew? Or me? What does this mean, 'The Messiah is among you'?"

The other monks noticed a change in the abbot. He began to treat them all with a special reverence. It was as if he had seen something special in each of them.

After a while, the monks began to change. There was a gentle, wholehearted quality that was hard to describe, but easy to notice. Occasional visitors found themselves deeply moved by the lives of these monks. Before long, people were coming from far and wide to be nourished by the prayer life of the monks. Young men were again asking to be become part of this holy community.



In time, the abbot grew old and fell ill. Fearful that the teaching that had brought such spiritual renewal would be lost, the monks gathered around his bed and pled with him to reveal the secret of their renewed faith.

In the whisper of a man about to meet God, he said for the first time those supremely powerful words, "The Messiah is among you."

Jesus told us that if we wanted to show love for him, the way to do that was to show love to the people around us in the same way we would for him. "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me," he said in Matthew 25.

In this time of celebrating Christmas, there are many ways to honour Christ's example in our daily lives. We bring out things of beauty into our lives and homes. We seek out special ways of showing love to other people. We encourage ourselves to exercise the spiritual gifts of generosity and charity by giving more. We spend time with people we otherwise might not see very often. We try to spend our money in ways that help those with less gain financial resources, so that more will have enough.

All these things are important. But our highest calling is simply to worship Jesus, the one who came for us. Out of this come all the others. This is the most important part of Christmas for me. It is the celebration of Christ the Messiah coming to us and living among us: God in his fullness, present, teaching us by example how to live in his grace and truth.

*"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. . . . From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace"* (John 1).

## ABOUT THE COVER:

**Christmas is all about gifts, beginning with God's gift to us: the Lord Jesus Christ come to earth as an infant. In return, our best and most proper gift is our worship, not only at Christmastime, when "goodwill" seems a little easier to come by, but the whole year through. Our Christmas feature begins on page 4.**

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490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5

WATERLOO ON N2L 6H7

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

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

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**Correspondents:**

**Aaron Epp**, National Correspondent, [ca@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:ca@canadianmennonite.org), 204-885-2565

ext. 259; **Amy Dueckman**, B.C. Correspondent, [bc@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:bc@canadianmennonite.org),

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# The gift of worship

BY FERNE BURKHARDT

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

*Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,  
bow down before him, his glory proclaim.  
Gold of obedience and incense of lowliness  
bring and adore him, the Lord is his name!*

*Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness  
of the poor wealth you would count as your own.  
Truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness—  
these are the off'rings to bring to his throne.*

**T**his epiphany hymn text by John S.B. Monsell in *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (No. 220) is just one of many we sing at Christmas that offers worship to God. “O Come All Ye Faithful,” (No. 212), a favourite we sing again and again, repeats an invitation: “Oh, come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.”

And the English translation of the text of the contemporary Venezuelan song of Jesus’ birth, “*Nino Lindo*” (No. 207), says: “Child so lovely, here I kneel before you. . . . You are Christ, the Lord . . . stealing my devotion, stealing my affection, stealing all my soul.” Simple adoration and complete surrender.

When we offer our gift of worship to God, we join the key players in the drama that is the Christmas story: Mary, the shepherds and the magi. Mary in her “Magnificat” (Luke 1:46-55) pours out her soul in praise to God, her “*Saviour, the Mighty One.*” The

shepherds—the riffraff of Jewish society, the outsiders, the marginalized—we are told, “*returned, glorifying and praising God*” (Luke 2:20).

The magi, on the other hand, are “not just ordinary gentiles, but rather they represent the spiritual elite of the gentile world,” explains Richard B. Gartner in *Matthew*, one of the Believers Church Bible Commentary series. When the magi arrived at Jesus’ home after a long, arduous journey, “*they were overwhelmed with joy . . . and they knelt down and paid him homage*” (Matthew 2:10-11). Matthew uses the same term for worship 13 times in his gospel, notes Gardner, in most instances describing a response to Jesus: “When the magi pay homage to Jesus in Matthew 2, they foreshadow the worship of Jesus as the risen Lord in Matthew 28.”

Only the magi brought concrete gifts, but each of the people in the Christmas story brought a special gift: unadulterated worship. Mary didn’t gloat about

## The best Christmas gift

BY CAROL PENNER

Christ comes as a gift into your life, but he doesn’t come wrapped in shiny paper and ribbons and you can’t say “Isn’t that nice,” as you quickly slide him under the bed or store him in a dark closet, thinking that someday you’ll find a place to put him.

Christ is a gift that you can’t pack away neatly in a box, bringing him out for special holidays like Christmas or Easter. There isn’t a place in the house where you can put him and leave him; this gift is always at your side.

The gift of Christ is one of those noisy Christmas gifts, whispering in the night, crying out during the day at unexpected times.

“Do you love me?” he whispers.  
“Feed my sheep!” he cries.

Where do you put this gift?  
In your heart. In your mind. In your soul.  
Pretty soon this gift has taken over your life.  
“I had no idea how time consuming this gift would be,” you’ll say, and sometimes you’ll wonder about the “No return” policy.

But mostly, you will fall in love with the gift of Christ.  
You will lose yourself in this gift.  
You will find yourself in this gift.  
About this gift you will say from the deepest part of your soul, “Thank you . . . this is just what I always wanted.” ❧

*Carol Penner wrote this poem on Christmas Eve 2005. She is pastor of The First Mennonite Church, Vineland, Ont.*

getting a leaked memo from an angel before the story broke; the shepherds didn't bask in the glory of getting a scoop from no less than heavenly beings; and the magi didn't herald their own wisdom in tracking down the infant king. Worship in each instance was only about God. And that is what worship should be.

"The purpose of worship," says author Marva Dawn, "is to honour our God and give him the praise he deserves. Period." She also says that good worship "brings people together as we focus on God and praise God."

May our worship in this Christmas season and throughout the new year be as authentic and pure as that of Mary, the shepherds and the magi. ☸

*Originally published in the December 2006 Mannheim Messenger, the newsletter of Mannheim Mennonite Church, Ont. Reprinted by permission of the author.*

# A contrarian view of anti-consumption

BY AL DOERKSEN

The annual Christmas "shop till you drop" season is nearly over for another year. I don't actually like the pressure, the crowds and the malls. Nevertheless, what I dread even more is the usual anti-consumption rhetoric that comes from some corners. I have decided to push back. Here are my arguments for consumption mixed with a measure of thought and intelligence:

- **Don't fall into the trap of anti-consumerism.** Ask yourself how many people you would like to dis-employ this Christmas by failing to engage in the trade and commerce that makes the world go round.
- **Live broader than the confines of the**

**100 Mile Diet.** We live in a global community. It is good to support local producers, but do not fall into the trap of neo-protectionism, which excludes distant producers from our markets. Enjoy a cup of coffee, a banana, an orange and other foods that have travelled some distance, knowing that producers, processors and transporters have as much right to work and earn an income as you do.

- **Fair trade is a good thing, but it only works if people consume.** Middlemen like Ten Thousand Villages do play a useful purpose in the value chain that connects producers to markets. Fair trade works to ensure that those portions of the value chain that have the least

PHOTO BY ROSS W. MUIR



shopping is good

# Christ\$mas rhetoric

economic power are also treated fairly. So buying fair trade coffee, cocoa or clothing is useful.

• **Buy something local, but also buy something from China or India or another developing economy.** Recently I read an article by a family that has been “China-free” for a year. That is repugnant. We need to start acting as though we live in a global community, and we need to celebrate the increasing prosperity being experienced in Mexico, China and India thanks to globalization.

• **Buy something extravagant like an original work of art or a handmade carpet.** Our world needs these influences and contributions if we want to be more than mere material consumers of daily needs.

• **Happily pay higher prices for organic food.** Organic foods are healthier for you, but are more expensive to grow, and those who produce them require a fair return on their efforts to stay in business. At the same time, recognize that organic foods are a luxury that mostly only the rich world can afford; much of the world lives on what it can get.

• **Pay above the market price for something.** I had my shoes shined in India. The going rate was five rupees; he asked for 10 (about 25 cents). I gave him 50 rupees and walked away. It cost me little more than a dollar to surprise him, to usefully interfere in the local market and to shorten the number of hours he had to work to feed himself and his family. There are other ways to overpay. Deciding to purchase from a small independent retailer trying to survive, as opposed to a lower-priced big box store, might be a good way to start.

• **Celebrate high energy prices.** It will encourage you to buy something energy-saving.

• **Buy some new piece of technology.** Digital film cameras are less expensive to operate and are easier on the environment than conventional film cameras; cell phones have democratized information for millions of poor people in developing economies; and iPods use a fraction of the energy of previous music machines. Buying technology rewards the innovators and inventors of this world. We need them.

• **Pay more for quality.** Cheapest is not always the best value. Higher quality items frequently last longer and often have a lower cost per use. They take longer to hit the landfill sites. Buying quality encourages good engineering and careful craftsmanship.

• **Look for items that contain a maximum amount of recyclable materials.** In general, leave plastic bags and other unnecessary packaging material at the store. Bring your own reusable bags when shopping.

• **Boycott boycotts.** The economic boycott of Cuba hasn't worked. Proposed

boycotts of Myanmar (Burma) and Iran are not only politically ineffective, they mostly only punish the poor. In a boycotted economy, the rich and powerful may be inconvenienced, but they will continue to eat. It is people at the bottom end of the ladder who will pay the price. If you have to boycott something, let it be the trade in small arms.

• **Forget the Reformation for a few days.** Become Renaissance people. Celebrate a little. Enjoy a glass of *glühwein* (hot spiced wine) while visiting with a neighbour. Shed your guilt and don't spread it to anyone else. Look for ways to be generous. Make larger donations than you had planned.

• **Finally, consume only what you can afford.** Avoid the credit card trap. ☘

*Al Doerksen is a member of Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, and president of International Development Enterprises Canada. Reprinted from The Marketplace.*

## ☘ For discussion

1. When you sing Christmas songs, do you regularly reflect on the words and meaning? Which songs best express a true spirit of worship and praise to God? How much do archaic language or confusing word order detract from a song?
2. Fern Burkhardt says we must join the characters of the Christmas story and bring our gift of worship to God. How do music, physical posture (kneeling, hands lifted) or visual art enhance worship? Does Christmas provide more opportunities for praise and worship than other times of the year?
3. Our society tends to go into consumer overdrive at Christmastime. Do you agree with Al Doerksen that anti-consumerism is a trap? How much do you agree with his contrarian view of anti-consumerism?
4. Doerksen advocates for generosity. Do you think consumers tend to be more generous than anti-consumers? Under what conditions should we feel guilty about buying something extravagant?

## VIEWPOINTS

# Tragic anniversaries

BY JANE WOELK

For most Christians, the approach of Christmas brings to mind thoughts concerning the celebration of the birth of Jesus. But for many people, it also brings horrific memories of tragic anniversaries of violence against women and children.

Fourteen women were shot and killed at Montreal's École Polytechnique on Dec. 6, 1989, by an enraged woman-hater. These young women went to school that day full of aspirations for wonderful careers, oblivious to the fact that it would be the last day of their lives.

An anniversary we take note of here at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) office in Winnipeg is the disappearance of the child of our own staff member, Wilma Derksen. Her daughter, Candace, disappeared on Nov. 30, 1984, and her body was found a month-and-a-half later. Our staff grieves with Wilma and Cliff, as they remember their daugh-

women. If every peace-minded person opposed acts of hatred and violence on humanity, and urged governments to include women in peacemaking processes, visible changes would be evident in our society. One way in which people can be proactive against violence against women is to implore various levels of government to promote regulations against media programming which clearly promotes misogynistic thought patterns.

I was working with a group of junior high students once, where the teens had the opportunity to share their preferred music. Together, we listened to the music and discussed the words. One student played a song with phrases like "woman hater" and "I want to maim her, I want to rape her, I want to kill her." These words of disdain and hatred of women clearly stand out in my mind. This student's response to the question of why he had chosen to play this particular song for us

*Why is it okay to market music directed in hatred towards over half of the earth's population?*

ter and the violence that took her from them. (See "A journey of resilience," page 34.)

Violence against women isn't new. Statistics Canada documents prove that the homicide rate for women went up close to 30 percent between 2000 and 2004. In 2000, 149 women were murdered in Canada. By 2004, that figure had reached 196.

The purpose for remembering the events of Dec. 6, 1989, and Nov. 30, 1984, is to move ahead with organized prevention programs, as well as to focus on the importance of listening to the voices of

was, "I like the music."

Calmly, I explained the impact this music had on me as a woman. I told him that the words led me to believe that the songwriter hated women and, in fact, was promoting violence and hatred towards all women. I explained the damage that could be done to someone listening to this music for any length of time, and suggested that he destroy it. My thought at the time was, "Was this quiet-spoken young man making a statement, showing his own propensity of hatred towards women, or seeking help?"

I am dumbfounded that this type of

music is allowed to be sold in stores, when any music of a racist nature would be banned. Why is it okay to market music directed in hatred towards over half of the earth's population?

What can we do about this? I invite all of the readers of this article to approach retailers who market this type of music and ask them to refrain from selling it. Voice your opinion because, if no one speaks out, the practice will continue. Young ears will hear the demeaning words over and over again, and these words will penetrate into the very being of their souls, bringing about unhealthy—and perhaps even violent—attitudes towards women.

The Manitoba government has passed a law, the first of its kind in Canada, that broadens the definition of who can be considered a stalker. This new law is a step in the right direction. It does not prevent violence, but it is a small move towards empowering people, especially women.

Dec. 6 has passed for another year, but let's make every day a day to reflect, remember and plan for proactive ways in which every person can be proactive in preventing and eliminating all forms of violence, especially violence against women and children.

Luke 4:18-19 speaks about people being given the Spirit of God in order to be a "voice" to free those who have been oppressed and treated unfairly, and to give hope for a time when God will show kindness to all people. The Spirit of God is alive and active in us, and it is up to us to show others this active Spirit through proactive acts of mercy and compassion. Let's use our voices and work towards eliminating violence in our midst. ✻



Jane Woelk is coordinator of the Voices for Non-Violence program at MCC Manitoba.



## /// 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.*

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## ✉ Reject Christian Zionism as a theological heresy

I READ WITH some interest the accounts of the experiences of Mennonite leaders during the Mennonite Central Committee-sponsored learning tour of Palestine-Israel ("From throwing rocks to living stones" and other articles, Sept. 15, pages 4-14). I was grateful for their considered and thought-provoking observations.

One observation troubled me, however. As a community of faith whose primary foundation is theological, we should reject Christian Zionism first and foremost on theological grounds. While historical and sociological perspectives are helpful, and inform our perspective, the primary and foundational reason for rejecting Christian Zionism as we find it here in North

### FROM OUR LEADERS

# Why plant new congregations?

NORM VOTH

Starting new congregations is properly rooted in the opening words of Scripture, "In the beginning God created . . ." (Genesis 1:1a). God's creativity extends to the formation of a community that experiences and models God's blessing. Church planting, advocating for justice and peacebuilding are all responses to, and continuations of, God's initial creative work.



**First, church planting is one way of participating in God's mission to reconcile all creation in Jesus Christ.** It is imperative that any church planting initiative begins from this perspective of God's mission in the world. Starting new congregations extends the incarnation as a concrete representation of God's presence through a redeemed community.

Church planting allows for new expressions of faith that reflect diverse cultures. Since there is no neutral and generic culture, a variety of expressions are needed

to reflect cultural diversity. Since culture is not limited to ethnic or national identities, there is a need for a variety of faith expressions. As communities change and develop, there will always be a need for new congregations.

*New congregations have greater freedom to explore new structures and build a faith community.*

**Second, church planting encourages creativity.** New congregations have greater freedom to explore new structures and build a faith community. This can stimulate creativity in existing congregations. New monastic communities developed around a rule of life are one example of a creative form of community life. New congregations exploring ancient liturgies and rituals give voice to those looking for a mystical and contemplative worship.

**Third, new congregations are most**

**effective at inviting and integrating new people into a faith community.**

It may be a result of a clear vision for evangelism, or that people new to faith have more significant relationships with people outside the church. In the same way that new faith commitments and baptisms energize congregations, new congregations bring energy and enthusiasm to the Mennonite Church.

Starting new congregations invites risk. Can we trust the Spirit's direction that challenges some of our cherished and meaningful traditions? Are we prepared

to give away control to empower others in the mission? Will we widen the welcome by confronting our own fears and prejudices about others?

The whole trajectory of Scripture reflects God's desire for reconciliation and restoration. Starting new congregations is one creative way to participate in God's mission.

*Norm Voth is director of evangelism and service ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba.*

America must be theological. Those who wrote in *Canadian Mennonite* rejected Christian Zionism for what I believe are secondary considerations, not the primary one.

Christian Zionism shifts the atonement of Christ from its position of pre-eminence in order to create “theological space” for its own political purposes. Christian Zionism posits that Gentiles are saved by the atonement of Jesus of Nazareth, and persons of Jewish ethnic background will be saved under a different, or second, covenant. Clearly, this position is neither supported by the evidence of Scripture nor by the witness of the apostles.

Let us, as a community of faith, find solidarity with the Palestinian Christian community as exemplified by Elias Chacour. Let us think carefully, using the tools of history, sociology and the rule of law. But let us begin at the beginning. Our foundation must be founded on right thinking, which will assist us in living aright in the world.

Let us first reject Christian Zionism for the untruth it is. Then let us reject it because it justifies injustice against people of Palestinian ethnic background. One rightly follows the other.

WALTER BERGEN, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

### OUTSIDE THE BOX

# What a *sheephony!*

PHIL WAGLER

One of the great experiences of my time well spent in the Arrow Leadership Program was a day of preaching. If you think this sounds exceedingly dull and like being court-ordered to some religious management course, you’d be dead wrong. That day was like sitting in on the Kingdom Symphony Orchestra.

We Arrowheads are a diverse and beautiful mix—a variety of leaders from different countries, ethnicities, denominations and vocations.

Each is unique and on that day we were each given the monumentally minute task of delivering



a three-minute sermon. I have rarely been so nervous. The mix of trying to impress—that’s not very holy, but it is honest—and seeking to compress the gospel into 180 seconds was enough to drive one to Pepto-Bismol. But a day spent hearing the good news of God’s love declared and embodied through the dynamism of such diversity was divine. What a symphony!

This inspired our church’s elder retreat this fall, where we asked some of our leaders to deliver similar three-minute homilies. It was fun watching them sweat. But it was even better hearing

the uniqueness of the gospel declared through their uniqueness and passions. What a symphony! It was, once more, a potent reminder that we need a preaching people, not just a preaching class or profession.

The gospel is not merely a concept or another in the great rivalry of moral ideals. It is the power of God (Romans 1:16)! It is yeast and salt. It is light in the pervading darkness, a whisper of hope amidst the moaning cacophony of the

*The gospel is not merely a concept or another in the great rivalry of moral ideals. It is the power of God (Romans 1:16)!*

age. It is God’s Word stealthily gossiped in dark alleys and unashamedly shouted from rooftops. The Word becomes flesh. It moves into the neighbourhood and speaks our language. The gospel is a living declaration of good news, a clarion call of another world, of the gregariousness of grace, of a different kingdom that is at hand. And for those who have subscribed to its regular delivery, the gospel is a vocational call to declaration, proclamation and demonstration.

To believe God’s good news is to become a preacher. To “preach” is to proclaim glad tidings. Is this not the task of

every believer? The communion of saints is a preaching community. We are sheep hailing our Shepherd. We bring good news of great joy that is for all people. Equipping this preaching community, this gospel band—this flock—is the task of those labelled “preachers.” Those asked to teach regularly are actually called to light, stoke and pour gas on the fire within the believing community and watch it spread. Sadly, we have trained the flock to be dumb sheep instead of roaring lambs.

This is far from the biblical vision. Moses longed for the whole of the Lord’s people to be prophets (Numbers 11:29). Paul yearned for the same beautiful reality (I Corinthians 14:24-25). Jesus, the

logos of God and a simple carpenter’s son, declared that the Holy Spirit would release a diverse symphony of good news witnesses on the world (Acts 1:8). We are all to be ready to give a reason for the hope we are convinced of (I Peter 3:15). Preaching is for the people, by the people, through the people, and for the sake of people who need to hear from and see in loving action the *sheephony* of heaven. Who is waiting to hear you bleat?

*Phil Wagler is equipping a preaching community in Zurich and Clinton, Ont. (phil\_wagler@yahoo.ca).*

## ✉ Mercy is indeed a gift

RE: “GOD’S GIFT of mercy” editorial, Nov. 10, page 2.

Tim Miller Dyck mentioned the experience of one of his Sunday school teachers who had been in prison, and how grateful he was to have been forgiven.

Mercy is a word that is not used as much as it

should be. We live in a culture that is influenced and educated by a legal system that wants to litigate every problem. The first words of counsel to an offender are to deny any wrongdoing. Asking for mercy is not even considered.

I am reminded of the passage in I Corinthians 1:18-31, where Paul compares the wisdom of the world and

### NEW ORDER VOICE

# Turning MCC upside down

WILL BRAUN

In my last column I asked two Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) leaders about the “Wineskins” visioning process and the possibility of sharing MCC ownership with overseas partners. Now I offer my own thoughts on the matter.

During my terms with MCC in Brazil, B.C. and Manitoba, I felt a dual allegiance. On one hand, to the organization I am historically and spiritually bonded to, and on the other, to the people MCC sent me to work with. My split allegiances became most evident when they conflicted, like when the Cree people I worked with in northern Manitoba wanted MCC to advocate boldly on their behalf. The MCC board, after some strong actions, shied away and eventually dropped the program, to the dismay of my northern friends.

Aside from the contentious details of that situation, it demonstrated that it is the people who bring money to MCC (the “constituency,” in MCC lingo), not the people who bring needs (“partners”), who call the shots. As an MCCer, I served “in the name of Christ,” but at the pleasure of a privileged constituency.

MCC is currently “owned” by North American church conferences. These conferences constitute the primary donor base and appoint the majority of members to the boards that ultimately control

the direction of MCC. In this model, the primary relationship between constituency and partners is one of “us helping them.” And, as the Cree found out, “we” have the final say.

While the us-helping-them model cannot be dismissed wholesale, its underside must be acknowledged. It tends to be patronizing and colonial in its assumptions: “We have what they need.” “We know better than them.” “They should be like us.” And it too easily revolves around our money. There is a role for straight-up charity, but it’s time for MCC to abandon the us-helping-them model as its central narrative.

When I was caught between the MCC constituency and a “partner,” I came to



*[I]t’s time for MCC to abandon the us-helping-them model as its central narrative.*

believe MCC should consider a two-in-one constituency model. Instead of the constituency-partner hierarchy, maybe MCC could see itself as equally responsible to two constituencies: those who bring cheques and those who bring needs. This two-in-one constituency would ultimately be seen as a single interconnected body.

The northern Cree situation demonstrates the connectedness. There, resource extraction—specifically, a

hydroelectric system—results in benefits to “us” and harm to “them.” The solution is not for us to help them, but for all of us to work towards a more equitable economic relationship. The same dynamic exists elsewhere in the world, where poverty is a by-product of an economic system that benefits us at the expense of others. The rich and the poor are both part of the problem and the solution. We all need help.

The us-helping-them model is ill-equipped to acknowledge such realities. It usually casts us as saviours. It hears marginalized people when they say “help us,” or “thank you, you are wonderful,” but is less likely to hear when they say “we need you to stop patronizing and empowering companies that have their hand in our cookie jar.”

The answer to the MCC ownership question is not as simple as including “partners” as decision-makers. We need to own our own responsibilities. We need to nurture an MCC culture that is less about us and our well-meaning money.

Money has to have less sway. Humble, collective healing of broken economic relationships needs a more prominent place.

After all, MCC belongs not to the realm of business, where money rules, but to the realm of church, with all the paradox and upside-down values inherent in faith.

*Will Braun is editor of Geez magazine (will@geezmagazine.org).*

the wisdom of God. He says that God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. Why? So that no man or woman should boast before God.

We like to boast when we win or feel that we deserve recognition for what we received. And when we do not receive recognition, we feel discouraged.

Again, Paul reminds us in II Corinthians 4:1 that,

*“since it is by God’s mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we should not lose heart.”*

To receive recognition is important, but sometimes if we are discouraged it may be because we have forgotten that we have received mercy.

Thanks for the reminder.

DAVID SHANTZ, MONTREAL

## VIEWPOINT

# When Korea met Germany

BY JOON HYOUNG PARK

There are two people groups on earth with extremely low inter-cultural compatibility. They have trouble getting along well with others and stick to their strong mono-cultural beliefs and ethnic myths. They both regard themselves as “pure” in blood and “homogeneous” in appearance. They like to show off their genetic genuineness and cultural superiority. Who do you think they are? One group is from Europe and the other in Asia: Germans and Koreans.

Geographically on opposite sides of the planet, Germany and Korea have kept the

Germans greet face-saving Koreans? How could order-loving Germans endure feel-loving Koreans? How could direct-speaking Germans communicate with indirect-speaking Koreans? How could linear-thinking Germans confer with circular-thinking Koreans?

Not knowing the culturally delicate differences between the two countries, ordinary Korean Christians now knock on the door of German-dominant Mennonite churches. With a simple and naïve universal belief that “we are all the same in the name of Jesus, so we will be

*Crestfallen by the German restraint and reservation, the newcomers hide away as soon as the Sunday service is adjourned, not even attempting to say hello to a stranger.*

same myths for a long time, contributing to the strong cultural bonds and “we-ness” inside their societies. However, it is a disadvantage when it comes to mingling and mixing with other countries and people groups.

But in the 21st century of “no boundaries” in economics and culture, what if these two seemingly incompatible countries happen to meet at one place, perhaps at a Mennonite church in Canada? How could tongue-saving

well cared for as we were in our Korean churches,” these newcomers by chance sign the visitor’s card in the pew and hope against hope that everyone gets used to—and gets along well with—each other.

As weeks go by, though, they realize that pure Germans show no emotions on their faces and no fluctuations in their accents. Crestfallen by the German restraint and reservation, the newcomers hide away as soon as the Sunday service

is adjourned, not even attempting to say hello to a stranger.

Having lunch at home, they start to miss the days at their Korean churches, where they were too close to keep to themselves and where no secret was allowed, where they enjoyed meeting together from dawn to midnight, sometimes for prayer and most of all for fellowship. Culture-shocked, they feel they must make a decision: “to stay or to leave.”

At Mennonite churches, Koreans are now at a crossroad. On the one hand, they do not deny learning that Germans cherish community traditions, respect each member’s spontaneity and keep individuality foremost. Also, they are inspired to see that Germans are so good at waiting for each individual’s commitment to be part of a community. Nobody pushes or pulls; they just wait and wait and wait. Externally accepting these meaningful values, Koreans, on the other hand, have a hard time internally assimilating them and discarding their own “speak quick and do quick” attitudes. Struggles go on and time flows.

So how can Koreans finally break through the culture shock if there is no direct answer in the Bible or in the culture books? Likewise, how can Germans cope with this unprecedented encounter with oriental Koreans? How can God intervene and, if he does, what will he say in a situation that nobody dares to challenge?

*Joon Hyoungh Park is a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C., and a Korean-Canadian intercultural educator and author.*

## ✉ Where is the reaction to 'The Crimson Phoenix'?

BETWEEN JUNE 23 and Aug. 18, *Canadian Mennonite* published three installments of Steven "Reece" Friesen's stories of "The Crimson Phoenix." I rather enjoyed the imaginative attempts to portray the gospel in a contemporary vehicle, complete with comic artwork, as it is a venture I once embarked on as well (not including the artwork), although to date I have not gotten too far with it.

Portraying Jesus as The Crimson Phoenix is certainly creative, alluding to both his shed blood and the fact that he rose from the dead, as the legendary phoenix was reputed to have done. And using a female as a disciple is certainly a contemporary touch.

I was surprised, though, that nothing appeared in "Readers Write" about this story as it was unfolding or in subsequent issues. Perhaps you received letters that, for various reasons, you did not publish. I glanced at the blogs you have links to on your website, but I didn't see anything to suggest that the story had been commented on there either.

How does one interpret that? Were the form and content of the story really that acceptable to the whole readership? If I was the author, I would certainly also be puzzled at the lack of any response.

LORNE BRANDT, RICHMOND, B.C.

*(We print most letters received, and have received no letters to "Reader's Write" on "The Crimson Phoenix" series other than this one. We did get two reprint requests and two readers personally commented that they didn't understand the format. —Ed.)*

## ✉ Israeli criticism about bias must be taken seriously

THE LETTER FROM Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein and Lou Adler ("Mennonite agencies charged with bias against Israel," Oct. 13, page 8) is an important opportunity to look at ourselves through the eyes of others. What do they see and why do they see it? If the view presented is positive, we are quick to pat ourselves on the back, but if it's negative, then it's easy to quickly become defensive.

Perhaps a better response would be to closely examine actions and perceptions that may have led to the criticism. Adlerstein and Adler are, I believe, correct when they say that the Mennonite community generally highlights the violent actions perpetrated against Palestinians more prominently than those carried out against Israelis within the original 1948 borders of Israel.

A number of years ago when my children were attending a Mennonite high school, a visiting CPter helped the school experience what it might be like to live in Palestinian territory, where the Israeli army was all-powerful and the average person had no right to object to poor treatment. It was an important experience. However, it would have been much more instructive if, on another occasion, the school had been made to live through a day when they might at any time be the victim of an attempted suicide bomber attack while going about their daily activities, as can happen in Israel. If this balance did happen, I did not hear of it.

I was happy to see Donald G. Peters' response to Adlerstein and Adler ("MCC defends its role in Middle East and talks with Iranian president," Oct. 27, page 9), and especially commend the expressed openness to meet with Israeli leadership and others interested in bringing about peace.

While critical of some Mennonite actions, Adlerstein and Adler also compliment the past actions of our church, and point out that our history and reputation position us well to take an active role in bringing about justice and mercy for both sides of the conflict. Let's not let this opportunity pass.

BETH METZGER, WATERLOO, ONT.



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## ✉ Bible must no longer be used to point out people's sins

RE: "IF ALLOWED, homosexuals would 'push' their views on others," and, "Time for church to put homosexual issue behind it," Nov. 10, page 8.

In my view, these letters used Scripture virtually as a weapon against gay Christian brothers and sisters. I was saddened by this. I had become hopeful that we, as Mennonites, were learning to stop the self-righteousness, the pointing out of other's sins, and, in particular, the hurtful practice of using the Bible to condemn. At the very least, it's totally counter-productive. How many gays or lesbians are going to want to attend a church that believes they are going to hell?

We all know that the Bible can be used to prove any argument we want it to. It's been used to promote hatred for centuries—from advocating slavery, racism and sexism, to genocide. There were biblical writers who promoted the eternal condemnation of many, including those who talk back to their parents or who wear red.

There is a cultural and historical context for that. Those writers knew nothing of science. They believed falsely, among many other things, that the earth was flat and that the sun revolved around it.

We no longer think that way. We've evolved in our understanding. We also know now that people no more choose their sexual orientation than they do their skin colour. There is no shame in either, and no place for condemnation.

When Scripture is used to condemn, it becomes ugly and detestable. Perhaps someday church periodicals will no longer allow Scripture to be used in this way in their letters section. I pray that day comes soon.  
**NOREEN JANZEN, STEINBACH, MAN.**

## /// Corrections

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote his book *Ethics* in the early 1940s. The publication date of the edition from which the work was quoted in "The pastor as choir conductor," Nov. 10, page 4, was mistakenly cited as the year it was written. On page 24 of the same issue, "Discerning the future," estimates for the number of attendees at Canadian Women in Mission (CWM) enrichment days over the years were inflated; in the 1970s such events "might have drawn 500 women from Saskatchewan; today that number would be fewer than 100," according to CWM president Erna Neufeldt. On page 4 of the Nov. 24 issue, Les and Sally Warrington of Bloomingdale (Ont.) Mennonite Church were misidentified. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the errors.

## /// Obituaries

### Albert Mario Dueck

Aug. 10, 1934 - Aug. 3, 2008



Mario? It was not until Bert, born on a farm in rural Ste. Anne, MB, on Aug. 10, 1934, received his birth certificate at age 18, that he discovered his second name was registered as Mario, not Menno. But by the time his parents, John and Maria Dueck, who had never even heard of this name, had gathered proof that the name was Menno, Bert had decided to keep the unique, new name. After 12 years of playing under the Manitoba maples, attending Landmark School, and helping “stook” sheaves and tend cows, his family moved to Abbotsford, BC the summer of 1946. Bert quickly embraced the challenges of chicken farm and berry patch, holding the family record of picking 312 pounds of strawberries, hulls removed, in a day. The family found a warm spiritual home at the West Abbotsford Mennonite Church. Before long Bert, along with many other young people, gave his life to Christ at an evangelistic service there. He was baptized by the Rev. H.M. Epp. That commitment guided him throughout life. Following his graduation from Mennonite Educational Institute, he worked at numerous jobs in addition to farming at home: cleaning the mess hall at the Abbotsford Airport; waiting on tables in CPR dining cars; working in lumber camps, plywood mills, peat bogs, and mental hospitals – sending home large portions of his earnings. In 1956 he entered Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now CMU), but was called home in November, after his father suffered a series of strokes. After Christmas he enrolled in Columbia Bible College (then, MBBI), close to home, while helping his mother and 16-year-old sister, Erna run the farm. His dad died the summer of '57. Two years later his mother married Abram A. Olfert and moved into Clearbrook. Bert completed teacher training in 1959 and married Berta Harder, also a teacher, that summer. Their first school was in the tiny native community of Hazelton, BC., followed by 3 years as vice-principal in Terrace. Bert heartily embraced the northern hunting and fishing lifestyle. In 1966 the family, now including two children, Raymond and Renie, moved to Vernon BC. Here Bert taught elementary

science for 18 years, retiring at age 55. Another son, Rory, joined the family in 1968. No Mennonite church existed in Vernon then, so Bert and Berta became lifelong members of the Vernon Alliance Church. Bert's retirement was filled with work, adventure, and volunteering. He and Berta built a house on a high hill overlooking Swan Lake, tended a huge garden, generously sharing the produce, and enjoyed their church involvements. They traveled, not only for pleasure, but also to visit and help their children and siblings in different parts of BC and AB, and to use their talents in mission projects in several countries. Bert also worked on many construction projects at their church camp, Eagle Bay. At the time of his death, he was running regular weekly errands for the food kitchen at the Upper Room Mission in Vernon. Tragedy struck the family the summer of 1995, when their youngest son, Rory, drowned while snorkeling in Victoria, where he was studying. Since Rory had all but completed requirements for an engineering degree, his parents were invited to the graduation ceremony to receive his degree and brass ring. Bert lived positively, focusing on faithful discipleship and caring for those in need or experiencing injustice. He is remembered for his pleasant manner, quick wit, readiness to lend a hand, and love of harmony singing, especially in quartets. In June Bert was diagnosed with multiple myeloma. Though he continued to live actively and fully, his condition suddenly worsened. On July 26 he was admitted to the Vernon hospital, where he died just before midnight on Aug. 3, 2008. More than 400 people attended the memorial service on Aug. 10, his 74 birthday. Touching tributes were given by his sisters, Doreen Neufeld (Hugo, Calgary) and Erna Wedel (Ernie, Enderby), by two friends, and by each of his children, Ray (Angie) and Renie (Dave) Kumpolt, and each of his five grandchildren. Also present were his three precious great-grandchildren. Before his burial next morning, family members wrote messages of love on the unadorned wooden coffin Bert had chosen. The cost difference between that and a regular coffin had already been donated to Eagle Bay Camp. Bert was predeceased by his parents and his stepfather, his son Rory, his siblings Agnes and Herman Dueck, and his stepbrother, Jake Olfert.

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Belletrutti**—Benjamin Daniel (b. Oct. 20, 2008), to Becky Wiens and Paul Belletrutti, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

**Lee-Epp**—Finn Baergen (b. Oct. 31, 2008), to Jennifer Lee and Chris Epp (Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.), in Calgary, Alta.

**Martin**—Julie Autumn (b. Oct. 15, 2008), to Jason and Donna Martin, Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont.

**Nicolas**—Sebastian (b. Sept. 6, 2008), to Dani and Solymar Nicolas, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

**Schiedel**—Caleb (b. Oct. 1, 2008), to Andrew Schiedel and Karen Martin, Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Steckle**—Owen Ryan (b. Oct. 31, 2008), to Jeff and Jocelyn Steckle, Zurich Mennonite, Ont.

**Stemp-Morlock**—Gwenyth Shalom (b. Oct. 23, 2008), to Laura and Graeme Stemp-Morlock, Rockway Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

**Wiebe**—Brody Tobias Jacob (b. July 16, 2008), to Brett Siemens and Natalie Wiebe, Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

### Marriages

**Boschmann/Feick**—Eric Boschmann (Arnaud Mennonite, Man.) and Carissa Feick (Hague Mennonite, Sask.), at Shekinah Retreat Centre, Waldheim, Sask., May 17, 2008.

**Bowers/Hart**—Dustin Bowers and Elisabeth Hart (Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.), at Wellesley Mennonite, Oct. 11, 2008.

**Friesen/Friesen**—Kaylee Friesen (Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man.) and Matthew Friesen, in Winnipeg, Nov. 1, 2008.

**Janzen/Wiebe**—Linda Janzen and Dean Wiebe, at Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., Nov. 1, 2008.

**Keenan/Weber**—Roseann Keenan and Dave Weber, at St. Agatha Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 22, 2008.

**Klassen/van Leeuwen**—Paul Klassen and Julia van Leeuwen, at Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil, Ont., Nov. 15, 2008.

**Martens/Peters**—Krissi Martens and Elroy Peters, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., Aug. 8, 2008.

**Morgan/Tiessen**—Benjamin Morgan and Laura Tiessen, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 23, 2008.

**Paetkau/Wall**—Alana Maurine Paetkau (Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Jeremy David Wall, at Crystal City, Man., Oct. 25, 2008.

**Pritchard/Retzlaff**—Mary Lynn Pritchard and Daniel Retzlaff, at Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., Oct. 11, 2008.

**Vos/Wiebe**—Amanda Vos and Rick Wiebe (Carman Mennonite, Man.), at Riverwood Community Church, Winnipeg, Sept. 12, 2008.

### Deaths

**Enns**—Arthur Herman, 86 (b. Aug. 6, 1922; d. Oct. 31, 2008), Arnaud Mennonite, Man.

**Giesbrecht**—David D., 92 (b. May 12, 1916; d. Nov. 17, 2008), Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask.

**Krahn**—Katharina (nee Klassen), 86 (b. March 7, 1922; d. Nov. 17, 2008), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

**Kuepfer**—Eva (nee Erb), 87 (b. March 13, 1921; d. Nov. 17, 2008), Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.

**Martin**—Loretta (nee Brubacher), 85 (b. Oct. 25, 1923; d. Nov. 9, 2008), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**McFarlane**—Harold, 85 (b. June 17, 1923; d. Nov. 12, 2008), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

**Myer**—Grace, 93 (b. Nov. 29, 1914; d. Oct. 23, 2008), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

**Nafziger**—Ray, 90 (b. March 27, 1918; d. Nov. 2, 2008), St. Agatha Mennonite, Ont.

**Peters**—Helen (nee Remple), 88 (b. Jan. 31, 1920; d. Nov. 5, 2008), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

**Riley**—Mary (nee Haas), 82 (d. Oct. 22, 2008), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Wiebe**—Diedrich, 82 (d. Oct. 7, 2008), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Wiebe**—Peter, 93 (b. Dec. 16, 1914; d. Oct. 28, 2008), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Zehr**—Katie, 87 (b. April 28, 1921; d. Oct. 24, 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](mailto:milestones@canadianmennonite.org) including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please include birth date and last name at birth if available.*

## Pontius' Puddle





## YOUNG PROPHETS

# God's gentle whisper

BY JAYMIE SCHMIDT

If there is one lesson that I've learned, it is to utterly and completely trust in God. There have been times when I have been privileged to witness this trust and experience the blessings that result. At other times, however, trusting God can be very difficult.

In the summer of 2007 the church where I am a member—Foothills Mennonite—opened a Patient/Family Guest House near the Foothills Medical Centre. The goal of the guesthouse is to be an extension of the ministry of the congregation. It provides Christian hospitality for people coming to Calgary to receive treatment or visit family or loved ones in the hospital.

The best thing about this guest home is that, instead of going back to a hotel after visiting hours, visitors have a warm, comfortable place to be. This option is economical—sometimes three times less expensive than a hotel. Families can stay as long as they need to, and there is a volunteer host every evening who makes sure the guests are comfortable. If they want to, guests can talk about their experiences with other guests and the host. Since having a loved one in the hospital, whether for serious or not-so-severe reasons, can be stressful, many guests appreciate this blessing.

I enjoy being involved in my church

Jackie and Kathleen, a couple from Ontario, were staying in the house. Their oldest son was living in Alberta and he was in hospital for major surgery to his abdomen.

Jackie and Kathleen had been away from home for close to three months by the time I moved in. For the first five nights I visited with them in the evening, mostly while watching the evening news. I felt like a guest in their house, because they opened up to me so willingly about why they were in Calgary and who they were. They talked about

spending their childhoods growing up in Ireland. They were also interested in me, in my life in Calgary, and what I was studying in school.

Sadly, on Dec. 23 Jackie and Kathleen's son passed away. I feel like I had developed a relationship with them, and I will never forget the experience we

solace. However, when the time came the right words didn't. One question I found difficult to answer was, "Why would [God] let him suffer?" Kathleen asked this question because her son had been sedated from the surgery for so long. Her hopes were in his recovery.

Many people ask this question, but it's one I thought I would never be confronted with. What was I to say? With my inexperience and discomfort with the situation, I was not in a position to answer wisely. My only reaction was silence. It seemed at that moment that Kathleen

needed a warm cup of tea and an ear to hear her concerns. Jackie and Kathleen did not need answers right away. They just needed comfort.

That evening spent with Jackie and Kathleen reminded me of one of my favourite stories about Elijah the prophet. God appeared to him in a way he did not expect. God was not in the earthquake, nor was

he in a great fire. God appeared to Elijah through a gentle whisper. This whisper was so powerful that Elijah had to cover his face (1 Kings 19). There are many Bible passages that I can recall to bring comfort to myself, but I have learned that it is hard to have comforting words for someone else, especially in a situation such as this. I know I do not hold all the answers to life and death. And I know that silence, or even a gentle whisper, is where God can be the most powerful. I need to put my trust in God, and let Him have the comforting words. ❧



PHOTO COURTESY OF CMU

*I wanted to approach them with words of comfort and solace. However, when the time came the right words didn't.*

community, so when the regular host took vacation time during my Christmas holidays from university last December, I volunteered for a week at the guesthouse.

shared. I remember sitting with them the night their son died as one of the saddest times I can think of. I wanted to approach them with words of comfort and

*Jaymie Schmidt, 22, is a history student at Canadian Mennonite University. She is a member of Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary.*

## STORIES OF FAITH IN LIFE

## Flat tire grace

BY JACK DUECK

Like the theme song to the old *Beverly Hillbillies* TV show, let me tell you the story of the Penners and the Thiessens, two feuding Mennonite families who found grace in a flat tire.

The story begins in the 1920s, when some Mennonites escape communist Russia and find a new home in North America. Within a few years the economic depression and the horrific dust storm years engulf them. Bearing *Reiseschuld* (travel debt payable to Canadian Pacific Railway) and mortgages, they put their communal creativity to the work of creating a new home for themselves. River dams and pumping stations create an irrigation system, opening the opportunities for mixed farming. Soon a cheese factory, credit union, hospital, Bible school and other community-based enterprises grace the mixed ethnic community.

But a Penner and a Thiessen have a falling-out over scarce irrigation water that flows through the district in a common ditch, and animosity flows into a full-blown family feud. Penner accuses Thiessen of drawing too much water, leaving only a trickle for him and his family. Raised voices escalate into a physical encounter that involves Penner pushing Thiessen into the canal. Angry language crowds out cool dialogue and the distance between General Conference Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren grows, so that peace between the two communities, like parallel train tracks, vanishes into the fading distance.

Although the two church communities have few associations—other than funerals—in common, their respective boards call Thiessen and Penner

to a conciliatory meeting at the local Mennonite Credit Union. They decide that Penner should apologize. He does so and Thiessen accepts with a grim nod. Penner then repeats the apology a second, then a third, time.

“Why three times?” a board member demands to know.

Replies Penner: ‘I’m too busy with dairy and harvest time to come here again. If Thiessen steals my water again, I’ll probably dunk him again. So I give you apologies to apply when needed.’

The families, although still neighbours, no longer visit. Children no longer play together. But, like many feuds, young love adds its complications. In this case, Harry Penner finds an unavoidable attraction to Sue Thiessen. Although seldom meeting, Harry receives some shy smiles from Sue at the cheese factory and general store. Their siblings become aware, but comments are muffled in whispers lest “the fathers find out.”

This feud ends so differently from other historic feuds—Kentucky’s Hatfields and McCoys, or *Romeo and Juliet’s* Capulets and Montagues—that festered into killings, contagious violence and extended family heartbreak. Thank God that these

*‘If Thiessen steals my water again, I’ll probably dunk him again.’*

two households—both alike in stubbornness and sinking into the spiritual death of animosity—are jolted back to life . . . by, of all things, a Model A’s flat tire!

In those days, farmers took turns collecting and delivering each other’s milk to the cheese factory, necessitating at least some ritual connection between Penner and Thiessen. One day, returning with the empty cans, Penner has a flat tire in Thiessen’s yard. With no spare tire, and

the patching equipment left at home for his son to fix another tire, Penner mumbles about walking home for patching.

Uncharacteristically, Thiessen calls out to Penner: “My son Peter is learning how to patch; he’ll be glad for the experience. And why don’t you join us for the noon meal? Elizabeth has made fresh borscht and *bulki* (white bread).

At a long table, with children arranged in ascending age along the sides, Thiessen and Penner sit at opposite ends, facing each other, seeing each other. An awkward silence is followed by a prayer of thanks for *Erloesung und Speise* (salva-



tion and daily bread). The guest is served first, and at Penner’s compliment on the delicious food, the children beam at their mother.

Yes, Harry Penner did marry Sue Thiessen and today, when their descendants meet for their annual picnic, they now consider themselves Penner-Thiessens (or, as they humorously call themselves: Dunkers and Dunkees).

At one such get-together that I was privileged to attend, an elder, eyes glistening, confided, “To this day, I never eat borscht without memory’s spiritual fragrance, seeing my father and Mr. Penner leaving the table conversing about the best time to cut the alfalfa.” ❧

*The names of the two families have been changed at the descendants’ request and some factual details are now uncertain, as the account presented here is based on oral history from a number of differing sources. —Ed.*

E-mail Jack Dueck at [ejdueck@gmail.com](mailto:ejdueck@gmail.com) or visit him online at [jackdueck.com](http://jackdueck.com).

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# Burns Lake church signs covenant

*Affirms ongoing membership in Mennonite Church B.C.*

BY LEE DYCK

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
BURNS LAKE, B.C.

“How do we propose to live our lives? Why are we here?” With these words Garry Janzen, Mennonite Church B.C. executive minister, addressed the congregation of Burns Lake First Mennonite Church on Nov. 23, the morning of its covenant-signing celebration.

Janzen reviewed the purpose and identity statement, vision statement and beliefs that are part of the MC B.C. covenant in preparation for the signing. With the congregation looking on, church moderator Wilf Dueck and assistant moderator John Rempel, along with Janzen, signed the covenant signifying First Mennonite Church’s continued membership in MC B.C.

This was the culmination of much discernment and discussion, prayer and seeking God’s will for the congregation, which has been part of the area church since the church’s beginning in 1954. Several of those in attendance were among the original members.

Following the signing, the congregation shared communion led by Dave Friesen of Abbotsford, who has served as interim pastor for the past month. Friesen encouraged those assembled to continue to walk alongside each other as Jesus did with the disciples on the Emmaus Road.

A number travelled from the Fraser Valley for this celebratory event, to rejoice with the Burns Lake congregants and encourage them for the road ahead.

“The covenant-signing was a beautiful thing, and people gathered around that,” Friesen said in a phone interview. “There

is a real sense of gathering, a sense of good will in the context of the church, and of moving ahead in finding a new pastor for the church.”

The MC B.C. covenant affirms shared vision and ministry in the area church that 30 of 34 congregations had previously signed in May 2007. Two of the four MC B.C. churches that did not sign at that time later chose to withdraw from affiliation with MC B.C. After ongoing discussion with the MC B.C. executive to discern its commitment to the area church, First Mennonite decided to sign the covenant in September. Abbotsford Mennonite Fellowship is still in discussion with the area church. ☞

*With files from B.C. correspondent Amy Dueckman.*



*Wilf Dueck, moderator of Burns Lake First Mennonite Church, signs the MC B.C. covenant, while MC B.C. executive minister Garry Janzen and assistant church moderator John Rempel look on.*

## Youths ‘impacted’ to care for creation

BY J.D. DUECKMAN

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

With November comes an annual highlight for Mennonite Church British Columbia youths—the annual Impact retreat at Camp Squeah. Many groups from churches in the Fraser Valley came together to learn about this year’s theme of “Creation care” from keynote speaker Matt Crick of Grand Rapids, Mich.

In his talk on the Sabbath he pointed out that God made it as a time to not just rest, but stop and reflect on God and all that he has created. The world wants people to just keep busy, but God wants them to actually stop from time to time and appreciate the world that he has made, Crick said.

Music was in abundance, as the worship team led participants in a selection of songs at every meeting. Saturday evening’s “coffee house” inspired the popular “mosh pit.”

“I liked singing with all these Mennos,” quipped Katrina Niebuhr of Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond.

Saturday afternoon activities ranged from the usual hiking, archery and field games, to the classic “Leaf Grab” and the thought-provoking “Stations of the Cross,”

where youths could follow the journey of Jesus from conviction to resurrection.

By the looks of it, Impact was a blast for all involved. Allen Kropp of Crossroads Community Church, Chilliwack, perhaps summed up the weekend best when he said, “I enjoyed the fellowship and getting deeper into my spiritual walk and being in harmony with nature and spreading my faith.” ☞



*There is nothing more Mennonite than an exciting game of Dutch Blitz. At one point during Impact 2008, there were three Dutch Blitz games underway.*

PHOTO BY GERALD DYCK

PHOTO BY J.D. DUECKMAN

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






The MAX team was recently working with a member regarding a necessary electrical inspection. In the process, they also learned this family was having more than an insurance issue.

With the only source of income being the husband's disability cheque, it made it difficult to take care of this insurance need, even though the *wholeness* of their safety and well-being was at risk due to the electrical system.

The MAX team sought the involvement of Mutual Aid Ministries to help with the cost of the inspection and possible repairs.

The Mutual Aid Ministries team met with the member's congregational leadership and learned that the family was raising money for a lift for the husband because it was becoming increasingly difficult to move him. They were short of the funding needed and Mutual Aid Ministries provided a financial grant to cover the shortage.

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# Budget shortfall

*MC Manitoba looks to trim \$100,000 worth of expenditures this year*

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent  
WINNIPEG

The Mennonite Church Manitoba board wants to take a year to listen to its member congregations as the area church responds to the significant financial crisis—a \$100,000 budget shortfall—it is facing.

“We plan to visit all the congregational leaders,” board chair Hans Werner told delegates who met at the annual fall delegate session held on Oct. 23 at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

“We called all the MC Manitoba congregations to see how each of them budgeted for 2008 and how firm that commitment was,” said Werner. “It has presented a significant challenge to cut \$100,000 from our spending this year.”

To deal with the crisis, the board has made cuts to its Camping Ministries as well as several program expenses and voluntary salary reductions in administration and general oversight.

“The trend in congregational giving to MC Manitoba over the past 10 years has remained flat in actual dollars. Taking inflation into account, we are doing 20

percent less joint ministry now than in 1997,” said Werner. “How do we discern the way forward?”

Kerry Enns, a delegate from Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite Church, expressed frustration: “Time after time we hear the same budget, the same programs, the same problems. It doesn’t surprise me that the numbers are flat. We need to energize our people about ministry. It’s not a money problem; it’s a vision issue.”

Derek Funk from First Mennonite, Winnipeg, wondered how much this budget considers and reflects the trends in the younger generation. “Many choose to work part-time and bring a different emphasis to their faith,” he said.

Delegates also asked for greater leadership from the board. “I’m not sure the listening process is what we need,” said Mel Letkeman of Grace Mennonite, Steinbach. “We ask you to lead. We want to hear how you would lead.”

“I decry the negativism we can get ourselves into,” said Hugo Peters of Winnipeg’s Bethel Mennonite. “A flat income may not be the picture in the churches. Churches have many more ministries going on. We need to find ways to celebrate all the things that are happening, instead of beating ourselves up.”

Delegates approved \$684,930 as the congregational giving portion of the 2009 proposed budget, a 2 percent increase from 2008 giving. They also gave provisional approval for a total budget of \$1.62 million. Final approval will be sought at the annual delegate meeting on Feb. 20-21, 2009, at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Delegates also heard from the task force that is looking at stewardship of the Camp Assiniboia property. Over the next year, an inventory of the camp will be undertaken. “We want to get a more scientific understanding of how the camping ministry can be carried out with mutual benefit to campers and the environment,” said task force member Justin Zacharias. A DVD is in the works to facilitate discussion among congregations. ❧

# From grape to raisin

*Seniors still need to be contributors to the church, not just consumers*

BY ABE WARKENTIN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
STEINBACH, MAN.

Nearly 100 seniors from across Manitoba gathered at an event at Steinbach Mennonite Church last fall, where they were told they were a gift to the church and the health of the church depended on their spiritual health.

Keynote speaker Robert J. Suderman, Mennonite Church Canada general secretary, acknowledged that “our church is going from a grape to a raisin.” He emphasized, though, that not only is aging a natural and normal way of life, but that the church and its members should see aging as a unique gift, rather than a problem. While aging forces people to acknowledge limitations, he said it helps seniors to be empathetic and frees them to be courageous and truthful. “Aging,” he said, “points us to hope.”

Suderman presented the following practical ideas for aging in the church, Seniors, he said, will need to:

- Be generous with financial gifts and focus them on strengthening the church;
- Be positively pro-active;
- Recognize the power for good and bad they exercise within the church, as the initiative for inter-generational harmony will need to come from them;
- Work at creative ministry to strengthen the church;
- Love other people’s grandchildren as well as their own;
- Not see themselves as primarily consumers of the services of the church, but as contributors to the plan of God through the church; and
- Be a blessing for the church. ❧

*Abe Warkentin is a member of Steinbach Mennonite Church.*

PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU



*Bethel Mennonite Church delegates Cheryl Funk, left, Delmar Epp and Hugo Peters discuss the significant challenges Mennonite Church Manitoba faces during the fall delegate session in Winnipeg.*

# Youths now really are different

*Pastors learn about keeping the millennial generation connected to the church*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY  
Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT.

Andy Brubacher Kaethler, director of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary youth leadership program, *!Explore*, addressed the issue of “what’s not working in youth ministry” with 15 Mennonite Church Eastern Canada youth pastors, pastors and conference ministers last month.

A litany of situations was described:

- Thirty teens and young adults in one church—who attend Sunday school, get together socially and are connected to the congregation—chose not to get involved with faith-exploration classes.
- The fragmented nature of youth groups, with different secular music styles leading to different subcultures.
- The “hyper-involvement” of some youths, who view church and youth group as just one interest among many, resulting in what one participant dubbed “episodic involvement” in church activities.
- Youths who are used to getting their TV shows and movies from the Internet wonder why the church isn’t available on podcasts.

Kaethler responded that the current generation of youths is trying to overcome time and space with “everything always and everywhere available.”

Sharing about the “millennial generation,” those youths born after 1982, Kaethler noted that they tend to connect well to parents, look to older people for advice, are more conservative than their parents about law-keeping, and are looking for ways to positively influence their world. They are also technology-savvy, live highly

structured lives and are high achievers.

Programming for them needs to work with postmodern culture, giving room for questions, building a core Christian identity through all that is done with them, and giving them adults to emulate—adults who admit to imperfection and doubts, and who are comfortable telling their own faith stories, warts and all. Mission and service

trips do all of these, Kathler said, adding that churches need to equip parents to communicate their faith to youths, so that youths have Christian adults to emulate.

Kaethler ended the evening with a reminder of Deuteronomy 6:4-12, where faith development happens all day, every day, whomever the youths are with. ✎

## Kraybill dresses down for Sunday afternoon

*AMBS president part of a focus on pastoral leadership in MC Eastern Canada*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY  
Eastern Canada Correspondent  
BADEN, ONT.

Taking a cue from the casual dress at Waterloo North Mennonite Church at the Nov. 2 morning service, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary president Nelson Kraybill opted for a sweater in the afternoon, only to be met by MC Eastern Canada executive minister David Martin in a suit and tie at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden. Ironically, Martin had “dressed up,” knowing Kraybill’s habits of stylish dressing!

Drawing on the incarnational hymn of emptying in Philippians 2, early Anabaptist confessions of faith and church rules, Jesus’ teaching about leadership in Luke 22, and current studies into pastoral demographics, Kraybill painted a landscape of leadership and authority in the church. Noting that he had been challenged when taking on the role of AMBS president, to “recognize his power and authority or others will ‘pull your strings,’” he urged leaders and congregations to call self-emptying leaders whom God can empower.

According to Kraybill, strong Anabaptist leadership is made up of pastors who are grounded in Christ with a strong personal spirituality; listen to others before speaking themselves; face problems and seize opportunities, insisting that the group does the work; help the groups they lead to shape a vision that can be expressed in

one sentence; say what they believe and think after listening to others; and who stay in touch with the whole community, especially those with whom they disagree.

In the discussion that followed, Kraybill noted that businesses want leaders who are decisive, but that they also need leaders who will empower the people to work. Likewise, churches don’t need “omni-competent” leaders who do everything, he said. ✎

### /// Briefly noted

#### Wilmot Mennonite installs new pastor

NEW HAMBURG, ONT.—On Nov. 2, Wilmot Mennonite Church celebrated the installation of Dave Rogalsky as its new pastor. In his sermon, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada regional minister Maurice Martin examined the role of pastor with a playful, yet serious look at shepherding a flock. Rogalsky’s pastoral experience includes ministry in Manitoba and Ontario, most recently at East Zorra, Poole and Waterloo-Kitchener Mennonite churches.

—BY LIL QUANZ

# Vietnam Mennonite Church approved by government

*Legal status granted by country's Religious Affairs Committee*

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent

The Vietnam Mennonite Church has now met all requirements for full legal status and the denomination organized its first official general assembly last month. Held from Nov. 15-17 at a guest house and conference complex in the Binh Thanh District of Ho Chi Minh City, more than 200 participants, of whom 188 were delegates, represented 6,123 believers.

With full legal status from the Religious Affairs Committee in Hanoi, the church can now hold corporate title to real estate, establish a Bible institute for training pastors and leaders, form relationships with other denominations to sponsor joint projects, serve as an official partner with Mennonite Central Committee in relief and community development work, and extend and accept invitations for international conferences.

"We celebrate with the Vietnam Mennonite Church because it really facilitates the church doing what it wants to do, and that is to be a worshipping community and reaching out to the wider community as they see fit," said Gord Janzen, Mennonite Church Canada's mission partnership facilitator for Asia and the Middle East.

At the assembly, Mennonite dignitaries and delegates endorsed a 22-member executive council of the Vietnam Mennonite Church, the church's rules, a set of disciplines, regulations on pastors, and the church's operation plan for the 2008-12 term. The documents and regulations were necessary legal procedures for the church to gain legal status.

While the progress is positive, the news from Vietnam is not all good. Nhien Pham, a representative of the North American Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship and pastor of Vancouver Vietnamese Mennonite Church, reported at the end of November that there were eight

Mennonites in custody in Vietnam; some had been arrested for religious activities, some for human rights advocacy.

Although the Mennonite Church has been present in Vietnam since the 1960s, political upheaval in 1975 brought widespread disruption to religious practices and persecution of Christians.

Several church leaders were arrested and imprisoned in 2004, and reports of beatings

and torture followed. "The Mennonite Six," as they became known, have all since been released, Pham reported. "Relatively, they are healthy and serving the Lord with much freedom, though some still have lingering problems," Pham stated in a recent MC Canada release.

Following the 2004 arrests, Vietnamese Mennonites split into two groups, both identifying themselves as the Vietnam Mennonite Church. The group led by pastor Nguyen Quang Trung has now been granted legal status.

Janzen said that MC Canada is "trying to encourage the whole body of [Mennonite] churches" in Vietnam, both those that have been recognized by the government and those that remain unrecognized.

MC Canada continues to support the Mennonite Church in Vietnam with training for pastors and church-planting efforts. ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE



*In addition to business, the first official Vietnam Mennonite Church assembly included times of worship, which featured singing, choirs and liturgical dances from several of the congregations. Pictured, an 80-voice choir of denominational leaders, pastors and evangelists sings the "Hallelujah Medley."*

## /// Briefly noted

### **Kelowna congregation holds retreat, 'end of life' seminar**

KELOWNA, B.C.—In early November, 21 people gathered for Kelowna First's third annual church retreat. Keynote speaker Harry Loewen spoke on the theme, "Desert blooms and prickly cactuses," the story of the Mennonites in Paraguay. There was much discussion of the spiritual, economic and social aspects of life in a country very different from the one from which the Mennonites had come, whether that had been post-war Russia and Europe, or 1920s Canada. The month before featured "Prime Time," a seminar about end-of-life-issues. There were presentations from funeral directors, grief counsellors, financial planners, and a palliative care physician who spoke about the decisions involved in accepting palliative care, the mandate and nature of the care, ways to access it and the peace it brings to the families of those who have come to terms with their life and impending death.

—BY HELENE WIELER



# A sort of homecoming

*CMU's academic vice-president talks about the future and what it's like being part of a Mennonite community once again*

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent  
WINNIPEG

Developing an action plan that will guide Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) through the next decade or more is one of the key tasks facing Earl Davey, the university's new academic vice-president.

"It's important in this country to have a place where young men and women can think carefully and critically about what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ in the 21st century," Davey said during a

recent interview in his office on the university's south campus. "What should CMU look like going into the future? What are the needs of the church? How can CMU serve the broader church and broader society? It's a time of really asking those questions."

In today's world it's not enough to be intellectually incisive, he believes. Rather, society longs for people living faithful, authentic, caring lives of witness. "The parameters for assuring the success of CMU need to include its financial viability, but its success needs to be assessed by the extent to which it becomes a place of positive influence," he said.

An accomplished conductor and music professor, Davey began his position in July after five years as provost and academic vice-president at Tyndale University College and Seminary in Toronto. At Tyndale, he was responsible for all academic programming and faculty at the school. He also played a key role

in preparing an academic plan and developing new programs as Tyndale transitioned from a Bible college to a university college.

Coming back to Manitoba is a sort of homecoming for Davey and his family. Prior to working at Tyndale, he was academic vice-president at Assiniboine Community College in Brandon, Man. He expressed his excitement about being part of a Mennonite community once again, having committed to a five-year contract at CMU. "It's my hope that I'm able to make some contribution to this community over five years."



Davey

In a prepared statement released at the time of Davey's appointment, CMU president Gerald Gerbrandt noted Davey's reputation as a professor, choral conductor and academic administrator, as well as his strong commitment to the church: "He has the experience and skills that CMU needs at this point in history." ❧

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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# Memories are made of this

*But for some, the memories of popular holiday ministry are of undue pressure put on local organizations unable to cope with the distribution of gift-filled shoeboxes*

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU  
Manitoba Correspondent  
WINNIPEG

As has been the case for the past 15 years, thousands of Manitobans scrambled to fill shoeboxes with gifts for underprivileged children in order to meet Operation Christmas Child's Nov. 29 deadline again this year. The ubiquitous red and green shoeboxes could be seen stacked in church foyers, grocery stores, schools, business offices and Hutterite homes.

Operation Christmas Child, a program of Samaritan's Purse, was begun by evangelist Franklin Graham in 1993, and last year Canadians contributed 600,000 shoeboxes to the cause, a total expected to be topped this year.

Sylvia Janzen, a contact person for Operation Christmas Child in Carman, Man., accompanied a shipment of shoeboxes to Mexico several years ago. The trip made a lasting impression on Janzen, who paid her own way to Calgary but had all expenses from there covered by Samaritan's Purse.

"I will never forget the sounds of the children opening the boxes," she says. "Almost 500 children were standing in line waiting and waiting for their gift box. They couldn't open their boxes until all were distributed."

But for Ed and Elnora Wiebe, who worked in Belgrade, Serbia, from 2001-04 with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Operation Christmas Child has left a troubling memory. In Belgrade, a local church-based relief organization with which MCC was involved became a base for the distribution of aid to displaced people in war-ravaged Serbia. Shoeboxes were enthusiastically received at first because the need was great. Local churches were used for helping in the distribution, but soon the organization was being requested to take on more than it could handle.

"The deliveries that came via truck were in excess of what they could deal with. The pressure was on to take more. It started to become uncomfortable," says Ed. In 2005, the local organization decided it was not prepared to distribute shoeboxes any more unless Samaritan's Purse was willing to cover the cost of customs fees, warehousing and distribution of the shoeboxes.

"Yet to see the kids get [a shoebox] was worth it," he admits.

Excess shoeboxes sat in a Belgrade warehouse until Easter, which is a gift-giving time in the religious calendar of the primarily Orthodox community of Serbia. Remaining shoeboxes were disassembled and the contents sold at income-generating projects and bazaars.

Gerhard and Katherine Neufeld worked with MCC in Croatia and recall a similar bad experience in 1995. That year, Duhovna Stvarnost [DS], a long-time MCC partner organization, was responsible for delivering more than a half-million shoeboxes, resulting in a bill for distribution costs that Gerhard says Samaritan's Purse would not cover. As well, he notes that "a portion of the shoeboxes arrived too late for Christmas

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD WEBSITE PHOTO



*Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes filled with toys and personal items are a hit with millions of children around the world each year.*

distribution and were put into storage. DS was advised to 'open the doors of the warehouse and let whoever comes take as many as they want,'" he says.

Michael Ulrich, a media contact for Samaritan's Purse, says the organization's policies are reviewed annually and changed as needed. "We are in our 16th year now and initially the project grew so fast that we didn't have all the infrastructure in place," he explains. Ulrich says he was unaware of any involvement with MCC in the countries to which Operation Christmas Child distributes shoeboxes.

For those seeking a Mennonite alternative to Operation Christmas Child, "MCC is always competing for resources," says Arthur Mann, material resources warehouse coordinator in Winnipeg. This year, MCC has received a huge appeal for relief kits for Iraq, he says, and "once that appeal is met, there will be none left."

Werner Wiens, coordinator for MCC's Global Family, a program of sponsorship and education, concedes, "We will never have that kind of profile [of Operation Christmas Child]." ❧



# Farmers honoured for food legacy

BY KARIN FEHDERAU  
Saskatchewan Correspondent  
SASKATOON, SASK.

A trip to India and Bangladesh in 1981 changed the lives of two ordinary farmers from Saskatchewan. That year, Dave Buhler and Cornie Derksen travelled together on a tour to observe a food-for-work project with the then Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Foodbank.

Buhler, who represented Bergthaler Mennonite Church on the program's board, returned home with a vision. "We felt we had to do something," Buhler says now.

The first sale, simply called a charity auction, was held at Derksen's farm near Martensville, Sask., and brought in more than \$15,000. Three years later, the MCC Foodbank moved out from under the

umbrella of MCC and was opened up to participation by other groups. Now called the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, it works through 13 church-based organizations.

But the auction has continued with the same Mennonite support. After two years at Derksen's farm, it moved to a farm west of Neuanlage, Sask., where it has stayed for at least 25 years, even though the land changed ownership during that time. Steady improvements to the event over the years have included a pancake breakfast, food booths serving Mennonite food and a catalogued livestock sale.

Now known as the Sask Valley Auction, support for the sale has grown, with this year's auction bringing in an all-time high of \$120,000.

"The businesses in the Valley area support it heavily," enthuses Buhler. However, he is quick to include Derksen's



FILE PHOTO BY DAVID BUHLER

*The first sale in 1981, in support of the MCC Foodbank, was held at Cornie Derksen's farm near Martensville, Sask. It raised \$15,000, which was matched 2.5 to 1 by the Canadian government. In comparison, this year's sale raised eight times that amount.*

involvement as well as the hand of God "The glory should go to God," he wrote in his 20th anniversary sale report, "for his blessing has been upon this sale from the very beginning."

The Buhler and Derksen families were recently recognized for their efforts in establishing the sale more than a quarter-century ago. ☼



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# Loving her neighbours

*Former MCC youth intern starts kids club, then moves into the housing complex with them*

BY GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Release  
SASKATOON, SASK.

Every Wednesday Dana Barrand and her friends organize an evening of fun-filled activities for children living in the Golden Oaks Apartments on Appleby Drive in Saskatoon.

"Kids are so lovable," says Barrand as she returns home from her classes at the University of Regina's satellite campus in Saskatoon to find a large group of children waiting for her. Amidst warm hugs and laughter she unlocks the door to a three-

of children living in the housing complex and the lack of activities for them.

Barrand was a participant in a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) youth internship program working for MCC Saskatchewan's refugee assistance program at the time. With the support of MCC and the manager of the complex, Barrand started making arrangements for a weekly family fun night. The first event took place in August 2004. The manager had given her permission to use the tennis courts. "I had planned for 15 to 30 kids, but 75 kids showed up," recalls Barrand.

That September, the manager allowed her to move the activities into a vacant suite. In January 2005, a formal agreement ensured that the suite would be used only for events relating to the Appleby Kids Club and that MCC would cover the insurance fees.

The number of children participating in the weekly meetings continues to grow. And more than 200 people from the apartments and neighbourhood participate in community events.

More than 400 children between the

*'I had planned for 15 to 30 kids, but 75 kids showed up.'  
(Dana Barrand)*

bedroom suite that has been designated for the Appleby Kids Club, an informal club started by Barrand in 2004 when she was 22.

Her inspiration for starting the club grew out of her friendship with two brothers who arrived in Saskatoon in 2004 as refugees from Sudan. The brothers were living at Golden Oaks and every time Barrand visited them she was surprised at the number

ages of three and 16 live in the housing complex, which is comprised of 10 three-storey buildings and 240 suites. About 45 per cent of the suites are occupied by newcomers to Canada.

"We call this our little United Nations," says the apartment's manager, Tony Van Esch, estimating that newcomers living in the apartments represent more than a

MCC PHOTO BY JOANIE PETERS



*Challing and Najok Deng receive warm hugs from the founder of the Appleby Kids Club, Dana Barrand.*

dozen different countries.

In an effort to establish closer relationships and friendships with children who participate in the Appleby Kids Club and their families, Barrand and a friend moved into Golden Oaks in May 2006. Soon afterwards, more friends moved to the apartments. Over the years, 15 friends and young people from Mennonite churches and Bethany College have lived in the apartments, including six current tenants.

"We are all here intentionally. We are all here to love our neighbours," says Barrand. "This is something that is in my heart—just getting to know the families who live here."

Besides the young adults living in the apartments who regularly volunteer at the kids club, the club also receives strong support from church groups and individual volunteers, and from some of the groups participating in the MCC Saskatchewan short-term service program.

"When you work in my business, you often see the less positive side of people," says Van Esch. "Then you meet a group of people like Dana and her friends. It reaffirms your faith that there are people who give of themselves." ❧

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## Hope and new beginnings

*Life Bridge ministry to recovering addicts underway*

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

For those struggling with addictions, the journey to rebuilding health and relationships is paramount to recovery. That's where Life Bridge Ministries comes in. The year-old ministry at Kinghaven Treatment Centre is offering hope and new beginnings to recovering addicts and marginalized people.

Located next door to the former West Abbotsford Mennonite Church—that recently merged with Wellspring Christian Fellowship to form Level Ground Mennonite Church (as of Jan. 1, 2009)—Kinghaven is ideally situated for Christian outreach. For some time, church members have been reaching out to Kinghaven residents, inviting them to church services and other events.

Now the program is being expanded, adding a Next Steps program to help participants see what a new life in Christ can look like. The program includes an introductory Bible discussion group, a "Spiritual Twelve Step" study and an Alpha course. So far, the male residents of Kinghaven and female residents of nearby Peardonville House have the largest contingent of people in the program, although it is open to anyone in recovery.

"The question, 'Is the ground truly level at the foot of the cross?' forms the basis of Life Bridge Ministries," says part-time administrator Keith St. Jean. "Our answer to it—that yes it is—drives us to reach all people regardless of their background or present circumstances."

St. Jean says the merged congregation is at present providing the personnel for Life Bridge, with partial funding coming from the Evangelism and Church Development Committee of Mennonite Church B.C.

"Our dream is to see this ministry



Keith St. Jean, administrator of the Life Bridge Ministries program for addicts, asks the church community to consider, "Is the ground truly level at the foot of the cross?"

expand to the whole city, with people from all congregations getting involved in coming alongside and loving these people into the body [of Christ]," says St. Jean. "We would welcome any level of involvement, from supplying socks and underwear and Bibles, to providing transportation or opening up churches for meetings."

Other goals include a professional peer

program, in which Christian business people could become involved as mentors, and obtaining a 15-passenger van to facilitate transportation to and from programs, church and other events.

Life Bridge Ministries has a presentation to share with interested churches. For more information, contact St. Jean at 604-854-8181. ☎

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# Coming Home: Sudan

*Multimillion-dollar appeal launched by MCC*

BY TIM SHENK

Mennonite Central Committee Release  
SOUTHERN SUDAN

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is launching a 10-year, multimillion-dollar campaign to help people in southern Sudan recover from a devastating civil war. The campaign, called "Coming Home: Sudan," is focused on building schools, supporting education, assisting farmers and promoting peace in southern Sudan. MCC is seeking to raise \$400,000 for southern Sudan by next March, with an eventual goal of raising \$2 million per year through the campaign.

Sudan's 22-year civil war decimated communities in southern Sudan, which is one of the most impoverished regions in the world. About two million people were killed and four million people were forced to flee their homes before a peace agreement ended the conflict in 2005.

Since then, about 1.7 million people have returned to their home areas after spending years in refugee camps or other temporary

living arrangements. More people are continuing to arrive despite the fact that few resources, such as schools or food supplies, exist to accommodate the rapidly growing population.

MCC and its mission partners have already begun the work of rebuilding. In June, Christian Ecumenical Action in Sudan completed the construction of six

classrooms for two schools in Juba, southern Sudan's capital, with about \$250,000 in funding from MCC. Earlier this year, MCC contributed \$30,000 to provide the Juba hospital with medical supplies and equipment.

MCC, which currently has four workers in southern Sudan, is also seeking to expand its staff in the region. ☸

PHOTO BY JANICE GINGERICH



Joanna and Tanya Dyck Steinmann play one of the carnival games at East Zorra Mennonite Church's 13th annual Creation Celebration, an alternative to trick-or-treating for children in the church and wider Tavistock, Ont., community. This year, the church welcomed more than 50 children plus "young at heart" volunteers who dressed up as God's creations, played games, made trips to the prize store and enjoyed the food booth hosted by the Mennonite Youth Fellowship.

## /// Briefly noted

### A hundred quilts in six weeks

SASKATOON, SASK.—Like many Mennonite churches across Canada, First Mennonite in Saskatoon has a regular group of quilters who meet to make blankets for Mennonite Central Committee out of old fabric or cut-up used clothing. Recently, the eight members of the Ladies Aid—some in their 80s and 90s—completed 100 quilts in six weeks during their weekly 9 a.m. to mid-afternoon meetings each Wednesday.

—BY KARIN FEHDERAU



## Family & Sexuality in Mennonite History

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# Prison chaplain finds ministry 'through a side door'

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent

LANGLEY, B.C.

Steve Hoepfner, a chaplain at the Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre in Victoria, was licensed for ministry with Mennonite Church B.C. on Oct. 19 at Langley Mennonite Fellowship.

Hoepfner comes originally from Winkler, Man., but he and his wife had been living recently in Montreal. He graduated with a masters degree this past spring from the ACTS Seminary in Langley and he has plans to continue his studies. It was through study at Capernwray Harbour Bible School on Thetis Island, B.C., that Hoepfner became involved in prison ministry as a volunteer.

The couple both feel that God led them to B.C. and to prison ministry. Hoepfner says, "I see myself as living proof of God's grace—and sense of humour—since he knew I would fight being a congregational

minister all the way. He needed to somehow bring me in a side-door."

Hoepfner's approach to prison chaplaincy relies heavily upon restorative justice principles that speak predominantly of God's gift of reconciliation through Christ Jesus. "I feel it a tremendous privilege to minister to the staff and inmates of the prison, often marvelling at the way in which the gospel meets head-on with men who have lived lives in utter darkness, and committed the most heinous of crimes," says Hoepfner of the inmates he counsels at the maximum security facility. ❧

## ❧ Briefly noted

### MCC to scrap overseas used clothing shipments

AKRON, PA.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) will discontinue shipping used clothing overseas in 2009 as a result of a comprehensive review that is intended to strengthen MCC's material resource program. The review recommended that MCC continue shipping highly valued items like school, health and relief kits, blankets and canned meat to people in crisis situations, but that it discontinue other items like used clothing because of higher shipping costs, environmental concerns and the possibility of purchasing items closer to their destination. MCC's material resource centres will stop accepting used clothing for overseas shipments by the end of 2008. Some centres may choose to accept used clothing to resell, distribute locally or use in projects such as rug-making. MCC constituents are encouraged to contact the material resource centre in their province for more information. —MCC Release



### 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 [mcc.org/bc](http://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.

**Driver/Shipper/Receiver, Abby East Thrift Shop located in Abbotsford, BC.** This is a full-time (1.0 FTE) salaried position with benefits. 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 satisfactory criminal record check required.

**Manager Positions: MCC Thrift Shop, Chilliwack, & MCC Clothing Etc. Thrift Shop, Abbotsford.** These are full-time (1.0 FTE) salaried positions with benefits. The manager position includes overseeing the daily operations of the shop including assisting customers, organizing displays, monthly sales promotions, and tabulating shop metrics. Must possess strong interpersonal, communication, retail, and computer skills; specifically Microsoft Office Suite. Satisfactory criminal record check required.

**Donations Receiver/Sorter, Clothing Etc. Thrift Shop, Abbotsford.** This is a full-time (1.0 FTE) salaried position with benefits. The donations receiver/sorter will be responsible to the assistant manager and shop committee. The donations receiver/sorter is responsible for pre-sorting donations into categories, transporting sorted donations to designated areas, assisting the drive-through receiver, and responsible for keeping the lower receiving area neat and clean. A key element of this position is the ability to work as part of a team with both staff and volunteers. General knowledge of MCC and Thrift Shops is a definite asset. This position requires the ability to lift and move items up to 50 lbs. Satisfactory criminal record check required.

#### 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 [hredirector@mccbc.com](mailto:hredirector@mccbc.com)

For more information call 604-850-6639 or check [www.mcc.org/bc](http://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.

GOD AT WORK IN US

# Immersed in history

*Archivist/librarian Sam Steiner retiring after 34 years, but plans to continue writing and editing Mennonite history*

BY SUSAN FISH

Conrad Grebel University College Release  
WATERLOO, ONT.

Sam Steiner, archivist and librarian at Conrad Grebel University College, ends his 34 years of service with the acquisition of three significant donations to the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, housed at Conrad Grebel.

Among the donations from J. Harold Sherk are legal and business papers of Benjamin Eby and Joseph Schneider, early Mennonite leaders in Waterloo County, with Eby considered by many to have been the founder of Berlin (now Kitchener). Other more recent papers and personal documents belonging to Mennonite lay leader Isador Snyder and farmer Ephraim Cressman were donated by Helen and Jim

Reusser, along with diaries and letters from Florence Cressman Snyder, which offer insight into 20th century Kitchener-Waterloo. Paul Burkholder donated the diaries of his father, Lewis J. Burkholder, a longtime Mennonite minister in the Markham area and the author of the landmark work, *A Brief History of the Mennonites in Ontario*, published in 1935.

"It's been a privilege to be immersed in the historical life of Mennonites in Ontario," Steiner says. "I've helped many fascinating people in their research, ranging from Old Order Mennonite historians like Isaac R. Horst to radio journalists from Switzerland. The biggest change in archives, despite the unrelenting increase in paper records, has been the technological one. More than half of requests from patrons today are for digitized forms of sound recordings or photographs. And many of these requests come by e-mail."

Steiner, who retires from his current position at the end of 2008, came to Canada from Chicago 40 years ago as a political refugee (draft dodger). While Steiner's Mennonite family had a history of ministers, he was inspired to take his own stance after attending Martin Luther King's march to Montgomery, Ala., in 1965. He graduated from the University of Waterloo in 1973, taking many courses at Conrad Grebel, which helped him find "my way back to Christian faith within a Mennonite context." He began at Grebel as the archivist in 1974 and as a librarian in 1976, finishing his master of library science degree from the University of Western Ontario, London, in 1978.

A member of Rockway Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Steiner is the historian for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, secretary of the Detweiler Meetinghouse Inc., and a member of the executive of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario. His research interests are in the area of Ontario Mennonite history. He has authored two books: a

biography of Jacob Y. Shantz, a 19th-century Ontario Mennonite entrepreneur (1988); and the history of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener (1995).

"Sam Steiner has made many lasting contributions in his long career," says Jim Pankratz, Conrad Grebel's academic dean. "He, more than anyone else, defined the focus and the quality of the college library, and built the archives into an unsurpassed collection of resources on Mennonites in Ontario. His own research and publications are remarkable scholarly and public service achievements. . . . He has excellent working relationships with scholars and Mennonite archivists in all of the major

*'The biggest change in archives . . . has been the technological one.'*

*(Sam Steiner)*

Mennonite research centres. We are deeply grateful for what he has accomplished."

Steiner's initial retirement plan is to write a survey history of Mennonites in Ontario, from the beginning of Mennonite immigration to Upper Canada to 2000, in cooperation with the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario. This ambitious project will update the 1935 Burkholder project. He also recently accepted another three-year term as managing editor of the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO), and will continue to serve as president of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada.

The Mennonite Archives of Ontario holds source documents related to the history of Mennonites in Ontario. These include congregations, conferences, institutions such as Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, and individual Mennonite leaders. This archival collection continues to grow. While most of the archival collections are paper, there are also growing oral history, audio and visual materials. A database of photographs in the archives is searchable on the Internet ([grebel.uwaterloo.ca/mao](http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/mao)).

Steiner is being replaced by Laureen Harder-Gissing as of Jan. 1. Harder-Gissing has been the manager/librarian of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Resource Centre in Kitchener. ☼

PHOTO BY LINDA HUEBERT HECHT



*Sam Steiner, right, who retires at the end of this year as archivist at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, housed at Conrad Grebel University College, where he also serves as librarian, looks at documents with donor Helen Reusser.*



# Public service offers challenges, rewards

*Former adviser to Paraguay's president tells of four years as cabinet official*

BY CELESTE KENNEL-SHANK

Reprinted from the *Mennonite Weekly Review*  
LANDISVILLE, PA.

When Nicanor Duarte Frutos, then president-elect of Paraguay, asked Ernst Bergen, a successful Mennonite entrepreneur, to join his cabinet, Bergen was astounded. “I replied quickly, without thinking much, ‘You are completely crazy, Mr. President,’” Bergen said.

Duarte, whose wife is a member of a Spanish-language Mennonite church and friends with Bergen’s wife Lucy, then spoke passionately about how Mennonites in Paraguay criticize the government and think they have better solutions.

Bergen agreed to reconsider the request and, after consulting his family, business partners, friends and church, became minister of industry and commerce in August 2003, and then minister of finance two years later. When he was deciding whether or not to enter government, Bergen remembered the kindness the Paraguayan people had shown to Mennonite immigrants coming from Canada and Russia in the 1920s and ’30s. “God showed me clearly that I was a person who had the privilege now to give back something to the Paraguayan people by means of serving in this role,” he said.

By the time he left office in July 2007—because he felt exhausted—the Duarte administration had achieved many of its goals for Paraguay’s economy, including increasing exports, reducing external debt and investing more in public works.

Bergen told the story of his time in government to Phyllis Pellman Good of Good Books. The book was released Nov. 1 as *Jumping Into Empty Space*.

“Ernst was astonishingly forthright, and vulnerable, and honest and self-aware,” Good said, introducing Bergen at Landisville Mennonite Church on Nov.

10 at an event sponsored by the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.

When Bergen joined the Paraguayan government, it was a new experience for Mennonites of the Fernheim Colony in the Chaco to have one of their own at a cabinet-level position. “Normally what had been done in those communities is to do what the Bible tells us, which is to pray for government,” he said. Yet, as Duarte pointed out, Mennonites criticize the government, so, he said, “we must be willing to accept the challenge of public service.”

Bergen felt the prayers of Mennonites as he and several other Paraguayan Mennonites served in top government positions. For the community, “it was also a lesson in humility, that not everything turns out right because Mennonites are in power,” he said.

Bergen made it a rule not to appoint any Mennonites to government roles. “I didn’t want to give the signal that Mennonites thought they would reform or take over any segment of government,” he said. “On the contrary, my goal was always to be as close as possible to the general Paraguayan population.”

However, Bergen said he was “very hesitant” to take part in any military actions. “I am profoundly convinced that human beings do not have the right to take away or terminate another human life,” said Bergen, who also opposes the death penalty and abortion.

Yet his time in government led him to better

understand members of the military. “They have different convictions than I do,” he said. “I, for my part, had the joy of discovering it is not my duty to judge others.” Bergen brought that lesson to his work in government. “One of the experiences that has formed much of my thinking is the deep awareness that I am not perfect,” he said.

The Apostle Paul has been a model of leadership for Bergen. “He talks about his weaknesses, but nevertheless he continues to strive ahead,” he said. “The important thing is that our mistakes do not distance or separate us from the heart of God.”

Bergen believes God provided him with co-workers in government who had strengths where he had weaknesses, including his lack of public-speaking ability and lack of academic studies. He took business administration at Columbia University in Asunción and has a technician degree in agro-mechanics.

Despite these perceived weaknesses, Bergen’s success in his business—including one firm that supplies most of Paraguay’s electric engines and motors—has made him one of the wealthiest people in his country. He does not think it is wrong for business owners to earn a great deal of money, but they shouldn’t do it on the backs of their employees or by “destroy[ing] the competition.”

“Every family has to find their journey before God, and also in relation to the church,” he said, adding, “For me what is important is why one wants to gain more. . . . Some of what we consider success might, in God’s eyes, be loss.” ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF ERNST BERGEN



*In this 2003 photo, Ernst Bergen signs a document certifying that he is the minister of industry and commerce for the government of Paraguay. President Nicanor Duarte Frutos sits second from left.*

## ARTBEAT

# A journey of resilience

*Family of murdered teen expresses their grief through art*

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent  
WINNIPEG

Resilience can mean a lot of things. But for Wilma Derksen, it means forgiving the man charged with murdering her daughter 24 years ago.

Candace Derksen did not return home from Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute, the school she attended, on Nov. 30, 1984. A massive citywide search for the missing 13-year-old took place until her body was found seven weeks later, tied up and frozen in a little-used machine shed not far from her home.

The case remained unsolved for 22 years, but a break came when the Derksen file was handed to investigators in the city's "cold case" unit in 2006. Mark Edward Grant, 21 at the time of the murder, was charged with first-degree murder in May 2007; the charge has not been proved in court.

Derksen chose to forgive her daughter's murderer 24 years ago, in part because she feared what might become of their family if she didn't. She deals with the events that took place all those years ago every day.

"We weren't spared any of the pain, but I think we're surviving," she said at the opening of the Journey of Resilience art exhibit at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery last month; the exhibition is presented by Victim's Voice, a program of Mennonite Central Committee Canada that Derksen directs.

Healing and forgiveness don't happen overnight, Derksen said, but rather are journeys that take time. For her family, part of that healing journey has included sharing their story. "Ours is the acceptable story," because it's such a public one,

Derksen said, adding that it has given her family a chance to speak out—including through their art—on behalf of others who have experienced violence in ways that may not be as acceptable to talk about.

"There is bravery, dignity, courage, rawness and healing in this art," curator Ray Dirks writes in the introduction to the exhibition on the gallery's website. "Their art and involvement, passion and conviction come out of the ultimate trauma, the violent loss of a daughter and sister. Wilma is more than the instigator of this exhibition, she is a model of grace and compassion."

Cliff Derksen, Candace's father, has a number of clay sculptures in the show. One of them depicts a man bound to a post by barbed wire, crying for help. He made the sculpture in reaction to people who thought he was involved in his daughter's murder.

Another piece reflects how hard the past 24 years have been for Odia Reimer, Candace's sister. Over the course of four years, Reimer crocheted 490 tears, echoing Matthew 18:21-22, where Jesus instructs Peter that Christians are to forgive those who have sinned against them "seventy times seven." The tears hang down 10 deep from a seven-foot-square frame attached to the ceiling.

"My husband's depicted the pain of it, and she's depicted the toughness," Derksen said, calling the tears "[a] symbol of how

hard it is."

When asked if she would ever meet with Candace's murderer, Derksen said she is unsure. She does feel as though God is preparing the Derksen family, though. For what, she's not sure: "I wish I knew. It's a very scary moment, but I think going public [with this exhibit] and saying, 'This is who we are,' has helped us deal with the fear of the looming legal process that is ahead of us right now."

The date for Grant's preliminary hearing has been set for mid-February. The Derksen family isn't sure what will come of it, and they can't talk about the pending hearings or trial. "It feels like a large part of our lives is off limits," Derksen said.

She thinks the instinct for many in her situation is to shut down, remain quiet and put life on hold. The Derksens don't want to do that, though. They may not be able to talk about the pending hearings or trial, but they can still talk about the experiences they have had over the past 24 years: "We can talk about our struggle to continue to live, our fear of violence, our tears. Everything that's a part of the [exhibit] is safe to talk about, and that's a lot, actually."

Although Derksen and her family have wondered where God is in all of this, they feel reassured that God is now very close. "Right now we're in a very strong spiritual place," she said, "and it's just amazing." ❧

PHOTO BY AARON EPP



Cliff and Wilma Derksen stand in front of the 490 tears their daughter Odia Reimer crocheted over the past four years.

## TWO BOOK REVIEWS

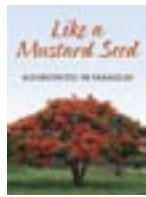
# Insights into Paraguay's Mennonites

*Like a Mustard Seed: Mennonites in Paraguay.*  
Edgar Stoesz. Herald Press, 2008.

REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER

Anyone travelling to the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Paraguay in July 2009 might want to be prepared with some understanding of Mennonite communities in that country. Edgar Stoesz, who has travelled to Paraguay more than 20 times through his work with Mennonite Central Committee, has written *Like a Mustard Seed: Mennonites in Paraguay*.

As his title suggests, Stoesz sees the present prosperity of Mennonites in



Mennonite communities in Paraguay. There are German-speaking Mennonites who migrated from Canada in 1927 and the 1940s; from Russia via Germany in 1930 and the 1940s; and from Mexico in the 1970s. Each of these groups developed their own colonies and they cover the spectrum from progressive to very conservative. In addition, there are Latino Paraguayan Mennonites and indigenous Mennonites.

To understand the various Mennonite

*Stoesz sees the present prosperity of Mennonites in Paraguay as something of a miracle.*

Paraguay as something of a miracle. God has worked to create a flourishing "tree" in spite of what seemed an impossible situation. The Mennonites who migrated to Paraguay felt as though they lived in a place of torment, but through perseverance, hard work and the grace of God, they have prospered. Today, some Mennonites are among the wealthiest in the country and a few have become involved in politics at the national level. (See "Public service offers challenges, rewards," on page 33.)

There is great diversity among the

groups in Paraguay, one needs to realize how and why they moved there. Stoesz provides a concise history of each group and explores how they have developed economically and in areas such as health care, education and missions. He does not try to explain the complex theological and sociological differences between the various groups, but sees great hope in what they have accomplished together. ❧

Barb Draper is the Books&Resources editor for Canadian Mennonite.

*One Body, Many Parts: The Mennonite Churches in Paraguay.*

Gerhard Ratzlaff (trans. Jake K. Balzer). Privately published, 2008, 307 pages.

REVIEWED BY HARRY LOEWEN

Gerhard Ratzlaff of Asuncion, Paraguay, has written several books on Mennonites in South America. *One Body, Many Parts*, first published in 2001 and now available in English, is an interesting, thorough and well-written



study of the Mennonite churches in Paraguay.

The Mennonites there are like no other community. Similar to the "Mennonite Commonwealth" in pre-Soviet Russia, the Mennonites of Paraguay have religious affairs

interlinked with all other aspects of life. Thus education, medical care and business ventures are not seen as "secular" activities, but as "religious" functions conducted as services under God.

While this close relationship between the religious and secular aspects of life can present problems, the book demonstrates that generally this church-state association works well. When the Mennonites went to Paraguay (from 1926-47), they immediately established schools for their children and soon began mission work among the indigenous population. Their educational system today is one of the best in the country and their work among the indigenous peoples is successful; indigenous children receive not only a basic education, but are also taught various practical crafts, such as sewing, masonry and carpentry.

While the Mennonites seek to preserve their German language and ethnic ways, they respect the culture of the indigenous peoples. The author believes that eventually integration will have to happen, but hopes that assimilation will not. "In assimilation, the values of a culture and religion are given up in favour of another," he writes. "In integration, the traditional forms are adapted to the national culture without surrendering biblical values."

As Ratzlaff sees it, the Mennonites in Paraguay will no doubt maintain their own identity, but they will also continue to have a positive influence on the national society.

The book is available for purchase from the MC Canada Resource Centre. ❧

Harry Loewen, the former chair of Mennonite studies at the University of Winnipeg, is now retired and attending First Mennonite Church, Kelowna, B.C.

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BETHANY COLLEGE PHOTO



**Darcy Stobbe (on floor, asleep) is found by his mother (played by Kristin Duchak) in a 1950s-era play called *A Boy and his Piano* put on by Bethany College as part of its 12th annual fall theatre festival last month. The festival at the college in Hepburn, Sask., also included a youth event and a community fall supper.**

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## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Jan. 18:** "A Sunday Afternoon: Sixty Years of Peace and Plenty": stories and songs to celebrate 60 years in Canada; at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, at 3 p.m. Sponsored by the Mennonite Historical Society of B.C.

**Jan. 26-30:** Mission Emphasis Week, at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford.

**Jan. 29-Feb. 1:** Missionfest, in Vancouver.

**Feb. 15:** Columbia Bible College citywide youth event, at Columbia Place, 7 p.m.

**Feb. 20-21:** MC B.C. annual general meeting, at Cedar Valley Mennonite Church, Mission.

**Feb. 27, 28, March 6, 7:** MCC B.C. fundraising banquets; Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond (27); South Langley Mennonite Brethren Church, Langley (28); Bakerview Mennonite Brethren Church, Abbotsford (6); Sardis Community Church, Chilliwack (7). For more information, call 614-850-6639.

**March 13:** Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. presents *PETE: Moving Man-made Mountains*, a film about Mennonite entrepreneur Peter Friesen; at Bakerview Mennonite Brethren Church, Abbotsford, at 7 p.m.

### Alberta

**Dec. 31:** Holyrood Mennonite is hosting an African-style New Year's Eve service, with testimonies, confession, praise and prayer, from 9 p.m. to midnight.

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

**Jan. 24:** 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:** Senior high snow camp at Camp Valaqua. For grades 10 to 12. Call 403-637-2510 for more information.

### Saskatchewan

**Jan. 10:** MCC Saskatchewan gathering for "New wine: New wineskins:

## Briefly noted

### Calling all quilters: Basket block quilt squares wanted

CALGARY, ALTA.—Mennonite Central Committee Canada quilt coordinator Bev Patkau of Calgary is calling on Canadian quilters to provide fabric basket blocks and quilt squares measuring 12 inches finished or 12.5 inches unfinished. They can be pieced or appliquéd, of any colour and of any design around a basket theme. Basket blocks or quilt squares will be used in quilts at MCC Relief Sales to help provide money for MCC's Food for All appeal that supports agricultural projects and distributes emergency food assistance in countries where people are facing hunger because of drought and high global food prices. In 2006, the heart block project brought in more than \$55,000 from Canadian and U.S. sales, and the 2007 house block project raised about \$105,000. "I have already received three basket blocks. They look great," Patkau says. In Canada, basket blocks should be sent to Bev Patkau, 227 Valhalla Crescent NW, Calgary, AB T3A 1Z8. For more information, e-mail her at [1patkau@shaw.ca](mailto:1patkau@shaw.ca).

—Mennonite Central Committee Release



Reshaping MCC for the 21st century," at Cornerstone Church, Saskatoon, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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

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

### Manitoba

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

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

**Jan. 22-24:** 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](http://cmu.ca).

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

**Jan. 26-27:** CMU winter lectures with Norman Wirzba, Duke Divinity School research professor of theology, ecology and rural life. For more information, visit [cmu.ca](http://cmu.ca).

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

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

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

**Feb. 14:** Westgate 50th anniversary

celebration dance on Valentine's Day, at the Gateway Community Club, at 8 p.m.

**Feb. 20-21:** MC Manitoba annual delegate sessions at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

**March 6-8:** 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](http://cmu.ca).

**March 16-17:** CMU annual apologetics lectures with author and radio host Michael Coren. For more information, visit [cmu.ca](http://cmu.ca).

### Ontario

**Jan. 8-12, 15-18:** Nextstage Theatre Festival presents *Reesor*, a play about a ghost town in Northern Ontario and the group of Mennonites who attempt to settle the land, the Factory Studio Theatre, Toronto. For show times and tickets, call toll-free 1-866-515-7799.

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

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

**Jan. 31:** 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:** MC Eastern Canada winter youth retreat, in Cambridge.

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

**March 21:** Grand Philharmonic Choir presents "Felix Mendelssohn and the Romantic Choral Heritage," featuring the GPC Chamber Singers, Howard Dyck conducting, First United Church, Waterloo, 7:30 p.m. Tickets available at 519-578-6885.

**March 22:** Grand Philharmonic Choir presents "Felix Mendelssohn and the Romantic Choral Heritage," featuring the GPC Chamber Singers, Howard Dyck conducting, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Cambridge, 3 p.m. Tickets available at 519-578-6885.

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

### Paraguay

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

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

/// Classifieds

**Travel**



**Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary** Kentucky Holy Land Pilgrimage: Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary will coordinate a tour to religious communities in northern Kentucky, May 24-31,

led by Marlene Kropf. Communities include Saint Meinrad Archabbey, Gethsamani Abbey and Shaker Village Pleasant Hill. The tour includes daily experiences of prayer and retreat, and presentations on each spiritual tradition. Transportation and lodging is \$1,129; tuition for one or two credit hours is additional. See more at [ambs.edu/kentucky](http://ambs.edu/kentucky). Contact Rosemary Reschly, 574-296-6244 or [rreschly@ambs.edu](mailto:rreschly@ambs.edu), for an application. Registration deadline is February 10.

**Announcement**

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

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**Upcoming Advertising Dates**

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

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Kowloon City, Kowloon Hong Kong  
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Fax: 852-2760-4324 Email: [jobs@cais.edu.hk](mailto: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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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](http://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.

Grace Mennonite Brethren Church in Waterloo, Ont. ([gracemb.org](http://gracemb.org)) is looking for a **LEAD PASTOR**, due to the retirement of our present pastor, starting in the early fall of 2009. We are looking for, and are trusting that God will show us, a pastor who loves the Lord, has a commitment to the unsaved and saved, as well as the gifts of preaching, teaching and nurturing people. We are a seven-year-old inter-generational church in a growing city. Presently we worship at Conrad Grebel University College, but we are in a church building project of our own. If you are interested, or know of someone who is, please let us know. All responses will be held in strict confidence. Contact Alfred Hecht, search committee chair, at [ahecht@primus.ca](mailto:ahecht@primus.ca), tel. 519-747-1561, or write to 117 Ralston Pl. Waterloo, ON N2T 1C7.

Leamington United Mennonite Church is a balanced, inter-generational community of 700 located in the Sun Parlour of Canada on the southernmost tip of Canada. We are seeking a **LEAD PASTOR** for a dynamic Pastoral Ministry Team, to guide our congregation in being a missional church, across the street and around the world.

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Muriel Bechtel at the MCEC office at 4489-4497 King Street East, Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2. 519-650-3806, [muriel@mcec.ca](mailto:muriel@mcec.ca). Or, William Toews, LUMC Search Committee chair, at [wilmarg.toews@gmail.com](mailto:wilmarg.toews@gmail.com).



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

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Please reply to:

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Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2

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



## Stewardship Consultant

MFC seeks a second full-time stewardship consultant to work in its Winnipeg, Manitoba office. This person will be responsible to provide charitable gift and estate planning services and to promote biblical stewardship of financial resources in the CMC, EMC, EMMC and EMCC in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The successful candidate will:

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

Applications will be accepted until December 31, 2008. Submit resumes to:

Erwin Warkentin, General Manager  
12-1325 Markham Rd, Winnipeg, MB R3T 4J6  
1-800-772-3257 fax: 204-488-1986  
e-mail: [ewarkentin@mennofoundation.ca](mailto:ewarkentin@mennofoundation.ca)  
[www.mennofoundation.ca](http://www.mennofoundation.ca)

THE YOUNGEST 'OLDER PEOPLE'

# Volunteers of all ages mirror gift of Christmas giving

BY GLADYS TERICHOW  
Mennonite Central Committee Release  
PETITCODIAC, N.B.

PHOTO BY NINA LINTON



*Young SOOPers Erica van Velsen, left, and Cara Rempel help out with this fall's Atlantic Festival Sales, which bring in more than \$500,000 annually for Ten Thousand Villages' Third World artisans.*

**A**s Erica van Velsen and Cara Rempel set up Ten Thousand Villages displays in communities along Canada's eastern seaboard, they see more than the beauty of the handcrafted items that are a hit with Christmas shoppers each fall.

They see the artistic skills needed to design the silk-screening stencils used in colouring the elegant scarves. They also see the cooperation of talented artisans working together to provide a stable income for their families and recognize that, by volunteering for Ten Thousand Villages, they help artisan groups in more than 35 countries on three continents earn a fair income for their work.

"Working here gives me a wider outlook on life," says Rempel, 18, of Winnipeg. "Every Tuesday we learn about one product and how it is made. The stories are very inspirational—all the stories show how much hard work went into making these products. It makes me feel that I'm part of it and I very much enjoy being part of it."

"It is fascinating to learn more about these products and

how they are made," says van Velsen, 21, of Waterloo, Ont. "It gives you a greater awareness of all the artisans out there and the care they take to make each item."

The women are the youngest volunteers in Service Opportunities for Older People (SOOP), a short-term volunteer placement program of Mennonite Central Committee that, despite its name, is for people of all ages.

This is Rempel's third SOOP placement, positions she fills with her parents, Anne and Brian Rempel. She graduated from high school in June and is taking a year off from studies before she pursues post secondary education.

Van Velsen, a student at the University of Waterloo, Ont., and a volunteer at the Waterloo Ten Thousand Villages store, says working with the Atlantic Festival Sales has helped her develop an even greater interest in the personal stories of artisans. "We have so much to learn from them," she says. "They do whatever they do best to make the best product possible. It is not just one person making a livelihood, it is a community working together and celebrating each other's strengths." ❧