

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Volume 13 Number 1

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bottom line

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GUEST EDITORIAL

A future of hope

KAREN MARTENS ZIMMERLY

I grew up with a prairie view of grain fields, rolling hills dotted with cattle, and a wide-open sky. In the living-room, however, was a painting of some fishermen hurriedly pulling their fishing boat to shore, racing against the turbulent waves and the impending storm that brewed in the blackened sky. My father, a life-long farmer, chose the painting because of the hope for rain that he saw in it.

This is a challenging time in history to be the church. Something is brewing; we're not sure what, except that things aren't working in the church the way they once did. Can we see a future of hope?

More helpful might be to ask:

- Will the world see a people of hope as they watch those of us who call Mennonite Church Canada our church home?

In times of uncertainty there is a tendency to protect, preserve and look for security.

- Will they see joy in a people who can adapt and respond with imagination and creativity?
- Will they see a people of integrity and compassion who respond to the pains and groans of this world?
- Will they experience a welcoming and generous people who are diverse in

culture and ages?

- Will they experience Christ through our presence in the world?



In Matthew 13, after Jesus shares parables about heaven, he says to the disciples, "... every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and old" (Matthew 13:52, NRSV).

We are a church with a rich treasure chest, but we will need to discern which old treasures to retain, which to discard and what new treasures will enable us to live with hope in a world where many only see dark skies.

We are a resurrection people. To discern what needs to die, and where God may be calling us, we will need to continue to be a people of God's Word and of prayer. To live into our future with

hope, our pastors will need to say no to increasing busyness and say yes to the far more important work of helping all of us immerse ourselves in being shaped by the biblical stories, to having them shape how we live in the world, to practices of prayer where we become still and listen to God's voice, and to the movement of

the Holy Spirit directing us.

In times of uncertainty, there is a tendency to protect, preserve and look for security. Yet the model of the area churches of Macedonia who were poor was to share generously of what they had with the church in Corinth (II Corinthians 8:1-15). We are a church that is rich in people of faith from a wide variety of cultures, and we are rich in material resources and institutions. We will need to be a church that mentors generosity and partnership, sharing and coaching each other in the practices that help us become a people of God who see our primary location of ministry out in the world rather than within the church.

We serve a God who is able to accomplish far more than all we can ask or imagine, Paul says in Ephesians 3:20. To provide for the ongoing pastoral and lay leadership we need for our churches to engage our changing world, we will need to encourage curiosity and dreaming, imagining how we can spark leadership across the generations and imagining new models of leadership that will help us thrive. To nurture new models of leadership we will need to cultivate the discipline of encouragement, intentionally searching out, identifying and affirming the gifts of young and old, even if the gifts are not yet polished treasures.

On a recent flight, the airplane moved through the dark and overcast sky into the clouds of white fog and then eventually to the brilliant sunshine above the clouds. Like my father, I choose to be hopeful and trust our faithful God to lead us through the fog of our current reality. May we be faithful in our response!

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

ABOUT THE COVER:

If a computer spreadsheet can't be used to calculate the incalculable—the cost of Jesus' ministry from his birth in a stable to the miracles he performed, his crucifixion and, finally, sending his Holy Spirit—churches certainly use the technology to calculate the bottom line of their own ministries. See page 4 for Carol Penner's calculation of 'Ministry's bottom line.'

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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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Ministry's bottom line

BY CAROL PENNER

Based on a sermon preached at The First Mennonite Church, Vineland, Ont., on Nov. 18, 2007. Biblical references include Luke 8:1-3, Acts 1:21-22, Matthew 27:55-56 and Mark 15:40-41.

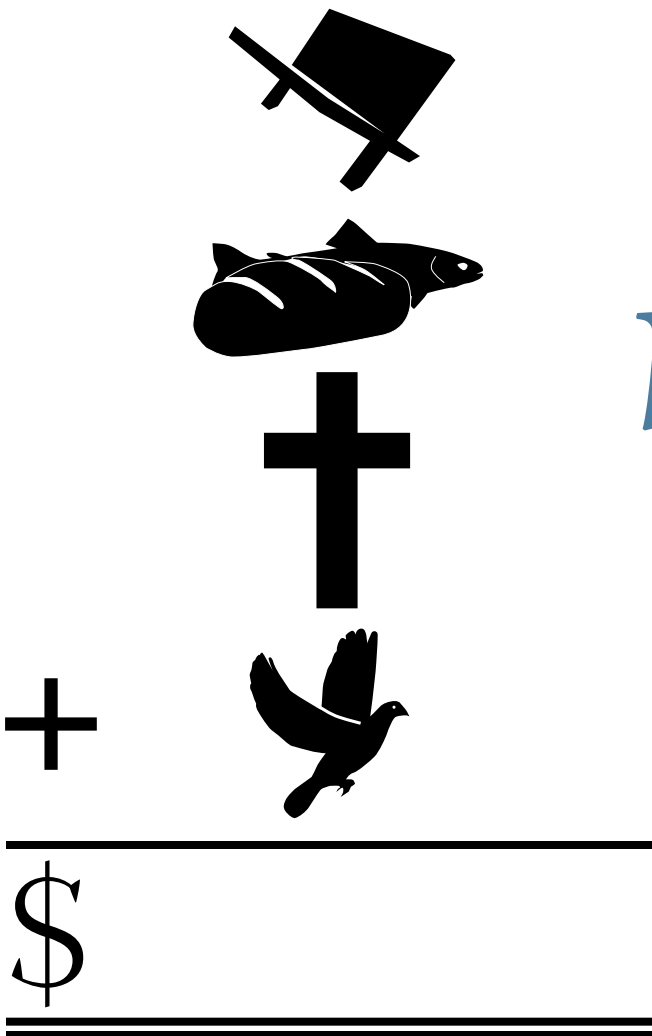
Mennonites are practical people. If someone says, “We need to build an addition to our church,” the response is always, “How much is it going to cost?” If a new project is suggested, “Let’s sponsor a refugee family,” we soon hear someone ask, “Where is the money going to come from?”

It’s pretty normal for us to ask those practical questions because that’s the way we live our lives. If we want to take a trip to visit distant relatives, or if we want to buy a car or a house, we always ask, “How much is this going to cost? What’s the bottom line?”

So when we read in Luke 8:1 that “*Jesus went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God*” (NRSV), the natural question we ask is, “What’s the price tag for this ministry? What’s the bottom line?”

Well, maybe not. I can’t ever remember thinking about this. I know there was money involved in Jesus’ life—Judas carried the money for the group—but it never occurred to me to ask, “How much did it cost?” or, “Where was the money coming from?”

At least not until I spent some time pondering Luke 8:1-3:



Soon afterwards Jesus went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources.

There are a number of surprising things about this passage. For starters, the idea that women were travelling with Jesus. We generally visualize him as travelling from place to place with his inner group of twelve male disciples. But women were there, and Luke isn't the only gospel writer to mention this. The writers of the gospels of Matthew and Mark both tell us that women were travelling with Jesus.

Jesus' entourage included more than the women and "the twelve." When it came time to replace Judas Iscariot, Acts 1 indicates there was a group of men to choose from who had followed Jesus this whole time who weren't part of "the twelve."

The followers of Jesus made up a big group of people: the twelve disciples plus Mary Magdalene, Susanna, Joanna, the

other Mary, Salome and many others, both men and women, who are unnamed. How big was this group? Twenty-five? Forty? We just don't know.

A big tab

In any case, that's a lot of people. How much was that bottom line? How much did it cost to provide food and shelter for them? Although the gospels indicate that Jesus was the invited guest on occasion, and that from time to time he performed miracles with food, this big group of people had to be fed every day, they had to find a place to sleep every night, and they had to have new sandals because they must have worn them out walking from place to place.

It's hard to know how many days' wages—in *denarii*—it would have taken to keep this troupe on the road. It's perhaps easier to talk about it in present-day dollars. According to Mennonite Church Canada Witness figures, the average cost for maintaining a mission worker in the field is \$45,000 per person (in 2007),

and more when there is a lot of travel involved or if there are children who need to be supported or educated.

Let's say that Jesus travelled in a group of 30 people. They travelled for around three years. That works out to just over \$4 million (\$1.35 million per year) in today's figures. No small potatoes.

Who's picking up the tab?

I don't think Jesus could have saved up enough personally to support this whole group. And if he had miraculously produced money, I think the disciples would have recorded it (like the one coin Peter found in the fish's mouth). It's also unlikely that the disciples were paying their own way, as the gospels suggest they left everything to follow Jesus. The call to the disciples recorded in the gospels has no financial directives like, "Sell your boats, and bring that money you've made collecting taxes, because we will have a lot of bills in the next three years!"

We never see Jesus doing any fundraising for himself. There isn't one

I know there was money involved in Jesus' life—Judas carried the money for the group—but it never occurred to me to ask, 'How much money did Jesus' ministry cost?'

place where he asks for money for his ministry. Think of when he meets the rich young man; he tells him to sell his possessions and give to the poor. Jesus does not say, “Sell your possessions and give the money to my ministry.”

So where is the money coming from? All three gospel writers who answer this question say the same thing: It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, Salome and the other Mary who paid the bills. It was women who were healed by Jesus who then supported him out of their own means. It was women who were personally committed, personally devoted to Jesus. And some of them were wealthy.

The women “provided for” Jesus and his followers. That term is the Greek word *diakonia*, from which we get our word “deacon.” The women served Jesus by supporting his ministry. They wrote themselves into the bottom line.

This surprised me. Growing up with Bible stories, we know the name Mary Magdalene. Usually we think, “She’s a sinner,” or, “She had demons cast out of her.” But three places in Scripture tell us that she helped pay the bills for Jesus’ ministry! And those were big bills! We have not given credit where credit is due!

It is important to read Scripture carefully and hear the story of the faithfulness of these women. They served Jesus with their money—substantial, sacrificial amounts of money. But that wasn’t the whole bottom line. They also served Jesus with their presence. They weren’t just sending cheques from a distance. Their *diakonia* meant paying the bills and walking with Jesus in his ministry.

The gospel writers tell us the women travelled with Jesus. It was these women who were at Golgotha, faithful to the end. There they stood, with broken hearts and perhaps with broken bank accounts, having spent all they had on Jesus. They loved Jesus to the end, in *diakonia*.

And then they were there at the tomb to see the risen Christ, and they were there in an upper room, filled with

the Holy Spirit, going out to spread the good news of Jesus Christ!

What is our bottom line?

I think of many people in congregations I’ve attended who have been part of the bottom line. Their faithful sacrificial giving paid the mortgage and the pastor’s

It was women who were personally committed, personally devoted to Jesus. And some of them were wealthy.

salary. They stuck with their congregations through conflict, through low and high attendance, through economic upturns and downturns. They remind me of these biblical women.

Or I think of a couple who took in a foster child, and then walked with that child into her troubled adult life. The couple gave sacrificially of themselves, of their home and their money. They went to Golgotha with this child they loved.

I also think of the faithful budgeted giving of churches across the country to Mennonite Church Canada Witness. It takes a lot of money to support a mission worker. Commitment to mission means that if our churches have a budget shortfall, support of mission workers is not the first thing to be cut.

The bottom line isn’t only money. If we take the lead from the Marys, Joanna,

Susanna and Salome, we will not just send money, but we will also give of ourselves. These women went the distance to participate in and observe Jesus’ ministry. They knew where their money was going.

We give money to our local congregation. But are we faithful with our presence and our prayers? We are willing to do a good turn for someone, but what if that turn takes three years, or 30? Are we willing to go the distance?

We give money to the Witness program, but are we willing to follow the work of one missionary? Are we willing to take the time to go on a Witness learning tour and support that worker with our concern and presence? Are we willing to attend their presentations or travel to conferences to hear about the journey they are on as followers of Jesus?

What’s the bottom line? It costs a lot to be a follower of Christ. Someone has to pay the bills. Someone has to walk the dusty road. Someone has to make the meals. Someone has to sit at Jesus’ feet and listen. Someone has to stay awake in the garden. Someone has to go to a fish barbecue on the beach. It takes personally committed and devoted people who will do this. Communities of these sorts of people working together will do this.

We are practical people. We are practising *diakonia*, providing for the needs of others. We do this because we love Jesus. That’s the bottom line. ❧

/// For discussion

1. Carol Penner points out that Luke 8:1-3 says there were women who travelled with Jesus and provided living expenses. Is this passage familiar to you? How do you think they provided for Jesus? Do you think they also provided for his disciples?
2. How does your church support international mission workers? How important is this type of work to your congregation? If your church has a budget shortfall, is giving to conference the first thing to be cut? Do local mission projects get better support?
3. What is the connection between finances and faithfulness? What motivates giving? How do you decide how much to give? Is it geared to income or need? Does the church do an adequate job in communicating its needs?
4. Why do you think Mary Magdalene helped to pay Jesus’ bills? Is generosity influenced more by character or by experience? Are there some ways that the church can encourage its members to be generous?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. Respecting our theology of the priesthood of all believers and of the importance of the faith community discernment process, this section is a largely open forum for the sharing of views. Letters are the opinion of the writer only—publication does not mean endorsement by the magazine or the church. Letters should be brief and address issues rather than individuals.

Please send letters to be considered for publication to letters@canadianmennonite.org or by postal mail or fax, marked "Attn: Readers Write" (our address is on page 3). Letters should include the author's contact information and mailing address. Letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines.

✉ Good governance expected of parliamentarians from all parties

IN AN IMMEDIATE post-election time of economic uncertainty, when political stability, civility and statesmanship are critical, there is a need for Canadians and Parliament to transition from divisive and partisan politics to focused good governance. We need more than rhetoric about civility in the House of Commons. Canada needs a renewed practice of civility where humility, self-control, respect, courtesy and good manners are practised.

The political and economic uncertainty in our nation is palpable as we watch recession play out across the world stage. All national party leaders have stated that we are on the verge of a recession, the degree of which is uncertain. Canadians already face this reality.

The Canadian government faces certain limitations on what it can do in the face of global economic turmoil and there is legitimate disagreement among Canadians as well as our political leaders about what course of action the government can and should take. Resolving the course of action needed for this situation requires careful thought and the exploration of many possibilities.

Careful thought and exploration requires open dialogue—the willingness to discuss, listen and consider alternatives. Our political institutions and traditions require a common commitment to reason together. It requires wisdom and heeding the simple rule: *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*

Accordingly, I respectfully appeal to the leaders of our nation, the members of our House of Commons and Senate, and make these requests:

• **A plea for civility.** All people of goodwill are

encouraged to compel our political leaders to remember their commitment to civility and to personally and collectively take responsibility to treat their colleagues on both sides of the floor of the House with dignity and respect.

• **A plea for integrity.** There is a need to be disciplined in our rhetoric and choice of words, to avoid creating instability and crisis beyond the serious issues already confronting the nation. Now is not the time to play into people's fears, but rather to explore possibilities, articulate principles and search for common ground.

• **A plea for statesmanship.** In Paul's letter to the Romans, the focus is on the role of the government and government leaders, who are called ministers of God and who are to govern for our good. This is the duty of Parliament and this supersedes partisanship.

• **A plea for grace.** In all human interaction the practice of apology, forgiveness and changed patterns of behaviour are integral to living and working with others. Some may argue that this is not how the real world of politics works. Well, perhaps it is time for something different. Sincere apologies extended and forgiveness granted would go a long way.

These disciplines would be significant steps towards restoring and improving the functionality of Parliament and fostering political cohesion in uncertain times. It would help to restore the faith of citizens in a system intended for our good, and in our elected representatives. Good governance produces peace and security in the best of times and the worst of times.

BRUCE J. CLEMENGER

Bruce J. Clemenger is president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, of which MC Canada is a member. Excerpted from a longer open letter to parliamentarians and all Canadian citizens alike.

✉ Allied atrocities tarnish Remembrance Day recollections

EVERY YEAR AT Remembrance Day I am saddened when I hear, see or read about the experiences of World War II. Most often the atrocities of the Nazi regime are juxtaposed against the patriotic, heroic and sacrificial actions of the Allies ridding the world of evil.

In no way do I want to minimize the horror the Nazis perpetrated or the sacrifices the Allied soldiers made. The point I would like to make is that the line between good and evil is not as "straight" as we are led to believe. Often we get our news from official sources, ones comfortable with the "collateral damage" caused in the pursuit of their objectives.

My family experienced the war as refugees from Stalinist Russia trying to survive in Germany at the end of the war while being harassed by Allied soldiers and air force. For decades I believed our experiences were anomalies until I read Canadian author James Basque's book, *Crimes and Mercies*. This book illustrates and magnifies our stories to an unimaginably large scale.

The bombing of Dresden is but one example of the terrorizing of German civilians by the Allies. The Allies pursued policies that went far beyond defeating the German military and punishing the Nazi leadership. This fact was withheld from the people in North America by the authorities. As a consequence, we cannot face our failures in the past and therefore are prone to repeat them in the future.

If we cannot commemorate the end of World War II

together with the German people, and recognize that the citizens of both sides were misled by their respective governments, then we have failed to learn from our history, to our own detriment.

GERHARD NEUFELD, WINNIPEG

✉ Roles of pastor and conductor fundamentally different

RE: "THE PASTOR as choir conductor," Nov. 10, page 4.

On first reading I found Ryan Siemens' article intriguing, but after some reflection I think there may be more fundamental differences than similarities between the roles of conductors and pastors. While conductors and pastors are both called to specific and

FROM OUR LEADERS

Ministering in exile

RUDY BAERGEN

The Faith and Life Committee of Mennonite Church Canada has the challenging mandate of giving counsel to our denomination on matters of ethics, theology and polity. In the past year, we have drawn attention to the important call to confess Jesus in our religiously pluralistic age. Respect and appreciation for other faith convictions should not prevent us from becoming more willing and able to testify to Jesus Christ in word and deed.

It is widely recognized that the Christian church in Canada finds itself in a radically different social environment today than ever before. The church must share the public square with people of many other faith traditions and it no longer holds the position of influence and prestige that it did a few generations ago.

Perhaps an appropriate metaphor for the church in our time is that of Israel in exile. While Christians have not been dislocated, as the Jewish exiles were, increasingly they are finding themselves in a spiritual environment where they

are no longer part of the mainstream. The rich metaphor of Christians being a people in exile goes back to the New Testament, as illustrated by texts such as I Peter 1:1 and 2:11. Our own Mennonite Anabaptist story of living in a sometimes hostile Christendom has also taught us about being pilgrims and exiles in our own land.

In a provocative article in the Fall 2008



[T]he church in exile is invited to become a missionary to its culture, as the Hebrew hero Daniel was.

issue of *Congregations*, an Alban Institute periodical, Lee Beech suggests that we can learn three important things from ancient Israel in exile:

- To appreciate the language of exile;
- To present ourselves as an alternative community; and
- To engage in mission in our host culture.

The language of exile is a language of lament that allows us to give voice to our losses, including the loss of influence, numbers and control. But it is also a language of penitence and hope. Living

faithfully in exile requires that we renew our commitment to behave differently if necessary from the exile host.

For Israel, it meant a renewal of the practice of Sabbath-keeping. Beech suggests that for us it might also mean that we do more careful study of the Sermon on the Mount.

Furthermore, the church in exile is invited to become a missionary to its culture, as the Hebrew hero Daniel was. As a church in exile we are required to go outside of our walls. We can no longer expect the world to come to us simply because we have good programs.

Confessing Jesus requires that we learn how to speak about our faith outside of our church building. It also requires that we respond to the needs of the community and society around us. To be a faithful Mennonite Church, it is essential that we grow in our ability to testify to Jesus in word and deed in our changing times.

Rudy Baergen is chair of MC Canada's Faith and Life Committee and senior pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

unique leadership functions, there are significant differences between their roles.

As he states, conductors learn a score, practise it, master it and lead a group in singing what a composer has created, but pastors, on the other hand, have a quite different role to play. They do not take another's sermon, learn it and speak it for others to hear; that would be plagiarism. Pastors create the score and compose their sermons.

Second, conductors invite interested singers to form

a choir within the congregation so that they can serve together. A conductor works with a select group within the congregation, but pastors do not get to speak or relate only to those who declare an interest; they are called to preach to one and all, whoever comes to the worship service.

Third, a conductor rehearses a piece of music repeatedly so that singers respond to the composer's score correctly, in keeping with the composer's notations and the conductor's interpretation. But pastors

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Working our way towards meaning

MIKE STRATHDEE

“What’s your theology of work?” the seminar leader asked his audience. And how, he wanted to know, does that view of work get expressed in dinnertime conversations at home? If families don’t teach a proper theology of work, their children could grow up viewing work as drudgery, something to be avoided, he said.

John Beckett, in the book *Mastering Monday: A Guide to Integrating Faith and Work*, points out that Adam and Eve’s early work was a source of pleasure, “a reflection of the Father’s own creativity and diligence.” Far too often, he writes, we take a completely different view of work, which is why 9 a.m. Monday morning is the peak period for heart attacks.

Part of whether we can say, “Thank God it’s Monday” with the same enthusiasm we embrace the weekend, may depend on whether we have a Genesis 2 or a Genesis 3 view of our labour. Do we view it as a creative and fulfilling act or as cursed drudgery that is at best a means to an end?

Often conversations about work move to plans for a time when current efforts give way to other pursuits. When people express concern to me about how the

recent stock market drop has ravaged their retirement savings, I joke that my RRSP puts me on the “Freedom 85” plan.

There is no denying the difficulties that recent events have caused for millions of people who are already retired or contemplating retirement. One recent report suggested that many folks will have to postpone retirement by six or seven years.

At the same time, I wonder if our expectations of being entitled to get out of the work force to a life of leisure as early as possible are also a problem. In a



[I]t is difficult to find support in the Bible for our modern notion of retirement.

previous career writing for a daily newspaper, I was saddened to learn of former co-workers who died soon after leaving their jobs. Deadline stress, poor lifestyle choices and working night shifts may have been contributing factors. I’ve also read of people in a variety of other industries dropping dead shortly after getting their gold watch. In some cases, they had so much of their identity tied up in doing, that they lacked purpose beyond the workplace.

More fortunate are those who find themselves so bored after a few months of leisure that they seek out a new, often slower-paced, career.

In his best-selling book, *The Number: A Completely Different Way To Think About The Rest of Your Life*, Lee Eisenberg cites a study about attitudes towards work. “Nearly 70 percent of pre-retirees said they plan to work at least part-time in their ‘retirement’ years, or plan never to retire at all.” For some, the decision is based on financial necessity. Yet more than two-thirds of respondents to a national survey cited work as being the way a person “stays active, remains useful and has fun.”

And it is difficult to find support in the Bible for our modern notion of retirement. God put Adam in charge of naming things in the Garden of Eden so he would have purpose and meaning in his life. How does that understanding of work mesh with your plans for what

could be the last quarter of your life?

Eisenberg talks about “downshifting” being a healthier alternative to giving up employment altogether. For him, “revolving retirement” involves short-term jobs, new fields of endeavour and ongoing efforts to bring money and meaning into alignment. That sounds good to me.

Mike Strathdee, CFP, is a stewardship consultant at the Kitchener, Ont., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC).

preach sermons only once and have little control over how their words are understood by those who listen, and they have even less control over how their sermons are lived out in daily life.

Fourth, choir members submit to the conductor's interpretation and relentless rehearsing over a period of weeks until they can perform exactly as the conductor wants. But living the Christian faith is fundamentally different: Believing in and following Christ is

not like cloning; all believers don't express their faith and discipleship in the same way. In fact, we hope and pray for individuality and creativity in expressing the faith.

Since the nature of the outcome of the conductor's efforts and the pastor's work are so different, I think that the roles of conductors and pastors are also distinct.

JOHN H. NEUFELD, WINNIPEG

FAMILY TIES

Dealing with disappointment

MELISSA MILLER

The trip of a lifetime. That's what I called an adventure I had lined up for last fall. My three sisters and I planned to extricate ourselves from our jobs (two pastors, a health care worker and a pharmacist), our families (one mother, four husbands, four adult children, seven young children and five grandchildren) and other responsibilities of our lives to visit my niece and her husband, who are Mennonite Central Committee workers in Bolivia.

For over a year we planned, coordinating our schedules, making the travel arrangements, getting shots and visas. We're not particularly adventuresome travellers. In fact, two of us had never flown! So the lure of a sisters' trip to an unfamiliar destination was powerful and exciting.

Alas, it was not to be. Just days before we were scheduled to leave, simmering political unrest in Bolivia turned violent. Government buildings were taken over and burned, people were killed and gunfire broke out at the airport where we were scheduled to land. Our flight was cancelled—a necessary and prudent decision on the part of the airline. We were grounded at home.

In retrospect, that was better than being stuck in Bolivia. But at the time, the

experience of getting grounded was painful. As my eager excitement and hopeful momentum turned to confusion and shock, I felt stunned and then crushed by the weight of disappointment.

I returned to work and the normal routine, grateful for the distraction. At the same time, I continued to ponder the unfortunate turn of events. It was a deep loss, and soon I realized that it touched other losses I had known. Like knots on a rope, when I pulled one of them, the



It was a deep loss, and soon I realized that it touched other losses I had known.

others surfaced, linked in my spirit. They came forth in various shades and intensities, different in origin, similar in impact. I felt low in energy, mournful, even a little depressed.

My sisters had some of the same feelings. One declared, "I was so upset I didn't unpack my suitcase for a month!"

In conversation with my eldest brother, I asked him how he handles disappointment. When he told me he rarely gets disappointed, I was surprised, although in hindsight I recalled his even temper and consistent good nature. He seems to roll with what life serves up, even

the hard stuff he's known, without fuss or protest. Admirable qualities. Ones I could emulate. Seems like life would be easier if one didn't get knocked off balance by such disappointments.

Was this what the Apostle Paul was talking about when he said, "I've learned how to be content with whatever I have" (Philippians 4:11)? Paul speaks of learning the secret of having plenty or of being in need. Might that be applied to learning the secret to having trips go smoothly and satisfyingly, or having trips get suddenly, distressingly derailed? Paul, centred on his faith in God and Jesus, declares, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Good counsel indeed.

And as a counsellor I tell people—and believe myself—that it's necessary to recognize one's feelings, mourn the losses and allow oneself time and space

to recover from major disappointments. Perhaps when Paul says, "It was kind of you to share my distress," he is processing some of the challenges he endured.

As for me, three months after the aborted trip I'm ready to reschedule. I can't let one disappointment stop me from pursuing the goal. The trip of a lifetime still beckons.

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

✉ Church must hear and respond to visionary leaders

I ENJOYED THE recent cover article on our pastors within the Mennonite Church (“The pastor as choir conductor,” Nov. 10, page 4). The comparison to song leaders was a good illustration. The observation that we don’t expect or support strong leadership from our pastors seems true, and especially worthy of further discussion.

Although I appreciated the article, I felt it was too short to properly address the issue it raises. In our congregations, where it’s sometimes difficult to find leaders to fill committees and councils, do we encourage our pastors to bring vision to their ministry? And do we work with them when they do?

The strength of the church comes from God. But God grants that strength to each of its members in the form of different talents. Just as the early Christians placed trust in leaders such as the apostle Paul, I hope we too will be able to hear and respond to visionary leaders among us today.

MICHAEL TURMAN, STOUFFVILLE, ONT.

✉ Corporation or community? More than MCC future in the balance

RE: “A PRIESTHOOD of MCC believers,” Nov. 10, page 9.

Will Braun’s column asks how Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) should be structured to best “focus on the needs of the world.” The make-straight-paths recommendation from unnamed Nicaraguan voices is, “There is a very strong wish here to make MCC a community and not CEO- and board-driven.”

This vision stands in sharp contrast to how Braun frames MCC Binational’s response to the question. At the Wineskins revisioning consultation in Winnipeg, MCC Binational—presumably using donation dollars (possibly even from Canada)—sent its young adult initiative coordinator. As if speaking in his own right, this insider to MCC nips in the bud MCC Canada’s bid to get expanded powers to have “a more direct say in how those [MCC Canada-raised] resources are used,” and with selfless tone declares that MCC’s “focus should be on ‘how to best respond to the needs of the world,’ not on ‘which powerful North American country gets to have control.’” Cute!

Furthermore, to now apply the earlier quoted Nicaraguan insight, there is a two-kingdom difference between living in community, where one extends universally to all the grace of citizenship while members may yet be in a state of disagreeing with one another,

and the top-down kingdom gatekeeper mentality exercised by what is named as “CEO- and board-driven.”

I find it deplorable that most, if not all, of our church institutions have taken on the corporate mantle as their basic legal structure. As this corporate-dominated, top-down vision becomes more mainstream, even within the church, I fear for the generations to follow if we do not take measured steps to reassert community values over corporate ones.

EDUARD HIEBERT, ST FRANCOIS XAVIER, MAN.

✉ MCC renewal process must ‘first do no harm’ to organization

HAVING JUST ATTENDED a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) weekend session on its New Wine/New Wineskins plans for the future in Winnipeg, I am left with three overriding impressions:

- We have a broadly based consensus that MCC is a beloved and effective arm of the Mennonite churches. We would do well, as we engage in this process, to heed the “first do no harm” precept commonly associated with medical services.
- I carried home a nugget of hope from the upcoming younger generation of constituents, leaders and staff. They do not suffer preoccupation with issues of race, ethnicity, social status, governance structures and resource allocation. They focus on collaboration, partnership and outcomes.
- A gripping vision of the future governance model emerged from the roundtable discussions: unity in essentials, liberty in non-essentials.

RON JANZEN, STEINBACH, MAN.

✉ MC Canada, MC USA joint partners in Radical Journey program

I WAS PLEASED to see the “CMU grads’ radical journey leads them to Paraguay” article on page 27 of the Nov. 24 issue. Mennonite Church Canada Witness is excited about offering this program in partnership with Mennonite Mission Network and sending three participants this year. Locations for the fall of 2009 are being selected and will include places like Colombia, Paraguay, South Africa and China. Prospective Canadian applicants, aged 18 to 30, should contact Mennonite Church Canada or visit mennonitechurch.ca/serve/possibilities.

GORDON JANZEN, WINNIPEG

Gordon Janzen is the MC Canada Witness mission partnership facilitator for Asia and the Middle East.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Enns—Nevaeh Katherine (b. Nov. 15, 2008), to Stacie and Travis Enns, Carman Mennonite, Man.

Fittler—Vivienne Helen (b. Nov. 24, 2008), to John and Jennifer Fittler, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Friesen—Carly Alannah (b. Nov. 12, 2008), to Ed and Lorraine Friesen, Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man.

Friesen—Jesse Erick Sawatzky (b. Nov. 19, 2008), to Reynold Friesen and Tammy Sawatzky, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Hoepfner—Brennan Jacob (b. June 20, 2008), to Garth and Christine Hoepfner, Morden Mennonite, Man.

Janzen—Amelia Grace (b. Nov. 5, 2008), to Paul and Angela Janzen, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Labossiere—Dylan Lee and Brady Michael (b. Nov. 13, 2008), to Cindy and Wesley Labossiere, Carman Mennonite, Man.

Pauls—Juliana Isabel (b. Nov. 10, 2008), to Elation and Herb Pauls, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Philippsen—Jason (b. Oct. 21, 2008), to Jakob and Maria Philippsen, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Spent—Tyrus David (b. Nov. 6, 2008), to Jake and Ang Spent, Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man.

Wall—Taya Rayne (b. Nov. 24, 2008), to Warren and Tammy Wall, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Baptisms

Rachel Bock—Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 7.

Dylan Chamberlin, Chelsea Enns, Leanne Warkentin—Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man., Nov. 23, 2008.

Brendan Krahn, Ben Schroeder—Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., Nov. 15, 2008.

Hannah Franz, Kaylee Friesen, Kelsey Friesen—Grace Mennonite, Winkler Man., Nov. 16, 2008.

Marriages

Enns/Klassen—Joel Enns of Winkler, Man., and Dana Klassen of Altona, Man., Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Sept. 6, 2008.

Deaths

Bowman—Delton, 83 (b. May 19, 1925; d. Dec. 6, 2008), Wilmot Menonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Derksen—David, 93 (b. Oct. 8, 1915; d. Nov. 10, 2008), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Earl—Joyce (Joy), 85 (b. July 30, 1923; d. Nov. 30, 2008), Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta.

Klassen—Annie (nee Hamm), 96 (b. July 27, 1912; d. Nov. 22, 2008), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Lichy—Gordon Martin, 94 (b. Nov. 16, 1914; d. Dec. 1, 2008), Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

McIntosh—John McCrae, 63 (b. Feb. 20, 1945; d. Oct. 20, 2008), Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.

Penner—Heman, 75 (d. Nov. 18, 2008), Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Schroeder—Agnes, 77 (b. May 10, 1931; d. Nov. 24, 2008), Tofield Mennonite, Alta.

Warkentin—Kathe (nee Dick), 88 (b. July 21, 1920; d. Nov. 16, 2008), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

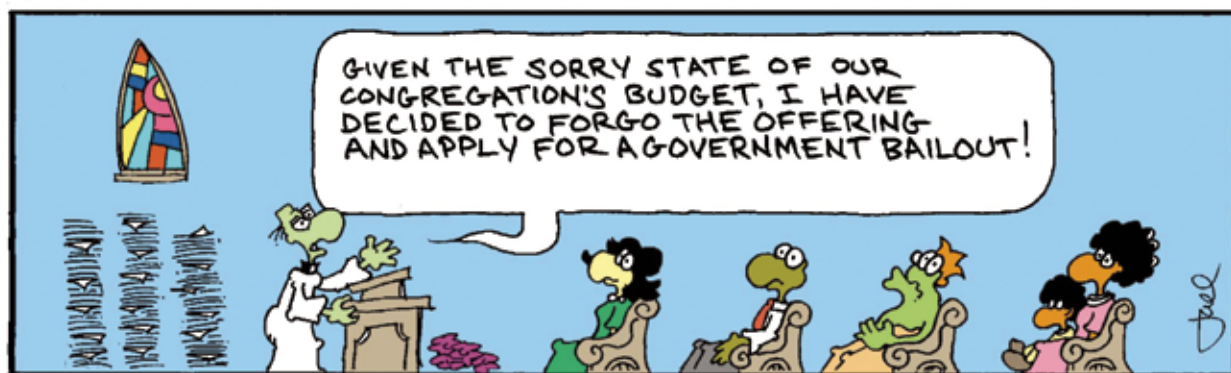
Wiens—Helen (nee Ruppel), 81 (b. May 27, 1927; d. Nov. 10, 2008), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Zehr—Austin, 92 (b. July 4, 1916; d. Nov. 27, 2008), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

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

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

Pontius' Puddle



PASTORAL TRENDS SURVEY REPORT: PART I OF IV

Thriving pastors, thriving congregations

BY SUE C. STEINER

Does it matter whether your pastor thrives in his or her calling? Does it matter whether the pastors in Mennonite Church Canada flourish?

Karen Martens Zimmerly, Mennonite Church Canada's new denominational minister, responds with a resounding yes: "When we as pastors are thriving, we are energized and joyful. When we minister out of joy, our congregations respond. And when we are thriving, that gives us energy for the difficult things we face in ministry."

In 2007, MC Canada commissioned a Pastoral Trends Survey, conducted

Crucial for pastors' well-being is having a clear sense of what the congregation expects....

by Mennonite sociologist Dieter Schoenwetter. Last fall, I, along with 200 present and former MC Canada pastors, responded to a comprehensive online survey. Our collective responses yield a fascinating picture of what helps pastors thrive and what hinders effectiveness.

What helps our pastors flourish?

As I pored over Schoenwetter's summary, I noted pastors' responses in five categories:

1. Paying attention to our own spiritual lives. To lead others, pastors must continue to grow in Christ. Pastors put prayer at the top of the list in maintaining a healthy spiritual life. Also significant for spiritual wholeness are reading the Bible, devotional books or other texts; meeting with another pastor or spiritual guide; and walking or other exercise. Some pastors also find spiritual retreats essential.

2. Finding and making the most of support systems at all stages of ministry.

A top indicator of pastoral success is having trustworthy mentors and spiritual coaches wherever one is located. Peer groups of pastors can also be important settings for belonging and support. To grow and be sustained in ministry for the long haul, pastors find that a Lone Ranger stance does not suffice.

3. Being in partnership with our congregations, working together, encouraging one another. What energizes MC Canada pastors most and brings joy is seeing the congregation grow in Christ. Pastors thrive when lay leaders and con-

gregants share in the work of ministry, responding together to God's vision and purpose for the church. Crucial for pastors' well-being is having a clear sense of what the congregation expects, as well as the ability to navigate through conflicting expectations which individual members or groups may express.

4. Developing a rhythm of life and protecting it. Because pastoral ministry requires the very best a person has to give, there is the need to set limits. This means taking clear breaks to be refreshed and to keep a healthy perspective on the work. It means ensuring that the pastor's spouse (if married), family and friends are priorities. It includes time alone, and time for hobbies, sports or other experiences where one is not the minister.

5. Seeing ourselves as life-long learners. Effective pastors don't have the notion that you go to seminary or Bible school, accept a call to a congregation,

and then are equipped with all the wisdom, skills, attitudes and perspectives needed for a lifetime of ministry. Some competencies crucial for pastors can be partly learned in the classroom, but need to be more fully learned on the job (such as fostering teamwork, for instance, or having a deep sense of a congregation's gifts and needs).

A pastor continues to grow into and deepen his or her calling by the very act of being in ministry. Furthermore, each congregation a pastor serves is different; each community is different; and over a lifetime of ministry our society itself changes. For all these reasons, mentors, coaches, clergy groups and continuing education of all sorts are crucial. Pastors need safe places to reflect on experience and keep learning and growing.

What about stress?

According to the survey, pastors experience stress when the things that help us thrive are missing or are not functioning well. Pastors ranked three situations as especially stressful:

- When work demands seem overwhelming and they lose balance, no longer taking sufficient time for God, for family and friends, and for personal rejuvenation;
- When the covenant between pastor and congregation is unclear or when expectations seem unrealistic; and
- When conflicts emerge within the congregation or between the pastor and congregation.

How beautiful it is when pastors and congregations grow in Christ together. How beautiful it is when pastors, lay leaders and people together catch a vision of their church's vocation and live into it.

The next article in this series will focus on how pastors and congregations can work together in ways that both will flourish. In this way, God's work in our world is honoured and enhanced. Thanks be to God! ☛



Sue C. Steiner, Waterloo, Ont., chairs the Christian Formation Council of MC Canada. She has served six diverse congregations as pastor or interim pastor.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Economy a hot topic at fall leadership assembly

Developing new pastors, discerning God's will also discussed

BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada Release
CALGARY, ALTA.

Fiscal concerns in times of economic crisis, pastoral leadership development, and a conversation about being a faithful church were the major topics of discussion at Mennonite Church Canada's Fall Leadership Assembly in Calgary, Nov. 12-15, 2008.

MC Canada's Finance Policy and Audit Committee recommended proceeding with a "flat budget" for 2009, neither increasing nor decreasing donation projections.

The General Board and staff leaders are taking a wait-and-see approach to the volatile economy, as donation income numbers reported from one month to the next can change dramatically.

Randy Wiebe, MC Canada's director of finance, reported that the income to Oct. 31 was positive. Total donations were slightly ahead of projections—by \$64,000.

But he also issued a word of caution: Total October donations showed a decline at a time of year when donations tend to trend upwards. Leaders are watching the numbers closely and are working at some contingency scenarios.

Pastoral development task force proposed

After an in-depth discussion about leadership challenges, the presidents of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), Conrad Grebel University College and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary proposed the

appointment of a task force to determine how congregations, schools, area churches and the national church can collaborate on the development of pastoral leadership.

The development of such a task force would be yet another step towards addressing the issue of encouraging pastoral leadership in an era where fewer people are entering ministry. A 2007 Pastoral Trends Survey clearly identified a need for ongoing education for existing pastors

Discernment, grounded in the study of Scripture, equips God's people to address difficult challenges in the life of the church . . .

and indicated a rising number of retiring pastors.

MC Canada leaders agreed that there is a genuine need for a collaborative vision for pastoral leadership training, but how that collaboration will take shape remains to be seen.

"We've done brainstorming for a number of years, with a lot of good ideas," CMU president Gerald Gerbrandt stated. "[But] we haven't been able to develop a concrete structure."

"We should . . . consider collaboration with the Mennonite Brethren Church, as they have also identified pastoral leadership training as a priority," Gerbrandt suggested.

The presidents anticipate a task force would have three primary objectives:

- To complete a process of identifying pastoral competencies;
- Consideration of educational delivery methods; and
- To determine the outcomes of collaboration.

The proposal to develop a task force exploring leadership development will be discussed at the Formation Council meeting in March.

A wise and discerning nation

The General Board determined that there is a deep and broad need to nurture MC Canada's capacity to discern the mind of God in order to be a faithful church.

Discernment, grounded in the study of Scripture, equips God's people to address difficult challenges in the life of the church,

including being a Peace Church, human sexuality in the church, and understanding the church's witness to Jesus Christ in a pluralistic religious world.

The call to strengthen skills of discernment arose from discussions surrounding the covenant statements of the 1986 Resolution on Human Sexuality that committed the church to "study the Bible together and expand our insight into biblical teachings; remain in loving dialogue

with each other in the Body of Christ, recognizing that we are all sinners in need of God's grace and that the Holy Spirit may lead us to further truth and repentance; [and] take part in the ongoing search for discernment and for openness to each other."

General secretary Robert J. Suderman noted that one of the key issues in any conversation is remembering that within the church there are different perspectives on the same Scripture from diverse groups of people who are all guided by the same Holy Spirit. ☿

PHOTO BY DEBORAH FROESE



Dave Bergen, executive secretary of MC Canada's Christian Formation Council, contributes to a discussion during the fall leadership assembly in Calgary.

What went wrong in Winnipeg?

Canadian, American church leaders ponder future of joint meetings after low U.S. turnout at 2008 binational summit

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent
WINNIPEG

Executive staff from Mennonite Church Canada and MC USA want to continue to look for ways to encourage members from both churches to meet together, in spite of the low U.S. turnout at last July's binational gathering in Winnipeg.

That was one of the messages that came out of November's Joint Executive Committee (JEC) meeting in Sioux Falls, S.D., said MC Canada moderator Andrew Reesor-McDowell, who attended the meeting with general secretary Robert J. Suderman. "It is my view that the MC USA is a highly valued and primary church partner to MC Canada," Reesor-McDowell wrote in an e-mail. "There are historic ties which nurture and mutually build us up as we work on our separate and important national church agendas."

'The turnout was so low that it was almost—somebody just has to say it—it was a little bit embarrassing, if not offensive.

(Tim Reimer)

Just 61 U.S. Mennonites participated in the People's Summit for Faithful Living at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, July 8-10, with most of those registrants coming from MC USA agencies. Meanwhile, there were roughly 450 Canadian Mennonite representatives. The goal of the summit was to build

relationships between the two churches at the grassroots level, as well as to generate discussion about what it means to be counter-cultural in today's world.

"The turnout was so low that it was almost—somebody just has to say it—it was a little bit embarrassing, if not offensive," said Tim Reimer, pastor at Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto, in a telephone interview. "Something went wrong. I think it was planned well. I think the workshops were good, but something was obviously out of tune."

The JEC doesn't think that low attendance signifies a lack of interest in future connections between the two churches, Reesor-McDowell said. He added that the two churches share commitments to Mennonite Publishing Network, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. Face-to-face meetings between the two churches are important from time to time.

"We don't know why people who didn't come, didn't come," said Pam Peters-Pries, executive secretary of MC Canada Support Services and one of the gathering's key organizers.

She added that it could have been the result of a variety of factors: people don't find it important to meet if there's not a delegate session attached to the event, the lo-

cation was a hindrance, people didn't have enough information, finances, or maybe they weren't interested in the theme.

In defence of MC USA, she wondered how many Canadians would have attended a learning summit in the U.S., saying, "I don't think it would have been 500."

Jim Schrag, executive director of MC

USA, shared many of Peters-Pries' sentiments. "It was disappointing," he said in a phone interview, of the low U.S. turnout, adding that organizers had hoped for at least 200 U.S. participants. Schrag said that

he is not sure what the message is in the low turnout, but MC USA and MC Canada need to work together to decide what the next step is.

"I don't think it's for U.S. folks to make statements about the future of this, or for Canadians to make statements about the future of this. They should make statements together," he said.

Peters-Pries noted that of

the 233 surveys that were filled out by summit participants, asking them what they thought of the gathering, 154 indicated that it is important for the churches to meet and they would probably attend again. "People aren't ready to say, 'This is just like any [other] relationship,'" she said, adding that the history that MC Canada and MC USA share "shouldn't be let go lightly." ❧



Peters-Pries



Schrag

/// Briefly noted

Conrad Grebel honours women theology students

WATERLOO, ONT.—Vicky Roeder Martin and Lisa Carr-Pries, master of theological studies (MTS) students at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., are the 2008 Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Theological Studies award-winners. The award, funded by Women of MC Eastern Canada and Grace Mennonite Church, St. Catharines, Ont., is given annually to female Mennonite students interested in church-related vocations. Roeder Martin is currently raising her young family and formerly served as youth pastor at Floradale Mennonite Church, Ont., while Carr-Pries is the associate minister of spiritual formation at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont.

—Conrad Grebel University College Release

NATIVE MINISTRY

Warmth and healing along the way

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent

The story starts eight years ago in Grunthal, Man., where Gertie Braun was looking for ways to use the surplus clothing from the local Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) thrift shop.

"I couldn't handle throwing them out and so I talked with the other volunteers about cutting them up for quilts," said Braun.

So Maria Funk started cutting the squares and Braun, with her industrial sewing machine, sewed the squares together for quilt tops. Over the years, she has sent their creations to various missions.

Recently, the quilt tops have brought delight to students in the northern First Nations community of Cross Lake, Man. When between 80 and 100 of these heavy quilt tops accumulate, Norm Voth, director of evangelism and service ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba, arranges for them to be delivered to Cross Lake.

Florence Benson-Umpherville, a leader in the Cross Lake Living Word Church (an MC Manitoba congregation) and principal at the local school, has discovered creative ways for the quilts to continue their journey. In her school, which has students from nursery-aged to Grade 9, she developed a character education program; as part of this program students work together in groups to finish the quilts and then send them to MCC.

Several of the quilt tops completed by the Cross Lake students found their way last spring to the remote community of Pauingassi, Man., where they were used in a healing circle. Ten families met at a retreat centre and each family unit was given a quilt to complete.

"Every couple and their children worked on a quilt," said Eric Kennedy, a member of the Pauingassi community, in a phone

interview. "They were encouraged to make the quilt so that it would have significance to them. Each one was different. A lot went into the making of each quilt. It brought families together on a project. There was interaction with each other."

While the event took place last April, Kennedy noted that these families

continue to cooperate and come together in ways they didn't before. "We hope to do the same thing at a community level," he said. "We want to have someone come in and teach us how to make the quilts from scratch. We already have a heavy industrial sewing machine."

This year, Benson-Umpherville gave the quilt tops to a group of her older students, who are sewing them for elders in the Cross Lake community. "They will each choose an elder in the community to give it to," she explained by phone from Cross Lake. "They are not to give it to someone in their family, but will present it to someone they feel is deserving."

Braun said that, while it is hard work and it takes time to put the quilt tops together, she plans to continue making them as long as they are meeting needs along the way to their final destination. ❧

PHOTO BY FLORENCE BENSON-UMPHERVILLE



Cross Lake school teachers Karen MacIsaac and Cheryl Plaisier put the final stitches on quilts their students made, which will be given to elders within the First Nations community in northern Manitoba.

NATIVE MINISTRY

Called to worship

Bell installed in aboriginal Mennonite chapel

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent

For the last four years, Fred and Helen Peters have made monthly trips from Winkler, Man., to serve the Matheson Island Community Fellowship and the aboriginal community for a week at a time. It was during this time in the small community 224 kilometres north of Winnipeg that Fred spotted a bell hanging in the unused Catholic church.

A collector of bells himself, Peters couldn't forget about the unused bell, so during one of his regular visits he mentioned the possibility of transferring the bell to the fellowship's leadership committee.

"The old Catholic church was almost tumbling down. It has been there for as long as I can remember," said Hazel Bird, 62, an active member of the fellowship, in a telephone interview, adding though that during the past 30 or so years, "we never once thought about the bell."

After Peters' inquiry, Bird contacted the First Nation's council. "They said we could have it, but they didn't want it broken or to leave the island," she said.

Peters organized a small work crew consisting of Ron and Steven Vanderwees and Vic Neufeld from his home church, Grace Mennonite. With local help, they removed the bell (which took two people to carry), built a steeple for the Mennonite chapel, and installed the bell in October 2008. Donations from Grace Mennonite, Canadian Lumber in Winkler and

Triple E Canada also helped to make the project possible. A dedication service was held in November.

"We are really happy," said Bird, who looks forward to hearing the bell regularly call people to worship.

In this community of 120 people, the Mennonite chapel is the only active church. The property is owned by Mennonite Church Manitoba, while a local committee governs the congregation's activities.

"We have an active Sunday school program, with up to 21 children and lots of community support," said Bird proudly. ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF FRED AND HELEN PETERS



After hanging silently for the past three decades, this bell was recently installed in the Matheson Island Community Fellowship, an MC Manitoba congregation, with the help of local community members and a crew from Grace Mennonite Church, Winkler, Man.

NATIVE MINISTRY

Reaching up and out

Multi-media resources connects sacred aboriginal teachings with Jesus Christ

BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada Release
WINNIPEG

A new resource will help bridge the church and culture divide between non-aboriginals and First Nations people groups in Canada. "Reaching up to God our Creator," an intergenerational curriculum resource developed by Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry, explores the wisdom of Jesus Christ that is present in sacred aboriginal teachings.



With a variety of multi-media materials, the "Reaching up to God our Creator" resource box introduces important inter-related aboriginal teachings such as the Sacred Tree, the Seven Sacred Teachings and the Medicine Wheel, all of which share the Bible's wisdom tradition.

The Sacred Tree represents the bounty of creation and God's gifts to all people. It offers a place to safely gather under the shade of its branches, with roots that spread deep into the soil of the earth, nurturing an abundance of fruit good for body and spirit. The Seven Sacred Teachings find common ground with the fruits of the Spirit described in Galatians 5:22-23, while the Medicine Wheel characterizes balance, openness and a holistic

approach to life; its four directions and animals will remind Christians of the worship visions in Ezekiel 1 and Revelation 4 and 21.

Multi-layered in meaning, the Medicine Wheel represents the four main people groups of the world with symbolic colours of red, yellow, black and white. It illustrates the circle of life as a wheel composed of spiritual, emotional, physical and mental quadrants. For an object lesson that explores the importance of maintaining equilibrium in all of these areas, two rubber balls are provided: one is whole, while the other is missing a quadrant. Clearly, without symmetry, the ball—or life—will not roll smoothly.

Tom Yoder Neufeld, associate professor of religious studies and peace and conflict studies at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., prepared an introduction to the curriculum. “Reaching Up to God our Creator” grows out of the conviction that the wisdom of Jesus Christ, who is revealed as the wisdom of God in the New Testament, has been present in aboriginal sacred teachings for a long time,” he wrote.

Harley Eagle, Dakota/Anishnawbe co-coordinator of aboriginal work for Mennonite Central Committee Canada, endorses the material. He notes that the curriculum has made its appearance at an opportune time. Prime Minister Harper’s June 2008 apology to Canadian aboriginals on behalf of the federal government for its role in the residential school system has opened the door for materials that will assist in the “process of reconciliation and of building respectful relationships between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, within aboriginal communities, churches and families,” he says.

“Reaching up to God our Creator” is intended for non-aboriginals and aboriginals alike, as a supplement to the traditional practice of handing down sacred wisdom from one generation to the next in aboriginal communities.

The curriculum resource can be borrowed or purchased from the MC Canada Resource Centre by calling toll-free 1-866-888-6785 ext. 152 or 171.

‘Living inside out’ at 2009 assembly

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada Release
SASKATOON, SASK.

Mennonite Church Canada’s 2009 delegate assembly will take place at the University of Saskatchewan from June 5-7. The theme is “Living inside out,” taken from Colossians 3:12. The theme calls God’s chosen people to clothe themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, as they live according to the Word—characteristics that shape the “inside” and inform the “outside.”

Delegate discernment sessions, worship, seminars and the Kids Assembly will all take place in one location—the university’s Education Building. University of Saskatchewan dormitories are situated just 600 metres away and offer plenty of affordable lodging.

For those who prefer hotel accommodations, a block of rooms has been reserved at the Park Town Hotel, a two-kilometre walk from the meeting facility. Local volunteers will also be arranging billets with Saskatoon and area church members, who are reportedly eager to host their brothers and sisters from across the country.

An on-campus shuttle service will be provided for those with mobility difficulties, and another shuttle service will be provided between the hotel and Education Building.

There are few restaurants within walking distance of the campus, so the University

Food Services Department has provided a variety of options for catered meals.

The assembly will close on June 7 with a Sunday morning worship service, to which local congregations are invited.

For 2009 only, the youth assembly will not be held in conjunction with the adult delegate assembly. Pam Peters-Pries, executive secretary of MC Canada Support Services, attributes this to timing:

“The Mennonite World Conference will be holding an assembly in Asunción, Paraguay, at the time we would normally schedule our delegate assembly. We believe a large number of our constituents with connections to Paraguay

may wish to attend the World Conference. To avoid scheduling conflicts, we felt it was prudent to schedule our Canadian delegate assembly for an earlier date.”

Peters-Pries says staff and other planners struggled with the decision to hold the assemblies separately, but felt that this was ultimately the most appropriate way to accommodate everyone. The youth assembly will take place in Caronport, Sask., from July 6-10.

It’s not too early to volunteer, says Peters-Pries. Saskatoon and area residents who are interested in helping to prepare for, and assist at, the assembly can contact her at ppeters-pries@mennonitechurch.ca or call toll-free 1-866-888-6785 ext. 102. ☛



The theme calls God’s chosen people to clothe themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, as they live according to the Word

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Next MennoHomes project for rural Low German Mennonites

BY BARB DRAPER

Editorial Assistant
FLORADALE, ONT.

MennoHomes Inc. brought a proposal to develop affordable housing for Low German families to its annual general meeting on Nov. 17 at Floradale Mennonite Church. Until now, MennoHomes projects have been in Kitchener or Waterloo, but this initiative would be in a rural part of Waterloo Region because Mennonites from Mexico and Latin America prefer to live in the country.

To establish the need, a panel of individuals who work with Low German Mennonites described housing conditions they have seen. Esther Janzen and Brenda Gingerich, family support workers with the St. Jacobs Family Support Centre, described dilapidated houses where staying warm in winter is a big challenge. They expressed concern about mould on walls and wood stoves from which small children can easily suffer burns. Gingerich pointed out that some families are happy because they come from situations where living conditions are even worse.

Sue Martin and Shirley Redekop work with low-income families in Wellesley and Woolwich townships through the Community Action Program for Children of Waterloo Region. They described 12 people living in a small three-bedroom house, and other housing with broken windows and poorly fitting doors, resulting in winter heating bills of up to \$1,000 a month.

Peggy Snyder, a nurse practitioner at the Woolwich Community Health Centre, pointed out that, although there is no clear causal link between housing and health, she said, "safety issues, crowding, drafty homes, dusts and moulds all have implications to health."

Lily Hiebert Rempel, the Low German program coordinator for MCC Ontario, was a community health nurse in neighbouring Wellington County for many

years. She commented that many men work in rural parts of Waterloo Region, but live at a distance because they cannot find appropriate housing.

Martin Buhr, chair of the MennoHomes board [pictured on the back cover—Ed.], reviewed statistics showing that there are about 5,000 Low German-speaking adults and children in the rural areas of Waterloo Region. While these families are larger than average Canadian families, their household incomes are modest. Those who work with

the Low German community estimate that there are 130 households in the townships where families are spending more than 30 percent of their gross income to pay rent, heat and hydro, and where standards of health and safety are not being met.

In the ensuing discussion, there seemed to be general agreement with Aaron Klassen's comment, "You've convinced me that the need is there."

MennoHomes presently has no government funding for this project, but Trevor Bauman, the treasurer from St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, announced that Selina Horst left a bequest to the church, stipulating that the money be used for refugee work. Because Horst was known for her tireless work in helping new families from Mexico in the years before her health declined, St. Jacobs Mennonite decided to give \$50,000 of that bequest to MennoHomes specifically for developing affordable housing for Low German Mennonites. ❧

PHOTO BY ANDREA EPP



Cold and rain couldn't dampen the efforts of volunteers and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario workers last month. Eugene Thiessen, left; Henry Hildebrandt, second from left; and Peggy Pickett, administrative assistant with the Niagara chapter of MCC Ontario, right; are joined by Clarke Fretz, the new Niagara rep for MCC Ontario, centre; and Moses Moini, MCC Ontario's refugee program coordinator, to load quilts and kits from Niagara area congregations destined for MCC Ontario's Kitchener warehouse into Thiessen's car. Materials were gathered at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church for what MCC Ontario hopes will be a monthly trip.

/// Briefly Noted

Helping schools deal with violence issues

KITCHENER, ONT.—Canadian Distance Education Institute (CDEI) is preparing materials to equip teachers, administrators and students across Canada to deal with such issues as drug and gang awareness, bullying and cyber-bullying. The institute—owned by Glen Woolner of First Mennonite Church in Kitchener and Kevin Milne, both fervent believers in Jesus' peace and reconciliation message—uses virtual classroom techniques that provide video input from specialists like Rob Nickel, a former detective in the Child Pornography Section of the Ontario Provincial Police, who taped a segment about cyber-stalking and cyber-bullying for a CDEI course. CDEI believes that “intelligent awareness,” or an educated understanding of what students, teachers, administrators and parents are facing, will lead to stopping violence before it happens, and the development of communities that include everyone. The curriculum ranges from peace and conflict studies to restorative justice, mediation and healing.

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Point Grey member receives national medical award

VANCOUVER—Dr. Paul Thiessen, a member of Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Church in Vancouver, was awarded the 2008 Clinical Practitioner Award bestowed by the Pediatric Chairs of Canada. This national award recognizes excellence in leadership for a pediatrician whose clinical practice has provided outstanding leadership in the education of trainees. Thiessen has also volunteered in the medical teaching program in a pediatric hospital in Uganda, and in pediatric hospitals in Ukraine, as well as stints of volunteer work on medical projects in India, Honduras and Ecuador.

—BY HENRY NEUFELD

Website helps churches prepare for pandemics

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent
WINNIPEG

The Mennonite Church Canada Task Force on Pandemic Preparedness and Response launched the ChurchPandemicResources.ca website last November to help churches deal with pandemic flu preparedness and other disasters. The task force includes representatives from MC Canada, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) and health care professionals.

“The goal of this website is to provide your congregation with a theological and pastoral framework for preparing for pandemic flu, and also to provide you with practical ideas about ways you can serve your members and your community—right now and when a pandemic strikes,” Robert J. Suderman, general secretary of MC Canada, writes in a letter that appears on the website's home page.

The last time a pandemic flu hit Canada, in 1918, it killed 50,000 Canadians. When it happens again, the Public Health Agency of Canada estimates it will kill between 11,000 and 58,000 Canadians and sicken up to five million others, the website notes.

“It's not a question of if it's coming, it's a question of when it's coming,” says Kirsten Schroeder, MC Canada's director of human resources and a task force member. “The question is: How will the church respond?”

The website has a simple design and is easy to navigate. Seven drop-down menus appear at the upper left-hand corner and provide information about the task force, a history of pandemics, why the church should get involved, and what churches can do to prepare themselves.

The simple design was intentional, says

Dan Dyck, director of communications for MC Canada, who helped design the website along with MC Canada communications staffers Katharina Nuss and Grant Klassen. “We want it to be available to all denominations, all church and all faith bodies, and not just as an MC Canada resource, although it is that, too,” Dyck says.

Task force facilitator Gord Friesen says the website was a collaborative effort, with everyone in the 12-member group involved. “The task force had Mennonite representatives from different church and community professions and perspectives, who shared their knowledge and experiences to become quite conversant on the topic,” he says.

Friesen adds that his work as the MDS binational director has shown him that churches that are not prepared for disaster have a very difficult time, but when they are prepared congregants are able to provide service to each other as well as the broader community.

It's a sentiment echoed by Schroeder. “It's critical for the church to plan [for a disaster], because that's when people will turn to the church for spiritual help,” she says. “That's not something the government is set up to do. This is the core of what the church can be, which is caring for each other.”

In addition to the website, Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) has partnered with MC Canada and MDS to produce a four-lesson study booklet for churches, Sunday schools and Bible study groups on the topic. These will be available in May. MPN is also working on a resource for worship that will be available by the end of 2009. ¶



A bike for Sam

Southern Manitoba's biggest little fundraiser is a dedicated supporter of Eden Health Care Services

EDEN FOUNDATION RELEASE
GRETNA, MAN.

Sam Brillinger is today's next generation of fundraisers. As a 12-year-old he has raised more than \$18,000 for the Eden Foundation, an organization dedicated to mental health services in southern Manitoba.

Often people get involved in a cause as a result of some family or friendship connection. For Sam, it was otherwise. In 2005, he learned that the Foundation was holding its annual Head for the Hills cycling fundraiser. He was especially intrigued when he discovered that the rider who raised the most money would win a free bike. And he wanted a new bike.

He entered the event for the first time the following year, when he was 10. The youngest rider to take part, he nonetheless raised \$400.

While he didn't win the bike, he and his father Bill developed a strategy that they hoped would take them to the top the next year. Beginning almost six months before the event, they contacted potential corporate sponsors; in return for their donation, Sam would print their names on a special T-shirt. Wearing this T-shirt, Sam then contacted people in and around his home community of Gretna. He also made up a fundraising card, and a follow-up thank-you card, to give to donors that explained what he was doing for Eden. Sam says that he was amazed how people would invite him into their homes to talk about what he was doing as he canvassed for donations.

In 2007, Sam raised \$7,500 from 202 donors and won the bike!

Sam's father is enthusiastic about his son's involvement with cycling and with Eden. "It is a life-defining moment for Sam," he says, adding, "We're building character together and keeping out of trouble."

As Sam was raising funds, he and his

family began to learn more about mental health issues and Eden. As his father Bill says, "We found out that people like to talk about Eden. We met many people who have been helped by Eden and its services." This encouraged them in the cause and, at the same time, the entire family got into cycling.

In preparation for the 2008 event, held in September, Sam used the same strategy and raised more than \$10,000 from 258 donors for Eden—approximately 20 percent of what was raised. As the largest single fundraiser, he again won the bike, which he gave to his mother Dana.

Sam says he does not need another bike,

but he wishes to continue to raise money for the work of Eden Health Care Services in Manitoba through the foundation. For 2009, he is developing a new strategy: The 13 members of the cycling club he started in Gretna, who range in age from 10 to 60, will be entering the Head for the Hills event as a team.

Sam has a remarkable passion for those stigmatized by mental illness and for what Eden is doing in their lives. As Eden CEO James Friesen notes, "When everyone in society from Sam's age and up better understands mental illness, we will have all succeeded." ❧

EDEN FOUNDATION PHOTO



Young Sam Brillinger of Gretna, Man., and his dad Bill pose with one of two mountain bikes he has won as the biggest single fundraiser for the Eden Foundation's annual Head for the Hills event in both 2007 and 2008.

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GOD AT WORK IN US

Going green: The colour of peace

Pastor chooses not to participate in the economy of global oil, at least not as much as he used to

BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada Release
ALTONA, MAN.

If you aren't quite ready to "go green" to decrease your environmental footprint, would you consider going green for peace?

That's what Dan Kehler is doing. The associate pastor of Bergthaler Mennonite Church in Altona says that society's addiction to oil has made it a commodity that drives war: "I figure the less carbon I use, the less I participate in the economy of oil and the less I participate in the war that is currently going on in Iraq."

Kehler credits a recent Mennonite Church Canada learning tour to Colombia with raising his awareness about oil dependency. After returning from the trip, both he and his wife struggled to come to terms with the contrast between their comfortable Canadian lifestyle and the poverty and injustice they observed in Colombia, where people are routinely forced from their land—or even murdered—so that others can reap profits from natural resources such as oil.

"[Oil] further divides the poor and the rich, the hungry and the not hungry," he says. "It changes the entire landscape of humanity from one where we are called to live in harmony and close communion with the land, to one where I don't have to think twice about eating a banana from South America because oil is cheap enough to bring it here." That banana, he points out, was commercially

grown in an area where the land should really be used to grow food for the local community.

Kehler began to leave his car at home as much as possible, even biking in the winter and using a bike trailer to buy groceries. The Kehlers still use their vehicle for family vacations or for visiting outside of town, but in an average week they spend less than \$20 on fuel. Some weeks, the car



Dan Kehler, associate pastor of Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Man., biked 125 kilometres to Winnipeg in the pouring rain to attend Mennonite Church Canada's 2008 assembly and binational summit.

never leaves the driveway.

In July, Kehler made a three-hour-and-40-minute bike ride to Winnipeg from Altona for Mennonite Church Canada's annual assembly. It was pouring rain at the time.

Breaking free of the "oil addiction" can be daunting, he says. In a rural congregation

such as the one Kehler pastors, farmers depend on the oil industry to fuel their equipment and to provide petroleum-based chemicals for their fields. "To 'go green' when you're talking about someone's livelihood is a lot harder than just leaving the car at home," he admits.

Sometimes theological understanding can get in the way. "If this world is going to be destroyed and replaced with a new world, why would we worry about it?" he says. "But if we see greening as an act of peacekeeping, that is something we can get a hold of. Our call to peace is rooted in Anabaptism."

In an e-mail exchange he wrote, "The whole gas-in-the-car talk . . . has caused us to look more closely at how we use energy in general." Instead of turning on the air conditioner for the entire summer, the Kehlers choose to use it only on the hottest days, fewer than 10 in total. They draw blinds to keep summer heat out and use a window-box fan and the evening breeze to cool the house.

By late October the Kehlers had not yet turned on their heat. Instead, they drew from the bounty of their garden, baking and cooking more frequently and using stove heat to warm the house. "It has turned into a bit of a challenge now to see how long we can go without turning on the furnace," Kehler wrote.

They are looking at reducing their consumption in general. "As a family we have started the journey of understanding the depths of our consumerism. I suspect that it will have its setbacks and its successes, but it is one that our faith calls us to walk," Kehler wrote.

He is quick to admit that changes made by one person or family won't make much

difference from a global perspective. "The difference for me personally is that I believe I will be held accountable for what I choose to do, so to choose to come [to the assembly] on the bike says that I've made a choice not to participate in the economy of oil." ❧

Surprised by success

Senior athlete has racked up an impressive 15 medals for his competitive efforts

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON, SASK.

Ken Epp sits comfortably on his couch in his well-furnished Bethany Place condo close to the Saskatchewan River. The word is out that Epp, 72, is a competitive athlete and he's been getting calls for interviews and stories.

"It's a little overwhelming," the Cornerstone Mennonite Church congregant admits.

Facing retirement seven years ago after 43 years as an accountant, Epp knew he wanted to get serious about fitness after his career. "The Monday after I retired, I started walking," he says. Walking led to running, and now Epp spends his days jogging, curling, swimming and playing hockey. Oh, and he also finds time for baseball in the spring.

But the biggest surprise for Epp and his wife Ann is his success in competitive track and field. He began racing in the 55-plus

Senior's Games and has competed in the 200-, 400- and 800-metre races.

While Ann believes track is his best sport, Epp, with encouragement from friends, has also branched out into other events such as the javelin, shot put and long jump. He has even signed up for a pentathlon.

Competitions have taken the couple around the province and across the country. The best part has been meeting many like-minded people and establishing special friendships. And Epp has repeatedly won medals in many varied events.

Growing up on a farm, Epp didn't have the chance to get involved in sports in high school. Now making up for lost time, he takes every opportunity he can, even running in the Mennonite Sports and Fitness Classic in Goshen, Ind., put on by the Mennonite Association for Retired

Persons.

Will he continue?

Epp laughs. "I can tell, from year to year, my times are slipping," he admits. Although he runs five kilometres every day, he still feels his age some days. Monday mornings, when he gets back into it after the weekend, it is still a shock to his body. "Sometimes I wonder, have I ever done this before?" he jokes.

Still, with 15 medals to his credit and a supportive wife to back him, it is unlikely he will quit anytime soon. ☼

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PHOTO BY ANN EPP



Wearing several of his medals, Ken Epp rests after a race.

ARTBEAT

Kindred spirits

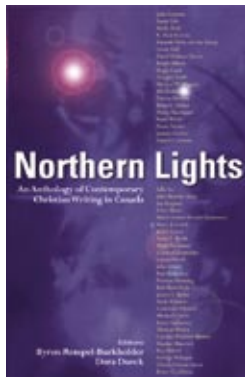
New anthology links Canadian Christians of all denominations

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent

Although it's published by the same company that brought the world such titles as *The Historical Jesus for Dummies* and *The Bible for Dummies*, the editors of a new book exploring Canadian spiritual identity never considered calling it *Canadian Spirituality for Dummies*.

"Someone else will have to write that book," Byron Rempel-Burkholder says with a laugh. Rempel-Burkholder, an editor with Mennonite Publishing Network, co-edited *Northern Lights: An Anthology of Contemporary Christian Writing in Canada* with Dora Dueck, a writer who has worked as associate editor of the *MB*



Herald.

"Our aim was not to analyze, define or argue about Christian identity in Canada. Rather, we wanted to explore, express and showcase it through the writing that's been done over the last little while," Rempel-Burkholder says.

The initial idea for the book came when he was walking to the bus stop one winter morning two-and-a-half years ago. He was pondering the relationship between spirituality and geography, and wondered if there was something distinct about Canadian spirituality.

It wasn't long before he was meeting

with Dueck, and *ChristianWeek* editor Doug Koop, who helped connect with writers and promote the book, about the possibility of putting together an anthology that would reflect the diverse face of Canadian Christianity. The resulting book, published by Wiley Books of Toronto, features 46 contributors from a variety of faith backgrounds, including Evangelical, Catholic, mainline Protestant, Orthodox, Pentecostal and Anabaptist.

Contributors include Rudy Wiebe, who reflects on the connection between the aspen trees in the boreal forest and the circle of life; MP Bill Blaikie's take on the compatibility of Christian faith and political life; and James Loney, a reservist with Christian Peacemaker Teams, who was part of a delegation that was kidnapped in Iraq in November 2006 and held hostage for four months.

Rempel-Burkholder says the book confirmed much of what he, Dueck and Koop had suspected—that there really is something unique about the way Canadians express their faith. "For me, there's a broad sense of inclusiveness and tolerance. I think we, as Canadians, are kind of known for that, [and] it does come through in some of this writing," he says.

Blaikie sees the book as a reassurance that Christians are not alone. At a Nov. 6 launch event at Canadian Mennonite University, he likened the book to an NDP meeting in Ottawa for people in the party who were concerned about faith and justice issues. One-hundred-and-fifty party members showed up, and it was liberating for each individual to know that they weren't alone. Likewise, he says *Northern Lights* lets Christians know they aren't alone.

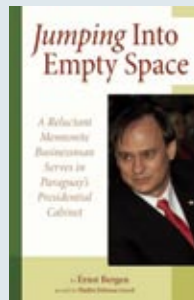
Rempel-Burkholder says that, for Mennonites, the book will identify some common ground they share with others in the Christian community. He adds that it is helpful to remember that other Christians do hold some of the same values that Mennonites sometimes tout as uniquely their own, such as concern for social justice, pacifism, loving one's enemies and the emphasis on community: "The book reminds us that we do have some kindred spirits in other denominations." ❧

/// Briefly noted

Jumping Into Empty Space released by Good Books

INTERCOURSE, PA.—In 2003, 39-year-old Ernst Bergen accepted the call to serve in the reform government of Nicanor Duarte, president of Paraguay. His book of that experience, *Jumping Into Empty Space*, has now been released by Good Books. Bergen told his story to Phyllis Pellman Good of Good Books, about how he was reluctant to join the cabinet because he was a successful businessman with no interest in politics. In fact, he grew up in a Mennonite colony in the Paraguayan Chaco and was taught that the government should be treated with some suspicion. Another reason to avoid becoming finance minister, he relates, was that Paraguay was on the edge of financial ruin due to massive corruption. Believing that the purpose of government is to work for the good of the people, Bergen accepted the challenge and began working to reform the Paraguayan economy. He faced enormous difficulties that included widespread black markets and tax evasion, but through perseverance and clear goals to create jobs, increase exports and distribute wealthy more fairly, the economy was turned around.

—BY BARB DRAPER



Punishment not the answer for crime

New book aims to take restorative justice to next level

Canadian Mennonite University Release
WINNIPEG

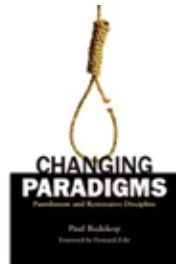
When Jeff graduated from high school, he decided to go for a joyride in his car on the schoolyard, causing thousands of dollars in damage to the freshly laid sod in the process. But instead of just allowing the charges to proceed in court, the school sent a representative to meet with Jeff and a mediator. Together, the three worked out an agreement whereby Jeff paid for the damaged sod by working for the school division. In the end, Jeff was able to get a reference from the school division for future work, an invaluable asset for a recent high school grad.

Jeff's story is one of the case studies featured in Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) professor Paul Redekop's new book, *Changing Paradigms: Punishment and Restorative Discipline* (Herald Press), which aims to show that punishment is not the answer to crime.

"There is no moral justification for punishment," says Redekop, who teaches conflict resolution at Menno Simons College, CMU's campus at the University of Winnipeg.

Redekop counters two traditional reasons for punishment: retribution and deterrence. The problem with retribution, Redekop says, is that the benefits of communicating moral disapproval depend on a situation in which the person being punished agrees completely with the values of the punisher, and fully understands the rightness of the punishment. This level of agreement rarely happens, Redekop believes, and when it does, punishment is rarely necessary.

The problem with deterrence, he adds, is that punishment doesn't act as a deterrent.



Citing studies that show that the longer someone is in prison, the more likely that person is to re-offend once released, Redekop says that it only makes things worse. But that's not the only problem with punishment, he notes. It also doesn't allow for communication between the victim and the offender.

"We have every right to express our disapproval of wrong acts, but when we punish, we undermine the message," he explains, pointing out that the way the criminal justice system is set up now doesn't

allow for contact between the victim and offender. "It's an exercise in futility, because punishment breeds only anger and resentment on the part of the person being punished."

Redekop acknowledges that "people are upset about crime, so they want more punishment. But that is only because they don't know that there are alternatives. Punishment is the only option that's been available. They don't know there's a whole other way of dealing with these conflicts that actually can work."

A restorative justice response, on the other hand, holds wrongdoers accountable, and has them restore the harm that has been done, Redekop says, everything from compensating the person they have wronged in some way, or sincerely apologizing to the victim and reassuring them that it won't happen again.

This can happen through mediation, in which the victim and the offender meet with a third party. Mediation gives victims the opportunity to let the offender know how the wrong affected them, and gives the offender the motivation to make things right. ❧

'We have every right to express our disapproval of wrong acts, but when we punish, we undermine the message.'
(Paul Redekop)

/// Briefly noted

Author David Bergen to teach at 2009 CMU School of Writing

WINNIPEG—Author David Bergen will teach senior fiction at the May 4-8 School of Writing at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). Bergen, a Giller Prize winner, has also received the McNally Robinson Book of the Year Award and the Carol Shields Winnipeg Book Award, and has been short-listed for the Governor General's Award. His latest novel is *The Retreat*. Joining Bergen as new instructors are Myrna Kostash, who will teach creative non-fiction, and Barbara Nickel, who will teach poetry. Kostash is author of a number of works, including the bestseller *The Next Canada: Looking for the Future Nation*. Nickel is winner of the Pat Lowther Award (best Canadian poetry collection by a woman) and the *Malahat Review* Long Poem Prize. The three join continuing instructors David Elias, who teaches intermediate fiction, and Joanne Klassen and Eleanor Chornoboy, who teach life writing. The School of Writing at CMU was begun in 2007 through the help and inspiration of author Rudy Wiebe. Last year, 45 students took courses in fiction, poetry and life writing at the week-long school.

—Canadian Mennonite University Release

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MAX Canada Release
BADEN, ONT.

The Canadian economy is moving into a very challenging period. Daily we hear about more job losses and diminishing investment portfolios accentuated by a very fragile American and global economy. This is occurring during a time when the ratio of personal debt to disposable income for Canadians is well over 100 percent (compared to just over 50 percent 20 years ago, according to Stats Canada). In short, as a society we are ill-equipped to deal with difficult economic times.

Do the members of our Mennonite churches find themselves in better circumstances? Most in our congregations appear to be doing fine. Yet anecdotal evidence and personal contacts hint at a darker picture within our faith communities—stories of people who have maxed out their credit cards and families unable to pay their household bills.

The comfort level with sharing financial burdens or difficulties with our congregational communities is low. Seldom during congregational sharing time do we hear people ask for help in a financial crisis. More likely, when financial crises develop, these people quietly distance themselves, feeling they have failed and are unworthy of assistance or prayer support.

During the past Advent season, we again heard the familiar passage from Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a child is born," followed by the names this child will be given. Among those names is "Prince of Peace." In *The Message*, Eugene Peterson has translated this name as "Prince of Wholeness," rendering verse 7 to read, "... and there'll be no limits to the wholeness he brings." We believe in the power of the gospel to bring spiritual wholeness to people's lives. Spiritual wholeness or shalom incorporates

all areas of life: personal, family, health and economic.

The MAX Enterprise has a vision: to restore and preserve wholeness. Wholeness, both economic and emotional, is achieved when an insured loss is restored or a Share Fund grant is provided. Wholeness is restored when Mennonite Disaster Service rebuilds a storm-damaged home. Wholeness is restored when

interest-free assistance is provided through Mennonite Savings and Credit Union members to help service a delinquent mortgage or loan. These examples are reactive, responding to a crisis.

How assertively and systematically do our congregations work at being proactive, preserving wholeness by training families and youths in financial and debt management? Is consumer debt a challenge in your congregation? How do you think congregations and related organizations should work at assisting members to maintain financial wholeness as part of spiritual wholeness?

MAX Mutual Aid Ministries is interested in exploring financial wholeness programs in and with our congregations. Please share your view of the challenge and possible solutions with us at mutualaid@maxcanada.org. ✎

Nelson Scheifele is executive director of MAX Canada's Mutual Aid Ministries.

Seldom during congregational sharing time do we hear people ask for help in a financial crisis.

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MCC prepares to weather economic storm

By GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Release
AKRON, PA.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is preparing for leaner times, but remains optimistic that a faithful constituency and diverse sources of income will lessen the impact of the economic downturn and unpredictable exchange rates on both sides of the border.

"Just like we have weathered economic storms in the past, we can weather this one," says Don Peters, executive director of MCC Canada. "This is unnerving, humbling and even frightening, but at the same time we remain optimistic and encouraged that we can continue to do the work that we have been called to do, domestically and abroad."

In Canada, MCC is anticipating that income from donations, designated

giving, thrift shops, MCC's account in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and government grants will make it possible for it to meet financial commitments that were approved in its 2008-09 financial plan.

However, the amount forwarded from Canada for international programs will be less than projected because of the sharp decline in the value of the Canadian dollar. MCC's work in the developing world is calculated in U.S. funds. A lower Canadian dollar buys fewer U.S. dollars.

MCC's international programs are currently facing a budget shortfall, says Jerry Shank, interim director for these programs. There are three main reasons for this:

- The declining value of the Canadian currency;

- Decreased income from investments;
- The possibility of a decline in giving.

MCC has a "rainy-day" fund to help cover unexpected expenses or a sudden drop in income. A portion of this fund will be used to cover the initial budget shortfall. MCC will also begin tightening its belt to bring down expenses.

In the short term, these steps should not affect the people that MCC is called to serve. However, further reductions may be required this year if contributions to MCC are lower than anticipated. Despite the economic turmoil, MCC remains committed to helping people in need.

"Reports indicate that this economic crisis will bite deeply and that many lives will be profoundly affected," says Arli Klassen, executive director of MCC's bi-national operation, which is responsible for most of MCC's international programs. "In the face of all this we are deeply grateful for people's steadfast support and prayers. Together, we will continue to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless and welcome the stranger, in the name of Christ." ❧



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/// Briefly noted

Pastors' pension plan riding out market volatility

WINNIPEG—Mennonite Church Canada's pension plan is weathering the economic storm better than some. So says Bryan Grom of Ardent Financial, the broker for the MC Canada pension plan. Unless plan members specify otherwise, the plan is invested in the Meritas Socially Responsible Asset Allocation Fund. Grom and Kirsten Schroeder, MC Canada's director of human resources, are providing opportunities to meet with pension plan members across Canada early in 2009. Schroeder says that with all the negative news about the state of global financial markets, many are concerned about the state of their investments. The meetings are designed to help planholders consider decisions they should—and should not—be making in financially volatile times. For a schedule of the meetings, visit mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/825.
—Mennonite Church Canada Release

Meritas wins 2008 investment award

TORONTO—The Meritas Jantzi Social Index Fund received the 2008 Socially Responsible Investment Fund Award at last fall's 2008 Canadian Investment Awards ceremony in Toronto. "In these times of market turbulence, a growing number of investors are looking for solutions that provide them with competitive financial returns and they are looking to advisors who understand that financial returns need to be balanced with social and environmental risk and returns as well," wrote Meritas Mutual Funds CEO Gary Hawton in a release following the ceremony. "That is what socially responsible investing is all about."
—Meritas Mutual Funds Release

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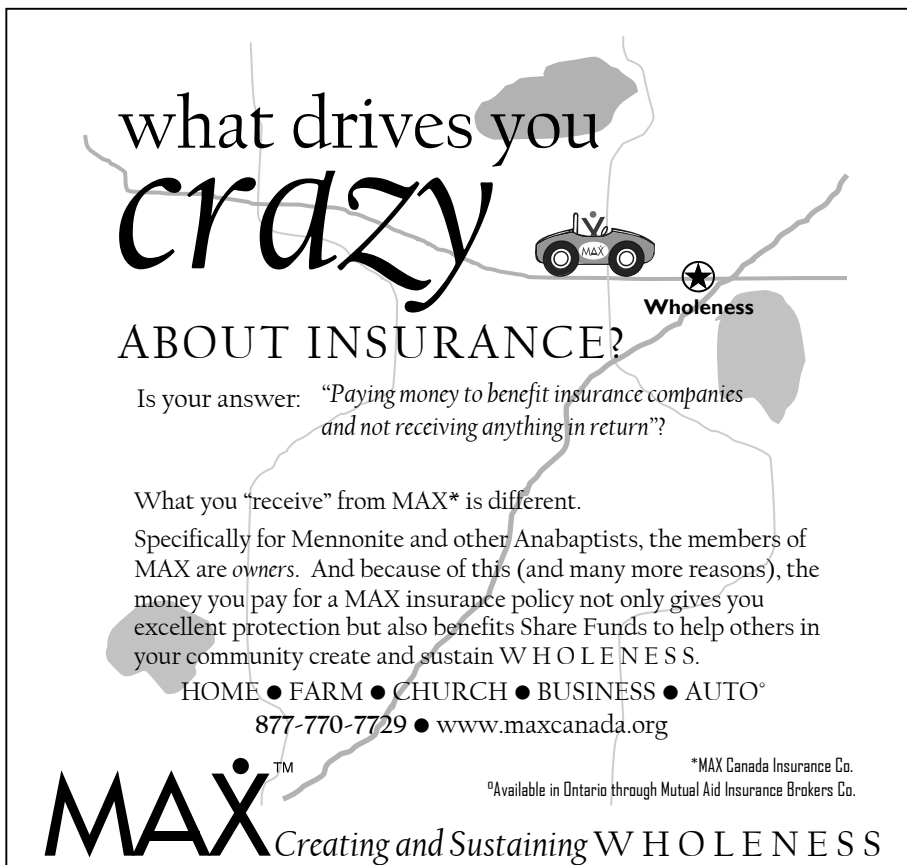
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Historical Resources

Bergthol Mennonite Church at Didsbury, Alta., has produced a CD of the pictorial display of its 100-year anniversary that took place in 2003. A copy may be obtained from: Kathy Peters, RR2, Didsbury, AB. T0M 0W0. The price is \$20.

Tavonius Family of Halbstadt and Muntau, Molotschna Colony. 1996 interview of Dr. Erika Tavonius, Vineland, Ont.; 35 pages, maps, photos, interviews of individuals who remembered the Tavonius family. \$12 plus postage. wkoop@sympatico.ca, 519-326-9791.

Employment Opportunities

Jubilee Mennonite Church (a dual conference church) in Winnipeg, Man., is seeking a **LEAD PASTOR** to shepherd our congregation of about 100 people. We desire a spiritually mature leader who can help us continue to fulfill our mission to "Reach Out, Serve, Know One Another, Grow, and Worship." Preference will be given to the candidates who have a minimum of four years Senior Pastor experience, a graduate or seminary degree from an accredited institution, demonstrated gifts in preaching, teaching, evangelism/church growth, and caring. Interested candidates are encouraged to submit their resumes by mail or e-mail, along with a brief personal ministry and vision statement to: Search Committee, Jubilee Mennonite Church, 365 Edelweiss Cres., Winnipeg, MB R2G 2B6; email: jubmen@mts.net; phone 204-668-9933; fax 204-669-4296.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Rosthern Mennonite Church invites applications for a pastor to provide programming and ministry among the youths and young adults in our community.

We are looking for a person who:

- has a strong personal commitment to Jesus Christ
- has an understanding of, and respect for, the Anabaptist faith
- is organized, self-motivated and able to work in a team setting

Please apply to:
Search Committee
Box 464

Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0

Or e-mail: tbjanzen@sasktel.net

The Mennonite Brethren in Christ Resource Centre invites applications for the position of **MANAGER/LIBRARIAN** in Kitchener, Ont.

This position requires a person with a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and non-violent peace-making.

Responsibilities include: Previewing, purchasing, cataloguing and promoting print and audio-visual resources and managing the day-to-day operations of a library resource centre to the Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren, Brethren in Christ congregations and Mennonite Central Committee Ontario constituency.

Qualifications include: General BA, with an MA in library science preferred. Computer and basic library cataloguing skills and an ability to work independently required. Previous experience in a library or resource centre setting would be an asset.

This position is 20 hours a week. Salary and benefits consistent with Mennonite Central Committee Ontario guidelines and begins February 2009. Application deadline: Jan. 16, 2009.

A complete job description is available on the Centre's website at mbicresources.org. To apply, send cover letter and resume to Roger Massie, 2273 Munn's Avenue, Oakville, ON L6H 3M4, or mjoanne@cogeco.ca.



**Receptionist
(Winnipeg)**

Mennonite Foundation of Canada has an immediate opening in our Winnipeg office for a Receptionist as a maternity leave replacement.

This person will be responsible for front desk and telephone reception, processing incoming and outgoing mail including deposits and receipting, word processing and various other clerical duties. Experience in a computerized office environment, specifically using MS OFFICE software with proficiency in WORD is desired. Applicants should enjoy interacting with the public and possess strong interpersonal and telephone skills.

MFC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. A complete job description is available upon request. Processing of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Interested persons should send their resume to:

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Looking for a **BAND TEACHER** with emphasis on brass instruments for a Mennonite community in Paraguay. For further information, please contact Ed Toews: edwil@chaconet.com.py. Phone: 204-654-1538.

Camp Elim is seeking a couple for **MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE** of the facilities and **DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS** for the Mennonite Camp program. On-site, lakefront housing is included. If you are interested in the opportunity to live in a scenic part of southwest Saskatchewan, please call Ben at 306-773-7063, warwick1888@comcast.net.

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SJMC is a vibrant, active, caring congregation of 300. The village of St. Jacobs is located on the edge of the city of Waterloo, minutes from two universities (Conrad Grebel University College) and a community college. The candidate would be part of a three-member pastoral team (2.25 FTE). Within the structure of a strong pastoral team, responsibilities would include worship, preaching and pastoral care with an emphasis on Christian Formation. Please reply by Feb. 27, 2009, to: Muriel Bechtel, Conference Minister, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, 4489 King St. East, Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2; 519-650-3806; muriel@mcec.ca.



Mennonite Church Canada invites applications for the position of **EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, SUPPORT SERVICES.**

Accountable to the General Secretary and the Support Services Council, the

Executive Secretary is responsible for carrying out the mandate to support Mennonite Church Canada with administrative services to enable the church to do its work efficiently and effectively.

This position is responsible for giving leadership to the areas of communications, human resources, resource development, information technology, legal compliance, property management, pension plan administration and assembly planning. This person is a member of the executive staff team and participates in overall planning and implementation of the objectives of the denomination. Some travel within Canada is required. The preferred start date would be in the first quarter of 2009.

This full-time position, located in Winnipeg, Man., provides leadership for Support Services and requires a person of vision with strong leadership and administrative capabilities. The successful candidate has excellent oral, written and interpersonal communication skills, is energetic, creative and organized, and is a team player. Education, work experience, and computer skills suitable to the responsibilities of this ministry are required.

All staff are expected to exhibit a personal faith commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord, uphold the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, and the vision of Mennonite Church Canada as a missional church.

The job description is posted at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved/jobs/>. Inquiries, nominations and applications can be directed to Robert J. Suderman, General Secretary, at rjsuderman@mennonitechurch.ca; Mennonite Church Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 (ph. 204-888-6781; toll-free 1-866-888-6785). Applications will be processed beginning Jan. 23.

Elmira Mennonite Church, a vibrant, multi-generational congregation of 240 members, located in the growing community of Elmira Ont., seeks a full-time **PASTOR OF WORSHIP AND PASTORAL CARE** to join Steven Janzen on the Pastoral Team. The successful candidate will have a Master of Divinity, a commitment to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology, pastoral leadership experience and a desire to work collaboratively as part of a co-pastor team. Responsibilities will focus on leadership in worship planning, pastoral care and providing administrative oversight.

Apply by Feb. 11 to:
Muriel Bechtel, Conference Minister
4489 King Street East
Kitchener, ON N2G 3W6
Phone: 519-650-3806 Email: Muriel@mcec.ca

Vineland United Mennonite Church invites applications for the full-time position of **LEAD MINISTER**. We are a congregation of 220 active members located in a growing semi-rural community in the heart of the Niagara Peninsula.

Our church is seeking a transformational pastor to assist our congregation in implementing our vision for the future. The successful candidate will be committed to an Anabaptist understanding of faith and theology, deeply rooted in biblical teaching, a strong preacher and willing to work as part of the leadership team. Candidates should have previous pastoral experience and possess a desire to foster local outreach.

Please submit inquiries, resumes and references to:

Vineland United Mennonite Church
3327 Menno St.
Vineland, ON
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Attn: Mike Hendriks
or e-mail mkhendriks@sympatico.ca

Saanich Community Church, in Greater Victoria on Vancouver Island, is seeking a **SENIOR PASTOR**. The congregation is a diverse, urban, West Coast group, with a passion for social justice, for challenging discourse, and for growing together. Our purpose is "to worship God with our whole lives, build one another up as a community of faith and engage in God's mission in the world." We seek someone who is passionate about inspiring people to follow Jesus, to live out their faith in community – both in the church and in the world – and who has a well-articulated understanding of and commitment to an Anabaptist approach to faith. Greater Victoria is a large urban centre with two universities, a college and a beautiful natural setting. See www.saanichcommunity.ca for details. Contact Carolyn Fast, fast@telus.net, with questions, applications. Accepting applications until Feb. 15, 2009.

Employment Wanted

Professional Russian/English Translator. Worked with Mennonite documents for 30 years. Numerous translations have been published in academic journals, books and CDs. Contact Olga Shmakina-Toews
Phone: 559-255-8638 (mid-October through the end of April)
Email: osgguide@yahoo.com

Award-winning snapshots

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Martin Buhr, president of MennoHomes, stands in the community room of the 50-unit Rockway Village Gardens affordable housing project with the 2008 City of Kitchener (Ont.) Urban Design Award of Excellence the building garnered recently. "Affordable housing doesn't have to look like it," said the judges. Part of the rent collected from Rockway Village Gardens' tenants goes to pay a caseworker to help residents with various issues they may have.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EDEN HEALTH CARE SERVICES



Ken Giesbrecht, left, and Ben Frey, members of Eden Health Care Services board, received a Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) award for "best practices in affordable housing" for Eden's Penfield Court project in Steinbach, Man. The ceremony took place in Ottawa on Nov. 3.

PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



Alison Scott-Prelorontzos, centre, a member of Project Ploughshares Edmonton's Salvos Prelorontzos Peace Award Committee, presents the award to representatives of the Arab/Jewish Women's Peace Coalition, Evelyn Hamdon, left, and Netta Phillet, right. The award affirms the effectiveness of personal relationships in building peace. Started in 1991, the group brings Jewish and Arab women together for conversation and friendship. Initially, the group met weekly for discussions of the issues surrounding the Gulf War. Says Phillet of the continuing dialogue the group has engendered, "I think the transformation that most of us have undergone is that this true kind of respectful, deep listening that we try to practise is the end in itself. . . . We believe the idea that war is inevitable is simply not true. There can be another model for human co-existence." Project Ploughshares is a social justice partner of the Canadian Council of Churches, of which Mennonite Church Canada is a member.