

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

March 2, 2009

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## EDITORIAL

# Into the world

TIM MILLER DYCK  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

A number of months ago, I had the chance to hear Rebecca Manley Pippert speak on evangelism. She is the author of the influential book, *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World: Evangelism As a Way of Life*, a book that was formative for me since back when I sat together with a group of fellow students in a dorm room at Conrad Grebel College to study it.

At her talk, Pippert described how there are now more missionaries being sent from churches outside North America and Europe than from the western world. "Christianity's centre of gravity has moved decisively south," she said.

This is certainly true for the Mennonite Church, considering where most new believers are coming to faith. According to Mennonite World Conference figures, Mennonite churches in Africa grew by almost 20 percent in just the three years from 2003-06, the last year figures are available. Africa is the continent with the largest number of Mennonites, and the largest single Mennonite national church group, the Meserete Kristos Church, is in Ethiopia.

However, gladly for us in Canada, that energy and passion for evangelism and church planting that is so strong in non-western churches is spilling across oceans and national boundaries. Thanks to immigration, Mennonites from the global south are coming to Canada and helping plant churches here. Our ongoing coverage of emerging church plants in Canada over

the past year has shown this movement at work. For example, the Colombian Mennonite Church gifted us with Lucy Roca and Betty Roca, two women commissioned and sent here to plant churches in Quebec in partnership with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. They are working on three separate church plants in the Montreal area.

As I write this, I'm travelling back east to the magazine's office in Ontario from the Mennonite Church B.C. annual delegate sessions held at Cedar Valley Mennonite Church in Mission. While I was there, I had the pleasure of meeting a group of people who had come the other direction. At the delegate sessions, the area church introduced and welcomed a group of Hmong Mennonites who are in the process of starting Western Hmong Mennonite Church in Maple Ridge, B.C.

I introduced myself to two of those Mennonites, Buayia Her and his wife Mee Lee Her, during a break and asked to hear more of their story. Buayia told me that most of the people in this group came directly from another congregation in our church fellowship, First Hmong Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont. "We are too sick of the snow," he joked. Pastor Ga Yang, who also was pastor at First

Hmong before current pastor Dan Yang, has also come out west while others already in B.C. have joined as well.

I also met Mie Matsui, who came to Christ as part of a Japanese Bible study group she began attending when she came to Canada to study. She now attends Mennonite Japanese Christian Fellowship in Surrey, B.C., and told me about that congregation's Friday night gatherings for Japanese students who come to B.C. to learn English. She told me that less than 1 percent of Japanese people are Christian. "We eat Japanese food and share something when they come," she said about their Friday student events. "I hope many people can get to know Christ the same [as me]."

Going into the world and sharing Jesus' love in whatever ways that work in our settings is the privilege of all Christians, not just those relatively new to Canada, of course, but I am grateful for this added salt and light in our midst.

The economic crash happening around us is bad for our bank accounts and

retirement funds, but I think it will be good for the church. It is showing us how weak the promises of money really are, and how powerful a congregation showing God's love to the people in its community is. One of the reasons I think the non-western church is so vibrant is because where the gospel speaks more to the cost of discipleship than merely to prosperity, the church has multiplied like the loaves and fishes did in Jesus' hands. May we all continue to experience that same multiplication.



*Mee Lee Her, left, and her husband Buayia Her are among a group of Hmong Mennonites beginning a new church in Maple Ridge, B.C.*

## ABOUT THE COVER:

"X" marks the spot of the Korea Anabaptist Center and its English-language program, Connexus, among the myriad signs and billboards of downtown Seoul, South Korea. For more on the centre's goals and plans, read the report by Dave Rogalsky on page 19.

PHOTO: DAVE ROGALSKY, CANADIAN MENNONITE;  
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: DAN JOHNSON, CANADIAN MENNONITE

*Circulation: Please contact Lisa Jacky toll-free at 1-800-378-2524 ext. 221 or by e-mail at office@canadianmennonite.org for subscriptions and address changes. Subscriptions can also be ordered at our web site. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Publications Assistance Program towards our mailing costs.*  
ISSN 1480-042X

Canada

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5

WATERLOO ON N2L 6H7

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

Web site: [canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org)

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**General submission address:** [submit@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:submit@canadianmennonite.org)

**Readers Write:** [letters@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:letters@canadianmennonite.org)

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

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

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# Ten things to remember

BY JOHN H. NEUFELD

*This series of articles, begun last issue, explores the question posed by Philip when he met the Ethiopian eunuch travelling home from Jerusalem:—Do you understand what you are reading? (Acts 8:31)—in the context of the Bible as a whole. In this second article the author suggests 10 tips to keep in mind when reading the Bible. Paying attention to these guidelines will help us read the Bible carefully and intelligently.*



*Taking a passage seriously does not necessarily mean that we take it literally, especially not poetry, metaphors, parables and apocalyptic imagery.*

**F**irst, the Bible contains various types of literature, and the kind of literature we are considering has a bearing on our understanding of the text.

It is necessary to distinguish between poetry (“*the trees clapped their hands*”); metaphors (“*the kingdom of God is like . . .*”); an epistle (“*Now about the collection for God’s people*”); a narrative (“*There once was a man who had two sons . . .*”); a genealogy (Matthew 1); a passage with laws (Exodus 20); or apocalyptic literature (the Book of Revelation).

It is important that we notice what kind of literature we are reading, and take the form of the text seriously. Taking a passage seriously does not necessarily mean that we take it literally, especially not poetry, metaphors, parables and apocalyptic imagery. It is well to note not only what the text is saying, but also how it is saying what it is saying.

**SECOND, EVERY READER** contributes to the reading of a text, either consciously or unconsciously.

Take Psalm 121 as an example. Here we read the words: “*Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord.*” For most of my life, these words were a source of comfort, strength and hope, but that changed when I was undergoing chemotherapy for cancer, about 10 years ago. Dealing with cancer and the effects of drugs coursing through my veins, I asked, “How does God’s help come?” I found nothing in this beautiful psalm to answer that question. This Psalm says that help will come from the Lord, but says nothing about how that help comes. The text said exactly the same thing it said before,

but given new circumstances, its significance changed for me.

In addition to our memories and experiences, we also bring a set of assumptions, conscious or unconscious, that are always at work in our minds and hearts, and play a role in how we interpret what we are reading. When we read the Bible carefully, God's Spirit will reveal fresh

*[W]e evaluate the Old Testament in the light of the New, and we interpret all in the light of Jesus.*

insights to us, some of which will be a challenge to our previous thinking. The more we are aware of our hearts, our minds and our experiences, the deeper will be our engagement with God's Word.

**THIRD, THE BIBLE** is the creation of the church.

At first, this may sound strange to us, but the early church did not come into existence because they had New Testament study groups. During the first century or so after the day of Pentecost, the New Testament was in the process of being created—epistle by epistle, gospel by gospel—and only by the end of the fourth century had the church decided

that the 27 books we now have in the New Testament were the believers' reliable guide for faith and life.

Some may now ask why this is important. It is important because it provides us one more question to bring to the text: "Why was it important to the early church that this writing was preserved and declared to be God-inspired?" The

early church decided, for example, that four perspectives on the life of Jesus were better than one. It is our task to ask why each of the gospel writers wrote the way they did, who their intended audience was, and how that shaped their writing.

**FOURTH, THE BIBLE** is the critic of the church.

The Spirit of God uses Scripture to address dangerous tendencies and shortcomings in the church. We can refer to Galatians and I Corinthians as examples, or the prophetic books of the Old Testament. When reading the Bible, we need to be ready to have our toes stepped on because we are too comfortable or

too complacent. The Word will call us to repentance, or a change of attitudes, actions and speech.

**FIFTH, THE BIBLE** is historically situated and culturally rooted.

When reading the Bible we become aware that we are entering a strange new world, a world with customs and attitudes that were part and parcel of that time and those places, but which have no precise parallels in our time and culture.

Consider Paul's statement, "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (used four times in his letters). In the first century, greeting one another with a kiss was normally accepted, but it isn't accepted in our time. Do we take his advice literally, then? I don't think so. If we want to take it seriously, though, we might suggest, "Greet one another with a hearty handshake."

When we take history and culture seriously, we realize that parts of Scripture are prescriptive and trans-cultural, while others are descriptive and culturally specific. I consider the Lord's Prayer to be pray-able in any culture. However, when we read I Corinthians 11 we encounter a dilemma. We take very seriously the oldest account of the institution of the Lord's Supper (verses 17-34), but most of

us don't consider the first 16 verses of this chapter—that speak about women needing to have their heads covered while praying or prophesying—in the same way. Good Bible commentaries can help us learn as much as possible about the cultural and historical situations assumed in the texts.

**SIXTH, EVERY TEXT** has context, both immediate as well as the broader context of the book in which it is found, as well as the Bible as a whole.

The material that precedes and follows a given passage often sheds helpful light on its meaning. Consider the three announcements of Jesus' suffering in Mark 9-10. If we simply uproot these verses from the context Mark has provided, we most likely fail to get the point that these announcements were deliberately placed there as a striking contrast to Jesus' concerns.

**SEVENTH, THE BIBLE** has a plurality of viewpoints.

This has not always been recognized or appreciated. Many have believed that any tension between biblical texts should not be tolerated, but when we read the Bible carefully we come across different viewpoints on the same topic.

Consider Deuteronomy 28, the Book of Job, John 9 and Luke 13:1-5. Briefly stated, Deuteronomy 28:1-14 promises a full range of blessings for the faithful. The writer of Job challenges this view, showing that even the most righteous man on earth experienced tragedy rather than blessing. What shall we do with these two quite different viewpoints?

Reading the gospel passages, we notice that Jesus addresses the same issue. In John 9 the disciples ask him, "*Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*" Their assumption is similar to that of Deuteronomy 28, but Jesus declares that neither this man nor his parents are the cause of blindness. Jesus takes Job's side, rather than that of Deuteronomy on this issue. Seeing this, we are alerted to the importance of listening to all voices in the Bible on a given topic and discerning in which direction Jesus and the New Testament lean.

**EIGHTH, READ THE Bible** Christocentrically.

This guideline was emphasized by our Anabaptist forebears, but is sometimes forgotten. It reminds us that the Bible is an uneven book, and not all parts have equal weight. Our forebears believed that all is to be seen in the light of the clearest revelation of all: Jesus. This means we evaluate the Old Testament in the light of the New, and we interpret all in the light of Jesus.

**NINTH, THE BIBLE** is inspired by God but written by humans, but God did not dictate what biblical writers should write or how they ought to express themselves.

which books were to be Scripture. A group of human beings meeting in Jamnia in 90 A.D. decided that the canon of 39 books in the Old Testament was closed. At the end of the fourth century, human beings decided that the New Testament would have the 27 books it now has.

**TENTH, THE BIBLE** is best interpreted in community.

Everyone's understanding and interpretation is tested by the believing community, both in larger and smaller groups. Like the Bereans, we are to examine the Scriptures and test each other's understanding (Acts 17:11).

*When reading the Bible, we need to be ready to have our toes stepped on because we are too comfortable or too complacent.*

It was written by several dozen unique individuals who each left his stamp on the document; each one expressed literary creativity in his writing; each wrote to an intended audience.

We believe God's Spirit inspired and guided not only the writing, but also the oral re-telling, the gathering and the editing, and, finally, the process of deciding

*John H. Neufeld was president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University) from 1984-97 and before that was pastor for 15 years at First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. He lives in Winnipeg and continues to preach and conduct seminars.*

### /// For discussion

1. What is your favourite Scripture passage? Is it associated with an incident or person that makes it special? Can you think of a time when the meaning of a passage changed due to circumstances in your life? Is it a problem if Scripture passages mean different things to different people?
2. Can you think of examples when the Bible has been used to criticize shortcomings in the church? If the Bible was created by the church, how can the Bible be authoritative? What is the relationship between the Bible and the church?
3. Neufeld says the Bible has different points of view on the question of whether blessings or suffering are caused by an individual's actions. What is the position of Deuteronomy 28, Job, Luke 13:1-5 and John 9? What position did Jesus take on this question? What do we do when the Bible says different things?
4. Who do you accept as the authority on how to interpret the Bible? If the Bible is best interpreted in community, how can we do that? Should we be challenging each other more in our understanding of the Bible? Do members of a community all need to agree when it comes to the Bible?

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

## ✉ A contrary view to a contrary view

**RE:** "A CONTRARIAN view of anti-consumption Christmas rhetoric," Dec. 15, 2008, page 6.

Having just completed a BA in communications, with the concepts of rhetoric and consumption at the forefront of my studies, I was troubled by Al Doerksen's apparently uninformed views. I was surprised that this consumption carol was sung by a Mennonite, when it was the Mennonite community that believes that simplicity, rather than consumption, brings us closer to God.

Although Doerksen is not advocating shopping for the sake of shopping, his efforts at global thinking fall far short of accurately taking into account the negative consequences of unbridled consumption. When buying in the global community, be sure to support industries that help locals in poorer countries.

## GOD, MONEY AND ME

## Chocolate shop as church model

DARREN PRIES-KLASSEN

It is easy to assume that when it comes to generosity, the church and its teachings are the best place to find a first-class model. Old and New Testament scriptures are filled with passages that challenge all of us to live selflessly. Praise and honour are given to God, and the needs of others in a hurting world take precedence over our own wants. However, things tend to break down when living this message on a daily basis. While the church preaches a message of generosity, it is not always evident in the way Christians live. The church can benefit from models we see in other places.

My wife and I have friends who own a chocolate shop. The moment you enter you are met with a feast for the eyes as well as the palate. Beautiful displays of handmade chocolates fill shelves and cases, and the contagious smiles of the proprietors and their children welcome you.

This is not just a place to buy chocolate.

This is a place where you are made to feel appreciated. Many times before I even make a selection, I am offered a quality coffee and a variety of free samples. Other times when I offer to pay, my money is rejected. I support customer service, but



*This is not just a place to buy chocolate. This is a place where you are made to feel appreciated.*

several times I have told my friends that I am not here to eat their chocolate for free. I am quite happy to pay for what I consume and am happy to support a local small business like theirs.

One evening I asked my friend about their business model. Without hesitation, he told me it was all about people: "People are busy. Their days are hectic. People come here because they want something that makes them feel special." I pushed him and suggested that this sounded quite

admirable, but that he was still running a business and that it needed to make a profit. He just shrugged it off. "I didn't open this place to make money," he said. "I opened it because I like people."

Very interesting. In describing their business model he could have been describing the reason for the existence of the church: life is hectic, people are busy, and they want to feel special.

What if Christians saw themselves as "proprietors" of the church, with a strong commitment to helping people feel and know that they are special? And what if they could find contentment in this? We'd be well on our way to being the

place Jesus talked about. Hey, that's not bad. It doesn't fully describe everything that the church should be, but it's a very good beginning.

*Darren Pries-Klassen is a consultant at the St. Catharines, Ont., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada. For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit [mennofoundation.ca](http://mennofoundation.ca).*

Monocultures do not support local industry or improve living standards in poorer nations when they switch their focus to providing food for the rich in countries like Canada. The actual result is that their own industry is marginalized and they become poorer.

An example of this is the banana industry in Jamaica, which has ruined its environment, culture and industry, and has lessened their standard of living. So next time you pick up a banana, think about whether our greed for tropical foods is really helping the locals living there or simply further marginalizing their way of life.

Doerksen advocates buying technology, but the

amount of toxins that go into iPods and digital cameras is astronomical. So beware, if you are trying to respect and love the environment as God would have us do.

Also, owning a cell phone does not democratize the poor, but rather clouds their true poverty and makes us think that their situation is better than it is. It is no cause for celebration that they may be starving while spending their modest means on technology in an effort to keep up with western trends. Rather, let's celebrate technology that is lessening our impact on this earth and those international goods that support fair wages to workers and sustainable lifestyles.

OLIVIA DYCK, KITCHENER, ONT.

FROM OUR LEADERS

# Working for peace, paying for war

JANET PLENERT

Can we mobilize a thousand Mennonites to declare themselves to be conscientious objectors to military taxation this year? Would the government take note? Would this encourage other nonviolent, peace-loving people to do likewise? Would it make a difference in diverting our tax dollars out of military spending and into community peacebuilding uses? We don't know.

We do know that 8.5 percent of the income tax we pay is used to fund Canadian military activities. In 2007-08 this amounted to \$18 billion dollars! Paying for this seems inconsistent with our commitment to a God who came to us humbly in a child, in a manger; who taught us to turn the other cheek, and to work to bring two sides into one new humanity (Ephesians 2:14), and to restore all things under Christ (Ephesians 1:10,22).

For several years, Mennonite Church Canada has encouraged and promoted

the work of Conscience Canada, a group that has worked tirelessly to legalize conscientious objection to taxation for military purposes for 30 years. Together with this group, we helped create Bill C-460 that would allow conscientious ob-

jectors to divert all of their taxes to non-military use. The "Act respecting conscientious objection for the use of taxes for military purposes" was introduced into Parliament, but had not received a second reading when the 39th session of Parliament ended.

As Bill C-460 awaits introduction into the current session of Parliament, the timing is right to increase our witness to government and ask it to take this issue seriously. Will you prayerfully consider submitting a Peace Tax declaration form along with your income tax form this year? The declaration (available online

at [mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/893](http://mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/893) or by calling MC Canada toll-free at 1-866-888-6785) outlines two possible courses of action:

- A declaration of conscience; or
- A declaration of conscience and a re-direction of all or part of military taxes.

Both options helpfully and simply guide us in witnessing effectively to our government, and provide additional suggestions and tools to make our declaration even stronger.

I encourage each one of us to consider one of these courses of action as a way



*For several years, Mennonite Church Canada has encouraged and promoted the work of Conscience Canada . . . .*

to practically witness to our Anabaptist faith convictions. If you do submit this form, I would appreciate you dropping me a brief note indicating this. Let's get a thousand Mennonites to witness to their faith in this way, this year! Be one of them!

If you need more information, send me an e-mail at [jplenert@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:jplenert@mennonitechurch.ca), or visit the Conscience Canada website at [consciencecanada.ca](http://consciencecanada.ca) or [mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/893](http://mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/893).

*Janet Plenert is executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness.*



## ✉ Sichuan church writes letter of appreciation

Like many other churches in Sichuan, China, the Anxian Church is struggling to cope with the aftermath of the 2008 earthquake. The church building suffered extensive damage from the quake and whether or not it can be repaired is still undergoing assessment. As congregants struggle to cope with their own challenges, they are embracing others who have flooded into the area from mountain valleys virtually wiped out by the

quake. The following note of appreciation to those who supported the congregation was provided by Mennonite Partners in China workers Todd and Jeanette Hanson.

—Ed.

### GREETINGS IN OUR Lord!

At this time, the serious earthquake in Wenchuan has affected many areas of Sichuan, and the people have suffered great difficulties. The churches in Sichuan have also suffered from this disaster, we here in Anxian perhaps the greatest.

### FAMILY TIES

# The body is beautiful

MELISSA MILLER

Last month, I wrote about ballroom dance lessons. The music, touch and movement of dance make these lessons a weekly highlight. A surprise benefit has been the beauty.

The beauty has a lot to do with the human body. I've been caught by this beauty before: a new father nuzzling his infant, sisters exchanging a hug, and the awesome power and agility of ice skaters and football players. Bodies are places where we see God's creative spirit and love for humanity made visible.

The bodies in my dance class are middle-aged or older. Meeting these bodies on the street or sitting beside them in the church pew, one might not see the grace and loveliness that they hold. There's the usual assortment of grey and thinning hair, round tummies and wrinkled skin that we associate with "experienced" persons. But when the music plays and the people in these bodies dance and whirl with their partners, it takes my breath away. Like Cinderella's dazzling gift from her fairy godmother, these ordinary bodies become suddenly transformed into beautiful dancers, gliding elegantly around the floor.

Well, at least, that's what my magic eyes see from time to time. On other occasions, like a few nights ago, when

our tango included a set of fast turns, we looked more like hopeless caricatures of dancers, with our limbs flopping as loose as rag dolls. After each set, we burst into laughter—perhaps with embarrassment, or with relief that we hadn't hurt our partners or fallen on our faces. But mostly laughing with comic release. Our body awkwardness became a fine, shared joke.

For many people, such discomfort often prevents them from taking their first dance steps. The prospect of dancing comes with a set of daunting questions: Will I make mistakes? Will I get it all



*Bodies are places where we see God's creative spirit and love for humanity made visible.*

wrong? Will I look foolish and uncomfortable? The answer to all those questions is yes! (As our teacher told us kindly during one class the first year, "Well, the problem is that pretty much everything you're doing is wrong.") That's part of being a student, one who comes to learn. There's a gap between what the student knows and can do, and what the teacher offers. In dance, as with other physical learning, there is an awkward stage that is a necessary part of acquiring new skills. Joining the dance can be a stretch.

Many, but not all, Mennonites grew up with a teaching that dance is sinful. Moreover, many of us picked up from our parents or churches that bodies are sinful. We heard more about bodies needing to be restrained and disciplined and held in check than we heard about the God-bestowed beauty and pleasure of our bodies. In Psalm 139, the Song of Solomon and other places, the Bible bears witness to the body as beautiful. How do we join with the psalmist in testifying, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made"? (Psalm 139:14a).

Ballroom dancing has increased my appreciation for the beauty of the human body. Not everyone will pursue or enjoy dancing, but let's at least start where we are. Join with the psalmist in marveling at the intricacies of the human body. Nourish ourselves with wholesome foods. Tend our physical and emotional health

lovingly. Teach our children healthy boundaries. Free our teenagers from the oppression of flawless body perfection. Pause to hold the hand of a loved one, tracing its lines and curves, and thanking God for the life pulsing within. The body is beautiful at all ages and stages.

*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.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNONITE PARTNERS IN CHINA



*The Anxian congregation worships in a makeshift sanctuary following the earthquake that devastated much of central China last May.*

In our time of great need, through your prayers and help, we have been recipients of God's love. Your love and care have not only moved the believers, but also has touched the lives of those in greatest need to whom the believers here have reached out.

What a beautiful, glorious witness to God has been seen by these people with your help passed along through our hands! You, as hands and feet of our Lord, have prayed for us, and we have received strength upon strength and grace upon grace. We now have faith and confidence to fight this natural disaster, to use our hard work and love to spread the gospel of God, to spread the love, joy and peace of God, to these people in need, together with you.

May God bless you and your loving hearts. May God bless you and your families, and give you joy and peace!

**THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS  
OF THE ANXIAN CHURCH**

### ✉ Global economic crisis impacts formerly 'cash rich' MCC

RE: "VOLUNTARY SERVICE for a new generation," Feb. 2, page 4.

Aaron Epp's article on voluntary service was excellent. Thousands of people have served with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) over the years and many returned home with life-changing experiences that enriched their families, congregations and the broader community. But, as noted in the article, times have changed and MCC's service programs are changing with them. Service in the name of Christ will remain an essential part of who we are.

I would like to make one clarification, however. Included in the article is a comment made by an MCC board member last year that "we [MCC] are cash rich, but people poor." The comment was in reference to the unusually high level of MCC cash reserves at the time. Like a household rainy-day fund, cash reserves help an organization cope when times are hard. Much has changed since the comment was first made, and the current struggling global economy is taking its toll. Facing a budget shortfall, MCC is now spending down these reserves to help meet its commitments to people in need.

**DON PETERS, WINNIPEG**

*Don Peters is executive director of Mennonite Central Committee Canada.*

An invitation from



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Mennonite Central Committee

Register now!  
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14-19 July 2009  
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### Come to Paraguay 2009 and a Pax reunion

Between 1951 and 1976, more than 1,100 young men chose to build peace through MCC Pax alternative service.

The Pax alumni reunion during MWC's Paraguay 2009 welcomes all who served with Pax in more than 40 countries. Come for a workshop, time to visit and a trip down the trans-Chaco highway, built with the help of Pax men. Come for MWC's world assembly, a unique experience of the global Anabaptist church coming together.

*God is calling us to Paraguay...  
¡Vamos!*

"Come together in the way of Jesus Christ." — Philipians 2:1-11

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Barnewall**—Ethan James (b. Dec. 9, 2008), to Jamey and Danielle Barnewall, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Chartier**—Thomas (b. Feb. 10, 2009), to Luc and Cathy (Lankin) Chartier, Windsor Mennonite, Ont.

**Fehr**—Austin Rain (b. Jan. 14, 2009), to Abe and Denita (Neufeld) Fehr, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Heide**—Delilah Elizabeth (b. Feb. 4, 2009), to Herman and Lisa-Marie Heide, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Kennel**—Thomas Kent (b. Feb. 2, 2009), to Meghan and Adam Kennel, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Krueger**—Ryan Benjamin (b. Jan. 27, 2009), to Dave and Tracie Krueger, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Neufeld**—Alexander Jacob (b. Sept. 28, 2008), to Robert and Maria Isabel Neufeld, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Tamblyn**—Julia (b. Jan. 15, 2009), to Robert and Valerie (Ramseyer) Tamblyn, Windsor Mennonite, Ont.

**Wahl**—Morley Jack (b. Jan. 9, 2009), to DJ. and Sheree (Doell) Wahl, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Watson**—Pamela Lynn (b. Feb. 8, 2009), to Calvin and Leanna Watson, Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.

### Marriages

**Epp/Vanderlee**—Yvonne Epp and Scott Vanderlee, at Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., Oct. 11, 2008.

### Deaths

**Bartsch**—Katharina (nee Suckau), 94 (b. Jan. 1, 1914; d. Nov. 17, 2008), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Corniere**—Joe, 78 (d. Feb. 3, 2009), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

**Dassler**—Kurt, 89 (b. April 7, 1919; d. Dec. 5, 2008), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Enss**—Reinhard, 84 (b. May 13, 1924; d. Sept. 13, 2008), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Fast**—Nettie (nee Penner), 90 (b. July 17, 1918; d. Feb. 2, 2009), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

**Funk**—Sylvester, 92 (b. Feb. 5, 1917; d. Feb. 5, 2009), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

**Groot**—Alex, 90 (b. Jan. 30, 1919; d. Feb. 5, 2009), First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

**Hildebrand**—Anne, 84 (b. March 16, 1924; d. Jan. 20, 2009), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Janzen**—Erika (nee Regehr), 77 (b. June 12, 1931; d. Jan. 3, 2009), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Krahn**—Peter, 87 (b. July 14, 1921; d. Nov. 13, 2008), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Lepp**—Alma, 73 (b. Dec. 31, 1934; d. Dec. 21, 2008), First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

**Neudorf**—Sara (nee Peters), 90, (b. Jan. 1, 1918; d. Nov. 11, 2008), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Penner**—Mary, 86 (b. June 26, 1922; d. Feb. 4, 2009), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

**Peters**—Elisabeth (nee Kroeker), 85 (b. March 2, 1923; d. Sept. 13, 2008), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Reimer**—Marie, 97 (b. Nov. 7, 1911; d. Jan. 17, 2009), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Sawatzky**—Harold, 64 (d. Jan. 14, 2009), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Shantz**—Elaine (nee Rohr), 80 (b. Sept. 23, 1928; d. Jan. 8, 2009), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

**Taves**—Eileen (nee Klassen), 71 (b. April 26, 1937; d. Dec. 21, 2008), Level Ground Mennonite (formerly West Abbotsford Mennonite), Abbotsford, B.C.

**Unger**—Jake, 67 (d. Jan. 25, 2009), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Warkentin**—Annie (nee Dick), 92 (d. Jan. 29, 2009), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Wiebe**—Clifford G., 54 (b. April 2, 1954; d. Dec. 13, 2008), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

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

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

### Pontius' Puddle



WHILE JONAH'S STORY WENT ON TO BECOME A FAVORITE PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE, THE WHALE'S VERSION NEVER QUITE OVERCAME THE SKEPTICISM OF HIS PEERS.

## /// Obituaries

### Isbrand Friesen

Feb. 18, 1921 - Jan. 17, 2009



Isbrand Friesen was born in the village of Nikolaifeld in the Mennonite colony of Sagradowka, Ukraine. He was the sixth of seven children born to Isbrand and Helene Friesen. The happy childhood he shared with five older sisters and a younger brother on the family farm ended with the great famine of 1932-33. After completing the local elementary school and the high school in the neighbouring village of Tiege, Isbrand studied engineering at the mining institute in Krivoy Rog. However, he had to return home due to financial difficulties when the government stopped providing free education for all students. Because many teachers had been arrested, Isbrand obtained a position teaching mathematics and German in the high school. When the German army occupied Ukraine in 1941, Isbrand was pressed into service as an interpreter. He returned home in the spring of 1942 and worked in an office for several months. This led to an opportunity to further his studies at a university preparatory school in Koenigsberg, East Prussia. In the summer of 1944, Isbrand visited his parents and sisters, and saw them for the last time: they were deported back to the Soviet Union at the end of the war. Isbrand was sent to the Russian front in Hungary, where he was wounded in the arm in early 1945. While convalescing in a military hospital, the advance of the Russian army forced him to flee westward until he was captured by the U.S. army. After the war, Isbrand taught in an elementary school in Germany while awaiting permission to immigrate to Canada. Isbrand arrived in Canada in 1948 and spent one year working on farms in Alberta to pay off his travel debt. Then he moved to St. Catharines, Ont., where several of his cousins were residing, and found work at McKinnon Industries (now General Motors). Seeking to improve his English, Isbrand attended night school and there met another student by the name of Annie Unrau. They were married on Sept. 2, 1950, and moved into the house that would be their home for the next 58 years. God blessed them with four children, who have brought them much joy. Isbrand and Annie attended St. Catharines United Mennonite Church, where Isbrand was baptized in 1952. They remained lifelong and active members of the church. Isbrand lived his life in accordance with his Christian faith and served for many years as the church librarian and as a teacher in the Saturday German School. He satisfied his love of drama by directing plays with children and adults in both German and Low German. Retirement from General Motors in the early 1980s allowed Isbrand to devote more time to pursue activities he loved, such as working with copper, tinkering around the house, and gardening. He particularly enjoyed visiting with his grandchildren. In 2000, Isbrand and Annie were fortunate to celebrate their golden wedding

anniversary at a family reunion in cottage country. A year later, he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and gradually lost his ability to work with his hands. Despite his increasingly debilitating affliction, Isbrand was able to live with Annie in their own home almost until the end. He finally had to be admitted into the hospital and passed away five days later, on Jan. 17, 2009, at the age of 87. We thank God that his suffering has ceased and he is in a better place. Isbrand is survived by Annie, their four children and their spouses, and 11 grandchildren: Wally, Irma, David and Laura Friesen; Hardy, Ginny, Sarah, Rachel, Peter and John Friesen; Ingrid, Rob, Anna and Jacob Tiessen; Doris, Joe, Joseph, Matthew and Ella Garrah. We mourn the loss of a wonderful husband, father and grandfather. He will be greatly missed.

### Sylvester Funk

Feb. 5, 1917 - Feb. 5, 2009



We, as a family, are deeply saddened to announce the passing of Sylvester Funk on Feb. 5, at the age of 92. He passed away peacefully at the Royal University Hospital, Saskatoon, with family by his side. Syl was born on Feb. 5, 1917, to John and Mary Funk on a farm close to Drake, Sask. He attended school in Drake through Grade 11 and completed Grade 12 at Rosthern Junior College. While at RJC, Syl enjoyed an active school year, including playing hockey for the Rosthern Wheat Kings. Of greater significance to him was meeting his future wife, Anna Toews, whom he married in Rosthern on July 27, 1940. Following high school, Syl enrolled in the engineering faculty at the University of Saskatchewan. When his father died unexpectedly, Syl left university to take over the family store in Drake. His years in the Drake General Store led to many other opportunities. His partnerships throughout Saskatchewan resulted in successful businesses and close friendships. After selling the Drake store, he and Anna moved to Saskatoon, where Syl pursued a career in financial investments. Not only did Syl excel at his work, he found pleasure in contributing to causes that he believed in. It was the act rather than the praise, that served as his reward. Syl achieved balance in his life through enjoying travel, tennis, skiing and golf with his family and friends. His patience in sharing his skills was a characteristic admired by everyone he taught. Syl was always a great role model, with strong values, a strong sense of family importance and community values. His faith in God and his commitment to the church was evident in all aspects of his life. Syl is survived by his loving wife Anna; his children Marilyn (Jack) Janzen, Doreen (George) Reynolds, Gwenyth (Richard) Epp, John (Vera) Funk, and seven grandchildren, Christine, Mark, Trevor (Elisa) Reynolds, Gillian and Jonathan Epp, and Michael and Anika Funk. He will also be greatly missed by many other relatives and friends.

## PASTORAL TRENDS SURVEY REPORT: PART III OF IV

# Fostering a culture of call

BY SUE C. STEINER

**M**y call to pastoral ministry began at my mother's dinner table. My extended family included six pastors and three foreign missionaries, and all of them came to dinner from time to time. As we visited together, I saw close-up the joys and challenges of pastoral work. My small world expanded. I absorbed what Mennonite Church Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman calls "an ecclesial vision," a vision of God's work through the church in our world. I was hooked.

Furthermore, the whole time I was growing up, one or two family members were pastors of the large church I

pastors and lay leaders.

Where will our new pastors come from? We could say they will come from our colleges and seminaries, but who will encourage them to take this training? Some pastors will surely come from other denominations. But many will need to come from your family and mine, from your congregation and mine. Much will depend on whether our families encourage a pastoral vocation among young and older members with leadership gifts. Much will depend on whether our congregations honour the pastoral vocation, so that gifted persons will be attracted to it.

And yes, much will also depend on

*Much will depend on whether our congregations honour the pastoral vocation . . . .*

attended. I was proud to be connected with them, for my church acknowledged pastoral ministry as a high calling—even while complaining about this or that pastor from time to time.

Growing up in such a setting, it's hardly surprising that I am a pastor, as are two of my nephews. We were nurtured in a culture of call.

But pastors of my vintage have either retired, or will shortly. MC Canada's recent Pastoral Trends Survey suggests that within the next three to five years, more than a third of our current 385 pastors will leave pastoral ministry either for a time or more permanently. Nearly half of those leaving will retire.

For years already, leaders in our area churches, church schools and national church have known that we need to foster a new culture of call. One of MC Canada's three current priorities is to "grow leaders for the church," both

the attitude of current pastors. As Jerry Buhler, area church minister for MC Saskatchewan, puts it, "Pastors who are clearly having fun doing their jobs while cultivating meaningful relationships will inspire others to consider a pastoral vocation."

### **Churches that produce pastors**

The Pastoral Trends Survey identifies some traits of congregations from which new pastors emerge. They:

- Recognize and celebrate the gifts of people in the congregation, regardless of their age;
- Encourage and shoulder-tap people with gifts for ministry;
- Encourage children, youths and young adults to take responsibility within the church and be more involved;
- Provide affirmation for work done, whether worship-leading, young group leadership, Sunday school teaching or

whatever;

- Provide financial aid for persons entering pastoral training programs; and
- Offer mentoring to people as they identify gifts, and participate in formal internship programs based in educational institutions.

A generation ago, St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, Ont., offered a program called Experience in Ministry in the Congregation. At the initiative of pastor Richard Yordy, interested young people tried out their gifts in public ways in the congregation, then talked about their experiences as a group. The program enhanced a culture of call that was already present there. Over the past 40 years, at least 12 pastors and many strong lay leaders have emerged from that congregation.

Randy Klaassen, pastor at Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil, Ont., notes, "I'm a pastor because of the encouragement and support several mentors poured into me as a young person in B.C." Given his experience, it's not surprising that Bethany has been involved in the formation of new pastors in recent years. We need to have the sense that "this is what churches do," he says.

### **What gives hope?**

Recently I asked denominational minister Karen Martens Zimmerly what gives her hope as she looks at our challenge of forming new pastors. "Young adults want to serve with integrity and make a difference in our world," she says. "I believe we can re-open the window that pastoral ministry provides as a way of making a difference."

"We are in this together," she says, as local churches, colleges and seminaries, area churches and MC Canada. "Clearly, there's a major part for church schools, but also an essential part for families, congregations and pastors: To honour the pastoral vocation and to identify and encourage people with gifts for pastoral leadership." ❧



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

## VIEWPOINT

# Manitoba's inconvenient truth

BY MARCUS REMPEL

There are a lot of different ways to tell the story of hydro development in Manitoba, and any way you tell it there are a lot of people's livelihoods on the line, so no recounting of it is safe. Listening to that story carefully in the North, and sharing that story honestly in the South is the mission of the Interfaith Taskforce on Northern Hydro Development.

In the 1960s and '70s, Manitoba Hydro set out to dam and divert Manitoba's mighty rivers and lakes to tap the hydro-electric potential of the mighty Churchill-Nelson River watershed, which drains 25 percent of the water off the North American continent. Projects such as the Churchill River Diversion and Lake

any longer who we are, and why we are on earth."

Manitoba Hydro continues to believe that what is good for it can also be good for northern communities. The task force's sense is that there is a degree of both convenience and sincerity in this belief. On a recent trip, we met aboriginal community leaders who are entering into business partnerships with Manitoba Hydro.

Nisichiwayasihk Cree Nation is buying a 33 percent share of the new Wuskwatim Dam being built in its traditional resource area. Councillor Agnes Spence was eager to show us some of the first fruits of the new, cooperative relationship the band has forged with

*Manitoba Hydro continues to believe that what is good for it can also be good for northern communities.*

Winnipeg Regulation were heralded as marvels of engineering.

But along with the southbound megawatts, these projects generated "an ecological, social and moral catastrophe," according to a 1999 interchurch inquiry. Even after the initial shock to local culture and ecology brought on by the radical reconfiguration of the landscape, continuous erosive impacts remain. The muddy, debris-littered and constantly fluctuating waters are a detriment to all kinds of aquatic species and to the fishing, hunting and trapping economy that sustained local people along these waterways for millennia.

One resident of South Indian Lake says, "Because we can't share as we should, because we can't eat as we should, we are losing our identity. We don't know

Manitoba Hydro. She toured us through a modern daycare and wellness centre and a brand new personal care home, all built with settlement money from Manitoba Hydro and staffed mostly with local people. We were housed in the residence wing of the Atoskiwin Training and Employment Centre of Excellence, where local people can learn the skills required to qualify for work at the Wuskwatim construction camp. Spence hopes that once the profits from the dam start coming into the community's coffers, it will be able to hire locally trained carpenters to start to address the critical shortage of housing on the first nation.

But not all the news is good, and some hopes have already turned to disappointments. Despite construction booming at the Wuskwatim site next door,

Spence estimates that the first nation's unemployment rate remains around 70 percent.

Two of her own children trained at excellence centre and got jobs at the Wuskwatim for a short while, but then had to give them up. The shifts at Wuskwatim are designed to accommodate long-distance commuters who travel in from as far away as British Columbia to work at the dam: 40 days in a row, 12 hours a day, followed by a lengthy time-off for people to fly home, spend their money and live their lives far away from the dam. For local people with commitments to care for elders or children, or simply to be present to their families and community—a very high value in Cree culture—these shifts are brutal.

Critics of the partnership point out that even these jobs will only be temporary, and that the deal permanently ties the first nation's economy to the degradation of the waters.

The challenge faced universally by leaders like Agnes Spence, whether they partner with Manitoba Hydro or not, is how to build a decent future for their people out of a very broken past. In northern Manitoba, a whole economy, a vast ecosystem and a culture intimately tied to the health of that ecosystem have been seriously disrupted by southern industrial incursions. There are pressures to assimilate as acute as those of the residential school system the churches and government just finished apologizing for.

Other than their own public image, Manitoba Hydro and the Province of Manitoba have few incentives to address the fundamental issues. Manitoba Hydro can generate just as many "carbon-neutral" kilowatts with filthy water rushing through its turbines as with clean water. And keeping local people and cultures thriving on the land does nothing to make Manitoba competitive on the global market, a driving principle of public policy in the province no matter who is in power. ❧

*Marcus Rempel is the hydro justice coordinator for the Interfaith Taskforce on Northern Hydro Development.*

## YOUNG PROPHET

A glimmer  
of hope

BY REBECCA JANZEN

Here in Managua it is easy to find a church service any day of the week. But finding God is another matter altogether. I felt called by God to come to Nicaragua, but now that I've answered, I find it hard to see what I came for. I rarely see God in the church services I attend and, despite the kindness of friends and strangers, I often struggle to make it to tomorrow. But sometimes, I see a glimmer of hope.

Hope comes to me from working in a place that refuses to accept things as they are and whose mission it is to transform this world into the kingdom of God. As a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Serving and Learning Together (SALT)

*Life's daily struggles aren't a cross to bear; they are obstacles to be overcome.*

participant, I was seconded to a local partner organization: Centro Cultural Batahola Norte. It is described as an "oasis" amidst Managua's material and spiritual poverty. Its beautiful gardens, trees and murals suggest that this fundraising slogan is not far from the truth. From the friendly driver and cleaning lady, to the administrators and teachers, each person works hard to further the centre's mission. At each weekly staff meeting, they discuss current events, societal issues and ways to improve the centre's programming.

Or else I might see hope in the story of a friend. One day, I was at work and was chatting with my friend Ana (not her real name). She was sweeping some fallen leaves and, as she worked, she told me a little bit of her life story. It went something like this:

"I grew up in Dinamarca [a

neighbourhood very close to the centre], and I first came here to the centre about 10 or 12 years ago to take a dance class. I liked being part of the performances and loved the centre so much that, when I started high school, I decided that I wanted to learn how to type. So I enrolled in a typing class.

"Unfortunately, after a short time, I wasn't able to pay the monthly fees. But I liked it so much I kept coming. When my teacher talked to me at the end of class and mentioned that I hadn't paid my fees for several months, I started crying. So, we

went to see Doña Eugenia, the scholarship coordinator.

"I applied for a scholarship and was accepted right away. Later, I took a computer usage class. And then, when my mom lost her job, I got a scholarship to pay for that, too. When I had to leave school for a year to be with my newborn daughter, Doña Eugenia told me that whenever I was ready to start studying again, I could come back and get a scholarship. I came back for my last year of high school and had a new goal in mind—I wanted to go to university."

Ana is now studying physiotherapy and getting ready to have another child. When she finished telling me about her life, she told me what she had learned at the centre: "I learned about my rights, how to communicate effectively and how to raise my daughter. I have become a mature

person because of what I learned here."

If one person can learn this, I thought to myself, the world is not such a bad place after all.

Of course, sometimes I am ready to give up, to listen to those preachers who say that if I'm a good Christian my life will be better. They tell me that whatever my problems are, they are my cross to bear, implying, of course, that there is nothing I can do about them.

But then I think about my friends like Ana and I say no. Life's daily struggles aren't a cross to bear; they are obstacles

PHOTO COURTESY OF REBECCA JANZEN



*Rebecca Janzen was presented with flowers and a certificate acknowledging her work at Centro Cultural Batahola Norte, an MCC partner organization in Managua, Nicaragua.*

to be overcome. While I may not see hope every day, or believe that God is really at work, that is okay. I just need to remember the words to the hymn, "I Sought the Lord"; they tell us that if we seek God, we find that God was seeking us all along. ☸

*Rebecca Janzen participated in MCC's SALT program for young adults last year and is now a master's student, studying Spanish at the University of Toronto.*

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# A brewing storm

*Mennonite educators urged not to confuse their culture with Jesus*

BY BARB DRAPER

Editorial Assistant  
PITTSBURGH, PA.

Gregory Boyd informed 300 administrators and board members of Mennonite schools from across Canada and the United States that he believes God has called him to give a prophetic message to the Mennonite Church. Boyd, a theologian and pastor of Woodland Hills Church in St. Paul, Minn., was the featured speaker at the Education Leaders Gathering sponsored by the Mennonite Education Agency, held in Pittsburgh, Jan. 30 to Feb. 1.

Boyd described himself as a “mutt,” with experience in many Christian denominations. In the 1980s he had an evangelical mindset, but he grew increasingly uncomfortable with the role of Christianity in America. Over the past 25 years he has become more sure of Jesus’ message, but less certain about the role of the Christian

church. When Boyd was asked to give guidance to the members of his evangelical mega-church about voting in the 2004 election, he decided to express his true convictions. The result was that 20 percent of his church left.

“The kingdom Jesus came to establish looks like [Jesus],” said Boyd, adding that most of the Christian church is only a religious institution and not the kingdom of God, because it doesn’t look like Jesus. Boyd felt alone and out on a limb, so he began networking and became aware of a growing movement of people who were also dissatisfied with the church.

“God has downloaded a vision of the kingdom all over the place,” he said. These people are not looking for something new; they are longing for tradition and are exploring ancient litany, ancient disciplines and monastic communities. “They are looking for a tribe,” he said, a counter-cultural community that incorporates kingdom values into every aspect of life.

As a theologian, Boyd was familiar with 16th century Anabaptists, but he hadn’t realized that Mennonites continued the tradition of putting Jesus and his words at the centre of their theology. “You have a treasure,” Boyd told the Mennonite education leaders. “People are looking for this.” He suggested that the Mennonite Church is facing a unique situation in history and it can reach out to these grassroots counter-cultural movements.

At the same time, he warned that Mennonites should not abandon their distinctive theology in an attempt to be more relevant, nor should they confuse the kingdom of God with Mennonite culture.

Sometimes when asked what their church teaches, they equate it with Mennonite tradition. “I want to encourage you to stop talking like that!” declared Boyd. “It’s because of Jesus!” If the message gets fused with the culture, it’s only a matter of time before the culture changes and that will change the message of the kingdom, he cautioned. “As an outsider, I see a storm brewing.”

“The treasure is not Mennonite culture; it is the kingdom of God,” said Boyd, encouraging Mennonites to be passionate about nonviolence, community, simplicity and other kingdom values. The Mennonite

Church needs to be welcoming to other cultures and it needs to be “scandalously flexible.” While kingdom essentials need to be inflexible, he cautioned that the Mennonite Church needs to be willing to change or die. “You are called to offer up your Mennonite culture as a kind of Isaac to God,” he declared.

Boyd encouraged the Mennonite Church and its institutions to be bold and unapologetic about beliefs and values that are patterned on Jesus. “The future of this movement is found in the kingdom, not culture,” he prophesied.

One of the questions asked of Boyd was whether his church had been invited to join the Mennonite Church. He responded that his church is considering an invitation. ❧

## /// Briefly noted

### Interfaith centre learns about Mennonites

EDMONTON—The words of the choir were a perfect fit for the Feb. 4 Edmonton Interfaith Centre meeting: “For we are strangers no more, but part of one humanity . . .” Members of the centre, including representatives of a variety of religions, gathered at Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church to learn about Mennonites in a program featuring a brief history, presentations from service organizations, short perspectives on worship and peace, a choir and potluck fellowship. Organizer Dave Hubert struck a note of commonality among faiths when he quipped, “There are several things, I think, that characterize Mennonites culturally as well as spiritually. One of them is music, and another one of them is eating.” The centre formed in 1995 to build bridges of understanding, respect and friendship between people of different religious traditions. Currently, 14 different faiths are represented in its membership. The group works against racial and religious discrimination through education, community activities that encourage dialogue, and by maintaining a list of available resources.

—BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

PHOTO BY JONATHAN CHARLES



*Gregory Boyd, a theologian and pastor of Woodland Hills Church in St. Paul, Minn., tells members of the binational Mennonite Education Agency that Mennonites should not abandon their distinctive theology in an attempt to be more relevant, nor should they confuse the kingdom of God with Mennonite culture.*



# A fresh take on Sunday school

*Osler Mennonite adapts American curriculum for its own use*

BY KARIN FEHDERAU  
Saskatchewan Correspondent

Walk into the Osler Mennonite Church Sunday school wing in the small prairie town just north of Saskatoon and you might find more colour than a coral reef. Bright blues and greens, harvest-inspired orange and fresh popsicle lime greet the students who eagerly come each week to learn the Bible using the “workshop rotation model.”

Coming out of the U.S. in the 1990s, the model was developed by two people from a Presbyterian church in Illinois who felt that traditional methods kept producing the same frustrating results: bored students, declining attendance, and costly and under-used curricula. While brainstorming on a simple flipchart, Neil MacQueen and Melissa Hansche worked out a system to teach Bible stories through interactive storytelling together with repetition, using ideas from art and music. Their original plan involved teaching the story via art, drama, music, games, puppets and computers over a five-week cycle.

Osler Mennonite’s education committee was looking for a solution to the church’s own dilemma—dropping attendance and difficulty attracting teachers—when it discovered the American model.

“We’d been losing students for the last 15 years,” says Chris Buhler, Christian education coordinator. “We had to do something before the program couldn’t run any more.”

The committee first looked around to see what other churches were doing. Buhler had heard of the workshop rotation model being used in mainline churches. Together with other education committee members, he went to visit an Anglican church in Saskatoon to see how it all worked. The Osler group decided to adapt the model for

its own purposes basing it on a three-week cycle instead of five.

“We have to write our own curriculum,” says Buhler, adding that lessons on the Internet exist but they are not written from a Mennonite perspective.

The Osler Christian Education Committee also planned on using the gifts and resources that already existed in their congregation and the church got on board quickly. Last summer, members remodelled several classrooms to make the new program possible, including renovating a coffee/fellowship room for the adults. The total cost for the new venture was about the same as ordering the church’s former teaching material, notes pastor Gordon Allaby.

Each week the Sunday school hour begins with a short worship time, prayer and snack. Then children are sent to their workshop station for 45 minutes. They are divided up by grades from 1 to 6. Teenagers in the church help with the Sunday school.

The response so far has been positive.

“Children are dragging their parents to church,” says Buhler, who

noted that attendance has increased by 18 percent.

Melanie Boldt has two children, aged eight and 10. She, too, has noticed an increased willingness to attend Sunday School. “The variety of activities in the rotation keeps their interest,” she says. “It’s not repetitive to talk about the same story for three weeks, because each week the kids are doing a different activity and delving a little deeper into the issues and characters of the story.” ❧

PHOTO BY GORDON ALLABY



*In the bright and friendly environs of Osler Mennonite Church’s redesigned Sunday school classrooms, Wilf Buhler engages children in the learning process as they study Bible stories through hands-on creations.*

## /// Briefly noted

### MSCU head stepping down next year

KITCHENER, ONT.—Nick Driedger, chief executive officer of Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU), will be retiring in the spring of 2010, after 17 years of leading the institution through unprecedented growth, while championing Christian, Anabaptist values at every turn. Assets at MSCU have grown five-fold under Driedger’s leadership and membership has nearly doubled. And while MSCU consistently posted strong financial results, Driedger’s mark on the credit union goes far beyond numbers. During his tenure as CEO, MSCU spearheaded the development of Meritas Mutual Funds in partnership with the Mennonite Foundation of Canada and Mennonite Mutual Aid. Driedger also launched the MSCU Charitable Fund, a vehicle that enables MSCU to invest in its communities through meaningful donations to churches and charities. At the time of Driedger’s appointment as CEO, MSCU was serving 8,700 members from six branches with \$140 million in assets under administration. Today, MSCU serves more than 16,500 members and manages \$700 million in assets from eight branches across southern Ontario. “After 25 years of service, and 17 of those as CEO, I am ready to hand over this important work to a successor who shares the values, dedication and talent to lead MSCU into the next decade,” Driedger says.

—Mennonite Savings and Credit Union Release

# MC Canada says farewell to Peters-Pries

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent  
WINNIPEG

Working for the church can leave some feeling disillusioned, but not Pam Peters-Pries. Ultimately, the seven years she spent working as executive secretary of support services for Mennonite Church Canada has affirmed her faith in the church.

"I really feel that MC Canada is on a good path, with good people to lead it," Peters-Pries said, taking a break from clearing out her e-mail inbox on the eve of her final day on the job.

Peters-Pries resigned from her position and finished at MC Canada on Jan. 30. She has taken a position as executive director of the Eastman Education Centre in Steinbach, Man., the city 50 kilometres southeast of Winnipeg where she and her family live.

One of the main reasons for resigning was a deliberate decision to simplify her lifestyle, she said. Her new position is less than full-time, it won't require as long a commute and she'll be able to spend more time with her sons. "I want to be around more while they're still at home," she said, noting she began working at MC Canada in September 2001, when they were five and seven. "I miss being around and want the flexibility to be involved in the things they're involved in."

While the financial crisis of 2003, as well as trying to determine and meet the needs and expectations people have for the annual delegate sessions, stand out as challenges, she said highlights include being able to work with so many good people in MC Canada. She will look back fondly on her time as executive secretary. "I feel very fortunate for being given the opportunity to serve the church in this pretty remarkable period in the church's history—the early years of MC Canada," she said.

MC Canada staff say they feel fortu-

PHOTO BY DAN DYCK



*Robert J. Suderman, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, humorously presents Pam Peters-Pries, outgoing executive secretary of support services, with the traditional—and expected—departure gift: a Mennonite Church Canada coffee mug.*

nate for having had the opportunity to work with Peters-Pries. "Pam is a person of great integrity," said Kirsten Schroeder, director of human resources for MC Canada. "She gives her best to everything she puts her mind to. . . . She will be missed, but I'm very happy for her, that's she's finding new opportunities to engage in the world." ❧

## Retired, but not resigned

*Lay pastor/deacon honoured for 45 years of service*

BY CLEO HEINRICHS

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
PLUM COULEE, MAN.

The aroma of baked potatoes and fried chicken filled Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite Church on Feb. 8 as the congregation met after the morning worship service to honour Henry Neufeld. Neufeld has been a member of the church for 58 years, having served as a deacon and lay pastor for 45 of them.

About 200 people stayed for this

fellowship dinner, with Neufeld and his wife Anne, along with some of his family members, all seated at centre stage in the fellowship hall.

Among the long-time members to express blessings on Neufeld was Aron Rempel, who recalled those early years beginning in 1950, when Neufeld moved to the community to serve as one of the teachers in the local school. Former teacher and principal Harold Schulz said that Neufeld was his mentor.

Many more fond memories came to the fore, in particular from a much younger generation who appreciated Neufeld's words of encouragement. Several students, who later became co-workers with him in the church, appreciated his expertise in running business meetings, writing constitutions and always starting meetings on time!

A special guest for the occasion was Henry Kliewer, conference minister for Mennonite Church Manitoba, who delivered greetings from the conference. "God be with you, to God be the glory," was how he summed up his words of congratulations.

Neufeld had the final word, thanking the congregation for its expressions of blessing. A highlight for him continues to be the large number of young people and children in the fellowship. "It's an honour to have been a part of a church that works together," he said, adding, "I have retired [from active ministry], but I have not resigned." ❧

PHOTO BY CLEO HEINRICHS



*Henry Neufeld, standing right, thanked the 200 guests who filled the Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite Church fellowship hall for a celebration honouring his 45 years of active ministry in the church last month.*

## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

## COVER STORY

# Pursuing peace in Korea

*Korea Anabaptist Center seeks to influence Korean church*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

Tucked away in an alleyway off a busy thoroughfare, the Korea Anabaptist Center in Seoul has influence and dreams far beyond its appearance or the size of the Anabaptist community in Korea—60 as of 2003, according to Mennonite World Conference data:

- Grace and Peace Church that meets in Seoul is an offshoot of the centre.
- Connexus, the centre's English-language program, has nine paid staff, including Koreans and expatriates. While classes focus on learning conversational English, topics of conversation include fair trade goods, and peace and reconciliation work.
- The Korea Anabaptist Press has translated and published many of Mennonite World Conference's books in Korean. Canadian pastor Bock Ki Kim of Vision Mennonite Church in London, Ont., has translated many of the books.
- According to Jae young Lee, the centre's Peace Program coordinator, the centre,

together with secular partners, has begun to be involved in restorative justice cases with the Korean judiciary.

• The centre is also receiving funding from Mennonite Central Committee to establish the Northeast Asia Peacebuilding Institute in South Korea.

That's a heady amount of activity for such a small church and centre. About half

*Korean Anabaptists, while not against planting new congregations, would rather influence existing churches and the society at large, with Jesus' gospel of peace.*

of Koreans would call themselves religious, with half of those identifying themselves as Christian.

Lee makes the point that many Christian churches tend to be highly evangelistic, drawing new people to themselves from existing congregations—what he calls “horizontal growth.” The churches also tend to be militaristic, encouraging their government to hold a hard line against the atheistic North Koreans.

In this mix, Korean Anabaptists, while not against planting new congregations, would rather influence existing churches and the society at large, with Jesus' gospel of peace. They have a big job ahead of them, as the stance against military service groups them with Jehovah's Witnesses, who refuse the mandatory two years of service for all Koreans. There are currently about 450 South Koreans in jail for conscientious objection. The plan for a peace academy grew out of the many military academies in Korea and throughout Eastern Asia. Lee hopes that an academy

in South Korea would serve the whole area with an opportunity to learn about peace, reconciliation and mediation.

According to centre administrator Kyong-Jung Kim, Canadian Mennonites can best help the centre and Anabaptist churches in South Korea by supporting them in their opposition to the mega-church model predominant in both con-

sumerist South Korea and North America. Some South Korean Anabaptists are opting for voluntary poverty, including not having church building projects or large budgets. They are trying to build community-based congregations, rather than charismatic leader-based ones, that carry out a nonviolent and peace witness, and live in intentional community. They want to be a witness against capitalism and individualism, ideals that have fit well with Korea's Confucian philosophy, and which are rampant in the country.

The Korea Anabaptist Center is a clear example that Anabaptists in the world outside of Europe and North America have much to add to the understanding of what it means to be Anabaptist followers of Jesus. With the addition of a new congregation in the past four years, it appears that Anabaptism has a bright future in South Korea, in spite of not planning to grow a new denomination. %

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



*Korea Anabaptist Center director Kyong-Jung Kim, left, is pictured with Will Loewen (MC Canada Witness worker at Jesus Village Church in Chun Cheon), Osee Tshiwape (MCC YAMEN placement from the Democratic Republic of Congo), and Jae young Lee (the centre's Peace Program coordinator).*

# MCC not immune to global economic flu

*International program spending being cut by \$2 million US in upcoming fiscal year*

By AARON EPP

National Correspondent

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) may have been “cash rich” last June, but that statement is no longer true. Amid the global economic crisis, the organization is reducing its budget in the coming year.

The budget for MCC’s international program, which carries out relief, development and peacemaking work in more than 50 countries around the world, will be reduced by about \$2 million US and administrative expenditures are also being cut, according to the organization. Overall, the total budget for MCC Binational, the part of the organization that runs international programs, will shrink by 10 percent.

“I think we’re all frantically busy trying to rearrange budgets that we thought were in order [at] Christmas, and doing it quickly without as much consultation and discussion as we’d like,” Arli Klassen, MCC’s Binational executive director, said by phone from Bolivia at the end of January. “But I think people are working together as a very strong team and [are] committed to finding ways to move ahead.”

MCC U.S. and the regional MCCs in the States are facing a 9 percent reduction. Klassen did not yet know where the cuts would be made. “All I can say is that we’re cutting \$2 million out of international programming, and that is going to affect our partners and what we are able to do in many parts of the world,” she said.

MCC Canada and provincial MCCs are also facing budget cuts. However, because the fiscal year for MCCs in Canada ends Aug. 31, as opposed to March 31 in the

U.S., it is not yet clear what the size of the budget cuts in Canada will be.



Peters

“We’ve developed a three-fold approach to this, or if you want, a stool with three legs,” Don Peters, MCC Canada’s executive director, said by phone at the beginning of February, when asked how MCC Canada expects to weather the

economic storm. The first approach is working diligently to invite people to contribute to the work of MCC. The second is reassessing budgets, reducing expenditures and deferring expenses that can be deferred. The third approach, according to Peters, is using reserves when necessary. “Through a combination of those three [approaches], we think we’re sitting on a very stable stool,” Peters said.

MCC Canada has committed to sending \$12.5 million to MCC Binational during MCC Canada’s current fiscal year, not including the funding it receives from Canadian International Development Agency, a federal government program. It is behind in revenue compared to last year, but it still expects to meet its commitment to MCC Binational by the end of August.

“We’ve got challenges ahead of us, but we have eight months to address this situation, so I’m cautiously optimistic,” Peters said. (In its last fiscal year, MCC Canada committed to sending just over \$11 million, and ended up sending over \$12 million.)

While more people are giving money to support MCC’s work than in previous years, the average contribution decreased in 2008, and the economic turmoil has affected MCC in other ways. In particular, Peters noted, the value of contributions

from Canada was reduced because of the recent sharp drop in the value of the Canadian dollar relative to the U.S. dollar. Nearly half of MCC Binational’s funding for its international program comes from Canadian contributions made in Canadian dollars, while MCC Binational’s budget and spending is in U.S. dollars.

MCC’s financial reserves were also reduced by losses in the financial markets. MCC’s investments have been made in accordance with a policy recommended by the audit and finance committee of the MCC Binational board, which the board approved, Klassen explained. “On the whole, MCC is known for being more cautious than aggressive in how we use the money that has been given to us,” she said, adding that each MCC has its own reserve. MCC Binational started its fiscal year with 3.8 months worth of average spending in its reserves, and hopes to end this March with 2.5 months left.

For the 2007-08 fiscal year, MCC and Ten Thousand Villages took in nearly \$105 million US and spent nearly \$103 million US. Indonesia was the largest MCC program in the past fiscal year because of tsunami recovery work, with India and Bangladesh the next largest. However, generally, Bangladesh, India and Bolivia are MCC’s largest spending areas.

Reflecting on MCC’s current financial situation, Peters also commented on MCC Binational board member Ryan Showalter’s summary of MCC’s financial state at this past June’s board meetings, when Showalter said, “We are cash rich, but people poor.”

“MCC is now in a situation where we are no longer cash rich, and we hope that we have enough reserves to make it through,” Peters said. “And we’re counting on the constituency to make sure the work of MCC continues.”

In an MCC release, Klassen asked for prayer for the work of the organization, in addition to financial giving. She thanked members of the constituency for their commitment “to walking alongside people who face poverty and conflict, whether we have big resources or smaller resources. . . . Our commitment to sharing God’s love does not change.”

# Practise what you preach

*Mennonite Creation Care Network follows its own advice to not travel long distances to meetings*

Mennonite Creation Care Network Release

Last November, the Mennonite Creation Care Network council replaced its regular bi-annual face-to-face meeting with a “nonference.”

The council came up with the idea of a nonference “to encourage people to find ways of getting together without having to travel vast distances,” said council member David Neufeld of Winnipeg. “We decided to take our own advice of encouraging people to look for ways to reduce our environmental footprint associated with the travel to meetings. So our Goshen members organized a day-long meeting with networked phones and computers to exchange ideas, share documents and discuss issues without leaving the comfort of home or office.”

*‘Screen-sharing was new to me.’*

*(Jennifer Schrock)*

The four council members who would otherwise have travelled long distances—from Oregon, Pennsylvania and Manitoba—to get to Goshen saved more than 2.2 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, as well as avoiding significant travel costs.

“Screen-sharing was new to me,” said council member Jennifer Schrock of Goshen. “I was not aware how much technology is available that can facilitate this kind of long-distance work.”

Council members digitally divided into small groups to work on various agenda items, including the organization’s [mennocreationcare.org](http://mennocreationcare.org) website, an evaluation of last summer’s workshops and ecological prayer walk in Winnipeg, upcoming Mennonite Church Canada and MC USA assemblies, the creation of “green guidelines” for convention planners, communicating with churches about creation care,

and developing an Anabaptist creation care project.

“What made this successful is that we know each other as a committee and have

shared many meals and face-to-face conversations,” noted Neufeld.

“Without the relationships we have built through face-to-face meetings, communicating and working on projects using the technology would have been much more challenging,” added council member Joanne Moyer of Winnipeg.

Based on the success of its first nonference, the creation care network council is planning to continue using this model for one of its two yearly meetings. ☸



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GOD AT WORK IN US

# Retiree sews for MCC

By EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU  
Manitoba Correspondent  
STEINBACH, MAN.

**P**eter Dick of Grace Mennonite Church, Steinbach, has found a new calling, learned a new skill and unearthed a dormant talent in his retirement.

"I was a phys ed teacher all my life," Dick says. "When I retired I delivered cars for a while and did a lot of reading, but then I found sewing was something I really enjoyed."

Always open to a challenge, he began to use his first wife's sewing machine after she died in 1994. "There was a cushion on my couch that was ripped and needed fixing," he recalls. "I love to be challenged and sewing was like a challenge."



*Peter Dick and his wife Thelma Guenther sew blankets that are destined for Afghanistan.*

*'There was a cushion on my couch that was ripped and needed fixing. I love to be challenged and sewing was like a challenge.'*  
(Peter Dick)

His neighbour, Thelma Guenther, taught him the rudiments of sewing, and the Grace Mennonite Women in Mission group showed him how to make quilt tops. He, in turn, introduced them to greater efficiency with his late wife's cutting board and wheel.

"I asked to join them and soon I was a regular at their work days," he says. The work days spurred his interest and these days he says he spends "hours down in my sewing room."

He is on his second sewing machine and has gotten to know Dave Friesen of Steinbach, who repairs sewing machines for free for those who sew for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Dick, 72, has been retired for 14 years now and shows no signs of slowing down. He has made more than 100 quilts and 560 health and school kit bags for MCC. He scours the MCC Thrift Shop for cloth swatches. "I also went to the furniture stores and they had stacks of fabrics," he says. "I filled the back of my car with this stuff."

But some of the fabric was too thick to be used for quilts and bags, so Dick had to find other uses for it. "Kathy Fast [former MCC Material Resource and Activity

Centre coordinator] gave me a sample of shopping bags and I made over 150 of those," he says. He has also sewn numerous cushion covers for the Thrift Shop.

Remember the woman who taught Dick the rudiments of sewing? They are now married and happily work together on some of these projects. "She helps me make a nice pattern for the quilt tops and irons them," he says, adding, "She doesn't like the sewing that much. She's an active gardener and golfer."

And when he's not at his sewing machine, Dick enjoys reading, something he never had time for when he was teaching. ☼

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## ARTBEAT

# Heritage Centre Gallery features Westgate artists

BY AARON EPP  
National Correspondent  
WINNIPEG

If it wasn't for art, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate might not exist.

When the Grade 7 to 12 private school first began in 1958, a women's auxiliary was formed to give moral and financial support to the school. One of the fundraisers it organized was an annual art and music festival at the Polo Park Mall. "And it seemed that the Mennonites of Manitoba had been waiting for such an event, for they came by the thousands. Artists, more than they had ever dreamed, came to exhibit their works," then festival president Susan Froese wrote in 1983. It was the auxiliary's most successful venture.

That's why the school decided to hold an art show at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations, says Helene Riesen, who spent 22 years as part of the school's teaching staff, including eight as vice-principal. The show runs until March 28.

"There were two communities that grew out of the annual art and music festival—the wider community that supported the school, and the community of artists

that participated," Riesen explains. "The women's auxiliary was really on the vanguard of acknowledging the visual arts."

Westgate's connection to the gallery through Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church Manitoba, made it easy to say yes to the exhibit, curator Ray Dirks says in a statement accompanying the works: "The gallery is proud to host artists from myriad communities and countries. It is also proud to host art from institutions close to the roots of the gallery and to affirm those who pursue or have pursued artistic interests there."

The exhibit features more than 70 works by past and present students and others with Westgate connections. The media used include photography, painting, woodcraft, pottery and more.

"I'm very proud," Marie Bergen, a current Grade 10 student at the school, says of the experience of having her photography included in the exhibit. "I love art class at Westgate. I find it's a really good way to express myself."

PHOTO BY DARRYL NEUSTAEDTER BARG



Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery curator Ray Dirks, left, shares a laugh with Westgate parent Rey Page at the opening of Westgate's 50th anniversary art exhibition on Feb. 6. In the background is "Cinnamon Man (Kolkata, India)," one of Page's works.

## Yellow Page Business Directory

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519-745-8458 x225 [www.mbicresources.org](http://www.mbicresources.org)

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**Mennonite Camping Association**  
[www.mennonitecamping.org](http://www.mennonitecamping.org)

## FOCUS ON CAMPS AND SUMMER CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

# Want to be a superhero?

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent  
WATER VALLEY, ALTA.

It's hard to get a picture of a superhero, but I got one at summer camp! Staff at Camp Valaqua certainly fit the bill.

On the surface, the job of a counsellor appears idyllic. Much of the work is outdoors in a gorgeous natural setting. It involves play and creativity, and meals are all provided. Camp staff live and work with their peers, doing a meaningful job that is clearly valued by the church. The baptismal testimonies of many young people make reference to camp experiences as fundamental in their decision to follow Christ.

Beneath the surface, though, the job is daunting. The work of a camp counsellor has always been demanding, but has become even more so in the last few decades. Besides dealing with common camper issues such as homesickness, occasional bedwetting and fear of the dark, camp counsellors also now contend with struggles brought on by a more permissive and secular society. The availability of questionable information and entertainment,

the high incidence of divorce and an increasingly litigious society all have visible effects on a counsellor's work.

Hot dogs and swims in a river. Pine trees and wood smoke. Children laughing and running. Camp songs and Bible stories around a crackling fire. These typical snapshots may be worth a thousand words, but they do not tell the truly important stories of summer camp. There are no pictures of a counsellor listening to a camper's grief about a family break-up. A picture cannot capture how each summer the young counsellors give up other higher-paying summer jobs for the chance to spend two months making a difference.

Are you up to the challenge?

*Donita Wiebe-Neufeld volunteered as a chaplain at Mennonite Church Alberta's Camp Valaqua last summer.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF CAMP VALAQUA



*Camp Valaqua added a new event to its programming last year with the introduction of the sky swing, a 10-metre-tall harnessed swing ride. The sky swing allows riders to choose the level of daring they feel comfortable with. The maximum ride is breathtaking, leaving the sound of wind whistling in campers' ears and the feeling of falling on both ends of the ride.*

PHOTO BY KRISTI LETKEMAN



*Counsellor Jeff Weihler enjoys some fun in the water with his charges last summer at Camp Valaqua.*

PHOTO BY JOANI NEUFELDT



*All good things must come to an end. Volunteers from Mennonite Church Alberta congregations gathered at Camp Valaqua last fall to get the camp ready for the winter season. Jobs included pulling the swimming dock out of the Little Red Deer River (pictured), chopping wood, sweeping roofs, cleaning gutters and general cleaning.*

CAMPS WITH MEANING PHOTO



Wall climbing is a big hit at Camp Koinonia, one of three Camps with Meaning facilities in southern Manitoba.

Advertorial

## Music camp also provides inspiration and magic

BY JEANNE EPP

Ontario Mennonite Music Camp Release  
WATERLOO, ONT.

It's mid-winter—and time to start making summer plans. Do you have a young musician in your house? Why not consider Ontario Mennonite Music Camp this year? It's a great blend of music and camp fun, where long-lasting friendships are formed, and self-confidence and leadership skills are developed.

As a member of the music camp's planning committee, and as a parent of campers, I've really been blessed with the opportunity to see the magic that happens each summer. A special memory for me is the camper-planned coffee house from a few years ago. It was really inspiring to see the encouragement and support that the campers had for each other as they performed in a wide variety of forms. There were instrumental solos, vocalists and some improv (a blend of serious and comedic performances).

The camaraderie that was apparent at the

coffee house is developed over the course of the two-week camp, held at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. Campers spend a part of each day with the whole group in choral singing and preparing the drama for the final performance. In small groups, they plan the daily chapel services, which provides wonderful opportunities to develop leadership skills and to explore ways of serving God with music. And in between, there's recreation, "secret friend" fun, guest musicians and awesome food.

Campers have several opportunities to perform in front of audiences, including a Sunday morning church service at a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada congregation, an evening service at a seniors home, and the final concert and musical.

As we look at the churches around us, many have been blessed by music and

### Briefly noted

#### New staff at Camps with Meaning

WINNIPEG— Art and Mary Anne Falk of Carman, Man., have been hired as the new year-round staff



Mary Anne, Art Falk

of Camp Moose Lake. He will serve as manager, while she will take on the role of food services coordinator. The Falks have an extensive background in farming and business, have been active at Graysville Mennonite Church and in community life, and have served on the Camp Moose Lake Regional Committee. They will begin their duties this month. The new position of program assistant in the Camps with Meaning office has been filled by Dorothy Fontaine, a member of Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg; she has started work in this part-time role. Fontaine brings an extensive background in small business and marketing, along with a deep involvement in community and congregational ministries. Her work will focus on promotion of year-round and summer programs, and summer staff deployment.

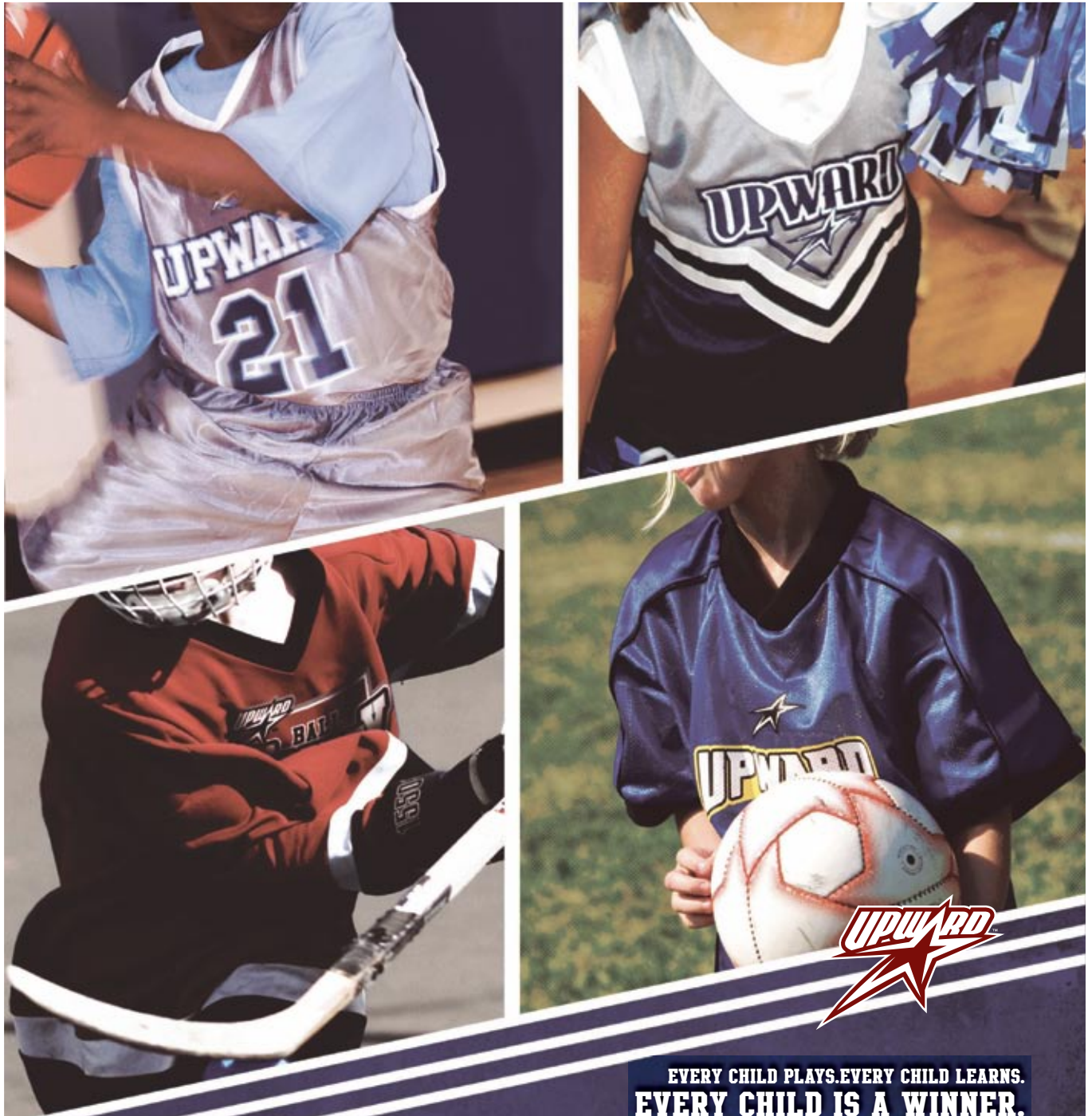


Fontaine

—Mennonite Church Manitoba  
Camping Ministries Release

worship leaders who were either previous campers or staff. We feel proud that music camp has been able to fulfill its vision by encouraging young people to use their musical gifts in church leadership.

This year's camp runs from Aug. 9 to 21. It is open to children and youths aged 12 to 16. The camp is a program of Conrad Grebel and is supported by MC Eastern Canada. Campers from any denomination are welcome to attend. For more information or to register, visit [grebel.uwaterloo.ca/ommc](http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/ommc). ☘



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## Calendar

### British Columbia

**April 4,5:** Lenten Vespers with Abendmusik Choir. (4) Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford; (5) Knox United Church, Vancouver; 8 p.m. both evenings. Donations to Menno Simons Centre.

### Alberta

**March 7:** Camp Valaqua fellowship banquet, Lethbridge. Entertainment by Kurt Wiebe. For tickets or more information, call 403-637-2510 or e-mail [valaqua@telusplanet.net](mailto:valaqua@telusplanet.net).

**March 27-28:** MC Alberta annual delegate sessions at Calgary Vietnamese Mennonite Church.

**April 4:** Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary, celebrates its 25th anniversary with a gala evening of dinner, reflections and entertainment.

**April 18-19:** First Mennonite, Edmonton, will celebrate its 50th anniversary with worship, a program, social gathering and barbecue supper. Direct inquiries to Anne Harder at 780-470-0868 or [ms.anne.harder@gmail.com](mailto:ms.anne.harder@gmail.com).

### Saskatchewan

**March 13-14:** MC Saskatchewan Songfest, First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**March 16:** Evening of song and stories with Kim Thiessen, MCC Centre (Generations at Risk Program), 7 p.m.

**March 21-22:** CMU "portable" teaching sessions with John J. Friesen, First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

**March 25:** MEDAffinity breakfast, at the Saskatoon Club, 7 a.m. Speaker: Marlene Froese. Topic: "How business and service relate."

**March 28:** Shekinah Retreat Centre fundraising banquet and silent auction, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, 5:30 p.m.

**April 4:** Nutana Park Mennonite Church Choir concert.

**April 5:** "An evening of quartets" MCC Saskatchewan fundraiser, Forest Grove Community Church, Saskatoon, 7 p.m. Donations in support of MCC's Food For All initiative. To register a quartet, or for more information, e-mail [office@mccs.org](mailto:office@mccs.org).

**April 11:** Menno Folk at The Refinery,

Saskatoon.

**April 18:** Saskatchewan Women in Mission Enrichment Day, Hanley Mennonite Church.

**April 19:** Menno Youth Café, Wildwood Mennonite Church. The event is a youth assembly fundraiser.

**April 25:** Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan Artisan Day, Bethany Manor, Saskatoon, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**April 29:** MEDAffinity breakfast at the Saskatoon Club, 7 a.m. Topic: "Balancing family and business."

**April 29:** RJC/CMU fundraising supper and concert, at RJC.

### Manitoba

**March 16-17:** CMU presents "Proclaiming Christ in the public square," the university's annual apologetics lectures, with author and radio host Michael Coren. For more information, visit [cmu.ca](http://cmu.ca).

**March 18:** CMU presents an evening with Eric Friesen, formerly of CBC Radio Two, 7:30 p.m., Laudamus Auditorium.

**March 22:** Men's Chorus Festival featuring the CMU Men's Chorus, the Faith and Life Male Chorus and additional high school male singers, 7:30 p.m., at CMU's Loewen Athletic Centre.

**March 26:** CMU Verna Mae Janzen vocal competition finals, 7:30 p.m., Laudamus Auditorium, Shaftesbury campus.

**March 27:** CMU presents "Envisioning sound: Encounters with the music of Olivier Massiaen," Laudamus Auditorium, Shaftesbury Campus; 7:30 p.m.

**April 7:** Jazz@CMU, featuring the CMU Jazz Band and Wholly Jazz, 7:30 p.m., at the Great Hall, Shaftesbury campus.

**April 10:** Winnipeg First Mennonite Church Choir presents Brahms' Requiem, 7 p.m. Featured soloists: Karis Wiebe and Victor Engebrecht. For more information, call 204-772-2419.

**April 23:** Annual youth pastors spring gathering, Camp Assiniboia, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**April 23-29:** Westgate senior high musical.

**April 24-26:** Manitoba Mennonite and Brethren World Wide Marriage Encounter weekend in Winnipeg. For more information or to register, call

Peter and Rose Dick at 204-757-4705.

**April 25:** Spring concert at CMU's Shaftesbury campus, 7 p.m.

**April 29,30, May 2:** Mennonite Collegiate Institute fundraisers; (29) Whitewater Mennonite Church, Boissevain, 7 p.m.; (30) Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship, Winnipeg, 7 p.m.; (2) MCI, Gretna, 6 p.m.

### Ontario

**March 14:** Community breakfast featuring keynote speaker Adrian Jacobs for the Six Nations reserve, Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, at 8 a.m. Topic: "An aboriginal perspective on issues affecting Canada's aboriginal and mainline cultures." For reservations, call 519-634-8311.

**March 16,17:** Hidden Acres Camp annual "Grandparent/Grandchild Retreat" for grandparents and their grandchildren in grades 1 to 6. For more information or to register for one of the days, e-mail [info@hiddenacres.ca](mailto:info@hiddenacres.ca).

**March 21,22:** Grand Philharmonic Choir presents "Felix Mendelssohn and the Romantic Choral Heritage," featuring the GPC Chamber Singers, Howard Dyck conducting. (21) First

United Church, Waterloo, 7:30 p.m.; (22) St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Cambridge, 3 p.m. Tickets for both shows available at 519-578-6885.

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

**March 29:** Lenten Vesper Hymn Sing with Menno Singers, using the new pipe organ at Breslau Mennonite Church, 7 p.m.

**April 10:** Grand Philharmonic Choir presents J.S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the KW Symphony Orchestra, Howard Dyck conducting. Centre in the Square, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m. Tickets available at 519-578-6885.

**April 16-18:** Missionfest Toronto. International Centre, Toronto. Keynote speakers include Tony Campolo and Shane Claiborne. Musicians include Brian Doerksen. For more information, visit [missionfest.org](http://missionfest.org).

**April 18:** Fraser Lake Camp annual fundraising dinner and auction, Parkview Auditorium, Stouffville. RSVP to 905-642-2964 or e-mail [eric@fraserlakecamp.com](mailto:eric@fraserlakecamp.com).

**April 18:** Women of MC Eastern

## Upcoming

### 'Reaching the Facebook Generation' theme of communications conference

WINNIPEG—Mike Tennant, co-creator and co-producer of the popular CBC Radio One show *The Age of Persuasion*, will be the keynote speaker at the May 15 Going Barefoot II conference for Christian communicators at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg. "The Facebook generation is very much like the rich young man who asked Christ what he must do to have eternal life," says Tennant. "When he didn't like what he heard, he 'changed channels' and left." At the same time, he adds, "the Facebook generation can spot a phony almost instantly. That's a peril for inauthentic brands, who are exposed, vilified, virtually tarred, virtually feathered, and shown the door. But that also gives Christianity a head start. After all, what's more authentic than the love of Christ?" Going Barefoot II is sponsored by CMU, Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Church Manitoba, Mennonite Central Committee Canada and the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. For more information, or to register, visit [mennonitechurch.ca](http://mennonitechurch.ca).

—MC Canada/CMU Joint Release

Canada Enrichment Day, Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, 10:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Theme: "Scripture interpreted through floral design." Speaker: Rhoda S. Oberholtzer of Litzitz, Pa. Register by mail to Florence Jantzi, 14 Nightingale Crescent, Elmira, ON N3B 1A8 or by phone at 519-669-4356.

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

**April 18:** Marriage Encounter fundraiser followed by "Five on the Floor" concert at Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church. Tickets at MSCU or e-mail martinjr@bmts.com.

**April 24-25:** MC Eastern Canada annual church gathering, in Kitchener.

**April 25:** Grand Philharmonic Choir presents "Love in a Northern Land—The Music of England, Scandinavia and Canada," featuring the GPC Chamber Singers, Howard Dyck conducting. First

United Church, Waterloo, 7:30 p.m. Tickets available at 519-578-6885.

**April 25:** MC Eastern Canada youth Bible quizzing competition (finals).

**April 25:** "Growing into the future" dinner and concert featuring music by Stringer Lake, Breslau Mennonite Church, 6 p.m. RSVP to 905-642-2964 or e-mail eric@fraserlakecamp.com.

**April 25-26:** Engaged Workshop, Living Water Fellowship, New Hamburg. For more information, contact Denise Bender at 519-656-2005 or denise\_bender@yahoo.com.

**April 25,26:** Pax Christi Chorale present Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto; 7:30 p.m. (25), 3 p.m. (26). With full orchestra and soloists.

**April 26:** "Anabaptist-Mennonite Women Through the Centuries. A panel discussion featuring Michael Driedger, Marlene Epp and William

Klassen. First Mennonite Church, Vineland, Ont. For more information, call 905-562-5944.

**Paraguay**

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

**Ukraine**

**Oct. 9-11:** Celebration weekend featuring the unveiling of a monument to "Mennonite victims of tribulation,

Stalinist terror and religious oppression" in the main square of the one-time village of Khortitsa, Ukraine. For more information, visit mennonitememorial.org.

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

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**Announcement**

**YOU'RE INVITED**

**To:** Edmonton First Mennonite Church 50th Anniversary Celebration  
**Theme:** Jubilee  
**When:** Registration 2:00-3:30 p.m. April 18, 2009. Followed by festivities, a 5:30 BBQ, and early evening program. Worship service and potluck lunch on April 19. A DVD featuring stories and six decades of history will be available for purchase.  
**Contact:** Please RSVP by April 1 to: ms.anne.harder@gmail.com or 1-780-470-0868.

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For more information, contact phartman@mscu.com, cathw@mennonitecc.on.ca, nscheifele@maxcanada.org.

**Upcoming Advertising Dates**

<b>Issue Date</b>	<b>Ads Due</b>
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	<i>Focus on Summer</i>
April 13	March 31

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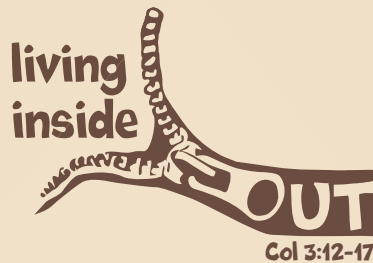
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- ✧ be comfortable preaching, teaching, and providing pastoral care

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Please reply to:

Joe Neufeld  
Search Committee Chair  
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**POST-ASSEMBLY EVENT:** June 7-9, 2009  
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**YOUTH ASSEMBLY:** July 6-10, 2009; Caronport, SK

FOR INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION FOR THE ADULT ASSEMBLY, GO TO:  
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FOR INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION FOR THE YOUTH ASSEMBLY, GO TO:  
**[www.mennonitechurch.ca/events/youth09](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/events/youth09)**





PHOTO BY DANIEL PANTOJA



PHOTO BY JOJI PANTOJA

# Farming for peace

## *Land donated to Peacebuilders Community Inc. for new Gabriel Peace Farm*

**BY CHRISTINA BARKMAN**  
Mennonite Church Canada Release  
DAVAO CITY, PHILIPPINES

**S**ixteen hectares of lush mountains and riverside have been donated to establish Gabriel Peace Farm, a peace and reconciliation training centre about an hour's drive from Davao City.

Daniel and Joji Pantoja, international ministry workers supported by Mennonite Church Canada Witness, are working towards a lasting and just peace in the Mindanao region of the Philippines. They employ grassroots peace and reconciliation training, interfaith dialogue and community development through Peacebuilders Community Inc., a ministry they co-founded and which is supported by Witness.

The land for the peace farm was donated by Rosalina Reyes Zerna. It will be the main training centre for peace and reconciliation team organizers. After training, the graduates will be assigned to various conflict zones as field workers. Programs will also provide training and socio-cultural orientation to international volunteers serving the people of the Philippines before they are sent to their specific areas of service.

As well, the centre will serve as a model farm illustrating a vision for ecological/economic transformation and sustainability, an integral component of the Pantojas' peacebuilding philosophy. Mennonite farmers from around the world will be invited to compare notes on organic agricultural technology and agri-entrepreneurship with local farmers.

Spiritual directors, peace seminars, workshops and retreat activities will be provided for field workers and peace workers from partner organizations at the peace farm.

Leaders will also facilitate peace learning tours through Gabriel Peace Farm. The tours will invite peace-oriented organizations, churches and other groups from around the world to see various peace projects in Southeast Asia.

Plans for Gabriel Peace Farm will increase capacity for training, enabling Peacebuilders Community Inc. to equip more people to work for much-needed peace in Mindanao. ☸

*Pictured from left to right at the Gabriel Peace Farm site are: Elwyn Neri (Peacebuilders field worker), pastor Fred Fredeluces, pastor Norman Naromal, and Daniel Pantoja (Peacebuilders co-founder).*