

CANADIAN MENNONITE

April 13, 2009

Volume 13 Number 8

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EDITORIAL

Easter in the orchard

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

One of the things I will miss most in moving to Ontario is our Virginia apple orchard, especially this time of year with the blossoms in full flower. This theatre performance of nature almost always coincides with Easter, overflowing my soul with inspiration after the long, drab winter.

If it weren't for my spirit's craving to share resurrection joy with fellow-believers on Palm and Easter Sundays, I could just as easily stay home from church, take my canvas camping chair into the middle of this heavenly stage and allow the warm spring breezes to blow over me.

There was the promise of new life, of course, for some weeks now. The signs were everywhere. As the days became warmer, the naked branches put on their new cover of green buds. The withered orchard grass gave way to new shoots on the orchard floor.

Then came the robins, always the first welcome indicator of winter losing its grip. The return of both the cardinal and bluebird couples, seen building their nests outside the east windows of our sunroom, gave us renewed delight at the thought of these fully costumed feathered friends taking up permanent residence here. A hierarchy of beauty seemed to be underway.

The blue jays, that raspy, loudmouthed species always flaunting its splendour and stealing the best places for rearing its young, seemed more subdued this season, many taking their place on the lower

branches. Each different species, in its turn, seemed to fit into the seating on the stage—the red-headed woodpeckers, the Carolina wrens, the wood thrushes and, not least, the mocking bird with its rare ability to somehow mimic all of his fellow actors in perfect pitch. He sits atop our roof, the self-appointed director of the feathered band.



With the Psalmist, I blurt out: *"Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad. Let the fields be jubilant and everything in them.*

Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy, they will sing before the Lord."

This ancient poetry frames the opening hymn for my outdoor worship service. A sermon is in the making.

It wasn't always this inspiring, I reminisce, as the words of this biblical score fade into silence.

Thirteen years ago, this was a God-forsaken two-hectare piece of overgrown, long-neglected orchard choked with honeysuckle vines, poison oak and ivy, and mulberry trees—a haven for skunks, black snakes and full of groundhog digs, the neighbours said. Marlene and I spent most of our summer evenings and weekends those first two years creating the park-like preserve it is today. It took a lot of sweat and grunt labour.

But the struggle and labour continue each season as the beautiful blooms give way to heavy green foliage and then to small formations of fruit. First come the worms, attracted to the fragrant petals for sustenance and cocooning. Then

brown and black rust attack, putting the first blemish on an otherwise perfect fruit. All can be prevented only with environmentally safe preventive sprays that give the apples room to develop into the luscious, red and yellow harvest we have come to relish each season.

This place not only becomes a sanctuary where I meet God in his annual life-giving ritual. It has become a place of memories, of friendships formed, of grandchildren's delight and laughter as they climb onto the lower branches and play tag among the trees, of school kids begging me for one more ride with my red tractor pulling the apple wagon, of university students throwing Frisbees on the large lawn next to the trees.

The outdoor sermon comes into sharper focus. How much like the orchard, with all its attendant history and dynamics, are the faith communities with which I have journeyed over the years. So many different species (fellow believers), some flaunting their splendour and stealing places, others content to take their place humbly in the body of believers. Some, lacking their own imagination, mimic, in perfect pitch, the gifts and "songs" of others.

Sometimes the plagues of jealousy, conflict and envy threaten to mar the development of the fruit (the body), their prevention provided by those gentle, mature souls who practise the fruits of the Spirit with the regularity of the seasons. You can always count on them.

And finally, amid all the struggle of growing into the fullness of life meant for the whole body, comes the delight of friendship, of community clothed with, as Paul tells the faithful at Colossae, *"compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."*

Thus ends the Sunday morning service in the apple orchard. I'm going to miss this place!

ABOUT THE COVER:

Given a second chance through Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba's Open Circle program, Tom Collins now manages Sam's Place in Winnipeg, a café, used book store and performing arts venue. See story on page 16.

PHOTO: JOANIE PETERS, MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

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

Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Obituaries: obituaries@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

Material can also be sent "Attn: Submissions/Readers Write/Milestones/Obituaries/Calendar" by postal mail or fax to our head office.

Reprint requests: reprints@canadianmennonite.org

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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FEATURE REFLECTION: LIFE BEYOND EASTER

A boy and his duck ... and a dog named Joe

*With the help of two beloved pets and his father, a teenage boy learns
that vengeance is not the reaction to violence that God wants*

BY GORDON ALLABY



*Webster had a growing place
in our hearts, especially mine.
Since I was the primary
caregiver, we sort of 'bonded.'*

Year after year, Easter comes and goes, and we go on with our life. Yet do we really know what it means to go on beyond Easter? Following the resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples, who were very nervous about going on. They were timidly hiding behind locked doors, nervous about a purge and not wanting to be crucified next. They were anxious and upset. Then Jesus appeared before them, and said, *"Peace be with you."* Proving that he was not an aberration by showing them his hands and side, Jesus again said, *"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."*

Beyond Easter is going out in peace, but do we fully know what that means?

Introducing Webster

Back in 1967, the Saturday before Palm Sunday, my sister Carolyn was home from university on break, and she returned from the shopping mall with an unusual surprise. Having succumbed to the cuteness factor, she had bought an Easter duckling.

Suddenly, we had a baby duck to play with for a few days. No one thought it would live very long. Even so, we set up a box in the kitchen, lined it with newspapers and placed a dish of water in it. We built a ramp with stones up to the dish so the duck could get into the water.

The next thing to do was name it. After various suggestions, we decided on Webster because it had webbed



feet. Webster survived frequent hands that grabbed and petted him. He survived the neighbour boy who lifted him up by his long neck, which became swollen for a couple of days after that episode. And he survived our initial uncertainty as to what to feed him.

In just a few weeks, a bigger box was needed, and that was placed in the garage. The entire garage soon became Webster's domain. A more permanent arrangement had to be made, though, since it appeared that this Easter novelty pet was going to endure.

We fenced in a corner of the backyard and placed an old inflatable child's pool in it. But the pool didn't last long; those webbed feet actually have claws. So I dug a small pond—really a big hole in the ground—that was big enough for Webster to swim around in.

Webster grew into a large, beautiful white Peking duck. Pekings are domestic ducks and they can't fly very well. They just skim the ground, which means they are fairly vulnerable. Webster loved to keep himself clean. He preened his feathers constantly. Then he would climb on top of a rock next to the pond and proudly flap his wings.

Webster had a growing place in our hearts, especially mine. Since I was the primary caregiver, we sort of "bonded." He would follow me anywhere. We even took long walks together along busy streets—just a boy and his duck.

I learned a lot about ducks, including the fact they make great pets. Except for providing a swimming hole, they require little care, just some cracked corn as a supplement now and then. Webster would forage around for insects and loved to eat dandelion flowers, which pleased my dad. But his favourite delicacy was earthworms; every time I worked the garden, Webster would be at my heels and quickly snatch each worm that was exposed, devouring it like spaghetti. That was a little gross, but he seemed to enjoy them.

Webster proved to be an intelligent duck. He knew his name and would come when he was called. We often just let him roam about, and if he was out of sight for too long, all I had to do was call out, "Webster," and he would quickly

waddle back.

The duck liked to come in the house. He would knock on the sliding glass door with his beak to be let in. Webster was very gentle and would rest his neck on my shoulder and go to sleep while I watched TV. Webster became very much a member of the family, and we loved to share Christmas with him, when he would stand next to the tree and stare at the blinking lights.

Something had to give

By early fall of 1969, I was 16 and a duck just wasn't macho enough for me any more. So I got a little black puppy with big feet and named him Joe. Joe's father was a German Shepherd and his mother was a Labrador retriever (a bird dog). Nevertheless, I felt I had to protect the little puppy from Webster, fearing that Webster would stake his claim a little too aggressively, as he was much bigger than Joe at this point.

By the spring of 1970, I had my macho dog. Webster was still special, still family, but Joe was a grand challenge that fed my ego. He was big, rambunctious and strong. I enjoyed wrestling with him. Whenever I got down on my knees, there were no rules, and we'd have a free-for-all. Joe would leap and attack me, at times ripping the skin open on my arms and hands. I would tussle with him and then repel him backwards. Again and again, we would fight that way. At 16 and full of testosterone, I loved the challenge, and

the blood was my badge of courage.

As soon as I stood up, Joe knew it was time to stop. I thought I was pretty clever, teaching him to be violently aggressive while on my knees. However, that turned out to be a poor and hazardous signal: He thought children were adults on their knees. To keep everyone safe, Joe's life became restricted to a length of a chain.

Our backyard presented an interesting contrast. Webster had his fenced-in area, which was nicely landscaped with a little pond, and Joe spent his time tethered

to a chain over beaten and worn-out grass. Side by side, the soft and the gentle was juxtaposed next to the rough and aggressive.

The arrangement brought consequences. No longer could Webster roam. No longer was Webster the centre of attention. Joe had to be fed and walked each day. Webster could wait, I would tell myself.

Something had to give, and it did. Late one night, I heard Joe barking, and looked out the window and saw that he was loose. I called for Webster, but there was no reply. Rushing outside, I discovered Joe's chain leading through a freshly dug hole under the fence where it was wrapped around the bird feeder post. The collar was still attached to the chain. Joe was free.

White feathers covered the ground. The scene appeared dismal. Concluding the worst, I caught Joe, dragged him to the house, put him in the basement and wrote a terse note for my parents before sadly going back to bed: "I think Joe got Webster; if so, goodbye Joe."

In the morning, my father saw the note and put Joe back on his chain and went to work. When I got up an hour later, I discovered Webster's mangled body, weak but alive! I called my father at work and he rushed home. Tenderly, we placed Webster in a pan of water and carried him inside. We tried to clean his wounds. From tail to head, not a feather remained on his back. His raw flesh showed the

I sat numb for a long time while my father buried Webster, filling in his little pond with dirt.

cruel teeth marks from the fierce mauling he had endured. One wing was badly chewed up and his neck was ripped open. He lay there, helplessly looking up at us with an expression that I took to be, "You should have known!"

Amazingly, he had survived for hours after the attack. I don't know why. Perhaps so I could see his wounds or maybe just so I could see him alive one last time. Whatever the reason, within a couple of minutes of our vain rescue Webster defiantly spread his wings wide

for one last moment. Then he gently folded them back, curled his neck, tucked his beak under a wing . . . and died.

I sat numb for a long time while my father buried Webster, filling in his little pond with dirt. I was crushed with grief, vowing never to have a pet again. But I did have another pet—and Joe was a murderer!

No hope for Joe?

With a sense of righteous vengeance, I felt the passion to be the avenging angel, so I grabbed a baseball bat and marched towards the back door. Fortunately, my father was coming in as I was going out. Realizing what was unfolding, he stopped me, and said, “Let’s talk.”

“Joe deserves to be punished,” I yelled

Out of fear and grief they were hiding and likely wishing they could ‘get even.’ Then they were confronted with the risen Lord.

back. “He did an evil thing.”

We humans have a tendency to lash out when we’ve been unjustly hurt. With self-righteousness, we desire to expose the evil and crush it by attacking the perpetrator. Yet that is revenge and the impetus is plainly to make ourselves feel better. We believe we are right; we believe we have every right to act!

But my father said, “Let’s talk.” After asking me to calm down, he questioned me, “Will beating Joe make things better?”

“Well then, let’s get rid of Joe.” I shot back.

But my father explained a better solution—a peaceful way out of this mess.

“Joe is your pet, too,” he said. “He did a terrible thing, but he was taught to be violent. Joe is one of God’s creatures. Do you think it is possible for Joe to be taught kindness and gentleness?” When I didn’t respond, he asked again, “Is there no hope for him?”

I was confronted with a message of peace, forgiveness and harmony, yet I struggled with grief and an emptiness that called for justice. But my idea of justice was to get even. There I was, full of grief and a contorted anger. I wanted to lash out and beat that dog, yet in sharp contrast I was told to be at peace, to forgive and to

go out and befriend my dog.

Looking out in the backyard, I no longer saw a killer, but a victim—a dog I had taught to be violent. Joe, with his tilted head and puzzled expression, looked back at me. Then it dawned on me: My emptiness that called for justice was real, but justice is not vengeance. Justice is confronting the evil, working for good, and graciously seeking to transform to peace and wholeness those who are engulfed with evil. That is justice. That is God’s way.

Confronted with the risen Lord

Years later, I can now imagine how Jesus’ disciples felt. Their best friend, teacher and prophet had been brutally killed.

Out of fear and grief they were hiding and likely wishing they could “get even.” Then they were confronted with the risen Lord. In the midst of grief and anger, they were confronted with a new way, a new mission. No wonder Jesus kept saying to them, “*Peace be with you.*”

Moreover, instead of petitioning the normal human reaction to hurt back or to act like a victim, Jesus sent them out to

the very people who had killed him. The disciples were sent out to teach the perpetrators the way of peace. They were told to boldly go out to the predators and teach them God’s way of peace and forgiveness, to teach them the good news that Jesus overcame evil, and God is gracious.

That message of grace, peace and harmony existed before the crisis point—before the crucifixion and before Webster’s death. Had I valued gentleness and peace, instead of indulging my teenage male ego, events in our backyard likely would have been different. Too often, we analyze the justification for war while in a war, instead of striving to avoid the conflict by working hard preparing a fertile ground of peace and harmony.

God confronts each of us with the words of Jesus, “*Peace be with you . . . now go and tell others.*” Imbedded in that call to serve is a declaration that we don’t receive what we deserve! Instead, we are offered forgiveness and peace. In a word, we are offered grace.

Thanks to my father’s message of grace, Joe lived on. He did not get the punishment he deserved, but remained a pet—and I taught him gentleness. The following spring, we acquired another duck, Jasper, and Joe and Jasper lived in harmony. ❧

Gordon Allaby is pastor of Osler Mennonite Church, Sask. ❧

❧ For discussion

1. Does this story of a boy and his duck remind you of experiences in your family? What memories does it evoke? Have you ever felt the passion of righteous vengeance? How did it turn out?
2. Allaby defines justice as “confronting the evil, working for good and graciously seeking to transform to peace and wholeness those who are engulfed with evil.” How do you react to that definition? What is wrong with justice as vengeance?
3. Have you, or someone you know, ever received grace instead of justified punishment for wrongdoing? What were the circumstances? What was the outcome? Does grace always bring transformation? Are some people or situations too evil to be redeemed?
4. What are some examples or ideas of how we can work for peace and avoid conflict in our neighbourhoods, schools, places of work, families and congregations? Is it possible to teach peace to others? What things are most effective?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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

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

✉ 'One-sided' coverage causes readers to cancel subscription

HAVING READ THE "Gaza tragedy a Holocaust reminder" article in the Feb 16 issue, page 14, I can't help but wonder when you will publish something "from the other side of the fence"

I do not condone, nor am I in favour of, the actions being taken by the Israelis. I do, however, think that this country, which has been under attack by the Palestinians and others for a long time, has the right to defend itself. And don't throw the proportional response thing at me. If I am repeatedly attacked by someone, I will eventually put a stop to it.

The magazine has not said one thing, that I can recall, about the 2,500 rockets that have been launched at Israel each year for the past eight years, deliberately aimed at civilians by the Palestinians. You have not drawn attention, as far as I can recall, to the stated position of the

FROM OUR LEADERS

No stress-free transition

WALTER WIEBE

I was serious last year when I stated I think Mennonite Church Alberta has a very important function. I believe in it. I believe we have a gospel message that people in Alberta need to hear. A way of life, a way of thinking that is Christ-centred and different than some denominations.

I've looked at how we're doing in comparison to the purpose statement in the constitution and bylaws adopted six years ago; met with pastors, to get their feedback, and with people in the churches, to present ideas that the committees have come up with. Conference pastor Jim Shantz and I have spent a lot of time discussing how we can help churches experience what God has in mind for us. That's our focus.

We've come away with some concerns. Many of our churches on Sunday mornings are at one-third of their capacity. I think about the ratio of the number of people we baptize versus the number we bury. How many people in our organization, through efforts in our churches, are

becoming Christ-followers? That's an issue.

There is concern about Camp Valaqua. We say we have interest, but numbers seem to show differently, and it takes an inordinate amount of the money our churches are contributing. The missions committee is pretty upset, saying where



I think about the ratio of the number of people we baptize versus the number we bury.

is the funding for our programs?

Last year's theme—"At the crossroads"—is appropriate now. What do we want to be? We've got a choice. We can carry on as independent churches under the same name, hoping that two or three survive. The rest will likely shrink and disappear. Or we can join our resources and again catch fire to grow God's kingdom. We've got that choice, but I can guarantee you the transition is going to be stressful.

I'm pretty well going to carry on the

way I worked last year. I will attempt to meet with the churches I have not yet managed to get to. I also want to meet with church executives individually and also have two joint meetings with these and the MC Alberta executive, to figure out whether we can work together.

We, as the executive, want to make sure the committees are somehow connected through the general council. Constitutionally, the general council meets twice a year; I'm expecting it to meet six times—we need that communication. I'm going to look for interest in the initiatives presented to you because

it's your ideas that I've collected.

As we discern God's Spirit, we'll figure out which ones to start with. The financial contributions will show up; God makes things happen according to his will. I'm confident God has great things in mind for MC Alberta. I get the feeling, when I visit churches, that we are ready.

Walter Wiebe is the chair of Mennonite Church Alberta. His comments are a summary of his speech to the annual MC Alberta delegate sessions last month.

Palestinians that Israel must cease to exist and, until it does, they'll kill as many Jews as they can.

You haven't mentioned the repeated attempts in the UN, as well as attempts by several U.S. presidents, to get a working peace agreement in place, and each time the deal-breaker has been an acknowledgement that the State of Israel has the right to exist.

As far as my wife and I are concerned, by continually publishing only one side of this coin, you have lost all credibility. So, until such time as you abandon your one-sided journalistic policies, please save your postage and remove us from your mailing list.

JACK FALK, CALGARY, ALTA.

✉ The church must allow all to serve as they are able

RE: "MINISTRY TO all members of the body of Christ," Jan. 19, page 4. Two mentally challenged adult women at Hanover Mennonite Church, Ont., have for quite some years already been assisting in taking up the weekly offering. The one woman is also an excellent, friendly, "unassigned" greeter. Both do their tasks with diligence and joy. In Luke 4:18, Jesus calls us to free the oppressed. But has the church given these people all the opportunities they are capable of?

RETA DERKSEN, HANOVER, ONT.

NEW ORDER VOICE

Why I like so-called 'ugly' paintings

AIDEN ENNS

On our dining room wall we have three paintings of faces. On the left could be a boy with tight blonde curls and a distorted nose, as if the camera was too close to his face when the picture was made. He could also be a girl.

The painting in the middle looks like an older Russian woman with wrinkles by her eyes. Again, her nose is distorted. Actually, she clearly has two noses and looks as if she's in chronic pain.

The painting on the right is of a woman with a tall, narrow nose. This nose comes down so far that it has bumped her mouth to the side. And her eyes are larger than her ears.

I think the average person would see these paintings as ugly. For example, some family members recently came over for a visit. As we sat at the table, I asked the man if he liked our paintings. He stared briefly at the faces, then turned to me and grimaced as if he'd tasted something yucky. He didn't like the paintings.

I like these paintings because they help me delegitimize a narrow construct of beauty. It connects with my Christian consciousness and way of viewing the

world, which is less superficial and more compassionate. It puts less value on appearances and more on appreciating what is normally seen as unlovable.

Our concept of beauty is socially constructed. Beauty, as they say, is in the eye of the beholder. But it also greatly depends upon on the beholder's community and its social conventions.

I question the dominant representation of what is cool, hip or beautiful.



There is no need for most cosmetic surgery except to cater to problematic constructions of beauty.

Billboards, store displays, magazine covers, movie stars—these very public things broadcast a narrow construction of beauty.

Why are straight noses and smooth skin more beautiful than bent noses and wrinkles? My answer is because that is how they are represented in the media and in our communities. Why is "young" and "thin" more prized than looking old and heavy? We may use the language of health and vitality to describe these appearances, but they are still constrained

by narrow notions of beauty.

There is no need for most cosmetic surgery except to cater to problematic constructions of beauty. This is an oppressive social consensus in which we all participate—unless we explicitly opt out. For example, I will no longer wear a typical business suit unless I'm having fun with it. It reinforces a patriarchal view of masculinity and blesses corporate power. It's also why I don't like "picture perfect" pictures on our walls.

This fits with what Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans, about renewing our minds and not being conformed to the patterns of the world. It also connects with Jesus appealing to those who have the eyes to see and ears to hear the gospel. James advises readers to avoid fa-

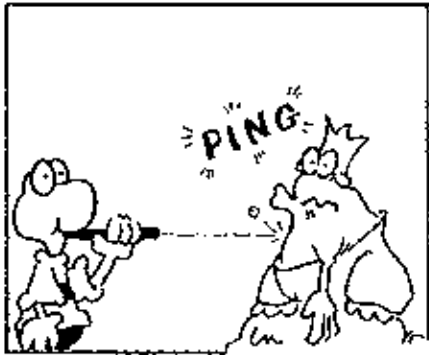
voritism based on outward appearances.

The so-called "ugly" paintings in our house help me see past a narrow notion of beauty and other social constructs. I feel more love for my own ugly bits and find a greater connection to "average" people. This reveals a world of love and a sense of belonging in the kingdom of heaven.

Aiden Enns is a member of Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. He can be reached at aiden@geezmagazine.org.



Pontius' Puddle



OUTSIDE THE BOX

Holy-day boldly

PHIL WAGLER

Our national statutory holidays are pathetically outdated.

Consider this quick survey of our glorious days off:

- New Year's Day: marking the launch of another year of our Lord (*Anno Domini*).
- Good Friday and Easter Monday: Jesus died so we could get the day off? (Many people believe this Friday is good simply because it is a holiday). Children and a few others get Easter Monday off to recover from chocolate hangovers. (Easter Monday is a actually a remnant of Roman Catholic influence on Canadian culture).
- Victoria Day: our Victorian (a word now defined as "prudish, moralistic and religiously oppressive") past is ritualized with trips to garden centres and fireworks.
- Canada Day: people above the 49th parallel remember they are not American.
- Labour Day: the recognition of labour by not labouring.
- Thanksgiving: the name says it all, but many are not sure why or to whom.
- Remembrance Day: a too-short silence to think long enough about what we lost and how we got there. Vicars and reverends still get seats of honour on this day.
- Christmas Day: the birthday of the guy killed on Good Friday. Also known as the day before the world junior hockey

championships or the day of rest before Boxing Day shopping.

- Boxing Day: marking with glee that stores are open again. (Yet the root of this holiday is the giving of goodwill "boxes" to the less fortunate. It was set aside for giving, not consuming. Novel idea.)

This brief survey of holidays reveals how terribly behind these post-Christian times we are. After all, the majority are founded on the Christian religion. Why all these Christian holidays remain—if only in name—is intriguing. And the fact



Why all these Christian holidays remain—if only in name—is intriguing.

that we are now at least acknowledging special days of other religions, including Ramadan and Kwanza, increases the peculiarity of the paradox. If religion is so private and passé, why the increased publicity?

Don't you see? Canadian culture, increasingly shaped by gods of self and mammon and the religion of secularism, is undergoing a subtle transformation. Our holidays tell the tale. In fact, they tell new tales—Earth Day, for example. What and how we celebrate ultimately shapes us.

In the early centuries A.D., Roman

festivals like *Dies Natalis Solis Invicti* ("the birthday of the unconquered sun") was redefined by Christians. They used the existing culture to tell the story of the Saviour and, by golly, it worked famously. The same shift Christianity once visited upon the Roman Empire is happening again, only in reverse.

This is no argument for state-sanctioned Christian observance. Rather, it is a wake-up call from our holiday slumber as we celebrate a very Good Friday and history-shattering Easter. Of all holidays, these are the most brash, for they invite public scrutiny of the very basis for Christian hope: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17).

Everything hinges on Good Friday and Easter. The days defy reason and

human religious indifference, but then again God has always done that. So, for the sake of our culture losing its memory and bowing before gods that are not God, Christians must holiday boldly and declare unashamedly that the Lord is risen indeed. Alone among the tombs and burial mounds of this world, his has been abandoned and left behind. We who holy-day—not holiday—are keepers of this old, old story that is new again.

Phil Wagler is lead pastor of Kingsfield and lives in Zurich, Ont. (phil@kingsfieldcommon.ca).

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Cook—Liliana Caitlin (b. March 15, 2009), to Jean Pellegrini-Cook and Colin Cook, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Dyck—Nehemiah Robert Allan (b. Feb. 4, 2009), to Norm and Rose Dyck, Graysville Mennonite, Man.

Kampen—Mateo Josef (b. March 22, 2009), to Christine Kampen and David Robinson, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Neufeld—Ella Violet (b. March 16, 2009), to Ryan and Sara (Brooke) Neufeld, First Mennonite, Kelowna, B.C., in Surrey, B.C.

Schumacher—Owen Luscott (b. March 25, 2009), to Chris and Lori Schumacher, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Unrau—Cassidy Lauren Snyder (b. Feb. 5, 2009), to Brian and Jennifer Unrau, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Marriages

Neufeld/Pugh—Angela Neufeld (Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain, Man.) and Dustin Pugh (Ninga Presbyterian, Man.), at Whitewater Mennonite, Feb. 8, 2009.

Deaths

Epp—Margaret (nee Pauls), 91 (b. Dec. 21, 1917; d. March 12, 2009), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Goertzen—Henry, 100 (b. Sept. 25, 1908; d. March 13, 2009), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Janzen—Mary (nee Neufeld), 96 (b. Sept. 17, 1912; d. March 4, 2009), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Litwiller—Walter, 79 (b. Dec. 22, 1929; d. Feb. 26, 2009), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Martens—Mary, 94 (b. Feb. 27, 1914; d. Jan. 22, 2009), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Neufeld—Harold, 81 (b. April 2, 1927; d. March 14, 2009), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Rempel—Menno, 73 (b. March 17, 1935; d. Feb. 21, 2009), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

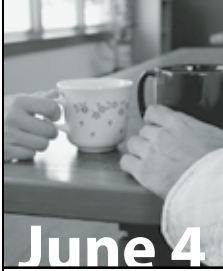

Steinman—Violet (nee Jantzi), 88 (b. May 5, 1920; d. March 13, 2009), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Wiebe—Agatha (nee Epp), 95 (d. March 18, 2009), Carman Mennonite, Man.

Zehr—Elizabeth, 91 (b. Dec. 16, 1917; d. March 12, 2009), Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

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

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

June 4 *Unmarried couples living together*

Examine how pastors can provide pastoral care to co-habiting couples in the church while simultaneously addressing the ethical questions and complex congregational dynamics generated by these situations.

Presenter: Irma Fast Dueck, Canadian Mennonite University

Hosted by the Church Leadership Center at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart Ind. Visit www.amb.edu/couples or call 574.296.6269 for details and registration.

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—Philippians 2:1-11

WORSHIP WISDOM: PART IV OF VI

New challenges to leading worship

BY CHRISTINE LONGHURST

Leadsing in worship is a lot more complicated than it used to be.

Twenty-five years ago, when I first began song leading, the expectations were clear. Songs were generally chosen from the hymnal. Selections needed to connect with the topic or theme for the service. Singing was accompanied by a pianist or organist. Songs were usually familiar to everyone. And songs were led using traditional conducting patterns.

These days few, if any, of those assumptions hold. In many congregations, the hymnal is only one source among many for worship songs. Songs are just as likely to be chosen for the way in which they aid the movement of the worship

the same time, looking for worship music that can bring everyone together.

2. LEADING MUSIC IN DIFFERENT STYLES. It's one thing to choose songs in a variety of styles; it's another thing altogether to lead those songs. Today's song leaders often find themselves called upon to lead worship songs in musical styles they know little about. For leaders educated primarily in classical western harmonies (such as traditional and contemporary hymnody or the music of Taize), branching out to rhythm-based praise and worship songs, international music or jazz harmonies can be daunting.

3. KEEPING UP WITH THE LATEST. These days, there seems to be a general assumption that "new" is better. Many

that the addition of new songs doesn't overwhelm or discourage their congregations? After all, it's widely held that the average congregation can only really absorb 10 to 12 new songs each year.

4. BUILDING REPERTOIRE. In my work with congregations, I've discovered that few of them have given much thought to how new songs are added to the repertoire of the worshipping community. Some song leaders comment on how difficult it can be to work towards a common congregational repertoire when song leading is shared between a variety of leaders or worship teams.

These are only a few of the challenges today's song leaders face. There are many others: finding time for rehearsals with accompanists, instrumentalists and other singers; finding ways to work with pastors and worship planners so that songs truly support the movement of the worship service; encouraging whole-hearted singing in a culture where people increasingly don't sing; developing a style of music leadership which is invitational and clear, and yet doesn't distract from the worship dialogue; learning the ins and outs of copyright clearance so that songs are used legally; sorting out the pros and cons of using new presentational technologies; and coming to terms with a role that is as much about the worship as it is about the music.

It's not an easy task. And yet, it is essential work. As Mennonites, singing has always been an integral part of our worship, uniting us with one another in praise and prayer to God. With all the changes we're seeing these days, thoughtful and sensitive leadership is especially important. ❧

[I]t's widely held that the average congregation can only really absorb 10 to 12 new songs each year.

dialogue as for their connection to the theme of the service. In addition to the pianist or organist, many other instruments now support congregational singing. And many song leaders no longer use conducting patterns to lead singing.

That's a lot of change in a short time, and many song leaders are struggling to keep up. Here are a few of the most common challenges they share with me in my song-leading workshops:

1. CONTROVERSY OVER MUSICAL STYLE. Many song leaders say they find it increasingly difficult to choose music that meets the needs of everyone in their congregation. So many diverse musical "languages" are used in worship, and few people are equally comfortable with all of them. Today's song leaders walk a fine line between the needs of individuals and groups within the congregation while, at

congregations regularly add new worship songs to their repertoire. While this can be a good thing—if not overdone—many song leaders speak about the pressure they feel to keep up with new music.

And there is so much new music. The Christian Copyright Licensing Inc. website alone suggests that its licence covers more than 150,000 songs. This number doesn't include the thousands of songs already in the public domain (all the hymns, spirituals, carols and gospel songs written prior to the 20th century), nor songs from Taize, the Iona Community, music from the Roman Catholic community or the recent flood of new contemporary hymns.

How do today's song leaders even begin to wade through the new songs that are being produced? And how do they choose wisely and judiciously, so



Christine Longhurst teaches at Canadian Mennonite University and leads workshops on worship and music. She can be reached at clonghurst@faithmatters.ca.

GOD AT WORK IN US

Facing your fears

Christ empowers and makes people courageous, Tony Campolo tells CMU youth conference

BY JOHN LONGHURST

Canadian Mennonite University Release
WINNIPEG

Decades later, the memory still haunts Tony Campolo. It happened many years ago, when the now 74-year old former university professor was in high school. A boy at his school named Roger was gay. The other boys bullied him incessantly, heaping abuse after abuse on him. One evening, Roger couldn't take it anymore, so he went home and killed himself.

"As a Christian, I knew I should have stood up for Roger, but I didn't," Campolo told about 400 youths at "Face Your Fears," the March 6-8 Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) Peace, Praise and Pray It Together (PIT) Conference. "I was afraid to be Roger's friend."

Campolo said he didn't stand up because he was afraid of what the bullies would think of him: "I didn't want them to think I was like Roger, that I was 'one of them.' I didn't do what I should have done."

A fear about standing up for what is right was just one of the fears Campolo spoke

about at the annual youth event, which brings young people from Ontario to B.C. to the university for a weekend of presentations, inspiration, workshops and activities. Other fears he addressed included being seen for what we really are, rejection and being condemned by God.

"I'm afraid that people will find out what I am really like, that my Christianity is a pretend game," he said. "I'm afraid they will find out what the real Tony Campolo is like."

He also admitted that, as a younger person, he was afraid of being condemned by God. "I was afraid that God would remember my sins and shortcomings, and judge me," he said. "But Jesus has blotted them all out. He remembers my sins no more. . . . We have a forgetful God. We should not fear condemnation."

One way Campolo counters his fears is through prayer. "When you pray, don't tell God what you want," he said. "God doesn't need to be informed. Be still, and don't ask God for anything."

He challenged conference-goers to not just believe in Christ, but "to be disciples." "The church is full of believers, but few who are disciples," he stated, adding that, "when Christ is in you, he empowers you to live out your life for others in the world."

Campolo also encouraged the group to not be afraid to go against the current. "The

world is going to sell you a bill of goods as you grow up," he said. "People will tell you to get a good education so you can get a good job and make a lot of money." Young people should get "a great education," he said, "but you need to remember that the purpose of education is to learn how to be an agent of God in a world of need."

"Break out of conventional expectations," Campolo said. "Surrender to a God who will ask you to do things that contradict what the world is telling you to do. Be fearless enough to be employed for the work of the kingdom of God."

Facing fears isn't always easy, he acknowledged. But, he said, "Christ in me empowers me, makes me courageous, helps me do what I can't do on my own. Love Jesus, invite him into your heart, because perfect love casts out all fear."

In addition to speaking three times to youth attendees, Campolo also addressed youth leaders at the event, telling them that society is in a transition from modernity to postmodernity, and that "reason and science have exhausted themselves." "Young people today are mystical," he said. "They want to experience God and feel his presence."

When asked whether there is a danger that this will result in an individualistic "Jesus and me" experience, Campolo replied, "The proof of whether this is a genuine encounter is whether we are involved in the lives of the poor and the oppressed."

He went on to emphasize the danger of following a cultural Jesus and of "creating God in our image," with the result that we "end up worshipping ourselves." He challenged youth leaders to nurture their young people into a gospel that is countercultural and challenges the status quo, a life where the goal is "not found in simply becoming wealthy, but in loving others in the way Jesus did." ❧



PHOTO BY JOHN LONGHURST

At this year's Peace, Praise and Pray It Together (PIT) Conference at Canadian Mennonite University, keynote speaker Tony Campolo urged the youthful attendees and their leaders to face their fears, whatever they may be.

'Surrender to a God who will ask you to do things that contradict what the world is telling you to do. Be fearless enough to be employed for the work of the kingdom of God.'

(Tony Campolo)

Vic Winter named Grebel distinguished alumni

By JENNIFER KONKLE

Conrad Grebel University College Release
WATERLOO, ONT.

The halls of education are where Vic Winter has been at home. From the fall of 1972, through the completion of serving as senior resident in 1978, Conrad Grebel was a second home for Winter.

He and his wife Marilyn have kept in touch with Conrad Grebel University College through their children, as all three have also lived and studied there. Art and Jesse graduated with bachelor of science degrees in 2005 and 2007, respectively, and Ben is set to graduate this year with the same degree.

Winter has had a long career in education, shaping and influencing the lives of many students. From 1980-99, he taught English for the Greater Essex County District School Board in southwestern



Winter

Ontario, serving as an English department head for nine years. In 2000, he began working at United Mennonite Educational Institute (UMEI) in Leamington, Ont., as principal, a school that has sent a sizable percentage of its graduates to Grebel.

One of these graduates, Sandra Dyck, nominated Winter for the 2009 Grebel Distinguished Alumni Award. She noted that, "with fewer than 100 students, UMEI is a small, close-knit high school, and our teachers often take on the role of mentors, friends and even baptismal witnesses. With no official guidance counsellor hired by the school, Mr. Winter took on this role, answering questions and helping to guide us in our future planning."

She reflects the comments of many

Providing academic and institutional leadership in a small school like UMEI demands a lot of energy, tenacity and vision on Winter's part

UMEI grads as she observed that "Grebel is naturally at the forefront of Mr. Winter's mind when it comes to post-secondary education, and students at UMEI are well aware of both the residence and academic programs that Grebel offers"

Providing academic and institutional leadership in a small school like UMEI demands a lot of energy, tenacity and vision on Winter's part, but the impact of the school is quite large, since more than 85 percent of its graduates go on to further education. He has provided strong leadership to dedicated and creative faculty members and students who have been enthusiastic about their small school experience.

It is clear that Winter's career in education is a model of service and leadership for the alumni of Conrad Grebel University College, which is why the Conrad Grebel Alumni Committee has named Winter as the recipient of the 2009 Distinguished Alumni Award. He was recognized at "Celebrate Teaching," an event for alumni teachers on April 5, where he shared a few reflections on his career in education.

When notified about this award, Winter said he was "grateful but bemused." He went on to say, "Mine has been a full, rewarding, fruitful, but modest career! I've have had a lot of fun because I'm an eager learner and teacher." ❧

/// Briefly noted

Rockway hires acting principal

KITCHENER, ONT.—Dennis Wikerd, assistant principal at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, has been hired as the school's acting principal effective July 1 for an interim period of up to one year, while long-time teacher John Moyer will become acting assistant principal for the same period of time. Rockway's board has struck a search committee to recruit a new permanent principal. It is anticipated that the new principal could assume the position as early as January 2010. During the interim period, the board will also be retaining the services of an external consultant to engage the constituency of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and encourage its ongoing support for the mission of the school. The consultant will explore other partnership opportunities that may be developed for the school to help it move forward. Terry Schellenberg, principal for the past 12 years, will be leaving the school in June to assume the position of vice-president-external at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg.

—Rockway Mennonite Collegiate Release

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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

ISARC PHOTO



Brice Balmer, Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) secretary, lights a candle to begin the prayer vigil for Ontario's poor at Queen's Park on March 3. The interfaith vigil ended on March 26, the day Ontario's new budget was announced, which included little new money for the province's poor.

Free trade deal with Colombia a bad idea: Kairos

Colombian Mennonite churches ask Canadian, U.S. congregations to show solidarity in a call for peace

By **ROSS W. MUIR**
Managing Editor

Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives has expressed outrage that the federal government has introduced legislation for a free trade deal with Colombia. Such a move ignores the pleas of Canadian and Colombian activists for a human rights assessment in advance of any deal, and the government's action also breaks its own promise to take their human rights concerns into account before making this move, according to Kairos.

The activists toured Canada last month to speak with Canadians and Members of Parliament about the human rights crisis in Colombia and why the proposed deal would exacerbate the situation. Kairos, a national church-based organization that works on a range of social justice issues, including human rights in Latin America, co-sponsored their tour.

The four leaders of Colombian social movements representing women, indigenous peoples, workers and faith-based communities urged the Canadian government to ensure the human rights of Colombians are upheld before Canada moves forward with this deal.

Kairos rejects a claim made by international trade minister Stockwell Day that the trade deal would be of mutual economic benefit to Canada and Colombia. "The level of economic activity this deal will generate is highly questionable," says Kairos executive director Mary Corkery. "And, more importantly, do Canadians and our government want to accept responsibility for what our partners are saying will lead to further deaths and human rights abuses?"

Kairos is urging the government to

immediately undertake a thorough and independent human rights impact assessment of the situation in Colombia.

In other news relating to Colombia, the country's Mennonite churches are again calling on congregations in Canada and the United States to join together with them on April 19 to worship, reflect and pray for Colombian victims, perpetrators and peacemakers. Churches are then called to make a public witness on April 20 by sharing stories, speaking with government officials, holding public vigils and doing other advocacy activities.

Thousands of people are dying and millions are left homeless as government forces, paramilitary groups and guerrillas vie for power and territory in Colombia, according to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), noting that the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs reports that Colombia faces the largest humanitarian catastrophe in the hemisphere.

Human rights workers are concerned that as paramilitary groups demobilize, they are forming other armed groups. Peace and justice workers, including Mennonites, are asking for a well-monitored process of reconciliation.

The latest human rights report, "A Prophetic Call," compiled by MCC partner organizations JustaPaz and the Commission for Restoration, Life and Peace, has just been released. It documents more than 300 violations against church leaders in 2007. Church members are also among the four million people who have been forced to flee their homes and communities because of the violence. ☿

From reports by Kairos and Mennonite Central Committee.



COVER STORY

What's cookin' at Sam's Place?

A 'meeting place with a heart' created to raise funds for MCC

By GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Release
WINNIPEG

Sam's Place, a unique non-profit café, used-book store and performing arts venue, opened last month in a newly renovated building in the Elmwood area of Winnipeg. The project, run mainly by volunteers, will raise funds for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). But Sam's Place is much more than a fundraising initiative, says Tim Collins, who manages the place.

"We want Sam's Place to be an inviting, warm and safe place," he explains. "We want this to be a destination, a meeting place for people—a meeting place with a heart."

Sam is actually a life-size wooden carving of a Komodo dragon—the world's largest lizard—that sits prominently in the building as a sort of mascot. It may not be alive, but it helps customers with menu and book selections through "Sam's Picks," says Collins.

Sam the dragon is one of the many things

that sets Sam's Place apart from other business ventures, according to Collins, whose company is helping MCC develop and manage the project.

Thousands of used books line the shelves on the main floor. Equipment has been purchased to remove the spine of books, making it possible to recycle ones that cannot be sold.

Jon McPhail, an experienced baker and chef, is providing the food services in a 60-seat restaurant that serves locally-grown food and fair trade products.

A stage and sound system gives emerging artists a venue for public performances and a place to sell their CDs, self-published books and art. Comfortable couches create an inviting atmosphere for people to listen to entertainment, visit or browse through books.

The building, which once housed a printing business, was renovated with the help of countless volunteers and the generosity

of Winnipeg's business community, Collins says. And plans are underway to renovate the second floor to create space for community programs, music lessons and literacy classes.

The volunteers who renovated the building include men living in Forward House, a halfway house for men with criminal records.

"Volunteers from Forward House literally donated thousands of hours of work," says Collins. "They have bought into the vision that this is a safe, warm, inviting place for everyone. I'm hoping they will be back to listen to the entertainment, take part in the classes and perform."

Collins understands the stigma these men face because he also has a criminal record. In the 1990s, he worked for the city and helped bring the 1999 Pam Am Games to Winnipeg, coordinate a royal visit and organize other special events. "I had a huge fall from grace," Collins admits. "I lost my moral compass."

He was involved with laundering drug money for organized crime and was held responsible for money that his business partner had stolen. To repay this debt, Collins committed a number of crimes and was convicted of several bank robberies.

During his time in prison, Collins developed a close relationship with the late Addison Klassen, a member of MCC Manitoba's prison visitation and community integration program, Open Circle.

"Addison became my friend," says Collins. "Addison never talked to me about religion, but he lived his faith to an amazing extent. He showed me that greed and arrogance are not as powerful as faith and trying to help people."

Through this friendship and MCC's Open Circle program, Collins says he learned that the "Christian ethic revolves around forgiveness, redemption and second chances." He also learned that, as a Christian organization, "MCC lives up to its faith."

"I believe in second chances, not only for myself, but for everyone," he says. "If you have a sincere desire to live a good life, you should be given the opportunity to do that. Everyone deserves a chance for redemption." ❧

PHOTO BY JOANIE PETERS



Sam's Place manager Tim Collins, left, and baker and chef Jon McPhail are pictured in the kitchen of Sam's Place, a café, used book store and performing arts venue in Winnipeg that will raise funds for Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba.

Confronting painful memories in post-war Bosnia

'Human beings had killed human beings,' woman learns after attending peace camp

By GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Release

The cemetery at the entrance to the picturesque village of Hrustovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, is a grim reminder of the cost of war. The birth dates on the wooden grave markers and stone monuments vary, but the year of death on every marker is the same: 1992. The youngest victim of the massacres that took place in this village 12 kilometres south of the city of Sanki Most was only two weeks old; the eldest was 90.

"These are my neighbours, my relatives, my cousins, my best friends. I know them all," says Vahidin Omanovic, a leader and organizer of peacebuilding activities supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), of the more than 200 villagers buried in the graveyard.

Wooden markers identify the recent burials of bodies that have been found in mass graves. The fate of more than 100 villagers is still unknown.

About 750 families lived in Hrustovo before the war. Only 300 families have returned to the village. The most tragic aspect of the three-year conflict that divided

the country along ethnic and religious lines is that it happened among neighbours and friends, says Omanovic.

When the war ended in 1995, about 110,000 people had been killed and close to two million people had been driven from their homes. Many people have not returned to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Those who have are forced to confront the painful events of the war and rebuild severed relationships.

"We can't forget the war. We have to learn how to live with it," says Omanovic. "If we don't talk about our experiences, reconciliation can't happen."

In 2004, Omanovic founded the Center for Peacebuilding, an organization supported by MCC that provides a variety of activities that bring about emotional healing, understanding and reconciliation. One of the activities is week-long summer peace camps that provide opportunities for people of various religions and ethnicities to speak candidly with each other about the pain of their past and their hopes for the future. After attending the camp for

two consecutive years, participants are encouraged to undertake peacebuilding activities in their own communities. Fifty-six people have completed the two-year training and are now involved in peacebuilding activities in 15 communities.

Sharing her story and listening to the stories of others helped Ermina Boskovic develop a better understanding of herself and the conflict that divided Bosnians into three groups of people: Bosniaks, a term for Bosnians of Muslim descent; Catholic Croats; and Orthodox Serbs.

Boskovic, a Muslim woman married to a man from the Roma group, an ethnic group commonly referred to as gypsies, says she was keenly aware of prejudices towards her family, but had not recognized her own prejudices until she participated in a peace camp. "When a woman, an Orthodox Serb, got up to speak at the peace camp, I said to myself, 'What is she doing here? What does she want?'" recalls Boskovic.

As she listened to the woman speak, though, she was surprised to learn that the woman had been married to a Catholic Croat and that she was a grieving widow and mother whose husband and two sons were killed during the war.

"She kept on asking, 'Who took away my husband and my sons? I felt pressure in my chest,' Boskovic admits. "What is my right to judge someone just because they are Serbs or Orthodox? In this situation, she is a mother and I'm a mother too."

People in Bosnia, she says, often refer to the events of the war as "a Croat killed a Serb, a Serb killed a Bosniak, or a Bosniak killed a Serb." As she listened to people from various religions and ethnicities share their stories, Boskovic says she realized that "human beings had killed human beings during the war."

A month after participating in the peace camp, Boskovic started volunteering at the Center for Peacebuilding. Despite a busy schedule of being a mother and helping her husband operate a bicycle repair shop, she spends eight hours a week at the centre. She also spends one hour a week teaching a course developed by the centre that gives students in local schools the skills to communicate with each other in an open, trusting and receptive way. ❧

PHOTO BY MELISSA ENGLE



Vahidin Omanovic started the Center for Peacebuilding in Bosnia-Herzegovina to help people confront the painful events of the 1992-95 war and rebuild relationships severed by the conflict.

Government urged to accept Palestinian refugees

Canadian churches being asked to consider sponsorships

Canadian Council of Refugees Release

The Canadian Council for Refugees issued a statement late last month calling on the federal government to resettle some of the Palestinian refugees forced out of Iraq but denied asylum anywhere else. The refugees are stranded in dangerous camps on the Syria-Iraq border, waiting for a country to accept them for resettlement.

“We are deeply disappointed at the Canadian government’s failure to offer protection and a home to any of these refugees,” said refugee council president Elizabeth McWeeny. “The Palestinians are among the most vulnerable of those forced out of Iraq—yet the Canadian government

is excluding Palestinians from consideration for any of the resettlement spaces allocated for the displaced from Iraq. This looks like discrimination—these refugees are being denied resettlement to Canada solely because they are Palestinian.”

The Palestinian refugees fled killings, kidnappings, torture and death threats in Iraq, but, unlike Iraqi refugees, have not been allowed into neighbouring countries to seek asylum. Last September, the UN issued a special appeal urging countries to offer resettlement to these stranded refugees.

Gloria Nafziger, the refugee coordinator for Amnesty International (a position she

formerly held with Mennonite Central Committee Canada), represented the refugee council on an international delegation last November to visit the Palestinian refugees. “During my visit to the Al Tanf and Al Hol camps, I spoke to men, women and children who live in some of the harshest conditions,” she said. “The children pleaded to be freed from the isolated and barren desert camps. They performed a play that showed them travelling to Mars to find compassion and a safe place to live—things they are not finding on earth.”

Last November, the council urged Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Jason Kenney to respond favourably to the UN appeal. No reply has yet been received. In practice, the Canadian government is not resettling any of the Palestinian refugees through the government assistance program, although Canadian groups may respond through the private sponsorship program, according to the refugee council.

“There is great willingness among groups in Canada, including the churches, to assist displaced Palestinian refugees. A similar level of commitment from our government must complement this,” said Alfredo Barahona, refugee program coordinator for Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. “Kairos, therefore, urges our government to respond immediately to the UN appeal.”

“The Palestinian refugees from Iraq have suffered threats, torture and killings, and live in appalling conditions in refugee camps near the Syrian border,” said Alex Neve, secretary general of Amnesty International Canada. “Amnesty International calls on the Canadian government to take a leadership role and establish a generous resettlement program for Palestinian Iraqi refugees.”

Nafziger is currently working with MCC Canada’s current refugee coordinator, Ed Wiebe, to arrange a speaking tour of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and B.C. congregations, to promote the idea of church sponsorship of Palestinian refugees. ☞

With files from Ross W. Muir, managing editor.

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GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

A spacious place of hopes and dreams

80th annual assembly results in cuts to camp, committees, Canadian Mennonite

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent
CALGARY, ALTA.

A few descriptive words summarizing the 2009 annual assembly of Mennonite Church Alberta are “inspire,” “clarify,” “assign” and “send.”

“Worship and work are one!” Gareth Brandt, professor of theology at Columbia Bible College, proclaimed that everything a Christian does, whether singing praise or fixing cars, is Christ-centred and, therefore, worship. Brandt’s reflections on living “inside out,” with Christ’s love on display, inspired assembly delegates as they considered the future of their conference.

A significant discussion about fundraising resulted from a presentation of the 2009 budget. A nearly \$24,000 shortfall—mostly from congregational contributions—experienced in 2008 led to reductions in Camp Valaqua’s 2009 subsidy, and decreases in amounts to committees and *Canadian Mennonite*. Valaqua is slated to receive a \$110,000 subsidy this year, down from nearly \$129,000 in 2008, a 14.7 percent drop. *Canadian Mennonite* will receive \$7,500, a 23 percent drop from \$9,800 in 2008.

Several speakers noted that people like to give towards identifiable projects, yet acknowledged this should be over and above regular giving and ongoing commitments.

Phil Heidebrecht voiced discomfort because of the possibility that specific fundraising could detach programs from the conference. “I sometimes wonder, the more fundraising we do, the more it becomes an individual project,” he said.

Valaqua reported challenges, including

tight finances and a drop in camper numbers. A decrease of 54 campers from MC Alberta congregations occurred in 2008. Camp director Jon Olfert noted, though, that the numerical decrease “is something that’s being seen by Alberta camps across the board.”

MC Alberta chair Walter Wiebe said, “I’m at a loss. . . . What are we thinking? . . . We need to believe in it ourselves and send our kids!”

Delegate Kate Janzen picked up on Irene Heese’s challenge to grandparents, saying, “Buy the kids camp applications! It makes a great birthday present. They don’t need any more video games. This present . . . is life-giving, maybe forever!”

Delegates affirmed the Valaqua board moving to develop a 10-year plan and continuing work towards a second camp residence. Camp fees will increase, starting in 2010, to reduce the subsidy required from the area church.

Of ideas raised by the congregational leadership committee, hiring a conference youth minister received, by far, the most attention of any discussion. Many attendees spoke of a desire and need for youth groups to build connections.

Edmonton youth sponsor Steve Jorritsma said, “[A youth minister] would go a long way to jell youth in our church and in our conference. . . . It would be fantastic if we were all one big group.”

A delegate from Pincher Creek, agreed, saying, “A youth pastor would be ideal for us; we are removed from everyone else.”

When asked if the committee would accept the challenge to look into possibilities, committee chair Doug Klassen replied,

“With fervent joy, we will!”

The community building committee received affirmation to improve the MC Alberta website content and design. Delegates supported the committee in attempts to increase and publicize tuition help for Bible college students and theological training for pastors.

The committee also announced a “Menno-Palooza” event for Sept. 18-19, hosted by Calgary’s Trinity Mennonite Church congregation. It replaces Songfest as a time for Alberta Mennonites to gather for fellowship, fun and worship. This year’s event includes sports, music, an arts and crafts display, and worship time. The annual event will change format according to the host church’s facilities, talents and interests.

The missions and service committee was encouraged to continue its aboriginal ministries work, especially Alvin Lepp’s ongoing ministry with First Nations people at Siksika.

A new initiative to research possibilities for housing university students in intentional Anabaptist communities also received interest and was encouraged to proceed. The committee was given a mandate to identify key leaders to look into possibilities in each university area.

In his sending statements, conference minister Jim Shantz expressed hope for the future of MC Alberta. “Many have longed for a day when we can move into the spacious place of our hopes and dreams. We think that we really are in that place now,” he said.

Calgary Vietnamese Mennonite Church was host of this year’s 80th annual assembly, held on March 27-28. ☼

PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



Pictured from left to right at the 80th anniversary annual delegate session last month in Calgary are MC Alberta vice-chair Loretta Kroeker, secretary Marvin Baergen, chair Walter Wiebe and finance committee chair Lois Epp.

Hope for the small church

Anglican bishop offers hope for small Mennonite congregations

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

With wit and energy, the Right Reverend Doctor Edwin M. Leidel Jr. smoothly knit together a variety of ideas and tools—including the life cycle of a congregation, appreciative inquiry and “holy conversation”—into his March 3 presentation at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

Representatives from 31 congregations in six denominations hung on the words of this former Episcopal bishop in Michigan who now works with the Diocese of Huron in the Anglican Church of Canada as a congregational coach throughout the morning.

Leidel noted that small congregations tend



Dave Brubacher, left, of Associates Resourcing the Church and a transitional minister at Toronto United Mennonite Church, discusses the “Hope for the Small Congregation” seminar with presenter Ed Leidel, an Anglican congregational coach, at Conrad Grebel University College last month.

to focus on what they are not, rather than focusing on the good things they are and are good at. Healthy small congregations are able to let go of the past, stop fearing the future and focus on worship and mission.

Using a small congregation in Michigan as an example, Leidel noted that it had many good cooks. Rather than bemoaning the lack of children, members decided to minister in the community with their skills.

A church of grey hairs

Whitewater Mennonite taking a ‘church sabbatical’

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent
BOISSEVAIN, MAN.

Whitewater Mennonite Church in Boissevain is taking a radical step of faith in this, its jubilee year.

Beginning this September, the congregation is “taking a church sabbatical,” says pastor Judith Doell. This will involve disbanding all of its committee structures for a period of one year. Doell describes Whitewater as a church that likes to plan things to the final detail, likes predictability and has a pastor who is “fastidious to dot all the i’s and cross all the t’s.”

“We will stop a lot of the things we do best because we realize we are more invested in our structures than in each other and God,” Doell says of the rationale for the sabbatical. “We are caught up in doing church and have forgotten what it is to be the church.”

Whitewater invited Phil Wagler to speak about his experience with a church sabbatical at Zurich Mennonite, Ont.

“He told us of how the experience helped them

redefine who they were,” Doell says. “This is a question we have been exploring for approximately four years.”

Whitewater is a dwindling congregation in a small rural community. It has experienced the exodus of its young people.

“We have a lot of grey hairs,” says Doell. “One member said if we can’t attract youth, I guess we have to become more youthful ourselves. That sounds biblical: Old men dreaming dreams, old women giving birth.”

As Whitewater enters into this season of uncertainty, Doell wonders, “Can we trust the Holy Spirit to do as good a job as we’re doing? What chaos might be released in our midst? Already we are sensing the Holy Spirit stirring the sedate and the orderly,” she says. “We stepped out of our comfortable pews during Advent and went to the basement to worship on stones and dead stumps while we awaited the arrival of the Messiah.”

The first year they feted the firefighters in their county at a banquet. There, they told the firefighters that the congregation would be praying for them weekly for the next year. The church has continued this ministry, having to increase space to accommodate the groups to whom it ministers. Now many years later, the congregation still has no children, but it is joyfully a healthy small church, he said, adding that healthy small congregations realize that they need to change to live.

After lunch, churches of MC Eastern Canada gathered to discuss the morning's presentation in small groups. One group

discussed what a healthy congregation looks like, deciding that being who they were, at their life stage, was a key sign of health. Un-health would be trying to be what they weren't or panicking about the future. One participant noted that he and his wife had downsized from a large country home to a condo in the city, which gave them more energy to live and serve.

Participants went home with hope for their small congregations, one as small as 15 regular participants.

The event was sponsored by Associates Resourcing the Church, Conrad Grebel and MC Eastern Canada. ❧

feel excited about," he said. "If people feel their money is needed, they give."

Margaret Ewen Peters, co-pastor at Hanley Mennonite and an MC Saskatchewan council member, shared concerns about competition arising among leaders. "What I don't want to see is pitting programs against each other," she explained.

Gerhard Luitjens, pastor of Hope Mennonite Fellowship in North Battleford, believes the budget isn't being met because younger people don't necessarily own the vision of the area church and the older people are passing from the scene. But he also sees a lack of information as part of the problem. A lot of people aren't familiar with what the area church is doing, he pointed out.

Perhaps the most surprising viewpoint came from Eigenheim Mennonite Church's bi-vocational pastor, Allan Friesen. "I believe a conference's main calling should be to provide mutual aid and accountability between congregations," he wrote in an e-mail. "Unfortunately, congregations are often seen more as existing to support the conference [rather] than the other way around." ❧

Finance chair, pastors differ on program funding cuts

MC Saskatchewan budget shortfalls 'can't continue,' Armin Krahn stresses

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON, SASK.

A letter sent out at the beginning of March from Mennonite Church Saskatchewan finance chair Armin Krahn has drawn mixed reactions from church leaders.

Addressed to the MC Saskatchewan council, commissions and all 30 MC Saskatchewan churches, the missive was sent immediately following the delegate sessions and stands in sharp contrast to the overall good feelings emanating from the session held in Drake in February. Krahn celebrated the spiritual high of the conference weekend and then quickly moved to air his concerns about a persistent budget shortfall that—up till now—has been covered by “reserves or extraordinary income.”

“This can't continue. Our reserves will run out,” Krahn pointed out, stating in the letter that the conference has failed to generate continuing cash for the programs. “We have a program that is larger than our monies can handle,” he wrote.

Pastors and conference leaders don't seem to agree. And furthermore, some

don't think cutting programs is the answer.

Ryan Siemens and the 50-member congregation in Prince Albert he pastors helps with the Person2Person program funded by MC Saskatchewan. “I think the money is there,” he said, adding, “If you cut out the programs . . . that's how we connect with people outside the church.” Siemens wondered if program staff should begin promoting their programs, rather than the conference itself.

Anita Retzlaff helps lead a large urban congregation in Saskatoon. “We do raise a lot of money in the province. The money is flowing,” she said. Fundraisers, rather than direct donations to area church coffers, are still the most popular way to generate money. “That's where people like to give,” she pointed out.

In the small town of Osler, Gordon Allaby pastors a church of 170 people. He also weighed in on why donations are falling short, but suggested that the conference hasn't “reached the point where we have to cut back.” “People give to what they

❧ Briefly noted

Metropolitan Kirill elected as Russia's new patriarch

MOSCOW—Russian Baptist leadership believes the election of Metropolitan Kirill as “Patriarch of Moscow and All of Russia” earlier this year can be interpreted as a clear vote for openness and dialogue with other religious groups. Vitaly Vlasenko of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians states: “I am very optimistic. . . . In our short personal meetings he has always been very kind and respectful. Most top-level Protestant contacts with the Moscow Patriarchate have occurred through him.” Vlasenko notes that Kirill has been instrumental in the creation of two inter-confessional bodies of vital interest to Russian Protestants.

—Russian Union of Evangelical Christians—Baptists Release

Athletes honoured at annual awards ceremony

Two CMU teams repeat as provincial champions

By JOHN LONGHURST

Canadian Mennonite University Release
WINNIPEG

Athletic ability, leadership, service—and two championships—were celebrated March 17 at the annual Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) athletic awards ceremony. The event capped off a successful year of inter-collegiate athletics, which saw the men's hockey and the women's volleyball teams repeat as champions in the Manitoba Collegiate Athletics Conference (formerly the Central Plains Athletic Conference).



PHOTO BY JOHN LONGHURST

Alex Leaver, right, receives his CMU Trail Blazer award from athletics director Russell Willms, left, and Vaughn Rempel Snider, assistant director of athletics.

"It was a great year, not just on the field or court, but also as our student athletes grew, developed and played leadership roles on teams and on campus," said athletic director Russell Willms.

The major award winners this year were:

- Paul Peters of Winkler, Man., and Maraleigh Short of Rivers, Man. (Male and

Female Rookies of the Year).

- Josh Ewert and Janelle Hume, both of Winnipeg (Male and Female Athletes of the Year).

- Alex Leaver of Winnipeg, who received the CMU Trail Blazer Award, which is awarded to the athlete who best exemplifies the mission and goals of CMU athletics. ❧

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❧ Briefly noted

EFC granted intervenor status in reproductive technologies case

OTTAWA—The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) and Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops have filed a joint 10-page written argument with the Supreme Court of Canada. The constitutional challenge case involves the Government of Quebec's dispute of the federal government's jurisdiction to enact legislation regulating assisted human reproduction and related genetic research with a consistent national standard. The legislation in question, the Assisted Human Reproduction Act, aims to protect the health, safety, human rights and human dignity of Canadians by either prohibiting or regulating certain activities, such as human cloning, surrogacy, sex-selection and in vitro fertilization. The joint argument is based on the uniqueness of human life and the public interest in having one Canadian standard in regard to scientific research and medical applications. EFC vice-president and general legal counsel Don Hutchinson says, "Human life . . . must be valued, respected and protected for its uniqueness. In Canada, this can best be done by regulating the artificial creation of human life with standards debated and established at the federal level." The case is scheduled to be heard at the Supreme Court of Canada on April 24. Mennonite Church Canada is an EFC member.

—Evangelical Fellowship of Canada Release

ARTBEAT

Fringe settlement leads to fringe theatre production

Reesor, the play, transcends Mennonite particularity

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
TORONTO

In 1925 Thomas Reesor, a Mennonite pastor from Markham, Ont., assisted a group of Russian Mennonite refugees from Ukraine to settle in Northern Ontario. While the latitude was similar to that of Winnipeg and Regina, grain-producing areas to the west, the muskeg soil of the Canadian Shield was too acidic to grow crops. After the forest was cleared in preparation for farming, there was no income to be derived and by 1948 so many of the settlers had left, many for Harrow, Ont, that the Mennonite congregation dissolved.

But Reesor lives on in annual picnics, once held at the site of the settlement, and in a play by Erin Brandenburg, a former Harrow resident, and Lauren Taylor. *Reesor* was first performed at the Toronto Fringe Festival in 2007, and then in Markham and Leamington, Ont. It was resurrected at the Factory Studio during The Next Stage Festival earlier this year.

Brandenburg also starred as Anna, 12 years old when she, her father and brother arrived in Reesor at Mile 103 of the CNR track between Cochrane and Hearst, in the dark, to find no settlement awaiting them.

PHOTO BY ED GASS DONNELLY



Erin Brandenburg both co-wrote and starred in The Next Stage fringe festival performance of Reesor in Toronto earlier this year.

All they find is an abandoned attempt to settle with the sign "Given up, help yourself." Much of the play happens as Anna recites letters she is writing to her sister, who has not accompanied them to Canada from Ukraine, but who, according to her father, will soon follow with their mother. In the course of the play we find that Anna, her father and brother had fled Ukraine after an attack by bandits. Anna managed to hide, but her last sight of her sister was of her standing in the middle of the yard in her night gown. No one will follow.

This realization dawns on Anna as the family comes to the conclusion that they need to abandon Reesor. While the place has not worked out, Canada has become home. The human longing for security in the present has been realized as the past finds closure and a future opens.

Although the proverb "in silence is grace" guides Anna's father, she gains grace through the pain of assisting at noisy child-births, both in the Mennonite and Finnish communities, and gains a sense of self through participating in a sauna after assisting a delivery. Anna grows up through the course of the play, through both the drudgery of being the only woman in the household and through interactions with Ivan, one of the Finnish youths in the community.

Reesor is not a straightforward play or story. Besides Brandenburg, three musicians on stage—Andrew Penner, Dave McEathron and Gord Bolan—play a variety of instruments to create mood and sound effects, and act out roles, both hilariously and devastatingly as the women's group who let slip Anna's mother's fate. *Reesor* tugs at our own longings for closure and an open future. %

Of mice, men and Menno

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate Grade 9 class learns social justice from Steinbeck novella

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

With the notoriety of being on both lists of books that should be banned from high schools and books high school students must read, John Steinbeck's 1937 novella, *Of Mice and Men*, still raises interest whenever it is studied.

Melanie Cameron of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener had her Grade 9 class study the book this year. She had her students select themes that are significant in the novel: unemployment, poverty, homelessness, mental disability, physical disability, racial discrimination, gender discrimination, sexual exploitation, animal cruelty and life without a family. Students then researched their theme in the context of 1930s California, where the novel is set, and also in the current Canadian context.

"Our current recession provided many interesting comparisons with the Great Depression era," Cameron wrote in an e-mail.

Based on what they learned, students then designed and executed a "creative community response" action. The actions were far reaching.

Shoukia van Beck created a T-shirt to make people think about sexual exploitation. Her "Little Miss Child Prostitute" T-shirt directed people to the stopsexualexploitation.com website. Her hope was to break through the secrecy and lack of education around sexual exploitation.

Shelby Steckly looked into the subject of violence as it is portrayed in the media.



She sent her essay to various federal, provincial and local politicians. She wrote in her reflection that “the greatest reward in designing and accomplishing my plan was being able to know how incredibly simple one can make their voice heard.” Personal responses from the local mayor and MP made this amply clear.

Homelessness was the theme that Matt Gerber picked up on. The two main characters of Steinbeck’s novella are on a search for “a place of their own.” With the present economic downturn, Matt thought it was important to educate himself both through reading materials on homelessness in Kitchener-Waterloo, and to rub shoulders with people who have been homeless by working in a rooming house where formerly homeless people live. Although he had been nervous going to the home, he wrote that he realized afterward that this was largely due to stereotypes he had learned about homeless people, noting that

“homelessness affects smart, nice, normal, and even rich people,” and “when homeless, you feel stuck, and it’s very hard to get out of it.”

“Dough fights for the homeless” was Chloe Russell’s project. She organized a bake sale (dough) to raise funds to buy items needed by a women’s shelter near where she lives. “After all my research, I realize more about George and Lennie (Steinbeck’s characters),” she wrote in her report. “They lived through all those awful statistics,” she noted, citing the fact that in the Great Depression up to 28 percent of California workers were unemployed and that up to 25,000 families lost their homes. “They had nothing to do other than work whenever possible and dream of a better place for them,” she concluded. “But it could only be a dream. . . . I have more sympathy for them (the homeless) now than before. Above all, I learned that I can make a difference in this world.” ❧



PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate students Matt Gerber, left, Shelby Steckly, Shoukia vanBeck, Chloe Russell and Melanie Cameron discuss their respective projects based on their study of John Steinbeck’s 1937 novella, *Of Mice and Men*.

Hamilton artist featured in Chicago art show

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Karen Thiessen finds herself living along a wide border. As an artist, a Christian and a Mennonite, she doesn’t often find others with those descriptors to relate to. But on March 6 she found herself in a new place with others who were more like her.

Answering the call for art by the Black Walnut/Robert Wayner Gallery in

Chicago, Ill., that she had read about in the Jan. 19 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, four of her pieces were selected for the “We, the Mennonites” show, along with art from 11 other Mennonite artists, including Margruiete Krahn from Altona, Man. At the show’s opening, Thiessen found herself an artist, a Christian and a Mennonite playing the Mennonite connection game.

PHOTO BY CEES VAN GEMERDEN



“Sanctuary/Exile II” by Karen Thiessen, 2002.

In a telephone conversation from her home in Hamilton, Ont., she noted that—not as a critique, but descriptively—many of the Mennonites she is in contact with keep their spirituality very private. “We don’t like to talk about God in our lives,” she said, noting that she found the experience in Chicago integrative.

One of her pieces featured in this exhibit, “Sanctuary/Exile II,” is part of her *Wide Borders Series*. Of her works, she writes, “Healing, transition and transformation occur in ‘discomfort zones,’ those fluid, tolerant places between Mennonite and mainstream society, art and craft, and black and white. Within the fringes of acceptance, I map the social, cultural, psychological and physical barriers that divide people and separate individuals from their communities of origin, through a topography of fabric, dye, and thread. . . . There is still much to consider within wide borders.” ❧



w i n d o w

A M B S

Sermons bring message from the Holy Spirit

Spring 2009
Volume 19 Issue 2

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Your gifts at work
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Panorama

As June Alliman Yoder, professor of communication and preaching, retires from 27 years of teaching at AMBS, are there still things she is learning as she listens to students' sermons?

"Oh yes," she says. "Oh, yes. Yes!"

"I have been ministered to," June says. "I can't believe I was so honored to have this job."

Early in her tenure at AMBS, she team-taught with Erland Waltner, now president emeritus. Erland taught students how to prepare sermon content; June taught them how to shape it and communicate it

In the late 1980s, when the curriculum for the Master of Divinity was revised, June helped to design the course Foundations of Worship and Preaching. This also was team-taught. June and Marlene Kropf worked together on the worship and preaching aspects; Mary Oyer and later Rebecca Slough taught the music components.

June believes the way to learn how to preach is to give a sermon, get constructive feedback; preach again and get feedback; preach again and get feedback. So she took her role very seriously, often providing students with several pages of

response for each sermon. Her goal was to give the kind of feedback that would be an honest critique of the sermon and also would encourage and support the student.

Over 27 years, June also led workshops and the Preaching Institute for pastors across the United States and Canada. She says she has taught a generation of pastors, probably somewhere between 700 and 1,000.

Over the 27 years of her teaching, June says, "what the Holy Spirit says and how we communicate that has changed, but the team-work of the preacher and the Holy Spirit has not changed.

"If the preacher is going to say something, the preacher must first listen—listen to the Holy Spirit, listen to the text, listen to the congregation." June's dissertation was centered on this topic and it has been at the core of her teaching all through her work at AMBS and in the church.

What that means for listeners in the congregation is this: "If God has spoken to the preacher and the preacher is interpreting that word to us, then I better listen. We'd better be on the edge of the pews!" June believes.

That may just be why, after hearing thousands of sermons, June is still learning. ●



June Alliman Yoder receives a gift of a ceramic cross, created by Goshen potter Dick Lehman, as a gift at the event honoring her as she retired from teaching at AMBS.

Mary E. Klassen

AMBS: A place of learning for all

The average age of AMBS students is 40 years. However, behind that statistic is the fact that one-fourth of the student body is between the ages of 21 and 24. More students are here immediately after graduating from college than at any other time in the last 20 years.

On the other hand, some students have come to AMBS as 50- and 60-year olds, either for first-time study or to complete a degree. In addition, the programs of the Church Leadership Center bring both new and experienced pastors and high school youth to AMBS—pastors for ongoing learning and reflection; youth for ministry exploration.

This mix of teenagers, young adults and people from different ministries and professions gives richness and integrity to the worship and learning at AMBS. In this issue of *AMBS Window*, read about several people who have chosen to come to AMBS at different stages of life and give thanks to God that AMBS is a place for all ages. ●



Vedra Snider

I was a history and religion major at Goshen College and felt a calling to some sort of teaching. I came to AMBS because I want to be challenged to grow spiritually as well as academically and to go into teaching as a ministry.

Here the study of history, ethics and theology is not separated from the faith journey. There's attention to integrating what we are studying with faith development.

The most surprising thing about my experience so far is that even though I am not living on campus, I am enjoying the community of people here. I am overwhelmed by the sense of camaraderie. We learn together, and I feel nourished and supported by other students in surprising ways.

Jonny Gerig Meyer, first-year student in the Master of Divinity program from Goshen, Ind.

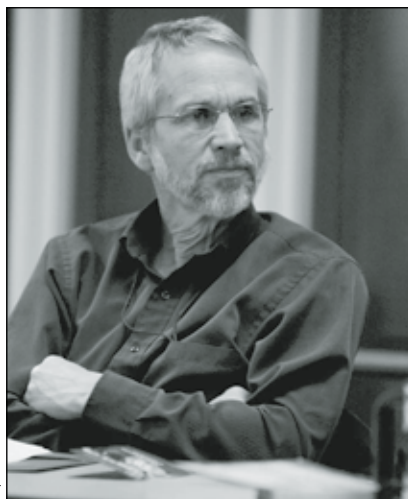
My spiritual life came alive at Highland Community Church in Abbotsford, B.C. I attended there for seven years and began to feel a sense of religious vocation. Coming to AMBS seemed the logical next step, and I am in the Master of Arts in Christian Formation program. I am not certain yet where my place will be in the church, but I do know that I want other people to have experiences in the church like I have had. I want to be a conduit of God's grace.

Coming here meant taking a risk—leaving a job, my community and everything familiar. But I sense that I made the right decision in coming to AMBS and am comfortable with the uncertainty about what will come next.

Christine Kampen, first-year student from Abbotsford, B.C.



Mary E. Klassen



Tyler Klassen

I studied at AMBS for a year from 1979 to 1980. Since then I spent twelve and a half years working in the Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes office when it was in Kidron, Ohio, and did four terms of service in Latin America.

I'm here now to continue my studies in the Master of Divinity program. As I look to the future, I see a fork in the road—pastoral ministry or further service in Latin America—and I'm not sure which path will open up. I'm taking Foundations of Worship and Preaching, Economic Justice and Christian Conscience, Pastoral Ministry and Leadership, and Mission and Peace: The Church's Ministry in the World. Regardless of which way I go, these classes will be helpful. This transition is an inspiring and invigorating time.

Charles Geiser and Teresa Geiser, his wife, came to AMBS from Colombia. Prior to that they lived in Apple Creek, Ohio.



I wanted to participate in Pastors Week in January because I had not been to AMBS since I graduated. I wanted to see faculty, friends and fellow pastors from across the U.S. and Canada. Dr. Diana Butler Bass's presentations and several workshops drew my interests, too.

I participated in Alan Kreider's workshop, "Witnessing during the worship service." It was helpful to learn ways to practice Christian witness during the worship service..

Bock Ki Kim, Master of Divinity, 2002; pastor of Vision Mennonite Church, London, Ont.

George R. Brunk to serve as interim president

George R. Brunk, III, will serve as interim president for AMBS, beginning July 19. He will serve until a new president begins, a tenure of six to twelve months.

Dr. Brunk has taught and served as vice president and academic dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., since 1974.

He also has served in numerous leadership positions in the Mennonite Church. He holds a Doctor of Theology degree from Union Theological Seminary in Virginia and was ordained to Christian ministry in 1964.

"The board is pleased to have George Brunk join the administrative team at AMBS," Ray Friesen, chair of the AMBS board, said. "We believe this early

announcement and the unique gifts George has will bring a sense of stability for the seminary community, donors and constituency through this time of transition while we also manage the effects of the economic downturn. We ask the church to pray for the seminary and its leadership team during this time."



Dr. George Brunk, III, named interim president for AMBS, greets Professor Emeritus Willard M. Swartley.

J. Nelson Kraybill, president of AMBS since 1997, will end his assignment at AMBS in July and will pursue other ministry opportunities.

A search committee is seeking a new long-term president for AMBS. To see a list of members and

to offer nominations, visit www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/search. ●

Your gifts at work

Because the generosity of friends across Canada and the U.S. is essential in our mission, we will report here several ways in which gifts to AMBS have been used in recent months.

- 1 A January class in Guatemala learned about peace and justice issues from a Latin American perspective. Professor Ted Koontz accompanied the group.
- 2 Pastors Week, January 26–29, featured Diana Butler Bass, who shared how mainline churches are finding renewal in their core practices and traditions.
- 3 Students and mentors in Journey: A Conference-based Leadership Development Program, reflected on what they have been called to do in a weekend learning event, Feb. 27–March 1.
- 4 One of the student apartments has been refurbished with hardwood floors and new kitchen and bathroom fixtures. This is a prototype for additional apartment renovations. ●



The call of God comes at every stage of our lives. The boy Samuel did not sleep another wink on the night the Lord "came and stood there, calling 'Samuel! Samuel!'" Moses at midlife was daunted to hear God say in the desert, "I will send you to Pharaoh." Life changed forever for international business woman Priscilla when God called her to be a teacher in the early church.

It is a wonderful sign for the Mennonite Church that more congregations are helping people at every stage of life hear and answer God's call. It is urgent that this call include preparation for pastoral leadership and mission work. AMBS is one place where people at various stages of life receive spiritual and intellectual formation for leadership in the church



and witness in the world.

In recent years the AMBS Explore program has helped scores of Mennonite teenagers test their own calling. Graduate programs at AMBS are seeing a surge of recent college graduates (who bring energy and probing questions) as well as older students up to typical retirement age (who bring wisdom and life experience). Current AMBS students include a former newspaper editor, people from various business backgrounds and former school teachers or nurses.

All these age groups working together makes

for a rich learning environment. At a time when jobs in the wider society are scarce, more people from all stages of life are coming to seminary. This is a gift for the church, because it suggests that God is preparing leaders for the years ahead.

This is also a challenge for AMBS, because economic turmoil in the wider society has diminished our financial resources. AMBS employees recently pledged to give an additional \$110,000 back to the seminary next fiscal year to help balance the budget. That is how strongly we feel that, at a time when enrollment is increasing and the church needs leaders, the seminary must remain vibrant. We thank God for each of you who share in this gratifying work with your dollars, prayers, and moral support.

— J. Nelson Kraybill

Joel Miller (Master of Divinity 2006) was ordained on Feb. 1 at Cincinnati (Ohio) Mennonite Fellowship.

David Elkins (Master of Divinity 2005) was ordained Sept. 7 at Lima (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Rachel Nafziger Hartzler (Master of Arts in Christian Formation 2004) was ordained Nov. 23 at Pleasant Oaks Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Paula Killough (Master of Divinity 2008) is senior executive for advancement for Mennonite Mission Network.

Daniel S. Schipani (Faculty) and **Leah Dawn Bueckert** (Master of Divinity 2006) have edited *Interfaith Spiritual Care: Understandings and Practices* (Pandora 2009).

Panorama

Pastors on sabbatical at AMBS

This semester AMBS is hosting several pastors on sabbatical through the AMBS Engaging Pastors sabbatical program. Steve Goering, pastor of Columbus (Ohio) Mennonite Church, was on campus for two months, accompanied by Susan Ortman Goering, his wife, who also is a pastor of Columbus Mennonite Church.

In April, Horace McMillon (pictured at right), pastor of Open Door Mennonite Church, Jackson, Miss., will return for a second segment of his sabbatical. Also planning to come in April are Angela Ozuruonye Nze of Christ



Horace McMillon, pastor of Open Door Mennonite Church, talks with John Rempel, AMBS professor, during the first segment of his sabbatical last fall.

Life Chapel, Avondale, Ariz., and Samuel Olarewaju of Berean Fellowship Church, Youngstown, Ohio.

On April 30, AMBS will

host a conversation with these sabbatical pastors and regional pastors about ministry in diverse settings.

Spring 2009 Volume 19 Issue 2

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

Editor: Mary E. Klassen
Designer: Nekeisha Alexis-Baker

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



Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary

3003 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517-1999
574 295-3726
www.ams.edu

Calendar

British Columbia

May 2: B.C. Women's Inspirational Day at Kelowna First Mennonite Church. Register at your local church or MC B.C. office.

May 24: "Reach Up In Out," an MC B.C. joint service featuring worship, fellowship and food; Chandos Pattison Auditorium, Surrey, 4 p.m. Meal ticket deadline: April 30; tickets available from local congregations or the MC B.C. office.

June 14: "Blessed Assurance: A summer evening of gospel singing," with Evan Kreider, King Road Church, Abbotsford, 6:30 p.m. For more information or tickets, call 604-853-6177.

June 20: Annual MCC fundraising luncheon, Garden Park Tower, Abbotsford, noon. Speakers Art and Marlyce Friesen will share stories from Ukraine. For more information, call MCC B.C. at 604-850-6639.

Alberta

May 1-2: Third annual "Cross the street: Engaging your community with authentic faith" conference organized by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (of which MC Canada is a member), Alpha and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada, at Centre Street Church, Calgary. For more information or to register, visit billygraham.ca and follow the "Ministries" link.

May 2: Alberta Women in Mission Enrichment Day, First Mennonite Church, Calgary. Registration at 9:30 a.m., followed by a business session, memorial service and inspirational speaker. Lunch provided.

May 9: Camp Valaqua spring work day. For more information, call 403-637-2510 or e-mail valaqua@telusplanet.net.

June 6: Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon For more information, call 403-637-2510 or e-mail valaqua@telusplanet.net.

June 10: Alberta heritage retreat at Camp Valaqua. For more information, call Kurt Janz at 403-271-7477.

June 12-13: MCC Relief Sale, Didsbury. Events include a Friday barbecue, sale and bike-a-thon. For more information, call Adam Beriault at 403-275-6935.

June 13-14: Camp Valaqua 50th anniversary celebrations. For more

information, call 403-637-2510 or e-mail valaqua@telusplanet.net.

Saskatchewan

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

April 29: RJC chorale and CMU choir joint-fundraising banquet and concert, at Osler Mennonite Church.

May 3: RJC spring concert.

May 27: MEDAffinity breakfast, at the Saskatoon Club, 7 a.m. Speaker: Ken Sawatzky. Topic: "Keeping the faith."

June 5: Canadian Women in Mission luncheon and meeting, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. University of Saskatchewan.

June 5-7: MC Canada annual delegate assembly, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.

June 8-9: MC Canada/MC Saskatchewan aboriginal learning tour.

June 12-13: MCC Relief Sale, Prairieland Park, Saskatoon.

June 18: First annual general meeting of Community Justice Ministries Saskatoon, at MCC Place, 7 p.m. The new organization brings together the Saskatoon Community Chaplaincy and Saskatoon P2P. All are welcome.

June 26,27: RJC year-end musical performances.

July 6-10: MC Canada youth assembly, Caronport.

Aug. 16: "A taste of China" event at RJC.

Oct. 14-18: MC Canada IMPaCT.

Oct. 16-17: MC Saskatchewan women's retreat, Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Oct. 30-Nov. 1: Quilting and scrapbooking retreat, Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Nov. 21: MC Saskatchewan leadership assembly.

Manitoba

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.

April 30-May 2: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate senior high musical.

May 2: Final Enrichment/Celebration Day for Manitoba Women in Mission, Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg; worship singing begins at 9:30 a.m. Lunch provided by donation.

All past and present members and guests welcome. For more information, e-mail Betty-Anne Hildebrand at pbhild@mts.net.

May 4-8: CMU School of Writing. For more information or to register, visit cmu.ca.

May 13: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate work day.

May 15: "Going Barefoot II," a conference for church communicators, with keynote speaker Mike Tennant of The Age of Persuasion. For more information or to register, visit cmu.ca.

May 22-24: Birding retreat at Camp Koinonia.

May 27: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Grades 7-9 spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

May 28: Westgate Grades 10-12 spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

July 6-12: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate 50th anniversary camping trip along the Bow River, Kananaskis Country, Alta.

June 29-July 10: Canadian School of Peacebuilding at CMU. For more information or to register, visit cmu.ca.

Ontario

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

April 18: Women of MC Eastern 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 Lititz, 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, Rouge Valley Mennonite Church.

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 22: "Making Peace Without Talking to Your Enemy," public forum on the Middle East with Daryl and Cindy Byler, Conrad Grebel Great Hall, 7:30 p.m. For more information, call Anne Brubacher at 519-745-8458.

April 24-25: MC Eastern Canada annual church gathering, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

UpComing

B.C. churches plan second celebration service

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—Mennonites in British Columbia will have the chance to unite once more for worship, fellowship and a shared meal on the afternoon of May 24. A joint MC B.C. worship service is planned for 4 p.m. at Chandos Pattison Auditorium in Surrey. In May 2007, more than 1,200 worshippers from MC B.C. congregations came together for a joint worship service in Abbotsford, climaxing with congregations signing the covenant for shared vision and ministry. With many saying, "Let's do this again sometime," it was decided to hold a second joint service this year. "As a body of God's people, covenanted together, we want to make this a celebration of the missional engagement of our congregations by hearing and seeing the stuff that God is doing," says MC B.C. executive minister Garry Janzen. Tickets for the meal following the service are available at individual church offices or at the MC B.C. office. Registration deadline for the meal is April 30. For more information or meal registration, contact MC B.C. by phone at 604-850-6658 or by e-mail at admin@mcbc.ca.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

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: "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: "All in the April Evening: Melodies and verses from bygone days" fundraising concerts, St. Jacobs Mennonite Church; 7 p.m. (25), 1:30 p.m. (26). Free-will offering. For more information, visit sjmc.on.ca.

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.

May 1: A celebration of African music with Hope Rising and a Canadian-Ethiopian church choir, Crosshill Mennonite, 7:20 p.m. Freewill offering for Meserete Kristos College, Ethiopia. Sponsored by MKC Link Canada and local churches.

May 2: Piano concert at Breslau Mennonite Church, 7 p.m. Pianist: Douglas Hallman. Repertoire includes Pachelbel's *Canon*, *Moonlight Sonata*, *Clair de Lune*. Benefit concert for Christian Peacemaker Teams.

May 2: Shalom Counselling Services Waterloo's fundraising breakfast and annual meeting, Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, 8:30 to 11 a.m. Topic: "Encouraging hope: One family's experience with mental health problems." Speakers: Andrew and Joanna Reesor-McDowell. To reserve a ticket (by April 27), call 519-886-9690.

May 2: Grand Philharmonic Children's Choir presents *Butterflies and Rainstorms*. Benton Street Baptist

Church, 7:00 p.m. Tickets available at 519-578-6885.

May 2,3: Soli Deo Gloria Singers presents "For the Beauty of the Earth," UMEI auditorium, Leamington; 8 p.m. (2), 3 p.m. (3). For more information, call 519-326-7448.

May 2,3: Menno Singers presents "Hopefulness," benefit concerts for ALS. St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, 7 p.m. (2); St. Paul's United Church, Paris, 7 p.m. (3).

May 5: Church leadership seminar: "Transforming the culture of the congregation," in Waterloo.

May 5-6: Church leadership seminar: "Leading the church through times of conflict and change," in Waterloo.

May 9: Grand Philharmonic Choir presents Franz Lehár's *The Merry Widow*. Centre in the Square, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m. Tickets available at 519-578-6885.

May 9: DaCapo Chamber Choir presents "Fire and Air: Kindling sun, moon stars and spirit," St. John the Evangelist Church, Kitchener, 8 p.m. Advance tickets available online at dacapochamberchoir.ca (follow the "ticket info" link) or by phone at 519-725-7549.

May 11: Spring seniors retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp. Speaker: Rick Cober Bauman, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario. Topic: "But we like the old wine: Shaping MCC for the 21st century." For more information, call 519-625-8602.

May 16: MC Eastern Canada presents "Ministering to the chronically mentally ill and their families" event; Erb Street Mennonite Church Waterloo; 8:45 a.m. to 3 p.m.

May 22: Fundraising yard and bake sale at the Wanner Mennonite Church picnic shelter, Cambridge; 5 to 9 p.m. Rain date: May 23.

May 26-29: "Quilts for the World" at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (26-28), 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (29). Guest artist: Judy Gascho-Jutzi. Gift shop, appraisals, quilting bee.

May 29-30: New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale, New Hamburg fairgrounds and arena. Gates open at 5:30 p.m. (29) and 7 a.m. (30). For more information, visit nhmrs.com.

May 30: Willowgrove annual fundraising golf tournament at Angus Glen Golf Club, Markham; 1:30 p.m.

shotgun start. Silent and live auctions and dinner included. Download registration forms at willowgrove.ca. For more information, call Ron de Roo at 905-640-2127.

June 4-8: Sound in the Lands II, a festival with multiple concerts, performances and workshops, and an academic conference with papers and presentations that address issues of Mennonite-rooted peoples and their local and global music-making, Conrad Grebel University College. For more information, call 519-885-0220 ext. 24264.

June 11: Lebold Endowment fundraising banquet. Speaker: Ron Mathies. Topic: "Extending the table: Becoming a global community of faith," Conrad Grebel University College, 6:30 p.m. For tickets, email Carol Lichti at clichti@uwaterloo.ca.

June 18-20: Write! Canada Christian writers' conference sponsored by The Word Guild, Guelph Bible Conference Centre. Keynote speakers at this 25th annual conference include Brian Stiller, president of Tyndale University College and Seminary. Theme: "Celebrating

God's blessings: Past, present and future." Classes for professional to beginning writers. Meet editors, publishers and agents from Canada and the U.S. For more information or to register, visit writecanada.org.

Paraguay

July 14-19: MWC 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 Khoritsa, 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.

Classifieds

Announcement

**Ottawa Mennonite Church
Is celebrating 50 years**
Oct. 10 & 11, 2009
Details at
www.ottawamennonite.ca
or call 613-733-6729.

For Rent

Cottage for sale at Chesley Lake, 49 Chapel Dr. Winterized, 3 bedrooms, large loft, finished basement, separate garage. 519-662-2528.

Employment Opportunities

Mennonite Publishing Network seeks a full-time person to serve as **EDITORIAL DIRECTOR** of Herald Press, its book imprint. Responsibilities: serve on the Publisher's Management Team to help set overall strategy and direction; provide leadership of detailed planning for Herald Press titles; manage process of preparing accepted manuscripts for production. Qualifications: knowledge of, and experience in, book publishing—both in planning and in management of the publishing process; ability to work collaboratively as part of a publishing team; a disciple of Jesus Christ and a convinced Anabaptist; commitment to the vision and mission of the MPN Board and its governing denominations (Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada). Contact Ron Rempel, Executive Director/Publisher, Mennonite Publishing Network at rrempel@mpn.net or 519-496-9487.

Advertising Information

Canadian Mennonite
Ad Representative
Karen Suderman
1-800-378-2524 x.224
519-745-4507
advert@canadianmennonite.org

Camp Valaqua, 1 hour NW of Calgary, is seeking a summer **HEAD COOK**. June 29 - Aug. 21. \$550/week plus room and board. For further information or to send a resume: manager@campvalaqua.com; fax 403-637-2183 ; ph 403-637-2510 ; Box 339, Water Valley, AB T0M 2E0.

Christian Alliance International School (CAIS) in Hong Kong invites applications from qualified **TEACHERS** (B.Ed. or equivalent). The School is registered with the province of Alberta. CAIS offers an attractive salary and benefits package.

TEACHER VACANCIES:

- 3 primary teachers (grades 1, 5, and 6)
- 2 Mandarin teachers (elementary and high school)
- French (elementary / middle years)
- Science (middle years) and chemistry (high school)
- Social sciences: social studies and psychology or geography (high school)
- Physical education (middle years)

Further details about the positions and the application process may be found on the school website at <http://www.cais.edu.hk>.

Closing Date: April 30, 2009.

Please send applications to:

Christian Alliance International School
ATTN: Mr. A. Enns, Headmaster
2 Fu Ning Street
Kowloon City, Kowloon
Hong Kong

Fax: (852) 2760-4324 Email: jobs@cais.edu.hk

Personal data will be used for recruitment purposes only.

CANADIAN MENNONITE

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE

Canadian Mennonite is seeking an approximately 40% time Advertising Representative for the biweekly magazine. Pay is a negotiable combination of commission and salary, plus expenses and benefits. The majority of work can be done from home if desired. Resumes will be considered starting April 1 with the position starting June 1.

This person is responsible for managing, caring for and growing Canadian Mennonite's advertising base. Specific tasks include providing excellent service to advertisers; developing and carrying out ad marketing campaigns; responding to ad inquiries; organising the production of ads from development through to print and/or online publication; growing our advertising base; and working with the publisher to develop our overall advertising business plan.

Applicants should be self-motivated idea people with strong sales and communication skills; the ability to understand customer needs and match our offerings to these; support Canadian Mennonite's ministry and mission; and be able to work independently. Come and serve the wider church in this exciting way!

Direct inquiries and applications to:

Dick Benner, Editor and Publisher, Canadian Mennonite
490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
Phone: 1-800-378-2524, x225
E-mail: editor@canadianmennonite.org

Zoar Mennonite Church at Waldheim, Sask., a congregation of about 80 regular attendants, is currently seeking a **PASTOR**. We are a small rural community 60 km north of Saskatoon. Currently, we are involved in supporting immigrant families from Colombia moving to our community.

We are looking for a person who:

- has a strong personal commitment to Jesus Christ.
- endorses commitment and respect to Anabaptist faith.
- has gifts of leadership in evangelism and visitation.

Please submit inquiries, resumes and references to:

Jerry Buhler, Conference Pastor
301 10A Pakwa Place
Saskatoon, SK S7L 6A3
Phone: 306-249-4844
E-mail: mcsask@mcsask.ca
Fax: 306-349-4441



Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) invites nominations and/or applications for the position of **PRESIDENT**, expected to assume office sometime between Jan. 1, 2010, and July 1, 2010.

AMBS is a fully accredited post-graduate seminary located in Elkhart, Ind., affiliated with Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. Additional information about the seminary and a complete description of this position can be located at amb.edu.

Qualifications: The ideal candidate for president will

- Be an active follower of Jesus, a convinced Anabaptist, and an advocate for the missional church in a diverse theological, denominational and faith context
- Have ability and passion for theological education and pastoral formation that includes new models of church, ministry and pedagogy
- Be a creative, entrepreneurial, visionary leader
- Demonstrate theological depth and have earned an advanced degree (Ph.D. or D.Min. strongly preferred)
- Understand and be committed to the missions of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA

Search process: Nominations and/or letters of application with CV or résumé may be submitted to Randall Jacobs, Chair of the Search Committee, c/o AMBSsearch@mennoniteeducation.org or through postal mail to AMBS Presidential Search Committee, c/o Mennonite Education Agency, 63846 County Road 35, Suite 1, Goshen, IN 46528-9621.

The search committee will begin reviewing applications in Spring 2009 and continue until the position is filled.

Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. AMBS, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
May 11	April 28 <i>Focus on Fair Trade</i>
May 25	May 12 <i>Focus on Seniors</i>
June 8	May 26

The most fun for 10 bucks

Fashion show raises funds for MCC aid programs

Mennonite Central Committee Thrift Centre Release
NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

MCC THRIFT CENTRE PHOTOS



Traci Jutzi and daughter Sidney—the daughter and granddaughter of Karen Jutzi, one of the volunteers that came up with the fashion show idea—model clothing for the Gala for Gaza fundraiser in New Hamburg, Ont., last month.

“That’s the most fun I have ever had for 10 bucks!” enthused one Gala for Gaza supporter after enjoying the fashion show fundraiser put on by the New Hamburg Thrift Centre on March 24.

Volunteers and staff sported thrift store fashions and took to the catwalk with more than 200 spectators in attendance.

The evening, which included decadent desserts and tea served on donated china, was a great success, with \$2,352 generated for humanitarian aid in Gaza provided by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Ticket-holders were encouraged to bring MCC relief kit supplies to the gala, and more than 600 items were collected.

Audrey Wilson, president and CEO of Gemini Models in Kitchener, Ont., provided the commentary and Mark Harrison of New Dundee Emporium spiffed up outfits with unique jewelry and accessories he carries in his store. At the completion of the show, all fashions were immediately for sale, as were the jewelry and accessories. Most were snatched up instantly.

“Clothes show much better this way than on a hanger!” said an enthusiastic shopper. ☺



Alyssa and Katie Ramseyer of New Hamburg, Ont., were the youngest models to walk the catwalk to raise money for MCC’s work in Gaza.