

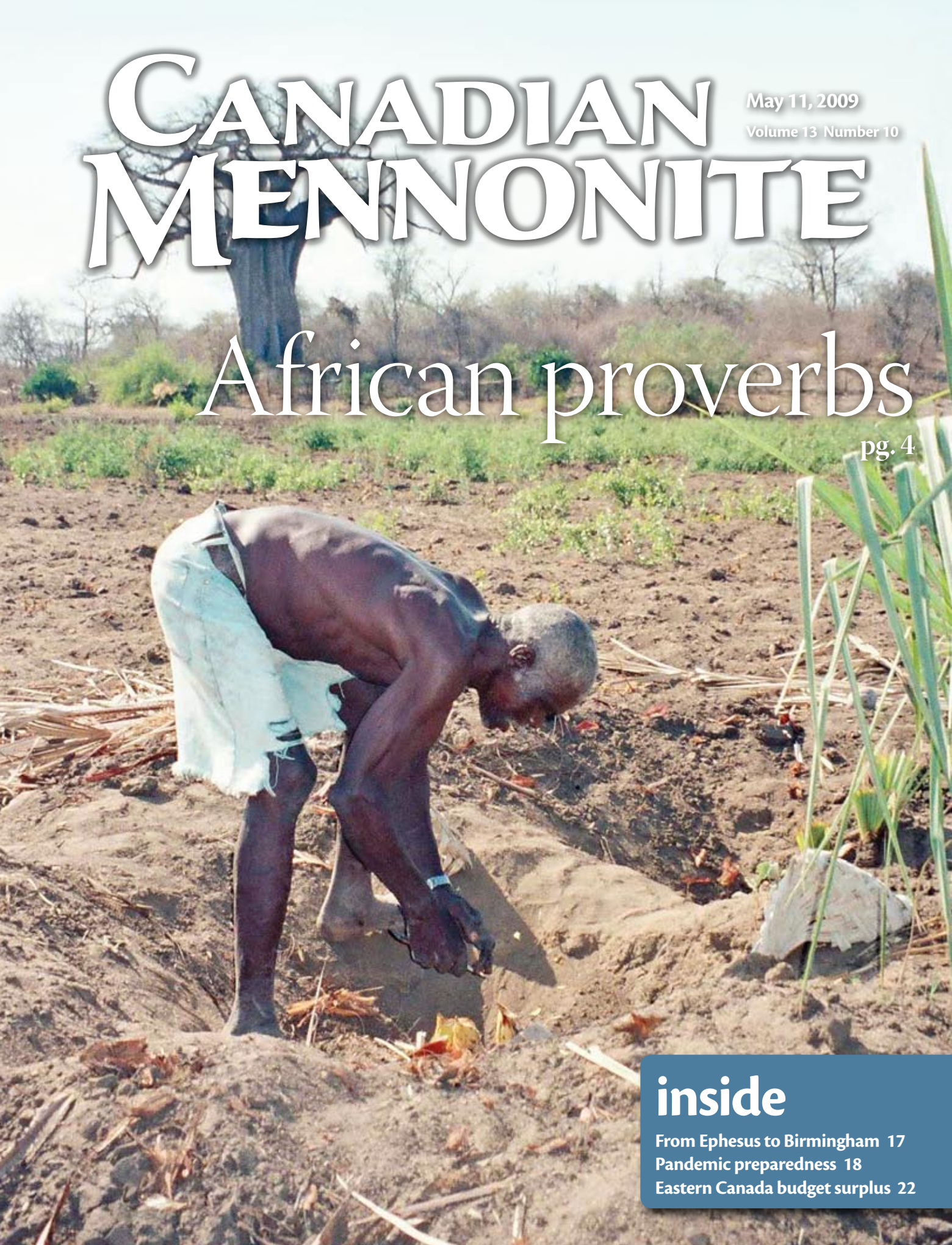
CANADIAN MENNONITE

May 11, 2009

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EDITORIAL

Emerging, ethnic churches

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Derek Suderman, a member of the listening committee for the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada delegate sessions, said he was being “playful” in noting the irony of the word “ethnic” when joyfully welcoming four new emerging congregations whose national identities stem from African and Asian roots.

“Sometimes when we say ‘ethnic,’ we mean Russian or Swiss Mennonites. But when we say ‘ethnic churches,’ we mean not Russian or Swiss Mennonite,” the professor of Old Testament at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., said with a muffled chuckle. In the original Greek, he further explained, “ethnic” comes from the root word *ethnos*, meaning nation or nations. “In that sense, we are all ethnic because of our national origins.”

Suderman’s observation so intrigued me that I pressed him further after the sessions. While he said he was being “playful,” doesn’t this highlight the age-old issue of surfacing our “nationality” biases when attempting to build the community of faith, I asked him. His words took me back to Peter’s vision as recorded in Acts 10, I told him, to the passage where the apostle, seeing that sheet filled with all kinds of strange animals, birds and reptiles, recoiled at God’s command to “Rise, slay and eat.” In a fit of piety,

Peter said he had never eaten anything “unclean.”

“Do not call impure anything that God has made clean,” came the sharp reply, in a wake-up call for Peter to drop his national biases against the Gentiles and to welcome them into the fold, along with the converted Jews.

“Oh yes,” Suderman responded, moving from the playful to the serious as a good scholar is prone to do. “The subtext of the New Testament is full of these references to the issue of the Jews accepting the Gentiles. The Apostle Paul referred to it in his letter to the Ephesians as the ‘mystery made known to me by revelation.’” This zealot, who had been turned around on the Damascus road, caught the vision of not only preaching Christ to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles, Suderman said.

In the small world of first-century Christians, Paul had become keenly aware that the gospel was now “globally ethnic,” that his first mission was to welcome the Gentiles, creating a new universal church that was to emerge from the Jewish sensibility of their centuries-long experience of being God’s chosen people.

Fast forward to our New World experience of *ethnos*. In our zeal to evangelize aboriginal Americans, Suderman noted that we built residential mission schools and attempted to strip the children of

their culture by bringing them from their homes and educating them in a “Christian environment.”

In hindsight, this was a grave mistake, we both agreed. But do we even now, at some subconscious level, reinforce the same kind of God’s “chosen” Russian or Swiss Mennonite peoplehood by welcoming these new congregations as “ethnic congregations”? Could we be adding insult to injury by referring to them as “emerging” congregations? How long is a congregation in an “emerging” state? Until it has qualified, trained leaders? A self-sustaining ministry? A minimum number of members? A church building of its own in which to worship?

It is a conundrum, Suderman says. Yes, we want to respect and honour the “ethnicity” of these new congregations. But in so doing, we might also be keeping them at arm’s length by defining their “otherness,” rather than seeing them as adding a new piece of fabric to the rich tapestry we call God’s universal church.

“In avoiding one ditch, we find ourselves driving into another,” is the way the professor playfully put it. And then getting serious again, he asked rhetorically, “What do we really mean by ‘culture’ anyway?”

“The real meaning of Paul’s call for a universal church is that it cuts across the grain of all *ethnos* [nations] to form a new body,” is the way our conversation ended. Amen and amen. So does it really matter whether we are Swiss, Russian, Ethiopian, Eritrean or Tamil?

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, says it best: “You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple.”



ABOUT THE COVER:

A farmer in southwestern Mozambique digs roots out of his field during a time of drought. Turn to page 4 for MC Canada Witness worker Hinke Loewen-Rudgers’ African proverbs gleaned from her time as a child growing up in Africa and a service trip there in 2006.

PHOTO: HINKE LOEWEN-RUDGERS

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

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

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JOHN PETERS of Waterloo North Mennonite Church has been a proponent of fair trade products for nearly 30 years. Read about his efforts in our Focus on Fair Trade section.

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Writing and Writing II: **REBECCA JANZEN**

A Korean Bible study in Harrisonburg: **CHERYL WOELK**

Called and and other stories

BY HINKE LOEWEN-RUDGERS

Adapted from a sermon preached at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., in 2006. She is currently on assignment with Mennonite Church Canada Witness in Israel/Palestine and is one of Canadian Mennonite's five bloggers.

The goal is to think of something higher—to think of our common faith in God and in Jesus Christ.

My stories mainly come from Africa, as I spent 13 years of my childhood in Kenya and Tanzania, and then worked in relief and development in Mozambique for six months before coming to work for Mennonite Church Canada.

In southwestern Mozambique, visitors to a congregation will open by introducing themselves with a hymn or other Christian song. Such a practice has an interesting effect. It places the focus of the introduction on what is held in common: the glory of God.

Instead of starting with an individual statement of “My name is . . . and I come from . . .,” the visitor says through song, “I am here to be part of your community and this is what I believe together with you.”

To a great extent in African culture, it is assumed that everyone believes in community first and the individual second. Paul says in Romans 15:5-6: “*May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HINKE LOEWEN-RUDGERS

sent . . .



After getting a short lesson in maize-pounding, Hinke Loewen-Rudgers tries out her newfound skills in southwestern Mozambique. The process is usually a group activity for women.

Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The purpose of life is quickly apparent: the glorification of God. And this is done in community and unity.

The idea here is not that everyone is to think exactly alike in order that there can be harmony. Everyone is not expected to have the same thoughts, the same tastes or the same clothing. The goal is to think of something higher—to think of our common faith in God and in Jesus Christ.

The story of Matambo and Jishegena

The African story of “Fast Runner Matambo and the Cripple Jishegena” recorded by missionary priest Joseph Healey illustrates this well.

Once there was a warrior in the

chiefdom of Bulima Mwanza called Matambo, a name which means “one who is quick on his feet” or “a fast runner” in the Sukuma language. He was a favourite of the local chief, not only because he was fast but also due to his heroic feats as a warrior.

There was another person living at the chief’s compound named Jishegena, which means “a badly deformed person who can move only with great difficulty by dragging himself or herself along the ground.”

The chief was very fond of Jishegena because he was an expert at playing the game of *bao*. (*Bao* is played with a wooden board with holes; stones or seeds are strategically moved around these holes.) The chief and Jishegena used to

spend hours together playing this game.

Matambo looked down on Jishegena and used to taunt him, saying, “Jishegena, you are good for nothing. Why do you sit around here all day long just playing *bao*?”

One day after being told that he was a worthless creature, Jishegena became exasperated and challenged his tormentor, saying “Matambo, even though I am crippled and can barely move, I can beat you in a race.”

Matambo looked at Jishegena with contempt. “Okay, let’s have a race,” he said. “If you beat me, I will give you four cows.”

“On your mark, get set, go!”

In the blink of an eye, Matambo was away and gone. With great difficulty, Jishegena dragged himself along the

ground and lay prostrate at the feet of Chief Lunyalula. Then he turned his head to Matambo running in the distance and yelled at the top of his lungs, "Matambo! Matambo! Where are you going? Why are you running away from our chief? If all of us run away from him, who will be his subjects? His chiefdom will come to an end."

Marvelling at the wisdom of Jishegena, the people began to clap their hands enthusiastically and praise him for throwing himself at the feet of the chief. The chief himself was delighted at the cleverness of Jishegena and gave him a gift of cows and an important post in his chiefdom.

Upon first hearing this story, some might think that Jishegena merely renegeed on his promise to run the race and wonder how it could be deemed wise for him to fall at the feet of the chief.

But from an African perspective, the chief represents community leadership and therefore represents the community itself. Jishegena knows that without the people's support, there is no chief and so no community. Without that central common support and focus, there is only the individual running into the distance pursuing an individual goal.

Many African proverbs bear this out:

- "Together in unity, there is strength; in

division is weakness."

- "You cannot break a bundle of sticks, but you can break one stick."

As in the story of Jishegena, the passage in Romans reminds us that we must return to our common centre in Jesus Christ in whom we are a believing community. Later in the same passage, Paul tells the Roman church, "*Welcome one another; therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the [Jews] on behalf of the truth of God, in order that he might confirm the promise given to the patriarchs, and in order that the [nations] might glorify God for his mercy.*" Then quoting from the Old Testament, Paul shows the faithfulness of God to the Israelites and encourages the nations to praise God along with them.

Once called, then sent

God was the "missionary in community" since the beginning of time. The Bible is one long record of God's missionary work forming a people in community. In the same way that the people of Israel were called, they were also sent, in the sense that they became an example

through their unity and community. Then later, through Jesus, the rest of the nations shared in the blessing and they were called and sent.

An African proverb says, "To be called is to be sent. We are called. We are sent."

We return to our centre in Jesus as we are called. At the same time, we are sent to glorify God in witness to the truth. It's

*'You cannot break a bundle of sticks,
but you can break one stick.'
(African proverb)*

a cyclical process, this being called and being sent. It's like a farmer who prepares the soil, plants the seeds, weeds the garden, collects the harvest, and then starts again. It's a cycle accomplished in community as we return to our centre, grow in faith and then deepen in discipleship.

A symbol of community

If there is a funeral, a wedding or any other type of large gathering in an African village, the whole village assumes it is invited. Everyone is extended family. If the food runs out, so be it. It is the togetherness that matters.

The global church is like this extended family. We learn from our sisters and brothers who live across the ocean or across the tracks, and they learn from us. This works only when there is this idea of unity and community, so that relationships are mutual. To give is to receive and vice versa.

We have different gifts to bring to these relationships. They may be gifts of time, biblical understanding, stories where God is active in our lives, resources, experience that can be passed on to others, various talents . . . and on . . . and on. In this way, the global family of a church strengthens in community like an extended family.

It becomes like the three stones that support a traditional African cooking pot. The three stones are of similar size so that the pot can be supported evenly. The stones need each other; they work together. Take one stone away and the carefully gathered vegetables and broth spill into the ashes. The stones are



Hinke Loewen Rudgers gets to know some neighbourhood children in Guiga, Mozambique, during her service trip there in 2006.

The global church has Christ in common

BY HINKE LOEWEN-RUDGERS

I have often been assaulted with the exuberance of questions about North American life by my African friends:

- What do you eat there?
- Do you enjoy dried caterpillars the same way we do?
- Does your house have more than one room? Is your floor dirt or cement? Is your roof made of grass or tin or something else?
- Do the wealthy have many cows?
- Is your church like ours, with wooden planks, dirt floor and a tin roof? Does the sun shine in the same way?
- What is snow? (*Try answering that one creatively to someone who lives in 45-degree Celsius heat in a vast sea of sand.*)

If those asking the questions have never been very far from home, it is often difficult for them to imagine a place where technology is as advanced as it is in North America. It is harder still for them to imagine the busyness of North American life, the amount of money that passes through the hands of the average Canadian every day, or the great abundance of food and gadgets available for purchase.

When I try to describe these parts of life, people often get the impression that Canada is a place where milk and honey flow down streets and money grows on trees.

therefore positioned carefully. They must stand close together and yet apart. This is a symbol of community.

Romans 15 teaches us to practise mutual acceptance, to broaden the welcome as we are grounded in the model of Jesus and in the teachings of the Bible. The teachings encourage believers to be a unified people who together honour God.

We may be weak or strong in social status, power, property, influence or material wealth, but when it comes right down to it, we are equal in the community before God. Our centre in Christ gives us hope as we are called to him and sent together.

To be sent sounds like we need to physically go somewhere. But we are sent right here, right now. To be called as the church is to be in mission at all times in some way. Whether it is in the congregation, in the community or workplace, or across an ocean, all believers are sent as we are called. ❧

I think this may often be an idea that people already have in their heads about Canada, before I even begin to describe life. So the differences in context become abundantly clear.

If we think about life in places we have never been, we may have just as many questions about the differences. But what are the commonalities that also become clear as we form valuable relationships across cultures or across some other social divide?

There is the basic commonality of being human and experiencing those things that all humans experience: births, deaths, rites of passage, and meals, for example.

In the Christian family, there is the commonality of faith in Jesus. Just to bring greetings in the name of Jesus from a Canadian church to a church that is in an entirely different context, that greeting is a bridge in itself. It is an acknowledgment of the value of community and the response is often appreciation for the broader Christian family that shares their sorrows and joy.

This is the essence of true Christian partnership. The beautiful results of this partnership in community—the moments of grace and joy—lead us to hope in the future of our global church family. We truly are called and sent to each other and the world by a loving God.

/// For discussion

1. What greetings has your church received from other churches? How important are these greetings? Have visitors to your congregation ever introduced themselves with a song?
2. What was your first response to the story of Matambo and Jishegena? What was the wisdom of Jishegena that the people in the story applauded? Although we like to be independent, in what ways are we dependent on each other? Why is this dependence so difficult?
3. In Romans 15, Paul encourages the Christians to have a spirit of unity and to accept each other. What happens to churches that lose a spirit of unity and acceptance? What aspects of your congregational life promote unity and acceptance?
4. Hinke Loewen-Rudgers says that the global church is “like an extended family.” What relationships does your church have with other Christian or Mennonite churches around the world? How important are these relationships between churches? How could we work at strengthening and increasing these relationships?

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.

✉ **Millennial pastor appreciates column on millennial pastors**

RE: "THE MILLENNIAL pastors are coming!" March 30, page 13.

This article is worth clipping and saving. As a member of the millennial generation and a young pastor, I was astonished by how well the authors described my attitudes toward ministry and the church. The suggested responses for churches are challenging, but, I believe, important for members of all generations. Thank you for printing such a helpful article!

MICHAEL TURMAN, WATERLOO, ONT.

Michael Turman is youth pastor at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.

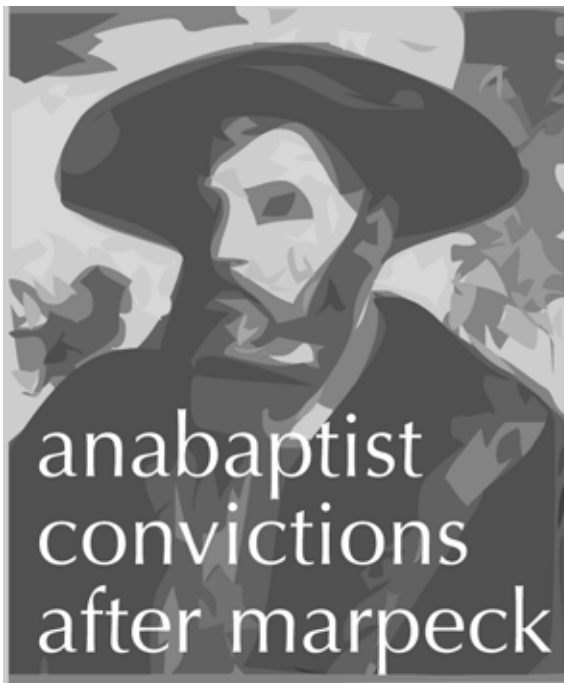
✉ **Church leaders urge NATO to proceed with nuclear disarmament**

Excerpted from a letter addressed to Prime Minister Stephen Harper on March 30 by the general secretaries of the Canadian Council of Churches (of which Mennonite Church Canada is a member), the World Council of Churches, the Conference of European Churches, and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Copies were sent to the leaders of other North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members and the NATO secretary general.

OUR LETTER IS a joint initiative to encourage joint action. We ask your government to ensure that the forthcoming NATO summit commits the Alliance to a thorough reform of NATO's Strategic Concept. The 60th anniversary meeting is a welcome opportunity to begin the process of updating the Alliance's security doctrine. In particular, we encourage new initiatives that will end NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons and will engage with nuclear weapon states and other states outside of NATO in the serious pursuit of reciprocal disarmament.

Such collective action by NATO can be a major factor in revitalizing the nuclear non-proliferation regime at this critical time. It is also an important opportunity for the Alliance to reinforce the vision of a world without nuclear weapons so compellingly put forward in recent months by eminent figures on the global security stage.

NATO has the opportunity to fashion a new strategic doctrine that, on the one hand, takes full account of the threats posed by nuclear weapons, and, on the other hand, takes full advantage of the political momentum that is now finally available to support decisive inter-governmental action against



a conference in bluffton, ohio focused on the life and thought of pilgram marpeck, 16th century theologian and engineer.

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the nuclear threat.

We encourage NATO to consign to history the notion that nuclear weapons “preserve peace” (as claimed in paragraph 46 of the current Strategic Concept), and, instead, to recognize the reality that “with every passing year [nuclear weapons] make our security more precarious” (former Russian president Mikhail Gorbachev’s assessment; echoed by other leaders).

We are convinced that NATO security in the years ahead will require not only long-delayed action on reciprocal disarmament, but also concerted new

action to resolve injustices, divisions and conflicts that affect both the Alliance and its neighbours. We believe security must be sought through constructive engagement with neighbours and that authentic security is found in affirming and enhancing human interdependence within God’s one creation.

Inasmuch as all NATO members are signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), we urge the Alliance to promote the actual implementation of the backlog of disarmament and non-proliferation measures already elaborated through the NPT review process or awaiting negotiation as the current cycle

OUTSIDE THE BOX

What’s right for me?

PHIL WAGLER

Recently, the world was introduced to a woman so smitten by the Eiffel Tower that she changed her last name to Eiffel. This is not her first fling of monumental proportions either, nor is she alone. A new sexual orientation is now being studied called “objectum sexuality.” Its website claims, “We love objects . . . in an intimate way and this feeling is innate.” The rightness of this architectural affection is justified upon the authority of one’s own experience. If you feel it, it can’t be wrong, so long as you’re not hurting any, uh, building. What a perfect project for postmodern media and psychiatry to drool over.



I have decided that relativism is wrong! I hope you notice the irony in that statement. The chief belief of our postmodern age is that truth and morality are decided at least by personal preference and at most by popular opinion. Yet the populace is not truly free, but is bound to cheer and legitimize what any individual finds fulfilling—no matter how absurd after the absolute voices of science and celebrity reach their definitive decisions.

Can we reason together? If morality and truth are determined by personal

preference, why can’t I decide that it’s wrong? Oh, argues the moral relativist, such mean-spiritedness flies in the face of relativism’s cheery companion: tolerance. There are, however, two problems with tolerance when it is based on relativism.

First, and most shockingly, tolerance actually requires absolutes to exist. As Francis Beckwith points out, “I can only be tolerant of that which I believe is wrong or mistaken.” If I claim to value tolerance, but hold that morality is relative, then I am not really tolerant; I’m either in agreement with the moral

[W]e must abandon the foolish idea that relative truth and morality make sense and can be merged with the gospel.

choice in question (at which point I have ceased tolerating and begun approving), or I’m indifferent about the moral choice (which is not a truly moral position at all).

This leads to the second problem with relativistic tolerance: it is indifferent. It doesn’t care. It can’t care. It turns away. It leaves us too alone, determined to hear only people who affirm us, and perhaps only with inanimate buildings to cling to. A society built on this foundation may well become the most intolerant and disastrously indifferent of all.

So how do those who believe God has spoken absolutely respond? Well, we must abandon the foolish idea that relative truth and morality make sense and can be merged with the gospel. Relativism may produce “warm fuzzies” and cool movie endings, but it is not logical or practical. To say truth is relative, is an absolute statement imposed on others. To say morality is relative, defies how we know how to function. (Try telling a jilted woman that her husband’s adultery was “right” for him.)

Biblically, relativism is nothing new; it is the default of sinners seeking to justify life without God. We’ve all tried it. But there is a firm foundation offered to a confused and increasingly selfishly indifferent culture: Jesus—the way, the truth and the life. God the Son is the fulfillment of the law none of us can keep and gives us power to break free of random

natural forces. And there is the far-from-perfect church that is not free to be indifferent, but is given an even higher call than tolerance: to love as God loves so absolutely (including Mrs. Eiffel), and love what he has spoken just as absolutely. That, after all, is something he has decided.

Phil Wagler lives in Zurich, Ont., and serves as lead pastor of the Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite and Kingsfield-Clinton churches (phil@kingsfieldcommon.ca).

culminates.

One very important measure of NATO's good faith in terms of NPT and the pursuit of nuclear disarmament will be its willingness to remove the 150 to 250 U.S. tactical nuclear weapons still based in five member countries—Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy and Turkey. In so doing, NATO would boost international confidence in an NPT regime that has been seriously eroded since 2000. NATO would also honour

the longstanding international call that all nuclear weapons be returned to the territories of the states that own them. Removal of these weapons would be a timely signal that NATO's old nuclear umbrella will not be extended and that there are real prospects for progress on collective security agreements in greater Europe.

The emerging vision of a world without nuclear weapons is giving citizens and churches in every

NEW ORDER VOICE

Jesus' face on my wanted poster

WILL BRAUN

I live in the territory of the “B-Side” gang. Their graffiti is everywhere, including on our apartment building. And while graffiti generally doesn't bother me, it's not exactly reassuring to see “B-Side Crime Family” scrawled proudly on a building I often pass when walking with my toddler.

It's not just idle aerosol can bravado either. Earlier this year, from our window we could see a man lying motionless in the snow, surrounded by paramedics, after being severely beaten by two gang members who mistook him for a rival gangster. Now a “wanted” poster of the two suspects hangs in the entrance of our building.

Although the building we live in is a “granola-ish oasis” in our crime-riddled Winnipeg neighbourhood, we regularly see drug activity, public drunkenness and cops on the prowl. I don't mean to over-sensationalize it, as it doesn't interfere that much with our relatively safe and comfortable lives, but the constant reminders and occasional dramatic incidents do get to me, forcing me to consider how I view people who commit crimes.

Sometimes I feel mad and violated, like I have the inalienable right to a calm life. Other times I feel sad and perturbed, like

I wish I knew what to do to bring healing. Sometimes I want to separate myself from offenders and other times I feel drawn to them.

Many voices in society and the current government desire to create distance between those who commit crimes and the rest of us. They want to “get tough on crime,” that is, punish the bad guys and protect the rest of us. They use language that plays on people's fears and thirst for



Sometimes I feel mad and violated, like I have the inalienable right to a calm life.

retribution.

That mentality contradicts Jesus' words: “*Forgive them for they know not what they do.*” It contradicts Jesus' interaction with the criminals who accompanied him to his death, one of whom got whisked into heaven. It contradicts Jesus' identification with criminals: “*I was in prison and...*” It contradicts the fine work done by Mennonite Central Committee and other church organizations that move towards offenders to bring healing. And it stands in contrast to Nehemiah, who took the sins of society as his own, confessing the collective sin of the people.

In some sense, the sins of those in my neighbourhood are my sins; they're collective sins. They are the fallout of an unjust society in which some are born into stability and opportunity, while others are born with many strikes against them. And so why should my family and I have the right to separate ourselves from the hurting elements of society, especially when countless people don't have the means to do so?

I do believe that people should be held responsible for their actions and that confinement is sometimes necessary. But I also believe in grace and collective healing.

And so I invite us as Mennonite people—including Vic Toews, a cabinet minister and former justice minister—to move towards people who commit crimes, because it is in their company

that we discover something of Jesus' love.

I was going to remove the “wanted” poster in our building, since I don't like the notion that one should walk around the neighbourhood fearfully wondering who might be a thug. Instead, I taped a little picture of Jesus between the police sketches of Suspects No. 1 and No. 2, to remind me that Jesus identifies with these men, and that at least one of them might just be closer to the kingdom of God than I am.

Will Braun attends Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg's West Broadway neighbourhood.

NATO country cause for hope. We are requesting that NATO's security doctrine be realigned in a direction which establishes such hopes.

REV. DR. SAMUEL KOBIA

World Council of Churches

THE VENERABLE COLIN WILLIAMS

Conference of European Churches

REV. MICHAEL KINNAMON, PH.D.

National Council of the Churches
of Christ in the USA

THE REV. DR. KAREN HAMILTON

The Canadian Council of Churches

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Bender—Blythe Nadia (b. March 6, 2009), to Nathan and Krista Bender, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Bollman—Sophie Claire (b. Jan. 3, 2009), to Scott and Marnie Bollman, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Cressman—Sophia Ryanovia (b. March 1, 2009), to Ryan and Diana Cressman, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Colosimo—Matteo (b. April 2, 2009), to Chico and Shauna Colosimo, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

FROM OUR LEADERS

A rose by any other name

JANETTE THIESSEN

Administrative Professionals Day is celebrated annually in April. Unless you're a secretary or administrative professional—to be politically correct—or a boss, you probably didn't pay much attention to the day or didn't even know it existed.

It's a day set aside to honour our office personnel, either paid or volunteer. A lot of work is done in the church that most people don't see or even realize. It's been said that behind every successful man is a good woman, and likewise it could be said that when you find a church running like a well-oiled machine, you'll most likely find a very capable secretary/administrative professional doing her job well.

Have you considered thanking your church secretary/administrative professional lately?

Being a church secretary is to be in a position unlike any other, with its own particular blessings and challenges. The blessings first:

- You can be a Christian, pray and read the Bible at work.

- You get to be in the house of the Lord all week.
- You get to work with and help so many people within the church community.
- You can enjoy going to work each day and love your time there.
- You get to see how God is working in the lives of those in your church community.

Now for the challenges:

- You get asked to do something for someone on Sunday morning even though it's not a work day. (One church in B.C. solved



You need to know everything about everything, so you're equipped with the answers

this by making Sunday morning part of the secretary's work week.)

- You have to manage the demanding role of helping the pastoral staff, leadership, congregation and everyone else who contacts the church with a need that often takes precedence over the regular duties that still need to be done.
- You need to know everything about

everything, so you're equipped with the answers, which can be physically and emotionally draining at times.

- You must learn to be a jill-of-all-trades—from shovelling snow to crawling under your desk to work on the computer, and everything in between.

Here are some helpful hints to make a secretary's day brighter:

- We enjoy people stopping by; however, please respect how valuable our time is and limit the length of your stay.
- Please don't send chain e-mails. We don't have time for them.
- Remember to pray for your church secretary and send encouraging notes.

In British Columbia, church secretaries/administrative professionals get together bi-monthly for prayer support, education and camaraderie. We have an annual overnight retreat, usually held in May, at Camp Squeah, to which the former church secretaries—alumni, as we call them—are invited. We feel blessed

to serve our Lord and Saviour, and our church community as secretaries, administrative assistants, office administrators, administrative professionals, or whatever you want to call us.

Janette Thiessen is the MC B.C. office administrator. She was assisted by other MC B.C. office personnel.

Erb—Josh Michael (b. Feb. 26, 2009), to Jason and Buffy (Baechler) Erb, Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Goertzen—Emma Elizabeth (b. April 7, 2009), to Robert and Claire Goertzen, Morden Mennonite, Man.

Hamm—Ty Christopher (b. March 14, 2009), to Chris and Ketreana Hamm, First Mennonite, Edmonton.

Kroetch—Lily Anne (b. Feb. 18, 2009), to Ryan and Amber Kroetch, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Lichti—Nova Emanuelle (b. April 17, 2009), to Todd and Melanie (Taylor) Lichti, Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Lizotte—Blayke Maddison (b. March 18, 2009), to Gabrielle and Rob Lizotte, First Mennonite, Edmonton.

Nicolson—Nadine Ruth (b. April 2, 2009), to Lillian (Haas) and Norman Nicolson, Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers, in Orodara, Burkina Faso.

Sawatzky—Jeremy (b. March 31, 2009), to Eliot and Melanie Sawatzky, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Wedler—Elias Nathaniel (b. April 20, 2009), to Tim and Karlyn Wedler, First Mennonite, Edmonton, in Abbotsford, B.C.

Wiebe—Samuel Joshua (b. Feb. 8, 2009), to Sigmar and Karin Wiebe, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Baptisms

Kim Peters—Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., April 12, 2009.

Jesse Doell—Hague Mennonite, Sask., Nov. 9, 2008.

Danika Epp, Erik Epp, Hannah Jones, Scott Neufeld—Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., April 19, 2009.

Marriages

Friesen/Hildebrand—Ryan Friesen and Jodi Hildebrandt, Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man., at Emmanuel Mennonite, Winkler, Man., April 4, 2009.

Houle/Penner—Felix Houle and Heidi Penner, Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man., at the Heartland Inn, Winkler, Man., March 28, 2009.

Lamure/Wilker—Greg Lamure and Karla Wilker, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont. April 24, 2009.

Deaths

Bechtel—Leonard, 92 (b. Aug. 19, 1916; d. March 19, 2009), Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Bender—Mabel, 95 (b. Nov. 15, 1913; d. March 11, 2009), Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Dueck—Mary, 98 (b. Nov. 24, 1910; d. April 19, 2009), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Froese—Helen, 87 (d. March 30, 2009), Hague Mennonite, Sask.

Guenther—Henry, 78 (d. Dec. 16, 2008), Hague Mennonite, Sask.

Hackman—Ada (nee Clemens), 101 (b. Jan. 6, 1908; d. March 24, 2009), Holyrood Mennonite, Edmonton.

Hildebrandt—Hermann, 75 (b. Sept. 20, 1933; d. March 21, 2009), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, in Dartmouth, N.S.

Kehler—Ben, 84 (b. Sept. 2, 1924; d. April 18, 2009), Carman Mennonite, Man.

Kuepfer—Ivan, 87 (b. Feb. 15, 1922; d. April 26, 2009), Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

Lichti—Eva (nee Brenneman), 77 (b. July 15, 1931; d. April 3, 2009), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Rempel—Maria (nee Braun), 84 (b. March 20, 1925; d. April 10, 2009), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Snider—Lloyd, 103 (b. April 27, 1905; d. April 3, 2009), Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

Wagler—Leola, 85 (b. May 23, 1923; d. Feb. 3, 2009), Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Wagler—Stan, 88 (b. Dec. 9, 1920; d. Feb. 2, 2009), Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

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

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

Pontius' Puddle



WORSHIP WISDOM: PART V OF VI

Navigating the copyright maze

BY CHRISTINE LONGHURST

“There’s so much new worship music available today. How can we be sure we’re using it legally?” “We’re not able to purchase multiple copies of *Sing the Journey* and *Sing the Story* right now. Does our CCLI licence cover all the new songs in these books?”

Questions like these come up at almost every workshop I lead on worship and music. Many people aren’t sure about the rules that govern copyright on the songs they use in worship.

‘There’s so much new worship music available today. How can we be sure we’re using it legally?’

Twenty years ago, when I started leading music in worship, getting copyright clearance for new songs was often a time-consuming process. Most of the time it involved long-distance phone calls or an exchange of letters and payment well in advance of the service in question.

We’ve come a long way from those days. Today, blanket copyright licences from Christian Copyright Licensing, Inc. (CCLI), LicenSing or OneLicense have greatly simplified the process of using new music legally.

The goal of these blanket licences is to make it less complicated for churches to receive permission to use copyrighted songs. Churches pay an annual fee—based on congregational size—and then have legal access to the songs of publishing companies and individuals represented by each licensing agency. Churches report their song usage to the licensing company, and royalties are paid to songwriters and publishing companies based on that usage.

CCLI (cli.com), the first and still the

largest of the major licensing companies, was established in 1988. According to its website, upwards of 200,000 songs from over 2,000 publishing companies and copyright holders are represented. At present, it serves approximately 150,000 churches around the world.

LicenSing (licensingonline.org) began as a partnership between four independent organizations: Logos Productions and OCP Publications in the United States, Wood Lake Books in Canada, and MediaCom Education Inc. in Australia.

According to its website, it licenses approximately 100,000 songs from 345 different publishing companies and copyright holders.

The newest licence on the block is OneLicense (onelicense.net). Although it’s relatively new to the scene, it is gradually amassing an impressive list of publishing companies and individual copyright holders, including publishers like GIA Publications and composers such as David Haas and Marty Haughen.

Which licence is best for your church? Is one licence enough? The answers to these questions will vary from congregation to congregation, depending on the music you generally sing. A CCLI licence is essential if your congregation is interested in singing any songs from the “praise and worship” tradition. LicenSing is the only copyright licence to cover songs from OCP Publications, New Dawn Music and North American Liturgy Resources, among others. Only OneLicense gives copyright clearance for songs from the Iona community and Taize.

And what if your congregation is interested in using songs from *Sing the Journey* or *Sing the Story*, but, for financial or logistical reasons, isn’t in a position to purchase multiple copies? Which licence would be best?

According to my calculations, a CCLI licence would allow you to legally use approximately 14 percent of the songs in *Sing the Journey* and 12 percent of the songs in *Sing the Story*. A licence from LicenSing would give you legal access to about 13 percent of the songs in *Sing the Journey* and 11 percent of the songs in *Sing the Story*. A licence from OneLicense would allow you to access around 47 percent of the songs in *Sing the Journey* and 40 percent of the songs in *Sing the Story*.

Approximately a quarter of the songs in *Sing the Journey* and *Sing the Story* are not covered by any of the three major licences. Churches would need to negotiate the use of these songs directly with the songwriter or publisher.

In my ministry experience—working in a congregation that enjoyed a broad diversity of music style in worship—purchasing two separate copyright licences was very helpful, and saved us significant time and energy in securing copyright permission.

If your worship or music committee has other questions about copyright law, check out “Thou shalt not steal: A primer for music copyright” by Emily Cooper, available online at reformedworship.org (search for “music copyright”). Another good online source for information is “A Copyright Guide for Congregations,” published by the United Church of Canada, that is available at united-church.ca (search for “copyright guide”). ☞



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 THE WORLD

In defence of dialogue

MC Canada supports Muslim call to discuss peace

Mennonite Church Canada leaders have sent a letter to Muslim leaders of the website at acommonword.com (see opposite page). The website is self-described as “an initiative by Muslim scholars, clerics and intellectuals from many different countries, denominations and schools of thought” advocating for dialogue and understanding between Muslims and Christians.

Canadian Mennonite managing editor Ross W. Muir conducted an e-mail inter-

MENNONITE/MUSLIM ISSUES

as a good initiative. We did not feel urgency to call a special meeting. We worked on the document and it was approved by the General Board in March.

CM: The letter states, “As Mennonite Christians we confess that Jesus is the one who most fully reveals God to us” (emphasis added). With the phrase “to us,” is there the possibility of some readers misunderstanding Jesus as being our own “local” God? If Jesus is only “our” God, doesn’t that seem diametrically opposed to our *Confession of Faith*, which declares Jesus to be “the Saviour of the world” and “the not-yet-realized Lord of the world”?

MC Canada: We would not read the “to us” in the way that you are suggesting. It can have two meanings: a) “to us” in the sense of “to humanity”; and b) “to us” in the sense of “this is how the people we speak for understand Jesus.”



Suderman

of Christian mission. We believe that the document is a good example of “evangelical” dialogue.

We believe that all people deserve the opportunity to engage—understand and respond positively to—the “good news of God,” as understood by Christians and Mennonites. We initiate opportunities for that to happen and we respond to the initiatives of others that allow it to happen.

In both cases we are clear about what we bring, and we assume that others also bring things that we can and need to learn from, because God is not a “local” God,

and so we do assume that God has been—and is—active beyond the church. In such a process, evangelism takes place. The good news of God is discerned, proclaimed, and our understandings are deepened. In all of this, we trust that faithfulness is nourished.

Other responses

MC USA and the World Evangelical Alliance (whose position paper was endorsed by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, of which MC Canada is a member) have also responded to “A Common Word,” bringing their own unique perspectives.

“We . . . respect ‘A Common Word’ as a courageous expression of goodwill in the midst of less charitable Muslim voices and in the face of recurrent Christian hostility towards Muslims and misunderstanding of Islam,” wrote MC USA executive director Jim Shrag in his November 2007 response.

Not surprisingly perhaps, the response by Geoff Tunnicliffe, international director of the WEA, was explicit in his call for Muslims to convert to Christianity, in the same way he felt “A Common Word” was inviting Christians to convert to Islam. “We do this not to stir up strife, but because we are convinced of the truth of our faith as you are [of yours],” he wrote.

Tunnicliffe then concluded with a challenge to Muslims to “help in establishing the same levels of peace and justice for Christians living in Muslim societies as Muslims, themselves, possess.”



Reesor-McDowell

Both of those meanings would accurately reflect the intention of the document. We could say, “The people that we speak on behalf of, i.e., Mennonite Christians, believe that Jesus is the one who most fully reveals God to the world (to humanity).”

CM: What is the relationship between dialogue and the church’s mission as stated in the *Confession of Faith*, which declares “the church is to seek the lost, call for repentance, announce salvation from sin . . . and without coercion urge all people to become part of the people of God”? Are Muslims among the “lost”?

MC Canada: Christian evangelism is not antithetical to theological dialogue. “Evangelism” (in the Greek New Testament language) refers to a good message (eu-angelion). Dialogue is an essential component

view with the signatories, MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman and moderator Andrew Reesor-McDowell, from April 21-27, about the process and some of the letter’s specifics.

CM: Since responses began as early as 2007, why is MC Canada only responding now?

MC Canada: We were aware of the initiative before. It was in winter-spring/2008, when our Faith and Life Committee (FLC) signalled that “Confessing Jesus Christ as Lord in a pluralistic society” was one of the high priority items for discernment, that we began to think more seriously about some practical ways of indicating our commitment to this priority.

At that point we wanted to wait till Assembly 2008, where the FLC would do some significant presentations on this. And then in November we addressed this possibility more seriously and it was approved

Dialogue is an essential component of Christian mission. We believe that the document is a good example of ‘evangelical’ dialogue. (Suderman/Reesor-McDowell)

—With files from Dan Dyck

MENNONITE/MUSLIM ISSUES



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March 10, 2009

A Common Word

To the Muslim authors of "A Common Word between Us and You" which was addressed to Christian Churches throughout the world:

The General Board of Mennonite Church Canada commends you for your thoughtful and respectful call for a conversation of peace between Muslims and Christians. This leadership body of Mennonite Church Canada herewith adds its voice of support and encouragement to your initiative.

At the annual Assembly of Mennonite Church Canada in July, 2008 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, delegates considered a call from its Faith and Life Committee, the body commissioned to give guidance in theological matters in our denomination, to respectfully engage people of other religious faiths.

We recognize that there are two important strands of wisdom found within Christian Scripture. One strand holds God to be present and at work in the whole world, not limited to any one story or one culture. Your exposition of the two commandments of love, love for God and love of neighbour found in all three Abrahamic faiths illustrates that conviction. Thus we affirm the importance of a respectful dialogue with those who profess a faith and spiritual way different from our Christian one. Like the Apostle Paul in his speech on the Acropolis as recorded in the Book of Acts, we should seek common understanding and be slow to condemn. As people of peace, Mennonite Christians are interested in promoting peace with people of different religious persuasions.

The other strand of wisdom found in our Christian Scripture invites us to claim and proclaim the particular truth given in Jesus Christ. As Mennonite Christians we confess that Jesus is the one who most fully reveals God to us. We confess that, as God's Son, Jesus speaks and acts on behalf of God. As such Jesus guides our view of life and our ethics.

Holding these two strands of wisdom together allows us as Mennonite Christians to appreciate the common ground within the different branches of the Abrahamic faith traditions. At the same time, we bring to this relationship our conviction, as one of the historic Peace Churches in the Christian tradition, that Jesus, through his teachings, life and death, clarifies what love for the neighbour entails. At the heart of Jesus' revelation is the call to love even the one whom our society wants us to name as our enemy (Matthew 5:43-45). God's love, as exemplified in Christ, overcomes human enmity and conflict by rejecting violence. God's love enables diverse communities to be reconciled and to seek the common good by working together for peace and justice. Thus we bring to the celebration of the common word between us the firm conviction that Jesus' command to love extends to all of humanity.

Frequently the religions of the world fix their attention on how they are different from one another. "A Common Word Between Us and You" highlights in a very helpful way the centrality of the conviction within the Abrahamic faiths that the God who calls us to love our neighbour is One. We owe a word of gratitude to you, for inviting us to affirm the common word between us for the betterment of humankind. To this end, we add our voice and signature to your initiative.

Robert J. Suderman
 General Secretary
 Mennonite Church Canada

Andrew Reesor-McDowell
 Moderator – General board
 Mennonite Church Canada

MENNONITE/MUSLIM ISSUES

On Ahmadinejad, Sharia law and 'A Common Word'

In light of recent widely reported events and issues involving Muslims around the world, Canadian Mennonite managing editor Ross W. Muir asked Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Binational executive director Arli Klassen for her comments. The interview was conducted by e-mail during the week of April 20-24.

CM: On April 21, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made headlines around the world for his speech at the UN racism meetings in Geneva, Switzerland, where he once again denounced Israel and called into question the Holocaust. Since MCC has been criticized by both those outside the organization and by some supporters within for meeting with the president in the past, will this increase pressure to forego any future meetings?

Klassen: *MCC has heard strong opinions, both affirmative and critical, about our meetings that included Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. We have sought, and continue to seek, guidance from church leaders and other constituents. We have not received feedback this week discouraging future meetings.*

No such meetings are planned at present. We would carefully consider under what circumstances we might agree to any future meetings.

In the September 2008 peacemaking dialogue and previous meetings with the Iranian president, MCC has raised concerns about topics including his statements on the Holocaust and Israel, Iran's nuclear program and religious freedom in Iran.

CM: What is your response to what the president said in this particular speech? (According to the *Globe and Mail*, Ahmadinejad "branded Israel a 'cruel and repressive racist regime,' and described the Holocaust as a 'pretext' for Jews to 'render an entire nation [Palestinians] homeless.'" Do you think the U.S. and Canada did the right thing by boycotting the UN event,

given that their reason for not going was the fear that it would become a platform for denouncing Israel? And what about the 30 or so other countries, whose representatives walked out of the Iranian president's speech?

Klassen: *MCC responds to world events out of our programmatic experience and where our partners throughout the world call on us to speak. At this time, we do not have responses to these questions.*



Klassen

CM: MCC is known for its goal of bringing justice issues to the forefront (the call for solidarity between Colombian and North American churches is a current example). However, I haven't seen any public statements on either the installation of Sharia law in the Swat Valley of Pakistan or the controversial law that was introduced by the Afghan government—and then reportedly amended—that included provisions that would prohibit a married Sunni Muslim woman in one area of the country

from refusing sex with her husband and that would require her to get permission from her husband or another male relative to leave the family home. Does MCC believe such laws are detrimental to the cause of women's rights in these countries,

and would MCC like to see them revoked or repealed? Also, does MCC stand in support of the women in both Pakistan and Afghanistan who have stood up to publicly denounce these laws?

Klassen: *MCC responds to world events out of our programmatic experience and where our partners throughout the world call on us to speak. At this time, we do not have responses to these questions.*

CM: Mennonite Church Canada has just released its formal response to the Muslim "A Common Word" declaration calling on Christians and Muslims to work together in an attempt to ensure world peace (see story, page 14). Has MCC issued a formal statement on this?

Klassen: *The "A Common Word Between Us and You" was a theological statement asking for response from churches. MCC is an arm of the church, but we do not offer theological statements on behalf of MC USA and MC Canada.*

There has been no formal MCC response to this statement, although it has been shared with the MCC Binational executive committee.

MCC is grateful to be part of churches that are building bridges between faiths. One of our own key initiatives in international programming has been inter-faith bridge-building on a programmatic level.

Canadian Mennonite has since learned that MCC Ontario has tentatively scheduled a discussion of "A Common Word" with local Muslim community leaders in the Kitchener-Waterloo area for this fall. The forum will provide an opportunity for both communities to read and discuss the piece,

'We have not received feedback this week discouraging future meetings. No such meetings are planned at present. We would carefully consider under what circumstances we might agree to any future meetings.'

according to Rick Cober Bauman, MCC Ontario's executive director, but—like MCC Binational—no statements will be issued on the results of the discussion. ❧

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

From Ephesus to Birmingham

Bechtel Lecturers find parallels between Paul and Martin Luther King Jr.

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

In the first of the 2009 Bechtel Lectures, “Ambassadors in chains: Evangelizing the powers,” given March 26 and 27 at Conrad Grebel University College, Elaine Enns, together with her husband Ched Meyers, took a run at the Pauline letter to the Ephesians, comparing it to Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” that was first published in the June 12, 1963, edition of *The Christian Century*.

Enns and Meyers noted that the Birmingham Jail letter came from a black American Christian who was concerned about Christians following Christ in a certain time, in a certain way. King, in jail for nonviolent civil disobedience, was responding to eight white clergy who agreed with his call for justice, but disagreed with his methodology, believing that the fight should be carried out wholly in the courts and not on the streets.

Meyers and Enns asked, “What does it mean to be a Peace Church today?” They asserted that Mennonites have something to offer the wider church. Their call was for pietism while trying to remain a Peace Church. Echoing Menno Simons, “True evangelical faith cannot lie dormant,” but needs to be active in working for peace, they said the key verse of Paul’s theology is “*For [Christ] is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups (Gentiles and Jews) into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us*” (Ephesians 2:14)

Key to gospel work is the breaking down of barriers between people wherever those barriers are found, Enns and Meyers said. In this work, today’s church faces the same powers as the early church: government, religious institutions and culture.

They closed their first lecture by citing



Conrad Grebel University College professor Tom Yoder Neufeld, right, prepares to introduce this year’s Bechtel Lecturers, Ched Meyers and Elaine Enns.

the example of the Greensboro, N.C., Truth and Reconciliation Commission, formed to look into the 1979 deaths of a number of demonstrators at the hands of the Ku Klux Klan and Nazis, as well as the local police’s role in the incident. Enns, a Canadian by birth, then turned to the impending truth and reconciliation commission looking into Canadian aboriginal residential schools as a potentially powerful tool for healing and justice in Canada. Just as the Greensboro churches were involved there, she called on Canadian churches to see this commission as an opportunity for gospel work.

The second lecture, “Women clothed with the sun: Facing the beast,” was based on the image from Revelation 12:1-4, where Mary gives birth to her Son and he

is protected from the beast, the principalities and powers; the passage is a parallel to Moses being protected from the Egyptian powers in his day by the civil disobedience of his mother and the midwives. Meyers and Enns told the stories of four non-Mennonite women who are working for justice in the United States, facing the beast while trying to protect the powerless. This personalized and made practical the teaching of the first lecture.

Meyers and Enns work together in Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries, described as an “ecumenical experiment in discipleship and mutual aid [that] offers a circle where persons called to gospel ministry can find support to discern leadings of the Spirit”—in other words, gospel ministry in the way of Menno Simons. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Credit union helps out counselling service

KITCHENER, ONT.—A \$10,000 donation from Mennonite Savings and Credit Union will help Shalom Counselling Services counsel more people as difficult financial times have begun to hit the region. “We felt it necessary to donate this money at this time because Waterloo Region is beginning to experience the effects of the economic slowdown,” says Pamela Fehr, the credit union’s director of marketing. “Now, more than ever, people need access to affordable counselling to help them work through their family challenges and find peace in these trying times.” At a time when many organizations are cutting back on charitable giving, the credit union felt this was an occasion to invest further in the community, she notes, adding, “Living out our values is very important to us, and when 47 percent of the families seen at Shalom live below the poverty line, and 84 percent of clients are not able to cover the full cost of the counselling they receive, I believe it is our duty as a Christian cooperative organization to lend a helping hand.”

—Mennonite Savings and Credit Union Release

BREAKING NEWS

Pandemic preparedness

Resources for churches at the ready in the wake of worldwide swine flu outbreak

BY DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada Release

Many wondered why Mennonite Church Canada would invest in pandemic preparedness materials, says Janet Plenert, executive secretary of MC Canada Witness.

But there is little doubt today: hits more than tripled overnight for church-pandemicresources.ca, a website developed by MC Canada with support from Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). The spike coincided with media reports that cases of swine flu, first discovered in Mexico recently, had shown up in Canada.

At press time, the outbreak was still not classified as a pandemic, although the World Health Organization has raised the alert level from three to five (six is a global pandemic). Plenert urges congregations wanting to demonstrate mission-mindedness to visit the website and use the tools there to prepare; this event may not be a pandemic yet, but experts continue to warn that the question is not if, but when.

To help further, MC Canada's communications department has set up a Twitter account. Users can follow flu and pandemic news trackers via the account name "ChurchFlu." Twitter, the Internet social networking phenomenon, allows users to keep on top of fast-breaking news—in this case, news about infectious health issues.

Mennonite Publishing Network, in partnership with MC Canada and MDS, is also developing a series of pandemic print resources, including a study guide and a children's book. These will be available at the MC Canada assembly, June 4-7, in Saskatoon, Sask. ❧

MennoHomes pushes ahead with rural building initiative

STORY AND PHOTO BY BARB DRAPER

Editorial Assistant

CROSSHILL, ONT.

With a spirit of confidence, the MennoHomes Inc. board presented the progress on its project to provide affordable housing for rural families in Waterloo Region at a consultation held at Crosshill Mennonite Church on April 15. Even if government funding is not available, MennoHomes has enough support to begin building at least two units.

Among those who addressed the group was Jacob Reimer from Aylmer, Ont., a minister of the Old Colony Mennonite Church and a member of the board of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario. He introduced some Old Colony men, including four from Virgil, Ont., who have experience in construction and who have expressed willingness to provide volunteer labour for a weekend building blitz. Because many of the families who will benefit from rural affordable housing are connected with the Old Colony Mennonite Church, this partnership has given MennoHomes a great deal of optimism.

"I feel for these people," said Reimer, as he reflected on the challenge of living in sub-standard housing. He went on to describe his childhood experience of living in a house near New Liskeard, Ont., with nothing but boards and wood-fibre sheathing covering the studs. In the upstairs children's bedrooms there were cracks between the boards, so that they could see outside, and on winter mornings their blankets would be covered with frost.

The plan that MennoHomes presented to Waterloo Region to build eight rental units was approved, although it is not certain that government funding will follow. MennoHomes has purchased two lots in the village of Wellesley, planning to build two four-bedroom semi-detached houses on each, and is searching for suitable lots in Woolwich Township. Murray Leis Construction has agreed to act as

project manager using volunteer labour and there is a great deal of optimism that local companies will donate some building supplies.

In his concluding remarks, Rick Cober Bauman, executive director of MCC Ontario, suggested that it is time that the Mennonites who have been in Waterloo Region for a long time open their arms and welcome their brothers and sisters of the Low German community.

Jacob Reimer challenged his comments, suggesting that this MennoHomes project is part of an ongoing generosity. "When we were in New Liskeard, we saw a van come into our yard," Reimer said. As a child, he didn't hear what the driver said to his parents, but he clearly remembers that in the winter of 1957-58 the delivery included flour, cereal, apple butter and canned beef that came from the people of MCC Ontario. "I don't know if you were involved," he told the people gathered, "but may the Lord bless you all." ❧



Margaret Nally, a member of the MennoHomes board, leads a litany during the consultation in which this model represented the goal of providing affordable housing for large Low German Mennonite families in rural areas of Waterloo Region.

Dealing with recession

MCC responds to economic downturn country by country, program by program

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent

It is still too early to tell what the global economic crisis will mean for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada's next fiscal year when it begins Sept. 1, but its leaders are positive that the organization's three-step approach for dealing with the recession—working diligently to invite people to contribute to the work of MCC, reassessing budgets, and using reserves when necessary—is working.

MCC Canada and the provincial MCC organizations first tackled the economic downturn last November, when they each reduced the budgets of their current fiscal year by 5.5 percent.

"To my knowledge, no one has been laid off," Don Peters, executive director of MCC Canada, said during a phone interview, when asked where cuts have been made. MCC Canada has deferred filling some positions that have become vacant, though. Programs the organization hoped to implement have been delayed, travel has been reduced, and the number of network meetings and learning tours MCC Canada organizes has decreased.

MCC Canada and the various provincial organizations have reserves set up that can cover two to four months of total expenses, and these have been dipped into.

"Donors are with us and they want to help. I think they see the need, they understand the situation, and, by and large, they want to invest," Peters said. "We are holding our own here, so I'm really gratified and humbled by that."

He added that his early sense is that MCC will receive fewer resources in the next fiscal year, but added that he could

be wrong. As of the end of April, giving was up 4 percent compared to the same time last year. "We're very grateful, very humbled by the support the Canadian constituency has entrusted to us," he said.

Meanwhile, at MCC Binational, international partner agencies bear the brunt of the budget reductions, receiving

fewer funds than hoped for.

In addition to cutting administrative expenditures, the relief, development and peacemaking agency reduced its budget by about \$2 million US.

All of MCC Binational, including the international programs department, began by instituting mandatory unpaid leave for staff, according to Ron Flaming,

director of MCC's international programs department. Some staff chose to take voluntary unpaid leave as well. Travel was cut "significantly," he said, and some hiring MCC had planned to do is now on hold.

Budgets were also cut in countries where MCC has international programs. The organization's overall budget reduction was 10 percent, while country base budgets were decreased by an average of 6.5 percent.

"While anticipating a need to decrease spending throughout the budget, our priority was to change as little as possible the work of MCC workers who are located in international settings," Flaming wrote in an e-mail.

All paid staff who work out of any MCC in the United States, including MCC Binational, MCC U.S., and regional MCCs, have implemented salary reductions and

unpaid leave for this fiscal year, according to Arli Klassen, MCC Binational's executive director. The salary reductions are on an inverse sliding scale, with a 6 percent reduction in the higher levels, a 3 percent cut in the middle levels, and 1 percent at the lower levels.

"We are impressed with the commitment of our staff to work together," Klassen wrote in an e-mail. "Many staff have requested further voluntary salary reductions in order to enable us to lessen the impact on program." Among all the MCCs in the U.S., 24 staff voluntarily reduced their salaries.

MCC Binational has also cut administrative travel, so that meetings that would bring together staff from multiple countries or regions have been cut

back significantly, some altogether. MCC intends to invest in telecommunications equipment that will help some meetings take place without travel.

"Given that we are a relationship- and service-focused agency, we need to be careful to ensure that integrity in relationship accountability is sustained, while limiting the funds we spend on travel," Klassen wrote.

When it came to international programs, Klassen said MCC's decisions were made based on program need and opportunity, rather than applying automatic across-the-board reductions. Comparing last year's budgeted amounts to this year's, Klassen reported that there was a net increase of program budgets in Africa, while Asia, Europe and the Middle East, and Latin America and the Caribbean will see overall net decreases.

"This is a global recession, and MCC workers serving internationally, as well as our partners around the world, know that no one is exempt," Klassen wrote. "Transparency, honesty, respect and faithfulness have been the cornerstones of our relationships with partners around the world, and will continue to be through these turbulent times." ▮



Klassen



Flaming



Peters

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Future church

Three elders share their vision for MC Manitoba

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba correspondent
WINNIPEG

The board of Mennonite Church Manitoba is visiting member congregations over the next several months to gain some clearer direction for the area church's future. Recently, *Canadian Mennonite* asked three elder church statesmen to reflect on the purpose and vision of the area church today:

• **JAKE F. PAULS** has served as leading pastor in rural and urban congregations, as interim pastor in various churches, and for eight months in 2003 as interim executive secretary of MC Manitoba.

• **HENRY LOEWEN** was lay minister at Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship for 16 years, served as executive secretary for MC Manitoba for 10 years, and was employed as a teacher for 34 years.

• **JOHN NEUFELD** has been a professor and president of the former Canadian Mennonite Bible College, as well as a lead pastor for many years.

There is a role and a need for MC Manitoba, they agree.

"There are only two ways that the conference is really important to the churches," said Pauls. "One is pastoral leadership; the selection of pastors is really important to the churches. They depend on it. Second, the camps are important for more than just the children. They are vital for the leadership skills they develop in young people."

"The reason for the conference is to do the things we want to do together," said

Loewen, and camping ministries is one of them. "But what is the difference between our camps and all the other camps today? The difference should be in the curriculum, how it is developed and that it reflects our

Anabaptist theology. It is an opportunity to teach the peace position. My dream is for us to pay the tuition for some of our young people to go to seminary and, in return, they serve at camp."

"I see our pastors being increasingly trained in other institutions," he noted. "We should encourage our congregations to engage pastors who

have been trained in our institutions." He also said, "We need the conference to . . . promote our Sunday school curriculum, our hymnal, our theology."

Evangelism and service ministries were harder to define.

"MC Manitoba needs to realize our congregations have changed in terms of being the church in mission," Pauls said. "They have become localized. That's where the heart of missions lies—in the congregations. This is something the conferences have been promoting for several years, that we don't only

send the missionaries abroad but we need

to be missionaries where we are. Now, we are. Now, the conference [is] like a fish out of water."

"Our congregations have become very independent," Neufeld said in agreement. "We don't have a dependence on the conference or other churches for our existence. Where our concerns used to be with the work of the conference, we now struggle with very local concerns. Today, we are a very different demographic."

"What if the MC Manitoba board would consider doing an analysis of a few congregations and really try to understand what being the church is like

in Winkler, in Winnipegosis or on Sargent Avenue in Winnipeg?" Neufeld wondered. "It's hard to get a real understanding of what's going on from one visit to a congregation," he said of the upcoming MC Manitoba board tour.

"What if the MC Manitoba board took the minutes of the last six council meetings from a number of congregations, not with the intent of being nosy, but to understand what decisions are being made, how they are made, how their core values and beliefs influence decisions," he suggested.

Neufeld also suggested that the MC Manitoba website could be a more effective tool. "It's not up to date," he pointed out. "It's confusing and not user-friendly.

It still has clips from 2006. A website has to be kept current." He suggested featuring every MC Manitoba congregation in the course of a year, giving a thumbnail sketch of each with photos.

"Adapting to the new reality is my real concern," said Pauls in conclusion. "I remember in the past, if half of the collection didn't go for something

outside the church, like missions, then people said we were not being faithful. Now, 50 percent barely covers expenses. It's an example of a new age—and we better understand that." ❧



Pauls



Neufeld



Loewen

*"We should encourage our congregations to engage pastors who have been trained in our institutions."
(Henry Loewen)*

Church Snapshots

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA FILE PHOTOS



Two families are currently on special assignment with MC Canada Witness. (photo above) Since April 13, Pieter and Susie Niemeyer have been in Philipstown, South Africa, with their family while Pieter is on sabbatical from his position as pastor of Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, Markham, Ont. During their stay, Pieter is teaching theology from an Anabaptist perspective at Grace Community Churches, while Susie works with those churches on women's issues. (photo left) On May 4, Richard Thiessen and Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen and their sons left for Ethiopia during a sabbatical from their respective positions as library director at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C., and pastor of Level Ground Mennonite Church, Abbotsford. During their stay, Richard will serve as a librarian consultant at the Meserete Kristos College library, while Karen relates to a local orphanage.



PHOTO BY CONNIE MADER



The women of Wanner Mennonite Church in Cambridge, Ont., are surrounded by 26 "sofa throws" they made for their upcoming Vacation Bible School fundraiser sale, to be held May 22 from 5 to 9 p.m. Proceeds will support their VBS program this year.

Under-spending leads to budget surplus

Sale of Warden Woods Community Centre under scrutiny at MC Eastern Canada delegate session

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

Despite the downturn in the economy, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada ended 2008-09 with a small surplus in its budget, in large part due to the historic pattern of under-spending by councils and committees. MC Eastern Canada is forecasting a small deficit for next year, though, to be covered out of an accumulated surplus from previous years.

The only critique of the 2009-10 budget came from a delegate who thought that the request for a 4 percent increase from congregations over last year's actual income wasn't challenging enough.

Somewhat contentious was the executive council's plan to sell, for a nominal fee, service organization properties to the congregations associated with the organizations. While this received approval for the Welcome Inn in Hamilton, the Warden Woods Community Centre property in Scarborough will soon no longer have a congregation associated with it.

"Why not sell it to the service organization instead?" asked Gerald Good, a delegate from Wilmot Mennonite Church.

Executive minister David Martin explained that legal counsel had suggested that this was fraught with difficulties.

But Good, who once served on the Warden Woods Community Centre board, noted that the board had received an opinion from the Ontario Trustee that there was no problem with such a transfer, so long as the centre continued in both its original purpose and followed the reasons for which monies had originally been given.

Martin explained that the executive council's priorities are to first sell the property to a congregation. In the case of Warden Woods, the next step is to be in conversation with other Toronto congregations. Each property

is unique and has a unique solution, he said, adding that no precedent was being set by the Welcome Inn sale.

Evidence that MC Eastern Canada congregations are at various points along the congregational life cycle spectrum were everywhere at this year's annual spring gathering, held at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in late April.

Marg Nally of KW House Churches and Kevin Peters Unrau of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, both based in Kitchener, led worship, which included contemplative focusing on the questions, "Who are we? Who is our neighbour? Why are we here? What shall we do?"

On the one end of the life cycle, Warden Woods Mennonite Church in Toronto representatives spoke of the 18-month spiritual journey the congregation has been on leading to its closure next month. The journey will end with a celebration of the congregation's life on June 14 and the final worship service on June 28.

On the other end, Jameson Sung, who pastors Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, spoke to the creative formation of his congregation, the focus on vision, and the need for this vision to be continually renewed.

In contrast to the many Swiss German, formerly Amish Mennonite, and Russian

PHOTO BY BARB DRAPER



Ben Jantzi of Maple View Church near Wellesley, Ont., was named quizzer-of-the-year at the 2009 MC Eastern Canada Bible quizzing competition. Two Hawkesville teams ended up in the final, with the team of Dan Freeman-Rieder, Justin Raimbault, Simon Raimbault, Emma Bartel and Thomas Fast-Sittler coming out on top.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LIZ FLYNN

Mennonite congregations that were seeing themselves well along in their institutional lifecycles, MC Eastern Canada accepted four new “ethnic” congregations as emerging churches: Church of the Living Word (Ethiopian) in Ottawa, Markham Christian Worship Centre (Tamil), Rehoboth Evangelical Church (Ethiopian and Eritrean) in Toronto, and Chin Christian Church in Kitchener. The latter’s members are from an ethnic group that is found in Myanmar (formerly Burma) and India; this congregation is a daughter work of First Hmong Mennonite Church in Kitchener, itself a daughter of First Mennonite Church, Kitchener.

An emerging church “recognizes that it is part of a larger body of Christ, is open to exchange of views and fellowship with other members and congregations within MC Eastern Canada/MC Canada,” and agrees to participate in the work of the area and national churches.

Derek Suderman, professor of Old Testament at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., and a member of the gathering’s listening committee, noted the ironic use of the word “ethnic” throughout the gathering. “Sometimes when we say ‘ethnic,’ we mean Russian or Swiss Mennonites. But when we say ‘ethnic churches,’ we mean not Russian or Swiss Mennonite.”

Suderman also noted that he could not remember when he had heard more “Christian language” in a presentation around visioning, especially a frequent call for individuals and congregations to listen for the Spirit’s guidance. ☿

PHOTO BY ALF REMPEL



Kassa Lemma, pastor of Rehoboth Evangelical Church in Toronto, at the microphone, speaks at the annual MC Eastern Canada meetings last month.



Jerry Loeppky, facing camera, helms one of the canoes in the 11th annual Camp Squeah paddle-a-thon to raise funds for the camp’s summer student bursary program. The bursary helps with education costs for the post-secondary students who volunteer their time at Camp Squeah each summer. This year, the event attracted 32 paddlers, who raised a total of \$55,000. Although down from last year’s total of \$71,000, the event was considered a huge success. “Despite this year’s economic downturn, people still found a way to be quite generous,” Squeah administrative assistant Dave Wismuth told *Canadian Mennonite* in a telephone interview. “To hit \$50,000 is pretty substantial.” The paddlers from Lower Mainland churches in B.C. began their trek along the Fraser River on a Friday night in April at Hope and finished up near Mission on Sunday.

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GOD AT WORK IN US

A place to feel at home

Riverton Fellowship commissions new leader

BY MARTIN PENNER

Mennonite Church Canada Release

A move by Barb Daniels from the Peguis First Nation, about 150 kilometres north of Winnipeg, to Riverton, Man., more than 30 years ago, sparked her search for a church where she could “feel

at home.” That desire eventually opened the door to her participation in the birth of a new congregation, a new building—and a new vocation. On March 1, about 75 people gathered to celebrate Daniels’

commissioning as leader of the Riverton Fellowship Circle.

Daniels’ connection to the congregation began with a request from Neill von Gunten almost 20 years ago. Von Gunten, who co-directs Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry with his wife Edith, invited Daniels to work with other aboriginals in Riverton to form a new congregational home. One thing led to another and, in 1997, a new building was erected for the growing church family.

In addition to family and friends, guests at the ceremony came from three Riverton congregations, a Peguis First Nation congregation, four Winnipeg churches,

Not about me

Aboriginal speaker tells Manitoba partnership circle her life is ‘about Christ’

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada Release

WINNIPEG

A nita Keith, an aboriginal teacher, writer and speaker, is hesitant to talk about the details of her life in biographical terms. “It’s not about me, it’s about Christ,” she says emphatically. “I don’t have a life without him. That’s how I feel.”

When asked where she comes from, geographical locations don’t come up. Instead, she answers, “If we’re to reflect back into the womb, where did we come from? We came from God.”

This shared origin forms the foundation of the common ground between aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities, and Keith has made it her life’s work to peel away the layers so that people can see their kinship across cultures. She shared her insights at “Removing Barriers, Building Bridges,” an annual event co-sponsored by Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry and Mennonite Church Manitoba and held at Sterling Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg in late February.

Keith experienced a variety of jobs before she stepped into her current position as an aboriginal education instructor at Red River College in Winnipeg. An ordained minister, she now participates in numerous institutions that focus on aboriginal education, including the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies, for which she is an administrator. She is also working to create a Christian aboriginal healing centre in partnership with Corrections Canada Chaplaincy.



Keith

An invitation from Youth With a Mission representatives to write a chapter for a book about aboriginal Christian ministry launched Keith’s writing career. She responded with a piece that was too long to be included. Rather than scrap her efforts, she added to them. The result was a 2004 publication, *Rise Up*, which exam-

ines the cultural differences between non-aboriginals and aboriginals. That same year, Keith published two more books through Healing the Land: *Sacred Children Sacred Teachers* and *Sacred Learning* explore culturally relevant approaches to aboriginal education.

For the spring partnership circle gathering in Winnipeg, Keith drew from her study about the impact of generational trauma on aboriginal culture, *For Our Children: Our Sacred Beings*, again published by Healing the Land in 2006.

The single biggest barrier to healing the relationship between aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities is racism and denial of it, Keith said in an MC Canada *Church Matters* radio interview. Pervasive stereotypes “bleed into our lives, into our spirit, into our prayer, into our programs,” she said. “It’s very painful for aboriginal people.”

The church has an important role to play in healing, but attitudes need to change, according to Keith. “The paradigm needs to shift to ministering with us, and not to us,” she said.

Keith likens her life journey to a tapestry of image and story threads, but also to a period of waiting for the bridegroom, as described in Matthew 25:1-13. Her journey is shaped by direction-giving encounters with God. “When I see where he is, I go there,” she said. “I do what I see my Father do.” ❧

PHOTO BY ELFRIEDE REMPEL



Barb Daniels, centre, is surrounded by supporters in a prayer circle during her commissioning service at Riverton Fellowship, Man., in March.

Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba, Mennonite Church Manitoba and MC Canada.

They drew together in a circle, a traditional formation symbolizing equality among all people in aboriginal culture. An opening on one side of the circle served as an invitation for others to join them. Traditional elements with sacred meanings were found throughout the sanctuary. In the middle of the room, a round table held a braid of sweet grass, a symbol of purification, a Bible to represent God in the Word, and a white candle to symbolize God in Christ.

On the wall, a four-colour medicine wheel depicted the four directions and tribes that inhabit the earth. Quadrants of yellow (east), red (west), black (south) and white (north) were undergirded by three eagle feathers representing the Trinity. A prayer acknowledged Christ as the centre of creation and expressed gratitude for the gifts God has extended to creation from each of the four directions and races.

Norm Voth, director of evangelism and service ministries for MC Manitoba, drew his address about God's great love

for humanity from John 3:16-17. He spoke of the various qualities of leadership, including humility, which he said Daniels exemplifies.

Guests then gathered around Daniels in a close circle, offering words of commissioning and prayer. Following this, the microphone was open for greetings and Daniels was given several gifts, including a "peace lamp" and a star quilt composed in medicine-wheel colours of red, yellow, black and white. Those gathered closed their worship time with communion. ☸

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ARTBEAT

Classical music still has a future in Canada

Eric Friesen, formerly of CBC Radio, speaks at inaugural Friesens Arts Café series at CMU

STORY AND PHOTO BY JOHN LONGHURST

Canadian Mennonite University Release
WINNIPEG

Is there a role and place for classical music in Canada today? Yes, according to Eric Friesen, who spent 24 years with CBC Radio, including 11 years as host of “In Performance,” “Studio Sparks” and “OnStage” from the Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto.

“Classical music still matters as much as it ever did,” he said at the inaugural Friesens Arts Café series at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) on March 22. “We, as human beings, need the transformational experiences it provides.”

Friesen defined classical music as “that which survives when all else falls away,” noting that, in his view, music by people like Miles Davis, Oscar Peterson and Leonard Cohen is classical—along with the more traditional composers like Brahms, Beethoven and Mozart. The difference, he said, is that music produced by Davis, Peterson and Cohen isn’t in trouble; it’s “Brahms, Beethoven and Mozart who need our help.”

His passion, he said, is “to be a champion of the great music, to say that this music is still important in the 21st century.”

Noting that classical music “is in crisis today,” Friesen listed the signs of trouble: symphony orchestras struggling financially or shutting down; record labels that specialize in classical music going out of business, or severely curtailing the number of recordings they offer; aging audiences; and

changes to radio formats. “Classical music in my lifetime has been marginalized,” he stated.

But Friesen was less interested in talking about the challenges facing classical music; he wanted to focus on success stories. “There are success stories—they must be told,” he said, noting how the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO) has “gone from a near-death experience” to a “thriving cultural institution again, a jewel of the city.”

A number of smaller record labels, such as Hyperion and Naxos, are selling lots of CDs, while “others are doing well selling classical music online,” he said.

At the same time, classical music stations in the U.S. “had their best fundraising drives in years,” despite the financial crisis in that country, he said, adding that interest in classical music is growing around the globe.

People who love classical music can ensure its survival in several ways, he said, beginning with dispelling any notion of returning “to a glorious past.” The goal today, he stated, is to “make it feel contemporary again, something young Canadians can identify with.”

To do that, “we have to honour the young,” he said, and show them “it’s not just the music that grandpa loves. . . . If we can’t make classical music connect to people today, it is not going to survive.”

He pointed to the success of the TSO in



Former CBC Radio host Eric Friesen speaks at CMU’s inaugural Friesens Arts Café series this spring.

attracting young people through the use of social media and inexpensive ticket sales; any unsold seat in that city’s concert hall can be bought for just \$12 a week before a concert by anyone between the ages of 15 and 29.

“Every concert, you see young people sprinkled throughout the hall,” Friesen said, adding that other symphony orchestras are trying similar programs. “It energizes the place.”

Another way is to use technology, like the New York Metropolitan Opera broadcasts of live performances in movie theatres across North America. “Who would have ever thought you could go down to the Silver City theatre and watch The Met in high definition?” he asked.

Some classical music lovers need to overcome “snobby ingrained attitudes” that keep the genre “frozen in the past,” he added.

Earlier in the day, Friesen spoke to CMU students about his passion for the genre. He encouraged them to be open to new styles of music, saying that “if there are no new shoots, the tree dies.”

This newer music may be “in a language so different from what we understand,” he said, “but we should put aside our prejudices and listen. . . . If we aren’t open, then classical music will die. It will just be the music of dead white guys from 200 years ago.”

In terms of their own musical tastes, he told the students they should “follow whatever makes your ears pick up, listen to whatever attracts you, and find your own musical voice.” ❧

‘If we can’t make classical music connect to people today, it is not going to survive.’

(Eric Friesen)

Sound in the Lands 09 to premiere new musical works

Sound in the Lands Release
WATERLOO, ONT.

Four commissioned music compositions will be premiered at Sound in the Lands 09, the Mennonite music festival and academic conference, which will be held at Conrad Grebel University College, June 4-8.

"The purpose of this conference is to discover and celebrate and practise the music made by people in a Mennonite context," says conference organizer Carol Ann Weaver, an associate professor of music at Grebel. "There is no better way to encourage the genre of Mennonite music than to commission works by composers working from this perspective."

Three of the pieces will be performed at a choral concert on June 7 at First United Church in Waterloo, at 8 p.m., featuring the Menno Singers, the Rockway Mennonite Collegiate senior choir, and Soul Influence of Zimbabwe:

- Waterloo area choral composer Jeff Enns was commissioned to compose an a cappella choral piece for the Rockway choir. Enns, a Rockway alumnus, has written his own text for this piece.



Enns

- Celebrated American composer Alice Parker has written an a cappella choral piece entitled "Sun, Rain, Wind," with text by Jean Janzen. The piece was commissioned for the Menno Singers. Parker, who has composed large and small pieces on Mennonite themes, will also deliver a keynote address at the conference.

- Janet Peachey, a prolific American composer, has written a choral piece, "Elegy (Waiting)," with text by Cheryl Denise. This piece, also commissioned for the Menno Singers, has been scored for SATB choir

with cello. Peachey has produced dozens of chamber and choral works, and is currently writing an opera.

"Triologue," a commissioned chamber piece by University of Waterloo alumna Joanne Bender, is scored for violin, cello and piano. It will be performed at a chamber concert on June 5 at 8 p.m. in Grebel's chapel.



Bender

These four commissioned pieces are supported by the Schultz Memorial Fund. Established by Lena Williams of St. Catharines in memory of her parents, the fund is directed by the music department at Grebel and supports the creation, performance and publication of

choral and instrumental sacred music for the Mennonite Church and the broader Christian community.

Sound in the Lands 09, a sequel to the acclaimed Sound in the Land music festival and academic conference held at Grebel in 2004, celebrates and explores Mennonite-related music across borders and boundaries. Concerts, performances, workshops and academic presentations will feature music from every corner of the world, across musical genres from Afrobeat to choral singing, gospel to alternative, improvisational to classical and jazz.

Tickets for festival concerts are available at the door. Registration is also still open for those interested in participating in the festival or academic conference. For more information, visit grebel.uwaterloo.ca/soundinlands. ❧

/// Briefly noted

***Magic at the Museum* a finalist in Manitoba Book Awards**

Jane Heinrichs's children's book, *Magic at the Museum*, was recently shortlisted for Best Illustrated Book of the Year (2008) in the Manitoba Book Awards competition; it was the only children's book in the final shortlist. The ceremony took place on April 25 at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. The jury commented that "the watercolour technique suits this children's book. This technique creates a playful, dream-like mood, which is both mysterious and magical. The illustrations and the wonderful use of colour really bring this book's characters to life." Heinrichs, who is an art student in London, England, was unable to attend, but she says she was honoured to make the shortlist. "I worked very hard to make the illustrations as true to the Courtauld Gallery and its paintings as possible, but also impart a sense of magic and imagination," Heinrichs said in an e-mail. "It was an exciting challenge, especially since it was my first attempt at illustrating a children's book. [Being nominated] is affirmation enough for my first book to be recognized in this way."

—BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Youth magazine ceases publication

After 41 years, *With: the magazine for radical Christian youth* is being discontinued by Mennonite Publishing Network's Faith & Life Resources as of the Summer 2009 issue that has already been mailed to subscribers. "Because of the gradual decline in subscriptions over the past years, Faith & Life Resources made the decision to discontinue this publication," wrote director Eleanor Snyder in a release sent to each *With* subscriber, adding, "Faith & Life Resources is grateful for the role that *With* has played in nurturing faith through several generations of teenagers." Snyder noted that two new resources for youths and leaders are being released this summer: *Merge: A guidebook for youth service trips* and *Youth Worship Service Book*.

—From a Mennonite Publishing Network Release

CANADIAN WOMEN IN MISSION

—A place to belong—

WOMEN WALKING
TOGETHER IN FAITH

Embracing change

BY ERNA NEUFELDT

Last summer, in an article in this magazine, I reflected on actively embracing change within our organization.

Now it's spring, and after months of exploration and labour at various levels, new initiatives—or “styles”—are beginning to sprout and grow. But we need your help to see which will fit. Please read the CWM Task Force “invitation for input” (see sidebar) carefully and send in your responses to the questions as requested to neufeldte@yahoo.com.



New blogspot

Created by Kathryn Lymburner, Stouffville, Ont., this blog (mennowomencanada.blogspot.com) was established as a way to explore getting in touch with younger women.

The blog is a vehicle for discovering what we are doing as individuals to carry out our mission. We can challenge/encourage each other in how we live our lives as Anabaptist Christians. Together, we can do different things than we can do as individuals.

Our vision for the blog is to provide a base that reflects our mission statement, which encourages us to “nurture our lives in Christ, study the Bible, utilize our gifts, hear each other, and engage in mission and service.”

What do you think? Does this technology fit?

Name change to mark a new beginning

The present name, Canadian Women in Mission, is not as inclusive of women as it once was. In the past, it meant all women; however, it has increasingly come to represent the older generation.

Also, the word “Mennonite” is missing.

Therefore, the CWM executive is recommending that the name be changed to Mennonite Women Canada (MW Canada, for short), which is in keeping with the

“name styles” of MC Canada and the provincial/regional organizations.

Is this a good fit?

The present name, Canadian Women in Mission, is not as inclusive of women as it once was.

Meanwhile, remember that even as we’re “trying on” these new styles, we still experience very good times while wearing our traditional coat. Many activities like volunteering, making comforters, Bible study, fellowship and prayer still happen.

Annual inspiration/enrichment days are held each spring in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Eastern Canada. At these gatherings we sing, share stories, worship and, of course, eat together. In that context, the words, “New earth, heavens new, Spirit of God moving; new seed, creatures new, Spirit of life moving,” spring to mind. Let’s embrace the change in that spirit.

Task force invites input on questionnaire

After several meetings focused on reviewing CWM history, discussing procedures and possible options—while reflecting on devotionals such as Jesus raising to “new life” Tabitha (a woman who was well-known for her good works and whose death was also deeply lamented), we, as task force members, are increasingly excited about finding new ways to raise CWM to new life as well.

However, this is a huge challenge. So we’re inviting input from you to help us discern CWM’s future direction as we develop a questionnaire that will be posted on the new CWM blog and in *Canadian Mennonite* within the next few months.

Please discuss ways in which the Spirit is working through women in the church. Here are some questions that you might want to consider:

- What is your prayer/vision for Mennonite women in today’s church and the church of the future?
- What new activities is the Holy Spirit calling Mennonite women in Canada to pursue?
- What are some innovative ways women of all ages across Canada can connect with each other?

Our prayer is that with your input the task force will be able to come up with some exciting recommendations that will help to “bridge the gap and enlarge the tent” for all Mennonite women across Canada. Please send your comments to Marguerite Jack at mjack@netcaster.ca or Liz Koop at koopfarms@becon.org.

—By LIZ KOOP on behalf of the CWM Task Force

PHOTO BY LEONA DUECK PENNER



FOCUS ON FAIR TRADE

Good to the last drop

Waterloo North Mennonite parishioner into third decade of selling fair trade coffee

STORY AND PHOTO
BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

John Peters doesn't drink coffee. But almost 30 years ago, long before "fair trade" was on most people's radar, Peters, a now retired Wilfrid Laurier University sociology professor and member of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, became involved in the Global Community Centre on Queen St., Kitchener, Ont.

Shortly afterwards, the organization lost its rented location and the fair trade coffee sales were moved, eventually to Peters' basement, where they have been located for most of the past three decades. Officially, there are several others involved, but Peters does most of the work—ordering, sales, deliveries—while another volunteer keeps the books.

Netting more than \$15,000 a year in sales, K-W Fair Trade's small mark-up is usually donated to specific Mennonite Economic Development Associates' projects in Tanzania, Kyrgyzstan and Nicaragua.

Peters volunteers his space and time, wanting to do his part for equality in a principled and conscious manner, as well as, he says, "bucking the corporate system." He buys from four companies, including one that also sells tea, hot chocolate and chocolate bars.

Most of his clients are local area churches—Mennonite, United, Unitarian, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Reformed—but Peters also travels to nearby Guelph and Hamilton. As well, he sells to several thrift shops, individuals and the House of Friendship in Kitchener.

"When they run out of donated coffee,

they come here," he says.

At between \$6 and \$8 a pound—with grinds for commercial and home percolators, and varieties from Sumatra, Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and recently added Ethiopia—he is competitive with other fair trade coffee in the community.

While his coffee is fair trade, the organizations from whom he buys do not run extra programs, such as scholarships for producer's children in their home countries, which can drive up the price of the coffee. ☘



John Peters of K-W Fair Trade displays some of his products.



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Calendar

British Columbia

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 the Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. at 604-853-6177.

Alberta

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.

Saskatchewan

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. Includes

a Prairie Roots Concert featuring Jeff Sawatzky, Larry Krause and Ayuve, 7:30 p.m. (12)

Manitoba

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.

Ontario

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 23: Paddle the Grand River in support of Silver Lake Mennonite Camp. Noon launch at West Montrose Family Campground, Highway 86; finish at 4 p.m. at Kaufmann Flats. Participants are asked to raise \$250 per person. For more information, e-mail silverlake@smlc.on.ca.

May 24: Grand opening of Parkwood Suites Retirement Residence, 720

New Hampshire St., Waterloo, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Dedication at 2:30 p.m. An addition to the Parkwood Seniors Community.

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 27: Solar energy information night, Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, 7 p.m. Learn about solar energy options for your church, home or workplace. Join MCC Ontario constituents in purchasing solar energy together in an effort to care for God's creation.

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.

May 31: "An Intimate Evening of Story and Song" with Steve Bell, Church of the Resurrection, Hamilton; 7 p.m.

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

Classifieds

Employment Opportunities

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



House of Friendship

House of Friendship of Kitchener is a Christian, multi-service, non-profit, organization which provides services to those who are living in poverty. Located in the Region of Waterloo this charitable agency strives to practise a holistic community ministry focusing on compassion and justice as it serves over 32,000 people annually.

The Executive Director leads a team of 9 senior staff in the management of approximately 150 employees. A \$5+M budget supports the day-to-day operations of 18 residential and community outreach programs. This position is responsible to the Board of Directors and is also accountable for personnel, properties, finance, programs, legal requirements, risk management and public relations.

The ideal candidate for this position is an inspirational leader who is also strong in management and administration skills, with a minimum of 5 years in a senior administrative role at a Social Services non-profit agency. This person will also possess a university degree in a relevant discipline, preferably at a post-graduate level, or have an acceptable equivalent combination of education and experience. He/she will act as an advocate, articulating the needs of both the agency and those who rely on our services to outside groups and funders. Experience in program planning, development and implementation, housing and media relations are required.

This is an excellent opportunity for a motivated professional to provide support and strategic leadership to a well-established organization. Well-developed verbal and written communication skills complimented with an ability to inspire and mobilize people, and excellent teamwork and organizational skills are essential. Extensive knowledge of poverty-related issues and an ability to appreciate and promote the Christian philosophy of the agency is necessary. Salary and benefits are commensurate with the above.

You may send your resume to Wendy Pratt, humanresources@houseoffriendship.org by June 1, 2009. We thank all applicants in advance; however, we will be corresponding only with those selected for an interview. See our websitehouseoffriendship.org for more agency information.

UpComing

Get ready, set, run . . . for relief

NEW HAMBURG, ONT.—The Run for Relief is back again in 2009! Last year's inaugural event at the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale attracted 187 runners and raised more than \$11,000 to support the work of Mennonite Central Committee. The 2009 event will once again feature a five-kilometre run and a two-kilometre fun run or walk for people of all ages and abilities. Both runs will begin at 8 a.m. on May 30 at the New Hamburg fairgrounds. Online registration is available at nhmrs.com. Pre-register before May 22 or register on race day from 6:45 to 7:45 a.m. at the fairgrounds. Run for Relief 2009 T-shirts are available while supplies last. Challenge a friend or co-worker to run or walk; volunteer as a race marshal; sponsor a friend; or come on out to cheer on the runners and walkers! For more information, or to volunteer to help with this exciting event, please contact the Run for Relief committee at runforrelief@gmail.com.

—New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale Release

of Mennonite-rooted peoples and their local and global music-making, Conrad Grebel University College. For more information, call 519-885-0220 ext. 24264.

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.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Douglas Mennonite Church is seeking an Associate Pastor. Located in Winnipeg, we are a growing congregation of approximately 500 baptized members and 200 children and youths. We are seeking an associate pastor whose primary responsibilities include the co-ordination of pastoral care with deacons, lay ministers and small groups, as well as direct pastoral care. Anticipated start date is Fall 2009. For further information, or to submit a résumé, please contact:

Henry Kliewer, Director of Leadership Ministries
Mennonite Church Manitoba
Phone: 204-896-1616
E-mail: HKliewer@mennochurch.mb.ca

or

George Reimer (Search Committee Chair)
Phone: 204-668-5852
E-mail: igreimer@mts.net

WIDEMAN MENNONITE CHURCH

Wideman Mennonite Church located in Markham, Ont., invites applications for a **LEAD PASTOR**. This position has the potential for full-time responsibilities. Duties could begin in the fall of 2009. The starting date is negotiable.

The composition of our intergenerational/multicultural congregation of approximately 60 to 70 members continues to change. This is the result of the church being located close to a new growth area in the Markham–Stouffville area, with a large multicultural population. We view this as an outreach opportunity.

The successful applicant should:

- Possess a commitment to an Anabaptist/Mennonite theology and the practices of the Mennonite Church.
- Function as a spiritual leader, with gifts in preaching, teaching and pastoral care
- Nurture and support a team leadership model involving lay personnel.
- Possess related education (such as a Master of Divinity degree) and experience in pastoral leadership would be preferred.
- Experience and/or interest in multicultural outreach would be an asset.

Direct inquiries and applications to:

Wideman Mennonite Church
10530 Hwy. 48,
Markham, ON, L3P 3J3
c/o Howard Burkholder, Chairperson of Search Committee
or email: myrnaburk@rogers.com

For Rent

For rent: Dunromin Cottage. 3-bdrm cottage at Red Bay on Bruce Peninsula. Nestled among maple trees. Short walk to sandy beach and small park. Rear deck. Available June 28–August 23. Phone 519-746-4920.

For Sale

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

Cedar Valley Children's Centre is seeking a licensed Preschool Supervisor, to start August 2009 or sooner. Please apply with resume and references to Cedar Valley Mennonite Church, 32840 Janzen Ave., Mission, BC., Attn: Joanne Elliott.

Position will include teaching, planning curriculum, administration, etc. Experience and some computer skills preferred. We thank all applicants, however, CVCC will contact only candidates receiving an interview.



Camps with Meaning
Ministry of the Mennonite Church of Manitoba

Camps with Meaning, a ministry of MC Manitoba, welcomes persons with a spirit of service to join our summer ministry teams at Camps Assiniboia, Koinonia and Moose Lake. Key needs include male counsellors 18 years and older, an assistant cook, lifeguards, nurses/paramedics and kitchen help. For information on openings, visit campswithmeaning.org and follow the links to the summer staff page, or call 204-895-2267.

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

Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date Ads Due

June 8 May 26

June 22 June 9

Focus on Children's Books & Resources

July 6 June 23

July 27 June 14

First Mennonite celebrates half-century of ministry



Marika Friesen, left, and Glenna Schowalter staged a puppet show to help children and adults alike think about how all ages are important to Edmonton First Mennonite's past, present and future. Schowalter wrote the script.

By **DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD**
Alberta Correspondent

What began as a small group of students meeting at a university professor's home in Edmonton is now a thriving church.

The warm welcome and stimulating theological discussion found at John and Mary Unrau's home in the 1950s planted the initial seed that grew into Edmonton First Mennonite, a vibrant congregation of approximately 200 members and many more adherents.

On April 18-19, the church building was packed to overflowing as congregants and guests celebrated 50 years of God's presence. A worship service remembered the past, celebrated the present, and encouraged a continued listening for God in the future.

The food, fellowship and atmosphere of praise sent participants home feeling blessed and encouraged.

After the service, Gary Harder, pastor from 1972-87, said, "There's a spirit of energy and life, a vitality in the congregation that was exemplified by the celebration, but can't be manufactured for an occasion if it's not already there." ❧



Some of the founding members of First Mennonite are pictured in this 1959 photo taken from the church's 25th anniversary book, Celebrating 25 Years: A History of First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alberta.