

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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EDITORIAL

Neighbourhood Pentecost

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

The thrill persists every time I drive down my street in Waterloo on the way to work, observing neighbours of many nationalities, persons of all ages and professions—some in their traditional garb, all blending into what seems to be a vibrant, middle-class community of families and, in time, hopefully, friends.

What a privilege, I muse, and so unlike the closely-knit German-Swiss community in which I grew up, where, yes, we were friendly enough with our neighbours, but always keeping them at arm's length because they were considered "outsiders." They were, after all, somewhat suspect as Protestants or Catholics, religiously tolerated at best and considered prospects for proselytizing at worst. As young children, we were warned of the vices into which we could be drawn, and were limited in our sports and drama participation at public school, always a reliable security measure for parents wanting to diminish "worldly" influences.

This new, friendly perception of my neighbours, of course, is my 21st century enlightened view of this monumental societal shift. Back in the 1950s and '60s, a preoccupation with "separation" was the accepted ethos of good Mennonites. My goodness, we even went into "mission work" in remote rural areas, the more brave and sophisticated going into blighted urban centres, to "convert" these

poor souls. My parents were considered one of the few visionaries, going into the hills of eastern Pennsylvania, "experiencing an enthusiasm, a freedom of expression," as historian John L. Ruth put it, "an intensity seldom, if ever, experienced in their home congregations."

How misguided, yet sincere, I ponder in looking back through my 2009 lenses. How fortunate to have come so far in so few years when seeing "A Common Word" letter signed by MC Canada promoting a "thoughtful and respectful call for a conversation of peace between Muslims and Christians."

How good to hear Tony Bender from Kitchener's House of Friendship tell the Sunday school gathering at Waterloo North Mennonite Church of the Sikh community near Milton, Ont., donating 36,000 kilograms of potatoes to this ministry's food needs, and of the Muslims giving food as part of their annual Feast of Sacrifice close to our Thanksgiving.

I'm sure that takes some humility, I think to myself. Don't we normally take great satisfaction in being the giver, rather than the receiver? Quickly, though, my wandering mind returns Sunday school, where Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) representative John Pauls tells us about the many national "partners" the organization depends on in carrying out

agricultural development in Third World countries. And of the new and exciting "micro-managing" model established to extend credit to low-income entrepreneurs in these same settings.

I think of all the similar national "partners" my friends work with as Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) country representatives in Beirut, one of many dozens in over 50 similar international settings.

Then my mind wanders back, way back, to the ancient formative event of the early church, the one we refer to and celebrate as Pentecost, when those filled with the Holy Spirit began to speak in other tongues.

Is it too much of a stretch to interpret these new thrills as our 21st century *glossolalia*, our new Pentecost? Is my drive down the street an ecstasy of "other tongues"? Are our MEDA and MCC volunteers learning the language of many nationalities as they work in tandem to meet the injustices of repressive regimes around the globe, and to use new technologies in meeting hunger and health needs?

Are we learning the new language of our Muslim sisters and brothers as we accept their gifts to meet the needs of our own ministries to the impoverished right here in our own Canadian cities and towns?

Doesn't Pentecost come to us, in 2009, after getting release from that well-intentioned, but misguided parochialism of the past, to embrace the new and lasting effects of the ecstatic speech of Pentecost? "Seen no longer as a momentary and largely incomprehensible religious ecstasy," write biblical scholars Richard J. Dillon and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "the apostolic utterance at Pentecost becomes the inauguration of a truly universal preaching that will transcend every boundary of nationality and speech."

Are you experiencing the ecstasy of Pentecost in your neighbourhood, in your congregation, on your street?



ABOUT THE COVER:

Stuart Martin does practice laps in the Wilfrid Laurier University pool in Waterloo, Ont., for 90 minutes four mornings a week to stay in shape for swim meets . . . and his chores around the house. See story on page 25, which begins our annual Focus on Seniors section.

PHOTO: DAVE ROGALSKY, CANADIAN MENNONITE

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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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‘WELL ENOUGH’

What your retirement planner doesn't tell you

Save in order to give your life away, not to retire comfortably

BY LYNN MILLER

*There is no end to what you
can do when you decide
that your life is a first-fruit
offering of God for a world
that needs to know him.*

In the movie *Out of Africa* the lead character, Baroness Blixen, returns to Africa from a visit to Denmark. Her Muslim servant, Farah, meets her at the train station. Upon seeing her, he asks, “Are you well, Msabu?” She replies, “I am well, Farah.” She then asks him, “And you, Farah, are you well?” Farah replies, “I am well enough, Msabu.”

I am well enough. What an amazing statement of contentment. And in our time, how rare.

Periodically, business magazines run “comparative salary surveys” describing what people in various jobs are paid on average. The implied question for readers is, “Are you paid well?” What a great response it would be to say, “I am paid well enough.”

Wouldn't it be healthy to be able to answer the question, “How big is your house?” with, “It is big enough”? Or your TV, “The screen is large enough.” Or your church's membership, “Our church is big enough!”

Contentment in life is a biblical goal. The apostle Paul said he had “*learned to be content whatever the circumstances*” (Philippians 4:11, NIV). And the Letter to the Hebrews encouraged its readers to keep their “*lives free from the love of money and be content with what you*

have" (Hebrews 13:5).

Contentment is indeed a biblical goal, but not everyone sees it in terms of having enough. Certainly the commercial world doesn't. "Now 15 percent larger," screams the streamer at the top of the cereal box. Have you ever seen a product advertised as being "good enough" or "large enough"?

No business sector is more affected by the drive to "get more" than the financial-planning industry. Just read the advertisements for mutual funds: "Higher returns with us!" is the message, not "Our returns are enough."

The easiest way in the world to scare financial planners out of their wits is to respond to their question, "Will you have enough money for retirement?" with Farah's answer, "I will have enough." They argue that since there is no way to predict the future accurately, one can never be sure there will be enough. But the underlying problem is not that one cannot accurately predict the rate of inflation or the rate of return on your investment—the problem is that contentment has been left out of the equation.

Life is a gift: Give it away

There is a difference between most financial planners' thinking about retirement and my own. I don't think of retirement at all, at least not in terms of idle comfort. The alternative to retiring comfortably is not to retire uncomfortably, but to live as an offering to God and of God. I understand my life as a gift that is managed so that I can afford to give it away at any age. I believe I should organize my life as if it were something to use up, to give away, to expend.

Occasionally a financial planner will come to me after a seminar and say, "You're out of your mind, telling people that they need to calculate their retirement needs based on 'being content with enough.'" I respond by saying that we must be thinking of very different goals when we think of what enough is for. Financial planners usually admit that they are thinking of "enough" in terms of retiring comfortably, being able to do all the things one wants to do, take all the cruises you have ever dreamed of, living

comfortably in a retirement community in a warm climate.

This kind of thinking suggests that comfort has become a synonym for contentment and a benchmark in financial-planning calculations. Comfort seems to be measured by the ability to eat out once or twice a day, hire someone else to do housecleaning, and fill the hours that used to be taken up by productive work with recreation. Eating out and playing golf are not wrong—or even unproductive (I enjoy both myself). But in my late 50s, they are not what I am thinking

about when I think of retirement.

In 1985, a doctor friend of mine, who was then 55 years old, told me that in five years he was going to do something different with his life. Actually, it took him six, but in 1991 he and his wife went to Calcutta to serve as a mission agency's country representatives. They planned to stay three years, but didn't come home for six years. And they didn't come home permanently. Now there is an offering of a life that has multiplied in its ability to give life!

Like my friend, I am planning on giving

AMBS PHOTO BY MARY E KLASSEN



Anna Mary Brubacher from Kitchener, Ont., and Don Yoder from Granger, Ind., were two of many volunteers honoured by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind., on May 1. Brubacher and her husband have come to AMBS for short visits each spring for several years; she especially enjoys working outdoors with landscaping and grounds. Yoder, a retired landscape designer, has coordinated the work of planting trees, shrubs, wildflower fields, prairie grasses and rain gardens at AMBS. Other Canadian volunteers through the Service Opportunities for Older Persons (SOOP) program included Wes and Cathie Braun from Keewatin, Ont.; Waldo and Elinor Neufeld, Dan and Elaine Zehr, and Isabelle and John Balzer from Abbotsford, B.C.; and Ed and Hedy Rempel from Chatham, Ont. In 2008, the seventh year of the AMBS volunteer program, volunteers—many of them seniors—contributed the equivalent of nearly \$141,000 US to the seminary.

my life away. I used to need to be paid to spend time on a project or task. What I want to do in my “retirement”—and what I have already started doing—is to give away the time that I used to charge for. I want to manage my life so that I can say yes to the opportunities to help someone else. So instead of retiring, I’m planning on switching from managing my investments to disbursing my abundance—to serve somebody else.

This idea did not originate with me.

This is what Paul said to the Romans: *“I appeal to you, therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship”* (Romans 12:1, NRSV). That’s my life plan, to present myself as a living offering, holy and acceptable to God. Holy, not because I am a paragon of spiritual virtue, but because I have set apart and separated the purpose of my life from what it used to be, from the cultural

norm.

Paul addressed the same issue with the church at Ephesus. After telling them what God had done for them, he told them why: *“So that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”* (Ephesians 2:7). Our lives are to be billboards of God’s grace that will be seen by others as they speed down the freeway of life. We are to be displays of the everlasting loving-kindness that we have received from God, displays for those who need to receive it to be whole and alive.

Paul stated the calling of those who have been so graced: *“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago”* (Ephesians 2:10, NLT).

Paul also said that God gives us *“the first fruits of the Spirit”* (Romans 8:23). This is God’s offering to come and dwell within us and empower us as his masterpiece. God the Holy Spirit is with us and makes our lives the offering that Paul calls the first fruits of the Spirit. Having given us everything we need to become fully alive and available in Christ, having given us the three offerings that will set us free—Christ’s death, resurrection and the Holy Spirit—God calls us to be his fourth offering and to extend that freedom to the rest of the world: *“He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created”* (James 1:18). Our lives are offerings both from God and to God.

But an offering must be given. It is not something that you keep for your own use. You don’t put something into the offering plate and then after the service take it out again for your own use. Being an offering means being willing to take some risk. For the past 2,000 years, most of humanity has walked right past the cross and looked for salvation elsewhere. But God is willing to have his sacrifice on our behalf *“rejected and despised”* because someone somewhere will say yes to Jesus. That is the risky business that God is in.

Think about it in terms of your own life, especially in view of retirement.

PHOTO BY NOREEN (NONIE) WIEBE



On April 7, the sewing group from North Leamington United Mennonite Church in southwestern Ontario hosted nine Muslim women from the Windsor area. The two groups joined together to knot comforters for Mennonite Central Committee and then enjoyed *borscht* and *zwieback* (beef soup and rolls) made by the Mennonite hosts and homemade baklava brought by the Muslim guests for dessert.

Why would you go to all the trouble of developing career skills and financial resources to save them up for a “comfortable retirement” for yourself? Church treasurers don’t take your offerings to the bank and put them in 20-year certificates of deposit. They put them in chequing accounts because they plan on using them. Unless your church has no mission and no local expenses, during the coming week the past Sunday morning’s offering is going to be used up in the ministry of the church.

It is same for the gift of our life. It is something to be used up in the ministry of God. Making your life an offering accomplishes something else. It is probably the best way to “prove” to God

Why would you go to all the trouble of developing career skills and financial resources to save them up for a ‘comfortable retirement’ for yourself?

that you meant what you said when you made your confession of Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Right in the middle of his fundraising letter to the Corinthians on behalf of the church in Jerusalem, Paul urges them to “*openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you*” (II Corinthians 8:24, NRSV). Later, he says that this offering to them is the proof of their obedience to their own confession of the gospel of Christ.

The proof then produces thanksgiving. “*You will be enriched in every way for your generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God*” (II Corinthians 9:11-12). The motivation for financial accumulation for a more comfortable retirement is to “get more to have more.” The motivation for living as an offering is to “produce more to prove more”—and to overflow in thanksgiving.

That is the foundational difference between stewardship and economics. Stewardship is an act of organizing our lives so that they show how thankful we are for what we have received. It is not manipulating God to get more.

Stewardship is a form of worship that offers thanks for the grace of God. It is not a financial exercise that pays the bills of the church.

Extravagant living

There is no end to what you can do when you decide that your life is a first-fruit offering of God for a world that needs to know him. In 1976, I met a man who was teaching welding at a vocational school on the edge of the Kalahari Desert in southern Africa—at the age of 72! He was a widower, and rather than sit around in a trailer park in Florida playing cards and waiting to scope out the newly-arrived widows, he decided to make his life an offering to those who needed it. He was

good at welding, they were not. His gifts were what they needed. He lived in a mud-wall, thatched-roof hut and was having the time of his life. He wasn’t always comfortable, but he was always useful and never bored.

Of course, making our lives an offering does not happen by accident. It takes planning and management. It takes “stewardship.” If your life and finances

are complex, it might take the advice of a good financial planner.

If you seek professional advice, however, make sure your adviser understands that your financial goals are not based on comfort or idleness, but that you intend to make your life a first-fruits offering for the redemption of others. Make thanksgiving the motivation behind your financial plan—thanksgiving for what God has already done. Use “content with enough” rather than “more, just in case” as the benchmark. Plan to save enough to give your life away, knowing that in doing so you will receive much more.

That is the way it is with God. We bring our offerings on Sunday to worship God, but we have already received much more than we are able to give. God is an extravagant giver of his grace. Whatever we do as an offering to God, we do because God has already been an extravagant offering to us, and promises to continue to be involved in meeting our needs and directing our paths. ❧

Lynn Miller is the stewardship theologian for Mennonite Mutual Aid of Goshen, Ind. He has written Firstfruits Living and Just in Time: Stories of God’s Extravagance, both published by Herald Press. This article was first published in a longer version in the March 2000 issue of Christianity Today. ❧

/// For discussion

1. When you think of retirement, what do you envision? Is this different from “Freedom 55” commercials? Do you envy those who can retire early? Has the recent recession caused you to change your ideas about retirement?
2. Do you know people who are content? How do they stop the cycle of wanting more? Is it harder for the rich to be content than the poor? What is your definition of comfort? How much is enough?
3. Lynn Miller says life is a gift from God that should be offered back to God. In what ways can retirement be a good time to do this? Do you know people who have chosen to serve God in new ways in retirement? How would you go about choosing a new career of service?
4. Some traditional Mennonites believe that Christians should trust God and the church community in case of need, rather than buying insurance and saving for retirement. What would need to change for us to adopt that attitude? How important is it to save for retirement? What is your benchmark for enough?

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.

✉ 'Outside the Box' column appreciated by Sunday school class

RE: "NOT SO elementary, my dear Jesus" (March 16, page 8) became another one of your columns to be discussed in our *Canadian Mennonite* adult Sunday school discussion.

"How can we communicate Jesus to our befuddled world when Christians themselves seem muddled?" certainly sums up a significant part of the problem.

The dominant responses within the class were:

- "We need bold leadership to help us on all aspects of that observation," and
- "Hopefully, subsequent columns by Phil Wagler and other writers will attempt to answer some of those questions and offer more concrete suggestions."

With time, the once cynical youth realizes that asking the questions is much easier than working

FROM OUR LEADERS

Invited to the table

KAREN MARTENS ZIMMERLY

Recall the first time you were invited to the table to receive the bread and wine of communion. Now reflect on other communion services that have helped you and your church community experience Christ's presence more fully.

Congregations have experienced the shift from communion services that were held only a few times a year, and were separate services for baptized members only, to more frequent services that are sometimes part of the weekly congregational worship service. In an earlier time, preparation began with self-examination and making things right with God and one's fellow members.

Today, that may be the focus for one service while another service emphasizes God's lavish grace and forgiveness for our brokenness, while yet another service emphasizes Christ's victory in breaking down the dividing walls between cultures and peoples. The bread we eat may be one hearty loaf or it may be sticky rice or pita bread, pointing to Christ's global

church. We may be served in the pew or invited forward to share from one cup. Children may be invited to take a grape, recognizing their faith journey and anticipating the baptismal covenant they will make.

Both the diversity of focus and practice point to a desire to experience the rich and multi-faceted mystery of what Christ has done for us. Changing and diverse practices also signal the experience of a generation in which there has been greater movement between

Christian faith traditions and, consequently, a greater diversity of expectations that are brought to the communion service. So how do we come to the communion table with our different longings?

We come remembering that it is still Jesus who invites us to the table. We come remembering that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper precisely at a time of tumult, when some of his followers were filled with confusion, doubt and fear, not able to comprehend how death could

possibly be part of God's way into the future. We come to the table in the company of one another, and in holy awe we take the bread and the wine, proclaiming that Christ who broke the bonds of death and was raised to new life beyond anything the disciples could imagine, is also the Christ who walks with us in our current uncertainties and will bring us to unimaginable new life.

So come to the table! On June 7, the Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Saskatoon will conclude with worship and communion. Saskatchewanians take note: Everyone is invited, even if you did not participate in the prior days' assembly.

After two days of reports, discernment and connecting with friends, we will participate in this powerful ancient ritual, where the very earthly symbols of bread and wine turn us to the centre of our faith, Jesus Christ, who still leads us as a faith community.

Karen Martens Zimmerly is denominational minister and director of leadership development for Mennonite Church Canada.



at constructive answers. There comes a time when we must acknowledge that all beliefs/worldviews are based upon some “authority” beyond ourselves. Choosing, by default or by intention, on which authority to base one’s life usually is some combination of “faith and reason.”

For some of us, “intellectual idolatry” hinders our ability to acknowledge and trust God as God; for

others, “simple faith” may hinder appreciating the struggles of our knowledge-based society.

For all of us, Peter’s letter exhorts us to “*have reverence for Christ in your hearts, and honour him as Lord. Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you, but do it with gentleness and respect*” (3:15-16, Today’s English Version).

IVAN UNGER, CAMBRIDGE, ONT.

FAMILY TIES

Musings on Marilyn

MELISSA MILLER

“**W**as it anything other than ‘soft pornography,’ my friend asked sceptically, referring to the Marilyn Monroe photo exhibit I’d just attended at the local art gallery.

“Well, there was that,” I answered, “but there were other things as well.” I went on to describe how the exhibit traced the evolution of Marilyn from early photos of a fresh-faced, curly-haired teenager through her stunningly high voltage “sex symbol” pictures, and, in an artist’s rendition, a final grim and grainy shot of Marilyn’s face taken when her body lay in a morgue.

Why had I gone to the exhibit? I wondered. And why did I plunk down a few more dollars to see a play about this celebrity—a one-woman show telling her story in her own words? Understanding, I think, was my purpose. Understanding one particular person, her fame and her impact on society more than 40 years after her death.

And even understanding how I and other women, old and young, have been shaped by her. Marilyn’s fame in the 1950s and ’60s (a period paralleling my childhood) marked a shift in North American society, as values such as individualism, hedonism and self-centredness increased. Correspondingly, sexual values shifted away from religious-based

ones like monogamy, self-restraint and fidelity, towards values based on physical pleasure, immediate gratification and multiple partners.

As the envelope for what’s acceptable in public advertising and popular media has been pushed in the “soft pornography” direction, I sometimes feel op-



To return to Marilyn, a walk through an exhibit of her photos is ultimately a sad walk.

pressed. If pornography refers to materials that are sexually explicit and intended to cause sexual arousal, then in my adult life I’ve endured thousands of questionable images—all of them right in front of me. When my friend used the word “pornography,” a set of images flashed through my mind, some of them subtle, others quite blatant.

Such as a leaflet that arrived in our mailbox last week advertising sales at a local sports store; on the front was a picture of a young female model wearing the briefest of swim suits. Or the messages conveyed by “artistic” fragrance ads in the department store.

Or the Internet, where straightforward visits often lead to unwanted advertising, much of it driven by the sex industry. I recently went to a site for “desperate preachers” because I was curious, not desperate. While scanning the site for

info related to the biblical passage I was researching, I was surprised by pop-up photos of three young females with an offer to link me with “sexy Christian singles” in my area!

And don’t get me started on the Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders!

To return to Marilyn, a walk through an exhibit of her photos is ultimately a sad walk. Sadness for a neglected, abused child. Sadness for a powerful, beautiful woman unable to achieve her deepest desires for love and family. Sadness for

exploitation and distorted sexuality, which damages all of us.

How do we wend our way in a sex-saturated society? How do we hold, practise and teach Christian values of monogamy, dignity for each person, respect for the sacredness of sexuality and the human body, and sexual attitudes grounded in joyful discipline?

Let’s at least begin by acknowledging the impact of our culture’s distorted sexual messages, by turning from exploitation and by turning towards wholeness and wholesomeness. Maybe, too, we can offer prayers of sorrow and healing for all those who, like Marilyn, have been led astray.

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

✉ **Canadian Mennonite criticized for printing pro-Israeli sentiments**

RE: “ONE-SIDED GAZA coverage causes readers to cancel subscription,” April 13, page 8.

In your obvious attempt to be fair, *Canadian Mennonite* provided Jack Falk a forum to appallingly assert that “the stated position of the Palestinians is that Israel must cease to exist and, until it does, they will kill as many Jews as they can.” He should not be

permitted to bully his way into *Canadian Mennonite* with this odious statement.

This is not the position of the Palestinian Authority, and Hamas has offered to co-operate with the Palestinian Authority if the two Palestinian groups reconcile. Indeed, Israel and Hamas had a detente, provided that Israel did not continue to block supplies, as it has done from the day it vacated the territory. Meanwhile, Falk is willfully blind to the fact that Israel occupies Gaza’s land, air and sea borders; and that it

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Can too much be not enough?

MIKE STRATHDEE

An interesting e-newsletter that is particularly relevant in today’s difficult economic climate is Gary Foreman’s “The Dollar Stretcher” (stretcher.com). In a recent issue, Foreman wrote about how the human gift of self-deception can hurt our finances in serious ways. Despite our ability to think, “we also have an amazing ability to deny the facts and believe whatever we want,” he wrote. Foreman’s list of examples provides a series of inconvenient truths, but barely scratches the surface.

An article in a national business paper pointed out that consumers’ expectations about how they will pay for their retirement plans frequently bear little resemblance to reality. Up to 40 percent of pre-retirees plan to work longer in order to build their nest egg. Yet about that same proportion of the population find themselves involuntarily retired, due to health issues or job loss, well before they would want. When it comes to spending, a third of people say they will be more frugal in retirement, but 40 percent spend as much or more once they leave the workforce.

Fewer and fewer, it seems, are those

who take to heart the advice of I Timothy 6:8: “If we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.”

Many of us have to work at learning to live within our means to make room for saving for retirement, let alone dreaming of how soon it will happen. Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney told an interviewer recently that he is worried Canadian households are getting too



‘[W]e also have an amazing ability to deny the facts and believe whatever we want.’

deeply into debt. Consumer debt in Canada increased by 10 percent last year.

Outstanding credit card balances in Canada have grown by 40 percent since 2004, even as the cost of more sensible means of borrowing—such as mortgages and lines of credit—dipped to historic lows.

Overspending is one end of the self-deception spectrum. There are also the people who mistakenly under-estimate or dismiss their good fortune with the comment, “I’m not rich.”

A quick visit to the Global Rich List website (globalrichlist.com) provides a sobering piece of evidence to the

contrary for those of us who feel that the rich are those people better off than we are. An income of \$35,000 a year puts a person in the top 6 percent of the world. Earned income of \$53,000 moves you up to the top 1 percent. An average Canadian household, with a combined income of \$78,689 (a figure sourced from Canadian Demographics 2009), is in the top 0.85 percent in the world in terms of income. Even when 14 percent of Canadians are out of work or under-employed, that still leaves 86 percent of the workforce who are blessed to have jobs.

In the early Christian church, believers shared freely of their possessions, giving to everyone as they had need (Acts 2:44-45). These days, our communal bonds

have frayed to the point where people are reluctant to let their congregation know about job loss or financial difficulty. In a time when Christian schools, camps, relief agencies and even some of our congregations struggle due to decreased giving, how shall we respond? Let’s talk about it.

Mike Strathdee is a stewardship consultant at the Kitchener, Ont., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit mennofoundation.ca.

has, from the time it fled the land, restricted calories, medicine and goods to Gaza's 1.6 million people.

Israel wants Hamas to cease to resist and to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, including all the land it has occupied, including parts of Lebanon, Golan and the West Bank, while, at the same time, Israel refuses to agree that it is in occupation of what is Palestinian land.

We know what we have seen with our own eyes in Israel's massive wars and daily violence against its neighbours and Palestinians. Maybe Falk needs to talk to the Mennonite Central Committee volunteers and missionaries in Palestine who know what their eyes see daily.

JOHN "ISH" ISHMAEL, BRAMPTON, ONT.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Bartlett—Brody (b. April 29, 2009), to Brett and Lisa Bartlett, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Janssen—Hadley Kay (b. April 6, 2009), to Jamie and Brianna Janssen, First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Neufeld—Tanner Jason Douglas (b. Feb. 28, 2009), to Jamie and Tamara Neufeld, First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Nielsen—Samuel Elliott Friesen (b. April 27, 2009), to Kathryn Friesen and Dan Nielsen, First Mennonite, Edmonton.

Pauls—Reid Jacob (b. April 14, 2009), to Chad and Lynda Pauls, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Sawatzky—Cooper Wesley (b. April 27, 2009), to Jason and Christie Sawatzky, Hague Mennonite, Sask.

Wiens—Madison Jayne (b. March 19, 2009), to Kevin and Melinda Wiens, Carrot River Mennonite, Sask.

Wiens—Makenna Mary June (b. April 15, 2009), to Kelly and Sharla Wiens, Carrot River Mennonite, Sask.

Marriages

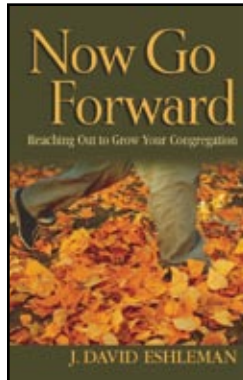
Derksen/Wiebe—Stacy Derksen and Trevor Wiebe, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., April 18, 2009.

Morin/Parkes—Chrissy Morin (Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.) and Nick Parkes, at the Morin farm, Rosthern, April 14, 2009.

Deaths

Bechtel—Dorothy (nee Zehr), 79 (b. March 23, 1930; d. April 14, 2009), Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

Cressman—Mary Elizabeth (nee Brubacher), 95 (b. Nov. 7, 1913; d. April 27, 2009), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.



Now Go Forward Reaching Out to Grow Your Congregation

J. David Eshleman encourages and equips believers, pastors, and church leaders to revitalize their congregations. The key, he writes, is to reach out to neighbors in the communities around our church buildings. Paper, 310 pages, \$22.99

Julia's Words

Julia discovers there's more than one way to communicate, and that friendship is deeper than sound. For children ages 6-10, their families, teachers, and others who work with deaf children. By Judith L. Roth. Paper, 44 pages, \$14.94



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Friesen—Esther, 77 (d. April 6, 2009), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Gingrich—John, 87 (b. Jan. 3, 1922; d. March 16, 2009), Hanover Mennonite, Ont.

Goerzen—David D. 85 (b. Sept. 17, 1923; d. March 24, 2009), First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Granzow—Carl, 65 (b. Dec. 31, 1943; d. April 11, 2009), Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta.

Horst—Sarah, 85 (b. March 9, 1924; d. April 22, 2009), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Mayer—Ruth (nee Gingerich), 90 (b. Aug. 5, 1918; d. April 24, 2009), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Neufeld—Linda (nee Reimer), 65 (b. March 30, 1943; d. March 29, 2009), First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Peters—Anne (nee Krause), 81 (b. Sept. 22, 1927; d. May 1, 2009), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Tilitzky—Neil, 90 (d. April 24, 2009), Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.

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.

/// Obituary

Susan Willms

Jan. 21, 1923 - March 9, 2009

Susan Willms, mother to her siblings and grandmother to their children, died on March 9, 2009, at the Coaldale Healthcare Centre. She was 86. Susie was born in Molotschna Colony on Jan. 21, 1923. She immigrated with her family to Canada in 1925 at the age of two-and-a-half. Her life was spent generously in devotion to her faith, family and community. Sharing seemed to come naturally for her. When she was a child, she and her brothers and sisters would receive a small portion of Christmas candy. Susie would save hers and treat the others after they had eaten their own. Adulthood began when she was still quite young. As the most senior girl among 11 children, she left school after passing eight grades in just five years, so that she could help the family make ends meet on their farm outside Coaldale, Alta. Her mother, Susanna, was very grateful for the assistance with cooking, cleaning and raising the younger children, but later expressed regret that she had not encouraged Susie to continue her education. After her younger siblings were grown, Susie took secretarial and accounting classes and, of course, educated herself. She was a good cook and some of Susie's first jobs outside the home were in kitchens, which she transformed into places of love and nurturing. She was recruited by Mennonite Central Committee in the 1950s to cook and undertake administrative duties for Pax in Germany, an alternative service program for conscientious objectors drafted by the U.S. government, as well as some Canadian volunteers. As she did throughout her life, she established long-lasting friendships with some of the Pax "boys". In the 1960s and 1970s, Susie spent a number of years working at Boys Farm (later Craigwood) for delinquent boys in Ailsa

Craig, Ont. She was loved by the boys there and kept in touch with some former residents for decades afterwards. After returning to Coaldale, Susie helped care for her elderly parents in their final years. She was a cook and, later, administrator at Altenheim, the Mennonite Home for the Aged in Coaldale, until her retirement in the late 1980s. Though Susie didn't marry or have children, she has a large family that adores her and whom she doted on relentlessly. Throughout her life, Susie made a priority of building relationships with her sisters, brothers, nieces and nephews, and their children and grandchildren. She would often insist that family gatherings be at her house or at the villa where she later lived in retirement. The kitchen was a place of laughter, of dinner and fasha with zwieback, wareneki and the other Mennonite dishes that she prepared so well. Birthdays and Christmas were times when the youngest members of the family would receive cards from Aunt Susie, often with cash gifts tucked inside. Yet it was her kind smile, infectious laugh and the generous attention that made those in her presence feel special. In the final stage of her life, when she was weakened physically and mentally by strokes, arthritis and other ailments, Susie sometimes wondered aloud why she was no longer able to do work helping others. Despite her deteriorating health, she still felt it easier to give than receive. As long as she was able, Susie continued to receive joy from spending time with her family, particularly the children. Yet she also spoke of being ready to go home to her Lord. Susie is predeceased by her parents Susanna and Abram; siblings Henry, Abe, Jake, Helen and David; her niece Carol; and grandnephew Logan. She is survived by her sisters Mary, Margaret, Anne, Johanna, and Betty; 31 nieces and nephews; in addition to her many grand and great-grand nephews and nieces, and their spouses who deeply love and miss her.

Pontius' Puddle



VIEWPOINT

Everything is new, yet not new

BY FRED REDEKOP

I had a heart attack on Nov. 26, 2007, and it has changed everything and yet nothing. I was dead and have been resurrected—by my wife Shirley (who did CPR on me), the volunteer fire-fighters, the heart surgeon and by God. Everything is new. I have experienced many thin places where I am more deeply aware of God's love, God's people and God's creation.

At the time of my heart attack, I was also diagnosed as a diabetic. Many people have gone out of their way to prepare extra food for me that is both heart- and diabetic-friendly. I am moved to tears each time someone does this for me. It is out of their deep love for me that they do this and I am overwhelmed beyond belief each time.

I am aware that I am not in control of my life anymore, although at times I still have the illusion of control. Jesus' saying about "losing one's life in order to gain it" is no longer at a distance, but a very personal statement of belief. So my life has changed, but not always.

At a one-day silent retreat last October, I was overwhelmed with guilt. In one of the Psalms to be read that day, it talked of the judgment of God upon the writer of this psalm. All day I battled this feeling of the judgment of God, and went away from that day demoralized spiritually. I felt it was my fault that I had the heart attack. I was to blame. I had not cared for myself. I had been selfish, and the heart attack was God's judgment upon me. I was down in the pit and could not return.

In January, though, I attended an eight-day silent retreat at the Jesuit-led Loyola House in Guelph, Ont. When I shared my story of the day of judgment with my spiritual director, he asked me simply what I expected would happen in my

journey. He asked with much compassion if I really expected to have no more days of desolation in my journey here on this earth.

Since I was saved from death, somehow I seemed to figure life would be easier. I have found that to be the problem with healing. I get healed once, and it is as if I am demanding God to heal me again and again. It relates to Jesus' response to some people who demanded he do signs and miracles. It actually does not help your faith, so I have returned in many ways to life before the heart attack.

Following my eight days of silence, I was left with three probing questions from God, that I do not believe there are answers to, at least not for me:

• **"WHAT DO YOU WANT IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?"** The answer to

the question seems farther away for me since my heart attack, but it seems less threatening for my journey to be farther away from the answer. The journey has become the answer.

• **"WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO FOR YOU?"** This question is asked of a blind man by Jesus in Luke 18. God does really know what I want, and wants me to tell him. I did not ask for God to save me from my heart attack, and yet God did that for me. Do I really want God to do anything more for me? Am I more afraid to ask anything of God?

• **"DO YOU LOVE ME?"** The final question was the one Jesus asks of Peter after the resurrection. Peter is perturbed by Jesus asking him the same question three times. For me, the question is more about my willingness to receive God's love for me. Do I really feel that God loves me unconditionally and forever? Then maybe I can love God unconditionally, not asking for any more miracles, only his presence.

So the issues of my faith journey remain the same. I am just happy to be alive to continue the journey here on earth. ✎

Fred Redekop is pastor of Floradale Mennonite Church, Ont.

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Fred Redekop, right, the pastor of Floradale Mennonite Church, Ont., accompanied Jim Loep Thiessen, pastor of The Gathering, Kitchener, Ont., in the five-kilometre Run for Relief event at the 2008 Mennonite Relief Sale in New Hamburg, Ont., less than a year after Redekop nearly died of a heart attack.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

'I will never leave you nor forsake you'

Inspirational Day speakers talk of God's abiding presence in their lives

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent

KELOWNA, B.C.

For 70 years, Mennonite women in British Columbia have been getting together every spring for a day of inspiration and fellowship. But when more than 200 women gathered at First Mennonite Church in Kelowna on May 2 for the annual event, even long-time attendees experienced something they never had before.

For the first time, Mennonite Church B.C.'s Women's Inspirational Day took place not in a Fraser Valley church, where the majority of the province's Mennonite congregations are, but in Kelowna, in the interior of B.C. Two buses and some private vehicles travelled from the Valley for the day, bringing women from Vancouver, Mission, Abbotsford and Chilliwack. In all, 15 churches were represented.

Once the buses arrived in Kelowna, the women enjoyed lunch together and then took part in the program with the theme, "Facing life's challenges with courage."

Five women from the host congregation talked about the varying challenges they had experienced in life: widowhood, cancer, death of a handicapped child, the loss of two homes and personal danger during overseas service. Overarching each woman's story was the presence of God and the individual's belief that God would never leave or forsake her.

"I liked the testimonies," said Hilda Krause of Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford. "It always helps to know what other people have gone through; it's encouraging."

The afternoon's offering of \$4,595 was divided equally between the new lodge at Camp Squeah and the Mennonite Centre in Ukraine. And in an annual tradition, 19 women who had passed away during the past year were remembered at the memorial service.

Members of First Mennonite, who

usually are the ones travelling the distance for any MC B.C. events that take place in the Valley, expressed gratitude for the large contingent of women who made the four-hour drive to Kelowna for the day.

"We're the only church in the Okanagan. We're isolated," Helene Wieler commented. "[This event] was breaking the isolation that was becoming more and more obvious."

Many participants noted that, not only did they appreciate the gracious hosting of the Kelowna women, they also had a great time on the bus ride. Entertainment such as word puzzles and a "What's in your purse?" game with prizes for the winners helped pass the time. ☼

☼ Briefly noted

Pastoral transitions in Alberta

The new year has brought a number of changes to the slate of Mennonite Church Alberta pastors:

- Harold Schilk began work as half-time pastor at Springridge Mennonite Church in Pincher Creek on Jan. 1. An installation service was held on March 22.
- Calgary First Mennonite Church celebrated the licensing toward ordination of associate pastor Alissa Bender on Feb. 15. Lead pastor Marvin Thiessen will complete his ministry with the congregation in August after nine years.
- Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, welcomed associate pastor Chad Miller on March 17. Miller and his family moved to Calgary from Hartville, Ohio.
- On June 21, Elwin Garland is to finish his ministry as pastor of Bergthal Mennonite Church in Didsbury. The Garlands plan to move back to their home in Bluevale, Ont. Michael Nimz of Virginia is to begin in August.
- Joe Goslin completes his term as associate pastor at Rosemary Mennonite Church on June 30. Goslin is to become director of family ministries with the Salvation Army in Lethbridge, Alta. Lead pastor Roy Hewko is also completing his ministry with the congregation as of July 31; he served as lead pastor for nine years.

—BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

☼ Briefly noted

MC Manitoba appoints associate director of leadership ministries

WINNIPEG—Kathy Giesbrecht has been appointed as Mennonite Church Manitoba's new associate director of leadership ministries. She began work on May 4. This is a new half-time position focusing on assisting congregations and pastors in the area of youth ministry and coordinating Manitoba Mennonite Youth Organization activities. Giesbrecht brings many years of experience in youth ministry to this assignment. She served in para-church ministries for 12 years, and for the last 11 years has been involved in congregational ministry at Springstein Mennonite, Winnipeg Chinese Mennonite and, currently, Home Street Mennonite, where she serves as a half-time youth minister.

—Mennonite Church Manitoba Release



Giesbrecht

'How hot is too hot for God?'

MC Eastern Canada youths discuss this and other theological questions at their annual winter retreat

STORY AND PHOTO

BY SARAH STEINER

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

CAMBRIDGE, ONT.

“**C**ould God make a burrito so hot that even he couldn't eat it?” This was only one of the questions brought up by some of the youths this year at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's winter retreat.

At the beginning of February, approximately 180 youths and sponsors participated in this year's youth retreat. Everyone gathered at Countryside Camp and Retreat Centre for a couple of fun-filled days of laughter, worship, games and sessions.

To explain the absurd question posed about the burrito, this year's theme was “The wonderful Word of God,” that involved an exploration of the Bible. The theme was a spin on *The Wizard of Oz*, with multiple skits starring Dorothy and her friends, who had their own questions about God's Word too.

The Bible is a most famous book, but is one that is not always easy to understand. Over a span of four sessions and a variety of speakers, many were able to get a better sense of how much it means for their lives. One of the sessions was a panel discussion, in which youths posed questions about the Bible to Ed Janzen, Jason Wicklund, Meg Bauman and Amanda Zehr, as well as some opinionated youths. Whether God is omnipresent, omnipotent and benevolent was one of the theology questions that the panel wrestled with.

What would a weekend be without music? The Annie James Project led in incredible music and worship, providing fun and powerful songs that reflected the weekend's themes and kept the youths on their feet.

“The music was uplifting and



Outdoor snow football proved popular at this year's MC Eastern Canada winter youth retreat.

entertaining, so much that some enthusiastic members of our group couldn't help but dance around,” said Christine Barkey, 16, from the Markham area.

Other activities included snow football, Walk-a-mile, and a talent show. ❧

Sarah Steiner attends Community Mennonite Church of Stouffville, Ont., and was part of the task group that planned the weekend and helped lead in worship.

/// Briefly noted

Mennonite VBS 2009 curriculum selected as a 'top pick'

Mennonite Publishing Network's 2009 Vacation Bible School curriculum has been selected as a “top pick” by the Center for the Ministry of Teaching of Virginia Theological Seminary. “Catch the Spirit! Join God's Work in the World” was cited for its “upbeat and non-judgmental tone, and strong message of evangelism.” The centre's evaluation highlights the curriculum's focus on worship and the original music by Canadian Mennonite composer Bryan Moyer Suderman as particular strengths. “Catch the Spirit!” uses stories from the Book of Acts to help children aged four through Grade 8 learn how the Holy Spirit works in their lives, in the church and with God's people throughout the world. The centre's main criteria for selection are theology—the love of God is emphasized more than the sinfulness of humans; unity—a distinctive theme is supported by a cohesive program of stories and activities; and inclusiveness—text and graphics represent all God's people with respect, and stereotypes are avoided. Nineteen curriculums were evaluated. The two potential weaknesses mentioned in the evaluation were that the outreach component is specific to the Mennonite Church and that the theme “doesn't lend itself to glitzy visuals and promotional materials.”

—Mennonite Publishing Network Release



Church Snapshots

PHOTO BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Church



HAWKESVILLE MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO



Yvonne and Dan Nighswander, who have just completed a three-year term with Mennonite Church Canada in South Africa, visited Hawkesville Mennonite Church, Ont., on April 19. The Nighswanders and pastor Perry Bartel light a candle in a candleholder that came from Zimbabwe as a gift from the congregation's youth delegates at the Mennonite World Conference assembly there in 2003. Hawkesville has been a prayer partner with the Nighswanders while they were in South Africa.

Young adults at Mennofolk Saskatchewan, held in Saskatoon on April 17, enjoyed sausage, buns and coffee while visiting with friends. Various art forms submitted by Mennonite young adults, including photography and paintings, were celebrated. Different musical artists also played and sang during the evening. "It's nice not to be in the minority," said one participant, referring to the lack of youthful faces at other church events. Sarah Unrau, 22, one of the organizers, agreed. "It was nice having something just for us," she said of the mostly twenty-something crowd.

PHOTO BY ISAAC FUNK



Herman Wiebe, kneeling, was installed as senior pastor of Zion Mennonite Church, Swift Current, Sask., on May 3. Surrounding Wiebe, from left to right, are Vic Reimer, Frank Ewert, Kathy Wiebe, Bill Wiebe, Ken Warkentin, Esther Derksen, Joy Jarrett and Esther Wiebe. Mennonite Church Saskatchewan conference minister Jerry Buhler stands at the pulpit, right.

SOLI DEO GLORIA SINGERS PHOTO BY EV GREENWOOD



The Soli Deo Gloria Singers of Leamington, Ont., present their spring concerts, “For the Beauty of the Earth,” at the United Mennonite Educational Institute (UMEI) auditorium on May 2 and 3. Directed by Paul Dueck and Nancy Dyck, the concert included a rich variety of choral music celebrating God’s creation. The event was a fundraiser for UMEI.

PHOTO BY ANNA REHAN



MC Saskatchewan youths Matthew Schellenberg, Kyle Siemens and Zac Schellenberg from Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, perform during the Menno Youth Café fundraiser on April 19. The fundraiser, held at Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, raised more than \$1,100 for travel expenses for this summer’s Mennonite Church Canada youth assembly, to be held at Prairie Bible Institute, Caronport, Sask.

HANOVER MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO



Hanover Mennonite Church hosted the “Songs for the Springtime of the Soul” concert on March 29. Performers included the Bows Art Quartet, three of whose members are pictured in the front row: Daniel Zondervan, Sibylle Ruppert and Jane Cobean; soprano Elaine Pearce and pianist Ruth Martin, back row left and right; and a student choir under the direction of Elaine Pearce. The event, which included a silent auction, raised more than \$2,000 for Meserete Kristos College in Ethiopia.

FOCUS ON PARAGUAY: PART I OF III

Utopian paradise or peril?

BY CAL REDEKOP

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Paraguay—host of this year’s Mennonite World Conference assembly—has hosted a disproportionate number of utopian settlements compared to other nations in the western hemisphere. The first began in 1609, and the most recent is in process at this very moment. This three-part series provides an analysis of only a few such societies that settled in Paraguay. It provides a perspective on the “social context” of Paraguay and the country’s relationship to, and influence on, the utopian societies, especially Mennonite ones.

The Jesuit Reducciones

The first significant “religious utopian” group was the Jesuit Reducciones, who established a settlement in 1609. The Society of Jesus obtained permission from the Spanish king to establish numerous “reducciones” in Argentina, Brazil and southeastern Paraguay. The Jesuits “Christianized” the Guarani Indians, along with other smaller native groups, establishing an amazingly advanced European culture, including education for the laity and the priesthood, architecture and art (cathedrals and symphony orchestras).

Nueva Germania

Paraguay continued to attract immigrant societies who wished to create utopias and distance themselves from the outside world. In 1887, Bernhard Foerster and his wife Elizabeth, the sister of Friederich Nietzsche, left Germany and established a community about 190 kilometres northeast of Asuncion. Their goal was to distill the best of German culture and civilization, utilizing the “superior” elements of German culture and race, into a type of spiritual socialism.

Nueva Australia

Less than six years later, an Australian utopian group established a colony at Villarica, southeast of Asuncion, inspired by the growing worldwide utopian movement. The community was to be a totally communist/socialist economic structure. The Paraguayan government offered them complete freedom and 182,000 hectares of land to try their hand at establishing a viable settlement. The official Paraguayan interest was not the utopian aspect of the community, but the

agricultural development of the area.

The Mennonite religious utopia

After investigating Paraguay in 1921, the Canadian Sommerfelder and Old Colony Mennonites migrated to the Paraguayan Chaco in 1926-27. Singularly and adamantly focusing on retaining their own totally “separated religious church/community” (a central utopian characteristic), they felt Paraguay offered complete religious, social and political freedom identical to that offered by Czarina Katarina to Russian immigrants many years before. The immense hardship in the settlement saga of this first group of 1,778 persons is well documented.

Already desperately waiting in Moscow, these Russian Mennonites had no place to go. . . .

From 1928-30, the newly formed Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) executive was anxiously debating where the Mennonite refugees who had suffered tragic religious and social disruption under the collectivization of Lenin and Stalin, should be resettled. Already desperately waiting in Moscow, these Russian Mennonites had no place to go, since Canada, their first choice, refused to accept them, while Brazil would not guarantee them the religious freedom they sought. After travelling to Russia in 1929 to review the conditions there, which were becoming desperate, the MCC personnel decided to relocate them to Paraguay. In April 1930, more than 2,000 Mennonites arrived in Paraguay.

A third wave of Mennonite refugees from Russia began in 1947. These Mennonites had escaped from Russia between 1941 and '43 during the war with Germany, and temporarily

remained in Germany until they could move to Paraguay, since Canada still remained closed. This group was desperately demoralized, poor and disorganized, with the majority of families having lost fathers. The immigrants were able to survive largely because of the help they received from the already established 1930 Mennonite immigration, as well as with help from MCC, just as the 1930 immigrants were assisted by the 1927 migration.

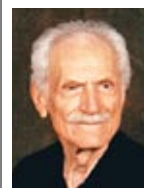
The Hutterite Society of Brothers

Probably the most consciously utopian Mennonite-related immigrant settlement in Paraguay was the Hutterite Society of Brothers in 1941. Located some 150 kilometres northeast of Asuncion, the settlement was called Primavera.

Because of their pacifist/communist identity, the Hutterites were forced to leave England, but again Canada refused to accept them. Orie O. Miller, who was well informed about Paraguay, mediated their plight to the Paraguayan president, who gave his permission to absorb the Bruderhof under the conditions that had applied to the Mennonite immigrants.

This settlement intended to establish Eberhardt Arnold’s version of the kingdom of God in a land where they would be totally free to do so. The social, economic

and religious aspects of life were closely modelled after the Hutterite Brotherhood, by creating literally a “theocratic” form of communal government, similar to what has been termed “the Russian experiment.” ❧



*Cal Redekop, professor emeritus of Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., is a retired sociologist living in Harrisonburg, Va. As author of *The Pax Story* (Pandora Press, 2001),*

*he was one of the driving forces behind a documentary on *Pax in Paraguay* aired recently on the Hallmark Channel.*

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Looking back, looking ahead

Past and present aboriginal ministry workers reflect on 60 years of mission

STORY AND PHOTO
BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
 Manitoba Correspondent
 PINAWA, MAN.

Last year marked 60 years of Mennonite involvement with aboriginal ministries. What the Manitoba Bergthaler Church began in 1948 as Mennonite Pioneer Mission looks and feels very different today, but has left indelible influences on the northern communities of Manitoba and on the people who served there.

Long-time Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry workers Neill and Edith von Gunten, MC Canada Witness executive secretary Janet Plenert, and Mennonite Church Manitoba evangelism and service director Norm Voth decided to mark the milestone with a series of events over the next year-and-a-half. The first event was a retreat at Pinawa in early May for former Pioneer Mission and Native Ministry workers.

"We want to honour the work of the past 60 years," said Plenert. "We want to honour the wisdom and learning of this group, and hand it on into the future."

Nearly 40 people came to this alumni gathering, a first of its kind. Some of their stories went back 50 years. Many of them went as newlyweds to serve as teachers, preachers or nurses in remote First Nations communities. Whether it was for three years or for a lifetime, they were very significant years.

Abe and Ruth Hoepfner last lived and worked in Bloodvein 33 years ago, but only two months ago they were called back for a funeral. Such are the relationships that run deep despite years of separation and challenging geographic barriers.

Time at the retreat was spent piecing



Vic and Norma Funk, who served in Pauingassi from 1970-75 and Neill von Gunten, co-director of MC Canada Native Ministry, locate the Manitoba First Nations communities they worked in over the years at a retreat to honour the 60 years of ministry to and with aboriginals in the province.

together a time-line that spanned the 60 years of ministry. It was noted that the years 1968-78 had the largest bulge of workers and memories. Plenert said those years "were the high point in terms of the number of communities we were relating to. Our contacts after that were fewer. It reflects a shift in how we are relating."

Native Ministry has for the past five years focused on Ministry Circles in which a partnership is formed between a congregation in southern Manitoba and a community in the north.

"We in Manitoba now have three aboriginal churches in the north become, or are in the process of becoming, incorporated as congregations of Mennonite Church Manitoba," said Voth.

Memories, some painful and some heartwarming, were shared. Some of the hardest challenges they faced were bridging a vast cultural gap.

"We had to learn to listen, learn that you don't have to talk all the time," recalled Ron Peters, who served in Bloodvein.

Many in the group expressed regret that they had not entered those relationships and responsibilities with a greater sensitivity and understanding of the culture, language and traditions of the First Nations people.

John Funk, former executive secretary

of Native Ministry, said the experience makes him "think more deeply about what it means to be Mennonite and Anabaptist. We think we can bridge the gap to aboriginal culture easily, but they are always facing the wind while we have the wind on our backs."

Grateful for what they experienced and learned from their aboriginal brothers and sisters, the alumni group also felt a deep sadness that sometimes their good intentions were not enough.

"I only realized I needed forgiveness long after," said one of the participants, voicing what many felt. "I am amazed at the forgiveness and acceptance we received despite our insensitivities."

Another regret was not addressing the peace aspect of the gospel more clearly. "Why are you so quiet about the peace position? Why do you carry it in your back pocket?" was a question several of them heard in their ministry.

At the end of the weekend the group discerned pieces of wisdom that they wanted to give to the future: Don't be silent about our own past, our own faith journey. Just as we need to be firm in our understanding of who we are as people of peace, we need to affirm the spirituality of the aboriginal people. ☸

PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

MCC considers new vision, structure

Head office likely to move out of Akron as organization's focus goes global

BY TIM SHENK

Mennonite Central Committee Release
AKRON, PA.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is nearing the end of an 18-month process called New Wine/New Wineskins, that has involved several thousand people worldwide in discerning God's call for the organization in the 21st century. The process has created recommendations for a new vision, organizational structure and global service forum.

About 100 participants will gather for a final summit in Hillsboro, Kan., from June 3 to 5, to debate, revise and approve recommendations for MCC's new vision and structure. The summit results will then be submitted for ratification by 12 MCC boards representing regional, national and binational offices in Canada and the U.S.

The proposed statement of common purpose defines MCC as "a ministry of Anabaptist churches worldwide participating in God's work of reconciliation." Justice and peacebuilding, sustainable development, and disaster response and prevention are proposed as mission priorities. Anabaptist churches include Mennonites, Brethren in Christ and other related denominations.

The proposed structure moves MCC from being a Canadian and U.S. organization to a global entity, according to executive director Arli Klassen. A new, central MCC office—probably located somewhere other than Akron, according to Klassen—would administer, and be a resource to, the entire system of MCC organizations. Programmatic work around the world, including in Canada and the U.S., would be the responsibility of MCC Canada, MCC U.S. and new MCC organizations accountable to Anabaptist churches in other countries.

The recommendations also call for Mennonite World Conference to lead a

process that may result in a forum of global Anabaptist service agencies, of which MCC would be a member.

Klassen emphasizes that MCC is committed to continuing its work in the name of Christ, and to maintaining the trust of its donors, partner organizations and

constituent churches. "Underlying all of this, in order to make this successful, is trust," Klassen said. "We need to trust that God is present in the middle of this process to strengthen MCC as a ministry of the global church." ❧

25in5 celebrates Bill 152

Poverty reduction becomes law in Ontario

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

Greg deGroot-Maggetti, poverty advocate for Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, and many others were invited to the Ontario legislature on May 6 to witness the passing of Bill 152, Poverty Reduction Act, 2009. The legislation received support from all political parties.

DeGroot-Maggetti is part of the 25in5: Network for Poverty Reduction, comprised of more than 100 provincial and Toronto-based organizations and individuals working on eliminating poverty. "As a result of tremendous community effort and the willingness of all parties to listen, important amendments have been made to the Poverty Reduction Act," he said on the 25in5 website.

The website also reported, "Amendments that were advanced by community groups

and accepted by the [government] committee include: a commitment to reduce adult poverty alongside child and family poverty; a recognition of the need to address discrimination and the barriers faced by disadvantaged groups; a requirement that Ontarians and, in particular, low-income people, be involved in the design and implementation of poverty-reduction strategies; and specific timelines for annual reporting to the legislature."

The 25in5 network "expressed disappointment" that the Bill does not include a vision for a poverty-free Ontario, a commitment to an independent review, and a commitment to strengthening Ontario's human rights laws and enforcement, among other things. ❧

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PHOTO



Participants take part in the New Wine/New Wineskins summit in Accra, Ghana.

PHOTO BY JOANIE PETERS

Horrors of war haunt refugee family

By Gladys Terichow

Mennonite Central Committee Release
SASKATOON, SASK.

It is not unusual for Leonie Mandeba Lwamba to wake up from a recurring and distressing nightmare. The images in her dreams are not fictitious—they are images of a family friend killing her mother in 1994 during violent conflicts in Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo.

“The man who killed our mother used to come to our house and eat at our table,” she says. “That image keeps on coming back to me. I still have great difficulty trusting people.”

Loving support from Mount Royal Mennonite Church in Saskatoon is helping her deal with this horrific memory, along with other painful memories of violence in Zaire and her escape to a refugee camp in Kenya.

She is especially thankful for the support of Eric and Verna Olfert, who understand the situation in Congo through serving with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Chad and Nigeria and travel in African countries. “People love me and encourage me—they are like my parents; they are like my relatives,” she says. “I don’t want to ever move away from here.”

Lwamba and five children, aged three to 14, arrived in Saskatoon in March 2004. They were sponsored by Mount Royal Mennonite through MCC’s refugee assistance program. Lwamba was a teacher in Zaire and her husband Stephen was the school principal. They had two children when her mother was murdered. Their youngest child was only six months old. Fearing for her life, Lwamba’s pastor helped her escape to a refugee camp in Kenya. One month later, her husband and children joined her in the refugee camp, where she lived for nearly eight years. Her sister Julienne was also at the same refugee camp.

Mount Royal Mennonite heard about these families when her brothers Michael,



Leonie Mandeba Lwamba has found safety in Saskatoon, but she continues to live with horrific memories of violent conflicts in Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Fabian and Aliston, founders of the award-winning Canadian gospel group, Krystaal, performed in the church. Her brothers were forced to run for their lives following the student massacre at Lubumbashi University in 1989 and were miraculously reunited in Canada.

Lwamba recalls the excitement of hearing that her application for refugee status in Canada had been accepted and that she would soon be reunited with her brothers: “First I cried and then I thanked God that I was going to Canada. I shouted all over the place—I’m going to Canada.”

But four days after arriving in Canada her oldest son died from sickle cell anemia—a traumatic event that she still finds too painful to talk about.

Although she is happy with her life in Canada, she is disappointed that her husband and sister are still trying to meet the requirements for Canada’s private sponsorship program. Her husband, she says, lost his refugee status when he returned to Congo to assist his parents, who were experiencing difficulties at that time. He is currently living in Nairobi, Kenya, and trying to have his refugee status reinstated. Her sister does not have the physical and emotional strength to complete the

interview processes.

Lwamba has not seen her husband since he left the refugee camp and is thrilled that she has a recent photograph of him. When she looks at his photograph she dreams of their future together in Saskatoon—a future that she hopes will make it possible for them to buy a house and provide a university education for their children.

She also hopes and prays that her sister Julienne will have the strength to complete the interviews. “My sister wants to come to Canada, but she is so afraid of the interviews,” says Lwamba. “When she is asked about the stories, she begins to cry and can’t continue the interview.” ❧

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GOD AT WORK IN US

From the Prairies . . . to Palestine . . . and back

Young adult returns home with stories of hope and resilience

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent

For 12 days in March, Stephanie Epp immersed herself in the sights and sounds of the West Bank. Women in Muslim dress, men carrying guns, and checkpoints and border crossings defined her experience in a real and tangible way.

As part of a Christian Peacemakers Team (CPT) delegation, Epp—a member of Eigenheim Mennonite Church, Rosthern, Sask.—spent the time getting to know the Palestinian people and learning as much as she could about the issues of the troubled region while speaking through an interpreter.

Interference comes in many forms in a

place where lives are carefully controlled via checkpoints and continuous challenges to basic human rights, she said. Although the Palestinian people live on their land, she said they are constantly harassed and challenged by Israeli settlers who have moved into the area and built villages—clearly in an attempt to intimidate the legal owners of the land.

While Epp and the 10 others in the delegation were there, they experienced first-

hand what such intimidation could feel like. Nowhere was this more evident than during a school patrol. Although Palestinian

PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHANIE EPP



Stephanie Epp, a member of Eigenheim Mennonite in Rosthern, Sask. who now attends Nutana Park Mennonite in Saskatoon, Sask., right, listens to the guide in a Palestinian refugee camp while in the West Bank during a recent Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation to the Israeli-occupied territory.

A just peace in everyone's best interest

BY SCOTT ALBRECHT
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
WATERLOO, ONT.

Cindy Byler saw a lot of rubble during her tour of Gaza in February. As a former elementary school teacher, seeing schools destroyed was especially hard, knowing how much that disrupted the daily routine of families. And as an American, she found it especially ironic that one international school was built with American money and then destroyed by an American fighter jet from the Israeli military.

Cindy and her husband Daryl, Middle East co-directors for Mennonite Central Committee, shared stories and pictures of their time in Gaza with more than 100 people at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo on April 22. They had visited the tiny strip of land a month after the end of the fighting, which killed 14 Israelis and 1,400 Palestinians.

Referring to the presentation's title, "Making peace without talking to your enemy," Daryl noted that Israel—and the U.S. and Canada—justify not speaking with Hamas because the Palestinian political party currently in power does not recognize the State of Israel. However, Likud, the party of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, does not recognize the right of Palestinians to have a state, he pointed out, adding, "Isolation is not working."

Christians need to acknowledge how centuries of anti-Semitism, including silence during the Holocaust, has made Jewish people feel insecurity deeply, Daryl said, adding that the same Christians must also not allow Zionist theology to blind them to Israeli policy that is abusive of Palestinians.

In the end, he said a just peace for all peoples in the region is "not only the right thing, but also in the best interest of Israel, Canada and the United States." ❧

children are allowed to attend school, some routes pass directly between two Israeli villages. When that happens, they are often hassled and bullied by the settlers in those towns, she reported.

Under rules of the United Nations' Fourth Geneva Convention, the Israeli government decided that the school children needed protection and sent soldiers to walk with them, explained Epp, but the problem continued. "The soldiers aren't always reliable," she said, explaining how they will sometimes show up late or walk with them only half way. This is dangerous, she said, since the children are then more vulnerable to attack.

CPT workers, whose role was to observe how the children were treated and to keep a record of the rights being violated, used to walk with the children until they, too, were attacked.

Before coming to Bible college in Winnipeg a number of years ago, Epp, a graduate of Rosthern Junior College, had never heard of CPT. But when she saw CPT's display on campus, she was immediately interested. "It was such a tangible working out of the Anabaptist vision of being disciples and being peacemakers," she said.

A decade passed, however, before Epp could pursue that interest. The support from her home church of Eigenheim Mennonite, as well as Nutana Park Mennonite in Saskatoon, where she now attends, was enough to send her on her way.

"I knew some of the struggles [of the region], but to go and meet these people was different," said Epp. Despite living with the terms of Israeli rule, the Palestinian are remarkably strong and not easily put off, she said: "What struck me the most was the Palestinian resilience. They won't be run off their land. They have a right to be there. The kids still walk despite the trauma of daily harassment. They're asserting their right to attend school. It's how they resist nonviolently."

The dignity displayed by the local people gave her much hope, said Epp, adding that she came home with a changed heart. She may go back someday, but right now she is content to be home and sharing her story, in this case over a tall mocha in a local café. ❧

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ARTBEAT

New peace choir seeks to inspire peacemakers

BY HENRY NEUFELD

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

"For all of life, for all of nature, sing we our praise to thee." This excerpt reflects the vision of Timothy Corlis, the founder and conductor of the newly formed 34-voice Vancouver Peace Choir. Corlis hopes to create a place of contemplation and be a source of inspiration for peacemakers. "I wanted a place in my life where I could feel hopeful," he says.

"Music brought me into the Mennonite Church," Corlis says. "I grew up singing choruses." While studying at Waterloo's Conrad Grebel University College, he attended a variety of area Mennonite

churches. "In every Mennonite church I attended I heard four-part singing," he says. "I found it a powerful symbol of how the Holy Spirit is reflected in the community; everyone has a role."

"The four-part singing tradition is an incredible foundation," he says. "It's the Gothic architecture of the Mennonite Church. Music has a way of getting people to contemplate; it's an inviting, embracing, gentle way of listening to the marginalized voices."

Currently, a doctoral student in music composition at the University of British Columbia and a member of Peace

PHOTO COURTESY OF TIMOTHY CORLIS



Timothy Corlis, the founder of the new Vancouver Peace Choir, directs the choir during its inaugural Earth Day concerts.

Mennonite Church, Vancouver, Corlis came to music largely through the influence of Leonard Enns at Conrad Grebel. He appreciated Enns's thoughtful way of conducting and of treating music as an opportunity to contemplate faith. Corlis conducted the Conrad Grebel choir when Enns was on sabbatical leave.

For Corlis, the peace choir is a way of combining his profession and his faith, having been strongly influenced by peace and conflict internships in Indonesia and India. "This changed my life," he says. And so the choir is the realization of his dream to use music to express his deeply held beliefs surrounding peace and to express his appreciation for West Coast beauty.

The choir's inaugural Earth Day concerts, interspersed with comments by Corlis, started with "Freedom Come," and, in addition to negro spirituals, included works by Mendelssohn, Bernstein, and Simon and Garfunkel. The concert concluded with Corlis's composition "In Paradisum,"—a setting of Faure's requiem text which is a musical painting of paradise not as a faraway place, but as an expression of beauty and fullness where people live. In his music, Corlis reflects on the privileges that come from living in an affluent context. The inaugural concerts also featured pianist Boyd McDonald and saxophonist Willem Moolenbeek.

Proceeds from the concerts are being donated to a Mennonite Central Committee-sponsored workshop on nonviolence training. ☸

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COVER STORY

Laps for life

75-year-old swimmer still has his sights set on the podium

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

WATERLOO, ONT.

“It’s really quite boring, watching the line at the bottom of the pool,” says Stuart Martin over breakfast one morning recently. “Gives you time to think things over.” Martin is enjoying his breakfast at 7 a.m. after an hour-and-a-half swim in the Wilfrid Laurier University pool in Waterloo.

Four times a week, for between 2,500 and 3,000 metres, he rotates through a variety of swim strokes. Martin began swimming competitively in his mid-40s, when he was taking his son to the Waterloo Region swimming club. For the sake of cardiovascular health, and to burn calories, he and other parents asked about an adult club and the Waterloo Region Masters Program was born. “Masters” are swimmers 25 and older, divided into five-year increments. Martin recently graduated into a new level when he turned 75.

Looking at some of the medals he brought along, he notes that there are several Canadian swimmers he just can’t beat. “But if you can’t beat your competition, you have to outlive them,” he quips. At the same time, the two swimmers he often comes in behind to claim bronze medals were on the team when he earned a silver medal from the 1996 Masters World Invitational meet in Riccione, Italy.

Martin has competed all over the world. His latest meet was in Toronto earlier this month.

At his first meet in 1984, he figuratively “almost died.” Coaches—like his current two: Dean Boles of Laurier’s varsity swim team, and James Blakie—have helped since then, teaching him to improve his stroke and pacing. “You have to have something left for the last leg or you ‘hit the wall’ and

just can’t go on,” he explains.

Retired from Sun Life Financial since 2004, Martin credits his time in the pool with the strength and flexibility to help his wife Merlyn on their two-acre property, digging, moving plants, chopping wood and caring for six grandchildren. And, he notes, “when we get tired of all the work at home, we go to the cottage to do some more.”

Vintage Volkswagens, like the 1976 Beetle convertible he’s restoring “from the ground up,” fill more of his time. He used to serve on the stewardship/finance board at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, where he now attends, but in recent years he’s limited his service there to decorating and installing a two-metre diameter wreath in the sanctuary each Christmas.

As he sits and talks in the coffee shop, as he does many times a week, reading the morning papers before going home to work on his projects, various people greet him by name.

Joan, sitting at the next table, notes, “He’s a good listener when I need to gab sometimes.”

“Listen, and hear,” he adds.

By caring for himself, he cares for his community. By focusing on health, he is available to his spouse, children, grandchildren and the church.



Stuart Martin holds his freestyle relay silver medal from the 1996 World Masters Invitational swim meet in Riccione, Italy.

At his meets, Martin looks forward to meeting swimmers he’s competed with around the world, to again tell stories of family and faith. So he plans to keep on watching that boring line in preparation to compete “as long as I can, because I know the benefits for my health.”

God be with you till we meet again

A Russian childhood remembered

BY ELLY TAKAKI

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

With my dear grandmother, Elsa Brush (nee Papke), celebrating her 90th birthday this year, it seemed important to record at least some of her life story. I wanted to know more about my Oma's childhood in Russia and asked if she would share some memories with me.

Elsa was born in Landskrone, Ukraine, on Feb. 14, 1919. Her German ancestors had come from Germany to Russia during the 1700s along with many Mennonites who wanted to escape pressure to take up arms and fight in wars, things that were against their pacifist doctrine.

Oma spent her early years in the village of Pordenau, where her father was the school teacher. There was no formal class for her in the school because there weren't any children her age. Oma remembers sadly how the only other girl her age died from tetanus (then called lockjaw). "She had stepped on a nail in the sheep pen," said Oma, "and I guess she suffered something terrible. The whole village helped take care of her. It was a terrible death."

Even though there was no class for her, Oma was frequently in the schoolroom

anyway. "I used to go in the classroom when I was only four or five, climb up on the lectern in the front and play in the books and stuff. And I learned a lot, you know, just being in the classroom . . ."

Oma's mother's name was Maria, but people called her by the diminutive *Marichen*. "I remember my mom putting me to bed after I fell three times in the ditch," said Oma, chuckling. "No more dry clothes!"

Nature has always been Oma's greatest joy. "I remember a lot of things about Russia. I used to love to lie in the grass. We didn't have storks on our farm, but the neighbour had a family of storks every spring on the top of their barn and I used to lie in the grass and watch those baby storks being fed by their parent and listen to the clapping sound. We used to call them *klappert*."

Everything changed when the Bolsheviks came. "Anybody that was a Bolshevik . . . could kill, rob, make people cook for you, and stay as long as you wanted." Their schoolhouse was occupied by soldiers at one time. "My mom had to cook. You had

hardly any food, but you had to give them everything you had available."

Other memories of Bolshevik soldiers were more disturbing. "They would take your wedding ring—rip them off people's fingers," Oma said. "Then, of course, my dad's brother was murdered right in the field between villages. His wife was pregnant with their eighth baby and went into labour. I don't think the baby lived."

It was around the time that Stalin took power that Oma's family left Russia. "When my dad was told he had to teach his children that there was no God and completely renounce Christianity, he said, 'Well, I can't raise my children in a place like this,'" Oma recalled. Her father began preparing to move to Canada at once. "I think in 1927 they closed the borders," said Oma. "He got us out just in time. Thank God he did."

Oma remembers being on the train as it left Russia. "When we got to Latvia—I remember it like it was yesterday—when the last step on that train came across the border, everybody on that train knelt down and thanked God, because [the soldiers] were known to stop the train if there were just a little piece of that train left in Russia," she said, describing how all the passengers sang hymn after hymn in gratitude for their safety.

One of those songs was "God Be With You Till We Meet Again," which served as a Christian goodbye, as the travellers didn't know if they would ever see loved ones again: "When life's perils thick confound you / Put his arms unfailing round you / God be with you till we meet again."

From Latvia, the family travelled to Liverpool, England, where they boarded an ocean liner on which, Oma said, they had "the cheapest passage." She recalls that her parents were seasick for the whole journey. In September 1926, they landed at Quebec City. From there, the family took a train to Essex County, Ont.

Over the years, she was reunited with friends and family she had not seen since Russia, fulfilling the promise of the hymn that was sung as they were leaving: "Till we meet, till we meet / Till we meet at Jesus' feet / God be with you till we meet again." ❧

Elly Takaki is a member of Harrow Mennonite Church, Ont.

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OBITUARY

Gifted with vision

Abe Rempel,
Oct. 3, 1931 – March 21, 2009

Mennonite Church Canada Release
WINNIPEG

Abe Rempel may have been colour-blind, but that didn't affect his insight. Through his roles as pastor, teacher, real estate agent, mentor and friend, and with his wife Hanna, Rempel dedicated his life to serving God wherever he was—in Manitoba, Mexico or Indiana.

Abram Enns Rempel died peacefully in Winnipeg on March 21 at the age of 77. His funeral, attended by more than 350 family members and friends, including representatives of the Mennonite Church in Mexico whom Rempel served with during two international assignments.

Eric Rempel said in a tribute that his father got along well despite his colour blindness. He managed to read traffic lights, and keenly developed his vision for detecting and encouraging gifts in his Christian brothers and sisters.

Born in Oak Lake, Man., Rempel grew up on the family farm. During his early years, Oak Lake church services—full-day events held in the homes of its members—instilled in him a life-long love for the church. He was baptized at Steinbach Mennonite Church, Man., and it was there that he met his future bride, Hanna Vogt. Their family grew to include four sons, Eric, Ed, Ernie and Jonathan, who died as an infant in 1970.

Although Rempel dropped out of school after Grade 9 to work on the family farm, education remained important to him. His studies included terms at Elim Bible School (Altona, Man.), Steinbach Collegiate Institute, the University of Manitoba, and Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Elkhart, Ind.).

The Rempels served in Mexico for two separate terms (1961-63 and 1991-98) with the General Conference's Commission on Overseas Mission, since succeeded by Witness in Mennonite Church Canada. These experiences significantly shaped their lives and formed friendships that

continue to this day. Rempel helped to create a school and church, pastored at Steinreich Mennonite Church, mentored young pastors, and taught at Steinreich Bible School, where enrolment grew from just a handful of local students to 70 students from all across North America.

The Rempels returned to Winnipeg in 1998 to spend more time with their family.

In Winnipeg, Rempel was lead pastor of North Kildonan Mennonite Church for 11



Rempel

years, and then, while selling real estate part-time, he pastored Northdale Mennonite Fellowship, a congregation that later became Jubilee Mennonite Church.

"He was a wise and knowledgeable teacher and church council member, and, as such, helped guide the church through formative years," said Mary Funk, family friend and a member of Northdale/Jubilee. "We pray that the spirit in which he served will continue to influence us." ❧

Yellow Page Business Directory

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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. Sponsored by the Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. For more information, call 604-850-6177. Tickets available at the door.

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

Alberta

June 10: Alberta heritage retreat at Camp Valaqua. Speakers: Erv and Marion Wiens. Music by the Corpus Christi Choir. For more information, call Kurt Janz at 403-271-7477.

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

June 13-14: Camp Valaqua 50th anniversary celebrations. For more information, call 403-637-2510 or e-mail valaqua@telusplanet.net.

Sept. 18-19: Mennopalooza! A music, worship and social gathering hosted by Trinity Mennonite Church, Calgary. All MC Alberta churches and people of all ages welcome. Battle of the Bands, baseball, arts and crafts gallery, and more. For more information, call 403-256-7157.

Saskatchewan

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)

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

June 26,27: RJC musical production of *Crazy for You*.

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

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

RJC.

Oct. 14-18: MC Canada IMPaCT.

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

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

Nov. 21: MC Saskatchewan leadership assembly.

Manitoba

June 18: Eden Foundation annual general meeting, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church. Keynote speaker: Randy Hildebrand. Winkler Evangeliums Christen Baptisten Gemeinde children's choir will perform. For more information, visit edenhealth.mb.ca.

June 20: Camp Koinonia Annual Golf Tournament.

June 25: Iron Man golf tournament. A 100-hole golf marathon at Winkler Golf Course. Proceeds to the Eden Foundation.

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

July 6-9: Family Camp at Camp Moose Lake. Contact Camps with Meaning at 204-895-2267.

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

July 25: Rekindle old friendships and make new ones at the second annual Eden Foundation Tractor Trek through Mennonite villages south of Winkler. For more information, visit edenhealth.mb.ca.

Sept. 11-14: Camp Moose Lake work days.

Sept. 12: Camp Assiniboia workathon.

Oct. 16-18: Scrapbooking retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

Oct. 24: Camp Koinonia work day.

Oct. 24, 25: Camps with Meaning celebration banquets at Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain (24) and Winkler Bergthaler (25).

Nov. 1: Camps with Meaning celebration banquet at Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

Nov. 6-8: Quilting retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

Nov. 13-15: Mini-quilting retreat at Camp Assiniboia.

Jan. 15-17: MMYO senior youth retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Jan. 22-24: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

Feb. 5-7: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Feb. 12-14: Young adult retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Ontario

May 31: Farewell for Terry Schellenberg, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, 3-5 p.m.

June 4: Sound in the Lands II presents Mennofolk concerts at Conrad Grebel University College's Great Hall and chapel, 4 p.m. to midnight.

June 5: Sound in the Lands II presents a chamber music concert at Conrad Grebel University College's Great Hall, 8 p.m. Music by Joanne Bender, Janet Peachey, Larry Warkentin, John Horst, Larry Nickel and Carol Ann Weaver.

June 6: Sound in the Lands II presents a world music collaborative concert at Conrad Grebel University's Great Hall, 8:30 p.m.

June 6: Retirement dinner for Community Justice Initiative's executive

director, Mark Yantzi, and fundraiser, Bingemans, Kitchener, 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. Dinner, square dancing, quilt auction.

June 6: MCC Ontario offers a "Training for the skill and soul of nonviolence" workshop, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., W-K United Mennonite Church, Waterloo. For more information, call Matthew Bailey-Dick at 519-745-8458.

June 7: Third annual "Shaped Noted Singing from the Harmonia Sacra" event, at 1855 Detweiler Meetinghouse, near Roseville. For more information, call Sam Steiner at 519-884-1040.

June 7: Sound in the Lands II presents a choral concert at First United Church, Waterloo, 8 p.m. Featuring Menno Singers, Rockway Collegiate choir and Soul Influence (a choral group from Zimbabwe).

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

June 12-14: Marriage Encounter weekend at Conrad Grebel University

UpComing

Free Mennofolk concerts to open Sound in the Lands festival

WATERLOO, ONT.—Free Mennofolk concerts will kick off Sound in the Lands 09, a festival and academic conference celebrating Mennonite music from around the world. The concerts, using two stages, will start on June 4 at 4 p.m. in the Conrad Grebel University College Great Hall and the chapel. The concerts will feature a variety of acclaimed and cutting edge performers from across the Mennonite spectrum—from the popular local band Moglee, whose debut CD *Recess* was ranked in the top five local albums of 2008 by the *K-W Record*, to veteran singer-songwriter Dale Nikkel, whose work has been played on radio stations from coast to coast. Musical styles vary from the experimental songwriting of The Anabaptist Bestiary Project, fronted by Trevor Bechtel, to the blend of roots, folk, Appalachian, old-time gospel and string band music of Spencer Cunningham. Other performers include Those Rowdy Corinthians, Andru Bemis, Annie James Project, The Land, Frances Miller, Blank Blue Sky, Todd Schiedel, Carol Ann Weaver, Rebecca Campbell, Mageshen Naidoo, Thandeka Mabuza, Prince Bulu, Lyle Friesen and Bob Janzen, Chuckee and the Crawdaddies, and Jeff and Marlyce Gundy.

—Sound in the Lands 09 Release

College. From 7:30 p.m. (12) to 4:30 p.m. (14). For more information, call Marjorie Roth at 519-669-8667.

June 13: United Mennonite Home, Vineland, fundraising bazaar. Garage sale, 9 a.m.; bake sale, 10 a.m.; silent auction, penny sale and barbecue lunch, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Proceeds to the purchase of a wheelchair-accessible van.

June 13: Crosshill Mennonite Church hosts Crosshill community rhubarb and rummage sale, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free barbecue from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Proceeds to MennoHomes affordable rural housing project in Wellesley and a church mission trip to Haiti.

June 13: Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario annual meeting and 30th anniversary of Brubacher House Museum, at Conrad Grebel University College Great Hall, 1:30 p.m. Speaker: Prof. Ken McLaughlin. Topic: "Saving the John E. Brubacher House: Giving the past a future."

June 14: Warden Woods Mennonite Church concludes 70 years of worship and work in southwest Scarborough with a celebration, 3 p.m. For more information, e-mail wvmc@wardenwoods.com.

June 17-20: "The end of the world as we know it—thank God" event. A national ecumenical gathering of people dreaming, praying and working for a new and better future, at the University of Waterloo. Sponsored by Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. For more information, e-mail smcglynn@kairoscanada.org.

June 18-20: Write! Canada Christian writers' conference sponsored by The Word Guild, Guelph Bible Conference Centre. Keynote speakers at this 25th annual conference include Brian Stiller, president of Tyndale University College and Seminary. Theme: "Celebrating God's blessings: Past, present and future." Classes for professional to beginning writers. Meet editors, publishers and agents from Canada and the U.S. For more information or to register, visit writecanada.org.

Aug. 8: Cornstock Music Festival at Willowgrove, Stouffville; 1 to 9 p.m. Connected to the Anabaptist community, the festival showcases young and emerging talent. Rain or shine. For more information, visit myspace.com/cornstockontario.

Aug. 20: Deadline for entries in the Pax

Christi Chorale's Great Canadian Hymn Competition. Canadian composers are invited to submit original compositions set to a hymn text. For competition rules and entry forms, visit paxchristichorale.org. Three winning compositions will be performed at Pax Christi Chorale's "Fanfare of Canadian Hymns II" concert on Oct. 25 at Grace Church on-the-Hill, Toronto.

Dec. 6: Steve Bell performs with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra, Centre in the Square, 6 p.m. Featuring music from Bell's *Symphony Sessions* CD and new arrangements of songs for Advent and Christmas.

U.S.A.

Oct. 17: Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society day-long field trip, "Trail of the Conestoga from Lancaster County to Canada." The field trip will explore the Lancaster, Pa., origins of the Mennonite immigrants to Canada around 1800. Original early pioneer homesteads, meetinghouses and

cemeteries in northern Lancaster will be visited. For more information, call 717-393-9745 or visit lmhs.org.

Paraguay

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

Ukraine

Oct. 9-11: Celebration weekend featuring the unveiling of a monument to "Mennonite victims of tribulation, Stalinist terror and religious oppression" in the main square of the one-time village of Khortitsa, Ukraine. For more information, visit mennonitememorial.org.

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

Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
June 22	June 9
<i>Focus on Children's Books & Resources</i>	
July 6	June 23
July 27	July 14
Aug. 17	Aug. 4
Sept. 7	Aug. 25
Sept. 21	Sept. 8
<i>Focus on Education</i>	
Oct. 5	Sept. 22

Classifieds Announcement

Rempel Re-union: July 31–Aug. 2, 2009. The descendents of Johann and Margaretha (Sawatsky) Rempel, immigrants to Man. in 1874, are gathering for a reunion at the Steinbach Bible College. Details at www.geocities.com/rempe1_2000.

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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.

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)
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Part-Time Music Coordinator

Emmanuel Mennonite Church is seeking a part-time music coordinator who loves to worship God through a wide variety of music, loves to work with people of all ages and backgrounds and has an understanding of Anabaptist/Mennonite Theology.

Please visit www.emmanuelmennonite.com or call 604-854-3654 for details. To apply, please send a letter of interest and resume to office@emmanuelmennonite.com or mail to: Emmanuel Mennonite Church, 3471 Clearbrook Rd., Abbotsford, BC V2T 5C1.

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Willowgrove is a Christian organization with a wide program offering which, includes Fraser Lake Camp, Glenbrook Day Camp, Willowgrove Primary School and Willowgrove Outdoor Centre. Located in Stouffville, Ont., with a second camp in Bancroft, the programs serve over 20,000 children per year with an annual budget in excess of \$1 million. A self-sustaining, non-profit organization, Willowgrove enjoys the enthusiastic volunteer and financial support of a large membership base and is affiliated with MC Eastern Canada. Willowgrove is looking for a dynamic Executive Director to build on its past success. The new Executive Director will work closely with Willowgrove's Board to:

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- Develop and participate in fundraising efforts.

The successful candidate will preferably have worked in a Christian organization, will have demonstrated success in managing a diverse organization and will have worked closely with a Board of Directors. He/she will have managed a budget and be comfortable being visible in the community, leading staff and making presentations. A strong Christian faith, including supporting the core Mennonite beliefs, and an enjoyment of working with children is a must.

Interested candidates should respond with a letter and resume in confidence to:

E-mail: WillowgrovePC@gmail.com
Attention: Chairman of the Personnel Committee

The smell of rain on dry ground

PHOTO BY INER SOUSTER



Petrichor playwright/performer Erin Brandenburg, second from right, poses with some of her collaborators, from left: Andrew Penner (musical director/performer), Iner Souster (instrument maker/set design), Gordon Bolan (musician/performer), and Jason Stephens (performer).

Brandenburg 'hatches' new play in Toronto

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Erin Brandenburg, whose play *Reesor* has been featured in the pages of *Canadian Mennonite*, workshopped her new play at "Hatch: emerging performance projects" at Harbourfront in Toronto over two days at the end of April.

Petrichor, the name of her new play, is a term that means the smell of rain on dry ground. According to Brandenburg, through lyrical storytelling, live music, movement, animation and other techniques, the performance tells the story of a family of Mennonite migrant workers and the farmers who need their labour.

She writes that it is "a story of those who inhabit our worlds, but are never permitted to call them home."

This was a company debut with a workshop presentation by Kitchen Band Productions, of which she is a major part. Brandenburg felt that those who saw and commented on the workshop were "positive, and people seem very interested to see its next incarnations."

Brandenburg then received the chance to go to the Banff Playwrights Colony, where she received more help in shaping the play. At Banff, she writes, she was given "dramaturgical support and there is a resident acting company there to do readings, but mostly it is an opportunity to focus on your writing in a beautiful setting and hopefully be inspired by your surroundings and the other artists there."

Plans are for the play to be produced sometime next year. ☘