

CANADIAN MENNONITE

July 6, 2009

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EDITORIAL

Unexamined Generosity

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Two conversations, one in the public square and one inside the Mennonite faith community, are converging to address what our main feature writer this week calls “unexamined generosity.”

“We’re not idiots. We’re adults. We can run our own society,” says Dambisa Moyo, a young Harvard/Oxford-trained economist born and raised in Zambia. Moyo, author of *Dead Aid* and a leading spokesperson in the current Toronto-based Munk Debates, has worked for both Goldman Sachs and the World Bank. She is leading a growing body of critics questioning the \$1 trillion in development-related aid given to Africa over the past 50 years by rich countries like Canada and the U.S.

The big problem with this aid is that it “disenfranchises Africans,” she insists, pointing out that African governments today depend on foreign aid for 70 percent of their budgets. “There’s no accountability to the people. Even if governments don’t do their job, they can stay in power because they are underwritten by the donor community.”

Sounding a similar note, but on a much smaller scale and with much gentler language, Mennonite Central Committee board member Elizabeth Soto Albrecht is not in favour of transferring international components to the U.S. and Canada. She spoke out at a summit meeting in Hillsboro, Kansas last month that culminated MCC’s “New Wine, New Wineskins” process involving more than

2,000 persons from 50 countries over an 18-month period.

“International program requires a structure and entity of its own,” she said as one of the few dissenters. “It should be kept apart, not placed with any [country].” (see Paul Schag’s story on p.14-15)



Albrecht’s welcome dissent in our faith community tracks, not surprisingly, with Moyo’s more forceful objection to what foreign aid has done in the political arena. Albrecht’s objection is that MCC’s \$36.7 million-a-year operation, working in 65 different countries, should not try and do an international program from its usual power centres, the U.S. or Canada.

MCC is to be commended for taking a fresh look at how it does ministry, something it hasn’t done for 30 years, notes Arli Klassen, a Canadian who now heads the US operations in Akron. The review was a costly venture, having a budget of \$600,000 and enlisting the cooperation and input of many stakeholders worldwide. Yes “there is tension,” Klassen told me in telephone conversation. “You can’t bring together 12 separate boards and attempt to get a unified voice on significant issues without it.”

She worries that “there will be any substantive change in this post-colonial era.” She dares to hope, though, that acting as the body of Christ in this new call from the worldwide church to MCC, a new form will emerge that shares ownership with the global Anabaptist family. She is herself a proponent of not locating the

new power centre in one of the super power countries.

It is an extremely delicate process. Klassen and her colleagues need our prayers as they find their way. Robert Kreider is right when he calls MCC “one of the most beloved of all programs that our people have.” Where we have disagreed in theology and practice, often contentiously, we seem to come together over the quilt, the school kit, the meat-canneries and in thrift shops. What a marvellous sense of unity has been established on these common grounds.

It is our prayer that this same spirit prevails as the MCC decision-makers shape their ministry for a new era. As both Moyo and Albrecht remind us, the world has and is changing rapidly. As citizens of super powers with regular disclaimers as “peacemakers” and as members of a faith community that has always held a counter worldview regarding these “powers,” we are uniquely equipped to be ahead of the curve in entering this new era.

Klassen is on the right track as she looks to Mennonite World Conference, meeting next week in Asuncion, Paraguay, to take the initiative by convening the various global bodies under its umbrella in fashioning both the vision and the structures of MCC.



Check the Canadian Mennonite blog site <http://canadianmennonite.org/blog/> for my regular on-site reporting from Asuncion, July 14-19.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Amós López, a Cuban pastor and music leader presents Latin American worship music at the Sound in the Lands conference held at Conrad Grebel University College from June 4-8.

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

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

Canada

CANADIAN MENNONITE

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5

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Web site: canadianmennonite.org

Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Obituaries: Karen Suderman, obituaries@canadianmennonite.org

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

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

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The president of an Atlanta-based urban ministries asks us to take a closer look at the unintended consequences of our many mission trips. Not only does the writer ask North American Christians to take a more critical look at what he calls "religious tourism," he documents the fact that while these short-term excursions have increased dramatically over the past two decades, support of long-term missionaries has declined.

A place to belong 13

In keeping with their new name, Mennonite Women Canada, writer Mylene Melancon, focuses on the expanded activities of women in several Quebec congregations—inspirational programs highlighting spiritual formation, sharing missionary experiences and starting a supportive ministry for widows in Burkina Faso and Nigeria called Dorcas.

MCC pours out 'new wine' 14

Meetinghouse writer Paul Schrag sums up the 18-month process Mennonite Central Committee has dubbed "New Wine, New Wineskins," asking the question: Who is the keeper of the MCC soul? One proposal is to break up the U.S.-based central office into mini-MCC centres around the globe.

Living in the dark 20

A Mennonite pastor, Bruce Wiebe, comes clean in his struggle with depression, admitting that he first tried to hide it, but then found redeeming acceptance and help in working with his congregation in dealing with it. In a three-month leave of absence, he "learned to sit in silence, often in darkness," to discover that God was very present in his life.

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AIDEN ENNS

New blog postings

at canadianmennonite.org/blog/

The translator who knows neither language: **WILL LOEWEN**

Writing (again?): **REBECCA JANZEN**

Meditation on wandering thoughts: **CHERYL WOELK**

Summer Jobs: **REBECCA JANZEN**

'Vacationary season' is upon us

The easy charity of some well-meaning 'religious tourists' is creating a new kind of welfare state.

BY ROBERT LUPTON

*'People say, "Why should we borrow money when the churches give it to us?"'
(Juan Ulloa)*

"They're turning my people into beggars!" It was a painful accusation for Juan Ulloa to make. He was a churchman, after all. An elder. With loyalty to the household of faith. But when asked the question directly, he could not lie.

I had pressed him on the relationship of his micro-lending organization to the churches of Nicaragua. Ulloa was the executive director of a Christian micro-finance ministry that made many thousands of small loans to Nicaraguan peasants. It seemed to me a reasonable inquiry to understand how they worked together with local churches. Hesitantly at first, he explained that there were entire sections of the country where his loan officers could not make any loans at all. These were the regions where a concentration of churches from North America conducted their mission trips. "People say, 'Why should we borrow money when the churches give it to us?'"

The people were right, of course. What peasant scratching out a bare existence could refuse suitcases bulging with new clothing for his family? What struggling pastor could resist the temptation to accept a steady salary and generous church income in exchange for hosting visitors, organizing volunteer work and staffing funded programs? What village would borrow

ISTOCKPHOTO



money to dig a well or buy books for their school library—or save money to build a church—if these things were provided for them free of charge?

If all they had to do was make their wish lists, show up for the schedule arranged by the donors, and smile graciously until their benefactors head back home, who would blame them for accepting this easy charity?

Now Ulloa was not blaming his people for becoming beggars. He was faulting the affluent, well-meaning North American church for its unexamined generosity. His accusations, now pouring forth with considerable force, were directed at naïve “vacationaries” who spend millions of dollars travelling to his country, perform work that locals could better do for themselves, and who create a welfare economy that deprives a people of the pride of their own accomplishments—all in the name of “Christian service.” The unintended consequences of such mission work was undoing the very

vision Ulloa had given his life to: helping his people emerge from poverty through training, entrepreneurship, saving and hard work.

For some reason, North American churches, filled with results-oriented members, seem oblivious to the abysmal outcomes of many, if not most, mission trips. Perhaps because it feels so good to be giving to those so much worse off, or

But in fairness to our North American churches, many of our motives are noble. We want to excite our members about missions.

because unconditional serving seems so Christ-like, the North American church embraces with great pride an unexamined form of charity that, unfortunately, creates unhealthy dependency, erodes a work ethic, and does not elevate people out of poverty. Yet, in the name of Christ, we perpetuate this very welfare principle in the way we do missions. And the trend

is growing!

A Princeton University study found that in 2005 alone, 1.6 million U.S. church members took mission trips—an average of eight days each—at a cost of \$2.4 billion US. And the number has grown every year since. “Religious tourism,” as some call it, has become a growth industry. The Internet is full of agencies—denominational and para-

church—ready to connect churches to a “meaningful mission experience” in an exotic location rife with human need. The Bahamas, for example, receives one short-term missionary for every 15 residents.

More scornful critics point to the make-work nature of many missions trips. Like the wall built on an orphanage

soccer field in Brazil that had to be torn down after the visitors left. And the church in Mexico that was painted six times during one summer by six different missions groups. And the church in Ecuador built by volunteers that was never used because the community said it was not needed.

But in fairness to our North American churches, many of our motives are noble. We want to excite our members about missions. We want to expose youths and adults to the needs of a hurting

As a matter of fact, while short-term mission trips have increased dramatically over the past two decades, support of long-term missionaries has declined.

world. We want to engage our people in life-changing experiences. We desire deeply to obey the teachings of Christ to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, show compassion to the oppressed and spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. But because we view missions through the lens of our church—that is, what will benefit our people the most, what will be most rewarding for us, what will appeal the most to our members—we neglect to consider what is in the best interests of those we would serve.

How we serve is equally important as who we serve. Take the well that my church dug for a rural Honduran village. The remote peasant community needed water. The obvious solution: dig them a well. There was great celebration when the first water was pumped to the surface and villagers filled their jugs with cold, pure water. But when our “vacationaries” returned the following year, the pump was idle and locals were again carrying water from a distant supply. We repaired the pump. But by the time we returned the following year it had broken down again. This happened repeatedly year after year. The village simply waited until their benefactors returned.

Compare this experience to the remote mountain village in Nicaragua where a different strategy was employed. A community developer, recruited from the U.S. and supported by Ulloa’s micro-lending organization, assisted the residents in

creating a plan for a much-needed well. She arranged financing conditional upon villagers investing their own money from their meagre savings. She then connected them with a reliable Nicaraguan engineer, and helped them organize a water commission to set fees, collect water bills, manage finances and maintain their new utility. Village men provided all the labour, digging trenches, laying water lines and setting 250 metres.

When the pump was switched on and water surged to the homes, the village

erupted with pride. Their water supply, they soon learned, was abundant—sufficient to allow them to sell water to the adjacent village. They now owned and managed a wealth-producing asset. The lesson: Never deprive people of the satisfaction of doing for themselves.

“Above all, do no harm.” It’s the bottom line of the Hippocratic Oath that has guided the conduct of physicians for centuries. It is time for the North American church to apply the same principle.

Postscript

Some believe that short-term missions trips whet the appetite for long-term mission involvement. Research does not support this claim, however.

In spite of all the moving testimonies of “life-changing experiences” by returning short-termers and the occasional example of full-time missionaries who point to a mission trip as the catalyst for their calling, there is no evidence that missions as a whole has benefitted. As a matter of fact, while short-term mission trips have increased dramatically over the past two decades, support of long-term missionaries has declined.

Strangely, the correlation seems to be inverse. Perhaps because we have spent so lavishly on “religious tourism” we feel that our financial responsibility to missions has been discharged. Or is it that long-term missionaries do not serve the immediate self-interest of our church? ❧

Robert Lupton is president of FCS Urban Ministries, based in Atlanta, Ga. The article was originally published in the January/February 2009 issue of The Marketplace.

❧ For discussion

1. What are some of the short-term mission trips that your families or congregations have been involved in? How have these experiences changed people’s lives? What is the primary purpose of short-term mission trips? Why are they so popular?
2. Lupton tells the story of a village that did not maintain its well because it was easier to wait for more aid. Do you know of other situations where people have become dependent on outside aid? How can mission trips avoid the pitfall of fostering unhealthy dependencies? Do you think learning tours are a better option?
3. Lupton says that the outcomes of many short-term mission trips are “abysmal.” Do you think he is being too harsh? Do Mennonite organizations do a good job in considering the outcome for the recipients? What are some other examples of generosity that can harm rather than benefit the recipients?
4. Has your congregation ever been part of an exchange with a Mennonite congregation in another part of the world? How might this type of partnership be different from the mission trips that Lupton describes?

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.

✉ Epp underestimates global warming

RE: "THE SCIENCE of environmental care," June 22, page 17. I appreciate your continuing series on environmental concerns. I think this article by Henry Epp seriously underestimates the dangers of global warming. Epp even writes that, "Global warming has stopped

for now." Whilst 1998 was the hottest year on record so far, the years since have been significantly hotter than the average of the previous century. Global warming has not stopped. The earth and seas are warming fast and human activities are the principal cause.

The governments and hundreds of scientists who participated in the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report have concluded that, "Warming of the climate system is unequivocal," and that the contribution towards this warming from human-related greenhouse gas emissions is ten times that of all natural causes like variations in solar radiation. The prestigious international medical journal, *The Lancet*, has recently concluded, "Climate change is the biggest global health threat of the 21st century."

In Epp's article, the only consequence of global warming that he mentions is the movement of ecological boundaries. What about the European heat wave of 2003 that killed thousands, permanent droughts in formerly glacier-fed river valleys, the growing number of high intensity storms like Katrina, and the rising sea levels drowning coast-lands and cities?

To mitigate these threats, we must reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions, educate those around us, and together demand concerted and urgent action on carbon emissions from our governments.

—DOUG PRITCHARD, TORONTO

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Bob Reist	2
Arden Snyder Sr.	2
Leo Weber	2
Henry Weber	1
Henry Weber	2
John Weber	3
David Weber	2
John Weber	2
John Weber	3
John Weber	4
David Weber	2
Edward Weber	2
Daniel Weber	1
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John Weber	1
John Weber	1
John Weber	2

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✉ MC Canada deficit not connected with U.S. Mennonite Mission Network

I am responding to the article in the June 22 issue of Canadian Mennonite entitled “MC Canada reports a \$200,000 deficit.” Since I am the main source of information for this article, I would like to correct certain points. The article makes an incorrect inference about MC Canada’s current deficit when it states that it is “due primarily to fewer grants from partner agencies for shared ministry with such partners as Mennonite Mission Network (MMN).” Mennonite Mission Network forwarded the full amount of their commitment to MC Canada for fiscal year 2008-09 and in no

way contributed to our deficit.

On a year-over-year comparison, grants to and from MC Canada Witness and MMN have decreased, but these reductions have been fully negotiated and budgeted for as part of our joint planning for shared ministries. I noted in both my Assembly presentation and printed report, that MC Canada’s deficit was the result of reductions in donation and bequest revenue totalling \$157,711 and an investment loss of 8.9% totalling approximately \$98,324. These factors, partially offset by some late-year under-expenditures, resulted in the deficit.

We are also not aware that “the heavier MMN losses on the U.S. side contributed inadvertently to

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Know Thyself

PHIL WAGLER

I was a chubby kid. Oh, I could score a few goals in a hockey game, but I keenly remember the haunting taunts of “Philsbury Dough Boy.” There were days I would have loved to crush some of my tormentors beneath my fresh-baked buns—if only I could have caught up to them.

The impact of those pre-teen days of identity mutilation took years to overcome. It wasn’t until a crisis moment and spiritual awakening in my late teens that I wiggled free from those traps of mocking and scoffing. I came to know that what God thought of me, how he defined me, was what mattered most. I was to be labelled by grace and mercy. My Creator was no mean Joker. In fact, he had a plan that required my redefinition, the knowing of myself not in the mirror, but in the redeemed reflection of my Saviour and Friend. We do as we believe we are.

Now turn the corner with me from the self to the community. Churches have self-identities too. Furthermore, these self-identities are crucial in their understanding of mission, purpose, and their relationship to their world.

I don’t have the definitive word on the myriad of self-identities churches live with, but I do note from my experience

these broad categories:

Wounded churches: Beat up by cultural or social circumstances, internal strife, or relational issues gone bad, these churches are limping along, believing they have nothing to offer. They are introspective, cloistered, over-sensitive, and prone to knee-jerk reactions. They need to be loved, reminded of their true identity so their woundedness can be transformed into mission and ministry to a wounded world.

Stubborn churches: Shaped by a haughty spirit



I came to know that what God thought of me, how he defined me, was what mattered most.

that is sure of its rightness, these churches lack a spirit of submission, teachability and surrender. They are prone to chew up leaders, those not like them, and are reticent to change. They are shaped by strong personalities, recurring powerplays, and a refusal to see where God is at work and to move in that direction. They need to be challenged, confronted, and called to repentance so their stubbornness can become a holy strength.

Wishy-washy churches: Shaped by the desire to please and be liked, these churches fall prey to the latest fads and

philosophies. They are well-meaning and often very intelligent, but become anchorless, floundering ships on the tossing waves of cultural drift. They need to be grounded in truth and taught to contend for the faith. They must read their culture biblically instead of reading their Bibles culturally. They have great strength to offer but need to build on the sure foundation.

Blind churches: Like the Pharisees of Jesus’ rebuke, these churches adore righteousness in religious garb, but don’t see that they often contradict the message with their mediums. They live a culturalized Christianity that has long abandoned any transforming power. They cherish the packaging, but have forgotten the product. These churches need their

religiosity refined by the fire and freedom of the Holy Spirit that enables them to see more clearly and trust more wildly.

What is the self-identity of your fellowship? You do have one and it’s shaping your mission, ministry, and purpose. What good, bad, and ugly has shaped it? Where do you, like a plump little boy, need the One who gives our true identity?

Phil Wagler is lead pastor of Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite and Kingsfield-Clinton churches in Ontario and the author of the new book, Kingdom Culture

the Canadian contribution level,” as indicated in the article. Until the end of October 2008, MC Canada’s donation revenue was ahead of projections. The sudden drop in the last months of the year, coupled with investment income losses, presented some difficulties. However, the financial situation was well monitored and controlled by last-minute efforts to reduce expenditures at year-end.

—RANDY WIEBE, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE,
MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA

✉ Editorial affirmed with German grammar correction

I AGREE WHOLEHEARTEDLY with your editorial in the June 22 edition. Allow me to draw attention to your use of the German phrase “Die Stille im Lande.” As you write it, it would translate into English as “The Quietness in the Land.” I believe you want to say, “The Quiet Ones in the Land” which in German means “Die Stillen im Lande.”

—PAUL PENNER SR., TORONTO

NEW ORDER VOICE

Try McLenin’s

BY AIDEN ENNS

If communism is bankrupt and capitalism is inherently exploitative, what’s a caring soul to do? Try on a new outfit, maybe?

My brother gave me a T-shirt he got from his trip to Ukraine. It looks like it’s a “McDonald’s” shirt—big red square with golden arches. Only in this case, the shirt has the name “McLenin’s” on it. In case there’s any doubt as to which Lenin, it has the iconic profile of the leader of the 1917 Soviet revolution.

One day this month I decided to wear the shirt as an experiment. (With my new beard and strong Russian features, some say I now resemble left-wing revolutionaries.) When I got to work that day, I went down to the office to



get our mail. I met the building supervisor and was all embarrassed. “Gosh, I’m wearing a communist shirt, what will he think?” I flailed my arms as I greeted him, trying to hide the image on my chest.

Then at noon, I rode my bike to Winnipeg’s North End where I joined my partner for lunch. As I entered the drop-in centre where she works, I didn’t think at all about the shirt. “Lenin,” somebody yelled out, “Wasn’t he a communist?” In spite of the attention, I didn’t feel embarrassed, I engaged this person on the topic. Must have been because the folks in

this neighbourhood are mostly working poor (perhaps they are the proletariat or modern-day peasants).

Later that evening, I joined a discussion group on the philosopher Georgio Agamben, who’s now popular among some anti-capitalist activists because of his Marxist assumptions, aesthetic tendencies and ability to decipher state oppression—or so I gather. When I sat down with five others around the small dining room table, I was hyper-aware of my “Lenin” T-shirt. There was no nuance in my attire. It was like, “Oh, we’re studying Marx? I better put my communist

Most of us are living one step removed from reality

shirt on so I fit in.” That’s so obvious. I felt like a dork.

The T-shirt experiment was a lesson for me: identity is determined largely by context. That is, it is socially constructed. This can liberate or oppress, disturb or pacify. And it’s not just clothing. Identity constructs, such as race, class or gender, can unify, but also exclude. They can add problematic layers to our perceptions.

I’m convinced that most of us are living one step removed from reality. Our things—or maybe our ownership of things—impede our direct perception of

that which brings joy. Walter Brueggemann writes in *The Prophetic Imagination* that those who benefit from the spoils of a rich empire will feel numb, and their “experience will not be experienced.”

As a middle-class, car-driving homeowner, I feel alienated from my neighbour and the natural world around me. I am wrapped in a clingy-ness that impedes my appreciation for all that life has to offer. This is where the gospel haunts me, seduces me.

Jesus offered abundant life to all. Those on the margins were most receptive. But those, like myself, in the ownership (or moneyed) classes have a system of perception which cannot surrender to the splendour of communitarian living or concrete inter-dependence. What exactly is the message of the gospel for a world of economic disparity?

I’m convinced that there is salvation

from this bondage to things and the never-quite-satisfying world they represent to us. There is salvation from my sense of isolation from my neighbour and my food.

This is why I flirt with my identity as a capitalist. It helps disturb my system of perception. Maybe it can crack open my clingy-ness and allow the good news to become attractive again.

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

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Fast—Clayton Kenneth (b. June 2, 2009), to Ken and Beth Fast, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Friesen—Luke Beckham (b. May 5, 2009), to Ryan and Candice Friesen, Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man.

Froese—Alan (b. March 21, 2009), to Rudolf and Adela Froese, Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Froese—Jacob Joseph Gunnar (b. May 29, 2009), to Daniel and Sarah Froese, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Goertzen—Caleb David (b. June 1, 2009), to David and Katrina Goertzen, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C.

Kehler—Mya (b. Jan. 14, 2009), to Ken and Nicole Kehler, Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Kropf—Blake David and Dana Christine (b. April 22, 2009), to Derek and Christine Kropf, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Lepp—Tia Celia (b. April 21, 2009), to Mark and Erica (Liu) Lepp, Bethany Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Penner—Kate Elsa (b. May 7, 2009), to Alfred and Vicky Penner, Crossroads Community Church, Chilliwack, B.C.,

Rea—Grace Karen Chantel (b. May 6, 2009), to Adam and Candace Rea, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Wieler—Theo Evan (b. May 7, 2009), to Heidi and Richard Wieler, Ottawa Mennonite.

Baptisms

Norman Lichty, Warren Hayes—Brussels Mennonite, Ont., June 14, 2009.

Lisa Rempel Boschman, Kristy DeFehr, Anthony Dyck, Jared Enns, Becky Epp, Bethany Kampen, Danielle Kampen, Danielle Kasdorf, Dallas Krahn, Emily Martens, Riley Morwick, Devin Ollinger, Jeff Peters, Josh Pries—Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 14.

Jordan Mahara, Jesse Mahara—Elim Mennonite, Grunthal Man., May 31, 2009.

Maisie Friesen, Yolanda Giesbrecht, Jessica Friesen, Madyson Paetkau—Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 24, 2009.

Matthew Dyck, Howard Petkau, Eric Dalke—Morden Mennonite, Man., June 14, 2009.

Caterina Wiens, Joshua Baergen—Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 24, 2009.

Jesse Wilms, Ryan Krugel—Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 31, 2009.

Curtis Friesen, Bianca Hiebert, Norbert Hiebert, Shantelle Kotz, Britney Quiring, Deanna Rempel, Perrin Zacharias—North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 31, 2009.

Ally Siebert, Heather Shantz—Ottawa Mennonite, May 31, 2009.

Ben Smith, John Spanjer—St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., May 31, 2009.

Tim Dueck—Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., June 14, 2009.

Marriages

Bergen/Eady—Jennifer Bergen and David Eady, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 22, 2009.

Cyr/Harris—Rachel Cyr and Tyler Harris, at Ottawa Mennonite, June 6, 2009.

DeVries/Federau—Fred DeVries and Trudy Federau (Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg), June 5, 2009.

Dyck/Schellenberg—Gerhard Dyck and Dorothy Schellenberg, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., April 24, 2009.

Enns/Holmes—Chelsea Enns and Nowell Holmes, Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man., May 8, 2009.

Fransen/Sawatzky—Matthew Fransen and Amy Sawatzky, Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., June 13, 2009.

Friesen/Sawatzky—Scott Friesen (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Kendra Sawatzky (Steinbach Mennonite, Man.), at Steinbach Mennonite, June 6, 2009.

Letkeman/Meakin—Kaylee Letkeman and Robert Meakin, Morden Mennonite, Man., at Lower Fort Garry, Man., June 6, 2009.

Pauls/Peters—Renee Pauls and Kyle Peters, Morden Mennonite, Man., June 6, 2009.

Peters/RoeóVictor—Peters (Glenlea Mennonite, Man.) and Kristine Roe, at Trinity Baptist Church, Winnipeg, May 9, 2007.

Ramsahai/Zvanovec—Nathan Ramsahai and Amanda Zvanovec, Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont., June 6, 2009.

Deaths

Agerbak—Lorna (nee Sawatzky), 38 (d. May 19, 2009), Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Barkovsky—Agatha (nee Tiessen), 98 (b. March 7, 1911; d. May 7, 2009), Erie View United Mennonite, Port Rowan, Ont.

Bergen—Jake H., 83 (d. May 25, 2009), Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Enns—John, 88 (b. July 12, 1920; d. May 21, 2009), Nairn Mennonite, Ailsa Craig, Ont.

Enns—Peter H., 81, (b. July 12, 1927; d. April 29, 2009), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Dyck—Muriel, 72 (d. June 6, 2009), Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.

Froese—Robert, 63 (d. May 67, 2009), Ottawa Mennonite.

Hamm—Anna (nee Wiens) 93 (b. April 20, 1916; d. May 24, 2009), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Goertzen—Louise (nee Thiessen), 83 (b. Sept. 7, 1925; d. May 20, 2009), Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta.

Jansen—Linda (nee Schulz), 89 (b. July 24, 1919; d. May 4, 2009), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Janzen—Jake K., 81 (b. April 23, 1928; d. May 31, 2009),

Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Krahn—David, 79 (b. Aug. 19, 1929; d. June 6, 2009), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Kroeker—Heinrich B, 91 (b. April 17, 1918; d. April 29, 2009), Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Lebtog—Kurt, 84 (b. Dec. 29, 1924; d. April 26, 2009), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Neufeld—Jacob P, 77 (d. May 15, 2009), Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask.

Neufeld—Maria (nee Berg), 93 (b. Jan. 3, 1915; d. June 3, 2009), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Pankratz—Henry, 76 (b. March 26, 1933; d. June 1, 2009), W-K United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Penner—Anganetha (Nettie), 98 (b. Feb. 22, 1911; d. April 4, 2009), Altona Mennonite, Man.

Reimer—Herta, 72 (b. July 23, 1936; d. June 5, 2009), W-K United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Suckau—Lothar, 74 (b. May 30, 1934; d. April 10, 2009),

Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Thiessen—Cornelius, 96 (b. March 15, 1913; d. May 20, 2009), Tofield Mennonite, Alta.

Toews—David, 80 (b. Oct. 16, 1928; d. April 21, 2009), Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Wall—Frank, 80 (b. Oct. 2, 1928; d. April 17, 2009), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Wideman—Clare, 71 (b. Feb. 21, 1938; d. May 29, 2009), Valleyview Mennonite, London, Ont.

Willms—Anna (nee Baergen), 90 (b. Oct. 17, 1918; d. May 19, 2009), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

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

Pontius' Puddle



Briefly noted

Mennonites tied to alleged mass rape

A South American Mennonite community with historical ties to Manitoba was the scene last week of allegations of a shocking mass rape, according to the June 29 edition of the *Winnipeg Sun*. Eight men from the small farming community of Manitoba, Bolivia—named after the Keystone Province, where the residents' ancestors came from—were arrested last Monday and charged with drugging and raping at least 60 women and girls as young as 11 years old. The men, aged 18 to 41, are accused of sneaking into homes, drugging the women using an aerosol spray and sexually assaulting them. The news agency Reuters reported earlier this week that a Bolivian federal prosecutor said the rapes may have been occurring for the past 10 years.

"People are just shocked," said Hans Werner, an assistant professor of history at the University of Winnipeg and an expert in Mennonite history. Werner said he stays in professional contact with members of the more conservative Mennonite community and that they are among those who were shocked to get the news. Werner said he has never heard of anything like this occurring in a Mennonite community before.

The Bolivian community of Manitoba is a farming town of about 2,000 located in the country's southeastern plains. Werner said conservative Mennonites here in Manitoba were being pressured by the provincial government on education and other issues during the First World War and one group left the country and set off to establish the community of Manitoba, Mexico, in the mid-1920s.

Misleading headline

In Donita Wiebe-Neufeld's story, June 22, page 26, a misleading headline indicated that Alberta Mennonites opposed provincial Bill 44, an incorrect reading of what happened. Rather, Mennonite educators saw no reason to put the right of a parent to exempt a child from certain classes under human rights legislation when that right already exists under section 50.2 of the Alberta School Act. The *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the misrepresentation. Ms. Wiebe-Neufeld did not write the headline.

STORIES OF FAITH IN LIFE

Wrapped in the comforter

BY JACK DUECK

After opening prayer, church board chair Henry Wiebe* announced, “The church’s young people have some suggestions for our proposed Bible conference next May. Welcome, tell us what’s on your mind.”

Youth leader Helen Thiessen responded with, “Thanks for meeting with us. After the church board announced that John’s Gospel would be the text for the Bible conference, the young people all agreed to read it. We’re excited about the powerful stories, but feel the traditional Bible conference format is not enough.”

“But the Bible conferences have had large attendance and been a great spiritual blessing” retorted David Wilms.

“But why only preaching?” Thiessen asked.

Deacon Rempel piped up, “Once we neglect preaching, we neglect God’s written word. Why bring in other ways to replace Bible sermons?”

Jake Kornelson jumped in. “Although the Bible says Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, it does not mean that our methods must remain static.”

“Cool it, Jake” Thiessen said, interrupting Kornelson. “We’re not opposed to preaching. It’s just that John’s Gospel has much more than sermons. The Mennonite Chautauqua-style *Bibelbesprechungen* were good for those times, but we’ve all noticed that attendance has dwindled and that young people seldom attend. Most of John’s stories do not take place in the synagogue. A festival could depict how the ‘good news’ showed up in all parts of daily living. Not only people sitting in rows listening to

one orator.”

“Well, Helen, what are some formats you propose in featuring John’s Gospel over a three day weekend?” Wiebe asked.

“Reading the gospel, we thought wow! It really is a celebration of the ‘good news’ throughout society,” Thiessen replied, “So, why not call it ‘A Festival of the Word’? We noted how, in John’s Gospel, the ‘Word became flesh’ through Jesus in the synagogue, the marketplace, over food, roadside debates, weddings, parties, and, yes, pungent preaching—in all the public places. So why not invite poets, song-writers, good preachers, actors, artists, cooks, musicians, to really feature John’s Gospel? Celebration could give us a sense of the incarnation among us.”

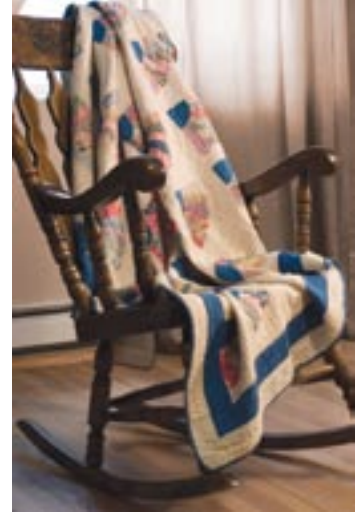
And so in late May—on lilac-scented church and Bible academy grounds—a three-day “Festival of the Word” buzzed with the gospel’s themes: Quiet rooms were set aside for early morning Bible study; there was vibrant preaching on John 3:16, along with original poetry readings, songs and skits; food booths were kept busy; and, as finale, a choir and orchestra performed Bach’s *Passion According to St. John*.

The most effective surprises were the so-called “Jesus intrusions” into all aspects of the festival. Carefully crafted skits erupted in seeming spontaneity: At the lemonade stand “Jesus” offers drink so people will no longer thirst; an “idiot” talking to a tree soon has spectators gathered, then “Zaccheus” drops to the

ground and offers to host “Jesus” at dinner; on sidewalks actors debate “Jesus”; at the bake sale tent, “Jesus” shouts, “*Why spend your money for that which is not bread?*” At the T-shirt booth, he tips the table, spilling the cash; angry leaders warn people not to listen to him, for “he is of the devil. How can he say he is here to raise the dead?”

Nettie and Harold Wiens’ young Sunday School students designed posters depicting themes in John’s Gospel. In all the noise and bustle, a withdrawn, unsmiling Melissa meticulously sketches

ISTOCKPHOTO BY CAROL GERING



a poster of a quilt. After reviewing the completed posters, Nettie complimented Melissa’s beautiful work, but wondered how it relates to John’s Gospel.

“Jesus said, I’m going to leave you,” replied Melissa, only seven years old, “but don’t be sad, he said, because I’ll give you a comforter.”

The posters were mounted in the large vestibule of the church. On Sunday morning, an elderly woman stopped in front of Melissa’s poster, her eyes tear-stained. “My granddaughter designed this poster,” she said proudly. Her mother died of cancer a year ago. At bedtime, wrapping Melissa in a quilt on her lap, they used to read and imagine stories, sing songs. The time always concluded by her mother ritualistically tucking Melissa in the quilt for cuddled sleep.

‘Jesus said, I’m going to leave you, but don’t be sad . . . because I’ll give you a comforter.’

“When her mother died, Melissa dropped into unreachable depression, ate little, groaned in fevered dreams. Then I remembered the quilt scenario. And so each night I again wrapped her in the quilt and rocked her, humming her favourite songs. One evening—after her class had been studying John’s Gospel—she murmured, “This is my Jesus comforter.” ❧

All names are pseudonyms. E-mail Jack Dueck at eajdueck@gmail.com or visit him online at jackdueck.com.

MENNONITE WOMEN CANADA

— A place to belong —

WOMEN WALKING
TOGETHER IN FAITH

Mennonite Women Canada (MW Canada) is the new and more inclusive name for Canadian Women in Mission (CWM). It was favoured by more than two-thirds of the women at the annual meeting in Saskatoon on June 5.

Inspirational days a “blessed ministry” in Quebec

BY MYLÈNE MELANÇON

I often say that Quebec is altogether in a different time zone. In 2005, after studying at Canadian Mennonite University in Manitoba for three years, I was anxious to come back to a predominantly French-speaking setting. I had been immersed in a rich Mennonite culture, living in a strong Christian community, but now I really didn't know what to expect going back home. One might think that being born and raised in Quebec would have been enough to ease me back in, but not quite! Quebec's Mennonite culture is somewhat “younger” than western Canada's. We still struggle for a certain respect and possibility to share our faith in a “secular” society.

So, given that there are only three Mennonite Church Canada churches in Quebec, and that the Mennonite women's concerns group has been closed for a while, Mennonite Brethren churches have helped bridge the gap between women of different denominations.

Fortunately, God's grace is infinite and so in 2006 I had the pleasure to meet with four wonderful women who had recently started organizing events for women in our congregations: Jeannine Lambert, Yolande Bourdages, Johanne Chalifoux and our missionary/guest speaker, Soula Isch. Our little “mostly Mennonite” committee ranges from age 28 to 80ish. In addition to sharing a passion to serve in a women's ministry, we have struck a fast friendship, as most of us knew each other long before starting this endeavor. We meet monthly to share in our faith and of course, to plan our bi-annual events.

Last March, we had our third inspirational day around the theme, “A life that matters.” Soula and her daughter, Lucia (also doing missionary work in Nigeria), shared an uplifting testimony that one doesn't necessarily have to go abroad to serve God and that in our everyday life

work we can find true meaning to our lives.

Even though at times we still wonder if we are truly meeting the needs of today's women, we were comforted to count no less than 75 women attending the retreat! Last fall we had a retreat in a beautiful area called the Laurentian, and again, 50 women shared an uplifting time.

Through our gatherings, we have also been supporting a ministry, Dorcas, which Soula Isch started in 2006. Having lost her husband a few years back, Soula had a special concern for widows wherever she was traveling. Although she could sympathize with widows in Canada and Europe, she was overwhelmed by the situation of widows in Africa. They were completely left to themselves, resource-less, facing hard choices to keep on taking care of their family.

In early 2006, during a missionary trip to Burkina Faso, she wanted to take the time during her conference, to get to know some widows who were attending—wanting to learn to know their names and listen to their stories. She was struck as there were more than hundreds present at her speaking event. God put in her heart a desire to do more for them, not just to listen and to pray, but somehow to become their ambassador, their voice. Proverb 31:8-9 spoke to her: “*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy*”

And so was born Dorcas, a ministry where through fund-raising of a different type, widows—first in Burkina Faso, but now also in Nigeria—can learn how to manage micro-loans and start small businesses such as herding goats or making pottery.

In Quebec, over the last three years we have raised over \$5000. We share pictures and prayers that Soula brings to us from her different travels, and we get back pictures and testimonies of widows she has visited.

We believe that women attending our events and supporting this ministry have felt blessed to encourage one another and also our sisters overseas. ❧

The writer currently attends a Mennonite Brethren congregation. She is married, the mother of a young son and teaches English as a second language.



The retreat organizing committee (from left): Yolande Bourdages, Jeannine Lambert, Soula Isch, Johanne Chalifoux, Mylène Melançon (writer).

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

MCC pours out 'new wine'

With revised vision and structure, organization seeks closer partnerships with churches around the world

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHRAG

For Meetinghouse
HILLSBORO, KAN.

During its most extensive review in 30 years Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) leaders asked big questions, such as "Who is the keeper of the MCC soul?" To find the answers, they convened 60 meetings, involving more than 2,000 people from 50 countries over 18 months. The result was a plan for change in an organization that elder historian and former MCC worker Robert Kreider, on June 6, called "one of the most beloved of all programs

that our people have."

The changes—approved by the MCC Binational board, which met on June 5 and 6 at Hillsboro Mennonite Brethren Church—aim to clarify MCC's vision, simplify its structure and make it a closer partner with Anabaptist churches around the world.

The meeting brought near to an end a process MCC called "New Wine, New Wineskins." The review sought to prescribe a structure ("wineskin") and define a vision ("wine") for a future of emerging global equality, rather than North American domination.

The plan calls for restructuring MCC into a system of interdependent national or multinational agencies. It redefines MCC as "a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches." This expands upon MCC's long-time definition as a ministry of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Canada and the United States.

"We have worldwide program, but we don't have worldwide ownership," said John Stoesz, executive director of MCC Central States. "This opens up those possibilities."

Participants used words such as "momentous" and "historic" to describe the



Marguerite Jack, Mennonite Church Canada representative on the MCC Binational board, left, and MCC executive director Arli Klassen enjoy a lighter moment during board meetings in Hillsboro, Kan., earlier this month.

board's approval of the "New Wine, New Wineskins" document. It had been finalized the day before at a summit of 96

MCC budget goes from surplus to cuts

BY PAUL SCHRAG

For Meetinghouse
HILLSBORO, KAN.

A year ago Mennonite Central Committee was looking for ways to spend a surplus. The global economic recession has turned that dilemma into a fond memory.

On June 5, the MCC Binational board approved a 10 percent cut in the international program budget for 2009-10. Expenses are projected to be \$36.7 million (all figures in US dollars), down from \$41 million in 2008-09.

Helping to achieve the cuts, in addition to reductions in spending on programs, are a freeze on some hiring, travel reductions and salary cuts. Despite the overall belt-tightening, spending on programs in Sudan is being increased by \$200,000 and in Congo by \$80,000.

Phil Rush, resource generation director, praised the constituency's generosity. "We have an awful lot to be thankful for," he said. "Compared to many church-related non-profit agencies, we find ourselves in a position that is envied by some others."

In the past year, Ron Flaming, international program director, said MCC had:

- Provided food aid worth \$15.2 million, a 33 percent increase over the previous year, much of that in Africa.
- Completed a \$22 million tsunami response in Asia, the largest response to a disaster in MCC's history
- Seen an 18 percent increase in international service personnel, from 353 to 417. ❧

people representing MCC boards and supporting denominations.

'There is no centre'

The plan calls for ending MCC Binational, the part of MCC that administers a \$36.7 million US budget for ministries in 65 countries. International programs would be transferred to MCC U.S., MCC Canada and Anabaptist service agencies in other countries.

Replacing MCC Binational would be a new central office that would lead the entire system of MCC organizations—which currently include the U.S. and Canadian national MCCs, plus four U.S. regions and five Canadian provinces.

"There is no centre right now in the MCC system," said executive director Arli Klassen. "We have a cumbersome decision-making process between 12 boards that has become almost paralyzing."

Klassen estimated a new central office, probably not in the United States, could be established in three to five years. She said summit participants did not discuss possible locations. MCC Binational is currently in Akron, Pa., where MCC U.S. also is based.

One of the few expressions of dissent came from board member Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, who disagreed with the plan to transfer international program components to the U.S. and Canada. International program "requires a structure and entity of its own," she said. "It should be kept apart, not placed with any [country]."

The long-term goal is for national or multinational entities to manage programs within their own region. This also could ease dissatisfaction Canadians feel about the centralization of international programs at the binational office in Akron.

"Canadian constituents in particular have felt that international program has been run from a U.S. perspective," said Klassen, herself a Canadian and a former executive director of MCC Ontario.

A global entity

The vision for making MCC a more global entity includes building a closer relationship with Mennonite World Conference (MWC). This has been evolving for several years. In 2006, MWC and MCC representatives called for a global service "forum." The "Wineskins" document affirms a forum to coordinate global Anabaptist

service programs.

MCC also aims to solidify its relationship with the global church by endorsing a statement of "shared convictions" adopted by the MWC General Council in 2006. That statement lists seven beliefs that unite Anabaptist churches around the world.

"I'm delighted that we adopted the MWC shared convictions," said Wayne Bremner, executive director of MCC British Columbia. "I think that will be encouraging and unifying for a lot of the people who support us"

MCC also wants a closer relationship with all of its supporting churches, leaders said.

"The churches feel they don't have enough say in what MCC is doing," Klassen said. "That's churches all over the world, not just North America. We needed to find a way to be more responsive."

Said international program director Ron Flaming, "The conversations have led us to a clearer sense of the church being front and centre. We want to be a part of the worldwide community. What form that will take is still a question."

The "Wineskins" document identifies MCC's priorities as justice and peacebuilding, disaster relief and sustainable community development.

And the soul of MCC?

It's "the people who are making quilts, canning meat, volunteering at thrift shops," said Phil Rush, resource generation director. "It's inspiring to know that we have that level of grassroots support."

A task force will meet in September to work out details of the "Wineskins" plan and then submit it to the 12 MCC boards for approval.

"This is not signed, sealed and done in every detail," said Herman Bontrager, binational board chair. ❧

Paul Schrag is editor of Mennonite Weekly Review, an independent Mennonite newspaper based in Newton, Kan. He wrote this report for Meetinghouse, an association of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ publications.



Ron Flaming, MCC international program director, right, told fellow delegates at this year's annual binational meetings, "The ["Wineskins"] conversations have led us to a clearer sense of the church being front and centre" for the organization.

SOUND IN THE LANDS

From Moglee to Mary

Sound in the Lands, crossing borders and boundaries delights hearts and ears

STORIES AND PHOTOS BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONTARIO

At a Mennonite music event, Mary could be no other than Mary Oyer, the grandmother of Mennonite musicology, professor emerita from Goshen College.

But Sound in the Lands began with Mennofolk Waterloo, an eclectic mix of folk, rock, blues, punk and reggae. Moglee is Mark Willms, Dan Kruger, Matt Burkhart and Eli Winterfeld from the Waterloo Region. Performing together since studying together at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate they try to “distribute as many dance moves and goose bumps around the audience as possible” all the while singing punk and reggae anthems to peace, ecology and whole living.

And that was just the beginning as Friday night’s Chamber Music concert, Saturday’s afternoon mini-concerts, and

evening “World Music Collaborative” concert were capped off by Sunday night’s Choral concert at the First United Church in Waterloo. From poignant (Ben Bolt-Martin’s solo cello playing Leonard Enns “From Tiegenghagen with Hope”) to humorous (Larry Warkentin’s “All my neighbours are named Johann,” part of Immigrant Laughter and Tears, sung by Mel Braun, baritone, accompanied by Laura Loewen, piano), to contemplative (Bonnie Loewen’s prose poetry “reaching thru a sliver of light” accompanied by Irmgard Baerg on original piano music), there was something for nearly everyone.

Several music educators noted the inclusion of African and Latin American popular music (like a Tango for Jesus) but felt the absence of the use of poplar genre of music in North American congregations. Dietrich Bartel, dean of music at Canadian Mennonite University wrote, “It seemed that the popular genre was good enough for Mennofolk, but not for worship music. . . . While the conference billed itself as exploring Mennonite music-making ‘across borders and boundaries,’ clearly some boundaries were not to be crossed.” Independently Rebecca Slough, academic dean and associate professor of worship and the arts at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary concurred, “We sometimes do better at engaging the musical cultures of people in other parts of the world than we do those in our own communities and conferences.” Bartel also

noted the lack of “any time of corporate worship.” Both were effusive in their praise for the larger event but, as befits an academic conference, were ready with constructive critique.

Mark Diller-Harder summed up the evaluation of most participants: “The conference more than met my expectations. The conference pushed the boundaries of Mennonite music-making in good and creative ways. I was struck by the quality, creativity and musicianship of all the new compositions and performers.” Plans are for another Sound in the Land in 2013, perhaps focused on ecology or ecology under the larger rubric of peace. ☼

SOUND IN THE LANDS

86 songs from 40 countries

Doreen Klassen, ethnomusicologist and chair of social/cultural studies at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, part of Memorial University of Newfoundland, was the volunteer editor of *International Songbook 1990*, the songbook of the 1990 Mennonite World Conference in Winnipeg.

This was the first concerted effort to include music and lyrics from all over the Mennonite World for worship. In her Friday afternoon presentation, “I guess we should use some drums”—Negotiating applied ethnomusicology in an intercultural Mennonite context,” she recounted the huge two-year effort to elicit, translate into English, German, French, Spanish and Dutch, and prepare for congregational singing, songs from all over the Mennonite World Conference. In the end, 86 songs representing 40 countries were chosen. Each song appeared in its original language as well as the other five.

While there had been “world” music in the 1969 *Mennonite Hymnal*, the *IS 1990* spurred the inclusion of many more songs from the wider Mennonite world in *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (1992) and its companions *Sing the Journey* (2005) and *Sing the Story* (2008). In her Sunday afternoon presentation, “Global singing



Matt Burkhart (guitar), Eli Winterfeld (drums), Dan Kruger (lead vocals) and Mark Willms (bass) perform as Moglee at Mennofolk.



Alice Parker (left), choral and vocal music composer, Mary Oyer and Carol Ann Weaver enjoy the Saturday Chamber Concert at Sound in the Lands.

in a church-wide experience,” Marilyn Houser-Hamm, a music and worship leader and clinician from Manitoba, presented and discussed global music as experienced in the post HWB era, including the Zimbabwe World Conference. She noted how many African and Latin American songs, such as “He is with you all the time” and “Lord, you have come to the lakeshore” from the *IS 1990* had “caught” in congregations across North America and then been included in HWB. Hauser-Hamm underlined that global music in the early 21st century Mennonite Church is not just a nod to political correctness but is “rooted in relationship;” it “reflects our identity as a world-wide community.” By inviting music like “Father God you are holy” from the American Cheyenne, and using it, we are transformed.

The capstone address of the four-day event was presented by Mary Oyer, professor emerita of music at Goshen College. In “International Mennonite music-making as cross-cultural experience” she used the idea of our musical experience and training as a “sound pool.” Every people and culture has its own sound pool—music that feels familiar, comforting, at home. In order to appreciate others’ sound pools and potentially add to ours from theirs we need to first appreciate and love our own. She noted that Mennonites began adding other music with the African American spirituals in *The Mennonite Hymnal*. At the

Calcutta (1997) world conference the use of dance in worship was introduced and continued in Zimbabwe (2003). There she noted western Mennonites learned “there is no sitting still while singing.” The theme of Zimbabwe, “Sharing Gifts,” underlined the radical equality of Mennonites around the world.

Oyer’s and Hauser-Hamm’s presentations were layered with music by Amós López, a Cuban pastor, and several groups of South African musicians. Fittingly Oyer’s presentation ended with her on stage singing with Prince Bulo, Thandeka Mabuza and Mageshen Naidoo, all of South Africa. ❧

SOUND IN THE LANDS

We learned so much

“**W**e thought that having [the African musicians] here was such an opportunity for them but we gained so much from them,” said Carol Ann Weaver a few days after Sound in the Lands at Conrad Grebel University College (CGUC).

Mutual learning was a major goal of Weaver’s in calling together the second Sound in the Land event. The celebration and exploration of Mennonite-related music across borders and boundaries

happened beyond her hopes.

In 2008 Weaver, together with students from CGUC travelled to South Africa and met many musicians, three of whom she sponsored to come to Waterloo for the event. On-stage jamming and teaching by South African and Latin American musicians, as well as off-stage jam sessions transferred music, methods and friendship between three continents. Weaver remembered a comment by Prince Bulo, a Xhosa bassist from South Africa, “We are venturing into Western culture and you are venturing into African culture” as a key moment for her, convincing her that her goals of cross-fertilization among Christian musicians was taking place.

Weaver also hoped to break down barriers between musicians and academics. She had hoped that the musicians could have heard more of the presentations, but when musicians come from all over the world they need to practice together before performing.

Only one of the musicians from Africa was Mennonite, and many who attended were not Mennonite, but some people from both groups felt drawn into the Mennonite world by this event, she said. ❧



Thandeka Mabuza illustrates dance moves at the Saturday evening World Music collaboration.

No one better at marketing than Jesus

Media conference told today's youths no longer turn to books or encyclopedias for information

BY JOHN LONGHURST
Mennonite Church Canada Release
WINNIPEG

When it comes to marketing, Jesus was the best in the trade.

"When Jesus was on earth, he spoke to people in their own place and in their own language," Mike Tennant told 130 church communicators and editors at the May 15 Going Barefoot Conference at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg. Tennant, a long-time marketer, communicator and co-creator of the popular CBC Radio show *The Age of Persuasion*, went on to say that Jesus "took time to understand his audience" and "attended to their wants." He also was a "viral marketer" whose "infectious ideas were spread by others."

God also put a face on his brand, said Tennant, a member of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Kitchener, Ont. "God could have communicated without coming to earth as a person," he said. "But he didn't."

Jesus also understood the power of events, he said, using the Passover in Jerusalem to make an entrance and gain maximum attention. "He had a sense of occasion," Tennant observed.

Speaking to the conference theme of "Reaching the Facebook generation," Tennant said that communicators can follow a similar approach to reach out to young people. "Our gentle, loving God wants to meet us where we are," he said, adding that the way God reached out to humans "underlies all good communication."

Tennant went on to describe the changing media climate, noting that while traditional media was based on a "push" philosophy—a few major media delivering

content to the audience—today it is a "pull" world. "People sit down in front of the computer and pull in what they want," he said. "It's no longer 'you talk, I listen.' Now it's 'I talk, you talk back.'"

In this media culture, communicators need to provide meaningful messages that "people will want to pull to themselves," he stated, adding that churches and other groups need to know who they are, be true to their core values and be authentic. "Superlatives are a cheap commodity," he stated. "If you are inauthentic, the Facebook generation will see through it."

Adding to the challenge for Christian communicators is "media clutter," he went on to say. "Every message in the world is your competition," he stated, not just messages from other church groups.

While social media like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and others are places to "start conversations," Tennant concluded by saying that the goal is to "lead people to longer ones . . . to take them to another level."

It won't be easy, though, Tennant said,

suggesting that even Jesus wasn't always successful. "The Facebook generation is very much like the rich young man who asked Christ what he must do to have eternal life," he said. "When he didn't like what he heard, he changed channels and left."

Also speaking at the conference was Gayle Goossen, founder and creative partner with Barefoot Creative of Kitchener, Ont., who shared the results of a survey of 1,200 Christian youths commissioned by Going Barefoot. The survey, which was conducted from November 2008 to March 2009, showed that "teens are online," she said, noting that 77 percent of respondents use social media like Facebook. Forty percent say they never use regular mail. And when they need information, most turn to the web. "They didn't even consider books, encyclopedias or textbooks an option for information," said Goossen, noting, though, that 40 percent of respondents indicated they had read a local newspaper in the previous month, and 15 percent said they read their denominational publication. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate hires new principal

KITCHENER, Ont.—The Board of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate is pleased to announce that Betsy Petker, of Kitchener, has been hired as the new Principal, beginning February 15, 2010. Ms. Petker brings 32 years of diverse teaching and administrative experience with the Waterloo Region District School Board. Following 12 years as a Principal, Ms. Petker is currently employed in Wilfred Laurier University's Faculty of Education, as Program Coordinator of LEAP (the Laurier Enriched Academic Program). She also brings her experience as a Vice President, Business Manager, and Advisory Council Member for a number of local Arts organizations. Ms. Petker is described by colleagues as "talented, respected by her peers, energetic, organized, articulate, open, and approachable, and, most importantly, she is caring and loves working with students." She is a Rockway Alumnus, grew up at the Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church, and is an active member of Rockway Mennonite Church. Says Board Chair, Gloria Eby, "We are thrilled to have secured the services of someone as experienced and dynamic as Betsy Petker, for this key leadership position. Betsy brings a wealth of outstanding leadership experience in education at a senior administrative level. We believe she will provide the kind of leadership needed to build on our school's reputation for excellent faith-based education. It is an exciting time in the life of our school."

—Rockway Mennonite Collegiate release



Petker

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Serving and learning in Tanzania

B.C. woman learns the meaning of hospitality in new culture

By ANGELIKA DAWSON

Mennonite Central Committee B.C. Release

When asked for one word to describe her experiences of the last year, Verena Seel of Richmond, B.C., says “*hamna shida*” (“no problem” in Kiswahili). It has been her response to any challenging situation that has required her to be flexible or open as she lived and worked in Nyabange on Lake Victoria in Tanzania.

Since last August, Seel has been teaching English at the Mennonite Theological College of Eastern Africa on assignment with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). A typical day is spent teaching both morning and afternoon classes to about 30 students. After class preparation is finished, she is very intentional about

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PHOTO



Verena Seel is pictured at the Mennonite Theological Seminary in East Africa, where she teaches ESL.

visiting staff members and students in their homes, where she has been invited for dinner. Hospitality is very important in Tanzanian culture and Seel tries to help at each home with dinner preparations.

“So far I’ve learned to make *chapatti, uji* (a local porridge) and a few other things,” she says, adding that dinner is a time to sit as a family and catch up on what has happened over the course of the day.

Seel has had to learn a lot more than making food, however. Living in another culture has meant learning to think differently about personal space and time. It’s meant having to get used to constant heat with no air conditioners, no running water or indoor plumbing. But while all of these experiences are different, there are some differences that she’s truly come to appreciate.

“I am so impressed by the Tanzanian hospitality,” she explains. “The first time

‘The language barrier means we communicate in “Swinglish,” a combination of words I know in Kiswahili and they know in English.

(Verena Seel)

you meet someone, you automatically receive an open invitation to visit them at their home, no appointment necessary. Even if you’re just walking by on your way home or to work, an acquaintance will insist you stop and sit awhile. You’ll drink *chai*, eat a meal together and just spend time together. There’s no hurry to get this or that done. You can always do it tomorrow.”

This experience has helped Seel realize how important it is to nurture relationships and spend quality time with others. Building relationships with her students and fellow staff members has been a personal highlight. “The language barrier means we communicate in ‘Swinglish,’ a combination of words I know in Kiswahili and they know in English,” she says. “It makes for some very amusing conversation.”

It has also been rewarding to see her students learn and apply the things they’ve learned in her class. “You should see the smiles on their faces when they catch me nodding my head in approval,” she says. “It makes me so proud of them!”

But the year has not been without its challenges. Those began before she even left North America. Originally, Seel thought she’d be going to Asia and had prepared herself by learning about the country she thought she’d be living in. But just before she was to leave, she received word that her visa was denied. Perhaps it was a premonition of the flexibility she’d have to apply in Tanzania, because, instead of simply coming home, she accepted the assignment in East Africa.

“God definitely used this experience to teach me a few lessons,” she says. “I’d never taught ESL [English as a second language] in my life and I felt completely out of my element. It was an opportunity for me to rely on God like I’d never done before.”

At her lowest moments she felt unappreciated by some students who would show up late or not at all, but it was all part of learning the Tanzanian interpretation of

time. She was then reminded about her purpose in being so far away from home. “It was humbling to be reminded that this year was not about me feeling better about myself, but learning to serve God selflessly,” she says.

Seel will be back home this summer, but is determined to not let thoughts of home detract from her responsibilities left to fulfill. “I don’t want to let my mind wander to thoughts of home too often,” she says. “I will keep teaching ESL in the afternoons and take over a regular morning class. I want to spend as much time as possible with my host family, my students, my fellow staff members and other friends.”

Considering all that she has already learned and experienced, that should be “*hamna shida.*” ❧

GOD AT WORK IN US

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Living in the dark

BY BRUCE WIEBE

Five years ago a companion joined me on the journey of life. When first introduced, we saw no good in each other. We argued constantly and even hated each other. Yet our pathways had joined and there was no going back. We had to learn to get along.

My companion's family name is *Depression*. His given name is *Uni-polar*, meaning "a chronic and sustained condition." I am

still getting to know him and some days I wonder if he might become a friend.

"Energetic and willing to share" are the ways I used to be most often described. I lived to work and loved to play, and received the greatest satisfaction out of seeing another person grow towards their potential. Almost 20 years had been spent in the relational vocation to which God called me, and I loved being a pastor.

As a result, the news that I had been hospitalized as a suicide risk came as a complete shock to all, including myself. I had visited numerous times on the psych-ward. Now I was admitted, involuntarily.

While the church and staff struggled to understand and adjust to a new reality, a three-month leave of absence from church work was freely granted, and later an additional three months on a half-time basis with an adjusted job description. In those days of personal shame and hopelessness, I tried to hide by requesting space from the church: No visitors please!

What I couldn't believe at the time, what I had no language for or ability to see—yet what I needed most—was to know that people still cared. *Depression* not only robs its victims of hope, but limits their ability to reach out for help.

The need to appear "normal" prematurely



Wiebe

drove me back to work. But pretending to be healthy was not possible. As a result, learning about this unknown and often unnamed disease became an activity of the church, in worship and workshops, through teaching and preaching, by accessing resources and creating supportive relationships.

Despite assurances of job security, I was not convinced that a person with a mental illness would be re-employable. A visit from my life insurance

company threatening to terminate coverage served to reinforce fears of permanent loss and the stigma of mental illness. My personal need to be well and to work again also created significant challenges for the church, as the congregation and staff tried to care for a pastor who had been called to care for them.

It was during that time of living in the unknown that I learned to sit in silence, often in darkness, and to know that God was present. Friends noted that my ministry changed from a self-confident pursuit of God, to a gracious acceptance of a God who chooses to come near in our sin and need.

Private stories about mental illness, never told, began to be shared in confidence. At first, it was individuals and families from within the congregation, but soon from the community and beyond. My ministry was simply to listen, to acknowledge the pain and the evil as well as the good and the godly. Over and again the comment was made: "We knew you would care because you've been there." The truth was, I hadn't

been there, but I had shared the experience of suffering. From the midst of suffering, people are longing to know they have value and that God still cares.

Life with a chronic mental illness is an ongoing struggle. Medication does not eliminate the *Depression*, but controls it to the extent that normal daily routines are possible. Diet, exercise and mentoring help to create a more healthy equilibrium. Yet the loss is real and painful.

I have a limited amount of energy for others. I have lost many of the previous passions of life. More significantly, I continue to live with the stigma of mental illness. The first assumption people make is that I am not fit to be entrusted with responsibility. In large part, I no longer get asked to sit on committees or to organize large projects and events. After all, who can be trusted after a public failure?

Meister Eckhart (c.1260 to c.1328) said, "Whatever happens to you is the best pos-

Friends noted that my ministry changed from a self-confident pursuit of God, to a gracious acceptance of a God who chooses to come near in our sin and need.

sible thing for your salvation." *Depression* has dramatically reshaped the nature of who I am and what I do, and yet pastoral ministry continues to be my vocational calling. I no longer yearn for the previous pastor that was me. Can it be that *Depression* and I are becoming friends?

Bruce Wiebe is pastor at North Leamington United Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont. He wrote this reflection after sharing his story at a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada workshop on pastoral care for people living with chronic mental illness and their families (see "No easy fix," June 22, page 27). ❧



w i n d o w

Jesus makes me laugh

J. Nelson Kraybill, AMBS President

Summer 2009
Volume 19 Issue 3

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How undignified for a seminary president to end a dozen years in office with high jinks! You may have read about presidential trousers getting soaked by jesters at a farewell banquet, and the subsequent chartering of a MennoPrank Society.

With all the daunting economic and missional agenda in front of the church, shouldn't our leaders be more serious? One brother, in love, even chided that folly is one of the evil intentions of the heart that Jesus lists along with fornication and licentiousness (Mark 7:18-23).

The trouble is, **Jesus** makes me laugh. A Franciscan friar in hood and robe once told me what he expects will happen when he gets to the gates of heaven: "Saint Peter will stand at a podium next to an *up* elevator and a *down* elevator. He will read from a long list of my sins, then point me toward the *down* elevator. Just as my knees start to buckle, Peter will reach under the podium, pull out a red plastic ball, stick it on his nose, and cry, 'Just kidding!' He will laugh uproariously as he announces that because of Jesus I am forgiven, and grace is sufficient for me to take the *up* elevator."

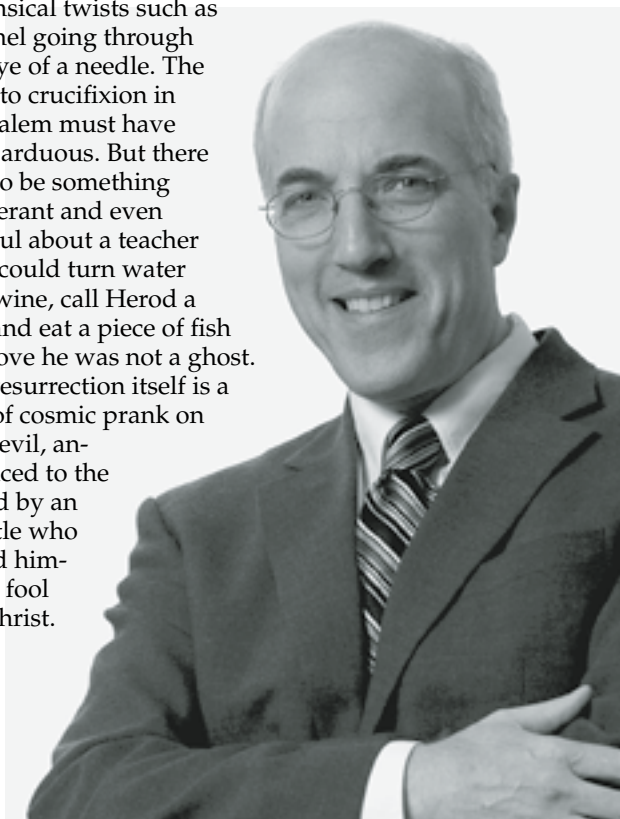
Jesus makes me laugh.

Just for the record, I underscore that just about anyone trying to run a business or nonprofit this year has had truckloads of sobriety. This is a tough season, and AMBS has had its share of sober meetings. But along with the ache there has been an enormous amount of grace—God's grace—and one evidence of that is laughter.

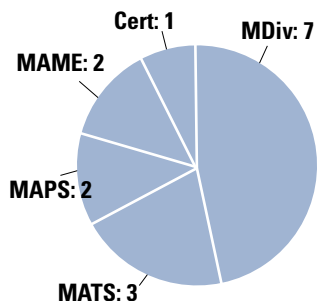
Jesus' opponents complained that he had too much fun (Mark 2:15-20), and his parables included whimsical twists such as a camel going through the eye of a needle. The road to crucifixion in Jerusalem must have been arduous. But there had to be something exuberant and even playful about a teacher who could turn water into wine, call Herod a fox, and eat a piece of fish to prove he was not a ghost. The resurrection itself is a sort of cosmic prank on the devil, announced to the world by an apostle who called himself a fool for Christ.

There is laughter that is destructive folly—sneering, gloating, or racist jokes, for example. But laughter that Jesus brings reflects the free spirit of people forgiven, the sheer exuberance of being in the arms of a loving God, the release of realizing we don't carry the burden alone. Best of all is laughter at ourselves. That kind of laughter is a little Sabbath, a rest from hard work, a relaxation into grace.

(continued on page 3)



Graduates step into new ministry roles



Fifteen students graduated from AMBS on May 23, 2009.

Graduates completed study to receive these degrees:

- MDiv** Master of Divinity
- MAPS** Master of Arts: Peace Studies
- MATS** Master of Arts: Theological Studies
- MACF** Master of Arts in Christian Formation
- Cert** Certificate in Theological Studies

Devin Cook MDiv Pastor of Liberty Center United Methodist Church, Liberty Center, Ind. Devin and Jennifer, his wife, have three children. He is a member of Osceola United Methodist Church, Osceola, Ind.

Emily Dueck MAPS Will pursue work in the area of peace and social justice issues. Emily is a member of Leamington United Mennonite Church (LUMC), Leamington, Ont.

Suella Gerber MDiv Will be pastor of Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart, Ind. Suella and John Gerber, her husband, have two children, and currently she is a member of Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Joseph Kabui MDiv Will resume his pastoral position at Tigoni Baptist Church, Limuru, Kenya. He also will be involved in training seminars for church leaders in different parts of the country. He and Ruth N. Kamau, his wife, have two children.

Richard Klinedinst MATS with a concentration in theology and ethics Will begin in the Juris Doctor program at Indiana University School of Law in Indianapolis, Ind., this fall. He is a member of North Liberty Church of the Brethren in North Liberty, Ind.

Christina Litwiller MDiv Began as pastor of Salina (Kan.) Mennonite Church



Devin Cook, Emily Dueck, Suella Gerber, Joseph Kabui

Jesus makes me laugh

(continued)

on May 31. She has been a member of Mennonite Church of Normal, Normal, Ill.

Devon Ezra Miller MATS Will enter the Michigan State University doctoral program in anthropology with the intent of continuing the pursuit of reconciliation between Anabaptists and Native Americans in the Great Lakes region. Devon and Margaret, his wife, have seven children. He is a member of Moorepark Community Church, Three Rivers, Mich.

Lyle G. Miller Cert. Will continue as minister to children at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. Lyle and Bonnie Miller, his wife,

have two sons.

Anne M. Mitchell MDiv Will do Congregationally Supervised Pastoral Education this summer, working part-time as minister of visitation at Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, then complete AMBS studies this fall. Anne and Chet, her husband, have three children.

Charissa (Reece) Retzlaff MDiv Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. Reece is a member of Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, Alb.

“When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,” the Psalmist wrote, “we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter.” At AMBS I laugh when we balance the budget (I’m still holding my breath and lying awake this year), when students do biblical storytelling and bring out unexpected nuances, when an international student innocently calls me the “dead duck [lame duck!] president of AMBS.” When I laugh at myself or my circumstances, I remember that salvation belongs to God. I don’t have to take myself or my job so seriously. All I have to do is watch for signs of God’s redeeming work and find ways to be part of the trajectory of grace.

When hope raises my sights above the daily toil of

budgeting and administration at AMBS, I see multiple reasons to celebrate: a new generation of able students with vision for the church; a new professor of missional leadership development; a national award for the AMBS library; good relations between seminary and regional conferences; vibrant spiritual life on campus; a broad donor base; a strong team of faculty, staff and administrators.

As I leave the seminary, I am certain God will call new leaders to AMBS with imagination and ability beyond anything I could muster. All this is God’s work, signs of what the Spirit is doing to restore the church and renew the world through Christ. Yes, Jesus makes me laugh. ●



Richard Klinedinst, Christina Litwiller, Devon Miller, Anne Mitchell, Charissa (Reece) Retzlaff. Not pictured: Lyle Miller

Joanna Shenk MATS with concentration in theology and ethics. Joanna will work for Mennonite Church USA as InterChurch Relations Associate and Communications Writer/Research Associate. She is a member of Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart, Ind.

Michael Sherer MATS Will continue in his role as theologically-inclined Information Technology Director and Executive Director of Mennonite.net. Michael and Patsy, his wife, have two daughters. He is a member of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen, Ind.

Tim Stair MAME Will continue working at Mennonite Health Services Alliance and will pursue a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing through Murray State University in Kentucky; and then pursue pastoral ministry and church leadership. Tim and Jan, his wife, have four children. He is a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Rick Stoner (Not pictured) MAME Began June 1 as youth pastor for Bethel Mennonite Church, West

Liberty, Ohio. He is married to Jessica Stoner.

Alan Stucky MDiv Began as pastor of Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church, Harper, Kan., in March. Alan is married to Katie Best. ●



Joanna Shenk, Michael Sherer, Tim Stair, Alan Stucky. Not pictured: Rick Stoner



Joseph Kamau Kabui (right) receives the award of excellence in practical theology from Daniel Schipani, professor of pastoral care and counseling. Joseph will return to Kenya to resume his pastoral position at Tigoni Baptist Church in Limuru.

Faculty give awards to graduates

AMBS faculty select students to receive special awards, presenting these at the Dean's Breakfast the day before commencement. This year's awards are as follows:

Devon Miller: John Howard Yoder award for excellence in peace studies

Rick Klinedinst: Marlin E. Miller award for excellence in theological studies

Christina Iitwiller: Gertrude Roten award for excellence in Greek exegesis

Suella Gerber: Millard Lind award for excellence in Old Testament interpretation

Reece Retzlaff: Perry B. Yoder award for excellence in Hebrew Exegesis

Joseph Kamau Kabui: Award for excellence in practical theology ●

The Holy Spirit will be with them, graduates told

Taking a cue from the church calendar which showed eight days until Pentecost, Dorothy Nickel Friesen told graduates that the Holy Spirit will be with them in their ministry.

The John 15:9-17 passage that Dorothy used as the basis for her message at the May 23 service comes within a section in which Jesus is preparing his disciples for his death. The disciples are asking, "Where are you going? Can we go, too? Who will stay with us?"

Dorothy noted that as graduates leave the seminary and move into ministry, they, too, are asking, "Who will stay with us?" She reassured them that as they make hospital visits, wait with grooms as weddings begin, and do other ministry tasks, the Holy Spirit will be with them.

Dorothy noted a variety of ministry concerns highlighted in publications for church leaders, including

economic stress, addictions, and the need for the church to involve young people. However, she also noted the signs she sees of new vitality in the church. "I see small group prayer cells, community gardens, and barriers between people slowly giving way and allowing new conversations."

She concluded with the reminder that Jesus called his followers "friends," and added, "God has called you to be salt and light, to be present. God calls you to love one another and to bear fruit."

Rebecca Slough, AMBS academic dean, called the 2009 graduating class small but "mighty," explaining that some students who could have graduated this year decided to continue their studies another year.

Dorothy is conference minister for Western District Conference of Mennonite Church USA. Prior to taking that position in 2003, she



Dorothy Nickel Friesen, conference minister for Western District Conference, assured the graduates they were "Chosen by God."

was pastor at First Mennonite Church in Bluffton, Ohio; assistant dean and director of continuing education at AMBS; and pastor at Manhattan (Kan.) Men-

nonite Church. She holds a Master of Divinity degree from Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Mo. ●

Employees give back to AMBS

When AMBS employees were invited to find ways to address the financial stress of the current climate on the seminary, many responded with an offer to give back part of their earnings for the 2009–2010 year.

“We tried to keep everyone informed about what was needed,” Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president, said. “We invited employees to consider giving back to AMBS; it wasn’t mandated by the board or administration.”

As a result, employees will give a total of \$106,000 in salary cuts or payroll contributions in the new fiscal year beginning July 1. This is approximately seven percent of the total amount the seminary needs in contributions for the year.

Nelson said, “This is a signal that AMBS is not expecting everyone else to carry the burden of keeping the seminary strong. We ourselves are ready to sacrifice.” He also noted, “Employees of the seminary are already modestly paid,

and some could give more than others, depending on their circumstances.” This is a one-time effort, Nelson emphasized, not something that will be asked of employees again.

There are several ways the seminary will maintain fiscal health in the next year. “We are not looking to just one source for all of the savings we need,” Jeff L. Miller, chief financial officer, said. For example, the board has approved using more estate funds received during the year for annual expenses,

temporarily putting less of the estate gifts into endowment or longer-range projects. Where possible, cuts in expenses will be made, and some savings will occur from normal changes in staff and activities for the year.

“The employee gifts are a bright spot in the midst of dark fiscal clouds,” Nelson said. “I am grateful to work with colleagues who are that committed to the mission of AMBS.” ●

Publications represent faculty scholarship and collaboration

The AMBS community gathers each spring to celebrate the writing and publishing completed during the year.

Mary H. Schertz, director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, noted that this year there are numerous examples of faculty-student collaboration among the published materials. These include two books by Daniel Schipani and alumna Leah Dawn Bueckert; a book of essays by students in a class taught by Steve Schweitzer; a book of lectures by John Howard Yoder, edited by Ted Koontz and alumnus Andy Alexis-Baker.

Mary also noted a first on this year’s list of faculty work: a DVD by Alan Kreider, “Resident but Alien,” a project he did for Youth With a Mission.

“All of these materials represent hours and weeks and months and sometimes years of work—and all are dedicated to the glory of



John Rempel, Alan Kreider, Ken Hawkey and Beverly Robinson look over new work by AMBS faculty at the annual event celebrating faculty scholarship. John and Alan are members of the teaching faculty, Ken is a development officer and Beverly is a volunteer from Iowa City, Iowa, who spent two weeks at AMBS in May.

God,” Mary concluded.

For the list of new work by faculty or with faculty contributions, see [www.](http://www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/faculty-scholarship)

www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/faculty-scholarship





Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president, thanks Sharon Baker, full-time volunteer and volunteer program coordinator, at a recent AMBS gathering.

Honors for employees

Sharon Baker was honored at the annual AMBS employee recognition event, even though she isn't an employee. As a full-time volunteer for seven years, Sharon has worked for every department and nearly every office on campus. She also has served as hostess for the AMBS Church Leadership Center, welcoming guests to campus.

Sharon will return to her home in Colorado in August. Her legacy will be a strong volunteer program which she initiated. In 2008, 91 volunteers contributed 7,214.25 hours, an equivalent of \$140,750 if paid as staff time.

The May 18 recognition event also honored three 20-year employees:

Judy Yoder, receptionist, mail-room coordinator and director of housing;

Rosemary Reschly, executive assistant to the president and dean; and

Don Steider, director of maintenance.

Three faculty members who are leaving AMBS were recognized:

Alan Kreider is retiring after five years of part-time teaching of mission and church history. Alan plans to write and will teach occasional courses.

Arthur Paul Boers, associate professor of pastoral theology, will take the R.J. Bernardo Family Chair of Leadership Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, Ont. He has taught at AMBS for seven years.

Steve Schweitzer, assistant professor of Old Testament, will become dean of Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind., after teaching at AMBS for three years. ●

Your gifts at work

Gifts to AMBS provide 45 percent of what we budget each year in income from contributions. This support is invaluable in sustaining not only the educational program, but also all aspects of life and work on the campus. Here some of the ways your gifts are helping AMBS:

All AMBS employees participated in Damascus Road Anti-racism Training, May 27–29. Together faculty and staff examined concepts of racism and white privilege while exploring how AMBS can be more welcoming for people of color.



A continuing education event on June 4, Unmarried Couples Living Together, involved more than 70 participants, working with presenter Irma Fast Dueck from Canadian Mennonite University to consider how pastors can respond to these situations in their congregations.



The Institute of Mennonite Studies recently published *In celebration of wisdom: Life and meaning in Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes*, a book of essays by students in the 2007 class on Job and Wisdom literature, taught by Steve Schweitzer.



A new lawn mower will double as a snowplow in the winter. Areas of the campus have been seeded in prairie grasses and wildflowers that do not need mowing; however, some parts of the campus still need to be tended. ●



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- www.ams.edu
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- www.youtube.com/mennoniteseminary

Upcoming events from the AMBS Church Leadership Center

Advanced Spiritual Guidance Seminar

Sept. 2009 to April 2010
(Register by July 15)
Marlene Kropf

Values-Based Leadership Program

Sept. 15–17, 2009,
Feb. 23–25, 2010
At Laurelville Mennonite Church Center

Advent Planner

Oct. 3, 2009
Marlene Kropf

Pastoring those who face financial crisis

Nov. 5, 2009
Lynn A. Miller

Pastors Week

Jan. 25–28, 2010
Theme: Known to us in breaking bread: Hospitality and Mission in Luke's Gospel
Mary H. Schertz

Leadership Clinics

Jan. 25, 2010
Life Flows On: Pastoring Families of Those Who Face Chronic Mental Illness

Gayle Gerber Koontz
Ministry and Money
Beryl Jantzi
Gathering for new pastors
Rebecca Slough, Karen Martens Zimmerly, Linford King

Continuing Education Day for Pastors

Feb. 22, 2010
John Bell

Online Pornography: Ending up someplace we didn't intend to go

June 3, 2010
Keith Graber Miller, Mary Lehman Yoder

See details for all events at www.ambs.edu/churchleadershipcenter

Visit AMBS for the Open House

The fall Open House for people wanting to know more about AMBS is set for Saturday, Nov. 14. Come to sit in on classes, worship in chapel, learn to know students and faculty, and find out about financial aid. See more at www.ambs.edu/open-house.

Be among the first

If you want to be among the first to know whom the board appoints as the new AMBS president, send your e-mail address to Mary E. Klassen: mklassen@ambs.edu.

We will keep your address on file for a special message as soon as the decision is public.

David L. Myers (Master of Divinity 1991) is director of the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives of FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency).

Kay Bontrager-Singer (Master of Divinity student) was ordained June 14 at Faith Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Thomas Meylan (Master of Divinity 1982) has released his second book, "Facing Challenges Whether You Chose Them or Not," designed specifically for people dealing with the effects of the current economic crisis.

Tina Stoltzfus Schlabach (Master of Divinity 2003) is working with others to begin Stephen Ministry at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., where she is a pastor. She has completed the foundational level of a training program in Gestalt Pastoral Care.



Bassam Bannoura (center), and Hiyam, his wife, were among the alumni who gathered for an annual reunion on May 22–23. Bassam and Hiyam came from their home in Beit Sahour, West Bank, Israel, to join others who graduated in multiples of ten years previously.

The gathering was funded by !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth, as a way to continue building support for the program that encourages young people to consider ministry. Hilary Scarsella, an alumna of !Explore, and Andy Brubacher Kaethler, !Explore director, shared stories about the impact of the program.

Participating alumni also were invited to join in the commencement service and reception on Saturday, May 23. Here Bassam and Hiyam visit with AMBS Professor Gayle Gerber Koontz.

Summer 2009
Volume 19 Issue 3

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

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

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



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Historic agreement

The University of the Fraser Valley has signed an agreement with the Mennonite Faith and Learning Society (MFLS) that intends to establish a Centre for Mennonite Studies, as well as a chair, a certificate, and possibly a minor in Mennonite Studies. The goal of the partnership is to jointly create an opportunity for students to study the rich heritage of the Mennonites and their contributions to the Fraser Valley and beyond. "The Mennonite community has played an incredible role in developing the Fraser Valley," said UFV president and vice-chancellor Dr. Skip Bassford.

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Calendar

Alberta

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

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

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. 3-4: Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church 60th anniversary celebration; 7 p.m. (3), and 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. (4).
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, 2010: MMYO senior youth retreat at Camp Koinonia.
Jan. 22-24, 2010: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Moose Lake.
Feb. 5-7, 2010: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Koinonia.
Feb. 12-14, 2010: Young adult retreat

at Camp Koinonia.

Ontario

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. 9: The annual Reesor picnic at Backus Mill Heritage Conservation Area Park, Port Rowan. Worship service at 11 a.m., followed by lunch and a social time. All Reesorites welcome.
Aug. 9-23: Community Tent Crusade with Gospel Express Ministries of North Carolina, featuring evangelist Nelson Coblenz and associates; in Millbank; 7:30 p.m. each evening. For more information, call Riverdale Mennonite pastor Jim Brown at 519-595-4055.
Aug. 14-16: Stratford Summer Music presents J.S. Bach's Coffee Cantata at Stratford's Balzac's Coffee Roastery; 10 a.m. shows each day. Starring Daniel Lichti, bass baritone. For more information, call 519-271-2101.
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.

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.

Classifieds

Announcement

Parent Support Group: Announcing a bimonthly support group for Mennonite parents of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) persons in Southwestern Ontario. We provide confidential support, fellowship, resources and opportunities for dialogue in the Spirit of Christ. For more information please contact the following: rvfast@rogers.com, pmsnyderangel@rogers.com, or Roy and Mary Gascho, 519-742-1850.

Employment Opportunities

Calgary First Mennonite Church, located in central Calgary, invites applications for a full-time **LEAD PASTOR** position available for Fall 2009. Our warm, intergenerational congregation of approximately 180 people seeks an applicant with a commitment to Mennonite theology and to the practices of the Mennonite Church. We seek a spiritual leader with gifts of preaching, teaching and pastoral care to nurture a meaningful worship life for our congregation. Related education and experience in pastoral leadership is a priority.

Please direct inquiries and resumes to our Pastor Search Committee Contact: Marguerite Jack – mjack@netkaster.ca.



Mennonite Central Committee West Coast office, located in Fresno, California, has an immediate opening for a **HUMAN RESOURCES AND GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR**.

The position will manage the human resources systems and coordinate regional communications and serve as the regional connecting point for West Coast constituency, alumni and people in service with MCC. Qualified candidates will have a minimum of an associates degree in Human Resources with at least five years of experience in the Human Resources field and a demonstrated knowledge of California employment law. Knowledge of MCC, good relational skills and the ability to relate to diverse constituencies and produce and publish communications materials is required.

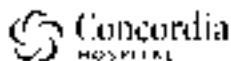
A complete job description and application is available online at www.mcc.org/serve. Resume and letter of interest can be directed to Tim Croyle, Director of Human Resources MCC US via e-mail tcroyle@mcc.org or by mail to MCC Great Lakes, 1013 Division Street, Goshen, IN 46528 by August 1, 2009.

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.

Advertising Information

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CUSTODIAN/MAINTENANCE ASSISTANT full time for Camp Assiniboia, near Winnipeg, one of three camps operated by Mennonite Church Manitoba. Skills required include building cleaning; grounds, barn/corral, equipment maintenance; snow removal; tractor operation; minor repair; group hosting. Position available fall 09. Applicants must affirm Mennonite faith statement. On site housing and benefits package available. Contact (204) 895-2267 or camps@mennochurch.mb.ca. Further information at www.campswithmeaning.org.



CHAPLAINCY POSITION

Concordia Hospital/Concordia Place
Winnipeg

Concordia is a Mennonite Christian acute and long term health care facility.

Concordia is seeking a full-time chaplain to work primarily at Concordia Place, the Personal Care Home, as well as the Emergency Department of the hospital. Applicants must have a minimum Bachelor of Religion or Theology (Master's level training preferred), 2-3 units of Clinical Pastoral Education as well as relevant chaplaincy or pastoral ministry experience. This is an indefinite term position. The starting date is negotiable.

Direct inquiries and resumes to:

Kathleen Rempel Boschman

Phone: 204-661-7149

E-mail: krboschman@concordiahospital.mb.ca



Rosthern Junior College invites applications for **MEN'S RESIDENCE DEAN** (full-time). Qualified applicants should forward resumes to: Principal, Rosthern Junior College, 410 - 6th Ave, P.O. Box 5020, Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0. Phone: 306-232-4222 / Fax: 306-232-5250 / e-mail: administration@rjc.sk.ca.

The **GATHER 'ROUND** curriculum, a project of Mennonite Publishing Network and Brethren Press, is accepting applications for the following positions:

MANAGING EDITOR. Full-time. Copy edits and proofreads; manages curriculum production process; secures and maintains contracts and permissions. Must have excellent editorial and computer technology skills and superior ability to organize projects and manage details. Must operate well in a collaborative environment. Must be well-grounded in Mennonite or Church of the Brethren beliefs and practices. Marketing experience a plus. Bachelor's degree required; graduate degree in related field preferred. Location: Open (Elgin, Ill., preferred). Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until position is filled. Start date: August 17, 2009, or earlier.

CONTENT EDITOR. Contract. Works closely with curriculum writers. Edits manuscripts in accordance with editorial and production guidelines. Must have excellent editorial and writing skills, understand faith formation and developmental stages, and operate well in a collaborative environment. Must be well-grounded in Mennonite or Church of the Brethren beliefs and practices. Bachelor's degree required; graduate degree in theology or education preferred. Location: Open. Employment will commence with attendance at writers conference September 27-Oct. 2, 2009.

Interested persons may view the full position descriptions at <http://www.gatherround.org/contactus.html>. Send letter of application and resume to: Anna Speicher, Project Director and Senior Editor, Gather 'Round Curriculum, at gather-round@brethren.org or 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120.



MISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

MCEC invites applications for a three-quarter time position (28 hours/week) with attractive benefits, beginning in September. The applicant will be committed to realizing MCEC's mission of extending the peace of Jesus Christ: making disciples, growing congregations, forming leaders. This person will provide administrative support to the Mission Minister within the context of a larger Administrative Team.

The ideal candidate will:

- Demonstrate ability to work in a team
- Possess good people skills and multi-cultural sensitivity
- Be proficient in Microsoft Office
- Have good communication and organizational skills with an eye for detail

APPLICATIONS (with resume and references), inquiries or nominations by July 31, 2009 to:

David Martin, Executive Minister
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
4489 King St. E., Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2
Phone: 519.650.3806 x113 / 800.206.9356
E-mail: dmartin@mcec.ca
Job description: www.mcec.ca



Recovery of Hope, a faith-based professional counselling center based in Winnipeg, a program of Eden Health Care Services, invites applications for the position:

PROGRAM DIRECTOR - RECOVERY OF HOPE

Reporting to the CEO, Eden Health Care Services and to the Board of Recovery of Hope, the incumbent is responsible for the overall direction, co-ordination and management of this Winnipeg-based counselling program as well as for the satellite offices located in Altona, Niverville, Portage, Steinbach and Winkler. This position works within the context of a team of other Program Directors providing a range of mental health recovery programs.

Essential qualifications include a Master's level university degree in a relevant field, successful administrative experience, demonstrated clinical skills and experience and effective communication skills.

The salary for this position is competitive and dependent upon qualifications and experience. The position is available immediately. Application deadline is July 31, 2009. Please direct inquiries/resumes to:

Search Committee, Box 129 Winkler, MB R6W 4A4
Phone: (204) 325-5355
e-mail: ehcs@mts.net

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

SHEKINAH RETREAT CENTRE, owned and operated by Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, is inviting retired couples to consider a four- to six-month volunteer opportunity at Shekinah.

Position includes hosting and sharing housekeeping duties. Housing and volunteer stipend are provided.

Next term to begin Sept. 1, 2009.

Come and enjoy the river hills of the North Saskatchewan River.

Contact Shekinah Retreat Centre at
email: office@shekinahretreatcentre.org/phone: 306-945-4929



Gloria Nafziger, second from right, visits the Al Tanf refugee camp, one of three make-shift refugee camps along the border between Syria and Iraq for Palestinians from Iraq.

Churches urged to sponsor Palestinian refugees

BY RACHEL BERGEN

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

Residents of the Fraser Valley attended a Palestinian refugee information meeting at Emmanuel Mennonite Church on May 11 to learn about refugee sponsorship as an option for helping the thousands encamped in the deserts of the Middle East.

Gloria Nafziger, refugee coordinator for Amnesty International, discussed the different camps that the Palestinians are trapped in, and Hetty Driegen, the refugee coordinator for Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford, discussed the different methods of sponsoring refugees in Canada as well as the financial aspects.

Private sponsorship of a family of Palestinians is “walking alongside refugees in order to ensure necessary support to integrate into life in Canada,” Driegen said, which involves helping them acclimatize to various aspects of Canadian culture, including finding a home, bringing groceries home, learning English, helping with school work, helping them find employment, all of which requires time and monetary aid.

Palestinian refugees require private Canadian sponsorship desperately because 3,000 are currently stateless,

unable to leave their camps because they are unwelcome in Jordan or Syria after fleeing Iraq due to war and death threats in March 2003. With nowhere to go, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Amnesty International, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the UN are specifically hoping that Canadians will sponsor families from the Al Hol camp in Northern Syria.

The federal government has approved between 150 and 200 people from this particular camp for entry into Canada if private sponsors can be found. Residents of two other two camps, Al Tamf on the border of Iraq and Syria, and Al Waleed in Iraq, have not yet been approved to be resettled in Canada.

According to Nafziger, Amnesty International and MCC, along with the other organizations, hope to “put pressure on [the Canadian] government” to act, as the Palestinian refugees account for the “largest refugee population in the world, and they have no prospect of returning home.”

Waldo Neufeld, a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, proposed that a half-dozen churches in the community gather together to support a number of refugees. “It needs to be done cooperatively,” he said. ☸