

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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EDITORIAL

Paraguay: The new Mennonite reality?

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

So what makes Paraguay a “micro-cosm of the new reality of the global Mennonite family?” I asked Larry Miller, general secretary of Mennonite World Conference, in a Skype interview after Assembly 15.

Three things, he said thoughtfully while entertaining his grandchildren at his home in France.

First, their immigrant Germanic-ethnic demographic, later enriched by the joining of some Swiss groups, forms the historic stream that is characteristic of many Mennonite communities around the world.

Second, Latino people have joined this historic stream and have formed communities of faith.

Third, there are the indigenous communities that are neither Germanic nor Latino in culture. Their churches are growing in number and in Mennonite identity.

All of these groups live in close proximity as an increasingly diverse composite. Younger people are a big part of this whole picture.

Economically, he further added, there is a gap between the more affluent historic stream and the newcomers to the faith, creating a complex dynamic in these evolving Mennonite groups, something to which we should pay close attention.

Theologically, he said, there seems to be more coherence between the traditional Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren

groups in Paraguay than in, for instance, Canada and the United States. And while the perception is in the two groups' different levels of evangelicalism, there is an increasing sensitivity to social justice issues in the Latin American setting among the Mennonite Brethren and Mennonites.

“They just cast it in more evangelical terms,” he said, rather than in the “activist” language increasingly used in the North American parlance.

And what about the creative commercial model the Paraguayan Mennonites have shaped from their experience of building business coops with their indigenous neighbours? Studies show that the necessity of mutual aid—one of Anabaptism's core beliefs—as a means of survival in the harsh Chaco is a dynamic providing employment and giving management training and participation to their poorer neighbours. As a result, social unrest and political corruption have lessened in this cultural environment.

Now, isn't that a wonderful mix of evangelicalism and social justice?

Most certainly, Miller agreed. “This is something which I raised with the Paraguayan leadership after assembly. Not thinking about it in these more grandiose terms, they are somewhat reluctant to export this model,” he clarified.

In their humility, leaders of the Global South, not only from Paraguay, say their

two ongoing challenges are economic development and leadership training. They first of all want to be sure this is happening in their own faith formation before thinking they have a prototype for elsewhere on the globe.

Meet your board members

With this edition, I begin introducing the members of *Canadian Mennonite's* 12-member board of directors. Members of the board, representing the five area churches and MC Canada, as well as Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, make editorial policy, act as ambassadors and engage in active listening to the magazine's readership. The board's chair is **Larry Cornies**, who teaches journalism at Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning in Kitchener, Ont., and at the University of Western Ontario in London. Previously, he was editor of *The London Free Press* and an A-section page editor at *The Globe and Mail*. He continues to write a weekly column for *The London Free Press*. In the early 1980s he was associate editor of *The Mennonite* in Newton, Kan. A member of Valleyview Mennonite Church in London, he represents Mennonite Church Eastern Canada on the board. He and his wife Jacquelyn are parents of four adult children: Darryl, Graeme, Andrew and Natalie. “It is my hope,” he says, “that I can bring my experience as a newspaper editor and manager to the board of *Canadian Mennonite*, as its publishing partners continue this important national ministry. I also hope to contribute to the discussion of how the magazine can extend its reach through new delivery platforms.”



ABOUT THE COVER:

First Mennonite Church in Vineland, Ont., held its first-ever crop tour this summer, giving congregants the opportunity to appreciate the work that farmers do while learning where their food comes from. Pictured, farmer Tom Neufeld takes tour members into his field of oats in Campden, Ont.

PHOTO: CAROL PENNER, FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH, VINELAND, ONT.

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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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PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

An ounce of prevention

Unlike the SARS pandemic of 2003—which caught the world off guard—there is no excuse not to be ready for the next global health security threat.

BY JOHN LONGHURST

For Mennonite Church Canada/Mennonite Disaster Service/Mennonite Publishing Network

We absolutely do know there will be another pandemic.

We can delay [the pandemic] by doing things like hand washing or staying home from work, church and social events when sick, but we cannot stop it. . . . The pandemic clock is ticking.'

(Larry Bredensen)

When Perry Chernesky, pastor of Oakbank Baptist Church, Man., developed a cough in late June, nobody thought much of it—including Chernesky himself.

But just a couple of weeks later, the otherwise healthy 43-year-old was admitted to hospital in Winnipeg and placed on a ventilator to help him breathe. On July 6, he died of H1N1 flu (the strain formerly known as swine flu).

“The most difficult thing about H1N1 is when you see your loved one suffering and you are wearing a gown and gloves, and you’re wearing a mask and face shield, and you can’t touch them,” said his wife Claudia. “You can’t be near them. You try to tell them that you love them, but they’re sedated.”

Chernesky’s case is unusual. Most people who get H1N1 don’t die. But some do. To date, more than 60 Canadians have died from the new strain, and more than 1,300 have become sick enough to require hospitalization.

In the U.S., more than 45,000 confirmed cases have been reported, and more than 400 people have died. Worldwide, there have been about 215,000 cases, with more than 1,700 deaths, since the virus first appeared in Mexico in March. The World Health Organization estimates that one-third of the Earth’s six billion people could become infected with the virus.

All those numbers blur beyond comprehension. We



usually don't know what to make of thousands of deaths or millions of infections. We think of people who are close to us. That's what happened for those who knew Chernesky.

"Perry was a one-in-a-million man," wrote one person on Chernesky's Internet memorial page. "His love for his family and his love for Jesus was shown daily in all that he did. He knew how to love people, and was a wonderful friend."

Why prepare for a pandemic?

Chernesky's death could hardly have been imagined in 2007 when Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), Canadian Mennonite University and other church groups, together with the International Centre for Infectious Diseases, held Canada's first Faith Community Summit on Pandemic Preparation in Winnipeg.

At the time, some wondered why the issue should even be raised. Sure, pandemics had happened before—the Spanish flu of 1918-20, the Asian flu in 1957, and the Hong Kong flu in 1968. But those happened a long time ago, people said. It could never happen again.

But speaker after speaker at the summit

emphasized that not only could it occur, they predicted it would take place.

"We absolutely do know there will be another pandemic," stated Larry Bredensen, regional coordinator for Emergency Preparedness and Response for the Public Health Agency of Canada. "We can delay [the pandemic] by doing things like hand washing or staying home from work, church and social events when sick," he stated, "but we cannot stop it. . . . The pandemic clock is ticking."

'Caring for people is the agenda of the church.'

(Janet Plenert)

Sadly, that prediction has come true, and the clock is no longer ticking. Instead, the alarm has gone off.

Who will care for the sick?

What makes a flu pandemic so unpredictable and virulent is that victims tend not to be bed-ridden once they become ill. They continue to go to work, school, stores and church even though they are sick.

Adding to the problem is that H1N1 is

so virulent; it transmits easier and longer, and infects deeper into the lungs via the nose, throat and upper airways. Also perplexing is that H1N1 affects a different population than the usual seasonal flu; more than half of H1N1 cases have occurred in healthy younger people, while seasonal flu tends to mostly affect seniors.

But still—what's the big deal? Even if a lot of people are getting sick, not many are dying.

That kind of thinking is short-sighted

and incomplete, according to Dr. Tim Foggin, a public health physician in B.C. and a member of Willingdon Mennonite Brethren Church. "Understand this," he says. "Even though currently only three in 1,000 die from H1N1, very few people have any immunity to it. If even only 10 percent of the world population got infected, of whom that many died, that would yet make over two million deaths."

Being healthy is no protection either. "While the media repeatedly reports

that this patient or that patient had underlying disease, the data from the U.S., Canada, Thailand and elsewhere suggests that 25 percent to 40 percent had no underlying condition to blame," he says.

Flu shots might help, but it's taking longer than expected to create the vaccine, Foggin notes. Then there's the issue of who should be the first to get it. Should it be healthcare workers, pregnant women or school children?

"Slowly it will be given out to all, over a period of months," Foggin says. "So what are you planning on doing until then?"

And if you, or a family member, gets H1N1, what next? You'll just go to the hospital, right?

"Our hospitals are already full," says Foggin. "Add thousands more sick people, and are you still feeling as certain now about getting checked in to hospital?"

Family doctors will be swamped too, he says. "So, trickle down to where you

will be likely cared for—at home, by family and friends. And by each other, as fellow believers."

What can the church do?

The role the church would play in the event of a pandemic was one thing that was repeatedly emphasized at the faith community summit.

Back then, Dr. Joel Kettner, Manitoba's chief medical officer, observed that the first people to get anti-virals—drugs like Tamiflu that can prevent the illness—when a pandemic strikes should be clergy. He was half-joking, but also making the serious point that, during a pandemic, "we will need people to keep us calm and help us not to panic." Clergy, he said, will be counted on to help perform that role.

"The faith community is so important during a disaster," added Dr. Tracy Parnell of the University of British Columbia's Department of Family Medicine, noting that it can be easy for governments and

public health agencies to overlook the role faith communities can play during a pandemic. Faith groups should "educate governments" about what they can offer, she went on to say—including things like clothing, shelter, food and other services.

Parnell, who helped the B.C. government draft guidelines for responding to a pandemic, noted that "spiritual and emotional care" will be an important part of a pandemic response, particularly in helping people to deal with the deaths of loved ones.

Where can help be found?

But are churches ready to help if the worst happens?

Some are getting prepared by using *Beyond Our Fears*, the new four-part study guide produced by Mennonite Church Canada, MDS and Mennonite Publishing



Why care about a pandemic flu?

Dr. Tim Foggin, a public health physician in B.C. who attends Willingdon Mennonite Brethren Church in Burnaby, is heavily involved in pandemic flu planning in that province. Earlier this summer he answered a few questions via e-mail from Dan Dyck, who directs communications for Mennonite Church Canada.

Q: Some people are ambivalent about the flu pandemic. They say that many more people die each year of seasonal flu. Why should we care?

A: Since the H1N1 outbreak is still in the early stages, we don't really know yet if "many more" people die of seasonal flu each year. But we do know that very few people have any immunity to H1N1. The U.S. is predicting a 40 percent infection rate. New Zealand is estimating up to 80 percent. And the main problem may not be the number of deaths, but secondary consequences, such as the breakdown of essential services (hospitals, emergency response, food chain distribution, etc.)

Q: Some say we are over-reacting. Is that the case?

A: If a flood is predicted, dikes are hastily constructed, homes are sandbagged. If a severe snowstorm is in the forecast, people stock up on essential supplies and stay home. During tornado warnings, experienced people seek safe cover. In hurricane season, folks shutter their homes. Are we over-reacting even if the result is less severe than predicted?

Q: But I'm fit and healthy. I don't think it will happen to me. Why should I worry?

A: But even if we are not personally at risk, should we pay less attention? What would the Good Samaritan do? And even if this is not important to you, I can guarantee it will be important to somebody you know. We'll all be affected.

Q: My congregation already has enough to do without worrying about a pandemic. Why should we add another thing?

A: Seeking to have sufficient oil in your lamp is not worrying. Obeying the command to love your neighbour is not worrying. Will you be able to continue even your essential ministry if a third of your congregants are ill? If your entire pastoral team is ill at a time when emotional and spiritual needs are at an all time high? If tithing declines?

Pontius' Puddle



Network. From it they are learning about the biblical basis for disaster preparation, what the church has done in the past when faced with similar crises, and how to get ready if a pandemic, or other disaster, occurs.

For Foggin, questions churches should be asking themselves include, "What will you do if a third of your congregants are ill? What will you do if all the pastors get sick? How can you best prepare to maintain what you do so well? How will you maintain that in the face of staffing shortages, possibly decreased tithing, and increased pastoral needs—physical, emotional and spiritual?"

In addition to serving each other, the church can play an important role in serving society, adds Janet Plenert, executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness and the new vice-president of Mennonite World Conference. "Caring for people is the agenda of the church," she says, adding that a pandemic is an opportunity for Christians to show that the church is "God's instrument in the world, spreading healing and hope."

Noting that when an emergency, like a hurricane, tornado or flood occurs, the church is often among the first groups to be asked for help, she says a resource such as *Beyond Our Fears* can "help churches to provide the best assistance possible."

In addition to the study guide, MC Canada and MDS have created a website at churchpandemicresources.ca to help groups with their pandemic preparations.

"These resources are a way to help churches be the hands and feet of Christ in the world as they help each other, and their neighbours," Plenert says.

When should preparedness begin?

In truth, nobody knows if H1N1 will be a terrible pandemic or just something that is worse than the usual seasonal flu. But if the worst does happen, shouldn't the church be ready?

That's Irene Stickland's view. Stickland was vice-president and deputy-CEO of the Salvation Army's Scarborough Grace Hospital, Ont., in 2003—ground zero in Canada during that year's sudden acute

respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak, which affected more than 8,000 people and killed more than 700 worldwide.

Stickland and her staff were caught completely unawares by that outbreak and had to develop protocols and responses on the fly. But unlike what happened at Grace Hospital back then, churches today can prepare for the worst-case scenario in this pandemic.

As Stickland puts it, "we will have no excuse" if the pandemic turns out to be as bad as some predict. "We need to be prepared. The needs of the community will be great, the opportunities for faith-based groups will be many." ❧

❧ For discussion

1. Has anyone in your community contracted H1N1 flu? How concerned are the health care providers in your area about a potential pandemic? How concerned are you?
2. Tim Foggin, a public health physician interviewed on page 6, points out the need to be prepared. Do you find his comments convincing? What other questions would you like to ask him? What things should your community do to be prepared?
3. If a flu pandemic happens and our health care system cannot function, what role do you think churches should play? What would happen if pastors got sick? What role have churches played in the past in emergency situations?
4. Health care has changed enormously in the last hundred years. How have our attitudes towards illness, disease and death changed? Do we expect too much of our health care system? How do you think our lives would change with a full pandemic?

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.

✉ Writer praised for speaking out about mental illness

I WANT TO commend Bruce Wiebe for his courage in writing about his mental illness ("Living in the dark," July 6, page 20). His article was extremely well written and very insightful. Knowing that the stigma attached to mental illness is still strong I consider that anyone who even talks to their friends and families about this shows great courage. With this article, Wiebe has gone way beyond the "great courage" category.

I met Wiebe at the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada conference in late April, when he was one of the seven or so people at my table. He easily held his own in

/// Corrections

- The congregations that now form the Conference of Mennonites in Mexico (CMM) were formed in 1963; the congregations were not formally organized as the CMM until 1993. Incorrect information appeared in an MC Canada release, "No longer parent and child," July 27 page 19.
 - Paul Amstutz and Carmen Epp of Paraguay helped Canadian Rebecca Yoder Neufeld with the planning, organization and coordination of the translation service at Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Assembly 15 in July; Jakob Lepp trained volunteers who had never interpreted simultaneously before. Incorrect and incomplete information appeared in the MWC release, "Getting the word out," Aug. 17, page 8.
- Canadian Mennonite regrets the errors.*

contributions to our discussion of the topic presented and I valued his input greatly. It is way past time for the general public to accept individuals with mental illness and refuse to stigmatize them. I think that this article is one step, hopefully a big one, in this direction.

I must admit to dismay when I read the blurb about his article on page 3 stating that he "comes clean" in the article. I think that every individual with mental illness has an obligation to him- or herself in choosing who, what and how to tell about this illness. Going so public may still, sadly, mean that some look at him through an inaccurate view. It is obvious to me that this illness has only extended his ministry in ways that, while he would not have sought them, make him more effective to some who otherwise may not have been reached, while he continues to reach the church at large.

ELLEN SHENK, OTTAWA

✉ Sound in the Lands 2009 producer responds to comments

A HUGE THANKS to Dave Rogalsky for his lovely, well-rounded and extensive coverage of Sound in the Lands in the July 6 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* (pages 16-17). His attendance, interest and coverage of this event are highly significant and greatly appreciated. He asked various attenders for comments, and it would be important to provide further discussion about a few concerns mentioned.

One attender suggested there was an "absence of the use of popular genres of music in North American congregations." Thus, certain boundaries "were not to be crossed." However, several academic papers dealt with contemporary North American "worship music." Also, we tried hard to bring several American contemporary praise groups to Sound in the Lands, but they were unable to come.

At our previous 2004 Sound in the Land festival we did indeed include "praise songs" in our worship service. However, this specific inclusion caused the greatest number of critical comments from our Mennonite attenders, who much preferred our four-part hymn singing. So for Sound in the Lands 2009 we opted to err on the side of presenting vintage four-part singing, such as *Harmonia Sacra* hymns, as well as featuring our international guests as generously as possible.

Marilyn Houser-Hamm did, for sure, present various North American contemporary praise songs on Sunday afternoon. And as it turned out, our international guests did indeed bring us new versions of "praise band" music, which caused incredible joy, and even dancing, from those assembled, and which gave us fresh ideas for our own Sunday worship settings. I brought some of this music to my own Rockway Mennonite Church in

Kitchener, Ont., the very next Sunday!

A second comment suggested that we did not have a specific “corporate worship service.” I would suggest that each of our hymn sings was, indeed, a very sincere, ardent, deeply spiritual, and profoundly worshipful setting where each hymn became a prayer, where Scripture was sung, and where the Holy Spirit spoke to us through the media of song. Thandeka Mabuza, our Zulu guest, commented that the Detweiler hymn sing was the best part of the entire conference, reminding her of her own Seventh Day Adventist church in South Africa, where they sing exclusively in four-part a cappella.

As producer of Sound in the Lands, allow this letter to serve as a call for ideas for the next festival in 2013; please contact me at caweaver@uwaterloo.ca.

CAROL ANN WEAVER, WATERLOO, ONT.

✉ How about ‘Mennonite World Service’ as the new MCC?

AS I SEE it, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) “New Wine, New Wineskins” process, as reported by Paul Schrag (“MCC pours out ‘new wine,’” July 6, page 14), was largely due to changes in global economic and political conditions: growth in numbers of national Mennonite groups that want to participate in MCC; the evolution of the purposes, activities and scale of MCC; and the astounding recent technological developments and consequent globalization.

Here are several observations by which I affirm some of the proposals of the emerging discussion and challenge others.

I suggest that the purpose of the “emerging MCC”

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Travelling lightly

DORI ZERBE CORNELSEN

Much of my energies this summer went toward moving from one house to another. It’s something I’ve done a fair bit of in my life, having been a missionary/pastor’s kid. Our challenge this time was moving into significantly smaller space than we’ve been used to while we undertake a building project. Suddenly, our family of four has been very tangibly faced with having too much stuff.

I must admit that this came as a bit of a surprise to me. After all, we’ve tried to be careful with our purchasing habits. I wouldn’t be quite so

smug as to suggest we live simply, but we do try to live mindfully in this consumer culture. Yet all of us in the household have managed to accumulate many things that we quite like and want to hold on to.

In an article called “Traveling Light,” Sharron R. Lucas, a United Methodist Church pastor, reflects on Jesus’ instructions to his disciples in Mark 6 when he sends them out in pairs to travel with the good news from village to village. Jesus’ packing list, as Lucas calls it, is not one

that many of us would want to adhere to on a journey of undetermined time and length. Jesus “ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics.”

“Take nothing” sounds outrageous. This instruction of Jesus, though, may have freed up the disciples to make their mission possible. Possessions can

My current favourite twist on an old saying is, ‘If the shoe fits, you don’t have to buy it.’



literally weigh us down. Pondering this as I packed yet another box of books, I resolved to learn the discipline of lightening my bags:

- First, in a culture that exerts powerful pressure to measure my worth by what I buy and own, I can separate my needs from my wants. My current favourite twist on an old saying is, “If the shoe fits, you don’t have to buy it.”

- Second, rather than accumulating more, I can practise the discipline of letting go. If something new comes into the

house as a purchase or gift, consideration should be given to replacing something already in the household.

- Third, I can practise gratitude as opposed to dissatisfaction. The old song may have had it right that we should “count [our] blessings, name them one by one,” in order to challenge the restlessness that comes from wanting more.

One of the tangible benefits created by these disciplines of travelling more lightly can include a capacity to become more generous with financial resources. A shift of energy and focus away from accumulation for self, to community empowerment and commitment, can liberate us from some entanglements that can make

the journey of good news more difficult. This was perhaps the wisdom behind Jesus’ packing list for his disciples that I will continue to ponder as I eventually unpack.

Dori Zerbe Cornelsen is a stewardship consultant at the Winnipeg office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit Mennofoundation.ca.

should continue to focus centrally on the historic Anabaptist/Mennonite genius of the love of neighbour as evidenced by “service” (see Menno Simons’s “True Evangelical Faith”) and the recent Mennonite World Conference (MWC) designation of *diakonia*, or service, as one of its four pillars.

The service purpose will continue to be expressed in activities such as emergency food, clothing and housing assistance; disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction; and economic, social and community development. Because of the controversial premises of justice and conflict transformation, these activities should be left to national service or peace organizations, if,

and as, they achieve unity on how justice and conflict transformation affirm historic Anabaptism.

The structure would, by definition, need to consist of a worldwide coordinating/acting body that I suggest be called Mennonite World Service (MWS), that would represent and coordinate national Mennonite Service Organizations (MSOs) that are becoming involved in national or international service activities. The various national MSOs would elect representatives to sit on the governing board of MWS, and would contribute to, and coordinate, world service activities. However, national MSOs would be free to also do their own international non-service activities—such as

FROM OUR LEADERS

Laying the foundation

LISA CARR-PRIES

Three years ago, together with our daughter, we decided that she would attend Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont.

In my reflections leading to this decision, I was drawn to Mennonite Church Canada’s theme verse: “*For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ*” I Corinthians 3:11. A Mennonite education is a way to help build a foundation that shapes our children over their lifetime.

As parents, one of our primary responsibilities to our children is to help them nurture and develop a faith and worldview that makes the story of Jesus relevant today. This can be a daunting task. Our children have many influences in the course of their lives. Education in a Mennonite setting offers a chance to learn “normal” subjects in a context where students are encouraged to openly declare their faith and intentionally interpret subject matter from that standpoint.

Tolerance in today’s culture is often understood as a reaction to a particular action, statement or belief. I believe tolerance should be considered from the initiator’s perspective. It means that, instead of feeling that a clear statement

of Mennonite identity is limiting, individuals, schools and churches have the freedom—even the responsibility—to clearly understand and articulate what it is they believe and why they believe it. A Mennonite Christian education is a way to extend this kind of work beyond the home and see it reinforced in a setting where our children will be spending much of their time for the next number of years.

The Mennonite school is also a place to put this learning into practice. Often I hear the criticism that a Mennonite education is limiting and sheltered. But what I have experienced with our daughter is the opposite. Along with her class peers, some of whom are from unchurched and

Service projects, travelling choirs, sports teams, and local and international trips connecting to various cultural groups all put our children in places where they are practising being Mennonites. In bringing the teaching to life and creating experiences to intentionally act as Mennonites, our children are developing a vocabulary of faith. Whether it’s talking to children at the Muslim school down the street, sorting clothes at the local thrift shop or singing in a church service, they are developing what it takes to be peacemakers and neighbours to those near and far—without sacrificing their identity.

Without the tools to understand and express who we are, and act from that foundation, we open ourselves to be predominantly defined by those around us. So I am thankful for Mennonite schools, at whatever level, that are developing



A Mennonite Christian education is a way to extend this kind of work beyond the home . . .

other faith families, Laura is exposed to many experiences. Students more freely share open conversations about beliefs and a clear sense of identity. Such interaction builds a foundation for growing and reaching out beyond the boundaries of the school or our Mennonite communities.

those who will lead us today and tomorrow, laying the foundation upon which much will be built.

Lisa Carr-Pries is the new chair of the MC Canada Christian Formation Council; she also sits on the General Board.

justice—when deemed appropriate. This would allow MWS to keep a clear purpose and structure.

There is great significance in a name, and MCC historically has created a noble image. But MCC no longer denotes or fits its contemporary purposes and structures. In fact, MCC's purposes and activities have evolved to a much larger playing field. The iconic MCC name so dear to many of us has little meaning

for those who did not work in MCC or were its far-flung beneficiaries. It is time to look into the future and behold what challenges lie ahead.

I propose that an MWS and national MSOs could be the best umbrella for the historic Anabaptist/Mennonite service genius in what is rapidly becoming an increasingly big, needy world.

CALVIN REDEKOP, HARRISONBURG, VA.

FAMILY TIES

Clothing connections

MELISSA MILLER

My mother is an excellent seamstress. In the past, she used her skill to provide clothing for her children, creating her own patterns or modifying those she'd purchased. Her sewing helped the family budget considerably.

Once, when I was about nine years old, she got her hands on a bolt of green and blue plaid fabric, yards and yards and yards of the same material. She rose to the challenge, making clothing for each member of the family: shirts for her husband and sons, and dresses for herself and her daughters.

She completed her feat in time for my father's employee picnic, an annual



The attitudes we display make visible our family connection, much like my mother's ambitious sewing project showed our family connection.

event at the local park attended by hundreds. Sure enough, Mom dressed us in our matching clothes and we headed off to the park, where we were certainly noticed. It was clear to everyone that we were all part of the same family. (As my mother laughingly recalls the story, "Someone would say, 'Look! There goes another one!'") It wasn't so good for developing one's independent identity, but it was clear that we all belonged to each other.

This story came to mind as I reflected

on Colossians 3:12-17, this year's theme verses for Mennonite Church Canada. In this section of Scripture, positive attitudes are described as clothing, and we are urged to "slip into those threads." Imagine opening our closets and seeing attitudes lined up on hangers: attitudes of compassion, kindness, humility, patience and forgiveness. On other hangers we might see their opposites: cold-heartedness, meanness, arrogance, impatience and revenge.

As we consider our options, maybe we run our hands over the clothes, feeling the silky smoothness of patience, the warm wools of compassion and kindness,

the burlap of humility, well, maybe something other than burlap . . . maybe worn blue jeans. And our hands brush over prickly fabrics of revenge and meanness, the stiff coarseness of cold-heartedness and the too-tight items of impatience. Which clothes do we choose? Does the clothing we wear reflect our heavenly parent?

The attitudes we display make visible our family connection, much like my mother's ambitious sewing project

showed our family connection. When we wear clothing of forgiveness and love, humility and meekness, compassion and kindness, we show that we belong to God. Doing so, we remember that these attitudes come to us from God, who offers us clothing like that worn by God.

I close with a final reflection coming from one of my recent sewing projects.

This summer I visited one of my young friends. She and I went to a fabric store, and bought beautiful coral and jade fabric, made especially beautiful with a generous sprinkling of sparkles. I sewed a capri set for my friend. Before I cut out the pattern, I washed and dried the fabric with some of my clothes. The sparkles from the new fabric got mixed in with my clothes. For weeks afterward, when I put on these clothes there were sparkles on me! Like the big and amazing light that is God, light that we are blessed to share,

we have our own lights, our own sparkles, given to us by God to wear.

Kindness, compassion, humility and meekness, patience, forgiveness, and, above all, love.

They're right there in our closets; it's our choice to put them on.

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

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Adrian—Benjamin Daniel Copithorne (b. July 25, 2009), to Carl Adrian and Michelle Copithorne, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Derksen—Cassandra Faith (b. Aug. 2, 2009), to Andrew and Mary Derksen, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Friesen—Sarah Mackenzie (b. June 27, 2009), to Michael and Kim Friesen, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Goerzen—Ethan Curtis and Trinity Marie (b. July 23, 2009), to Curtis and Terry Goerzen, Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.

Simpson—Ryan Daniel (b. June 17, 2009), to Dan and Stephanie Simpson, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Toews—Kaylynn Marie (b. April 16, 2009), to Jeff and Amanda Toews, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Baptisms

Joshua Ewert, Savannah Funk-Unrau—Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 14, 2009.

Yeseul Ahn, Seulmi Ahn—Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Aug. 2, 2009.

Tonya Wagner—Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 31, 2009.

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

Christa Kuepfer—Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., Aug. 16, 2009.

Marriages

Ens/Funk—Linda Ens (Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man.) and John Andrew Funk, Aug. 1, 2009.

Friesen/Wiebe—Sara Jane Friesen and Jeremy Wiebe, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, July 4, 2009.

Harder/Wiens—Chani Harder and Alexander Wiens, at Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., June 13, 2009.

Harms/Heidebrecht—Alex Harms and Amanda Heidebrecht, at Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., July 24, 2009.

Huebner/Withawick—Carolyn Huebner and Sheldon Withawick, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Aug. 7, 2009.

Jantz/Nakoneshny—Caitlin Jantz and Daren Nakoneshny, at North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., Aug. 15, 2009.

Koehn/Schultz—Samantha Koehn and Scott Ryan Schultz, at Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont., May 23, 2009.

Kroeker/Thiessen—Jamie Kroeker and Paula Thiessen, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Aug. 8, 2009.

Rempel/Wakeman—Miriam Rempel (Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg) and Curt Wakeman, at St. Michael and All Angels Anglican, Winnipeg, Aug. 15, 2009.

Schiedel/Wiens—Todd Schiedel and Marianne Wiens, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., Aug. 5, 2009.

Deaths

Bergen—Elsie Marie (nee Epp), 70 (b. March 18, 1939; d. June 25, 2009), Carrot River Mennonite, Sask.

Bluhm—Ed, 77 (b. June 15, 1932; d. Aug. 10, 2009), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Bracken—Robert E., 86 (b. March 12, 1923; d. April 25, 2009), Portage Mennonite, Portage la Prairie, Man.

Cressman—Myrtle, 90 (b. June 16, 1920; d. Aug. 5, 2009), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Dahl—Margaret (nee Rempel), 89, (b. Oct. 4, 1919; d. Aug. 11, 2009), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Dyck—Anna (nee Willms), 84 (b. Aug. 22, 1924; d. May 28, 2009), First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Dyck—Susanna (nee Peters), 89 (b. Sept. 9, 1919; d. July 1, 2009), Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta./West Zion Mennonite, Carstairs, Alta.

Epp—Dora (nee Karsten), 96 (b. Aug. 28, 1912; d. July 21, 2009), First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Epp—James William, 52 (b. May 17, 1957; d. July 8, 2009) Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask.

Epp—Reuben, 89, (b. March 1, 1920; d. June 20, 2009), Kelowna First Mennonite, B.C.

Gascho—Sylvia Magdalena (nee Swartzentruber), 93 (b. Mar. 18, 1916; d. June 30, 2009), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Goerzen—Trinity Marie, 13 days (b. July 23, 2009; d. Aug. 5, 2009), Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.

Epp—Waldemar, 91 (b. July 21, 1918; d. July 24, 2009), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Habermehl—Edna, 100 (b. Dec. 4, 1908; d. July 18, 2009), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Harder—Aganetha (Nettie), 94 (b. March 3, 1915; d. July 14, 2009), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Horst—Iona May (nee Meyer), 97 (b. March 7, 1912; d. July 22, 2009), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Janssen—Elsbeth (nee Franzen), 88 (b. April 21, 1921; d. July 29, 2009), First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Janzen—Henry, 94 (b. Sept. 29, 1914; d. July 6, 2009), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

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

STORIES OF FAITH IN LIFE

Promises broken ... and kept

BY JACK DUECK

During the American Revolution the Iroquois Confederacy south of Lake Ontario had sided with the British, while in Quaker Pennsylvania the pacifist Mennonites had been loyal to the existing government.

During the Revolutionary War, the Mennonites suffered retaliation for their allegiance to the Crown. No longer under the benign Quaker legislature in Pennsylvania, they were now treated as aliens in their own lands.

The Iroquois and Mennonites were welcomed to Upper Canada for expediency, not charity.

Mennonites were useful to the colonials for their agricultural skills and their strong sense of community, which made them the ideal settlers; as pacifists, they posed no military threat in the event of Indian uprisings or other civic disturbances. So in their Conestoga wagons they brought their Bibles, almanacs, tools, seeds and shoofly pies to Upper Canada, becoming the first inland settlers in what would become Ontario.

On the other hand, the powerful Iroquois Confederacy could prove a valuable and proven military force to

deter any American incursion. With the Haldimand Grant, they were offered 273,000 hectares of land, a 9.6-kilometre swath on either side of the Grand River from its headwaters down to Lake Erie. This was

granted with the anticipation of a large influx of Iroquois; however, those that actually came were mainly Mohawks.

Whether due to bureaucratic confusion



or outright deceit, neither the written nor spoken word of the colonials was entirely reliable. To the colonials, land was a commodity, no longer held in reverence as a gift from the Creator. With it came the British methods of dealing with land by English words on paper: surveys, deeds and private ownership.

The Mennonites thought they had obtained promises of legal title to the land, when, in fact, they had only received a surveyor's location certificates. It wasn't until 1828 that Mennonite land titles were affirmed.

Chief Brant reminded governors that the Iroquois were promised that they, too, could own and manage their land along the Grand River, and he demanded that the British promises be kept.

After Joseph Brant's extended, acrimonious tangle with succeeding military governors, the British eventually approved the sale of Block No. 2—part of Waterloo County—to the Mennonites



Brant

What about the Mennonites already settled on the land and Preacher Bechtel's \$3,000 down payment?

from Pennsylvania. In July 1800, 10 Mennonite families moved onto Block No. 2 along the Grand River. But the land speculator who had contracted for the land was now unable to even remit the interest agreed upon, because of the land title issue.

What about the Mennonites already settled on the land and Preacher Bechtel's \$3,000 down payment?

It was the Iroquois chiefs who intervened, requesting that the Mennonites be given time to arrange the cash for the purchase. Brothers Daniel and Jacob Erb travelled back to Pennsylvania to solicit help from Mennonites there. Returning in 1805 with the money, the Pennsylvania-based German Company paid off the entire mortgage.

Matters did not go smoothly between these two peoples, though, and conflicts arose. An aboriginal called Old Jack fired on a Mennonite, shattering his arm in an attempt to warn intruders off his people's land. However, Sam Eby, called "Indian Sam," one of the first settlers on Block No. 2, established harmonious relations with his aboriginal neighbours by learning their language, and serving as interpreter, minister and lawgiver, thus becoming a widely respected peacemaker.

During this period, a Mennonite farmer needing additional space for growing wheat leased a piece of property from his aboriginal neighbours. The agreement stipulated that the annual lease payment was to be made in terms of a certain number of bushels of wheat. Facing massive crop failure one year, the Mennonite farmer gleaned his meagre crop and delivered his payment to his aboriginal landlord.

They talked about the drought and bad weather sent by the Great Spirit.

"How was your harvest?" the chief asked.

The Mennonite replied, "These bushels are the extent of my grain harvest."

"But then your family will go hungry this winter, and your animals will suffer

as well, and you'll have no seed for the spring planting," the chief responded. "You have promised payment and we have agreed to a contract, but this time it will not please our Great Spirit. Take all the seed back. With better crops you can pay us again." ❧

E-mail Jack Dueck at ejadueck@gmail.com or visit him online at jackdueck.com.



Haldimand

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Supreme Court decision may affect religious freedom

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent
EDMONTON

A Supreme Court of Canada ruling that Alberta can require a photograph on its drivers' licences raises questions of religious rights.

The 4-3 decision, made July 24, revokes exemptions to these licences that Hutterites were able to obtain before the ruling. The Hutterian Brethren of Wilson Colony, east of Lethbridge, argued the requirement negates their right to religious freedom. They believe that allowing their photographs to be taken would be making a "graven image," something they believe is prohibited

by the second of the Ten Commandments. The loss of drivers' licences would severely limit the rural colonies' ability to be self-sufficient, the court was told.

Chief Justice Beverly McLachlin, writing for the majority, stated, "The goal of setting up a system that minimizes the risk of identity theft associated with drivers' licences is a pressing and important public goal."

Colin Neufeldt, a lawyer and history professor at Concordia University College in Edmonton, thinks Mennonites should pay attention to this case, pointing out that the

decision was a close one. "It is important in the sense it opens the door to possibly more infringements on religious rights in the future," he said. "The rationale the majority used to justify this is important. Mennonites have to pay attention to that. . . . It can lead to future decisions that impinge upon religious minorities.

"The dissenting reasons are important for us to look at," he went on. "These may become relevant later on, when other decisions are being made."

Many news reports make it appear that all Alberta Hutterites are involved in the photo licence issue. This is not the case, however, and does not represent the majority of the colonies. As with any group, a variety of viewpoints are present.

Ernie Wiens of Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church in Edmonton is familiar with several Hutterite colonies around the area. "Many Hutterites I know have digital cameras and are happy to have pictures taken," he said. ☘

/// Briefly noted

MCC responding to hunger crisis

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) provided a record amount of food aid around the world from April 2008 to March 2009 in response to disasters, skyrocketing food prices and climate change. MCC food aid, which totalled \$17 million during the fiscal year, includes agricultural development projects, food shipments from Canada and the U.S., and food purchases in other countries. Global food prices remain high, after spiking last year, and food needs are growing around the world, as the number of undernourished people is on track to reach more than a billion in 2009—the highest number ever. But while the number of hungry people has grown, there is still enough food produced in the world to feed everyone, according to Willie Reimer, MCC's food, disaster and material resources director. The challenge is to make sure food is available to people in need.

—Mennonite Central Committee Release

PHOTO BY MELISSA ENGLE



Simon Danner and Rafael Gramm, Mennonite Voluntary Service workers from Germany, decided to "go homeless for a week" in Lethbridge, Alta., this summer after becoming aware of the needs of the city's homeless while working with Lethbridge Mennonite Church and Streets Alive, a local Christian humanitarian organization. They slept in "the rolling hills around Lethbridge and hung around at a public park . . . because we literally had to kill our time somehow," Gramm wrote, adding, "Luckily the weather participated in the venture by being sunny all week long." They realized quickly, though, that being homeless means being very dependent on others for nearly everything.

Bailey's Local Foods a hit with local families

STORY AND PHOTO

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

It began as an attempt by Nina Bailey-Dick, a member at Erb St. Mennonite Church in Waterloo, to find local foods for her family. But her initiative grew as friends and neighbours signed on and it has now burgeoned into a business providing hundreds of families with local food products.

Bailey's Local Foods very quickly outgrew her front yard and porch, and local bylaws forced a move out of the residence into First United Church in uptown Waterloo. Bread, meat and cheese accompany the usual fruit and vegetables that many find in community shared agriculture (CSA) plans.

Customers are e-mailed a list of products available each week for order online. Then on Friday afternoon, they pick up their orders, occasionally picking up extras from the surplus table.

About half of the more than 400 families involved in the enterprise begin arriving before the doors of the church gymnasium open at 3 p.m., to gather their order from the boxes of food against the walls, then going to the fridges and coolers in the kitchen to get dairy and meat products.

Food is not cheaper here, as there are no "loss-leaders" like many chain stores offer to entice shoppers into the store. But the bustle of voices, old and young, learning about their food and the growers, shows the growing popularity in connecting with food in a way that large grocery chains have made near-to-impossible.

Similar to CSAs, Bailey's patrons share some risk with the farmers who supply the produce: items on the order chart may not be available at pick-up time, or in the



Nina Bailey-Dick, left, helps patrons to free samples at the June 26 grand opening of Bailey's Local Foods. Her business partner, Rachel Ward, stands next to her.

amounts ordered.

But this is different from CSA's in many ways. Bailey-Dick, together with her business partners, Rachel Ward and her father Wendell Bailey, focus on low-spray and organic products, including grains, legumes, baked goods and meat products. The other focus is on local produce: fruits from Niagara; vegetables from all around

Waterloo Region; cheeses from Tavistock, Millbank and Bright; locally grown meat; and bread made with grains mostly grown within a hundred kilometres.

The weekly supply will become monthly in the winter, with root vegetables and apples, as well as local meats, cheese and baking, offered for sale. ☼

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/// Briefly noted

B.C. church hosts celebration for Kingcrest

A barbecue in the parking lot of Vancouver's First United Mennonite Church in July, that drew 300 people, benefited the neighbourhood and celebrated the ministry of Kingcrest International Neighbours. The barbecue provided a way for church members to interact with those living in the immediate area of the church. While children made beaded jewellery, blew giant bubbles and had their faces painted, adults played a Colombian disc-tossing game and watched a tai chi demonstration. Four partnering churches of Kingcrest, which assists refugees and newcomers to Canada, provided music while community organizations set up displays and everyone enjoyed barbecued hot dogs, burgers and corn. "We want to thank God for a beautiful day and thank everyone for their participation," said First United Mennonite pastor Ingrid Schultz. Kingcrest International Neighbours is celebrating its 20th anniversary.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. youths go on service trips

Young people in Mennonite Church B.C. congregations have been busy with service trips this summer. Youths from Bethel Mennonite in Aldergrove and Eden Mennonite in Chilliwack joined forces to help conduct Vacation Bible School at United Mennonite Church of Black Creek in August. Seventeen youths and six sponsors from Peace Mennonite in Richmond travelled to San Quentin, Mexico, in August, partnering with Stoney Creek Expeditions. According to youth pastor Craig Thiessen, the group helped to build a new house for a family and built relationships with children in the village through crafts, soccer and other games.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

/// Staff changes

Heidebrecht replaces Janzen at MCC Ottawa office

OTTAWA—Paul Heidebrecht of southern Ontario has been appointed director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada's Ottawa office. Heidebrecht comes to MCC Ottawa from Marquette University, Wis., where he studied and taught theological ethics. He also studied at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., and received a master of arts in theological studies degree from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. He served short-term assignments with MCC in Bangladesh in 1993 and in Nigeria in 2001. In his new position, Heidebrecht will be responsible for acting as a liaison between MCC's work around the world and the Canadian government, as well as working alongside partner organizations based in Ottawa to advocate for change. He is pictured in front the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. Heidebrecht replaces Bill Janzen, who served in the MCC Ottawa office for 33 years.

—Mennonite Central Committee Canada Release



New CEO coming to credit union next year

KITCHENER, ONT.—Brent Zorgdrager has been appointed as chief executive officer (CEO) of the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, effective the first quarter of 2010. He currently holds the role of chief financial officer (CFO) and has led the credit union's finance, treasury and banking services functions over the last two years. Zorgdrager joined the credit union following a 16-year career at Manulife Financial, culminating in his position as CFO for the successful Group Savings and Retirement Solutions business unit of the Canadian division. Beginning in 1992, he sat on the credit union's inaugural volunteer Council of Members. In 2000, he began his first term on MSCU's board of directors, where he served for six years. Zorgdrager replaces Nick Driedger as CEO. Says Driedger, "I'm absolutely delighted with the board's choice for my successor. From my perspective Brent has earned the respect of his peers, our staff and the board of directors. I'm confident that the leadership transition will be smooth for our members."

—Mennonite Savings and Credit Union Release

House of Friendship welcomes new executive director

KITCHENER WATERLOO, ONT.—House of Friendship, which marks its 70th year of service in 2009 to low-income adults, youths and children in Waterloo Region who are in need of support, didn't have to go very far to find the right person for the job when recruiting a new executive director. In fact, it had to go no further than Kitchener. John Neufeld took over the role on Aug. 31. Neufeld is an active member of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener. For the past 11 years he worked with Bridgeway Family Homes, a foster care agency, most recently as manager of program development. He combines this experience with a bachelor of theology degree from Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, a master of social work degree from the University of Toronto and a master of business administration degree from Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo. Outside of his paid work, Neufeld volunteered locally at Out of the Cold from 2004-08, which helped define his understanding of homelessness in Waterloo Region. He is currently a board member of the Waterloo chapter of Mennonite Economic Development Associates. Neufeld succeeds longtime House of Friendship executive director Deborah Schlichter.

—House of Friendship Release

PARAGUAY: PART II

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Paraguayan mass choir a preview of heaven

Mennonite World Conference Release

Eleven Paraguayan ethnic groups “came together in the way of Jesus Christ” at Mennonite World Conference Assembly 15 this past summer, forming a 160-voice choir to serve God in unity with songs of praise.

Under the direction of Ed Toews, the choir of German, Spanish and indigenous Paraguayan Mennonites from the eight hosting conferences performed a repertoire of traditional Spanish and German songs, as well as two movements from a Catholic mass, “Missa Criolla,” by Ariel Ramirez.

The greatest task, according to Toews, was recruiting singers scattered all over Paraguay. However, long connections to the German Mennonite churches in west and east Paraguay through numerous song festivals, and frequent music workshops over many years at different indigenous communities, made balanced recruitment easier. Distances between settlements made rehearsals difficult, but many prayers and the help of local consultants made the project possible.

After the first joint rehearsal in the Chaco, Toews reported that an indigenous woman

who was overwhelmed by the sound of the choir said, “Now I can imagine how it might sound on resurrection day, when all ethnic groups will sing the same repertoire and the same language in unity.”

A final joint rehearsal was possible only on the day of the actual performance, July 18, over the noon hour.

For Toews, the symbolism of the inter-ethnic unity in this choir joining in a Catholic mass, traditional Spanish songs, a German chorus, “*Das Kreuz von Golgotha*,” which has deep roots with many 1930s German immigrants to Paraguay, and finally in the “Kyrie Eleison” in eight languages, was “immense, powerful and awesome.” ☿

Mennonites around the world long to ‘green’ their planet

BY STU CLARK

Mennonite World Conference Release

On every continent, Christians are awakening to both the abuse of creation and the first green shoots of a societal repentance. If the church is to be a voice of hope, it needs to lead the way in creation care.

In introducing creation care workshops at Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Assembly 15, Bert Lobe and Tigist Gelagle spoke of the earliest conference stirrings that led to the care of creation theme at this assembly. Besides the well-attended workshops, the creation care table at the Global Church Village was swamped with visitors. The workshops gathered ideas from both Scripture and observations of how the world is changing.

On July 16, indigenous people explained

how the disruption of creation is already threatening their survival. Using a slide presentation, Norma Kassi, a member of the Gwich'in Nation in northern Canada, told how, in her lifetime, the lakes in her home on the Arctic Ocean are disappearing. Migratory birds are vanishing and the huge caribou herds are aborting their young. Her people are desperately searching for a new way to live in one of the most remote parts of Canada.

From Paraguay, Robustiana of the Enlhet tribe and Juliano of the Nivaclé tribe told stories of the disappearance of their fishing lakes and the forests where they used to hunt. More and more signs saying “private property—no hunting” are appearing. Their people are becoming increasingly sick from the lack of food.

Norman Meade, a Métis from Manitoba, shared the traditional creation teaching of the Sacred Tree and the Medicine Wheel by anchoring them in the parallel understandings of the Bible. He urged workshop participants to listen to the teachings of indigenous elders as they struggle to find better ways to care for God's creation.

The workshop ended with a group prayer, asking God to open people's ears and soften their hearts so they can find their way.

The next day, Nunus Subandi of Indonesia recounted her work with people who are trying to “green” their low-lying city, including the slums. Her work focuses on listening to children who are dreaming of a better future and who are already beginning to care for God's creation around them.

Working in continental groups, participants spoke of creation care issues in their contexts, and the creative solutions just beginning to emerge. When asked whether Mennonites should make responding to climate change—and those most seriously affected by it—a high priority, the overwhelming majority said yes. The workshop concluded with a sense of being sent out to work: to make a united Mennonite repentance visible to the world.

The strong emphasis on the mind of Christ in the worship services awakened a renewed commitment to seek justice for all creation, both by changes in people's personal lives and in finding ways to face the future challenges as a global fellowship. ☿

PHOTO BY MARK SMUCKER



A 160-voice choir of German, Spanish and indigenous Paraguayan Mennonites melded their disparate voices together at Assembly 15, prompting one choir member to exclaim, “Now I can imagine how it might sound on resurrection day, when all ethnic groups will sing the same repertoire and the same language in unity.”

PARAGUAY: PART II

Youths experience global community in Paraguay

Mennonite World Conference (MWC) asked organizers of the Global Youth Summit (GYS), held in conjunction with Assembly 15, for reflections from delegates from the five continental regions. Their responses have been edited for space. (Ed.)

KRISTINA TOEWS
CANADA

A school gym filled with hundreds of young people covered in layers of jackets and sweaters speaking numerous languages is not a common sight for me. But even more amazing was what brought us together—or who brought us together.

More than 800 young people gathered to worship the Lord and learn from each other how God is working in our lives. It was amazing to meet and build relationships with brothers and sisters from all around the globe and to discuss with other delegates the different challenges and opportunities we face.

In our first session, delegates gathered in continental groups and focused on a Bible passage about service. Our North American group read from Nehemiah and discussed different views of service and how service has been done in North America. Often we North Americans have tended to think we know better and have imposed our views on others whom we have served. We have seen service as something we do for others.

From our study in Nehemiah we saw that the service was God-initiated. Jesus needs to be at the centre of our lives and all of our service. Nehemiah first discerned the most important need and then all the people served and worked together in community. Everyone took responsibility.

These are principles that we need to apply to our service. We need to spend time discerning needs before doing something. Service needs to be in relationship, in community, working together and knowing who has what responsibility. We must ensure healthy relationships where we can learn and grow together.

AYUB OMONDI AWICH
KENYA

I want to believe that it was God's plan for me to be a GYS participant. It was my first time to attend such a gathering and it really changed my life.

The group's discussion sessions revealed to me a number of lessons, including that youths have a "must" role in the ideal church. I was born in the Mennonite church and I always felt the elderly had the sole input in the church. As youths, our role was attending services on Sundays, singing and once in a while participating in church cleaning. From the discussions here, I learned that youths have to stretch further than that. To realize the ideal church means working hand-in-hand with church elders.

RUT PAULINA BERGEN DYCK
MEXICO

GYS helped me to get a better perspective of how God is working all around the world. . . . This whole experience was a taste of heaven where one day we'll be all together worshipping the same God!

CARLOS ALVAREZ WOO
COLOMBIA

Each delegate put great effort into preparing for the summit. We brought survey reports from our local churches to share. I learned that young people around the world face common issues. How can we face those issues together? What would an ideal church to challenge young people look like? The idea of young people participating with the leadership in their communities, using our gifts and serving

to make a difference based on a biblical model, made an impact on me. . . . Prayer will always be the key, communicating with our Lord and Father, who will lead us and guide us along this path to change our generation.

SUMANA BASUMATA
INDIA

I liked the statement of one worship leader who said, "Youth are not the future of the church; they are the present church." This encouraged me a lot. This statement also challenged me to get out of my comfort zone and be more active in my church and in society.

The most amazing experience was worshipping God together in one spirit. Though we came from different countries, cultures and backgrounds, and spoke different languages, we came together because of one name, Jesus Christ. All glory be to God!

PHOTO BY BARBARA KÄRCHER



Small group discussions about service and the ideal church provided inspiration for youths at the 2009 Global Youth Summit.

PARAGUAY: PART II

MARC PASQUÉS VILLALBA
SPAIN

I learned a lot from the people I met. The cultural differences and our diversity in customs and traditions have truly taught me how to “live the difference.” The energy, along with the peaceful way in which we interacted, created a unique and multi-cultural atmosphere. The shared objective was to worship God and to serve as Christ

I liked the statement of one worship leader who said, ‘Youth are not the future of the church; they are the present church.’ This encouraged me a lot.
(Sumana Basumata, India)

served, in order to make the world a better place. This was a strong influence in the growth of my soul.

I am excited to take home a large list of e-mails of people with whom to stay in touch and the knowledge that I am part of this great family of God.

ELINA CIPTADI-PERKINS
OUTGOING AMIGOS CHAIR

The thing that gave me the biggest joy at the Global Youth Summit (GYS) 2009

is the confidence that young people have in their capability to make changes. I had this feeling at GYS 2003 in Africa, but confidence reached a new level in 2009.

Among Paraguayan participants and volunteers, I saw a great willingness to bridge the gap between the Germanic, Spanish and indigenous groups. Some openly expressed their wish to be identified only as a Paraguayan, while not forgetting their history.

African delegates and participants desire to be independent and not to be seen as people of “poor nations.” They recognize that they have many gifts, like the heart for evangelism, determination, commitment to serve and willingness to share what they have with other people.

Young Asians were willing to work together across denominational and country boundaries. Current delegates, aware of limitations but starting with themselves, are encouraging their uncles, aunts and parents towards closer relationship

between churches and countries.

My term as Amigos chair ended with a lot of thanksgiving and joy. The next team, in God’s hands, will be able to do greater things than what Amigos has achieved. It has been a privilege to plant seeds and see trees starting to grow, and it will be my joy to see these trees bearing much fruit and becoming a blessing to more people.

LEAH MARTIN
CANADA

At the GYS I realized the importance of concentrating on what we, the Mennonite youth of the world, believe together. At the beginning I felt frustrated that I couldn’t identify with the definition of Mennonite that I was presented with. The style of worship was something that I had never associated with the Mennonite church: there wasn’t a hymnal in sight and the focus was much more evangelical than I was comfortable with.

This was one of the first times that I felt out of place in a Mennonite worship service and generally at odds with the Mennonite community. I realize that Mennonites are no longer strictly of Swiss/German descent, don’t necessarily know what crokinole is, eat borscht or sing always in four-part harmony.

One thing that really shocked me was the lack of focus on issues of peace and justice in our world. To pacifists, issues of peace and justice are extremely relevant and important, and this often means that we find ourselves at odds with an increasingly violent world. It is beliefs and values like this that help Mennonites from all over the world feel connected regardless of theological understandings.

By the end, I realized that the “Mennonite” label does not only apply to people very similar to myself, and this doesn’t make me or anyone else less “Mennonite.”

If the global Mennonite church is going to be able to exist and to work together, it is essential that we broaden our definition of Mennonite. It is important that we focus on the things that we believe together, rather than concentrate on cultural differences that do pull us apart. ☺

PHOTO BY WILHELM UNGER



Arnold Voth, a Global Youth Summit organizer, stands in front of the welcome sign at the Gutenberg School in Asunción.

PARAGUAY: PART II

Face-to-face in Paraguay

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada congregations meet their sister churches and partners at Assembly 15

SUBMISSIONS FACILITATED BY
REBECCA YODER NEUFELD
Mennonite Church Canada



Yaliel Caballero of Venga Tu Reino in Bogota, Colombia, reflects on a Bible passage as Mary Castello from Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., follows along. Says Stirling Avenue peace and justice worker Josie Winterfeld, "Our reflection times together were very rich. We came back from the conference with renewed energy to nurture this important sister church relationship. This church-to-church relationship helps us have a deeper understanding of what it means to be part of the larger global church."



Alf Koop, right, of Vineland United Mennonite Church, hands out quilted banners church members made to representatives of eight sister congregations of the Evangelical Mennonite Churches of Bolivia, during a stop in Santa Cruz before Assembly 15. His wife Liz Koop writes, "We felt truly blessed when we would run into them through the days at assembly and be welcomed with a warm hug! What a wonderful opportunity for them to experience a worldwide gathering of Mennonites. For many of us in the north, we can conceivably plan for and attend another [assembly], but for most of them this week in Asunción will have been a 'once-in-a-lifetime' event. I heard many of them use the word 'incredible' to describe how they felt. I would translate that as 'awesome' and it truly was an awesome experience for us."



Waterloo North Mennonite Church members met with their partners, the Association des Theologiennes Mennonites du Congo (ATMCO), a group of Congolese women theologians, in Asunción, where they exchanged handmade banners (pictured, Waterloo North receives the Congolese banner). Carol and Leroy Shantz write, "Being able to meet face-to-face at Paraguay 2009 deepened and strengthened our partnership. It was truly an opportunity to 'come together in the way of Jesus Christ' with our partners." Being able to sit in on workshops on the church and violence against women and children in the Congo "left a profound impression on participants," they add.

PARAGUAY: PART II



Emily Brubaker-Zehr, left, Arnold Snyder and Marg Janzen were among a group from Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., meeting with friends in Asunción from Burkina Faso, including Siaka Traoré, second from left. Rockway pastor Scott Brubaker-Zehr writes, "Our meeting . . . made the global reunion more personal and tangible for us. We had a chance to share pictures and stories from our own ministry settings. Through our contribution to the training centre in Orodara, we feel like we are participating in their educational ministry in a small way. Face-to-face meetings like this are significant for building up the international body of Christ."

Siegelinde De Jong of Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil, Ont., and Pastor Marta Lucía Gomez of the Comunidad Cristiana Menonita de Paz of Pereira, Colombia, enjoy their visit to Iguazú Falls together. "It was my privilege to first meet our sister congregation in Colombia before their pastor and I took off together for Asunción," De Jong writes. "She and her congregation were very thankful that our church had sponsored her. It was wonderful to observe the joy and enthusiasm of other Colombian sisters whom I met daily, as well as that of Martha Lucía, who, in spite of poverty and often persecution, stay faithful to God and keep on working for his kingdom."



Louise Cober Bauman of Tavistock Mennonite Church, Ont., left, stands with Pastor Beatriz Barrio of La Floresta Mennonite Church, Montevideo, Uruguay, in front of the "Peace be with you" banner made by quilters from Tavistock as a gift to the Uruguayan Study Centre. Husband Rick Cober Bauman writes of the intercontinental get-together that took place on their way to Paraguay, "Even without good Spanish, it was clear we were very warmly welcomed. We had been very uncertain how our visit to the Uruguayan Mennonite Study Centre in Montevideo was going to further the partnership with our home congregation of Tavistock Mennonite. And we are still not sure. But there is energy for a relationship. Some of it was in response to gifts from Tavistock. But I hope we find ways to go deeper. If we do not, then these parts of the Anabaptist Christian family of faith will remain largely unaware, and without understanding, of each other. That would be unfortunate."



PARAGUAY: PART II

Gender, race not an issue for new MWC vice-president

MC Canada's Janet Plenert will help guide global Mennonite organization over the next six years

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent
WINNIPEG

Not many people can say they are the vice-president of a worldwide organization, but Janet Plenert can.

Plenert, executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness, was elected to a six-year term as vice-president of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) at its assembly in Asunción, Paraguay, in July.

"It was a very affirming and humbling experience," Plenert says, adding that she feels "a great deal of excitement" about her new role. "I've always loved all things international, and this is an avenue to serve, to learn and to get to know more parts of the global church."

Canadian Mennonite editor/publisher Dick Benner reported that during one assembly session, three Latin American women theologians made a bold statement of solidarity with women leaders in the global Mennonite church, rejecting patriarchal models of church leadership and calling for more interdependence and dialogue in the Anabaptist community.

Plenert says her gender will not influence how she approaches her new role as vice-president, and it will not affect what kind of tasks she is assigned. She also notes that the other candidate for vice-president was a woman.

"It's safe to say I was not elected because I'm a woman," Plenert says. However, she adds that, for some Mennonite women in places where patriarchal models are the norm, seeing a woman out front in leadership can be a helpful model. "This isn't a platform for me to promote gender issues or women's rights," Plenert says, "but by being there, it can be an inspiration to other women."

In the global Mennonite church, North American membership has now taken second place to that of Africa, which is

nearly 600,000 strong. How will Plenert, as a white North American, represent the expectations of the demographic of colour?

Plenert points to the diversity of the new MWC officers. The president, Danisa Ndlovu, is from Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, treasurer Ernst Bergen is a Spanish- and German-speaking Paraguayan.

"There are significant measures in place to ensure that there's broad representation [in MWC]," Plenert says. She does not have the sense that, as a North American, she needs to withdraw or defer to other voices when meeting with her fellow officers, the executive committee or the general council. "We are put in these roles from all over [the world] to lead, and we will lead in unity."

One of the things Plenert and the other officers will oversee during the coming six years are some significant staff changes, including replacing general secretary Larry Miller. Miller will transition out of his role in 2012 after 22 years.

MWC also plans to strengthen its presence in each continental region. One of the

strategies to do this will be to open regional offices. Discerning where these centres should be located is the first step.

People who wonder if her new role will take away from her work at MC Canada need not fear, Plenert says. When she was nominated, she contacted MC Canada's general board to discern if she should accept the nomination. She received "strong affirmation," she says.

MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman is pleased with the appointment. "It's a very good choice [and it matches] the use of her gifts and also the needs that are currently there in MWC," he says, adding that Plenert's appointment is a good way for MC Canada to contribute to the global church while, at the same time, "putting some flesh" on one of its own priorities, which is to become a global church. "We consider this appointment as blessed, and very much supported by MC Canada."

Plenert's new role comes at the end of a six-year term she served with the Global Mission Fellowship, which she chaired for the past three years. In Asunción, the fellowship decided to become MWC's Mission Commission. As a result, the mission efforts of the agencies and churches around the world that are part of the fellowship will no longer network in parallel to the global church, but as part of the global church.

Prior to becoming executive secretary of MC Canada Witness at the beginning of 2006, Plenert was the denomination's executive director of international ministries. ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF JANET PLENERT



Janet Plenert of Canada, second from right, is the new Mennonite World Conference vice-president. From left to right, she is pictured with treasurer Ernst Bergen of Paraguay, president Danisa Ndlovu of Zimbabwe, and general secretary Larry Miller of France.

Private intimate goodbye for Warden Woods

Congregation calls it quits after more than 60 years

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
TORONTO

Music to mingle by was brought by the “Resurrection Band” as congregants past and present gathered on June 14 for the farewell celebration for Warden Woods Mennonite Church.

Pastor Johanna Wall had spoken of this eventuality at the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada spring gathering, responding to the potentiality of death when a congregation reaches the end of its institutional life cycle. “When we came to the realization that our journey would end with closure, it didn’t come with the smell of decay, it came with the fragrance of Christ,”

she wrote in response to e-mail questions. “That’s been the Spirit’s gift for us.”

Warden Woods began as a congregation in 1937 and went through several moves and name changes before settling at its final location at 74 Firvalley Court in Scarborough, a suburb of Toronto. There, under the leadership of John Hess, who pastored the church from 1955-88, an active and continuing community centre ministry was spawned. While independent from the congregation early on, the centre depended on support from the church for finances and volunteers.

Early in this decade it was becoming apparent that the congregation was dwindling. After an attempt to focus on “information, outreach, and hospitality” in 2005, with no apparent change, the congregation decided to hold to the status quo until 2008. Then, following a careful pattern of “holy conversations,” the congregation approached the topic of where it was going following a pastoral/congregational review.

Congregational chair Danielle McCandless told *Canadian Mennonite*, “I think the most important part of our process was the work done at the beginning. This was where people were invited to really reflect, and their input was very honest. . . . There was a new commitment to change.”

Wall noted that the lessons of the Spirit along the way included being “intentional, brave, reflective, moving forward appropriately, honest and speaking kindly” to one another. “Love allows difference. We’ve had plenty of practice over the years, yet I was so amazed at our increasing ability to move from caution to clarity—and how

Sargent Avenue holds final German service

BY ANNE THIESSEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church held a special bilingual service on June 21 to mark that German worship services are coming to a close. It was a time to be grateful for God’s leading for 60 years, but for some senior members it was also a time to mourn.

When the congregation came into being in 1949, the majority of the congregation had come to Canada after World War II. The services were exclusively in German, which was not unusual in Mennonite churches in Manitoba at the time. As time went on, Mennonites (especially young people from rural areas) joined Sargent when they moved to Winnipeg.

The transition from German to English went through several phases. The language question first came up in 1964 and by 1967 some English was included in the worship services. In 1987 the congregation decided to have two separate worship services every Sunday, a format that served the church well for 22 years.

Sargent has a long tradition of lay ministers, who have been a great blessing, especially in the German services.

As attendance in the German services dwindled, and some lay ministers were no longer able to serve due to health reasons, the members decided in 2008 to bring the German worship services to a close. This decision was not made lightly; much prayer and thought went into it.

After John Dyck gave a brief overview of the history of the church, Margaret Pankratz reminisced about how, when she came to Canada as a teenager, she and her family were grateful that the language and people at Sargent made them feel at home. She has many pleasant memories of the youth group activities.

Henry Kliewer, Mennonite Church Manitoba conference minister, spoke in German on the unchanging God. Pastor Edwin Epp and lay ministers Martin Friesen, Ben Sawatzky and Menno Wiebe also participated. It was sad that long-time lay minister Gerhard Ens could not attend due to declining health. The service lasted nearly two hours, and everyone was truly blessed.

The German language will not be entirely out of the picture. There is still room for German hymns and German Bible study at Sargent for those who wish it.

relieved people felt. You can't get anywhere together unless you know where others truly stand."

The intentional process included giving members two chances in April and May to visit other congregations in the area to prepare for the day when Warden Woods would no longer worship together.

Former members and friends were

invited to the June 14 service, but the closing worship on June 28 was reserved for present members and attendees, Wall wrote, "much like a family staying at the gravesite after the others have left. Those who are most directly impacted need to share the experience, to feel its raw reality, and in the midst of separation also know a profound connection with others." ❧



Martha Smith Good, left, pastor at Warden Woods from 2000-05, left, speaks with Johanna Wall, the congregation's final pastor, at the Toronto church's farewell celebration on June 14.

Church leaders taught to make disciples at summer institute

STORY AND PHOTO
BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

Nan Cressman, director of Conciliation Services Canada, was relaxed and excited after the 17th annual Summer Training Institute for Church Leaders at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, over three days in June.

This year, Ed White from the Alban Institute spoke on "Creating disciple-making communities: Congregational and personal transformation go together."

Cressman saw this year's topic and speaker as continuing to fulfill the original goals of making church specialists available to Canadian pastors of any denomination.

White's lectures included material from Patrick Lencioni's *Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, and Christian Schwarz's *Natural Church Development*, underlining the belief that the basic task of a congregation is to make disciples. Pastors need to make sure their own relationship with Christ is growing, and their role to help their congregation to focus on growth in relationship with Christ is key among the many good things they could be doing.

The ecumenical summer institute has long been a regular event for proactive pastors from across Canada and often includes American pastors as well. Some congregations, including several Mennonite ones, have taken to sending a key lay leader along with the pastor. This year, Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden, Ont., sent pastor Steve Drudge and congregational chair Gladys Bender, while Hillcrest Mennonite Church (in New Hamburg, Ont.), sent pastors Jan Steckley and Dave Driedger, as well as congregational chair Andrea Yantzi. ❧

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

CFO appointed to position of CEO. Senior Leadership Team seeks new CFO.

Who We Are: Mennonite Savings and Credit Union is a progressive and visionary organization founded on values of stewardship, compassion, and mutual aid. From modest beginnings, we now serve the financial needs of 16,500 Mennonite, Brethren in Christ and Amish members, with dollars under administration rapidly approaching three quarter of a billion dollars.

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GOD AT WORK IN US

More than a 'refugee activist'

Former executive director of the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers ponders his future and that of the organization

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent
EDMONTON

Jim Gurnett's eyes flash when he talks about refugee issues. "I haven't had a chance to talk about this stuff for awhile," he said. On May 12, Gurnett retired from his position as executive director of the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers.



Gurnett

During his eight years, the centre's budget quadrupled, from \$2 million to \$8 million, staffing levels tripled, an apartment complex was added, and many programs were begun. When the centre moved to new buildings, he felt it was a good time for new beginnings for himself and the organization.

Gurnett was labelled a "refugee activist" by the *Edmonton Journal* in a Feb. 10 article.

"I do sort of like the word 'activist' . . . but I'd probably not be that narrow. I'd probably say 'civil society activist' or 'community activist' . . . Many of the refugee issues are poverty issues, which is an even larger, deeper, underlying horror in Canada that most people go along oblivious to."

"It's degrading and soul destroying when [an immigrant] woman with two master's degrees is working in some kitchen of a fast food restaurant because she's got to pay the bills so her children can survive," he added, noting that the centre is actively involved in helping immigrants get jobs that match their skills.

An accomplishment Gurnett is pleased with is the development of "holistic integrated practice" that he introduced at the centre. He said the practice recognizes that people are "whole and complex and not mechanical. . . . How you work with them

has to be responsive." Instead of telling immigrants what they need, "holistic integrated practice" begins with their abilities and needs, and seeks to build relationships to benefit the individuals and the society they join.

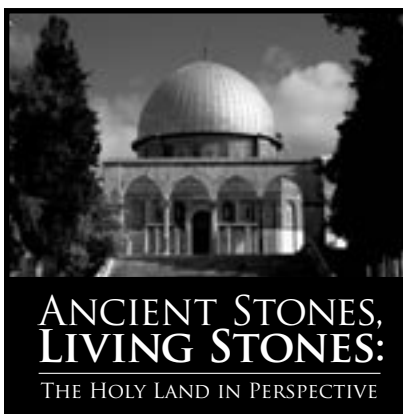
There are things Gurnett wishes could have worked differently. "If I could do it over, I'd do anything to find the money for [staff development]," he said. A second regret was lack of time to build a network of friends to support the centre's programs. It was easier to get funding from institutional sources, he said, adding, "We didn't do nearly enough to build the commitment of individuals and families to being financial partners and participants with the [centre's] life."

While Gurnett is not attached to the "Mennonite" in the centre's name, he definitely wants Mennonites to remain important participants. "I came to have huge admiration for the Mennonite church and

the way Mennonites seem to understand the Christian faith in a practical way. . . . You are a model of values in a civil society. [The centre] needs that to be unique and distinct. . . . We are one of the few organizations that explicitly said we are committed to concepts like hope and love. Those are fundamental Mennonite Christian theological ideas. . . . There need to be Mennonites that are volunteering, working, donating, that are paying attention," he said, adding that he hopes to see more Mennonites involved and caring about the centre in the years to come.

Gurnett is not sure what sort of job he is looking for now, although he wants avoid another "all-consuming job" like his position with the centre.

A grandfather of eight, Gurnett said, "I think that the Canada of the future can just be a tremendous place if we embraced, not in a superficial greeting card way, the real power of being a diverse community together. That's the Canada I want my grandchildren to be adults in." ❧



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ARTBEAT

FILM REVIEW

Harry Potter grows up

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince.

Director: David Yates. Writers: Steve Kloves (screenplay), J.K. Rowling (novel). Stars: Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson and Rupert Grant. A Heyday Films/Warner Bros. release, 2009.

Rated PG.

REVIEWED BY VIC THIESSEN

“This is dark stuff, very dark indeed,” says Professor Slughorn in this past summer’s hit film, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, aptly describing the tone of this sixth film in the series. Full of dark images and references



Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince, like repeated references to Harry as “the chosen one,” suggests the battle between Harry and Voldemort has taken on apocalyptic proportions: it’s about the ultimate battle between good and evil.

to dark forces and the dark lord, this film could fit comfortably in the horror genre, one of many signs that Harry Potter has grown up.

The film boasts stunning cinematography and an excellent classical score, which combine to create a darkly ominous atmosphere that alone makes the film worth watching on the big screen.

But, like most of its predecessors, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* is burdened with the necessity of telling a long story in a limited amount of time. The result is only partly successful, with characters popping in and out in haphazard fashion and many events feeling isolated and irrelevant (some make no sense at all to those of us who have not read the books).

Criticisms aside, this was a very well-made film, one of the best in the series. But is it a good film for Christians to watch? The Harry Potter books and films have been very controversial among Christians, especially in North America, primarily because they are about witches, wizards and magic spells. Can our children be damaged by them? Is there anything we can learn from them?

My first response is that a definitive answer will have to wait until the series is finished. The religious symbolism in

How will this battle be won? I do not yet know and so cannot comment on how this theme relates to Christianity. I do know I was impressed by the lack of redemptive violence in this film, as I was by the ambiguous ending, and I look forward to a discussion-worthy finale.

A clearer response to these questions concerns a recurring theme in the Harry Potter films, in which we hear Dumbledore repeatedly telling Harry that what makes us who we really are is the choices we make. This theme is particularly evident in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, where Harry is faced with one choice after another.

For Mennonites, Christianity is very much about the choices we make in our lives. The choices Harry makes not only reflect who he is and who he is becoming, they have profound consequences for him and for the world in which he lives. Churches can use this film as a way to engage their young people in discussions about the choices facing them every day and the way they live their lives as Christians.

Nothing in my experience would lead me to believe that these films are likely to create an unhealthy interest in witchcraft among our young people, but I don’t recommend this film for pre-teens. Even

here in Great Britain, where we have many witches, I have not heard that Harry Potter is seen as promoting paganism; it’s just a grand adventure story. So, in my opinion, the Harry Potter films are less likely to negatively impact young people than most of the films out there. ✎

Vic Thiessen is director of the London Mennonite Centre, England.

✎ Briefly Noted

Mennonite Artist Project connects ‘creatives’

Writers, designers, musicians, actors and visual artists from across Canada and the United States are joining Mennonite Artist Project (MAP), a new interdisciplinary network for “creatives” with Mennonite connections. Since the project launched its website, MennoniteArtistProject.com, in May, more than 250 artists have posted bios, events, classified ads and examples of their work. “Mennonite influence presents unique footholds and obstacles to artists,” says actress Kim Stauffer, the network’s founder. “MAP is a place to exchange ideas, share resources, promote shows, post reviews, find mentors, arrange collaborations, commission new work and speak in depth about what it means to be an artist.” Actress Elizabeth Hess became the project’s first featured artist in a series that now includes painter Don Swartzentruber, clothing designer Katherine Yoder and writer Deborah Good. Both *Rhubarb* magazine, the Mennonite Literary Society publication from Manitoba, and Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, the host of several annual arts weekends in Pennsylvania, have become members. “We hope MAP will be a clearinghouse for the amazing variety of Mennonite arts activity happening around the world,” says web administrator Lowell Brown. The website is open only to members, but membership is free and available online.

—Mennonite Artist Project Release

BOOK REVIEW

Not your grandfather's war

Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century.

P. W. Singer. The Penguin Press, 2009, 499 pages.

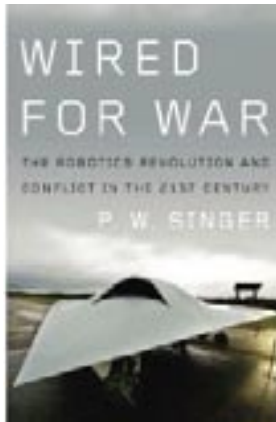
REVIEWED BY GENE STOLTZFUS

Unlike the days of my youth in the early 1960s, the decision today about participating in organized military violence is incredibly diffuse. The long arm of military service reaches into every industrial sector: to contractors or subcontractors; and into educational institutions, including high schools and think tanks. Production of components for advanced navy, air or ground-based fighting takes place in most industrial areas.

No part of the military complex is more dispersed throughout industry than the development, production and maintenance of the thousands of digital systems that wire the new armed forces; guide robots in battle, where they defuse explosive devices, collect pictures of the enemy and shoot at the enemy; and directly bomb or shoot people from unmanned digitally controlled vehicles.

Wired for War is not a 400-page book about how to lead a pacifist's life. It's a book about how war and advanced killing is unfolding. Singer tells us how the Talon robot "saves lives" by going places that are dangerous with its rapid-fire gun, and how a warrior robot uncovers hidden roadside bombs. He introduces us to unmanned submarines that are increasingly used in the most dangerous underwater situations, and insect-like bio-inspired robots that can climb up walls or even into pipes to look things over for security purposes. And the revolution has only begun.

A Brookings Institute thinker and consultant for the U.S. state and defence departments, the CIA and Congress, Singer



introduces us to the pilots, caretakers and commanders who are challenged to adjust their management ways, technical styles and chat room manners to killing in the 21st century. He frequently returns to the ethical questions of where the transition to digital warfare will take us. He tells the reader that these new creatures or machines

already affect police work, and hints that they will affect our larger culture in ways that will change us forever.

Our lives today are honeycombed with the tentacles of the military infrastructure and the choices are not very sweet. The old one-time decision to do alternate service is gone forever, if it ever really existed.

Today, being a pacifist is an exercise in repeated examination of industrial products, taxes, consumer goods, and, most of all, the workplace. And this is just the outward journey, a walk that only makes sense if there is an inward journey of the spirit that informs our hope for the wholeness of all things. This complexity would have completely overwhelmed me as a young man 50 years ago. This is why all of us are invited to take responsibility to investigate and help sort this out. ❧

Gene Stoltzfus is a cofounder of Christian Peacemaker Teams. Read his blog at peaceprobe.wordpress.com.

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Calendar

British Columbia

Sept. 24-Jan. 3: "A Common Thread: Textiles from Sto:lo First Nation, South Asian and Mennonite Communities" exhibition at the Reach Gallery, Abbotsford.

Sept. 26: Mennonite Fall Fair, Prince George Civic Centre.

Oct. 3-4: Thanksgiving Vespers with Abendmusik Choir at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (3) and Knox United Church, Vancouver (4), 8:00 p.m. Donations to Menno Simons Centre.

Oct. 16-18: Women's retreat at Camp Squeah.

Oct. 17: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. annual banquet, "An Evening in Paraguay," with Jacob Warkentin, at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford. For tickets, call 604-853-6177 or pick them up at the archives after Sept. 1.

Nov. 12-15: MCC Arts and Peace Festival at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford.

Nov. 14: MCC B.C. annual conference

at Culloden Mennonite Brethren Church, Vancouver.

Nov. 20-22: Youth Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

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 information, call 403-256-7157.

Oct. 15-17: The Centre for Rural Community Leadership and Ministry (CIRCLe M) is hosting a "Rooted in Faith" conference at the Best Western Wayside Inn, Lloydminster. Workshops include "Rural churches and social agencies," "Rural congregations and health," and "The church in community crisis." For more information, e-mail lloydanglicanchurch@sasktel.net.

Saskatchewan

Oct. 3: MC Saskatchewan council meeting, at RJC.

Oct. 14-18: MC Canada IMPaCT: an international gathering of pastors in Saskatchewan.

Oct. 16: Canadian Foodgrains Bank "Fast for Change" on World Food Day.

Oct. 16-17: MC Saskatchewan Women in Mission retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Oct. 16-17: RJC alumni volleyball tournament, at RJC.

Oct. 20: RJC annual corporation meeting, at RJC, 7 p.m.

Oct. 24: MC Saskatchewan Equipping Day at Osler Mennonite Church.

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

Nov. 6-7: MCC Saskatchewan Encounter (annual general meeting) at Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Nov. 7: RJC annual fundraising banquet, 6 p.m. Keynote speaker: Billy Morgan, a Hurricane Katrina survivor.

Nov. 21: MC Saskatchewan leadership

assembly.

Manitoba

Sept. 25-26: MCC Relief Sale, Keystone Centre, Brandon.

Sept. 26: Mennonite Collegiate Institute alumni volleyball tournament
Oct. 3: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate cyclathon fundraiser.

Oct. 3: Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Association coffee house at Fort Garry EMC Church to support U. of Manitoba chaplain program. Matt Schellenberg and Bucky Driedger of the Liptonians performing, 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 3-4: Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church 60th anniversary celebration; evening of reminiscing 7 p.m. (3), Thanksgiving service, 10:30 a.m. and evening of music 7 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).

Name	Members
Abraham Snyder	2
Levi Weber	2
John Reist	2
Abraham Snyder	2
Levi Weber	2
Henry Weber	1
Tommy Strickler	2
Joseph Schertz	3
Samuel Schertz	2
Levi Weber	2
August Weber	3
John Weber	4
Joseph Schertz	2
Edmund Gies	2
Daniel Weber	1
Harold Reist	2
Levi Weber	1
John Weber	1
Edmund Gies	2
Edmund Gies	2

Mennonite Heritage Portrait



It's about you: your connection with Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren heritage and culture.

Visit the Mennonite Heritage Portrait website to get hands-on with history; sign up for a free account and share your photos, stories and memories of Waterloo Region. The Mennonite Heritage Portrait is an archive with a life of its own - it will grow continually, as new collections and historical documents are added to the fully searchable database, and as individuals contribute stories, digital artifacts, and photographs.

Explore the Mennonite Heritage Portrait.

Use it. Learn from it. Contribute to it. Help build this accessible, authoritative, flexible heritage model.

www.MennoniteHeritagePortrait.ca

Oct. 31: "The Great Emergence," a day-long seminar with Phyllis Ticke, author of *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*, at Booth College, Winnipeg; 8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. For more information, visit faithforum.ca and click on "Events."

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

Nov. 2: Mennonite Collegiate Institute soup and pie supper/fall concert.

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

Nov. 7: "New Songs for Worship IV," a half-day workshop with Christine Longhurst and the CMU Worship Band, exploring a wide variety of new congregational songs for worship, at CMU; 9:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For more information, visit faithforum.ca and click on "Events."

Nov. 9: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual general meeting, at Westgate, 7 p.m.

Nov. 9: Mennonite Collegiate Institute annual general meeting.

Nov. 13-14: Mennonite Collegiate Institute presents *Oliver Twist*.

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

Nov. 16: MC Manitoba fall delegate meeting, 7 to 9 p.m., location t.b.a.

Dec. 3-5: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate senior high drama.

Ontario

Sept. 13: 175th anniversary celebration at Breslau Mennonite. Worship at 9:45 a.m. with Erwin Wiens followed by lunch, historical displays, tours, storytelling and music. For information call 519-648-2501.

Sept. 18-20: *Reesor*, a play about Mennonite pioneers in northern Ont., at St. Jacobs Church Theatre sponsored by Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, 8 p.m. (18, 19), 2 p.m. (19, 20). Tickets available at Conrad Grebel or MSCU.

Sept. 18,20: Maple View Mennonite Church, Wellesley, celebrates its 150th anniversary. Evening program at Faith Mennonite Church, Kingwood, at 7:30 p.m. (18); morning worship service at 10:45 a.m., afternoon program at 2 p.m. and potluck supper to follow (20). For more information, call 519-656-2579 or e-mail mvchurch@cyg.net.

Sept. 19: 19th Black Creek Pioneer Village Mennonite Central Committee

Relief Sale, Toronto; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Quilt auction at noon.

Sept. 28: Annual fall seniors retreat at Hidden Acres Camp and Retreat Centre. Theme: "Mennonite congregational singing: Sources and traditions of the past and present." Resource person: Wilbur Maust, former member of Conrad Grebel College music department. For registration or more information, call 519-625-8602.

Oct. 10-11: Ottawa Mennonite Church 50th anniversary celebration. Meet and greet at 3:30 (10), to be followed by a dinner and program; Worship service at 11 a.m. (11), followed by a lunch and program. For details, visit ottawamennonite.ca or call 613-733-6729.

Oct. 16: Shalom Counselling Services will host Mary Wiens, CBC producer and reporter, "Facing Challenges: Stories of Resilience and Growth" at Waterloo Mennonite Brethren Church, Lexington Rd., 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 23-25: Silver Lake Mennonite Camp's fall work weekend. RSVP to David Erb at 519-422-1401 or silverlake@slmc.ca.

Oct. 25: Pax Christi Chorale's Fanfare of Canadian Hymns II with guest host Eric Friesen, featuring winners of the Great Canadian Hymns Competition, at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto, 3 p.m.

Oct. 30: MDS fundraising dessert evening at Crosshill Mennonite Church, Millbank, at 7 p.m. Guest speaker: Jerry Klassen. Music by Five on the Floor.

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

UpComing

Workshop to root rural churches in the faith

The Centre for Rural Community Leadership and Ministry (CiRCLe M) is planning a conference for the fall. The three-day event will be held Oct. 15-17 at the Best Western Wayside Inn in Lloydminster, Alta. "Rooted in faith" is the theme for the weekend, with workshops on various topics, including "Rural churches and social agencies," "Rural congregations and health," and "The church in community crisis." CiRCLe M works to educate and encourage both religious and civic leadership in small towns. Its focus is four-fold, with an emphasis on strengthening leadership in small communities through a master of sacred theology degree in rural ministry and a "rural ministry concentration" for pastoral students at the Saskatoon Theological Union. In addition, the centre provides online resources for rural ministry plus a mentoring program for new rural church leaders. "The goal is more for pastors to gain an understanding on what rural issues are," says Don Unger, recently elected to the CiRCLe M board as the MC Saskatchewan representative. To register, e-mail lloydanglicanchurch@sasktel.net.

—BY KARIN FEHDERAU

MEDA offers answers to new global challenges

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) is offering up some new solutions to address new global realities at its annual "Business as a Calling" convention, Nov. 5-8, in San Jose, Calif. With the theme of "New frontiers: New solutions," and a special focus on alternate energy and food supply/security issues, convention-goers can expect to hear frank discussions about the current economic reality, new business opportunities and growing needs around the world. Plenary speakers include Stephen Kreider Yoder, San Francisco bureau chief for the *Wall Street Journal*; Len Penner, president of Cargill Canada; and Suzanne Broetje and Roger Bairstow of Broetje Orchards in Prescott, Wash. With more than 25 seminars on everything from renewable energy and the green revolution in India, to sustainability and stewardship in the pork industry, attendees will have an opportunity to learn, grow and meet the challenges of today's economic environment. They will also be inspired to put their faith and values to work on the job, and connect with other Christians who share similar values and a commitment to fighting poverty around the globe. For more information, or to register, visit businessasacalling.org.

—Mennonite Economic Development Associates Release



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Announcement

URBAN YOUTH ADVENTURES is looking for **volunteers** with passion to serve at-risk youth in Winnipeg's North End. We're a Christian organization initially supported by World Vision. Our programs teach skills and character development, and are intentional in relationship-building to encourage youth, build hope, develop self-worth and break the cycle of poverty. Will you help us? Contact Karis or Frank at info@uya.ca or 204-582-8040. ALSO, **Cycle 4 Change Bike Tour** coming October 3. Hop on your bike, support a great cause and enjoy a beautiful fall ride. Register to cycle or volunteer at www.uya.ca.



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Please contact Dale Schiele, P2P Director, at 306-763-6224 or dschiele@sasktel.net, for more detailed information.

Employment Opportunities



VICE PRESIDENT & UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC DEAN

Eastern Mennonite University, located in Virginia's scenic Shenandoah Valley, seeks qualified candidates for the position of Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean to lead and oversee all undergraduate academic programs of the university. The successful candidate will: provide vision for program quality and development; guide long-range strategic planning; manage day-to-day details of undergraduate administration; recruit and hire qualified undergraduate faculty; communicate effectively and work collegially.

Qualifications include: leadership and administrative expertise; a doctoral degree in a discipline in the university; a record of teaching and scholarship appropriate for appointment as a full professor; familiarity with the Mennonite church; commitment to the mission of Mennonite/Anabaptist higher education.

To apply send a letter of application and resume to Fred Kniss, Provost, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or e-mail to provost@emu.edu. For more information, visit our website: www.emu.edu/humanresources.

Position begins on July 1, 2010. Review of applications will begin on October 1, 2009 and continue until the position is filled. EMU is an equal opportunity employer with a strong commitment to diversification of its faculty, staff and administration.



DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Due to a retirement we have an exciting opportunity on the Canadian Mennonite University leadership team. The Director of Human Resources is responsible for the delivery of all Human Resource activities within CMU. The individual will have applicable education and experience in order to administer all human resource functions, including salary and benefit administration, as well as developing and implementing policies and practices.

For more information, please check the CMU web page at www.cmu.ca, or contact Susan Warkentin at swarkentin@cmu.ca or by telephone at (204) 487-3300 ext 663.

Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
Oct. 5	Sept. 22
Oct. 19	Oct. 6
	<i>Focus on Travel</i>
Nov. 2	Oct. 20
	<i>Focus on Books and Resources</i>
Nov. 16	Nov. 3
	<i>Focus on Music</i>

Snapshots of Canadians in Paraguay



Sisters Rachel, left, Nicole and Ashley Redekop from Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C., volunteer their services for a day of clean-up at Hogar Ganar, home for abused and abandoned children near Asunción.

ASSEMBLY 15 PHOTOS BY RAY DIRKS



Raising their hands in prayer to the eastern sun are North American worship leaders Katie Bishop of Montana, left; Neill von Gunten, Thelma Meade and Sara Meade, all of Manitoba; and Danita Fisher of Montana.



One of the many special music groups leading worship was the Faith and Life Male Choir of Winnipeg. Ben Pauls conducted the choir in Paraguay.