

CANADIAN MENNONITE

September 21, 2009

Volume 13 Number 18



Is your
school
bully-free?
p.4

inside

Warden Woods scholarship 16

Praying at the mosque 22

Focus on education 25

EDITORIAL

Mennonite Anti-Zionism?

FIRST OF THREE EDITORIALS

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Zexter Van Zile, a journalist who claims to be neither Jewish nor a Zionist, has a lot of opinions about Mennonites working in the Middle East. He circulated a paper, at the height of the United Church of Canada controversy last month, entitled "Key Mennonite Institutions Against Israel."

Coming in for harsh criticism was the work of Mennonite Central Committee and Christian Peacemaker Teams. The controversy, drawing national media attention and the ire of the Jewish Congress, centred around a call by some UCC delegates for a boycott of Jewish academic institutions because of the continued Jewish occupation of the Gaza strip.

Among other offences, Mennonites, according to Van Zile, have been at the forefront of the effort to discredit Israel to audiences in North America, have called on Israeli Jews to abandon their insistence on maintaining Israel as a sovereign Jewish state and acquiesce to a one-state solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, are ironic and hypocritical because they enjoy safety and wellbeing by virtue of other people's willingness to engage in acts of violence. Mennonite anti-Zionism, he charges, is emblematic of an inability to deal with the reality of evil and the power needed to confront it.

Surprised and feeling blindsided by such impassioned rhetoric and what appeared to be well-researched arguments, I asked myself how we, a small denomination, could have such forceful impact on this weary,

emotionally charged, 61-year-old debate.

So I went to three trusted friends and experts for some answers: Paul Heidebrecht, the newly-named MCC Ottawa director; Cal Redekop, a sociologist who has written extensively on this and other global conflicts where Mennonites have encountered similar hostility; and Ken Seitz, recently returned as MCC country representative in Lebanon, who has been in and out of the Middle East for the past 30 years.

MCC, said Heidebrecht, has been working in the Middle East since 1949, first with Palestinian refugees. MCC believes that the land of Palestine/Israel should provide a safe and secure home for Israelis and Palestinians, for Jews, Muslims and Christians. "We believe that safety and security grow out of the pursuit of justice and peace. We are unequivocally opposed to all that is anti-Jewish and anti-Arab. We condemn the use of violence in all instances, including calls for the violent destruction of Israel."

That doesn't sound like an anti-Jewish bias to me.

Redekop was more confessional. Van Zile's description of Mennonite hypocrisy regarding non-resistance as a way of avoiding involvement in dirty politics and warfare "totally ignores the agonizing over this very fact by Mennonites of every generation," he demurred. "The fact that many Mennonites defected and went into the war machine simply magnifies the problem of the two kingdom stance. I think this is what brings on Van Zile's outrage."

Seitz would prefer eye-to-eye communication. "It is difficult to deal with Van Zile's objections because of his extreme Zionist defense. If I were to sit down with him, I'd like to talk with him about the injustices and suffering amongst the Palestinians, which we've witnessed firsthand, instigated by the insistence on a Jewish homeland in Palestine and the policies of the state of Israel."

Meet your board member

Ed Janzen of Abbotsford, BC, represents MC Canada on *Canadian Mennonite's* 12-member board. He serves as secretary of the executive committee and represents Support Services at the national level. Now retired, he has held human resources positions, including director, in several Ontario universities: McMaster, Guelph, Toronto. He has been manager of salary and benefits at Coca-Cola Canada and was executive director of MCC BC. In related church responsibilities, he was MCC Director in Jamaica for three years, chair of United Mennonite Churches in Ontario for six years and vice-chair of MCEC for the first two years after merger. He has also been chair of several congregations: Hamilton, Guelph, Toronto, Emmanuel, and has served in various other capacities including the General Board of MC Canada and chair of Support Services Council. He is currently vice-president of Mennonite Faith and Learning Society which is a partner in the development of Mennonite Studies at the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford. He and his wife, Louise, are parents of one son, David, who is married to Patricia King. Ed and Louise are members of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford. He can be reached at epjlj@shaw.ca via email or by phone at (604) 852-0095.



ABOUT THE COVER:

Speaking for peace in the public square means we must stop bullying behaviour wherever it is found

PHOTO: ISTOCK

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

CANADIAN MENNONITE

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5

WATERLOO ON N2L 6H7

Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 Fax: 519-884-3331

Web site: canadianmennonite.org

Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

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Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Obituaries: Karen Suderman, obituaries@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

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Reprint requests: reprints@canadianmennonite.org

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

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

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contents



Fighting back against schoolyard bullying 4

As a new school year begins, **Elsie Rempel**, MC Canada director of Christian nurture, provides practical advice on how to counteract bullying.

Blown away by grace 14

Eastern Canada correspondent, **Dave Rogalsky**, reports on Hawkesville Mennonite Church's cleanup after a tornado destroys property near their campout site near Durham, Ont.

A 'taste of China' in Saskatchewan 18

MC Canada Witness workers, **Todd and Jeanette Hanson**, describe the growth of churches in China in this report by **Kathy Luitjens**.



MC Manitoba executive director retiring 21

Edgar Rempel reflects on his six years as executive director of Mennonite Church Manitoba in this interview by Manitoba correspondent, **Evelyn Rempel Petkau**.

From pig farm to coffee shop 24

Daniel Lichti, who performed Bach's *Coffee Contata* in Stratford this summer, describes the twists and turns in his music career.

Regular features:

For discussion **7** Readers write **8** Milestones **12**
Pontius' Puddle **12** Calendar **30** Classifieds **31**

Mennonite anti-Zionism? 2

DICK BENNER

Playing chicken with evil? 9

PHIL WAGLER

Salvation 10

AIDEN ENNS

Church growth or Church health 11

JIM SHANTZ

New blog postings

at canadianmennonite.org/blog/

Focus turns into reality: **CHERYL WOELK**

The Pastor and the General: **WILL LOEWEN**

B.C.-itis: **PAUL LOEWEN**

Fighting back against schoolyard bullying

Will 'Blue Day' be on the back-to-school agenda this year?

BY ELSIE REMPEL

Mennonite Church Canada director of Christian nurture



Elsie Rempel is Mennonite Church Canada's director of Christian nurture.

Not long from now there could be another day to honour on our annual calendar. Katie Neu of Listowel, Ont., and Robert Frenette of Fredericton, N.B., endured bullying in their childhoods. Together with Mike Allan, a Maritime MP, they are lobbying for the acceptance of December 17 as “Blue Day” to promote a culture that is anti-bullying. Dec. 17 is also the day in 2006 when their Bullying Canada website was launched. The occasion would annually be known as Blue Day, chosen for the colour of the anti-bullying awareness ribbon. December is a good time for such a focus: Even in a post-Christian society, Canadians still expect and respond to messages of peace and goodwill in December.

On the other hand, media often feature stories about bullying in September, when school starts up again. September is a key month for establishing the social climate of school communities in which many bullies, bystanders and victims find themselves.

A spiritual crisis

Can a story in September and a focus day in December prevent schoolyard bullying? As good as such efforts are, it's not enough for a problem that is as persistent as dry skin in winter. But we can cultivate communities that make bullying the exception rather than the rule.

In October 2005, a national ecumenical task force on bullying met in Manitoba and developed this definition: “Bullying is repeated behaviour intended to cause harm or distress. It seeks to establish a relationship that is based on power and contempt. The actions destroy the possibility of life-giving relationships and are a signal of spiritual crisis.”

Defining the issue is an important step, as are resources that equip children and educators to deal with bullying. Thankfully, good resources abound. A brief Internet search reveals “Proven Bullying Prevention Software” (practiqest.com) with virtual role

Bullying is repeated behaviour intended to cause harm or distress. It seeks to establish a relationship that is based on power and contempt.'
(National ecumenical task force on bullying)



plays that foster experiential learning, and the Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network (prevent.ca), with handy lists of actions if you are being bullied or see someone else being bullied, and personal safety curricula like Steps to Respect (cfchildren.org).

Mennonite schools pro-active

Valuable resources for developing anti-bullying communities also reside among educators in the Peace Church tradition. I contacted some of Canada's Mennonite elementary, middle and high schools to find out how they respond to this pernicious relational issue.

At the elementary and middle school levels, using curricula such as those mentioned above or from provincial education departments, was common. In addition, staff exercised considerable vigilance in responding to incidents of bullying.

Heather Smith, the vice-principal at the Mennonite Educational Institute (MEI) in Abbotsford, B.C., re-defines the popular public policy of "zero tolerance" as follows: "Every incidence of bullying will have consequences, and those consequences will include opportunities for growth, for restoration and redemption." She stresses that, while students aren't coerced into liking each other, MEI students are expected to be kind to each other.

Students with special needs are also equipped with special tools, such as



Participants, Enthusiastic, Accepting, Christ-like, Encouraging, Mentors, Aspiring, Kind, Excellent, Responsible, and Servants. The acronym does not eliminate the issue of bullying, but it does highlight the complementary resources the staff at Menno Simons use to address the issue.

Vice-principal Karen Braun, who came to Menno Simons from a career in the public schools, notes that, while bullying is less of an issue than it was

the consequences for bullying at Menno Simons: bullies must perform an act of kindness toward the person they have just bullied.

At the Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary and Middle Schools, the online Steps to Respect resource helps teachers equip students to counteract bullying tendencies. Attentiveness to incidents of bullying is stressed, as is the one-on-one response to each occurrence. Everyone is taught to intervene when they see bullying behaviour.

At the Winnipeg Mennonite schools, referring to a higher power—to what Jesus expects of them and helps them to do—adds importance to the need for making amends and making better choices.

The schools recently conducted a survey on this topic among its parents. It revealed that students generally feel safe at school, that incidences of bullying erupt occasionally during unsupervised times, and that parents appreciate the way staff responds when it does occur.

Different challenges at high school

At the high school level such direct moral teaching is no longer the most effective

Much of the increase of violence and killings in North American schools is linked to disadvantaged kids being bullied, "frozen out," and eventually lashing out with incredible violence.

"Bully Busters," a resource that is part of BC schools' Bullying and Prevention Handbook. Everyone at MEI gets the message that it is never wise to keep bullying a secret.

At Menno Simons Christian School in Calgary, Alta., a secular violence prevention curriculum is well appreciated. However, the schools PEACEMAKERS acronym gets used even more:

in the public schools, it still remains an issue. She appreciates the ability to work in a faith-based context, where she can remind students of their identity as PEACEMAKERS and pray with children who are involved in bullying.

Children who are involved in praying for each other tend to respect each other more. Perhaps praying for each other even makes it easier to deal with one of

way to counter bullying behaviour. Christian teachers and administrators who model Christ-like behaviour and use peer monitoring are effective. Teachers must treat students with integrity and respect, keeping their eyes open for incidents of bullying and responding pro-actively even when the bullied teen claims “it’s not so bad,” and confronting bullying with redemptive attitudes.

Westgate School principal Bob

[R]eferring to a higher power—to what Jesus expects of them and helps them to do—adds importance to the need for making amends and making better choices.

Hummelt views peer assessment as the most powerful agent for change. He and his Winnipeg staff work hard at building up positive values in their students. Hummelt asks students engaged in bullying activity if they want their classmates to think of them as jerks. These students get the message and usually work at improving their behaviour.

Phys-ed classes support this approach with curriculum units on the topic and equip students with bullying prevention language, such as “That’s bully action. Stop it.” The community spirit of their smaller school also helps Westgate build an anti-bullying culture, although some students do still “freeze other kids out.” Bullying, like dry skin, isn’t easy to eradicate, but it can be treated.

Such good news stories occur in the public school system as well. There are many people of faith in public education systems that are committed to redemptive nonviolence, but serve in settings where explicit references to their faith are not possible. However, their attitudes and actions convey clear messages of care for the underdog. Their redemptive approaches towards perpetrators and supportive bystanders of bullying make them distinctive, and help them build relationships of respect and integrity that go a long way in building school cultures of anti-bullying, even where faith is a taboo topic. When students, who are stuck in cycles of retribution are asked, “Have you ever considered the power of not hitting back?” they are often surprised, but

sometimes try out this “weird” strategy, and add it to their personal toolbox.

From bullying to genocide

Are our children getting too soft to tough it out like their parents and grandparents may have done? No.

Much of the increase of violence and killings in North American schools is linked to disadvantaged kids being bullied, “frozen out,” and eventually lashing

out with incredible violence. The shootings at Columbine High in the 1990s, where her sons were students, prompted popular parenting author Barbara Coloroso to focus on the issue of bullying.

Since then, she has led workshops and given presentations across North America. She travelled to Rwanda and Darfur to lead anti-bullying workshops, and was shocked to discover how genocide survivors identified countries according to bully and bystander qualities. This led her to additional research and the conclusion that it’s a short path from bullying to genocide.

Her book *Extraordinary Evil: A Brief History of Genocide* (Nation Books, 2007), effectively illustrates the line from the personal dynamics of bullying to the social dynamics of hate crimes and genocide. Coloroso claims that, as in bullying, a critical requirement for stopping genocide is to see and name it as early in the process as possible. She challenges the international community to get involved and help rewrite the script, rather than take decades to name the genocides of the past and then say “never again,” while remaining blind to the evolving genocides of the present.

Becoming part of the solution

Christians who are committing themselves to speak for peace in the public square need to do our part in building anti-bullying cultures wherever we are active, whether that is in our families, our schools, congregations, or at broader civil and church levels.

One of Coloroso’s tools to overcoming the relational evils of bullying to the extraordinary evil of genocide is a commitment to “deep caring” and moral formation.

And deep caring can make every day a “Blue Day”, including Dec. 17. ❧

❧ For discussion

1. What bullying behaviours do you remember from your own school days? Do you think bullying has grown less socially acceptable? How prevalent is bullying in your community?
2. A national task force developed a definition of bullying (see page 5). Do you think this is a good definition? What role does contempt play in bullying? What role do bystanders play in allowing bullying to continue?
3. What happens to bullies and victims when they become adults? How prevalent is bullying in families, in the workplace or in the church? Are there effective ways to deal with bullying in these situations?
4. Barbara Coloroso has concluded that, it’s a short path from bullying to genocide. Do you agree that hate crimes and genocide have dynamics similar to bullying? If caring deeply for others and commitment to morality can overcome bullying, how can we help to build these qualities in our world?

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.

✉ Heroic warrior not a murderer, says brother of slain missionary

RE: "FORGIVING THE murderer," Aug. 17, page 11.

I want to correct this heading. In accordance with human rights, every independent nation has the right to defend its territory against any outside invasion. The Ayoreos lived in this territory of Paraguay for many generations. When the white man penetrated their territory in search of oil, the Ayoreos fought with every means against this invasion. Jonoine did what a young warrior needed to do. The death of Kornelius Isaak was a result of an act of war. Murder is a criminal offence, whereas killing in a war is an act of heroism. Therefore, Jonoine should not be called a murderer.

The assembly in Paraguay was my first opportunity to meet the man who had killed my brother Kornelius, a member of the Conference church in Filadelfia, Paraguay, who was working as a missionary with Licht den Indianern under the supervision of the Mennonite Brethren Mission Board in September 1958, and to extend my hand of forgiveness and reconciliation.

I led Jonoine by the hand onto the stage and I said to him, "Fifty years ago you were a courageous young warrior of your tribe. You defended your territory against the invasion of the white man and you were a hero of your people. Fifty years ago, my brother Kornelius Isaak, another young man fought the peaceful war of the Lamb of God, willing to give his life for his Lord Jesus Christ. Jonoine, you did what you had to do according to your values and tradition, and my brother did what he needed to do. At that tragic confrontation in 1958, Kornelius lost his life. Today we are not enemies, we are brothers in Jesus Christ and warriors together for the kingdom of God".

Jonoine presented me with his spear, a complete replica of the one he used to kill my brother; I took the spear from him as a gesture of peace. This spear will be placed in a case at the Study Center for Anabaptist Peace and Theology, located at CEMTA in Asunción, which I established in 2006.

Then I addressed the assembly, "In the name of Kornelius Isaak and Jonoine, I challenge you to establish centres all over the world, of study and research of Anabaptist and peace theology and training, in ways to find peaceful solutions to confrontations.

HELMUT ISAAK, BURNS LAKE, B.C.

✉ Human criteria for what is 'important' may be 'irrelevant'

I READ WILL Braun's confessional accounting of values ("Important . . . in whose eyes?" Aug. 17, page 21) and how we measure such things as importance.

It reminded me of a query I've faced too many times in my short life: How is that relevant? My response over time has been ". . . according to whom?"

I would welcome some discussion on this conundrum for many of us, as we grapple with "relevancy" in our churches, homes and "marketplace" conversations. Who determines, or influences, relevancy? When? How?

I expect that we might encounter similarly astounding, freeing, perhaps confounding, paradoxical insights, if we were to cease seeking desperate assurance of the relevancy of "our" culture, politics, theology, preaching, teaching, program, doctrine, praxis, etc. Perhaps we might find ourselves facing an inescapable relevancy, revealed by the unequivocally uniquely qualified "One" whose test of relevancy may well exclude many, most or all of our tests.

CLARE NEUFELD, KELOWNA, B.C.

✉ Just wondering

RE: "'VACATIONARY SEASON' is upon us," July 6, page 4.)

I wonder if we travelled less, and used less fuel, would there be better opportunities for the poor—both people and environment? I wonder if we lived with less, would there be more for others? I wonder if we ate less and grew more of our own food, would there be more for others? I wonder if we worked less hours to earn more money, would we find a sense of peace and contentment where we are? I wonder if we bought less, would there be a possibility of more equitable distribution of the world's resources? I wonder if we didn't live with a deep sense of greed and guilt that might come from owning too much stuff, would we need to make ourselves feel better by extravagant

giving? I wonder if we should look upon ourselves for unexamined greed.

MARIE DUECK, NIVERVILLE, MAN.

✉ Menno wouldn't approve of 'cultural Mennonites'

SCOTT BERGEN'S ARTICLE, "What about the non-German Mennonites?" Aug. 17, page 16, effectively highlighted the confusing double-meaning of

Mennonite as "faith" and "Germanic culture" among many German Mennonites. He also pointed out how this perception can restrict the histories we write.

As a member of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, I find it's often easier to be seen as a minister than perceived as a Mennonite. This flies in the face of early radical Reformation history, where Anabaptists were identified by their beliefs and martyred for their faith, and not by their surnames or for their family recipes.

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Playing Chicken With Evil?

PHIL WAGLER

I remember the good old-fashioned butcher parties at my grandparent's farm. Headless chickens flapped frightfully around the barnyard before dropping lifeless, surrendering to a roast pan future. Precious memories; how they linger. Such imagery drives some to tofu. Nothing against tofu, which has a place in the food chain right next to play-dough, but we've lost sight of what this world is really like.

I once visited southern Alberta's Head-Smashed-In-Buffalo-Jump (the name says it all) to learn of the amazing ways Aboriginals provided for themselves. A yearly ritual of driving bison off cliffs to their bloody end was needed in order for the community to survive year to year. Life teeters hazardously close to the brink and it's not always grocery store appealing.

The stark reality of life on our planet has been airbrushed away. As true as this may be with food, it is even more real when it comes to evil. For all the horrors we're exposed to via the media, the entertainment value of evil has never been higher. We know this is a problem, don't we? Still, there is the paradoxical belief out there that somehow evil should never actually touch us. We've set up

ways, means, and securities to make sure it doesn't and seem honestly aghast when evil slips through our feeble Maginot lines. Now, without a doubt, we—and Christians specifically—should be working with all our might to counter evil in



The stark reality of life on our planet has been airbrushed away.

all its chameleonic forms. We know the Good and that in him there is no darkness. Still, I wonder if we haven't begun, with our culture, to think of ourselves more highly than we ought.

Do we see things too rosy? Do we only see cordon bleu without the plucking mess? Have we swallowed an unbiblical notion of human nature that is highly optimistic, but light on sin and Satan? Have we forgotten that humanity consistently flirts with chaos?

Romano Guardini wrote, "All monsters of the wilderness, all horrors of darkness have reappeared. The human person again stands before the chaos; and all of this is so much more terrible, since the majority do not recognize it: after all, everywhere scientifically educated people are communicating with one

another, machines are running smoothly, and bureaucracies are functioning well." That was penned in 1950, within spitting distance of Auschwitz and Hiroshima. It sounds like it could have been posted on Facebook last week.

We find ourselves in a blind culture. We must be a people of faith and hope striving against evil, but is that possible where we don't recognize how dark and bloody evil really is?

Perhaps we need courage to name the evils in our communities and begin singing and praying seditiously, "Deliver us from evil." We do a lot of trying to convince ourselves humanity will grow out of its rebellious stage if only they'd read or vote right. Let's get over it. Life is messy. That nice lean chicken breast once lost its head and evil will not be overcome with

wishful thinking or human philosophies and philanthropies alone. Let's be honest, we are all—even pacifists—capable of the darkest of deeds, misdeeds, and undone deeds. The head of evil is only smashed-in by Good confronting evil head-on and conquering in love. Have we forgotten the victory of the cross? Have we forgotten what it took to rescue us? Have we stopped praying for deliverance?

So, enjoy your Buffalo wings, join the Lamb in his invasion of goodness, but for goodness' sake, be awake to the evil that lurks and who the Deliverer truly is.

Phil Wagler is increasingly aware of what he is capable of as he pastors and eats with the people of Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite & Clinton churches in Ontario (phil@kingsfieldcommon.ca).

Evangelical Anabaptism is rich theologically. I rejoice in being part of Mennonite World Conference (MWC), with its common faith amid diverse cultures. I have no doubt that Menno Simons would rejoice at the common faith in Christ voiced within MWC, while

being concerned about our using his name to identify ourselves and dismayed with how some use it to define themselves culturally.

TERRY M. SMITH, MITCHELL, MAN.

NEW ORDER VOICE

Salvation for those who don't believe in the afterlife

AIDEN ENNS

I don't believe in the afterlife as a motivation for my faith in Jesus. It is this life that keeps me bound to follow the way of Jesus. What can salvation offer for those who don't believe in traditional Christian notions of the afterlife? I can think of at least ten things:

Salvation . . .

1. invites detachment from material goods. Jesus offered a sensibility of life that subverts attachment to material things. While woe often comes to those who hoard, for they court insecurity, a sense of blessing comes to those who hold lightly and risk generosity.

2. disarms convenience, embraces struggle. The way to salvation is not easy, but it is worth more than any other endeavour. Of course this can't be proven except for personal testimony. Appeals to ease and the saving of labour by machines is the genius of consumerism that removes us from our own affairs. Direct action for ourselves and others in need is difficult but empowering, which is a taste of salvation.

3. honours the incarnation of God in Jesus, and in us all. All of life is connected and the presence of the Spirit is in everything. Christians affirm that God was in Jesus, the same Spirit is promised to us,

even in us. This deep sense of connection brings us grace, an avenue to equanimity.

4. provides resources to tolerate, even appreciate, suffering. While suffering and pain are never good, they can be endured with purpose. As Jesus suffered in his defiance of violence (as we should defy the violences of racism, patriarchy, classism, heterosexism, militarism and others), he forgave those who tormented him saying, "for they know not what they do." There is



Why save ultimate joy for the afterlife, which we can never know for sure?

something greater than this moment of pain, this period of history, that gives us perspective to pursue a path of peace and joy in the face of suffering and pain.

5. brings courage to love. Even at the risk of personal loss or harm, salvation comes to those who give of themselves out of concern for others. With solidarity comes an expanse of gratitude unavailable to those who close their hearts.

6. makes hope the miracle of embodiment. This is a vision of wholeness, a sense of connection to an eternal and unbiased love already at work among us. Even among hostility and deprivation, this very presence gives us hope.

7. yields the ability to marvel. Salvation comes to those who uncover the wonder in the ordinary, the sublime in the mundane and even something redemptive in the lowly and banal. Craving subsides and splendour unfolds as we appreciate the tenacity of the sparrow or the communion of a friend.

8. saves us from a sense of alienation. For those, like myself, who despair of their location in the middle and upper classes, Jesus offers absolution from the need to save the world. We are not the way, we are along the way. It's a journey to do only that which we are able to do.

9. makes urgent the confrontation of evil. The stalwart confrontation of evil is the evidence of salvation. When a person speaks out at the desecration of a tree, the punching of a face, the emaciation of a nation, we witness the eruption of love in the pursuit of justice. We have a foretaste of salvation.

10. comforts in the face of the future. Given our trajectory of destroying seas

and trees, of producing poverty and starvation, the future is bleak. I have no wisdom as to how best to respond. I grab the tail of the sun as it rises in the east, I drink the magic of the water as it hugs me when I dive. I watch humans that manifest the divine and seek to do likewise.

Salvation is at hand. Why save ultimate joy for the afterlife, which we can never know for sure? Taste it now; this is a promise.

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

✉ Being a sports bully not a Christian option

RE: "EMBRACING VIOLENCE . . . in sports," Aug. 17, page 24.

Carl DeGurse tries hard to justify violence in sports, listing the possible positive aspects of it.

I am sure he also knows the other side of extreme contact sports. In hockey, players have been disabled for life—or died—as a consequence of the violence of other players. Can we justify that behaviour? Do athletes really "volunteer" to be hit and to "sacrifice" their health or life for the pleasure of the spectators or their own vanity? Can we blame the spectators who seem to get excited about brawls, or the coaches who want their team to win at all costs, for the violence of the players?

Each player is responsible for his own conduct, and, as Christians, we have our God-given conscience to decide what is fair and what is not. We have to listen to it sensitively and honestly.

I am no hockey fan, but what I enjoy in watching the occasional game is the skill and the good teamwork of the players. I wonder if playing fair and skillfully, no matter if they win or lose, does not give as much satisfaction to players and spectators as playing "tough," unfair and revengeful. I think Wayne Gretzky was a good example of fair and skillful play, winning several trophies for good sportsmanship.

If I do not have the skills to play well, to make up for it by being a bully is not a choice for a Christian, in my opinion.

HELMUT LEMKE, BURNABY, B.C.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Church growth or church health?

JIM SHANTZ

"Congregational systems are perfectly aligned to get the results they are getting and that means uninterrupted decline for most congregations." This startling quote came from my recent attendance at the "Leading the Church Through Change" Institute held in Edmonton this May. My attendance at the Institute came

concurrent with our recent discussions both at the national and area church level regarding church planting and the state of the health of our congregations. While there are some very encouraging signs of growth, by various reports, a majority of our congregations are in plateau or decline. Typical responses may vary from denial, to concerned awareness to concrete action.

When it comes to action, it seems to me that we follow one of several approaches. One line of reasoning takes the more pessimistic view that churches

either cannot or will not grow so why waste the effort trying to get them to do so. The approach here is to start something fresh and innovative alongside already existing churches, sometimes co-



Our hunger for God ... is the driving energy for any change process we embark on.

opting members from existing churches. This has the advantage of not being encumbered by the traditions of the "we've never done it that way before" people, and creates excitement for something new.

Another approach is the "churches planting churches" strategy. This approach presumes the health of the parent church. From a purely organic point of view this might seem to be the most "natural" way for churches to be birthed but critics of this approach contend that churches don't normally do this on their

own. Some outside stimulus is needed.

Both of the above approaches (certainly the first one), ignore the possibility of renewal from within. Do churches not have all they need themselves for renewal? We have the Spirit and we have the gifts—that should be enough "raw material" for God to work with to effect renewal! This was the approach of the Institute I attended, an approach that goes beyond church growth technologies toward renewal that is both organizational and also pays attention to the inner spiritual life of the church members.

Whatever our bias when it comes to church health and growth, it's hard to improve on belief #1 and #2 of the Missional

church paradigm—everything starts with God and God's intentions for the world. My "gut" feeling is that our hunger for God and our longing to see God's will done on earth is the driving energy for any change process we embark on. So for starters let's keep feeding that hunger for God through the spiritual practices that work for us and fan the flames of shalom by our proclamation of the Good News we possess!

Jim Shantz is Mennonite Church Alberta Area Minister.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Cluthe—Maddyn Mackenzie (b. July 27, 2009), to Troy and Caroline Cluthe, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Huntington—Ivy Evalina (b. March 31, 2009), adopted by Corey Huntington, Ottawa Mennonite, August 2009.

Janzen—Courtney Jayde (b. July 14, 2009), to Amanda and Jay Janzen, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.

Janzen—Nathalie Pamela (b. Aug. 27, 2009), to Michael and Deidre Janzen, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Parodi—Carlos Miguel (b. July 27, 2009), to Berta Arteaga and Gustavo Perez Parodi, Ottawa Mennonite.

Prychak—Joshua Arthur Cornelius (b. June 1, 2009), to Darcy and Jennifer Prychak, Emmaus Mennonite, Wymark, Sask.

Sawatzky—Ayden John (b. Aug. 24, 2009), to Madison and Amanda Sawatzky (nee Gerbrandt).

Unger-McMillan—Marin Faith (b. June 10, 2009), to Gina Unger and Jeff McMillan, The Meeting Place, Winnipeg.

Baptisms

Brad Zacharias—Carman Mennonite, Man., July 26, 2009.

Clayton Neufeld, Sandra Goertzen—Hague Mennonite, Sask., July 26, 2009.

Rachel Good Gingrich—Mannheim Mennonite, Ont., June 14, 2009.

Heather Snyder—Mannheim Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 9, 2009.

Marriages

Boekestijn/Wiens—Nicoline Boekestijn and Markus Wiens, St. Catharines United Mennonite, July 25, 2009.

Carr/Wiens—Jacklyn Carr and Kevin Wiens (Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.), at Faith Mennonite, June 19, 2009.

Coplen/McIlroy—Cheryl Coplen and Alan McIlroy, St. Catharines United Mennonite, July 11, 2009.

Costa/Sawatsky—Jessica Costa and David Sawatsky, St. Catharines United Mennonite, June 12, 2009.

Doerksen/Nickel—David Doerksen and Christine Nickel, at Blumenort Mennonite, Rosetown, Man.

Enns/Farmer—Andrew Enns and Jennifer Farmer, St. Catharines United Mennonite, May 16, 2009.

Enns/Unrau—Kelly Enns and Brent Unrau, Carman Mennonite, Man., July 18, 2009.

Ens/Funk—Linda Marlene Ens (Blumenort Mennonite, Rosetown, Man.) and John Andrew Funk (Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg), at Blumenort Mennonite, Aug. 1, 2009.

Poechman/Wideman—Robert Poechman and Stephanie Wideman, Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont., at Floradale Mennonite, Ont., July 25, 2009.

Deaths

Epp—Katharine, 88 (b. July 10, 1920; d. May 6, 2009), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Fretz—Paul L., 78 (b. Feb. 25, 1931; d. June 7, 2009), Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont.

Friesen—Cathryn, 74 (b. Oct. 10, 1934; d. July 14, 2009), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Funk—Dora, 81 (b. Oct. 29, 1927; d. July 22, 2009), Carman Mennonite, Man.

Kennel—Mabel, 91 (b. Aug. 1, 1917; d. July 25, 2009), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Petkau—Tina (nee Peters), 73 (b. June 8, 1936; d. Aug. 10, 2009), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Redekop—Henry H., 90 (b. May 19, 1919; d. Aug. 2, 2009), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Roth—Gladys Grace, 86 (b. Nov. 28, 1922; d. Aug. 7, 2009), Nairn Mennonite, Ailsa Craig, Ont.

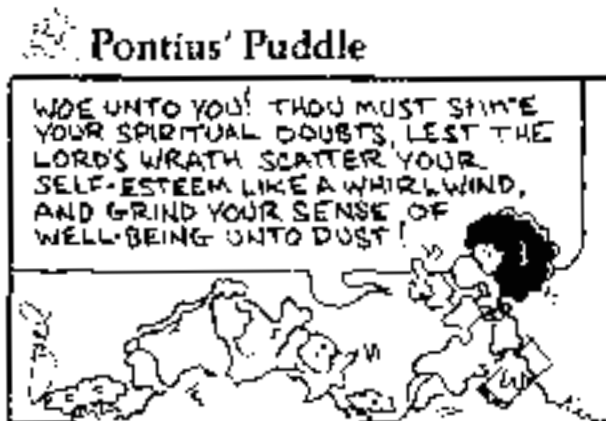
Salih—Joseph, 47 (b. July 17, 1962; d. Feb. 20, 2009), Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Schmidt—Helen, 89 (b. Oct. 16, 1919; d. July 12, 2009), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Schroeder—Mary (nee Klassen), 96 (b. March 3, 1913; d. July 27, 2009), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Siemens—Evelyn (nee Derkson), 76 (b. Oct. 11, 1932; d. March 17, 2009), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Wiens—Anna, 96 (b. May 19, 1913; d. Aug. 4, 2009), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.



MENNONITE WOMEN CANADA

—A place to belong—

WOMEN WALKING
TOGETHER IN FAITH

Back to school reflections on wisdom

BY LEONA DUECK PENNER



I
Echoes from the usual off-to-school flurry reverberate around the room:

Mom, when will you shorten my new jeans? And:

Rob, what did you do to my new blue pencil? And:
Boys, have you brushed your teeth? You'll be late.

At last, midst hurried goodbyes, the door slams and my husband and I settle down for a second cup of coffee. As the early morning sunlight filters through sun-weakened curtains, catches on the delicate fronds of a young fern and gently warms our bodies, we begin to read:

*Seventy years is the span of life,
Eighty if our strength holds;
The hurrying years are labour and sorrow,
So quickly they pass and are forgotten.
Teach us to order our days rightly
That we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

Silenced by the quiet truth of the words, we leave for the office. Throughout the day, in the midst of busy schedules, the words rise like chimes of distant bells, calling us to remembrance:

*Teach us to order our days rightly
... order our days rightly
That we may gain a heart of wisdom
... gain a heart of wisdom.*

II

It's September again—26 years after I wrote the above reflection on Psalm 90 while on a Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Swaziland with our teen-aged sons. Now they're all grown up with children of their own and I'm half-way through my seventh decade, still listening for those bells and yearning for that heart of wisdom as I watch my two oldest granddaughters, aged 16 and 10, head off to school while I cradle the newborn!

Admittedly, there have been glimpses of how to attain that wisdom along the way, the most powerful one being the example of my maternal grandmother. In the midst of her dying in September 1948, she remembered to

send home a gift for me on my fifth birthday—a specially chosen pear from her bedside fruit basket, given to me by my weeping mother after the vigil ended. That had a profound effect on me as a middling child of a large family who didn't get singled out that often.

Even now, all these years later, I can still recall the sweetness of that golden pear and associate the fresh, cool taste with the caring wisdom of grandmothers who take time for little ones “no matter what.”

And again, decades later, while on retreat at St. Benedict's Catholic Monastery, we were told that during these gatherings, the elderly nuns who could no longer do other work, because they were frail and sickly, saw it as their calling to uphold both the retreat participants and leaders in prayer. That gave me an amazing sense of peace and well-being, to the extent that I felt that I'd discovered an important “key” to gaining a heart of wisdom.

Yet, it's very easy to mislay the key of quiet reflection in our speeded up society where everything—even in our churches—seems geared towards doing and speaking, rather than listening and learning.

So, last September, when I officially became a senior citizen, I marked the occasion by searching out and spending some “sisterly” birthday money on a tangible symbol that would reflect something about the stage of life I was entering as well as my personal commitment to actively pursue the growth of wisdom during my senior years.

Eventually, I settled on a pair of tiny owl earrings because these nocturnal birds are traditionally linked with wisdom. And soon afterwards, when I shared these thoughts with a wood-carver friend, he surprised me with a small owl carving to encourage me in my wisdom search.

Now it's a year later. As I sit sipping my coffee looking at that little carved owl and fingering my earrings I'm saddened that I haven't noticed a marked increase in wisdom despite my best intentions.

So this September, as my oldest two granddaughters re-enter the halls of learning in an age when “new blue pencils” and neatly shortened jeans have been replaced by the challenges of constantly changing technology and a bombardment of designer fashions of assorted lengths, my intent, like the nuns at St. Benedict's, is to hold all these “hurrying ones” in my heart with a prayer that they, too, will pause now and then to remember that wisdom comes not from book learning on its own, but from “*ordering our days rightly*” so that we have time to integrate what we learn in our hearts and in our lives. And hopefully even hear a bell or two! ❧

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Blown away by grace

Congregational campout becomes tornado cleanup

DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent
DURHAM, ONTARIO

When Ernie Martin first looked at his neighbour's devastated property, he wondered, "Where is God in all this?" Dorla Eppler's house was relatively untouched, but the large trees around it were shredded and her outbuildings, including a barn, were destroyed. Then Martin looked up at the barn and saw a cross made of the remaining beams standing out against the sky and knew "God is with us in our suffering."

God's presence became even clearer when members of Hawkesville Mennonite Church arrived at the Riverstone Retreat Centre which Martin runs with his wife Edith.

"They arrived with their work gloves and boots," said Martin in a telephone interview. "They gave up their campout to help clear up the mess."

According to Kathy Bauman of Hawkesville Mennonite Church, "We were at the right place at the right time." The congregation's usual campout is a week earlier but was postponed this year because of a wedding.

The tornado that ripped through Durham killed a child in a conservation area. It was one of nine confirmed and two potential tornados that moved through southern Ontario in the early evening of Thursday, August 13.

While Mennonite Disaster Service looked into setting up a command centre in Durham, by the time they arrived to evaluate the situation, clean up was well underway. The local Home Hardware, on the advice of the St. Jacobs head office, loaned out chainsaws.

According to Martin, by Saturday there was a "symphony of chainsaws" as Old Order Mennonites from Mount Forest, Ontario, also joined in the clean up. ❧

PHOTO BY KATHY BAUMAN



With barn beams forming a cross in the background, Hawkesville Mennonite Church campers clean up at Dorla Eppler's property. (From left) Jeremie Raimbault, Mark Brubacher, Luke Jantzi, Rigo Pineda.

❧ Briefly Noted

Women asked to participate in survey

A task force of women from across Canada has alerted pastors and coordinators of women's activities to a survey they are taking to determine the number and level of participation in women's ministries at the congregational level. The seven-member task force, chaired by Marguerite Jack of Calgary, is asking women of all ages and backgrounds to participate in the survey. In addition to completing the survey by forms sent to Mennonite Church Canada congregations, women can complete the survey online by accessing the blog spot: <http://mennowomencanada.blogspot.com>. "The survey can be completed in less than five minutes," says Liz Koop of St. Catharines, Ont., the publicist for the group.

"We are looking for feedback, not only from women who already belong to a women's group in the congregation, but from any and all women," she says. All responses will be kept confidential. Questions about the survey can be directed to any of seven women on the group, listed as follows with their email addresses and phone numbers:

- Marguerite Jack, Calgary AB mjack@netkaster.ca (403-235-3646)
- Waltrude Gortzen, Abbotsford, BC waltrude@shaw.ca (604-756-0707)
- Irene Bartel, Drake, SK barteli@yourlink.ca (306-363-4710)
- Ruby Harder, Denholm, SK tryharder@sasktel.net (306-389-4315)
- Justine Heese, Winnipeg, MB hjheese@mts.net (204-487-6475)
- Liz Koop, St. Catharines, ON koopfarms@becon.org (905-562-5920)
- Mylene Melancon, St. Jerome, QC mylene-matt@videotron.ca (514-755-7356)

Church has grandchild



Chin Christian Church worships in First Hmong Mennonite building

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT

“In some ways,” says Mennonite Church Eastern Canada’s missions minister Brian Bauman, “the Chin Christian Church is the grandchild of First Mennonite, Kitchener, who made a home for the Hmong Mennonite church, who now have made a home for the Chin.”

Chin Christian Church was accepted as an emerging congregation at the annual MC Eastern Canada church gathering at the end of April.

The Chin are refugees from Burma, sometimes called Myanmar. Their story includes migrations from Mongolia to China, to Tibet, and finally to the Chin State in Burma. There, the Chin make up the vast majority of the half-million people. More than 90 percent of the Chin are Christians, with a variety of Baptist denominations making up 70 percent of all Chin.

But Burma has 53 million people, the vast majority of whom are Buddhist, and a government that seems to believe unity comes through uniformity. According

to the Chin, the long-standing military oligarchy suppresses Chin culture and Christian practice through the destruction of Christian places of worship, the tearing down signs of Christianity like crosses, and the arrest of pastors and other church leaders. The Chin are political and religious refugees who escape through India to the east and Thailand to the west.

Chin Christian Church began worshipping together in July of 2003, its members having most recently moved from other places in Canada to Kitchener. In 2006, they formed the present congregation and began meeting at First Hmong Mennonite Church the same year.

The congregation of 85 adults, youths and children is pastored by Jehu Lian Ching on a voluntary basis. Ching works as a custodian to support his family.

The two-hour Sunday afternoon service can include six or more songs plus congregational hymns. All of the singing is accompanied by youths and young adults on drums, guitar and keyboards; the large youth group enjoys singing in groups, as a choir and solo. Worship is in Chin, with many prayers, including one—in response to the sharing of concerns and joys—in which everyone simultaneously prays aloud. Scripture readings, a sermon and announcements round out the service.

New to Anabaptism, most of the group

/// Briefly noted

Zoar Mennonite welcomes new pastors

After months of living with some leadership uncertainty, Zoar Mennonite in Waldheim, Sask., is welcoming Henry and Erna Funk to the position of pastoral leadership. The Funks, who have previously served together in a number of congregations, are part-time farmers. They have agreed to a one-year commitment in the position.

was originally Baptist, so members are hungry for more information about the Mennonite group they have joined and invite guest preachers to bring English messages, which will be translated.

A socially conscious congregation, one of its members, Victor Khambil, runs the Chin Refugee Committee in Malaysia, spending more time there than in Canada, although he will soon become a Canadian citizen. ///



Pastor Jehu Lian Ching leads Chin Christian Church in Kitchener, Ont., on a voluntary basis.



The Chin Christian Church Youth Choir, complete with robes, sings during worship.

Warden Woods establishes scholarship

Ongoing gift helps ease the pain of church closing

BY JENNIFER KONKLE

Conrad Grebel University College release

While the closing of a church is never easy, Warden Woods Mennonite Church turned some of their sadness into joy with a unique gift to Conrad Grebel University College.

The church had been the recipient of a bequest from the estate of Winston Harrison and his partner John Ford. As Warden Woods prepared to disband in June 2009, they wanted to find a way for this gift to be passed along to continue to honour Ford and Harrison. Pastor Johanna Wall, herself a Grebel Alumna, contacted Fred W. Martin, director of development at Grebel, to inquire about setting up a scholarship. She noted that Ford and Harrison “promoted sacred music through choral conducting, singing, teaching and

adjudicating—enriching the lives of many deeply appreciative people.”

Thus, the College received the gift of \$50,000 to establish the “The John Ford and Winston Harrison Church Music Award.” Proceeds from this endowment will be awarded to qualified students for expenses as part of the Church Music and Worship program at the College.

This past year, Ken Hull, chair of the Music Department at Grebel, revitalized the Church Music and Worship program by creating a specialization in this area. “We believe that preparing students to help lead the church’s music and worship is an important contribution we can make to the life of the church,” remarked Ken. “This award will assist students both with

the cost of tuition as well as to enrich their studies beyond the walls of the classroom. We’re grateful for this gift given in memory of John Ford and Winston Harrison.”

Jim Buchanan from Warden Woods and a member of Grebel’s alumni committee, explained that “John was very active in music education in the Toronto community, and was very involved in directing concerts for high school students.” Ford was also involved in the establishment of the Pax Christi Chorale in Toronto.

The inaugural award will be made to a student in the fall term of 2010. In addition to the gift to Grebel’s music department, Warden Woods made gifts to the Ontario Mennonite Music Camp and Silver Lake Mennonite Camp. ❧

❧ Briefly noted

Gambling, overwhelming debt topics of newest Close To Home pamphlets

As a long-time Christian, Barb never imagined herself involved with gambling. But after trying an electronic gaming machine once, and winning some money, she found herself going back again and again to play. Because she managed the family finances, she was able to keep her gambling secret from her husband. But it all fell apart when he discovered unpaid bills and an empty bank account. Barb’s story, which is based on a real-life situation, is told in “Dealing With Gambling,” one of two new pamphlets in the Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) Close to Home series. The other new title is about “Dealing With Overwhelming Debt.” In the two pamphlets readers can see how people overcame their problems with help from the church and professional counsellors or organizations. They can also find information on identifying problems or addictions, along with biblical perspectives on the issues and suggestions for steps towards wholeness. The goal of the Close to Home series is to provide pastors and caregivers with tools they can use to help people who are struggling with issues that can be hard to talk about. Close to Home pamphlets can be ordered at www.mpn.net/closetohome.

—MPN/MC Canada Joint Release



❧ Briefly noted

MC Canada reports positive ledger, concern for year-end

WINNIPEG—As of July 31, Mennonite Church Canada’s income from donations was \$82,000 ahead of budgeted income for the same time period, and \$6,000 ahead of the same time period last year. On the debit side, expenses are generally within projections so far, reports director of finance Randy Wiebe. But in the same breath, he cautioned that only 36.7 percent of budgeted income had come in, even though the fiscal year is half over. The current fiscal year will end on Jan. 31, 2010. “Very important shifts can take place in the last few months of the budget year,” he wrote in a report to leadership, as giving patterns of past years indicate that approximately a third of annual income is accounted for in the final quarter of a fiscal year. MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman calls the six-month income statement “good news,” given the financial uncertainties generated by the global crisis last year. “We are grateful for the solid financial support demonstrated by donors and congregations in spite of the risky financial waters we are all swimming in,” he says. “We trust that this generous spirit will continue in order to finish the financial year well.”

Robert J. Suderman announces 2010 departure date

Mennonite Church Canada release
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Robert J. Suderman, General Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, on Aug. 28 informed the General Board Executive of his intention to retire not later than Aug. 31, 2010.

Suderman officially began in the position on Dec. 1, 2005, after most recently serving as Executive Secretary of MC Canada Witness.

His warm, patient, and listening posture have defined his leadership in large part, but a deep love for the church has fuelled



an energetic and passionate commitment to his work.

By the time he retires in 2010, Suderman will have spent 42 years in church ministry—encompassing a breadth of diversity that includes teaching, spiritual formation, mission, and administration.

In his resignation letter, he expressed thanks for the dedicated staff, elected and appointed colleagues, pastors and congregational leaders, and ministry partners with whom he has worked over the years. He also thanked Irene, his wife of 44 years, and his family “for the persistent encouragement and solidarity for our ministry together.”

Suderman has worked tirelessly at inspiring trust among Mennonite Church Canada’s Area Churches, congregations, and members. He has written extensively on diverse topics that have proved helpful to the church. At the beginning of his term as General Secretary, Suderman personally visited virtually all MC Canada congregations, (over 200 out of 225) resulting in the

book entitled *God’s People Now!* At the assembly in Saskatoon, 2009, his discussion paper, “Being a Faithful Church: Testing the Spirits in the Midst of Hermeneutical Ferment” provided delegates with a helpful tool to faithfully discern contentious issues in the church.

Suderman has been deeply involved in the international church, and has been an important voice in ecumenical circles through MC Canada’s membership in the Canadian Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. His ability to understand scripture in its context due to his working knowledge of Greek and his considerable international experience (including being fluent in Spanish) have been a tremendous asset to the denomination.

“Jack has been an inspirational leader at the General Board table,” wrote Garth Ewert Fisher on behalf of the General Board Executive in an official release. “His wide experience, his biblical wisdom, and his ability to ask probing questions have contributed to the work of the whole. We will miss his voice at the table.” ❧

/// Briefly noted

MC Saskatchewan opposes more nuclear reactors

At government-sponsored hearings in May, Gordon Allaby and Chris Buhler of Osler Mennonite Church addressed the hearing, presenting their opposition to building a second nuclear reactor in Saskatchewan. Allaby, pastor at Osler Mennonite, is part of a four-person group formed during the Mennonite Church Saskatchewan delegate sessions in Drake to promote peace and justice issues. The Allaby and Buhler paper responded to a paper written by the Uranium Development Partnership and was based on biblical convictions and concerns arising from their research. The paper is available online at www.saskuranium.ca. In reflecting on the experience, Allaby noted that they were the only group who opposed the project on moral grounds. “The other groups were concerned with the environmental impact,” he said. Although the company has been unclear concerning the future location of the reactor, Allaby believes it will be built in Lloydminster or Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

—KARIN FEHDERAU

/// Briefly Noted

Churches warned of fraud artists

Mennonite pastors and church leaders have been warned by Dan Dyck, director of communications for MC Canada, of fraud artists perusing church related websites, then posing as an international person known in Mennonite circles and connecting with a church staff person in Canada, assuming a relationship exists. In one case, the caller posed as Jeremiah Choi, a pastor from the Hong Kong Mennonite Church, and asked to speak to a specifically named staff person. He indicated that he had encountered an unexpected airport tax in the Manila airport on his way to his brother’s funeral in Winnipeg (Choi does not have a brother in Winnipeg). The caller provided a phone number, instructing the staff person to call border control officials and guarantee payment of several hundred dollars to border officials so that he could proceed with his travels. The MC Canada staff person was appropriately suspicious, and did not turn over any money or credit card information. Staff at the Korea Anabaptist Center in Seoul have received a similar call and warned MC Canada about it.

—Mennonite Church Canada release

'A taste of China' in Saskatchewan

STORY AND PHOTO BY KATHY LUITJENS

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
ROSTHERN, SASK.

Missionary endeavours in China were the focus of "A taste of China," an event sponsored by the Ministries Commission of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan and held in mid-August at Rosthern Mennonite Church. MC Canada Witness workers Todd and Jeanette Hanson helped the hundred or so participants learn about the country of China, the history of Mennonite missions there, and the present state of the Chinese church.

Mennonite mission work in China began in December 1909, when Henry and Maria Brown began their work there. Over the century, Chinese Christians have suffered—and even died—for their faith, and for a time there was no visible church in the country.

However, about 30 years ago, when reforms and some freedom came to the Chinese people, Christians also began to feel more free to express their faith, rebuild their churches and reach out to others. Today, churches are full, as people continue to seek answers to their questions about the meaning of life.

The Hansons ended their presentation by saying, "Today there are no Mennonite churches in China. There are no institutions owned or operated by the Mennonite church. No one from China attended Mennonite World Conference in Paraguay. But there is a developing network of people, churches and organizations, both rural and urban, that are working together to share ideas and support each other. Some in this group would like to use the word 'Anabaptist' to describe themselves. Others don't even know what that word means."

But within this informal group, the Hansons—who have served in China since 1991—see God's kingdom growing there. Although the couple are currently on a two-year furlough, Jeanette will travel back



Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker Jeanette Hanson speaks with Oliver Heppner at "A taste of China" at Rosthern Mennonite Church, Sask.

to China for meetings with this informal network.

The day also included activities to help participants experience and understand a bit about China. Chinese tea and snacks were served, and children, as well as adults, tried Chinese skipping, using long elastic ropes. For the potluck supper, donated chicken and lamb were made up into Chinese-style kebabs, while participants were encouraged to bring Chinese-style dishes.

During an after-dinner presentation with their daughter Claire, the Hansons explained how some people in China learn English by saying phrases made up of syllables that sort of sound like English words. They called that "Learning to speak English by speaking Chinese." There was lots of laughter as participants tried to guess what these phrases might mean.

The evening's offering for Mennonite Church Canada Witness raised \$2,078. //

// Briefly noted

Picnic marks Glencross community history

The history of the Glencross community was celebrated with a community picnic and the launch of *Remembering Glencross* at the local school grounds this summer. Hundreds attended the event south of Morden to mark the completion of a history book project and the 40th anniversary of the closing of the Glencross School District No. 71 in 1969 and the formation of the Glencross Community Centre. The Glencross school was established in 1878 by early Scottish and English settlers, who also established the Glencross cemetery in 1879, which is still in use today. The neighbouring Mennonite community brought about change in the shadow of the Pembina Hills, and today Mennonite names like Braun, Dyck, Fehr, Hildebrand, Hoepfner, Loewen, Thiessen, Suderman, Warkentin and Wiebe are the Glencross taxpayers. Glencross Mennonite Church began services here in 1936. Elderly Glencross residents still recall the first settlers riding to hounds chasing deer, fox or wolf, damaging fences and ruining the crops of their compatriots. A few area Mennonite farmers became avid greyhound breeders and loved the chase.

// Briefly noted

Pastor installed at Burns Lake

Helmut Isaak was installed as pastor of First Mennonite Church, Burns Lake, on Aug. 16. Isaak and his wife Eve had been serving at Burns Lake in an interim capacity since January, and were called to a three-year term this summer.

Several representatives of Mennonite Church B.C. made the journey to Burns Lake for the service, including MC B.C. executive minister Garry Janzen; David Friesen, who had served the Burns Lake congregation intermittently as interim pastor; and Gerald and Lee Dyck, members of First Mennonite who now reside in the Lower Mainland.

— BY AMY DUECKMAN

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

'I just did what needed to be done'

Community Mennonite Fellowship man cited for bravery by Ontario Provincial Police

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WALLENSTEIN, ONT.

It's been over a year since Cliff and Jean Klassen were driving home from visiting friends late on a Saturday night. They were later leaving than they had planned and had taken a different route than normal, and were thinking about their duties at Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton, Ont., the next morning.

But when they came across a burning car near Wallenstein, northwest of Elmira, Ont., thoughts of tomorrow were swept

aside. All Klassen could think of was that there might be someone in there. He drove past and turned around so his headlights shone on the scene. Movie scenes where burning cars explode played in both their minds.

Another car stopped on the other side of the wreck. The driver, Jason Brooks, a hockey coach from Guelph, yelled that there was someone behind the wheel.

The driver's door of the burning car wouldn't open, so Klassen ran around to the passenger side. Only the back door opened, so he grabbed the man's hands and began to pull him out. The man came part way and got stuck.

Klassen then ran around to the other side to see what he could do there, and Brooks yelled that the accident victim was loose. Klassen pulled him free and began to drag him along the road. Yelling in pain, the victim asked him to stop, and Klassen lowered him to the ground.

But then the flames shot higher and the gas tank began to act like a blowtorch. Together, Brooks and Klassen managed to move the victim further away. The scene took all of about 90 seconds.

While there was no explosion, the car

was completely destroyed in the flames.

"Even the paint on the car burned," Klassen recalls.

A citation from Ontario Provincial Police Commissioner Julian Fantino reads, in part, "Clifford Klassen is highly commended for his courageous lifesaving actions." Klassen received the citation on June 4 of this year, but the card from the parents of Antony

Bell, as well as a page containing Psalm 117, from Bell's Bible—which his mother found under the back seat of the burned car—are more important to him.

Bell, mostly recovered from his trauma and burn injuries, has no memory of the accident.

Klassen, on the other hand, was surprised by his own lasting reaction to the crash, reliving the experience in his dreams and while driving his truck alone, thinking about "what if we'd gone home earlier, or by our regular route?" Eventually he followed up offers to talk from various people, including Brooks and his pastor, Dave Tiessen, and feels like he is mostly past the trauma now.

"I'm no hero," he says, "I just did what needed to be done." ❧



Bell



Cliff Klassen holds his OPP citation for bravery, received for rescuing a man from a burning car in August 2008, while a singed page from the Bible found in the burned-out car sits on the table. The singed page and a thank you card from the rescued man's parents means more to him than the citation. "I just did what needed to be done," he says.

/// Briefly Noted

Balmer Named Director of ISARC

Brice Balmer, of Kitchener, has been named director of the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC), an organization which addresses provincial issues of social and economic marginalization. In his half-time role, he will concentrate on contacts with faith groups, continue his work with the anti-poverty coalitions, and do more writing and reflecting on ISARC events. Because ISARC is a project of the Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Brice will be spending his other half time teaching, advising students, and working at the seminary. Brice was on a six-week health leave after surgery in mid-June and is now back at work. He is a member of Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener.

Zaiba's story

Afghan woman's life of sorrow now one of increasing optimism and peace

BY LINDA WHITMORE

Mennonite Economic Development Associates Release

“I am a Muslim. That’s why I hide my face from you,” a rural Afghan woman says to our male videographer. “I am sorry, but we are Muslim and we know that you are not in my religion. But I respect you because you come here and do a lot for our village, for our people.”

I met Zaiba in a small village in Parwan province, northeast of the Afghan capital of Kabul. And while she may have been only a few years older than me, her life—one of extreme poverty, hardship and great sorrow—was revealed in her lined, gaunt face.

“The *mujahideen* [Afghan guerrillas] killed my husband, and I lost my young son during

the war,” Zaiba says. “My daughter and I tried to escape to Kabul, but she died along the way, and I had no chance to bury her.”

Zaiba apologizes for telling her sad story. She wants to emphasize that she is finding joy in life again working with the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) Through the Garden Gate project. As a lead farmer in the project, this enterprising woman is relishing the opportunity to learn modern horticultural methods and earn a living to support herself in relative peace.

Other Afghan women like Zaiba are now getting similar opportunities to unleash their entrepreneurship and find roads out of poverty through a new MEDA initiative undertaken in partnership with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Through the Afghanistan Challenge, MEDA is helping enterprising Afghan

women—many of who are widows—and their families by providing micro-finance loans and basic business training. Economic empowerment will not only help them feed and clothe their family, but also send their children to school, earning respect both within their family and in the community. Equally important is the restoration of personal dignity that these accomplishments can bring.

Every dollar donated to MEDA for the Afghanistan Challenge will be matched by CIDA until 2012.

“Hope is far too rare a commodity, yet I see hope in the eyes of these women,” says Kim Pityn, MEDA’s vice-president of international operations. “A good future for themselves and their children is now a possibility. MEDA and the Afghanistan Challenge will enable women to help other women, to build communities and networks of trust.”

MEDA PHOTO



Zaiba, a rural Afghan woman (seated with her back to the camera), is representative of her peers who are being helped by such MEDA initiatives as Through the Garden Gate and the Afghanistan Challenge.

/// Briefly noted

Transforming the scars of war into the beauty of peace

Beginning on Sept. 21—the International Day of Peace—Ten Thousand Villages Canada will donate \$5 from the sale of its peace dove necklaces, handmade from bombshell casings by Cambodian artisans, to Mines Action Canada’s victim assistance programs. The money will help fund programs for Cambodians who have been injured by landmines and bombs. After two decades of war, one in every 250 Cambodians is disabled and the proportion of amputees—one in every 384 people—is the highest in the world. The campaign runs until Remembrance Day (Nov. 11).

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bombshell necklace



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By transforming old bombshells into symbolic jewellery, artisans with Rajana Association in Cambodia are turning the ugly legacy of war into a peaceful future.



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GOD AT WORK IN US

MC Manitoba executive director retiring

By EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

On the doorstep of his retirement, Edgar Rempel recently took some time to reflect on his past six years as executive director of Mennonite Church Manitoba. "This has been a tremendous and rewarding opportunity, both in terms of how it has challenged and stretched me, and in terms of being involved in the work of the church," he said.

In 2003, MC Manitoba had completed an extensive review of its vision, program and structure. "I was aware that the implementation of the new structure was not complete. That was something that needed to be worked on right away," recalled Rempel.

In addition to giving leadership in this

area, Rempel recognized administrative needs to address, "to make our office run well and provide the kinds of tools for the staff to carry out effective ministry."

In the area of nurturing and supporting congregations, Rempel noted, "some of the things we had done in the past were discontinued, so we needed to work at other ways to fill those needs.

"Our camping ministry continues to be a very important way of working at faith development in children and in our youth and young adults," he noted. "Faith and Life had a very strong tradition [of nurturing faith development], so maintaining the choirs was a good way of allowing the constituency to worship together and use music to express our faith."



Rempel

The six years have not been without significant challenges, however.

"We've struggled with our identity as a community of congregations," he acknowledged.

Rempel, who served as MC Manitoba board moderator from 1997-2001, felt constituency support and affirmation through-

out the various stages of review and change, "but I think as we began to see how decisions were made under that structure, we began to wonder, 'Is this really who we are?'"

At the same time, MC Manitoba was working with the reality that many congregations were becoming more autonomous and self-sufficient. "It has changed the expectations when we relate together as a community of congregations, of how we do things together and of what binds us together," he said. "It has become less clear."

Rempel recalls two significant financial challenges over the past six years. During the financial crisis of 2003-04, when increased giving to cover new programming costs failed to come in, some of the Faith and Life programming and the chaplaincy program were discontinued.

Last year required even more extensive adjustments when donations fell substantially below budget. "On one hand, it clarified what we absolutely needed to do," he said, "but it was also difficult to trim back so that we could continue the three main ministries" of education, evangelism and service, and leadership.

The decision-making and discernment processes have changed significantly under the new structure. "We have a much more streamlined system," according to Rempel. "Rather than some of the decisions being made at delegate assemblies, they are made around the board table."

"The process the board is going through now with visiting each MC Manitoba congregation is a significant opportunity to rethink and discern who we want to be," Rempel said. "It will have an impact on this office and the kind of person they will need."

Rempel has agreed to continue his duties until the MC Manitoba board can find a replacement. ❧

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and ITS FJORDS (June 13-28)
PENNSYLVANIA to EUROPE (June 19 - July 2)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE (June 24 - July 5)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE II
with JOHN SHARP (June 29 - July 12)
ITALY, AUSTRIA and GERMANY (July 7-17)
ENGLAND and SCOTLAND (July 23 - August 4)
SWISS GLACIER EXPRESS (July 29 - August 11)
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PERSONAL REFLECTION

Praying at the mosque

BY PALMER BECKER

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA RELEASE

BETHLEHEM, PALESTINE

Every day at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and at 9:30 p.m., the imams go to their microphones and in a loud melodic voice call everyone to prayer. One evening, I cautiously responded to the sunset call and went to the local mosque to pray. I slipped off my shoes at the doorway, as is the custom, and took a lone seat in the back. I began to pray to God as I know him in Jesus Christ.

I was welcomed afterwards by those around me.

“Are you a Muslim?”

No, I am a Christian.

“Do you want to become a Muslim?”

No, I am very happy in my faith.

“Do you know how to pray?”

Yes, I converse with God and find it very meaningful.

“But you don’t pray the right way; can we teach you how to pray?”

While it is highly unusual for a Christian to go to a mosque to pray, that is what I did about twice a week for three months. One day, when I kneeled down in my chair to pray, as we did in my home church, a man came to me out of concern, asking, “Do you want to go to hell?”

No, I am going to heaven.

“But you can’t pray like that!”

He was concerned that I was turning my backside towards Mecca, instead of my face.

I became convinced that most of the men who come to pray do so out of deep devotion. They begin by standing reverently before God, seeking to free themselves of all selfish emotions and distractions. They bow before God, recognizing that he is great and he alone is God. They kneel and touch the floor with their foreheads in submission to his will. Like me, they recognize that they are sinners who need daily forgiveness and guidance from

God. They end their prayers by wishing *Salaam* (peace) to those beside them.

It was a good time of learning and dialogue. To watch and talk with committed Muslims helped me to understand that many have much more than a religion of works. Like me, they are truly seeking to give full respect and obedience to God.

One day I took 20 visiting students with me to the mosque. After prayers, a dozen men gathered around us to answer our questions and, of course, to try to teach us how to pray. In our dialogue they shared their perceptions of Christians. It was rather sobering to hear them say, “Christians have killed millions of people in many wars. They are obsessed with sex and are very shallow in their faith.” We had to admit that there was some truth in their perceptions.

As our conversation continued, I shared how badly I felt about the slaughter and plundering that happened during the Crusades and then, looking intently into their eyes, said, “On behalf of my people I ask for your forgiveness for what

happened during the Crusades [1096-1270 A.D.]. That was not in the spirit of Jesus.” They appeared touched. It gave us an opportunity to talk further about the nature of Jesus and what it means to follow him.

After about 45 minutes of conversation, I asked if I could close our time together with prayer. I asked God for forgiveness for our many sins and asked him to “bless this place and these people with your love and understanding.” I concluded “in the name of Jesus.”

The men around us were silent for a bit and then one said, “That was a good prayer.”

Among all the shoes at the door I mistakenly slipped into a pair of shoes almost identical to my own. I wore them for a day before realizing that they were not mine. The following night I went back and after prayers met the owner of these shoes. I apologized profusely. We had a good laugh together as we exchanged shoes. “It happens all the time,” he said.

As I walked the two blocks to my home, I reflected, “Maybe it was meant to be that I should walk in the shoes of a Muslim for a day to get a sense of how it feels.” ❧

Palmer Becker wrote this reflection while he and his wife Ardys were on a five-month Mennonite Church Canada teaching assignment in Bethlehem earlier this year.

PHOTO BY PALMER BECKER



Men and boys standing in reverence before prayers. The mosque was full so they gathered outside.

OBITUARY

Dedicated Der Bote volunteer leaves lengthy legacy

DICK EPP,

SEPT. 4, 1927 – JUNE 28, 2009

For Diedrick (Dick) Epp's family, *Der Bote* was respected like no other paper in the household.

Growing up in Glenbush, Sask., it was Epp's job to cut up the newspapers to be re-purposed in the family's outdoor toilet. The family subscribed to four papers: *The Winnipeg Free Press*, *The Western Producer*, *The Family Herald* and *Der Bote*, the German language newspaper of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (and later Mennonite Church Canada).

"My mother gave me strict instructions never to cut up *Der Bote*," said Epp at Bethany Manor in Saskatoon where he presented reflections about his long involvement with the paper on Oct. 13, 2007. "It was special. . . They did not go the way of other newspapers."

Together with family and friends, Epp's wife of 53 years, Betty, said farewell to Epp at his funeral service in Saskatoon on July 3. He died on June 28.

Epp was an active member on the board of *Der Bote* for many years, often serving as recording secretary. His name first appeared in masthead of the paper in 1990.

Ingrid Janzen Lamp, former editor of *Der Bote*, which ceased publication in 2008, said Epp was always cheerful, optimistic and hopeful, noting that he attended every meeting unless he was seriously ill.

Although Epp grew up with the paper, his interest in *Der Bote* was intertwined with his passion for Mennonite history, and, in particular, the history of Mennonites who had come to Canada from Russia. In the early 1970s, Epp became a founding member of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan and Alberta, and later its long-time president before it evolved into two separate entities.



Epp

Leonard Doell, a past president of Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, wrote in a tribute that Epp recognized the importance of belonging to the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. Epp would often pay most, or all, of the \$500 annual membership fee from his own pocket when the Saskatchewan society's coffers were empty during its lean early years. In 1996, Epp left the president's post but remained a wholly active volunteer in the Saskatchewan society.

The Epps were charter members of Nutana Park Mennonite Church

in Saskatoon. With strong support from his wife, Epp was active on many church-related boards, committees and organizations.

During his career life, Epp held the positions of teacher, vice-principal, and principal, later working in administration for the Saskatoon Public School Board. He was also an avid photographer, producing multi-image slide show productions in cities in Canada and the United States. ❧

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ARTBEAT

From pig farm to coffee shop Daniel Lichti forges a career

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
STRATFORD, ONT.

Balzac's, a coffee shop in Stratford, is named after Honoré de Balzac, the 19th century French philosopher and writer who purportedly died of caffeine poisoning after consuming more than a hundred cups of coffee in 24 hours. Fittingly, the establishment was turned into Zimmerman's Coffee House in Leipzig, Germany, for three performances of J. S. Bach's *Coffee Cantata* this summer.

As Chris Dawes, playing Bach himself, introduced the piece and accompanied it, Daniel Lichti, bass-baritone and a member of Rockway Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., entered, ice pack in hand, to complain about his daughter's evil ways: she had been overcome by an addiction to coffee.

The presentation, part of the City of Stratford's Summer Music program, was the latest in Lichti's presentations of the cantata that date back many years. His English translation, constantly updated—"no more

Daddy's cell phone plan," "you can count the SUV out"—carefully follows Bach's phrasing and rhythmic patterns, showing the skills that make Lichti much in demand in Canada, Europe and the Middle East, as both a performer and teacher.

It was not until he auditioned for the choir at Waterloo Lutheran University (now Wilfrid Laurier University [WLU]) in 1969 that, he says, "the dream of a career in music was kindled." The conductor at the time advised him to audition for the university's new voice teacher.

In the Amish Mennonite congregation at Tavistock, Ont., where he grew up, Lichti had sung in choirs and quartets, a pattern that continued at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener. After finishing at WLU, he went to Detmold to study at the Northwest German Music Academy. Known in Germany for his performances of the German Romantic repertoire and oratorio solos, Lichti had to start from scratch upon his return home.

"I could have stayed in Germany, but Canada . . . pulled me back," he says.

After 13 years in the family pig farming business, he freelanced for five years, "eking out a living," he says. In 1998 both the University of Toronto and WLU invited him to apply for faculty positions. Now a tenured faculty member at WLU, he enjoys teaching, mentoring and developing young talent.

Performing is seen as the music faculty's version of "research and publishing." Between trips to Israel, where he has many invitations to return to provide master

classes and perform, and Malta, as well as performing a repertoire that includes Schubert's *Winterreise*, he also provides worship music at Rockway Mennonite.

His Mennonite roots continue to provide a spiritual underpinning for his life: "Everything I've grown up with," including "respect for the simple things of life," the "sense of community," and the "support from Rockway," as well as key Mennonite leaders like Frank Epp, Walter Klassen and Howard Dyck.

In his own mentoring Lichti says he wants to "provide young musicians with a bigger view of the performing world than I was privy to."

The *Coffee Cantata* finishes with the daughter safely married to the suitor and off Daddy's hands as they all enjoy a cup of coffee together. Daniel Lichti has found his niche in life and is enjoying it to the last drop. ☘

/// Briefly noted

Pax Christi Chorale announces new Pax Christi Youth Choir

TORONTO—The Pax Christi Chorale has formed the new Pax Christi Youth Choir for youths between 13 and 21. It will be led by Lynn Janes, currently the head of music at Toronto's Havergal College and former conductor of the Toronto Mendelssohn Youth Choir. Janes and Stephanie Martin, artistic director of Pax Christi Chorale, were co-winners of the Leslie Bell Prize for Choral Conducting in 1998. The Pax Christi Youth Choir will rehearse separately and perform a repertoire on their own during the regular concerts, but will also join the adult choir for the oratorio performances under Martin's direction. "Most of us who enjoy choral singing as adults have strong, positive memories of singing in a youth choir or children's choir," says Martin. For information about auditioning for the Pax Christi Youth Choir, contact general manager Jennifer Collins at jenniferanncollins@hotmail.com.

—Pax Christi Chorale Release



Brandon Leis (music director at Stirling Ave. Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.), narrator and suitor, sings with Pam Patel, the daughter, and Daniel Lichti, the father, in J. S. Bach's *Coffee Cantata* at Balzac's Coffee Shop in Stratford, Ont., this summer.

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Mennonite institutions optimistic about financial health

BY AARON EPP

National Correspondent

In an economic climate that is forcing some universities and colleges to make significant budget cuts, Mennonite post-secondary institutions are optimistic about their financial health and thankful to donors for their generous support.

Columbia Bible College (B.C.), Conrad Grebel University College (Ont.) and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Indiana) all reported increases in giving to their annual funds—donations to their operating budgets—during the 2008-2009 fiscal year, compared to the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

"In a difficult financial environment,

many people gave more," said AMBS president Nelson Kraybill in a prepared statement, referring to the 5.82 per cent increase in annual fund giving the seminary experienced. "It is an extraordinary sign of commitment and grace. Thanks be to God."

Meanwhile, Canadian Mennonite University (Man.) received \$16,000 less in donations to its annual fund, which includes corporate, individual and church giving. CMU received \$1,147,000 in 2008-2009, compared to \$1,163,000 in 2007-2008. The university had to dip into reserves last year, but describes its current

financial health as "very strong."

"Our budget is very realistic," Gordon Epp-Fransen, vice president finance and administration at CMU, said in a phone interview. "We had to make certain adjustments based on lower earning from our investments and we had to be more realistic in our expectations for donations."

The difference in giving does not worry Abe G. Bergen, director of development at the university. "My primary feeling would be one of extreme gratitude for the generosity of people who continue to believe in CMU," he said in a phone interview.

Although giving to the annual fund was up at Conrad Grebel, the college reported a total amount of \$795,315 received from 808 donors. That represents a decline of 37 donors and over \$100,000. Given the economic climate, Conrad Grebel is pleased by the core of supporters who continue to give.

"We did not have large fundraising projects last year, so to receive almost \$800,000 in donations on a \$5,700,000 budget feels good," Fred Martin, director of development at the college, wrote in an email. "The 2008-2009 fiscal year ended in surplus and we have some reserves in place." He added that donors are cautious, but still generous—a sentiment echoed by Paul Loewen, who works in church and donor relations at CBC.

"In general, donors in B.C. are positive," Loewen wrote. "We sense that our constituency is cautiously optimistic."

At AMBS, the staff is planning several ways the seminary will maintain fiscal strength. Employees have pledged to give five per cent of their earning back to the seminary for the year, a total of approximately \$106,000. Where possible, expenses will be cut, and some savings will occur from normal changes in staff and activities.

CBC has also implemented new initiatives, such as its Church Match Program. If a church supports a student up to a particular amount, the college does the same. By doing this, the college has involved more churches in a direct way, according to Loewen. "We feel very blessed that we continue to have strong support from our churches, alumni and supporters of the college," he wrote. ▄



Profiles of graduates

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Canadian Mennonite University

Niki Enns Fehr, who attends Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg, graduated from Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in 2009 with a Bachelor of Arts in Peace and Conflict Transformation Studies. She was one of 20 students around the world accepted into the Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, one the most prestigious Master Degree programs in Peace Studies in the world. She is ecstatic about “studying in a very dynamic and international atmosphere” as three quarters of the students come from outside the United States. Her area of concentration is Culture, War, and Peace.



Enns Fehr

Rebecca Woodmass, who attends St. Margaret’s Anglican Church in Winnipeg, received a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance from CMU. She is pursuing a Masters of Music at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec and will major in Opera Performance. Because CMU is a small university it could not give Woodmass the intense focus in opera performance so she will take some catch-up undergraduate classes. CMU was a stepping stone for Woodmass to get her masters degree. Henriette Schellenberg, her voice teacher at CMU, was an important tool for preparing her as a performer.



Woodmass

T. Stephan Christianson graduated from CMU this year with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in English with honours. He will attend University of Alberta in the Master of Arts program in English Literature.



Christianson

He will be studying the “intersection between literature, economics, and political critique in the figure of William Morris, a late Victorian English writer, craftsman, and political radical.” Christianson feels ready to pursue this new challenge because “Paul Dyck and Sue Sorenson [Professors of English at CMU] have more than prepared me for graduate studies.”

Columbia Bible College

David Dyste, who attends Heritage Alliance Church in Abbotsford graduated this year from Columbia Bible College (CBC) with a Bachelor of Arts in Caregiver Counselling. He is attending Associated Christian Theological Seminaries (ACTS) located on the Trinity Western University (TWU) campus in Langley, BC. Dyste credits Carey Penner, a faculty member at CBC, as being “a very engaging professor, always open to work with me, to work through my



Dyste

questions and concerns about moving into the mental health profession.”

Steven Kim, a member of Willingdon Church in Burnaby, BC, received a Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies in 2009 from CBC, and will be attending Canada Institute of Linguistics in order to attain a Master in Applied Linguistics and Exegesis (MLE) degree. Kim hopes to be a Bible translator with Wycliffe Bible Translators Society after he finishes his studies. CBC prepared Kim for his dream to be a Bible translator with extensive Greek studies. Kim credits Michael Szuk, his mentor at CBC, with preparing him “more than enough” in that area. CBC also challenged him “not only in the academics in the classroom, but also in integrity, character, and personal commitment to Jesus Christ outside of the classroom.”



Kim

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Laura Abraham, who attends South Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church in Abbotsford, BC, graduated from CBC in 2007 with a Bachelor of Arts in Caregiver Counselling. She will be graduating from Trinity Western University in Langley in November with a Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology. Abraham raved about CBC and how they work closely alongside other universities to ensure “that their counselling program is sufficient for graduate level entry.” Abraham hopes to work in the counselling field, especially with children, youth, and their families.



Abraham

Conrad Grebel University College

Sarah Johnson received a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies from the University of Waterloo and a Master of Theological Studies (MTS) from Conrad Grebel University College



Johnson

(CGUC) in 2008. She is currently studying at Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut, hoping to get a Master of Arts in Religion with a major in Liturgics, “all things related to Christian worship,” she says. Johnson, a member of First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., hopes to use her studies in service to the church. She says CGUC gave her a “strong grounding in the Mennonite history and theology” which has become a part of her beliefs for bettering the church.

Andy Martin, a member of Elmira Mennonite Church in Elmira, Ont., graduated from CGUC in 2008 with the MTS degree. He is working toward his Doctor of Theology in Pastoral Theology at Toronto School of Theology (TST), Regis College. Because he grew up with a limited idea of “what it means to be Mennonite,” Martin decided CGUC would “enlarge his understanding” of his background and provide a location to study theology. Martin hopes to



Martin

focus his dissertation on “how humility was understood in the Christian tradition versus how Mennonites traditionally thought about, and lived out, humility.”

Amy Waller graduated from CGUC in 2006 with a Bachelor of Arts in Music and moved on to graduate studies in music at the University of Western Ontario. She has just begun a Doctor of Music in Music Literature and Voice Performance at Indiana University. Waller, a member at First United Church in Waterloo, says that CGUC was “the perfect base for me to work from, in order to be able to attend an institute such as Indiana University.” She also says, “Grebel provided me with a safe environment to grow and learn about myself as a musician.” ❧



Waller

❧ Briefly noted

Bartel out at Bethel College

Only three years into his five-year contract as president of Bethel College in Kansas, Barry C. Bartel, a former attorney representing detainees at Guantanamo Bay, has been let go by the board of trustees right before the fall term began. Bartel was surprised by the move, saying he first heard on July 29 of the board’s concern about confidence in his ability to lead Bethel through a difficult time. This was his first review, he said. He was told by the college’s executive committee on Aug. 13 that he was being terminated. Board chair Mel Goering, insisting there was “no scandal, no breach of ethics,” claimed Bartel did not have adequate confidence from the employees and organizational structure to face the significant challenges Bethel faces. Bartel will move out of the president’s house, but stay in the community with his family. John K. Sheriff, current executive vice-president for institutional development, has been named interim president.

—BY DICK BENNER

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PHOTO BY BETHANY COLLEGE



Twenty-one young adults attended leadership week at Bethany College in Hepburn, Sask. for the last week of August. The Student Council for 2009-2010 includes (front left): Lisa Braun, Hepburn (Dean of Student Development, Advisor), Adriana Schmidt, Calgary (Spiritual Life), Michelle Epp, Biggar (Social Rec.), Ashley Marie Wiebe, Warman (Vice-President), Heidi Neufeld, Borden (Treasurer). Back: Hillary Klassen, Glenbush (Sports Rep), Christ Frostad, Waldheim (Drama), Clark Holmes, Warman (President), Sam Krause, Winnipeg (Missions), Aleah Isaak, Winnipeg (Secretary). Bethany's other team of student leaders are the Residence Assistants who are charged with the primary caregiving of small groups of the student body within the dormitories.

Why does Christian education matter?

BY JEREMY SIEMENS

Mennonite Collegiate Institute release
GRETNA, MANITOBA

Eight years ago, I would have told you that it doesn't. As a church-going teenager with strong opinions, I fought tooth and nail to stay out of private school. I simply saw the whole institution as unnecessary. Why would I leave my friends to pay for a diploma I could get for free?

In a bit of irony, I'm now working to promote the very school (and the educational framework) that I fought so hard to avoid. A lot has happened in the years between to alter my opinion on Christian education, but my last year as a staff member at Mennonite Collegiate Institute (MCI) has done the most in this regard.

I've discovered that the difference of Christian education is simply defined and profoundly experienced.

Christian education operates out of a biblical narrative that makes particular claims about God, life and knowledge. This definition isn't going to surprise anyone nor is it sexy enough to flood my desk with new student applications. However, it is here that the difference of Christian education is found. To claim the lordship of Jesus Christ is to radically alter how one understands education and community.

In this framework, the goal of education is not only good grades that will lead kids to great universities and even better careers. Education becomes the vehicle that drives students towards a working knowledge of the created world, helping them understand the God behind it all and His will for them.

As staff and students buy into this mission and its implications for the school community, everything changes. I've seen students who were outcast in previous schools reduced to tears at how open and accepting this type of community can be. I've seen students discover amazing musical and athletic gifts simply because they felt safe enough to try something new. I've seen student leaders boldly recognize their potential to do God's work and change the world around them.

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CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE PHOTO



As these stories show, the value of Christian education is that it intentionally pushes young people to repeatedly encounter the living God. As a cynical high school student, I heard of this difference, but saw it as little more than a few verses of “*Kumbaya*” and a couple of Bible classes. Today, I’ve come to see that this difference has the potential to drastically change every aspect of one’s high school experience.

This doesn’t mean that Christian education is perfect or that God can only be found in the halls of a private school. It simply suggests what I couldn’t fathom eight years ago: Christian education is an important and drastically different educational experience where students encounter the love of God and, in turn, leave with much more than just a high school diploma. ☼

Mary Brubaker-Zehr, Director of Student Services at Conrad Grebel University College (centre), welcomes students Fernand Harugimana (left) from Rwanda, studying Science, and Saido Sheikh (right) from Somalia, studying Arts. Several years ago, Conrad Grebel University College students voted to increase their residence fees by ten dollars a term to help support a refugee student living at the College while studying at the University of Waterloo. “Participation in this program is an excellent fit with Grebel’s values and beliefs,” notes Brubaker-Zehr. “This includes promoting social justice, increased awareness of international issues, engagement among people with diverse backgrounds, and empowerment.”

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Calendar

British Columbia

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

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.

Alberta

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.

Oct. 20-22: Pastors retreat at Camp Valaqua. For more information, contact Jim Shantz at 780-668-0851 or jimshantz@live.com.

Nov. 7-9: Pathway to Renewal seminar at Trinity Mennonite Church, Calgary. For more information, contact Jim Shantz at 780-668-0851 or jimshantz@live.com.

Saskatchewan

Oct. 14-28: 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. 10: MC Saskatchewan Pastors' Gathering at Rosthern Junior College, 9:30 am registration.

Manitoba

Until Nov. 4: Urban Textures by Articulation Textile Group at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd, Winnipeg.

Oct. 1: Annual Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery fundraiser at 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg featuring music by Jesse Krause and speaker/artist Bob Haverluck, 7:30 p.m. RSVP to rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca or Connie Wiebe @ 204-888-6781.

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. 18: Join MCC Manitoba at Sam's Place, 159 Henderson Hwy, Winnipeg for presentation and discussion, "Reflections on Food," 7 p.m.

Oct. 24: Camp Koinonia work day.

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

Oct. 31: "The Great Emergence," a day-long seminar with Phyllis Tickle, 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."

Oct. 31: Camp Moose Lake workday. Volunteers welcome to help cut wood, rake, clean, etc.

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. 8: Join MCC Manitoba at Sam's Place, 159 Henderson Hwy, Winnipeg presentation and discussion, "Militarization of Canada," 7 p.m.

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.

Ontario

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. 1: Greening Sacred Spaces

information night, 99 Regina St., Waterloo; 7 to 9 p.m. Topic: Free water and electricity audits, low-cost energy audits and do-it-yourself waste audit.

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. 22-24: 10th annual Ten Thousand Villages Fair Trade Crafts Sale, at Hamilton Mennonite Church; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (22, 23), 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (24). Villages Café open during sale hours. For more information, call 905-528-3607.

Oct. 23-25: Marriage Encounter weekend at King's Hotel, Palmerston, beginning the evening of Oct. 23. For more information, contact Marjorie Roth at 519-669-8667 or wmroth@rogers.com.

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 Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
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<i>Focus on Books&Resources</i>	
November 2	October 20

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Announcement

The **Salem Mennonite Congregation** near Tofield Alberta is planning a **100th Anniversary Celebration**, July 24 & 25, 2010. Come and join us for a time of fellowship, inspiration, and challenge. We will be reviewing how God has blessed us in the past, as we envision what the Lord will call us to in the future. For more details you may contact Joe & Elaine Kauffman at Box 212 Tofield Alberta Canada T0B 4J0 or by e-mail at Jolane72@gmail.com.

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

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Employment Opportunities



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- Education and/or work background in gerontology an asset

Please forward Resume in Confidence to:
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FREELANCE CURRICULUM WRITERS WANTED

The Gather 'Round curriculum, a project of Mennonite Publishing Network and Brethren Press, is accepting applications to write for the 2011-12 year. Writers are needed for Preschool (ages 3-4), Primary (K-grade 2), Middler (grades 3-5), Junior Youth (grades 6-8) and Youth (grades 9-12). All writers will attend an orientation conference in April 2010 and begin writing thereafter, with deadlines staggered quarter by quarter. Writers prepare weekly materials for teacher's guides, student books, and resource packs. Compensation varies according to the age group and the number of weeks (12-14) in a given quarter.

For more information and to apply, visit the "Contact us" page at www.gatherround.org. Deadline for applications: November 30, 2009.



PRESIDENT

Bethany College is a Bible College committed to *nurturing disciples* and *training leaders* to serve. Bethany's Board of Directors invites nominations, applications and expressions of interest for the position of **President**. Founded in 1927, and situated in Hepburn, Saskatchewan, Bethany offers a range of undergraduate Bible College programs.

The President, who serves as CEO, will have a proven record of respected leadership, be committed to excellence in **discipleship** and transformative education, understand and embrace the mission of **Bethany College**, and possess the ability to represent Bethany effectively on provincial and national levels to our alumni, donor and church constituencies.

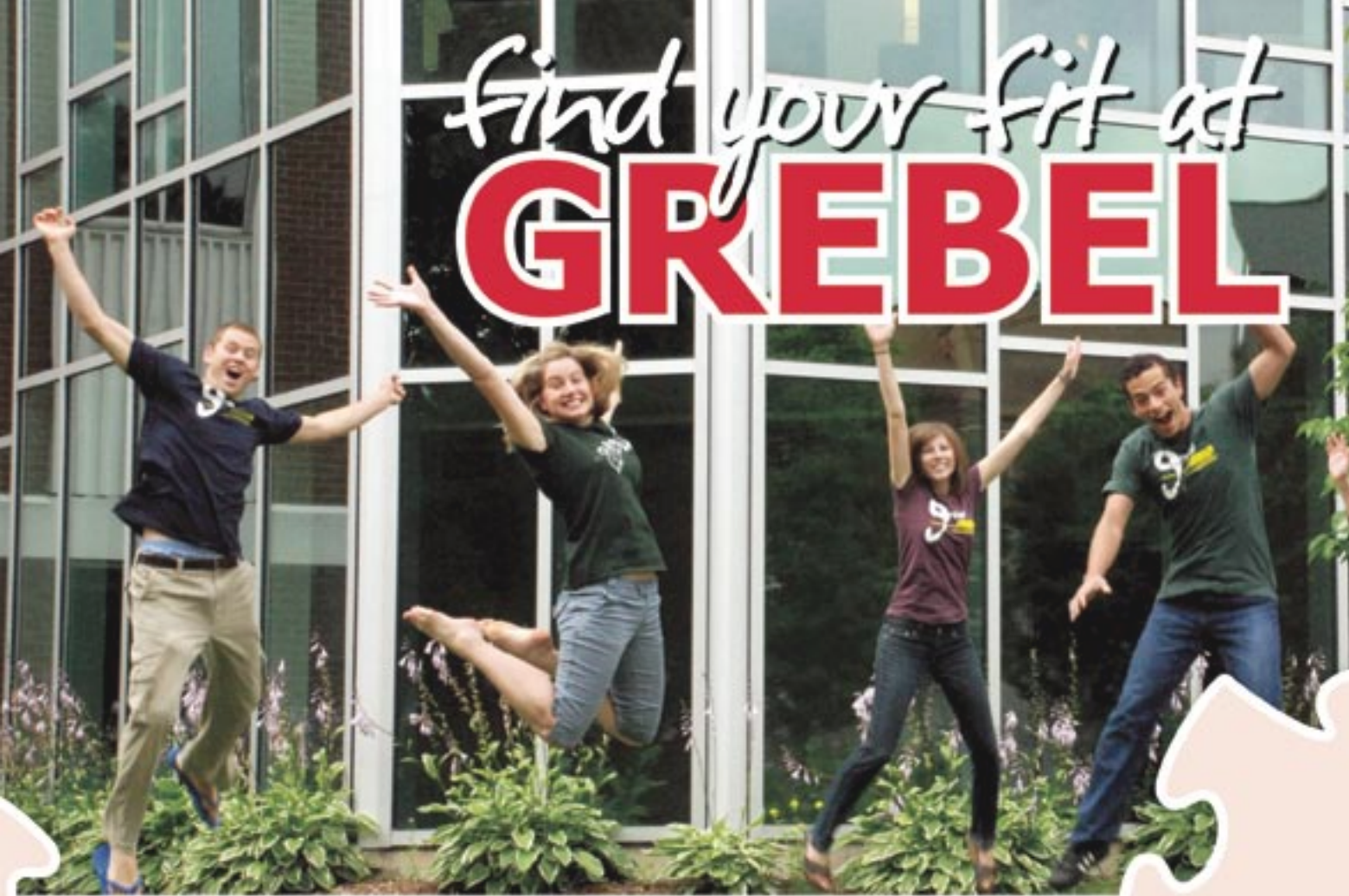
For a full job description, please visit: www.bethany.sk.ca.

YOUTH PASTOR POSITION

Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church located in Winkler, MB invites applications for a full time Youth Pastor starting immediately. This is a single salary position that could be shared as well. Our intergenerational congregation of 500+ seeks a pastoral team member, a spiritual leader(s) with gifts of teaching, leadership and a vision for developing a youth program. Related education and experience in youth work is a priority along with a commitment to Mennonite theology and the practices of the Mennonite church.

Please direct your inquiries and resumes to:
Youth Pastor Search Committee Chairperson
Darlene Derksen at darfaye@mts.net.

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